Soulmates: Reinvention of ethnic identification among higher educated second generation Moroccan and Turkish Dutch

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Chapter 1

i In Dutch he said: "Ik ben een Nederlander. Ik ben heel trots – met Marokkaans bloed. Ik ben een moslim. En ik heb een *f*cking Gouden Kalf in mijn hand". See: www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYkSPiYbKg8 [accessed 17 October 2014]

ii Dchar was appointed a hero and many were deeply moved by his words and applauded his criticism towards exclusionary discourses (see for example: the broadcast of 'Pauw and Witteman' of Oct 3, 2011 (www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHTaZUVggTE); De Volkskrant 2011; Algemeen Dagblad 2011; Trouw 2011). He was regarded 'the first' to claim the right to be Dutch, Moroccan and Muslim at the same time (Volkskrant Magazine 2011). In later interviews Dchar referred to the negative reactions he received (see for example Volkskrant Magazine 2011 and the broadcast of De Jong's interview with Dchar on: www.uitzendinggemist.nl/afleveringen/1215853).

iii See www.nu.nl/politiek/2551250/verhagen-noemt-angst-buitenlanders-begrijpelijk.html

Chapter 2

i The fact that I employ a constructivist perspective does not mean that I regard every concept as a social construct, rather that I approach the main theme of ethnic identification in such a way, which enables me to reveal its possibly constructed relative character, and the possible underlying mechanisms.

ii I prefer to use different terms because of the connotation of ‘virtual’ as unreal and the confusion of ‘nominal identity’ and category (see for example the use of ‘nominal identity’ by Chandra 2012: 10).

iii When the (then) Dutch crown princess Máxima Zorreguita, herself an immigrant from Argentina who migrated to the Netherlands to marry the Dutch crown prince, in a speech presented in 2007 remarked that in her search for the Dutch identity she has not found any ‘the’ Dutch identity, this leads to a lot of commotion. She was severely criticized for making this remark. She delivered the speech at the event organized for the presentation of the WRR report ‘Identification with the Netherlands’ (Identificatie met Nederland), (Meurs 2007) (WRR: Scientific Council for Government Policy; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid)

iv In the Netherlands, discussions on integration are exclusively focused on the category of ‘non-western immigrants’, referring primarily to people with a Surinamese,
Moroccan, Turkish and Antillean background. In the Dutch context, it is self-evident that integration discussions do not focus on immigrants from for example the U.S., Germany or Japan. The attribute 'non-western' is generally even omitted in these discussions, as well as a description of the particular categories that belong to this label. (Low-wage workers from Eastern-Europe form a recent new category, which is also focus of discussions on integration).

Chapter 3

i Niglas (2010: 217) shows that the use of the labels to refer to the various research paradigms varies between authors. I follow Bryman (2001) in distinguishing between labels that refer to ontological positions (objectivism and constructivism) and labels that refer to epistemological positions (positivism and interpretivism).

ii Various typologies are mentioned in the literature. Some authors present typologies of mixed methods studies based on technical characteristics, such as the sequence of the methods and the emphasis placed (e.g. Caracelli and Greene 1997; Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2009; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). Personally, I do not find these very useful in designing a study because the technical design is not a consideration in itself, but should arise from the purpose of the study. Other authors, like Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), give a typology that mix purposes and designs. I find their typology confusing because the options they sketch are too rigid and limited, and in my view, these inhibit researchers in thinking from the purpose of the study in drafting their own research design.

iii Greene et al. (1989) refer to this purpose as ‘complementarity’, but I prefer the label clarification to clearly distinguish this purpose from the purpose of expansion.

iv I asked the 2006 participants for permission to still use their interviews. One I could not reach again, and I decided to use the interview for the analysis, but to include only a few quotes in the book in a decontextualized way, without any other personal information.

v I also tested working with the software package Atlas.ti. I choose MaxQDA for its additional options for structuring the codes into specific orders and levels and for marking codes with colors.

Chapter 4

i The recently reinvigorated discussions about the Dutch custom of Zwarte Piet, who features as a dark-skinned helper of a white-skinned Saint in a national children’s celebration, has probably increased the resonance of the anti-racist discourse in the last two years. I doubt, however, if its consonance has increased as well, as the anti-racist criticism of Zwarte Piet has triggered fierce and emotional opposition, in which Zwarte Piet is portrayed as an inherently Dutch symbol and therefore as untouchable.

ii In 2006, the Labor party argued that ‘[i]ntegration is not only about bridging socioeconomic differences and language problems: it also has a cultural dimension’
(Sleegers 2007: 43-44, translation MS). The Christian Democrats state that: ‘Shared norms form the basis of our society. They bind us and make us proud of our country’ (ibid.: 42, translation MS). The right-wing Liberals want to protect the typical ‘Dutch’ character of society, which is a real source of pride, and needs protection from external influences (ibid: 44)


‘Marokkanendrama’ was the title of a book published in 2007 (Jurgens 2007), which was adopted by mainstream politicians. See for example the text of a Green politician on his party’s website (Dibi 2009) and the blog of the Secretary of State for Social Affairs (De Krom 2010).

v In his speech of 28 June 2011, see text printed in NRC: www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2011/06/28/toespraak-maxim-verhagen/

vi CBS uses (non-western) ‘third generation’ to refer to individuals who have at least one grandparent who is born in a non-western country (2010: 37)

vii NRC published (May 6th, 2012) “En op de website van de LPF, stond de - vaak geciteerde - uitspraak: ”Christelijke inwoners in Nederland, zoals op de Veluwe, hebben moreel meer rechten dan islamitische nieuwkomers, omdat christenen al eeuwenlang hebben bijgedragen aan de opbouw van ons land.” See: www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2012/05/06/de-extravagante-uitspraken-van-de-flamboyante-fortuyn/


ix This section is mainly based on data from the CBS (Statistics Netherlands, Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek) and SCP (Netherlands Institute for Social Research, Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau). These research institutes are closely affiliated with the government and equipped with the task of conducting research and providing statistical monitors on all areas of government policy. Alternately, the two institutions produce the Jaarrapport Integratie, a yearly monitor of the state of affairs with regard to the ‘integration’ of ‘allochthonous’ groups, based on statistical data about socioeconomic and sociocultural aspects of the situation of immigrants and their offspring in the Netherlands. As mentioned in chapter 2, in the figures shown in the Integration Monitors, most results as they are shown are organized by ethnic background rather than by class background or parental education level (see for example CBS 2012). Apparently, even though the authors of these monitors...
suggest that the educational arrear ‘seems to be more related to characteristics of the parental environment than with ethnicity’ (2012: 70), this does not lead them to present the figures in a different way than organized by ethnicity (and occasionally by gender).

The Dutch education system is characterized by the lack of a (significant) sector of private schools and by the presence of a public school system that is of relatively high quality. Less than two percent of the pupils attend a public secondary school (Elsevier 2005x). Nevertheless, the achievements of Dutch pupils are ranked at the 10th best in the world (OECD PISA rankings 2012)

Chapter 5

The level of significance (alpha) throughout the book is .05, unless indicated otherwise.


As one might have noticed, the self-descriptions in this section were phrased both in terms of ‘being’ and ‘feeling’. Do these expressions not refer to essentially different components of identification? Verkuyten (2005) distinguishes ‘being’ components (referring to ontological aspects, to ‘objective’ characteristics related to the applicability of the categorization) from ‘feeling’ components (referring to other kinds of affiliations, such as emotional attachments). However, in how these terms are used in the interviews, no such distinction seems to be made. In the interviews, there does not seem to be an analytical difference in how these terms are used, as they are used interchangeably, both by me and by participants. In the context of the interview, the theme of ‘objective’ characteristics, or ontological arguments, appears to be largely irrelevant, as it hardly pops up. It only surfaces occasionally, when referring to the ridiculously exclusivist character of the integration discourse but hardly in narrations on self-definitions. See how the terms ‘feeling’ and ‘being’ are mixed in the following two quotes:

Marieke: Did you also feel like ‘a foreigner’?
Nathalie: Well, you know... back THEN... back THEN I did... and I have to say this has decreased with the years. I mean, um... now, I NEVER feel like the foreigner. NEVER. I’m just not – I AM just Dutch. That’s how I feel about it. (...) No. No... No, I am just Dutch. I feel REALLY Dutch!
[The last part literally was: Ik BEN gewoon niet buitenl – ik ben gewoon NEDERLANDER. Zo voel ik dat. (...) Nee. Nee... Nee, ik ben gewoon Nederlands. Ik voel me ECHT Nederlands!]

Marieke: As you say: ‘I’m Turkish...’ Are you... more Turkish than Dutch...? Or can’t you see it like that?
Aysel: No, I think – Well... It just depends on – In Turkey I feel more Dutch and in the Netherlands I feel more Turkish, let’s say it THIS way.

iv Without opening up a new concept and an additional domain of literature on transnationality, here I remark that ethnicity among Turkish Dutch seems to contain more transnational elements than ethnicity among Moroccan Dutch. I therefore highly contest the inflation of ethnic identification with transnationality, as ethnicity is likely to refer more to having-a-certain-background-in-a-specific-country than to practices that are related to two countries. The first can contain the latter, but does not necessarily have to.

v As asked in the Rotterdam Youth Survey (Rotterdam Jongeren Survey) 1999 and 2006. (Entzinger and Dourleijn 2008: 91)

Chapter 6

i The terms consonant and dissonant are also employed in segmented assimilation theory but with a different meaning. There, consonance and dissonance specifically refer to how acculturation processes of children relate to the acculturation processes of the parents. The proposition is that the social mobility of the children is hampered in a situation of dissonance, i.e. when the acculturation process of the parents severely lags behind the acculturation of the children, which is supposed to often be the case in low-capital minority groups (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Portes, Fernández-Kelly and Haller 2009).

ii That having stern parents is crucial for upward mobility is disputed by Stepick and Stepick 2010. In reference to Nicholas, Stepick and Dutton (2008), they argue that not only upwardly mobile immigrant children have stern parents, but that children across the entire achievement spectrum have stern parents.

iii Buitelaar (2009: 205, 209) shows that internalization, even though it might resolve tension with social others, can result in internal friction, as internalization can result in a moral dilemma and mixed feelings.

iv Ellemers and colleagues call this denial of belonging ‘acceptance threat’. However, they only apply acceptance threat to the context of the ethnic ‘ingroup’, and they do not recognize this as an aspect of categorization threat, also applying to interethnic contexts (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears and Doosje 1999).

v I suggest that this classification of approaches can be applied to any situation of dissonance, as it is based on how the gap between two diverging stances is bridged.

vi Literally, the conversation was:

Karim: Ik was op een gegeven moment klaar met het allochtoon zijn. En [die vriend] ook, zeg maar. Die ging gek genoeg ook door dezelfde fases als die ik ging. (...) Want hij voelde ook dat we op een gegeven moment stereotypen werden, zeg maar, in plaats van echte mensen...
Marieke: En toen ben je minder ‘allochtoon’ geworden?
Karim: Toen ben ik minder allochtoon geworden. Ehm, ja steeds minder eigenlijk.

vii This differs from findings of other studies, such as the study of De Jong (2012). The Moroccan Dutch students in her study often feel insecure in their daily interactions with ethnic Dutch, as they assume that most of the ethnic Dutch agree with Wilders’ view and have negative associations with ‘Moroccans’

Chapter 7

i Literally, he said: ‘omdat ik veel meer behoefte had aan mijn Marokkaans-zijn.’

ii During the interview I tried to unravel the distinction between his self-identification and identity-ascription by others. Here, Karim describes how others see him, but his tone radiates a sad resignation. I see this as indicative of how his self-image and feelings of self-worth are intricately related to how others see him. With my explicit focus on his emotions, which might come across as ‘steering’, I try to have him further reflect on this.

iii Instead of ‘white middle-class cultural capital’, Carter (2003) uses ‘dominant cultural capital’ to distinguish this capital from the forms of cultural capital that are present in ethnic minority settings, which she calls ‘non-dominant cultural capital’. With this distinction, she acknowledges the important fact that ethnic minority settings also have cultural capital. I avoid the term ‘dominant’ in reference to the ethnic majority mainstream, as what is ‘dominant’ differs per field and therefore is a relative term. (In ethnic minority settings, forms of ethnic minority capital are dominant).