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De todo un poco (a little bit of everything)
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Migrants In The Hague

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Preface

My choice of topic was the result of my ideas on meaningful research, my personal interests within development, and my strengths as a researcher. Diversity¹ and difference within a development context has formed a central theme throughout my professional education and work experience. Diversity exists at micro, meso and macro levels and is experienced and accommodated in an array of different expressions – politically, institutionally, organizationally, socially and culturally. Understanding how to deal with difference and diversity has always been one of my personal and professional foci.

In the past I have looked at diversity in the context of education, child poverty, indigenous peoples issues, community development and migration. Migration in the Netherlands, and the way in which migrants deal with and articulate their experiences, emerged as a research topic because of my previous professional work. However, my interest in migration and diversity is also a result of my own personal experiences as a Canadian of Vietnamese/Thai/Australian/American roots. Growing up in a country built by immigrants, within a family of immigrants, I learnt to appreciate diversity but at the same time I learnt of the great difficulties and challenges that diversity itself presents for individuals, societies and nations. I experienced first hand the ways in which people deal with diversity and project their own understandings on to the world around them: my own identity as seen by those who do not know me, depends on the eye of the beholder². This has given me insight as well as a deep curiosity about diversity, the role it plays politically, socially, culturally, and in development. I embarked on this research with the idea that we all have normative understandings of diversity, different associations and different ideas about how to deal with diversity, but that ultimately, it is present in many forms and key to looking at many issues that are discussed in development.

¹ By diversity I mean variety and difference in something or place.

² In different settings, I have been identified by strangers as originating from several continents and hemispheres.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Area of study

The global movement of people across political, economic, social, cultural and geographic borders is now of central importance. Migration is not a new phenomenon and neither are migration studies; however, increasing and constantly evolving international migration requires new analytical lenses, new conceptualizations of migration processes, of the relationship of migrants to the receiving places, and the exploration of new dimensions to existing discourse.

Migration takes many forms: international³, rural to urban, urban to urban, and from any one small locality to another. Migration produces new types of relations, perspectives, activities, shifting identities, flows of capital and resources, cultures and practices. It is important to include migration into development and policy formulation, as it is a key dimension to the make-up of many localities. Migration is a process which is not often factored into a locality's planning: the in and out flows of capital, people, and resources are not incorporated into planning processes, though these movements are becoming a normalized dimension of both the developing and the developed world. Many of these are 'invisible' and undocumented. There is little understanding of the flows produced by migration and therefore there is no integration of these processes. To develop local and regional development policy and projects, flows of capital and people need to be accounted for, as they affect the resources upon which the locality can count. Exploring the processes of change and diversity produced by migration, resulting in different perspectives, strategies and social networks within which development occurs, is important for informing the experiences of policy and projects. Pursuing migration studies and seeking to understand their relevance to the locality and development has the potential to contribute to understanding how things should and could work. Consequently, the knowledge derived from migration and diversity will assist (local) government policy makers in addressing the array of problems, needs and demands.

³ "The movement of persons across national borders with the intention to settle in another country for a period of at least a year" (Muus, 2001: 32).

1.2 Background to the research problem

Migration is a common life strategy in Latin America due to social, political, economic and cultural situations in the countries of origin and the global restructuring of capital and production. For example, in the United States there are approximately seven million Mexican-born migrants (LAWP, n.d) and in Costa Rica there are half a million Nicaraguans (ibid). International migration is a predominant migration form for Latin Americans and deepens the interconnectedness between places. This movement of people, introduction and insertion of new peoples, cultures, practices and social realities is often a point of discord. It is a process of negotiating identities, managing difference, incorporation, and general dynamism of a locality's population make-up. The significance of this process is evidenced by the emergence of organizations such as the International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion organization (IMISCOE) which has 19 European research institutes and whose mission is to provide systematized information to aid in policy development towards migration and social integration. Such organizations and research institutes are indicative of unsettling debates in Europe and the need for new policies and approaches.

The Netherlands is increasingly a popular destination for transnational migrants and currently experiencing much policy debate regarding migration and social integration which can be related to the history of migration in the country and recent political events. The situation is a product of post-war migration waves and the lack of defined policy and strategy to manage the inflow of people in relation to the host's national identity and "native" population. In the 1960s a labour shortage was experienced and an invitation to unskilled "guest workers", mainly of Moroccan and Turkish descent, was issued (Magnee and Gerritsma, 2003: 8). No government policy was developed on education and integration of the migrant "guests" (ibid.): there was no planning for the inflow of people, since the situation was deemed temporary. Magnee and Gerritsma (2003: 2) claim that it was not until recently, in the 1990s, that programmes aimed at integration were created. Due to their initial low quality and long waiting lists they programmes "failed to do what they were meant to do: create a permanent and solid basis for mutual respect and acceptance, a multicultural society" (ibid.) The result has been mounting tensions,

security concerns, and social problems. “Dutch voters made it clear they wanted a change. In response, the government developed a stricter approach to immigration, while emphasizing the necessity of integrating in society” (Von Bartheld, 2005: 2). The mounting tensions regarding migration require the attention of policymakers in order to negotiate and mediate the experiences of migration and its relationship into Dutch society. Migrants now live and operate in this context and understanding their role in, and interpretation of, social cohesion, difference, incorporation, and co-existence is fundamental to developing policy and programmes aimed at creating a desirable environment.

A case study in The Hague has been elaborated to explore the articulation of these issues from the migrant perspective. In The Hague, the Netherlands, there is a population of legal and illegal Colombian migrants. The “International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that over the past five years, approximately 1.2 million Colombians have emigrated to other countries” (Ruiz, 2002). Though there is a fair amount of literature on forced migration and migration to North America, literature on voluntary Colombian migrants and their experiences in Europe, other than in Spain, is limited. Insight into the process of adapting to new environments and negotiating identity and self-identity in a new environment remains obscured by economic discussions of migration and misperception of migrants as victims

1.3 Research objective

To critically examine, through an ethnographic lens, the subjective social experiences of Colombian migrants in The Hague, their strategies of incorporation (the logics⁴ and practices of migrants in their attempt to adjust and survive) in relation to their new locality of socio-cultural diversity and the potential for/of their stories to provide insight, complementary to existing literature, into policy development aimed at diversity management.

⁴ “Logics” refers to migrant rationalities (proactive or reactive) and reasonings behind their actions in their quest to survive in their new locality.

1.3.1 Research questions

What are the experiences of Colombian transnational migrants in The Hague “as told by them”, specifically regarding their coping strategies and practices in their new environment?

- How is ‘incorporation’ into the new environment perceived?
- How do the migrants perceive the socio-cultural ‘interface’?
- How are the diverse social identities of Colombian migrants interacting with each other and Dutch society in the process of inclusion/exclusion?
- What kind of spaces are created and/or operated in?
- What kinds of strategies are employed in the new locality for building socio-cultural ties?
- How do these strategies relate to policies regarding integration?
- How are existing policies regarding migration perceived?
- Can this sort of qualitative research contribute to the development of policy?

1.3.2 Conclusions regarding the research objective and questions

The research endorses the need to incorporate migration into the process of local and regional development. Local and regional development has the capacity to take into consideration migration (transnational, rural-urban, etc.) and contribute to the development of policies which are applicable to these new emerging situations i.e. policies regarding cultural diversity must be considered in local and regional development work. Analysis of the experiences of the migrants and the context of their perceptions allows for conclusions that will further the discussion of incorporation. Anthropological research provides ground or micro level perspectives which can contribute as an advocate and developer of appropriate strategies.

1.4 Justification – the ‘why’ behind this research

In most localities around the world processes of change due to migration are occurring; dealing with the introduction of new peoples, and what comes with them, is a problematic experience. Dealing with difference, managing diversity in a locality and finding a harmonious coexistence is a challenge that many policymakers, local governments,

communities, and individuals are trying to address. This research will provide intelligence⁵ for policy and seek out channels for understanding and improving the experience of migration from the migrant perspective.

Looking at migrants' experiences and their discourses on day-to-day reality is relevant in building bridges of understanding. The Hague is a relevant case study as it is experiencing simmering public and political debates on immigration issues and is home to a number of international migration organizations and policy institutions. In addition, there is little knowledge of Latin American migrants in Europe other than in Spain: in the Netherlands a large amount of the literature produced is centered on Muslim migrants. Latin Americans constitute an unplanned and increasing migration flow. Thus, there is potential in the stories and voices of Colombian migrants in The Netherlands for deepening the understanding of diversity and for de-homogenizing the category of the migrant's identity beyond 'Muslim', in itself a simplistic and reductionist construction of migrants.

The choice of Colombian migrants in the Hague is based on contacts within the community, and is determined by the fact that they are a migrant group with strong associated stereotypes⁶, and because they form part of the growing Latin American migration flows to Northern Europe. Though they are not representative of all migrant experiences in The Hague, and the Netherlands, Colombian migrant experiences re-emphasise the need for planning and policy development for diverse categories of migrants. Furthermore, ethnography, specifically descriptive and interpretive, does not seek out subjects who are predominant or at the forefront of cultural relations; rather, it seeks to understand and appreciate the micro-level experiences of groups.

The study contributes to the cultural and subjective analysis of migrants' experiences through a socio-cultural lens. This type of work serves to document experiences and

⁵ I borrow this term from Erhard Berner who suggested it at the research design seminar, June 29th, 2005.

⁶ Often negative stereotypes of association with drugs, crime and prostitution are assigned arbitrarily to Colombians; see Zaitch, 2002: 12.

contributes to contemporary understandings of migrants and the potential for networking, cohesion, and organization of the migrants in their new localities. It has the potential to give voice to the diversity in a locality and further insight into cultural cooperation, management and coexistence. This research has transferable dimensions in that it looks at diversity in a locality. Migration is a common life strategy and livelihoods choice, and localities around the world are currently struggling with developing policy to address the management of migration and social cohesion.

Chapter 2: Locating migration, ethnography and the research

2.1 The Encompassing Methodology

A qualitative approach to research is being employed and the overarching methodology for this research is that of ethnography. Ethnography here is:

“a method of studying and learning about a person or group of people... the study of a small group of subjects in their own environment. Rather than looking at a small set of variables and a large number of subjects (“the big picture”), the ethnographer attempts to get a detailed understanding of the circumstances of the few subjects being studied.” (Learning Commons, 2005).

It is within this methodological framework that I carried out research on Colombian migrants. The foundation of this research is the qualitative tenet that meaning can be sought out from social action (Sidell, 1994: 108). The research captures the “world that originates in [the subjects’] thoughts and actions, and is maintained as “real by these” (Berger and Luckman, 1967: 20). It will provide supporting information and new insights into the multiple realities that exist in development experiences and processes.

2.2 Development and Migration

The interconnectedness between development and migration has become clear and they are being studied together jointly. Migration links and intensifies issues such as socio-economic restructuring, conflict, citizenship, social protection, social exclusion and vulnerability and intersects with gender at all points. All of these issues are central in development and are grappled with in many developing countries, as well as in developed countries.

Socio-economic restructuring throughout the world may provide the background to migration: cutting back in jobs, in public provisioning (social protection, welfare), heightening ‘flexibilization’, in some cases ‘feminisation’, and ‘casualisation’ of work (Chhachi, 2004: 11). Migration may be undertaken in pursuit of other livelihoods and opportunities: i.e. employments, higher wages, better public services. In other situations, migration can be forced, or a decision taken under duress, e.g. where there is conflict – in

this case migration takes place with the hope of finding safety, security, and/or peace. Migration may also be motivated by personal choice, the opportunity to be somewhere different, to be different, to experience something new.

Migration, though a strategy chosen to reduce vulnerability, in fact often increases the vulnerability of the migrant, due to the unfamiliarity and newness, to a lack of institutional supports in the host location, to hostility from other populations (xenophobia), to social exclusion and exploitation. With every type of vulnerability there are gendered dimensions, often exacerbating the situation of women. There is the trend towards the feminization⁷ of migration (Chammartin, 2002) and women experience a doubled vulnerability on the basis of their gender identity and their immigrant position in the host society.

With movement, new debates on the value of citizenship and social protection bound to citizenship are escalating. Citizenship has symbolic value but is also laden with meanings of entitlement, belonging and inclusion. As the movement of people increases, citizenship, bound to a specific territory, and its role in social protection must be critically examined (Schmidtke, 2001), as the traditional definition of citizenship and entitlements leads many individuals to become invisible and vulnerable, ineligible for social protection and, possibly even basic entitlements.

The relationship between migration and development is increasingly pronounced as crosscutting issues are examined. It is therefore important that migration and development studies be carried out in tandem.

⁷The trend, since the 1980s, of increasing numbers of women in migration flows in search of employment opportunities abroad.

2.3 Ethnography, migration and transnationalism

Anthropology and ethnography⁸ intersect with development studies and enhance development-oriented research with their focus on culture and human practices. Culture shapes and changes with relationships and practices that are emerging with the increasing mobility of persons throughout the world. This applies also to development related changes and anthropology is of value in examining "... transnational connections, [and] the organization of meanings and actions" (Hannerz, 1996: 4). Hannerz (1996) explores the anthropology of globalization and provides his readers with examples of ethnographically grounded inquiry into present day processes of change. Ong makes a strong case for anthropology in understanding the "intertwined dynamics of cultural and material processes as they are played out in particular and geographic locations as part of global history" (1999: 22). Anthropology and ethnography bring to development studies the fundamental 'social eye' for critically examining the multiple dimensions of development. This is exemplified by Lawson (2000) argues, through research collected from Ecuadorian internal migrants, that migrants' stories have theoretical potential as they bring to the surface the way in which their narratives express and re-interpret dominant development discourses.

Transnational migration studies is a way of examining migration and the movement of people: it sees migrants as more than individuals who have moved from one place to another; it give individual migrants agency and a complex evolving identity by acknowledging the interconnections that they maintain across international borders. Transnational migration studies focuses on "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Glick Schiller and Basch, 1995: 48); as such, it is a strengthening of linkages between people, place and identities and a socio-cultural experience.

⁸ Ethnography is a research method and anthropology a subject/discipline that has a complete history and theory with several different methodological and theoretical approaches. Ethnography is rooted in the disciplinary home of anthropology (http://labweb.education.wisc.edu/cni916/def_eth.htm).

Thus, migration and transnational migration are often best traced and understood through the use of ethnographic research. Ethnography is the study of social processes in their natural setting and of the (elusive) existing, unofficial but important multiple day-to-day realities. The use of ethnography in migration studies is evidenced in the extensive literature on migration, cultural identities and the subjective understandings of change and movement. Several examples may be cited. Ong (1999) beautifully discusses the Chinese Diaspora, in particular to the United States and looks at how this has affected Chinese citizenship, Chinese cultural identity, Asian-Pacific modernity and its relationship to global social change. Olwig (2003) looks at family networks of Caribbean families, dispersed by migration, and through ethnographic research explores the multitude of migration practices and the socio-cultural systems that emerge as a result of this migration. Glick Schiller et. al. (2003) draw from numerous German ethnographic studies of different migrant groups to explore pathways of incorporation. Curran and Saguy (2001) examine at the role of gender and social networks in cultural change and reproduction. Sorenson (2005) examines how female Colombian and Dominican migration in Europe spatially fractures and reinvents family relations, discussing cases which support the thesis of the feminization of migration.

Ethnographic research contributes to the qualitative understanding of migration flows and enriches the discussion by providing insight into the socio-cultural processes which emerge as a result of the movement of people. New insights into ways of facilitating and enabling migrants in their new environment may be uncovered by ethnography which looks to the micro-level experiences to capture the agency, imagination, and practices of individual migrants, thus enriching our understanding of processes produced by migration.

2.4 The research methods

Informal, loosely structured interviews were used to elicit life stories in association with participant observation. These methods were an ethnographic study and were appropriate in gaining an understanding of Colombian migrants' realities in The Hague given the sensitive nature of the data to be collected. Approaching the subjects with a survey

would not have yielded any information. The objective was to follow the subjects as they articulated their experiences rather than set structured pathways to elicit information. This approach led to a more naturalistic flow of information and enabled a more instinctive relating of the migrants' lifeworlds or discourses on their realities.

Jorgensen defines participant observation as having seven basic features:

“a special interest in human meaning and interaction as viewed from the perspective of people who are insiders; location in the here and now of everyday life; a form of theory and theorizing stressing interpretation and understanding; a logic and process of inquiry that is open-ended, flexible and requires constant redefinition of what is problematic; an in-depth, qualitative, case study approach; the performance of a participant role or roles; the use of direct observation along with other methods of gathering information” (1989: 13,14).

Participant observation attempts to be naturalistic; “... human beings are ... observed under otherwise natural conditions” (ibid.: 48). This method was employed to capture the everyday practices, interactions and meanings in the migrants' lives, and to “generate practical and theoretical truths formulated as interpretive theories” (ibid.: 23). Participant observation was chosen as appropriate for exploring giving insight into human processes and logics. My acceptance as “one of them”⁹ allowed my participation to be more “naturalistic” than would be normal for an external ethnographical participant observer, as, for example, when I was swept up into the 2005 Rotterdam Zomercarnaval parade as an insider and a performer.

Complementary to participant observation are life stories obtained through informal interviews, free flowing conversations which best captured life as told by, and told as chosen by the migrants. Life stories, well discussed by Linde (1993) are defined “as an oral unit of social interaction” (1993: 20), and are a way of gathering information about the subject and insight into the shaping of a subject's actions and words. Peacock and Holland use the term “story” as it does not signify an absolute truth (1993: 368), that is, “its evaluative point primarily [is] to show something about the kind of person the

⁹ See Appendix A to further place the researcher within the research.

speaker is, rather than demonstrate something about the way the world is” (Linde: 1993: 22). Learning the life story of an individual is a portal into experiences, identity and the person, as an interpretive subject.

For migrants the creation of self is a part of the process of migration, of establishing oneself in the new environment and provides both opportunities and obstacles. Thus a variety of processual life story approaches become central according to Peacock and Holland (113: 371-373). Each of the approaches situate the life story “in processes crucial to human life: collective meaning systems and their dynamics, self-other communication and discovery, social relations and the formation of sociality, or self-formation” (Peacock and Holland, 1993: 273). Though there is much debate on this method (see Peacock and Holland for a concise summary of the key issues), life stories add value and strong insight into subjective experiences of migrants.

Data was analyzed on the basis of what was observed and noted in conversations – salient interactions and activities, day to day interactions, the choice of what is told, how stories and experiences are told, what kind of reality is presented, place of interaction, and so forth. The processed data was then examined within the conceptual framework of social interface and social spaces (see sections 2.5.2 and 3 below for definitions).

“The distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches does not capture the full range of options that we face” (Hammersly, 1992: 172), and this was found to be true of this research. The methods have been selected, with acknowledgement of their potential weaknesses, in relation to their appropriateness to the topic and to the subjects of research. With this type of research there is no claim to representativeness, rather illustration, highlighting some stories, to provide examples, to further the discussion on the issues that surround the topic, and to provide insight into the processes created by migration and the practices and logics of migrants in their new locality. In sum, the research aims not at being knowledge which directly translates itself into action but rather knowledge contributes towards the path or convergent line to action.

2.4.1 Synthesizing the methods – Data analysis

Interpretation of the data will follow the collation and categorization of evidence collected from the diverse sources of information. It is a methodological triangulation¹⁰ of sorts, combining methods, in order to analyze and cross-check the emergent data. As stories are narratives (Liblich et. al., 1998 & Riessman, 1993), narrative analysis will be carried out where possible, looking at content, what is included or excluded, events, language, actions or meanings chosen. Narrative analysis is most appropriate as “the approach gives prominence to human agency and imagination, it is well suited to studies of subjectivity and identity” (ibid.: 5). “Interpretation is inevitable because narratives are representations” (Riessman, 1993: 2), and meaning can be found in what is included or excluded. The research involves interpretation in the attempt to create a logical whole from the fragments collected.

2.5 Analytical framework

Inspired by authors such as Lawson and Olwig, I employ an analytical lens which places value on the stories, agency, and potential of migrant experiences for theory. “Interpreting the voices of migrants themselves as theoretically meaningful allows researchers to open up ‘development’ and critique categorizations of place...” (Lawson, 1999: 123): from this perspective the migrants become interpretive subjects (ibid.: 126). With this conceptualization of subjective experiences the ethnographic research data collected is viewed as a source to enrich existing literature, theory, policy, and as a potential source of new ideas and directions to be taken on the topic.

To understand the experiences of the migrants I use an analytical framework which combines from Long’s (2001) actor-oriented approach, the interface analysis, with social spaces from theories on migration and immigrant incorporation which are being explored in transnationalism¹¹ studies (see e.g. DeWind and Kasinitz 1997; Faist 1998, 2000;

¹⁰ Sidell (1994: 108) identifies four types of triangulation: methodological triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and triangulation using the data in terms of time, pace and person.

¹¹ Though transnationalism ideas are used, I wish to stress that the focus is not transnationalism, but the local, and that this research does not embrace all dimensions of transnationalism studies.

Kivisto 2003; Glick Schiller and Basch 1995; Vertovec 1999; and Portes et. al 1999). Using these two approaches enables me to build a richer analytical framework within which to examine the subjective experiences of migrants, their lifeworlds, and their everyday strategies/practices and coping mechanisms. The combination of social interfaces and the social spaces that are created at this interface are used as the analytical framework within which migrant experiences in The Hague and their perceptions of incorporation will be analyzed, because they offer the opportunity to place and understand these experiences in a framework that accommodates the creation of newness, potential tensions, management of difference, and the divergent normative realities and the meeting of migrants with their new reality.

2.5.1 The social interface

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. This meeting of at least two different populations can therefore be seen as a social interface (Long 1989, 1993, 2001). Long and Villarreal define this social interface “as a critical point of intersection between two different social systems, fields or levels of social order where structural discontinuities, based upon differences of normative value and social interest, are most likely to be found” (Long 1989 in Shuurman, 1993: 147). The social interface is the product of an encounter, a point of potential compatibility and conflict. For example, the perception and use of time: the punctuality and time consciousness of the Dutch is the opposite of Latino (almost always late, not in the forefront of thoughts and not dictating to one’s actions). Latino migrants in the Netherlands struggle with the need to be on time, and with the unaccustomed stress that it creates in them.

A social interface, neither negative nor positive, simply needs to be understood, perhaps best through study of “the production and transformation of differences in worldviews or cultural paradigms” (Long, 2001: 70). Though Long uses the interface concept in relation to a discussion of agricultural development interventions, the concept is transferable, as migration creates “critical junctures or arenas involving different normative values and social interest” (ibid.: 148) between the migrant and his/her new environment. It is the meeting of two different cultures, realities, histories, identities, collective memories,

logics, and behaviours - in sum, two different normative understandings of the world. Viewed as such, the social interface created by migration is the interface at which incorporation, co-existence, exclusion, hybrid identities, and adaptation occur. "These interactions must be analyzed as part of the ongoing process of negotiation, adaptation and transfer of meaning that takes place between specific actors concerned" (ibid.); social interfaces created by migration can be probed in an attempt to understand potential points of understanding, misunderstanding, cooperation and conflict, as well as to further understand how and why migrants act in response to this interface.

2.5.2 Social spaces

Complementary to this interface at which migrants meet the receiving country/locality and its people are the theories on transnationalism and immigrant incorporation. These theories seek to explain and explore the effects of transnationalism on the migrants' identities, the social spaces that exist and are created, and what these mean for incorporation, acceptance and future generations. In this study I will use the conceptual groundings of transnationalism as social consciousness, a mode of cultural reproduction and as (re)construction of place (see Vertovec 1999: 449-455, for further discussion on this and other conceptual premises). This means understanding transnationalism as consciousness marked by one or more identifications, the "fluidity of constructed styles, social institutions and everyday practices" (ibid.: 451), and the emergent discontinuity between the migrant's native identity and the new territory, the changed relationship to space or locality, as a product of movement and transnational relations.

With this conceptualization of transnationalism, I propose, in the hopes of deepening the analysis of migrant experiences, to combine in particular the idea of social spaces and identity negotiation at the social interface, produced by migration, to understand the socio-cultural experiences of Colombian migrants to The Hague. Social spaces are seen to emerge in response to the interface at which migrants find themselves in the receiving locality; these spaces are relational, created and not necessarily fixed to a spatial dimension. Faist (1998, 2000) concretely explores social spaces and defines a transnational social space as:

“combinations of social and symbolic ties, positions in networks and organization, and networks of organizations that can be found in at least two geographically and internationally distinct places. These spaces denote dynamic social processes, not static notion of ties and positions.” (1998: 216)

As a further point of departure, Faist provides a typology of different types of transnational social spaces which are produced by international migration:

Types of transnational social spaces	Primary resources in ties	Main Characteristic
<i>Transnational kinship groups</i>	<i>Reciprocity</i> : what one party receives from the other requires some return	Upholding the <i>social norm</i> of equivalence
<i>Transnational circuits</i>	<i>Exchange</i> : mutual obligations and expectations of the actors; outcome of instrumental activity	Exploitation of insider <i>advantages</i> : language; strong and weak social ties in peer networks
<i>Transnational communities</i>	<i>Solidarity</i> : shared ideas, beliefs, evaluations and symbols; expressed in some sort of collective identity	Mobilization of <i>collective representations</i> within (abstract) symbolic ties: religion, nationality, ethnicity

Source: Faist, 2000: 195

By using the notion of social space I hope to be able to better place the logics and practices of migrants – their coping mechanisms, modes of support, and how they strategize their best survival practices. In the research I focus on the social space, rather than the transnational dimension of these spaces, and its significance in every day life of Colombian migrants, for example, Church congregations. Social spaces are created, found, and operated within and thus, the concept provides a way of analyzing the subjective experiences and observations of migrants.

To summarize, the research examines the interrelationship between social interface and social spaces and what they can mean for perceptions and experiences of incorporation.

Chapter 3: Situating the problem and the experiences of migrants

3.1 Framing the problem: Incorporation and Migration

The notion of incorporation or integration surrounds the issues of migration and its relationship to the receiving country. Migration produces diversity and the question of how to manage the diversity has been consistently posed and explored. Incorporation and its cognates are terms laden with values, attitudes and assumptions: they are ideological and can carry varied interpretations on the issue of immigrants in the host country. Incorporation and its cognates “imply direction and intentionality, that immigrants should be incorporated into the societies to which they move, that this is a one-way process, and the host society remains relatively unchanged if incorporation is successful” (Freeman, 2004: 946; DeWind and Kasinitz, 1997). While incorporation implies boundaries or a delimited host which immigrants can or cannot adapt to, the question remains what are immigrants incorporating into and how it is to be done.

Incorporation¹² varies among Western liberal democracies and is the subject of much debate; it is central to the attempt to reconcile difference and temper hostility and tension between the indigenous and immigrant populations. With increasing migration as well as the need to integrate former “guest workers” and their families, European states are confronted with the problematic task of developing policies and strategies to accomplish incorporation. Since incorporation and its ideological application vary from country to country it is difficult to generalize its usage and application in policy¹³. Because of the varied approaches and practices, a large body of literature has emerged on the topic. Hansen (1999) gives a comprehensive description and critique of the two major contrasting models: multiculturalism and its tolerant progressive integration policies, practiced in the Great Britain, versus the republican ideology of assimilation, secularism, universalism and unitarism, as in France (ibid.: 418). He goes on to look at the important role of race and racism in contemporary society and citizenship, sovereignty and the nation-state, all

¹² Incorporation and integration will be used interchangeably since this appears to be the case in most of the relevant literature.

¹³ See the *European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index 2004* which was published to assist governments to monitor developments in Europe’s attitudes to rights, citizenship and economic fairness and the differences that exist within the EU.

key concepts with regard to incorporation. Hansen (1999) points to two theses in examining the relationship of migration to the state; the declinist, that migration is eroding the traditional basis of citizenship, and the anti-declinist which argues that the state's control remains intact and is still highly enforced (ibid.: 425-435). Freeman (2004) and Entzinger (2000) further this discussion, stressing the need for a multidimensional approach, looking at incorporation in relation not only to the state but also the market and the cultural and socio-economic domains. Freeman points to the lack of coherence in incorporation policies and the need for coordination, while Entzinger has developed a valuable framework - used also by Freeman - within which one can look at the different experiences and objectives of incorporation:

Table 1: Six options for incorporation policies

	Legal and political domain	Cultural domain	Social and economic domain
Individual Approach	Equal rights	Liberal pluralism	Equal opportunity
Group Approach	Group rights	Multiculturalism	Equity

Source: Hansen, 2000: 107; Figure 5.1. Six options for incorporation policies.

The key difference is between the individual and the group approach and how that is woven into the other domains. These authors provide an essential contribution by stressing the multidimensionality of incorporation and the interrelationship among the domains, Table 1¹⁴, as well as by underscoring the ways in which other typologies are limited by their uni-dimensional focus.

Other authors approach incorporation from the other side, that of the immigrants; how immigrants practice, experience and undertake incorporation. DeWind and Kasinitz (1997) look at the debate over incorporation by assimilation and focus on the relationship between the "immigrants and the native born with regard to race and ethnicity" (ibid.: 1108). Kivisto (2003) examines transnational immigrants communities, their social

¹⁴ Individual Approach: immigrants are seen and treated as individuals, a liberal philosophy. Group Approach: immigrants are defined in terms of their membership to a non-native group/community, a communitarian approach.

spaces and relationship to incorporation. Kivisto argues that, rather than being separate from and countering to incorporation, immigrant social spaces are embedded in the larger social spaces and regimes (ibid.: 23), and thus should be treated accordingly, as part of the incorporation process. Glick Schiller et. al. (2003) look from a transnational standpoint at incorporation modes of different migrant groups in Germany and identify five different pathways – Christian modernists, local public foreigners, familial networks, vernacular cosmopolitans, and regional cosmopolitans. This work highlights the way in which immigrants can choose to adapt and the outcomes of their choices.

In sum, from a broad selection of the vast array of literature on incorporation, it is clear that there are many different ways of approaching the subject, different ideological underpinnings, perspectives and ideas on how it is put into practice but that there is no specific/concrete meaning which emerges. It is equally clear that incorporation has become the dominant mode of articulating the intricate relationship between migration and the host country and the experience of the migrant.

3.2 Social Exclusion in Europe – a discussion

A brief conceptual discussion of social exclusion in the context of questions on incorporation is necessary. Social exclusion is the opposite of incorporation or social integration. The term social exclusion originated in France in the 1970s, in response to the growing problem of sustaining solidarity and social integration (Monica Barry 1998 in Barata, 2000: 1). It grew out of the growing awareness of problems due to the retrenchment of the welfare state and shifts in labour markets. Three main paradigms exist by which social exclusion is conceptually approached: solidarity, specialization, and monopoly. Silver (1995) discusses the three paradigms that permeate the literature and discourses on the issue. “Solidarity” in French Republican thought refers to the rupture between the individual and society (ibid.: 66); “specialization” focuses on social differentiation, economic division of labour and the boundaries that exist between the spheres, exclusion results from structures created by cooperation and competition (ibid.: 67); and “monopoly” sees social order as coercive and as a set of hierarchical power

relations (ibid.: 68). The last concept is particularly important within leftist political and social thought.

Defining social exclusion remains difficult: the term itself is evocative, ambiguous, multidimensional and evolving. However, the contextual, interpretable nature of the term is useful in theory and application. The European Commission defines social exclusion as “a disintegration and a fragmentation of social relations and hence a loss of social cohesion. For individuals in particular groups, social exclusion represents a progressive process of marginalization leading to economic deprivation and various forms of social and cultural disadvantage” (Barata, 2000: 4) and public policy in Europe has viewed social exclusion as the result of individual immigrant failure, rather than of institutional and organizational limitations (ibid.: 7). However, there is growing recognition of the limitations of such a perspective and an emergence of multi-faceted frameworks encompassing not only the economic forms of disadvantage but social forms, deriving from birth or background, and from societal or political discrimination (see Stephan Klassen, 1998 in Barata, 2000: 11). In the Netherlands, problems of social exclusion are being discussed and strategies and initiatives are being put into place, mostly concentrating on the economic aspects of social exclusion. Even Klopogge’s report for the OECD (1998) seems superficial, as it does not provide any kind of disaggregated information or in-depth examination of the reasons for the existing exclusion. Nevertheless, new initiatives are being taken (i.e. focusing on youth policies) and will evolve and take on new shapes to tackle the problem.

Though social exclusion was originally identified with regard to national, or indigenous, problems of poverty and exclusion, it now extends into the discussion of migration and incorporation. Immigrants and migrants are vulnerable to social exclusion, and this is especially true since people can move in and out of a state of exclusion, not only because of labour market disadvantages, but because of limitations in their access to institutions and organizations, resulting from discrimination based on identity traits. In the 2004 European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index a direct link between migration and exclusion is made: “We must combat social and political exclusion to create vibrant,

active societies. Active, cohesive societies depend on the responsibilities of citizens towards societies. The responsibilities accepted by immigrants in Europe must be linked to the entitlements they enjoy” (ibid.: 3). However, the definitions and conceptual understandings lack the relational, emotional foundations of exclusion; that is, the sense of being excluded, or rejected felt by the immigrant. Because social exclusion is felt it goes beyond institutions, services and labour market opportunities, and is a constituent of migrant well-being in the host country. To understand the role that incorporation can play in the well-being of current and future immigrant generations, there needs to be a clear idea of exclusion and what it could mean. In other words, understanding incorporation requires an understanding of its opposite, exclusion.

3.3 Situating migrants in The Netherlands: Context for Migration Policy and Politics

In order to understand the current context in which migration and incorporation policies are being developed and implemented, it is necessary to look at the history of immigration experiences, debates, and policy in the Netherlands.

The first post-war migration flows to the Netherlands came from its former colonies, particularly Indonesia and Suriname - which gained independence in 1949 and 1975 respectively - and can be termed post-colonial (Entzinger, 2003: 60). The largest post-colonial flow came from Suriname: integration went fairly smoothly as Dutch citizenship was accorded to the Surinamese until five years after independence (Thranhardt, 2000: 169) and they were already accustomed to the Dutch language and way of life. Beginning in the 1960s ‘guest worker’ invitations were issued to workers from the Mediterranean, mainly Turkey and Morocco, in order to address temporarily the shortage in unskilled workers (Magnee and Gerritsma, 2003: 2). It was as a consequence of this that Dutch society started to experience changes in the nature of its composition.

Following the influx of ‘guest workers’ in the 1960s the Netherlands experienced a somewhat uneven period of integration, notably when in 1972 fighting broke out between Turkish immigrants and indigenous people in Rotterdam, and in 1974 when there was a

train hijacking by Moluccans. There was resistance towards accepting refugees settling in the country (Thranhardt, 2000: 169-170). As it became clear that guest workers were staying on and the inflow of migrants continued, it was necessary to devise policies to deal with the situation. It was thus that the 'elite consensus' (Thranhardt, 2000 - elite desire to preserve the Dutch image of openness and tolerance), identity preservation, and/or multiculturalism (Entzinger 2003) emerged. In 1979 the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), a government advisory organ with a wide range of interests (Magnee and Gerritsma, 2003: 14), published the *Ethnic Minorities* report preparing the ground for ethnic minorities policies. Group membership formed the foundation for these policies and the assumption that, within a multi-ethnic society, groups should live in harmony and mutual respect of each other (Entzinger, 2003: 63). The three essential objectives of the emerging minorities policy were emancipation in a multicultural society, equality before the law, and promoting equal opportunity (ibid.: 63-69). The first referred to the idea that immigrants enriched cultural diversity and as such, identity preservation was a tool for advancing multiculturalism. Equality before the law aimed at eliminating differences of treatment between non-citizens and citizens, i.e. granting local voting rights to foreign residents. Equal opportunity meant guaranteeing equal access to relevant institutions such as health, employment, education, and housing. Processes of managing diversity were built on these objectives which were reflected in four central elements emerged in the 1983 *Mindherhedennota*: stability of residence after five years, enlarged participation including easier naturalization and voter rights in local elections, special programmes for underprivileged minorities - special assistance for organization and representation, help to fight racist discrimination- (Thranhardt, 2000: 170). Though not without opposition and problems, "on the whole ... an attitude of pragmatic compromise became prevalent, with rising optimism about the possibility of solving existing problems, and a sense of pride about the Netherlands as an open tolerant country" (ibid.: 171).

Since the 1990s though, the Netherlands has seen a shift in the orientation of its migration policies, from a multicultural and group approach to an integration and individual approach. This shift is in part a response to the changes in the dynamics of the foreign

born population (size and new flows), the second generation of immigrants, and the continued poorer socio-economic situation of minorities (Entzinger, 2003: 69-70). It is also a reflection of a change in societal values: in the early 1990s Frits Bolkenstein, the then leader of the Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), “warned publicly against giving in too much to the cultural peculiarities of immigrants, and argued that they should be expected to integrate much more into Dutch way of life” (Thranhardt, 2000: 172). Pim Fortuyn in 2002 attacked the political sensitivity, pointing to the need to address problems of integration regarding the migrant population in the Netherlands (Magnee and Gerritsma, 2003: 2). Bolkenstein’s and Fortuyn’s comments, though controversial and disputed, highlight the growing existence of a ‘silent majority’ (Entzinger, 2003: 71) who felt unwilling to speak up for fear of being accused of racism.

In 1994, the *Contourennota integratiebeleid etnische minderheden* was published, replacing the 1983 *Minderhedennota* (ibid.: 72). This new policy document laid emphasis on enabling individuals to participate in society, reducing reliance on state assistance, and emphasized integration; thus, the minorities’ policy became integration¹⁵ policy. The individual approach underscores the importance of individuals doing their best to adjust and be independent, demanding more of the immigrant and the need “for migrants to identify with the political community and to become part of it” (ibid.: 75). An example of this approach is the elimination of the right to hold dual citizenship. The stricter rules, policies and attitudes that prevail today are seen in Bart von Bartheld’s speech at the Workshop on Migration and Development in Geneva of 2005 (Director, Movement of Persons, Migration & Alien Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) stresses the need for migrants to learn skills and the language, to reduce the push factors in the countries of origin so as to lessen migration flows, the return of illegal migrants, and more stringent regulation (von Bartheld, 2005). There are also proposals to set a rejection target of 80% of asylum seekers, to introduce compulsory integration programmes, and to reduce family reunifications (Magnee and Gerritsma, 2003: 3).

¹⁵ Integration was defined as “a process leading to the full and equal participation of individuals and groups in society, for which mutual respect for identity is seen as a necessary condition” (*Countourennota*, 1994: 24 in Entzinger, 2003: 72)

Integration now means all newcomers are required to apply for an integration inquiry¹⁶ with their municipality and participate in an educational programme which includes language classes, social orientation and vocational orientation (ibid.: 44). In sum, the Netherlands has seen a shift in its policy orientation and underlying philosophy on questions of diversity produced by migration. The policy context has seen a striking shift in its treatment and conceptualization of migrants from a group-based idea of multiculturalism to an individual integration approach.

Relative to other European countries, the Netherlands in four of five policy indicators is above average, Table 2 demonstrates that, based on a 0-3 score the Netherlands scores higher in all categories.

Table 2: Comparative Performance: Dutch and EU Averages

	Labour market inclusion	Long-term residence	Family reunion	Nationality	Anti-discrimination
EU	2.18	2.19	2.18	2.02	2.16
Netherlands	2.56	2.48	2.26	1.94	2.65

Adapted from European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index, 2004: 126.

However, internally, and despite the shifts in approaches to migration policy, there are continued inequalities and discrimination, in particular against Turkish and Moroccan migrants. Thranhardt (2000, following Pettigrew, 1998) discusses subtle prejudice, cool, distant and indirect (ibid.: 174). He goes on to list statistics regarding non-EU women's employment, unemployment disaggregated by foreigners and non-foreigners, and educational achievement. In each category "foreigner" displays a significantly poorer situation: e.g. in 1998 unemployment rates for the indigenous population was 6.5%, for foreigners it was 23.5% and 8% of indigenous children left school without any qualification compared with 35% and 39% of Turkish and Moroccan origin children (Thranhardt, 2000: 175-176). While the focus here is not on statistical achievements of foreigners and their recorded level of incorporation, it is important to note that integration

¹⁶ An integration inquiry investigates the need for creating an individual programme and takes into account the newcomer's knowledge, experience and education. Based on this, an integration programme is identified for the individual by the municipality (Magnee and Gerritsma, 2003: 44).

continues to be problematic and not fully inclusive, and that migrants remain at a disadvantage in Dutch society.

3.4 Latin American migration flows to Europe

Not long ago Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) were major destinations for European migrants, however migration flows have reversed and flows from Latin America have grown over the past few decades. Though LAC migration is principally to Spain, it is extending into the rest of Europe. The close historical and cultural links between Latin America and Europe is a factor in the EU becoming a choice destination due to familial ties. Some European countries feel a sense of responsibility to mitigate problems being experienced in LAC. Immigration flow from LAC to the EU is the product of economic and demographic changes: decolonization was accompanied by migration flows to the former metropolitan countries; labour shortages in Northern Europe meant that guest worker programmes were established, replacing the formerly 'closed door' policies; and the political and social violence of the 1970s and 1980s in South and Central America resulted in exiles (forced migration) and emigration pressure due to economic causes (Pellegrino, 2004: 12-13). Today, with the continued economic crises being experienced in Latin America, coupled with the United States tightening immigration and visa controls post-September 11th, Europe is increasingly an attractive destination.

In 1999, European state heads at the European Council in Tampere, Finland, decided to develop a common migration and asylum policy: this decision reflected the growing recognition of the realities of labour market demand for immigrant workers, declining birth rates and ageing European populations and the ever-present migration pressures from the developing world (ibid.: 8). The focus of this policy orientation was on partnership with the countries of origin to tackle migration related issues – humanitarian and social problems, human rights, social incorporation, risks of human capital flight, and trafficking for sexual exploitation. The Rio Summit of 1999 between the EU and LAC was the culmination of these concerns and was followed by the second and third EU-LAC summits in Madrid and Guadalajara, Mexico (ibid.: 9-10).

It is difficult to quantify, or estimate, the total the numbers of Latin Americans currently in Europe due to statistical gaps, methodological problems and the question of invisible and illegal flows from LAC. There is some information available, produced by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and EUROSTAT, which is used in Pellegrino's report for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), from which one can see the patterns of migration flow from LAC to some EU countries. For example, from 1986 to 2001, (in thousands) Brazilian flows to Portugal grew from 10.5 to 23.5; from the Colombia to Spain from 3.4 to 48.7; and from 1996 to 2001 Peruvian flows to Italy grew from 21.2 to 29.6 and Ecuadorian flows to Spain from 2.9 to 84.7 (Pellegrino, 2004: 16, table 3; Trends in International Migration: SOPEMI 2003 Edition, OECD).

From the numbers available in Table 3, even granted missing numbers, it is evident that Europe has seen an increase in the number of migrants coming from LAC.

Table 3

Percentage Distribution of South Americans in Europe														
Country	Total	Argentina	Bolivia	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Ecuador	Guyana	Peru	Paraguay	Suriname	Uruguay	Venezuela	Year
Belgium	4357	0.0	0.0	37.2	28.9	19.4	0.0	0.0	14.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2000
Denmark	2644	7.7	1.9	32.9	21.5	9.3	4.5	1.5	7.8	0.6	0.1	3.7	5.0	1999
Germany	58873	8.1	2.9	38.0	10.9	13.5	5.5	0.2	13.3	1.4	0.1	1.3	4.8	2000
Greece	2108	10.9	0.9	34.1	15.3	15.8	2.4	0.7	7.0	2.3	0.0	2.8	7.6	1998
Spain	84678	20.1	1.4	8.3	6.9	12.3	8.3	0.0	29.4	0.6	0.0	4.6	8.2	1999
Italy	76073	9.9	1.3	22.8	4.1	10.1	9.3	0.0	36.3	0.5	0.0	1.5	4.2	2000
Netherlands	16351	2.0	0.8	15.9	5.7	10.9	2.8	1.6	2.9	0.3	53.0	0.6	3.5	2000
Portugal	25494	1.6	0.1	81.9	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.3	13.4	2000
Finland	612	7.0	6.9	28.1	18.3	11.4	4.9	0.2	17.5	0.0	0.0	2.3	3.4	2000
Sweden	17038	2.7	3.4	8.4	63.2	5.9	1.3	0.2	11.7	0.2	0.0	1.9	1.1	2000
UK	32561	11.0	0.0	18.6	4.1	49.6	0.0	8.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.6	1999
Norway	4245	2.4	1.6	12.5	65.7	6.0	1.7	0.5	5.8	0.3	0.0	1.3	2.1	1998

Source: Pellegrino, 2004: 17-18, table 2; Adapted from Newcronos, EUROSTAT

Colombian migrants in the Netherlands

Migration to the Netherlands continues to occur as can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Netherlands	
Estimates of the net number of migrants by five year intervals, 1950 – 2000 (in thousands)	
1950 - 1955	-123
1955 - 1960	-31
1960 - 1965	36
1965 - 1970	55
1970 - 1975	152
1975 - 1980	168
1980 - 1985	55
1985 - 1990	151
1990 - 1995	190
1995 - 2000	161

Source: Migration Information Source Data,
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/GlobalData/countrydata/data.cfm>

Though in the Netherlands LAC migration inflow is not one the largest, the numbers evidence it as becoming a growing choice of destination (Table 5):

Table 5

Netherlands: Inflow of foreign-born population by region/country of birth

	1996	2003
Total North and South America	11,386	18,023
The Caribbean	3,934	7,056
Central America	211	578
South America	4,319	6,507
Colombia	434	795

Source: Adapted from Migration Information Source Data,
<http://www.migrationinformation.org/GlobalData/countrydata/data.cfm>

The number of Colombians in the Netherlands appears to be growing and again, cannot be fully quantified as many people enter illegally and are thus not recorded in official numbers. The numbers are indicative and therefore significant, but it is essential to realize that they are most likely an inaccurate representation of the actual numbers comprising the migration flows from Colombia (or LAC for that matter).

Chapter 4: Uncovering migrant lifeworlds

4.1 Introduction to the research subjects

Migrants find themselves trying to survive their day-to-day realities within the multilayered, multi-faceted incorporation issues, migration flows, and policy debates. The focus of my research is to examine everyday social experiences of migrants. "Social life is composed of 'multiple realities', ... constructed and confirmed primarily through experience, ... in which actors seek to grapple cognitively, emotionally and organizationally with the problematic situations they face." (Long, 2001: 51) The subjects chosen reflect and provide insight into some of these multiple migrant social realities. The primary research subjects were Colombian migrants, two males and one female: one male is twenty, the other in his mid-thirties and the woman in her mid-forties¹⁷. Aside from the primary subjects interactions took place with other Latin American migrants of all ages and both genders within the context of a church (fully described below). Most participant observation and interaction took place within women's circles, thus giving a gendered dimension to the data collected. Though the key subjects were Colombians and interactions primarily took place with women, Colombians are not isolated from other Latin American migrants and women are not isolated from men as evident from the research results. The ethnographic research on Colombian migrants¹⁸, focusing on three specific subjects, revealed a variety of discourses captured within narratives and stories, interactions with others and actions. One can observe the changes produced by migration in the discourses employed in day-to-day life. The existence of these numerous discourses in the migrant stories highlights the embedded multiple realities, the social function of language, and the diverse ways in which individuals incorporate discourses into their everyday lives.

4.2 Uncovering social realities in the ethnoscape

To situate the research and the social realities explored, and in order to describe the situation of Colombian migrants in The Hague, I will loosely borrow from Appadurai

¹⁷ For further detail on the research subjects see Appendix B.

¹⁸ Discourse is used in the sense of the social function of what people say, in the interpretation of society implied by words and how these interpretations shape behaviour and action.

(1996/2003) his neologism of “ethnoscape”. The term “ethnoscape” incorporates several concepts: that the observer’s perspective and perception affects the process of representation, that ethnography is no longer exclusively localized in its focus because of the movement of people, so ethnography is an attempt to capture the [re] constructed, lived, and imagined social life of groups (ibid.: 48). An ethnoscape is the ever-shifting landscape of people that now characterizes the majority of localities and nations; it points to the fluid and irregular shapes in this landscape and to the multiple realities of people’s movement (Appadurai, 1996/2003: 33, 34).

Within the ethnoscape, the community of Latino migrants observed has three overarching themes that can be used to structure our understanding of Latino migrant realities. These themes are 1.) incoherence, 2.) the unspoken, or gaps in what is made public, and 3.) the interpretive nature of the subjects. “Incoherence” refers to contradictions observed in discourses and actions, not from hypocrisy, but deriving from migration and identity construction in a new location. “The unspoken” refers to certain personal information about home life and families¹⁹ withheld, or obscured during conversations, underscoring the difficulty in reaching the population and the constructed, somewhat distant, public persona that the migrants choose to project outwards. This public persona is built on much wide-ranging talk, while obscuring personal details which could reveal vulnerabilities and reveals “the interpretive nature of the subjects”. Thus they are interpreters of their realities and of themselves. Creative and imaginative, the migrants recount such narratives and sentiments as they choose, as they wish to tell them, creating their world and their identities. The three themes which emerged from the population studied thus give a loose structure and frame to the discourses captured.

4.3 Incorporation perceived

Holistic discussions of incorporation require examining the migrants’ interpretations and feelings about incorporation. The perception of integration varies according to social position and group. Discourses are determined by social position in that those of higher

¹⁹ Information was not gathered on the migrants’ lives in Colombia and how they came to the Netherlands since the focus of the research was on their lives here and now. Thus the conversations were oriented around such.

social standing see incorporation as an acceptable reality, reasonable, and - most significantly – achievable reality. A migrant working cleaning floors, of the popular class, or who is illegal, discusses incorporation in an ambiguous way; incorporation is not a priority, and is seen as elusive and unrealistic. The diversity in social identities contributes to the complexity of understanding migrant populations and their ways of interpreting discourses on incorporation.

Accommodating incorporation

For Martin*, an educated young professional, incorporation is something he understands as part of his experience in the Netherlands, as something that is required of him and his contribution in return for his experience here. Martin loves his life here, he loves Dutch culture, the people, the language, his lifestyle, the friends he has made, the travel opportunities, and the possibility to take on difference, embrace it and become part of it. His social position prior to coming here, though not explicitly discussed, is evidently middle to upper class – he is well educated, travelled, and multilingual and previously had a Dutch girlfriend. His past and his social position in Colombia have privileged him here, compared with other popular class migrants, with an easier transition process, easier adaptation to mainstream life and more powerful social position discourses. Martin has joined book clubs, cooking clubs, goes to the gym, to cafés and restaurants, and has taken classes. He does so willingly and with enthusiasm, saying he has to do all this to belong, because he wants to belong. Martin perceives incorporation as understandable and embraces it.

Flexibility or incorporation?

In contrast, the popular class employs discourses on flexibility (the need to be adaptable) rather than on incorporation. Flexibility for the popular class Latino migrants is not a strategy leading to social incorporation but rather to (economic) survival. As an example, when asked what they could do, what their skills were (on a registration form), five Colombian women ranging in age from 25 to 49 responded “*de todo un poco*”, a little bit of everything. Sardonicly laughing, they said they would do whatever they have to do

to get by, that they are willing to try anything at least once. This captures not only their ability to adapt but also their ambiguity to life as a migrant.

Juan*, a political refugee starting up his own business, works seven days a week, twelve hours a day and has not seen his family in five years: he recounts this with a sigh and a smile, saying this is what one must accept to get by and advance economically. Juan's story also reflects the emerging flexibility in family relationships resulting from migration, discussed by Sorenson (2005). Regarding women and migration Sorenson maintains that there is "a dire need for a reconstituted gender and family ideology in sending as well as in receiving countries" (2005: 15). Juan, as the head of his household who has not seen his family in five years, is a transnational caregiver and illustrates how migration alters the traditional notions of care and family relationships.

The need to be flexible also extends into migrants' living arrangements: an illegal Ecuadorian woman who was looking for a room explained to me that she was willing to live anywhere, even a hole, as long as it is cheap and somewhere to sleep. Given the conditions under which the migrants live abroad and the constraints they face in the host locality, there is a resignation in acknowledging the need be flexible, to adjust and to do whatever is necessary to get by. Flexibility becomes a way of justifying the means to an end, to cope with the hardships migrants, and is a strong demonstration of resilience and determination. Flexibility however is not a discourse or interpretation of integrating into the broader Dutch society. It is a discourse that encapsulates their daily reality. Survival is the priority; incorporation is not perceived as a priority.

Understanding incorporation as it's opposite: exclusion

When discussing incorporation, popular class migrants articulated their understanding of it by its opposite – "exclusion". They stated they did not believe they would ever achieve incorporation and that their primary feeling was of exclusion/rejection. Esteban*, a young male, reflective and conscious of his migrant identity, sees himself within discourses of discrimination and rejection. Recounting an experience with a major bank, he told of how he was not properly informed, made to pay too much interest on his loans,

and treated badly by the banking staff. He attributed these problems to his identity as a young, non-native Dutch-speaking immigrant. He explained his feeling that he, as a migrant, will always take second place to a native Dutch person if applying for the same job; he senses a level of exclusion at the job market level. Esteban also spoke of barriers between Dutch and non-Dutch, saying that even if one speaks the language well one is never fully accepted. He considers that he will always be an outsider here. Esteban conveys a sentiment of difference and separation (which is linked to his sense of discrimination) through his stories. The exclusion that is perceived by popular class migrants resonates with what Thranhardt (2000: 174) refers to as “subtle prejudice”, the cool distance and subtle exaggeration of difference between natives and non-natives that can manifest itself as social exclusion. Esteban’s stories echo not only the European Commission’s definition of social exclusion as a process of marginalization leading to economic and other forms of disadvantage²⁰ but also the relational, emotional dimension to exclusion of feeling an outsider.

Another strong articulation of exclusion or the impossibility of incorporation is in Carmen’s narrative on the divide between Dutch and Latino congregations sharing the same church. She asks, “How can we speak of incorporation when under the same house of God we cannot get along?”, stressing her sense of the impossibility of being accepted into Dutch society. This sense of exclusion and elusive incorporation is also seen in the perceived bias against migrant children in the education system. Carmen spoke of how her teenage son was “put down” at school and discouraged from pursuing his studies beyond high school. He has since left school claiming he felt rejected and that it was not worth it, as it would never get him anywhere; he is now in an unskilled, low-wage job and has no plans to return to school. His story, and those of other youth/children of migrants, exemplifies a sense of exclusion rather of incorporation.

²⁰ See Chapter 3 for the complete definition of social exclusion employed by the European Commission.

4.4 At the socio-cultural interface

The social interface is the key locus of analysis of the relationship of migrants to the host environment. Here different lifeworlds intersect and the interactions “become oriented around the problem of devising ways of ‘bridging’, accommodating to, or struggling against each other’s different social and cognitive worlds” (Long and Villarreal in Shuurman, 1993: 147). Migrants at the interface deal with difference on multiple levels and react to it. The migrants’ discourses show that they creatively make use of difference, picking and choosing elements to best suit their needs and identity and the incoherence in the interpretive subjects is a product of this mixing and matching, the accommodation and negotiation of difference at the interface. The selective use of discourses and articulation of difference are manipulated into positives and negatives in their daily realities, shape their actions and enable them to grapple with interface.

Discursive weavings

The mixing and matching of discourses from the migrants’ host environment and from their place of origin is what Glick Schiller and Basch call the “ongoing and continuing ways in which current-day immigrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society” (1995: 48). Migrant discourses reflect their everyday environments as well as the change in their lifeworlds as a result of migration. Combining and using multiple discourses is a way of accommodating change, difference and asserting their identity as being multifaceted.

Discourses from the migrants’ place of origin are combined with discourses they are exposed to in the host environment. For example, Carmen, as a woman, combines two distinct gender discourses which are the result of her migration. Her exposure to two different social realities (Colombia and the Netherlands) is reflected in her discourses. As a woman she practices a discourse which mixes traditional Latin American gender roles with that of a Western, liberated, independent approach to gender identities. The Latin American discourse on women stresses the importance of femininity, is more passive, is strongly domestic, and dependent on a woman’s relationship to a man. Carmen may be observed in public acting in a ‘cheap’ manner, flaunting her availability and eagerness,

behaving in the mode she disdains in others, that is, out looking to meet men and fulfill her desire to be in a relationship. The more liberal discourse that Carmen articulates is of “self-love”, self-respect, independence, and rejection of any need to be defined by a relationship to a man²¹ (autonomy). She prides herself on not needing a man, on not needing a relationship and feels pity for women who, having arrived from Latin America and now living in the Netherlands, are not able to shed the vestiges of this constructed dependency. In fact, she talks of putting on workshops on self-love for the other migrant women here. She also puts emphasis on how she has done things for herself here, how she goes out on her own, pays her own bills and likes being alone giving her a sense of independence. Living in the Netherlands places Carmen more strongly in liberated gender discourses but does not take away her Colombian discourses.

Another discourse recounted by Carmen, one that underscores her sense of difference but in a positive way, concerns happiness. Happiness is defined by her as spontaneity, warmth, social interaction with others, smiles, and a sense of not being alone. She relayed to me that she feels the Dutch are cold people, who lack spontaneity, are too organized, and too stuck in routine and pre-planning. This inhibits them from indulging their feelings, from being truly happy. She perceives the Dutch in public spaces as often alone, or accompanied by a dog (the dog serving as a companion) and that people more often than not appear to be lonely and unhappy. She feels sympathy for them, for what she senses as their loneliness and social conservatism. She also links this interpretation to money and materialism. Though the Dutch are richer and have all they could want, they do not seem to her to be happy. This discourse allows her to feel richer in a symbolic way, to find a comparative happiness, to further stress differences between her culture and Dutch culture and to feel good about the perceived difference.

Esteban also exhibits the tendency to mix and match his understanding of difference in order to place himself and grapple with his reality as a migrant. Though he describes feeling like an outsider and alien to this culture and he specifies certain differences he

²¹ Relationships with men are a significant topic as there are many women migrants who upon arriving to the Netherlands, find themselves in relationships with Dutchmen to assure their legal status in the country.

perceives in Dutch culture, nevertheless he tries to adapt to it – through his clothing style, the way in which he carries himself when speaking Dutch, the way in which he chooses to embrace what he calls “Dutch freedoms of the individual”. On the occasions upon which I saw him interacting with Dutch friends, his demeanour changed. While speaking Spanish he was warm and spontaneous but while speaking to Dutch friends he became more aloof, spoke slower and more abruptly. In these interactions his actions reflect the discourse differences between the Dutch and a Latino that he explained – a reserved nature and suspicion contrasted with the Latin fluidity and openness. Lastly, Esteban, contradicting his Latino family values discourse, tells of how living here in the Netherlands he finds happiness in the freedoms that individuals have, and maintains that people are more independent and private. As a young man, he enjoys his privacy, in that his personal life is not shared with all his family and friends as it would be in Colombia. Esteban uses discourses which follow a “fine line between movement, change, continuity and identification” (Olwig, 2003: 797) - movement and change with exposure to new ideas and discourses, continuity in retaining discourses or social practices which he continues to value in his lifeworld, and identification with multiple social practices that suit him as an individual and as a Latino migrant. Thus, within discourses which underline divergence from his own life world or reality, Esteban, like many others in his situation, picks and chooses values he wishes to accept, modifying them and using elements as he sees best.

Valuing difference

Difference can have a positive connotation for the imagined and real potential of a migrant’s new surroundings, resources, and possibilities. Difference when seen as providing opportunities is seized upon in a discourse of “hope and the imagined”. The imagined is built on discourses: it is not fantasy divorced from reality, but is projective. Collective imagination shapes ideas of how the world should be and is, and this can be empowering, and can lead to action (Appadurai, 1996/2003: 6-8). The imagined in the Netherlands is much richer and with wider possibilities than in Latin America. The fact that Esteban is in the Netherlands broadens his imagined horizons, enlarging the possibilities of where he could go and what he can do. He is now fluent in Dutch, has a

high school diploma, and is poised to begin a degree in graphic design (before he spoke of studying tourism) at an institute in Amsterdam. For him this is the experience of a lifetime which he views as leading to something greater. He talks of his dreams, which from here are more attainable, such as: moving to somewhere in Latin America, perhaps Buenos Aires; of moving to Spain and working; of purchasing a bigger flat screen-surround sound television; of shopping at the best designer stores in the Netherlands (accelerated sense of consumerism); of traveling; of starting a family and providing for them. In essence, he has the possibility of desiring something more, something that is more feasible in the context of the Netherlands than from Colombia. Hopes of upward social mobility, something highly valued in Latin America, are embedded in the difference at the interface, difference in this sense being the vehicle for potential change. This understanding of difference marks some of the discourses that characterize migration, that justify migrants' current realities, that provide hope and comfort, and that give migrant identity a sense of purpose and hope for the future.

Martin, while embracing discourses of integration, meticulously preserves aspects his Colombian identity. Difference is important to him, to his identity but is something that should not be overstressed, something to be maintained on a quiet, personal level while at the same time integrating and adopting Dutch practices. In language and culture, Martin sustains this dimension by purchasing the *La Vanguardia* and *El Pais*, two well-known Spanish weekly papers, by attending cultural events, dancing in Salsa bars in Amsterdam and having friendships with Latinos of his class. Martin's day-to-day life is a finely tuned balancing act of integrating and adapting while maintaining certain Colombian characteristics he deems important.

4.5 Diversity within the migrant population

Recognizing the diversity that exists within the category of "migrant" and within each migrant population is fundamental to understanding migrant populations and Colombian migration has become socially more heterogeneous (Guarnizo and Diaz, 2003: 402), adding to the complexity of understanding migrant experiences. This diversity is rarely addressed in literature on migration or in policy and has significant implications for

current understandings of the realities and needs of migrants. The research uncovered multiple social identities, shaped by gender, age, class and country of origin. In turn these multiple social identities of Latino migrants interact with each other and with Dutch society in different ways in the process of inclusion/exclusion.

The migration of class structures

Intermingling across class is atypical of the Latino migrant populations. Class structures that existed in the home country remain intact in the host locality: the Colombian migrant population is defined by its class factionalism. This was evident from my observations and the comments of various migrants and the priest of the Spanish congregation. Martin's social position remains middle class, he is distanced from the popular class as evident one day in an encounter we had with Carmen. They clearly knew each other but did not greet in the typical friendly manner (though Carmen greeted me with kisses). He speaks of the popular group as "them" in distinction to "me". Eva*, another middle class Colombian migrant, spoke of the differences that exist within the Colombian group. She categorized Colombians into four types: "Wassenar senoras" are here with corporate or embassy working husbands, do not work, meet for tea and to chat, and distance themselves from other Colombians; the women who work so much they cannot take part in events, activities and meetings and are thus the most isolated; the popular class and the illegal groups who form strong networks amongst themselves; those like her who form and in-between group. She is a married to a Dutchman, a professional and came here as a student and is now working.

For the upper classes, interaction with Dutch society comes smoothly for language reasons, because of the nature of their labour market insertion and the motivation behind their migration. For most popular class migrants, interactions with the Dutch are restricted to basic daily interactions and those related to work. As some migrants are illegal, they are hesitant to engage with the Dutch for fear of being uncovered. Others, because of language, do not feel confident enough (some even ashamed) to engage in discussions and participate in Dutch activities. Some feel rejected, too different to interact comfortably, and choose to interact more exclusively with other migrants. And

still others make small efforts by joining in social groups or events in the hopes of pursuing relationships with Dutch people. Due to different social norms and ways of interacting, Latino migrants find the Dutch difficult to understand and to relate to and thus maintain a constructed divide. Overall, most migrants of the popular class have limited interactions with broader Dutch society and tend to turn inwards, towards their fellow migrant population.

Popular class collectivity

Most data were collected from the popular class. Within this group one finds a sense of community based on shared experience and similar social positions. Contrasting the sense of social difference felt towards Dutch society, the Latino migrant community and collectivity is built on symbolic ties, a strategy to resist exclusion, a way of belonging to something in the face of social exclusion from dominant society. The community remains a public domain, the social relations are utilitarian and do not extensively involve the private personal level. Collectivity appears as a shared sentiment and experience of being a Latino migrant from a similar social position: it is empathy and understanding. Collectivity is expressed through words of support, through the collective referral to “us”, through word-of-mouth networking, through secrecy (protecting oneself and others), advice giving, and the sharing and creation of social spaces. Collectivity is stronger within specific nationalities, however it extends and bridges all Latin American popular class migrants. They share food, tell stories from work, give one and other advice, share faith, and upon these foundations build relationships. A case in point manifesting collectivity is the desire to promote the presence of Latin America in The Hague. An initiative taken by Casa Bienvenida*, a community migrant association (see 4.6 for further explanation), was an event for the broader community and was supported by Embassies, sponsors and, most importantly, by the small contributions that the migrants made, be it a pound of sugar, labour or money. The discourse of collectivity helps to build social spaces, aids people in feeling a part of something, and provides the umbrella for the actions and emotions related to it.

*"Fragmented solidarity"*²²

It is important to note, however, that this collectivity is not a strong enough to mobilize, and is actually contradicted by the division which exists within the popular class. In line with the Guarnizo et. al. (1999) thesis that "hostility generated by [drug-related] stereotyping has fomented social fragmentation ... among Colombian immigrants" (ibid.: 375), there is a weak sense of collectivity. The popular class is observed to be divided by nationality, regionalism, gender, age, distrust, jealousy, and by individual interests and needs, as noted by Guarnizo and Diaz (2003: 414). These differences and distrust are not overcome and are stronger than the expressions of collectivity – the ability to mobilize and act together in the pursuit of a common interest is perceived to be unattained, perhaps impossible. For example, when considering migrant ability to challenge policy Carmen and Esteban felt as people would not come together enough to work on the issue. Though there is a sense of collectivity, it is superficial and the popular class remains divided and incoherent.

Role of gender

Gender also plays a significant role in the interrelationships found between the Latino migrants. Strong womens' networks exist which serve as emotional support as well as helpful in finding work, giving references, etc. For this research, it was easier to access women's networks and thus the data collected centre on female lifeworlds. Relationships between men and women also figure predominantly in day-to-day discourses. Based on research on womens' perspectives, the central theme that emerges is of duality or ambiguity. This discourse is used to refer to both Latino and Dutch men but figures more prominently when speaking of Dutch men. There is a mixed discourse and, by extension, action of women and their relationship with men as a result of the reality in which they find themselves. Often ambiguous about their status, one minute they say that they are married, the next that they are single, many seem to retreat from positioning themselves in one status or another; ambiguity serves them best. Women express the happiness at being free of men, autonomous, of not wanting to deal with the complications that men

²² Term is from Guarnizo et. al. (1999)

bring to their lives. Nevertheless, they crave the attention, and the affection and act upon this at times rashly, spontaneously, without regard to the consequences of their actions. Relationships with men are mediated by the unrelenting ambiguity migrant women feel regarding their identity as women and affect how relationships are engaged in.

4.6 Social spaces as strategy for building socio-cultural ties

Within the analytical framework, the “interface analysis focuses on the linkages and networks that develop between individuals or parties” (Long, 2001: 69), thus harmonizing with the concept of social spaces which are created by linkages, networks, and social action undertaken by migrants to deal with their encounter at the social interface with the Dutch. The social spaces operated in by popular class Latino migrants exhibited characteristics of kinship groups, transnational circuits and communities, in other words, certain social norms, insider advantages and collective representations (Faist, 2000). Social spaces are thus part of the strategy (discourse and action) chosen by migrants at the micro level for operating at the interface, for surviving and for (re)creating their identity in their new environment. They are and function as pathways of incorporation (Glick Schiller et. al., 2003), aiding in mediating individual migrants’ interaction with the broader host society. Social spaces are part of the transnational way of life of migrants, part of the “tendency of today’s transmigrants to maintain, build, and reinforce multiple linkages with their countries of origin” (Glick Schiller and Basch, 1995: 54). Not mentioned by the authors is the fact that the development of these pathways is a representation of migrant creativity in dealing with the interface and the importance of the micro-level interplay of socio-cultural relations. The spaces and linkages identified were built around faith (the Catholic church), around cultural and national representations and events, as well as the Latino migrant community, and are all intersected by class, nationality, age, gender and language.

The Church – faith-based social space

A key social space in which, and from which, popular class Latino migrants operate is Sta. Ines* Church, a Catholic church which provides Mass in Spanish, and has an Ecuadorian priest. Sta. Ines is led by Padre Diego* (as he is referred to by his Latino

parishioners), a Dutch priest, fluent in Spanish and with experience in Latin America, as well as with the issues faced by Latin American migrants in the Netherlands. Padre Diego leads the Spanish parish with a kind, gentle firmness and conveys to his parish a sense of compassion and empathy – a discourse of paternalism pervades his actions and words. He speaks of his congregation with affection and places them within a discourse of migrant problems - vulnerability, exclusion, gendered issues such as prostitution – and frames the problems within a faith-based approach promoting anti-materialism and the need to support and assist migrants. The awareness of the type of people in his Spanish congregation comes out clearly in the Sunday sermons where he and his Ecuadorian colleague acknowledge their day-to-day realities, drawing on examples from their lives. For example, once, when discussing choice, the priest used the example of potato chip flavours to illustrate the amount of choice individuals face on a daily basis. Guided by Padre Diego, Sta. Ines Church is a flourishing social space for Latino migrants, providing them a safe haven where they can practice their faith and also socialize, form networks, meet others from the same country, culture or cultural background, share experiences and food, and where most of all, they can be themselves, safe and away from the outside Dutch world.

The informal, familiar behaviour of the Latino congregation demonstrates their perception of the space. Mass is a key event at which one may observe the practices and interactions of Latino migrants in their social space. The Spanish Mass currently begins half an hour after the Dutch Mass finishes and during this brief interval the segregation of the two is extremely clear. There is no intermingling; the Dutch and the Latinos keep their distance from each other. The Dutch congregation hurries out while the Latinos slowly meander in, taking their time, calling out greetings, chatting, introducing one and other, and laughing. The Dutch arrive by bike or on foot and the Latinos arrive by foot or by tram as many of them travel across the city, or even from other cities, to get to the church. For Padre Diego it is a constant chore to organize the Latino congregation, to get people to sit down and be ready on time. Every Sunday he asks them to be on time and begins the Mass almost as if calling a class of children together, asking people to take their seats, appealing for quiet and sometimes appears to be about to clap his hands to get

attention. He has a resigned and accepting attitude towards his congregation. Even as Mass begins, people continue to trickle in, making no attempt to hide their tardiness, they walk in, waving to others, pushing past those already seated, greeting friends, essentially letting their presence be known. Padre Diego ignores them, thus allowing them to continue acting in this way. It is behaviour of people who are comfortable in the space but who are also undisciplined, spontaneous and very informal.

Specific groups' social spaces

Operating from the platform of the faith-based social space there emerge other social spaces, dedicated to and created for specific groups. Among those specific groups were individual nationalities which were distinguished through mention of patron saints as well as weekly bake sales with countries selling (as church fundraisers) typical food to share with others. Youth are given a social space through the strong discourse evidenced in sermons promoting faith in the youth with youth participation mentioned weekly. Extensive efforts are made to include youth in activities and to appeal to their interests: a group was sent to the World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany to meet the Pope. Other activities are the Sunday schools and youth discussion groups. This discourse benefits youth who use the social space and their faith to meet other young people, to make friends with whom they can relate culturally, linguistically and experientially, in their new environment. One young girl said that she had all her good friends in the Church, not at school, and that she loved the group meetings which gave her time and space to be herself, share her faith and socialize. Thus, promoting youth involvement serves the interests of the Church but also serves the needs of the youth migrant population.

Another specific target group for whom the priests carve out a social space is the group of popular class migrant women: their vulnerability and gender sensitivity are recurring theme. During sermons Padre Diego addressed the vulnerability of women and appealed to them through words of faith, comfort and support. In one sermon Padre Diego spoke of the difficulties faced by migrant women, those who are widows, mothers, here alone, and how their faith and their community in the church is here to guide, support and love them during this time. Aware of the issues that face migrant women, Padre Diego uses a

language of inclusion, support and understanding and priority is given to the creation of a social space that is safe and sensitive to the particular needs and experiences of migrant women. Women in the congregation consciously recognize this and react positively by feeling included and understood by the church's attempts to help them and the gender sensitive approach of the priests when speaking of and interacting with migrants. The discourses of gender sensitivity and the vulnerability of women serve to further the notion of shared experience between popular class Latina migrants, further solidifying the foundations for friendship, support, and womens' networks. It is thus a discourse articulated in the church which creates a social space primarily for migrant women.

Community organization

Casa Bienvenida*, the Latin American migrant association in The Hague and operating out of Sta. Ines, is a mixed group of member migrants. The relationships that bind together Casa Bienvenida are built on social norms, collective representation and insider advantage. The association works to meet some of the group's needs and as a support/contacts network. Casa Bienvenida provides a variety of courses – English, Dutch, computers, art, dance, and religion - catering to the youth as well as the adults in order to enrich and enable their experiences. Volunteers, educated Dutch people and some wealthier Latinos (although rarely) give the classes. Casa Bienvenida also has partner associations in Utrecht, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and one in Belgium which network as organizations by sharing information, contacts in partner cities, etc. Significant is the provision of legal support to illegal migrants, working with lawyers and providing consultations. Casa Bienvenida is an association built on the premise of being a space in which people can find support that facilitated day-to-day life, and feel comfortable in a place/land where they feel alien, alone and afraid.

Casa Bienvenida is also a space where people, in particular women, meet and talk. It is a public, yet private space, public to Latinos and private as it is 'away' from the broader society. Sitting in on these conversations and interactions, I was able to observe the array of topics and interaction. There is a great deal of small talk, about the weather (usually complaints), about work, gossip, and international affairs, such as the bombings in

London and Egypt. Based on the observed interactions there are, as with all groups, specific friendships and relationships based on reciprocity, exchange and solidarity, on the shared experience of being a Latino migrant living in the Netherlands. Womens' networks are particularly strong because, 1) they are more numerous; 2) socially they spend more time together, collaborating on Church and other activities; 3) because the majority have come alone and thus seek out friendship and support to a greater extent.

The gendered dimension of Casa Bienvenida as a social space and as a network supports Curran and Saguy's (2001) work that shows the important role of gender in networks and their tendency to reinforce gender relations. Networks are stronger between women and thus gender plays a strong role in an individual's interaction and incorporation into social spaces and networks. Additionally these social spaces and networks serve to reinforce traditional gender relations and roles: for example, at a recent cultural event women were assigned the task of cooking and cleaning while men set up the stage and did very little else. The women of Casa Bienvenida have gendered identities that are "reinforced by embeddeness in migrant networks" (Curran and Saguy, 2001: 72). However, as the authors contend, migrant networks are vehicles for change, and within these gendered identities in social spaces one can see empowerment of migrant women and the potential for change. They should not be dismissed as only blocking to changes in gender relations.

Cultural social space

The July 10th celebration of Colombia's 195th anniversary of Independence typifies the cultural social space which migrants embrace and create to practice realities brought from home, out of pride in their Latino identity, to maintain symbolic community ties with other migrants as well as display, or build a public identity in the broader Dutch society. These cultural social spaces are group expressions of pride, solidarity and unity (Guarnizo et. al., 1999: 388). The celebration consisted of a small stage set up with a young male dj playing popular Colombian music. Along the sidewalks people had set up stands selling food, others little cheap goods, some artisan work and some clothing. On one side of the street there was a Colombian import store with cheap (popular class style)

clothing (jeans, bustiers, shoes) and some specifically Colombian foodstuffs. Teenagers dressed in typical/traditional clothing were dancing. People lined up along the sidewalks watching, cheering, taking pictures, and eating. The majority of those in attendance were Colombians, mostly of lower class, although there were some Dutch bystanders or friends/family of the Colombians. Those present, families and individuals, were within the working-age group – there is not a great range in the ages of those Colombian migrants living here, except for children. People reveled in the food, using it as a symbolic centerpiece for representing culture and embodying “home” and the Colombian culture. The fiesta functioned as a social space, providing the opportunity for people to be “with their own” and proud of their origins, to celebrate and share a dimension of their identity.

4.7 Social spaces revisited

As previously mentioned, the social spaces observed exhibit characteristics of the three types of transnational social spaces - kinship groups, transnational circuits and communities - described by Faist (1998, 2000). Though exhibiting characteristics of these social spaces they do not fall directly into one category or another. Elements of reciprocity, exchange and solidarity can be found in all the spaces observed. The characteristics are not mutually exclusive but are complementary and go hand-in-hand. Like the migrants themselves, the social spaces are ambiguous and incoherent and thus difficult to place. Faist’s typology serves as a framework for considering immigrant incorporation and relationship to the state but it is too rigid for understanding the lifeworlds and practices of the observed migrants. As Kivisto (2003) said, it is difficult to understand social spaces conceptually. However, counter to his idea that operational definitions need to be elaborated, this research demonstrates the difficulty, and impracticality, of such elaboration. Social spaces are context/group/culture/host-specific and are very difficult to define or categorize. It is important to see the ambiguity of migrant social spaces and to connect this ambiguity to the type of migrant operating in these spaces.

Chapter 5: Migrant realities and policy

5.1 Seeing the policies from below

Policy discourse is ordered and defined by official policymakers and the discourses produced attempt to set norms and structure a targeted population or issue. Nevertheless, discourses are fluid by nature, open to interpretation and reinterpretation as is apparent at the interface between migrants and migration policy. The research revealed interpretations of incorporation by Latino migrants, most significantly that incorporation remains an ambiguous concept and, depending on the (social) position of the interpreter, carries different values, attitudes, and understanding.

Disjuncture at the interface

Despite the pervasiveness of discussions on incorporation and policies emerging in the effort to advance processes of incorporation, many of the migrants from the popular class were unsure as to what the term actually means. There is a disjuncture between what is meant in Dutch policy by incorporation and how migrants understand it. The question of “incorporation into what?” was constantly posed. The implicit idea of integrating to a bounded host is understood but that host remains unclear, perhaps because of the fragmented nature of modern society with its “... multiple autonomous and interdependent fields or systems, which engage actors only partially” (Freeman, 2004: 947). Regardless of theoretical understanding of society, Dutch society (the host) remains intangible to the popular class Latino migrant: its normative social codes and modes of interaction are not communicated and/or accessible to the migrants and are not fully understood. For example, social interaction with the Dutch -- when the perception is as being closed, limited, and suspicious -- is a difficult barrier for a Latino to overcome since Latinos see themselves as operating in a more open and loose manner. Social disjunctures at the interface complicate a migrant’s ability to grapple with what they are supposed to incorporate into. Comprehending how to adapt and incorporate without knowledge is virtually impossible. There is at the interface a lack of communication, dialogue and transparency regarding the actual desired outcomes of incorporation and

what is required of the migrant. Thus, my informants were clearly exposed to policy and public discourses on incorporation; however, how these discourses were to be operationalized and what they meant in a popular class Latino migrant's day-to-day life was unclear.

Conflicting discourses

Incorporation in discourse is rooted in equal rights, liberal pluralism and equal opportunity; it refers to the legal, political, cultural and socio-economic domains and is based on the individual approach. Migrant day-to-day realities require participation in micro-level activities and meeting of immediate needs and are not framed within a citizenship discussion. The discourses migrant informants articulated in their ordering of priorities for coping with their new lives did not correspond with the discourses laid out in policy. Incorporation is something desired by the host country's policy agenda but for migrants is hard to understand, as it is not their agenda, not in the terms laid out in policy. Migrants think of incorporation as a sense of dignity, acceptance and equality. The migrant conceptualization of incorporation better aligns itself with multiculturalism discourses and the earlier Dutch ethnic minorities policies. Dignity and acceptance are in line with the idea of a multi-ethnic society living in harmony, mutual respect, in which identity preservation is acceptable, even promoted (Entzinger, 2003: 63). Equality for migrants relates to equal opportunity and equal treatment of non-citizens and citizens. Furthermore, migrants, though migrating as individuals, most often operate under the group approach, that is, they act together and through a number of ties feel a sense of community, of group identity. Though referring to incorporation the actual discourses and practices of migrants are encapsulated by multiculturalism. In sum, there is a large disjuncture between current Dutch policy and the discourse or interpretation of incorporation by the popular class Latino migrants.

Incorporation embodied

Martin interestingly, as a middle-class Colombian professional migrant, is a story of "successful" incorporation, successful in the sense that his stories, attitude and behaviour correspond to the current Dutch policy discourse of integration and the individual

approach. The value of his story is that it illustrates and reinforces the notion of how strongly discourse is tied to social position. Given the circumstances under which Martin came here, with a Dutch girlfriend, his university education, linguistic abilities, a sister already living in the Netherlands for a few years, and his job status, Martin has the tools to inform himself on Dutch policies on incorporation and adapt himself to them. Martin believes that it is the migrants themselves who must make the effort to adjust, adapt and incorporate into the broader Dutch society. This discourse represents the individual approach which “demands much more effort from migrants than from the receiving population” (Entzinger, 2003: 74). Martin does not understand a lack of desire to incorporate and strongly feels that people must be committed to integrating, as part of their responsibility as migrants. Martin’s discussion of incorporation mirrors Dutch policy and the attitude that responsibility falls squarely on migrant shoulders.

Frustration at the interface

Martin’s affirmative stance towards incorporation contrasts with Carmen and other popular class Latino migrants who strongly expressed a sense of frustration regarding the existing policies for integration. The frustration stems from the perception of the actual practice of integration. Migrants feel that the concept exists in policy discourse but that in practice on a day-to-day level it has no reality; talking about incorporation is not the same thing as practicing it. The idea that integration falls to the migrant, with migrants accommodating and changing, while the Dutch should not have to meet the migrants half way, is considered inflexible. The perception is of a glass ceiling limiting the extent of incorporation. This sense of frustration translates itself into a further sense of alienation from the already ambiguous concept of incorporation.

Furthermore, the policies are seen as inadequate and impractical regarding migrant realities. According to the present research, incorporation remains a vague process and requires more than is available (e.g. integration courses). In fact, in making such comments, the migrants are acknowledging the complexity of incorporation. Several people used the example of language classes, laughing at the idea that 600 hours of Dutch classes were sufficient: “how are we supposed to learn such a difficult language in that

amount of time?” They identified the difficulty in pursuing language classes after the initial 600 hours (Michalowski, 2005: 3), since one must pay high fees for classes, in addition to finding free time to attend classes, which is very difficult for working migrants. Carmen also laughed at the idea that migrants, such as the people she associated with and works with at Casa Bienvenida, were consulted and able to access the policies. She pointed to the language barrier as a major obstacle; if unable to speak Dutch or English, the arriving migrant will remain isolated and uninformed. To assume that a migrant has all the capabilities to understand policy and engage in policy dialogue is unreasonable. Finally, Carmen also spoke of her desire to have “their” voices heard on the matter – her perception of policymaking is one of exclusivity and closed-door policy; she feels that she as a migrant is excluded and looked upon as a trouble maker if she attempts to discuss the matter in public forums. The disjuncture between migrants and policy at the interface is one that gives rise to feelings of frustration, exclusion and furthers the skepticism that migrants feel towards the concept of incorporation.

5.2 Relating social spaces and migrant strategies to integration policy

In attempting to understand Latino migrant social spaces, or the strategies used in the effort to grapple with the social interface, one must also examine these migrant discourses and interpretations in relation to the existing policies for integration. The Glick Schiller et. al. (2003) research on migrant pathways of incorporation looks at how migrants act to become incorporated into the broader society. The authors examine pathways that in the case of this research are social spaces. Though they do not link these pathways to policy they look at, but stress, “the complex interplay of being part of different local and social settings in different political and geographic locations in the course of migrants’ everyday practices” (Glick Schiller et. al., 2003: 50) which has the potential to better inform policy. The important role of social spaces, both positive and negative, should be considered when looking at policies for incorporation. Social spaces can be complementary, contradictory and/or a mode of accessing and understanding the lifeworlds and looking at the ways in which policy plays out in migrant life. The created social spaces in fact relate closely to discourses on multiculturalism and operate in domains beyond the reaches of existing policy and fill perceived voids in policy.

Multi-purpose social spaces

The existence of specific social spaces is indicative of a group strategy, created by migrants and those who have their interests at heart, to fill certain perceived gaps in integration policy. In such cases they are the manifestation of social capital, “resources inherent in patterned social and symbolic ties that allow individuals to cooperate” (Faist, 1998: 218). Casa Bienvenida and the activities and functions it performs are examples of this. Aside from being a network and pivotal community association which provides emotional support and a feeling of solidarity for migrants, Casa Bienvenida has a functional role in providing services to a community which is constrained by legal, economic and education limits and cannot easily access these services through Dutch pathways. Low-cost Dutch lessons, English lessons, and computer lessons all have the goal of better equipping the migrants for participating and bettering their lives in the Netherlands. The association seeks to provide services that will enable migrants, but are much less accessible elsewhere. As a relationships and word-of-mouth network Casa Bienvenida has a role in job placement. I witnessed the arrival of an illegal migrant. Within hours, people from the association were passing around the word that a job was needed, phone calls were being made and suggestions given. It is a public/private²³ service provided exclusively through the social space, based on membership. Another key service that Casa Bienvenida plays is in the legal domain – accessing free, or cheap, legal services, acting as a go-between for migrants and the legal system. The legal services acquired through the association for vulnerable migrants, afraid to access the legal system or unable to do so, are fundamental in many instances. Thus it can be seen that social spaces have a social function, but because of perceived policy gaps they act as service providers as well.

²³ Public in that the social space is a public one but private as the social space is also limited to a certain population or group of people.

5.3 Beyond the scope of policy

The observed social spaces are beyond the domain of policy because they are socially or relationally built, despite the fact that they relate to questions of integration. Migrant social spaces have positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, they are positive in that they provide safe spaces to express oneself, to socialize with people who share and understand the experience of being a migrant, as a place to make contacts, find out about activities and events, and to gain knowledge. On the other hand, they can lead to a negative group mentality towards the host environment and, by focussing on negative comparisons, they can be gossipy and thus vulnerable to infighting, distrust and feelings of insecurity, and can limit or restrict the amount of contact and interaction that a migrant has with the host community. Negotiating the extent to which one participates in these social spaces varies from individual to individual but for the most part they are the first place that people turn to, or rather, carve out for themselves in initial reaction to their new environment.

Social spaces are migrant creations as a pathway to integrate into and coexist with broader society (Glick Schiller et. al., 2003). Social spaces, such as ones built on faith, which are beyond policy reaches, play an equally important role in mediating migrant incorporation and daily realities. The Catholic Church plays a considerable role in the lives of popular class Latino migrants in The Hague. Based on faith, this social space also reaches out, with paternalistic tendencies, to youth, to women and makes the effort to address issues faced by migrants in their day-to-day lives. An example of this would be regarding materialism and the vulnerability of migrants to losing their way in their quest for betterment of their lives. Sermons regarding choice and evaluating choice were given. One sermon discussed the pitfalls of materialism, the vicious cycle that one might fall into trying to better one's life: continuous desire to consume and attaching happiness to material acquisitions. The notion that materialism counters the quest for happiness is strong. Stories of migrants who end up staying on longer than they intend or not returning home, in part because of their addiction to consumerism, circulate. The priest perceives that Latino popular class migrants are easily swept up in the material when they come to Europe, losing perspective on what they need and want and why they came here,

that their coming here is initially for basic and standard life improvements but can become a semi-obsessive trail of consumption. Padre Diego speaks against this in his sermons to inspire his parishioners to reflect on their actions and attitude towards materialism, and to help prevent migrants from succumbing to this false happiness, one that binds them forever to working here and losing their way in their quest for betterment their lives. It is thus that spaces such as the Church reach for, and serve, aspects of migrants' lives which fall beyond the scope of policy.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Migrant identity and culture

Like Olwig, I would argue that focusing solely on transnationalism as a connector of national identities obscures “the full complexity and meaning of migrants’ extra-local socio-cultural relations” (2003: 787). My research employs some foundations from transnationalism - social consciousness, a mode of cultural reproduction and as (re)construction of place (Vertovec, 1999) - but has uncovered the “extra-local” or micro-social relations which are embedded in larger socio-cultural realities and patterns but are uniquely practiced at the micro-level resulting in specific systems or lifeworlds.

It is apparent from the present research that around the research subjects, in particular around the popular class Colombian and Latino migrants, there has evolved their own “migrant culture”. It is culture in the way Appadurai (1996/2003) conceives it, treating culture as “a concept of difference, a contrastive rather than a substantive property of certain things” (p. 12). He elaborates on this, saying that this culture sets the foundation for the mobilization of group identities, and it is dissimilarity which serves as a boundary of difference (ibid.: 13). From the migrant narratives and discourses, we find a popular class ‘migrant culture’ which has developed as a product of migration and a sense of being in an identity limbo – fitting in with neither the former Latino identity nor as a Dutch person. The migrant culture develops as one of difference - different from Dutch society, from other migrants’ flows, and even different from the home country identity. The difference felt by this group of individuals serves to mobilize and articulate what becomes a group identity.

6.2 Describing the Latino migrant culture

The migrant cultural identity is bound by certain specific characteristics which emerged from the research. These characteristics framed the nature of the data collected and permeated the discourses on day-to-day life.

The underpinnings of the life stories and the discourses used to describe the migrant lifeworlds are rooted in the psychocultural and the psychosocial (returning to Peacock and Holland's typology). As migrants narrated their life stories and expressed their view of reality, they constructed their identity, picking and choosing what they told, how they told it, and mixing the discourses which they employed to interpret their lifeworld. The way in which life was recounted was a device to construct/create/reinvent an identity. Furthermore, the narratives served to form and maintain social relations between migrants, building on shared experiences, on language, and Latino cultures, the migrants articulated stories and discourses which solidified certain social relationships, created social spaces, and produced a type of migrant popular class group identity/culture. Given the migrants' new environment, exposure to different realities and their need to adapt to the changes in their lives, it is not surprising that narratives function as identity construction devices and as a welding mechanism for social relations.

Migrant culture is class-based; the social structures which existed in the home countries migrate with migrants. These are the social relations which continue to dictate how life is interpreted, how the host environment is interacted with, the kind of experience that a migrant has, the way in which a migrant interacts with others, and the social spaces he/she chooses and can operate in. Change in environment is not enough to overcome the strong class relations that existed at home and thus remain central to a migrant's day-to-day life. Social position is a defining characteristic and is key to understanding migrants and migrant culture.

Also characterizing the popular class migrant culture is its contradictory or ambiguous disposition. Migrants frequently referred to themselves as not fitting in anywhere, neither here nor there, and this sense of living an indeterminate state is reflected in the identity they project outwards. They have contradictory social discourses (feminist discourse and traditional Latino gender roles), economic contradictions (successful in their home country but not successful in the Netherlands), contradictory hopes and dreams (wanting a better life but wanting to go home), and contradictory feelings towards their host environment (disliking some differences, adopting other differences to suit their

interests). Transnational studies posit this contradiction to a certain extent in its thesis of transnational connections/relations (Portes et al., 1999: 227) however it does not capture this contradiction in terms of its complexity on a relational level and the difficulty migrants experience in bridging their two worlds. Transnationalism over-romanticizes the duality of being a migrant and overlooks what the toll of establishing and balancing dual identities can be for a migrant. The contradiction in the migrants is a product of being a migrant, of existing in a middle-ground of discourses, identities and of living unique lifeworlds. Their interpretive nature creates an interpreted version of who they are and what their reality is and results in an incoherent identity, characterized by contradictions. The contradictions and ambiguity that define many migrants make them difficult to categorize and it is equally difficult to define their needs, interests, and approach to migration issues.

Finally, the observed migrant culture displayed a high propensity to be elusive and to shroud in some secrecy a great amount of information about themselves. Though migrants were open to talking and sharing, they chose to expose selected aspects of themselves and their views, they veiled personal information or information that might expose a vulnerability, for example in their home life, how they came here and the reasons they migrated. Thus, though talking a great deal, at times they said very little. For many migrants, the precarious grounds on which they are here and their sense of vulnerability, limited the ability and desire to be open. The migrant culture which an outsider can access is an incomplete depiction and difficult to fully understand.

6.3 Relevance of the research to policy

The research, using an ethnographic lens and epistemology, has yielded an enriched perspective on migrant experiences of living in the Netherlands. Ethnographic research has the potential to uncover unofficial realities, ways in which meanings are utilized, relations between culture and policy, and to transcend macro-understandings of reality. As Van Donge (n.d) clearly lays out, ethnography can contribute to the analysis of development interventions, practices and results from a socio-cultural standpoint. In this case, the research relates to policy by providing intelligence on the population in question

regarding incorporation. Like Lawson's (2000) work in which migrant stories challenged dominant discourses of modernization (ibid.: 186), the stories from this research challenge dominant discourses on incorporation and migrant realities and enhance our knowledge of what it means to be a migrant. The research emphasizes the discontinuity which exists between the migrant reality and the assumed construction of migrants as a category in incorporation policy and offers the potential for policy to have a greater understanding of how policy is interpreted and practiced in day-to-day life; it is informing, or providing intelligence upon which policymakers can build. As such, there is the potential for policy to become more inclusive, holistic and effective.

During the course of the research, it became apparent how difficult it is to reach the migrants and to learn about them. This is because migrants obscure information about themselves and additionally those who work with them, or are related to them in some way, also do not talk of them in order to not compromise them. The understanding that knowledge is power and knowledge about migrants can be used to their benefit but also against them prevails within the migrant culture and results in a code of silence regarding certain private domains of their lives. For policy, this implies that the target population remains a vague concept, bound to a category of "migrant" which does not fully capture all their realities and complexities. In fact, the term packages them into an entity which does not accord with their true identities and in turn makes it difficult for policy to bridge the existing discontinuities at the interface.

The research that was carried out with a small migrant population leads to identification, acknowledgement and a validation of multiple realities and lifeworlds. It is important to recognize these multiplicities, as they are what mediate policy at the grassroots or micro-level. They increase the complexity of designing policies. The research has been an attempt to see how processes are unfolding, how meaning is interpreted and applied in lifeworlds. In particular, regarding the normative concept of incorporation, the research has shown that demonstrating the multiple realities is a way to explore the interface between policy and migrants. Understanding how migrants view incorporation may enable policymakers to re-think their approaches to dealing with diversity. Bridging the

discontinuities that exist at the interface between migrant realities and incorporation policy must start with a thorough re-examination of how a “migrant” is conceptualized and the inclusion of their lifeworlds into the design and implementation of policy.

6.4 Where can we go from here?

For policymakers, looking at the concept of incorporation, there is a definite need to rethink the approach to the development of policy. The objective of this research was not to say that policy is irrelevant. Rather, the outcome of the research has shown that policy can become irrelevant if it does not acknowledge the complexities and the multiple realities which exist and mediate them in practice. In essence, the research has shown that we need to look at the case-specific, human, socio-cultural, and processual experience of policy as practiced and interpreted by a complex, dynamic and sensitive population. Policy has directionality from an official position towards the daily existence of members of society. Avoiding the pitfall of privileging, or overlooking, other realities, discourses and interpretations of the world may enable policy to remain relevant and helpful in the quest to deal with migration, the diversity it produces and the production of strategies.

To consider giving concrete policy recommendations contradicts the idea that one reality, or interpretation, should not be privileged over another, that there is no one right answer or one better approach. Instead of recommendations, I would like to suggest considerations that should be examined when looking at migration, incorporation and migrant lifeworlds.

We need to be empathetic, to see migrants as people who are grappling with new and old meanings in the host locality, as well as trying to find their footing in the material world. Migration and migrants are more than subjects, they are people caught in numerous flows of life, whose realities and feelings are in continuous dialectical play with the changes in their lives. What do we mean by incorporation, what do we aim to achieve by it, and what does it mean for the involved parties, or social realities – these are crucial questions. As incorporation is normative, the attached values, attitudes and assumptions must be

critically examined for their significance to specific segments of society as well as to society as a whole. It is essential to examine the relevance of present policy, as it is currently formulated and articulated - how does it correlate to the social realities it is directed at? What is occurring at the interface between policy discourse and policy in practice? In sum, the dynamic nature of migration, migrants and their relationship to host localities and populations requires a (self) critical eye which moves beyond dominant discourses and the received view of realities, to uncover discontinuities at the interfaces and unofficial realities which mediate day-to-day life.

Appendix A

Placing/locating the researcher

The role of the researcher's identity in the community under study and in determining what data is collected must be considered. This "reflexivity" (Hertz, 1997) places the researcher, allowing the readers to better situate the research. Reflexivity means constant self-reflection and internal dialogue, looking at what is known and how it is known, an attempt to be aware of one's own position and interests; it is a "more radical consciousness of self in facing the political dimensions of fieldwork and constructing knowledge... a continuing mode of self-analysis and political awareness" (Callaway, 1992: 33 cited in Hertz, 1997: viii). As explored by Reinharz (1997) in her reflection on her one-year research, the self is actually a fieldwork tool (ibid.: 3). Reinharz provides a framework for analyzing the self by categorizing selves into three major groups: research based selves, brought selves, and situationally created selves (1997: 5). This framework is an excellent departure point for reflexivity and captures the multiple selves that can emerge and shape a research. Reflexivity has the potential to provide deeper analysis and command over the accounts of the social world which are gathered.

Various dimensions identity may mediate the interactions I had with my research subjects. I am a young Spanish speaking female student, with dark hair and skin (ethnic background). Being a woman means that other women feel a sense of identification with me and are able to relate to me and build trust. This allows me to create strong relationships with female subjects in ways that a male researcher would not be able to do. Being a female also impacts my interaction with male subjects as sexual dynamics between gender identities may come into play and affect how I am treated, perceived and respected. Being non-Dutch also shapes my relationship with the migrants being studied, as there is another sense of identification, or understanding. As I too am the 'other' in the Netherlands, my "otherness" implies to the subjects that I am not threatening and that I, as an 'outsider', am better able to understand their experiences. On multiple levels it is

my 'outsider' status which allows me an 'insider' perspective²⁴. Since, I am often mistaken as a Latin American so that my presence is often unnoticed or taken for granted, I am seen as fitting in, not as an outsider. This enhances the naturalistic quality research method chosen. Balancing community acceptance while maintaining an objective relationship is difficult and these dimensions of my identity must be constantly monitored. They allow me to draw closer to the community, but they must be kept in mind so as to preserve the objective and critical eye. There is also the need to avoid the potentially exploitative relationship, discussed by Finch (1984)²⁵, that could emerge as a result of what is told to me in confidence as an "almost insider".

My identity as a researcher will also influence how I interpret or understand the data collected. As a Canadian who has worked with immigrants in Canada, used to Canadian multiculturalism and diversity, I bring my own normative understanding and experiences of how diversity is managed and dealt with in society. Also, my experiences in Canada influence my ability to understand/relate/empathize with the migrants as I have the experience of being perceived as an immigrant, part of an ethnic minority. That is, the experience of being seen one way and feeling another on the inside is of significance here. My own somewhat complex identity, made up of a multitude of backgrounds means that I have acquired the ability to understand being seen in many different ways and being treated accordingly. Being seen as 'different', as an outsider and related to as an outsider by some, while being treated by others as a native-born Canadian, or not different, means that I have felt both sides of the issue and have had to manage multiple identities. The challenge of confronting who I am and establishing an identity in the face of multiculturalism, cultural protectionism, and incorporation is an ongoing process, one that shifts and takes shape with every encounter and experience that I have. My

²⁴ For a more detailed discussion on the insider/outsider debate see Naples, 1997. The author explores the insider/outsider debate from a feminist perspective and argues that there is actually fluidity between insiderness and outsiderness, that they "are not fixed or static positions, rather they are ever-shifting and permeable social locations that are differentially experienced and expressed by community members" (p. 71).

²⁵ Finch discusses in more detail the potential ethical and methodological pitfalls that may emerge from woman to woman interviews and the need for the researcher to be responsible for anticipating whether the work produced could be interpreted or used in unintended ways to the detriment of the subjects, of the individual and collective interests (1984: 83).

understanding of migration and social incorporation issues and the experiences of migrants is influenced by this process and past experiences.

Appendix B

Carmen -

- A 44 year old woman from Medellin, Colombia. She has been living in the Netherlands for 11 years and has legal status. She arrived here, single and accompanied by her then 9 year old son. Carmen has family in Australia, the Netherlands and Colombia. She currently works as a cleaner, working in the Embassy in the mornings and in the afternoons in private homes. She also, almost single-handedly, runs Casa Bienvenida, the Latino migrant association in The Hague. Carmen claims to have middle-class origins and to be educated. She is an articulate, dynamic, reflective woman who is one of the community leaders in the Sta. Ines church Spanish-speaking parish. Carmen's identity here is in part based on these traits, founded in being a caregiver, defender of rights, politically minded, and a support and help to those migrants who feel, or are, vulnerable.

Martin -

- From Bogotá, Colombia and is in his mid to late 30s. He has been living here in the Netherlands for 7 years; he has a sister who is married to a Dutchman and also lives in the country. He is well educated, a political scientist, speaks English, Dutch and Spanish, and currently works as an editor and a fiction writer. Martin originally came here with a Dutch girlfriend, he calls himself a "refugee of love", and his experience has been different than that of other Colombians as he is of middle to upper class origins and his transition was facilitated by his relationship with a native Dutch individual. Martin's leisure time activities, friendships and group with which he spends time are not the same as that of the popular class Colombians. He more aptly belongs to the group of young professionals who have migrated here and are taking on their new lives with vigour and excitement. Martin is outgoing, articulate and eager to talk. He is opinionated and likes to share his ideas; he is generous with his time as well his stories.

Esteban –

- A 20-year-old male from Cali, Colombia. Esteban's passage to the Netherlands was facilitated through family networks. His aunts and mother came here first, secured work and some even married Dutchmen, thus paving the way for his arrival and it was thus that he was able to come and now even has legal documents. Esteban has a married brother living in Tenerife, Spain whom he tries to visit on a regular basis. Esteban's family is a typical popular class migrant family – they operate almost exclusively through migrant and kinship networks, work in service industry jobs, have numerous transnational relationships and remit home. Esteban was introduced to me through friends who had lived in his [deceased] aunt's boarding house. As such, I was able to work with him and gain his trust more quickly. He is studying Dutch and began studying graphic design at a school in Amsterdam, however last speaking with him I was informed that he had dropped out and is now planning to join his brother in Spain. Esteban is a soft-spoken, intelligent and reflective individual whose words and actions reflect thought and awareness of his and others' situations.

Maritza –

- A Colombian woman, in her early forties, from Cali who has been in the Netherlands for 5 years. She has a few relatives in the rest of Europe, mainly Italy and maintains contact with her family through them. Upon her arrival to the Netherlands she married a Dutchman and they had a child together. A few years later she was allegedly thrown out, accused by her husband of being too vulgar and improper. Now living on welfare and unemployed she lives in Leiden. She continues to engage multiple relationships and is struggling to put her life together.

Eva –

- A 33 year old woman originally from Bogotá and has been here for ten years. She came here to do a Masters and then did a PhD. She is married to a Dutchman and is currently working in Brussels for an NGO which works in Asia and Eastern Europe. She is a lawyer and was previously teaching law at the University of Leiden.

Juan –

- In his mid-forties, a political refugee from Cali. Juan recently opened his own restaurant, with a Greek partner. He works seven days a week, twelve hours a day and has not seen his family in five years. Upon his wife's death five years ago and some threats against his life he came here and now supports his family from abroad. He speaks of wishing to return home to visit but for financial and social reasons has been unable to do so yet. Since living in the Netherlands Juan has been involved in a range of activities – cleaning, selling imported Colombian goods, working in restaurants, etc. Juan is a cheerful, hard working, innovative, committed individual.

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