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### Young Asian Dutch constructing Asianness

*Understanding the role of Asian popular culture*

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**YOUNG ASIAN DUTCH CONSTRUCTING ASIANNES:**  
**UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF ASIAN POPULAR CULTURE**

**Reza A. Kartosen**

Young Asian Dutch constructing Asianness: Understanding the role of Asian popular culture

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**Young Asian Dutch constructing Asianness:  
Understanding the role of Asian popular culture**

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

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aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam  
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus  
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom  
ten overstaan van een door het  
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door Reza Anthony Kartosen

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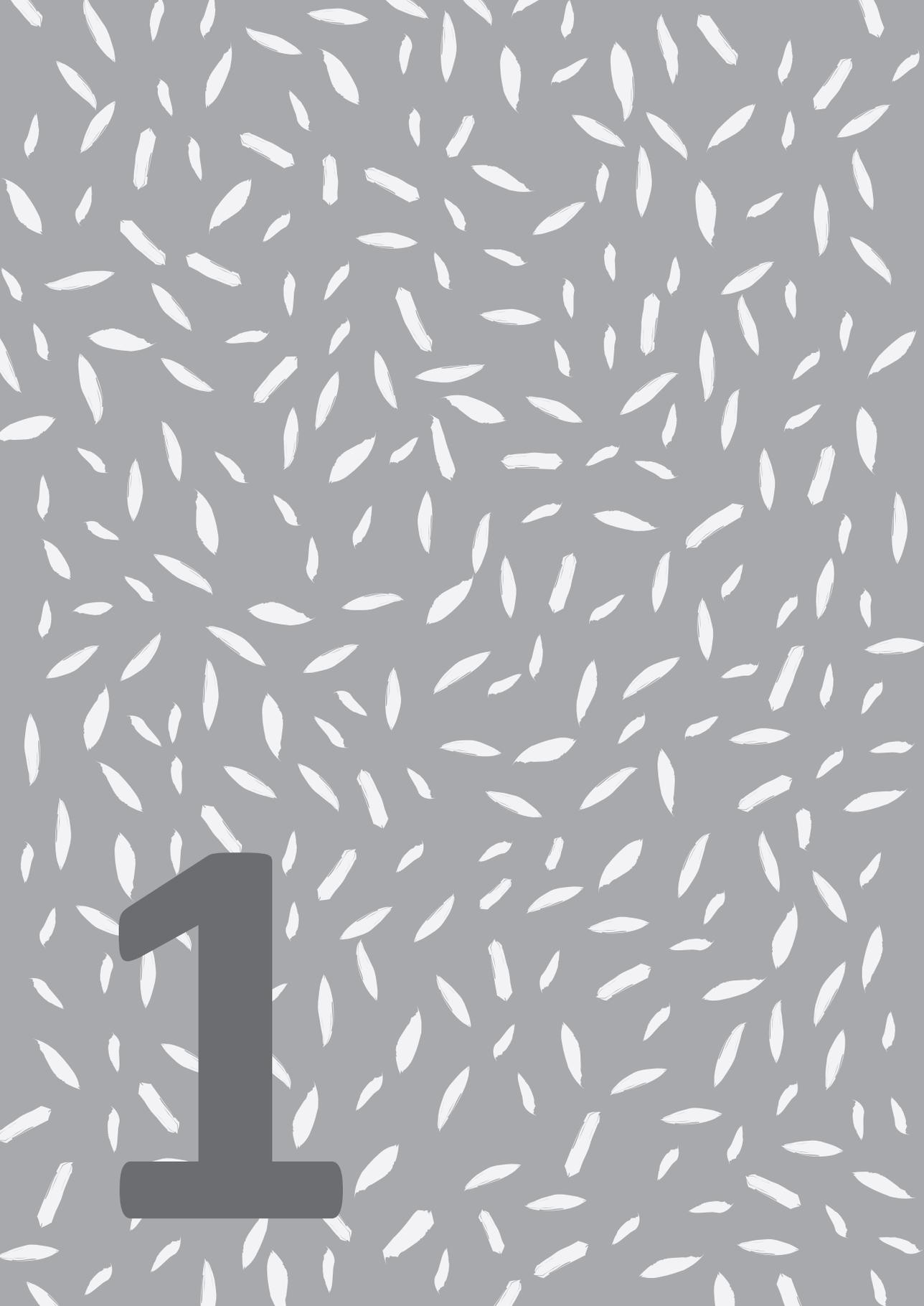
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**1**

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Introduction**

This doctoral thesis is about young Asian Dutch,<sup>1</sup> panethnic Asian identities and identifications,<sup>2</sup> and Asian/Asian Dutch popular culture.<sup>3</sup> By definition, research projects concerning matters of identity and identification are highly personal and emotional. Not just for the people – or research subjects – under scrutiny, but often for the researchers as well. Even more so in the case of the present research project, as by virtue of my parents' Indonesian, Indo-Dutch,<sup>4</sup> and Indian origin, I am Asian Dutch myself. I also identify as Asian and I identify with other people of Asian origin. Furthermore, I have consumed ample Asian and Asian Dutch popular culture and from time to time I still do so. However, I have not always identified as Asian, nor have I always consciously consumed Asian popular culture *as Asian* popular culture. I only became aware of, and sensitized to, notions of panethnic Asianness and Asian/Asian Dutch popular culture fairly recently, say about twenty years ago, in the 1990s. I believe starting my doctoral thesis with a short recapitulation of how I myself became an Asian Dutch subject, a recapitulation of my own 'Asian journey', is necessary and meaningful here, as it will shed light on the genesis as well as the nature and objectives of the present research project. Thus, I will begin by reflecting on my engagement with panethnic Asianness through the years, in hindsight.

Twenty-odd years ago, when I was a twentysomething, I identified as Indonesian through upbringing, and I also strongly identified as Dutch – albeit 'allochthonous' Dutch. At the time I was an ambitious journalist and I felt to be part of mainstream Dutch culture. Save for a few incidents, I had not encountered much explicit racism or social exclusion myself, at least not consciously. I felt integrated and accepted by Dutch society at large. In hindsight, I felt I was what some would call a 'model minority'. Life was good. Thus, I did not 'need' to identify with a new cultural 'groupness' to 'get by' in everyday life. And yet, at some point in the 1990s I started to identify as Asian (while also still identifying as Indonesian and Dutch), and I started to imagine Asian identities. This was situated in the context of the wider emergence of a sense of shared Asianness among young Asian Dutch of diverse Asian origin which started around late 1980s/early 1990s. I first encountered this notion of Asianness as a journalist in the early 1990s when I interviewed the organizers of so-called Asian parties, club nights aimed at Asian Dutch youths, which at the time constituted a small but growing phenomenon in the Dutch nightlife landscape. I remember that I was not very impressed with the quality of Asian parties, but most of all the idea of shared Asianness did not resonate with me and I did not identify as Asian. I left it at that. However, by the late 1990s Asianness crossed my path again. Together with business partners I was looking for potential niche markets to develop (online) media for. The Asian parties came to my mind, and we identified young Asian Dutch as a promising and underserved target audience. Subsequently, I got involved in what was vernacularly known as the 'Asian scene'; an Asian Dutch imagined community, to speak with Anderson (1983).

Under the name 'VeryAzN' my partners and I created an online social network for young Asian Dutch and we produced club nights, panel discussions (amongst others about

Asian identity in the Netherlands), film screenings and other cultural events. Established cultural institutions approached us for co-productions targeted at Asian Dutch, and I was asked to join the board of Asian Dutch film festival CinemAsia. Initially my engagement with Asianness and the Asian scene was purely concerned with creating high quality media and events that would appeal to young Asian Dutch and advertisers alike. But very quickly my engagement gained a personal dimension. I became friends with people of Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino and other Asian origin, whereas up till then my friends were mainly White Dutch or of Surinamese, Indo-Dutch or Indonesian descent. I got socialized into the Asian scene, and felt at home. I felt a connection with characters in Asian films, the people at Asian parties, and just random people of Asian origin I encountered in the streets. I started to identify as Asian too. And I still do, especially now that I am married to a Chinese Dutch woman (whom I met through my involvement in the Asian scene) and I carry our new, combined last name Kartosen-Wong that articulates our shared Asianness. Moreover, we have a son, Sam-Ming Malique, who is inevitably going to be raised with notions of Asianness. Thus, my personal and emotional Asian journey continues.

As Asianness has played and still plays such a central role in my personal life, it is perhaps unsurprising that when the opportunity to design my own PhD research presented itself, I tapped into my extensive experiences with, and observations of, Asianness and the Asian scene in the Netherlands. These observations and experiences, and, indeed, my own sense of Asianness, raised questions which I was unable to address or even formulate adequately during the time I was involved in the Asian scene as a cultural entrepreneur. But now that I was not actively involved in it anymore, I was able to look at the Asian scene from a relative distance. More so, as a (prospective) PhD researcher I was able to embed my experiences with, and observations of, Asianness in the Netherlands in a body of academic knowledge, and to formulate several pertinent research questions and objectives to be addressed in this research project. Most pressingly: why do young Asian Dutch, who were born and/or raised in the Netherlands, identify as Asian and construct Asian identities? What is the content or meaning of these Asian identities and identifications young Asian Dutch imagine? And how do these relate to young Asian Dutch' Dutch and homeland identities and identifications? What factors, or markers of Asianness, drive young Asian Dutch' identification with people of different Asian origin? How, if at all, do Asian parties and other forms of Asian popular culture facilitate the imagination of Asian identities and Asian identification? These and other questions will be addressed in this doctoral thesis, and their answers will eventually lead to the fulfilment of the main objective of this research project, namely to explore and gain an understanding of the role of local Asian Dutch and transnational Asian popular culture in young Asian Dutch' Asian cultural identification and their construction of Asian cultural identities.

First and foremost, this research project is an inquiry into the formation of panethnic 'groups' or 'communities' and identities, and processes of panethnic identification. Much

of the research on panethnicity hails from the US (Okamoto & Mora, 2014), and often Asian American panethnicity is theorized and analysed in terms of structural conditions and sociopolitical objectives. In this body of literature, external causes are foregrounded with regards to the genesis and maintenance of Asian American panethnicity. These range from non-Asian Americans who are unwilling to distinguish between Asian Americans of different origin and US government institutions who group Asian Americans of different origin together for official purposes (and who both thus assign or impose the categorical (and racial) Asian American identity on Asian Americans), to explicit and virulent racism, social exclusion and (symbolic) violence (e.g., Espiritu, 1992; Lopez & Espiritu, 1990; Lowe, 1991). Thus, in her seminal book *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*, Yen Le Espiritu (1992) posits that the assumption that ethnicity is largely voluntary is flawed. Instead, Espiritu emphasizes the “coercively imposed nature of ethnicity”, which is all the more highlighted by panethnicity (pp. 5-6). However, Espiritu (1992) does acknowledge that panethnic identities are not only and always imposed on insiders (e.g., Asian Americans) by outsiders (e.g., non-Asian Americans). She endows Asian Americans (and members of other panethnic groups) with a degree of agency by arguing that they may eventually employ and assert panethnic identities as a political resource, and that panethnicity may eventually be (re) shaped by both external and internal forces and the interaction between them (p. 7). Whether imposed by outsiders or asserted by insiders, Espiritu and other scholars of Asian American panethnicity perceive Asian Americanness mainly as a reaction to, and a product of, social and political processes and conditions, rather than cultural ones (e.g., Lopez & Espiritu, 1990). Thus, even when the cultural aspects of panethnicity are acknowledged and it is stated that processes of ethnicity, and thus panethnicity, “are not only reactive, a response to pressures from the external environment, but also creative, a product of internally generated dynamics” (Espiritu, 1992, p. 176), it is emphasized that this can only come after the panethnic groups, boundaries and identities have been properly established – by political and social circumstances –, and not the other way around (p. 13).

The present research project will attempt to enhance our understanding of panethnicity in general and panethnic Asianness among young Asian Dutch in particular. As such, it responds to Okamoto’s and Mora’s (2014) call for more research on panethnicity outside the US context. The formation of panethnic Asian groups and identities in the Netherlands may put into question the aforementioned notions that panethnicity is generated by external forces, and that the internal forces that may sustain and further panethnicity are mainly political and social in nature, rather than cultural. Asian Dutch and Asian Americans differ from one another in terms of the social and political conditions they have (had) to face. Asian Americans have faced virulent acts of racism in the US, including hate crimes such as the murder of Vincent Chin in 1982 (see Espiritu, 1992), while Asian Dutch have faced relatively little virulent racism in the Netherlands. Also, unlike in the US, in the Netherlands there is no ‘Asian Dutch’ racial category for official government use. Thus, the structural and external factors that generated Asian American panethnicity are not present, or not as strongly present, in the Netherlands. Yet, Asian Dutch do, in

fact, form panethnic Asian groups and identities, and they identify as panethnic Asian. It appears that in the Netherlands, cultural – and more specifically, popular cultural – rather than sociopolitical factors are at the base of panethnic Asianness.

By directing attention to the cultural aspects of panethnic Asianness, and in particular young Asian Dutch' engagement with popular culture in everyday life, this research project attempts to broaden our understanding of processes of panethnicity and to add to the existing scholarship. This doctoral thesis diverges from the aforementioned body of literature on panethnic Asianness in its approach and content. It is a report of a collection of related studies that employ a variety of data collection and analysis methods, including a survey and focus group interviews. In these studies, the lived experiences of young Asian Dutch are foregrounded, and their accounts of these form the heart of this thesis. Furthermore, through these accounts of lived experiences the thesis illuminates how young Asian Dutch imagine and articulate their own, new, panethnic Asian culture, groupness and identities, and specifically how they do so facilitated by their consumption of popular culture and by employing popular culture as a cultural resource.

The subject matter of this research project and the methods employed – ones that at times require a certain closeness to the research subjects and the data – necessitate me to reflect on my role as a researcher. This, given my personal engagement with Asianness and my previous active involvement in the Asian scene in the Netherlands. First of all, my own Asian Dutch subject position, and the networks in and working knowledge about the Asian scene gained through it, enabled me to make key informed decisions concerning the sites and the people to be investigated, at an early stage in the research process. I had a good idea of where and what to look for. Furthermore, my personal and professional networks among young Asian Dutch and within the Asian scene have undoubtedly helped me to recruit participants for the different studies. Especially since Asian Dutch in general are relatively invisible and unvoiced in the public sphere and are hard to reach. Also, articulations of my own sense of Asianness and research participants' perceptions thereof, were conducive to my interaction with them prior to and during the interviews and focus group discussions. The perceived shared sense of Asianness contributed to build up rapport with the participants, and it facilitated open and candid interviews and focus group discussions. My Asian Dutch subject position provided clear advantages to the research project.

However, my Asian Dutch subject position also called for caution. I was not 'neutral', my perspective could and would at times be affected by my own sense of Asianness and my personal involvement in the Asian scene in the Netherlands. Thus, I had to constantly reflect on my own subjectivities during all stages of the research process. I had to maintain a proper distance to the participants, the data, the subject matter, in fact, to the research project at large, while at the same time remaining involved and benefitting from the knowledge flowing from my Asian Dutch subject position. This balancing act between taking position as an insider and an outsider, between being involved and being detached, needed constant attention, in particular during the analysis of data. In this process my supervisor Ed Tan played an important role. My supervisor is of Asian origin

as well, and he self-identifies as Indonesian Chinese (as well as Dutch). However, he had not engaged with the Asian scene and the sense of Asianness found among young Asian Dutch, prior to this research project. Furthermore, he had always felt a strong sense of belonging and inclusion in Dutch mainstream culture and society. As a proper outsider, my supervisor was able to show me different perspectives on the data, the analyses and the connection between them, and he helped me to reflect on them – up until our very last meeting before submitting the manuscript of this doctoral thesis. Thus, for instance, sometimes my supervisor would urge me to take another look at the data and my analyses thereof as I might have read too much into the data due to my own desires, hopes and wishes for Asianness in the Netherlands. While at other times I was asked to explain and elaborate on a particular analysis when I might have read too little in the data. For instance, when as a consequence of my familiarity with certain ‘Asian’ events and experiences, I might have taken these for granted when they occurred in the data. In the end, and with the help of my supervisor, I was able to take up and switch between two positions when necessary during the research process: the involved outsider or the researcher with inside knowledge, and the detached insider or the Asian Dutch with academic knowledge.

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Already in delineating the research group, or, concretely, who belonged to the Asian scene or the Asian ‘community’ in the Netherlands, I employed my inside knowledge and personal experiences. I could readily tap into the demotic discourse of the young Asian Dutch I wanted to investigate, rather than having to rely on the conceptualizations of ‘Asian’ used for official statistics in the Netherlands or used by for instance academics and policy makers in countries such as the US. In the US for example, the racial category ‘Asian American’ that is used for the census and other official government purposes, entails people of South, East and Southeast Asian origin. In line with this, research on ‘Asian Americans’ entails studies on Americans of South, East and Southeast origin with an emphasis on the latter two (see for example volumes on Asian Americans such as Ono, 2005 and Vö & Bonus, 2002). Contrary to the US, in the Netherlands there is no official racial category ‘Asian Dutch’ in use for government purposes, although Statistics Netherlands, the Dutch central bureau of statistics, does provide the total number of people living in the Netherlands who have an Asian country of origin. Their definition of ‘Asia’ is rather broad, besides South, East and Southeast Asian countries it includes countries in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia and Syria (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS], 2015).<sup>5</sup> In everyday use in the Netherlands however, the term ‘Asian’ commonly denotes anyone of East, South and Southeast Asian origin. Still, for the purpose of the present research project, ‘Asian’ – or indeed ‘Asian Dutch’ – is conceptualized differently and entails Dutch of East and Southeast Asian descent only. This conceptualization is based on my observations of young Asian Dutch who label themselves and others of East and Southeast Asian origin as ‘Asian’. The concept of ‘Asian’ employed in this study is thus not based on an official category but on the conceptualization and uses by members of the group under research themselves, so as to acknowledge and connect to their demotic discourse (Baumann, 1996).

There is relatively little ‘outside’ knowledge available about people of East and Southeast Asian descent living in the Netherlands, whether public or academic. In this sense, Asian Dutch are rather invisible in the Netherlands, which will be further elaborated on later. Chow (2011) already observed this situation for Chinese Dutch, but the same applies to other East and Southeast Asian diasporas in the Netherlands. Only people of Indo-Dutch origin receive some notable attention in Dutch media, academic research, politics and policy from time to time (see for example De Vries, 2009). Together with people of amongst others Indonesian, Moluccan and Chinese Indonesian descent Indo-Dutch constitute the Indonesian diaspora in the Netherlands. Counting over 369,000 members, the Indonesian diaspora is the third largest diaspora in the Netherlands and the largest Asian diaspora. Just to compare, the two largest diasporas in the Netherlands count around 396,000 (Turkish Dutch) and nearly 381,000 (Moroccan Dutch) members. Other Asian diasporas include amongst others Dutch with origins in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan (87,405), Vietnam (20,987), the Philippines (19,341) and Thailand (19,004). In total, about 545,000 Dutch belong to an East or Southeast Asian diaspora, of which nearly 324,000 are second generation Asian Dutch (CBS, 2015).<sup>6</sup> These numbers already warrant more academic attention for ethnic minorities of East and Southeast Asian origin in the Netherlands.

The individual East and Southeast Asian diasporas do not only differ from one another in size, but also in terms of migration histories, socioeconomic characteristics, cultural practices and so on. ‘Asian Dutch’ should thus not be understood as a homogenous, bounded and natural ‘group’ or ‘community’. Firstly, there is much ethnic, national and cultural diversity within this panethnic group as it includes amongst others people of Filipino, Thai and Chinese origin. The latter single ethnic and national groups are not homogenous either. Chinese Dutch for example have come from different countries including Indonesia, Surinam, China (mainland and Hong Kong), Vietnam and Malaysia. At the same time, migrants who have come from Indonesia may amongst others be of Indonesian, Indo-Dutch, Moluccan or Chinese origin. Secondly, Asian Dutch are not a natural, bounded group since Dutch of East or Southeast origin may or may not identify as Asian and feel a sense of belonging to this group. Indeed, they also may or may not identify as Chinese, Indonesian, Vietnamese and so forth, which underlines that these single ethnic-national groups are not natural and bounded either (Baumann, 1996). Thus, salient differences between, as well as within the diverse East and Southeast Asian diasporas should be acknowledged.

Notwithstanding the above, there are in fact many young Asian Dutch who do perceive ‘Asian Dutch’ as a natural, bounded and homogeneous group – at least at certain times and in certain social contexts and circumstances. They understand of ‘Asian Dutch’ as a broader ethnic group that is naturally constituted of the various single East and Southeast Asian ethnic groups that they perceive to be primordially connected. The observation that Asian Dutch are not empirically a naturally bounded group, yet young Asian Dutch think of them – and hence, themselves – as such and act upon it, is crucial to this research project. Especially given the observation that in general young Asian

Dutch' (grand)parents did not and do not think and act in a similar manner, as they were and still are very much oriented towards their smaller single ethnic-national groups, also in terms of media and (popular) cultural practices. For instance, so-called 'Indo parties' have been popular among first generation and older second generation Indo-Dutch for decades. And many older Chinese Dutch, for example, consume mainly Chinese media and popular culture. Like their parents, young Chinese Dutch may also consume Chinese media and popular culture (see also Chow, Zwier, & Van Zoonen, 2008) and young Indo-Dutch may indeed join their parents to an Indo party. Still, they appear less oriented towards their single ethnic-national groups and cultures (e.g., Chinese and Indo-Dutch) than their (grand)parents as they now also visit panethnic oriented Asian parties and consume media and popular culture from other Asian countries. Simultaneously, they imagine a bounded, panethnic Asian Dutch community. This research project is concerned with illuminating the (popular) cultural practices and identification processes of these young Asian Dutch in terms of their panethnic Asianness, and, importantly, in and through *their* terms and understandings. Thus, 'Asian Dutch' will be engaged with through young Asian Dutch' own notions of natural and bounded panethnic groupness and culture. In doing so, I understand 'communities', 'groups', 'cultures', 'ethnicities' and 'identities' as imagined and not 'real', yet with consequences and causes in the social world that are, in fact, very real (Brubaker, 2002; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Jenkins, 2002).

This research project investigates young Asian Dutch' imagination of panethnic Asianness through the lens of their engagement with Asian and Asian Dutch popular culture. To this end, several empirical studies have been conducted. These studies have been reported in three research articles published in, or submitted to academic journals. Chapters two, three and four of this thesis are based on these research articles. In the fifth and final chapter the findings and conclusions of the separate studies are summarized, synthesized, and reflected on. Ultimately, this will lead to answers to the research questions and a discussion of the wider academic and sociopolitical implications of the findings and conclusions. What follows below is an overview of chapters two, three and four.

Chapter two is concerned with the first key objective of this research project, namely to explore and map young Asian Dutch' hostland, homeland and Asian cultural identifications, as well as their consumption of different kinds of media and popular culture.<sup>7</sup> To this end an online survey study was conducted among young Asian Dutch. This study adds to the existing research on cultural identifications of ethnic minorities by directing explicit attention to panethnic Asian identification. In doing so, the hostland-homeland dichotomy that is still prevalent in research on ethnic minorities and cultural identifications will be critiqued and expanded. This will enhance our understanding of the diverse cultural identification options and combinations thereof available to young Asian Dutch in particular and ethnic minorities in general. Also, while studies on Asian panethnicity do indeed exist (e.g., Espiritu, 1992), this study – and the research project

at large – contributes to the research on panethnic Asian identification in the West by specifically focusing on the consumption of media and popular culture. With regards to this, the study departs from the hostland-homeland dichotomy foregrounded in much of the literature on ethnic minorities' consumption of media and popular culture (e.g., D'Haenens, Van Summeren, Saeys, & Koeman, 2004; Peeters & D'Haenens, 2005). Chow et al. (2008) already questioned this dichotomy and showed that young Chinese Dutch do not only consume Chinese and Dutch (popular) media, but US (popular) media as well. Chapter two adds to this by specifically including young Asian Dutch' consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media and panethnic Asian Dutch popular culture.<sup>8</sup> By exploring young Asian Dutch' patterns of cultural identifications and young Asian Dutch' patterns of consumption of media and popular culture, as well as the relationship between these, chapter two provides a sound base for the subsequent studies in this research project.

In chapter three attention will be directed to the aforementioned Asian parties. Asian parties are an essential research site as they have been instrumental for the imagination and emergence of a sense of panethnic Asianness among young Asian Dutch since the 1990s and they remain to be among the most prolific public articulations of panethnic Asianness in the Netherlands. De Bruin (2011) already investigated Asian parties in the Netherlands for her PhD research project and shed more light on this relatively recent phenomenon (see also Boogaarts, 2009). While she did discuss the strategies employed by Asian party producers to attract clubbers, her focus was very much on the consumers and consumption of Asian parties. The study reported on in chapter three complements this by specifically examining the producers and the production of Asian parties. To this end, in depth interviews with a number of the most influential organizers, promoters, DJs and others involved in the production of Asian parties have been conducted, as well as participatory observations at several Asian parties. By focusing on the producers, chapter three offers a more comprehensive perspective on Asian parties. First of all, because to a great extent the producers' decisions and actions determine the eventual (and typical) characteristics of Asian parties in terms of amongst others music policy, audience composition and 'Asian' markers. Consequently, this affects what kind of Asianness is foregrounded and facilitated by and at Asian Parties, and how. Furthermore, most producers are Asian Dutch who may identify as Asian and who have themselves consumed Asian parties before becoming involved in the production thereof. At the same time, the Asian party producers are also cultural entrepreneurs and act as such. Thus, this study will offer insights into both consumption and production practices, and both personal and professional aspects. In particular, the chapter will illuminate the dialectic between Asian parties producers' identification as cultural entrepreneur and as Asian, or, more concretely, the dialectic between their economic objectives and motives on the one hand and their moral or 'Asian' objectives and motives on the other. This will enhance our understanding of why, how and what kind of Asian parties and Asianness are produced in Dutch nightlife and beyond.

Chapter four further explores the role of non-homeland Asian popular media in young Asian Dutch' everyday lives. The survey study reported in chapter two is amongst others concerned with establishing young Asian Dutch' patterns of consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media. The study in chapter four complements these findings by researching in depth, by means of focus group interviews, how young Asian Dutch actually make sense of non-homeland Asian popular media in their daily lives, especially in relation to their Asian identities and identifications. The focus is on Japanese and South Korean popular film and television as these are particularly popular among young Asian Dutch. The accounts of the research participants, all young Asian Dutch consumers of Japanese and South Korean film and television, will provide insights into why they find these films and television programs appealing and enjoyable and why and how these may evoke a sense of Asian identification among them. Like chapter two, chapter four adds to the literature on ethnic minorities and the consumption of media and popular culture by explicitly diverging from the traditional hostland-homeland dichotomy foregrounded in much of the research (e.g., D'Haenens et al., 2004; Peeters & D'Haenens, 2005). Essentially, this concerns the consumption of popular media texts representing countries and peoples that differ from young Asian Dutch' hostland and homelands in terms of for instance language, religion and cultural traditions. This chapter, then, explores how young Asian Dutch relate to these 'distant' media texts, and it does so through the lens of the concept of cultural proximity (Straubhaar, 1991, 2003), specifically in Iwabuchi's (2006, 2011) understanding of it as contingent and fluid rather than an essential quality. Ultimately, chapter four will illuminate how the consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television facilitates, structures and contributes to young Asian Dutch' Asian identification and their imagination of Asian identities.

In addition to contributing to the existing body of academic research as discussed above, this research project is also an attempt to intervene in, and contribute to, public and political debates concerning amongst others multiculturalism, integration, cultural identification and cultural citizenship. Furthermore, this research project is also an explicit effort to let Asian Dutch' voices be heard. To start with the latter, as mentioned earlier, Chow (2011) observed that Chinese Dutch are rather invisible in Dutch political discourse, media and popular culture. This applies to other Asian Dutch diaspora as well. More than seven years ago, I addressed the underrepresentation as well as the stereotypical representation of Asian Dutch in Dutch mainstream film and television in a short piece for CinemAsia Film Festival's program booklet (Kartosen, 2008). Since then, the situation has not changed much, despite efforts by CinemAsia and individual Asian Dutch working in film and television. Asian Dutch remain invisible and their voices – their *actual* voices – unheard in Dutch media and popular culture, as well as in public and political discourse. This research project is an attempt to address this problematic state of affairs, not by 'simply' counting or classifying Asian Dutch, but by trying to listen closely to young Asian Dutch' narratives of everyday life and to represent these in this doctoral thesis and related research articles. This then, is my contribution to improving the visibility and representation of 'real' Asian Dutch in Dutch society at large.

In that sense, this research project is also a natural consequence of, and follow-up to, my personal and professional engagement with Asianness and the Asian scene in the Netherlands. Indeed, rather than 'just' giving way to *their* voices, this research project is getting *our* voices heard.

As mentioned, Asian Dutch are invisible in Dutch public and political discourse concerning issues to do with multiculturalism, migration, cultural and social integration of ethnic minorities and so on. These issues are continuously addressed by Dutch media, authorities, politicians and the public. In general, these debates mostly foreground negative aspects associated with migration and ethnic minorities, such as crime and unemployment. Thus, the focus of these debates is on ethnic minorities perceived to be 'problematic', in particular people of Moroccan, Turkish or Antillean origin, Muslims, and, more recently, refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants (who are quite tellingly called 'illegals' or 'illegal migrants' by Dutch media, authorities, politicians and the general public alike). Asian Dutch are generally ignored in these debates because they are perceived as 'silent', 'unproblematic', 'well-integrated' minorities, so-called 'model minorities' (see also Chow, 2011; Chow et al., 2008). This effectively leads to the construction of a problematic social hierarchy with White Dutch ('real' Dutch) on top, undesired 'bad' ethnic groups on the bottom and desired 'good' ethnic groups in the middle. The 'good' ethnic groups constitute White immigrants and non-White 'model minorities' such as Asian Dutch who are often not even perceived as 'real' ethnic minorities. This is succinctly underlined by the rather arbitrary definition of 'Western immigrants' used for official purposes, which includes people of Japanese and Indonesian origin based on their perceived socioeconomic and sociocultural position in Dutch society (CBS, 2015).

However misconstrued and problematic the notion of Asian Dutch as 'model minorities' or 'good' minorities may be, it does offer an opportunity to lay bare the contradictions and inconsistencies in Dutch mainstream public and political discourse on migration, ethnic minorities and sociocultural integration. In mainstream discourse it is emphasized that ethnic minorities who are 'integrated' are welcome in the Netherlands, thereby foregrounding the traditional idea of the Netherlands as an egalitarian and inclusive society that is welcoming and tolerant towards 'non-Dutch' cultures and people. Inclusivity, tolerance towards 'difference', and multiculturalism as societal ideal and government policy, have indeed prevailed in mainstream discourse in the past. Not so anymore, as right wing populist ideas concerning multiculturalism and ethnic minorities have become mainstream in the Netherlands. Dutch media, politicians and the general public have declared Dutch multicultural society 'failed', and calls for a focus on, and 'recovery' of, 'Dutch identity' abound. It is suggested that ethnic minorities must prioritize Dutch cultural identity and identification over other cultural identities and identifications in order to properly integrate into Dutch society (e.g., Awad & Roth, 2011; Slegers, 2007; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid [WRR], 2007). However, Dutch national identity is a 'thick' identity, an exclusive rather than inclusive

and open identity (Ghorashi, 2003).<sup>9</sup> Thus, in the end, what is generally conceived of as ‘Dutch identity’, is essentially White Dutch identity.

While Asian Dutch are perceived as ‘integrated’, at the same time they also engender non-Dutch identities and identifications, including Asian ones, and thus they do not completely adhere to this ‘thick’, White Dutch imagination of Dutch identity. In this sense, Asian Dutch are essentially no different from other, ‘undesired’ ethnic minorities. This observation in itself already suggests that the egalitarian promise of Dutch mainstream society, the promise that ethnic minorities are tolerated or even accepted if and when they are ‘integrated’, is false rhetoric. Asian Dutch are actually perceived as ‘good’ minorities and favoured over other ethnic minorities because they are silent and invisible in Dutch society. Furthermore, like other ethnic minorities, Asian Dutch are, in fact, confronted with social and symbolic exclusion and racism in the Netherlands; they too are not perceived as ‘real’ Dutch as a consequence of their non-White Dutchness. This is underlined by a few recent public cases of racialized notions and acts affecting Asian Dutch, including several drugstores and supermarkets refusing to sell baby milk powder to people of Chinese, and by extension Asian, origin on suspicion of reselling the milk powder in China, and Dutch celebrity Gordon making racist ‘jokes’ directed at a Chinese contestant in a talent show on national television. When Asian Dutch stood up and complained about this, they were often confronted with even more stigmatizing and racist comments including remarks that they “did not understand Dutch jokes and culture”, thus suggesting that they were not integrated after all – simply because for once, Asian Dutch broke the silence and did not behave as ‘obedient’ minorities.<sup>10</sup>

This research project, then, offers a fresh perspective to current Dutch dominant discourse on multiculturalism, migration and ethnic minorities. It does so by reporting on young Asian Dutch, a ‘group’ of ethnic minorities who are integrated and generally perceived to be so by mainstream society, yet who also engender non-Dutch identities and identifications, are not seen as ‘proper’ Dutch, and who also face social exclusion and racial discrimination. As said, this will illuminate the inconsistencies and contradictions in Dutch mainstream discourse and expose it as racialized false rhetoric. Furthermore, unlike other ethnic minorities, investigating Asian Dutch ‘model minorities’ does not ‘necessitate’ to address ‘problems’ ethnic minorities are perceived to cause in Dutch society. Instead, it opens up space to directly address questions of identification, belonging and citizenship rather than ‘integration’.<sup>11</sup> More specifically, it opens up space to explore how novel Asian identities and identifications are conceived by young Asian Dutch and may offer them a new ‘way out’ of choosing between assimilating into and resisting against any (dominant) culture, and of choosing between identifying with either hostland or homeland cultures. Essentially, through representing the voices of young Asian Dutch, this research project enhances our understanding of ethnic minorities’ everyday life in Dutch multicultural society, and of the workings of Dutch multicultural society at large. It describes how, under the conditions discussed above, young Asian Dutch still manage to feel a sense of belonging in the Netherlands. Faced with symbolic exclusion from Dutch

mainstream culture, young Asian Dutch appear to have taken matters into their own hands by constructing Asian identities, engendering Asian identifications, and producing and consuming Asian and Asian Dutch popular culture; Asianness may thus be young Asian Dutch' self-created 'solution'. By making this visible, this research project is an attempt to make Dutch mainstream society actually see young Asian Dutch as they are: as active and fully fledged Dutch citizens who, despite exclusion from Dutch mainstream culture, are more than capable of navigating and coping in Dutch multicultural society on their own, and on their own terms.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In this research project 'Asian Dutch' refers to Dutch citizens/nationals of East and Southeast Asian origin. This excludes for example exchange students and expatriates from Asia who temporarily live in the Netherlands. Furthermore, as a noun 'Asian Dutch' is employed as a 'simple' classifying term to indicate the Asian origin of particular individuals and groups, and it does not imply that these individuals and groups necessarily also identify as Asian Dutch.

<sup>2</sup> When in this doctoral thesis Asian (Dutch) identities, identifications, subject positions, subjectivities and cultures are discussed, *panethnic* Asian (Dutch) is implied. Thus, rather than a generalizing term standing in for Chinese, Indonesian and so forth, Asian (Dutch) then stands for a sense of shared Asianness transcending the particular Chinese, Indonesian and so forth. When required for matters of clarity or emphasis, 'panethnic' is added to 'Asian (Dutch)' and 'Asianness'.

<sup>3</sup> 'Asian popular culture' denotes popular culture originating from Asian countries, while 'Asian Dutch popular culture' refers to popular culture produced by Asian Dutch in the Netherlands.

<sup>4</sup> Indo-Dutch are people of mixed Indonesian and Dutch/European heritage who were born in former Netherlands East Indies before it became Indonesia, or who are descendants of Indo-Dutch who were born in Netherlands East Indies.

<sup>5</sup> However, oddly enough, people with origins in Japan and Indonesia are registered as 'Western immigrants' rather than 'non-Western immigrants' like other people of Asian origin. This is based on their 'socioeconomic and sociocultural position in Dutch society' (see CBS, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Third and younger generations of Asian Dutch and ethnic minorities in general, are registered as Dutch only.

<sup>7</sup> In this research project 'hostland' refers to the country of residence of ethnic minorities, i.e., the Netherlands. 'Homeland' refers to the country of origin of ethnic minorities and/or their (grand)parents.

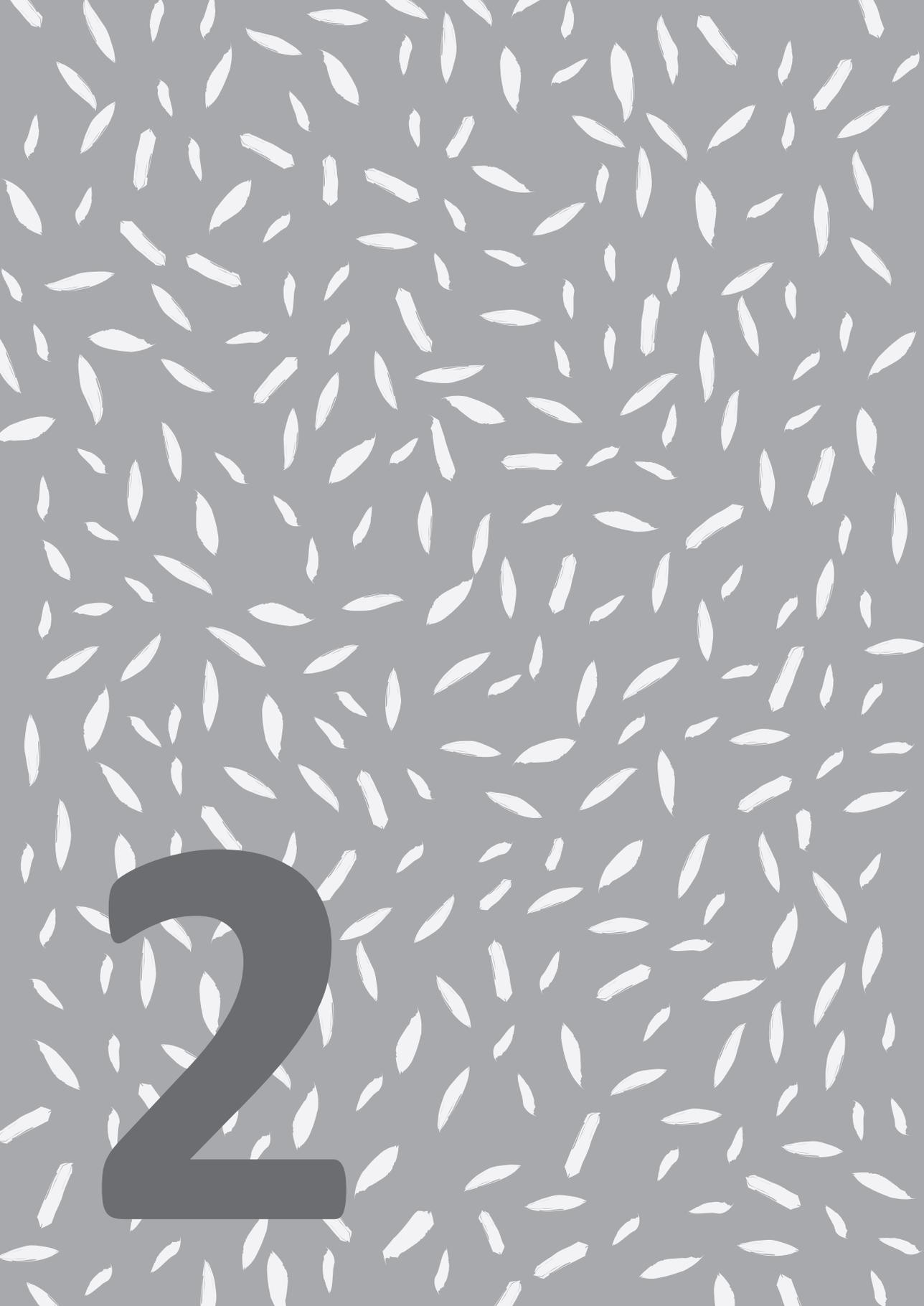
<sup>8</sup> ‘Non-homeland Asian popular culture’ entails popular culture originating from Asian countries other than young Asian Dutch individuals’ Asian homeland country.

<sup>9</sup> See Ghorashi (2003) for an insightful comparison between ‘thick’ Dutch and ‘thin’ American national identity.

<sup>10</sup> This prompted me to write an op-ed for Dutch daily *De Volkskrant*, in which I argued that the very fact that young Asian Dutch finally protested against racism directed at them – something their parents had never done – is an articulation of their integration and assertion of Dutch citizenship (Kartosen-Wong, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Moreover, this research project may suggest that the general focus on ‘integration’, in fact, the very notion of ‘integration’, in Dutch mainstream discourse is limiting and flawed. Notwithstanding this, the study reported in chapter two will address and attempt to capture the degree of ‘integration’ of young Asian Dutch.





2

# CHAPTER 2

## Articulating Asianness: Young Asian Dutch and Asian/Asian Dutch popular culture

A shortened version of this chapter has been published as:

Kartosen, R. & Tan, E. (2013). Articulating Asianness: Young Asian Dutch and non-homeland popular media. *International Communication Gazette*, 75(7), 653-671. doi:10.1177/1748048513482540

This study explores young Asian Dutch' cultural identifications in relation to their consumption of media and popular culture. More specifically, this study focuses on young Asian Dutch' panethnic Asian cultural identifications and their consumption of non-homeland popular media as well as so-called Asian parties.<sup>1</sup> The scholarship on the consumption of media and popular culture by ethnic minorities is growing. In particular ethnic minorities' consumption of (popular) media from their homelands has received quite some scholarly attention in recent years (e.g., Aksoy & Robins, 2000; Chow, Zwier, & Van Zoonen, 2008; D'Haenens, Van Summeren, Saeys, & Koeman, 2004; Hafez, 2007; Peeters & D'Haenens, 2005). For example, Aksoy and Robins (2000) focus on Turkish migrants in Germany and the UK and their consumption of transnational television from Turkey, while Peeters and D'Haenens (2005) have studied members of the four largest ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands and their consumption of media from the Netherlands and their countries of origin. These studies have enhanced our understanding of the relationship between ethnic minorities' cultural identifications and their consumption of homeland (popular) media.

However, ethnic minorities' consumption of media and popular culture from countries that they may perceive as sharing similarities with their homelands in terms of culture and people – for example the consumption of Chinese films by Vietnamese Dutch – is an under-researched area. Research on the latter is warranted because it may be an articulation of panethnic Asian identifications that transcend traditional cultural boundaries. Furthermore, so far no studies have investigated these panethnic Asian identifications of Asian Dutch as a combined panethnic group (although Boogaarts (2009) does report on panethnic Asian parties in the Netherlands). In addition to Dutch and Asian homeland cultural identifications (e.g., Chinese or Indonesian), young Asian Dutch appear to engender novel, less territorially limited and less culturally exclusive *panethnic Asian cultural identifications* – they self-identify as Asian as well.

We suggest that young Asian Dutch' consumption of popular culture from non-homeland Asian countries as well as panethnic Asian Dutch popular culture (i.e., Asian parties), is an articulation of their Asian cultural identifications. And in turn, the consumption of non-homeland Asian and panethnic Asian Dutch popular culture provides them with cultural material and discursive spaces to explore and articulate Asian cultural identifications. In this study young Asian Dutch' (patterns of) consumption of films, television series, popular music and nightlife will be investigated. While studies on ethnic minorities often place emphasis on news media representations and consumption, here the focus is on popular media. Notwithstanding the importance of news media, the present study thus underlines the pivotal role of popular culture in processes of social identification and the production of meaning in everyday life, especially where it concerns youth and young adults (e.g., Fiske, 1990; Hermes, 2005; Van Zoonen, 2003).

The present study, then, is the starting point for investigating the relationship between young Asian Dutch' Asian cultural identifications and their consumption of non-homeland Asian and panethnic Asian Dutch popular culture, and will thus address

the gaps in the research on Asian Dutch as well as Asian cultural identification. This study will thus contribute to a more encompassing understanding of the processes of cultural identification young ethnic minorities are engaged in and their practices of the articulation thereof. We will explore how young Asian Dutch' consumption of media from different countries is related to their configurations of Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identifications. Following this, we will zoom in on non-homeland Asian popular media and Asian parties to investigate whether there is a relationship between young Asian Dutch' Asian cultural identifications and the Asian cultural identification gratification they obtain from non-homeland Asian popular media and Asian parties.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***Conceptualizing 'Cultural Identification'***

The first objective of the present study is to explore young Asian Dutch' cultural identifications. More specifically, the focus is on young Asian Dutch' self-identification as Dutch, homeland-ethnic (e.g., Chinese or Indonesian) and panethnic Asian. Before conceptualizing 'cultural identification' as employed in this study, it is helpful to look at 'cultural identity' first. This study is premised on the notion that 'groups', 'communities', 'ethnicities', 'cultures' and ultimately 'identities' are socially constructed, rather than real and natural entities (Baumann, 1996; Brubaker, 2002; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Jenkins, 2002). Jenkins (2002) posits that ethnic identities, and by extension all cultural group identities, are imagined, and this connects to Brubaker's (2002) argument that ethnicity exists "only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, categorizations and identifications" (p. 174) and should be understood as a process rather than an entity. Jenkins (2002) further observes that while these ethnic identities are imagined, they are not imaginary and can indeed be meaningful and consequential to individuals who may act upon them. This underlines Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) suggestion that ethnic identities are to be regarded as 'categories of practice' as they are perceived as real and are employed in the social world. Thus, when individuals are engaged in self-identification they may identify themselves with these imagined cultural groups: they construe themselves as members of these groups, engender feelings of similarity and connection with other (perceived) members, and engender a shared sense of belonging (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Jenkins, 2002). Following this, the concept of identification as employed in this study entails several cross-cutting aspects: 1) self-categorization, 2) perception of commonality and 3) feelings of belonging.

At the core of identification lies the assumption that people are engaged in developing understandings and articulations of their self. Self-categorization serves this objective as it involves a formal categorization of oneself as a member of a specific and well-articulated social category based on (imagined and perceived) attributes such as gender, nationality or ethnicity (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Lawler, 2008). Perception of commonality is a more subjective and affectively laden sense of sameness. An individual can perceive the self as

sharing distinct attributes with another person or group. This requires an individual to see the self in others, which involves establishing an emotional tie (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Hamilton, 2004; Hermann, 2003). The third and arguably most important aspect of identification in the context of this study is an individual's notion that one belongs to a particular group based on certain shared objective or subjective attributes (Bauman, 2001; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Hermann, 2002). Like the perception of commonality, this too involves both cognitive and affective investment. It also involves a high degree of creativity since it requires an individual to construct the self as connected to, and part of, a collectivity based on (a perception of) shared attributes, and to see the self in terms of what the group is.

In the present study, cultural identification is analyzed as a single concept entailing the aforementioned three aspects. Consequently, 'Asian cultural identification' is conceptualized as identifying oneself with an imagined Asian community and Asian identity. This entails construing oneself as Asian, engendering feelings of similarity and connection with others perceived as being Asian, and engendering a sense of belonging to a panethnic Asian community. Homeland and Dutch cultural identification are conceptualized in a similar manner.

### ***Ethnic Minorities and Cultural Identification***

Ethnic minorities can identify with more than one cultural group and the configurations of these identifications are ever shifting. Cultural identification is not a 'zero-sum game' as individuals can identify strongly with multiple cultural groups simultaneously (Baumann, 1996; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid [WRR], 2007). Empirical studies indeed show that ethnic minorities combine homeland and hostland cultural identification in a variety of ways (e.g., Chow et al., 2008; Ersanilli, 2009; Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2009). Also, depending on social context, cultural identification and combinations thereof are consciously and strategically articulated (Bauman, 2001; Jenkins, 2002). Some ethnic minorities only show hostland cultural identification, which may be a consequence of their desire to fit in the host society, rather than stand out. Other ethnic minorities identify solely with their homeland cultures, which for some is a reaction to perceived and experienced social exclusion and discrimination in the hostland (Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2009). Furthermore, evidence of ethnic minorities identifying equally strong with both homeland and hostland cultures, is fueling the idea of the production of hybrid cultures and identities (e.g., Parker, 1995). In addition to the possibility of engendering multiple cultural identifications simultaneously, it is also argued that attachments to cultural groups are not necessarily always congruent with attachments to associated countries in a territorial sense (Berry, 1997; Ersanilli, 2009). Thus, one may culturally identify as Chinese and not Dutch, while at the same time feeling a sense of belonging in the Netherlands and not China.

It has been suggested that the more capital (economic as well as cultural, social and symbolic) ethnic minorities possess, and hence the better they are socially, economically and culturally integrated into their hostland, the less they will identify with their

homeland cultural group. However, homeland cultural identification is not necessarily limited to less integrated and disenfranchised ethnic minorities only. In fact, larger stocks of social and cultural capital provide individuals with the space to explore and express new identifications (Alba, 1990; Halter, 2000). Furthermore, identification can be seen as following from individuals' desire to accumulate social and cultural capital. To establish and maintain relationships with other individuals one needs to identify with them first, hence identification is essential for the accrual of social capital (Hamilton, 2004). Identification with a specific group or category also serves the presentation of self in general and the distinction of self from others specifically. Depending on the 'standing' of the group one identifies oneself with, one gains more or less cultural capital from it (Bauman, 2001; Halter, 2000; Lawler, 2008).

As Halter (2000) convincingly argues, economically successful and socioculturally integrated ethnic minorities can afford to engender homeland cultural identifications through which they can distinguish themselves from their middle class peers and mainstream society in general. Hence, for ethnic minorities who have reached middle class status in the hostland, homeland cultural identifications have evolved from a liability to an asset. For ethnic minorities lacking social and cultural capital, the employment of homeland cultural identifications is a different story all together. For them, strong homeland cultural identifications may be related to perceived and experienced social exclusion and discrimination (Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2009). By engendering homeland cultural identifications, these ethnic minorities aim to reinforce relations with co-ethnics and thus enlarge their social capital within the confines of their ethnic community. Furthermore, in addition to hostland and homeland cultural identification, ethnic minorities may also engender panethnic cultural identifications, as a growing scholarship on Asian American panethnicity suggests (e.g., Espiritu, 1992; Kibria, 2002; Lee, 1996). Thus, based on the literature, the question arises whether, to what degree, and in what configurations young Asian Dutch engender Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identifications.

### ***Ethnic Minorities and the Consumption of Media and Popular Culture***

It is argued that individuals articulate their diverse social identifications and affiliations through the consumption of media and popular culture. In turn, the consumption of media and popular culture facilitates the construction and maintenance of those very same processes of identification and affiliation. In addition, through the consumption of media and popular culture individuals can engender a sense of community and belonging (e.g., Fiske, 1990; Hall, 2003; Halter, 2000; Hermes, 2005; Hermes & Dahlgren, 2006; Van Zoonen, 2003). Also, it seems that at least for youths and young adults popular culture is of particular importance, especially since popular music and other forms of popular culture are inextricably linked to diverse youth cultures. Young people experiment with and engender various group identifications and for this they need symbolic material as building blocks. Given the intrinsically social and emotional nature of processes of identification they may have a particular need for symbolic material that provides

them with social and emotional cues, i.e., popular culture. D'Haenens et al. (2004) for instance, show that young ethnic minorities consume high levels of news media and do so critically, but at the same time they also find that music, television and internet play a more important role in young ethnic minorities' everyday lives than radio, newspapers, books and magazines. Also, while television is undoubtedly also used to watch news programs, it is also found that young ethnic minorities especially use television to relax, experience excitement or otherwise manage their moods which most likely is achieved by watching popular television shows rather than news programs. In line with these findings Chow et al. (2008) show that young Chinese Dutch consume more popular media than news media. Thus, a particular focus on young Asian Dutch' consumption of popular culture is warranted.

Furthermore, while there is a wide body of research on ethnic minorities' consumption of mediated popular culture with an emphasis on (transnational) film and television, there is relatively little research on ethnic minorities' consumption of non-mediated popular culture such as 'ethnic' parties or festivals. But as Malbon (1998) and MacRae (2004) argue, especially so-called experiential forms of popular culture such as clubbing and festivals are spaces that facilitate identification processes. These spaces provide their consumers the opportunity to see, meet and connect with others who are 'like them' in real life, and thus facilitate feelings of sameness and belonging. This is certainly the case for ethnic minorities who consume ethnic, or indeed panethnic, forms of non-mediated popular culture (Bennett, 2000; Boogaarts, 2008, 2009; Nurse, 1999). It can be argued that experiential forms of panethnic Asian Dutch popular culture play an important role in the construction of panethnic Asian identities among young Asian Dutch. Thus, the aforementioned Asian parties are a compelling form of Asian Dutch popular culture to include in this study.

Much of the research on the consumption of popular culture by ethnic minorities has focused on the consumption of homeland popular media by ethnic minorities, sometimes set against the consumption of hostland popular media (e.g., Gillespie, 1995; Punathambekar, 2005; Shim, 2007), while attention has also been directed to the reception of hostland popular culture by ethnic minorities (e.g., De Bruin, 2001; Dhoest, 2009), as well as the consumption of diasporic popular culture (e.g., Bennett, 2000; Boogaarts, 2008; Echchaibi, 2002; Nurse, 1999). In addition, a great deal of the research on ethnic minorities and their consumption of media and popular culture (mainly) focuses on a rather limited hostland-homeland dichotomy (e.g., D'Haenens et al., 2004; Hafez, 2007; Peeters & D'Haenens, 2005). Furthermore, it is suggested that these patterns of consumption, like cultural identifications, can be explained by the degree of integration into the host society: the less ethnic minorities are integrated, the more they are involved with their homelands and the more they will consume homeland media and popular culture (Peeters & D'Haenens, 2005). However, both the notion of patterns of consumption of hostland and homeland media and popular culture, as well as the notion of a straightforward relation between these and the degree of integration, seem to be problematic.

### ***Degree of 'Integration' and Consumption of Media and Popular Culture***

The suggestion that the consumption of homeland popular culture is related to the degree of integration into the host society (Peeters & D'Haenens, 2005) may seem appealing at first sight, especially when first generation migrants are compared to their children who were born in the hostland and who are consequently better integrated. But when considering important motives to consume homeland popular culture, proposing a straightforward relationship between consumption and degree of integration is problematic. One important motive for the consumption of homeland popular culture is ethnic minorities' desire to stay connected to their homelands. By consuming homeland popular culture ethnic minorities symbolically (re)create their homelands and establish imagined communities, which engenders a sense of belonging (Anderson, 1991, 1992; Appadurai, 1996; Hermes & Dahlgren, 2006). Ethnic minorities also consume homeland popular culture because it contains 'positive' and 'authentic' representations of 'people like themselves', which hostland media and popular culture lack (e.g., D'Haenens et al., 2004; Gillespie, 1995; Hamamoto, 1994; Shohat & Stam, 1994). And thirdly, it is suggested that ethnic minorities consume homeland popular culture to articulate their cultural identifications and distinguish themselves from mainstream society. Consequently, this may enlarge their social, cultural and symbolic capital (Alba, 1990; D'Haenens et al., 2004; Halter, 2000).

For all of the above mentioned motives it can be argued that they do not only apply to less integrated ethnic minorities, but to well-integrated ethnic minorities as well (e.g., Chow et al., 2008; Punathambekar, 2005; Shim, 2007). Ethnic minorities' patterns of consumption of popular culture appear to be related to their cultural identifications rather than their degree of integration. What is even more interesting in the context of the present study, is that it can be argued that all of the above motives may apply to Asian Dutch' consumption of popular culture from Asian countries other than their homeland as well. Thus, it is suggested that both well-integrated and less integrated young Asian Dutch youth will consume Asian non-homeland popular culture.

### ***Beyond the Consumption of Hostland and Homeland Media and Popular Culture***

Studies that simultaneously investigate the consumption of both homeland and hostland media have resulted in typologies entailing different patterns of consumption of these. D'Haenens et al. (2004) and Peeters and D'Haenens (2005) for example have been able to categorize young ethnic minorities in three groups based on their media consumption: 1) *Homelanders*, who mostly consume homeland media, 2) *Omnivores*, who more or less consume similar levels of homeland and hostland media, and 3) *Adapters*, who mostly consume hostland media. Media and popular culture consumption patterns of certain ethnic minority groups and in particular the older, first generation members of these groups, may indeed be limited to combinations of hostland and homeland media and popular culture. However, young ethnic minorities may also consume media from countries other than their homeland or hostland and this should be addressed in the research.

Given its omnipresence in the Netherlands and other European countries (Kuipers, 2008) and its popularity among youth in general, incorporating global (i.e., UK and US) popular culture in analyses of consumption patterns of ethnic minorities greatly enhances our understanding of the matter at hand. Chow et al. (2008) for instance, show that young Chinese Dutch mostly consume global popular culture, followed by Chinese (homeland) popular culture. Dutch (hostland) popular culture was consumed the least by these youths.

Furthermore, besides homeland, hostland and global popular media, ethnic minorities may also deliberately consume popular media from countries that they perceive as sharing similarities with their homelands in terms of people and culture. This can be related to their imagining of new and broader panethnic groups, identities and identifications. This warrants further investigation into this type of popular culture consumption. Such research, however, is scarce, although for instance Cunningham and Nguyen (1999) found that Vietnamese Australians consume popular media from Hong Kong (i.e., non-homeland Asian popular media), but they have not investigated this in relation to possible processes of panethnic Asian cultural identification. Research by Park (2004) on young Korean Americans' consumption of Japanese television dramas is more insightful and suggests there may be a relationship between the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media and panethnic Asian identification. Also, while Oh's (2011) study is on Korean Americans' consumption of Korean films and thus on the consumption of homeland popular media, he concludes by suggesting that future research should look into the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media and processes of panethnic Asian identification.

The present study makes a clear distinction between news media and popular media from Asian Dutch individuals' respective homelands and from Asian countries other than Asian Dutch individuals' homelands (non-homeland Asian). This study connects to Park (2004) and Oh (2011) by focusing on the relationship between young Asian Dutch' panethnic Asian cultural identifications and their consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media. Also, in concurrence with the above it can be argued that young Asian Dutch do not only consume hostland and homeland experiential popular culture (e.g., bars, nightclubs and festivals) but panethnic Asian Dutch popular culture (i.e., Asian parties) as well. Thus, two questions follow from the literature. The first is whether, and to what degree, young Asian Dutch consume non-homeland Asian popular media and Asian parties, and if this is related to their Asian cultural identification. The second question is whether young Asian Dutch obtain a sense of Asian cultural identification, or 'Asian cultural identification gratification', from the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media and Asian parties, and if this is linked to their Asian cultural identifications.

## METHOD

### *Procedure*

From mid-March 2010 through mid-July 2010 an online survey was conducted among Asian Dutch visitors and members of several Asian Dutch online spaces. The main online space included was [www.asn-online.nl](http://www.asn-online.nl), the largest panethnic Asian Dutch website, which has a database of over 9,000 members and receives over 250,000 page views per month (ASN, n.d.). Amongst others this website offers young Asian Dutch listings and pictures of Asian parties, Asian entertainment news and personal online profiles. Since only a few popular dedicated websites aimed at Asian Dutch exist in the Netherlands, a number of prolific Asian Dutch public groups on Netherlands' largest social network Hyves (comparable to public groups on Facebook) were included as well. These public groups differ in reach and content. *Indoweb* for example has more than 8,000 members of mainly Indo-Dutch and Indonesian origin and of all ages. It provides information on Indo-Dutch/Indonesian events and facilitates online discussions on Indo-Dutch/Indonesian sociocultural and political issues. Similarly to *Indoweb*, the much smaller group *Pinoy* (approximately 200 members) caters to a specific ethnic cultural group, in this case people of Filipino origin. Other groups were for example *Asian music* (600 members) which offers news about East Asian pop artists and links to their music videos to an audience of mainly teenagers and young adults of diverse East and Southeast Asian origin, and *Nhac Viet* (100 members) which provides its young Vietnamese Dutch members with news and links related to Vietnamese pop music.

A message containing basic information about the survey and an invitation to participate was posted in the Asian Dutch online spaces and administrators of these spaces were asked to include this message in their news letters to members. Potential participants were redirected to the questionnaire by clicking on a link in the invitation. It took respondents 20 to 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire as well as all messages and instructions related to the survey were in the Dutch language.

### *Participants*

Of 1118 people who started the questionnaire, 723 completed it. After removal of respondents who did not meet the age criterion (18 to 35 years) or who were not of East or Southeast Asian origin, a sample of 486 participants remained. The sample consisted of 289 females (59%) and 197 males (41%), the average age of the respondents was 24.92 years ( $SD = 4.81$ ), and 77% of the respondents were born in the Netherlands. In addition, 74% of the respondents had received (some) higher education or were in higher education at the time of the survey and 93% held a paid job and/or were students. Finally, participants were asked to indicate their cultural origin(s) from a list in the questionnaire, and they could also add any origin that was not included in the list. Thus, a respondent of Chinese Indonesian origin could for example indicate Chinese and/or Indonesian as cultural origin (in official Dutch census data (s)he would be recorded as of Indonesian origin only).<sup>2</sup> Of the sample, 57% identified as Chinese, 30% identified as

Indonesian and 10% identified as Filipino. Other cultural origins indicated included for example Vietnamese, Malaysian and Singaporean.<sup>3</sup>

### **Measures**

Analyses were conducted using self-designed measures based on single survey items as well as 5-point scales constructed of two or more survey items. Single items were used to determine respondents' sex, age, level of education and intention to vote, as well as whether respondents were born in the Netherlands, whether they were unemployed and how many friends of particular ethnic origins they had. All items used for the construction of scale measures were 5-point Likert scale items with 1 corresponding with *totally disagree, never or none* and 5 corresponding with *totally agree, very often or many*. The survey items were formulated in such a manner that they would connect to the participants' demotic discourse (Baumann, 1996). Thus, notwithstanding their argued imagined nature, categories of practice (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) such as 'identity', 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic group' were employed in the survey items as these are part of participants' everyday talk and uses.

**Cultural identification.** Based on Hogg and Reid (2006) and Jenkins (2002) cultural identification was conceptualized as entailing: 1) construing oneself as member of a particular cultural group, 2) engendering feelings of similarity and connection with other (perceived) members, and 3) engendering feelings of belonging. This was translated into three corresponding survey items for Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identification. Thus, a scale for Asian cultural identification was constructed based on three 5-point items: "I feel Asian", "I feel connected to Asians who are of different ethnic origin than me" and "I feel at home in the Asian culture" (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .68$ ). Similar scales were constructed for homeland cultural identification ( $\alpha = .70$ ) and Dutch cultural identification ( $\alpha = .81$ ). Also, the items for homeland cultural identification were formulated in general terms as the analysis required to measure to what extent participants identify with any homeland related cultural group, rather than a specific group or groups. Thus, for example instead of "I feel Chinese/Indonesian/Vietnamese/etc." the first item was formulated as "I feel a member of an Asian ethnic group (e.g., Chinese, Indonesian or Vietnamese)".

**Dutch territorial identification.** In addition to cultural identification, the extent to which participants identify as Dutch in a territorial rather than a cultural sense, was measured as well (see also WRR, 2007). A scale for Dutch territorial identification was constructed based on the 5-point items "I feel at home in the Netherlands" and "I feel connected to the Netherlands" (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .78$ ).

**Education.** The level of education of respondents was measured by means of a 7-point scale item that indicated the highest level of education a respondent had received, whether completed or not (1 = "elementary school", 7 = "university").

**Number of friends of particular ethnic origin.** The questionnaire contained four items which asked respondents to indicate how many friends of similar Asian ethnic origin ('co-

ethnic Asian'), of Asian but different ethnic origin ('panethnic Asian'), of non-Asian and non-White Dutch origin ('non-Western'), and of White Dutch origin they have. The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "none", 5 = "many").

**Perception of social exclusion.** To measure respondents' perception of social exclusion, a scale was constructed based on the items "I am not seen and treated as a full-fledged Dutch citizen" and "Sometimes I am discriminated against because of my Asian background" ( $\alpha = .66$ ).

**Consumption of popular media and news media.** The consumption of popular media from Asian countries other than respondents' Asian homeland(s) ('non-homeland Asian') was measured by a scale based on the 5-point items "How often do you watch films and television series from Asian countries other than your homeland?" and "How often do you listen to music from Asian countries other than your homeland?" (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .78$ ). Similar scales were constructed for the consumption of Dutch ( $\alpha = .52$ ), homeland ( $\alpha = .76$ ) and global (i.e., UK and US) ( $\alpha = .58$ ) popular media.

The consumption of non-homeland Asian news media was measured by a single 5-point item: "How often do you use news media from Asian countries other than your homeland to stay informed of news and current affairs?" Similar items were used to measure the consumption of homeland, Dutch and global news media.

**Consumption of Asian parties.** Respondents were asked to indicate how often they visited Asian parties, as well as to indicate how often they visited clubs and bars in total. By dividing these two items, a measure was constructed that indicated respondents' relative frequency of visiting Asian parties. To ensure compatibility with the other scales, the values were recoded into a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "never visits Asian parties", 5 = "only visits Asian parties").

**Asian cultural identification gratification obtained from non-homeland popular media and Asian parties.** The degree to which respondents derive a sense of feeling Asian from the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media, or 'Asian cultural identification gratification obtained', was measured by a scale constructed of six 5-point items including "Films and television series from Asian countries other than my homeland make me feel connected to Asian people who are of different ethnic Asian origin than me" and "Music from Asian countries other than my homeland makes it easier for me to express my Asian identity" (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .90$ ). Also, a scale for Asian cultural identification gratification obtained from visiting Asian parties was based on the following items: "Asian parties make me feel connected to Asian people who are of different ethnic Asian origin than me", "Asian parties make it easier for me to express my Asian identity" and "What I like about Asian parties is that people who are of Asian origin come there" ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

## RESULTS

### *Typology of Configurations of Cultural Identifications*

The first objective of this study was to explore configurations of Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identification that can be found among young Asian Dutch. A K-Means cluster analysis based on the three cultural identification scales resulted in a final solution consisting of three highly distinctive and comprehensible configuration types. Table 1 presents the types' cluster center values (means) for the three cultural identification scales.

**Table 1 | Mean Cultural Identification Scores of Cultural Identification Types, N = 486**

| Cultural Identification | Cultural Identification Type |               |              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|                         | CO<br>n = 259                | AS<br>n = 131 | HL<br>n = 96 |
| Dutch                   | 4.10                         | 2.70          | 3.52         |
| Homeland                | 4.09                         | 4.23          | 2.96         |
| Asian                   | 3.94                         | 4.21          | 2.86         |

Note: CO = Cosmopolitans, AS = Asians, HL = Hostlanders

The cluster analysis showed that young Asian Dutch engender Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identifications simultaneously, but to different degrees and in different combinations. The following three distinct types of configuration of cultural identification were found:<sup>4</sup>

- *Cosmopolitans*, on average these respondents show strong Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identifications.
- *Asians*, these respondents show strong homeland and Asian cultural identifications and weak Dutch cultural identification.
- *Hostlanders*, these respondents show moderate homeland and Asian cultural identifications and stronger Dutch cultural identification.

### *Differences Between the Cultural Identification Types: Demographic Variables*

No significant differences were found between Cosmopolitans, Asians and Hostlanders for sex, unemployment and income (for respondents who held a job and were not students). However, the three cultural identification types did differ on other demographic variables. Cosmopolitans (83%) were more often born in the Netherlands than Hostlanders (71%) and Asians (69%),  $\chi^2(2, N = 486) = 11.53$ ,  $p < .01$ . Also, a one-way ANOVA test indicated that differences in age are significant,  $F(2, 483) = 8.62$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ . Asians are significantly younger ( $M = 23.45$ ,  $SD = 5.00$ ) than Hostlanders ( $M = 25.57$ ,  $SD = 4.32$ ) and Cosmopolitans ( $M = 25.41$ ,  $SD = 4.75$ ) (Scheffe post hoc tests,  $p < .05$ ). Where education is concerned there are

significant differences as well. Cosmopolitans (78%) and Hostlanders (75%) have more often received (some) higher education than Asians (63%),  $\chi^2(2, N = 486) = 11.26, p = .004$ .

### **Differences Between the Cultural Identification Types: Sociocultural Variables**

**Ethnic composition of friends.** A two-way ANOVA was employed to investigate whether there are differences between Cosmopolitans, Asians and Hostlanders in the number of friends of particular ethnic origin they have. Cultural identification type was taken as between-subjects factor and ethnic origin of friends as within-subjects factor. Furthermore, a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied to the degrees of freedom of the within-subjects factor. Table 2 presents the means for the number of friends of four distinct ethnic origins for the three cultural identification types.

**Table 2 |** Number of Friends of Particular Ethnic Origin and Cultural Identification Type,  $N = 486$

| Ethnic Origin of Friends | Cultural Identification Type |                 |                | Total       |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
|                          | CO<br>$n = 259$              | AS<br>$n = 131$ | HL<br>$n = 96$ |             |
|                          | $M (SD)$                     | $M (SD)$        | $M (SD)$       |             |
| Co-ethnic Asian          | 3.49 (1.27)                  | 3.57 (1.26)     | 2.82 (1.26)    | 3.38 (1.29) |
| Panethnic Asian          | 3.04 (1.12)                  | 3.35 (1.10)     | 2.65 (1.12)    | 3.05 (1.14) |
| Non-Western              | 2.81 (1.15)                  | 2.98 (1.25)     | 2.97 (1.17)    | 2.89 (1.18) |
| White Dutch              | 3.49 (1.16)                  | 2.93 (1.16)     | 3.33 (1.30)    | 3.31 (1.21) |

Note: CO = Cosmopolitans, AS = Asians, HL = Hostlanders

The test showed a significant main effect of the within-subjects factor,  $F(2.29, 1301.04) = 10.05, p < .001$ , with friends of non-Western origin and panethnic Asian origin occurring less often. A main effect of the between-subjects factor was also found,  $F(1, 483) = 6.91, p < .01$ , indicating that cultural identification type affects the total number of friends. Cosmopolitans seem to have slightly more friends than Asians, while Hostlanders have the least friends.

In addition, a significant interaction of ethnic origin of friends with cultural identification type was found,  $F(5.39, 1301.04) = 9.16, p < .001$ . This indicated that the three cultural identification types differ significantly from one another in the number of friends of particular ethnic origin. Cosmopolitans have mostly co-ethnic Asian and White Dutch friends, Asians mostly have co-ethnic Asian and panethnic Asian friends, and Hostlanders mostly have non-Western and White Dutch friends.

**Perception of social exclusion.** A one-way ANOVA showed that differences in perception of social exclusion between the three cultural identification types are significant,  $F(2, 463) = 4.01, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$ . Scheffe post hoc tests ( $p < .05$ ) indicated that Asians have a higher perception of social exclusion ( $M = 3.09, SD = 1.05$ ) than Hostlanders ( $M = 2.70, SD = 1.01$ ).

**Dutch territorial identification.** A one-way ANOVA test showed that the cultural identification types differ significantly from each other in their Dutch territorial identification,  $F(2, 482) = 112.43, p < .001, \eta^2 = .32$ . Scheffe post hoc tests ( $p < .05$ ) indicated that Cosmopolitans ( $M = 4.35, SD = 0.05$ ) identify with the Netherlands more strongly than Hostlanders ( $M = 3.84, SD = 0.91$ ). Also, both Cosmopolitans and Hostlanders identify with the Netherlands more strongly than Asians ( $M = 3.23, SD = 0.83$ ).

**Intention to vote.** More Cosmopolitans (86%) indicated the intention to cast a vote for elections concerning Dutch parliament and other government bodies than Hostlanders (73%) and Asians (72%),  $\chi^2(2, N = 411) = 11.12, p < .01$ .

### ***Cultural Identification Type and Consumption of Media and Popular Culture***

**Consumption patterns of popular media and news media.** A three-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate young Asian Dutch' consumption of media of different genres (news media and popular media) and different geographical origin (The Netherlands, homeland, non-homeland Asian and global) in relation to their cultural identification. Cultural identification type was taken as between-subjects factor and origin and genre of media as within-subjects factors. A Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied to the degrees of freedom of origin and genre of media.

The test showed a significant main effect of genre of media  $F(1, 483) = 47.56, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$ , while no significant interaction of genre with cultural identification type was found. This indicated that the participants in general consume more popular media ( $M = 2.61, SD = 0.52$ ) than news media ( $M = 2.37, SD = 0.65$ ). Furthermore, a significant main effect of origin of media  $F(2.24, 1079.65) = 177.28, p < .001, \eta^2 = .27$  as well as an interaction of origin with cultural identification type  $F(4.47, 1079.65) = 20.09, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$  were found.

To further investigate the relationship between origin of media and cultural identification type two two-way ANOVAs were conducted, one for news media and one for popular media. Table 3 provides the means for news media consumption and popular media consumption for the three cultural identification types.

**Table 3** | Consumption of News Media (NM) and Popular Media (PM),  $N = 486$ 

| Genre | Origin             | Cultural Identification Type |                 |                | Total       |
|-------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
|       |                    | CO<br>$n = 259$              | AS<br>$n = 131$ | HL<br>$n = 96$ |             |
|       |                    | $M (SD)$                     | $M (SD)$        | $M (SD)$       | $M (SD)$    |
| NM    | The Netherlands    | 3.98 (1.03)                  | 3.53 (1.19)     | 3.70 (1.15)    | 3.80 (1.12) |
|       | Homeland           | 1.80 (0.99)                  | 2.18 (1.12)     | 1.52 (0.82)    | 1.85 (1.02) |
|       | Non-homeland Asian | 1.42 (0.77)                  | 1.73 (0.96)     | 1.37 (0.76)    | 1.49 (0.83) |
|       | Global             | 2.37 (1.09)                  | 2.25 (1.08)     | 2.38 (1.11)    | 2.34 (1.09) |
| PM    | The Netherlands    | 2.29 (0.81)                  | 1.85 (0.67)     | 2.20 (0.87)    | 2.15 (0.80) |
|       | Homeland           | 2.46 (1.08)                  | 3.03 (1.16)     | 2.17 (0.89)    | 2.56 (1.11) |
|       | Non-homeland Asian | 2.28 (1.10)                  | 2.77 (1.27)     | 1.98 (0.99)    | 2.35 (1.16) |
|       | Global             | 3.58 (0.74)                  | 3.15 (0.81)     | 3.18 (0.87)    | 3.38 (0.81) |

Note: CO = Cosmopolitans, AS = Asians, HL = Hostlanders

#### Consumption of Dutch, homeland, non-homeland Asian and global news media.

A two-way ANOVA showed a significant main effect of origin of news media,  $F(2.37, 1145.13) = 499.24, p < .001, \eta^2 = .51$ . This indicated that the participants consume Dutch news media the most followed by global news media. Homeland and non-homeland Asian news media are consumed the least. A main effect of cultural identification type was not found, thus Cosmopolitans, Asians and Hostlanders do not differ in their total level of consumption of news media. However, an interaction of news media origin with cultural identification type was found  $F(4.74, 1145.13) = 10.18, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04$ , which indicated that Cosmopolitans, Asians and Hostlanders do in fact differ from one another in their consumption of news media where the origin thereof is concerned. Dutch news media are consumed most by Cosmopolitans, followed by Hostlanders and finally Asians. Asians consume more homeland and non-homeland Asian news media than Cosmopolitans and Hostlanders. And finally, Hostlanders and Cosmopolitans consume more global news media than Asians.

#### Consumption of Dutch, homeland, non-homeland Asian and global popular media.

A two-way ANOVA showed a significant main effect of origin of popular media,  $F(2.26, 1089.88) = 125.88, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21$ . The participants consume global popular media the most and Dutch popular media the least, while the consumption of homeland and non-homeland Asian popular media falls in between. A main effect of cultural identification type was also found,  $F(2, 483) = 12.35, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$ , Asians show the highest level of popular media consumption and Hostlanders the lowest. Furthermore, an interaction of origin of popular media with cultural identification type was found,  $F(4.51, 1089.88) = 18.27, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07$ . This indicated that the three cultural identification types differ significantly from one another in their consumption of popular media originating from specific locales. Homeland and non-homeland Asian popular media are consumed

most by Asians and least by Hostlanders while Cosmopolitans' consumption thereof falls in between. Also, Cosmopolitans consume Dutch popular media the most followed by Hostlanders, while Asians consume the least thereof. Finally, Cosmopolitans consume more global popular media than Hostlanders and Asians while in addition Hostlanders consume slightly more global popular media than Asians.

**Non-homeland Asian popular media versus non-homeland Asian news media.** The three-way ANOVA also yielded an interaction of origin of media, genre of media and cultural identification type,  $F(5.08, 1226.31) = 3.83, p = .002, \eta^2 = .02$ . Given this study's focus on non-homeland Asian popular media and news media, a paired samples t-test was conducted to investigate differences between the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media and the consumption of non-homeland Asian news media. The test indicated that the participants consume significantly more non-homeland Asian popular media ( $M = 2.35, SD = 1.16$ ) than non-homeland Asian news media ( $M = 1.49, SD = 0.83$ ),  $t(485) = 16.76, p < .001$ .

**Consumption of Asian parties.** A one-way ANOVA showed that Cosmopolitans, Asians and Hostlanders differ from one another in how often they visit Asian parties relative to other non-Asian mainstream nightlife spots,  $F(2, 483) = 4.85, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$ . Scheffe post hoc tests ( $p < .05$ ) indicated that on average the proportion of Asian parties visited is higher for Asians ( $M = 2.42, SD = 1.33$ ) than for Cosmopolitans ( $M = 2.12, SD = 1.02$ ) and Hostlanders ( $M = 1.99, SD = 0.98$ ).

**Asian cultural identification gratification obtained from non-homeland popular media and Asian parties.** A one-way ANOVA showed that the cultural identification types differ in the Asian cultural identification gratification they obtain from the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media,  $F(2, 202) = 20.53, p < .001, \eta^2 = .17$ . Scheffe post hoc tests ( $p < .05$ ) indicated that Asians ( $M = 3.66, SD = 0.69$ ) obtain more Asian cultural identification gratification from non-homeland Asian popular media than Cosmopolitans ( $M = 3.26, SD = 0.77$ ) and Hostlanders ( $M = 2.60, SD = 0.66$ ) while in addition Cosmopolitans do so compared to Hostlanders.

Furthermore, a one-way ANOVA indicated that Cosmopolitans, Asians and Hostlanders differ in the Asian cultural identification gratification they obtain from visiting Asian parties,  $F(2, 156) = 9.20, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$ . Scheffe post hoc tests ( $p < .05$ ) indicated that Asians ( $M = 3.78, SD = 0.68$ ) and Cosmopolitans ( $M = 3.64, SD = 0.77$ ) obtain more Asian cultural identification gratification from visiting Asian parties than Hostlanders ( $M = 3.00, SD = 0.87$ ), but the post hoc tests did not indicate any significant differences between Asians and Cosmopolitans.

## DISCUSSION

This study explored the relationship between young Asian Dutch' patterns of media consumption and their cultural identifications, in particular their consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media and their Asian cultural identifications. Using survey data, it was first investigated how young Asian Dutch' consumption of Dutch, homeland, non-homeland Asian and global popular media and news media is related to their diverse configurations of Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identifications. Subsequently, the study zoomed in on non-homeland Asian popular media and looked at the 'sense of feeling Asian' young Asian Dutch obtained from the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media and how this is related to their Asian cultural identifications.

First, in line with expectations, a cluster analysis showed that young Asian Dutch identify with Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural groups simultaneously and do so to varying degree and in different configurations. Three types of distinct configurations of cultural identifications were identified: 1) participants who show strong Dutch, homeland as well as Asian cultural identifications, 2) participants who show strong homeland and Asian cultural identifications and weak Dutch cultural identification, and 3) participants who combined moderate homeland and Asian cultural identifications with stronger Dutch cultural identification. For the purpose of this study the three types found were labeled 'Cosmopolitans', 'Asians' and 'Hostlanders' respectively.

The finding that young Asian Dutch identify with Dutch and homeland cultural groups as well as a broader and more vaguely delineated Asian cultural group is in concurrence with previous empirical studies that showed that ethnic minorities can indeed identify with different cultural groups simultaneously (e.g., Berry, 1997; D'Haenens et al., 2004; Ersanilli, 2009; Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2009). The fact that Cosmopolitans show strong Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identifications also underlines that cultural identification is not a 'zero-sum game' as is increasingly suggested by dominant political and public discourse in the Netherlands (e.g., Awad & Roth, 2011; WRR, 2007). Thus, one's identification with one cultural group does not necessarily hinder one's identification with another cultural group. Furthermore, in previous research a focus on hostland and homeland cultural identifications has been prevalent (e.g., Berry, 1997). However, our finding that young Asian Dutch identify with Dutch and homeland as well as Asian cultural groups suggests that further research that goes beyond the hostland-homeland dichotomy and also takes into account novel and broader cultural group identifications is warranted.

Also, Cosmopolitans, Asians and Hostlanders do not differ from one another in terms of unemployment and income. Thus, they possess equal amounts of economic capital. However, differences in education, perception of social exclusion, intention to vote, and Dutch territorial identification suggest that Cosmopolitans possess the most 'mainstream' cultural capital and are the best integrated into Dutch society followed by Hostlanders and lastly Asians. Still, it has to be noted that even Asians identify positively with the

Netherlands and are relatively well integrated into Dutch society. The finding that Asians identify the weakest as Dutch while Cosmopolitans do so the strongest, suggests that higher degrees of integration go hand in hand with stronger hostland identification. However, an inverse relationship between integration and homeland and Asian cultural identification is not as clear-cut as Cosmopolitans also show strong rather than the weakest homeland and Asian cultural identification. Perhaps this can be explained by Halter's (2000) suggestion that especially well integrated ethnic minorities have the luxury and the willingness to engender and articulate homeland cultural identification – and by extension Asian cultural identification as well in the case of young Asian Dutch. Further research is needed to gain more insight into the factors that inform processes of cultural identification in general and of non-hostland cultural identification in particular.

After establishing young Asian Dutch' configurations of cultural identifications their patterns of media consumption were investigated. First of all, the findings show that young Asian Dutch consume more popular media than news media, which is in line with previous research. For example Chow et al. (2008) report similar findings for young Chinese Dutch and D'Haenens et al. (2004) find that popular media play a more important role than news media in young ethnic minorities' everyday lives. Quite strikingly, the levels of consumption of non-homeland Asian news media are very low for all young Asian Dutch. It seems that if Asian cultural identification is articulated at all, then it is through the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media rather than non-homeland Asian news media. This underlines the importance of popular media for cultural identification processes.

This, however, is not to suggest that news media are of no importance at all to young Asian Dutch. Young ethnic minorities do indeed consume high levels of news media as D'Haenens et al. (2004) have already shown, and while young Asian Dutch consumption of news media is lower than their consumption of popular media, the difference is small. Also, Cosmopolitans, Asians and Hostlanders consume Dutch news media the most, even more so than global popular media. Perhaps this can partly be explained by the wide availability and easy accessibility of Dutch news media (amongst others multiple television news shows throughout the day and three widely circulated free newspapers). Still, the high levels of consumption of Dutch news media by young Asian Dutch supports the idea that they feel connected to the Netherlands and want to learn and know about Dutch and international current affairs reported from a Dutch perspective. Dutch news media thus function as a point of reference for young Asian Dutch and binds them regardless of their configurations of cultural identifications.

As expected, the analyses of the patterns of popular media consumption show that young Asian Dutch consume a combination of Dutch, global, homeland and non-homeland Asian popular media. First, it becomes clear that Cosmopolitans, Asians and Hostlanders all consume global popular media the most. Global popular media can thus be regarded as a binding element between the three identification types. The high levels

of consumption of global popular media have also been observed by Chow et al. (2008) and can be explained by the pervasiveness and dominance of especially US popular media in certain popular media genres in Western European contexts (Kuipers, 2008).

Like other ethnic minorities, Asian minorities consume homeland popular media as well (e.g., Oh, 2011; Park, 2004). In addition, our analyses indicate that young Asian Dutch also consume popular media from Asian countries other than their homeland. It can be argued that the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media has been facilitated by a recently growing interest in and popularity of Asian popular culture in the West in general. This has led to ever increasing flows of films and other forms of (mediated) popular culture from Asia to the West. With respect to East and Southeast Asia, this concerns popular media from China, Japan and South-Korea in particular (e.g., Iwabuchi, 2004; Park, 2004; Pham, 2004). Thus, Japanese animation or anime has for example become much more accessible to Chinese Dutch youth while Indonesian Dutch youth can more easily watch a Chinese film. As said, the participants in our study consume non-homeland Asian popular media although they consume more popular media from their homelands. The consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media may lag behind the consumption of homeland popular media because of the popularity and accessibility of Japanese, Korean and Chinese popular media in the Dutch context, especially when compared to for example Indonesian or Vietnamese popular media. For the many Chinese Dutch participants in this study, Chinese popular media amount to homeland popular media which decreases levels of non-homeland Asian consumption. Nonetheless, differences in levels of consumption of homeland and non-homeland Asian popular media are small and non-homeland Asian popular media can bind Cosmopolitans and Asians in particular.

As expected, increasing levels of panethnic Asian cultural identification are associated with increasing levels of consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media. Asians show the highest levels of consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media, followed by Cosmopolitans and finally Hostlanders. Still, the levels of consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media are not particularly high when compared to much wider available global popular media. On the other hand, the relatively high standard deviations for consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media may indicate the existence of subgroups of Cosmopolitans and Asians with very high levels of consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media. Ultimately, what becomes clear is that young Asian Dutch are deliberately searching for and consuming non-homeland Asian popular media. The findings underline that popular media from non-homeland Asian countries are part of young Asian Dutch' everyday lives. Thus, it may be worthwhile to expand existing hostland-homeland typologies of ethnic minorities' media consumption (e.g., D'Haenens et al. 2004; Hafez, 2007) by incorporating the consumption of media from countries that ethnic minorities may perceive as sharing similarities with their homeland(s).

The cultural identifications of young Asian Dutch also explain their consumption of Asian parties. Asians show the strongest Asian cultural identification and they visit Asian parties more often than Cosmopolitans and Hostlanders. It can be argued that Asians go there with their friends who mostly are Asian Dutch too. They visit Asian parties to establish and maintain relationships with other Asian Dutch and thus to enlarge social capital. However, it should be noted that Asian Dutch in general show relatively low levels of Asian party consumption. Perhaps this is due to a relatively limited supply of Asian parties in the Netherlands compared to other nightlife options. Furthermore, unlike Asians, Cosmopolitans do not visit Asian parties more often than Hostlanders despite their stronger Asian cultural identifications. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Cosmopolitans have a more diverse group of friends than Asians. Cosmopolitans may prefer to go to mainstream clubs and bars where their non-Asian friends would like to go as well. Also, Cosmopolitans have more 'mainstream' cultural and social capital, enabling them to comfortably consume mainstream nightlife. Still, Cosmopolitans do visit Asian parties and ultimately they feel at home anywhere. But because they have more options and want to accumulate as many different cultural experiences as possible, they do not visit Asian parties regularly.

Clearly, Cosmopolitans possess large stocks of social and cultural capital and may be seen as cultural omnivores (D'Haenens et al., 2004) who consume and appreciate all types of popular culture: Dutch, global, homeland and non-homeland Asian alike. In line with Halter's (2000) suggestion, it can be argued that especially well integrated Cosmopolitans have the luxury to articulate their homeland and Asian cultural identifications. By consuming homeland and non-homeland Asian popular media, Cosmopolitans can distinguish themselves from their non-Asian peers and accumulate even more cultural, social and symbolic capital. This may be a rewarding strategy especially now that non-Asians show a growing interest in Asia and Asian popular culture (e.g., Pham, 2004).

Compared to Cosmopolitans, Asians possess lower stocks of social and cultural capital and are less integrated into Dutch society. It can be argued that their consumption of homeland and non-homeland Asian popular media as well as their consumption of Asian parties is a strategy to connect to co-ethnics as well as other Asian Dutch and thus to enlarge their social capital. This strategy is intrinsically linked to their homeland and Asian cultural identifications. Also, Asians' lower stocks of mainstream cultural capital may limit their choice of popular media to consume to homeland and non-homeland Asian popular media, which they are familiar with. Finally, it could also be the case that like Cosmopolitans, Asians consume homeland and non-homeland Asian popular media as well as Asian parties to distinguish themselves from their non-Asian peers. Further research is needed to enhance our understanding of the relationship between young Asian Dutch' cultural identifications and their consumption of Asian and Asian Dutch popular culture.

Our final analysis was concerned with the sense of 'feeling Asian' young Asian Dutch obtain from consuming non-homeland Asian popular media. The results show that

young Asian Dutch actively use non-homeland Asian popular media and Asian parties to explore and construct their panethnic Asian cultural identifications. This underlines the idea that popular media and other forms of popular culture play a pivotal role in the creation of meaning in young people's everyday life (e.g., Fiske, 1990; Hermes, 2005) and is just as, or perhaps even more important than news media for young people's cultural identification. In line with expectations, Asians obtain more Asian cultural identification gratification from the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media than Cosmopolitans and Hostlanders, while Cosmopolitans do so compared to Hostlanders. However, where Asian cultural identification gratification obtained from the consumption of Asian parties is concerned, the findings were not entirely in line with expectations. Here, no differences were found between Asians and Cosmopolitans despite their differences in Asian cultural identification. Further research is needed to better understand how Asian Dutch are using non-homeland Asian popular media and Asian parties to maintain their Asian cultural identification.

The findings of the present study shed light on the relatively invisible group of Asian Dutch, as well as on panethnic Asian cultural identification and the relationship between cultural identification and popular culture. Still, further research is needed to investigate in depth why young Asian Dutch consume non-homeland Asian popular media and Asian parties, and how they use these to work on their Asian cultural identification. What kind of feelings of belonging and commonality do they obtain from non-homeland Asian popular media and Asian parties, and by what attributes of popular culture are these facilitated? Or, to be more concrete: how is it possible that Vietnamese and Malaysian Dutch adolescents see themselves in, and identify with, Korean actor and popstar Rain? Or why do Chinese and Indonesian Dutch youth mingle at Asian parties and feel a sense of groupness despite different ethnic backgrounds and migration histories? These types of questions should be addressed in future research.

This study also has its limitations. First, it has to be noted that the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population of young Asian Dutch. This is because respondents have been recruited through Asian Dutch online spaces which are most likely for those already showing a certain level of homeland and/or panethnic Asian cultural identification. Hence, young Asian Dutch who show no or very low homeland and/or Asian cultural identification may be underrepresented in this survey. Also, in this study all respondents were treated as members of one 'group': Asian Dutch. The diverse Asian homeland origins of the respondents were not taken into account in the analyses. Future research should take young Asian Dutch' different homeland origins into account as these may further explain the strengths and directions of their Asian cultural identification as well as their consumption of Asian and Asian Dutch popular culture.

Notwithstanding its limitations, what this study ultimately shows is that relatively well integrated ethnic minorities actively engender and combine hostland, homeland and even broader and more vaguely delineated panethnic cultural identifications. Also, these

cultural identifications are articulated through the consumption of popular culture. Thus, the findings undermine the popular conviction that in order to properly integrate into Dutch society it is imperative for ethnic minorities to prioritize Dutch cultural identification and Dutch popular culture. In fact, identifying with multiple cultural groups and consuming popular culture of diverse origins, enlarges ethnic minorities' stocks of social, cultural and symbolic capital and may just be the way for them to feel a sense of belonging and to further integrate into the hostland society.

## NOTES

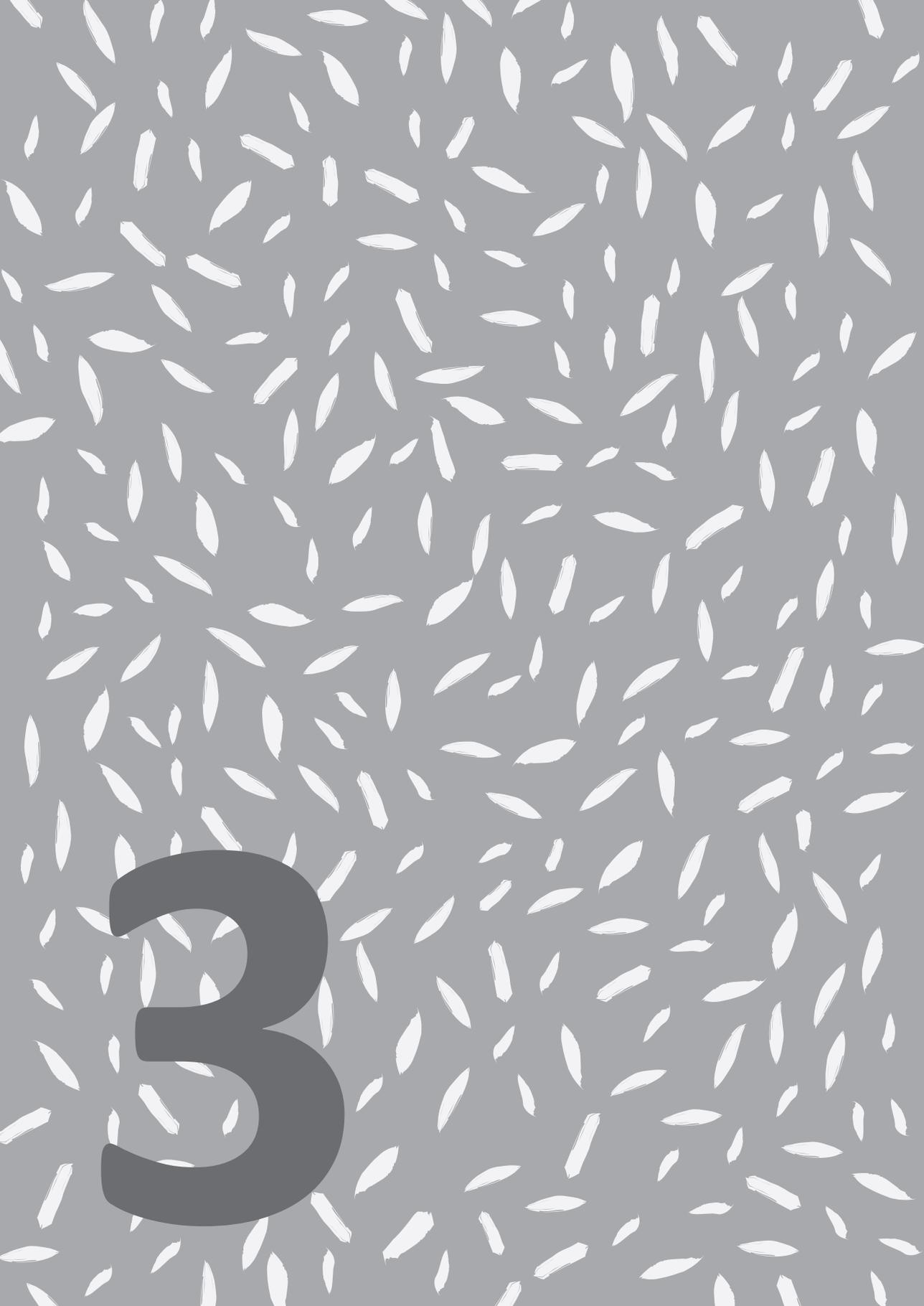
<sup>1</sup> 'Non-homeland Asian popular media' entails popular media originating from Asian countries other than young Asian Dutch individuals' Asian homeland country.

<sup>2</sup> Because participants could indicate multiple cultural origins, the percentages for all the cultural origins indicated add up to more than 100%.

<sup>3</sup> While participants who identify as Chinese appear to be overrepresented this does not affect our study as the analyses are not concerned with specific homeland cultural identifications (e.g., Indonesian or Vietnamese) but with homeland cultural identification in general.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that the three clusters are not to be considered as actual groups manifesting themselves in the social world. Rather, the clusters are a set of respondents who so happen to share similar configurations of cultural identifications.





3

# CHAPTER 3

## Asian Parties in the Netherlands: (Re)producing Asianness in Dutch Nightlife

This chapter has been submitted to *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* as:

Kartosen-Wong, R. & Tan, E. Asian parties in the Netherlands: (Re)producing Asianness in Dutch nightlife.

Clubbing, one of the quintessential pastimes of adolescents and young adults in contemporary Western societies, has often been linked to the articulation of a variety of group identifications based on amongst others social class, sexual orientation, (life) style and (musical) taste (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002; MacRae, 2004; Malbon, 1998; Thornton, 1995). Hence, in the Netherlands the clubbing and nightlife landscape offers a diverse range of venues and programming for different audiences and 'scenes' based on music and lifestyle preferences. In addition, an increasing amount of Dutch nightlife programming caters to specific ethnic-national groups, including people of Surinamese, Moroccan and Turkish origin (Boogaarts, 2008; De Bruin, 2011).

Since the 1990s so-called 'Asian parties' are held across the Netherlands. Rather than cater to one specific ethnic-national group, Asian parties cater to youth of diverse Southeast and East Asian ethnic-national origin including Indonesian, Chinese and Vietnamese. On average almost every week an Asian party is organized in the Netherlands with some attracting as many as 1200 visitors (see also Boogaarts, 2009; De Bruin, 2011). Thus, many young Asian Dutch come together at Asian parties where they may engender and articulate panethnic Asian rather than (or as well as) specific ethnic-national group identifications. Given the centrality of a notion of group identifications as well as the articulation thereof at club nights (e.g., MacRae, 2004; Malbon, 1998), it is important to investigate the relationship between Asian identifications or a sense of 'Asianness', and Asian parties. This seems to be even more important as the emergence of a sense of Asianness among young Asian Dutch may be linked to the advent of Asian parties in the Netherlands.

While many studies on club cultures and nightlife economy have provided valuable insights into the consumption thereof by clubbers as well as clubbers' motivations and social identifications (e.g., Boogaarts, 2009; Demant & Østergaard, 2007; MacRae, 2004; Malbon, 1998; Northcote, 2006; Thornton, 1995), fewer studies have explicitly and extensively directed attention to the producers and the production of club nights (e.g., De Bruin, 2011; Hollands & Chatterton, 2003; Thornton, 1995). Notwithstanding consumers' agency – and consequently the importance of researching clubbers' consumption of nightlife spaces – it can be argued that examining producers and production processes is essential for understanding club cultures and the group identifications articulated in and through them. After all, producers play a pivotal role in determining the look and feel of club nights and hence the possibilities for the articulation of group identifications at these. Research into how a sense of Asianness is facilitated by and at Asian parties should therefore start with looking closely at the producers thereof.

Investigating the producers of Asian parties may be exceptionally worthwhile as most are of Asian origin and have been or still are consumers of Asian parties themselves. Why and how they produce Asian parties may therefore be guided by economic rationale as well as their possible sense of Asianness. By means of observations at Asian parties and interviews with Asian party organizers, DJs, MCs and others professionally involved in

the Asian party scene, this study explores how Asian party producers' involvement in the production of Asian parties is driven by economic motives and whether and how it is driven by (and is at the same time an articulation of) their possible sense of Asianness. Ultimately, the objective of this study is to gain an understanding of the relationship between Asian party producers' sense of Asianness and the production of Asian parties and Asianness in Dutch nightlife.

### ***Economic and Moral Motives in the Night-Time Economy***

Clubbing has become one of the most important leisure pursuits and spending priorities of adolescents and young adults in Western societies. It is thus no surprise that the night-time economy attracts a growing flow of capital investments by large corporations, turning clubbing and club culture into proper business interests (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002). In conjunction with this, the producers of club nights – e.g., the club organizers, DJs and MCs – have become increasingly entrepreneurial (McRobbie, 2002). Also, the interdependent relationship between producers of club nights, club owners, and the media, which Thornton (1995) already pointed to, seems to have only intensified over the years. Thus, McRobbie (2002) observes that thinking commercial and acting in self-interest are simply part and parcel of being a cultural producer in today's cultural field. And while McRobbie does not consider club producers to be part of the cultural field, she explicitly attributes the cultural field's commercialization to the growing influence of club culture and its entrepreneurial ways on it.

Following McRobbie (2002), it could be argued that producers of club nights are guided by self-interest and economic motives only, and that their main objective is to accumulate economic capital. However, Banks (2006) convincingly argues that cultural producers may be driven by economic as well as moral motives simultaneously. Thus, cultural producers may work to generate a profit while at the same time making an effort to achieve social or political goals. Banks (2006) argues that cultural producers can feel strongly connected to the 'community' they are a part of and act in a manner that is beneficial to the advancement of that community. This may certainly apply to the producers of Asian parties as they may engender a sense of Asianness, feel connected to the Asian Dutch community and may consequently be motivated to 'do good' for the Asian Dutch community.

### **DATA AND METHOD**

Between March 2010 and December 2011 participatory observations were conducted at several Asian parties in or near Amsterdam. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals involved in the production of Asian parties. Through personal and professional networks of the first author, Asian party organizers, promoters, DJs and MCs were approached and eventually ten Asian party producers were interviewed. Most of the interviews took place in public spaces, including a library

and coffee houses, while two participants were interviewed in their private homes and one interview took place in the first author's home. The interviews lasted between 30 and 85 minutes and were conducted and transcribed in Dutch while salient quotes were translated into English for inclusion in this paper. The names of participants were changed to ensure their anonymity.

As with all qualitative research the role of the researcher and his or her subjectivities have to be acknowledged and reflected upon. The first author is of Asian origin himself and identifies as Asian Dutch as well. Furthermore, from 2000 to 2008 he was involved in the production of Asian parties and Asian Dutch social media himself. The first author's subject position may have had several consequences for this study. Since he was involved in the production of Asian parties himself, he has a relatively up-to-date working knowledge of, as well as networks in, the Asian party scene. This has been a great advantage in identifying which Asian parties to visit, who to approach for interviews and what questions to ask. Most producers knew the first author from when he was involved in the production of Asian parties himself – albeit sometimes superficially or only by name. Most likely these existing relationships have played a role in succeeding to recruit participants for this study: all the producers approached agreed to be interviewed (two producers could not be interviewed due to conflicting schedules). In addition, existing relationships as well as a perceived shared sense of Asianness may have contributed to swiftly build up rapport with the participants, which subsequently led to very open and candid interviews. This has particularly been the case with interviewing DJ Rockstar who is the first author's younger brother. A disadvantage of the first author's particular subject position may be that it poses a risk for an unbiased interpretation of the interview data. This point was addressed by continuously scrutinizing and reflecting upon the interview data and analyses thereof through discussions between the first and the second author. Furthermore, the first author ensured to remain a critical distance from both participants and data by engaging in critical self-reflexivity throughout the research process which ultimately also led him to analyse his own involvement in the Asian party scene.

### ***Engendering a Sense of Asianness at and through Asian Parties***

Before the Asian party producers interviewed for this study became involved in the production of Asian parties, they had been consumers thereof themselves. Asian parties have played, and continue to play, an important and in some cases pivotal role in the everyday lives of the producers. They all have vivid and pleasurable memories of visiting Asian parties, partly since for most of them Asian parties served as their gateway into Dutch nightlife. It was at Asian parties where most participants started their 'career' as nightlife consumers at a young age, sometimes as young as thirteen years old. When they were teenagers it was difficult to get into mainstream nightlife venues and club nights due to their young age. However, Asian parties were less strict about age and when the producers tagged along with older friends, siblings or cousins, they were allowed in. Following Thornton (1995) Asian parties can thus be regarded as cultural spaces where the producers could mingle with older clubbers, familiarize themselves with the codes

and conducts of urban nightlife, and be socialized into nightlife culture. Visiting Asian parties was the producers' first step into adulthood away from their parents, and can be seen as a rite of passage.

Asian parties were also the very first explicitly panethnic Asian Dutch public spaces the producers encountered. Some of the producers were already familiar with ethnic-national specific events including Chinese New Year festivities and so-called Indo parties. But before they started visiting Asian parties the producers had never consumed spaces deliberately aimed at people of diverse Asian origin. At Asian parties the producers interacted with many peers of different Asian origin and befriended them, and consequently the producers' current circle of Asian Dutch friends includes not just co-ethnics but people of different Asian ethnic-national origin as well. For young people one of the main motivations to visit nightlife spaces is to meet peers, especially since these spaces attract a relatively homogenous crowd of peers who have similar (music) tastes and lifestyles (Thornton, 1995). However, at Asian parties people with different musical tastes and lifestyles come together, and with regards to ethnic-national origin the crowd is less homogenous than for instance crowds at Turkish club nights (Boogaarts, 2008). Nonetheless, at Asian parties most of the producers experience(d) a high degree of physical similarity and cultural proximity between them and their peers of different ethnic-national origin as the following interview extracts illustrate:

I do feel like the people who are present at the party, they are people who look more like me. (...) yes it's easier to connect with them. (DJ Juice, DJ/promoter)

Often when you see a Chinese or Vietnamese or someone Asian [at an Asian party]... you don't know him but you start talking to each other, then there's a click right away... it has always been like that. (DJ Maze, DJ/promoter)

I don't know... I simply feel a connection [with other Asian Dutch]... Yes, that's because of my [Asian] roots. (...) It's just easier to socialize with one another. (Missy, DJ/MC/organizer)

What these interview extracts point to, is that at and through Asian parties these producers identify with people of different Asian ethnic-national origin based on perceived shared physical and cultural attributes. In turn, this facilitates the interaction with other young Asian Dutch and the development of friendships with them. This is further underlined by MC Flow, who explains how he felt about the first Asian parties he visited:

[Asian parties] really meant a lot to me. I had the feeling I belonged somewhere, that I had friends.

The producers felt a sense of togetherness and community at Asian parties and shared the feeling that they and the other visitors are 'one'. It has been argued that experiencing a sense of belonging and sameness is inherent to clubbing (e.g., MacRae, 2004; Thornton, 1995), hence the feelings of belonging and sameness that the producers experience(d)

at Asian parties could be located in the act of clubbing per se. However, notwithstanding the role of the latter, what the accounts of most of the producers underline is that their feelings of belonging and sameness are in particular related to their sense of Asianness. This is made clear succinctly by Asian party organizer Jeffrey:

[Asian parties are about] getting together [as one]. So if you're at an Asian party... yes well, they are *all* Asian. You won't go like: "you're Chinese", "you're Vietnamese" ... No, "we're *Asian!*"

Most of the producers interviewed identify as Asian at Asian parties, and they are thus articulating new group identifications that transcend older or more traditional ethnic-national identifications (e.g., Chinese or Vietnamese). This shared sense of Asianness appears to be more conducive to feelings of belonging at Asian parties than the act of clubbing per se. To facilitate Asian identifications, young Asian Dutch privilege perceived similarities between them and their Asian Dutch peers over perceived ethnic-national differences. Furthermore, they construct a new group 'identity' based on these perceived similarities, which is in line with the notion of 'identity' being imagined and socially constructed (Baumann, 1996; Jenkins, 2002; Mannitz, 2011).

As Mannitz (2011) has argued, the construction of new group identities requires special creative efforts from the social actors involved. This is especially true for young Asian Dutch as generally the everyday social contexts they engage with do not facilitate and endorse the development of a sense of Asianness. At home ethnic-national cultural identifications may be privileged, as for instance parents of young Chinese Dutch may want their children to be more 'Chinese' (Chow, Zwier, & Van Zoonen, 2008). Furthermore, despite the promise of cultural diversity and social and symbolic inclusion, at school, in public discourse, and in mainstream media and popular culture in the Netherlands the values and norms of the dominant cultural group are privileged, leading to a monocultural White imagination of Dutchness (Awad & Roth, 2011; Mannitz, 2011). Constructing a hybrid hostland-homeland identity (e.g., Chinese-Dutch) may be a way for young Asian Dutch to position themselves in and vis-à-vis the established sociocultural spaces they inhabit, as has been observed with other ethnic minorities (e.g., Bennett, 2000; Mannitz, 2011). But creatively more demanding and arguably more compelling is young Asian Dutch' solution to imagine panethnic Asian identities: completely new collective identities which are more detached from imaginations of homeland or hostland identities. Young Asian Dutch are thus clearly "demarcating their own sense of collective identity" (Bennett, 2000, p. 118).

The imagination of these new Asian identities requires the construction of a common narrative that resonates with young Asian Dutch, one that suggests historical continuity, coherence and unity to young Asian Dutch as well as 'outsiders' (Bennett, 2000). To speak with Hobsbawm (1983), young Asian Dutch have (had) to invent an Asian tradition. The notion of shared values and 'culture' serves this project. This is underlined when the producers are asked why and how they identify with Asian Dutch of different ethnic-national origin:

(...) we are all Asians. We understand each other. We have different countries [of origin], but we think alike, we have the same culture. (Jeffrey)

At home I speak Vietnamese to my parents and my parents believe that that should never change, that's how I have been raised. (...) It's like that for most young Asians, they have maintained their language and culture. (DJ Maze)

Indonesian Dutch Jeffrey and Vietnamese Dutch DJ Maze subscribe to the notion of shared 'Asian values' and 'Asian culture' as articulated in for instance 'similar upbringing' and 'similar relationships with parents'. According to them this forges a bond and an understanding between young Asian Dutch of different ethnic-national origin. DJ Maze further adds that Asians "have a sense of honor", "work hard" and "are focused on academic achievements". Other producers mention that Asian Dutch are "polite", "well-behaved" and "disciplined". By describing 'Asian culture' and people of Asian origin in terms of positive traits mainly, the producers construct an idealized Asianness. This betrays a conscious or unconscious internalization of the essentialistic notion that people of Asian descent are 'model minorities', a trope that has gained much currency in Western public discourse (e.g., Espiritu, 1992; Chow et al., 2008). Identifying as and being perceived as a member of a particular 'good' social group may generate symbolic capital for individuals (Bennett, 2000; Bourdieu, 1986; Halter, 2000). This may explain why idealized notions of Asianness and Asian Dutch as model minorities particularly resonate with the Asian party producers and other young Asian Dutch, and provide salient points for identifying as Asian.

The fact that most of the producers share a sense of Asianness by no means implies that they ignore possible differences between people of various Asian ethnic-national origin, or that they do not engender more 'traditional' ethnic-national sensibilities themselves. The producers are aware of possible differences and sometimes make them explicit during the interviews, but they emphasize similarities rather than differences. This reveals a commitment to, and believe in, the idea of an Asian Dutch 'community-in-difference' (Baumann, 1996; Mannitz, 2011) which they themselves are members of. Furthermore, the producers consciously articulate their panethnic Asian and ethnic-national identifications in conjunction with one another. They position themselves as for instance Chinese or Indonesian as well as Asian rather effortlessly and attach different meanings to their sense of Asianness and their sense of Chineseness, Indonesianness and so forth depending on social context. This is strikingly illustrated by the account of Indonesian Dutch MC Flow who "has always felt Indonesian". His Indonesian Dutch parents gave him an 'Indonesian upbringing' and he has always been surrounded by Indonesian relatives. For MC Flow this Indonesian sociocultural context has played an essential role in negotiating a sense of Indonesianness in Dutch society. But MC Flow also articulates a sense of Asianness and he consciously differentiates between this and his sense of Indonesianness:

I feel Indonesian yes. (...) Very often I would join my parents when they visited friends or relatives and were having dinner at their places. It made me feel Indonesian. (...) That Asian feeling is actually something outside of my family. That is something that you do outside of the house when you're together with different Asian cultures. So, then you're not just with Indonesians, but also with Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai and so forth. To me, that's the Asian feeling; mixing with different cultures.

MC Flow and other producers show a high degree of self-reflexivity where their cultural group identifications and the articulations thereof are concerned. Furthermore, through and at Asian parties they have developed the competence to negotiate intra-Asian differences in favor of a newly imagined collective and more cosmopolitan Asianness. Following Baumann (1996) and Mannitz (2011) it can be argued that the producers are very well capable of deliberately constructing, combining and shifting between different cultural group identifications and giving (new) meaning to these identifications depending on social context.

What ultimately becomes clear is that Asian sensibilities are not generally encouraged or facilitated within the home and the family of young Asian Dutch. Thus, having a cultural space outside the home where young Asian Dutch can come together is essential for the creation and articulation of a sense of Asianness. Asian parties serve that purpose for the Asian party producers as these were the first spaces where they could meet young Asian Dutch of different Asian ethnic-national origin and engage in the imagination, negotiation and consumption of Asianness. Hence, Asian parties can be seen as 'laboratories' where the producers could experiment with their Asian identities (Jansz, 2005) and where this new Asianness could be materialized and expressed. Without Asian parties, these producers may not have engendered a sense of Asianness and formed panethnic Asian friendships.

### ***Making Profits and Careers in and Through the Asian Party Scene***

As discussed above, through visiting Asian parties the Asian party producers were socialized into the 'Asian scene'. As Asian party consumers they accumulated (embodied) 'Asian' cultural capital; they learned what 'Asianness' entailed and how to 'act Asian'. In addition, they built up 'Asian' social capital by meeting and befriending Asian Dutch peers. The producers felt a sense of belonging at Asian parties and thus for them the transition from consuming to producing Asian parties felt 'natural' and logical. Bryan, an Asian party organizer and manager of Asian artists, explains why he started to organize Asian parties:

I am Asian myself and I have been part of this [Asian scene] for years. So I know what the [audience] want and what the market is [like]. And it is an interesting target audience, also because they are in my network.

Bryan mentions his Asian origin as a reason for getting involved in the production of Asian parties. But more salient are his knowledge of, and networks in, the Asian party

scene which he developed as a long-time consumer of Asian parties. Without these he would not have started organizing Asian parties, regardless of his Asian origin. Clearly, the stocks of cultural and social capital Bryan and other producers accumulated at and through Asian parties provided them with the (business) opportunity to become involved in the production of Asian parties themselves. The accumulation of Asian cultural and social capital may not have been strategic and deliberately meant to generate business opportunities from the start, as initially this most likely occurred while the producers were 'simply' consuming and enjoying Asian parties like other clubbers. Still, the producers' self-reflexive accounts of how and why they got involved in the production of Asian parties reveals that they are very much aware of the value of the knowledge and networks they have acquired while and through consuming Asian parties. Theirs is a deliberate act to make these carefully gained capitals 'work' for them and to transform their Asian cultural and social capital into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

From the accounts of the Asian party producers it becomes evident that to a degree their actions and dispositions are guided by economic self-interest. In this sense the producers resemble the owners of the club venues they use, who are first and foremost entrepreneurs who hold profit maximization among their main objectives (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002; Thornton, 1995). Club owners only facilitate Asian parties in their venues because they believe young Asian Dutch are a lucrative 'target audience', and the producers interviewed for this study are aware of that. But rather than critically assessing the club owners' motives, the producers endorse them. In fact, they too approach the production of Asian parties in a professional business-like manner. This is emphasized by the fact that during the interviews the producers refer to young Asian Dutch as a 'target audience' too, and they talk extensively about Asian Dutch' spending behavior, turnover figures, and attendance numbers, which they take as indicators for success. The congruence between club owners' and producers' economic objectives is made explicit by the following excerpt from an interview with Asian party organizer Jeffrey:

I always keep track of the average spending. I find that very important for myself and for the club owners. At a regular party the [average] spending [per person] is 11 euros. (...) At Asian parties the average spending is between 13 and 16 euros.

Here Jeffrey unambiguously positions himself as a proxy for the club owners, keeping a close eye on their interests. Focusing on the bar spending is also in the producers' own interest as club owners may decide to discontinue particular Asian parties if revenues are lower than expected. Furthermore, some organizers receive a percentage of bar revenues and hence benefit directly from higher spending on beverages. So, while Asian party producers are independent entrepreneurs rather than employees of club owners, their close and interdependent relationship does point to the co-optation of Asian party producers into the mainstream nightlife economy. This is in concurrence with Thornton's (1995) suggestion that even 'alternative' or 'underground' club cultures are not isolated from 'the mainstream' and may depend on it, and it underlines the notion that cultural producers are driven by the logic of the market (McRobbie, 2002).

All the producers interviewed regard young Asian Dutch' high spending on beverages as a unique selling point vis-à-vis non-Asian Dutch clubbers, and some speak of this in rather admiring terms. Thus, while Missy, a well-known MC with years of experience in organizing mainstream club nights, explains how Asian Dutch clubbers' spending behavior at the first Asian party she organized surprised her, it is also clear how impressed she was by this:

They have a lot of money, especially the Chinese. And they drink a lot. I never expected that so many bottles of whiskey would be finished. The tequila was completely finished, the beer was almost finished! (...) I have noticed how Chinese spend more money [than other Asians]. They keep on spending!

Interestingly, Missy's observation that Chinese Dutch spend more than other Asian Dutch has led her to focus more on Chinese Dutch, for instance by advertising in Chinese Dutch media. This is salient because Missy herself is not of Chinese but of Indo-Dutch and Moluccan origin, and because this seems to conflict with the idea that Asian parties are nightlife spaces meant for Asian Dutch of various ethnic-national origin, not just (mainly) Chinese. Thus, economic objectives guide Missy's actions as she focusses on the clubbers who spend the most, even when this may have consequences for the panethnic Asian makeup of the audience at her Asian party as well as for the participation of her co-ethnics. Again, this reaffirms the notion that 'cultural production is increasingly driven by the imperatives of market and consumer culture' (McRobbie, 2002, p. 525).

Most Asian party organizers act in a professional, business-like manner and spend as little as possible on the production of their Asian parties in an effort to maximize profits. They try to keep things 'simple' and stick to a tested formula rather than taking risks and adding new elements to their Asian parties. This is acknowledged by Missy, when asked how she feels about the various Asian parties:

Missy: They all look alike. It's just a different name, the same DJs, the same music.

RK: Can you distinct them from regular parties?

Missy: Oh yes. Yes, that's just because Asian people go there. But other than that... no, not really.

Observations conducted at Asian parties confirm Missy's account; at most Asian parties the same DJs play the same popular Western r&b, hip hop and house music. While at for example Turkish Dutch club nights Turkish music is played (Boogaarts, 2008), at Asian parties Asian music is not or sporadically played. A few organizers, including Missy, may book additional singers and dancers of Asian origin, and other markers of Asianness such as Asian decorations and food stuffs are present at some Asian parties. However, in general organizers will not spend (much) money on these extras as they have found these are not needed to attract young Asian Dutch to their Asian parties. Thus indeed, Asian parties do not differ much from one another nor from non-Asian mainstream club nights, in terms of setting, styling and music, and this has been the general practice for many years.

As Missy remarked, Asian parties' main difference from mainstream club nights is their Asian Dutch audience. While the majority of clubbers at Asian parties are of Asian origin, the interviews and observations do, in fact, reveal that overall the share of non-Asian Dutch visitors at Asian parties has increased over the past few years. This is partly due to less strict door policies. In the past, non-Asian Dutch who were not accompanied by Asian Dutch friends were regularly denied entrance to an Asian party. At present, however, non-Asian Dutch who are not with Asian Dutch friends are generally allowed in. This is clearly guided by economic motives as Nick, who runs an Asian Dutch online community that supports the Asian scene, explains the rationale behind loosening the door policies at Asian parties:

Asian parties are not doing that well anymore so [there is] less [strict] door policy. In the past you couldn't get into the Escape (a popular Asian party – RK) if you weren't Asian because it would sell out anyway. (...) It's getting less [now] so you want to get everyone inside to have enough visitors.

However, Thornton (1995) observes that the main attraction of club nights is the prospect of being among people 'like oneself' and getting the feeling one belongs to a select group of people who know about a certain club night and who are allowed in. Indeed, Asian party organizers realize all too well that Asian Dutch youth – their core target audience – are attracted to their Asian parties because they facilitate feelings of Asian community and sameness. Thus, to preserve the Asian character of their Asian parties and to avoid the risk of alienating Asian Dutch visitors, the organizers do make sure that the majority of their audience remains of Asian origin. They do so by for instance targeting their marketing and promotion efforts at Asian Dutch only. Still, what is evident is that the ratio between Asian Dutch and non-Asian Dutch visitors has changed over the years because of economically motivated production decisions.

What becomes clear is the centrality of highly instrumental and economic motives in the production of Asian parties. This affects the actions of the producers and ultimately the content of Asian parties. The prospect of gaining monetary profits and developing a career in the night-time economy has prompted these producers to become involved in the production of Asian parties and to stay involved. This is made rather explicit by DJ Rockstar who started his career at Asian parties and is now successful in Dutch and international mainstream nightlife:

For Asian parties I like to charge my regular fee, because they are also paying for my [mainstream] reputation of course. (...) There are many Asian party organizers who are willing to pay my regular fee. So I don't have to lower my fee.

From time to time DJ Rockstar still plays at Asian parties, mainly because he can make good money there. While for mainstream club nights DJ Rockstar regularly has to reduce his fee, at Asian parties he can earn a higher fee. This, however, is not a motive for DJ Maze, DJ Crunch and MC Flow. As they are not (yet) successful and well-known

outside the Asian party scene like DJ Rockstar and Missy, they do not earn high fees at Asian parties. But Asian parties do provide these producers with the opportunity to gain valuable skills, knowledge and experience that they need to develop a profitable career in the entertainment industry at large – just as Asian parties did for DJ Rockstar and Missy. Thus, while in the past Asian parties were often produced by young Asian Dutch who did this ‘on the side’ while studying or holding a ‘proper’ day job, today an increasing number of Asian party producers hold a professional career in the entertainment industry or aspire to develop one. For them, producing Asian parties is more likely ‘business as usual’ and part of a wider career in the entertainment industry. This ultimately underlines that to a certain degree Asian party producers are driven by highly instrumental and economic motives.

### ***‘Giving Back’ to the Asian Dutch Community***

It is evident that all the Asian party producers interviewed are to varying degree guided by self-interest and economic motives, and act as ‘regular’ entrepreneurs. But as suggested by Banks (2006), cultural producers may also be driven by non-instrumental or moral motives and may prove to be more than ‘simply’ entrepreneurs. This may certainly be the case for Asian party producers. All but one of the producers interviewed are of Asian origin and their involvement in the production of Asian parties may thus also be guided by their engagement with their own sense of Asianness and their feelings of belonging at Asian parties. Hence, notwithstanding their economic motives, Asian party producers may be driven by ‘Asian motives’ as well.

During the interviews the producers talk about the changes that have come about in the Asian party scene over the past few years. Of the changes they have witnessed, the most salient one seems to be the growing involvement of club owners and other professional night-time and entertainment industry entrepreneurs who have no links with the Asian party scene. If anything, this has led to a more professional and entrepreneurial approach to producing Asian parties. Some Asian party producers are rather critical about how this may affect the Asian party scene:

Nick: There’s nothing social about it. (...) I think that’s a pity.

RK: Why do you think that’s a pity?

Nick: I think it’s a pity because it misses the whole purpose.

RK: What do you mean by purpose?

Nick: Something social, giving something back to the community, organize something for them. Now it’s more purely commercial.

MC Flow expresses similar concerns about the perceived commercialization of the Asian party scene:

I think that people are more concerned about making money off it than to bring forth togetherness.

Nick, MC Flow and a few other producers express their concerns about the perceived growing role of economic objectives in the Asian party scene, as they feel that organizing Asian parties should also, or even mainly, be about 'doing good' for the community. However, these producers do not simply reject economic motives altogether. They are fully aware that professionalization and commercialization can be beneficial for Asian parties too and have indeed brought about new opportunities for them and other Asian party producers. In fact, they work closely with club owners who prioritize profit maximization and they operate deliberately and effortlessly within the economic confines of their field. Nonetheless, these producers do believe economic motives are prioritized over moral motives which they regret. Whether or not economic motives have in fact become more important in the Asian party scene over the years is difficult to ascertain, but the observations offered by these producers attest to the fact that they themselves subscribe to certain moral objectives when producing Asian parties. This is in concurrence with the suggestion that cultural producers may be driven by moral as well as economic motives (Banks, 2006). For MC Flow and the other more 'critical' producers, gaining financially is clearly not the only motivation for producing Asian parties; they also show a strong desire and commitment to reach out and 'give back' to the Asian Dutch community.

All the producers who are driven by Asian motives as well, mention that they find it important to provide young Asian Dutch with their 'own' cultural space where they can come together. This is similar to for example British Asians who regarded 'Bhangra' events as "one of the few opportunities (...) to be together in a space that was essentially their own" (Bennett, 2000, p. 117). Thus, for the producers driven by Asian motives, creating a meeting place for young Asian Dutch is the main moral objective of producing Asian parties. It can be argued that this desire to bring young Asian Dutch together is linked to these producers' own sense of Asianness and their own experiences as consumers of Asian parties. As discussed earlier, Asian parties were the first and most important spaces where the producers met and befriended peers of different Asian origin and felt at home among them, and where they articulated novel Asian identifications. The producers are thus passionate to provide other young Asian Dutch with a space in which they can (continue to) experience the same feelings of Asianness, togetherness and belonging.

The Asian party producers are committed to ensure that everyone feels at home at their Asian parties so as to create a sense of togetherness and belonging. For example, when MC Flow is emceeing at Asian parties he employs his lyrics and public announcements to facilitate a sense of inclusion and togetherness:

I want them to feel at home. So I will say "All the Asians let me hear you!" and then you'll hear the entire club [scream]. And that will bring forth a sense of togetherness. It's not just Vietnamese, Chinese or Indonesians separately. In the end it's about everyone being together. (...) At that moment everyone feels Asian.

Asian party producers' desire to facilitate a sense of Asianness, togetherness and belonging may also affect the music policy. Nick explains why some of the producers are reluctant to play Asian music at Asian parties:

There are many Asian groups [at Asian parties]. Whose music do you select? If you select Chinese [music] it becomes a Chinese party.

As the producers subscribe to the ideal of an Asian Dutch community-in-difference (Baumann, 1996; Mannitz, 2011) they make it their mission to create a space in which people of diverse Asian origin can comfortably mingle, feel united, and articulate collective Asian identities that transcend ethnic-national boundaries. The producers believe that playing for example Chinese or Indonesian music may cause segregation along ethnic-national lines and disrupt the panethnic Asian atmosphere at Asian parties. Thus, these producers' decision to mainly play Western instead of Asian pop music can also be seen as guided by moral motives and not just economic ones.

Asian motives also play a role where selecting DJs and MCs for Asian parties is concerned. In general, most DJs and MCs performing at Asian parties are of Asian origin. To an extent this can be explained by the earlier discussed observation that Asian party organizers are risk averse and stick to a tested formula, and that includes booking the same Asian Dutch DJs and MCs over and over again. However, some producers make it clear that they believe most or all DJs and MCs at Asian parties should in fact be of Asian origin. These producers approach Asian parties and the production thereof from a 'for us, by us' perspective and they try to involve Asian Dutch peers in this as much as possible, as DJs, MCs or otherwise. This is exemplified by Jeffrey as he explains why he mainly books DJs and MCs of Asian origin for his Asian parties:

(...) it adds to the [Asian] character of our own party. Like, it's *our* party, we have to do it together.

Jeffrey clearly shows a strong sense of community and Asianness, which is materialized in the booking of DJs and MCs who are part of the Asian Dutch community themselves. The opportunities this provides to Asian Dutch DJs and MCs are welcomed and acknowledged by the DJs and MCs in this study as they all started their (semi-)professional careers at Asian parties. Asian parties have enabled them to develop their DJ and MC skills in the comfort of a nightlife space they are familiar with, and knowing they are among their Asian Dutch friends and peers. Thus, by being committed to book DJs and MCs of Asian origin and by providing them with a space to develop their skills, Asian party organizers do good for the Asian Dutch community and show to be driven by Asian motives as well.

While at most Asian parties live entertainment is limited to DJs and MCs as to minimize production costs, some producers do find it important that Asian parties feature Asian Dutch singers, dancers and other performers as well. Bryan for instance, is quite articulate about programming additional Asian Dutch acts:

I think that if you organize something Asian and you don't do anything with that [Asian aspect], then I'm like "what's so Asian about it?" I do think that for example an Asian act... a Filipino singer, a Chinese act or a Lion dance... yes, that would make it Asian.

Bryan argues that performers of Asian origin are crucial and without them an Asian party cannot be considered 'proper' Asian. But programming Asian Dutch artists is not just about rendering Asian parties 'more Asian' and to distinguish them from mainstream club nights, it is also about providing Asian Dutch artists a stage. Nick for example, has produced a professional dance contest at an Asian party. He explains that his goal was to give Asian Dutch amateur dancers the opportunity to perform in front of an audience, receive feedback from professional dancers and judges, and develop their dance skills. Ultimately, to a certain degree producers like Nick are committed to create a cultural space where aspiring Asian Dutch DJs, MCs, singers, dancers and other performers can develop and show their artistic talents. Furthermore, it is also the producers' goal to show young Asian Dutch that there is a lot of talent among their peers. The producers hope this will inspire young Asian Dutch to develop and employ their own artistic talents. In this sense, the producers clearly make an effort to contribute to the advancement of the Asian Dutch community by using Asian parties to empower young Asian Dutch.

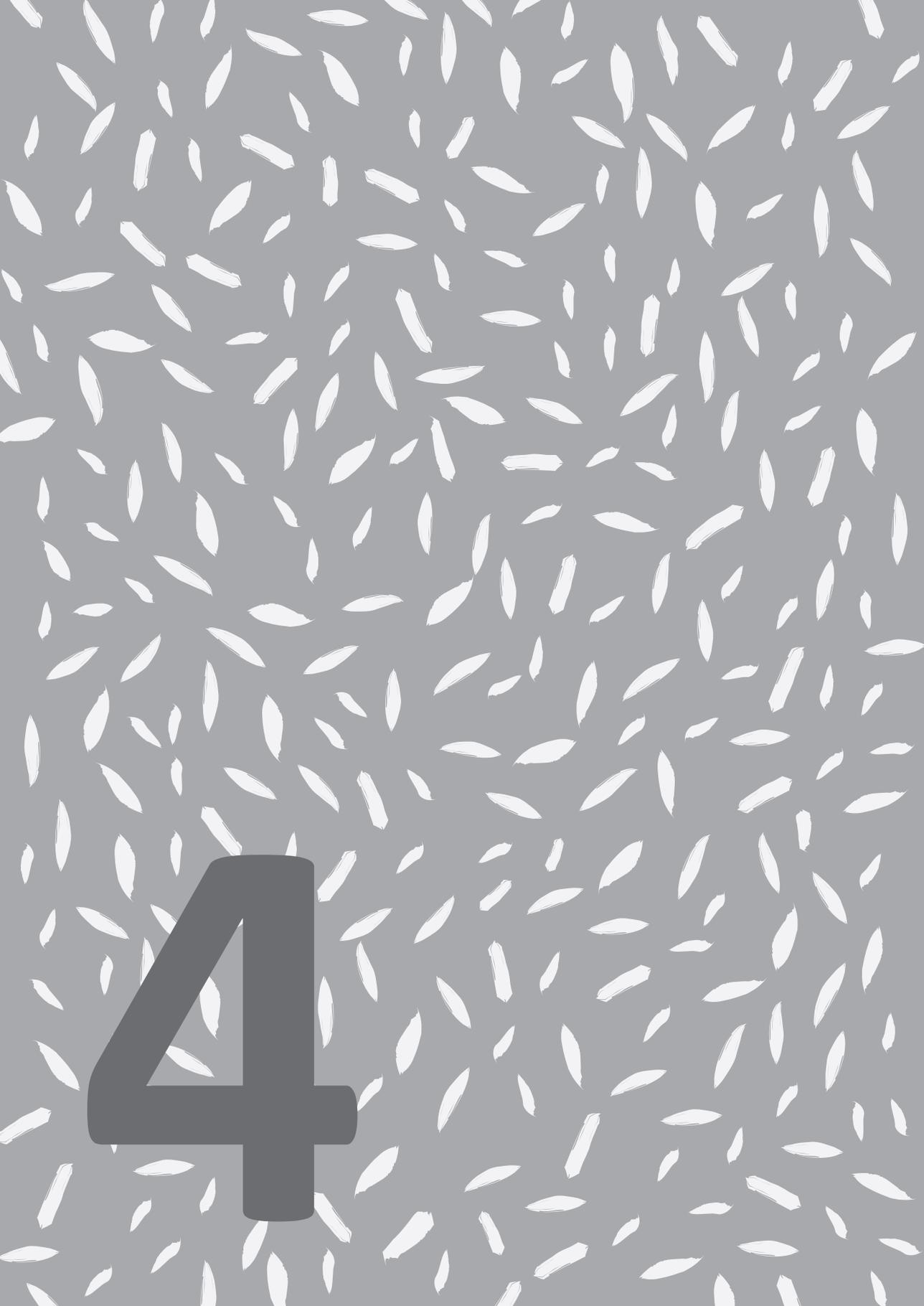
It is evident that most of the Asian party producers in this study are not guided by economic motives only; to varying degree they are also guided by moral motives that are inextricably related to their sense of Asianness. These Asian motives are materialized in a panethnic Asian project or mission these producers subscribe to. Their mission entails 'giving back' to the Asian Dutch community with the ultimate goal of empowering young Asian Dutch and advancing the Asian Dutch community. This is in concurrence with Banks' (2006) findings and suggestion that there are indeed cultural producers who are committed to 'do good' for their community. In doing so these Asian party producers are similar to minority ethnic media practitioners (Husband, 2005), sociopolitically engaged British Asian musicians (Huq, 2003) and other actors in cultural fields who are making an effort to advance their ethnic communities. For these Asian party producers one of the most important objectives is to (re)create a cultural space where young Asian Dutch can come together and articulate their sense of Asianness. Furthermore, through the production of Asian parties in general, and through providing Asian Dutch performers a stage in particular, these producers contribute to the visibility of Asian Dutch among Asian Dutch themselves as well as Dutch society at large. They thus contribute to improving the sociocultural status of Asian Dutch in the Netherlands and positioning them vis-à-vis Dutch mainstream society.

## CONCLUSION

This study focused on the producers of Asian parties in the Netherlands. The main objective was to investigate the relationship between Asian party producers' possible sense of Asianness and the production of Asian parties and Asianness in Dutch nightlife. With the exception of one Asian party organizer all the producers interviewed for this study are of Asian origin and show a sense of Asianness, albeit to varying degrees. Importantly, Asian parties were the first panethnic Asian cultural spaces these producers consumed. It was there where they met Asian Dutch peers of various Asian origin, felt at home among them, and engendered a sense of Asianness for the first time. This underscores the importance of popular culture for cultural identification processes in the everyday lives of youths. Also, through consuming Asian parties the producers gained knowledge about the Asian party scene and extended their network of Asian Dutch friends and acquaintances. These stocks of valuable Asian cultural and social capital provided the producers with the opportunity to become involved in the production of Asian parties themselves. Clearly, the prospect of making profits and developing a career in the night-time economy attracted the producers, thus it can be argued that from the start of their careers as Asian party producers they have been driven by self-interest and economic motives. However, most of these producers are driven by moral motives as well; they show a dedication to 'give back' to the Asian Dutch community – some more than others – and this is related to their (shared) sense of Asianness. These particular producers subscribe to the idea of a panethnic Asian project and regard it as their mission to advance the Asian Dutch community.

For most of the producers in this study, producing Asian parties is not only a means to make money or develop a career in the night-time economy, but also a means to articulate their sense of Asianness and to serve and advance the Asian Dutch community. The main 'Asian' objective of these particular producers is to (re)create a cultural space where young Asian Dutch of diverse Asian origin can get together, feel at home, and articulate a sense of Asianness. The Asian parties they produce constitute that cultural space, one that privileges and facilitates a particular Asianness that is centred on the cosmopolitan idea of community-in-difference and panethnic Asian unity. It is an Asianness that the producers themselves have consumed and engendered from their first visits to Asian parties. Hence, what the producers are ultimately engaged in is the reproduction of that Asianness in Dutch nightlife. This Asianness is located in the people at Asian parties, i.e., the clubbers, DJs and so forth of Asian origin. That is, first and foremost, what Asian Dutch clubbers consume at Asian parties: other young Asian Dutch. Thus, at Asian parties Asianness is not particularly located in symbolic markers of Asianness such as 'Asian' decorations or Asian music. It would be interesting to investigate how young Asian Dutch consume, experience and articulate Asianness outside Asian parties. Do they consume Asian films, Asian popular music and other symbolic material to develop their sense of Asianness? How do they do this? And what meaning do they attach to this Asianness? Future research should address these issues.

Finally, what the findings of this study point to is the central role played by highly instrumental and economic motives in the production of Asian parties. The actions of the producers are unmistakably deliberate and aimed at transforming their cultural and social capital into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). This would be in concurrence with McRobbie's (2002) argument that club cultures are commercialized and devoid of any social or political goal. However, through their sense of Asianness the producers feel connected to the Asian Dutch community and show a commitment to 'do good' for it as well. Thus, ultimately this underlines Banks' (2006) argument that it is very well possible for cultural producers to pursue both economic and moral objectives. Furthermore, without commercialism there would most likely not have been as many opportunities for Asian party producers. If anything, the producers are at least able to produce and disseminate a particular Asianness which would otherwise not have been the case. In turn, this Asianness, however commercial it may be, is deliberately and happily consumed by young Asian Dutch clubbers and is thus highly meaningful. This however, is also not to suggest that uninhibited commercialism and neoliberal logic should be celebrated uncritically. Clearly, Asian parties can exist because young Asian Dutch are considered a lucrative target audience. Other social groups who are not perceived as profitable or desirable may not be offered a cultural space in the night-time economy, as McRobbie (2002) and Chatterton and Hollands (2002) have already noted. Thus, the relation between commercialism and the cultural field remains complex. However, it is unproductive to simply dismiss any and all commercial motives as 'bad'. Given Thornton's (1995) suggestion that popular culture and commerce are inextricably linked together, it seems to be more fruitful to further investigate how economic and moral objectives as well as commercial agents and cultural producers actually work together to create cultural spaces that diverge from 'the mainstream' and add to cultural diversity in particular local settings.



4

# CHAPTER 4

## Imagining Asianness: Young Asian Dutch and Japanese/South Korean Film and Television

A shortened version of this chapter has been submitted to *Journal of Communication* as:

Kartosen-Wong, R. & Tan, E. Imagining Asianness: Young Asian Dutch and Japanese/South Korean film and television.

Popular culture from Asian countries has received quite some scholarly attention in recent years. Studies concerned with Asian diaspora in the West have demonstrated that there is a reciprocal relationship between Asian minorities' homeland cultural identification (e.g., Chinese or Korean) and their consumption of popular media from their homelands (e.g., Chow, Zwier, & Van Zoonen, 2008; Lee, 2004; Oh, 2011; Park, 2004). In addition, Park (2004) found some preliminary evidence suggesting a relationship between Asian minorities' panethnic *Asian* sensibilities and their consumption of popular media from Asian countries other than their homeland. Park called for further research into the matter, but so far little empirical research has been done in this direction. A recent survey study has, however, established that young Asian Dutch consume relatively high levels of non-homeland Asian popular media and that this is related to their sense of Asianness (Kartosen & Tan, 2013). The present study builds on the findings of this quantitative study and will further explore in depth, by means of qualitative inquiry, how young Asian Dutch' panethnic Asian cultural sensibilities are related to their consumption of popular media from non-homeland Asian countries.

The present study will focus on Japanese and South Korean popular film and television given that Japan and South Korea produce and export (to both Asian and non-Asian countries) more popular films and television series than any other East or Southeast Asian country (e.g., Iwabuchi, 2011; Jung, 2011; Lee, 2004). The aim of this study is to reveal how young Asian Dutch (18-30 years old) of diverse East and Southeast Asian origin make sense of the Japanese and South Korean popular film and television they consume. Young Asian Dutch may engage with different and defining cultural spheres – i.e., dominant (White) Dutch, homeland and panethnic Asian culture – in their everyday lives, and this prompts several questions relating to their consumption of Japanese and South Korean popular media texts. How, for instance, might they employ these media texts to navigate in and between the different cultural spheres and to socioculturally position themselves? Why and how do, for example, Dutch citizens of Indonesian or Chinese origin watch Japanese and South Korean film and television and identify with these? And, ultimately, how is this consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television related to the emergence and maintenance of shared panethnic Asian sensibilities?

By examining young Asian Dutch' consumption of Japanese and South Korean popular film and television, this study will illuminate the role of transnational popular culture in processes of cultural identity formation and identification in general, and in particular where it concerns new and emerging cultural group identities such as panethnic Asian identities. This will enhance our understanding of the ramifications of cultural globalization and the multiple ways in which the global and the local intersect, which is especially relevant given the increasing global interconnectedness and the growing (non-Western) transnational flows of media and popular culture as well as people (e.g., Crane, 2002; Iwabuchi, 2002, 2010; Park, 2004). Furthermore, by investigating young Asian Dutch, this study sheds light on ethnic minorities who have been virtually invisible

in public, political and academic discourse on multiculturalism and cultural diversity in the Netherlands as well as in other Western societies. This study will thus add a fresh and more encompassing perspective to an understanding of Dutch multicultural society by showing how Dutch citizens of Asian origin negotiate their Dutch, homeland and Asian identities and identifications, and carve out their own cultural space in Dutch society.

### ***Cultural Proximity and Cultural Identification***

If Japanese and South Korean films and television series play any role of significance in Asian Dutch' imagination and articulation of panethnic Asian identities and Asian identifications, they should at the very least elicit some sense of Asian cultural sameness or commonality in Asian Dutch audiences. Given this, the concept of cultural proximity is a helpful tool to investigate young Asian Dutch' consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television. According to the cultural proximity thesis, people have a preference for media and popular culture that feel close to them in cultural and linguistic terms (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005; Straubhaar, 1991; Straubhaar, 2003). Often, shared language constitutes a main component of cultural proximity, for instance in the case of the circulation of Spanish language telenovelas across Latin America (e.g., Straubhaar, 1991) and the consumption of Arab soap operas by Arab diasporas in the West (e.g., Georgiou, 2012). However, besides shared language there are many other components in television and other cultural texts that may constitute cultural proximity, including (representations of) ethnicity, religion, cultural values and body language (e.g., La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005; Straubhaar, 2003). Thus, for example, Taiwanese prefer Japanese popular culture over US popular culture, despite language differences between Japanese media producers and Taiwanese media consumers (Iwabuchi, 2005, 2008).

The notion of cultural proximity implies that films and other cultural texts facilitate processes of cultural identity and cultural identification among their viewers (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). More specifically, cultural proximity first implies processes of identification as a member of particular sociocultural groups that are linked to the textual components that constitute cultural proximity. In this regard, Shaw's (2013) observation that there "is a flaw in research on media representation and identification that conflates identifying *as* a member of a particular group with identifying *with* a media character" (p. 133) is helpful. She argues that identifying *as* a member of a particular social group such as 'African Americans' does not necessarily entail identifying *with* a media character belonging to the same group and vice versa, as we will elaborate later. In addition to media characters this may also apply to other components of media texts that signify a particular social group and 'its' culture and are consequently assumed to constitute cultural proximity (e.g., language).

The proposed link between textual components that are perceived to constitute cultural proximity and facilitate identification as a member of particular sociocultural groups, should not, however, be understood in a rigid fashion, but, rather, in a more fluid sense. As Iwabuchi (2011) argues, cultural proximity is not to be "considered as something

static, natural and given” (p. 266) and it should not be seen as an essential cultural similarity (Iwabuchi, 2006, 2011). Cultural proximity may thus be conceived of as located in the moment of consumption instead of as located in the text per se. And rather than an essence, cultural proximity may be seen as a process, in a manner similar to identity. Also, while identifying *as* a member of a particular sociocultural group does not necessitate identifying *with* a media character or other textual components perceived to be linked to that same group, it is, in fact, directly related to cultural proximity. Any level of cultural proximity experienced requires the viewer to identify *as* a member of a particular sociocultural group being signified.

### ***Cultural Proximity and Panethnic Asian Identities***

The abovementioned already hints at the polysemic nature of cultural proximity and the textual components that facilitate this. Evidently, the meaning and structure of cultural proximity are multiple and contextualized, as consumption and sense-making of media texts are embedded in the specific sociocultural environments and practices of viewers (e.g., Hall, 2003). However, notwithstanding viewers’ agency and contextualization, media texts do, in fact, provide viewers with particular frameworks for identification and identity, which can be seen as “components of the collective imaginary and resources for collective action” (Silverstone & Georgiou, 2005, p. 434). Media texts contain textual components that frame processes of cultural proximity and privilege the imagination of particular collective identities. Thus, in the context of the present study, we need to investigate which components of Japanese and South Korean films and television series may facilitate and evoke a sense of cultural proximity and Asian identification in Asian Dutch viewers. Furthermore, we need to investigate what kind of Asian identities are privileged by these media texts. The growing body of literature on the circulation and consumption of Japanese and South Korean popular culture in Asia provide a point of departure. Based on this literature, we identified three textual components in Japanese and South Korean film and television that may evoke a sense of cultural proximity and Asian identification and may facilitate the imagination of Asian identities: 1) articulations of ‘Asian modernity’, 2) ‘Asian’ physical appearances of characters, and 3) representations of ‘Asian’ (traditional) culture, values and virtues. These will be elaborated below.

It is argued that Japanese and South Korean pop culture combines Western formats and production values with representations of (traditional) ‘Asian’ values and culture as well as representations of ‘Asian modernity’. This renders Japanese and South Korean pop culture more ‘modern’ than traditional Asian pop culture and simultaneously culturally closer than Western pop culture for audiences in Asia (e.g., Fung, 2007; Iwabuchi, 2005, 2006, 2011; Jung, 2011; Lee, 2004). The depictions of skyscrapers and shopping malls are a reflection of the economic, technological and cultural developments in Asia, and they fit in the celebratory discourse of ‘booming Asia’ (e.g., Chua, 2012; Lee, 2004; Lin & Tong, 2008). Furthermore, these representations of Asian urban modernity evoke a sense of cultural proximity among middle class audiences in Asia, based on a shared sense of ‘Asian modernity’ and coevality (Chua, 2012; Iwabuchi, 2010, 2011).

Particular physical and physiognomic traits of actors and characters that are perceived as 'Asian', such as particular skin colour and facial expressions, are perhaps the most basic aspects in film and television that Asian audiences can perceive as 'similar' and that consequently evoke cultural proximity and Asian identification (e.g., Chua, 2012; Fung, 2007; Iwabuchi, 2005, Lin & Tong, 2008). As ethnic minorities in the West are generally underrepresented and stereotypically depicted in Western popular culture (e.g., Gillespie, 1995; Shohat & Stam, 1994; Silverstone & Georgiou, 2005), the presence of media characters carrying Asian physical and physiognomic traits in Japanese and South Korean film and television may be of particular importance for Asian Dutch viewers. Watching people on screen who they perceive to look like themselves "is reassuring and feels good" (Park, 2004, p. 282), and may engender feelings of Asian commonality and shared Asian identities.

Japanese and South Korean films and television series contain ample representations of (perceived) 'Asian' culture and 'Asian' values. These depictions and narratives of, for instance, strong family relations, filial piety and social harmony, resonate with audiences across Asia and evoke feelings of cultural proximity and Asian identification (Chua, 2012; Iwabuchi, 2008, 2011; Lin & Tong, 2008). These traditional Asian values are perceived as collectivistic values which are not foregrounded in Western popular culture and society at large, where individualistic values prevail. Thus, representations of Asian values in Japanese and South Korean popular culture may especially strike a chord with Asian minorities in the West who are seeking for 'Asian' cultural knowledge.

## **METHOD**

### ***Composition of the Focus Groups***

The data for the present study were collected by means of focus group interviews conducted from July through November 2013. Participants were 1) of East and/or Southeast Asian origin, 2) between 18 and 30 years old, and 3) born in the Netherlands or migrated to the Netherlands at a young age. Participants were recruited through announcements posted on websites and social networks aimed at young Asian Dutch and included in their newsletters, as well as through the personal and professional networks of the present study's first author. Participants selected for the study were asked to invite three to four eligible friends or relatives with whom they (occasionally) watch and/or discuss Japanese and/or South Korean films and television series to participate in this study as well. Thus, 'natural' focus groups could be composed of participants who already knew one another and who had already built up social rapport, which would be beneficial for the course of the focus group interviews. Eventually, 27 participants were selected and divided into nine focus groups consisting of two to four participants. Eight focus groups consisted of participants who were friends (six groups) or siblings (two groups), while the remaining group consisted of two friends and a third participant they had not met before but who resided in the same city. Furthermore, efforts were made to

ensure that the selected participants represented a diversity of sociocultural categories in terms of gender, age, homeland-ethnic origin (i.e., Indonesian, Indo-Dutch, Chinese Indonesian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Thai, Malaysian, Chinese Singaporean, Korean and Chinese Surinamese) and place of residence (large urban areas such as Amsterdam and small towns or villages in more rural areas). The appendix provides an overview of the composition of the individual focus groups.

### **Procedure**

Prior to the actual focus group meetings, participants filled out a short online questionnaire. Amongst others, they were asked to list their favorite Japanese and South Korean films and television series. Table 1 provides an overview of the titles that were mentioned most often as a favorite by the participants.

**Table 1 | Most Popular Japanese and South Korean Films and Television Series among Participants**

| <b>Title</b>            | <b>Country</b> | <b>Year</b> | <b>Genre</b>                         |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Spirited Away</i>    | Japan          | 2001        | Anime, fantasy (film)                |
| <i>Death Note</i>       | Japan          | 2006-2007   | Anime, psychological thriller (TV)   |
| <i>1 Litre of Tears</i> | Japan          | 2005        | Drama (TV)                           |
| <i>Naruto</i>           | Japan          | 1999- ...   | Anime, fantasy, action (TV)          |
| <i>My Sassy Girl</i>    | South Korea    | 2001        | Romantic, comedy, drama (film)       |
| <i>City Hunter</i>      | South Korea    | 2011        | Action, thriller, drama (TV)         |
| <i>You're Beautiful</i> | South Korea    | 2009        | Romantic, drama, gender bending (TV) |
| <i>Full House</i>       | South Korea    | 2004        | Romantic, comedy (TV)                |

Based on these lists, films and television series were selected which all or most of the participants in a particular focus group listed as one of their favorites. These included *Spirited Away*, *My Sassy Girl*, *You're Beautiful* and *City Hunter*. During the focus group meetings participants were shown clips of these films and television series and discussed them. The first author acted as the moderator of the focus group interviews and guided the group discussions by asking probing questions based on a semi-structured topic list. In the second half of the interview participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire. Amongst others, the questionnaire included additional questions regarding the degree to which specific textual aspects render Japanese and South Korean film and television enjoyable to them. Subsequently, the answers given by the individual participants were discussed with the group.

Five of the focus group interviews were conducted in participants' or their parents' homes, one in a restaurant owned by one of the participants' parents, and three at the University of Amsterdam. The focus group interviews were audio taped and conducted and transcribed in Dutch. The transcripts, questionnaires and additional field notes made by the moderator were subjected to qualitative data analysis. Salient quotes and

excerpts were translated in English for inclusion in this paper. Finally, the names of all participants were changed to ensure their anonymity.

## RESULTS

### *Consuming and Enjoying Articulations of Asian Modernity?*

The majority of the participants in this study are (or have been) avid consumers of Japanese and South Korean films and television series. Although they do watch more film and television from the US, they watch more film and television from Japan and South Korea than from their Asian homelands or the Netherlands. Participants show an explicit preference for, and emotional bond with, Japanese and South Korean films and television series. When participants are asked why they watch Japanese and South Korean film and television and what they like about it, one of their first responses is that they enjoy them for their high standards. In the group discussions most participants explicitly evaluate the quality of Japanese and South Korean film and television vis-à-vis the quality of Western film and television as well as film and television from their Asian homelands. They appreciate US film and television's generalized style and high production value as expressed in amongst others state-of-the-art special effects and art direction. However, when it comes to qualities such as plot, screenplay and character development, the participants generally find Japanese and South Korean films and television series more complex, imaginative and sophisticated than US films and television series, which they find predictable, simplistic and unrefined.

Notwithstanding their critical assessment of US films and television series, the participants do, in fact, enjoy these to a certain degree, which is underlined by the aforementioned finding that the majority of participants consume US film and television the most. This is not the case for Dutch film and television, which the participants rarely watch and unequivocally dismiss; in the group discussions they candidly denounce and sometimes ridicule these for their perceived low quality, banality and superficiality. Furthermore, most participants also prefer Japanese and South Korean films and television series to productions from their Asian homelands. This is clearly articulated in an interview with Chinese Dutch sisters Li-Wei and Li-Ming:

Moderator: Do you watch Chinese films or television series as well?

Li-Wei: In the past I did.

Li-Ming: Well, I didn't.

Li-Wei: Yes, but I really don't find them as good as the Korean ones.

Li-Ming: No, it's simply... I find them bad. (...) If they were any good and if subtitles were available then I would watch it. But I just think the quality is... it is simply worse [than Korean productions].

Li-Wei: Yes, I find them *really* bad too.

(...)

Li-Ming: In China it is still a bit like how it *used* to be in Korea I think. Because now we are used to a certain standard in media [production] I guess, especially due to American series and so on. And China is still lagging behind, I think. (...) And in Korea the acting is more realistic [than in China].

Evidently, the ‘Westernized’ or ‘Americanized’ production standards that have become part and parcel of Japanese and South Korean media industries (e.g., Iwabuchi, 2011; Jung, 2009), render Japanese and South Korean films and television series more appealing to participants than productions from their Asian homelands. Growing up in the Netherlands, they have been exposed to an abundance of US popular media and have consequently internalized the formats and production values defined by Hollywood. ‘Backwards’ films and television series from their Asian homelands are simply harder to digest because they lack in ‘American’ production values and are not regarded as ‘cool’ – just like films and television series from the Netherlands.

The participants’ perception that homeland film and television are old fashioned and ‘uncool’ is further underlined by some participants who express a certain pride of Japanese and South Korean film and television. Especially among the younger participants there is a sense that with Japanese and South Korean film and television, they finally have “something of their own” (Mei-Yin) and “something that makes them proud, something they can be happy about” (Lanh). Apparently, the participants were in need of something they could be proud of. Homeland film and television cannot fulfil this need because they are deemed old fashioned and tacky, but the modern Japanese and South Korean films and television series are perfectly able to fill that void.

Considering that participants appreciate Japanese and South Korean films and television series for their perceived ‘coolness’, one might expect that they would also appreciate the ample depictions of skyscrapers, shopping malls and other aspects of modern Asia featured in them. However, while depictions of modern Asia elicit a sense of cultural proximity based on notions of coequality among middle class audiences in Asia (e.g., Chua, 2012; Iwabuchi 2002, 2011; Jung, 2009), the participants in this study are rather indifferent about these. Moreover, some participants are even critical about these images of modern city life in Asia, arguing that they are one-sided, as Japan and South Korea also have many less affluent and less modern (rural) areas. The difference between audiences in Asia and young Asian Dutch in making sense of images of Asian modernity can be attributed to their lives in different localities. Asian audiences are often part of a select group of urban, middle class citizens in countries where significant and visible segments of the population are poor and live in rural areas. This explains how images of modern Asia resonate with middle class Asian audiences and feel familiar to them. But this is different for the participants in this study. The Netherlands is a country that is modernized throughout, even in the more rural areas. Thus, even though there are

very few Asian-like skyscrapers and shopping malls in the Netherlands, the depictions of Asian modernity do not particularly resonate with the participants as they are immersed in a modern sociocultural context themselves.

### ***Seeing Media Characters of Asian Origin and Identifying as Asian***

During the focus group interviews, most participants display an acute awareness of the underrepresentation, as well as stereotypical depictions, of people of Asian origin in Dutch and US film and television. At first sight it appears that in general the participants are not too bothered with this; they are used to it and it is not something they consciously think about when watching US or Dutch films and television series. However, they also indicate that whenever a Dutch or US production they watch contains a character of Asian origin, they instantly notice this. This forces them to reflect and contemplate what seeing an Asian character means to them. The participants acknowledge that they do indeed enjoy seeing people of Asian origin in a Western film or television series. This also includes Huynh and Fajar, who are among the few participants who are expressly dismissive about sharing panethnic Asian identities and Asian identifications:

Huynh: I do like it when I see someone of Asian origin playing a lead role or a certain role [in a film]. That's nice.

Moderator: But why do you like that?

Huynh: Yeah, I don't know. It's more like... Do you know *The Fast and the Furious*?

Moderator: Yes, I do.

Huynh: For instance, [in that film] you've got Han, he is obviously of Asian origin. And that's just nice, like: "hey, we've got an Asian in the group!"

Fajar: Oh, Chau too...

Huynh: ... or Chau...

Huynh and Fajar: (simultaneously) ...from *Off Centre*! (they both laugh)

Huynh: (...) ...it's great, really great! Cause then I can identify with it.

Moderator: You can?

Huynh: Well, in terms of physical appearance I mean.

(...)

Huynh: Let me put it this way: I like it because in the past you wouldn't see any Asians at all [in US film and television]. And if you did see an Asian it was stereotypical. And now you see Asians in it, and he has a [proper] role. (...) Yes, I think that's beautiful. (...) To me it doesn't matter whether this Han is Vietnamese or Japanese... it's about Asians among themselves, you know.

The instant pleasure that is invoked in participants Huynh and Fajar by the mere presence of media characters who look ‘Asian’, points to a deeper felt lack that most participants find difficult or irrelevant to address during the open discussions. However, the specific probing questions and propositions in the short questionnaire pertaining to the presence of people of Asian origin in Western as well as Japanese and South Korean film and television, drive some participants to elaborate on this and, perhaps unwittingly, to expose a certain degree of pain and sorrow felt:

Moderator: (...) those physical traits [of characters in South Korean film and television] seem to be important to you, don’t they?

Li-Ming: Hmm, yes... (...) because when we were growing up there were *very few* Asian characters in the [Western] media we watched. (...) It’s still like that, actually.

Li-Wei: Yes, that’s right.

(...)

Li-Ming: Yes, and [in South Korean film and television] it was just simply natural [to see Asian characters].

Moderator: Does that make watching those television series enjoyable?

Li-Ming: Yes, it was nice.

Moderator: So is that something you have missed you think? When you were growing up?

Li-Wei: Missed what?

Moderator: That, in fact, you didn’t see ‘yourselves’ in television series and films?

Li-Ming: That’s something you didn’t think about, I guess. Maybe [now] in retrospect we do, but back then it was more like... what we watched was simply considered normal.

Li-Wei: Yes.

(...)

Li-Wei: Well, I didn’t really *miss* it or anything, because that was just normal. But then later you realize: “Oh!”

Li-Ming: ...it could have been different.

Li-Wei: Yes.

Li-Ming: But I mean, what’s done is done and... well, it made you into who you are now, so...

Thus, when participants reflect more elaborately on how they feel about the representation of people of Asian origin in Western film and television, it turns out that the underrepresentation and stereotypical depictions actually do affect them negatively and they acknowledge this – albeit now and in hindsight, and by contemplating what it means to them to see a character of Asian origin. Participant Chen makes an even more forceful and political point:

In America it's actually different [compared to the Netherlands]. Because [in film and television] over there Asians simply appear [to be] 'part of the nation' so to say, and here [Asians] are still [depicted as] a different race.

Surprisingly however, the participants do not explicitly call for more Asian characters or 'people like themselves' in Western film and television to 'fix' the lack. It can be argued that this is because through the Internet the participants have easy access to Japanese and South Korean films and television series, which feature ample (non-stereotypical) Asian characters. The participants do not need Western popular media for matters of representation anymore, which underlines the growing impact of transnational flows of popular culture on the local.

Furthermore, the participants perceive Japanese and South Korean actors as 'similar' and as people 'like themselves' based simply on their physical appearance which they consider to be 'Asian'. These appearance characteristics such as sleek, black hair, but also perceived behavior and personality, thus serve as markers of Asianness and as such they are employed to signify an imagined boundary between Asians and non-Asians, between in-group and out-group. It should be noted, however, that participants do not hold similar ideas about who constitute a panethnic Asian in-group based on this assessment of shared 'Asian' physical characteristics. Some participants, especially participants of Chinese origin who have no or few friends of Southeast Asian origin, imagine an Asian in-group of a particular East Asian nature. They do not feel that they share distinct Asian physical characteristics with people of Southeast Asian origin. Participants of Southeast Asian origin, however, do, in fact, identify with Japanese and South Korean characters based on their perception of shared Asian physical appearances, and, consequently, they imagine a broader Asian in-group that includes people of both East and Southeast Asian origin. Still, whether participants imagine a narrower or a broader Asian in-group, they all imagine a new Asian in-group that is 'larger' or more encompassing than traditional notions of in-groups imagined around their homeland origins. The findings thus underscore the importance of media characters' Asian physical appearance for invoking a sense of cultural proximity and Asian identification in participants.

What the focus group data ultimately demonstrate is that media characters' Asian physical traits are, in fact, meaningful to participants and they evoke feelings of cultural proximity and Asian identification. Furthermore, seeing a character of Asian origin in Western films and television series prompts participants to reflect on their position and representation in Dutch society. On the other hand, seeing characters of Asian origin in Japanese and South Korean productions is common and nothing special, and it does not necessarily prompt participants to contemplate about the representation of people of Asian origin. Instead, being 'surrounded' by characters with whom they perceive to share Asian physical traits gives them a "warm feeling", as Jing says, and it makes them "feel at home" in these films and television series. The presence of characters who look like themselves in Japanese and South Korean films and television series thus evokes feelings of belonging in participants. Finally, participants need and employ Asian physical

traits to determine who is Asian and who is not and to imagine a broader Asian in-group. Thus, ultimately, participants identify *as* Asian through the consumption of media characters' Asian physical traits.

### ***Consuming Representations of 'Asian' Virtues, Culture and Lived Experience***

The participants indicate that they identify with Japanese and South Korean media characters through the characters' personality traits, dispositions, actions, and lived experience. They stress that the characters' Asian physical appearances are of little significance to this identification process. However, when participants' processes of identification with Japanese and South Korean characters are more closely investigated it becomes apparent that the Asian physical traits of said characters do, in fact, play a pivotal role. This is because the participants consider characters' actions, personality traits and so on as 'Asian', as the following interview excerpt demonstrates:

Moderator: What do you mean when you say that you can identify with the characters?

Yuna: I think personality traits actually.

Moderator: Yes, like what?

Sandra: Taking decisions that you are *also* more likely to take. It's like, in American television series you often think "Why would you do that?"

Yuna: Yes.

Cynthia: I think that characters in Asian television series have to take the people around them into account more often. In Western films and television series people often are more individualistic, while in Asian culture that is less so, I think. (...) Yes, [it is] more like collectivist. (...) And also what Sandra is saying, that when you take decisions you also take into account how, for example, your parents will feel about it. (...)

Sandra: Often in American television series I feel like "You really haven't thought about the consequences of your actions." So that's indeed a personality trait that is different, I think. (...) That's why you're better able to identify with [an Asian] character...

Yuna: Yes.

Sandra: ...because he makes decisions that are [compatible with] your feelings.

Clearly, participants understand Japanese and South Korean characters' personality traits, actions, and so forth as 'Asian'; as derived from and closely linked to 'Asian' values and culture. In order to be able to perceive these characters' lived experiences as Asian – and thus as familiar – participants first need to identify the characters as Asian, and this is facilitated by the characters' Asian physical traits. This is underlined by an interview excerpt wherein participants Mei-Yin, Binh and Anh discuss a scene from romantic comedy *My Sassy Girl*, in which male protagonist Kyun-woo is chased and hit with a vacuum cleaner hose by his mother:

- Moderator: The fact that it concerns people who look Asian, does that make it easier for you to identify [with them]?
- Anh: Yes. It's not that you pay attention to it per se, but just unconsciously.
- Mei-Yin: Yes, I'm like "Yes, they're just exactly like me in certain ways."
- Moderator: Yes, even though... she is Korean, isn't she? And you have a Singaporean background. But nonetheless you feel some sort of commonality?
- Mei-Yin: Yes, because when it's an American I think I would just (...) watch it and not think about it, you know? Because when an American would be beaten by his mother, I would simply laugh. But then I really wouldn't think like "That happens to me too!"
- Binh: I think that it's less funny when white people...
- Mei-Yin: Yes, it's just not funny.
- Anh: Because [when it's about] Americans you think "Ok, they have a different culture." And from there on [the feeling] is different....
- Moderator: Ah, I see. And what if it were a Dutch character, would that be the same as an American?
- Anh: Yes, the same.
- Mei-Yin: I wouldn't even watch! (laughs)
- Anh: (laughing) Ehm no, me neither!

This excerpt underlines the importance of characters' Asian physical appearances to participants' identification processes. Participants identify the characters as Asian through their Asian physical traits. This enables participants to compare characters' particular actions, lived experiences, and so forth with their own lived experiences, recognize these as familiar, and qualify these as 'Asian'. This evokes a sense of 'Asian' cultural proximity. Japanese and South Korean characters' 'Asian' lived experiences thus resonate with, as well as facilitate, participants' Asian subject-position and self-identification as Asian. Finally, the participants identify with the Japanese and South Korean characters.

It should be noted that in the end participants may not identify *with* certain characters after all, for example if they do not agree with the characters' dispositions and actions. However, this does not negate participants' self-identification *as* Asian based on the characters' Asian physical appearances and general lived experiences. Furthermore, as the interview excerpt above suggests, participants evaluate Asian and Western characters differently, even when the characters share similar lived experiences, personality traits, and so forth. While the participants may indeed also enjoy watching such Western characters and may even identify with them, this will not be the same as identifying with Japanese and South Korean characters. Western characters and their lived experience will not be perceived as 'Asian' and will thus not resonate with

participants' Asian subject-position. Consequently, participants' will not identify as Asian and their identification with Western characters may be less intense and less emotional than their identification with Japanese and South Korean characters.

It is evident that Japanese and South Korean characters' perceived 'Asian' lived experience, personality traits, and so forth drive participants' identification with the characters and provide depth to their self-identification as Asian. The participants describe and explain these in terms of generalized 'Asian' culture and 'Asian' virtues, which they imagine as transcending particular Asian nations, people and cultures.<sup>1</sup> While and after watching the video clips, vivid discussions about the importance and centrality of 'family', 'harmony' and '(showing) respect' in Asian culture as well as in participants' everyday life emerge spontaneously in the focus groups, thus without the moderator having to ask specific probing questions to start a discussion. This already indicates the salience of these perceived aspects of Asian culture to participants. Furthermore, it suggests that participants perceive these aspects of Asian culture to be similar in Japanese, South Korean and their homeland cultures. Indeed, the participants articulate a deeply felt familiarity with portrayals of family life and filial piety in Japanese and South Korean films and television series, as they are able to relate these to their own lived experience. Below, participants Li-Ming and Li-Wei explain what aspects of the narratives of South Korean television series they feel familiar with and can identify with:

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- Li-Ming: [In the television series] family is important. That's how I feel too.
- Moderator: Do you see that in Korean dramas?
- Li-Ming: Yes, they always talk about "You do it for family" and "This is your family" and...
- Li-Wei: That is actually one of the reasons why I started to watch [Korean] dramas, because I was able to identify with many characters they played. Because it was just Asian and uhm... the way the families are organized, the relationships within the families and so on.
- Moderator: What do you mean by that?
- Li-Wei: For example the way you deal with your parents.
- Li-Ming: Yes, I have the feeling that Asian [children] are expected to show more respect to their parents... obey them more. In the Netherlands [children] are treated more like equals and in Asia more like "You're the child, so you do as we say."

When participants elaborate on the issue of 'family' and 'filial piety' in Japanese and South Korean film and television, most end up talking about (difficult) relationships with parents, the strict 'Asian' upbringing, having to show respect, and the pressure to perform well at school and at work. This is illustrated by an interview segment in which Julia, Steven and Robert describe what aspects from aforementioned *My Sassy Girl* they can relate to, while especially referring to a comedic scene in which the male protagonist

undergoes corporal punishment from his parents for underperforming at school and later at college:

Julia: (...) expectations of parents, wanting to perform well at school... these are aspects that are familiar [to me], and because of that it's easier to identify with such a character.

Moderator: Does that also apply to you Robert, [experiencing] that sense of familiarity?

Robert: That is definitely familiar to me, yes. Yes, the relationship between child and parent as shown in the clip, that is very familiar to me. (...) When your grades were bad, you would also get spanked at home (laughs). And here in the Netherlands they talk it over, people are not prone to spank [their child], [give] a correcting slap [on the wrist]. While that would happen more often in our family.

(...)

Moderator: Does that sense of familiarity also make you feel at home in that film?

Robert: (...) If it's familiar to you, I think that that just makes you feel comfortable. [The film] would raise questions with an outsider sooner than it would with an Asian for instance.

Steven: It's also [the] comical element really... I think it was in the first clip that he is standing like this with his hands, with his hands up (holds his hands up). That is so typically Asian!

Moderator: How so?

Steven: It's really a common sort of corporal punishment of theirs. You have to hold your hands up and then you get slapped on your hand... or when you [get spanked] with the infamous bamboo cane, you know? Most [Asians] will know that. If you haven't experienced this or if you don't know about this at all, then you will not understand the humor of it. That is the familiar element of course, and then you're able to understand that that is funny to watch... that you know what's going to happen next.

What is notable, is that Steven, who is of Chinese Indonesian origin, has not experienced this type of corporal punishment himself. In this regard his upbringing may be typified as more liberal or 'Westernized'. Nonetheless, Steven is in fact familiar with this type of punishment and understands it. This can be explained by his Asian subject-position and the Asian cultural knowledge he has acquired over the years through interacting with relatives and peers of Asian origin. Steven is not unique in this as this applies to some of the other participants of (Chinese) Indonesian and Indo-Dutch origin as well. It appears that especially the participants of Chinese and Vietnamese origin have had a very strict upbringing that included corporal punishment.

What the data show is that participants perceive certain personality traits, dispositions, acts and lived experiences of Japanese and South Korean characters as familiar. They 'understand' these through the lens of the 'Asian' cultural capital they already possess, and through comparing these aspects of 'Asian' everyday life with their own lived experience. These salient aspects of Asian lived experience are all clearly linked to traditional Asian notions of 'family', 'respect', 'harmony' and a combination of the three 'filial piety'. This, thus, underlines that these three concepts are foregrounded in participants' everyday life and participants' conception of Asian culture and Asian identities. Furthermore, the salient perceived commonalities are expressly labelled as 'Asian' rather than 'Korean' or 'Japanese', or, indeed, 'Chinese', 'Indonesian' and so on. Participants thus effortlessly redefine and redeploy their homeland culture based habitus and cultural capital (e.g., Chinese habitus and Chinese cultural capital) as '*Asian*' habitus and '*Asian*' cultural capital. Also, they articulate a sense of cultural proximity and notions of broad, primordial bonds between themselves and other people of East and Southeast Asian origin. These notions of shared 'Asianness' facilitate the engendering of a deep and emotional sense of familiarity and belonging when the participants see representations of salient aspects of Asian everyday (family) life. The latter thus form the essence of any degree of cultural proximity and Asian identification perceived and experienced by the participants when they consume Japanese and South Korean film and television. Also, the consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television may evoke a sense of Asianness in participants as well as provide them with additional Asian cultural knowledge. Ultimately then, it may confirm, reinforce and expand participants' notions of what it means to be (a moral) Asian.

***Imagining Panethnic Asianness as Non-Dutchness: Resisting Dominant Dutch Culture***

Participants' imagination of Asian identities and participants' identification as Asian imply that they subscribe to the notion that they share culture and identities with both co-ethnics and people of different Asian origin. This includes people of Asian origin in their everyday social contexts. The consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television indeed facilitates the imagination and sharing of Asian identities with peers of Asian origin. This is pointed at by the following interview quote in which Chinese Dutch Feng and Timmy, who is of mixed Thai and Dutch origin, discuss how watching Japanese and South Korean films and television series are linked to being and feeling Asian:

Timmy: I do think that most Asians watch anime, or at least watch an Asian movie.

Feng: Yes, certainly.

Timmy: I'm sure of it. (...) Those [Asians] who live here in the Netherlands.

Feng: Certainly. By watching anime or those [Korean drama] series you already feel Asian enough, because you are just simply watching it. (...) What I mean is... because the majority of Asians watch it and you watch it too, then you just feel that you're simply like one of them.

Through the consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television participants also get a sense of who is Asian and effectively delineate an imagined Asian in-group. This delineation is in part based on their observation that ‘only people of Asian origin’ watch Japanese and South Korean films and television series. The mere consumption of these can thus be seen as an articulation of Asianness by participants and their Asian Dutch peers. Furthermore, and this is essential, the delineation is also based on the notion that peers of certain Asian origin actually understand these films and television series and are able to unlock the ‘deeper’ – or ‘Asian’ – meanings they convey. By extension then, these Asian Dutch peers understand the participants and vice versa, as they also share Asian lived experiences:

- Moderator: The fact that certain things that you’re familiar with occur in that film [*My Sassy Girl*], like that mother... Do you feel those are typical Asian...
- Binh: Yes, that’s very familiar. [We] hear that from everyone.
- Moderator: You mean from your other Asian friends?
- Binh: Yes, when you tell your friends then they will say “We understand it” and so on, and then [the movie] is even funnier.
- Mei-Yin and Anh: (Laugh in agreement)
- Moderator: What’s that like with your non-Asian friends then? Do they feel the same way?
- Anh: No, they would be completely shocked then!
- Mei-Yin: (Imitating non-Asian friends’ reaction) “No, do they hit you?! What?! Really?!”
- Moderator: (Laughs) So it seems it’s easier for you to talk to Asian friends about certain issues?
- All: Yes!
- Binh: Because Dutch find things very weird straightaway. And then it’s actually easier to talk about that [with Asian friends].
- Anh: Yes.

The interview excerpt above emphasizes that when participants talk about Japanese and South Korean film and television with peers of Asian origin, they perceive a high degree of cultural proximity between them and their peers, based on shared lived experiences. At the same time, they perceive a cultural distance between themselves and their White Dutch peers. This then, is a basis for the imagination of Asian identities participants and their Asian Dutch peers share together. Furthermore, the Chinese Dutch participants who, based on an evaluation of perceived Asian physical traits, imagine an Asian in-group of a particularly East Asian nature, do, in fact, imagine an Asian in-group that includes Southeast Asian peers when this is based on perceived shared Asian lived experiences and notions of Asian values and virtues. At the very least, these Chinese

Dutch participants recognize that in terms of these cultural aspects they have more in common with for example Indonesian Dutch peers than with White Dutch peers. Thus, the Asian in-group and Asian identities imagined by participants are also based on conceptions of, and a desire to distinguish from, non-Asian out-groups.

The data also reveal that participants' consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television facilitates the development and maintenance of social relations with Asian Dutch peers in everyday life. This particular social element of consumption practice is of great importance to participants' construction and articulation of Asian identities and Asian identifications. Participants reinforce their bonds and sense of connectedness with siblings, cousins, and friends of diverse Asian origin by watching and discussing these films and television series with them. Moreover, they may even initiate and develop new relationships with Asian Dutch peers:

- Moderator: You have indicated that Japanese and Korean films... well, that they make you feel connected to other Asians.
- Binh: Yes, because only Asians watch that stuff.
- Mei-Yin: Yes, you can just say like "Have you watched this?", "Yes! Yes!" And then you can about it extensively!
- Binh: Yes.
- Moderator: To whom can you say this?
- Anh: Well, other Asians.
- Mei-Yin: Yes.
- Moderator: Yes? It doesn't matter if they're Vietnamese or Chinese or...?
- Anh: No...
- Mei-Yin: No. Like, when I didn't know them (referring to Binh and Anh) yet... (...) Then I just asked like "Do you know this [Korean television] series?" And then we talked about it the *entire* bus ride. From that moment on we were friends.
- (...)
- Moderator: And Dutch peers would for instance talk about *Goede Tijden* (a Dutch popular soap series – RK) instead?
- All participants: (laughing) Yes...
- Anh: Then they would ask me like "Do you know *Goede Tijden*?" and I'm like "Yes, but I don't watch it." (laughing). And then that's the end of [the conversation].

This interview excerpt underscores that through the consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television, participants accumulate Asian cultural capital which they can employ to approach and connect with Asian Dutch strangers in school or elsewhere, who they subsequently may befriend. Furthermore, the interview excerpt demonstrates participants' dislike of mainstream Dutch popular culture, their lack of interest in it and

knowledge about it, and how because of that it is difficult for them to connect with their White Dutch peers. To a degree, this leaves them excluded from participating and being acknowledged in mainstream Dutch society. However, they do connect with Asian Dutch peers through *their* preferred popular culture and talk about it with them, thus constructing an Asian Dutch cultural space, facilitated by their consumption of Japanese and South Korean popular culture. This evokes a sense of participation and belonging in the participants. Furthermore, participants' relationships with Asian Dutch peers in everyday life can be seen as tangible articulations of their sense of cultural proximity and Asian identification. In turn, these Asian Dutch social networks, or Asian social capital, gained through the consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television, reinforce participants' sense of Asianness as well. Thus, in the end, the consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television contributes to a sense of Asian unity and community that transcends popular cultural consumption.

Besides highlighting participants' exclusion from mainstream Dutch (popular) culture, the interview excerpt also illustrates how they may distance themselves from their non-Asian Dutch peers. As said, participants' imagination of an Asian in-group through Japanese and South Korean film and television is clearly linked to their imagination of non-Asian out-groups, in particular White Dutch and 'their' culture. Participants appropriate Japanese and South Korean films and television series and regard these as 'something of their own', not only because of a sense of cultural proximity, but also because they believe Dutch (or other Western) people do not watch them. To a degree, the sense of Asianness engendered through this notion is premised on their reluctance to culturally identify as Dutch and their desire to distinguish themselves from Dutch culture. However, participants do acknowledge that people of non-Asian origin may also watch Japanese and South Korean films and television series, but they persist in the notion of difference between people of Asian and non-Asian origin:

Denise: I know non-Asian girls who watch [Korean dramas]... but who for example do not understand why [the characters] act that way.

Lanh: They have a different perspective.

Denise: They have a *very* different perspective and they don't understand it.

This interview excerpt illustrates how participants position themselves as individuals who already possess a certain degree of Asian cultural capital which enables them to consume and 'truly' understand Japanese and South Korean film and television – unlike peers who do not already possess Asian cultural capital and who are thus deemed less culturally sophisticated. The participants link this a priori Asian cultural capital to their Asian origin, suggesting that non-Asian Dutch peers do not possess it. Clearly, here participants articulate a sense of Asianness to emphasize difference, disconnect and distinction from their White Dutch peers and White Dutch culture. Furthermore, the participants employ their consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television as a marker of Asianness with which they can fashion themselves and through which they can articulate a sense of Asianness, membership of an Asian in-group, and cultural

distinction from their non-Asian peers.

Evidently, participants' imagination of an Asian in-group and attached Asian identities is partly based on their perception of essential differences between people of Asian and non-Asian origin, as well as between 'their' cultures. As demonstrated above, during the focus group interviews participants articulate this notion of cultural difference through their unabashed display of disdain for Western – Dutch in particular – films and television series. They deem these to be of lower cultural value than Japanese and South Korean counterparts, most of all because of perceived 'Western'/'Dutch' virtues, values and culture depicted in these films and television series. Participants are critical of certain aspects of Western/Dutch culture, and they express a preference for a generalized Asian culture, which they find superior. Their denouncement of Dutch popular culture is thus inextricably linked to their denouncement of Dutch culture at large. Consequently, it can be argued that the alternative popular cultural hierarchy participants imagine is in fact embedded in a broader alternative cultural hierarchy they imagine. This underlines that this alternative cultural hierarchy – in which Asian culture takes up a higher position than Western/Dutch culture – is thus the basis for distinction between Asians and non-Asians, and hence of pivotal importance for participants' imaginations of Asian identities and Asian identification. Furthermore, the construction of this alternative cultural hierarchy is in part based on, and reinforced by, depictions of Asian virtues and culture in Japanese and South Korean film and television that participants consume. Finally, by constructing this alternative cultural hierarchy the participants implicitly question the legitimacy of Western/White Dutch culture's rather unchallenged dominant position in the Netherlands and beyond. To the degree that they do, participants' imagination of Asian identities and Asian identification, as well as the consumption of Asian popular culture, can thus be read as an act of resistance against dominant White Dutch cultural norms.

### ***Negotiating Identities and Identifications: Towards Imagining Asian Dutchness***

It is clear that the participants subscribe to the notion of sharing Asian commonalities and having close cultural bonds with Japanese and South Korean characters (and, indeed, with people of diverse Asian origin in their everyday lives). Moreover, they can identify with these characters and they self-identify as Asian through watching Japanese and South Korean film and television. This emphasizes participants' appropriation of these films and television series as well as their ability to employ them for identity construction and identification purposes, as Jing's statement underlines:

I think I can absolutely state that [Korean film and television] were really a part of discovering that Asian side of me. (...) To me [watching Korean films and television series] has indeed been an enhancement to my exploration of my Asian [and] Chinese roots.

Furthermore, for some participants the images and narratives offered in Japanese and South Korean film and television had also been reassuring and helpful in dealing with

particular 'Asian' situations in everyday life that were difficult to understand and accept when they were growing up. Denise explains:

I could identify very well with [Korean dramas] because I was having difficulties [at home] at first as well. Well, more like [with] the rules or the culture, and that my mother was always so strict, you know. And I could see that very clearly in Korean dramas too. Then I really realized like "Yes, this simply is really the Asian culture." It's how we live, you know? Because generally the parents have much say over your life, like you always have to respect the elderly. (...) And uhm, I could see myself in [the dramas] very well. And because I watched [the dramas] and realized that it was something Asian after all, I was better able to accept it eventually. And I was also better able to deal with it.

Moreover, Japanese and South Korean films and television series offer participants a space to reflect on their everyday life and talk about it with their Asian Dutch peers. Such conversations also take place during the focus group interviews, for instance when Mei-Yin, Anh and Binh discuss *My Sassy Girl* and end up reaching a common understanding and acceptance of the corporal punishment they themselves had received from their parents when they were younger:

- Mei-Yin: (...) for example, when [your parents] would hit you very often... I simply know they meant well for you.
- Binh: Yes, that's true.
- Anh: Yes...
- Binh: But only later you realize this
- Mei-Yin: Yes! At first you don't [realize this] at all, do you?
- Anh: No...
- Binh: [Then] it's like: "Why are you hitting me?"
- Anh: (laughing) Like: "Don't you love me?"

What is notable is that many participants did not understand certain aspects of their upbringing when they were growing up. Participants explain that they were angry, sad and puzzled over the fact that, amongst others, they had to obey strict house rules, had to work hard in school as well as in their parents' restaurant or other business when applicable, were subject to corporal punishment and received little affection from their parents – unlike their White Dutch peers. Some participants felt 'weird' and alone, especially those who grew up in parts of the Netherlands with no or few people of Asian origin. But through depictions of aspects of everyday life that were familiar to them, Japanese and South Korean films and television series enabled participants to understand and accept their situation as 'Asian' and as shared with many others. Moreover, these often painful aspects of their everyday life – in particular corporal punishment, due to its bodily aspect – have left an impression on the participants and as such they are important elements for identification and bonding with Asian Dutch peers.

The findings above illuminate how participants' consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television – and in particular the representations of Asian culture, virtues and lived experience they contain – facilitates and structures their imagination of Asian cultures, identities and in-groups, as well as their Asian identifications. The strong sense of Asianness and notions of Asian commonality evoked in and articulated by participants do not, however, imply participants' uncritical consumption of representations of Asian culture and the wholesale uptake and internalization thereof (nor the denouncement of 'Western/Dutch' culture part and parcel). In fact, during the focus group interviews participants do voice discontent with, and sometimes explicit disassociation from, certain aspects of Asian culture as well as their own Asian upbringing. This underscores that participants are engaged in negotiating their diverse and sometimes conflicting identities and identifications, i.e., Dutch, homeland and Asian.

During the focus groups, especially watching and talking about South Korean romantic dramedy *My Sassy Girl* and action filled drama series *City Hunter* elicits extensive discussions among participants, particularly on the issue of their 'Asian' upbringing. Participants reflect on their upbringing and their relationship with their parents, displaying both understanding and criticism. The highly contested nature of these issues is all the more emphasized by some participants who express disagreement between them on these issues. This is for instance the case when Mei-Yin, Anh and Binh vividly continue their discussion on corporal punishment, strictness and other aspects of their upbringing with regards to possible future children of their own:

Anh: Yes, you do take up [ideas about parenting from] your parents. So I guess you will teach these to your children as well.

Moderator: But including the strictness? Regarding grades and...

Binh: Yes... I would take up certain things [from my parents] while certain things I wouldn't.

Moderator: What wouldn't you take up for instance?

Binh: I ehm... would try not to hit my children.

Moderator: And you?

Mei-Yin: (in a soft voice) Ehm, [I would hit them] sometimes... (starts laughing in response to the surprised looks she gets from Binh and Anh) What?!?

Anh: No, perhaps [I would be strict] in a different way.

Mei-Yin: (laughing) A different way of hitting?

Anh: (laughing) No... For instance, [parents] usually tell you "Go and do your homework," don't they? But then I want to actually see [my kids doing it], you know.

(...)

Mei-Yin: When my little niece [is being naughty], I will already hit her you know. I'll slap her on that hand, like that! I don't know whether Dutch people

- would do that.
- Anh: No, I would tickle them. Then they would say “stop, stop, stop!”  
(laughs)
- Mei-Yin: No, I would just hit her, then she won’t do it again.
- Binh: I did it with my younger brothers, but then I was younger. I would hit them when they did stuff. But later I kind of thought like “Well, I shouldn’t have done that actually.”
- Mei-Yin: (sounding surprised) You shouldn’t have???
- Binh: Yes, [I thought about] that I don’t want to raise my children in that way, you know, that I would hit them all and stuff.
- Mei-Yin: Yes, but you have to... Look, what if they [are naughty] and you don’t do anything [about it]?
- (...)
- Binh: A lot of parents can raise their children just as well without hitting them and such.
- Mei-Yin: I don’t know... I don’t know any Asian parents who didn’t hit [their children].
- Binh: Not Asian [parents], no. But I do think that... [corporal punishment] is getting less [common] with newer generations.
- Mei-Yin: Yes, I wouldn’t know... perhaps. I in fact think it’s good when [parents] sometimes hit [their children].
- Binh: Yes, that’s what I used to think as well but... I don’t know, [the way I feel about this] has changed over the past few years. Perhaps because I watch those parenting shows, you know?
- Mei-Yin: Hahaha, what?
- Binh: You know, where they raise those children and such. And then their parents are not raising them well and then one of those nannies comes in and...
- Mei-Yin: Oh nanny, yes. (...) But I mean... not too hard you know, a slap, just a light slap.

This interview excerpt illustrates how, through consuming and discussing Japanese and South Korean films and television series, participants become engaged in critically reflecting on their Asian everyday life, and by extension Asian culture at large. They negotiate notions of Asian identities and their Asian identifications, both individually and among their peers, by critically assessing which perceived aspects of Asian culture – and aspects of their Asian upbringing in particular – they do and do not appreciate and approve of. Moreover, they assess which aspects they intend to perpetuate, discard or change. While participants may express understanding of, reconciliation with, and even approval of certain difficult and painful Asian aspects of their everyday lives, at the

same time they critically assess these and may engender a desire for change as well. The participants do not disassociate themselves from Asian culture altogether however. In fact, their adherence and loyalty to Asian values concerning family, respect and harmony remain solid. The desire for change articulated by participants is thus not so much a critique of (the legitimacy of) the values they perceive as the base of a shared Asian culture. Rather, they address the interpretations of these values and their fulfilment in concrete virtues, ideas and actions in everyday life, for instance by questioning 'Asian' parenting methods to ensure children's obedience and respect towards parents.

In search for new and progressive interpretations and fulfilments of traditional Asian values, participants also look to their White Dutch peers and Western culture, including popular culture, as underlined by Binh's appropriation of Western parenting television shows. Participants express that in matters such as (strict) parenting, personal freedom and public display of affection, their views may be more liberal or 'Westernized' compared to those held by their parents, their peers in Asia, and traditional Asian culture in general. Thus, while only few participants articulate explicit Dutch identifications during the focus group interviews, most have in fact appropriated and internalised (aspects of) generalised Dutch or Western culture. They have become 'bananas' as Mei-Yin jokingly says, "yellow outside, white inside." This however, does not negate participants' strong discontent with, and denouncement of, particular aspects of Western/Dutch (popular) culture, as demonstrated earlier. Notions of difference from their White Dutch peers and Western/Dutch culture continue to inform participants' formation of cultural identities and processes of identification to a great extent.

It can be argued that Japanese and South Korean film and television provide participants with a cultural space in which they can safely negotiate their Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identities and identifications. Through the consumption of Japanese and South Korean films and television series participants do not only understand and internalise aspects of Asian culture, they also critically reflect on these aspects and may disregard them. Participants thus clearly negotiate their Asian identities and identifications. Importantly, they do so against the backdrop of Dutch and homeland cultures. The panethnic Asian culture they imagine through Japanese and South Korean film and television constitutes both continuity and change vis-à-vis their homeland culture. Furthermore, for an important part the change is elicited by the Dutch culture they are also immersed in. Thus, the Asian identities and identifications the participants imagine are not exclusively Asian. They are, in fact, Dutch in the sense that they could only be imagined in Dutch society, in a cultural space where the diverse cultures, identities and identifications the participants engage with, intersect and can be negotiated.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study set out to investigate how young Asian Dutch make sense of Japanese and South Korean film and television, and more specifically, how the consumption thereof is related to their imagination of Asian identities and Asian identifications. The findings

demonstrate that Japanese and South Korean film and television strongly resonate with Asian Dutch viewers' sense of Asianness. Young Asian Dutch engender feelings of cultural proximity and panethnic Asian identification and categorize themselves as well as Japanese and South Korean media characters as 'Asian' rather than as 'Japanese', 'Chinese' and so forth. They identify with these media texts and the characters portrayed in them through their perception of shared 'Asian' physical traits and shared 'Asian' values and lived experience. Furthermore, the consumption of Japanese and South Korean films and television series provides Asian Dutch viewers with (additional) 'Asian' cultural capital, as well as 'Asian' social capital. Thus, on the one hand it provides them with cultural repertoires for living a moral 'Asian' life and facilitates the development and maintenance of relationships with their Asian Dutch peers, while on the other hand it lends them distinction from their non-Asian Dutch peers. The Asian cultural capital they accumulate, in particular notions of certain traditional 'Asian' values and virtues, structures the Asian identities they imagine as well as the distinction they make between an Asian in-group and non-Asian out-groups.

In a quantitative survey study, Kartosen & Tan (2013) already found that young Asian Dutch engender and combine multiple cultural identifications (i.e., Dutch, homeland and Asian), and that young Asian Dutch' consumption of popular media from non-homeland Asian countries is associated with their Asian identifications in one way or another. The present study analysed accounts of lived experiences of viewing and using popular Asian film and television and provides an in depth view of how popular culture may facilitate multiple identifications. The findings illuminate how through the consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television young Asian Dutch create their own cultural space in which they can negotiate their diverse and conflicting cultural identities and identifications. Thus, the complexities of young Asian Dutch' popular media consumption and how this serves negotiations and structuring of identities and identifications, were laid bare. Above all, young Asian Dutch demonstrate substantial agency in these matters. They are acutely aware of the various options in trans/national media and popular culture as well as identities and identifications offered to them, and they display a certain degree of sovereignty in this. Their preferences, choices and negotiations thereof are highly reflexive and deliberate. This also explains the observed differences between individual young Asian Dutch in terms of media and popular culture consumption practices and sense-making, as well as in terms of conceptions and negotiations of Asian identities and Asian identifications. Some young Asian Dutch identify strongly with traditional 'Asian' values and culture, while certain 'contradicting' aspects of 'Western' values and culture are foregrounded by others. In these processes of imagining identities and identifications, Japanese and South Korean film and television offer young Asian Dutch a mirror as well as a window on Asian values and culture. To differing degree they recognize themselves in the images and narratives and engender feelings of 'Asian' familiarity and commonality, and in addition they acquire additional Asian cultural knowledge to imagine ways of becoming a moral Asian subject. Moreover, interaction with their Asian Dutch peers and processes of shared reflexivity play a

significant role in this, and, importantly, in turn these are also facilitated by young Asian Dutch' consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television.

The findings clearly foreground young Asian Dutch' agency in their media consumption practices, thus resonating with the notion that media do not simply determine identities and identifications, but rather they offer frameworks and symbolic material with which identities and identifications can be imagined. Also, as Silverstone and Georgiou (2005) argue, "these identities are essentially plural" (p. 436). This is all the more underlined by the observation that young Asian Dutch differ from their peers in Asia with regard to the cultural proximity they perceive and experience and the Asian identities they imagine through the consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television. Audiences in Asia lend a sense of cultural proximity and identification from depictions of Asian modernity (e.g., Iwabuchi, 2010, 2011). The Asian identities they imagine are thus centred on notions of Asian modernity and middle class consciousness. Indeed, Chua (2012) even argues that any cultural proximity and identification experienced by viewers in Asia are more likely to be based on shared middle class capitalist consumer ideologies and identities than on notions of shared Asian values and panethnic Asian identities. This is different for Asian Dutch viewers who, in fact, identify more with portrayals of traditional Asian values and culture in Japanese and South Korean film and television than with the portrayals of Asian modernity and middle class consumer culture. Thus, while audiences of Japanese and South Korean film and television across Asia share a sense of Asian modernity and of Asian routes or futures, young Asian Dutch share a sense of Asian tradition and of Asian roots or pasts. Young Asian Dutch are in search for a shared Asian past and shared Asian tradition to serve as a cultural base or anchor. This is in part an act of construing a shared cultural identity that sets them apart from their non-Asian Dutch peers and dominant White Dutch culture, and lends them distinction and cultural capital. For another part, it is a consequence of not being represented in Dutch media and popular culture and of feeling displaced in the Netherlands. The consumption of Japanese and South Korean film and television compensates for Asian Dutch' relative invisibility and the denial of their cultural citizenship in Dutch society. These salient differences between audiences in Asia and Asian Dutch viewers attest to the notion that cultural proximity and the shared identities associated with it are fluid and contextualized (e.g., Iwabuchi, 2010).

Ultimately, the Asian identities and identifications imagined by young Asian Dutch are not necessarily 'Asian' in terms of citizenship or geographical attachment. Notwithstanding the notion that the consumption of transnational media and popular culture offers minority groups "frameworks for participation and agency no longer grounded in singular residence and no longer oriented exclusively to the project of national or singular citizenship" (Silverstone & Georgiou, p. 438), the Asian cultural identities and identifications imagined by young Asian Dutch cannot simply be viewed as articulations of detachment from Dutch society altogether and attachment to Asia instead. Rather, by reworking the symbolic material offered by transnational Asian media and popular

culture, young Asian Dutch imagine particular Dutch forms of Asianness or Asian Dutchness. It can be argued that their sense of Asianness is grounded in their shared awareness that to a certain degree they think and feel 'traditionally Asian' while at the same time they can critically assess 'traditional Asian culture' as involved 'outsiders'. In the end, young Asian Dutch imagine Asian Dutch identities and identifications that are questioning and resisting both dominant Dutch culture and homeland culture. These are thus not global Asian identities and identifications disconnected from Dutch society, but, rather, glocalised Asian Dutch identities and identifications firmly embedded in young Asian Dutch' everyday lives immersed in Dutch and homeland culture.

#### **NOTE**

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that most participants display, at one time or another, awareness that they are generalizing when they talk of 'Asian' values, culture and virtues. Some explicitly question the 'Asianness' of certain values and virtues perceived as Asian, for example when they contend that they know people of non-Asian origin who also have tightknit families, as well as people of Asian origin who do not. Furthermore, the participants do not identify with all aspects of Japanese and South Korean culture; they do find some cultural aspects "strange" or "exotic" and denounce certain aspects, in particular cultural aspects they deem "too conservative" and "too old fashioned".

**APPENDIX**

## Composition of the Focus Groups

| <b>Group</b> | <b>Name</b> | <b>Sex</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Ethnic origin(s)</b> |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1            | Anthony     | Male       | 28         | Chinese-Surinamese      |
|              | Sandra      | Female     | 25         | Indonesian and Dutch    |
|              | Yuna        | Female     | 25         | Malay                   |
|              | Cynthia     | Female     | 28         | Indonesian              |
| 2            | Binh        | Female     | 20         | Vietnamese and French   |
|              | Mei-Yin     | Female     | 21         | Chinese-Singaporean     |
|              | Anh         | Female     | 20         | Vietnamese              |
| 3            | Jing        | Female     | 31         | Chinese                 |
|              | Ling        | Female     | 27         | Chinese                 |
| 4            | Nancy       | Female     | 19         | Vietnamese              |
|              | Lanh        | Female     | 18         | Vietnamese              |
|              | Denise      | Female     | 18         | Vietnamese              |
| 5            | Julia       | Female     | 29         | Chinese-Surinamese      |
|              | Robert      | Male       | 30         | Chinese-Surinamese      |
|              | Steven      | Male       | 30         | Chinese-Indonesian      |
| 6            | Chen        | Male       | 21         | Chinese-Indonesian      |
|              | Maurice     | Male       | 19         | Chinese                 |
|              | Dave        | Male       | 18         | Chinese                 |
|              | Andrew      | Male       | 20         | Chinese                 |
| 7            | Huynh       | Male       | 24         | Vietnamese              |
|              | Fajar       | Male       | 25         | Indonesian              |
| 8            | Timmy       | Male       | 24         | Thai and Dutch          |
|              | Aliyah      | Female     | 19         | Indonesian and Dutch    |
|              | Lian        | Female     | 22         | Chinese and Korean      |
|              | Feng        | Male       | 21         | Chinese                 |
| 9            | Li-Ming     | Female     | 27         | Chinese                 |
|              | Li-Wei      | Female     | 25         | Chinese                 |





5

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **Summary and Conclusions**

This research project set out to shed more light on Asian minorities in the Netherlands. As noted before, Asian Dutch are virtually absent in Dutch political, public and academic discourses about cultural diversity, migration and multicultural society (see also Chow, 2011; Chow, Zwier, & Van Zoonen, 2008). By investigating and reporting on Asian Dutch specifically, this project attempts to intervene in these debates and to adjust the discourses so as to make them more inclusive and a better reflection of multicultural reality in the Netherlands. Not just by increasing the representation and visibility of Asian Dutch as such, but more importantly by inserting their very own voices and an understanding of particular aspects of their everyday lives in the Netherlands. Ultimately, this will enhance our comprehension of Dutch multicultural society at large – both academically and sociopolitically.

In retrospect, the seed of the present project had already been planted in the early 1990s. It was then when my personal experiences with, and observations of, an emerging sense of panethnic Asianness that resonated with a growing number of young Asian Dutch, started to build up. This new phenomenon of young people of Chinese, Indonesian, Indo-Dutch, Vietnamese and other Asian origin calling themselves ‘Asian’ – and proudly at that –, coming together and connecting at Asian parties, keenly watching film and television from Asian countries other than their homeland; this I wanted to understand, and subsequently explain to others, passionately. What is this sense of Asianness they, and, indeed, I myself share? Why? How? These and other questions coupled with my extensive observations eventually got embedded into the existing extensive body of scholarship on ethnic minorities, cultural identities and identifications, panethnicity, multiculturalism, media consumption, popular culture, cultural globalization and so forth. This resulted in the formulation of the main objective of this research project, namely to explore and gain an understanding of the role of local Asian Dutch and transnational Asian popular culture in young Asian Dutch’ panethnic Asian cultural identifications and their construction of panethnic Asian cultural identities.

Through conducting the studies reported in the preceding chapters, I have tried to find and formulate answers to the main research question and a number of sub questions flowing from it. What follows below is a summary of the separate studies and their main findings and a reflection and synthesis thereof, leading up to answers to the research questions and a discussion of the wider academic and sociopolitical implications of the findings and conclusions.

The very first objective of the present research project was to explore and map young Asian Dutch’ Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identifications and combinations thereof. Given that this is the first research project to investigate panethnic Asian identifications in the Netherlands, it was essential to start by exploring to what degree young Asian Dutch identify as Asian and how this is related to other cultural identifications. To this end, an online survey was conducted for this project’s first study. The study established empirically that among certain segments of the Asian Dutch population there is a sense of panethnic Asianness. Young Asian Dutch engender Asian identifications in addition to, or next to, their Dutch and homeland (e.g., Chinese or Indonesian) identifications. Three

distinctive cultural identification types – or groupings of respondents who share similar distinct configurations of particular levels of Dutch, homeland and Asian identifications – were identified in the study: 1) ‘Cosmopolitans’, who show strong Dutch, homeland and Asian cultural identifications, 2) ‘Asians’, who combine strong homeland and Asian cultural identifications with weak Dutch cultural identification, and 3) ‘Hostlanders’, who combine moderate homeland and Asian cultural identifications with stronger Dutch cultural identification.

Furthermore, no clear-cut negative relationship between non-Dutch identification on the one hand and Dutch identification and ‘integration’ in the Netherlands on the other hand, was found. In fact, ‘Cosmopolitans’ show the highest level of ‘integration’ and Dutch identification, as well as strong homeland and Asian identification. Also, even ‘Asians’, who show the highest levels of homeland and Asian identification, show a positive identification with the Netherlands and are relatively well integrated in socioeconomic terms. The findings undermine popular belief that (strong) hostland and non-hostland identifications cannot be combined, and that engendering non-hostland identification hinders integration into the hostland. ‘Well integrated’ Asian Dutch, who hold significant amounts of mainstream cultural capital, also show strong homeland and Asian identifications. This may in part be explained by the notion that especially for ‘well integrated’, middle class ethnic minorities such as certain Asian Dutch, (pan) ethnic identifications have become an asset and a worthwhile way to distinguish oneself from the mainstream (e.g., Halter, 2000). It has become a new type of capital, and in the context of this research project one could speak of Asian cultural capital.

The first study also explored young Asian Dutch’ consumption of popular culture and media and how this is tied to their Asian identification. With regards to media consumption patterns, the study showed that respondents in general consume more popular media (i.e., film, television and pop music) than news media. Furthermore, the study established that in addition to popular media from the US, the Netherlands and their homelands, Asian Dutch also consume popular media from Asian countries other than their homelands. Chinese Dutch for instance, may pick and mix from films, television series and pop music from the US, the Netherlands, China as well as South Korea. As such, this study is one of the first to explore and establish these patterns of cross-Asian popular media consumption among Asian diasporas in the West. Also, the study found that levels of non-homeland Asian popular media consumption are highest among ‘Asians’ and lowest among ‘Hostlanders’ while ‘Cosmopolitans’ fall in between. A similar pattern emerged for the levels of Asian identification obtained through the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media. Finally, nightlife consumption was also investigated. It was found that ‘Asians’ visit so called Asian parties – or panethnic Asian Dutch nightlife – relatively more often than ‘Cosmopolitans’, while ‘Cosmopolitans’ do so compared to ‘Hostlanders’. ‘Asians’ and ‘Cosmopolitans’ show high and comparable levels of Asian identification obtained from visiting Asian parties, while ‘Hostlanders’ show considerably lower levels thereof.

The findings suggested a relationship between Asian Dutch' sense of Asianness and the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media. More specifically, it seemed that the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular culture is an articulation of Asian Dutch' Asian identifications. Furthermore, a similar relationship between Asian identification and the consumption of Asian parties is revealed as well. Essentially, what the first study illuminated, is that non-homeland Asian popular media and Asian Dutch nightlife are part of young Asian Dutch' everyday lives, and that the consumption thereof is related to their sense of Asianness. This underlined the importance of Asian and Asian Dutch popular culture for young Asian Dutch' Asian identification and warranted more in depth investigation into their relationship.

This research project's second study directed attention to the phenomenon of Asian parties. Asian parties constitute a crucial research site with regards to panethnic Asianness in the Netherlands as they were the first (and continue to be some of the most prolific) explicitly panethnic Asian spaces in the Netherlands. As such they have played an indispensable role in the emergence and maintenance of a sense of Asianness among young Asian Dutch. More specifically, the study focused on the producers of Asian parties, which, given that they have been or still are consumers of Asian parties themselves, provided an opportunity to examine both the production and consumption of Asian parties. Furthermore, the study investigated Asian party producers' considerations and motivations with regards to the production of Asian parties. This provided a unique and additional perspective on young Asian Dutch' Asian identities and identifications as well as the construction of Asianness in the Netherlands in general. To this end, participatory observations at Asian parties and in depth interviews with DJs, promoters and others involved in the production of Asian parties were conducted.

First and foremost, Asian party producers' vivid accounts of their own first encounters and subsequent experiences with Asian parties as 'regular' consumers unmistakably showed how young Asian Dutch are socialized in these panethnic Asian cultural spaces. They also showed how Asian parties facilitate and direct both young Asian Dutch' imagination of Asian identities and Asian identification, as well as the materialization thereof into real life cross-Asian interactions and relationships. Asian parties facilitate a shared sense of Asian togetherness, cultural proximity and belonging among young Asian Dutch visitors. Also, Asian parties structure young Asian Dutch' Asian identities and identifications through foregrounding a particular delineation of a panethnic Asian in-group (i.e., people of Southeast and East Asian origin) and by emphasizing the notion of community-in-difference (i.e., commonalities are foregrounded rather than differences between single ethnic-national origins, groups or cultures).

Furthermore, the study shed light on the strategic deployment of Asian identities and identifications by Asian party producers. They successfully employ the Asian cultural and social capital they gained through their sense of Asianness and through visiting Asian parties to produce Asian parties themselves. Asian party producers thus transform their

Asian cultural and social capital into economic and symbolic capital. This concurs with the notion that ethnic identities and identifications constitute valuable assets or capital nowadays (e.g., Halter, 2000). Asian party producers could be regarded as 'plain and simple' nightlife entrepreneurs as their involvement in the production of Asian parties is guided by economic motives and market logic. However, the study demonstrated that many Asian party producers are also driven by moral motives associated with their sense of Asianness and their sense of connection to, and responsibility towards, the 'Asian community' in the Netherlands. They are committed to the idea of providing young Asian Dutch a safe space where they and their peers of diverse Asian origin can come together, mingle, feel at home, and imagine shared Asian identities and identifications. Asian party producers' moral or Asian goals are thus materialized in the production of Asian parties.

Both Asian party producers' economic and moral motives affect the production of Asian parties and their (symbolic) content and features, and consequently lead to particular configurations of these Asian cultural spaces. Indeed, the observations at Asian parties as well as the interviews with the producers showed that in general, Asian parties contain few symbolic or material markers of Asianness. Asianness is located in the people present at Asian parties: the crowd as well as the DJs, MCs, artists and other performers are mainly of Asian origin. To a large extent the Asian parties produced by the Asian party producers interviewed for this study are thus a perpetuation of the Asian parties the producers consumed themselves. The producers are, ultimately, involved in the reproduction of panethnic Asianness as they have known it from the start: an Asianness that foregrounds the notion of community-in-difference and shared Asian identities and identifications.

The final study of this project investigated in depth the relationship between young Asian Dutch' sense of Asianness and the consumption of non-homeland Asian popular media reported in the project's first study. It did so through conducting focus group interviews with young Asian Dutch about their consumption of Japanese and South Korean popular film and television. The study established that young Asian Dutch find Japanese and South Korean films and television series appealing and enjoy them, in part because they evoke a sense of cultural proximity in them; young Asian Dutch identify with the narratives and characters through their sense of shared Asianness. In turn, Japanese and South Korean films and television series contribute to young Asian Dutch' imagination and articulation of Asian identities and identifications. Young Asian Dutch' notions of cultural proximity and Asian identification are evoked by the characters' perceived 'Asian' physical appearances and by the representations of 'Asian' values, culture and lived experience. These, then, facilitate a sense of belonging as well as the imagination of Asian identities and identifications of a particular Southeast and East Asian nature.

Through watching Japanese and South Korean films and television series and talking about them with Asian Dutch peers, young Asian Dutch reflect on their own 'Asian'

upbringing and other aspects of their 'Asian' lived experience. In that sense, the films and television series serve as a mirror for young Asian Dutch. In addition, they also serve as a window on 'Asian' everyday life and as such they provide young Asian Dutch with additional Asian cultural repertoires and knowledge needed to live a moral 'Asian' life. Furthermore, as young Asian Dutch enjoy watching characters 'like themselves' who they can identify with as Asians, Japanese and South Korean film and television, to an extent, replace Dutch and US popular media content lacking Asian representations. Moreover, Japanese and South Korean film and television provide young Asian Dutch with additional cultural capital with which they can distinguish themselves from non-Asian Dutch peers, and resist and question dominant White Dutch (popular) culture. Most significantly perhaps, the findings illuminate how Japanese and South Korean film and television contribute to an Asian Dutch cultural space in and through which young Asian Dutch are able to negotiate their Dutch, homeland and Asian identities and identifications.

The findings of the three studies taken together clearly demonstrate that young Asian Dutch do indeed identify *as* Asian in the first place and identify *with* people of Asian origin in the second, and that they construct shared Asian identities. Furthermore, this sense of Asianness has been shown to be tightly connected to the consumption of transnational non-homeland Asian popular culture and the consumption and production of local Asian Dutch popular culture.

These new and emerging Asian identities and identifications are appealing to certain segments of the Asian Dutch population as they offer them a way out of a constraining hostland-homeland dichotomy. While the findings of the first study did indeed show that the majority of young Asian Dutch engender strong Dutch and/or homeland cultural identifications, the qualitative follow-up studies provided in depth understandings of these identifications and highlighted their problematic nature. On the one hand, young Asian Dutch do not completely feel at home in the mainstream Dutch cultural sphere. They acknowledge the symbolical exclusion of Asian Dutch from mainstream Dutch culture and society, and at times they feel that they are not fully accepted for who they are by their White peers and Dutch society at large. As young Asian Dutch are being othered and not perceived as 'real' Dutch subjects, it is difficult for them to feel Dutch and unreflectively engage with the Dutch cultural sphere. On the other hand, young Asian Dutch are also critical about their homeland cultures as they find them traditional and quite restrictive – in particular when compared to Dutch or Western culture. Consequently, young Asian Dutch do not unconditionally and at all times identify with their homeland cultures, nor have they formed 'stable' and 'unified' Chinese, Vietnamese or other homeland based cultural identities.

While older generations of Asian Dutch have generally only had the option and the desire to engage with Dutch and/or homeland cultural spheres, today young Asian Dutch can also engage with panethnic Asian spheres. Given the problematic nature of Dutch and

homeland cultural spheres and identifications, it is not difficult to see how Asianness effectively constitutes a new and attractive option for young Asian Dutch. Rather than being forced to identify and engage with hostland and homeland cultural spheres only – and thus being subjugated by these – young Asian Dutch have embraced Asian cultural spheres, identities and identifications as a ‘solution’ to this constraining dichotomy. Compared to Dutchness and Indonesianness, Chineseness and so forth, Asianness offers young Asian Dutch more space for imagining cultural identities and identifications and is more open and inclusive as it does not preclude hostland or homeland identifications. In this sense, the panethnic Asian ‘community’ in the Netherlands is an example of what Baumann (1996) called community-in-difference. Young Asian Dutch are acutely aware of differences among themselves flowing from their diverse ethnic, national, cultural, and migration backgrounds. At the same time however, they actively construct shared Asian identities based on shared lived experience and perceived cultural commonalities, most saliently the importance and centrality of ‘family’, ‘harmony’, ‘respect’ and ‘filial piety’ in ‘Asian culture’ as well as in their own everyday lives. In panethnic Asian cultural spheres, young Asian Dutch downplay cultural differences, emphasize their commonalities, and foreground shared identities and identifications. This, then, facilitates the development of larger social networks crosscutting cultural boundaries.

Also, panethnic Asianness is young Asian Dutch’ own creation, and it is given meaning by themselves rather than by traditional institutions like the family, school or government. To a certain degree it is a source of pride and distinction vis-à-vis non-Asian Dutch peers and mainstream Dutchness, and it empowers them. In the face of stigmatization, exclusion and marginalization, young Asian Dutch are critical about how they are perceived, represented and treated by mainstream Dutch society. In addition, they are critical about the perceived conservatism in, and pressures from, the homeland spheres they encounter in their everyday lives. But rather than positioning themselves as dupes or victims of sociocultural structures they have no control over, young Asian Dutch appear remarkably strong and resilient. This, I argue, can in part be credited to the presence and availability of Asianness, to which young Asian Dutch can belong, and which they can employ as a rich sociocultural resource with which they can enlarge their social, cultural and symbolic capital.

As mentioned, the studies’ findings also show that the emergence and maintenance of panethnic Asian cultural spheres, identities and identifications in the Netherlands are inextricably connected to the consumption and production of local Asian Dutch popular culture and the consumption of transnational non-homeland Asian popular culture by young Asian Dutch. These forms of popular culture are the essential sociocultural resources, the raw materials so to say, that young Asian Dutch have employed and continue to employ to construct Asianness in the Netherlands.

In particular Asian parties have played a pivotal role in the creation and emergence of a sense of panethnic Asianness among young Asian Dutch, as they constitute the first

explicitly panethnic Asian cultural spaces in the Netherlands and revolve around face-to-face interaction, unlike mediated forms of popular culture. Young Asian Dutch have been able to meet peers of different Asian origin at Asian parties. Furthermore, at Asian parties they have been able to imagine and articulate panethnic Asian identities and identifications which they incorporate in their everyday lives and diffuse among, and share with, their Asian Dutch peers. The case of Asian parties clearly underscores the socio-spatial dialectic or the notion that space shapes the social just as much as the social shapes space (Soja, 1980). It also foregrounds the importance of real life interactions between young Asian Dutch for the construction of Asianness in the Netherlands. Asian identities are not 'simply' synthetic and virtual identities imagined through mediated popular culture, they are constructed, shared, lived and connected in and through the social worlds of young Asian Dutch. Whether through friendships with young Asian Dutch peers forged at for instance high school, or through visiting Asian parties that are explicitly produced to facilitate interaction between young Asian Dutch. Thus, despite the observation that only a minority of the young Asian Dutch participants in this research project visit Asian parties, the significance of Asian parties for the creation and diffusion of panethnic Asianness in the Netherlands cannot be underestimated. Indeed, notions of panethnic Asianness in the Netherlands as observed in this research project, may not have come to fruition had it not been for Asian parties. In the end, this underlines the suggestion that the production of culture and identity in general is shaped by real life interactions.

The above is not to say that mediated popular culture is of little importance to the construction and maintenance of Asianness in the Netherlands. On the contrary, what the studies taken together illuminate is in fact the importance of, and the interplay between, the different forms of popular culture consumed by young Asian Dutch. Asian parties' main contribution to panethnic Asianness in the Netherlands is located in their unique capacity to facilitate real life social interactions between young Asian Dutch and to represent and diffuse a sense of panethnic Asianness in Dutch public space. Japanese and South-Korean film and television on the other hand, function as rich and accessible resources of Asian cultural knowledge with which young Asian Dutch can imagine more intricate and particular shared Asian identities and identifications. As such, Japanese and South Korean film and television can be viewed as infusing the panethnic Asian bonds and group identities forged at Asian parties with indispensable cultural content or meaning. If Asian parties afford young Asian Dutch a space to forge a sense of Asian groupness, then Japanese and South Korean films and television series provide them with a mirror and a window on Asianness. Also, Japanese and South Korean film and television compensate for a painful lack of representation in mainstream Dutch media and popular culture. Ultimately, what the findings illustrate is how 'ordinary' people employ various forms of popular culture to construct new and creative cultural identities and cultural spheres that are not foregrounded or sanctioned by the state, the family or other traditional institutions.

To a degree the panethnic Asian identities and identification imagined by young Asian Dutch differ from those imagined in other localities. While acknowledging that one should speak of multiple Asiannesses in the Netherlands rather than of a singular and 'stable' Asianness, it is possible to paint a generalized picture of Asianness in the Netherlands. This becomes all the more clear when it is compared to for instance panethnic Asianness in the United States.

In much of the literature on Asian panethnicity in the United States, not the least Espiritu's seminal book *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities* (1992), the instrumental nature, meanings and articulations of panethnic Asianness are foregrounded. Although cultural aspects and considerations as well as the notion of primordial bonds are also observed and discussed, it is emphasized that panethnic Asianness in the US emerged out of Asian Americans' desire and need to combine their forces and unite in order to reach particular (socio)political objectives, mainly counteracting exclusion from all major spheres of life. Fighting overt and virulent racism targeted at Asian Americans and securing government funding of race-based community interest groups were two main objectives. Hence, Asian American panethnicity is often described as a movement, alliance or collectivity, while the very term 'Asian American' was coined by student activists of Asian origin. Furthermore, the delineation of 'Asian America', of who belongs to this panethnic 'group', has to great extent been influenced by the (from time to time varying) definition of 'Asian American' used by US government for census purposes, equal opportunity programs, and the like. Asian Americans have internalized this assigned identity and its delineation, and, on the other hand, appropriated it for their own objectives. Thus, in the US the delineation of 'Asian American' has changed over time according to the needs of US government as well as Asian Americans themselves and at present includes Americans of East, Southeast and South Asian origin (see Espiritu (1992) for an extensive and insightful account of the emergence of panethnic Asianness in the US).

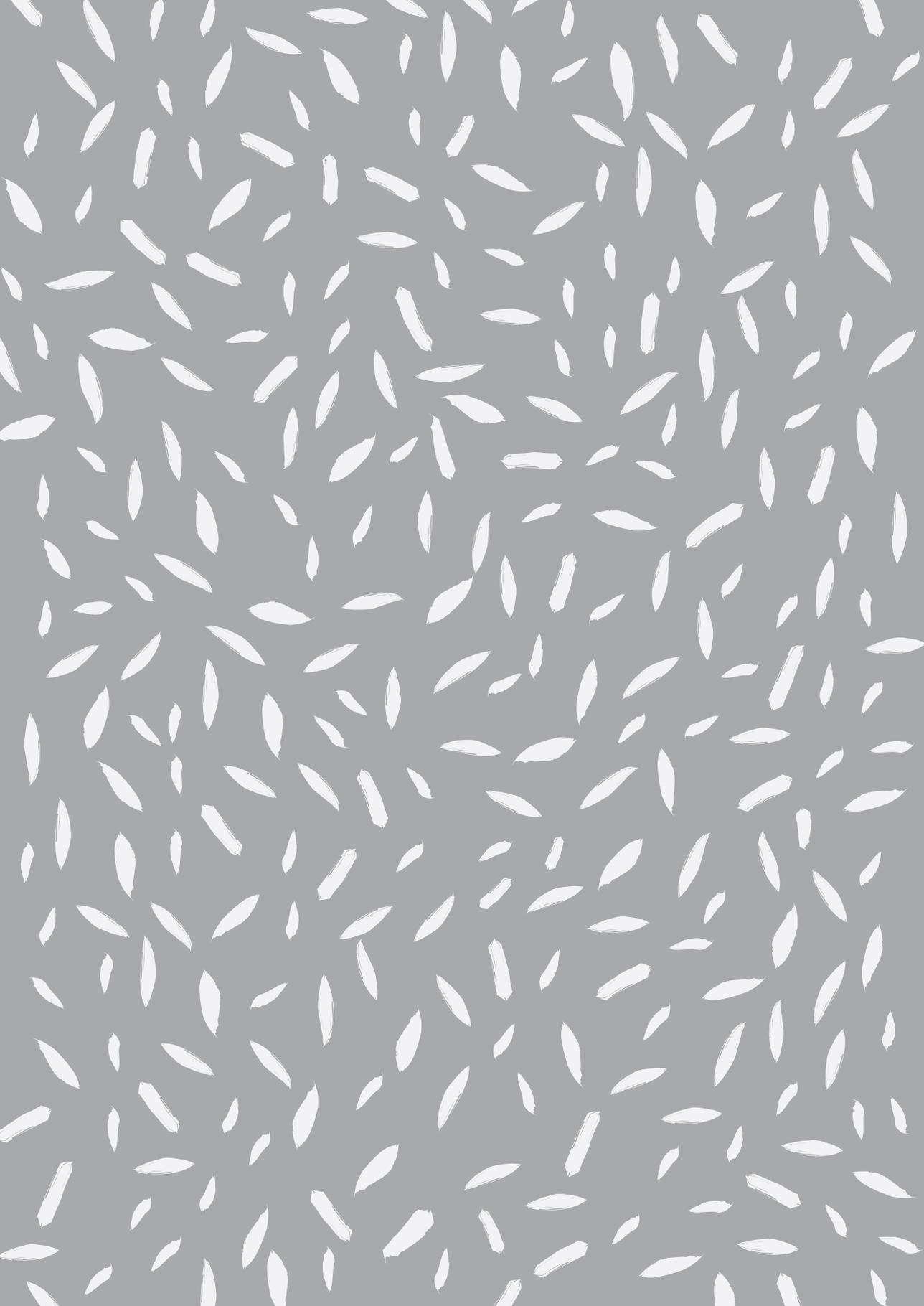
Already in their most commonly used delineation of who 'belongs', panethnic Asianness in the Netherlands and the US are distinct from one another. As the findings suggest, young Asian Dutch themselves have constructed a panethnic Asian in-group that includes people of East and Southeast Asian origin specifically. This is not based on official definitions used by Dutch government (in fact, there is no one unambiguous official 'Asian Dutch' category in use for government purposes in the Netherlands), nor is it linked to certain explicit and overt political objectives held by Asian Dutch. Moreover, there are no panethnic Asian interest groups of significance organized around a political agenda in the Netherlands; all the significant panethnic Asian interest groups are completely or mainly organized around notions of panethnic Asian (popular) culture and the (re)production thereof. This is all the more emphasized by the fact that one of the very few recent instances of overt panethnic Asian Dutch activism (protests directed at Dutch celebrity Gordon who made racist comments about a Chinese contestant during a talent show on Dutch television) was to a great extent organized through Asian Dutch film festival CinemAsia.

Still, panethnic Asianness as a 'solution' or resistance against a constraining hostland-homeland dichotomy has political connotations – albeit in the realm of the everyday and the private. Also, Asian party producers' objective to create panethnic Asian cultural spaces that facilitate cross-Asian social interaction and the construction and maintenance of panethnic Asian identities, as well as their efforts to support Asian Dutch artists and increase the visibility of Asian Dutch in Dutch society, do carry sociopolitical meaning. However, ultimately, the essential meanings and nature of these objectives and the Asian parties flowing from them, as well as of panethnic Asianness per se, are (popular) cultural rather than political. In the Netherlands, notions of panethnic Asian identities and unity are not commonly and structurally employed to fight racism for instance, or to reach other sociopolitical goals.

Asian Dutch seem to have little interest in organizing Asian Dutch activism. This may be explained by the observation that compared to Asian Americans, Asian Dutch are generally confronted with acts of racism and exclusion that are perceived to be less severe, at least in terms of violence and other material consequences. A similar explanation applies for differences between Asian Dutch and other ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. Moroccan Dutch, Dutch Muslims and black Dutch in particular appear to be confronted with much more virulent forms of racism and exclusion than Asian Dutch. Consequently they have formed very vocal and public anti-racism groups addressing various issues from racial profiling and police brutality to Black Pete, a racialized blackface caricature that is part of Dutch traditional holiday Saint Nicholas Day. The racism and exclusion that Asian Dutch are confronted with in the Netherlands are arguably of a more cultural and symbolic nature, amongst others felt in the lacking and stereotypical representation of Asian Dutch in Dutch mainstream media and popular culture. As the findings show, the Asian Dutch cultural sphere which young Asian Dutch themselves have created and sustained through engaging with local Asian Dutch as well as transnational Asian popular culture, provides them with sufficient cultural resources to deal with the exclusion and racism they face, and to feel a sense of belonging in the Netherlands.

Ultimately, the studies taken together represent an engaged and intimate account of young Asian Dutch' formation and articulation of panethnic Asian identities and identifications – it is their voices that have guided this research project and resonate throughout it. These accounts and the analyses thereof clearly emphasize the highly situational and contingent nature and meanings of panethnic Asianness in the Netherlands. It is distinct from panethnic Asianness in the US, as elaborated above, but also from for instance panethnic Asianness across Asia. Also, young Asian Dutch' vivid accounts of their everyday life experiences demonstrate how Asian identities, identifications, groupness and ethnicity are indeed constructed and not 'real', but they are lived nonetheless and do have significant, and one might say dramatic, bearing and consequences in the material social world of young Asian Dutch; they are imagined but not imaginary, to speak with Jenkins (2002). Panethnic Asian identities, identifications and groupness in the Netherlands are imagined and articulated through Asian and Asian

Dutch popular culture in particular, to a certain extent ‘free’ and ‘independent’ from traditional institutions in both hostland and homeland spheres. Yet in the end, these imaginations and articulations of Asianness are always in relation to, and embedded in, these very same hostland and homeland spheres. This leads to a particular and unique Dutch panethnic Asianness, or panethnic Asian Dutchness. Thus, while the relative thickness and inherent Whiteness of Dutch national identity may render it difficult or unappealing for young Asian Dutch to completely culturally identify as Dutch, as well as to identify with Dutch mainstream society unreservedly, it is precisely panethnic Asian Dutchness that provides them a strong sense of belonging in the Netherlands.



# **NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING**

**Jonge Aziatische Nederlanders en de  
constructie van Aziaticiteit:  
Het begrijpen van de rol van  
Aziatische populaire cultuur**

Dit proefschrift is een weerslag van een onderzoek naar jonge Aziatische Nederlanders,<sup>1</sup> pan-etnische Aziatische identiteiten en identificaties,<sup>2</sup> en Aziatische/Aziatisch Nederlandse populaire cultuur.<sup>3</sup> Het voornaamste doel van dit onderzoek was het verkrijgen van inzicht in de rol van lokale Aziatisch Nederlandse en transnationale Aziatische populaire cultuur in de pan-etnische Aziatische culturele identificaties van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders en hun constructie van pan-etnische Aziatische culturele identiteiten. Aziatische Nederlanders zijn nagenoeg afwezig in Nederlandse publieke, politieke en academische debatten en discoursen over culturele diversiteit, migratie en multiculturele samenleving (zie ook Chow, 2011; Chow, Zwier & Van Zoonen, 2008). Dit onderzoek tracht de kennis over, inzicht in en zichtbaarheid van Aziatische Nederlanders te vergroten. Daarmee is dit onderzoek een poging tot interventie in genoemde debatten en discoursen door deze inclusiever en een betere afspiegeling van de Nederlandse multiculturele realiteit te maken. Uiteindelijk zal dit ons begrip van de Nederlandse multiculturele samenleving vergroten – zowel in academische als in sociaalpolitieke zin. Om de doelstellingen van het onderzoeksproject te bereiken zijn drie deelstudies uitgevoerd. Deze deelstudies en de daaruit voortvloeiende bevindingen zullen hierna kort worden besproken.

## DEELSTUDIE 1

Het eerste doel van dit onderzoeksproject was het verkennen en in kaart brengen van de Nederlandse, thuisland en pan-etnische Aziatische culturele identificaties en combinaties daarvan van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders. Daartoe werd in deze eerste deelstudie een online enquête uitgevoerd onder jonge Aziatische Nederlanders. De studie toonde aan dat er onder bepaalde segmenten van de Aziatisch Nederlandse populatie sprake is van een gevoel van pan-etnische Aziaticiteit. Jonge Aziatische Nederlanders ontwikkelen Aziatische identificaties naast hun Nederlandse en thuisland (bijv. Chinese of Indonesische) culturele identificaties. Drie kenmerkende culturele identificatie typen – groepen van respondenten die vergelijkbare kenmerkende combinaties van bepaalde niveaus van Nederlandse, thuisland en Aziatische culturele identificaties delen – konden worden geïdentificeerd: 1) 'Cosmopolitans', die sterke Nederlandse, thuisland en Aziatische culturele identificaties vertonen, 2) 'Asians', die sterke thuisland en Aziatische culturele identificaties combineren met zwakke Nederlandse identificatie, en 3) 'Hostlanders', die middelmatige thuisland en Aziatische culturele identificaties combineren met sterkere Nederlandse culturele identificatie. De studie vond geen eenduidig verband tussen niet-Nederlandse identificatie en Nederlandse identificatie en 'integratie' in Nederland. Integendeel, 'Cosmopolitans' vertonen het hoogste niveau van 'integratie' en Nederlandse identificatie maar zij vertonen tegelijkertijd ook sterke thuisland en Aziatische identificatie. De bevindingen ondermijnen het populaire idee dat (sterke) gastland en niet-gastland culturele identificaties elkaar uitsluiten en dat het ontwikkelen van niet-gastland culturele identificatie de integratie in het gastland belemmert.

De eerste deelstudie bracht ook de consumptie van populaire cultuur en media van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders in kaart en onderzocht hoe dit verbonden is aan hun Aziatische culturele identificatie. De studie stelde vast dat jonge Aziatische Nederlanders naast populaire media (film, televisie en popmuziek) uit de VS, Nederland en hun Aziatische thuislanden ook populaire media uit Aziatische landen anders dan hun thuislanden consumeren. Deze studie is een van de eerste studies die de consumptie van deze zogenoemde niet-thuisland Aziatische populaire media verkende. De studie liet zien dat de consumptie van niet-thuisland Aziatische populaire media het hoogst is onder 'Asians' en het laagst onder 'Hostlanders' terwijl 'Cosmopolitans' daar tussenin zitten. Een vergelijkbaar patroon werd gevonden voor de mate van Aziatische identificatie verkregen via de consumptie van niet-thuisland Aziatische populaire media. Tot slot werd ook de consumptie van het nachtleven onderzocht. De studie toonde aan dat 'Asians' zogenaamde Asian parties – pan-etnische Aziatische clubavonden – relatief vaker bezoeken dan 'Cosmopolitans' en 'Cosmopolitans' weer vaker dan 'Hostlanders'. 'Asians' en 'Cosmopolitans' vertonen hoge en vergelijkbare niveaus van Aziatische identificatie verkregen door het bezoeken van Asian parties en 'Hostlanders' vertonen aanzienlijk lagere niveaus. Deze bevindingen suggereerden dat de consumptie van niet-thuisland Aziatische populaire media en Asian parties een articulatie is van de Aziatische culturele identificaties van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders. Wat deze eerste studie aantoonde, is dat niet-thuisland Aziatische populaire media en Asian parties deel uitmaken van de dagelijkse levens van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders en dat de consumptie daarvan gerelateerd is aan hun gevoel van Aziaticiteit. Dit onderstreepte het belang van Aziatische en Aziatisch Nederlandse populaire cultuur voor de Aziatische culturele identificatie van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders en rechtvaardigde nader onderzoek naar deze relatie.

## DEELSTUDIE 2

De tweede deelstudie richtte zich op het fenomeen Asian parties. Asian parties waren de eerste expliciet pan-etnische Aziatische ruimten in Nederland. In die hoedanigheid hebben zij een essentiële rol gespeeld in de opkomst en ontwikkeling van een gevoel van pan-etnische Aziaticiteit onder jonge Aziatische Nederlanders sinds eind jaren '80/ begin jaren '90. Deze studie richtte zich specifiek op de producenten van Asian parties. Omdat deze producenten zelf Asian parties hadden geconsumeerd of dat nog steeds deden, bood deze studie de mogelijkheid om zowel de productie als de consumptie van Asian parties te onderzoeken. Tevens onderzocht deze studie de motieven en overwegingen van deze producenten met betrekking tot de productie van Asian parties. Dit bood een uniek en aanvullend perspectief op de Aziatische culturele identiteiten en identificaties van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders en op de constructie van Aziaticiteit in Nederland in het algemeen. Ten behoeve van deze studie werden participerende observaties tijdens Asian parties en diepte-interviews met DJ's, organisatoren en anderen die betrokken zijn bij de productie van Asian parties uitgevoerd.

Allereerst lieten de relazen van de Asian partyproducenten over hun eigen eerste kennismaking met Asian parties en hun daaropvolgende ervaringen als ‘gewone’ consumenten daarvan onmiskenbaar zien hoe jonge Aziatische Nederlanders worden gesocialiseerd in deze pan-etnische Aziatische culturele ruimten. Tevens lieten zij zien hoe Asian parties zowel de verbeelding van Aziatische culturele identiteiten door en Aziatische culturele identificatie van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders als de materialisatie daarvan in cross-Aziatische interacties en relaties faciliteren en richting geven. Asian parties faciliteren een gedeeld gevoel van Aziatische saamhorigheid, culturele nabijheid en thuishoren onder jonge Aziatisch Nederlandse bezoekers. Voorts structureren Asian parties de Aziatische culturele identiteiten en identificaties van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders door het prioriteren van een bepaalde afbakening van een pan-etnische Aziatische in-groep (i.c., mensen van Zuidoost- en Oost-Aziatische afkomst) en door het benadrukken van de notie van gemeenschap-in-verscheidenheid (i.c., gemeenschappelijkheden worden geprioriteerd in plaats van verschillen tussen enkelvoudig etnisch-nationale achtergronden, groepen en culturen).

De studie wierp ook licht op de strategische inzet van Aziatische culturele identiteiten en identificaties door de producenten van Asian parties. Het Aziatische cultureel en sociaal kapitaal dat de producenten hebben verworven via hun gevoel van Aziaticiteit en het bezoeken van Asian parties wendden zij succesvol aan om zelf Asian parties te produceren. De producenten van Asian parties transformeren aldus hun Aziatische cultureel en sociaal kapitaal in economisch en symbolisch kapitaal. De betrokkenheid van de Asian partyproducenten bij de productie van Asian parties wordt echter niet alleen gestuurd door economische motieven – ook morele motieven gerelateerd aan hun gevoel van Aziaticiteit en hun gevoel van verbondenheid met en verantwoordelijkheid naar de ‘Aziatische gemeenschap’ in Nederland toe, spelen een rol. De producenten van Asian parties zijn toegewijd aan het idee om jonge Aziatische Nederlanders een veilige ruimte te bieden waar zij en anderen van diverse Aziatische afkomst kunnen samenkomen en mengen, zich kunnen thuis voelen en gedeelde Aziatische culturele identiteiten en identificaties kunnen verbeelden. De morele of Aziatische doelstellingen van de producenten van Asian parties zijn dus gematerialiseerd in de productie van Asian parties. De Asian parties die geproduceerd worden door de geïnterviewde producenten zijn grotendeels een voortzetting van de Asian parties die zichzelf consumeerden en/of consumeren. Uiteindelijk zijn de producenten van Asian parties verwickeld in de reproductie van pan-etnische Aziaticiteit zoals zij dat van begin af aan kenden: een Aziaticiteit die de notie van gemeenschap-in-verscheidenheid en gedeelde Aziatische culturele identiteiten en identificaties prioriteert.

### DEELSTUDIE 3

In de derde en laatste deelstudie werd nader onderzoek gedaan naar het verband tussen aan de ene kant het gevoel van Aziaticiteit van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders en aan de andere kant hun consumptie van niet-thuisland Aziatische populaire media waar

verslag van werd gedaan in de eerste deelstudie. Daartoe werden met jonge Aziatische Nederlanders focusgroep interviews gevoerd over hun consumptie van Japanse en Zuid-Koreaanse populaire film en televisie. De studie bevestigde dat jonge Aziatische Nederlanders Japanse en Zuid-Koreaanse films en tv-series aantrekkelijk vinden en daarvan genieten, deels omdat deze films en tv-series een gevoel van culturele nabijheid in hun opwekken; jonge Aziatische Nederlanders identificeren zich met de narratieven en personages via hun gevoel van gedeelde Aziaticiteit. Andersom dragen Japanse en Zuid-Koreaanse films en tv-series bij aan de verbeelding en articulatie van Aziatische culturele identiteiten en identificaties door jonge Aziatische Nederlanders.

Via het kijken naar Japanse en Zuid-Koreaanse films en tv-series en door daarover te praten met andere jonge Aziatische Nederlanders, reflecteren jonge Aziatische Nederlanders op hun eigen 'Aziatische' opvoeding en andere aspecten van hun 'Aziatische' geleefde ervaring. In dat opzicht fungeren deze films en tv-series als een spiegel. Daarnaast fungeren zij ook als een venster op het 'Aziatische' dagelijkse leven en in die hoedanigheid voorzien zij jonge Aziatische Nederlanders van Aziatische culturele repertoires en kennis die nodig zijn om een moreel 'Aziatisch' leven te lijden. De studie toonde tevens aan dat jonge Aziatische Nederlanders plezier ontleen aan het zien van personages in Japanse en Zuid-Koreaanse films en tv-series die 'op hun lijken' en met wie zij zich kunnen identificeren als Aziaten. Ook voorzien deze films en tv-series jonge Aziatische Nederlanders van additioneel cultureel kapitaal waarmee zij zich kunnen onderscheiden van niet-Aziatische Nederlanders en zich kunnen verzetten tegen dominante witte Nederlandse (populaire) cultuur. Uiteindelijk laten de bevindingen zien hoe Japanse en Zuid-Koreaanse films en tv-series bijdragen aan een Aziatische culturele ruimte waarin en via welke jonge Aziatische Nederlanders in staat zijn om hun Nederlandse, thuisland en Aziatische culturele identiteiten en identificaties te onderhandelen.

Samengenomen tonen de bevindingen van de drie deelstudies aan dat jonge Aziatische Nederlanders zich in de eerste plaats inderdaad identificeren *als* Aziatisch en zich in de tweede plaats identificeren *met* personen van Aziatische afkomst, en dat zij gedeelde Aziatische culturele identiteiten construeren. Voorts is aangetoond dat dit gevoel van Aziaticiteit sterk verbonden is met de consumptie van transnationale niet-thuisland Aziatische populaire cultuur en de consumptie en productie van lokale Aziatisch Nederlandse populaire cultuur.

Deze nieuwe en opkomende pan-etnische Aziatische culturele identiteiten en identificaties spreken bepaalde Aziatische Nederlanders aan aangezien zij hen een uitweg bieden uit een beknellende gastland-thuisland dichotomie. De eerste studie toonde inderdaad aan dat de meerderheid van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders (sterke) Nederlandse en thuisland identificaties vertoont. De kwalitatieve vervolgstudies verschaften diepgaander inzicht in deze identificaties en benadrukten hun problematisch aard. Aan de ene kant voelen jonge Aziatische Nederlanders zich niet volledig thuis in de mainstream Nederlandse culturele omgeving. Zij erkennen de symbolische uitsluiting van Aziatische Nederlanders van de mainstream Nederlandse cultuur en samenleving en

op bepaalde momenten hebben zij het gevoel dat zij niet volledig geaccepteerd worden door hun witte leeftijdsgenoten en de Nederlandse samenleving in het algemeen. Jonge Aziatische Nederlanders worden niet gezien als ‘echte’ Nederlanders maar als de ‘Ander’ en dit maakt het voor hen moeilijker om zich Nederlands te voelen en reflectieloos om te gaan met de Nederlandse culturele omgeving. Aan de andere kant zijn jonge Aziatische Nederlanders ook kritisch over hun thuislandculturen. Zij vinden die traditioneel en vrij restrictief – in het bijzonder in vergelijking met Nederlandse of westerse cultuur. Dit heeft als consequentie dat jonge Aziatische Nederlanders zich niet onvoorwaardelijk en te allen tijde identificeren met hun thuislandculturen en geen ‘stabiele’ en ‘eenduidige’ Chinese, Vietnamese of andere thuisland gebaseerde culturele identiteiten hebben gevormd. In deze context vormen pan-etnische Aziatische culturele identiteiten en identificaties een aantrekkelijke ‘oplossing’ voor jonge Aziatische Nederlanders. Vergeleken met Nederlandsheid, Chineesheid, Indonesischheid et cetera biedt Aziatischheid jonge Aziatische Nederlanders meer ruimte om culturele identiteiten en identificaties te verbeelden en is het opener en inclusiever aangezien het gastland en thuisland identificaties niet uitsluit.

De bevindingen van de deelstudies laten ook zien dat de opkomst en ontwikkeling van pan-etnische Aziatische culturele omgevingen, identiteiten en identificaties in Nederland onlosmakelijk verbonden zijn met de consumptie en productie van lokale Aziatisch Nederlandse populaire cultuur en de consumptie van transnationale niet-thuisland Aziatische populaire cultuur door jonge Aziatische Nederlanders. Deze vormen van populaire cultuur zijn essentiële socioculturele bronnen die jonge Aziatische Nederlanders hebben aangewend en nog steeds aanwenden om Aziatischheid in Nederland te construeren. Wat de bevindingen uiteindelijk illustreren is hoe ‘gewone’ burgers verschillende vormen van populaire cultuur aanwenden om nieuwe en creatieve culturele identiteiten en omgevingen te construeren die niet worden geprioriteerd of gesanctioneerd door de staat, de familie of andere traditionele instituties.

De deelstudies laten ook zien dat de door jonge Aziatische Nederlanders verbeelde Aziatische identiteiten en identificaties tot op zekere hoogte verschillen van die in andere plaatsen. Pan-etnische Aziatischheid in de Verenigde Staten is bijvoorbeeld van oorsprong veel (expliciet) politiek van aard en ingebed in een activistische context die gericht is op de strijd tegen virulent racisme en sociale uitsluiting. Ook verschilt de afbakening van de Aziatische in-groep in de Verenigde Staten (zie ook Espiritu, 1992). Pan-etnische Aziatischheid als een ‘oplossing’ voor een beknellende gastland-thuisland dichotomie heeft inderdaad ook politieke connotaties – maar dan in de sfeer van het alledaagse en het private. Noties van pan-etnische Aziatische identiteiten en eenheid worden in Nederland dan ook niet structureel aangewend om te strijden tegen bijvoorbeeld racisme of om andere sociaalpolitieke doelen te bereiken.

Uiteindelijk vormen de deelstudies samen een betrokken en intiem relaas van de vorming en articulatie van pan-etnische Aziatische identiteiten en identificaties door

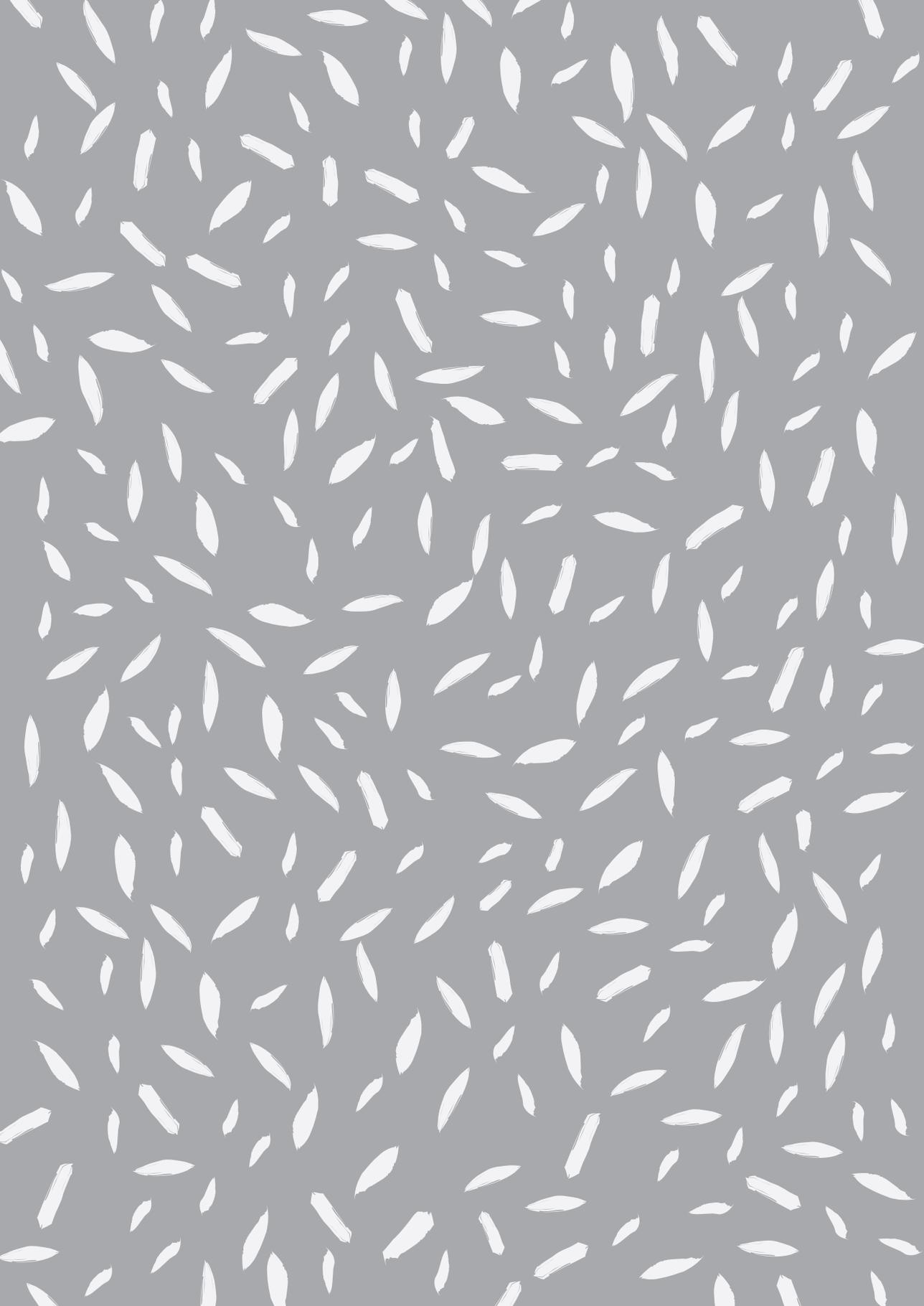
jonge Aziatische Nederlanders – het zijn hun stemmen die dit onderzoeksproject hebben geleid en die door het gehele onderzoeksproject resoneren. Hun relazen en de analyses daarvan benadrukken de contingente aard en betekenissen van pan-etnische Aziaticiteit in Nederland. Ook laten hun relazen zien hoe Aziatische identiteiten, identificaties, ‘groupness’ en etniciteit inderdaad geconstrueerd en niet ‘echt’ zijn, maar dat zij niettemin geleefd worden en significante consequenties hebben in de materiele sociale wereld van jonge Aziatische Nederlanders; ze zijn verbeeld, maar niet denkbeeldig, om met Jenkins (2002) te spreken. Pan-etnische identiteiten, identificaties en ‘groupness’ worden in Nederland in het bijzonder verbeeld en gearticuleerd via Aziatische en Aziatisch Nederlandse populaire cultuur, tot op zekere hoogte ‘vrij’ en ‘onafhankelijk’ van traditionele instituties in zowel gastland- als thuislandsferen. Echter, uiteindelijk bestaan deze verbeeldingen en articulaties van Aziaticiteit altijd in relatie tot deze gastland- en thuislandsferen en zijn zij hierin ingebed. Dus hoewel de inherente witheid van de Nederlandse nationale identiteit het moeilijk en onaantrekkelijk maakt voor jonge Aziatische Nederlanders om zich cultureel volledig te identificeren als Nederlands en om zich zonder voorbehoud te identificeren met de mainstream Nederlandse samenleving, is het juist pan-etnische Aziatische Nederlandsheid die hun een sterk gevoel van thuishoren in Nederland verschaft.

## NOTEN

<sup>1</sup> In dit onderzoek verwijst ‘Aziatische Nederlander’ naar Nederlanders van Oost- en Zuidoost-Aziatische afkomst. Hieronder vallen bijvoorbeeld niet uitwisselingsstudenten expats uit Azië die tijdelijk in Nederland wonen.

<sup>2</sup> Wanneer gesproken wordt over Aziatische en Aziatisch Nederlandse identiteiten, identificaties, subjectposities, groepen en culturen, wordt *pan-etnische* Aziatische geïmpliceerd.

<sup>3</sup> Onder ‘Aziatische populaire cultuur’ wordt populaire cultuur afkomstig uit Azië verstaan. ‘Aziatisch Nederlandse populaire cultuur’ verwijst naar populaire cultuur geproduceerd door Aziatische Nederlanders in Nederland.



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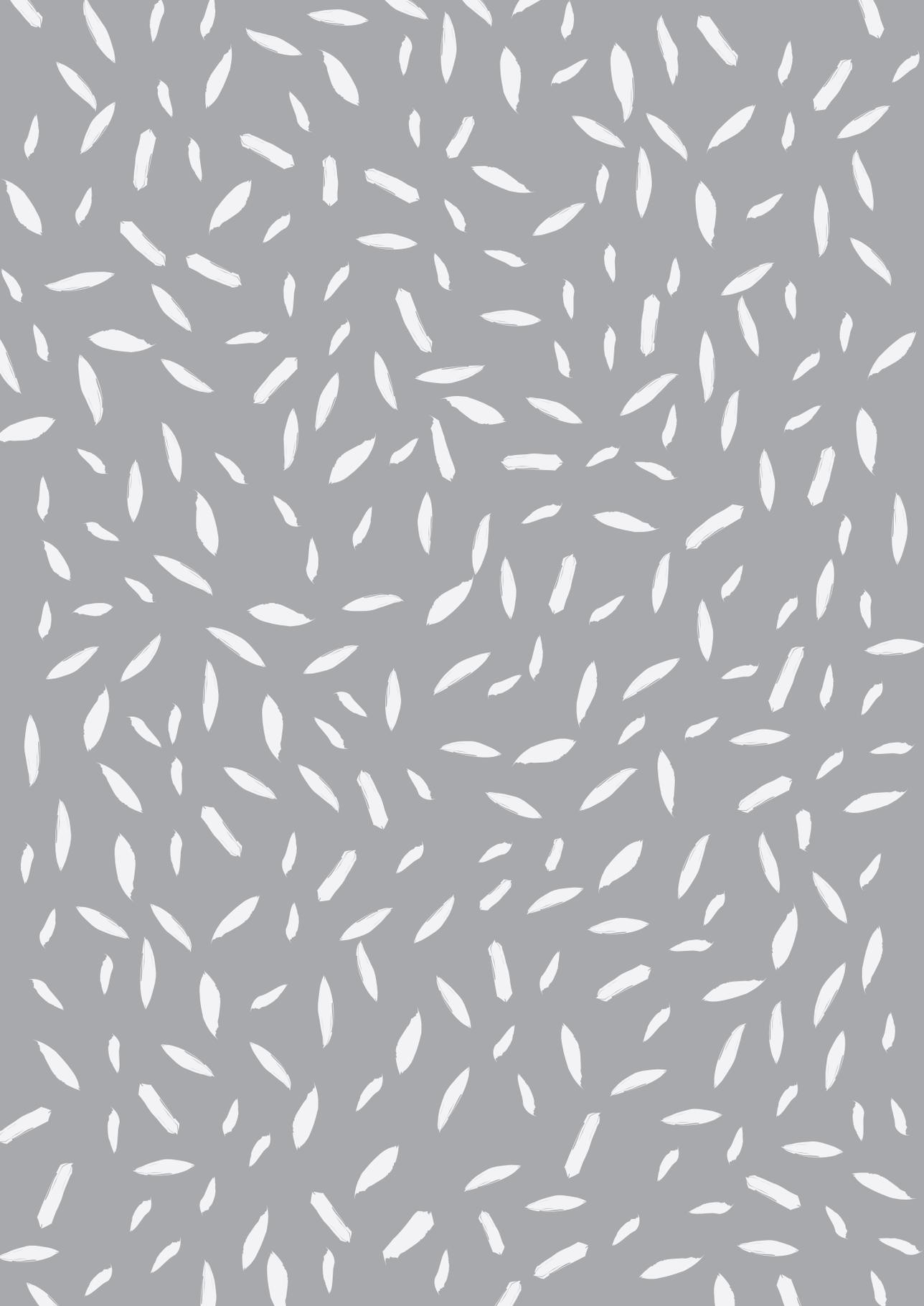
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Why work in an office room, when you can do your reading and writing and have a good cup of coffee in one of the cool coffee shops in Amsterdam and London? So that is what I did. Quite regularly. In Amsterdam I spent a lot of time in CC Nieuwe Doelen, CC Oosterdok, CC Westerdok, Espressofabriek Westergas, Filter, and Il Memento. Fix Whitecross street, Hackney Bureau, Timberyard Old Street, Department of Coffee and Social Affairs, and Foyles were my favorite workplaces in London. A shout out to all the baristas for their hospitality and their nice coffees.

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A big hug to Merlijn Juliard, my best mate, my brother from another mother (and father). Merlijn, I am honored and grateful to have you as a friend, a friend who has always been there for me. Over the years we have seen one another turn into older and hopefully wiser men, so it is only fitting that now, as a paranymph, you are part of another important event in my personal trajectory. Thank you. One love.

Amin Widjoatmodjo, we have known one another since primary school and we grew up together. We have always considered one another as family, as cousins. That is also why, even after long periods of being out of one another's life, we always feel a warm bond. That warm bond is now extended to my son, whom you are such a kind and caring uncle to. I thank you for this.

My cousin Robert Ayal, my best man, needs to be mentioned as well. Robert, you have known me since I was a baby, and I have always seen you as an older brother really. I enjoy the long conversations we have about our families and their migration histories, digging up heartwarming anecdotes. I thank you for always being my big cousin.

From a young age, my cousin Quint Hudson has been my partner-in-crime. For a long time we shared similar dreams and interests, from graffiti and hip-hop to stock trading and Star Wars. Our last joint effort was Asian Dutch online community VeryAzN.nl, which eventually led to this research project. Thanks for being around Quint!

A few years ago I got married into the Wong family. I thank my parents-in-law and Sau-Han Wong, Waihan Wong, and Joost Niewenhuijse for welcoming me into their family. I have felt at home in your/our family from the beginning. I would also like to thank you for always showing support for my PhD project and for stuffing me with delicious food!

Big hugs to my sister Chandra Rietmeijer-Kartosen and my brother Irwan Kartosen. Chandra, thanks for always keeping me sharp on social and political issues. I fondly remember how we would have long political discussions during dinner when we were students, which eventually led to mum and dad voting for leftist parties. This still plays a role in my work. And thanks for bringing Dennis Rietmeijer into the family, I could not have wished for a better brother-in-law. Irwan, my not-so-little-anymore brother, thanks for supporting me when I was involved in the Asian scene and when I was doing my research on the Asian scene. We rarely see one another due to your busy schedule being a dj, but I just want to let you know that I am proud of your achievements as a dj so far. Hugs!

My grandmother Jane Hudson-Klein is one of the most special people in my life. Omie, I am so very happy to have you as a grandmother. You have always been a caring and loving grandmother, and now a caring and loving great-grandmother. I have so many wonderful memories with you and I plan to make many more. Thank you for being the best (great-)grandmother!

My grandfather Sam Hudson was one of my most important role models. I looked up to him. I learned from him, even if only years after the fact. He would always tell me to be inquisitive and think critical, and read. And that is precisely what I did for my research project, so I would imagine my grandfather would be rather happy about this. Opie, I thank you for all the love and knowledge you have given me.

I have so much to thank my parents Gloria Kartosen-Hudson and Wahyudi Kartosen for. I do not even know where to start. Mum, dad, thank you for always supporting me in my choices, whether personal or professional, and for giving me the freedom to choose my own path. But most of all I will always be indebted to you for all the sacrifices you have made to make sure me, Chandra, and Irwan had everything we need. And now you are giving your grandchildren the same love and care that I have received. I am honored, grateful, and proud to have you as my parents. Terima kasih.

Two years ago my son Sam-Ming Malique Kartosen was born. No words can express how much I love him and how important he is to me. What I can say, is that Sam inspired me when I was writing this PhD thesis: Sam was one more reason to finish this thesis properly. But more so, Sam inspired me because in all his panethnic Asianness, he symbolizes this research project. I thank you and I love you Sam.

I would like to conclude my acknowledgements by thanking my beautiful wife Chee-Han Kartosen-Wong, without whom this PhD thesis would not have happened. Chee-Han, this research project has not been easy for you, to say the least. You had to endure and sacrifice, so that I could finish this project. For this, I am not only unbelievably grateful to you, I admire you too, as not everyone would have been able or willing to do what you did: to support me unconditionally. Without your unconditional support I would not have been able to do this project. You truly are the best wife and buddy I could have ever wished for, thank you. I also thank you for being actively involved in my research project, thanks for designing the wonderful cover of this PhD thesis. During the course of this research project we have set out on different life-changing journeys: getting married, living in London, buying our first home and becoming parents. I look forward to setting out on many more exciting journeys together, for many, many years to come. As I have said before: to infinity and beyond! One.four.three. I love you.



## **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **Authors' initials**

Reza Kartosen-Wong (RK)

Ed Tan (ET)

### **Chapter 2**

#### ***Articulating Asianness: Young Asian Dutch and Asian/Asian Dutch popular culture***

RK performed the literature review, ET provided input. RK and ET developed the outline, research design, and online questionnaire. RK recruited research participants and conducted the online survey. RK and ET analyzed the survey data. RK wrote several concept versions and the final version of the manuscript. ET provided input for revisions of the manuscript. RK presented preliminary results at several conferences and submitted the manuscript to *International Communication Gazette*. RK and ET revised the manuscript for resubmission. Both authors reviewed and edited the final manuscript.

### **Chapter 3**

#### ***Asian Parties in the Netherlands: (Re)producing Asianness in Dutch Nightlife***

RK performed the literature review, developed the outline and research design, designed a semi-structured topic list, recruited research participants, conducted participatory observations and in depth interviews, analysed the data, and wrote several concept versions and the final version of the manuscript. ET reviewed all analyses and all versions of the manuscript and provided input for revisions. RK presented preliminary results at several conferences and submitted the manuscript to *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Both authors reviewed and edited the final manuscript.

### **Chapter 4**

#### ***Imagining Asianness: Young Asian Dutch and Japanese/South Korean Film and Television***

RK performed the literature review, ET provided input. RK and ET developed the outline and research design. RK designed a semi-structured topic list and short questionnaire, recruited research participants, and conducted focus group interviews. RK and ET analyzed the data. RK wrote several concept versions and the final version of the manuscript. ET provided input for revisions. RK presented preliminary results at several conferences and submitted the manuscript to *Journal of Communication*. Both authors reviewed and edited the final manuscript.

