

# Erdogan's long reach?

An investigation into the influences of current political events on the identity constructions of Turkish-Dutch adolescents.



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Supervisor: Haley Swedlund

15 May 2017

Radboud University





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Master's thesis

Human Geography – Conflicts, Territories and identities

Radboud University

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## Preface

So this is it, the moment I am finishing my master's thesis and thereby my time as a Student at Radboud University. The process of writing this thesis has not always been easy. The ability to concentrate while not experiencing pressure from a quickly approaching deadline, is a quality I have never possessed. I therefore think it's a case of good fortune that circumstances suddenly required me to finish my thesis within two months. The process of writing a master thesis may be something I am not very good at, I was however, completely grasped by the subject. The highly topical character of the research, forced me to adjust my research several times, but made it really exciting. I really enjoyed speaking to the Turkish-Dutch youngsters, because they allowed me a unique insight into their perceptions and ideas on topics, which were covered by Dutch media on a daily basis, but from a completely different point of view.

There are several people I would like to thank. First of all I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Haley Swedlund. Not only, because she provided me with the strict deadline I so badly needed, but mainly because of her guidance and comments, which helped me to take this thesis to a higher level. I am grateful for her flexibility and efforts, which enabled me to properly respond to last minute challenges, formed by sudden shifts or developments, such as when the actions of the Dutch and Turkish governments caused a direct political confrontation.

Secondly, I would like to thank Sema Daymaz. She helped me a lot by presenting me with a broader understanding of the research group, which helped me to put the everyday challenges and struggles of Turkish-Dutch adolescents into context. She taught me how to approach the respondents and helped me to ask the right questions.

Also I would like to mention both my parents, whose help has proved invaluable. They arranged access to their high schools, provided me with respondents, were always willing to discuss the subject and inspire me and revised my thesis, including my use of English. I cannot thank them enough for this. Furthermore, I am incredibly grateful to Rolf and my Hangmatjes, who were always ready to proofread my texts, or provide me with mental support when I needed this.

Last but not least I would like to mention the 21 wonderful and inspiring youngsters, who allowed me to get a glimpse into their lives. They were willing to open up to me, for which I am extremely grateful. I can only hope, that through this thesis, I have contributed to a better and more inclusive understanding of this group, for there is more to them than meets the eye.

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## Abstract

This thesis focusses on the identity constructions of Turkish-Dutch adolescents. According to previous research, Turkish-Dutch adolescents, have great difficulties establishing their own identities, being restricted by many external influences. These struggles might have been partly the same for their parents' generation, but due to recent political developments in Turkey and the Netherlands, the geo-political landscape has fundamentally changed.

Within the Netherlands, the position of Turkish-Dutch citizens has become increasingly problematized, due to growing anti-Islam sentiments and recent political developments in Turkey. On the one hand, the Dutch society seems to be increasingly rejecting these citizens, while on the other hand, it is increasingly asking these people's unquestionable loyalty, by questioning the right of having two passports, for example.

Also within Turkey tensions have increased. Recently, the country was plagued by several terrorist attacks and a failed, but nonetheless harmful coup d'état in July 2016, in an attempt to overthrow the government. The Turkish referendum of April 2017, has further fuelled unrest and widened divisions between government supporters and Turks supporting opposition parties. A diplomatic conflict erupted when Turkish ministers travelled to the Netherlands to conduct a campaign and the Dutch government decided they were not allowed to enter. It led to a direct confrontation between Turkey and the Netherlands, putting Turkish-Dutch citizens in a difficult position.

There is a knowledge-gap concerning the impact of these growing hostilities between Turkey and the Netherlands on the identities of Turkish-Dutch adolescents. This thesis seeks to find a deeper understanding of the influences of recent events on the identity constructions of this group. In order to investigate this, a qualitative research was set up and 21 Turkish-Dutch adolescents from Nijmegen and Oss were interviewed.

In this thesis it is argued, that Turkish-Dutch adolescents have complex, fluid and multiple identities. They very much identify with religion, and, to a lesser extent, their identities are shaped by their hobbies, educational level, future dreams, talents and character traits. It would be unfair to understand these youngsters solely in terms of their dual loyalty to the Netherlands and Turkey.

But, whereas identity is a very personal concept, it is very much socially shaped. Even though identities are complex, multiple and fluid, the duality of 'living in two worlds' does exist, for it is imposed on these youngsters by society, the media and politics. Whereas previous researches have focused mainly on the existence of this duality, the central argument in this thesis is that current political developments in the Netherlands and Turkey, have made this duality even more pungent. The increase of anti-Islam sentiments in the Netherlands, the military coup and the referendum in Turkey, and especially the growing mutual hostilities after the direct confrontation between Turkey and the Netherlands in March, have added to this. It has led the Dutch government, media and public to increasingly reject everything related to Turkey, and to increasingly ask Turkish diaspora in the

Netherlands to pledge their loyalty to the Dutch nation. At the same time lack of loyalty to the Turkish ruling party may result in excommunication and even physical threats. This puts later generation Turks in the Netherlands in an impossible position.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The duality Turkish-Dutch adolescents struggle with

*“Studies on identification and orientation of Turkish-Dutch youth, show that they are strongly focused on their original identity and roots”. -Huijnk, Dagevos, Gijsberts and Andriessen (2015, 162)*

According to recent research, youth living in the Netherlands with a Turkish migration background, seem to differ from their peers with an Antillean, Moroccan and Surinam background. While the latter appear to have been more successful in blending their original roots with Dutch identifications, Turkish-Dutch youth seem to feel more in conflict with which nationality they identify with (Huijnk and Dagevos 2012; Staring, Geelhoed, Aslanoğlu, Hiah and Kox, 2014). When asked with whom or what they identify, Turkish youngsters very often appear to interpret this question as having to choose between national loyalties, either Turkish or Dutch (2015, 163). Paradoxically, even though they feel they should have a preference for one national identity over the other, at the same time these youngsters express they are constantly confronted with the fact that in both Turkey and the Netherlands they are regarded as ‘different’ (SCP, 2015, 168).

The finding that Turkish-Dutch youngsters feel like they have to choose between different identifications, while never succeeding in fully identifying with one becoming one, is also confirmed by specialists, working with this group, such as Sema Daymaz, director of ‘het Time Out Huis Gelderland’. The Time Out Huis is an organisation providing shelter for girls with a migration background from the age of 12 till 21. These girls either ran away from home or were kicked out by their parents. In most cases, the situations at home had escalated into extreme quarrels as a result of years of mutual incomprehension and frustration. During our conversation (December, 2016), Sema Daymaz described how Turkish youngsters constantly deal with incomprehension. On the one hand they are part of a Turkish community that has a rather restricting character, and on the other hand they are part of the local school community, where the Dutch educational system is aimed at shaping youngsters into autonomous and critical individuals. Furthermore, the youngsters are part of one or more friend groups, often existing of migrant youth, wherein also different norms and values apply (Daymaz, 2016). While struggling to find their own way, and heavily influenced by ‘Dutch’ society, Turkish-Dutch adolescents are continuously watched and judged, especially by Dutch-Turkish communities. According to Daymaz, the values of their parents clash with the values taught in school, which then clash with the values of their friends. These youngsters are constantly asked to prove their loyalty to one of these groups while they, being teenagers, are still searching for their own identities, shifting in loyalty and identification. They are constantly reminded that they will ‘never be Dutch or Turkish enough’ (Daymaz, 2016; Huijnk et al., 2015).

The struggles of having to combine different values and expectations is not necessarily something new. Most of the youngsters’ parents were either born in the Netherlands, or moved there

as a result of family reunion when they were still minors. This means they probably also had to cope with these expectations. However, the geo-political landscape has changed over the years. The political developments both in the Netherlands and Turkey have problematized the positions of Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands, anti-Islam sentiments are growing. At the same time, political developments in Turkey itself have led to increased tensions within Turkey and among its citizens. 'The West' is increasingly portrayed as an enemy, placing Turkish diaspora in Europe in a difficult position. The Netherlands and Turkey appear to be growing further apart, with both constantly demanding that the people living in these two worlds prove their loyalty to the own nation. This puts these Turkish-Dutch citizens, among whom many youngsters, a huge dilemma concerning their belonging and identifications.

Little is known about the impact of these growing hostilities between Turkey and the Netherlands on the identities of Turkish-Dutch adolescents. As Turkish-Dutch youngsters are trying to find their way in life, discover who they are and who they want to be, changes in the geo-political landscape might have large influences on their identity constructions. These youngsters are old enough to be self-reflective and able to distance themselves from ideas they do not agree with, but are still searching to find a balance between uniqueness and joining certain social groups within society (Erikson, 1968). Adolescents thereby form a very interesting research group, for the social contexts they will live in, have not yet been defined. In this condition, external influences, like major geo-political developments, might very well have larger influences on their identity constructions, than on the identities of mature people, whose minds and places in society are more definite.

## **1.2 Research objective and questions**

This thesis thus focusses on the identity constructions of Turkish-Dutch adolescents. Through conducting a qualitative analysis, it seeks to acquire a deeper understanding of the perceptions and identifications of this group. In the process of gathering data, a total of 21 Turkish-Dutch adolescents was interviewed. They are all attending one of two high schools; Maaslandcollege in Oss or the SSGN in Nijmegen.

Up to now scientists often focused on the existence of the duality of living in two worlds at the same time, with which Turkish-Dutch youngsters have to struggle in their everyday lives. But is fair to solely understand these youngsters in terms of this duality? As adolescents who have almost finished puberty, is there not more to them? According to Huijnk et al. (2015), Ramm (2010) and Karakayali (2005), Turkish and other immigrant children, have great difficulties establishing their own identities, being restricted by many external influences.

At the same time, we should not underestimate the importance of these two cultures for their identity constructions. If the socio-political societies these Turkish-Dutch youngsters live in, are

imposing this duality on them, this might greatly influence how they perceive themselves. While navigating through puberty and the struggles and insecurities this accompanies, Dutch-Turkish youngsters appear to often find themselves in a position strongly problematized by both the Netherlands and Turkey. How do those youngsters deal with these contrasting pressures in the wake of current political events? From many different sides identities, roles, loyalties and belongings are imposed on these adolescents, but how do they conceive these themselves? And do they experience difficulties in establishing their own identities? How do they navigate between different, possibly contrasting identifications?

In this thesis, I will investigate how Turkish-Dutch youngsters identify themselves, leaving room for a broader and more inclusive understanding of identity. Meanwhile it will be examined if this duality of living in two worlds does exist, and particularly, to what extent their identifications are influenced by recent political developments. This leads me to compose the following central question:

**How are senses of identity constructed for Turkish-Dutch adolescents, and to what extent are they influenced by recent political developments in Turkey and the Netherlands?**

To be able to answer the central question, I focused on several sub-questions. In order to get an insight into existing literature on the concept of identity constructions, and how these might be influenced by political developments, I first answered the following questions:

- How are identities constructed for later generation Turkish youngsters in the Netherlands, theoretically?
- According to previous researchers, how would those identities be influenced by political developments, both in Dutch and Turkish society?

Secondly, I researched empirically how Turkish-Dutch youngsters construct their identities. Thereby it was also examined to what extent they indicated to be influenced by current political developments in Turkey and the Netherlands. For this, the following sub-questions were composed:

- How do Turkish-Dutch youngsters in Nijmegen and Oss identify?
- How do they conceive recent political developments in the Netherlands and Turkey, and how do they deal with these?
- What are the influences of these recent political developments on the identifications of these Turkish-Dutch youngsters?

This thesis thus seeks to find a deeper and broader understanding of the perceptions of Turkish youngsters within the Netherlands of their own identities, taking into account current political events. It thereby focusses particularly on the salience of the imposed duality of ‘living in two worlds at the same time’.

### 1.3 A changing context: political developments in the Netherlands and Turkey

In order to understand the political developments contributing to this duality, firstly, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the changing geopolitical context in which these adolescents navigate. Today the Netherlands are home to around 400.000 Turks (CBS: Bevolking; leeftijd, herkomstgroepering, geslacht en regio, 1 januari, 2016). The First Turks arrived in the 1960's, as part of the 'guest workers' program, in which the Dutch government recruited Turks as cheap labour to temporarily work in the Netherlands. The Dutch government had not anticipated their stay would become permanent. In the 1970's labor migration was replaced with family reunification, when guest workers, already living in the Netherlands brought their families too (Garssen, Nicolaas and Sprangers, 2005). From the second half of the 1980's until the end of 1990's, the Turkish population in the Netherlands grew further due to family formation. Turks who grew up in the Netherlands, married in Turkey and then returned with their spouse, to build a future here. Most guest workers and their families stem from rural villages in Central Anatolia (Sirseloudi, 2012).

#### 1.3.1 The Netherlands: anti-Islamic sentiments are increasing

During the last Dutch elections in March 2017, Geert Wilders' political party, 'Partij voor de Vrijheid' or Freedom Party (PVV), grew with 25%. The party's primary focus lies in promoting anti-immigration policies and feeding sentiments of Islamophobia. It has had its influence on the political arena, rhetoric and public debates preceding the elections, because these all became largely dominated by the subject of immigration. This contributed to the establishment of other rightwing parties, who also responded to these sentiments, by partly adopting them. The PVV's huge growth, the rise of other right-extremist parties, and the adoption of such sentiments by other parties, show an important shift in public discourses from a 'tolerant' to a more hostile attitude towards migrants over the last twenty years. According to Paul Scheffer (2007), this process was set in motion by events like 9/11 and the rise of the politician Pim Fortuyn (and strengthened by his murder in 2002). Also researchers, like Christoph Ramm (2010), describe how debates around immigration and multicultural societies in Europe and the Netherlands, have hardened in the last ten years. Recently influenced by the palpable effects of large scale warfare in name of Islam in the MENA-region, the Muslim world is more and more seen as an enemy (Macleod, 2016). Examples of these effects are the coming of large numbers of refugees and terrorist attacks within Europe every now and then. These sentiments are fed by right-wing parties like the PVV.

Over the past year, both Turkey and Turkish communities in the Netherlands have attracted much media attention. From within the Netherlands, we can all remember the sudden appearance of 'treitervloggers' – migrant youngsters who made short clips, which they put on the internet, in which they molested the police and other public servants, while claiming to be victims of discrimination. Furthermore, there was the sudden rise of the political party DENK, consisting of mostly Turkish-

Dutch citizens, who have promoted themselves as representatives of citizens with a non-Western background and Turks in particular. DENK gained specific attention due to its opinions concerning Turkey's politics and President Erdogan, as was recorded during a debate in the 'Tweede Kamer' (Latoria, 2016). The party got a lot of criticism within the Netherlands, because it would not actively distance itself from current practices in Turkey. Many Dutch strongly believe these practices contribute to a dismantling of Turkey's democracy.

As a result, the position of Turkish-Dutch citizens has become a recurrent theme in social and political debates and has thereby become more and more problematized. Turkish-Dutch millennials, today's adolescents, are growing up in a different society than their parents. Subjects they identify with, and, maybe more important, are associated with, are things like Islam, the East, migration. These subjects are surrounded by prejudice, particularly on social media and TV. They now have to deal with negative imaging on a daily basis.

### 1.3.2 Turkey: towards an authoritarian regime with the West as enemy?

At the same time, recent events in Turkey have led to an increase in tensions within Turkey and within the Turkish communities living in Europe. Since, in 2002, the Justice and Development party (Adalet ve Kalkinma, AKP) came to rise in Turkey, the country has slowly moved away from its Europe minded politics towards a more conservative, majoritarian regime (Ozbudun, 2014). These political developments accelerated over the course of the last year, due to some major events. Turkey is facing many threats from several terrorist groups, who commit acts of terrorism almost every month. The most well-known is the PKK or Kurdish Labour Party. According to Turkey, the PKK is a separatist group, pursuing an independent Kurdistan. In an interview with the BBC, the PKK's military leader Bayik claimed to pursue the acceptance of Kurds' innate rights, within the borders of Turkey (Pannell, 2016).

In July 2016, Turkish communities were shaken by a failed, but nonetheless harmful coup d'état. Its aftermath is still very tangible even within the Netherlands. According to the government, which is being ruled by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, it was an attempt to overthrow the government by the cleric Fethullah Gülen and his 'Gülen movement'. Since Gülen resides in Pennsylvania after he was banished from Turkey, the Turkish government repeatedly requested the US to extradite Gülen (Turkey: Evidence given to US of Gulen's 'role' in coup, 2016). The United States have so far denied this request. This contributed to the strong belief in Turkey that the United States, via the CIA, played a role in the coup too (Yeni Safak, 2017).

After the coup, Erdogan announced an emergency situation of three months, which he has since prolonged, in which thousands of civil servants, policemen, academics and people from the military, were fired or sometimes arrested for their supposed ties to the Gülen movement (Academics for peace,

2017; Shaheen, 2017). This resulted in major tensions among Turkey's population, and even in the Netherlands tensions between different groups of Turkish-Dutch citizens run high.

These tensions further increased after the German website 'Der Spiegel' released an interview with Bruno Kahl, head of the German foreign secret service, BND. According to Kahl the coup was not carried out by supporters of Gülen, nor was it staged by the government (de Voogt, 2017). He believed the cleansing of dissident officials within the government had already started before the coup, which led a group of high-ranking officials to try to overthrow the government, before being arrested themselves. The coup gave Erdogan the legitimization to pursue the cleansing (de Voogt, 2017). This interview was conceived with rage within Turkey, resulting in an increase in statements on Turkish media, and by Erdogan himself, portraying 'the West' and Europe as the enemies of Turkey.

After the coup, the AKP set in motion a series of constitutional changes, strengthening the president's position in parliament. These changes were to be completed, by the implementation of a comprehensive proposal, resulting in a broadening of the presidential power, through a referendum on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 (de Voogt, 2017). This referendum entailed the transformation from a parliamentary system to a presidential system. The AKP strongly persuaded Turks to vote 'yes'.

The result of the Turkish referendum was a very small victory for the 'yes' camp. A majority of 51,4% ( as opposed to 48,6%) voted in favor of the of the proposed constitutional changes (Yeni Safak, 2017). Of the 370.000 Dutch Turks, 250.000 are registered voters for Turkey . From these registered Turks, around 45% voted during the referendum in April 2017 (Turkse Nederlanders stemden massaal 'ja', 2017). From this group of Turkish-Dutch citizens, around 70% voted 'evet', in favor of the proposed changes.

#### **1.4 Conflicting loyalties?**

On the one hand, the Dutch society seems to be increasingly rejecting all non-western migrants, among whom there are many Turks. On the other hand however, it is increasingly asking these people's unquestionable loyalty. An example would be the heated discussions on the subject of citizens owning two passports, which re-emerged just before the elections, brought up by politicians like Sybrand Buma from the Christian, middle-right party CDA (Buma, 2017).

According to the CBS (2016) in January 2014, there were 1,3 million Dutch citizens having a double nationality. Around 300.000 of these are Turks. More recent figures on double nationalities do not exist, because in the law 'Basisregistratie personen' (Basic Registration of Persons) which became effective in January 2014, it is laid down that for citizens with a Dutch nationality, other nationalities will no longer be registered. This law was drafted to accommodate Dutch citizens with one or more other nationalities, who only feel Dutch, but who, through the original Basic Registration of Persons, were constantly confronted with their non-Dutch background. The Dutch government deemed this



undesirable, after a quick scan in 2009 showed, that ten percent of Dutch municipalities had received complaints about this ‘double registration’, by Dutch citizens with more passports (Plasterk, 2013).

The rhetoric on double passports is rooted in the idea that a passport, symbolizes one’s identity. Owning two nationalities, and thereby two loyalties, one of which to a non-Western country, would imply that full endorsement of the Western, liberal values is not possible. The abolition of the right to own another passport next to the Dutch one, can be understood as a constraint to choose only one national identity.

Turkey’s politics over the last years have focused on reaching out to its diaspora living all over Europe. An example is the fact, that also second and third generation Turks in Europe are legitimized to vote, also for the referendum on April 16<sup>th</sup>. By the Turkish government and through Turkish television and social media, they are constantly addressed as normal Turks, countrymen, living abroad. As such they are also asked to prove their loyalty, by supporting the government in its fight against ‘terrorists’ like Gülen, via statements on Facebook, for example. And through voting ‘yes’ for the referendum in April. Because if you want to protect democracy in Turkey and you if are ‘ready to completely get rid of the terrorist organizations FETO, the PKK, Daesh, and the DHKP-C’ (Yeni Safak, 2017), you will enable the president to do what is right for Turkey, and to defend Turkey against those who used terror and economic crises "to hinder Turkey's path" in a “dark game”(Yeni Safak, 2017). The US government had already become the enemy through its safeguarding Gülen, but very recently the Dutch government has become the enemy too.

#### 1.4.1 The diplomatic conflict between Turkey and the Netherlands

The Turks living in Europe, form a considerable part of the Turkish electorate. In promoting among Turks to vote ‘yes’ for the referendum, Turkish ministers also planned to come to the Netherlands to campaign. Possibly influenced by the proximity of the Dutch elections, the Dutch government, led by Mark Rutte from the VVD, stated that the Turkish ministers were not welcome. This led to a diplomatic row, when the Turkish minister of Family Affairs denied this request and entered the Netherlands by car in the weekend of March 11<sup>th</sup> 2017. Subsequently she was not allowed to enter the Turkish consulate. The weekend marked a very interesting shift. Earlier, both within the Netherlands and in Turkey, the portrayed enemy had remained quite abstract; ‘The West’ and ‘Islam’. Now, due to this direct confrontation, political leaders and media in both countries have started to depict the other as an enemy of focus.

When you watch Dutch news today, chances are quite big you see an item on Turkey, in which President Erdogan and his is ministers are criticized and an image is drawn of Turkey falling into dictatorship. In Dutch talk shows, often only Turks who are anti-Erdogan are asked to give their opinion. Also on the Turkish side hostilities towards the Netherlands have increased. The Turkish-Dutch journalist Erdal Balci explained in the Volkskrant (2017) how television is an important tool for

Erdogan to influence Turks outside of Turkey. According to Balci (2017) Turkish state television nowadays broadcasts a constant stream of pro-Erdogan minded programmes, where Europe and the Netherlands specifically, are denounced as enemies, primarily focused on the destruction of Turkey. The Dutch have repeatedly been called fascists and Nazis by the Turkish government. Turkey has accused them furthermore of slaughtering thousands of innocents in Srebrenica in the 1990's, and constantly underlines on Turkish television, how the Netherlands support Gülen (Balci, 2017).

Turkish-Dutch citizens thus now find themselves on the verge of two conflicting nations. What would the impact of this be for them? Turkish communities in the Netherlands are known to be quite close and restrictive. The aftermath of the coup and the commotion around the referendum have resulted in major tensions between different Turkish groups within the Netherlands. Turkish-Dutch citizens in favour of the AKP, demand from fellow Dutch-Turks they speak out and prove their support for Erdogan's AKP, or risk excommunication, hence the massive amount of pro-Erdogan statements on social media. According to, amongst others, Groen, Kuiper and Zoetebrood (2017), anti-Erdogan Turks barely dare to speak out anymore, in fear of being labelled a traitor?

#### 1.4.2 Central argument of this thesis.

In this thesis it is argued, that Turkish-Dutch adolescents have complex, fluid and multiple identities. They very much identify with religion, and, to a lesser extent, their identities are shaped by their hobbies, educational level, future dreams, talents and character traits. It would be unfair to understand these youngsters solely in terms of their dual loyalty to the Netherlands and Turkey.

But, while Identity is a very personal concept, it is very much socially shaped. What I found, is that while identities are complex, multiple and fluid, the duality of 'living in two worlds' does exist, for it is imposed on these youngsters by society, the media and politics. In line with Karakayali (2005) it is argued, that this duality is salient and influential, only because these youngsters live in a society in which almost everyone believes these youngsters are 'caught between two worlds'. The imposed duality thereby becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Then, whereas previous researches have focused mainly on the existence of this duality (Karakayali, 2005; Sirseloudi, 2012), the central argument in this thesis is that current political developments in the Netherlands and Turkey, have made this duality even more conspicuous. The increase of anti-Islam sentiments in the Netherlands, the military coup and the referendum in Turkey, and especially the growing mutual hostilities after the direct confrontation between Turkey and the Netherlands in March have added to this. It has led the Dutch government, media and public to increasingly reject everything related to Turkey, and to increasingly ask Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands to pledge their loyalty to the Dutch nation, and vice versa. They thereby put later generation Turks in the Netherlands in an impossible position.

## 1.5 Scientific relevance

### 1.5.1 New group in a new situation

The highly topical character of the subject provides this thesis with scientific relevance. The influences of a coup and terrorist attacks in the country of origin, combined with increasing anti-Islamic sentiments in the host society, on Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands, have barely been researched yet, because these events have only just happened. The situation also presents a rather rare case: later generation Turks living in the Netherlands, who still very much identify with Turkey, see these two countries moving in seemingly opposite directions, and in direct confrontation with each other.

The respondents form a quite new group of immigrants. They are the children of the children of immigrants. For almost all of them, their grandparents were the first to come here, so most of them have either one or two parents who largely grew up here. Still many current adolescents are regarded as second generation (CBS, 2016), because often either one or both parents were not born in the Netherlands. Most millennials either belong to this group, or are third or even fourth generation Turks.

As Scheffer (2007) furthermore explains, the situations of current day diaspora cannot be compared to the situations of migrants, further back in history, because of the enormous consequences of globalisation. For Turkish migrants and their children today, it is extremely easy to keep in touch with their nation of birth. Everyone knows the image of flats with satellite dishes in front of every apartment, enabling its residents to directly stream Turkish (or other national) TV (Scheffer, 2007). Budget airlines make it payable for many to travel back and forth between the Netherlands and Turkey. In the 1980's and 1990's it was still relatively easy to import a Turkish bride or groom for marriage, which is an important reason for the fact many current Turkish adolescents are still only second generation. And also through the internet it is perfectly possible to keep warm ties to the homeland. The Labour migrants in the sixties were no longer forced to slowly abandon their own traditions and ties to home, like, for instance the Europeans, travelling to North America around 1800. This makes the need to really integrate and adopt Dutch culture potentially less urgent.

As a result, earlier researches on identifications of migrant youth are no longer directly applicable to explain the struggles and challenges Turkish-Dutch youngsters face today. Little is known about the effects of current events on their identities. But why is it important to focus on these youngsters' identities and identifications? This will now be discussed.

### 1.5.2 The importance of speaking about identity

As Amartya Sen describes in his book 'Identity and Violence, The Illusion of Destiny' (2006), a sense of identity can be a source of pride and joy and it can give a person strength and confidence. Belonging to a particular group might give a person feelings of warmth and security. But, identity can also become a source of hatred, conflict and even violence. For "a 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, p. 2).

Also Brubaker and Cooper (2000) explain how the concept of identity is often used as a political tool. Leaders of political parties or rebel groups often emphasise the existence of fundamental characteristics of the own social group, but more importantly, of other social groups (bound together by categories like race, gender, ethnicity or age). These characteristics are then presented as fundamental, primordial differences that cannot be overcome, because they are at the core of those people’s identity. A famous example in the Netherlands is the way Geert Wilders, party leader of the ‘Partij voor de Vrijheid’ (PVV), speaks about ‘Moroccans’, ‘immigrants’ or ‘Muslims’, groups he defines as coherent and homogenous. This form of reification or ‘verdinglichung’, the belief that fixed nations, races and identities exist and that all people have one (Brubaker et al. p. 2000), is very present in current political rhetoric and has been argued to present a severe problem for multicultural societies. Ramm (2010), for example, stated the following on the integration of Turks in Germany. He speaks of:

*“The notion of ‘parallel societies’ which has become very popular over the last decade, in particular the threatening scenario of ‘non-integrated’ immigrants retreating to ‘parallel worlds’ and rejecting ‘western values’” (p. 187).*

In current debates within social sciences, it has become almost common knowledge that the concepts of identity as singular and primordial are incorrect. Still, in everyday rhetoric, Dutch politics and media on the issues of integration, Islam and immigrants, it is very often these essentialist conceptualizations of identity, to which people with a non-western background are reduced. As Ramm (2010) points out, this is seen to be causing tensions and segregation in society. Hence also providing this thesis with societal relevance, which will be elaborated on in 1.6.

Thus, the focus on identity in this research has a dual impact: through the use of a scientific discussion on identity, we might learn more about the situations of Turkish-Dutch youngsters in the Netherlands. Secondly, an investigation into this specific case, could contribute to scientific debates on identity in general, through providing a broader and more inclusive understanding of the concept. As described in 1.4. Whereas earlier researches focused on proving the existence of the duality of being caught between two cultures as affecting the identifications of later generation migrants, this thesis will argue that due to recent political developments in the Netherlands and Turkey, this duality has become more influential in the hybrid and fluid identity constructions of Turkish-Dutch youth.

## **1.6 Societal relevance**

Dutch Turks form a considerable part of the Dutch population. As Sen (2006) and Ramm (2010) described, external influences, such as the current changing discourses in the Netherlands and the

occurrence of political events in Turkey, might greatly affect Turkish-Dutch youngsters, for they impose essentialist concepts of identities on these adolescents. Thereby distancing them from other groups, causing tensions and segregation in society. Changes within Turkish communities in the Netherlands, might have significant impact on the whole of Dutch society.

These growing tensions and segregation are also described in an article in the *Volkskrant*. As the headline points out, the article describes how ‘Teachers express ‘great worries’ on segregation at schools in the Randstad’ (author translation, van den Berg, 2017). There is a lot to criticize with respect to this research; the design of the questions and theses presented to the respondents is of a quite steering character and methodological decisions are barely motivated (van den Berg, 2017), so its conclusions should not be adopted without hesitation. The research by DUO does however provide insight into the great fuzz around the themes of integration and segregation in Dutch society.

But, even though there is a lot of attention for the topic, seemingly important Political events have only happened recently, causing a lack of knowledge of the perceptions of Turkish-Dutch millennials and how they have been affected by recent events. The respondents are growing up in a society with growing anti-immigrant and anti-Islam sentiments, which makes their situation very different from earlier generations. Do the challenges and opportunities their parents faced, either as first or second generation migrants, apply to the Turkish-Dutch youngsters in this research too? If current events have been proven to affect identities, and if Turkish-Dutch youngsters are increasingly forced to pledge their loyalties and forced to choose between countries or between Turkish political parties, what does this mean for the Turkish communities in the Netherlands?

The complexity and importance of the concept of identity, combined with all the difficulties Turkish-Dutch youngsters are facing in the Netherlands today; the increase in tensions within Turkish communities and the growing fear of segregation in Dutch society as a result of recent political developments; the knowledge gap in how to deal with and understand these youngsters as a result of the highly topical character of the research: these all make it a crucial moment to thoroughly investigate the identity constructions of Turkish-Dutch youngsters in the Netherlands. Therefore the findings of my research might prove to be quite helpful in tackling this problem.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Making sense of the concept

#### 2.1.1 Early conceptualizations

Renwick Monroe, Hankin and Bukovchik Van Vechten (2000) describe how most current conceptualisations of identity - that is to say conceptualisations after the 1950s - encompass both the sense of oneself as an agent and as an object, that is seen, experienced and judged by others. This presents an alleged dichotomy between a personal or individual self, versus a social self, which many scientists take as a point of departure. Those conceptualisations combine an Aristotelian view, which considers humans as biological organisms, having basic biological needs, with a Lockean view, which defines a person as a psychological entity, distinct from the biological organism (Renwick Monroe et al., 2000). The psychological entity has analogous social needs, such as desires for prestige and security. Many contemporary social scientists define a person as 'a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places' (Perry 1975, p. 12). "The self is thus positioned as a complex and multifaceted identity" (Renwick Monroe et al., 2000, p. 420). Authors like Mead, and Freud describe a paradox within the human mind, where individuals try to maintain self-continuity over time, while acting out different roles and personalities, depending on the particular circumstances (Renwick Monroe et al., 2000). Mead for example speaks about the 'I' (the subject self) versus the 'me' (the object seen by others').

Erik H. Erikson is often considered a leading figure in identity debates within psychology. In his method of psychoanalysis he also considers the above mentioned dichotomy between an individual and a social self. As Renwick Monroe et al. summarise:

*"In Erikson's view (1980 [1959]), each person has (a) a conscious sense of individual identity, (b) the unconscious striving for a continuity of personal character, (c) an ongoing or developmental process of ego synthesis, and (d) maintenance of an inner solidarity with the ideals and identity of a group" (2000, p. 421).*

According to Erikson, identity is formed by a mental process, in which the mind constantly absorbs, combines and processes information deriving from both the inner and outer senses into one coherent whole: an identity (Erikson, 1968). Your identity thereby serves as the boundary between the individual and the social world and at the same time brings these together (Erikson, 1968).

The notion of having 'multiple identities', according to Erikson (1968) is only existent during childhood. During adolescence, the multiple identifications a child has, rework to produce one, coherent, mature identity (Schachter, 2013). Schachter (2013) explains how Erikson looks at 'multiple self-representations, or adopted aspirations of the self, as the building blocks of a future identity-

rather than as identity itself (p. 73). Mature identity, in Erikson's eyes, is thus rather fixed. It is formed, based on earlier identifications and internal processes. He does not account for the shaping influences of (new) differing social contexts and the different roles individuals play in these contexts. Erikson thereby fails to fully acknowledge the importance of contextual influences (Schahter, 2013).

Social theorists like Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx, on the other hand, emphasise the importance of influences of social structures and culture. Durkheim, whose ideas are firmly based within structuralism, considered the individual "a determined product of social facts" (Renwick Monroe et al., 2000, 421). Whereas for Durkheim identity is completely determined, Marx, who stated that individual identity is produced by class location in economic structures, leaves some space for agency in what he calls 'the possibility of a revolution' (Marx & Engels 1989 [1947]).

Within a democracy, it is, to a certain degree, necessary for people to feel they belong to all other people in society, in service of a higher purpose, which eventually benefits all. It is therefore necessary to set aside internal differences, for in the end, they do not matter (Brubaker et al. 2000). Structuralist views on identity do not present any tools or solutions to overcome these differences, for internal differences between people are inherent and thus unchangeable. Amartya Sen, in his essay on identity, does. His constructivist views on identity leave room for active agency in choosing your identity and hand tools for creating multiple belongings. At the same time, he does take into account social influences.

### 2.1.2 Identity according to Sen

Amartya Sen (2006) describes how one person belongs to many different categories. I am at the same time a daughter, Dutch, a girlfriend, a student, an atheist, etc. According to Sen these are all different identities I possess at the same time. The identities I have, are constructed within and depending on a particular social context (Sen 2006). Social circumstances vary over time and thus identities depending on them vary along, hence emphasizing their fluid character. I might for example become a mother in a few years, but I am not one now. Identities are thus constructed, plural, fluid and depending on external circumstances. Sen then describes how not all identities are equally important at the same time. Sometimes different identities can compete for attention and priority, depending on the particular circumstances. The person experiences diverging loyalties and decides, either consciously or unconsciously, what relative importance to attach to the different loyalties (Sen, 2006). Central in Sen's essay on identity is thus the element of choice!

### 2.1.3 The importance of social context

The different categories to which one 'belongs' or with which one relates are based on certain classifications. These classifications are sometimes very well defined (shoe size, marital status) and sometimes quite vague, like nationality. What exactly is defined if a person is categorized as Dutch,



Turkish or immigrant, is not always clear. Even though the category of people with the same shoe size, is much better defined, it is also of much less importance for my everyday life than the notion of me belonging to a vaguely defined group of ‘Dutch youngsters’. While this classification might play a significant role in my life, for my Dutch-Turkish peers it might be of even greater importance. Now, why would that be? As Sen (2006) states: “whether a particular classification can plausibly create a sense of identity or not, must depend on social circumstances” (p.26). Pierre Bourdieu (1993) stated that even though certain classifications are hard to justify intellectually, they are sometimes ‘made’ important. Social action can result in “producing differences where none existed, it can transform people solely by telling them they are different” (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 160-161). Sen amplifies: “the social constitutes differences by the mere fact of designing them” (2006, p. 27).

#### 2.1.4 Singular affiliation

A crucial aspect of the theory that people have many different identities to which they can attach importance, is the possibility to identify with others having one of those particular identities. A high level of segregation in a plural, multicultural society such as the Dutch society, presents many risks, for it may create mutual misunderstandings, miscommunication and through this, social tensions and even violence (Sen, 2006). To be able to identify with and relate to many different people in society, can help reduce mutual incomprehension and hence overcome these problems (Sen, 2006).

As I described above however, people’s extensive collections of different identities are not always taken into consideration, both by themselves and, more importantly, by others. A very common type of this reductionism is called ‘singular affiliation’. Then someone’s identity is reduced (by others) to belonging to only one collectivity or group, and all other identities, which define the person, are ignored (Sen, 2006, p.21). The theory of singular affiliation demonstrates how reasoning and choice are not always decisive in the way certain identities are made important and others are ignored in particular situations. External influences can restrict or restrain the choices people make (Sen, 2006, p.25). We all choose our identities within particular constraints. Some of those constraints are shaped by feasibility; obviously, it would be very hard for me to choose the identity of a Chinese emperor. Others are very much determined by our social context. It thereby comes down to “defining the extent to which we can persuade others to take us to be different from what they insist on taking us to be” (Sen, 2006, p. 31).

In short, Sen thus explains how according to his theory, identities are multiple and fluid. Different identifications can co-exist, also when these are at times conflicting. He thereby very clearly underlines the existence of individual agency in choosing the relative importance to attach to different identities, in contrast to structuralists like Durkheim. Furthermore, whereas Erikson fails to do so, he acknowledges the influences of external social and cultural factors, for he describes how identities are



shaped within and by the individual's social context and how this social context might pose constraints which limit the individual's ability to choose his/her identity.

In this thesis, I will use the definition of identity as presented by Amartya Sen. This definition would be most suitable in this research, because it acknowledges the difficulties later generation Turks experience in constructing their identities, constrained by their (social) environments. At the same time, Sen's definition has an emancipatory character, for it provides individuals with active agency; with the ability to partly choose their own faith. As such, troubling accounts of Turkish-youth being stuck in a duality between two countries, should not merely be understood as the unchangeable result of the 'failed integration' of Turks in the Netherlands (Scheffer, 2000). The notion, that identities are fluid and individual agency can provide tools for creating multiple belongings, provides potential solutions for the problems, associated with migrant youth in the Netherlands. It thereby offers agency and hope.

## 2.2 A focus on adolescents

Even though Erikson's theory falls short of providing an inclusive definition of identity, his emphasis on the crucial stage of adolescence is an interesting one. Erikson (1968) emphasises that adolescents experience a severe identity crisis. These youngsters have developed enough to be self-reflective, but must still navigate to find a balance between uniqueness and joining significant social groups within society (Erikson, 1968). This normative crisis, which all youngsters experience, is thought by Erikson to be a crucial condition for optimal development of one's personality. This crisis manifests itself in these adolescents through periods of insecurity, extreme emotions and recalcitrance, characteristics of puberty (Erikson, 1968).

Mackavey, Malley and Stewart (1991) have done additional research to test Erikson's theory. Asking respondents for memories, involving moments of critical decisions that influenced the course of their lives, they found most of those derived from adolescence and early adulthood. They thereby proved the hypothesis that these stages are crucial, for they mark important life choices. Adolescents in higher grades of high school are almost ready to spread their wings. They leave the firm base of their homes, to start living their own lives, making their own choices.

As Erikson describes, the identity crisis happens to all adolescents. So if all adolescents, also the ones with a stable and non-problematic position in Dutch society, such as native Dutch youngsters, experience a 'severe' identity crisis, how severe would the crisis be for the children of immigrants? The negative imaging in the media and political rhetoric, the alleged clashing of values between the parents, the school and friend groups, the growing tensions within Turkish communities; according to Sen (2006) they should all be of influence for one's identity construction. If the youngsters participating in this research are still finding their way, this means many of the social contexts they will live in, have not yet been defined. In this condition, external influences, like major socio-political

developments, can be assumed to have larger influences on their identity constructions, than on the identities of mature people, whose minds and places in society are more solid. In my research on how identities are constructed, I will therefore focus on people, who are already rooted in a firm base of self-conceptualizations, values and their beliefs, but who have yet to decide which path to take in life: adolescents.

## 2.3 The second generation?

As I described earlier, even though my ‘Dutch’ identity might play quite a significant role in my life, for my originally non-Dutch peer, its importance might be way more significant. Due to some major recent events, this might be particularly the case for first, second and third generation Turks living in the Netherlands. In preparation of answering my central question, I will now dive deeper into identity construction for second and third generation Turks in Europe and in the Netherlands in particular. I will thereby primarily focus on adolescents. How are their identities constructed, to what extent does their background play a (decisive) role and why?

### 2.3.1 To which generations do my Turkish respondents belong?

In order to be able to make valid statements on Dutch citizens with a Turkish background, based on categories in terms of the particular generation they belong to, it is important to make clear, what the terms imply. The Dutch Central Office of Statistics (CBS) (2016) describes these groups as follows: Those who were born abroad, but have migrated to the Netherlands, are considered to belong to the first generation of immigrants, even if they were still very young at the time of migration. Persons who were born in the Netherlands, but at least one of their parents was born abroad, are considered to belong to the second generation. In order to belong to the third generation of immigrants, both parents should have been born inside the Netherlands, and at least one of the four grandparents should have been born abroad (CBS, 2016).

The children of immigrants, also known as ‘the second generation’ constitute a rather specific group about which much has been stated. Most Turkish-Dutch high school students, like the ones I interviewed, are descendants of ‘gastarbeiders’ or guest workers, who came here in the sixties and seventies. For these students, the so-called guest workers are mostly their grandparents. Still a family reunion often took place later, when these children’s parents were already born. Also, very often a spouse for these children’s parents was found in Turkey- often people went to Turkey to marry there and then return to the Netherlands- so many of them are still categorised as second generation. New groups of third or even fourth generation Turks already exist, but because of these two reasons, youngsters whose parents (or even grandparents) were both born inside the Netherlands (a condition as set by the CBS for defining the third generation), are still quite few in numbers. The youngsters I am

interested in researching, Turkish-Dutch adolescents in high school, therefore mostly ‘belong’ to the second generation of Turks in the Netherlands.

## 2.4 How do Turkish-Dutch youngsters identify themselves?

### 2.4.1 Self-concept and self-esteem

In his article on ethnic identity among Turkish and Dutch adolescents in the Netherlands, Verkuyten (2010) focusses on the notion of self-concept. Using the definition given by Rosenberg, he explains self-concept as “the totality of the individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object” (Rosenberg, 1979, in Verkuyten, p. 288). The term ‘global self-esteem’ is its affective or evaluative aspect, which relates to the person in his totality (Verkuyten, 2010). He too describes the tendency to see ethnic identity as the central component of self-concept for adolescents from ethnic minorities (p. 288). Here Verkuyten names authors like Newton (1968), who stated that negative feelings with respect to ethnic background equal a rather negative global self-esteem for youngsters. Ethnic identity is often considered to be a factor so characteristic and central, that generalizations such as this one are justified (Verkuyten, 2010). If in fact there exists a relationship between the two, either theoretical or empirical, remains unclear according to Verkuyten. He acknowledges however, that these assumptions do have certain roots. For instance, ethnicity may also be stressed by family and the own ethnic circle. As he describes:

*“Research in the Netherlands indicates that the fact of being Turkish is nourished by the ethnic circle and is considered to be of great importance (Penninx, 1988). Turkish people in the Netherlands usually feel a bond with each other, and because of their position in Dutch society, their ethnicity gains an extra dimension”* (Verkuyten, 2010, p. 287).

Verkuyten therefore, set up a quantitative research in which he made a comparison between Turkish and Dutch youngsters in the Netherlands, about the importance they ascribe to different components of identity. His main goal was to test if the assumption that ethnic background is important for self-concept, is correct.

Self-concept can be divided into three categories (and from there many sub-categories); dispositions, physical or external features and social identities (Verkuyten, 2010). These social identities Verkuyten describes, are in line with Sen’s theory on identity (2006). The research led to the following findings: in percentages, the differences between Dutch and Turkish youngsters turned out to be very small (Verkuyten, 2010). The component with by far the greatest impact on global self-esteem, for both the Dutch and Turkish respondents, was body image. However, taking into account that respondents were adolescents, who were in the middle of experiencing important physical changes, Verkuyten found this result not to be very surprising.

Ethnic identity was less important than body image for both the Dutch and Turkish respondents, but compared to each other, ethnic identity was stronger for youngsters with a Turkish background. Furthermore there were some indications they also evaluated this identity more positively (Verkuyten, 2010). Verkuyten (2010) stresses that the greater importance Turkish youngsters attach to their ethnic identity, absolutely does not mean that global self-esteem becomes dominated by it, but in specific situations, it might however be possible that ethnic identity gains predominant significance (p.295). This research thus suggests that in contrast to what other research might suggest, ethnic identity does not play a large role in the global self-esteem, for both Dutch and Turkish-Dutch youngsters. But, since ethnic identity is more significant for Turkish youngsters than for Dutch ones, it could be assumed, that in specific situations, this ethnic identity gains importance. Verkuyten's research thereby supports Sen's (2006) theory, that different identifications can co-exist and that these might become more or less important as a result of changing external influences.

#### 2.4.2 Belonging and identification

Crul and Heering (2008), who conducted qualitative research under the Turkish second generation in the Netherlands, focused on belonging and identifications, rather than self-esteem, as markers for identity construction. According to Crul et al. (2008) "about 80 percent of the second generation hold strong or very strong feelings of belonging to their own ethnic group – which corresponds to similar figures on feelings of 'being Dutch' among the comparison group" (p. 108). According to their parents' ethnic background, 14 percent also indicates to identify strongly or very strongly with the Kurdish ethnic group.

If asked about their feelings of 'being Dutch', about 30 percent of Turkish-Dutch men and only 20 percent of Turkish-Dutch women indicate to have either (very) weak feelings or no feelings of being Dutch at all. These data might be understood in terms of supporting theories like Sen's, which state that people can have and perform multiple identities at the same time. Crul and Heering (2008) examined the acquired data in such a way that they were able to distinguish if the respondents could simultaneously identify with different types of identities. They found, for example, that it was very common amongst Turks to identify simultaneously with the Islam and the Netherlands, without the one necessarily limiting the other (p. 111).

Large differences between Turkish and Dutch peers can be found in terms of religious belonging; Over 80 percent of Turkish youngsters identify either strongly or very strongly with being Muslim, while for the Dutch comparison group, over 60 percent indicate to have no feelings at all or (very) weak feelings of religious belonging (Crul & Heering, 2008, p. 109-110). I will dive deeper into the influences and roles of religion in the feeling of identity for Turkish youngsters in 2.8.

## 2.5 Being caught between two cultures – second generation immigrants

Dominant discourses on the identification processes of this ‘second generation’ are often rooted in the ‘two-worlds thesis’. Its main argument evolves around the belief that the reality of growing up in two opposing worlds at the same time is of major influence for the individual development of the immigrant child (Sirseldoudi, 2012). Sirseldoudi (2012) explains:

*“On the one hand they are being brought up by their families in a traditional way with regard to religion and culture, whilst on the other they have to adapt to a Western-Christian culture outside of their family life” (p. 816).*

Karakayali (2005) also writes about ‘the second generation’, but critically examines the dominant idea about children of immigrants, being ‘caught between two worlds or cultures’, those of their parents and of the host society. This idea first gained notice in Mayo-Smith’s article on the different groups of ‘whites’ living in America in 1894. In slightly different forms and with shifting focus, the two-worlds thesis remained dominant in debates on the topic until today (Karakayali, 2005). According to Karakayali (2005): “by focusing exclusively on the experience of duality, the two-worlds thesis depicts an existence shaped by uncertainty and ambivalence” (p. 326). It constitutes the dominant discourse on “the problem of the second generation” (Karakayali, 2005, p. 327), hence enhancing the idea of the immigrant child syndrome, which involves mainly feelings of marginality. Karakayali (2005) explains, that the dominance of this division is problematic, because it cuts through the everyday lives of immigrant children, being imprinted on them from the day they were born. It becomes an inevitable source of tension, where these children are being caught between two worlds they will never truly belong to. She concludes by stating that the real problem is not that immigrant children feel caught between two worlds, but that this feeling derives from the “condition of living in a world where most people believe that there are only two worlds” (2005, p. 340). It thereby becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and ignores the fact that these people have a desire to escape this duality and create a new identity.

Karakayali might be right in her statement that, even more than these children’s actual situation of living in two worlds, the dominant framing in policies, media and everyday practices of this duality, is of importance for the way these children are interpreted and understood. This is, for example, visible in actual political rhetoric where the notion of Dutch citizens having two passports, is constantly re-emphasized and debated on. There is a firm belief among large parts of Dutch society, that to own two passports, is to have two loyalties, one to the Netherlands and one to the country of origin. The children of migrants are in that case reduced to having an identity, which is solely constructed of their alleged dual loyalty. We should refrain from understanding these children only in terms of the two-worlds thesis, but we should not underestimate the influence it has. Both in the sense

that these children are understood within this frame of duality, and in the sense that they in fact do experience shifting identifications. This is because they are constantly asked to prove their loyalties to the different groups they belong to: their school, the mosque, their parents and friends; all with different and sometimes clashing values.

Furthermore, the ‘two worlds’ these children live in, the Netherlands and Turkey (or the Turkish community), are now increasingly asking them to prove their loyalty to either one of them. Within the Netherlands, debates around the status of citizens with a migration background harden, led by radical parties like the PVV. Especially during the elections, which were held in March 2017, their being ‘different’, with a focus on religion, became increasingly framed as a threat to Dutch culture and society (PVV election program, 2017-2012). Within the Netherlands, Turks are constantly told they should do anything possible to become like the Dutch, but at the same time Dutch society is reminding them of the fact that they will never truly be like the Dutch.

Also, political developments within Turkey, remind Turkish diaspora of their Turkish roots. The coup d’état in July 2016 for example, has resulted in millions of Turks internationally pledging their allegiance to the AKP through social media. Furthermore, the governing party AKP led by Erdogan is quickly installing political reforms, in order to ensure Erdogan’s firm position as president (Volkskrant, NRC, 2016). He even sent Turkish officials, like the minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Netherlands, in order to gain support amongst Turkish diaspora for a referendum, held on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2017.

It is important that in our understanding of identity, we hold tight to Sen’s description of people having multiple identities, which can all coexist. However, as Sen (2006) also describes, according to the relative importance attached to these identities, some might temporarily become more important than others. Key to this relative importance is the social context, whereas external factors can greatly influence people’s self-identifications. Therefore, I will now subsequently examine the influences of Dutch society, politics and media, and the influence of political developments in Turkey on the identity of Turkish youngsters.

## **2.6 How the Netherlands influences the second generation**

### **2.6.1 From Ausländer to Muslim**

Ramm (2010) steps away from the idea that the two-world thesis still dominates the public discourse. In his research focusing on Turks in Germany, he claims that there has been a shift in public perceptions of Turks from being ‘ausländer’ to ‘Muslim’. The image has stepped away from that of immigrant children ‘being caught between two cultures’, and has become “Islamized” (Ramm, 2010, p. 185). He describes how in the 1970’s Turkish people had become *the* image for immigrants and all the problems that came along with immigration. According to Ramm (2010), anxiety about Muslim fundamentalism slowly came to rise. The media focused particularly on Turkish women, who were

increasingly framed as being suppressed by their religion. (p. 185, 195) This was enhanced by the attacks of 9/11, when Islam was catapulted into a religion of terrorists. By Islamizing (Turkish) immigrants, this approach promoted segregation, since it conceptualized a democratic and secular German identity as opposed to the Islam (portrayed as untouched by enlightenment or liberal emancipation).

Ramm (2010) describes how within the political spectrum, the concept of integration is very popular, also among left-wing liberals. After all, it seems obvious that each immigrant would want to fully participate in our society and wish to become a full and equal member. Yet, full integration implies adherence to democratic, liberal and secular values in order to acquire *the* German identity. For Turks, however, allegiance to these values is not self-evident. Liberal integrationism makes allegiance to 'our values' a necessary precondition for belonging to Western society, according to Ramm (2010, p. 194). It thereby uses a totalitarian logic. Ramm in this way criticizes the liberal integrationist approach, for it enhances an imaginary separation of social spheres and value systems. The focus laid on culturalist and essentialist discourses around patriarchal violence (e.g. the fascination for how Islam treats women) transforms it into a fundamental characteristic of all Muslims. In conclusion, Ramm states that people, who he calls 'Muslim haters' *create* a negative ideal of the true Muslim believer, to which every man or woman from a Turkish background is reduced.

## 2.7 Turkey's Identity politics

### 2.7.1 Erdogan's built identity

As Sirseloudi (2012) describes, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Turkey experienced a secularization process after the fall of the Ottoman empire. Within the Kemalist discourses, which then came to rise, Islam was seen as a potential danger for the modern nation state Turkey was developing into. On the other hand however, Islam played a key role, as it formed an important component in unifying the plurality of peoples in the region, into the Turkish nation. According to Sirseloudi (2012), this notion is essential in the sense that, even though Turkey was developing into a Western, secular republic, "the religion remained firmly rooted, particularly amongst the rural population, and was never completely eliminated" (p. 809).

From the 1970's onwards, the Islamic world experienced a change of thought with regard to the position religion should have in society and politics. Discourses that "did not want to adjust religion to modernity, but rather to create 'a religious modernity' gained new influence" (Sirseloudi, 2012, p. 810). Islamist politics experienced much resistance, but was empowered by the economic growth and political liberalization, resulting from the military coup d'état in 1980. This eventually led to the formation of the Welfare party (Refah Partisi), led by Erbakan, in 1996, which, for the first time, managed to mobilise and unify large groups of people, who had not felt represented in politics before.



Its openly anti-kemalist and anti-EU positions, resulted in the prohibition of the Welfare party and the forced resignation of Erbakan in 1997 (Sirseldoudi, 2012).

Out of the Welfare party's ashes, the Justice and Development party (Adalet ve Kalkinma, AKP) was established, led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The AKP had clearly learnt from past experiences and tried to distinguish itself from the Welfare party, by framing its government as a conservative democracy, pro-Western in the EU context. As Duran (2013) describes, during the AKP's rise to power from 2002 to 2006:

*"The party utilized the EU membership process as the main engine behind Turkey's democratization drive and presented Western integration as an alliance of civilizations... In recent times, however, an emerging discourse of "common Islamic civilization" plays a more noteworthy role as part of the AK Party's efforts to control the wave of regional transformation that arose out of the Arab revolutions" (p. 93).*

During the years of his reign, Erdogan carefully presented Turkey as a 'great nation' with a central and constructive role in combining a Western Alliance with a focus on Islam and the Middle-East (Duran, 2013). This strategic framing of policies, in which Erdogan tried to encompass also the Kurds in his 'great nation', did not only serve to create common feelings of identity and belonging to his government, but "also constructed an identicalness between Turkey's future and his party" (Duran, 2013, p. 94).

Even though the AKP emphasized the willingness to integrate into the EU and propagated Western Allegiance through membership of NATO, it meanwhile started to construct criticism on the Western world. In recent years, Erdogan increasingly started to criticize the West, e.g. in its dealing with Israel (Duran, 2013). Also, as Duran describes, he increasingly began to portray the Islamic world as the victim of Western disregard. It paved the way for a whole new form of Islamism: it removed effects of Kemalism and produced a "normalization of Islamism" (p. 97). Through its claimed ownership of EU accession, the AKP gained support, also from Kurds and liberals. With the prospect of EU membership, "foreign policy became an instrument to transform domestic politics" (Duran, 2013, p.98). When the AKP became the leading party, Turkish politics became more conservative, majoritarian and authoritarian (Ozbudun, 2014). The government, led by Erdogan, thereby dissociated itself more and more from the secular 'West'.

### 2.7.2 Increasing tensions and civil unrest

Turkey faced multiple challenges in recent years. There are several rebel groups in the South and East, responsible for terrorist attacks every now and then. In July 2016, Turkey was shaken by a failed, but nonetheless harmful coup d'état, in an attempt to overthrow the government, which is being



ruled by Recep Tayyip Erdogan's AKP. In reaction, Erdogan immediately pointed towards the cleric Fethullah Gülen and his 'Gülen movement' as the guilty ones, and announced an emergency situation of three months in which thousands of civil servants, policemen, teachers and people from the military, were fired or even arrested for their supposed ties to the Gülen movement.

The AKP and the Gülen movement have not always been hostile towards each other, for both movements are rooted in the Islamic belief and therefore originally challenged the laicist establishment in Turkish politics (Kirdis, 2016). While the AKP became involved in politics and the Gülen movement focused on change bottom-up (via education etc.), together they achieved in transforming the existing laicist structures.

In the beginning of 2017 Erdogan announced the coming of a referendum to pass a bill in which several constitutional changes were proposed. These changes would enlarge the president's power and would further that of parliament. Erdogan and his AKP paid specific attention to Turkish diaspora, living all over Europe. Representatives of the government planned to visit European cities to speak to potential voters living abroad. Several European nations deemed this 'undesirable' and within the Netherlands it even led to a direct confrontation (Vreeken, 2017). The Turkish minister of Foreign Affairs was denied the right to land his plane, after which the Turkish minister of Family Affairs crossed the Dutch border by car. She was denied entrance to the Turkish consulate and was escorted out of the country. This immediately led to large protests in cities like Rotterdam, and Erdogan publicly accused the Dutch of being Fascists and Nazis (Vreeken, 2017; van der Laan, 2017). Erdogan and his AKP placed much emphasis on Turkish diaspora. This is remarkable, because Turks in the Netherlands (and in the rest of Europe) have lived abroad for several generations now and will probably stay there too. The results of the referendum show, why it was so important for the AKP to campaign inside the Netherlands: a considerable part of their electorate, of whom many supporters of the AKP, live in the Turkish diaspora. The referendum held on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2017, resulted in a small majority of votes in favour of the proposed constitutional changes. Of the roughly 400.000 Turks in the Netherlands, around 250.000 of them are registered to vote in Turkey. Out of these registered Turks, around 45% voted during the referendum in April, 2017 (Turkse Nederlanders stemden massaal 'ja', 2017). From this group (Turkish-Dutch citizens), around 70% voted 'evet', in favor of the proposed changes. But why would the AKP be this popular among Turks in the Netherlands? I will now elaborate on why and how Turkey has actively conducted identity politics for later generation Turks in the Netherlands. This could also explain how this led to a majority of yes-votes for the referendum in the Netherlands.

### 2.7.3 Turkish Diaspora in the Netherlands

In the 1960's and 1970's large groups of Turks travelled to Netherlands to work as guest workers in low-income jobs. While the government had assumed their stay to be temporary, most of

them stayed and brought their families too. They created large, permanent communities over the last 50 years. Even though these labor migrants, and their children and grandchildren, had permanently left the country, Turkey never referred to them as diaspora (Ünver, 2013). Even today the Turkish authorities still speak of countrymen or expatriates when referring to first, second or third generation Turks in European countries. Ünver (2013) furthermore explains, that since the AKP has been in power since 2002, the Turkish government has “pursued a policy of even closer ties with the Turkish communities abroad. Among measures taken to this end, the most dominant is the granting of the right to vote in Turkey’s parliamentary elections for Turkish citizens residing abroad” (p. 186). The labor migrants, who initially intended to stay only temporarily, remained focused on events in their homeland. According to Sirseloudi (2012) this notion, combined with their actual distance from Turkey and its politics, “enabled them to hold more extremist points of view than would have been possible in Turkey” (p. 811). Furthermore, many of these labor migrants are descendants from working class families in central Anatolia, which are known to be pro-AKP.

On the one hand, later generation Turks in the Netherlands are constantly portrayed as strangers by Dutch society (Ramm, 2010). Their image is ‘Islamized’ and as such, they are constantly reminded of the notion, that they are not ‘really’ Dutch, and will not easily become Dutch. At the same time, the Turkish government seems to constantly reach out to them. Even though the second and third generations are considered to be ‘Europeans’ by Turks living in Turkey, due to their Western clothes, habits and values, the Turkish government keeps referring to them as countrymen, as Turks abroad. This might give a clear explanation for the fact that later generations in the Netherlands still feel very much Turkish. For Turkish migrants, also their Muslim identity is often very important. It is remarkable that in this secular, Western environment, many Turks identify with Islam more than their countrymen in Turkey do (Sirseloudi, 2012). I will now try to explain, why this is the case and how religion helps them in establishing their identities.

## **2.8 Religion as an important marker for identity**

Crul and Heering (2008), who compared later generation Turkish youngsters to ‘Dutch’ youngsters, state that over 80 percent of the Turks in the Netherlands describe themselves as Muslim. Even if people do not pray five times a day, or only visit a mosque every once in a while, religious norms, values and practices remain dominant in their domestic lives. Crul and Heering (2008) describe furthermore that also second and third generation Turks strongly identify with Islam much more than their Dutch peers do.

Sirseloudi (2012) explains the difficulties immigrants inside the Netherlands experience. They are faced with very high expectations of integration. According to Berry (2005) integration implies an effort from both sides; the immigrants and the receiving host society. Therein both are interested in maintaining their original culture, while engaging in daily interactions with other groups in society. It

involves a mutual process. But integration in this sense is based on the assumption that immigrants have the freedom to choose the ways in which they would like to engage in the host society. This host society should adopt an open and inclusive orientation toward cultural diversity (Berry, 2005). In Dutch society, integration is merely seen as an expected effort from the side of the immigrant. These migrants experience constraints in their cultural choices, imposed on them by Dutch society. They are supposed to adapt to Dutch society, without trying to maintain their own cultural heritage. In our standards, integration actually means immigrants have to assimilate (Berry, 2005). On top of this difficulty, immigrants have to achieve this 'integration' in difficult environments; most migrants end up in the poorest areas, where social-economic circumstances are bad and unemployment rates are high.

First generation Turks were and are still very clearly rooted in their Turkish backgrounds. Their values, norms and beliefs were established, while situated in a stable environment. For later generations this is not the case, as they are confronted with very different, and sometimes conflicting, discourses, being Turkish descendants in a Dutch society. Their fear of losing their religious, cultural basis is often connected to a general fear of losing their identity (Sirseldoudi, 2012). As long as they consider their integration into the host society, as purely instrumental, as long as they hold strongly to their cultural, historical and religious roots and hang out with people having the same roots, their identities remain very clear. When people focus very strongly on their Turkish, Muslim rootedness, fear of losing their identity is not an issue. As Sirseldoudi (2012) states, it is therefore not surprising that even Turks who would have been atheists in Turkey, in the Netherlands convert to Islam again.

Turkish second and third generations have grown up in the Netherlands and are participating in Dutch society way more than their parents, who often do not speak the language. They would, in principle, be able to fully participate in Dutch society, for they were born there, have had a Dutch education and are familiar with Dutch norms and desirable behaviour. But, mostly due to their visibly non-Western roots, they keep experiencing discrimination and rejection as if they remain strangers (Sirseldoudi, 2012). Identity crises and orientation problems are therefore almost unavoidable. "The religiousness of the second and third generation offers a lifestyle allowing them to cope with the challenges of modernity in a foreign country" (Sirseldoudi, 2012, p. 814).

## **2.9 Towards an hypothesis**

All the above theorists emphasise the fluid and dynamic character of identity. Identities evolve and transform due to changing external influences (Sen, 2006; Erikson, 1980). Stuart Hall (1990) in line with this reasoning, states the following: "Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything that is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power" (p. 225). This quotation is interesting, in the sense that, due to cultural and political events

in society, and shifting power dynamics, Turkish-Dutch youngsters might feel they belong more or less to specific cultural identifications, such as Turkey or Islam (Huijnk et al., 2015). The way these youngsters are perceived and treated within Dutch society, is of major influence on the extent to which they feel they belong to the Netherlands.

Furthermore, Huijnk et al. describe how a strong focus on the own community is characteristic for Turkish groups within the Netherlands. This is combined with an even stronger internal differentiation in terms of cultural and ethnical backgrounds, and religious and political convictions (Huijnk et al. 2015). With the arrival of large groups of Turkish migrants in the sixties, coming from many different ethnic, cultural, religious and political groups, their movements and organisations have come along and were reproduced here (Huijnk et al. 2015).

Huijnk et al. (2015) stated the following: “While van Bruinessen in 1982 stated that within Turkey, Islam was more emphatically present than ever before (Van Bruinessen, 1982, 193), due to recent political developments, his findings still seem very relevant” (p. 169). In Turkey’s changing society, Erdogan’s government has started a process of re-Islamization. At the same time it has led to many protests because of the fading democratic character of Turkey’s rule of law. For Kurdish, Alevi and other minorities this is very threatening. Dividing lines between different groups within Turkish society have become more visible, and Turkey and the Netherlands have recently stepped into a direct confrontation with regard to the Turkish referendum. Following the above argument, one could assume that recent events have strengthened those divisions and have thereby reinforced ethnic, cultural and religious identities. This makes it a crucial moment to pay specific attention to the identity constructions of Turkish-Dutch youngsters and the potential influence of political developments in both Turkey and the Netherlands.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 The choice for qualitative research**

The best way to investigate the meaning and construction of identity for Turkish-Dutch adolescents, is through qualitative research. According to Braun and Clarke (2013) “it deals with, and is interested in, meaning” (p. 20). Data in qualitative research is produced by people, who act as agents, and are located, within a specific (social) context (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The qualitative researcher thus has the opportunity to recognize biases and subjectivity and incorporates those into the analysis. This means that, in the end, he or she will not come up with one right and definite answer based on the data, but that many different ‘stories’ could exist (Braun et al., 2013). A well-known limitation of qualitative research is its inability to generate results which can lead to general conclusions. The subjectivity, which refrains us from doing so, is however, extremely valuable, according to Kvale (1996), because the way we see and understand things reflects our identities and experiences. So qualitative research is more suitable to investigate identity than quantitative research would be, for it “allows a far richer (fuller, multi-faceted) or deeper understanding of a phenomenon than using numbers. Furthermore it allows us to retain a focus on people's own framing around issues, and their own terms of reference, rather than having it pre-framed by the researcher” (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 24). It has more tools to recognize and reveal ‘messiness and contradictory experiences’ in people’s language and because qualitative research can be explorative, flexible and open-ended, it can evolve during the research, and might lead to findings we would not have ever imagined in advance (Braun et al., 2013).

The qualitative methodology within this research will be of ‘experiential’ character. It focuses on the respondents’ own experiences and interpretations. The aim is thus “to ‘get inside’ people's heads as it were, and to prioritize them in reporting the research” (Braun et al., 2013, p. 21). An effort has to be made to see the world as it is understood from the respondents’ perspective.

#### **3.2 The respondents**

This thesis focuses on Turkish-Dutch youngsters, and thus the respondents belong to this group. As Erikson (1968) describes, all adolescents experience an identity crisis during puberty. I therefore interviewed young Turks who are in high school. As I described in the theoretical framework, these youngsters had to have developed enough to be self-reflective, but must still navigate to find a balance between uniqueness and joining significant social groups within society (Erikson, 1968). According to Cavanaugh (2010), these youngsters are still experiencing the last drops of that period. For girls, puberty usually ends at the age of sixteen or seventeen. For boys this is around the age of seventeen, eighteen.

The respondents should not be too young, because they must have developed sufficiently in order to be able to really reflect upon their own experiences and position in society. Because of this I decided to interview Turkish-Dutch adolescents who are in higher grades of High school (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, mainly 16, 17, 18 years old).

### 3.2.1 Location

I questioned respondents in two high schools; The SSGN (Stedelijke Scholengemeenschap Nijmegen) in Nijmegen, Gelderland and Maaslandcollege in Oss, Noord-Brabant. Both schools offer education on three distinct levels; vmbo-t, havo and vwo. These can loosely be compared to respectively pre-vocational, senior general secondary education and pre-university education.

The SSGN is of average size, with over 1350 students and around 120 staff members. The school is known for its facilities for students doing high level sports, so it attracts all kinds of future athletes. Furthermore, within Nijmegen, this school is known to host a large number of students with a migration background. At the SSGN, I interviewed 9 Turkish-Dutch youngsters, of whom five were boys and four girls, spread over all three educational levels.

Maaslandcollege is a large school with roughly 1800 students and 150 staff members. This school is known for its international orientation, thanks to its bilingual programme offered to havo and vwo students. In this programme, students are offered the possibility to receive half of all courses in English. Details on the interviewees here are just like above.

I have given much thought on how to approach my potential respondents in such a way that they would be willing to participate and in a way their parents would find acceptable, considering the sensitivity of the subject. The best way to approach these youngsters was through my parents, who are both teachers at the schools. They knew which students were Turkish, or knew which colleagues to ask, knew where to find them and were able to look at their timetables to make appointments for interviews. It Turned out, most students were very willing to help me, and they really enjoyed speaking about themselves. The limitations and advantages of this approach will be described in 3.4.3.

In order to facilitate the respondents as much as possible, interviews (and other participatory methods) took place either in an empty office or classroom at school, most of the time during free hours. There they felt at ease and, very importantly, they could speak freely. As such it would have been unwise to interview these youngsters at home, because the presence of their parents or other family members, might have influenced their answers greatly.

### 3.2.2 Profile of the respondents

Within the select group of Turkish-Dutch students, I strived for a group of respondents with broad features. In order for the result to be inclusive, I included both boys and girls and students from all three educational levels.

All in all I interviewed 21 respondents; twelve boys and nine girls. At Maaslandcollege I interviewed twelve Turkish-Dutch youngsters, of whom seven boys and five girls, spread over all three the educational levels. 20 of those youngsters belong to the second generation of Turks in the Netherlands, as defined by the CBS (2016). Only one respondent's parents were both born in the Netherlands, which makes her the only third generation Turk in this research. The sample of third generation youngsters is therefore so small, that it will not be possible to draw conclusions, based on the possible differences or similarities between the generations.

The respondents are all in the highest grades of secondary school, which means either in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade, of all three educational levels. Their ages range from 16 to 18 years old, with one exception; one respondent was 20 years old. The access granted through my parents has somewhat influenced the research sample. They are both mainly concerned with students from havo and vwo education; my father because of his role as coordinator for the top grades of havo, my mother via the courses she teaches. The result is that eleven of my respondents are havo student, whereas only five respondents are in vmbo-t. The reason that I questioned only five vwo students, lies in the fact Turkish-Dutch students following this form of pre-university education are still quite few in numbers.

Among the respondents, 19 declared to belong to a group of 'normal Turks' as they put it themselves. Only one respondent has a Kurdish background and one respondent, who considers himself as a normal Turk, has roots in Syria. All students come from Muslim families. The extent to which and how this plays a role in their everyday lives varies.

## 3.3 Research methods

### 3.3.1 Small talk

Driessen and Jansen (2013) described the importance of 'small talk' in addition to other research methods. Through small talk you could learn a great deal about social norms and behaviour within a specific group. Connecting to the respondents on an everyday level, helps the researcher to gain trust and, at the same time, might provide a lot of information and awareness on where sensitivities lie and how to deal with those carefully and in a 'local' way (Driessen and Jansen, 2013).

Due to the highly topical character of the research, I had the advantage that the subject was very present in many people's minds. All sorts of people, acquaintances, friends and family, brought me into contact with the Dutch Turks they knew as friends, teachers, colleagues, etc. Through small conversations, mainly on their opinions about political developments in Turkey and the conflict

between Turkey and the Netherlands, I acquired a broader and more inclusive understanding of the different discourses present in the Turkish-Dutch communities inside the Netherlands.

Furthermore, before I started the interviews, I first met with Sema Daymaz, director of the Time Out Huis Gelderland. She, being of Turkish descent, explained to me how I could approach these Turkish-Dutch adolescents properly, and how I could get them to speak about politically sensitive and rather abstract topics. She described the difficulties the migrant youngsters that she works with face. This helped me a lot in making the respondents feel more comfortable and open towards me. Also, as I came across several respondents in the weeks after, we continued to have short, informal conversations about their opinions on the most recent developments.

### 3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

In order to gain the most valuable information, the main focus was put on conducting interviews. Through the interviews, I hoped to get a broad and deep understanding of what the concept of identity means for Turkish-Dutch adolescents in Nijmegen and Oss. These interviews were semi-structured. As Braun et al. (2013) describe, this way, the interviews left room for explorative and flexible questioning. Semi-structured interviews are however, partly pre-determined in character, so it still gives the researcher something to hold on to during the interviews. Boeije, Hart and Hox (2009) describe how a number of topics or questions, with themes to touch upon, should predominantly be composed. From there on, the researcher should follow the respondent when talking about the topics, also if it leads them, only to a certain extent, away from the original interview guide. Galletta and Williams (2013) describe how this enables the researcher to really go in depth and ask respondents for clarification and critical reflection on the topics discussed.

I structured my interviews based on these prescriptions, given by Boeije et al. (2009) and Galletta and Williams (2013). It allowed the research to evolve along the way with the collected data and also enabled me to acquire important findings, A possibly I had never anticipated. An example: I was quite naïve in not anticipating on how the different religious discourses are very important for the way the current government is perceived. Something I found out along the way. The semi-structured character of my interviews made it possible to find this and enabled me to involve it in later interviews.

I spoke with youngsters, not with adults, on quite sensitive topics. This had some major implications for the type of interview questions I could ask. Firstly, since the concentration span of adolescents is usually quite short, I ensured all interviews took less than an hour and most had a timespan of around 30 minutes. The fact that I dealt with youngsters, also meant that the type of questions I posed, had to be concrete and comprehensible enough for them to give meaningful answers. Simply asking how their identities are constructed, would have asked for a level of abstraction and distance from their own situation, possibly far beyond their capabilities. Through



posing questions like: ‘How would you raise your child?’ I could indirectly learn a lot about their worldviews and perceptions on the particular concepts, while the questions remained specific and comprehensible.

Next to the demand for questions to be understandable, I had to take into account that I questioned politically and socially very sensitive topics. Especially questions regarding recent political discourses and developments, such as those leading to the military coup in July, had to be handled delicately. Via small talk in the beginning and through experience, I tried to define which topics were particularly sensitive and how they could be properly addressed or avoided. This was particularly the case with regard to my own opinions on the political developments in both the Netherlands and Turkey. It was very important, the respondents would be able to speak, without feeling judged. I therefore chose my words very carefully, asking questions too bluntly, might have given away my own opinions on the matter.

All interviews started with questions regarding demographic data. Braun et al. (2013) have described the importance of systematically collecting demographic data, because it enables the researcher to reflect on the potential relationship between the results and the different ‘categories’ to which the respondents can be counted. In order for the demographic data to be inclusive, attention had to be paid to ensure their non-discriminatory character (Braun et al., 2013). Since I wanted to prevent myself from unintentionally excluding whole groups, I left some space in the questions to obviate this problem. This could be done by asking people to use their own words to define themselves with regard to themes like gender and background. Still I wanted the answers to be defined in distinct categories as much as possible, for this would make it easier to draw conclusions based on these. This appeared to form no problem, since the respondents all used very similar categories to identify themselves, in terms of ethnicity, religious group and others.

I then started asking the respondents to describe themselves. This was followed by questions about their home situation and future plans in order to get an insight into their self-conceptions and worldviews. I finished by asking them about their opinions on Dutch and Turkish politics. See the interview guide in Appendix I.

### 3.3.3 Participatory research methods

Furthermore, to complement the interviews, I used an additional research method. In order to enhance the explorative and iterative process, methods of participatory appraisal seemed suitable.

*“Participatory research methods involve a wide range of tools, techniques and processes which are often applied in a customized mix and sequence that is iterative and complementary in order to ‘triangulate’ perspectives and to build progressively from one stage of inquiry to the next”* (Pretty, et al., 1995 in Pettit and White, 2004, p. 245).

As White and Pettit (2004) describe, through these methods, I could try to measure if differences between different individuals or subgroups within the group of Turkish-Dutch youngsters from the SSGN exist. I took care to include both boys and girls from three educational levels. I expected the use of participatory research methods to lead to more knowledge of the differences in perspectives between these categories. As Desai and Potter (2006) describe: “The emphasis of participatory research is on generating knowledge from the perspective of those being researched, rather than from the perspective of the researcher” (p. 6). Concepts used and explanations given by teachers, psychologists, the government and other professionals working with these groups might differ a lot from perceptions and realities of the youngsters they try to help. These methods help to identify and respond to the factors influencing their behavior and worldviews from within. It is therefore of crucial importance for the researcher to be aware of his own behavior and attitude.

*“This includes being self-critically aware, not rushing, and helping participants to express themselves in their own way and to formulate their own analyses. The researcher's role is to act as a facilitator, to establish trust, listen, learn and, as far as possible, ‘hand over the stick’, or control, to participants”* (Chambers, 1994 in Desai and Potter, 2006, p.6).

The method I used is the pairwise ranking. During a pairwise ranking, you present the respondent, or group of respondents with a framework. In this framework, different categories are drafted. In this thesis, these could be different identifications, like Turkish, piano-player, male, Muslim, Dutch, etc. Some of those I included in advance, but there was always space left to supplement those with identifications the respondent came up with. The respondents were then repeatedly asked to choose between two categories, which one they thought was more important for them and why. This way I hoped to get an overview of the relative importance attached to the different identifications in comparison to other identifications<sup>1</sup>. See the pairwise ranking in Appendix II.

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<sup>1</sup> I asked seven respondents to rank their different identifications. This led to some interesting findings, but did not produce as much useful data as I had hoped it would. The respondents, had enthusiastically been telling a lot during the interviews, but seemed a bit tired and bored during the process of ranking. To rank all different identifications in relation to the others, was a quite tedious and time-consuming process and did not do much good to the positive and assertive atmosphere, which accompanied the interviews. It might have been better to ask the youngsters to fill in the ranking first, or to not ask from the students who were interviewed, to also fill in a ranking during one appointment. Since the interviews gave me more information, I decided to stick to those and quit using the rankings after the seventh.

### 3.3.4 Informal conversation – revisiting respondents to ask about the referendum

There were only two respondents I still had to interview, when, during the weekend of 11 March, the Dutch and Turkish governments were thrown into into a diplomatic conflict. Before, respondents, who had been pro-Erdogan, spoke about an abstract enemy; the US or ‘the West’. Now there was a direct confrontation between Turkey and the Netherlands, where Erdogan and his ministers started framing the Netherlands, the country they live in, as ‘the enemy’. What would this mean for the identifications and feelings of belonging of these youngsters?

Given the rapidly changing political events, I decided to visit 9 respondents again, to find out if and how these events had affected them. I met them in the schoolyard and in the canteen and spoke to them for about ten minutes, either alone, or in pairs. I had four questions to lead me, but since the expected effects were really unclear, I wanted to see where the conversations was leading to, and how interaction between two respondents would take place. It was not possible to record the conversations with students of the SSGN. The location, where these conversations took place, the canteen, was really noisy and crowded. I therefore took notes and tried to transcribe useful quotations as literally as possible. I experienced that with this way of questioning them I missed a lot of information, compared to when I would have recorded the conversation. Furthermore, I noticed the respondents dared to speak much less freely compared to when I had spoken to them alone. I therefore I decided to again use the interview setting while re-questioning respondents at Maaslandcollege. I interviewed four respondents at the SSGN and five at Maaslandcollege for the second time. Combined with the two youngsters I had accidentally planned the interview with after the weekend of 11 March, I asked eleven respondents out of a total of 21 about their point of view on the Turkish referendum. See the questions in Appendix III.

## 3.4 Transcription, coding and analysis

All 21 interviews were recorded, which enabled me to fully transcribe them. Thereafter I worked with the program Atlas TI to provide the transcripts with codes, categorizing their words. This made it easy to gather all data on a particular topic and start the analysis from there. Quotations I was able to rephrase directly and fully from the transcripts, but since the interviews were held in Dutch, all quotations were translated by me. In translating the quotations, I attempted to maintain the original and literal meaning as well as possible. It should however, be noted that the translated quotations in the following chapters, remain my interpretations.

Via domain analysis, I then grouped the different quotations into meaningful categories by applying semantic relations to them (Spradley, 1980). This enabled me to discover culturally meaningful categorizations. An example of such a relation: ‘X is a form of Y’. Under this semantic relationship, I grouped all quotations as seen in figure 1:

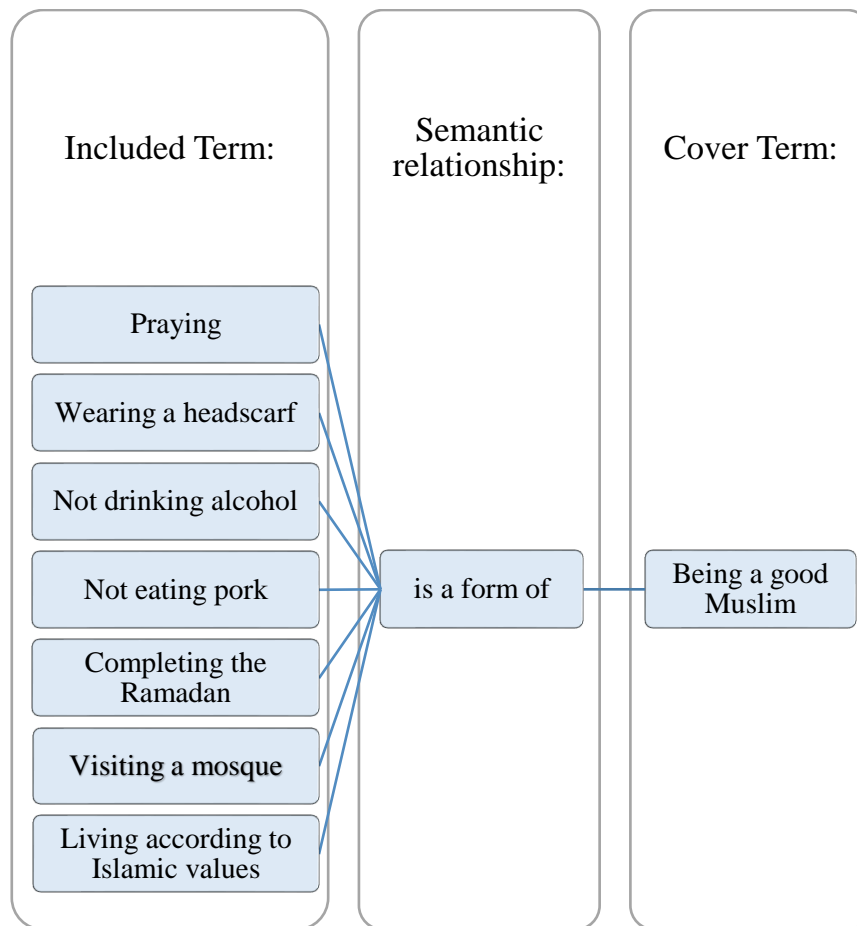


Figure 1. Domain analysis. Data from interviews grouped together under a semantic relationship: aspects of being a good Muslim.

After I grouped all meaningful quotations under a variety of semantic relationships, I started a taxonomic analysis. As Spradley (1980) describes, a taxonomy is a group of categories, which are all organized according to the same sort of semantic relationship. All domains with the semantic relationship ‘X is a way to do Y’, for example. Within the taxonomy I was able to distinguish different levels, which I drew up in figures<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The processes of domain analysis and Taxonomic analysis provided me with a good overview of all data, but did not lead to as many new findings as I had hoped. Some, however, appeared to be very useful, so I found it worth including it in this thesis. One of the taxonomies is included in chapter 6.1.

### 3.5 Ethical dilemmas and other considerations

#### 3.5.1 Confidentiality

Qualitative research brings with it several ethical dilemmas which should be carefully taken into consideration. First of all there is the issue of confidentiality. As Braun et al. (2013) describe, it is very important to ensure that the respondents' answers are treated with caution and respect. The names and personal data of the respondents are therefore altered in the analysis to ensure their anonymity is guaranteed. A complicating factor is formed by the fact that both the SSGN and Maaslandcollege have expressed the wish to receive the thesis. Even though the participating students are not identified in the research, it will be difficult to keep it a secret for the school which students have participated. The small scale of the research, combined with the categorization of the respondents based on religion, gender, educational level and (ethnic) subgroup, might enable the schools to connect certain answers to specific students quite easily. I had to be sensitive to what could be easily identified, and how this could be changed in order to increase anonymity. At the same time, I had to be careful not to change it so much that it would alter the meaning of a quote substantially (Braun and Clarke, 2013). I have not been able to prevent the confidentiality issue completely, but I have done everything in my power to keep their answers confidential, also by asking the participating teachers to treat information about which students participated as confidential.

The interviews were recorded with an audio device. This was helpful in processing all gathered data without the danger of forgetting important parts. It did however, also raise certain concerns; voices are more recognizable than written words and thus harder to anonymize (Braun and Clarke, 2013). I have therefore kept these audio fragments secured. After transcription, they have all been erased.

#### 3.5.2 Informed consent

My proposed strategy was to interview the respondents in such a way, that they would not become suspicious of the desire to learn about their perceptions on Turkish politics. This conflicted with the ethical principle on informed consent. Jupp (2006) stated that the principle implies:

*“The responsibility on the part of the social researcher to strive to ensure that those involved as participants in research not only agree and consent to participating in the research of their own free choice, without being pressurized or influenced, but that they are fully informed about what it is they are consenting to” (p. 49).*

Therefore, I had to remain honest to the students and had to be very accurate in making sure I did not withhold anything. At the same time however, I had to make sure to not exaggerate the

influence of their answers and the potential risks involved. If I had laid too much weight on telling everything very precisely, they might have wrongly assumed and overestimated certain risks that are involved. Also, as Braun et al. (2013) describe, since these interviews were semi-structured, they left room for an iterative and open-ended research. This made it somewhat difficult to “know in advance exactly how I would end up analyzing the data, or the sort of claims I would make about them” (p. 64). Informed consent could therefore only be granted to the broad topics or approach of my research. Fortunately, this did not cause many problems for the respondents. Telling them their answers would be treated with confidentiality and that their specific words would not be traceable back to them, was enough to let them speak freely on politics. I did not have to withhold my interest in learning about their opinion on Turkish politics from them, because they were happy to speak about it. They very much liked giving their opinions to me, but some did express the fear their words would become known among Turkish peers, or other members of the Turkish community. This applied only to students with political views concerning an anti-AKP standpoint. Even though it seemed as if also anti-Erdogan respondents spoke freely about their political views, their fear of their words coming out, still might have impacted their stories. Ironically, whereas most respondents spoke rather freely about politics, when it came to family situation however, they appeared to be much less open. This applied to questions such as if they ever had fights within their families, and if so, what those fights normally are about. At these moments multiple respondents kept their answers very short and were visibly not at ease.

Even though this thesis’ main goal is to get a glimpse into the heads of Turkish youngsters as to their perceptions and views on the issue of identity, the analysis of all gathered data still involves my (the researcher’s) interpretation. The researcher’s interpretation is always influenced by several subjective, theoretical and political discourses, which construct the lenses through which we analyze the data. This analysis might therefore eventually end up very different from the ‘raw’ data gathered. Braun et al. (2013) describes how “the interpretation of data, through analysis, transforms the data from the words participants tell us, into ‘our’ story about the data, not the participants’ story” (p. 64). The use of participatory methods in producing data can, only to some extent, sidestep from this issue, for it includes the respondents as “active collaborators in the research process” (Braun et al., 2013, p. 65). It is therefore important to at all times remember the results in this thesis are colored by this author’s perceptions.

### 3.5.3 Being interviewed by the teacher’s daughter

The schools were selected because of the easy access I had at both schools. A first barrier in gathering respondents, to be granted permission to access the school and contact its students, had thereby already been overcome. Also, via my parents, I was able to find Turkish students easily. In exchange both schools asked me to send them my thesis, when it is finished.

The fact my parents both work at one of the schools, however, also presented a possible limitation. The fact that my parents are staff members there, makes that I am tied to them, and the way students regard me is thereby inevitably influenced by their opinion of them. Even if I tell them their answers will be truly anonymous, they might still feel these will be read by either my mother or my father, who might be able to influence their grades. Furthermore, supposing they do not really like either of my parents, they might have automatically had a negative image of me, influencing their willingness to open up to me. This could very well have influenced their answers, especially since my questions possibly touch upon very sensitive subjects. Besides, the fact that I am related to my parents, might even have influenced which students were willing to talk to me in the first place; thereby determining the composition of my group of respondents.

As it turned out, the fact I was tied to my parents' reputations, was of great advantage, especially since this research dealt with sensitive subjects. In order to gain the most intimate and honest answers, I needed my respondents to trust me to a certain degree. Students who knew one of my parents well, since they were in their classes, for example, expressed how they felt comforted by the fact I was no 'complete stranger', because this way they 'knew' I could be trusted. It was very important to approach these children either via school or some other organisation. If they had not been able to 'place' me, it could have been difficult for them to decide that I was 'okay'. If not approached through school, these youngsters might have perceived me with distrust; as an outsider, who started asking all these intimate questions, on politically sensitive topics. These children are still minors, and the Turkish communities they live in are often quite suspicious and controlling (Daymaz, 2016). This might have caused them to regard me with distrust, and access would have become very difficult. A secondary school like the SSGN is presented with a certain level of authority and trust; the fact parents allow the school to educate their sons and daughters supports that. That I am clearly related to their teacher, or at least facilitated by their school, thus presented me with an advantage. The respondents and their parents perceived me as follows: 'she is backed by the school, so she will probably be 'okay''.

The possible limitations or advantages of my connections to my parents, applied only if the students were actually aware of those connections. Especially at Maaslandcollege, students from the pre-vocational level, had never had anything to do with my father and some did not even know him. As it turned out, these youngsters' attitudes or answers did not seem to differ in any way from those who knew him well. Hiding my relatedness to my parents, appeared impossible; I am clearly a child of my parents and a quick look on Facebook shows enough. If I had not brought up this theme myself, or if my parents had not done this, students might still have suspected our connection.

#### 3.5.4 Don't you speak Turkish?

A phenomenon I had definitely not anticipated, was that several respondents assumed I too had a Turkish background. Due to my appearance and first names, Esra Deniz, combined with my interest in the subject, they took me for having some Turkish roots, even though most of them knew one of my parents. This became clear when they asked me questions like *'Oh but don't you speak Turkish?'* and *'Huh, but if your mother is Maria, do you have a Turkish father then?'* This might be relevant considering the notion that speaking about politically sensitive subjects to another Turk, might lead them to saying different things than if they had spoken to a 'Dutch outsider'. Especially, since the Turkish community has a reputation for gossip and scrutiny. It is difficult to establish if for these respondents, the idea of me having some Turkish roots, would have influenced their answers and openness towards me. For as far as I can see, in comparison with the answers of other youngster who really saw me as Dutch, or with whom I had discussed this subject before the interview, there were no real differences. Still it is important to be conscious of the consequences this might have had.



## 4 Multiple identification of the Turkish-Dutch adolescent

In the coming chapters, I will analyze the data gathered during the interviews. Firstly, I would like to once more underline that the data is almost exclusively coming from adolescents, most of whom are between 16 and 18 years old. The fact that the respondents are not yet mature adults is, at times, clearly noticeable from their answers. When interpreting their answers, their ages should be kept in mind. All interviews were conducted in Dutch. Relevant quotations included in this thesis, were translated by the author,

In this chapter the question how identity is constructed for the respondents in this research will be covered. Thereby I will look at both Dutch and Turkish influences in these youngsters' lives. As appeared from the data, also religion, the social environments, hobbies, character traits and dreams make these youngsters who they are, hence emphasizing their multiple and complex identities.

In chapter 5 the respondents' positions within the Dutch society are evaluated. Thereafter, in chapter 6, the influences of political developments in Turkey for the identifications of these respondents are described.

### 4.1 How do they describe themselves?

Who is ....? / How would you describe yourself? This is a question I asked the students, to get an idea of how these youngsters perceive themselves. Which aspects of their identity do they feel are important in describing who they are. Some of the youngsters struggled on how to deal with this question, for those I have simplified the question: Could you name 5 words that describe you best? In line with Sen's (2006) reasoning, I had expected the youngsters would name different identities they have, thereby already indicating which were important to them; I am a boy, I play soccer, etc. The respondents, however, almost unanimously started to describe their personalities, their character traits. Unable to test this question either on Dutch peers or Turkish peers in Turkey, I am not sure whether the reason for this is grounded in how I questioned them, or whether 'Dutch' peers would have answered the same way, for example. The latter might indicate this is more a generational difference, for instance. Is this way of speaking about themselves taught in school? These aspects remain unclear. A few examples:

Respondent 6, Boy, 4 HAVO, Nijmegen

*"I am always thinking ahead, always a little stressed though. Smart, that I can say about myself.. and yes.. I am not sure if you could call it revolutionary, but I see things happening in the world. I can sense where is all comes from . A little inquiring and I am also emotional."*

Respondent 7, Boy, 4 HAVO, Oss

*"I always pictured myself as someone who likes to glorify himself. It is not really self-confidence, but more self-glorification. I always thought I was the best in everything, and if I turned out not to be, I really couldn't handle that. Now I am very confident, hardworking, task oriented boy, who still believes he is the best, but who will not compare himself with anyone."*

Respondent 15, Girl, 6 VWO, Oss

*"I am a very serious student. Most think of me as a creative person. I am a very disciplined worker. I also feel that at school, I am normally not able to really be myself. But I think most students experience this. An example? If I speak to some people in a group, one of them might make a joke and everyone laughs. At those moments, I think like: 'This wasn't funny at all', but still I pretend to laugh, so I won't seem so aloof."*

What is also interesting to see, is that most respondents are quite positive in their descriptions of themselves. They might think of themselves as easily stressed, a bit quiet at times, or emotional, but almost all use words as disciplined, positive, open/friendly and helpful. Furthermore, many of the boys think of themselves in terms of quite grand characteristics: revolutionary, (too) kindhearted, entrepreneurial.

#### 4.1.1 The Moreno-scale

One of the questions I posed was constructed around the Moreno-scale: a tool used by academic researchers to get an insight into dual self-identifications. (Moreno, 2006). Thereby the respondents could be categorized and ranked, according to the extent to which they feel Turkish. Using this tool I asked the youngsters to scale themselves ranging from: I feel completely Turkish, not Dutch at all..., to: I feel completely Dutch, not Turkish at all. Through this technique it became clear, that for most of my respondents their Turkish identities are more important than their feelings of being Dutch. The results were as follows; from 21 respondents, 1 student thought himself to be completely Turkish, not Dutch, fifteen indicated to feel more Turkish than Dutch, three said they felt just as Dutch as they felt Turkish, and two said they felt more Dutch, than Turkish.

Answers given by the largest group, feeling more Turkish than Dutch, ranged from: *"During weekdays, I am at school for a few hours, but the rest of the time I either spend in the mosque, with Turkish friends, or with my family. Still I won't say I feel completely Turkish, this would not be acceptable to say, for I live here"* (respondent 13), to?: *"I think I feel 53% Turkish and 47% percent Dutch"* (respondent 21). The extent to which these respondents feel 'more' Turkish thus differs, but it still indicates they feel like Turks living in the Netherlands. They do not really feel fully 'Dutch'.

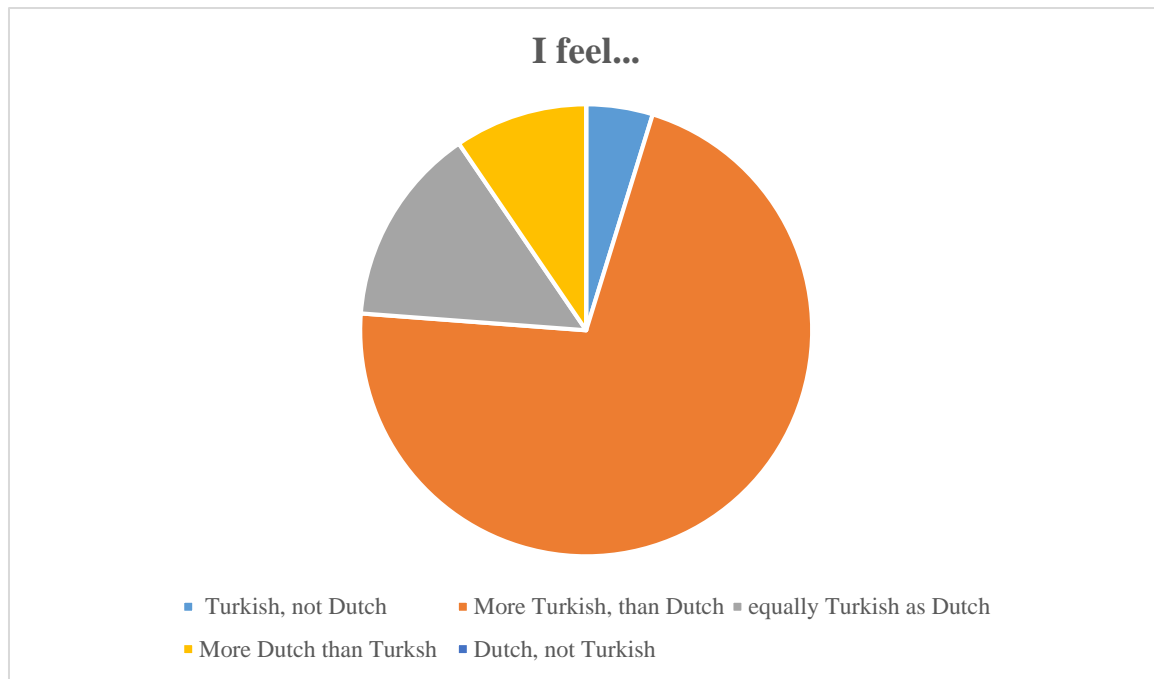


Figure 2. Answers given on the Moreno question.

The social environment has proven to be highly influential in the way these adolescents perceive themselves. Due to their light colored skin and black hair, the rest of the Dutch society perceives them as foreigners, even though they possess a Dutch passport and are thus officially Dutch citizens. However, at the same time, when these youngsters are in Turkey, their physical features might give away their Turkish descent, but according to the respondents, the rest of their appearance is most often clearly perceived as Dutch. They found it difficult to pinpoint what it is exactly that distinguishes them from ‘regular’ Turks. Somehow either their hairdo, clothes or behavior gives them away. This means that also in Turkey the respondents are regarded as ‘foreigners’. About 20 of them used the exact words; ‘*In the Netherlands I am a Turk, but in Turkey I am a European*’. Since they spend only their holidays in Turkey, and the rest of their lives in the Netherlands, the amount of time they are regarded and addressed as Turks is far more extensive.

The respondents feel Turkish, partly because they are always regarded as Turks. But apart from their physical features, how do the youngsters shape their lives? To what extent are their behavior, habits, perspectives and morals influenced by either Dutch or Turkish culture and traditions? In the next paragraph, I will describe successively how their everyday lives are shaped by Turkish and Dutch influences.

## 4.2 To what extent are their lives Turkish?

In this paragraph it will be described which parts of the respondents' lives have Turkish aspects. What role does Turkey play in their everyday lives? The respondents might have a Dutch passport, in their lives Turkish influences are still very present. Even though their grandparents were usually the first to migrate to the Netherlands, 20 of the 21 youngsters are second generation. Most often, (one of) their parents came to the Netherlands later via family reunification at an early age, or came here just before or after marriage (family formation), usually around the age of eighteen. For fifteen respondents, this means that either the father or the mother speaks either no Dutch or very limited Dutch. In almost all households the common language is Turkish, often interspersed with Dutch.

As most parents are first generation, and many grew up in Turkey, these parents are often still very much rooted in Turkish traditions and culture. This also applies to Turkish norms and values, which are often intertwined with Islamic traditions. For example, most students are not supposed to go out at night, have boy- or girlfriends, and drink alcohol. Perhaps needless to say, the fact that there are strict rules, does not mean those things never happen. Still, those norms and values are often named by the respondents to illustrate how they feel different from 'Dutch' classmates. *'We cannot really relate. They are left much more free. When they go out, I can never join them. Also, when I am at their place and dinner is ready they ask me to leave, whereas my mother would actually insist on letting them stay for dinner'* (respondent 16).

As to their plans for the future, nineteen of the 21 respondents expressed the wish to marry and have children. Most of them have quite conventional ideas on how this should happen. Around the age of 25, most Turkish youngsters wish to have married and have their first children. Fifteen respondents indicated they would want their partner to be Turkish as well and sixteen respondents would want their partner to be Muslim. In contrast to their parents, most respondents were not enthusiastic about marrying someone who also grew up in Turkey. Almost all emphasized they found it important to teach their children the Turkish language.

Almost all respondents visit family in Turkey either annually or once every two years. For the few who travel there less, this is mostly, because of financial reasons. All respondents, also the only third generation girl, still have a lot of family in Turkey. It may be, for example, that most of mother's family lives at several places across Europe, and father came to the Netherlands after marriage, but his family still completely lives in Turkey. Very often respondents travel to Turkey with their parents and siblings for four to six weeks, combining a few weeks of visiting the family with spending their holidays in more touristic areas. Even though they are often seen as 'European Turks' they do speak the language (often with a Dutch accent) and are therefore able to get along with their families and friends in Turkey. Most of the respondents also indicated to feel quite at home in Turkey, for it is, as they call it: 'my country'.

Many respondents indicated they feel part of a Turkish community. Especially the parents who do not speak Dutch properly, only hang out with other Dutch Turks, often living in their neighborhood. These neighborhoods often largely consist of families with a migration background, or sometimes they even largely consist of families with a Turkish background. As such these youngsters grew up surrounded by Turks in the Netherlands. According to the respondents, these communities are very close. Some use very positive words to describes these communities, such as ‘family’, they feel really at home within the community. Others point towards the restrictive character of the communities. Respondent 4, for example, indicated she cannot wear a short skirt without being gossiped about.

Almost all respondents have a firm base in Turkish norms, values and culture, as their parents are often first generation Turks. Being a foreigner in both the Netherlands and Turkey, most youngsters indicate they can relate best with people living in the same situation: other Turkish-Dutch citizens. With them they do not only share the socio-economic position in Dutch society, but also the cultural background and traditions. This is also visible in their future plans: many respondents expressed the wish to marry a spouse from the same group of later generation Turks.

#### **4.3 To what extent can their lives be deemed Dutch?**

The respondents speak of Turkey as ‘their country’, but is it really? In this paragraph I will describe whether and to what extent life in the Netherlands affected them.

For family members and friends in Turkey, Turkish youngsters living in the Netherlands are more Dutch or European, than they are Turkish. They speak differently, wear western clothes, and have all these ‘strange’ western habits. Without always fully realizing it, these youngsters have grown up in a Dutch, individualistic society and appear to be shaped by it. This quote from an 18-year-old girl from Oss illustrates this (respondent 9):

*“They think that because we are from Holland, we are very rich. They (family members) expected, for example, that I would buy shoes for their son. I said I was sorry, but I would not do that. I earned this money myself, so no, I didn’t want to do that. They were mad at me and would not speak to me for a week or so. I was like; yeah I am very sorry but I am not obliged to buy anything for anyone, right? Typical Dutch behavior I think!”*

According to my respondents, in Turkey people with money are supposed to take care of their poorer family members. It makes saving money very difficult, because every time one family member has earned some money, he or she will be constantly asked to provide payment for all kinds of expenses; reparations or a new television for grandmother. Dutch Turks save money all year, to be able to travel to Turkey during summer, but people in Turkey only see those ‘European Turks’ living

as tourists, spending large amounts of money. The idea that you can keep the money you earned, without having to pay for someone else's expenses is clearly at odds with the norms and values of their relatives living in Turkey.

It seems that the lives of the respondents who answered the Moreno-question either with 'as Dutch as Turkish' or 'more Dutch than Turkish', are most influenced by the Netherlands. They often have mainly Dutch friends, speak Dutch with their siblings and indicated to have no preferences as to their future partner's background. However, also youngsters who feel more Turkish, foresee a future within the Netherlands. Fourteen youngsters expressed the wish to stay in the Netherlands and three youngsters said they would like to live somewhere else, either in the US or another European country. Only two said they would love to move to Turkey and build a future there. Even though the respondents express feelings of pride and loyalty with regard to 'their country', they are perfectly aware, that life inside the Netherlands would be easier for them, because infrastructure, education, the economy and healthcare are better organized in the Netherlands. Some even mentioned that moving to Turkey, would be like *'taking a step back in modernity'* (respondent 1). This would be especially the case for the girls, of whom only one indicated she would want to stop working, when children come. For most respondents a life in Turkey would take quite some adaptation skills.

Furthermore, the youngsters know that they will be perceived as foreigners, Europeans, in 'their country' which would only complicate the integration process. Some have told me stories on how they are being watched all the time by Turks there, because their families often originally come from small, rural villages, where tourists are a rare sight. Several youngsters also told stories on how they, like other tourists, always have to pay higher prices for the same products than their Turkish friends and families. Still, most respondents indicated that this does not really bother or trouble them during stays in Turkey. In the worst case, they said they found it somewhat annoying. Respondents say they enjoy being in Turkey, but many are happy to go 'home' at the end of the summer.

With regard to their children's education the respondents' ideas are clearly shaped by Dutch society. They would really want their children to speak Turkish and become good Muslims, but apart from this almost all respondents indicated they would want to let their children to be 'more free' than they themselves were. They then refer to their non-Turkish peers in class who they believe experience more freedoms than they do, such as going out at night or having a boy- or girlfriend. Please note that the respondents are teenagers and possibly still in puberty, struggling to cut loose from their parents' grip.

Thus, being born and raised in the Netherlands has had some clear effects on the respondents' mentality and behavior. Most prefer a life in the Netherlands; they feel more 'at home' there and they know things like education are better organized in the Netherlands. Having had only Dutch education and being raised in Dutch society their opinions are shaped by Dutch, 'liberal' values. They now differ from Turkish peers in Turkey, for they have become 'Dutch Turks'.

As is clear from 1.2 and 1.3, Both Turkey and the Netherlands have had a considerable influence on the identity construction-of the Turkish-Dutch youngsters, who participated in this research. I will now elaborate on two other huge identity markers, friends and religion respectively.

#### 4.4 Who are their friends?

As appeared from the data, friends (groups) seem to have great influence on the identification of the respondents. With regard to the respondents' friends, the interviews show quite some variety. At both schools, there is this a so called 'Turkish corner' or 'small Ankara' where mostly Turkish students, but also other students with other migration backgrounds (Moroccan, Afghan, Serbian, etc.), hang out during breaks. It is remarkable that from the nine youngsters questioned at the SSGN in Nijmegen, six spend their breaks there, whereas from the twelve youngsters from the Maaslandcollege in Oss, only three reside in the Turkish corner. These nine students in total have indicated to have only Turkish friends. Seven other respondents answered to have both Turkish friends as well as Dutch friends or friends with other backgrounds. Five respondents indicated that they only have Dutch friends.

Whether their friends are Dutch, Turkish, or whether they have roots somewhere else, appears to be strongly connected to how Turkish the respondents identify. All youngsters, who hang out with only Turkish friends expressed to feel either more Turkish than Dutch or completely Turkish. This is in contrast to the five respondents with only Dutch friends, of whom four indicated to feel either as Dutch as Turkish, or more Dutch. This is not surprising. The youngsters with only Turkish friends, most often speak Turkish with them, at home, in the neighborhood and mosque. One of those girls from Nijmegen tried to explain she really did have contact with Dutch peers: *'No I do speak to Dutch people in the classroom once in a while, you know!'* (respondent 4).

In answer to the question why the youngsters with only Turkish friends do not have Dutch friends, they most often refer to the activities they undertake. They are not able to drink and go out, like Dutch adolescents do. With Turkish friends, they can go to the mosque or drink tea. They would not be able to share these things with 'Dutch' friends. Also, most of these youngsters found their friends in the neighborhoods they live in.

Whether the respondents' friends are boys or girls, differs a little. Most hang out mainly with youngsters of the same sex outside of school, but in larger friend groups at school, often both boys and girls are included. The boys are left freer than the girls. Multiple girls indicated they were absolutely not supposed to have a boyfriend, one girl was not allowed to hang out with boys at all. Ironically this girl had a Dutch boyfriend in secret.

Since other people with a non-western migration background often experience the same socio-economic position in Dutch society, the respondents often prefer them as friends to 'Dutch' peers. Therefore most respondents have either only Turkish friends, or a mixture of Turkish, Dutch and

‘other’ friends. The youngsters who do have mainly Dutch friends, feel more Dutch and speak Dutch better.

Many of the respondents having Turkish friends, undertake religious activities together. They either pray together or go to the mosque. Also, for some boys, their friend groups are structured around the mosque, and they spend a lot of free time there in the canteens. Religion is another important identity marker for the respondents. In the next section I will describe this further.

#### 4.5 Religion - I am the imam at home

Religion plays a large role in most children’s lives. Fifteen of the 21 respondents said they consider themselves to be ‘true’ Muslims. Five said they are Muslim, but not really practicing it all the way, and only one told me he was ‘*not really that religious*’ (respondent18). Still, also this boy said he believed in god and just went along with traditions, like not eating pork or drinking alcohol. The ways in which the respondents practice their religion, varies greatly. Most never eat pork, and only a few boys drink alcohol, one of them even smokes weed. About one-third participates in the Ramadan every year. Around the same number of youngsters, but partly different ones, visit mosques weekly and around half of the respondents pray, with frequencies ranging from now and then to five times a day. Only three of the nine girls wear a headscarf.

There is a difference to be made in the various types of Islam. Most Turks belong to the Sunni population. They consider themselves to be ‘normal’ Turks and the Turkish president Erdogan and his AKP belong to this group too. Thirteen respondents belong to this group. I also spoke to three students who consider themselves Alevi Muslims. These Muslims have traditions, which slightly differ from the Sunni ones. Alevi do not visit ‘regular’ mosques, but have their own, the women do not wear headscarves and instead of the Ramadan, there is this twelve-day tradition wherein Alevi fast. In Turkey there are also other shades of opinion, like the Shiite one, but among the respondents there were only Sunni and Alevi Muslims. That is to say, for the ones who knew where they belong to. Four students did not know to which religious group they and their parents originally belong. They told me that these things do not play a role in their lives at all. They consider themselves to be just Muslims.

It seems many respondents preferred their Muslim identity above all other possible identifications. This became clear when, for example, they had to choose between their feelings of being Dutch and Turkish in the Moreno question. Some thereby indicated that their Muslim identity was more important than their being Turkish or Dutch. They spoke about their religion extensively and referred to Islam multiple times, when speaking about morality. The importance of religion for these youngsters’ identities, is also expressed in the large role religion plays in their envisioned future. Eight out of 21 declared to be stricter than their parents in performing their faith. As written earlier, sixteen youngsters would choose a Muslim partner and eighteen youngsters would want to raise their children as Muslims. From those eighteen, six respondents would educate them to be Muslim stricter, than their



own parents have done. Some respondents were themselves a little startled by the imminent importance they had just attached to religion. One girl explained: *'Ai, if normal Dutch people would hear me now, they would probably think: wow she is a really radical Turkish Muslim!'* (respondent 15)

As might already be concluded from the above: most respondents perform religious activities out of their own initiative. They often perform religious rituals, like praying, while their parents do not. Also for two of the three girls, when they began wearing headscarves, their mother even said: *'Do you really want to do that? This will be difficult for you here in the Netherlands'* (respondent 5). Some parents do set restrictions for their children: Some girls have to follow quite strict rules with regard to their contact with boys, and things like alcohol are often forbidden. But in terms of performed activities, these are all out of their own motivation.

Religion is thus very important for most respondents. Whereas the performed activities with regard to religion vary greatly, many respondents indicated to strongly identify with being a Muslim. The Islam provides them with guidance and morality. When the respondents experience difficulties or clashes between different cultural groups, they rely on their religion to decide what is wrong and right. It thereby seems to offer them a sense of security, just to label themselves Muslim, even though multiple respondents do not perform religious activities daily.

#### **4.6 The respondents' hobbies, talents and dreams**

Lastly the respondents' identities are shaped by their personal interests, hobbies, dreams, and talents. In terms of professional careers, the respondents have quite big plans. Most plan on doing a study with prospects of future professions with a high status, such as medicine, law and economics. Several boys like sports a lot. They go to the gym or play soccer for example. The girls however do not. Within Turkish culture they told me, doing sports is quite unusual for girls. Some play an instrument. Respondent 16 appears to be a very talented piano player, who is often asked to perform in the mosque or at school events. Other respondents see themselves as intellectuals, as people who love to read. Through the interviews and the usage of the pairwise ranking particularly, it became clear that these individual aspects play a significant role in their self-conceptualizations.

#### **4.7 The multiplicity of these youngsters' identities**

This chapter has evaluated the different aspects of the respondents self-identifications. Therein the dual context, of 'living in two worlds' appears to be a concrete reality for the respondents, and to be influential for the ways these youngsters regard themselves. Shaped by external, social influences, these youngsters are constantly reminded of their being Turkish in a Dutch environment.

There is, however, much more to them, The construction of their identities is far more complex, than this simple dichotomy might assume. Next to their dual belonging to two countries, religion, education, future dreams, friends, hobbies and character traits turned out to be of importance for the

respondents identifications. Especially their identities as Muslim seem to be important. The enthusiasm with which many of the respondents speak about Islam, suggests that it brings them solace and guidance in an environment with conflicting loyalties. In acquiring a broad and complete understanding of these youngsters identity constructions, all these aspects should be taken into account in order to fully see them as the complex and unique human beings they are.

Unfortunately for these youngsters, in current public debates there is hardly any room for an inclusive understanding of these complex and multiple self-conceptions. In the rapidly changing political contexts the respondents grow up in, the importance of looking at the influences of these developments on their identities becomes increasingly important. Therefore, without losing sight of their complex and multiple natures, in the coming chapters I will describe how the respondents react to and deal with current political discourses in the Netherlands and Turkey.

## 5 To be a Turk in Dutch society

In this chapter I will examine the influences of recent socio-political developments on the identity constructions of Turkish-Dutch youth. The respondents might feel like foreigners in the Netherlands and some of them might have romantic ideas about ‘their land’ and living there. However, the fact is that most of them will build a future inside the Netherlands. With only holidays spent in Turkey, and mostly speaking with Turks who have also lived (most of) their lives abroad, their command of the Turkish language is deteriorating, each generation a little more. As described earlier, also socially and culturally, they slowly become more ‘Dutch’ or ‘Westernized’.

The youngsters’ place in Dutch society is consequently quite definitive, but at the very least non-problematic. In recent public discourses, their belonging, loyalties and identity are increasingly questioned and problematized by a growing group of Dutch citizens. How do the respondents conceive these developments? And how do they deal with them? In order to answer these questions, in this chapter three main topics will be discussed. Firstly the respondents’ opinions on Dutch politics are outlined. Secondly, their experiences with Dutch society, living as Turks in the Netherlands will be described. Lastly, the discussion on having two passports, symbolizing two loyalties, is shortly mentioned.

### 5.1 Dutch politics

Most of the youngsters believe their future lies within the Netherlands. Five respondents stated that because of this reason, they feel politics in the Netherlands are more important to them, and therefore more in their interest, than Turkish politics are. Especially with the prospect of the Dutch elections, which were held on March 15<sup>th</sup>, the youngsters were quite well aware of the different parties. Needless to say there were also certain youngsters, who did not have any clue on politics both in the Netherlands and in Turkey. This might likely be the case for many of the respondents’ peers without a migration background too. Six respondents had already reached the age of eighteen and were thus legitimized to vote. They all said they would vote in March.

A first remarkable observation, was that most respondents said they would consider progressive, middle-left and leftist parties for Dutch elections. I heard D66, PvdA and GroenLinks, several times. This is remarkable because two-thirds of them, indicated that in Turkey they are in favor of the governing party AKP, which can be considered a conservative, rightwing party.

Somewhat less surprising might be the fact that all respondents had at least heard from the new party DENK. A few students had seen the party’s leader, Tunahan Kuzu, in real life, for he had visited the mosques they attend. Six of them, all pro-Erdogan, said they would vote for DENK, if they had the chance to. The most significant reason they named is because they feel represented by DENK. This is also said to be the main reason not to vote for other Dutch parties. *‘They do not look like us and will*

*not do anything for us*' (respondent 6). This does not count for all respondents, a significant number of them did not recognize this claim and expressed the intention to vote for another political party.

A party all respondents have an opinion about is the PVV or Freedom party. This party is known for its' anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic sentiments and could therefore be perceived as threatening by Turkish youngsters. Most respondents, however, indicate they just do not really take this party and its' statements seriously. They emphasize how many people in the Netherlands do not agree with him and rely on the knowledge that most of what Geert Wilders says is not true. They recite on how *'he just shouts nonsense, without referring to facts'* (respondent 5). Recently many events have occurred with large numbers of European victims, due to Jihadi terrorist attacks in Europe and Islamic State as the grand enemy in the Middle-East. These only fueled right-wing extremism and anti-migrant rhetoric. In the course of the last ten years, the Islam and Muslims in general have increasingly become demonized and criticized. One respondent said about this: *'There were terrorist attacks, in the name of Islam, with Muslims being the terrorists so often, it has become ordinary. Doesn't keep me awake at night anymore'* (respondent 12).

Still, it does hurt them. It is painful to hear many people speak about their religion and their countrymen or fellow migrants as if those are all evil. These youngsters strongly identify with things a considerable part of the Dutch hate, or are afraid of. Despite their efforts to ignore this rhetoric and deem it nonsense, it is still confronting and leads for these youngsters to a feeling of not being understood.

Possibly in part because of the proximity of the elections at the time of the interviews, many respondents were thus quite well aware of Dutch politics. The largest criticism they had on the political parties, is that they do not feel represented by them. This was named several times as a motive to vote for the party DENK. Multiple respondents indicated they simply do not take the PVV's rhetoric seriously and emphasize there are always many people not voting for them. There are, however, also many people who support the PVV's standpoints. The respondents said seeing these things on TV does not hurt them, but when they are addressed in this way personally, by people in their environment, it does. In the next section I will describe some of the youngsters' anecdotes of these experiences and how they deal with them.

## **5.2 How are Turkish-Dutch youngsters perceived by Dutch society?**

Turkish-Dutch youngsters do not only have to deal with negative imaging of Turks or Muslims on TV. Also within Dutch society, the youngsters have to deal with discrimination and negative imaging. Almost every single one of the respondents can recall situations in which they were called names or felt discriminated against. This is the worst for the respondents wearing a headscarf. One of them explained: *'You will never be seen as Dutch by fellow Dutchmen. You're seen as a Turk, and if you wear a headscarf, you are seen as a dumb Turk'* (respondent 9). Another youngster (14) recalls a

situation where a car stopped next to her bicycle in front of the traffic light and started making explosion sounds. One of the other respondents describes furthermore:

*“I was once called terrorist by someone passing by. That was really hard to take. I walked together with a cleric from our mosque when that happened. In our fatherland so many terrorist attacks happened in the last years... It really was a slap in my face”* (respondent 13).

That being said, most youngsters also emphasize things like these things only rarely happen. They all agree that at their high school they never have to deal with intended racism and that they almost never feel discriminated against. They do not get into heated and angry discussions with non-Turkish classmates except during social science classes once in a while, or when a teacher says something that makes them angry, like pronouncing that Erdogan is a dictator. This only seldom happens, they rarely ever seek these confrontations themselves, nor are they sought by Dutch or other non-Turkish peers. After all, the respondents are just youngsters who have barely transcended their puberty, and their daily lives are largely about ‘regular’ Dutch teen subjects.

More hidden are forms of seemingly unintentional and unconscious racism, occasionally performed by people in their environment. Respondent 19 for example, remembered how a teacher reacted when he failed a test in Dutch grammar after he had completely neglected to study: *‘Probably you failed, because you have not been living here for a long time yet!’*. Statements like these might be well-intended, but they underline time and again, that the Turkish-Dutch adolescents are seen as different from ‘normal’ Dutch adolescents.

Confronted with discrimination the respondents react in various ways. Some boys react emotionally and have the tendency to become aggressive. Others remain quiet or act as if they did not notice. Some respondents explained how their Turkish families or friends advise the respondents in dealing with these things. Respondent 5 told me how, on her route to school, she was always aggressively shouted at by a Dutch woman. According to the girl, her mother had answered that she simply had it coming, when she decided to start wearing a headscarf. Respondent 9 said her Turkish friends criticize her when she gets into an argument with Dutch peers: *“Why did you say something? You should just keep quiet when something like this happens!”*

In short, the respondents emphasized they do not have to deal with discrimination or racism often, but many of them did not have any trouble remembering several of such experiences. Especially when they clearly show physical features associated with Islam, such as a headscarf or walking next to a cleric, they have to deal with discrimination. It is difficult to verify whether the respondents really experience discrimination or racism rarely, or if they might be downplaying this, for example, because they find it painful to speak about it, or because of my own identity as Dutch woman.

Whereas the respondents indicated not to be touched by the PVV’s negative stereotyping for example, they expressed that personal assaults do hurt. Through these experiences now and then, the

respondents are reminded that they do not really belong in the Netherlands. In the next paragraph, it will be described how Dutch society at the same time asks these adolescents' loyalty to the Netherlands.

### 5.3 To own a double passport: to own a double loyalty?

In the previous paragraph it was described how the respondents experience rejection, expressed by influential Dutch figures on social media and TV and, to a lesser extent, within Dutch society. I will now explain how the Netherlands places these adolescents in a split position. The children of non-Western migrants constantly hear they need to integrate, even though they were born in the Netherlands.

The discussions on limiting the possibility of having two passports for example, illustrated how Dutch citizens with a migration background are increasingly asked to prove their loyalty to the Netherlands. The respondents gave very different answers with regard to this subject. Respondent 8 claimed he really felt like an 'integrated Turk', that he was proud of living in the Netherlands. Respondent 12 would choose Turkey, if she were forced to choose:

*"On TV they now argue about the right to have two nationalities. I am really like, okay then you can give me a Turkish passport and I'll be out of here. But in that case you [the Netherlands] can pay for my house there, because it is not that simple to move."*

Ironically, several of the respondents, also the ones being very interested in Turkey's politics, only have a Dutch passport. Even though they feel addressed, these statements in fact do not apply to them.

The rhetoric on having two passports has a highly symbolical character. It assumes that having two nationalities means you always have two loyalties, which cannot really coexist. It thereby pushes Turkish-Dutch citizens, amongst others, into the duality of solely being defined by their dual belongings. Many of the respondents, feel addressed by statements like the one about two passports or the 'Pleur op!' statement by the Dutch prime-minister Rutte (2016). They strengthen the feelings these youngsters have of being outsiders, who do not belong here. As such they contribute to problematizing the positions of Turkish-Dutch youth in Dutch society.

#### 5.3.1 In conclusion

As almost all respondents envisage a future within the Netherlands, most of them do acknowledge the importance of Dutch politics for them. This does not mean they are also very interested in the subject. The fact most respondents' with regard to Dutch politics indicated to be oriented towards progressive left-wing parties, is quite remarkable, because two-third of the respondents meanwhile consider

themselves to be pro-AKP, which is often considered to be a conservative, right-wing party. For many respondents their political orientations in Turkey and the Netherlands thus do not seem to match. The popularity of the party DENK, among AKP supporters, might be understandable, because they feel connected to and presented by the party's Turkish-Dutch leaders. However, also this party can be considered as left-wing.

It might be a form of self-protection, but it seems as if the respondents have become numb to all negative stereotyping and imaging on TV and in politics. Almost every single one of them declares that he or she does not feel addressed by anti-Muslim or anti-immigrant statements, does not feel touched by them, and does not take them seriously.

The actions of Dutch society, the Dutch government and certain political parties, put Turkish-Dutch youngsters in a split. On the one hand, through rhetoric of rightist parties the position of people with a migration background is constantly being problematized and questioned. Within the Netherlands, Islam is increasingly portrayed as a threat to Dutch liberal values. The respondents in this research, who identify first and foremost as Muslims are thereby increasingly rejected. Luckily in their daily lives, the respondents experience these forms of rejection only seldom.

At the same time, those same people are increasingly pressured to integrate more, to become Dutch faster and to prove this. The idea of prohibiting Turks, among other migrants, the right to have a double passport, is that these people are then forced to actively choose the Dutch nationality and get rid of other nationalities. A clearer example of the ways in which Turkish-Dutch youngsters are reduced to an identity, solely existing of the conflictual duality of living in two worlds, does not seem to exist.

## 6 The influences of political developments in Turkey

In this chapter the influences of political developments in Turkey on the identity construction of Turkish-Dutch youngsters will be examined. Firstly, the political opinions of the respondents and their parents with regard to Turkish politics will be described. Thereafter I will dive deeper into the commotion around and aftermath of, respectively the coup d'état of July 16<sup>th</sup> 2016 and the Turkish referendum of April 16<sup>th</sup> 2017. Then I will describe to what extent the effects of these events are palpable even within Dutch society and in what way. Finally, I will conclude by arguing if and how these have influenced the identifications of the respondents.

Most respondents expressed they were aware of the importance of Dutch politics for them, since they live in the Netherlands. Still fourteen of them said Turkish politics interested them more. This number should be seen in context; only nine respondents said to be really interested in Turkish politics in general. They are after all just high school students. But, when further questioned, it appears almost all of them know exactly where they and their families stand. During the process of conducting this research it furthermore became clear, that with every large event, the subject becomes more and more prominent to them.

The respondents identify with multiple political parties in Turkey. These parties differ on certain topics and agree on others. In the course of this research one distinction is really important: whether respondents are either supporting Erdogan and his AKP, or if they are against him. This last group mainly exists of youngsters following secularist discourses of the CHP and Atatürk and one respondent whose family is both anti-Erdogan and anti-Atatürk. They will be regarded as anti-Erdogan respondents versus pro-Erdogan respondents.

### 6.1 Political opinion

*“You should imagine Turkey as a giant kettle which is almost exploding. I believe Erdogan functions as the cover, that he is the only one still able to restrain the domestic pressure, which is now afflicting Turkey. Turkey is suffering from tensions from within. Another leader would not be able to do this”* (respondent 6).

Almost all respondents were quite well aware of their preferences with regard to Turkey's politics. Out of 21 respondents, fourteen answered they consider themselves to be pro-AKP, the ruling party in Turkey's government, led by Erdogan. Seven respondents said they consider themselves to be 'left'. This means most of them would vote for the CHP and instead of honoring Erdogan, they name Atatürk as the great leader, thanks to whom Turkey thrived. One respondent describes: *“The CHP, this is what Atatürk established. The AKP tries to change the system Atatürk constructed, but we don't want them to. Erdogan is actually trying to slowly institutionalize the sharia”* (respondent 15).



### 6.1.1 We at home are for...

Most respondents follow their parents' political opinions without a doubt. They speak in terms of 'we (at home) are for Erdogan'. . There were three students with slightly different ideas than their parents. I did not encounter any youngsters who identify with other (political) parties or discourses such as the Gülen movement or the Kurdish party HDP. The only Kurdish respondent I spoke to, said her *'parents never want to speak politics with her, but she herself thought that Erdogan was a very good speaker'* (respondent 3).

With regard to the respondents' parents, there appears to be a relationship between their political preferences and one of three factors; ethnicity, religion and the area within Turkey they originate from. If a respondent is a Sunni Turk, coming from a village in central Turkey, chances are big, he or she comes from a family of AKP supporters. The three Alevi respondents were all pro-Atatürk. The only Kurdish respondent, who was in favor of Erdogan, told me later her father is against the AKP. According to some respondents, Izmir is seen as the heart of the opposition, where everybody is pro-Atatürk. Three of the respondents have families originally from Izmir, they and their parents are all supporters of the CHP.

Based on the data of the 21 respondents, I drew up the figure below. In the figure, all common characteristics of respondents being anti-Erdogan, were extracted from the acquired data. It is not in any way complete, for it is only based on these respondents. As stated earlier, I did not speak to adolescents with other ethnicities or religious backgrounds, for example. As such, this categorization is only applicable to the respondents in this research.

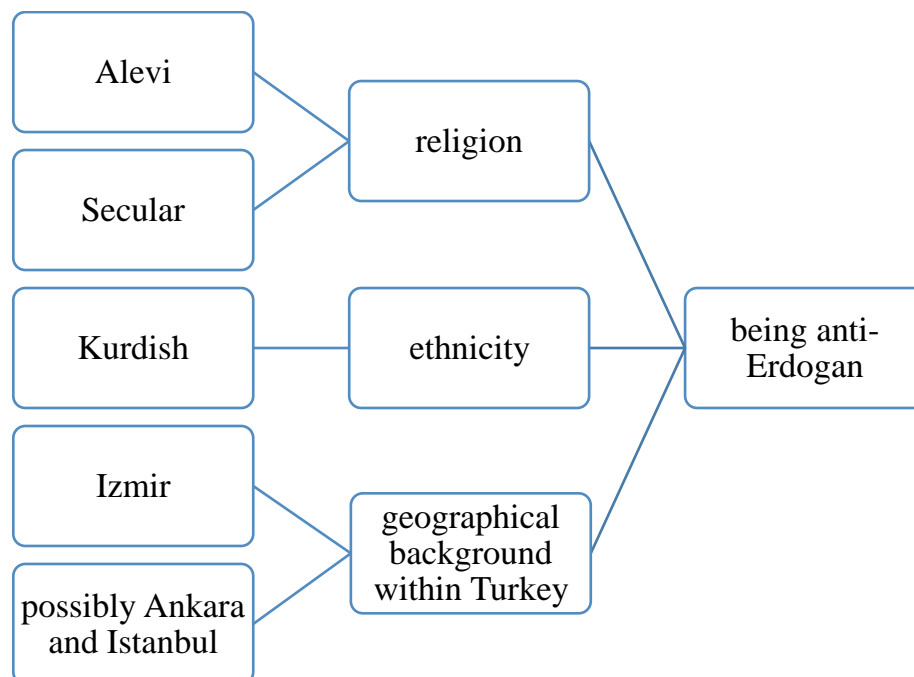


Figure 3. Taxonomy - characteristics of respondents, potentially related to their political preferences in Turkey.

In short, the political preferences of the respondents vary. Two-thirds of them consider themselves to be supporters of Erdogan and his AKP, one-third indicated to be (strongly) anti-Erdogan. Reasons for the respondents' political preferences seem to be rooted in the family's ethnical, religious and geographical backgrounds in Turkey. However, little is known about the consequences of recent events on these perspectives and standpoints. To begin with, the impact of the coup d'état in July 2016 will be examined.

## 6.2 Opinions regarding the failed military coup

In this paragraph the respondents' opinions regarding the military coup in Turkey in July 2016 will be described. The youngsters were asked what they thought happened and how they think of the alleged putschist Gülen. Thereby, it became clear many different stories on the coup and the alleged perpetrators exist. It demarcates the vagueness and ambiguity in which this event is covered. Whether the event led to tensions within the Dutch society, palpable for the respondents, will be discussed in paragraph 3.4.

The respondents might be pro-Erdogan or anti-Erdogan; most of them condemn the coup d'état of July 2016. As this anti-Erdogan respondent described: *'you might disagree with the government, but let it be known by using your voice instead of using brute force'* (respondent 19). The 300 Turks who ended up dead that night are vividly etched in everyone's memories. Some respondents have family living in or close to Istanbul and Ankara. Others were in Turkey during the coup or had to cancel their travels because of it, so the effects were clearly tangible. I will now dive deeper into the respondents' opinions on Fethullah Gülen, the alleged leader of the coup.

### 6.2.1 Gülen's Role

*"If you support him [Gülen] you are definitely crazy"* (Respondent 1, Anti-Erdogan)

All students are aware of the existence of Fethullah Gülen and know he is being held accountable for the coup. Also most of them know he lives in the United States, in Pennsylvania to be precise. All respondents assumed it was indeed Gülen, who was behind the coup, except for two or three government opponents. One Alevi girl for example, described how 'they' (she and her family) thought Erdogan had staged the coup himself. The respondents' opinions on Gülen are all very negative, but the reasons for this, apart from their condemnation of the attempted coup, vary between AKP and CHP supporters. The AKP supporters strongly believe that Gülen, who supposedly used to be a friend of Erdogan, has betrayed him because he wanted to seize power in Turkey. CHP supporters mostly take Gülen and Erdogan as two of a kind.

Most respondents do not know any Gülenists personally. That is to say, as far as they know. According to them there are no supporters of Gülen in school or in the neighborhood. Some pro-

Erdogan respondents do have stories, for example about a former tutor of which they now know he was trying to influence them into following his ideas. Also one boy claimed his former boss, at a Turkish supermarket was ‘with him’:

*“I worked at a shop.. I won’t call names, but ‘coincidentally’ in the name of the shop there is a giant F. The rest of the name is made up of small letters, but then with one big F. Also ‘by accident’ two weeks before the coup he traveled to America. I went to work and I was like: ‘WTF, where has he gone to?’ I heard he was in the US and two weeks later the coup happened. Well, at that moment it was clear to me.”* (respondent 13)

The boy told me he then quit his job immediately and never went back there anymore, as does the rest of his neighborhood. Who would want to become associated with a terrorist?! One could doubt the validity of this boys ‘evidence’, but it illustrates that the socio-economic consequences for people, who are deemed Gülen supporters, are huge.

The notion that the respondents do not really know if and where there are Gülenists in their environment, might not be surprising. Many indicate themselves they would consider it unwise to express pro-Gülen sentiments. ‘Considering what they did to Turkey’, they will really be negatively looked upon, so it is logical if they are afraid to express themselves. Respondent 2 even expressed he really thought it was a good thing Gülenists were beaten up ‘total loss’ to punish them for their contribution to the coup.

So, most respondents do believe the Gülen movement, or as they call it, Fetö, was behind the military coup in July. Whether or not the respondents support the current government, almost all of them strongly condemn the coup, in which many of their countrymen died. Who exactly belongs to Fetö, is unclear, which led to great tensions and insecurities, for anyone could be suddenly deemed a terrorist. The government has already fired thousands of alleged Gülen supporters, but it is believed many more are still hiding within the system (respondent 10). On the internet and on TV, many stories circulate about the possible perpetrators of the coup. The following paragraph will shed light on these stories, and how they influence Turkish-Dutch youth.

### 6.2.2 Conspiracies or reality?

Multiple respondents emphasized the importance of doing your own research on politically sensitive topics, before bragging about possible scenes or suspects. This is said especially in reaction to the Dutch, *“who only follow the Dutch news, which is really one-sided, and who simply believe everything they hear”* (Respondent 9).

Many respondents have therefore done their own research. But at a time when ‘fake news’ is topical in relation to the present president of the United States, and is thought to be used regularly to

influence elections (Allcot & Gentzkow, 2017), how do these adolescents distinguish between truth and fiction? Particularly the more fanatic Erdogan supporters, five or six of the respondents, told interesting theories about the course of current events in and around Turkey. I believe it is important to describe these theories, for they might give an insight into the way these youngsters perceive ‘the West’ and possibly all that is associated with it. Without taking a stance in what I believe is right or wrong, I will try to give an insight into some of their ideas concerning the events around the coup.

To begin with, due to Gülen’s residence in the United States, and because of America’s refusal to extradite him to Turkey, many pro-Erdogan respondents strongly believe the US played a role in the coup. According to the narrative, Gülen lives in a giant house in Pennsylvania heavily guarded by the CIA. Other respondents claimed Gülen and the CIA even cooperated in the coup. One respondent describes how the putschists all had one-dollar banknotes with them as a sign they participated in the coup. Also, Turkey is believed to have clear evidence of the US supplying terrorist groups in the south and south-east with weapons.

Respondent 10 explained that if you would only look at a map of the world, you would see Turkey is an important country. It lies on the front line between two continents, Europe and Asia. According to the respondents, America would want to stop Turkey from becoming too powerful. Thanks to Erdogan, Turkey is really thriving and ‘the West’ would fear it is becoming a new world power. Respondent 13 said he believed that in fact all problems in the Middle-East are caused by the US:

*“I just think America doesn’t want an Islamic country to become powerful/great. Gadhafi, for example, was also just murdered. Saddam Hussein too. I believe Gadhafi has done quite a lot of good things in Libya ,you know. Then all of a sudden something happens concerning gold and he is shot dead. There must be something behind this. It can’t be that suddenly a president, who is loved by everyone, is shot dead”* (respondent 13).

These youngsters ideas shed light onto a line of reasoning and perspectives which are completely different from dominant discourses in Europe. The same respondent stated that the leader of ISIS, called Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was in fact an Israeli special agent. Being born of Jewish descent with Jewish parents. These youngsters are influenced by news channels, blogs and videos on the internet which are clearly not coming from Dutch media.

Of course, also on the other side different theories exist. The respondent (15) claiming the coup was staged by the government itself, believes all problems lie in bad education. Erdogan would purposely restrain the educational system from functioning properly, to ensure people remain dumb. Respondent 21 claimed that if you are in Turkey, and you will only say one critical thing about him, he will immediately seize and imprison you.

From the above, we can conclude that most respondents, either pro- or anti-Erdogan, think Gülen was behind the coup and almost all of the respondents despise him. The coup has shocked most

respondents deeply. There are, however, ‘beautiful’ sides to it: according to respondent 6, for example, the failed coup has shown that ‘the people’ strongly support Erdogan. According to multiple respondents Gülen is a powerful and evil spider with a gigantic web of influence stretching all over the world, which he leads from his safe base in Pennsylvania (Respondent 10). Thanks to the coup, this has become visible, and many powerful figures in this web have since been removed.

It is difficult to define exactly by which sources the respondents are influenced in acquiring theories on the course about the coup, but it is clear most of those sources propagate ideas which are not in line with mainstream Dutch media coverage. This could say something about the extent to which their norms and values are determined by Dutch media and other authorities. This is further examined in the sections 4.3 and 4.4.

Firstly I will describe the commotion around another, more recent Turkish event: the referendum of April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The content of the proposed changes and the diplomatic conflict between Turkey and the Netherlands, preceding the referendum have further increased tensions within the Turkish communities.

### **6.3 The commotion around the Turkish referendum of April 2017**

The outcome of the Turkish referendum of April 16<sup>th</sup> 2017, was a narrow majority of votes in favor of the proposed constitutional changes. Eleven respondents were questioned about the referendum and especially about the commotion around the diplomatic row between Turkey and the Netherlands. These conversations took place after the weekend of March 10, when Turkey and the Netherlands erupted into a diplomatic conflict, but before the referendum took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April and its result was published.

Three of the eleven respondents had indicated earlier to be anti-Erdogan. These three were all supporters of the CHP and see Atatürk as the great leader of Turkey. It might not be a surprise they all completely condemned both the referendum and Turkey’s actions towards the Netherlands. According to them, the referendum was just another tool to increase the president’s power, and make Turkey slip further into an autocracy. They believed the Turkish ministers had no business in the Netherlands, as it is written down in the Turkish constitution that Turkish political parties are not allowed to campaign outside of Turkey. They approved of the Dutch government’s actions towards prohibiting the ministers to enter the Netherlands and the Turkish consulate and deemed Erdogan’s rhetoric’s afterwards ridiculous. For them this was just another proof of the wickedness of Turkey’s current president.

#### **6.3.1 The actual referendum**

With regard to the Erdogan supporters, there was quite some variety in the answers these other eight respondents gave. For them the diplomatic conflict was between a leader they followed (and some very enthusiastically) and the country they live in. Most respondents expressed quite nuanced

opinions. Of these eight respondents, three were already eighteen and were thus entitled to vote. Only one did in the end, and voted in favor (Respondent 12). In total, three of the eight respondents indicated they (would have) voted yes, four were still strongly doubting what would be the right option and one respondent would have undoubtedly voted no.

To begin with, not all Erdogan supporters thought positively about the referendum's content, with regard to the proposed constitutional changes. While voting against or in favor of the referendum, had evolved towards either voting against or in favor of Turkey's current president, Erdogan, the actual content of the referendum comprised a proposed transition from a parliamentary system, towards a presidential one (Respondent 10; Vreeken, 2017). However, where all the fuzz came from is evident: the transition would substantially enlarge the president's responsibilities, and thus his political power. As a result respondent 10, for example, loyal supporter of Erdogan, doubted whether he had to vote in favor or against the referendum, because he *"truly believed Erdogan would serve Turkey at his best, but who will become president after him? What if this will be a bad man, with all this power?"*

Some of the eight respondents pointed towards this proposed transition in political system and the referendum itself as proof that democracy in Turkey is not fading. Others understood these changes as a transition towards a more autocratic regime, but emphasized that this is what Turkey needs. One respondent (8), who earlier had expressed warm feelings towards Erdogan, was strongly against the referendum.

### 6.3.2 The commotion around the referendum

The previous paragraph described the respondents' opinions with regard to the content of the proposed constitutional changes for which the referendum was set up. As described in 6.3.1, this led to quite some commotion. Maybe even more contributing to increased tensions within the Turkish communities in the Netherlands, was what happened during the weekend of March 10, when the Dutch government got into direct conflict with Turkey's ministers.

Six of the eight pro-Erdogan respondents I spoke to after these events occurred indicated that they understood both sides in the diplomatic row between Turkey and the Netherlands which began in the weekend of 10 March 2017, when the Turkish minister of Family Affairs was stopped from entering the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam. They did not agree with the decision to forbid the minister from entering the consulate, for the consulate is Turkish territory, but understood why the Dutch government did it. Multiple respondents indicated they understood that prime-minister Rutte felt compelled to act forcefully in order to provide an opposing force to the PVV's growing popularity, as this happened just before the Dutch elections on March 15, 2017

What many respondents emphasized was the hypocrisy they saw in the Dutch government's actions. They deemed the prohibition for Turkish ministers to enter the Netherlands, not fair, because the Turkish opposition was allowed to campaign against the referendum in the Netherlands.

Furthermore, Dutch parties also go to the UK for instance to campaign during elections. *“How do they [the Dutch government] dare to accuse Turkey of a dismantling of democratic institutions if they themselves restrict our human rights [meaning: constitutional rights] like freedom of association and assembly?”* (respondent 12). The Kurdish respondent (3) explained that because of the Dutch reaction, her father, who claims to be anti-Erdogan, would now vote in favor of the referendum. Just because he strongly disapproved of the prohibition.

The respondents all condemned Erdogan’s aggressive statements, for example about the Dutch being Nazis and fascists. Their answers ranged from *“that was definitely not necessary, I do not approve of this!”* as respondent 6 described, to *“he should not have done this, but he is also a human being. He is a quick-tempered man, like Trump (president USA)”* (respondent 12). At the same time many condemned the Dutch actions, referring to the usage of dogs in trying to contain the protests in Rotterdam during the night minister Kaya was forbidden to leave her car and enter the consulate.

The one pro-Erdogan respondent (8) who would have voted no, expressed a completely different attitude towards Turkey from last time we spoke. In his opinion, the way Erdogan, the Turkish government, and Turkish-Dutch citizens, participating in the protests in Rotterdam, behaved, was very shameful. He thereby specifically mentioned how Turks in the Netherlands are really privileged. *“They enjoy all these rights and freedoms, and because one man says they should fight the country they live in, they just do! Haven’t you got any principles!?”* Whereas during the first interview, he spoke about Erdogan with pride, he now told me he believed Turkey is becoming an autocracy, without any freedom of speech. Still, if regular Turkish elections would be held now, he still would have voted for Erdogan: *“He just really is a great leader!”*

The referendum of April 2017 entailed a proposal for a transformation of Turkey’s political system, from a parliamentary system to a presidential one. If adopted, the system would enable president Erdogan stay in power until 2029. The referendum has caused a lot of commotion, for many anti-Erdogan Turks and many Western countries believe, the adoption of the proposed changes would lead Turkey into dictatorship. Also among Erdogan’s supporters, the referendum has evoked very different reactions. For some it strengthened their support for the Turkish government, while others were left disillusioned, hence enlarging division and tension within Turkish communities inside the Netherlands. In the next section, these tensions will be further described.

#### **6.4 The tangible effects of recent events in Turkey for Turkish-Dutch citizens**

Both the coup and the referendum have caused commotion also within the Netherlands. But to what extent have these things affected the everyday lives of the Turkish-Dutch youngsters in this research? I will first look at the role of the media, both in Turkey and the Netherlands. Thereafter it will be analyzed if the Turkish communities these youngsters belong to, have had an impact, whether they

discuss this with friends and to what extent they recognize the tensions in their environments. And finally, how sensitive are these topics for the respondents?

#### 6.4.1 Media

In most of the respondents' families mainly Turkish TV is watched. The respondents told me Turkish TV these days, and especially the news, are almost exclusively about politics. Via the red bars below the news, there is a constant stream of statements by or on Erdogan, sliding past. According to the anti-Erdogan youngsters, Turkish media channels are completely censored. Supposedly these channels broadcast an ongoing stream of AKP propaganda, combined with items on how Gülen, the PKK and Europe or the US are trying to sabotage Turkey. Government opponents are seldom given voice. Multiple anti-Erdogan respondents sketched the image of their fathers yelling at the TV screen.

Erdogan supporters on the other hand, claim there really is room for Erdogan or AKP criticism on Turkish television. They often point towards Dutch television as broadcasting only one-sided news with regard to political developments in Turkey. The respondents agreed almost unanimously on one thing: many Dutch people do not understand anything of what is going on in Turkey. Influenced by only Dutch media, Dutch people are, according to the respondents, simply believing everything they see, without taking a critical stance towards it. The respondents live in the Netherlands, so Dutch news has many ways to reach them. One respondent describes how they always watch Turkish television, but RTL news in the morning. Also via school and the internet (social media), respondents are exposed to Dutch media coverage. Respondent 15 describes:

*“Dutch people only see what the [Dutch] media shows them. I also watch Turkish media and sometimes I see Dutch media. Then I think like ‘oh, this is really one-sided’. Those moments I only see Erdogan’s denigration. In Turkish media I see this too; there you are shown both sides.”*

#### 6.4.2 Friends even though they have different political views?

Apart from what the respondents see on TV, also in their daily lives politics seem to increasingly play a role. It will now be described how they deal with this in their contact with Turkish-Dutch peers.

Even though the respondents' opinions sometimes differ a lot, this does not seem to have much effect on the friendships they forge with other Turks. Many of the respondents are befriended with other Turks at the same school, of whom many other respondents. These friendship lines cut across political preferences and ethnic or religious backgrounds. The Kurdish respondent (3) is befriended with 4 or 5 other youngsters I spoke to, most of whom are ethnical Turks. They all hang out in ‘Small Ankara’, the ‘Turkish corner’ at the SSGN. Even though some of those respondents expressed quite hostile feelings towards Kurdish separatist claims and especially towards the Kurdish ‘Terrorist’ group



the PKK, these feelings seem to have little effect on their friendship. Still these feelings are projected onto this girl, they form a basis for some teasing every now and then: *“You go back to your country! I’ll buy you a plane ticket if I only knew for which country”* (respondent 3).

Also political preferences and religious discourses do not really stand in the way of friendships between the youngsters. Their parents and the communities they live in at home might possibly be somewhat more organized based on these dividing lines, but in those cases the youngsters I interviewed were not really aware of this. What is really clear, is that with regard to friendships at school, these things do not really matter.

This does however not mean that these subjects are easily discussed, especially when it comes to politics. Both anti- and pro-Erdogan respondents indicated how they avoid to speak politics with friends having a different political opinion. As respondent 1 explained: *“Most of my friends are pro-Erdogan, but I am Alevi. We know we won’t agree anyway, so why would we speak about it?”*. Of course, it is not as if youngsters, who share the same political opinion, speak politics all the time. The respondents are also just high school adolescents, speaking about *“typical teen stuff”* (respondent 5).

#### 6.4.3 Pressurized to express themselves?

Apart from their Turkish friends, the respondents are often quite firmly rooted in a mosque or a Turkish community. As described in 6.1 some respondents indicated they experience these communities as very controlling. Respondent 12 said she does not like Turkish girls for this reason. They always gossip and you are always being watched and judged by others. This is in line with news articles (Volkrant, NRC, NOS, Trouw, 2016, 2017) claiming the restrictive and controlling character of Turkish communities in the Netherlands.

When asked if youngsters, from either political side, experience tensions or difficulties to express themselves, most of them did not recognize this in their own lives. When asked directly, they almost unanimously say they feel they can be themselves, they never feel pressurized to either say something or remain quiet. Also among friends or in the mosque they indicated they were always able to express themselves in principle. However, many anti-Erdogan respondents said that when they are among only pro-Erdogan Turks, they mainly remain quiet.

Most youngsters indicated they believe Gülen supporters experience difficulties in expressing themselves or even feel threatened. They might risk excommunication or worse, which, according to some, is just what they deserve being the terrorists behind the coup which killed 300 fellow countrymen. Respondent 2 explained how these people could have prevented this:

*“When Fetö had attacked, nine out of ten Turks expressed themselves on Facebook or Instagram. At that time there wasn’t any Gülenist posting a message like ‘I support Turkey, our country will not fall apart because of this.’ This was a big mistake on their side, because even if*

*they were Gülenists, if they had posted something like this [a message in which they had expressed they were condemning the coup and they were supporting Turkey's government in this], people would not have blamed them for doing this."*

In my opinion, this quotation reveals yet another thing. The way this boy describes the pressure put on Turks in the diaspora, to express their loyalty to the current government, indicates that to a certain extent, pressure within the Turkish communities does exist, also palpable for the respondents. These youngsters might not recognize the underlying tensions and sensibilities as such, but that does not mean they do not exist, and the respondents are not influenced by them.

This was noticeable from the stories of anti-Erdogan respondents. When asked if, and to what extent they were interested in Turkish politics, four out of seven anti-Erdogan respondents said they were not interested in Turkish politics at all and two said a little bit. Whereas from the fourteen pro-Erdogan respondents only one indicated to have no interest in Turkish politics at all and five respondents a little bit. The anti-Erdogan respondents gave quite similar reasons: *"My parents say I really don't have to be engaged in politics yet"* (respondent 7), *"my father never wants to speak with me about politics"* (respondent 20) or *"my parents say I shouldn't speak about politics, for I don't know anything about it yet"* (respondent 14). It is difficult to confirm if these answers are indeed revealing the youngsters' parents' worries about having their kids speak freely about anti-Erdogan sentiments at their homes. Do they say these things in order to purposely prevent their children from speaking about sensitive subjects? It is, however, clear they do differ from pro-Erdogan families with these statements.

#### 6.4.4 Underlying tensions

The underlying tensions might perhaps be clearer when looking at the reactions of some respondents towards the anonymity of the research. Respondent 20, Alevi and anti-Erdogan, suddenly became nervous at the end of the interview, repeatedly asking if his answers would really not be traceable back to him. Respondent 10 indicated that *"It is really difficult for me to speak about this, I am afraid to say something wrong. It is not as if it's a taboo, but the topic is really sensitive."* Respondent 18, coming from a pro-Erdogan family, expressed during the interview that he began to increasingly question the AKP's good intentions. This makes him one of the very few respondents having a different opinion on politics than his family. He said the following:

*"After the coup he [Erdogan] immediately received absolute power. Because of the emergency situation. If I speak about this they say like 'you are a Fetö guy!'. It is not like I support him... If he really did it, I believe he is a bad person, but if it turned out, Turkey would become a*

*dictatorship... If it had succeeded, would the situation be different now? Maybe something is not right. I really hope this remains anonymous, because otherwise I will surely be dead!"*

Apart from respondent 18, who personally started doubting the legitimacy of the AKP's actions, the respondents' political opinions were not very surprising, for they most often seemed rooted in their religious, ethnic and geographical belongings (an Alevi is anti-Erdogan etc.). This 'knowledge' is not only clear for a handful of researchers, like me: even though they are still youngsters, they are perfectly aware of the backgrounds of their Turkish peers in their environment and the political views these normally accompany. They know exactly who is pro and who is against the AKP. You could wonder why then, youngsters like respondent 20, want to keep their answers hidden. On the other hand, the fact that political preferences are sort of 'out in the open', could give an indication as to why respondents said they do not experience tensions or difficulties to express themselves.

The above applies to all groups but one: Gülenists. Their identities and whereabouts are surrounded by vagueness for the respondents. As described in 6.2, no one really knows these people, apart from hearsay, and the respondents indicated that if you are indeed a Gülenist, it might be wise to keep your mouth shut.

The Turkish referendum, and especially the commotion around it, enforced tensions. Multiple respondents I interviewed a second time, indicated they now felt more obliged to speak out and choose sides, than during our first conversation. They told me that even though on both Dutch and Turkish (social) media, the other is very aggressively addressed, luckily in their everyday lives, none of them had any bad experiences with non-Turkish people since the weekend of March 11. Occasionally they had been asked for their opinion on the matter, but so far, none of them had to face any negative reactions personally.

Still, after the coup many Turkish-Dutch citizens were pressurized by fellow Turks or Turkish-Dutch citizens, to speak out against the coup, against the terrorist attacks, in support of the Turkish government. The notion that fatherland-loving Turks should speak out on social media was supported by multiple respondents. Even though most respondents seemed unaware of this, underlying tensions do exist, and they are influenced by them.

## **6.5 How political events can shape identities**

I will now examine if and how Turkish political developments influence the identifications of the respondents. Therefore firstly, I will focus on a typically Turkish character trait: pride. In this section it will be described how the political developments have contributed to this feeling. Secondly I will reflect on the respondents' feelings of belonging, connectedness and loyalty. Then I will reflect on the possible influences of the duality imposed on these youngsters. I will end with describing how for some, these developments actually led to doubt and despair.

### 6.5.1 Turkish pride

The respondents' answers confirm the widespread stereotype that Turks are a proud people. Almost all respondents were clearly proud of their Turkish descent, which might partly explain, why they focus on these roots this strongly. Respondent 6 expressed this by stating that by only being a Turk, you are already 50% nationalist. Erdogan and his ministers cunningly respond to these feelings in their political rhetoric's. Multiple respondents named exactly the same examples in explaining Turkey greatness, which leads me to believe, these examples were widely advertised. They told me that since Erdogan is ruling Turkey, the economy has thrived. Hospitals used to be overcrowded, with enormous queues of sick people in front of them. The infrastructure has improved, there are many new roads and bridges, and as we speak, Turkey is allegedly building the largest airport in the entire world (Respondents 9, 10, 13 and 16). Turkey's rapidly growing prosperity is believed by these youngsters, to be the main reason Western countries try to find fault with Turkey's government.

For Erdogan supporters, the coup has further contributed to this. Respondents expressed how proud they were of their countrymen who took to the streets and gave their lives to prevent the coup from happening. They indicated to feel strongly connected to Turks in Turkey, and feel accountable for events happening in 'their' country. Respondent 2 expressed he experiences goose-flesh when speaking about it: *"if Erdogan said, rise up, I would go immediately!"* Respondent 4 expressed how she really feels a bond between her and other Turks: *"I am so proud that after all this, Turkey is still standing. There it is not only the leaders who govern the country, but also the people, who strongly support them, by saying: This is our country, we will not give it up and we will fight for it!"*

Ten respondents indicated to feel connected to Turkey more because of the military coup. It made them more aware of their 'belongings'. Respondent 2 said his connectedness to Turkey had not increased: *"We already were, we cover each other's backs. The coup rather provided proof of this."* Only four respondents indicated the coup had made them feel more Turkish. Most explained they already strongly felt Turkish. There was one group of youngsters who very clearly indicated the coup had not made them feel more or less connected to Turkey. These were the anti-Erdogan respondents.

### 6.5.2 An imposed duality

Over the last years, but especially since the referendum Turks were increasingly pressurized to express their political preference, while it became increasingly difficult to express anti-Erdogan sentiments. Respondent 8 and 7 explain these had already been banned completely from Turkish television, for instance. Respondent 8 said something very interesting:

*"It's not like I am really pressured, but more like I am obliged. My country, Turkey has done this. It becomes an obligation, because when something happens, I need to know where to stand. But at the same time, there isn't any room for choice"* (respondent 8).

This respondent's word choice, to speak about an obligation to pledge his loyalty to Turkey, rather than about pressure, displays how severely this imposed duality is felt by him. After the diplomatic row, Turkish-Dutch citizens were increasingly asked to choose one country over the other. In Turkish media, Erdogan is directly targeting my respondents among many others, when he orders them to 'live in the best houses and have five children instead of three' (Hanegreefs, 2017). Respondent 12 stated that in Dutch media there is constant reference to 'the long reach of Erdogan'. Turks supporting him, are supporting a dictator and are thus stupid.

Dutch Turks are pressurized both by the Netherlands and by Turkey, to prove their loyalty. Since the commotion around the referendum started, the choice has increasingly become the following: Be a good Dutch citizen, and reject Erdogan's dictatorial search for power. Be a good Turk, and pledge your loyalty to Turkey. Show your Turkish environment by putting statements on Facebook and vote yes for the referendum. Even though almost all respondents appear to be affected by this pressure, many of them do not really recognize it as such. Exceptions are formed by respondent like 8 and 12.

It is interesting to see, that the referendum did not unanimously have the same effects, the coup had on the connectedness Turkish-Dutch citizens feel. For some, it has strengthened their feelings of loyalty to Turkey's government, for others these same events evoked shame. There are roughly four categories to be distinguished in the effects the conflict between Turkey and the Netherlands had on the identifications of the respondents. Firstly, there are the ones who were already anti-Erdogan. For them, the referendum and the commotion around it formed a confirmation of what they already believed: Led by Erdogan, Turkey is slowly falling into dictatorship. They still feel connected to Turkey, but choose the Dutch side in this conflict without a doubt. It is still too soon to see the consequences of the tight majority of the yes-vote for this group.

Secondly there is a group consisting of Erdogan supporters, who either feel the same or stronger about their Turkish leader. Some of those might question the content of the proposal, or might understand both sides in the conflict. Still for them, Erdogan is the great leader, and they strongly believe he will always do what is best for his people. For them, all recent events, including the referendum, might have strengthened their ties to Turkey.

Thirdly, there are respondents, who sort of consider themselves to be pro-Erdogan, but who are not interested in politics, and who have no real clue as to what the referendum is about.

Lastly, there is a small group of respondents, who were Erdogan supporters, whose families are all Erdogan supporters, but for whom this has now changed. Their love for Erdogan had always formed a firm base, on which their morals and values were based. Either the referendum or the events preceding it, had started to shake the fundamentals of these youngsters' lives. For them Erdogan and his AKP went too far. They now experienced feelings of shame and doubt. Respondent 18 declared to feel ashamed. *"How would the world look at us now? We flushed many of our rights, like freedom of religion, through the toilet."* When I spoke to respondent 8 for the second time, he seemed insecure

and a bit down. These youngsters seemed to struggle most with the duality imposed on them since the weekend of March 10, 2017.

## 7 Conclusion

In this part I will reflect on all gathered data, both empirical and theoretical. In section 7.3, these are combined into a coherent answer to my central question. Subsequently I will reflect on the limitations of this research and lastly, I will provide recommendations for praxis and suggestions for further research.

### 7.1 The construction of identity

In chapter 4, it was examined how the identities of Turkish-Dutch youngsters are constructed. In line with Sen's (2006) reasoning, it can be concluded that these adolescents experience many different identifications through which their identities are given shape. Therein especially religion and the social environment (friends and family) seemed to play a vital apart, next to identity markers such as character traits, hobbies, talents and dreams. Crucial is the fluid character of different identities. Turkish-Dutch youngsters experience shifting loyalties and decide, based on the particular circumstances, what relative importance to attach to different identities. Hence emphasizing the element of choice (Sen, 2006).

However, as Sen (2006) had also stated, these identifications could be restrained by external influences. In line with the literature on the identity constructions of immigrant children, the duality, of 'living in two worlds' has been proven to exist, and to be influential for the ways these youngsters regard themselves. The data show that the respondents are influenced by both the Netherlands and Turkey, and thereby constitute a separate group. In both countries they are seen as outsiders, who do not really belong there. Living in the Netherlands most of their lives, these youngsters are constantly reminded of their being Turkish in a Dutch environment. The result is that the respondents' feelings of being Turkish are stronger: fifteen of the 21 indicated to feel more Turkish than Dutch.

These influences can best be understood in Karakayali's statement that the real problem is not that immigrant children feel caught between two worlds, but that this feeling derives from the "condition of living in a world where most people believe that they caught between two worlds" (2005, p. 340). As such, this duality is imposed on them by both the Dutch and Turkish society, who see these adolescents as outsiders.

These findings are in line with researches in the past like Karakayali's, which have mainly focused on either proving or falsifying the existence of the duality of being 'caught between two worlds' for Turkish-Dutch youngsters. This thesis goes further, by adding the influences of very recent political developments on the salience of this duality.

## 7.2 The influences of recent political developments

### 7.2.1 The paradoxical message from Dutch society

In current political discourses, both in the Netherlands and Turkey, there is hardly any room for an inclusive understanding of the complex and multiple self-conceptions of Turkish-Dutch youngsters. Within the Netherlands, Dutch citizens with a migration background have been attracting negative media attention for quite a few years. Especially after the death of Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002, negative discourses around the positions of non-Western migrants in the Netherlands came to dominate the public debate. Partly due to the political developments in Turkey, the recent establishment of the political party DENK and the emergence of ‘treitervloggers’, Turkish-Dutch citizens have become the centre of negative attention.

Furthermore, partly due to the palpable effects of large-scale warfare in the Middle-East, with Islamic State as the grand enemy, anti-Islam sentiments have increased. Muslims are directly depicted as the enemy by rightwing media and parties like the PVV, which are growing in popularity. The respondents indicated to be barely touched by negative imaging on TV, whereas occasional, personal experiences of racism and discrimination hurt them a lot.

Meanwhile the Dutch society, and especially its political leaders, are increasingly pressuring Turkish-Dutch citizens to pledge their unquestionable loyalty to the Dutch nation. They should integrate more, become Dutch faster, and choose for the Netherlands rather than their country of origin. If they do not comply, they are supposed to simply ‘pleur op’ or leave. From within the Netherlands a paradoxical demand is imposed on these Turkish-Dutch youngsters: they should do everything they can to become like the Dutch, but they are constantly reminded that they will never fully be Dutch.

The result is that Turkish-Dutch youngsters live in a society where they do not always feel they ‘fit in’. They experience clashing values between the Turkish ‘home’ and Dutch values taught in Dutch society. In a critical search for a sense of belonging, Turkish youngsters find solace in religion. This finding was in line with Sirseloudi (2012) who stated that “the religiousness of the second and third generation offers a lifestyle allowing them to cope with the challenges of modernity in a foreign country” (p. 814). Unfortunately for these youngsters, religion forms an identity marker with which they distance themselves further from Dutch society, in which the number of ‘Muslim haters’ seems to be growing (Ramm, 2010).

### 7.2.2 Turkey’s identity politics

At the same time, due to political developments in Turkey, Turkish-Dutch adolescents have become more and more pressurized by Turkey’s government and from within Turkish communities in the Netherlands. The AK party, led by Erdogan, exercises and promotes a form of political Islam, which



means his policies and ideas can influence religious Turkish youth in Europe (Sirseldoudi, 2012). Erdogan performs a very exquisite form of identity politics; he responds to peoples' feelings of pride, a typically Turkish character trait. He reaches out to all 'normal' (Sunni) Turks, both within Turkey and in Europe, propagating how much they are all one, strong unity.

Turkish social media, television, newspapers, they all reported extensively on the course of the failed coup and how it was ended by 'the Turkish people', who in masses took to the streets, for they all wanted to defend Turkey's democracy. Over 300 people died, sacrificing themselves to protect Turkey from disaster and they are remembered as heroes. Who would not want to be part of this? Instigators of this evil are alleged members of Fetö, a terrorist organisation, with members all over the world, led by the cleric Fethullah Gülen, who resides in the United States, a notion feeding into theories on the possible involvement of America in the coup. A very clear enemy was formed, and many government officials, teachers, doctors- people with status- were fired or even locked up for their supposed ties to the movement and the coup.

Erdogan's reach stretches far and also within the Netherlands his tight grip is felt. If you are a pious Muslim Turk, you are belonging to a tremendous people and a wonderful nation, but beware of Gülenists (followers of Gülen) (or opposition parties for that matter), for they are infectious and demand the fall of 'our great nation'. As a result tensions within Turkish communities in the Netherlands have increased. Especially alleged Fetö-members risk excommunication or worse. Turks everywhere were demanded and expected to actively speak out against the coup and rally behind Turkey's ruling party, which explains the omnipresence of pro-AKP statements and messages on social media.

After the coup in July, Turkey has been plagued by several terrorist attacks. Most Turks in the Netherlands still visit their country of origin annually and most have family living in Turkey, for whose well-being they now fear. Some were even visiting Turkey during the time of the coup, or had to cancel their holidays because of it, so it had a lot of impact, even for young Turks in the Netherlands. Parents, who are often first generation, and have very close relatives still living in Turkey, are following Turkish news and television on a daily basis and politics have become an increasing part of its content. Turkish media are all unambiguously propagating: Erdogan is a hero, thanks to whom Turkey has become the prosperous nation it now is, and without whom its democracy would have collapsed into violence and anarchy.

As a result, Turkish politics have become much more prominent in many of the respondents' lives. For most of them, their Turkish roots have become more visible and they feel connected to the 'fatherland' more than before. An exception to this is formed by anti-Erdogan respondents. For them, recent developments have rather resulted in creating more distance from Turkey. They do feel connected to Turkey and fellow Turks, but to a somewhat lesser extent. The anti-Erdogan respondents sharply distance themselves from governmental practices and seem to generally be less interested in Turkish politics than pro-Erdogan respondents. Even though most anti-Erdogan respondents indicate

these developments have no effect on their friendships and daily lives, their positions in Turkish communities and in Turkey specifically have become more tense.

The Turkish referendum of April 16<sup>th</sup> has further fuelled unrest and widened divisions between government supporters and Turks supporting opposition parties. During the weekend of March 10 2017, Turkish ministers travelled to the Netherlands to campaign. A diplomatic conflict erupted when the Dutch government decided they were not allowed to enter. The weekend marked an interesting shift. Earlier, both within the Netherlands and in Turkey, the portrayed enemy had remained quite abstract; 'The West' and 'Islam'. Now, due to this direct confrontation both countries have started to depict the other as an enemy of focus.

For Turkish-Dutch youngsters this mostly happened at a distance, but it did influence their identifications, either strengthening them, or leading the youngsters into despair, for they were put in an impossible position, having to choose between two countries, both demanding their loyalty.

### 7.3 This thesis' central argument

Turkish-Dutch adolescents today, thus find themselves in a difficult position having to navigate between two conflicting nations, moving in seemingly opposite directions, both increasingly demanding the youngsters' loyalties. I will now try to answer this thesis' central question, which is: How are senses of identity constructed for Turkish high school students in the Netherlands, and to what extent are they influenced by recent political developments in the Netherlands and Turkey?

As explained in 7.1, Turkish-Dutch adolescents have complex, fluid and multiple identities. But, while existing of- and influenced by- many different factors, their identities also seem to be very much shaped by their position of being a Turk in Dutch society. In line with Karakayali (2005), it can be argued, that the duality of being both Dutch and Turkish, is salient and influential, because these youngsters live in a society wherein almost everyone believes these youngsters are 'caught between two worlds'. The duality is thereby imposed on Turkish-Dutch youngsters.

Whereas previous researches have focused mainly on the existence of this duality in the identity constructions of Turkish-Dutch youngsters (Karakayali, 2005; Sirseloudi, 2012), the central argument in this thesis is that current political developments in the Netherlands and Turkey, have made this duality even more salient. While identity is a very personal concept, and the importance of individual agency in choosing one's identity should not be underestimated, it is also very much socially shaped. Identities can change under the influence of different events. The increase of anti-Islam sentiments in the Netherlands is partly due to the fear of Islamic State in the Middle-East. The military coup and the commotion around the referendum in Turkey -especially the growing mutual hostilities after the direct confrontation between Turkey and the Netherlands in March-, have contributed to increased tensions among different Turkish communities in both countries. The Netherlands and Turkey have grown further apart, increasingly rejecting everything related to each other.

As a result, both the Dutch and Turkish society, media and politics are increasingly putting pressure on Turkish-Dutch adolescents, forcing them to choose alliances and pledge their loyalties. It is these imposed social frames, which create a sense of duality, and it is due to recent political developments, that this duality has become more salient. In answer to the central question of this thesis, it can thus be concluded that senses of identity for Turkish adolescents in the Netherlands are constructed, based on many different aspects, such as their families and friends, religious belonging, and character traits. But their identities are indeed influenced by recent political developments in the Netherlands and Turkey, for they enlarge a sense of duality, by increasingly imposing conflicting social frames on Turkish-Dutch adolescents.

#### 7.4 Limitations of this research

Reflecting on the limitations in this research, I should first take myself as researcher into consideration. I am a Dutch woman, researching the identities of Turkish youngsters, problematized by the conflictual relationship between Turkey and the Netherlands. Clearly originating from one side, my assumptions and perceptions might very well be biased, influencing the results of this research.

Moreover, because of the same reason, it could very well be, that the respondents were biased towards me as a Dutch researcher. They might have found it difficult to speak to me on (politically) very sensitive subjects, which possibly slightly influenced the answers they gave. Would they have told me the same if I had been Turkish too, or if I came from a completely different country? Has the fact many knew one of my parents influenced them? These are possibilities I have not been able to verify.

Then, I was also limited by my lack of knowledge of the Turkish language. Apart from certain news articles, or research papers written by Turks in English, I was not able to read directly about the Turkish perceptions and ideas in scientific literature, in politics and in the media. For information, I most often had to relate to translations given by the respondents or people in the media. Translations are always interpretations of the translator and as such are never truly objective. As to my respondents, this is not very problematic, for I was specifically asking for their perceptions on the subject. However, in certain parts of this thesis, my explanations of Turkish rhetoric are based on either English or Dutch articles, from non-Turkish journals and websites, explaining Erdogan's line of reasoning for example. Information coming from these channels most often matched the respondents' answers and the few Turkish sources I could read, but I cannot really guarantee their originality.

Furthermore, the limited scope of this research has coerced me into researching only a microscopic part of these new, large, geo-political developments, with potential consequences we cannot yet oversee. As such, my results have raised more questions than they have answered. My research is based on the answers of 21 Turkish-Dutch high school students, living in Oss and Nijmegen. It is impossible to say if these results can be applied to other Turkish-Dutch youngsters in

the Netherlands too. Even more difficult would it be, to apply the results to later generation Turks in other age categories, or in other European countries. Therefore additional research on much bigger scale would be necessary. But let's assume for an instance, that the answers to the questions in this thesis can be applied to a larger group; what would that do, for our understanding of identity? If recent political events indeed have a large influence on the identifications of Turkish-Dutch youngsters, what does that mean for the Turkish communities in the Netherlands, and their position in society in particular?

## **7.5 Suggestions for further research**

The results in this thesis thus cannot be easily applied to all Turkish-Dutch youngsters in the Netherlands, for they only focus on this non-representative group of 21 youngsters in Oss and Nijmegen. They do however, give an insight into the perceptions and identifications of these youngsters. This thesis thereby underlines the significant societal and scientific relevance of the subject, which makes further research into this topic essential.

The qualitative nature of this thesis, enabled it to dive deep into the perceptions of the respondents on the subjects of identity and belonging. It endeavored to understand these youngsters from within. A next step would be to find out if the challenges and struggles my 21 respondents faced, are representative of the whole group of Turkish-Dutch youngsters in the Netherlands. Further research should therefore adopt a much bigger scale, by including especially the larger cities, such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam, where large populations of later generation Turks live. There might be differences in identifications of Dutch-Turks to be noted between areas in the Netherlands where very few Turks live and areas with a large Turkish population.

Over a longer period of time it would be interesting to investigate what the actual consequences are of the ways in which recent political developments have shaped Turkish-Dutch adolescents' identities. What has been the impact of these for their 'integration' and position in Dutch society? Has the increased imposed duality of 'living in two worlds', negatively affected this generation, in comparison to, for example, other non-Western migrant groups, such as Moroccans and Antilleans?

Lastly, it would be interesting to examine the effects of Dutch policies and political decisions, on the identifications, belongings and positions of Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands. Specifically with regard to the way in which the Dutch Government has dealt dealing with Turkey, since diplomatic relations have been tense recently. Therefore, a cross-national research could be set up for example, to reflect on the ways different European countries acted, when the Turkish ministers came to campaign to vote 'yes' for the referendum in March 2017. What were the effects of the Dutch strategy on the loyalties of Turkish communities in the Netherlands, compared to the effects on Turkish communities in France for example, where the Turkish minister of Foreign Affairs could

simply perform in Metz. I believe research on these topics to be indispensable to understand how future challenges can best be dealt with.

## **7.6 Recommendations for praxis**

Turkish youngsters in the Netherlands struggle to find their place in Dutch society, constrained by many external influences. In order to support them in this, they need to be understood and addressed properly. When Turkish-Dutch youngsters are reduced by society to only being seen as ‘caught between two worlds’, being stuck in a conflicting duality, as Karakayali (2005) points out, this framing becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Even though socio-political developments in both the Netherlands and Turkey demand otherwise, it would be unfair to understand these youngsters solely in terms of their dual loyalty to the Netherlands and Turkey.

I would therefore like to pledge for a more inclusive understanding of these youngsters, within the Netherlands. Achieving change will be a slow and difficult process, for the biggest problem lies in the minds of many Dutch people, who still conceive these adolescents as outsiders. It is not easy to provide clear answers to this problem, but potential solutions can be found for example in education. Themes like these should be extensively dealt with during teacher trainings. Future teachers should be taught that they must stop to constantly emphasize the Turkish-Dutch youngsters’ otherness, for example when they compliment second generation Turks on their command of the Dutch language. Small steps like these could contribute to an understanding making it possible for later generations of people with Turkish roots to be regarded as the complex and versatile human beings they are.

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## Appendix I – Interview guide

### 1. Demographic data:

- age, family status, gender, educational level,
- Which generation are you? (2th, 3th, 4<sup>th</sup>)
  - o Could you tell me how your family ended up here?
  - o Where in Turkey do you come from?

### 2. What does your life look like?

- Who is....? How would you describe yourself?
  - o What language do you speak at home?
  - o Where do you go during holidays? (vacation)
- What is/ who are important to you? + Why?
- Who do you usually listen to? (Father, mother, uncle, etc.)
  - o Do you often have conflicts at home? What are those conflicts about?
- Are you religious? What group? (Sunni, Alevi, etc.)
  - o Does it play a big role in your daily life? Why (not)?
  - o Do you visit a mosque? Do you pray? How often?
  - o What do you think about alcohol? Ramadan?
- Where are your friends from?
  - o m/f/o?
  - o Turkish, Dutch, ethnic group, etc.
  - o Which group would you consider you belong to/how would you describe your group of friends (at school, in general, etc.)?
  - o Are there many differences between you and Dutch classmates?
    - What kind of differences? Could you name some?
  - o Do you experience many differences between different Turkish groups? (Kurds, etc.)
    - To which Turkish group do you yourself belong?
- Do you feel a member of the Turkish community? Why?

### 3. Future

- Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
  - o What would you like to be when you've grown up? (What are your expectations)?
  - o Where would you like to live?
  - o Partner?
- Do you want children? How would you like to raise your child?

- Would you speak Turkish?
- Muslim?
- Moreno question: If you would place yourself on a scale, how do you feel?
  - Turkish, not Dutch,
  - More Turkish than Dutch,
  - Equally Turkish and Dutch,
  - More Dutch than Turkish,
  - Dutch, not Turkish.
- Do you feel more strongly on Dutch or Turkish politics? Why?

#### **4. Involvement in Politics NL.**

- Wat do you know about Dutch politics?
  - Could you name some parties? + their focus?
  - Which party would you vote for? Why?
    - What do you think of a party like the PVV?
    - What do you think / feel when you see something like that?
- Have you ever had any unpleasant experiences you would consider discrimination?
  - Would you tell me about it?
  - And at school?

#### **5. Politics in Turkey.**

- Are you interested in Turkey's politics?
  - Do you feel connected to the people there? Why?
  - Do you have an opinion about politics there? What is your opinion?
  - Have you ever been afraid / felt pressured by other Turkish people/Turkish politics?
    - And what about your family? If so, will you tell me about it?
- If possible: asking questions about the coup?
  - What is your opinion on developments there?
    - Would you tell me your opinion on Gülen/Erdogan?
    - Do you experience tensions (at school, community, neighborhood)?
  - Do you think Dutch people/classmates/teachers understand what is going on?
    - Why/why not? Could you name examples?
  - Do you think what happened is important? Why?
- Has the coup made you feel more/less connected to politics? Why?
- Has the coup made you feel more/less Turkish? Why?

## Appendix II - Pairwise ranking

Naam:

Klas + leeftijd:    **moslim**    **Turk**    **Nederlander**    **Man/vrouw**    **Vmbo/Havo vwo**    **Middelbare scholier**    **Hobby?**    **Evt. etniciteit**    **Evt. politiek.**    **karakter**

<i>moslim</i>										
<i>Turk</i>										
<i>Nederlander</i>										
<i>Man/vrouw</i>										
<i>Vmbo/havo/vwo</i>										
<i>Middelbare scholier</i>										
<i>Hobby?</i>										
<i>Evt. etniciteit</i>										
<i>Evt. politieke voorkeur</i>										
<i>karakter</i>										



### **Appendix III – Informal conversations**

Questions on the commotion around the Turkish referendum on April 16<sup>th</sup>(?) after the direct confrontation between the Dutch government and Turkish ministers who tried to enter the Netherlands for promotional purposes.

- What is your opinion on the referendum? Would you vote in favour or against it?
- What do you think of the Turkish minister not being allowed to enter the Netherlands? Why?
- What do you think of the way Erdogan, and the AKP. Now speak about the Netherlands? (Nazis, fascists, etc.)
- Has it changed the way you feel about Turkish politics? And about being Turkish?