

**Subject: Draftpaper Marieke Slootman – Identification strategies
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*** Reading guide ***

This is only a first start in the process of writing a new article. I apologize for the fact that the argument is not yet smoothly and consequently laid out throughout the entire paper but kind of emerges towards the end.

I very much appreciate any feedback, as it will help me to advance the argument and to make this into a relevant and interesting article.

I am particularly interested in the following:

- Do you think this can become an interesting article? What do you think is most interesting?
- Do you think the various parts presented are relevant and insightful? Which aren't?
- Do you think it connects to the right literature/theory? To what (additional) literature can this best be connected?
- Do you have any suggestions for journals?

But of course, any comments and suggestions are highly welcome!
I hope you enjoy the reading!

Marieke

'I am... who I am...'. Ethnic identifications in social contexts

Abstract:

This paper focuses on the 'ethnic options' of ethnic-minority individuals. It shows that individuals' positionings and identifications are at least partly responses to the social situation at hand. Both in co-ethnic and interethnic contexts, minority individuals balance their independent preferences with social belonging. Based on in-depth interviews with higher-educated second-generation Moroccan and Turkish Dutch, in this paper, a range of responses is identified, which show how and why minority individuals identify themselves in certain ways in certain social contexts. This range of 'ethnic options' shows that minority individuals, even in the face of more or less coercive pressures, and of more or less subtle mechanisms of exclusion do not lack individual agency, although their agency should not be overestimated.

Key words: ethnicity, identity, ethnic minorities, second generation, Netherlands.

Relevance & background of the study

In many western-European countries, in the last decennia the identification of ethnic minorities has become increasingly politicized. Like other countries, also the Netherlands has experienced a culturalist, or assimilationist, turn (Brubaker 2001, Duyvendak 2011). Dominant voices in the Dutch integration discourse have increasingly demanded of immigrants and their children, particularly those of Muslim descent, to adapt to the progressive norms that are presented as 'the Dutch culture' and to emotionally identify with the Netherlands. In this discourse, on the one hand self-identification as Moroccan or Turkish is regarded as suspect, as it is assumed to threaten identification as Dutch, on the other hand immigrants and their offspring are persistently addressed as Moroccan or Turkish, which emphasizes their non-belonging. In short, identification with ethnic minority labels, which I call 'ethnic identification' and with the nation of residence, which I call 'national identification', have become more important in public definitions of belonging.

In the Netherlands, this exclusionary culturalist discourse largely targets the now adult children of Moroccan and Turkish immigrants, which are primarily Muslim. Their parents arrived in the Netherlands in the early 1970s to work in lower skilled jobs. Their parents' relatively low education levels do not hinder ever increasing shares of the second generation to enter higher education levels. This does not change the fact that first, second and even third generation immigrants are persistently labeled as '*allochtonen*' (allochthonous or foreigners). The main question that is explored in this paper is how such labeling affects individuals who belong to such a minority category. How does it impact them, and how do they deal with external labeling and categorizations? The focus on higher educated individuals is interesting, because higher educated are often assumed to identify less strongly in ethnic terms because in the structural domain they are relatively strongly assimilated, and one could expect that therefore they are less strongly targeted by the exclusionary discourse.

In my opinion, with a research focus on minority individuals in interethnic contexts, we risk overlooking the fact that minority individuals are not seamless parts of homogeneous ethnic groups. As I want to prevent reification of the concepts of not only 'ethnicity', but also 'ethnic groups', I do not focus on the frictions and differences between ethnic minority individuals and ethnic majority individuals (the latter often referred to as ethnic 'outgroup') alone. I also focus on the frictions and differences between ethnic minority individuals and people with the same ethnic backgrounds, their co-ethnics (often referred to as ethnic 'ingroup'). I will show that minority individuals not only experience pressures from people from the ethnic 'outgroup', but also from people from the ethnic 'ingroup'. This is why I consider the terms outgroup and ingroup when applied to ethnic categories to be misleading. Furthermore, I show that individuals have a range of responses at their disposal, a similar set of responses both for interethnic and for co-ethnic contexts. Their agency, however, should not be overrated, even among higher educated.

In this article, I discuss a variety of co-ethnic and interethnic settings as they emerge from in-depth interviews with second generation Moroccan and Turkish Dutch. Above all, I sketch the various approaches that the participants employed in cases in which their preference or view diverged from the preference or view from social

others (thus: in cases of 'dissonance'), and the underlying reasons for these responses. I start with situations and responses in co-ethnic settings and proceed with situations and responses in interethnic settings. But first, I reflect on the theoretical context and the methodology.

Ethnic options (500 words)

With the introduction of the term 'symbolic ethnicity', Gans developed the idea of ethnic options. He argued that persisting ethnic identification does not necessarily reflect an orientation towards co-ethnics or the 'old ethnic cultures', as illustrated by third generation Jews in the United States, whose ethnic identification does not require cohesive ethnic networks and practiced cultures (1979). This kind of ethnic identification is 'symbolic' in the sense that it is not anchored in groups and roles, that it is voluntary, without consequential behavioral expectations, and primarily expressive, relying on the use of symbols. Waters (1990) further illustrated this 'symbolic ethnicity' in her book 'Ethnic Options', describing that many descendants of white European Catholic immigrants indeed have such costless, voluntary and individualistic 'symbolic ethnicity'. Many of the 'white ethnics' in her study identify in ethnic terms (only) at the moments they want to; they choose 'to turn their ethnicity on and off at will' (1996). They are not labeled by others in ethnic terms and their ethnicity only influences their lives when they want it to.

In later work, Waters (1996) argues that this 'optional ethnicity' is not available for (visible) minorities who have a socially enforced or imposed identity and who are confined to a minority status. She concludes that many ethnic (and racial) minorities do not have these 'ethnic options'. Rumbaut likewise explains that those labeled as 'non-white' confront an entirely different situation than descendants of white European immigrants, whose ethnic identifications have gradually become individualized and voluntary (2008). When ethnic differences are socially relevant, for example in the context of the prejudice and discrimination that 'non-white' minorities encounter, this makes individuals self-conscious of their ethnic backgrounds. A likely response is for them to strengthen their ethnic identifications, leading to a 'reactive ethnicity'. Like Waters, Rumbaut argues that it is unlikely that the ethnic identity of the successive generations of 'non-white' ethnic minorities will become optional, voluntary and 'symbolic'.

The emphasis on the limitations in ethnic options for visible minorities is balanced by Song (2001, 2003). She shows that although ethnic minority individuals do not have unlimited freedom to assert their preferred identity labels wherever or whenever they wish, they have the ability to influence the connotations and meanings that are associated with their identities. Additionally, they can influence the cultural practices that are attributed to a certain identity. 'Code-switching', such as adapting one's dialect to a situation, is another example of exercising one's ethnic options. Song argues that even though structural aspects can be very influential, ethnic minorities are not powerless and do not lack agency in asserting their ethnic identities. In this current paper, I show not only that this also applies to higher-educated second-generation Moroccan and Turkish Dutch, but I also shine more light on the social interactions and the possible strategies that these individuals employ.

Methodology

The empirical data presented in this article were collected through thirteen in-depth interviews with university-educated second generation Moroccan and Turkish Dutch. I selected participants who were born in the Netherlands and who had at least one parent who migrated from Morocco or Turkey, as well as participants who arrived in the Netherlands at a very young age, before they entered the educational system. Nine of the interviews were conducted with Moroccan Dutch (four female and five male) and four with Turkish Dutch (two female and two male). The participants were in their thirties or early forties at the time of the interview. Some of the participants were in a relationship (mostly married); others were single, and some had children. At the time of the interview, they lived in cities and in villages all over the Netherlands. All of them went to university and had jobs matching their education levels. Several worked as consultants, some ran companies they (co-) owned, one worked in the medical field, and others worked as researchers, technical engineers, or teachers. Four of the interviews were conducted in 2006, and the rest in 2011. Nearly all participants referred to themselves as Muslim, but how they described their religiosity and what it meant for them greatly varied. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted between one to four hours. They were all in Dutch. In the interviews, various social contexts were discussed that the participants encountered throughout their lives. We discussed the composition of these social contexts, as well as the relations, interactions and feelings of belonging in these various settings.

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To avoid selecting participants *based on* their ethnic identification, thus selecting on the dependent variable, I did not use organizations with ethnic signatures as a starting point for recruiting. I recruited most participants via my own (primarily ethnic Dutch) private network, covering various professional branches in various parts of the Netherlands. A few participants were recruited via my professional academic network. As participation was voluntary, a certain bias could not be completely avoided. In explaining their willingness to participate, most participants expressed their wish to contribute to the Dutch debate, to be heard, and to challenge negative stereotypes. This implies that the participants are probably characterized by a relatively high social involvement. This bias is not necessarily problematic, as the aim of this study is not about representativity of all second generation individuals, but about exploring social mechanisms as they occur (among some). With regard to the four types of responses that are identified in this study, we can speak of 'theoretical saturation', as the four types are all present in the interviews and together comprise a full range (from confrontational to conformative) of strategies.

Co-ethnic settings: descriptions and responses

Interactions with co-ethnics are not always harmonious and supportive. Although co-ethnics, such as friends and parents, can be (and often are) affirmative and supportive, this is not always the case. This sounds obvious, but this view – that interactions with co-ethnics can be dissonant and can require negotiation, just like interactions with interethnics – is frequently ignored when people think in terms of ethnic groups; which often happens, even in academic studies (Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov 2004: 45). This also occurs when the idea of 'self-identification' or 'internal definition' is used in reference to both the identification of an individual

and the identification of the entire minority category or 'group', just as Jenkins does (2008: 171).

Parental authority is a main theme in many of the participants' reflections on their childhood and youth. Many participants were not allowed by their parents to take part in social events with their classmates, which had predominantly ethnic Dutch backgrounds. They missed out on friendships because they were not allowed to ask friends over to their house or they were not allowed to visit friends' homes. They were not allowed to go on school trips or to join classmates to the cinema. They were not permitted to attend a university of their choices, because this required them to move to another city and live by themselves. Most parents did stimulate their children in their educational careers, but only as long as this did not threaten their children being a 'good' and 'decent' 'Moroccan', 'Turk' or 'Muslim'. Most of the times, parents downright prohibited certain behavior. In other occasions certain actions were not explicitly prohibited but children felt their parents' disapproval and disappointment.

These stories of dissonance between parental preferences and the personal preferences of the children should not make us overlook the emotional bonds between children and parents. Most participants felt strongly connected to their parents, even though their life-worlds were miles apart. They were close, as the children helped their parents navigate the unfamiliar Dutch society they had entered. Many participants sensed the hardships their parents had endured through their migration trajectory. This made them feel responsible to succeed in return and not to fail. Agius Vallejo and Lee, who observe a similar attitude among Latino Americans, call this the 'immigrant narrative of struggle and sacrifice' (2009: 19). Bouchra concisely illustrates this point:

My parents made so many sacrifices for us that I kept thinking: I don't want it to be in vain.
(Bouchra, parents from Morocco)

These bonds and feelings of responsibility extend into the participants' adult lives. Many of the participants emphasize how much they appreciate the bond with their parents. The reflections on their current relations focus less on frictions and more on the effort taken to bridge the gap with their parents.

While nearly all participants discuss the relation with their parents in rather similar ways, how they speak about other co-ethnics varies. Some explain how they feel that other co-ethnics treat social climbers, such as themselves, with suspicion, or how they keep a certain distance to co-ethnics as they fear gossip and disapproval. For others, what they call a 'co-ethnic community' feels as a comforting home. Besides reflections on co-ethnics in general, most of the participants mention that they have close friends who share their ethnic background and also their education level, which can include siblings.

Responses

When divergent behavioral preferences exist between children and parents and other co-ethnics, such situation of dissonance requires a response. Children have various ways of dealing with their personal preferences and the diverging parental

expectations. They have various approaches for dealing with the mix of parental encouragements, demands and prohibitions in combination with their own feelings of respect, responsibility and love. The stories show that how individuals act in situations of dissonance not only depends on their own preference and the preferences of the social other, but also on feelings of belonging and the appreciation of the social bond. From the interviews, four kinds of responses emerge, which I label 'conform', 'convince', 'conceal' and 'confront'. These are characterized by varying balances between one's own independent preferences and the wish to preserve social bonds. These strategies are very similar to the strategies Van der Hoek identifies among adolescent second generation Moroccan and Turkish Dutch women: acceptance, communication, deceit and rebellion (2006: 78).

(1) Conform. One way to react to dissonance is to conform to the stance of the other. Conformism is a way to avoid conflict, which can threaten the social relation. One can fully internalize the other's stance, resolving the entire disagreement,ⁱ but conformism can also entail one's obedience in terms of behavior. For example, Esra decided that she would not even ask if she could study at a distant university, which would require her to live by herself, because this seemed futile. Bouchra also referred to a strategy of conformism, when she referred to sharing the norms of her co-ethnics as partly a 'coping strategy'. In these cases, feelings of belonging are more important than the participants' independent wishes. When one wants to protect social relations and avoid threats to one's acceptance and belonging, conformism is the safest response.

(2) Convince. Here, people try and convince the other by explanation. This was Esra's approach when she kept explaining her preferences for a specific university and for a specific husband to her father. This was also Aysel's main approach in a later stage of her life. When she already had children, she started pursuing a professional career. The bond with her family felt very important to her, and her main aim during her path of social mobility was to keep her family close and to prevent alienation. This wish made her continuously try to make them understand her decisions and to 'take them along' in her trajectory of personal development. Other studies show that fear of parents that their children's social mobility leads to alienation or immoral behavior can be eased when children explicitly identify in ethnic or religious ways (De Koning 2008, Ketner 2010, De Jong 2012). Such identification can convince parents and other co-ethnics that the child is a good 'Moroccan', 'Turk' or 'Muslim'. This reassurance that the child is doing fine can increase trust and expand the child's freedom. The strategy of convincing is another approach to avoid confrontations and to protect social relations and belonging, while at the same time one tries to pursue his personal goals.

(3) Conceal. Another way to pursue one's personal wishes is to hide the behavior that the other does not appreciate. Esra visited the cinema, while she pretended to go to school. Hind did not tell her parents that she was seeing a boyfriend. According to De Jong, Moroccan Dutch students often use this strategy, which is based on the apparently broadly accepted principle among Moroccan Dutch families that 'what you don't know does not exist' (2012: 107). In this approach, one does not comply with the wishes of the other, but nonetheless tries to avoid conflict. However, the risk of being exposed forms a possible threat to one's belonging.

(4) *Confront*. One can choose for open conflict and confront the other by assertively pressing one's point or by openly choosing one's own path. This approach is most risky in terms of belonging. One runs the risk of disapproval and rejection, as we can see in Karim's example. He did not comply with his parents' wishes to visit the mosque, marry and get rid of the black clothes he was wearing, which led to disapproval and rejection. Another example is Ahmed, who decided to go and live in another city against the wishes of his parents, who actually got used to this situation quite quickly. A participant in Buitelaar's study illustrates the possible consequences of this approach. After this participant finished her studies, she went to live by herself to enhance her job prospects – apparently against the will of her father, as she tells: 'I had to hand in my keys. From then on, I was simply a visitor who had to ring the doorbell. He emphasized that he didn't want to see me again' (2009: 208-209, translation MS).

These four strategies to deal with dissonance vary in levels of independence and belonging. The strategies are characterized by varying balances between fulfillment of one's independent ambitions on the one hand and the protection of one's social bonds on the other hand. Pektaş-Weber (2006) and Buitelaar (2009) observe searches for a similar balance among Muslim and Moroccan Dutch women. This range of strategies shows that behavioral expectations of others, even when these others are parents, do not necessarily deprive individuals of personal agency. Even in the face of authoritative parents or a cohesive community, individuals often still have various responses at their disposal. This means that even when people conform to the stance of the other, this does not necessarily reflect a complete lack of agency. Conformism can involve the careful deliberation of various choices. Individuals can deliberately *choose to conform* and to refrain from pursuing one's independent ambitions in order to protect social bonds, for example out of love or respect. However, the acknowledgement of individual agency should not lead to an underestimation of external pressures. When environments have strict social norms and severe sanctions for deviance, individual agency is very limited.

Interethnic settings: descriptions and responses

Interactions with interethnics are not always characterized by difference and dissonance, contrary to the connotation of difference that accompanies the term ethnic 'outgroup'. Actually, although all participants experience the Dutch integration debate as exclusionary and offensive for people with Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds, nearly all of them express that in daily interactions, for example with colleagues, they do not feel different nor discriminated. Particularly with higher educated, they feel they have much in common, even more than with co-ethnics who are lower educated.

This does not mean that they do not mention instances of dissonance. Participants frequently account of instances of exclusion, in which they are 'Othered' and placed in an outsider's position against their will and against their own views. However, when they are labeled as 'Moroccan' and 'Turkish' by others, they often do not interpret these occurrences as instances of exclusion, as these mechanisms of Othering are often subtle and therefore difficult to interpret, and often do not have negative intentions. In addition, they sometimes also use these ethnic labels

themselves; how then can one blame someone else for using the same label? At the same time, the participants' accounts radiate reluctance to be labeled as 'Moroccan' or 'Turkish' by others. Apparently, it is unpleasant to be classified in (solely) ethnic terms by ethnic Dutch. Ellemers and colleagues offer various reasons for, what I call, this 'classification resistance' (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears and Doosje 1999; Ellemers, Spears and Doosje 2002), which resonate with the participants' accounts in the current study. Firstly, such classification expresses prejudice. People prefer to be seen as holistic, multifaceted persons, with multiple individual strengths and weaknesses and not to be reduced to the singular image that accompanies the label 'Moroccan', 'Turk', 'Muslim' or 'foreigner'; particularly when this image is related to negative stereotypes. Karim's quote illustrates this point:

There's no one who appreciates me for who I AM... And now [as successful minorities] we simply have changed into new stereotypes – just like before, you know. We are still not people. (...) this ethnic identity suddenly becomes your real identity, you know. (Karim, parents from Morocco)

The second is irrelevance or *inaccuracy*. Participants are well aware of the 'ethnic lens' in Dutch politics and media. 'Culture' and 'religion' are often taken as natural explanations for a wide range of social problems, such as criminality, obnoxious street youth, gender inequality and homophobia. This view tends to obscure more relevant social mechanisms. This leads participants to carefully consider whether particular events really can be explained by ethnicity and religion (and really need to be labeled 'Moroccan' or 'Islamic') or if other social mechanisms offer more accurate explanations. Emir critically reflects on the relevance of (ethnic minority) culture in explaining failings and successes in his professional field:

(...) is that culture then...? I'm not really like: culture... – Is this all about culture? (Said, parents from Morocco)

Giving a third reason, Ellemers and colleagues explain that external classification entails a *reduction of agency*. When one is labeled by someone else, one is deprived from the freedom to present oneself as one wants to, which can feel highly uncomfortable. I add a fourth reason to this list, which is *denial of belonging*. When one is appointed the position of the Other, when one is classified as not one of 'us', one's belonging is denied. This not only occurs when one is labeled as 'Moroccan' by ethnic Dutch but also when one is labeled as (too) 'Dutch' by Moroccan Dutch.ⁱⁱ This fourth point relates to the first and third point, but in my view it needs separate mentioning. These four reasons explain why external labeling as 'ethnic' in interethnic situations can feel annoying and why these are instances of exclusion.

While most participants emphasize that they do not feel different nor discriminated in their adult lives, for most this was different in their childhood. Many of them felt like an outsider because they were downright bullied or excluded by others, because they were not allowed by their parents to join in social activities, or because they just felt ashamed, for example, of certain practices or their language skills, family or appearances. In most cases, feeling like an outsider was related to their ethnic minority background.

Responses

From the participants' stories, from the parts that focused on interethnic settings, a variety of approaches emerge; a variety of responses to situations in which one is unwillingly labeled as (exclusively) 'Moroccan' or 'Turkish' by others. When we see these situations as instances of dissonance, the same four kinds of responses can be identified as in co-ethnic contexts: to conform, convince, conceal and confront. These responses roughly resemble the responses to unwanted categorization, or labeling, identified by Ellemers and colleagues (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears and Doosje 1999; Ellemers, Spears and Doosje 2002), which are (1) challenging the presumed stereotypical relation between category membership and behavior (similar to 'convincing' and 'confronting'), (2) 'disidentification' with the category of the ascription (concealing), and (3) strengthening one's identification with the category of the external ascription (conforming). I discuss them here in reverse order.

(1) Confront: challenge the external categorization. One way to respond to unwanted external labeling is to explicitly challenge or deny the (exclusively) ethnic identification. This can be done by refusing the ethnic label. Another way is explicitly emphasizing one's Dutchness. Such claim of Dutchness occurs in the interview with Adem who underlines the indisputability of his Dutchness in what seems to be a reaction to the (implicit) suggestion that he is not Dutch:

Marieke: When I ask you: 'Are you Dutch?' What would you say?

Adem: Um.... I am – Well... That JUST depends on what you call Dutch, doesn't it??

Marieke: What do YOU call Dutch?

Adem: I feel I do MORE than enough for THIS country, more than the average Dutch person. And I would defend this country MORE than enough. And I DO. So, when THIS is the condition for being Dutch, I am Dutch for one thousand percent. (Adem, parents from Turkish)

Another way to challenge the supposed singular character of identification is to challenge the stereotypical idea that identification as Dutch and Moroccan/ Turkish are mutually exclusive by stressing one's 'bi-culturality' and the value of 'bi-culturality'.

I feel REALLY blessed in that respect. I really feel blessed that I have two countries where I can live, and that I feel at home in both countries. That's a REAL privilege. (Berkant)

(2) Conceal: avoid external categorization by disidentification. Another set of responses aim to entirely avoid the unwanted external labeling as ethnic. To avoid being Othered, sometimes people try to hide or de-emphasize their minority identity in order to 'pass' for a member of a different category. The strategy of concealing was common for many participants during their childhood, when they wanted to downplay or even hide their ethnicities. Yet, as we saw in the discussion on classification resistance, also in their adulthood, participants sometimes refrain from labeling themselves as Turkish or Moroccan. Karim's quote shows that he made a deliberate move from emphasizing to de-emphasizing his minority identity:

Karim: After a while, I was done with being a minority. Just like my friend. (...) We felt that we became like stereotypes... instead of real people...

Marieke: And then you kind of 'undid' your minority status?

Karim: Then, I undid my minority status. Um... yes, over time I did so.ⁱⁱⁱ

A way to de-emphasize one's ethnicity is to designate the ethnic categorization as irrelevant to the situation at hand by stressing other dimensions, such as one's professional identity, like Aysel does:

– In Turkey I feel more Dutch, and in the Netherlands I feel more Turkish; let's phrase it THIS way. But at my work, I just feel like a consultant (Aysel, parents from Turkey).

Another way to underscore the irrelevance of ethnic categorization is by pointing to one's individuality, emphasizing the futility of categorizing people:

Well... you just switch somewhat, you know. You want – At some moments you really strive to belong. Then you want to be EITHER Dutch OR really Moroccan. At other moments, you feel extremely rebellious and you think: 'You know what? NEVER MIND! I am who I am. I just don't care. It's a bit of a compromise...' (Karim, parents from Morocco)

Well... I'm not like a standard employee or anything. I somewhat divert from the standard. But that's fine. They have to take me as I am (...). I am Moroccan and Dutch. I am who I am, I cannot separate these things. (Imane, parents from Morocco)

(3) Convince: challenge the applied stereotype. Others take up the challenge. They try to influence the debate and change the widespread negative stereotypes. They publish articles, start social initiatives or enter 'white' bulwarks to bridge the gap between the ethnic minority and the rest of society. They try and 'convince' the audience that the stereotypical assumptions are untrue and misleading. To show that negative stereotypes of the ethnic group are too negative and simplistic and certainly do not apply to all members of the specific category, it is crucial to highlight not only one's success (measured against dominant standards), but also one's ethnic minority background. Said's quote is illustrative for this strategy:

I WANT to show that you can be both Moroccan and successful. I want to, very deliberately, show that these two CAN be combined. Whenever I can, I also say I am a Muslim. Whenever I can I say I celebrate the Ramadan. And whenever I can I say I regularly pray. And whenever I can I say that I... whatever – that I visit Morocco every year, for example. So, you know, I just try to make people realize: Wait, there's something wrong in that picture... To SHOW the right picture and to show that in your mind you are too black-and-white. (Said, parents from Morocco)

This approach of showing socially desired behavior to change negative stereotypes appears to be common, at least among Moroccan Dutch. It is the most common behavior among the Moroccan Dutch students in the study of De Jong (2012: 79), and the Moroccan Dutch respondents in Ketner's study also frequently employ this approach (2010).

Another way to challenge negative stereotypes is to 'play' with stereotypical images. The aim is to trigger critical reflection, to make the audience reconsider their simplistic assumptions by behaving in stereotypical ways with-a-twist, as Said explains:

I remember, once – I was with friends in the train at peak hour, the train was packed – that we started to speak Dutch with such awful, faltering accents. ON PURPOSE, just to shock people. And meanwhile, we just said incredibly smart things, you know (both laughing). To trigger people, so they think: 'Huh??' You know. Just to, kind of, annoy them. To make them REALIZE: 'There's something wrong here... These kids are saying really intelligent stuff. But with an awful accent.' On purpose! (Said)

(4) Conform: increase identification with the category of ascription. The variety of responses demonstrates that individuals often have agency over how they identify in many situations. However, even though external categorizations do not entirely pin people down, one's personal agency is limited. The influence of external categorizations often cannot be ignored. When external labeling happens, they need to be dealt with in one way or the other. Categorizations can be overwhelming, and attempts to challenge these might simply seem futile. People do not always feel the freedom or have the energy to challenge them. In those cases, conforming to them – at least in how you present yourself – might seem like the best option. It is a way to protect one's self-esteem (Ellemers, Spears and Doosje 2002). Consequently, participants sometimes present themselves according to the ascribed ethnic label, even if they do not (entirely) feel this way. This is also observed in other studies, see for example Omlo (2011), Van der Welle (2011), De Jong (2012) and Eijberts (2013). Ahmed explains:

Actually, now I think about it... Nine out of ten times I am not addressed as Dutch, but as Moroccan [by ethnic Dutch], whereas inside I feel like a Dutch Moroccan, both. (...) Look, I actually do not call myself Dutch, because you are not seen as Dutch. (Ahmed, parents from Turkey)

The pressure to identify in a certain way can also lead to an increased identification with the ethnic or religious identity on a deeper level, for example, when focusing on being Turkish, Moroccan or Muslim makes one more conscious of one's minority ethnicity and religion. Rumbaut calls this a 'reactive ethnicity' (2008). This is also what De Koning (2008) and Ketner (2009, 2010) notice in relation to religious identification among Moroccan Dutch youth. The social importance of ethnicity (or religion) may lead one to further explore these identities, and it can make these identifications more salient, as Hicham's quote illustrates:

Before, people were much less aware of their being Moroccan or Muslim, they possessed multiple identities. It was more dynamic; it was just how you felt at a particular moment. In the afternoon, at the snack bar with your peers, you use slang, while in the evening with your mom, you speak Berber. Currently, it happens that one identity becomes more and more prominent. That you are Moroccan or Muslim becomes imprinted as the most prominent identity. I feel pushed into this identity, by people questioning me about it, or write about it in the papers, and those who study the second and third generation, whatever. That makes me think about my identity and wonder: 'What actually IS my identity?' Then I suddenly have to make decisions, whereas, before, my identity was like: it all fits together. (...) Now it seems like some sort of a make-or-breakpoint. It is almost like: 'Take it or leave it, it belongs with me and it's important to me'. Things that you were not aware of, previously, become more and more important. (Hicham)

External pressure can also lead to an increased association with a co-ethnic or co-religious community. Bouchra explained that as a result of her experiences of exclusion from Dutch society, she only feels truly welcomed and accepted by the worldwide Islamic community (Ummah).

On an even deeper level, being categorized as 'Moroccan' or 'Turkish' and as 'non-Dutch' can lead to the internalization of this view and to a weakening identification as Dutch. When people do not feel accepted for who they are, this might lead to a reconsideration of their belonging in Dutch society and doubts about their futures

is in the Netherlands. Will they and their children really be happy here? Aysel's feelings of belonging changed over time:

(...) For a long while, I thought: 'We are Dutch... This society is ours...'. Fortuyn's murder sort of – I started to realize: 'You are an immigrant and you will remain one, FOREVER. Whatever happens'. (...) So I told my children: 'You might THINK that you can be like Jan or Piet [which are typically Dutch names, MS], but you should really know: If you're involved in something – in the bus, or on a street corner – you are much more likely to be seen as a troublemaker than Piet or Jan... Always be aware of your position in a society.' (Aysel, parents from Turkey)

Sometimes, the idea that one is 'Moroccan' and therefore is not-Dutch is even too internalised to be problematized, as Hind's quote illustrates:

I KNOW I'm darker and everything, but I am not fully aware of it myself... (laughs). Sometimes, when I am abroad, I happen to say: 'I'm Dutch'. Then they respond with: 'Are you DUTCH??' 'Um, no, sorry, sorry, sorry, I am Moroccan...' (laughs). You know... that I just forget for a moment... (Hind, parents from Morocco)

The occurrence of this response of 'conforming', either just in how someone presents oneself, or regarding identification on a deeper level, shows the reverse (or perverse) effect of the culturalist and emotive integration discourse. The consistent labeling of immigrants and their offspring as the ethnic Other often leads them to identify as such (see also Duyvendak and Sloopman 2011). Other studies show that feelings of exclusion hamper national identification (Ersanilli 2009; Georgiadis and Manning 2012).

Conclusion & Discussion

Clearly, how one self-identifies is (at least partly) a response to the situation at hand. How one positions oneself, both in terms of label and behavior, depends on the interaction with social others. When views on categorizations or behavioral preferences diverge, we can speak of a situation of dissonance, which requires a response; one way or the other. By formulating interactions that contain an element of friction as instances of disagreement or dissonance, this opens up a framework of identification strategies that applies to both co-ethnic and interethnic settings. The classification of these approaches is based on the balance between one's personal preferences (apart from the social aspect) and the social relationship¹. Dissonance in co-ethnic settings is primarily discussed by the participants in terms of behavioral norms and preferences, whereas dissonance in interethnic settings primarily deals with labeling. Both aspects, the use of an identity label and the cultural content, can be regarded as dimensions of identification; hence the use of 'positioning' as a synonym to identification. However, I suggest that this classification of strategies can be applied to any situation of dissonance, as the classification is primarily based on how the gap between two diverging stances is bridged. This means that, although the empirical data comes from interviews with higher educated Moroccan and Turkish Dutch, this framework has much broader relevance. Although the accounts of the social climbers are probably not indicative for lower educated (lower educated probably have different relations with their parents, different needs and different ways to respond to dissonance, and maneuver

¹ Formulating this more in terms of belonging? Or does the introduction of this term confuse the argument?

in different contexts, where they encounter different mechanisms of exclusion), I think that the identified framework of strategies is probably not unique for social climbers, nor for the Moroccan and Turkish Dutch.

The empirical descriptions of various situations of dissonance and the range of responses that the participants of this study employed at various moments support Song's argument (2003) that minority individuals do not lack ethnic options, despite being a (visible) minority. It is important to acknowledge the individual agency the minority individuals possess, even sometimes in situations in which they choose to conform to the stance of the other. Conformism regarding certain issue not necessarily expresses a complete lack of individual agency, but can be a conscious decision to not endanger the social relation on this particular matter. Of course, when the pursuit of one's preferences severely endangers precious social relations, there is little freedom for the individual and large social pressure exists to conform to social norms. But as we have seen, this does not always fully determine the individual's response.

At the same time, it is important not to overestimate individual agency and to underestimate the influence of external actors. There is a danger, when the image of 'victim' shifts to the image of 'resilient actor' that the responsibility for social oppression shifts from society to the individual, and that failures to cope are seen as personal rather than societal failings (Meyer 2003, p. 23). As is clear from this article, individuals are not free to choose whether or not to be subject to external pressures, whether from co-ethnics or others. In particular, the dominant integration discourse is felt as extremely exclusionary and insulting. Participants often feel judged 'as Moroccans' and 'as Turks' and measured along specific yardsticks. It is important to realize how social others limit and shape the individual's options; by granting or withholding appreciation, acceptance and the permission to belong. It would be unjust to hold the minority individual (entirely) responsible for their experiences and expressions of non-belonging, as feelings of belonging are strongly affected by politics of belonging.

The framework of options that emerged from the participants' accounts – consisting of the strategies to conform, convince, conceal and confront – is valuable in various ways. First of all, as it is based on the idea of dissonance between two actors, it explicitly acknowledges the interactional aspect of identification. In this respect, it parallels the models of Ellemers and colleagues that I discussed. Secondly, and this is an addition to Ellemers' models, these strategies are all characterized in terms of a balance between 'personal' needs and 'social' needs; the latter referring to one's needs for belonging and for the protection of social bonds, and the former relating to one's individual preferences beyond these social bonds^{iv}. The formulation of all four strategies as specific balances between these two needs provides coherence to the set of strategies identified. This formulation furthermore brings out considerations that are often overlooked (for example when conformism is solely seen as a lack of agency): the wish to protect and nurture social bonds, and to avoid conflict, which might endanger one's belonging. Thirdly, the framework is valuable because it focuses on dissonance in any kind of setting, which avoids the ingroup-outgroup dichotomy. A dichotomous view on co-ethnic and interethnic contexts (as characterized by respectively similarity/agreement and difference/disagreement)

is too simplistic and does not do justice to minority individuals, as this study shows. The dichotomous view overlooks differences and disagreement within a social category and commonalities and agreement between social categories, which is why I find the use of the terms 'ingroup' and 'outgroup' in relation to entire ethnic categories problematic. With one framework that applies to various settings we can get beyond this binary.

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Endnotes

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- ⁱ 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.
- ⁱⁱ 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).
- ⁱⁱⁱ 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.
- ^{iv} I actually object against these labels 'personal' and 'social needs', because the need for social bonds can very well be seen as just one of one's personal needs, and no 'personal' need lacks social embedding. However, as I lack a better alternative, I reluctantly use these terms (with explanation).