

To Belong or not to Belong?

A study on the sense of belonging of Turkish-Dutch young adults in the
Netherlands

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Preface

We all want to be part of a group of people that support us in becoming better versions of ourselves. Realizing some people face more difficulties in the quest to belong to a group because of prejudices and stereotypes based on certain (physical) features which set them apart from others, makes me feel rather uncomfortable. This master's thesis is an attempt to provide more insight into the influences of the changing social and political reality in the Netherlands and Turkey, illustrated by the lives and the sense of belonging in the Netherlands of ten Turkish-Dutch young adults.

The process of writing this thesis has not always been easy. I would not have been able to finish my thesis without the supervision of dr. Bert Bomert. I want to thank him for his constructive feedback and fast reactions. Second, I want to express my gratitude to my friends and family for their support and patience to listen to my stories. In specific, I want to thank Stijn, Jorike and Sjoerd for their critical view and general feedback.

Finally, I want to say thank you to the respondents. Without them I would not have been able to write this master's thesis. I am especially grateful for their honesty and willingness to speak so openly about sensitive topics; for taking the time to share their personal stories about their feelings and lives. Thanks to them I now have a more complete picture of the Turkish-Dutch community, of their struggles and dreams. I can only hope the readers of this master's thesis will learn from them as much as I did. Most of all I hope it will create more understanding and acceptance towards a community that is still struggling to find the space to express themselves and to be themselves. In other words, to belong.

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Abstract

Several studies on *belonging* indicate that changes in the social and political reality can influence one's *sense of belonging* to the point where someone can experience place-panic, disorientation and depression (May, 2011). A stable and inclusive society on the contrary, contributes to a grounded sense of belonging, which in turn makes people feel safe and helps them in getting more out of life (Lambert et al., 2013). Research suggests that the sense of belonging can be investigated by looking at five factors: autobiographical, relational, cultural, economic, and legal factors (Antonsich, 2010). Over the last few years more attention is given to the Turkish community in the Netherlands. This group has been part of the Netherlands for more than half a century now; yet, recent riots have shown the frustrations amongst a part of this group towards the Dutch society. Not only does a part of this community seem to be upset about their place in society, they are looked at with suspicion by fellow Dutch citizens for their alleged loyalty to Turkey and President Erdoğan. This research sketches the current sense of belonging of ten Turkish-Dutch young adults in the Netherlands and the way it is influenced by various political developments in Turkey and the Netherlands. Using in-depth interviews, the results suggest that the respondents have a rather deeply rooted sense of belonging in the Dutch society. Elements such as (memories concerning) their childhood and family, relationships, future dreams, economic and legal embeddedness are not easily shaken up. Various events, such as the failed coup in Turkey in July 2016, the subsequent Rotterdam riots and the 'Dutch' response to these events, have influenced the respondents' sense of belonging in two ways. On the one hand it influences some of them in such a way that they feel more 'Dutch'; the developments in Turkish politics have directed them to feel more distanced from Turkey and the Turkish-Dutch community in the Netherlands. On the other hand, some respondents clearly felt less 'Dutch' because of prejudices about the Turkish community and the discrimination they face in Dutch society.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the theme

In March 2017 riots erupted in front of the Turkish Consulate in Rotterdam. Groups of Dutch Turks gathered to listen to the speech of the Turkish Minister of Family Affairs, Kaya. She was to speak about the upcoming referendum on the Turkish Constitution, to be held in Turkey in April 2017. Previously, the plane of the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Çavuşoğlu was denied landing rights and the rally he was planning to speak at was banned, due to apparent security reasons. Kaya was not allowed to speak to the Dutch Turks either and in response a demonstration was held against this decision of Rotterdam Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb, who was supported by the Dutch Prime Minister Rutte (Gumrukcu & Escritt, 2017). On videos and pictures of that night, we can see the expression of anger and disbelief of many of the Dutch Turks in response to the decision. The crowd that gathered was chanting pro-Erdoğan slogans and some of them turned to violence against the police (Dirk Gang, 2017; OPEN Rotterdam, 2017).

Following that night, heated discussions were held about the legitimacy of Rutte's decision and to what extent the Dutch Turks' rights to listen to such a speech were taken away. Turkish President Erdoğan responded furiously and called the Dutch "fascists" and "Nazi remnants" (Gumrukcu & Escritt, 2017). Consequently, a diplomatic row broke out. All in all, it is an understatement to say that tensions flared up between the two countries. Lately, political leaders of both nations stated they want to work on improving the diplomatic ties ("Nederland en Turkije", 2018). Nevertheless, the question remains how such riots could erupt in the first place. Moreover, it is absolutely necessary to look into the issue of the distrust expressed towards the Dutch government and the loyalty to Erdoğan by Turkish-Dutch citizens.

The Netherlands is witnessing a wave of aversion to (public) pro-Erdoğan statements. The general (political) belief seems to be that Erdoğan should not interfere in Dutch society and should not be supported by citizens of the Netherlands. Examples include the aversion against 'Erdoğan's long arm', expressed by a majority of the Dutch House of Representatives and several prominent media and political representatives (AD, 2017; Media Courant, 2018; De Boer, 2018). Turkish-Dutch politicians are also pressured to distance themselves from Erdoğan, something they refuse to respond to (Bhikie, 2016; Van Ast & Jongejan, 2016).

Debates on integration have been going on for decades now. Over the years the notion of what a multicultural society should look like and how to establish integration has changed. The debate seems to be hardened and more recently a lot of attention has been put on the Turkish-Dutch community, their 'failed integration' and their assumed loyalty to Turkey. In this master's thesis

research, I examine to what extent ten Turkish-Dutch young adults feel at home in the Netherlands and how and to what extent this ‘sense of belonging’ is influenced by Turkish political events.

1.2 Research objective and research questions

The research objective is to shed light on the nowadays foggy and quite tense relationship and struggle between living in the Netherlands and feeling (not) at home there, and the assumed loyalty to the country of one’s ancestors. More specifically, the research focusses on Turkish-Dutch young adults, with ages ranging from 20 to 30, in the Netherlands. The choice for this group will be further explained in the sections dealing with the scientific and societal relevance. The main objective of this research is to clarify to what extent Turkish-Dutch young adults feel at home in the Netherlands and whether and how (political) developments in Turkey influence this sense of belonging in the Netherlands. The main research question will thus be:

To what extent do Turkish-Dutch young adults feel at home in the Netherlands and how is this sense of belonging influenced by (political) developments in Turkey?

The research is based on a qualitative study; therefore, I will not try to point out causal relationships between certain variables. However, it is possible to find patterns that indicate specific correlations. In order to be able to give an answer to this research question, it is necessary to divide the main question into several sub-questions. An elaboration of the notion of *sense of belonging* is needed in order to eventually be able to ‘measure’ and understand the situation of the Dutch Turks; therefore, the following sub-questions have been formulated:

- According to current studies, how can one’s sense of belonging generally best be described?
- How can the sense of belonging in the Netherlands of the Turkish-Dutch young adults best be described?

To make sense of the influence of political events and developments on the sense of belonging, I ask the next sub-questions:

- How do the Turkish-Dutch young adults perceive relevant recent (political) events – in particular – the coup d’état in 2016, the ‘silencing’ of two Turkish ministers in Rotterdam in 2017 and the ‘Dutch’ response to these events?
- How did these events – the coup d’état, the Rotterdam riots and the ‘Dutch’ response to these events, respectively – influence and shape the sense of belonging of the Dutch Turks in the Netherlands?

1.3 Relevance

1.3.1 Scientific relevance

During the last two years more attention has been paid to the Turkish-Dutch community in the Netherlands, especially because of some political developments and events that occurred in both Turkey and the Netherlands. Since these events only took place quite recently, not much scientific research has been done on how these (might) have influenced the Turkish-Dutch community. An opinion poll amongst 561 Dutch Turks, carried out by Ipsos, showed that 6 out of 10 Dutch Turks agree with Erdoğan's policies while 4 out of 10 approve of his 'Nazi remnants' statements addressed to the Netherlands (Groen & Kuiper, 2017). Such numbers are hard to interpret and might be misleading since no background information is given. In fact, according to researcher Bethlehem, one has to be critical regarding this kind of data. This random sample does not provide a representative picture because the database used is not a proper representation of the Turkish community (Groen & Kuiper, 2017). A qualitative study based on in-depth interviews is necessary for trying to understand what these people's positions are and how these positions are influenced by the societal context.

Moreover, this group of young adults – between the ages of 20 and 30 – forms a relatively new group of 'migrants.' They are obviously not migrants, since they are born in the Netherlands. The young adults in this thesis are the grandchildren of the guest-workers who arrived in the Netherlands during the 1960s and 1970s. Some of the young adults are part of the third generation – meaning their parents were born in the Netherlands – while some belong to the so-called '2.5th' generation: their parents were born in Turkey but migrated to the Netherlands at a very early age, which officially makes the parents the first generation. However, since they spent – apart from their very first years – their entire life in the receiving country, they can also be seen as second generation. This makes the young adults in this thesis part of the '2.5th' generation (Bielenin-Lenczowska, 2014). Research on the second generation often focuses on the children of the guest-workers arriving during the 1960s and 1970s (see: Crul & Heering, 2008; Crul & Vermeulen, 2003; Mügge, 2010; Timmerman, Vanderwaeren & Crul, 2003). The young adults in this thesis are, however, the grandchildren of these so-called guest workers. In contrast to the first and second generation, which both have been quite extensively researched (for example Bezcioglu-Goktolg & Yagmur, 2018; Crul & Doornik, 2003), not much academic research is done on this group in particular. It has been suggested that third-generation Dutch Turks have fewer social contacts with autochthonous Dutch people than their parents and grandparents have had (Otten, 2014). A study on radicalized Turkish-Dutch youngsters argues that young Turkish-Dutch people tend to share a "strong internal focus" within their own group, which gives them a sense of security and helps in dealing with social exclusion within society; moreover, it makes them feel like they *belong*

somewhere (Staring et al., 2014: 18). Studies concerning diaspora groups often suggest that these groups have multiple loyalties and “build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement” (May, 2011: 370). With this master’s thesis research, I will add knowledge and insight to the academic debate concerning diaspora groups, because it deals with the current state of these assumed multiple loyalties of the Turkish-Dutch diaspora group in the Netherlands.

Up to this day there has not been any substantial research on the *sense of belonging* of the Turkish community in the Netherlands. There are many (theoretical) studies about the concept of (*sense of*) *belonging* in general (for example Börner, 2013; May, 2011; Rouchy, 1995; Schein, 2008), as well as in reference to specific groups, such as the research by Eade (1994) on second generation Bangladeshi Muslims in Britain. The choice for using this concept in this master thesis is based on the idea that “belonging offers an apt window into studying the interconnectedness of social change and the self – as the world around us changes, so does our relationship with it” (May, 2011: 372). It perfectly fits the subject of how social changes such as Turkish political events and developments, influence people’s lives and their ‘loyalty’ to a particular country. The more theoretical studies about the *sense of belonging* and also the case studies using this key concept, are often concerned with people’s sense of belonging at a specific time and place. This study looks at how this notion might be influenced by foreign political developments; this knowledge can eventually contribute to a better understanding of the notion of the *sense of belonging*.

1.3.2 Societal relevance

What is the societal relevance of finding an answer to the research question? First of all, a better understanding of the sense of belonging of Turkish-Dutch young adults is beneficial for the Turkish community itself. The research sheds light on the apparent struggle of this group, the assumed feeling of not feeling at home in the Netherlands; by doing so it will create ways for self-reflection and make the search for dealing with these feelings a bit easier. A feeling like you don’t belong somewhere can have very negative consequences. One might, for example, experience place-panic where one “confront[s] the imminent possibility of there being no place to be or to go” or one can experience depression, disorientation and “a sense of unbearable emptiness” (Casey, 1993: x).

There is also a socio-political relevance. If the relationship between (foreign) political developments and the sense of belonging is better understood, it will be easier to deal with related issues. Subsequently, in the long run it might reduce investments in time and money for authorities that are responsible. There is an ongoing public and political debate about the issue of having a double passport (Groot, 2017; Jongejan, 2017; Naber, 2017). Many Dutch Turks have a Dutch as well as a Turkish passport and have the right to vote in both countries. This thesis also gives insight

into this duality and the assumed consequences of having multiple loyalties and not feeling at home somewhere. The research can thus also be used to determine the most effective social and integration policies.

The acquired knowledge can also contribute to less tensions between the Turkish and Dutch communities in general. There are not just tensions between people with different ethnic backgrounds within Dutch society, there also seems to be a segregation between the pro-Erdoğan and anti-Erdoğan electorate among the Turkish community. Some Turkish-Dutch critics of Erdoğan don't dare to express their worries about the political developments in Turkey, in fear of repercussions for their family in Turkey (Kamerman & Jorritsma, 2017). This research will not uncover any causal relationships between, for example, the support of a president and (not) feeling at home at a particular place, but it might indicate some patterns on which future research can be built.

In addition, exploring the sense of belonging in the Netherlands of 'migrant' groups tells us more about (social) mechanisms of inclusion- and exclusion. It highlights for example to what extent a (right wing) political discourse of who does and who does not belong, often based on notions of sameness and whiteness, influences the daily lives of non-native Dutch people in the Netherlands (Mee, 2009: 776).

Turkish-Dutch young adults have grown up in a different social and political environment than their parents and grandparents have. Even though there has been a lot of attention for Turkey and the Turkish-Dutch community lately, given the recent events there seems to be a gap in up-to-date knowledge. It is therefore important to look at how this group deals with seemingly increased anti-Islam, anti-immigrant sentiments, as well as with important political developments in Turkey. All in all, more insight in the everyday lives and feelings of belonging of these young people might help them in making more out of life. A sense of belonging somewhere "enhances meaning in life", it infuses life with meaning in many ways. It creates stability, a social identity and can even help people "to pursue higher order collective goals" (Lambert et al., 2013: 1420).

1.4 Reading guide

Chapter 2 offers a broader context to the current situation of the diaspora Turks in the Netherlands by elaborating on the development of the multicultural society in the Netherlands, including a brief history of the diaspora Turks in the Netherlands. Elaborating on these two subjects will make it easier to understand how the 'conflict' of (not-) belonging in the Netherlands came into being.

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical framework of this thesis. The most important theoretical insights in the current academic debate concerning citizenship, identity (construction), social-

cultural integration and belonging are to be explored. This chapter answers the first sub-question, concerning the definition of the sense of belonging.

Chapter 4 on Methodology focuses on the research methods used in this thesis. The choice for the qualitative method is explained as well as the process of gathering, coding and analysing the data.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, presents the first part of the results of the qualitative analysis. The in-depth interviews with ten Turkish-Dutch young adults are used to answer the third sub-question on how their sense of belonging in the Netherlands can be best described.

Chapter 6 presents the results of the qualitative analysis dealing with the political events and developments in Turkey and to what extent they influence the sense of belonging of the Turkish-Dutch respondents.

In Chapter 7, finally, an answer to the main research question is to be given, as well as reflections on the research process itself and recommendations for praxis and further research.

2 Context of the ‘Conflict’: Diaspora Turks in the Dutch Multicultural Society

2.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly dives into the history of the subject of this thesis. First, the history and development of multiculturalism in the Netherlands is be addressed (2.2). The Turkish-Dutch youngsters this research focuses on, were born and raised in the Dutch multicultural society. It is therefore helpful to look at the changed meaning(s) of ‘multiculturalism’ in the Netherlands over the years: how is (the concept of) multiculturalism influenced and perceived by the government and Dutch society?

The next section (2.3) tackles the history of the Turkish diaspora in the multicultural society of the Netherlands. The Turkish-Dutch young adult in this thesis are part of this diaspora. Consequently, it is useful to expound a bit further on this part of their background. Elaborating on these two subjects – the history of multiculturalism in the Netherland and the Turkish diaspora – makes it easier to comprehend the emergence of the apparent struggle of ‘not belonging’.

2.2 Multiculturalism in the Netherlands

Until the 1950s the Netherlands was a ‘pillar-structured’ society – society was socio-spatially segregated along lines of class and religion. The pillar-structured society faded out during the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless, it is still present in the collective memory of Dutch people (Crul & Doornik, 2003; De Rooy, 2014). Between 1945 and 1975 various waves of so-called *guest workers* came from Morocco, Turkey and Southern Europe. Amongst the waves of immigrants were also post-colonial immigrants. These had very different backgrounds: “Among them were metropolitan Dutch [...] Moluccan militia, Indo-Chinese, Afro-Caribbean and Surinamese originating from India, Java and China.” (Bosma et al., 2012: 7). Almost ninety per cent of the post-colonial immigrants were already Dutch citizens, which sets them apart from the guest workers (Bosma et al., 2012: 7). The Turkish and Moroccan guest workers were generally in a more difficult situation than the ‘Dutch’ Indonesian, Surinam and Antillean immigrants, because they had a very disadvantaged socioeconomic background and “did not share the common elements of history and language with the Dutch, as the colonial immigrants did” (Crul & Doornik, 2003: 1041).

Initially, the guest workers were expected to return to their homelands; the Netherlands was not (and according to the Dutch government at that time should never become) an immigration country (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007). There was no explicit policy dealing with the issues of integrating these new groups into the Dutch society (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007). The idea of

the pillar-structured society meant that people had to organise themselves around their religious or social identities. Thus, Turkish people were encouraged to ‘stick to their own’ and keep their ethnic and religious identities (Crul & Doornik, 2003: 1044).

Bosma (2012: 7) argues that although colonialism shaped the Dutch nation, it is not very visible in society; the only “pan-European publication on post-colonial immigrants even has ‘invisible’ in its title: Europe’s invisible migrants”. Furthermore, Bosma links the identity formations of the migrant-groups to the “erratic and convoluted ways in which the colonial past is rendered in Dutch collective memory: compounded by taboos and silences” (2012: 7). It was clear that there was not much attention for these new groups, for who they are and what their personal stories were. However, the arrival of more migrants and the growing awareness of the fact that many of the guest workers were not planning to leave, started to change the notion of multiculturalism. A 1974 Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy report showed that most of the people originating from the Mediterranean region would not go back to their respective motherlands. In fact, during the 1970s family immigration increased (Castles, 1986). One of the consequences was that the migrants were now recognized as permanent settlers and new policies were initiated. These policies included laws securing “their full improvements in legal status, housing, social situation. Legislation against racism and discrimination and foreign residents’ political rights improved” (Castles, 1986: 766). However, the arrival of (new) spouses and children was also met with a lot of (political) resistance and various political parties tried to put stricter regulations on marriage migration; this, in turn, was met with fierce opposition from left-wing parties such as GroenLinks and the Labour Party PvdA (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007).

The notion of integration and multiculturalism kept changing and the 1994 Integration Policy Paper for the first time emphasised the integration of the individual. The idea was now that people had to adapt to the receiving country instead of letting the migrants stay in their own communities. The new policies included national initiatives offering ‘introduction courses’ to the Dutch society for the newcomers (Bruquetas-Callejo et al. 2007; Crul & Doornik, 2003).

During the last few decades the numbers of asylum seekers increased, which influenced Dutch policies on integration and the public debate about multiculturalism as well. Beginning in the 2000s, the discourse concerning multiculturalism became very critical (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Scheffer coined the term ‘multicultural drama’, a term often repeated by populist right-wing politicians (De Wit, 2007). In the Summer of 2018, Minister of Foreign Affairs Blok stated that there is not one good example of a peaceful multi-ethnic and multicultural society. According to him, human beings are inherently not able to live with people who are different (“Minister Blok”, 2018). Even though he retracted his words, most likely because of fierce opposition from parliament members, it illustrates that negative feelings towards multiculturalism are clearly present in the

Netherlands. More recently, there is also a rise of anti-racist voices. People are fighting for more openness concerning the Dutch colonial history and other racist tendencies in the Netherlands, such as the anti-Black Pete movements¹. These movements have generally met with a lot of resistance.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning the rise of Islamophobia in the West and in specific in the Netherlands. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) states that Muslims in the Netherlands are: “the subject of stereotyping, stigmatizing and sometimes outright racist political discourse and of biased media portrayal and have been disproportionately targeted by security and other policies. They have also been the victims of racist violence and other racist crimes and have experienced discrimination” (Mepschen et al., 2010: 965). Mepschen et al. (2010: 965) state that more than half of the Dutch population think the Islam is “incompatible with ‘Dutch’ Jewish-Christian and humanist traditions and feel the admission of immigrants has been the country’s biggest historical mistake”.

3.3 Diaspora Turks in the Netherlands

In 2018 approximately 400,000 people with a Turkish background were living in the Netherlands. They make up a small 2,3% of the entire Dutch population (CBS, 2018). The first groups of labour migrants from Turkey came on their own initiative and worked in low-paying, low-status jobs (Castles, 1986; Crul & Doornik, 2003). There was, however, a continuing demand for more low-skilled workers in various industrial branches in the Netherlands, such as textile and metal industries. This led to a process of chain migration and in 1964 official agreements on labour migration were signed by the Netherlands, and Turkey and Morocco, respectively (Crul & Doornik, 2003). The Moroccan labour migrants were mostly recruited from the rural areas, which meant that most of them only went to primary school or Koran school. Many were illiterate and the women had even less schooling than the men. The Turkish first generation was a bit more educated, but most had only little schooling. After a peak in the number of migrants between 1970 and 1974 the official migration was put to a halt. The second generation often grew up in a family who had to live on minimum wages and whose fathers were mostly unemployed by the time the children finished primary school (Crul & Doornik, 2003).

Research on the second generation shows that the majority of them only took the lowest three educational levels: primary school and VMBO/MAVO. They had several disadvantages in comparison with their Dutch peers; for example, they could rely less on help from their parents who did not speak the Dutch language. This resulted in less opportunities than their ethnic Dutch peers for getting good and stable jobs (Crul & Doornik, 2003). The small group that did enjoy a higher

¹ Two examples of such movements are ‘De Grauwe Eeuw’ and Stop Blackface. See for more information: <http://degrauweeuw.blogspot.com/> and <http://stopblackface.com/kozp/>.

education, often started their own law firms or other companies. The third generation Turkish-Dutch youngsters, however, are showing better results in primary, secondary and higher education. Turkish-Dutch youngsters more often choose for a higher professional education level or university education. Nevertheless, in comparison with native Dutch youngsters, the Dutch Turks still have an educational disadvantage. This disadvantage can partly be explained by looking at motivational factors, a lower educational background and poor language skills of the parents, experiencing discrimination and not feeling at home at school (Staring et al., 2014).

Even though the Turkish-Dutch youngsters nowadays are doing better at school, they seem to be more socially segregated than previous generations. Moreover, a third of the Dutch Turks living in Amsterdam experiences relations with non-Turks as less friendly than before (Crul & Heering, 2008). The majority of the Turkish people live in so-called 'black neighbourhoods.' The inhabitants of these neighbourhoods predominantly have a non-Western background. Research (Staring et al, 2014) on Turkish-Dutch youngsters shows that most of them are positive about these neighbourhoods, because of the social contacts and close friendships people have, something the Turks living in 'white' or 'mixed' neighbourhoods often miss. Research has pointed out that even Turkish-Dutch people with a higher socioeconomic status tend to choose for these ethnically concentrated neighbourhoods, because of the established social networks and also out of fear of being confronted with discrimination in white neighbourhoods (Staring et al., 2014).

All in all, the Turkish-Dutch citizens are generally doing better in terms of education and at the labour market, but they are still very much a socially segregated group within Dutch society. Being segregated and confronted with racism or discrimination has serious consequences, such as an increased likeliness to participate in criminal activities or religious fanaticism (Staring et al., 2014). Turkish-Dutch citizens are also significantly more often depressed than autochthonous Dutch people (Veling et al., 2007). So far, the relations unfortunately don't seem to get any better.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework explores various key concepts connected to the theme of belonging, starting with an overview of the debate concerning the subject of ‘citizenship’ (3.2) and what it entails to be a citizen of a particular nation-state. Elaborating on this subject raises all sorts of questions related to this thesis, such as: What does it mean to be a citizen of the Netherlands? Being born in the Netherlands and having a Dutch passport and officially being a citizen of the Netherlands does not automatically make it feel like you *belong* there and neither does it guarantee that all (native) Dutch people perceive you as a Dutch citizen. These discussions are linked to the ‘construction of identity’ (3.2), the second subject addressed in this theoretical framework. Is there something like a ‘Dutch’ or ‘Turkish’ identity? Is it a fixed fact and if not, how does it come into being and what does it mean to identify with a certain group? The following section deals with several academic perspectives on how to measure social-cultural integration: in what ways does it differ from *the sense of belonging*, and how does it illustrate the concept of social-cultural integration as used in this thesis. The theoretical framework ends with an elaboration of the theoretical discussions on the theme of belonging itself. This will help us to better understand what the notion of the ‘sense of belonging’ (3.5) entails and eventually helps in deciding which definition(s) of belonging are useful and how to measure it.

3.2 Defining citizenship

3.2.1 Introduction to the concept

There is not one singular definition of the term ‘citizenship’. The academic debate concerning this term shows that one can look at this concept from different angles. With regard to this thesis, it is important to know what citizenship entails and to clarify how it helps in better understanding the notion of ‘the sense of belonging’.

3.2.2 Citizenship in the literature

“The citizen in the full sense cannot be better defined than by his participation in judicial or political office” (Aristotle, trans. 1984: 22-23)

According to Aristotle, a citizen is someone who actively participates in decision making. It then depends on the kind of regime, i.e. a tyranny or democracy, how many citizens a nation would

actually have – a monarchy with one ruler would consequently have one citizen, while a democracy as much as there are people entitled to vote. Over the centuries the definition of ‘true citizenship’ has changed; in fact, lately, there has even been a proliferation of all sorts of citizenships, such as for instance global and sexual citizenship (Anderson & Hughes, 2015).

Liberal theories on citizenship focus on reciprocal rights and duties, not so much on the relational aspects of citizenship (Kymlicka, 1995). Republican theories on citizenship see the political community as the intermediary between the individual and the state. Again, the relations between the various actors are solely seen in the light of claiming rights or owing duties to one another (Dagger, 2002).

Schinkel and Van Houdt give the following description of the term *citizenship*: “a state regulated technique of in- and exclusion and a crucial instrument in the management of populations” (2010: 696). A part of citizenship encompasses techniques of *in- and exclusion* regulated by the state. In a legal sense, being a citizen of a particular nation-state entitles one to certain rights; for instance to have a passport, to be able to travel freely throughout the country and to vote (Cousineau, 1993). However, identification with a nation-state (either the state of birth or the state of destination of migration) has become one of the primary elements in citizens’ self-identification. Modern nation-states usually don’t portray themselves as a random collection of people sharing the same legal status of citizens; they rather emphasize their shared common values and behavioural patterns, as expressed through a shared language, religion or culture (Anderson & Hughes, 2015).

3.2.3 Citizenship in the Netherlands

Schinkel and Van Houdt argue that there has been a change in the notion of citizenship in the Netherlands. An important dimension is the shift from the right to be different to the duty to be the same (Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010: 704). This duty to be the same, an interpretation of integration that we might call *assimilation*, sometimes causes clashes within the multicultural society of the Netherlands. In fact, this change can clearly be illustrated by referring to the 1994 Integration Policy Paper, in which more emphasis was put on ‘integration’, the idea that people had to adapt to the host country (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007).

The second transformation is the changing notion of responsibility. Where initially the state was supposed to be responsible for everyone, the opinion gained ground that there should be a shared responsibility between citizens and the government. People have the task to participate in society as best as they can and the government has to provide a safe environment (Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010). An interesting argument of Schinkel and Van Houdt is that a combination has been made, merging both the “communitarian care of a Dutch culturally grounded national community

– conceived as traditionally ‘enlightened’ and ‘liberal’” and the neo-liberal belief that a person has the responsibility to try to achieve membership of that community (2010, 696). This notion was taken into consideration when talking to respondents. Clearly, there is a certain expectation of citizens (and even more so of migrants) to try to *achieve* membership. Schinkel and Van Houdt also elaborate on *facilitative responsabilisation*, in the sense of “to *mobilize* an attachment to norms and values concerning individual responsibility that are deemed already present” (Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010: 709). There are serious consequences to this idea. It divides society into people with a migrant background next to native Dutch people; the first group is deemed to lack responsibility and to be culturally unadjusted, while the latter are seen as guardians of the norms of civil society (Dean, 2002 in: Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010: 709).

This raises all sorts of questions in reference to this research. Do the Turkish-Dutch young adults feel the pressure to adjust to the Dutch culture, do they experience this ‘call for responsibility’ to participate in Dutch society to become a ‘true and full’ citizen? According to Cousineau (1993: 139), citizenship encompasses both legal rights and the identification with the nation-state: “there must be other elements, beyond simply being a citizen of a country, that give meaning and substance to the relationship between the citizen and the state.” He argues that a sense of belonging therefore is an *essential* part of citizenship: “without that sense of belonging, the citizen is likely to feel alienation and hatred toward the state, and his or her actions will reflect this antipathy toward the collectivity.” (Cousineau, 1993: 140). This quote illustrates that citizenship and the sense of belonging are two intertwined concepts; an issue that, will be further explained in the section about belonging.

3.3 Identity and identity construction

3.3.1 Introduction to the debate

“It is generally accepted that successful multiculturalism requires that all subgroups within a society can develop a real sense of belonging to the mainstream society, expressed as a national identity.” (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim 2009: 106).

The two concepts – belonging and identity – are highly intertwined. Hence, it is necessary to explore the concept of identity (construction) and to see in what ways it differs from as well as overlaps with the sense of belonging. In order to develop a sense of belonging to a certain nation-state, one should be able to identify with the mainstream society (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind & Solheim, 2009). Even though the debate about what identity (and identification) exactly is, has been held for

many years, there is still no clarity on this subject. Nonetheless, we can distinguish various arguments in the debate about identity (construction).

3.3.2 Identity (construction) in the literature

One of the more controversial perspectives on (national) identity nowadays is the primordial perspective (Eller & Reed, 1993; Bačová, 1998). This view holds that “certain social categories are natural, inevitable, and unchanging facts about the social world” (Fearon & Laitin, 2000: 848). According to this view, identities are naturally given and cannot be changed (Kaplan, 1993). In the contrasting social-constructivist perspective on the other hand, identity is understood as being continuously influenced by (social) circumstances, for example social and cultural processes. Identity can change over time; “their membership rules, content, and valuation are the products of human action and speech” (Fearon & Laitin, 2000: 846). Social exclusion of particular (identity) groups and the creation of sometimes seemingly rigid and contesting identities within society, lies in the hands of the ‘elites’, who, according to Fearon and Laitin, are trying to keep or increase their hold on political power.

3.3.3 Identity in this research

Fearon and Laitin’s emphasis on the conscious creation of (contesting) group identities, sometimes done by politicians, is important to keep in mind in this research. In the Netherlands the debate on integration and who does and does not belong ‘here’ is often linked to someone’s identity. According to some, one has to become ‘Dutch’ in order to live in the Netherlands (“Dit is wat”, 2017; Huygen, 2016; Krins, 2016). I do not agree with this primordial belief that there is such a thing as *the* Dutch identity. Even if there is a concept of ‘being Dutch’, it is influenced by (and in turn, does influence) society all the time and it is therefore changeable. Human beings can identify with different groups at the same time – sometimes it is a conscious choice to opt for a certain group, sometimes it is not. An affiliation with a specific community can give a sense of security and warmth (Sen, 2006). However, this “strong -and exclusive- sense of belonging to one group can in many cases carry with it the perception of distance and divergence from other groups” (Sen, 2006: 2). In this thesis, the social-constructivist view on identity construction is be used. People’s sense of identity and belonging to a certain group is continuously influenced by social circumstances such as one’s upbringing, media and encounters with other people. Nonetheless, I will keep the primordial notion of identity in mind since this view seems to be quite often used in political discourse – think about both Wilders and Erdoğan – and therefore it can influence the Turkish-Dutch citizens, who might consider this view (of rigid and contrasting identities) a valid

one. If the Turkish-Dutch citizens see their Turkish identity as incompatible with the Dutch national identity, it will surely influence their sense of belonging in some way or the other.

3.4 (Social-cultural) Integration

3.4.1 Introduction to the debate

The section dealing with the notion of *citizenship* already gave us some insight into the debate on the exact meaning of integration and it showed that the discussion concerning integration is an ongoing one. In this section the various academic perspectives on how to measure the level of (social-cultural) integration are explored. Integration and the sense of belonging are connected, yet not interchangeable. It is therefore necessary to understand the difference between integration and the sense of belonging, and to make clear how the theories of measuring (social-cultural) integration are used in this thesis.

3.4.2 (Social-cultural) Integration in the literature

Every two years the Dutch governmental institution Statistics Netherlands (CBS) compiles a report concerning the level of integration of migration groups in the Netherlands. Integration is broadly defined as: “the extent to which people with a migration background and people with a Dutch background are growing towards each other” (CBS, 2018). They ‘measure’ the level of integration, mostly using quantitative data, by looking at developments in several dimensions, such as: social relations, education, employment, income, and crime. For this thesis the social-cultural integration in particular is relevant and is described more in-depth. A report from the Dutch Research and Documentation Centre on the social position of Turkish-Dutch people, elaborates on the various ways to operationalise social-cultural integration (Staring et al., 2014). Vermeulen and Penninx (1994: 3) see social-cultural integration as “the social contacts that members and organizations of minority groups maintain with the wider society and the cultural adaptation to that society”. The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) measures the level of social integration using demographic data such as partner choice, number of children women give birth to, interethnic contact and religious identification (SCP, 2009; Staring et al., 2015). Crul and Heering (2008) distinguish three features of social-cultural integration: social relations, partner choice and family formation, and religion and identity. The last feature, religion and identity, is broadly ‘measured’ by the preference for cultural values and the perception of the multicultural society.

These various ways to measure social-cultural integration are quite a-like. Crul and Heering (2008) use the most ‘broad operationalisation’ and, by doing so, take many factors into consideration which all together show, at least to some extent, someone’s (social-cultural)

embeddedness and/or rootedness in society. It is exactly this ‘rootedness’ of the Turkish-Dutch young adults that this research intends to capture and elaborates upon.

3.4.3 (Social-cultural) Integration

Looking at the ‘level’ of one’s sense of belonging, might at times look like measuring their level of integration. That is not the case in this research, because the respondents are all born in the Netherlands and most of their parents were either born there as well or migrated to the Netherlands at a young age. Therefore, it would not be proper to speak about a respondent’s ‘level of integration’, because: how can you integrate into a society you are already part of? Obviously, there is a difference between integration and the sense of belonging. The above-mentioned ways to ‘measure’ integration by looking at the social-cultural dimension, might give the impression that people with a migrant background have to be friends with (autochthonous) Dutch people or need to participate in Dutch cultural habits in order to be conceived as fully integrated (SCP, 2009: 227). It must be clear that this is not the case. However, as will become clearer in the next section dealing with the notion of the sense of belonging, participating in a society – in different dimensions such as the societal reality, the labour market, traditional practices – could influence one’s emotional embeddedness, and thus one’s sense of belonging, in a society.

3.5 Sense of belonging

3.5.1 Introduction to the concept

“The first image is that of the small child held securely by its mother, whether in her arms or, as I encounter it here, snug in a blanket against her back. Either way, I see calm eyes looking out at a wide world: a gaze that can enchant in its reflected wonder, or disconcert in its steadiness of regard, an engagement with that which is utterly foreign from a vantage-point which is utterly secure. The second image is that of the slightly older child, setting off on determined if unsteady feet to explore something of that wide and foreign world, and returning at intervals to mother before venturing out again (and usually slightly further).”
(Callaghan, 1998: 1-2)

This anecdote perfectly captures a part of belonging, namely, the feeling of being secure. To be able to do what you want, to fully express yourself, you need a steady ground on which you can build and rely on – in this anecdote this secure place is in the arms of the mother. This sense of security, having the freedom to express yourself, derives partly from past experiences (Antonsich, 2010). However, ‘belonging’ does not only come from the sense of feeling secure. In the next section

(3.4.2), I will explore the different definitions of ‘belonging’ in the current academic debate, followed by an elaboration on the choice for the working definition of ‘sense of belonging’ used in this thesis (3.4.3).

3.5.2 The notion of ‘belonging’ in the current academic debate

The concept of *belonging* has been analysed in different contexts, such as in research on citizenship (Cousineau, 1993), political mechanisms of in- and exclusion (Akinwumi, 2006; Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010) and belonging through landscape (Staeheli, 2003 in Schein, 2009). Usually, the notion of belonging appears in “*the sense of belonging*” (Fenster, 2005). The notion of belonging gets a more affective twist here and the focus is on the feeling of “being in place” (Mee, 2009: 772). This last notion of *the sense of belonging* is the key concept used in this thesis. Antonsich claims that many scholars tend to equate belonging with citizenship and/or identity. The sense of belonging is, however, a much broader notion than the concept of identity, which most often deals with identifying with a certain group of people. Someone does not need to identify as a Dutch person in order to feel at home in the Netherlands. Hence, the concept of belonging is better suited to use in this thesis.

The place-belongingness of the Turkish-Dutch young adults covers a broad scale of dimensions. “Belonging”, as Bhimji (2008: 414) suggests, “encompasses citizenship, nationhood, gender, ethnicity and emotional dimensions of status or attachment”. In other words, it is multidimensional. This multidimensional belonging must, according to Antonsich, be analysed “as a personal, intimate, feeling of being ‘at home’ in a place (place-belongingness)” (Antonsich, 2010: 644). In this thesis I will use this perspective on the sense of belonging.

3.5.3 A sense of belonging in the Netherlands

Antonsich lists five factors which influence one’s sense of belonging: autobiographical, relational, cultural, economic, and legal (Antonsich, 2010). If one wants to analyse someone’s sense of belonging, these various factors must all be explored.

The autobiographical factor encompasses memories and personal experiences attached to a particular place. According to Fenster, childhood memories are an important factor in this context. Another factor that has to be mentioned here, is that the presence of family members and the stories and memories of their ancestors about a particular place can also contribute to the sense of belonging. (Fenster, 2005). Diving into someone’s past and the positive or negative experiences someone has had, might give us more insight into why someone feels (not) at home at a particular place.

The relational factors “refer to the personal and social ties that enrich the life of an individual in a given place” (Antonsich, 2010: 647). These can be “weak ties”, in the words of Buonfino and Thomson (2007: 16), being encounters with strangers in public spaces. The inter-personal relations are way more important and are in fact, as some group analysts argue, essential for every individual. According to Baumeister and Leary (1995) the creation of a sense of group belonging is only possible through stable long-lasting relationships that are positive, caring and with frequent physical interactions.

The third factor, culture, includes various smaller concepts such as language, traditions, habits and religion. Antonsich (2010) focuses on (shared) language; this factor is, however, not applicable to the situation of the young adults. We can assume that, since they are born in the Netherlands (to parents who either were also born here or who grew up here from an early age on), there are no big issues concerning language barriers between Dutch Turks and other Dutch citizens. Hence, in this thesis I will focus on the cultural expressions, such as traditions, cultural practices and religion. If a group of people share the same cultural expressions it can evoke a “warm sensation”, a shared element of intimacy (Antonsich, 2010: 648). When people don’t share the same habits, the practices might on the other hand work as a demarcation line between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Not sharing the same traditions could thus influence one’s sense of belonging. I also want to briefly mention belonging through (cultural) landscape here, in the sense of a “materialized discourse [...] through its function as a symbol and its interpretation as representation” (Schein, 2009: 819). Schein states that some young African American men don’t dare to enter specific (white, middle class) public spaces, because they ‘don’t belong over there’. A landscape, someone’s everyday environment – i.e. the buildings, monuments and shops – often comes into being through political policies and might function normatively. This raises questions such as: is it welcome to all identities, or does it eventually tell us who does (not) belong there? In other words, do the Turkish-Dutch young adults perceive the landscape they are living in as representative and inclusive?

Economic factors influence the sense of belonging as they (can) generate a feeling of safety and at least stable material conditions for a person and his/her family. As is suggested by Yuval-Davis and Kaptani (2008), people who are taking part in casual labour, who have a professional life, experience a stronger sense of belonging to the country than others who don’t engage in work activities. Yet, it is not just the material safety that matters in this ‘economic embeddedness’. Someone who is economically involved might feel that “s/he has a stake in the future of the place where s/he lives” (Antonsich, 2010: 648). This is in line with Veninga’s (2005) notion of the sense of belonging. According to her, belonging can be divided into two concepts: *belonging to* (ownership) and *belonging with* (membership). The concept of ownership corresponds with this

economic embeddedness. It is useful in this thesis because it dives into the notion of feeling like one can make a change in or ‘add value’ to the Netherlands.

The last factor Antonsich (2010) elaborates upon are legal factors, including citizenship and resident permits. As mentioned before, citizenship and the sense of belonging are not equally in terms of meaning; they are rather interrelated. The legal factors are part of generating security which is in turn an essential part of belonging (Antonsich, 2010; Buonfino & Thomson, 2007; Lee, 1979). The feeling to be entitled to certain legal rights – such as the right to work, of access to health care and social benefits – does not only give a sense of safety but these rights are also needed to “participate in and actively shape one’s environment, which is deemed important in generating feeling of belonging” (Mee, 2009: 844 in: Antonisch, 2010). However, since the respondents are all Dutch citizens by birth, who all enjoy the same rights, it is not useful to use this factor in the sense that Antonsich provides us with. The Lefebvrian notion of ‘the right to the city’ is a more useful concept here. Looking at Fenster’s critical analysis of the Lefebvrian notion of ‘the right to the city’ (which might also be interpreted as the right to the nation), we notice a gap between having certain rights in a legal sense and actually enjoying these rights. *The right to the city* encompasses both the right to appropriate and the right to participate (Fenster, 2005: 219). To appropriate the city means that a citizen has the right to “full and complete use of urban space in their everyday lives. It is the right to live in, play in, work in, represent, characterize and occupy urban space in a particular city.” (Fenster, 2005: 219). Having these rights in the legal sense does not mean that everyone experiences the freedom to use these rights. For example, people can be afraid to use certain public spaces in fear of experiencing discrimination, sexism or racism (Fenster, 2005).

The second part, the right to participate, means that people have the right to take important roles in decision making. Be that as it may, research has shown that people from minority groups less often participate in decision making and thus have their interests represented less than fellow native, white middle-class citizens (Fenster, 2005).

3.6 Conclusion

The entanglement of the notion of citizenship, social-cultural integration, identification and the sense of belonging has become clear by now. The five factors provided by Antonsich, sometimes slightly altered in line with my own perspective, form the framework of the research. An elaboration on how these five factors are used in this research is be given in section dealing with the Methodology (4.2.1).

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

First of all, a literature study on the subject of ‘belonging’ has been conducted to answer the first sub-question: *According to current studies, how can one’s sense of belonging generally best be described?* The literature study is also used to design a broader theoretical framework. Following that, qualitative research methods are used to add knowledge and insights to the current debate concerning belonging in the Netherlands. The qualitative study is used to answer the other three sub-questions. This chapter also addresses the choice for (as well as the downsides of) qualitative research. Next, I discuss the process of collecting the data, followed by an elaborate explanation of the transcription, coding and analysis processes.

4.2 Qualitative research

4.2.1 The choice for qualitative research

The best way to deal with the sensitive subject of belonging somewhere, is to use in-depth interviews. This research method is a proper way to get a more comprehensive picture of the social reality. In contrast to most quantitative research, qualitative studies are more often concerned with the *why* than *what*. It deals with the meaning of things (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Qualitative research also allows: “critical reflection on the research process and on one’s own role as researcher” (Braun & Clarke, 2013: p. 7). I am very much drawn to this way of looking at scientific research, for it creates an open area where the researcher is not the ‘unknown and/or anonymous’ observer but reflects upon her/himself and is aware of the fact that he/she is part of the respondent’s reality. The respondent might be nervous or feels that he/she should give desirable answers. It is up to the researcher to be aware of this tension and make the respondent as comfortable as possible. In qualitative research the researcher is aware of the fact that the social reality consists of ‘different stories’, which all are equally meaningful and important to understand (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The researcher is reflecting on his/her own position, something I will further dive into in the next section.

4.2.2 Critiques on qualitative research

Qualitative research is generally perceived as less objective than quantitative research (Clifford et al., 2016). One might ask to what extent the stories told by the respondents are true and objective. To counter this problem, you have to accept their narratives “on its own merits as individual experience and the interpretation [of it]” (“Narrative Research”). The answers given by the

respondents must be seen in the light of the socio-cultural context and be valued as being their experiences and perceptions of life in the Netherlands.

Another critical note is that one has to interpret the data and therefore it is not objective anymore. The personal beliefs of the researcher can be biased and thus influence the way the findings are interpreted. In my case, over the years I have already formed an opinion about the multicultural society in the Netherlands and learnt that I am overall a proponent of this kind of society. The conflict between Turkey and the Netherlands and its (diplomatic) consequences have also influenced the way I look at Turkish-Dutch people. In general, I am tempted to defend people who are in a minority position and who are trying to stand up for their rights; yet, at the same time I do not consider Erdoğan's politics as being fruitful for the Turkish society. One might assume this means that a qualitative research can thus never be objective or credible. This, however, is not true. As long as I am aware of having certain prejudices, about for example the multicultural society in the Netherlands and Erdoğan's policies in Turkey, it will not harm this research.

Statistical generalization is very often not possible when conducting a qualitative research ('t Hart et al., 2009). The respondents are often selected to be part of the research, as is also the case in this research, instead of being a random sample. This means that they are not representative for the whole second- and third-generation Turkish-Dutch people. This implies that as a researcher, one cannot conclude that the results from the research can be applied to the whole group. However, one must keep in mind that it is not the goal of qualitative research to find statistical generalizable data. The aim is to understand people, to understand how they feel and to find out why they feel the way they do. However, by using analogy and/or comparability one could in a way generalize the content (Smaller, 1996). As mentioned before, the results of the research will not indicate specific correlations, but it might find some patterns which could also count for similar (Turkish-Dutch) groups.

4.2.3 Reliability and validity

One way to check the reliability of a research is methodological accountability, meaning that the researcher writes a detailed report of what he/she did. By doing so, others can check whether they trust the results of the research ('t Hart, Boeije & Hox, 2009). In this thesis I have tried to write down as best as possible what tasks I undertook at various points of the research and how I carried them out. The recording and transcription of the interviews also reduce the chance on (accidental) errors.

The validity of research can be judged by this method as well. Validity in short means that the researcher is measuring what he/she wants to measure. By writing down everything in detail, the researcher clarifies how he/she came to the interpretations of the results. Using member validity,

showing the results of the research to the respondents to check if the interpretations were right, is another way to tackle this problem.

4.3 Data collection

4.3.1 In-depth interviews

Through in-depth interviews data was collected to answer the following three sub-questions:

- How can the sense of belonging in the Netherlands of the Turkish-Dutch young adults best be described?
- How do the Turkish-Dutch young adults perceive relevant recent (political) events; – in particular the coup d'état in 2016, the 'silencing' of two Turkish ministers in Rotterdam in 2017 and the 'Dutch' response to these events?
- How did these events – the coup d'état, the Rotterdam riots and the 'Dutch' response to these events, respectively – influence and shape the sense of belonging of the Dutch Turks in the Netherlands?

The in-depth interviews were semi-structured, which means I made a list of questions in advance, organised around several themes I wanted to discuss. The Interview guide can be found in Appendix I. The questions of the interview guide were merely a guide for my-self during the conversation; while doing a semi-structured interview, it is not necessary to use every question or even ask them in chronological order. The interviewees are allowed to bring up other relevant topics and I wanted to keep the conversations as 'smooth' as and 'open' as possible, instead of a one-way questioning.

The topics discussed during the interview were: auto-biographical factors, relational factors, cultural factors, economic factors, and legal factors; together they make up one's 'sense of belonging'. After discussing this, I brought up the following three political events: the failed coup in 2016; the riots in Rotterdam in 2017, and the (re-)election of Erdoğan in 2018.

I will now explain the decisions on how I made the concept of 'sense of belonging' a 'negotiable' concept. The five factors mentioned earlier (Section 3.4.3) could all be sub-divided in smaller, more useful categories. To make the autobiographical factor better negotiable, I choose to divide it into childhood (concerning certain events during the childhood of the respondent) and narratives (stories told by their families about respectively Turkey and the Netherlands). The relational factor is addressed by looking at the social network of the respondents. The cultural factors are split up in cultural traditions, habits and religion. These categories are pretty obvious and to see how these factors are in fact made negotiable through questions, one could look at the interview guide. The economic factors are interpreted as the respondents' perspectives on getting their 'dream job' and to what extent they feel they can reach their goals in life. Finally, I decided to

divide the legal factors into the Lefebvrian notion (taking Fenster's critiques and my own considerations into account, see: Section 3.4.3) of 'the right to the nation', which in its turn can be divided into: the right to appropriate and the right to participate. In regard to the right to appropriate, topics such as 'being proud of the Netherlands' and 'ownership' were discussed. The right to participate is more concerned with political matters; the respondents were for example asked to what extent they feel represented by the Dutch government and whether they feel like they get a fair chance to participate in political matters themselves.

4.3.2 Finding respondents

I have interviewed ten Dutch Turks, either belonging to the second (more precisely the 2.5th) or the third generation. This means that they are all born in the Netherlands and that their grandparents moved from Turkey to the Netherlands. All of the respondents were between 20 and 30 years old. I used several platforms to reach out to respondents. I contacted Turkish-Dutch organisations such as AK-parti Hollanda, Alevi Gencleri and some student associations and asked if they knew of people who would be interested in participating in the interviews. At first, I mostly got reactions from Islam-orientated organisations; they provided quite a list of names of people who were willing to join the research. However, to get a group as diverse as possible, I also contacted other non-Muslim organisations and people.

The locations for the interviews were mostly sought in cooperation with the interviewee. I did not expect the respondent to travel far or to spend any money for travelling, thus I went to their city of choice and looked for a suitable location in advance. I wanted the respondents to feel comfortable, so the location should be safe and preferably a bit quiet. Most of the interviews were held in either the university library or a small coffee shop.

4.4 Transcription, coding and analysis

4.4.1 Transcription and coding

“Some have depicted qualitative analysis as craftsmanship, others as an art, and still others as a process of detective work.” (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009)

The interviews were all recorded, making it possible to transcribe them quite easily. I transcribed the data right after the interview was done. Transcribing the interviews helped me in getting familiar with them and I could already make some basic observations. After transcribing the data, I used Microsoft Word to code the collected data and to categorize them. This made it easier to eventually

analyse all the data. As Srivastava and Hopwood describe in their article on qualitative analysis: “the qualitative data analyst is constantly on the hunt for concepts and themes that, when taken together, will provide the best explanation of “what’s going on” in an inquiry.” (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009: 77). The ‘inquiry’ within this thesis is obviously the sense of belonging in the Netherlands; therefore, in order to be able to analyse and interpret the data as good as possible it was necessary to divide the interviews into segments and then code the segments. The process of coding the collected data was iterative. Iteration is a reflexive process that “is key to sparking insight and developing meaning and revisiting the data and connecting them with emerging insights, progressively leading to refined focus and understandings” (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009: 77). I eventually choose to use MS Word for the coding process, because I thought it made the coding process a lot easier to visualise; and, in my opinion, it gives a better overview than coding programs such as Kwalitan or Atlas.TI. Hahn’s coding guide for Microsoft programs was a huge help in this matter (Hahn, 2008).

4.4.2 Narrative and thematic analysis

In this research I merged two slightly different types of analysis; narrative analysis and thematic analysis. The advantage of the narrative method is that it focuses on the stories and experiences and uses these to answer a research question. It is thus often used in social sciences and in investigating ‘real life problems’, which perfectly suits this research (“Narrative Research”). The narrative analysis is located within the social constructionist paradigm; it takes the ‘stories’ and experiences of the respondents seriously as being valuable in themselves. It is thus another approach than the traditional social scientific analyses which tend to have more realist assumptions and focus on information collection (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). The personal stories are not only “a way of telling someone about one’s life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned” (Rosenweld & Ochburg, 1992: 1). Thus, this approach holds that, in contrast to the traditional claims, a research can never represent the ‘truth of people’s lives’. Uncovering such a ‘truth’ is no longer the object of analysis; it is the ultimate transition from the ‘what to the how’ (Earthy & Cronin, 2008: 3-4). Instead of looking at the narratives as being just ‘representative’ of the respondents’ lives, I try to look at the social circumstances involved in the production of these narratives and look at the wider social context in which the story is told.

It is, however, not an entirely narrative method since I interviewed the respondents using specific themes (the five factors provided by Antonsich to measure one’s ‘sense of belonging’). This thematic approach is somewhat different. It is still part of social constructionism and a qualitative approach. The difference is that this method you somehow try to test or confirm a hypothesis. Thus, one can have certain ideas about what to find in a specific group of respondents

and the interviews and the analysis will reveal either the presence or absence of the expected themes. That is clearly visible in this thesis. I do not have a clear hypothesis, but I do expect to find a certain ‘tension’ within this group of respondents in relation to the subject of belonging in the Netherlands; otherwise, there would be no sense in conducting this research. The discussed categories were chosen because I expect them to reveal the presence or absence of the sense of belonging. In this thesis I thus tried to merge the two methods, which eventually led me to use the already existing five categories but also to be open for new themes if they would arise during the interviews.

5 A Sense of Belonging in the Netherlands

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains an analysis of the qualitative data gathered through interviews with ten Turkish-Dutch young adults. The young adults – six men and four women – were all between the ages of 20 and 30. Seven of them study or have studied at the university, two have a college degree and one of them has a secondary vocational education degree. Important to note here is that initially it was my intention to interview Dutch Turks with no or a low education as well. However, due to difficulties in getting in touch with them and a lack of response and willingness to join the research from this group, I ended up with nine higher-educated young adults. The collected data helps in illustrating the current sense of belonging of Turkish-Dutch young adults in the Netherlands. All quotes can be found in the full transcription of all ten interviews in Appendix II.

As mentioned in Section 3.3, the young adults from the third-generation diaspora Turks in the Netherlands are generally living a more segregated life than their peers from other ethnic groups. It is suggested that they are more prone to get depressed and usually only interact with peers with the same ethnic and/or religious background. In this chapter, the five sub-categories of the sense of belonging are analysed and discussed; respectively the autobiographical factors (5.2), relational factors (5.3), cultural factors (5.4), economic factors (5.5) and legal factors (5.6). Some topics that are addressed in certain sections, could also have been discussed in other sections. To be able to discuss the complex and multifaceted factors as clear as possible, I had to make choices regarding their place in this chapter. The childhood friendships, for example, are discussed in the section on autobiographical factors and not in the section dealing with the relational factors. As will be addressed later on in the chapter, one of the differences between the friendships made in their childhoods and their current social networks, is that their present-day relationships are in a way more rationally established than the ones in the past. The friendships established in their youth are most of the time the consequence of living in a particular neighbourhood, just playing with the children you meet when you hang out on the streets. Once you get older and develop ideas about the world, you get more critical about whom you want to spend your time with. This ‘choice’ in establishing certain relationships is different from how they used to do it in the past and worth discussing in a different section.

5.1.1 Thinking about the Netherlands and Turkey

This section is merely an introduction to the full elaboration of the sense of belonging of the Turkish-Dutch young adults. Some parts of the answers given, will be discussed more in-depth in later sections of this chapter.

‘Which words pop up into your mind when you think about the Netherlands?’, was the first question asked during the interview so as to get a quick impression of how the respondents describe their country of birth. Half of the respondents said, without hesitating, that the Netherlands is their home. Before the interviews took place, I had not told the respondents that my research was mainly revolving around the sense of belonging and feeling at home somewhere. The fact that some of them did relate the question to ‘feeling at home’ this quickly, is therefore worth mentioning. However, since I have not done the same research on their Dutch peers, I do not know whether Dutch young adults would have answered the same. It must be said though, that the respondents knew that the research was about their lives and experiences in the Netherlands being a Turkish-Dutch citizen. Hence, that might have influenced relating the question (‘associations with the Netherlands’) with the notion of feeling at home in the Netherlands. A few examples:

Yes, the Netherlands is really my home, wherever I go. Whether I am in Turkey or in Belgium – my father is currently living in Belgium and I have lived there for quite some years myself – and yes, while being there I always have that nostalgic longing for the Netherlands, to just go to the Albert Hein and buy some cheese [...]. The Netherlands is actually just mine, that’s how I see it. (Respondent 10, Woman)

Home. Yes, my home country. I was born and raised in Amsterdam and I don’t know.. I really had the feeling I could do everything over there. [...] I have always had the feeling that you can just be yourself. (Respondent 9, Woman)

The phrase of “just going to the supermarket” is expressed in such a way that it shows a deep sense of ‘familiarity’ with the everyday Dutch ‘environment’. A place where you don’t easily run into difficulties or many obstacles; a sense of security even. Both respondents also felt the need to add their worries about the future:

And I find it really difficult and confronting when there are people who say: ‘Yeah, well, you are not from here because you have a different culture’. But I don’t see it like that, I don’t experience it that way! (Respondent 10)

However lately I do find it a pity, that when I think about the Netherlands I also start to worry, in the sense that the social debate is taking on more extreme forms, it is polarizing. That there are some prejudices, so that does worry me. It is, however, not the first thing that comes to mind when I think about the Netherlands, so it is really something new.
(Respondent 9)

It is exactly this tension, that seems to be more evident nowadays, that is explored in this thesis: the sense of belonging and looking at how political developments – involving the polarized societal debate – might be influencing that.

Five of the respondents associated Dutch society with being ‘open’ and ‘tolerant’. Respondent 6 says: *When I think about the Netherlands, I just think about home. I feel at ease here. I can easily express myself, so, freedom of speech of course. I can just talk to anyone if I’d want to.* This feeling of being able to freely speak your mind is in a way also part of feeling secure. However, we will see that not all of the respondents always feel the freedom to say what they want (Section 5.6.2).

The same question was asked about Turkey as well. This could show us whether the young adults have the same (emotional) associations with Turkey, such as feeling at home. This was not the case however. Four of the respondents immediately said they thought about family and holidays:

Family, family. A big part of my family lives there. We go there on a holiday every year or sometimes every two years. I really think about cosiness as well; cosiness a lot. Other things I think about when I think about Turkey.. Holiday. Holiday of course. A bit of Islam as well, because the Islam is a bit more present there in the street scene, with more mosques and the prayer call five times a day. But it’s more about family so to speak, less about being at home. (Respondent 9)

This respondent was the only one who mentioned the Islam as being associated with Turkey. This is remarkable, first of all because seven of the respondents identify as Sunni Muslims, three of them as practicing Muslims. The other three respondents identify as Alevi, a (religious) minority group in Turkey. Secondly, it has been suggested that due to new immigrant groups clashes could erupt between the people belonging to nation-states and the people belonging to global ‘imaginings of communities such as the *Umma* (the global Islamic community) or people being part of a diaspora

group (Eade, 1994). However, at a first glance, the respondents in this research do not seem to relate to the Islamic side of Turkey as much as they relate to the Dutch society as being their home country.

Only one respondent said he thought of Turkey as “a little bit like home” (Respondent 6), whereas two other respondents specifically said it was not like being home.

[It's] not like being home, in the way the Netherlands feels like home to me. (Respondent 4, Woman)

Family and holidays. But that is not my home, no. (Respondent 10)

The last association worth mentioning here is the emphasis on less freedom and less openness in terms of dialogue and politics, as shared by three respondents. Two of them even stated that Turkey is more dangerous. One example:

You have to be more cautious, also with what you say, because it is a different culture. You cannot say everything over there what you could say [in the Netherlands], so in that sense you have to be cautious of what you say. (Respondent 3, Man)

Where a sense of security was an important feature regarding the Netherlands, the Turkish society is seen as a bit more dangerous, which possibly influences the sense of feeling at home in Turkey.

5.2 Autobiographical factors

5.2.1 Childhood

This section describes the autobiographical experiences of the Turkish-Dutch young adults. It dives into personal experiences and memories the young adults have from their childhood years, in particular regarding the social environment in which they grew up. First, the experiences of living in a white or mixed neighbourhood, going to a white or mixed school are sketched, followed by an analysis of the ways in which these experiences might influence their sense of belonging in the Netherlands. Secondly, an elaboration is given of the stories they have (or have not) heard in their early youth. As addressed in the theoretical framework, narratives are an important feature in creating one's identity.

5.2.2 Growing up

During the interviews the young adults were asked to describe the area they grew up in. More than half of the respondents grew up in a white neighbourhood and went to fairly white schools. The other four grew up in more mixed or even 'black' neighbourhoods. In areas where one family or person is in a minority position, a process of 'othering' could easily take place. Othering is defined as "the process of perceiving or portraying someone or something as fundamentally different or alien" ("Othering", n.d.). Sharing the same ethnic or religious background often creates some kind of collective identity, where the shared factor acts as an invisible border demarcating 'us' from 'them' (Gregory, 1995; Kristof, 1959). The feeling of being part of a community – based on notions such as ethnicity or religion – gets tighter when there is an 'Other' involved. One would assume that Turkish-Dutch children who grew up in predominantly white neighbourhoods might have experienced 'being othered' and in some way even being rejected. However, the opposite is true. All of the respondents had good memories of their childhood related to the neighbourhood they grew up in. Almost all of them mentioned that they played with the children who lived in the same area, regardless of someone's ethnic background. For the respondents living in mainly white neighbourhoods this meant that in their early youth they mostly played with white children. None said ever having felt different from the white autochthonous children, at least not in a negative way.

Most of them went to a predominantly white school, either a Christian or public school. They never been aware of the fact that they were 'different' from the other kids in their class. One of the respondents who went to a predominantly 'black' school said:

Yes, [the Dutch children] were the minority group in absolute numbers. But as a child, I have never had the feeling that there was a division between the Dutch children and the other children, so to speak. (Respondent 10)

Someone who went to a predominantly white school had the same experience:

Actually, everyone just got along with everyone. But I also, at that age, didn't really have the feeling that we were Turkish. At that age you don't really think about nationality or identity. (Respondent 8, Man)

Thus, in schools with predominantly white children as well as schools with predominantly 'allochthonous' children, they never really experienced being 'the other'. A positive notion, since memories in your early youth can be of great influence in how you construct your world when getting older (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004; Fenster, 2005). One respondent said that as a child he never consciously thought about the diverse backgrounds in his class, but he did like the diversity in his class:

I did notice that I had something 'of my own' that I could 'add' to such a school. My mother made Turkish pizza's for example and I had a friend from Sri Lanka and his mother also made something. Everyone had their speciality, which was always so much fun.
(Respondent 3)

Respondent 7 spoke about being bullied at school. She did not dare to say if it was because she was from Turkish descent, but it was quite noticeable; she and her two friends – one being Sri Lankan, the other Spanish – were the laughingstock of the class. Nevertheless, she added that this only happened at primary school; outside school she had Dutch friends with whom she had never experienced this.

Going to high school meant a kind of transition for some of these adolescents. We will see that the respondent's feeling of belonging somewhere can change over time. This happens because people themselves experience inner changes, but it might also be a consequence of relational and cultural changes around them. These changes eventually also contribute to the sense of belonging (May, 2011).

Respondent 4 mentioned that she had never really met 'people with a migration background' until she went to high school. She always had Dutch friends and never felt excluded. However, this changed when she went to high school:

That is where my battle began, between my culture and who I am. In my childhood I had never thought about the fact that I am different. I had never experienced being 'someone with a foreign background'. [...] I really always felt Dutch. But once in high school certain issues came forward; my parents are not religious [...] but [in high school] I came in contact with teenagers and children with a migration background who were religious [...]; so, I did get a big struggle with my identity. (Respondent 4)

She eventually dealt with this duality by mainly being friends with people with a migration background. She wanted to get to know other cultures and tried to create her own identity that way. She had often been excluded during her high school period, by the Turkish-Dutch community because she was 'too Dutch' in their eyes. Yet, she also mentions that during that time the Dutch political arena began to change – with the murder of right-wing politician Fortuyn; Dutch people began to approach her with more suspicion. She thus neither really belonged to the Turkish-Dutch community nor to the Dutch community, which caused a period of frustration and loneliness. A more in-depth elaboration about '(not) belonging to' the Turkish-Dutch community will be discussed in Section 6.3.2

Three respondents mention that going to high school meant that the differences between them and Dutch teenagers became more visible. This was mainly due to the fact that the now about 15-year-old teenagers started to become more involved with the Islamic faith, in the sense that they were doing the Ramadan or did not join fellow classmates in their experimental phase of going to parties or using alcohol or drugs. This more visible difference did not automatically have negative consequences. For Respondent 8 however, it meant he did feel some distance towards the rest of his class, especially when they started making 'jokes' regarding his personal choices and beliefs. Yet, he also mentioned that he did have Dutch friends in his class, who were "*totally different and way more open [than the rest of the class]*"

Respondent 10 went to an Islamic primary school in the Bijlmer, a black neighbourhood in Amsterdam. She had a great time and never experienced anything bad in relation to her background. However, while in high school she had moments where she questioned herself whether she actually belonged to the group or not:

There was a period where I thought like... I don't know if I truly belong here. But that is especially at certain occasions; like, when you go on a camping trip with your classmates and you want to eat Halal food or you cannot eat pork, that kind of things, but it's not like I truly felt bad about it. However, I did feel a bit uncomfortable because you have to account

for you choices, so you have to say 'yes, I am a bit different', yes, you are being confronted with that. (Respondent 10)

Not only within this group she was sometimes confronted with her non-Dutch background, she also tells a story about a new district police agent who came to their high school to introduce himself. He asked about her educational level. She answered that she was doing pre-university education, already sensing he expected her to do a lower educational level. He responded with, *“Oh really, well, many people with your background can make it till 4th grade and after that they cannot keep it up anymore, so be careful with that”*. Another example she gave is a stranger in the supermarket telling her and her mother: *“You Turkish cunts, go back to your own country!”* Studies have shown that ethnic discrimination has serious consequences for ethnic groups to achieve a sense of belonging (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009). This respondent, however, later on mentions she never really has been discriminated against and calls herself “totally Dutch”. Experiencing these kind of negative and biased prejudices does confront her with the fact that some (Dutch) people don't consider her (and Dutch Turks in general) as to be fully Dutch. Nevertheless, these confrontations never made her question her 'Dutchness': *“No, there is no doubt about that, no. No, not at all”*.

5.2.3 Visiting Turkey

During the interviews we discussed the visits to Turkey, because sometimes one's sense of belonging to a particular place becomes more visible while being away from that place. In addition, the assumed 'loyalty' to Turkey is worth looking into. Some research suggest that there is a dichotomy between mobility and territorial belonging. 'Mobile' people – long-distance travellers – would have a weaker sense of belonging (Gustafson, 2009). Other research shows a more complex picture of belonging, suggesting that migrants can develop multiple senses of belonging to both sending and host countries (Castles, 2002). Another study claims that a temporary stay abroad would also reduce national attachments (Kennedy, 2004). However, various studies also emphasize that mobility and belonging are not (necessarily) contrasting and suggest that 'mobile' people can also experience strong territorial bonds (Gustafson, 2009). In fact, Van der Land (1998: 133) states: *“Mobility might in fact be conducive to forming ties with a place”*. The following section shows us to what extent the respondents enjoy(ed) going to Turkey and how they experienced going back to the Netherlands after being away for more than a month.

All ten respondents go to Turkey to visit family members and to have a few days or weeks as a 'real' holiday there, meaning they enjoy the sun, sea and beach vibe. Most of them have been going

to Turkey for at least five weeks a year from an early age on, some even going there for several months, spread over a year. Only one respondent mentioned it is a bit like coming home (Respondent 3) and even though all of them like being there and enjoy the company of their family members, eight out of ten expressed being so happy to return to the Netherlands after those long weeks were over. Only two talked about being really sad when leaving Turkey and especially about leaving their families behind. One woman answered:

[It was] a drama. Drama. The first weeks in the Netherlands we are always a bit down and depressed, so to speak. Because we are missing everyone. This house in the Netherlands, it seems to be so big and empty. Because over there we were always together with the whole family. [...] I see my family in the Netherlands less than I see my family over there! Of course, I only see them once a year, but it is for six weeks straight. So, it's different from over here. [...] Over there we have a closer relationship with each other, while over here, everyone is ... well, it's a logical thing by the way, everyone here has their own job and their own life of course. (Respondent 9)

Asked about going back to the Netherlands, three respondents answered in quite a visual way. All three described the travel from Turkey to the Netherlands, one went by plane and two by car. Their descriptions came down to seeing the landscape change during the journey starting in Turkey and finally reaching the borders of the Netherlands after a long trip, seeing the highways change and starting to recognize the familiar landscape of the Netherlands. These three respondents mentioned that the experience of crossing the Dutch border and seeing the familiar meadows and highways, was a sense of 'coming home', a positive experience:

If you take the car and you leave Turkey and drive through Bulgaria, the misery begins. When you cross the Dutch border and you are somewhere around Nijmegen, you think: 'Okay, now I am home'. [...] When I drive into Rotterdam, I'm thinking: 'Alright, I am home.' That feeling is very good. (Respondent 1, Man)

Yes, so you are in the plane and you look down and see those meadows, which are so 'rectangular' and the rain, yes, I always quite liked that. (Respondent 3)

And as you notice the highways become more beautiful, you knew you were going back to the Netherlands. And that was a good feeling. Because we all do see the Netherlands as our home, so to speak. (Respondent 8)

This description is in line with the description of ‘home’ Antonsich provides us with. Home is not just the material space and building you are living in, it is also “a symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security, and emotional attachment.” (Antonsich, 2010: 646).

5.2.4 Narratives

All landscapes are haunted by ghosts. [...] Places, as well as the landscapes that allow us to grasp them, are thoroughly narrative constructs. They would not exist as places were it not for the stories told about and through them.” (Price, 2004: xxi)

Narratives are an important factor in creating an emotional connectedness to a certain place. One can imagine that people who hear either solely negative or positive stories in their early youth about a country, might be quite influenced without even experiencing it that consciously. Schein (2009: 812) emphasizes this: “the telling of stories about ourselves and our places is central to identity and community and to creating and maintaining a sense of belonging.” It is therefore important to know what kind of stories the respondents heard at home, from their parents and their grandparents. Their grandparents are the ones who migrated to the Netherlands during the ‘guest workers wave’, who in general were used to have low-paying and low-status jobs. Did the respondents hear about those stories? And in what way did it influence them?

Not only are the stories about the Netherlands worth asking, also the stories about Turkey, the country of origin. Keeping in mind the assumed loyalty to Turkey, we should find out if the respondents really only hear ‘grand’ stories about Turkey and whether this influenced their ability to really feel at home in the Netherlands.

Five of the respondents said to have heard quite a lot of stories about the past, both from their grandparents and parents. Two mentioned that most of the times these stories only included a lot of information about the history of Turkey, something they find interesting and worth learning about. However, even though all of the respondents do know the stories about the guest workers coming to the Netherlands, these stories were not told that often:

Well, not that much. My father didn't tell a lot about his childhood, my mom kind of did. My grandparents didn't tell a lot either. Yes, it was the well-known story so to speak, as in 'we came here to work' and now you are here. (Respondent 9)

The stories told about Turkey were mostly told in connection to the reason why the guest workers left. Most of the respondents were able to tell why their (grand)parents left, often because of

financial reasons or the struggle of not being (religiously) free. In that sense, the stories about Turkey were not overly positive. The stories about the Netherlands were more mixed. Six of out ten mentioned the hard times their grandparents and parents had while living in the Netherlands during the first few years. The stories about the dirty work and small, expensive living accommodations, make some of the respondents feel angry. One respondent (Respondent 4) mentioned that it makes her angry that the Syrian refugees who came to the Netherland over the last few years, have been treated way better than her parents. Her parents never got the help they needed with learning the Dutch language and integration. However, and this is of course part of our human nature, she has mixed feelings about these stories. On the one hand she said the stories told by her parents were quite positive and she experienced them as quite remote from her personal life. On the other hand, she talked about how her parents had isolated themselves, while not getting any help with integrating, and said she recognizes her own behaviour in that. In high school she struggled with her own identity and during the early 2000s – with 9/11 and the murder of Fortuyn – she experienced a change in how (Dutch) people saw her. She started to isolate herself and ended up being basically surrounded solely by people from other cultures; just like her parents experienced.

The stories told by their grandparents do bring up some kind of emotional feelings by most of the respondents. They realize that the decision made by their (grand)parents to move to the Netherlands has directly influenced their lives. Three of the respondents talked about how they carry the stories of their grandparents with them. This might sound like some kind of heavy burden, but it is in fact quite the opposite. Most of them realize that the Netherlands offers them much more opportunities than they would ever have had in Turkey. They learnt from the stories told by their (grand)parents and try to make as much out of life as they can:

They always say like: 'We didn't have [opportunities] there but they are here, so you have to take those opportunities.' That phrase is something we heard a lot from an early age on. [...] So that phrase ... I really do feel connected [to the stories] in the sense that my grandparents came here, and I really need to make something out of life. (Respondent 9)

As said before, people can experience mixed emotions at the same time. As sorry as the respondents might be for their (grand)parents for having had to do the dirty jobs, which makes them feel angry, they are grateful for being in the Netherlands and realize that over the years a lot has changed. Four respondents specifically mentioned that those stories come from a 'different time' and that the Netherlands they know is a lot different from what it was back then.

Dixon and Durrheim (2004:459) suggest that belonging and the sense of being at home, not only originates from individual (autobiographical) experiences and memories with a place; it is also “a group response, wed to the history of ethnic and racial relations and inflected to its core by political struggles over space and place.” From this perspective the rootedness of the Turkish-Dutch adolescents in the Netherlands can be explained better. The shared struggle of their (grand) parents who had to live through sometimes pitiful circumstances in making a living for their family and eventually somehow getting their own place in Dutch society, might have affected the Turkish-Dutch respondents in such a way that they feel more grounded in that society. The fact that their (grand)parents ‘fought’ for recognition and their place in the Netherlands, makes the respondents proud of this ‘acquirement’, making their sense of ‘rootedness’ in the Dutch society stronger.

5.2.5 Summary

In contrast to what the theory of ‘othering’ tells us, the process of ‘othering’ did not quite happen during the early years of the respondents. As children they were not aware of the fact that they had a different ethnical background than their Dutch classmates. However, while growing up and going to high school, for some of them things changed. Whereas some had never felt ‘Turkish’ or ‘different’ in a predominantly white environment, going to a more diverse high school all of a sudden made them more aware of ‘not being the same’. For some this meant they were suddenly faced with that ‘other’ part of their identity, namely being Turkish and the feeling of having to choose between being Turkish or Dutch. This might have temporarily shaken up their self-identification and for one respondent it led to isolating herself more from the Dutch society.

The visits to Turkey do not seem to really affect the respondents in an emotional way, except for the two respondents who clearly miss their family when they are in the Netherlands. But as Van der Land (1998) has suggested, their trips to Turkey made their connectedness to the Netherlands even more visible. The longing for the familiar Dutch environment came forward, clearly showing their sense of feeling at home in the Netherlands.

The narratives told by their (grand)parents about both the Netherlands and Turkey generally made their sense of belonging to the Dutch society stronger because the stories about the Netherlands were mostly positive and even the more negative stories about working low-status jobs eventually contribute to a stronger rootedness in society because the respondents feel like they (or their (grand)parents) have ‘earned’ their place in society.

5.3 Relational factors

5.3.1 Introduction

In this section the (friendly and romantic) relationships of the respondents are to be discussed. As mentioned before (Section 3.5.3), inter-personal relations are at the core of every individual's needs. Not only do these relationships enrich your life in many ways, it attaches you to a certain place as well. Not all relations are equal, in the sense that some can be more emotional and meaningful than others. In reference to the current research, certain questions may come to mind, such as: what role does ethnicity and religion play in establishing long-lasting relationships in the lives of the Turkish-Dutch adolescents? and, how important do they deem ethnicity or religion in the search for a life partner?

A sense of belonging to a certain country also encompasses a sense of *group* belonging. Stable, positive and significant relationships with frequent physical interactions contribute to the creation of a sense of group belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). It is not up to the researcher to claim whether someone belongs to a certain group or not; I am not the one to judge whether the respondents belong to the 'Dutch' group, whatever that 'Dutch' group may be. Thus, a person who is, for example, only friends with people with a Turkish background is not necessarily not part of Dutch society. However, elaborating upon how the respondents themselves judge their own relationships; looking at how they consider establishing relationships in general and the question whether they have ever felt excluded or had the feeling they could not become friends with certain people with a specific ethnical background, *will* give us some insight into the sense of (group) belonging in general.

5.3.2 With whom do I belong?

A study on socio-cultural distance and the position of migrant groups in the Netherlands suggests that over the recent years a part of the Turkish-Dutch youngsters experiences a removal from autochthonous Dutch peers. This division is mostly caused by clashing worldviews and the experience of not being really accepted by the Dutch people (SCP, 2015). Three of the ten respondents, all three originally being Alevi, mentioned to have almost solely friends with a Turkish-/Kurdish Alevi background. One might assume this means they only interact with people from the Turkish community because they feel very 'Turkish' themselves and don't feel any connection to the Dutch society. The opposite is true, however. It is remarkable that these three Alevi respondents stated more often than the others how connected they are to the Netherlands and that they don't understand Turkish-Dutch people who do not feel at home in the Netherlands. This shows that the connection between relationships and the sense of belonging is not as straightforward as one might think at first. These three respondents basically only have friends with a Turkish

background, yet at the same time express their rootedness in Dutch society more than once and clearly mentioned to not identify with just the group that is only loyal to Turkey.

While Respondent 6 also mentioned that he basically only has Turkish and Kurdish Alevi friends, he also said he votes for the PVV (the right-wing political party) and tends to be very critical of people who don't want to integrate into Dutch society:

I have always said, you should integrate into the country you live in. Yes, you always have to integrate, so to speak. (Respondent 6, man)

It is crucial to keep in mind that people are multifaceted beings, with sometimes contrasting emotions and even contradictory senses of belonging. This is even more visible with people with a mixed ethnical background (Ifekwunigwe, 1999).

Respondent 7, a woman who during her youth only had Dutch friends and who didn't feel connected to the Turkish (Sunni) girls in her class, now only has Turkish and Kurdish Alevi friends. She noticed that the friendships she had made during high school with Dutch friends deteriorated quite easily. Turkish-Dutch young adults often experience that their relationships with Dutch peers are more vulnerable than with other Turks (SCP, 2015). Respondent 7 also stresses that the relationships with her Alevi friends are more stable, mainly due to the fact that she encounters them way more often in her daily life because they share the same cultural or religious practices. This reasoning is shared in some way or the other by other respondents. Most of the respondents have quite a mixed group of friends in terms of ethnic backgrounds. However, some of them do say that their closest friends have a Turkish background. Respondent 5, a student at the University of Leiden with mostly Dutch friends, talked about trying to find Turkish people in the predominantly white university. This is not because he is not 'integrated well enough' – he described himself as a "successfully integrated person" – but because he would have a slightly better connection with them than with his Dutch friends. The main reason for feeling closer to fellow Turkish-Dutch people is the shared set of values. Almost all of the respondents stated that they make friends based on shared values on life and want to recognize something of themselves in the other.

The chance of finding 'equals' in that sense, is of course larger when you are raised in similar circumstances: growing up in a Turkish household, with shared cultural or religious values and habits, with (grand)parents who moved to the Netherland and thus hearing similar stories in your childhood. Respondent 8 described it as follows:

Personally, I can connect to anyone. However, if we talk about the time it takes to generate that warm feeling towards someone, a warm relationship, then it takes way less time, in my

case, with Turkish peers. [...] You could say that objectively it is nonsense, since you wouldn't even know each other yet. But it is purely because you meet someone who is Turkish as well, that you immediately feel like that person cares about you because you are also Turkish. That is a typical Turkish thing. So, when I meet Turkish people, I tend to make a connection more easily. (Respondent 8)

In the multicultural society of the Netherlands, this would mean that as long as the respondents are able to connect to fellow Turkish-Dutch citizens, they feel grounded in the Netherlands because of their social networks. The question is, would they feel just as 'grounded' in the Netherlands if they would be living in predominantly white neighbourhoods or studying or working at overly white places where they cannot connect to the people as deeply as they can with Turkish-Dutch people?

It must be remarked, however, that since we're talking about Turkish-Dutch adolescents, it is not just the set of 'Turkish' values that is seen as important in establishing relationships. The same guy who talked about becoming friends with Turkish people more easily, said that at the end of the day he can also become close friends with Dutch people. Having grown up in an overly white neighbourhood and spending lots of time with Dutch families, eating dinner at their place and going on trips with Dutch classmates, he said he is not 'as Turkish' as some other Turkish-Dutch people. He feels at home with Dutch people as well. He described himself as a 'chameleon', being able to be friends with many different people. In his case it doesn't seem to have a negative impact on his life. Respondent 7 shared the same kind of notion of "being a Dutch person over here and being a Turk over there", but she did struggle with being 'in-between'. When she was younger, she even asked her parents: "What am I?" This reality of not fully belonging to one group faded out when she became older and nowadays she she feels more Dutch than Turkish.

5.3.3 Finding a partner

Interethnic relationships amongst people with a Turkish background are relatively few, although during the last decade the number of interethnic marriages did increase to more than 10 percent (CBS, 2017).

During the interviews I asked the respondents how important it is to have a partner who shares the same ethnic background. After having talked about friendships, I assumed the answers to this question would be somewhat in the same direction. However, almost all of the respondents had to think a bit longer before they responded. Finding a partner to share your life with requires a deeper connection, one that is mostly based on – again – recognizing parts of yourself in the other and sharing the same values, even more so than it was necessary in friendships. In the answers given by the respondents two elements can be distinguished, the emotional and rational one. Six of the

respondents expressed their doubts on this. Two of them are currently in a relationship with a Dutch person. They argue that these relationships are ‘emotionally’ good, in the sense that they are in love and you don’t break up with someone just because you don’t share the same ethnic background. However, on a more rational level they also worry about the future. One guy said he has worried about it a lot, even to the point where he thought: “*I’d rather not have a girlfriend, because what if we become serious.*” (Respondent 3) He mentioned that the most important thing is to be in love with each other, yet at the same time said it is preferable to be with someone with the same background because it makes things a whole lot easier. Respondent 2 emphasizes this as well:

I would say yes. More in the way that it is an advantage rather than a requirement, in the way that you share more things with each other. I’m defining ‘background’ in a broad way here, but if your partner is Muslim as well and maybe also Turkish, then a lot of things go way more natural and easier. Think about raising your children according to the Islam or not, and if your partner is not a Muslim, then you’re the only one at home who is doing the Ramadan. Those are obstacles that you would have to bridge. (Respondent 2, male)

The thought of having contrasting values, mostly in reference to Islamic values, is one of the main reasons the respondents would rather have a Turkish or Islamic partner. They experience the gap between different religions or cultures as ‘obstacles’ that would have to be bridged during a relationship, something that is definitely possible, yet not preferable since it brings a lot of struggles along:

That’s just not nice. You would have to continuously fight for yourself, always stand up for yourself. (Respondent 3)

All Sunni respondents say it is preferable that their partner has the same background, the religious factor being more important than being Turkish. The two Alevi girls state it doesn’t really matter; you should obviously share the same values, but that is not necessarily based on your ethnic or religious background.

5.3.4 (Not) belonging to a group

“Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others.” (Weeks, 1990: 88)

Belonging goes further than identification with a certain group of people. Identification with a group of people is about recognizing (parts of) yourself in others. Feeling like you belong to a certain group of people is quite easy when you share the same beliefs. Belonging is about feeling at home in a place, a nation, with people who might not all share the same values and beliefs. After talking about the factors the respondents consider to be important in becoming friends with someone and knowing to which people they better connect, it is also necessary to look at the people they don't easily connect to and whether or not this influences their sense of belonging.

Four of the respondents talk about moments when they felt unwelcome or uncomfortable. Three of these stories took place at school, two are already discussed in Section 5.2.2. One respondent talked about how he experiences that sense of ‘not being accepted’ on a daily basis:

Just yet, today. Something happened in Utrecht² and everyone starts looking at me. And I happen to be the guy who always has something to say, who stands up for himself. So, yes. [...] People want me to talk about it. That's not nice. [...] The same with Charlie Hebdo. People expect me to say sorry. Look, I am a practising Muslim, but you shouldn't hold me responsible. (Respondent 1)

He is however the only respondent who experiences this sense of being ‘different’ from the Dutch group on a daily basis. One of the respondents said that she does notice a change in behaviour lately and especially in her career she has to deal with small, yet prejudiced comments:

Yes, lately I do experience that a bit. It's in the small things. [...] When I have a job interview and people say something like: ‘Hey, wow, your Dutch is so good, you don't even have an accent’. I have written an entire letter for you and my CV tells you where I was born and I have studied at a university, then I'm thinking: ‘Where does this come from?’ (Respondent 9)

Respondent 4 experienced the same:

² On March 18, 2019, four innocent people were fatally shot in a tram in Utrecht, the Netherlands, an attack carried out by a Turkish man named Gökmen T.

Something that did quite hurt me is that people often say to me: 'Your Dutch is so good', then I'm thinking: 'Why wouldn't it be? Why would I not be able to talk Dutch in a good way?' That's something that makes me really mad. Then I look at that person and say: 'Well, I don't know what you're talking about, but I was born here, so of course my Dutch is good'. It's really something that still makes me really angry, I find it so narrow-minded. It's time they really stop making these comments.

5.3.5 Summary

In this section I elaborated upon the social networks and the friendships as well as romantic relationships of the ten Turkish-Dutch young adults. The majority of the group have quite mixed groups of friends in terms of ethnic backgrounds. Three respondents almost solely have friends with a Turkish or Kurdish Alevi background, but are still very much engaged and grounded in the Dutch society.

The most important factor in becoming friends with someone is the feeling of sharing the same values. To some, this meant that even though they have Dutch friends, the closest friendships they have are with fellow Dutch Turks. One could assume that if these respondents ended up living or working in an exclusively white neighbourhood, their sense of group belonging would be reduced.

Where most of the respondents claim one's culture, background or religion doesn't necessarily matter in establishing friendships, it is very important in romantic relations. There was a lot of doubt in answering the question about finding a partner, with more than half of the respondents tending towards favouring a relationship with someone with the same background, because it reduces the chances of facing tensions or difficulties. There is thus apparently, a tension between the 'Dutch' and the 'Turkish' lifestyle. Thus, again, their sense of (group) belonging is vulnerable, because it partly depends on finding a partner with a Turkish (or Islamic) background.

In terms of feeling part of 'Dutch' society as a whole, some respondents share moments of facing stereotypes, such as the assumption of not 'being able to speak Dutch, because they look foreign'. It is easy to imagine that if one is confronted with such prejudices on a daily basis, it will affect your sense of belonging in a negative way.

5.4 Cultural factors

5.4.1 Introduction

Belonging is only partly a relational phenomenon. Belonging to a country does not only mean belonging to a particular group of people or landscape. Sharing the same social values, habits and traditions also contributes to the sense of belonging (May, 2011). Some scholars argue that one of the most important elements of belonging is the notion of ‘longing’; be-longing can then be described as “a desire for becoming other” or “a longing for someone/something” (Probyn 1996, 5). Instead of interpreting belonging to a certain place as a primordial, fixed condition that people (don’t) have, it is rather a (socially constructed) process (Mee, 2009; Kumsa 2005). Considering belonging as ‘performativity’ means that the sense of belonging can be enacted through personal and collective activities and performances (Antonsich, 2010; Skrbis et al., 2007). This research is not about finding out to what extent the respondents became ‘Dutch’, since it is not an investigation into the level of integration or assimilation itself. However, looking at the extent in which the respondents share the same habits or cultural traditions, could give us insight in the sense of belonging to the cultural side of the Netherlands. If a person cannot find him/herself in the traditions or habits a country propagates and is being confronted with it every now and then, it might influence his/her sense of belonging in a negative way.

5.4.2 Turkish vs. Dutch media and food

At a given moment we started making [Dutch] stew and that was really cool, you know? So, we kept doing that kind of things. So, it did get into our lives eventually.

(Respondent 3)

Duruz (2002: 373-374) argues that mapping “changing landscapes of food, place and memory” is valuable because of “the ways that everyday life in its mundane detail confronts, mediates and is mediated by dominant meanings, providing spaces to see things differently”. Memories of (eating particular) food can produce feelings of nostalgia and an intrinsic (warm) sense of longing for a certain place and time. According to Duruz (2002: 373), food you are unfamiliar with, “food from somebody else’s childhood”, can become mysterious and inviting to try. In reference to the sense of belonging, the question comes up to what extent the respondents experience Dutch food as ‘food from somebody else’s childhood’, thus: to what extent were the respondents brought up with Turkish or Dutch food? Out of the respondents all but one said without hesitating that it was basically always Turkish food. Some of the respondents shared stories of their mother making typically Dutch food, such as Dutch stew or pea soup. Making Dutch food was quite a ‘thing’ in

their childhood, in a positive and funny way. It is in line with Duruz' description of 'being mysterious' and something you want to try out. As Respondent 3 said, it eventually did become a part of their lives. Most of the respondents prefer Turkish food to this day. However, some, because of their busy student lives, tend to choose for Dutch food more often because it is easier to make.

In the morning I used to watch a lot of Nickelodeon and all these things they broadcasted on the Dutch television back then. [...] As far as movies concerns, I indeed watched those Dutch cartoon movies, but the older movies on the other hand were more often Turkish. Nowadays, I basically look at both; Turkish, Dutch, everything. (Respondent 7)

Not only food can raise feelings of nostalgia or a warm sensation. Other 'cultural factors' such as television or music can evoke the same feelings. Therefore, I asked the question to what extent during their youth cultural expressions such as television and music were Turkish. Some respondents used to watch typical Dutch cartoons or tv-series when they were younger yet also grew up with their parents watching mostly Turkish television. However, as is more common lately, many mentioned to hardly ever watch television anymore and if they do watch a tv-series it is mostly English or American series, for example on Netflix. Most of the respondents listen to a broad mix of music, with an emphasis on English music and sometimes Turkish music. None said to listen to solely Dutch music and if they do, most of the time it is rap. One respondent said to mainly listen to Turkish music, because it is more emotional, and he can recognize himself better in that kind of music:

I am an emotional person; Turkish people are emotional people and Turkish music is emotional music. That's how you could describe it in in three steps. Concerning Dutch music ... I listen to rap, so for example to Boef. But if you'd ask me: 'Do you listen to André Hazes?' No, not in a million years. (Respondent 5)

None of the respondents was raised in an entirely Turkish environment; Dutch elements were always present and over the years more Dutch elements entered the house. In general, during their youth the emphasis was more on Turkish elements. Talking about their preferred sort of music, television or food nowadays, none of them described these elements as either being totally Turkish or totally Dutch. Most of the respondents enjoy this blending of 'cultural' elements. However, one guy mentions he does have difficulties with the two different worlds coming together:

Yes, in general I have been raised Turkish. But that happens mostly indoors. Outdoors, your parents have no control over you. So, you get influenced by all sorts of stuff, most of them being Dutch ideas and the Dutch society. So, in that way, outdoors I am mainly Dutch and indoors mainly Turkish. There is a tension there. (Respondent 3)

He argued that speaking Dutch outside and Turkish inside the house resulted in his Turkish becoming less fluent. He and his sister started speaking Turkish and Dutch interchangeably. This is also mentioned by another respondent; she however spoke about it in a more joyful way:

My Turkish has become more informal, it is really a mix. You'd might even say that we talk more Dutch at home nowadays than Turkish. It is truly a mix, even in the sentences we say, one word is Turkish, another is Dutch. (Respondent 9)

The merging of these two worlds, the Turkish more familiar and the Dutch slightly less familiar world, is generally conceived as a positive experience. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

5.4.3 Habits

Imagine living together with multiple people in one house. It can be fun and interesting to live together with a diverse group of people, diverse in terms of their hobbies and taste in music for example. However, as discussed in Section 5.3 (Relational factors), in order to really feel good and be yourself around someone, you want to recognize certain parts of yourself in the other. You don't want to be confronted on a daily basis with people who are totally different from you, who do things the exact opposite, and with whom you cannot connect at all. During the interviews I therefore asked the respondents what they perceive as typical Turkish and Dutch characteristics, followed by the question to what extent they recognize themselves in these characteristics.

The previously mentioned image of the house can also be seen as a country, let's say the Netherlands. It is of course not necessary to be exactly the same in order to live together in the Netherlands. Yet, being part of a minority group – and thus brought up with particular cultural and religious values and habits – means that you should at least to some extent recognize parts of yourself in the other (citizens); in this case, the predominantly white Dutch citizens, in order to feel comfortable and have the feeling you can be yourself.

Almost all of the respondents talked about the ‘emotional’ side of Turkish people as the most visible characteristic. The most distinguished feature of Dutch people on the other hand was their rational and structured mindset. The emotional side of the Turks could, according to the respondents, be noticed in their hospitality, collective mindset and generosity:

If I’m going to say this, I’m basically hurting all my Dutch friends ... but really the generosity, it goes way further than any form of it known in the Netherlands. Look, for Turkish people it goes really far, you’d even invite strangers into your house. It goes too far sometimes, I think. But, yes, generosity, that warm welcoming you get when you get into someone’s house. (Respondent 8)

Most of the interviewed Turkish-Dutch adolescents find these features very important themselves and try to live according to these social standards that are common in the Turkish culture. The typical Dutch traits were quite the opposite. The typical stinginess of Dutch people was mentioned a few times, their tendency to individualism and the pragmatic lifestyle. Just because some of these features seem to be the exact opposite of the Turkish traits, such as a strong focus on the community, does not mean they are automatically seen as negative traits. The respondents emphasize they always want to have that (Turkish) welcoming attitude, but some also mention that since they are also Dutch, they are of course influenced by these Dutch features. They describe it as a more restricted version of hospitality, one where people are definitely always welcome to stay over and eat food – sharing food is also mentioned as another typical Turkish value – but that there are limits to their hospitality. In that way, some respondents say, they have become more individualistic than previous Turkish generations:

Yes, yes, I recognize myself in [the Turkish characteristics]. A bit more of a restricted version of it. [...] In Turkey family members often just stop by at random, also without calling and then they are ringing your doorbell and you are thinking: ‘Eh, hello, I’m sitting here in my pyjamas and just wanted to watch Netflix this evening, so what are you doing here?’ (Respondent 9)

Some respondents struggle every now and then with the Dutch structural and rational mindset. Respondent 1 sometimes experiences the rather pragmatic approach of Dutch people as a sense of distrust towards others:

Appointments: in black and white. Turkish people are more like: 'A word is a word ... you don't have it in black and white.' Dutch people do that. [...] That is a good thing. But sometimes it does generate a sense of... 'I don't trust you.' [...] Honestly, I do struggle with that sometimes. (Respondent 1)

The less welcoming attitude of (stereotypical) Dutch people is mentioned a few times. Some respondents were amazed by the moments where they had to deal with the reserved attitude of Dutch people, especially in personal, intimate situations. One girl talks about being sent away as a guest at a friends' house because it was dinner time. For someone who grew up with the exact opposite values, to always be open and welcoming to guests, it is understandably a hard reality you have to deal with at such a moment:

I have been in a situation where I was at a friends' house and it was somewhere around 5 o'clock and their mother came to tell me, 'So, are you going home now? Because we're going to eat dinner.' At that moment I was really thinking: 'Err, what ... Okay, I will leave...' If she would have been at our place, we expect someone to stay for dinner, of course we have an extra plate for you. (Respondent 10)

Sharing the same (cultural) practices can generate a warm sensation; for many cultures, including the Turkish one, sharing food is a very important factor in evoking this sensation (Duruz, 2002). The respondent who brought up this story can now laugh about it and just shook her head while thinking about it. It is not something she encounters daily. One can however imagine, as it was also argued in the section about relational factors, if a Turkish-Dutch person would only encounter Dutch people there could be some kind of tension in the sense that you would not really feel comfortable.

The respondents named the strong collective mindset – the focus on the community rather than on the individual – as one of the most important features. This is in line with studies that show that the Turkish community in the Netherlands has a strong inward-directed focus (Staring et al., 2014). This also makes sense, thinking about how you feel most comfortable within a group with shared values and – as we have seen – there are some strong values within the Turkish community, which are almost opposite of the 'Dutch' values. The question is thus how comfortable the Turkish-Dutch adolescents would feel in the Netherlands if the Turkish community would not be present to fall back to. It has to be remarked though, that the respondents also emphasize several Dutch values which they deem to be very important and even better than certain Turkish traits. The 'openness' is really valued; openness in terms of being able to speak about anything and always be able to speak your mind. The sense of being equal to each other, not experiencing hierarchy, is also something

the respondents recognize and find important. Some talk about the more hierarchical system in Turkey, where it is socially not done to contradict an elderly person for example:

I'm quite rebellious in this respect when I'm in Turkey. If someone speaks their mind in Turkey, for example when elderly people are talking to each other [...] then you're not supposed to interfere their conversation. I do like to do that however [...] and tell them what I think about it. They are quite surprised when I do that. [...] Here [the Netherlands] on the other hand, they think it's good, when you are more proactive in that sense.

(Respondent 2)

Some of the respondents talk about Turkish and Dutch habits in a rather rational way, as if you can pick the habits you'd like to use and which not. In answer to the question if he identifies with the Turkish habits, Respondent 5 answered:

I am of course raised with a Turkish background in the Netherlands. I don't think it is ethically correct to let my Turkish culture take over in the Netherlands. I have chosen to use some of the habits of the Turkish culture, such as offering your seat to an elderly person in the bus. [...] Those are things I would like to preserve. But I do of course take over Dutch habits or values as well. [...] Yes, I just pick which [values / habits] I like and form my own identity in that way. (Respondent 5)

A recurring element throughout all interviews is the emphasis on being both Turkish and Dutch. The rather rational approach of being able to sort of put together your own identity (also seen in the next section on 'Traditions') might be a typical characteristic of this ('migrant') group. According to Schein, migrants live in a liminal space where new identities can be produced in the space between belonging and exclusion (2009: 812). The Turkish-Dutch young adults in some way merge their Turkish up bringing with the rather 'Dutch' outside world. The same way Dutch elements such as food and media at some point come into their lives, some 'Dutch' habits eventually also become part of their identity.

5.4.4 Traditions

According to Ameli and Merali (2004), the ‘sense of community’ is partly generated by cultural expressions such as shared (cultural) traditions. I asked the respondents to tell me about typical Turkish and Dutch traditions which they have celebrated or still celebrate themselves, after which I asked them if they would want to continue these traditions themselves, when they have their own family for example. The Turkish weddings and the smaller traditions such as the engagement, were mentioned most often. Most of the respondents enjoy the typical grand weddings a lot and want to celebrate their own wedding in this way as well. Some respondents are a bit more critical towards the often very luxurious weddings and would therefore not necessarily continue it exactly as it is usually celebrated:

Hmm, yes, I do think [the Turkish traditions] have a cultural value and I find them very beautiful and special but ... as a Muslim, you are also supposed to give money to the poor etcetera. I think some people miss the mark there because a lot of people are in bad situations and if you spend over 20,000 euros on a wedding, I do think you really miss the mark. (Respondent 10)

Even though most of the respondents do value Turkish traditions and would want to celebrate them, they don’t seem to have a lot of ‘emotional’ attachment to the traditions. They would celebrate the traditions in their own way and not necessarily how it is celebrated in Turkey or amongst the older generations:

Yes, yes, I do think [traditions] are valuable. I just choose the fun things [...] I think that traditions should be flexible. It has a different symbolic value for everyone. So, everyone should be able to change them as well. (Respondent 1)

Emotionally, I don’t feel that much for [traditions]. But, if you approach it more pragmatic, then I think they are some fun traditions and things you can do. Use whatever you’ve got, I always say. (Respondent 2)

The respondents also talk about celebrating Islamic festivities such as Eid al-Fitr at the end of the Ramadan and the Feast of Sacrifice. Even though only three of the respondents identify as practicing Muslims, almost all of the respondents join in the festivities. They would want to celebrate them in the future, with the addition however that they don’t join the fasting during Ramadan since that is not necessary according to them.

Well, if they would abolish the Sinterklaas festivities for example and something else would be celebrated instead, I would be totally fine with it. I did always enjoy celebrating it though.
(Respondent 2)

Basically, all of the respondents have celebrated typical Dutch traditions such as Sinterklaas and Christmas during their youth. Most of the time these traditions came into their lives when they went to primary school; they saw other children do it at school and wanted to celebrate it with their family at home. Most of the respondents want to keep celebrating these traditions but not all for the same reasons. A few really enjoy celebrations like Sinterklaas and cannot wait to celebrate it with their own families in the future. However, the general feeling amongst the respondents is they would celebrate if their children want to, but they don't have a deep emotional connection to the traditions themselves. Most of the respondents talked about how at some point in their youth the Christmas tree was 'introduced', but also about how they stopped celebrating it when they got older. The traditions are mostly celebrated because the children enjoy it. One respondent mentioned that you have the obligation to integrate into the country where you live, therefore you should actively try to participate in the cultural festivities:

I have always said that you should integrate into the country where you're living, you must strive to participate in that culture as well. (Respondent 6)

This is in a way also emphasised by other respondents; one said his family just tries to do what is expected of them – they just “Go with the flow” (Respondent 5). This shows some kind of distance and rational approach to the celebration of cultural traditions. That is by no means a negative approach, but it does show a contrast to some Dutch people who for instance have very strong emotional feelings for the Sinterklaas festival (“No. 36 Sinterklaas”, 2015).

5.4.5 Summary

The general tendency throughout the section dealing with the cultural factors is that the emphasis in their upbringing was, understandably, on Turkish elements. When they got older and went to school – and thus got in touch with other Dutch children – more and more 'Dutch' elements entered the household. Not only elements such as Dutch food every now and then, the Christmas tree and celebrating Sinterklaas, but they started to adapt typical Dutch habits. What is remarkable here is that the respondents talk about it in a very rational and even distant way. Some mention to 'pick out' the best Turkish and Dutch habits and traditions and try to merge these two lifestyles. Sometimes it causes tensions, however, when faced with values or habits that go directly against

your own set of values you might feel unwelcome or ‘different’. However, these moments are only scarce in the lives of the respondents. Living between two worlds, being both Turkish and Dutch, yet also neither being fully Turkish or Dutch, might result into a certain distance towards both ‘cultures.’ This distance should not necessarily be interpreted negatively, because eventually, as some respondents have said, they can enjoy the best of both worlds.

5.5 Economic factors

5.5.1 Introduction

Studies have shown that people with a Dutch name have a 32 percent chance of getting invited for a job interview when applying for a job. This is in stark contrast with a meagre 9 percent of people with a non-Western name (Van den Berg, Bijleveld & Blommaert, 2017). According to a study from the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, people with a Western name even have a 60 percent higher chance of getting an invitation than people with an Arabic name (Ministerie van SZW, 2018). Moreover, a recent study has shown that even violent offenders with a Western name have a bigger chance of being invited than people with a non-Western name without a criminal record (Van den Berg, Bijleveld & Blommaert, 2017). There is not just discrimination in the selection process. People with a migration background are often confronted with discrimination at their work place as well. In case of Turkish and Moroccan people, this often has to do with the stereotypes about Muslims; in contrast with people with a Surinam or Antillean background who are more often discriminated on the basis of their skin colour. Even though, according to some experts the image of Turkish-Dutch people is quite positive in general, Dutch employers still tend to discriminate against them as much as Moroccan people because they cannot distinguish a Turkish name from a Moroccan one. Another reason might be is the widely reported alleged loyalty to Turkey and Erdoğan (Ministerie van SZW, 2018).

As discussed in the theoretical framework (Section 3.5.3), the economic factors matter because they are part of creating stable material conditions for people. Moreover, people who have established a professional career or are working on getting one, have a greater sense of belonging than people taking part in casual labour (Yuval-Davis & Kaptani, 2008). Being part of the economy is therefore part of creating a place-belongingness, as suggested by Antonsich (2010). In this section I will therefore dive into the question of the economic ‘belonging’ of the respondents.

5.5.2 I want to become...

Almost all respondents tell me they had a dream job when they were younger. The dream jobs include a wide variety of jobs, such as becoming a cop or an archaeologist or even becoming the prime-minister of the Netherlands. Many of us had great dreams as children, imagining these rather positive and great things about your future is a healthy way of dealing with whatever is coming on your path. Only few eventually really fulfil those big dreams. The same counts for the ten Turkish-Dutch adolescents. Only three respondents are currently trying to chase their dream job. The others decided somewhere in their life that their dream job was either something that didn't really suit them or chose to do something else because of more pragmatic reasons. They emphasized that they believe they would have been able to get that dream job if they wanted to. According to them, their migration background would not have been an obstacle. A few respondents do mention that it could be slightly harder for them to get a job in general. In response to the question whether he ever worried about ever getting a good job, Respondent 6 said:

Definitely, yes. Always when I applied for a job. Two years ago, I didn't have a job at all. But, I kept applying, I kept going on. And every time I got rejected; only got rejected. So, I thought, I just have to fight for it, it will make me stronger eventually. (Respondent 6)

He added that it probably didn't necessarily have to do with his Turkish background, but rather with his name being 'non-Western'. This is exactly what has been suggested by research; the discrimination takes place on the basis of a non-Western sounding name and not necessarily because of the Turkish background. It has to be added that he was the only respondent with a 'lower' educational degree; research has shown that labour discrimination more often occurs regarding 'lower' status jobs (SCP, 2010). It is argued that employers are more often in need of higher educated people, which results in less discrimination against the higher-educated people with a migration background. Yet, at the same time, higher-educated people are slightly more aware of discrimination. Respondent 6, mentioned above, talked about how being rejected over and over again excludes him from having the chance to prove himself. However, when asked if this makes him feel excluded from Dutch society, he firmly answered: "*No, no it doesn't work like that. Not at all.*"

One guy who used to have a dream of becoming the prime minister and is still very much involved in politics, does now believe that he cannot become prime minister, even if he still wants to. This is mainly due to the fact that he has publicly expressed his support for Erdoğan and Turkey:

At this moment, if you'd ask me, if a Dutch Turk wants to become prime-minister of the Netherlands today, he should first renounce his country. [...], Turkey. You have to deny a part of your background. [...] So, it's a finished story, at least here in the Netherlands, and that's a pity. If you'd ask me, I would very much like to do it. (Respondent 1)

This is in line with the reason shown by the study of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment: people who have openly expressed their loyalty to Turkey and Erdoğan will have a harder time in finding a job. One can imagine this is even harder if you would want to join the (Dutch) political arena. The political arena is one infused with distrust, from both 'fellow' politicians and the people whose vote you would have to gain.

The feeling of not being able to work the profession you would like, must have some impact on someone's life. Feeling limited in your choices, just because of your ethnic background or political statements, can influence the sense of freedom and the sense of trust in your country. This will be discussed more in-depth in the section regarding the legal factors: the right to participate (Section 5.6.3).

Three respondents told me they experience the exact opposite, namely, positive discrimination:

Nowadays you have to think the other way around. So: 'You don't get invited, even though you are Turkish.' Nowadays they have so many diversity programs, so you should think: 'Damn it, I did not get invited even though I am Turkish'. [...] So, sometimes I'm thinking, maybe I have an advantage of being Turkish; thus, that there is positive discrimination. (Respondent 3)

I am the kind of person that thinks that 'precisely because I am an allochthonous person, there is positive discrimination, and when a migrant works at your place there is more diversity and you have a better image, so they would take me over an autochthonous person. (Respondent 5)

Sometimes I even had the feeling that I was favoured, yes. That they were thinking: 'We want to have a more diverse team.' (Respondent 7)

5.5.3 Summary

In line with what studies have shown, the higher-educated respondents have not faced labour discrimination or discrimination in the workplace themselves. The lower-educated man did have trouble finding a job for a long time, giving him the feeling that he did not get the same chances to show his abilities as everyone else got. Publicly expressing your loyalty to Turkey and Erdoğan is another factor that might influence your chances of getting a job. One of the respondents said he thinks he would never be able to chase his dream of becoming a politician in the Netherlands, for that exact reason. Whether that is true or not, is not important in this study. What is important is that he expressed his feelings of being distrusted by politicians or by others, who would question his loyalty to the Netherlands.

The respondents in this thesis are relatively young and only just about to enter the labour market. The moments of facing distrust by others (for instance employers) or being discriminated against are in this case rather scarce. However, if the respondents would be confronted with it more frequently and not being able to get the job they want because of discrimination, their sense of belonging would arguably become less strong.

Some of the respondents talk about positive discrimination. This kind of discrimination still sets you apart from the rest of society, in terms that it highlights your ‘differences’ with others. However, the fact that it has positive consequences, being accepted and getting a job more easily, probably only contributes to the sense of feeling of being a part of the society.

5.6 Legal factors

5.6.1 Introduction

The fifth and final factor discussed by Antonsich refers to the ‘legal’ factors. Having certain rights as a citizen of a nation-state, generates feelings of security and security is an essential part of belonging (Antonsich, 2010; Buonfino & Thomson, 2007). The respondents in this thesis are all, obviously, legal citizens of the Netherlands. It is therefore not necessary to dive into the rights they have, since we all have the same rights as citizens. However, the fact that all citizens have the same rights, doesn’t mean that everyone really experiences that sense of freedom to actively make use of these rights (Fenster, 2005). In this section we address the question to what extent the respondents feel like they have the right to ‘appropriate’ and ‘participate (in)’ the Netherlands (as discussed in the theoretical framework, Section 3.5.3). To enjoy the sense of freedom to appropriate or participate in, thus make use of or change in a country, one should – on an emotional level at least – feel like the country is ‘yours’ (Fenster, 2005). Do the respondents experience that sense of emotional attachment to the Netherlands? And do they feel like they could actually make a change in the Netherlands, if they wanted to?

5.6.2 The right to appropriate

The respondents were asked if they ever have the following thought: ‘The Netherlands is my country’. Almost all of them said without hesitating that this was certainly the case. Respondent 5 was a bit in doubt, because he thought this meant he had to choose between either Turkey or the Netherlands, something he would never be able to do. The same is emphasized by Respondent 1, who during the interview mentioned a few times that it is impossible to choose between the two countries:

The Netherland and Turkey, they are father and mother. I mean, what would you choose, your father or your mother? I cannot make that decision. I love my father just as much as my mother. (Respondent 1)

Respondent 1 immediately said the Netherlands was absolutely his country as well. The respondents were also asked if they had ever experienced moments of ‘being proud of the Netherlands’. Questions about these national sentiments are important because it shows the rather subconscious experience of national belonging, a non-rational attitude towards the (imaginary) nation (Hjerm, 1998). Important factors in inducing such national sentiments are shared national elements such as a common history, cultural and sports events. Seven out of ten respondents do feel proud of the Netherlands every now and then. Some feel quite proud about specific things, for instance Dutch

people winning the Nobel Prize, the Dutch national soccer team winning a match and the overall tolerance towards different religions. One example:

During your life, ... there are these subtle moments of proudness. That you're proud that you can just walk around here and say what you want, or that you're proud that we take in refugees. Or that we have the freedom to believe in whatever you want to believe and that we can build mosques over here. That is this subtle feeling of, 'Oh, I'm so happy and I am so proud of the Netherlands'. (Respondent 3)

One respondent doesn't really experience these moments of being proud. Where almost all of the other respondents are proud of the freedom and tolerance in the Netherlands, she was more critical. She considers the level of tolerance in the Netherlands not as good as many other people think it is; she has experienced this while living in more conservative parts in the Netherlands. Everyone encounters different situations in their life and also within the Netherlands there are many different (political) groups; someone who lives in a more conservative place could easily encounter more negative attitudes than someone living in a rather progressive and left-wing area. However, even though she is not particularly proud of the Netherlands, Respondent 10 emphasized several times throughout the interview that the Netherlands is absolutely her home.

The sense of belonging does not only depend on your inner, personal ties with and experiences in a place, one should also look at the moments where someone doesn't want you to belong (Schein, 2009). As Schein (2009: 813) puts it: "Belonging implicates an inside and outside". 'The Islam' has been a hot topic lately and continues to be a much-debated subject. Muslims are not only frequently the subject of racist political discourse, Mepschen remarks that more than half of the Dutch population considers the Islam as incompatible with 'Dutch' Jewish-Christian traditions (Mepschen, 2010). Such negative attitudes towards the Islam can easily make that people that are part of this group, the Muslims, feel alienated or excluded (Staring et al., 2014).

During the interviews we thus discussed the question to what extent the respondents see their religion as a part of Dutch society. Seven of the respondents identify as Muslims, with one of them being raised with an Alevi mother and a Muslim father and three are Alevi, one of which is a non-religious Alevi woman. Five of the respondents profess their faith in a rather personal way; they see their private relationship with Allah/God and being a good person as the most important factors. Three of them are practicing Muslims, in the sense that they are trying to implement Islamic rules in their everyday lives, such as praying five times a day. They have never really felt restricted in exercising these practices. On the contrary, all three mention the fact that in essence they are always able to do what they want, in terms of religious practices.

There are two kinds of 'being Dutch'. There is the version of the Netherlands where the Islam is not a part of. But, when I say: 'I am Dutch', I am talking about the Netherlands including all the mosques. To me, the Netherlands also means Döner Kebab or the Sugar Festival. So, I have an inclusive idea about the Netherlands. So, [the Islam] is totally a part of the Netherlands. (Respondent 3)

All of the respondents consider the Islam as a part of the Netherlands; yet, sometimes a bit legally restricted, in the sense a ban on the Burka might be called in the near future or a police woman who was not allowed to wear a head scarf ("Geen hoofddoek", 2017). One respondent mentions certain 'restrictions' in more informal situations. If someone wants to pray somewhere outside the house – in a public area for instance – she is quite sure this would not be accepted by others:

It probably depends on the sort of social circles you are in, I think. Dutch people tolerate things to a certain extent. I don't think you could for example go pray in a park, ... a lot of people would not tolerate that, so it's something I would not do very likely.

(Respondent 10)

Half of the respondents deal with negative experiences every now and then, related to negativity concerning the Islam or them being Muslim. Some experiences are more direct than others. Respondent 1 mentioned that he has been in situations where people were making rather racist and anti-Islamic jokes. One of these situations was during an internship and someone 'jokingly' said that nowadays you have to be careful with people with beards and especially when you see them at the airport. Being confronted with stereotypes like that is something that hurts Respondent 1, in particular when people expect him to say sorry for terrorist attacks carried out by 'Islamic' terrorists. An Alevi woman, Respondent 4, mentioned that she has been confronted with stereotypes as well; people think her Turkish or 'foreign' looks automatically means she is a Muslim. This in turn has often brought her in situations where people questioned her behaviour; when she would go out or smoke a cigarette, people assumed she was acting against the Islamic rules. She constantly had to explain herself, that she is not a Muslim and not religious. She is also fluent in Limburg's dialect and people tell her: 'You are just like one of us but with a foreign appearance'. Remarks like these can make you feel uprooted, especially when you are faced with them in seemingly secure everyday circumstances or encounters with people (May, 2011). Indeed, Respondent 4 says that remarks like these hurt her, and she is tired of reminding these people that she actually *is* one of them, whatever she looks like.

According to May, “belonging is the quintessential mode of being human ... in which all aspects of the self as human, are perfectly integrated – a mode of being in which we are as we ought to be, fully ourselves” (2011: 368). Belonging thus also means to fully be yourself, to feel secure enough to do ‘whatever’ you want to do and to be who you want to be. Therefore, I asked the respondents if they ever felt the need to ‘restrain’ themselves, in other words, have they been in situations where they could not fully be themselves? Three of the respondents do sometimes feel they have to ‘hold back’ from being really honest. One of them considers it as a normal part of life; according to him, once in a while everyone has to cover up certain parts of him/herself: “*Of course, at a business level you should not talk too much about Islam in my opinion or about Turkish culture ... I do that a lot, but I consider that as a normal thing.*” However, he has also been in situations with friends where he found himself lying about personal matters in order to not provoke a discussion; however, he realized that this is not a good thing to do, so he tries to not cover up any part of himself in situations with friends:

It has happened that I was hanging out with friends and we were drinking something, and I told them I don't drink alcohol because I had started working out, which was not true; I don't drink alcohol because of religious reasons. (Respondent 8)

Respondents 9 and 10 mentioned that they always want to ‘be themselves’, yet both have experienced the ‘fear’ of not being understood in the right way. Respondent 9 gives the example of not wanting to shake hands with men, because of religious beliefs. However, she often does shake their hands because she is afraid that people don’t understand her decision and that they think all kinds of bad things about her:

Yes, with little things such as, I'd rather not shake their hands, but I still do it because I'm afraid they would think I am some kind of extremist or a supporter of IS.
(Respondent 9)

The other respondents do not share this feeling, however, and quite clearly state that they do not feel in any way more restricted than any other (non-migrant) citizen and almost always feel secure enough to speak their minds or do what they want to do.

Related to the issue of feeling secure enough to ‘be yourself’, is the question whether the respondents can think of any places in the Netherlands where they would rather not go, because they wouldn’t feel ‘comfortable’ there. Schein (2009: 824) provides us with an example of young

African American men who don't dare to enter specific (white, middle-class) public spaces, because they 'don't belong over there'. More than half of the respondents wouldn't feel really comfortable in the smaller, more conservative towns in the Netherlands either. This has not only to do with not wanting to deal with the more 'conservative', perhaps more racist attitudes, but also with the fact that most of them feel comfortable in a place with people who are like them. Diversity is an important factor here. Not just conservative or white areas are sometimes avoided, however. Respondent 5 mentioned he doesn't feel comfortable in certain parts of Rotterdam where there are "too many allochthonous people ... wearing tracksuits and caps all the time. I try to avoid those people". Respondent 9 wouldn't feel at home in a place with only 'native' Dutch people; for her being the only migrant family living there would automatically make her feel to be like the odd duck out:

I wouldn't be able to live in a small village being the only migrant family. [...] You want to feel at home somewhere. [...] I have the same with my internships, it's fun to be the first one there wearing a headscarf, but it is a different feeling if you would have to stay there the rest of your life and facing certain stigmas every day and having to fight for yourself. [...] That would be exhausting, you just want to feel at home. I would just love to live in a diverse neighbourhood where other people with headscarves live as well, you don't want to be the only one. It has to do with a sense of recognition. (Respondent 9)

5.6.3 The right to participate

A sense of belonging to a particular country includes the right to participate in the development of that society (Shotter, 1993) The fact that people have the right to participate in decision making doesn't mean that in reality they are always able to do so. Due to discrimination or not feeling like people appreciate their 'voice', people from minority groups participate less and are less represented than fellow native, white middle-class citizens (Fenster, 2005). Social institutions such as the government can communicate powerful signals of inclusion and exclusion to both individuals and groups in society (Loader, 2006). They can do this through associating specific ethnic groups with crime, often followed by discriminatory behaviour such as the police arresting people based on ethnic profiling. Another quite powerful signal of telling people they are not 'fully one of us', is by not including them in the 'representative' bodies of the country, for instance the House of Representatives. Therefore, the respondents were also asked if they feel represented by the House of Representatives. Almost all of the respondents do feel represented by the Dutch government. Most mentioned that their interests do not necessarily have to be represented by someone sharing the same ethnic or religious background. However, at the same time they said that politics is also

about trust, and having your interests represented by someone who has a similar background does generate more trust. Still, most rather firmly stated that politics should be approached rationally and that one should vote for people who represent their ideas and not just for someone who happens to have the same ethnic or religious background. Nine of the respondents think they could, if they would really want to, get a job in politics, for instance get into the House of Representatives. Four respondents emphasized that it would be harder for them to get such a job, having a Turkish background. Yet, they do think if you try hard enough you would be able to get there. They assume you have to kind of cover-up your Turkish background, at least not put too much emphasis on it. Respondent 1 doesn't believe he could ever become a politician in the Netherlands, because of his expressed 'loyalty' to Turkey and Erdoğan, as discussed in Section 5.5.5.

Antonsich (2010: 649) emphasizes that "to be able to feel at home in a place is not just a personal matter, but also a social one". Experiencing some kind of distrust towards you, thinking that you would not be accepted in a political body that should be representative, might influence your sense of belonging. As Probyn puts it: "belonging cannot be an isolated and individual affair" (1996: 13). Even though someone's personal ties with a place can be very emotional and profound, once you feel unwelcomed by authoritative figures and especially by a representative body, the boundaries that separate 'us' from 'them' are put in place (Crowley, 1999).

5.6.4 Summary

In this section two aspects of belonging to the Netherlands were discussed. Overall the respondents see the Netherlands as 'their' country and most of them expressed a certain degree of being proud of the nation; they are especially proud of the level of tolerance in the country. These emotional attachments are important features of the sense of belonging. There needs to be a certain 'love' for the nation to fully feel like you are an integral part of that society. People living in more conservative places, who probably more often encounter people with less tolerant attitudes, could be negatively influenced while facing a certain level of distrust towards them. This will definitely make it harder to feel like you are a part of the society.

All of the respondents consider the Islam as a part of Dutch society; they don't see it as incompatible with the Dutch society. Every now and then some face stereotypes about being Muslim, however, which obviously makes them feel uncomfortable. The sense of belonging of the respondents is thus very much dependent on the area they live in and the sort of people they encounter. A couple of respondents have sometimes felt like they couldn't be themselves. As one respondent said, these moments are probably something everyone encounters every now and then. However, for some it had to do with their Islamic background, a very emotional and rather intimate part of them. Once again, if they would be in an environment where the majority of people has a

negative attitude towards the Islam, they would not be able to really be themselves. The respondents therefore also mentioned that they would rather not live or stay in the more conservative areas of the Netherlands. Not just because they would feel comfortable enough to be themselves, but also because being with people who share the same background or religion creates a sense of sameness. This is needed to create that sense of familiarity that is so important in feeling at home somewhere.

The emotional attachment partly consists of the notion of being able to ‘change’ or attribute something to the country. All the respondents felt that their voice is (to a certain extent at least) represented in the government. Most trust that they would be able to become part of the government, if they wanted to. Some however expressed some doubt in this respect, saying it would be harder for them to get such a position than it would be for a native Dutch person. This is worrisome, since it shows a lack of trust in being treated equally by the government. An experience that at least in some way destabilizes one’s sense of belonging.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the results of the qualitative part concerning the sub-question:

How can the sense of belonging in the Netherlands of the Turkish-Dutch young adults best be described?

Using the five factors provided by Antonsich, a questionnaire was prepared to discuss these factors – which all five contribute to the sense of belonging – with ten Turkish-Dutch young adults. Overall, the stories shared by the respondents were quite positive. During their primary school years, the respondents never experienced being different from other kids, neither in predominantly white schools nor in ‘black’ schools. Most never even consciously thought about the fact that they had a Turkish background. This changed when they got older and encountered people who don’t want them to belong during their high school, internships and some during their search for a job. Most of them share positive stories about their childhoods, about having friends from all sorts of backgrounds and the longing to go back to the Netherlands after having spent time in Turkey. However, some did question their belongingness every now and then. When they are faced with people who don’t want them to belong or even when they are hanging out with Dutch friends and they realize they don’t always share the same emotional connections; these are rather disturbing moments. For some it results in questioning their own belongingness, others make the rather radical decision to sort of ‘choose’ for one of the two groups. Their sense of belonging therefore seems to be, logically, quite dependent on being able to stay in touch with their Turkish background and/or the Turkish community. Would they find themselves in a predominantly white neighbourhood, school or workplace – where they would not find the same emotional connectedness and habits most of them do find important – a sense of disorientation could be the result; in the words of Casey (1993: x): “a sense of unbearable emptiness”. As long as the multicultural society of the Netherlands gives enough space to people to shape their own lives, to have their own traditions, yet is also inviting enough for everyone to join in national events and participate in decision making, their sense of belonging can be of great value in pursuing their goals in life.

The next chapter presents the results concerning the political events and developments in Turkey and analyses in what ways they influence the sense of belonging of the ten respondents.

6 Influences on the Sense of Belonging

6.1 Introduction

During the night of July 15, 2016, a coup attempt was carried out by a part of the Turkish armed forces against Turkish governmental institutions and in particular against President Erdoğan (BBC, 2016). Numerous theories concerning the coup d'état have been circulating since. Some accuse the religious leader and one-time friend of Erdoğan, Fetullah Gülen, to be the mastermind. Others are pointing their finger at secular (Alevi) groups that want to overthrow the 'Islamist' regime, while some claim it was Erdoğan himself who orchestrated the whole event. Regardless the perpetrator, it has been a huge event with many consequences – thousands of people have been fired, arrested and/or put in jail because of alleged terrorist loyalties –, leaving an immense mark on the Turkish nation as a whole. In the Netherlands the failed coup was celebrated by many Turkish-Dutch citizens, who also expressed their frustration about the rather indifferent position of the Dutch government towards the coup. Some of these 'celebrations' erupted into riots, which in turn were met with a vast amount of suspicion from the Dutch government, media and (Dutch) people. The coup seemed to be the starting point of a period of (diplomatic) tensions between Turkey and the Netherlands, as well as within Dutch society as a whole. Some questioned the loyalty of Turkish-Dutch citizens, and Dutch Prime Minister Rutte reacted rather bluntly to the riots by stating on national television that the Turkish-Dutch people who do not want to conform to 'our' society should just: 'Go away!'³ According to Cousineau (1993), also emphasized by Loader (2006), citizens know very well whether a society accepts them or not. Their sense of (not) belonging is very much influenced by actions from the state authorities and other citizens.

This chapter presents the perceptions of the ten respondents regarding recent political developments in Turkey and the Netherlands, and analyses whether and how these influence their sense of belonging.

6.2 Political developments in Turkey and the Netherlands

6.2.1 The night of the coup

The first question I asked the respondents concerning this topic was whether they still remember exactly where they were and what thoughts went through their minds when they first heard the news about the coup. All of the respondents knew exactly what they were doing at that time and were able to tell precisely how they experienced that night. The general experience was that it was a

³ 'Go away' is a rather poor translation for the words he used. The Dutch 'pleur op', would be a combination of the English 'Fuck off' and 'Go away'.

horrible evening. Most of the respondents gathered with their families and spent the night in front of the television set while trying to contact family members and friends in Turkey to see if they were safe:

We watched television all night, constantly thinking: 'Wow, this is really bad, what is going to happen now? Is it going to be an Egypt-like situation? What is going to happen?!' Seeing all those millions of people on the streets. I think we fell asleep around 5 o'clock in the morning. (Respondent 9)

Not all of the respondents experienced it as an emotional event, however. Respondent 8 mentioned that it did of course shock him because one would never expect such a thing to happen; yet, since the coup failed and it was all over the next day, he quite easily moved on. Another respondent shared that he even tried to make money out of it by buying liras; he succeeded, he said smiling:

We did follow the whole thing, but not that emotional, I have to say. In fact, I was looking at the investment opportunities to earn money from the lira, in which I also succeeded by the way. Yes, so it happens, and you want to know whether your family is in safety or not. [...] We were happy the coup failed. [...] It's a pity innocent people died of course, but that always happens. So, mixed feelings. It's a pity it happened, I'm glad it failed and nothing too bad happened. (Respondent 2)

Two respondents were rather excited when they first learned about the coup that evening. Bearing in mind that both of them have an Alevi background – and Alevi people have been oppressed and are still oppressed by Islamist regimes for hundreds of years – it is easier to understand why they would support the overthrow of the government led by Erdoğan⁴:

Actually, I thought: 'Yes, finally a revolution in Turkey. I hope they succeed. [...] revolution and that people finally open their eyes and that we get rid of Erdoğan!' [...] I even said, I would pop a bottle of champagne if they succeeded. (Respondent 4)

⁴ See for more information: Tol, U. (n.d.). The Alevis' Agenda from July 15 to the Present, *Public Policy and Democracy Studies*. Retrieved from <http://podem.org.tr/en/researches/the-alevis-agenda-from-july-15-to-the-present/#4>.

6.2.2 After the coup

Four of the respondents stated that in general the coup did not have any effect on their feelings concerning Turkey. Four other respondents, on the contrary, feel more connected to Turkey. Seeing the huge numbers of people gathering on the streets in Turkey that night, defending their country which eventually resulted in a failed coup, made them immensely proud. A couple of respondents mentioned getting goose bumps while talking about the coup. It shows the deep emotional connection to the Turkish nation and the connectedness with the people:

Yes, I am so proud of those people. Around 200 or 300 people died that night. It really shows the resilience of the Turkish people. I am getting goose bumps while telling this, all of those people gathered outside on the streets, all these women who made noise by banging on pots and pans showing 'we are going outside, we are protesting'. I am so proud of the people, that they just took it against the tanks and weapons [...] I thought it was very beautiful to see the unity. (Respondent 3)

6.2.3 'Go away' statement by Rutte

Contrary to what one might expect, eight of the ten respondents understand and to a certain extent even agree with the statement made by Prime Minister Rutte. A few respondents added that it was not the right moment to say such a thing. According to them, Rutte should have understood that the Turkish-Dutch citizens just needed to express their frustration in the aftermath of the coup. Yet, it is remarkable that only two respondents find the statement unacceptable. Half of the respondents state quite firmly that they agree that people who do not want to conform to the Dutch society, who express such frustration towards the Dutch government and feel that loyal to Turkey, should just consider going 'back' to Turkey. Two examples:

I saw Mark Rutte some time back and we talked about all the things he said, and I told him in all honesty: 'If you are prepared to send all those people away who cannot adjust to the Dutch society or if they are only doing wrong things: just send them back!' I just agree with him totally. They only make [Turkish-Dutch citizens] seem like bad people. (Respondent 6)

I had said the same thing way before Mark Rutte said it. [...] Yes, maybe you should not make such a statement in such a way when you are the Prime Minister. [...] But I do agree with him. We are living in the Netherlands. If you want to protest in Turkey, just catch a

plane and express your feelings over there. You have a double nationality so just go to Turkey. (Respondent 4)

More than half of the respondents do not feel ‘addressed’ when such statements are made. For them it is clear that the statements were directed at Turkish-Dutch people who were being rude or breaking the rules. Three respondents, on the other hand, do feel offended somehow. It makes them feel like they are not truly part of Dutch society. According to them, it seems as soon as you do something wrong or express your concerns and emotions in connection to Turkey, you are seen as ‘just another Turk’ who is only loyal to Turkey:

There are many differences both within the Dutch culture and within the cultures of migrants, but for those people, let’s say supporters of Wilders, it doesn’t matter whether you are Moroccan or Turkish: everybody with dark hair, dark eyes, is just a Turk or a Moroccan. So, I do take those statements personally [...] because in the end they generalize a whole group of people. That doesn’t feel good.” (Respondent 7)

6.2.4 Turkish interference

Erdoğan wanted to create an enemy – politically seen – to get more support for his political programme and Rutte wanted to look like a tough leader to the Dutch people to gain votes during the elections. I think it was childish on Turkey’s side, but legally it was nonsense what the Netherlands was doing. (Respondent 8)

The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Çavuşoğlu and the Minister of Family Affairs Kaya were both denied giving a speech in Rotterdam in March 2017. The speech would be about an upcoming referendum in Turkey, to be held in April. Five of the respondents thought it was a strange decision of the Dutch government to deny the ministers their right to speech. They did not express any anger about the subject though and above all considered it to be a strategic political move of Prime Minister Rutte. He would appear to be a strong political leader who doesn’t tolerate ‘foreign interference’ and by doing so could gain the votes of the more right-winged electorate later that year.

Four of the respondents, of whom three with Alevi background, are glad the ministers were not allowed to speak. The fact that the ministers wanted to come to Rotterdam to basically just gain votes in favour of Erdoğan is not appreciated by these respondents:

I thought it was nonsense of them to come to the Netherlands in the first place, and that all those [Turkish-Dutch citizens] were so happy about it. I have always thought that was rubbish. [...] If you want to campaign, just do it in your own country or just go to that country you know. Not over here. They just have no business here. So, I'm actually pretty glad they were refused. (Respondent 4)

According to five of the respondents, the Turkish 'political interference' leads to divisions in Dutch society; not only would it have a polarizing effect on the supporters and opponents of Erdoğan, but by trying to come to the Netherlands even though their right to speech was denied, they were creating a negative attitude towards the Dutch government and society. This last sentiment, of Erdoğan trying to create divisions in the Dutch society, was strengthened by Erdoğan telling the Dutch (government) they were 'fascists and Nazi remnants' (Gumrukcu & Escritt, 2017). Almost all of the respondents considered it to be a rather stupid statement that should not be made by a president. One of the respondents kind of understands where his statement comes from; he considers the banning of the Turkish ministers to be unacceptable, even "inhumane", and he therefore understands this furious reaction.

6.3 Experiencing more distance

6.3.1 Being held responsible

At first I did feel like people were looking at me in a strange way, because I am a Dutch Turk of course. So, I decided to just talk to those people. Saying: 'I don't know what is going on, why are you looking at me like that? Okay, I am a Dutch Turk, but that doesn't mean you have to look at me like that. You don't need to be racist towards me, I am just a normal person.' And then they realized: 'Oh, he is not like the rest of them.'

(Respondent 6)

Erdoğan's unvarnished reaction made tensions flare up even more, something some of the respondents clearly do not appreciate. Some considered Turkey's decision to send the Ministers to the Netherlands, as a provocation which would harm the status of the Turkish-Dutch citizens:

At the end of the day the Turkish-Dutch people here are the ones losing. Because, now I'm being held responsible all the time, every day I hear these questions: 'What do you think about this? [...] You are a Turk, who do you support?' [...] As a Dutch Turk you are torn between the two countries, which is such a pity. [...] We have built up our lives here. We

are doing our best. We are working, studying, trying to participate in society. And then there is this guy from Turkey, who tries to stir us up, against the Dutch government [...] Then I just think: 'Fuck off, mind your own business'. He only caused unrest here between Dutch Turks and Dutch people. (Respondent 3)

The previous examples of political developments have in some way or another affected the lives of the respondents, although not all in the same way. All but one of the respondents said to get more questions from Dutch people regarding Erdoğan's behaviour, and said it was almost as if they were held responsible for his policies and statements. Four of the respondents do get annoyed sometimes when people start asking questions about their loyalty or whether they support Erdoğan or not. Yet, they rather have people asking these sort of questions than just assume things about them and by doing so labelling them as 'those kind of Turks':

I never really had any troubles with Dutch people; yes, they would assume that I am a Muslima and then I'd tell them yes or no and they would just be like: 'Ah, ok.' It never felt like they judged me for it. I never had that feeling. (Respondent 7)

Five respondents do not see these kind of straightforward 'are you pro or against Erdoğan' questions in such a positive light. Being held responsible for someone's else's actions and/or always being asked to explain your point of view, just because people assume you are a Turk who is only loyal to Turkey, must be quite exhausting. To be confronted with not being perceived as 'a full Dutch citizen' – who would after all question the loyalty of a full Dutch citizen? – by fellow Dutch citizens, surely could (temporarily) shake up one's self-perception. Even though basically all respondents get rather annoyed by the amount of question they get, it does not seem to influence all of them in the same way.

The respondents were asked if the political developments in Turkey influenced their view of Turkey in some way and whether the consequences of the (diplomatic) conflict have changed their sense of feeling at home in the Netherlands. Three of them answered that this was not the case, the events did not really change their views about either country, nor did they feel like it changed their daily life in any way.

6.3.2 Feeling more distance towards the Turkish-Dutch community

None of the respondents truly felt more distance to Turkey. A few were surprised by the large support of Erdoğan in Turkey, something they hadn't quite seen before. Yet, at the same time it didn't really affect their feelings about Turkey. One respondent said not to feel as 'at home there' as he used to do, mainly due to an increase in the visibility of the Islam in the Turkish society:

I no longer feel at home there as before. That's because of the changes in Turkey, yes. Because of the policies. In the past, for example, in the capital Ankara, nicely dressed ladies were wearing all sorts of clothes, secular. Now you only see them with burkas, a sort of Ninjas. That sort of stuff. (Respondent 5)

Three respondents also feel a bit more distance towards Turkey, but even more so towards the Turkish-Dutch community in the Netherlands. Respondent 8, for example, does not feel less Turkish but also said he doesn't really consider himself a part of the Turkish community in the Netherlands:

Turks in the Netherlands are less Turkish than Turks in Turkey. So, I am not necessarily a part of them, I am a part of the Turkish community in general. Only on paper also part of the Turkish community in the Netherlands. But that doesn't mean that their 'kind of Turkish' means the same for them as for me. To me it means something totally different.
(Respondent 8)

Two other respondents, two women with an Alevi background, mentioned that they feel slightly less Turkish when they are confronted with supporters of Erdoğan in the Turkish community in the Netherlands:

I do feel less Turkish [when other Turks address my aversion to Erdoğan]. I went to school in Rotterdam and there were a lot of Turkish people there with whom I talked, who made me think: 'I really don't feel attracted to this group.' (Respondent 7)

During such moments I feel very Dutch. Then I identify way more with the Dutch identity, than with the Turkish identity. Regardless of how you look at it, I was born here.
(Respondent 4)

6.3.3 Feeling more distance towards the Netherlands

Human beings can experience different, sometimes seemingly contrasting, emotions at the same time. Respondent 4, who stated multiple times that she sees the Netherlands as her home country, also said that the (negatively) changed social reality in the Netherlands made her feel betrayed. Whereas as a child she never experienced being ‘the other’, she now experiences being looked at with suspicion:

A lot has changed really and with the emergence of social media, sharing opinions on the internet and all the stuff people say. I just feel betrayed. In my own fatherland I just feel sort of betrayed, by the people I always identified with. (Respondent 4)

As May stated, social changes really influence your experience of belonging. Not only do people themselves change, our relational and cultural surroundings change as well, which contributes to changes in our sense of belonging (May, 2011). The respondents in this case mentioned a sense of discomfort because of the expressed suspicions towards them, as if they are not truly a part of society.

Two other respondents mentioned that the political developments have influenced their ‘Dutchness’. Respondent 9 emphasized that the distrust expressed by (certain) Dutch people towards her, as someone who in general agrees with Erdoğan, hurts her. She has feelings of being more distanced from these people; yet, also added that even though she totally loves Turkey she wouldn’t be able to live there because she is so used to the Netherlands. Respondent 1 said that he is of course influenced by the suspicion with which people look at him. His first reaction is that he wants to tell them how much he has done for the Netherlands, that he has always tried to participate in society. He said this wouldn’t work however, because as soon as people see the Turkish flag on his Facebook profile for example, they would confront him with ‘how bad Erdoğan is’. This only makes him feel more loyal to Erdoğan:

You know what works as well? When people start talking negatively about Erdoğan. [...] It is counterproductive. [...] In such a case, I start to think: ‘If you scold him and have such ideas, while having right-wing populist thoughts – which I deem wrong – [...] it makes me think: ‘[Erdoğan] is probably right’ [...] If you hear stuff about Turkey and Erdoğan every day, you will begin to feel more connected to it. (Respondent 1)

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the results concerning two sub-questions were presented by using the data collected by doing in-depth interviews with ten Turkish-Dutch young adults:

- How do the Turkish-Dutch young adults perceive relevant recent (political) events – in particular the coup d'état in 2016, the 'silencing' of two Turkish ministers in Rotterdam in 2017 and the 'Dutch' response to these events?
- How did these events – the coup d'état, the Rotterdam riots and the 'Dutch' response to these events, respectively – influence and shape the sense of belonging of the Dutch Turks in the Netherlands?

The coup d'état in 2016 was followed with great interest by all ten respondents. Most of them experienced it as a frightening night, in which they feared for the safety of their families and for the future of Turkey. It shows that these respondents, even though they usually are only in Turkey for a few weeks a year, have a strong and deep connection with Turkey and are very concerned about its future. A few respondents were less worried during the coup attempt and in fact hoped for the coup to succeed, yet they still showed a lot of concern for Turkey's future. As much as the respondents were emotionally involved by the coup, almost half of the respondents stated that the coup had not influenced their feelings towards Turkey. The other half did feel more connected to Turkey and especially felt very proud of the Turkish people. These respondents clearly experience a sense of group belongingness and emotional connectedness towards Turkey; two respondents even mentioned the goosebumps they get while talking about this event.

Most of the respondents are rather critical towards fellow Turkish-Dutch citizens, even to the point where they agree with Prime Minister Rutte's statement that 'they' should just go back to Turkey if 'they' don't want to participate in the Dutch society. The respondents show that in that sense they feel very much like a part of the Dutch society. They talk about 'the others' who don't belong here if they don't try to participate, which makes themselves a part of the group that does belong in the Netherlands.

Most of the respondents didn't really agree with the Turkish ministers being sent away, but were even more critical about the decision on Turkey's part to still try to come over to the Netherlands. There is even some frustration about how Erdoğan tried to provoke a clash between Turkish-Dutch citizens and the Dutch government. In that sense, the Turkish interference – in an attempt to gain more political support for Erdoğan and Turkey – only achieved the opposite result, creating frustration amongst the Turkish-Dutch young adults towards the Turkish government. Thus, to answer the last sub-question, for some the political developments meant that they start to feel more 'Dutch'. They especially experience distancing themselves from the Turkish-Dutch

people who are very loyal to Erdoğan and Turkey. Nevertheless, at the same time most of the respondents do also face negative stereotypes towards them. Prejudices, such as automatically being seen as a person who is loyal to Turkey (and not to the Netherlands) just because you ‘look Turkish’, are very harmful.

Another way of how political events influence the sense of belonging is that the prejudices against Muslims and Turkish people are creating a distance between them and Dutch people. These political and social changes sometimes – at least temporarily – shake up the sense of belonging of the young adults, sometimes to the point where they wonder whether they are actually a part of society or not. Some of the young adults experience both of these two seemingly opposite consequences – feeling more ‘Dutch’ or less ‘Dutch’ – alternately. Nevertheless, for these ten Turkish-Dutch young adults it has not come to the point where they feel like they don’t belong anywhere anymore – they were and are very firm about the fact that the Netherlands is their home.

7 Conclusion & Reflection

7.1 Introduction

In this final chapter the main research question is answered, based on a discussion of the most important research findings. Following that, recommendations for praxis and follow-up research are formulated and a reflection on the working process is given.

7.2 Conclusion

This research focused on the following question: ‘To what extent do Turkish-Dutch young adults feel at home in the Netherlands and how is this sense of belonging influenced by (political) developments in Turkey?’

To answer this question, four sub-questions were formulated. The first two sub-questions related to the concept of *belonging*, on how to ‘measure’ one’s sense of belonging in general and how the sense of belonging of Turkish-Dutch young adults in the Netherlands can best be described. The following two sub-questions dealt with issue of whether and how political developments in Turkey and the Netherlands have influenced this sense of belonging of Turkish-Dutch young adults.

The first sub-question, on what the notion of belonging in fact entails, was answered on the basis of a literature review. The sense of belonging (and the influences on it) of Turkish-Dutch young adults have been extensively described and analysed with the use of qualitative research.

7.2.1 Belonging in the Netherlands

The sense of belonging is a complex concept, a mingling of various factors which all together make up one’s sense of belonging. In an attempt to grasp the sense of belonging of ten Turkish-Dutch young adults, in-depth interviews were held, dealing with the emotional stories, memories and feelings in relation to the respondent’s youth, relationships, cultural, legal and economic embeddedness in Dutch society.

The respondents grew up playing with children from all sorts of backgrounds, never really realizing they all had a different ethnic and cultural background. Positive memories about one’s childhood are an important factor in creating a stable sense of belonging. Moreover, hearing positive stories in your youth from your (grand)parents concerning the Netherlands and their lives there, only strengthens this feeling. Some respondents mentioned to have heard the more emotional stories about the tough years when their (grand)parents just arrived in the Netherlands. On the one hand, these stories emotionally influence the respondents; some get frustrated and emotional while

thinking about it – yet, at the other hand, it makes them even more proud that in the end their (grand)parents established such a good life in the Netherlands for their families.

Going to high school meant some kind of change for a lot of the respondents. For some it was the first time they encountered other Turkish youngsters and the differences between ‘the’ Dutch group and ‘the’ Turkish group became more visible. For some the consequences of this realization meant they became more aware of their own background and for others it meant a rather radical decision to sort of ‘choose’ for one of the two groups. Most of the respondents feel more connected to people with a Turkish background than to autochthonous Dutch people. This has to do with a shared history, sharing the same habits and cultural traditions. However, none of the respondents perceives him/herself to be ‘totally Turkish’. Over the years Dutch elements such as cultural festivities (Sinterklaas and Christmas) and Dutch food have found a way into their homes and lives. Moreover, many of the respondents rather joyfully speak about having both typical Turkish and Dutch characteristics. Living between ‘both worlds’ is in their eyes most of the time a positive notion, since they can enjoy best of both worlds.

Nonetheless, most of the respondents also share moments where they felt rather uncomfortable in a totally ‘Dutch’ environment. Many have been in a situation where the rather blunt and sometimes unwelcoming attitude of Dutch people clashed with their own notion of hospitality, something that is so important in the Turkish community. Moments like that, realizing that you don’t share the same values, do (temporarily) shake up the sense of belonging of the respondents. Some have asked themselves the question, ‘Do I actually belong here?’ Facing labour discrimination or other forms of racism only worsens this sometime instable sense of belonging. Fortunately, the respondents don’t experience moments like this too often.

Even though it shows that these ten Turkish-Dutch young adults do feel very much at home in the Netherlands, one of the most important factors in this case is the presence of the Turkish community in the Netherlands. The young adults would probably have great difficulties in living in the more conservative, white areas of the country. In these areas it would be hard to establish the deep emotional friendships, to feel free enough to express themselves, to just be themselves; in the words of Antonsich (2010: 650):

“In order to belong, people should feel that they can express their own identity and be recognized as an integral part of the community where they live, as well as being valued and listened to.”

7.2.2 Influences on the sense of belonging in the Netherlands

Most of the respondents are very interested in the political events and developments in Turkey and are very much concerned with Turkey's future. In the second part of the thesis we looked at whether and how the developments and tensions between Turkey and the Netherlands influenced the sense of belonging of the ten respondents.

Some events, such as the Turkish resistance against the coup in 2016, made half of the respondents feel prouder of Turkey and the Turkish people. Even though at least half of the respondents expresses such an emotional connectedness towards Turkey, almost all of the respondents agreed with Rutte's statement that people – in this case Turkish-Dutch citizens – who don't want to adjust to 'Dutch' society, should leave the Netherlands and go back to Turkey. The respondents all show a great sense of belonging and want to participate in society. The events discussed in this thesis – the coup d'état, the Rotterdam riots and the 'Dutch' response to these events – influenced the respondents in two ways. Some of the respondents clearly felt more 'Dutch', because of the actions undertaken by Turkish authorities, with whom they very much disagree. Some experience more distance to the Turkish-Dutch community in the Netherlands, because of alleged loyalties for Erdoğan and, according to these respondents, their unwillingness to participate in Dutch society. Yet, some of the respondents also feel more Turkish. As a consequence of (diplomatic) tensions between Turkey and the Netherlands, most of the respondents are faced with more prejudices towards them and are sometimes held accountable for the actions of Turkey or fellow Turkish-Dutch citizens. This definitely influences them in a rather negative way, sometimes to the extent where they consciously take more distance from the 'Dutch' part of the Netherlands.

The sense of belonging of the ten young adults are deeply rooted in Dutch society and are therefore not easily shaken up. However, were the social and political reality to destabilize, resulting in even more stereotyping, discrimination or racism towards Muslims and Turkish people, it will definitely weaken their grounded-ness in society. That sense of safety – to be able to do whatever you want to, to be who you want to be and to feel accepted – that is so important in everyone's life, is in fact deeply influenced by the narratives circulating in the media and by the political discourse. The respondents have found ways to deal with the negative discourse about 'the Muslim terrorists' or 'Dutch-hating Turks' they are faced with almost every day. For some it means they distance themselves from Turkish people, others especially seek the presence of the Turkish community because it makes them feel accepted and comfortable. There are also respondents who are not so sure what to do, whether they need to make a choice or not and in that sense are in a sort of 'limbo space' of not really belonging to one of the two groups.

If the political and social reality becomes even more polarized and intensified, we can only hope that the Dutch society is inclusive enough to open their arms to the people who feel less cherished and accepted.

7.3 Recommendations for praxis

It is quite impossible to stop outside factors such as political events and developments in Turkey from influencing Turkish-Dutch citizens in the Netherlands. The Turkish-Dutch people are connected to the country through history and family ties and in many ways profit from having more than one culture to learn from. However, if (negative) developments influence the Turkish-Dutch people in such a way that they feel less at home in the Netherlands, then something is going wrong. The question is, how can we make sure that their sense of belonging will not be influenced by such outside forces? One way of tackling this problem is to look at the different factors that make up one's sense of belonging – along the lines of this thesis – and think about how we can deepen and strengthen the rootedness of the sense of belonging in Dutch society so it cannot easily be weakened by outside influences.

The respondents experienced positive feelings of group belonging with the Dutch community through shared cultural traditions; thus, investing in more inclusive national festivities – perhaps by considering to make some Islamic traditions, such as the Sugar Festival, national holidays and modernizing traditions such as Sinterklaas – can help to establish a stronger sense of belonging in (and being a part of) Dutch society.

Another way to tackle the problem of a weakened sense of belonging is to look at the prejudices Turkish-Dutch citizens sometimes encounter in their daily lives. The number of prejudices against Turkish-Dutch people especially increased after there was a lot of media attention for Turkish-Dutch citizens who were rioting against the Dutch police and government in Rotterdam. To counter this problem of prejudices against Turkish-Dutch people, talk shows on national television could provide platforms for Turkish-Dutch people to openly speak their mind about whether and why they (don't) support Erdoğan and, by doing so, create a better understanding of this community.

The results of the thesis show that none of the respondents ever felt 'different' from (white) children in the neighbourhoods they grew up in. Yet, going to high school and for the first time meeting other children with a migration background, sometimes resulted in a (small) identity-crisis. Therefore, the government and/or other relevant institutions should invest in combating residential segregation, so children learn from an early age on that the world is a diverse place and have more time to understand who they are themselves.

All in all, investing in creating a more inclusive society in the social, cultural, economic and legal sense, is crucial in establishing and maintaining a deeply rooted sense of belonging. A feeling that is so important in living a meaningful and happy life.

7.4 Suggestions for follow-up research

The results of this thesis cannot be applied to all Turkish-Dutch young adults in the Netherlands; the ten interviewed respondents are (of course) not a representative sample of all the Turkish-Dutch young adults. However, the results do give insight into the lives of these young adults and as the societal and scientific relevance of this subject point out, further research on this topic is essential. Where this thesis used qualitative research to get an as conclusive and broad view of the lives of the young adults as possible, quantitative research could point out whether other Turkish-Dutch young adults also have a rather deeply rooted sense of belonging in the Netherlands or not. Future research could compare the Turkish-Dutch communities living in various Dutch cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Deventer, and look whether there are significant local differences in the sense of belonging.

Almost all of the respondents in this research have a university degree and are thus by no means a representative sample of the Turkish community. I therefore recommend doing research on other (more representative) groups within the Turkish Community; one could think about (research) questions such as: to what extent do non- or low-educated Turkish-Dutch people feel at home in the Netherlands? Is there a significant difference between practicing Muslims and non-practicing or non-religious Turkish-Dutch citizens?

Not only the ‘successful integration’ of the Turkish-Dutch community has been questioned, other non-Western citizens in the Netherlands have been subject of the debate on integration as well. Future research could thus do a similar qualitative research on the sense of belonging of other ‘immigrant’ groups.

I believe that research on the effects of political developments (in host and sending country) on the sense of belonging of immigrants to be indispensable to understand how social challenges can best be dealt with and may eventually help in determining the best integration policies.

7.5 Reflection on the working process

The research process of writing this thesis was very instructive. I genuinely enjoyed compiling the theoretical framework and especially conducting the interviews. Although I never before had one to two hour long interviews with people I had never met before, setting up the interviews and conducting them went smoothly. Not only as a researcher but also personally I thought the conversations with the respondents were very interesting. The respondents told me they enjoyed the

interviews as well, as they had never really talked so openly about all these subjects before. Beforehand, I was quite nervous about finding respondents, thinking it would be a hard task. However, once I got in contact with several (Turkish/Islamic/Alevi) organisations, I came in touch with more than enough respondents in no time.

I am very thankful for that fact that my thesis supervisor always responded rapidly to my e-mails and for making critical and valuable comments; this has certainly contributed to the fluency of the writing process.

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Appendix I – Interview guide

1. Demographic data

Age, gender, city of birth, place of residence, educational level

Introduction questions:

- Can you describe the Netherlands in a few words for me?
- Can you describe Turkey in a few words for me?

2. Auto biographical factors

Youth:

- In which city did you grow up?
 - Did you live in a Turkish, Dutch or mixed neighborhood?
- Did you engage a lot with people / kids from the neighborhood?
 - Did you engage a lot with Turkish kids? And with Dutch kids?
 - Did your family engage a lot with Turkish families? And with Dutch families?
- Did you go on holidays and if so, where to?
 - Did you go to Turkey and if so, how did you experience that? Can you tell me about it?
 - Did you like going to Turkey? What did you mostly do over there? How long were you there and did you like it to be back in the Netherlands after the holiday?*
- Which school did you attend? *(Was this a religious – non-religious – black or white school?)*
 - Can you tell me about your experiences there?

Narratives:

- Did your parents or grandparents talk about Turkey and their lives there?
 - How did you think about these stories?
 - Did you feel connected to those stories?
 - Were you curious about their lives in Turkey?
- Did your parents and grandparents talk about their lives in the Netherlands, about the migration to the Netherlands and if so, in what way did they talk about it?
 - Do you identify with these stories or does it feel like a completely different time and place?

3. Relational factors

Social network:

- If you think about your social network, your close friends and the people you see almost every day, are they mostly Turkish? Dutch? From other ethnic or religious backgrounds?
- Do you feel like you can be friends with ‘anyone’?

- Have you ever felt like you weren't allowed to be a part of a particular group?
- Is having the same ethnic or religious background as your partner important for you and why?

4. Cultural factors

Cultural traditions:

- What do you consider to be typical Turkish traditions?
Do you celebrate these traditions at home? Do you value these traditions?
- What do you consider to be typical Dutch traditions?
Do you celebrate these traditions at home? Do you value these traditions?

Habits:

- What do you think is typical Turkish behavior?
Do you identify with this behavior?
- What do you think is typical Dutch behavior?
Do you identify with this behavior?
- What is typical Turkish food / music / media? To what extent have you been brought up with these aspects?
- What is typical Dutch food / music / media? To what extent have you been brought up with these aspects?

Religion:

- Are you religious?
What part does religion play in your life?
Did you experience any negative responses on your religion from other people?
Do you think the Islam is a part of the Dutch society? Is there enough 'space' to express your religious identity?

5. Economic factors

- What did you want to become when you were younger?
And what do you want to become now? Or what is your job now?
What changed your mind?
- Do you or did you ever worry about getting a job?
- Do you think you can make your dreams come true (in the Netherlands)?

6. Legal factors

The right to the nation

The right to appropriate:

- Do you have a feeling that ‘the Netherlands’ is yours?

Do you every feel ‘proud’ of the Netherlands?

- Do you feel like you can do whatever you want to do?

- Have you ever experienced the feeling of ‘holding back’, that you felt you couldn’t say or do what you wanted to do?

- Are there places you don’t want to or like to come? And why not?

The right to participate:

- Do you have the feeling that you can make a change in the Netherlands?

- Do you feel represented by the government? Do they stand up for your interests?

- Do you always feel the freedom to express your meaning?

7. Political developments

The failed coup, 15th of July 2016:

- What can you tell me about the coup in Turkey?

- Do you remember where you were when you learnt about what happened? What did you do? What did you feel?

In the days after the failed coup demonstrations were held by Turkish-Dutch people (against the coup). Tensions got quite high at some of these demonstrations. Mark Rutte responded with ‘Pleur op’ to Turkish-Dutch people rioting against the coup, who expressed a lot of anger and dissatisfaction to the Dutch government. Rutte claimed that people who are not conforming to ‘Dutch standards’ should go away.

- Do you remember this?

- What do you think about it?

- How did people around you react to the coup attempt?

- Has the coup affected your life? Has it affected your view on Turkey? On the Netherlands?

Rotterdam demonstrations and the referendum about the Turkish Constitution, March and April 2017:

- Do you remember the demonstrations and riots that erupted in Rotterdam in March 2017? (When the rights of giving a speech to the Turkish-Dutch people of two Turkish Ministers were evoked).

- What do you think about the fact that they were not allowed to speak?

- What do you think about the riots?

- How did the people around you react?
- What did you think about the referendum concerning the Turkish Constitution?

Erdoğan called the Netherlands 'Nazi remnants and fascists'.

- What do you think about these statements?
- Did these events affect your daily life? Did you experience different attitudes towards you? Has it changed the way you look at Turkey or at the Netherlands?

Presidential victory of Erdoğan, June 2018:

- Do you remember the presidential elections in June 2018?
- Did you decide to vote? What did you vote? What did your family and friends vote?
Do you feel involved in Turkish politics? And in Dutch politics?
- Has the presidential election changed your feelings about Turkey?
- Has the election of Erdoğan changed your daily life? Have you experienced moments of negative attitudes towards the election of Erdoğan and did it affect you?

Appendix II – Interview transcripts

An electronic version of the appendix (the transcripts of the various interviews) is available upon request.