

Dutch-Moroccan youngsters and Morocco

An investigation into the self-identifications of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters in their everyday lives and the influence of holidays to Morocco on these self-identifications



Thesis report

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Preface

Throughout my study, I had come to think that I may not be that much of a sociologist as I decided to become when I chose for the specialization 'Sociology of Rural Development'. In my view, a real sociologist embraces sociological theory and loves to have endless abstract discussions about the differences and similarities between Marx and Durkheim, Giddens and Habermas. The theories and concepts were interesting, but they did not appeal to me very much, because it was hard to imagine how they worked in the 'real world'. At the end of my study, I was desperate to see for myself what the world looked like and how I could make sense of it.

The research for this final thesis was a step in the good direction. Finally, research would not be limited to an investigation into the existing literature on a certain topic, but I could actually go into the field and ask people about their actions and thoughts. Thus, when I started my research in May 2009, I worked my way through the literature to construct a theoretical framework for my thesis and I presented my proposal a month later. Then, I dropped the framework and went to see for myself. I've spent three months talking to Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, asking them questions about who they are and how they perceive the world in which they were living. For three months, the only thing I cared about and paid attention to was their life-worlds and their experiences. However, the purpose of a thesis is to do research and reflect on your results with the help of relevant theories and concepts. Thus, in September, when I started writing the report, it was time to turn back to the theoretical framework and see whether I could see any of the theories and concepts reflected in my data. I have to say that it was a bit to my surprise that I did! As I compared the theoretical framework with my results, I realized that theories and concepts *do* make sense and they *are* reflected in the real world. This 'revelation' has made me reconsider my standpoint towards sociology and has made me realize that, after all, I *am* a sociologist. Wherever I go and whatever I do, I am interested in the way in which people live together, how they make sense of the world and how their worldviews influence their actions. Sociology *is* the way I look upon the world.

In this thesis, the knowledge that I have gained from my specialization in Rural Development Sociology and my minor in Leisure, Tourism and Environment, is combined with my interest in other cultures and my fascination for the way in which people make sense of their lives. Throughout my study, I have always been interested in those topics that are to be found on the edges of different study fields, or to combine different study fields in a way that not many people would think of. Doing that makes me feel like an explorer. This thesis has made me explore a group of people within the Dutch society that I normally have no connections with at all, with life worlds that seem so different from mine. My sister once gave me a quote that has ever since inspired me with everything I undertake:

"Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve"
(W. Clement Stone)

At the start of my research I conceived how I would interview Dutch-Moroccan youngsters and how they would tell me about their bonds with Morocco. I believed that it was a very interesting topic for academic research. This believe has kept me going throughout the entire period of doing research and it has helped me to finally achieve to write all my results and conclusions down in this report.

Acknowledgements

One cannot finish a thesis without thanking those persons that have been supportive and helpful throughout the entire period of doing research as well as writing the report.

First of all, I would like to thank my respondents. If it was not for them, this thesis would not have been possible at all. I have had a hard time finding respondents but every single interview that I have held was interesting and useful for my research.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Monique Nuijten and Karin Peters. They have always provided me with good support and advice. Their enthusiasm about the topic of my research as well as my results gave me the necessary confidence in my own abilities to perform an academic research.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and friends. They were very helpful throughout the entire period of the thesis research. They pointed me to interesting news features on the topic and they introduced me to Dutch-Moroccans they knew. But equally important, they provided me with the necessary social distraction from time to time. If it was not for these 'social intermezzos', I would not have been able to distance myself from my thesis from time to time and return to it with a fresh outlook on the topic.

Executive Summary

This thesis is the result of an exploratory and qualitative research that was meant to reveal how, to what extent, and for what reasons Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with their parents' country of origin in their everyday lives and during a holiday in Morocco.

Moroccans have a long immigration history in the Netherlands. Since the 1960s, there has been a steady annual flow of immigrants from Morocco into the Netherlands. Initially, they came to the Netherlands as guest workers and intended to return to Morocco after a few years. However, from the 1970's onwards, it already became clear that more and more guest workers let their wives and children come over and they postponed their return to Morocco until after their retirement. Nowadays, the Moroccans comprise the third largest immigrant population in the Netherlands. A considerable part of this population consists of 'second generation' immigrants: the children and grandchildren of the pioneer immigrants that came to the Netherlands in the 1960's and 1970's. Most of these children and grandchildren are born and raised in the Netherlands but nevertheless they seem to self-identify strongly with their parents' country of origin. These 'Dutch-Moroccan youngsters' are the focus of this thesis research. Together with their parents, or a group of Dutch-Moroccan friends, they undertake regular trips to Morocco, to visit their Moroccan relatives, but also to be in a country to which they also partly feel that they belong. These holidays to Morocco are the second focus of this thesis.

The objective of this thesis was to research how Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with their parents' country of origin in their everyday lives, and how they self-identify with their parents' country of origin during a holiday in Morocco. The nature of the research was intently qualitative, since most of the research that has been done so far on this topic is quantitative.

For the theoretical framework of this thesis, theories and concepts were selected from three study fields: transnationalism, VFR tourism, and identity. These three study fields seemed relevant considering the topic of this research, and they were also considered to provide useful and interesting theories and concepts against which the results of this research could be evaluated. In the theoretical framework, the concept of transnationalism is presented as opposed to assimilationist theories from the early 20th century. In this section, the focus is also mainly on 'transnationalism from below'. Theories and concepts from VFR tourism were selected because they provided an insightful theoretical background for the motivations of immigrants to undertake 'return visits' to their original homeland, as well as the experiences that they might go through during such trips. The concept of identity has been narrowed down to those theories and concepts that deal with processes of identification and self-identification, as well as some theories and concepts that focus on ethnic identities.

For this research, respondents were selected that were between 16 and 26 years old. It was decided to focus on adolescents because literature on identity often argued that an individual evaluates his or her identity the most during the period of adolescence. To find the respondents, Dutch-Moroccan and Islamic organisations were contacted and announcements were posted on Dutch-Moroccan Internet forums. This last strategy proved to be the most fruitful for finding respondents. Furthermore, a trip to Morocco was undertaken by the researcher, which also yielded some valuable respondents.

Three research techniques were selected for the implementation of this research. The most important technique was the semi-structured interview. Initially, the idea was to

interview the respondents before, during and after their holiday. However, throughout the research, many difficulties have been experienced with finding respondents as well as contacting respondents for a follow-up interview. This has made it very difficult to find enough respondents that could be interviewed before, during and after their holiday and it was decided to let go of this division during the analysis of the data. The second research strategy revolved around participant observation during a trip to Morocco. This participant observation was intended to supplement the data yielded from the interviews and it gave the researcher a better idea of what the respondents actually do during a holiday in Morocco. The third research strategy was secondary data collection. This provided useful information for the background study on Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands as well as for the theoretical framework of the thesis. For the analysis of the data, qualitative data analysis strategies and the case study technique were selected.

For the case studies, two respondents were selected. The case studies are meant to reveal how respondents developed a story around their self-identifications as Moroccans. Furthermore, the case study would be able to put the Moroccan ethnic identity of the respondents more in perspective. Besides ethnic identity, the case studies also focus on the respondents' accounts on their study, family relations, religion, the holidays to Morocco, discrimination and future prospects. The case studies are illustrative of how respondents move back and forth between self-identification as Moroccan, Dutch, Muslim, Berber, feminist, and so on.

In the 'identity chapter', the respondents' accounts on their Moroccan ethnic identity and other types of self-identifications are presented in a more segmented way and analyzed against the theories and concepts on identity that were introduced in the theoretical framework of the thesis. The chapter is divided into five paragraphs, which focus on the way in which the respondents' described who they are, what reasons they give for their self-identification as Moroccan, what other 'social categories' they identify with, what role they ascribe to their Moroccan ethnic identity in their everyday lives, and what transnational activities they employ that link them to Morocco. The chapter reveals that the respondents' self-identifications as Moroccans are largely influenced by the way in which they are perceived by the Dutch society. Furthermore, their Moroccan ethnic identity is 'situational', in that it is not a salient aspect of their identity all the time. Another important finding in this chapter is that the respondents' Moroccan ethnic identity plays a role in their everyday lives, although the respondents' were not aware of this all the time. Especially when talking about their future and their friends, they seemed to be culturally oriented towards Morocco. Furthermore, they had regular contact with their Moroccan relatives in their everyday lives. A fourth important finding of this chapter is that self-identification as a Moroccan is not the same as self-identification with Morocco. Although the respondents self-identify as Moroccans, it is not because they feel like they 'connect' with Moroccans who actually live in Morocco. A last important finding of this chapter is that the respondents' did not self-identify as either Moroccan or Dutch. Most of the respondents felt comfortable in both the Moroccan and the Dutch culture, and they were selecting the best of both cultures to combine it into a 'hybrid' Dutch-Moroccan culture.

In the 'holiday chapter', the regular holidays that the respondents undertake to Morocco are the central focus. The chapter is divided into four paragraphs, which focus on the motivations of the respondents to go on a holiday to Morocco, the activities they employ during such a holiday, the experiences they have regarding such a holiday, and the way in which they perceive themselves is influenced by a holiday to Morocco. The results

presented in this chapter reveal that the main reason for the respondents to attach importance to the holidays to Morocco is to visit their Moroccan relatives. The holiday furthermore provides the respondents an opportunity to learn more about their Moroccan culture and how this culture is a part of their own background. What furthermore became clear from the results is that the holiday to Morocco also provides the respondents with an opportunity to escape from their daily lives in the Netherlands. In correspondence with the main motive that the respondents gave for the importance of a holiday to Morocco, a lot of time during this holiday is dedicated to the visiting of Moroccan relatives. Other major activities are going to the beach, shopping and strolling along the boulevard. When not visiting their Moroccan relatives, the respondents' mainly hang out with fellow Dutch-Moroccan youngsters during the holiday. In general, the holidays to Morocco are experienced as very pleasant. The respondents enjoy the Moroccan ambience, weather, parties, food and the omnipresence of their religion. When it comes to self-identification, the holidays to Morocco seem to be an important moment of evaluation for many respondents. They seem to reflect a lot on their identity and what their Moroccan background actually means to them. Many respondents have come to realize through the holidays to Morocco, that they are not as Moroccan as they may have thought they were.

In the conclusion of this thesis, a comparison is made between the respondents' self-identifications in their everyday lives and self-identifications during or around the holiday to Morocco. A similarity is identified in that both in their everyday lives and during a holiday to Morocco, their self-identifications are largely influenced by the way in which they are identified by significant others. In their everyday lives, their self-identification as Moroccan is influenced by the way in which they are perceived by the Dutch society. During a holiday, their self-identification as Moroccan is influenced by the way in which they are perceived by their Moroccan relatives. In the Netherlands, this seems to result in a stronger self-identification as Moroccan, while in Morocco, their self-identification as Moroccan seems to be weakened by the fact that they are not considered as Moroccan by their Moroccan relatives. When it comes to self-identification with their parents' country of origin, the respondents did not seem to do so very much. Although Morocco is very important to them and they like to go there on a holiday very much, they did not seem to self-identify with the country or its citizens. What they seemed to self-identify with the most was with their Dutch-Moroccan friends. With them, they share a common background, rooted in two countries: Morocco *and* the Netherlands.

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1 Introduction

The contemporary significance of transnational migration flows across the globe and the existence of considerable immigrant communities in several countries, has led to an increased interest in the concept of identity within the field of anthropological studies on migration (Kearny 1995). Travel is becoming an increasingly important transnational practice of immigrants for the maintenance of social and cultural ties with their home country. For the children of these immigrants, visits to their parents' country of origin often provides them with an opportunity to find out who they are and where they come from (Stephenson 2002). Within the field of anthropology, there is furthermore a growing fascination with 'home-feelings', especially in the current era of globalization. (Al-Ali & Koser 2002; in Buitelaar 2007). For migrants as well as their children, the question 'where do I belong?' is equally important to the question 'Who am I?', where their identity is concerned.

This thesis is the result of a qualitative study on a particular group of immigrant children, namely Dutch-Moroccan youngsters. These adolescents are of Moroccan descent, but they were often born and raised in the Netherlands. However, the majority of these youngsters self-identify as (partly) Moroccan and they undertake regular trips to Morocco. This thesis is an investigation into their lives, their identities and the challenges they face as immigrant children.

This report will start with a background study on Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands, as an introduction to the topic of this thesis. Furthermore, the problem statement, research objective and the research questions will also be outlined in this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework of this thesis. In Chapter 3, the research methodology is outlined. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the results of this thesis research. Conclusions and recommendations for further research will be made in chapter 7.

1.1 Background study

To sketch the context of this research, I will first briefly outline the immigration history of Moroccans to the Netherlands. I will then continue to outline the holidays to Morocco that the so-called 'Dutch-Moroccans' undertake. For many of them, these holidays are an important element in the maintenance of the social and cultural ties with their country of origin. Then I will focus on Dutch-Moroccan youngsters in particular, since they are the subjects of this research. Their close ties with and sometimes strong orientation towards Morocco seem to be less obvious than their parents', since they were either born and raised in the Netherlands, or born in Morocco but brought to the Netherlands when they were still too young to remember anything from their 'residence' in Morocco.

1.1.1 Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands: a brief history

The Moroccans are considered as one of the 'traditional' immigrant populations in the Netherlands (Nicolaas 2009): since the 1960s, there has been a steady annual flow of immigrants from Morocco into the Netherlands (CBS 2005), which has only started to decline slightly in recent years. Due to the post-war exodus in the 1960s of Dutch citizens to Canada and the United States, the growth of the service sector which caused many Dutch

labourers to shift to jobs that were better paid, and the economic boom within the country itself, a large labour deficit caused many Dutch companies to seek for cheap and low-skilled labour in the Mediterranean (Garssen et al. 2005; Benali & Obdeijn 2005; Loukili 2007). The Moroccan immigrants followed only shortly after the large immigrant flows of labourers from Spain, Italy and Greece.

Initially, the main motive for migration of Moroccans to the Netherlands was labour. These first Moroccan immigrants were therefore predominantly male. At first, both the Dutch government and the immigrants themselves thought they would only stay in the country for a relatively short period, to earn some money and then to return to Morocco to be reunited with their families (Obdeijn & Schrover 2008; van Amersfoort & van Heelsum 2007; Stevens 2004). The influence of Morocco was still very strong in the everyday lives of these immigrants in the Netherlands, partly due to regular contact with relatives in Morocco. Learning the Dutch language and adjusting to Dutch culture did not seem relevant for these 'pioneer' immigrants, because they thought they would go back to Morocco within a few years. They were no immigrants, but guest workers: only to stay in the Netherlands for a limited amount of time. However, already from the 1970s onwards, the number of Moroccan immigrants that came to the Netherlands with the motive of family reunion outnumbered those Moroccan immigrants that came to seek work (Garssen et al. 2005; Loukili 2007). It resulted that Moroccan immigrants, after having earned some income, wanted to bring their families over so that they could also reap the benefits of a strong Dutch welfare society where education and income levels were much higher than in Morocco. Although the idea to return to Morocco was still on their minds, the actual return was postponed to the moment when their children would have finished their education and could start families of their own. In the 1980s, 'family formation' became the most important reason for Moroccan immigrants to come to the Netherlands (Garssen et al. 2005). Young and single Moroccan-Dutch men who had earned their first incomes would go to Morocco to find a good wife with whom to marry and build a family in the Netherlands.

Nowadays, the Moroccans comprise the third largest 'immigrant' or 'allochthonous' community in the Netherlands, after the immigrants from the former Dutch colonies (Netherlands Antilles and Aruba), and Turkey. The country currently inhabits around 330.000 Dutch-Moroccan citizens (Obdeijn & Schrover 2008; van Amersfoort & van Heelsum 2007). The majority of this 'allochthonous' community is now comprised of second or later generations of 'Dutch-Moroccans' (CBS 2005). They are the children and grandchildren of the actual immigrants that arrived since the 1960s and most of them are born in the Netherlands. The figure on the next page illustrates the growth of Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands. The children of immigrants are in this figure indicated as 'second-generation' allochthones.

2. Aantal niet-westerse allochtonen: eerste en tweede generatie, 1972–2003⁹

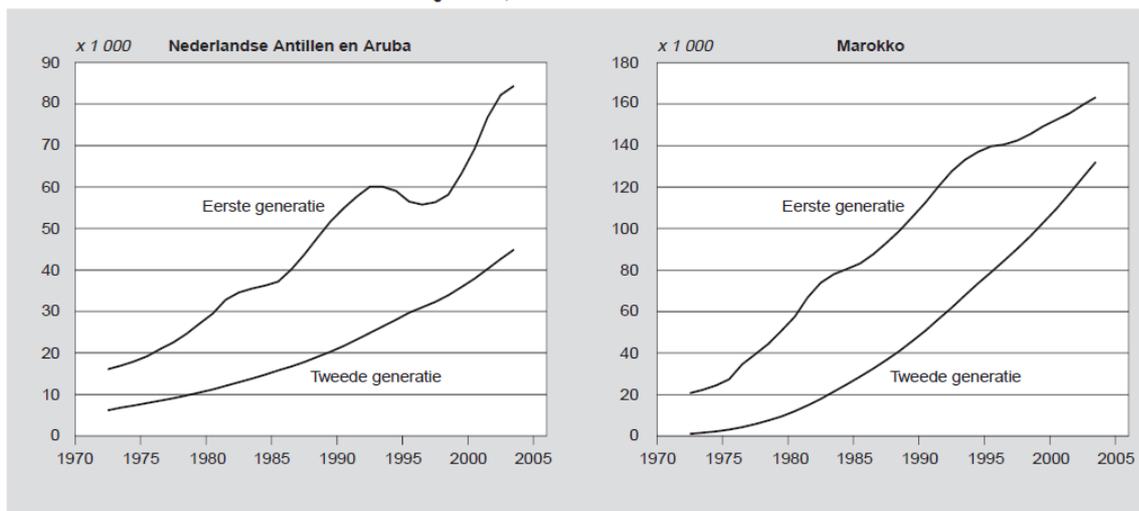


Figure 1: First- and second generation of immigrants from Morocco and the Netherlands Antilles in the Netherlands. (Source: de Jong 2003)

1.1.2 Dutch-Moroccans and Morocco

Throughout their immigration history, Dutch-Moroccans have held close ties with their original or ancestral homeland. First of all, the first generation immigrants had the immense responsibility of generating enough income to sustain their (extended) families back in Morocco and eventually help them to come to the Netherlands as well (Loukili 2007). Second, although the first immigrants often managed to get their wife and children to the Netherlands as well, grandparents, aunts and uncles stayed behind and these needed to be visited regularly to maintain the familial ties in good condition. The family is the most important element in a Moroccan's life (York 2006). The sometimes annual trip back to Morocco, which most families still do entirely by car in order to bring as much gifts for the relatives in Morocco as possible, is so famous and impressive that it has been the subject of a Dutch TV-programme ('Tante in Marokko'; broadcasted on NL2 in 2008 and 2009). The programme stated that annually, 100.000 Dutch-Moroccans make this trip, which is a third of the entire Moroccan immigrant population in the Netherlands. Both first generations as well as their children stated in the programme that they looked very much forward to going (back) to Morocco. The visiting of relatives was the main motive for these Dutch-Moroccans to make this trip. The average duration of these holidays is about 5 weeks and most of the families travel in July and August. Besides meeting the friends and relatives that are still living in Morocco, these holidays also function as a 'get-together' for all relatives that have emigrated from Morocco to other countries. Many families plan their holidays in such a way that all the relatives are in Morocco in the same period. These holidays are therefore also important for the celebration of weddings and other important family events. It is the only moment in a year when the whole family is together.

1.1.3 Dutch-Moroccan youngsters

As already mentioned earlier, the second generation of Moroccan immigrants - or to put it analytically more adequately, the children of the Moroccan immigrants – is fast growing and

already outnumbers the first generation of immigrants. The majority of this 'second generation' is now reaching adulthood and one can even speak of a rise of the adolescent third generation (van Amersfoort & van Heelsum 2007; CBS 2005). The majority of the research that focuses on Moroccan youngsters in the Netherlands is quantitative, and deals with their level of integration into Dutch society, their proficiency with the Dutch language, or whether they identify more with Morocco or with the Netherlands (e.g. Stevens 2004; Crul & Doornik 2003; Dagevos 2001; Verkuyten 1994). The last topic is also partly the focus of this thesis. However, this thesis attempts to complement quantitative research on this topic with qualitative data.

A study done by Crul & Doornik (2003), on the socioeconomic and socio-cultural integration of second generation Moroccans and Turks, revealed that among Dutch-Moroccan youngsters and their families, much importance is placed on the learning of the Moroccan language and many of the second generation Dutch-Moroccans have spent 'a lengthy period of time in their parents' home country' (Crul & Doornik 2003: 1050). The article furthermore argued that, compared to their Dutch counterparts, the Dutch-Moroccan children held on more strongly to the ideas of their parents. This indicates that second generation Dutch-Moroccans also maintain close ties with Morocco, through their relatives as well as corporeal travel to the country and the 'adoption' of the country's language and habits. Preliminary interviews for this research revealed that many Dutch-Moroccan youngsters also hold close contact with their relatives in Morocco, by phone or through the Internet. These interviews also revealed that many put great importance on the holidays to Morocco. Some state that they look forward to these holidays the entire year. Preliminary research on the Internet revealed that many Dutch-Moroccan youngsters discuss their holidays on 'Moroccan forums'. Topics such as 'where will you be staying this summer?' and 'who is leaving for Morocco in July?' can be found on several of these forums. Some of these forums are even especially designed for discussing these holidays (e.g. www.marokko-vakantie.hyves.nl). During the preliminary interviews, some respondents also stated that their 'roots' were in Morocco, even though they were not born there. This implies a rather strong orientation to their parents' country of origin.

However, on the other hand there are also Dutch-Moroccan youngsters who do not travel to Morocco anymore to visit their relatives. They have reached the age at which their parents no longer decide for them whether they have to go to Morocco during the summer holidays, and they have decided not to go anymore. Although Dutch media sometimes seems to imply the opposite, Dutch-Moroccan youngsters are not all the same. They differ in their experiences with their parents' country of origin, as well as in the extent to which they identify themselves with Moroccan culture.

1.1.4 Dutch-Moroccans youngsters and ethnic identity

Verkuyten (1994) and Dagevos (2001) state in their articles that the majority of the Dutch-Moroccan youngsters identify themselves as Moroccan or as being a member of the Dutch-Moroccan community. Among the second generation Dutch-Moroccans there are slightly less who identify themselves as Moroccan or as a member of the Dutch-Moroccan community, although compared to other ethnic communities within the Netherlands this percentage is still relatively high (Dagevos 2001). Furthermore, the Dutch-Moroccan youth also relatively identifies more with a certain religion (Islam) than other groups of ethnic youngsters do. Thus, not only do many Dutch-Moroccan youngsters identify with their

parental homeland, but also with their parental religion. It is argued that discrimination against people belonging to an ethnic minority group often impels them to 'retreat' into something they feel most comfortable with, which in this case is ethnic identity and religion (Loukili 2007). Van Amersfoort and van Heelsum (2007) also argued that the social position of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters within the Dutch society influences the way they self-identify. I will turn to processes influencing the salience of one's ethnic identity in the theoretical framework of this proposal. For now it is suffice to say that for many Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, their Moroccan ethnicity seems to play an important role in their lives.

1.2 Problem statement

Although much research on immigrants and their relation with their home country has been done, little of this research focuses on the children of these immigrants: those who were born in another country but feel connected to their parents' country of origin. The reason for first generation immigrants to be closely connected to their country of origin is quite obvious. However, the fact that their children also have this connection is less obvious and requires scientific investigation. Research on these '1.5' (born in parents' home country but migrated at a very early age) or second generation immigrants, focuses on *whether* they relate to or identify with their parents' country of origin or not. So far, hardly any research has focused on *how* these 'children' identify with their parents' country of origin in their everyday lives.

1.3 Research objective and research questions

Relating to the problem statement in the previous section, the purpose of this thesis is not to investigate whether it is good or bad for Dutch-Moroccan youth to hold on to Moroccan habits, for example considering their level of integration into Dutch society. Rather, the purpose of this thesis is to analyze *how* Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with their parents' country of origin. The focus will thereby be on the experiences of their holidays to Morocco, since this is an activity that is assumed to have much influence in shaping this process of identification with their parents' country of origin. (Stephenson 2002).

In accordance with this research objective, the following two main research questions were developed:

- 1. How do Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with their parents' country of origin in their everyday lives?**
- 2. How do Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with their parents' country of origin in their everyday lives?**

In the chapter 3, the corresponding specific research questions are outlined and operationalised.

1.4 Relevance of research

Immigrant children and their bonds' with their parents' country of origin have not been given much attention in the social sciences, and the majority of the research conducted on this topic is of a quantitative nature. This thesis is meant to complement this quantitative data with some qualitative accounts on immigrant children and the ways in which they self-identify with their parents' country of origin.

Furthermore, research on Dutch-Moroccan youngsters as a particular ethnic minority group in the Netherlands might provide insightful information about the multi-cultural background of fellow Dutch-citizens. Although multi-culturalism is many times considered as a positive characteristic of a society, immigrants are often criticized for the way in which they 'hold on' to the culture of their original homeland. When immigrants reveal a strong orientation towards their original homeland, it is more often considered as a 'lack of integration' than a manifestation of their multi-cultural background. Research on these immigrants, as well as their children, might create a better understanding about where they come from and how not only their original homeland culture is important to them, but also the culture of the country in which they actually live.

2 Theoretical framework

This thesis is about Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, their self-identifications with Morocco and the holidays that they undertake to this country. In this chapter, the concepts and theories are outlined, which were considered useful and appropriate for the theoretical underpinning of this research.

Within the field of transnationalism, the study of immigrant populations and their persistent social, cultural, economic and emotional ties with their home country, has been given much attention. Theories and concepts developed within this field of research might shed a light on how and why children of immigrants maintain social and cultural ties with their parents' country of origin.

VFR tourism is that section within the field of tourism studies that focuses on holidays whereby visits to friends and relatives abroad are undertaken. A special subdivision within VFR tourism focuses on migrants who undertake 'return visits' to their original homeland. Concepts and theories from VFR tourism were considered to be helpful in analyzing the motivations of immigrant children to make visits to their parents' country of origin, as well as the experiences that immigrant children generally have during or through such a holiday.

Lastly, the central focus of this thesis is on the self-identifications of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters with their parents' country of origin. Identity is the field of study in which useful concepts and theories on identities and self-identifications are to be found. Since this is a very broad field of study, a selection has been made of those theories and concepts which seemed to be most relevant, considering the topic of this thesis.

2.1 Transnationalism

According to Falicov (2005), the concept 'transnationalism' exists in the academic world for about 30 years. However, many other academics (e.g. Kivisto 2001; Portes 1999) consider Randolph Bourne, who wrote at the turn of the 20th century, to be the 'father' of transnationalism. He did not describe the phenomenon with this exact word, but he was the first to point to the existence of minor communities in the U.S. that were formed around shared ethnic identities and which held close social and cultural ties with a common 'original homeland'. Bourne's publications at the turn of the 20th century were one of the first indications that assimilation was not equal to forgetting or rejecting where one comes from. It proved that loyalty to a nation can cross borders and take transnational forms. Bourne's findings have been influential in the debate on transnationalism. The idea that transnational practices – of for example migrants and economic enterprises – blur the boundaries of the nation-state and pushes for different levels of analysis than the nation-state for the study of cultures is still a very important standpoint in the debate on transnationalism (see for example Faist 2000).

Although Bourne identified transnational practices already at the turn of the 20th century, considerable attention to the phenomenon has not been given until the second half of the 20th century, which is probably the reason why Falicov argued that the concept exists only for about 30 years. Nowadays, the concept of transnationalism has come to embrace more processes than just the transnational ties of immigrants with their home country. The general definition of the concept is clearly summarized by Faist (2000), but other authors

have formulated similar definitions (van Amersfoort & van Heelsum 2007; Faist 2000; Portes 1999; Vertovec 1999; Kearny 1995):

*“Whether we talk of transnational social spaces, transnational social fields, transnationalism or transnational social formations in international migration systems, we usually refer to **sustained ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders across multiple nation-states, ranging from little to highly institutionalized forms.**”*

(Faist 2000: 189; bold added)

2.1.1 *Transnationalism from below*

As the extract from Faist’s article above already reveals, a distinction is made between so-called institutionalized ‘transnationalism from above’ and more loosely organized ‘transnationalism from below’ (Smith & Guarnizo 1998; in Vertovec 1999). Examples of the first type of transnationalism are transnational corporations and (non)governmental organizations (Kobrin 2008; Sklair 2001, in Kivisto 2001). They are considered to ‘impose’ their transnational practices on people through marketing strategies and legislation, and are therefore said to come from above. Transnational communities are usually given as an illustration of transnationalism from below. This latter type of transnationalism will be focused on in this research.

Many authors have linked the concept of transnationalism from below to immigrant communities (Portes 2003; Vertovec 2001; Faist 2000; Basch *et al.* 1997; Kearny 1995). The interest in immigrant communities within the field of transnationalism was raised due to discoveries such as those done by Bourne. As Kearny (1995) argues, assimilation studies has given way to investigations into the persistence of a so-called ‘ethnic identity’ and ‘ethnic cultural practices’ among many immigrant populations, including among the children of immigrants (Falicov 2005). Many of the activities of immigrants have a so-called ‘transnational character’: “sending occasional remittances, buying a house in the hometown, or visiting the home country undoubtedly qualify as part of what is labelled transnationalism” (Portes 2003: 877).

2.1.2 *From assimilation to transnationalism*

Transnationalism is considered to be a phenomenon of modern times. In the ‘early days’ of migration flows, like that towards America in the early 20th century, transportation and communication technologies were not as such that migrants could keep close contact with the relatives and friends they had left behind. Through this lack of contact with the home country, immigrants often had no choice but to focus on their lives in the new country and adjust to their host culture the best they could (see Basch *et al.* 1994). Their children would be born in a different country and grow up with little references to their parents’ country of origin. The traditional ‘assimilation’ or ‘acculturation’ theories are based on these early migration patterns and the life cycles that these migrants exhibited (Stevens 2004; Menjivar 2002; Faist 2000): the first generation of immigrants would still show a strong orientation towards the original homeland but this orientation would already be much less among the second generation, while the third generation was expected to be fully assimilated to the host society and exhibit hardly any cultural characteristics that would refer to their parents’ or grandparents’ country of origin. However, from the second half of

the 20th century onwards, transportation and communication technologies have developed and improved in such ways that even for the lower-income immigrant households it is easy to maintain close contact with relatives and friends ‘back home’ (Faist 2000; Portes 1999; Basch *et al.* 1997). Although Bourne already identified transnational practices at the turn of the 20th century, it was through these technological developments that transnationalism among immigrant communities became more salient. This maintained contact with the home country was of great influence on the so-called ‘assimilation’ of immigrants into the host society. Instead of ‘forgetting’ about their home country and its culture, memories would be revived through communication with relatives and occasional travels ‘back home’. These memories in turn were transmitted to the children, who, partly through phenomena such as racism and subordination (Portes 1999), were well aware of the fact that their origins laid somewhere else than in the country in which they were living at that moment. Thus, from the 1960s onwards (Phinney 1990), next to processes of assimilation to the host society, revivals of ‘ethnic cultures’ and corresponding practices within immigrant households were taking place, which would be passed on from generation to generation. Therefore, in current times, traditional assimilationist theories cannot explain the life cycle of immigrant households anymore, since a so-called ‘lack of integration’ into the host society is detected among immigrants’ children. Some academics even suggest that immigrants’ children increasingly relate to their parents’ country of origin, sometimes even more than their parents do (see Phinney 1990).

Assimilationist theories have thus in many cases been replaced by the concept of transnationalism, in an attempt to shed light on the linkages between immigrants and their children and grandchildren, and their home country (Kearny 1995). The fact that improved communication and transportation technologies facilitated increased contact between immigrants and the home country seems logical. However, as Basch *et al.* cleverly note:

*“The presence of technological innovations, however, [does not] explain why immigrants invest so much time, energy and resources in maintaining home ties”
(Basch et al. 1997: 23-24).*

This thesis will hitch in to this comment made by Basch *et al.*, and will focus on why and how Dutch-Moroccan youngsters maintain social and cultural ties with their parents’ country of origin.

2.2 VFR tourism

Within tourism studies, the study of the relation between migration and tourism is fast growing. Besides statistical research on the size of the tourism population stemming from flows of migration (e.g. Lee *et al.* 2005; Jackson 2003; Lehto *et al.* 2001), qualitative research on this subject is also on the rise. Questions of why or why not immigrants travel back to their original homeland and how they experience these travels dominate this qualitative corner of research on tourism and migration (e.g. Larsen 2008; Duval 2003; Stephenson 2002; Feng & Page 2000).

‘VFR’ stands for ‘visiting friends and relatives’ (e.g. Lee *et al.* 2005; Duval; 2003). This type of tourism is considered to be distinct from more conventional types of tourism – such as the well-known Sun-Sand-Sea tourism – because VFR tourists reveal different motives for

travelling as well as different experiences than the conventional tourists (Jackson 2003). In order to focus specifically on that aspect of VFR tourism that deals with migrants and their visits to their original homeland, the concept of 'return visit' (Duval 2003) has been introduced, to which I will turn later in this section. Other 'sub-divisions' of the term 'VFR' relate to the children of immigrants and their travels to their parents' country of origin. Concepts such as 'ancestral tourism', or 'roots tourism' have been developed for these travel patterns (see Coles & Timothy 2004). However, these terms have not yet been given much empirical content.

2.2.1 VFR motivations

Jackson (2003) states that in 1986, Morocco received about 660.000 VFR tourists, which comprised a third of the total tourist flow entering the country that year. Jackson links the growth in VFR tourism to Morocco to the increased labour migration flow from Morocco to other countries, predominantly in Europe (Jackson 2003).

Many of the motivations of first generation immigrants to visit their home country also hold for their children, who were not born in this home country, but who are often taken on a trip to this 'ancestral homeland' by their parents, in the case of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters even regularly – often on an annual basis.

Duval (2003) identified several reasons attributed to the return visit, which he defined as the visit of the immigrant to his or her home country. The first and most important reason for the return visit is to maintain and strengthen familial as well as cultural ties. Familial ties imply some sort of obligation to go back, while the maintenance of cultural ties seems to revolve more about (re-)affirming ones own identity in relation to changes that this identity has undergone in the 'host country'. Many migrants consider their home countries to be the foundation or cradle of their identity and therefore consider it necessary to go back every once in a while to '(re-)connect to the cradle'. Second, some immigrants have indicated that the return visit also serves as a 'check', whether the decision to migrate has been a good one: do I really have a better life, now that I have migrated? A third reason for the return visit is 'simply to check upon changes taking place in the natal home' (Duval, 2003: 289). A fourth reason is 'relaxation'. In the first place this is relaxation in the sense of being on a holiday, which is also an important motive for conventional tourists. However, relaxation in the context of the return visit also refers to the fact that one feels familiar and relaxed in a certain place, because one is 'surrounded' by his/her own family and culture. One can let go of the tensions which adaptation to a host country can bring and does not have to bother about behaving correctly, according to an unfamiliar culture. Duval (2003) refers to this motive of relaxation as 'escapism'. Stephenson identified this reason as 'a need to go home' (2002: 392). Many of the other motives that Duval introduced were identified by Stephenson as well, such as the feeling of obligation to visit relatives and friends, the evaluation of one's life as an immigrant, and the need to reconnect with one's ancestral homeland (Stephenson 2002).

2.2.2 VFR and immigrant children

Duval based his definition of the return visit on the experiences of 'first generation immigrants': those who have actually migrated from one country to another. However, the motivations and experiences related to the 'return visit' could possibly hold for the children

of immigrants as well. Many of these children have grandparents, aunts and uncles, and nephews and nieces who still live in the ancestral homeland. Many immigrants come from a country where familial ties are very important. Their children are being brought up with this cultural value, therefore they also consider it very important to maintain close ties with their relatives in the ancestral homeland and sometimes even visit them. The second reason needs a little adaptation to the situation of immigrants' children. Obviously they will not visit the ancestral homeland to check whether their decision to migrate has been a good one, since they never migrated. However, for many children of immigrants, a visit to the ancestral homeland functions as a 'check' whether one's identification with the culture of this homeland is right: do they also feel this connection with the 'ancestral culture' when they are in the ancestral homeland or have they been fooling themselves back home? Have they been misled by the idea that they belonged to an ethnic community? Thus, for the children of immigrants, the visit to the ancestral homeland also involves an important moment in which one (re-)affirms one's ethnic identity (results from preliminary interviews for this research). Also the fourth reason holds for the children of immigrants, since they too are often discriminated against in the society in which they were born and they face difficulties in overcoming these acts of discrimination and claiming their position within this society. For these children, a holiday to the ancestral homeland often means to get away from that difficult task for a short period.

2.2.3 VFR experiences

Return visits, or VFR holidays are thus often undertaken to reconnect with one's ancestral homeland and to evaluate one's ethnic identity. However, much of the literature on return visits and VFR tourism also illustrates that a visit to the ancestral homeland could further alienate an individual from its roots, partly because of disjunctures between what that individual considers as his or her ancestral homeland culture and the changes that this culture has undergone in the country during the absence of the individual (e.g. Stephenson 2002). Benali and Obdeijn (2005) note that many Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands are nowadays holding on to Moroccan habits that were dominant in the 1960's, the period in which they left their ancestral homeland. While in Morocco many things have changed since the 1960's, Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands have lived in some sort of 'cultural hub' for almost 40 years, thinking that they are in this way faithful to their ancestral homeland to which they still feel that they belong more than to the Netherlands. Many migrants, when travelling to their ancestral homelands, are shocked when they are not considered as fellow citizens by the 'people they have left behind'. Because of their upgraded socio-economic status, their slightly different appearance through the foreign clothes they wear, and the 'foreign' cultural characteristics they have (unconsciously) adopted, they are often considered as foreigners or tourists (Strijp 2007; Stephenson 2002). This can be a very confusing and emotionally harsh experience, if one expects to 'come home', when travelling to the ancestral homeland.

2.3 Identity

Identity is a very broad concept that can be and is interpreted in many ways. In this thesis, identity will be dealt with in relation to ethnicity. As Gleason (1983: 910) notes: “today we could hardly do without the word identity in talking about immigration and ethnicity”. I will first introduce some general definitions of the concept ‘identity’. Then I will link identity to the concept of ‘ethnicity’. This combination also seems to be essential and unavoidable in a study on immigrants or their children, as I will show.

2.3.1 Identity

The concept ‘identity’ was introduced into the social sciences during the 1950s (Gleason 1983). Initially, it was explained as a person’s personality, the way he is. This was assumed to be stable; a person could only be himself and would not change throughout his entire life, regardless of the circumstances this person was living in (Gleason 1983). Defining one’s identity could be achieved by asking oneself the simple question “Who am I?”, and this question assumedly would be answered in the same way throughout an individual’s life.

In the 1950’s a turn in thinking about identity was taking place, partly based on literature that was dealing with immigrant populations and their processes of acculturation into a host society (Gleason 1983). It was recognized that identities were not fixed and stable throughout one’s life, but were subject to changes in a person’s environment. Immigrants had to evaluate strange experiences in the host society and incorporate this into their ‘identity’, which would give this identity new dimensions. In a new country, immigrants had to conduct the search for a new identity (Gleason 1983). The shift from a fixed notion of identity to one that is subject to changes also relates to the individualization of the post-World War II society in general. The focus was no longer on how everyone is or tries to be the same as everyone else, but on how a person distinguishes itself from others, on what makes a person an ‘individual’ (Gleason 1983). Gleason considers Erikson to be one of the greatest contributors to the development of the current notion of identity (see Gleason 1983). The main point that Erikson (1950; in Gleason 1983) makes is the fact that identity is a ‘process’: an interaction between one’s ‘inner soul’ - or personal preferences and characteristics – and a person’s participation in society. What this implies is that the simple question “Who am I” is not enough to reveal one’s identity, since it will not take into account the way that participation in society influences one’s identity. The focus on immigrant populations and the ‘struggle’ they revealed with defining themselves led to a second important question relevant for the definition of an identity: “Where do I belong?” (Gleason 1983: 928). I will turn to Erikson again later in this chapter.

Verkuyten (1999: 22) points to the ‘normative use’ of the concept of identity, which reveals how important identity is in everyday life and at an individual level. He notes that ‘having an identity’ is considered as something positive while not having an identity is considered as something ‘unfavourable’. Thus, for an individual, ‘to exist’ is almost equal to ‘having an identity’: without an identity, one becomes invisible, meaningless in life. This implies that identity sort of gives purpose to one’s life: without an identity, one cannot have a purpose in life. It is then no wonder that the search for one’s identity is considered to be an important ‘quest’ for many individuals, especially those who consider their roots to be elsewhere, such as immigrants and their children.

Verkuyten (1994) argues that one's self-identity is influenced by how an individual is perceived by the larger society, which he refers to as one's 'social identity'. However, he also argues that the ethnic community with which one identifies is also very influential in shaping one's identity. Thus, both the majority culture of the larger society as well as the minority culture to which one belongs influence the formation of one's self-identity. An individual interacts with society in that it interprets and either incorporates or rejects the implications that this society makes about his or her identity. Verkuyten (1999) argues that, although he recognizes that individuals have 'some saying' in how they identify themselves, there is no escape from the identifications done by society and these will always be the most influential component in one's self-definition. He cites the sociologist Norbert Elias to illustrate what he means. Norbert Elias stated in an interview:

"Yes, I am a Jew – a German Jew, that's how I look, that's how I am. If you ask me whether I consider myself a Jew, it sounds as if I have a choice. I can only answer this: I don't have a choice, I am a Jew – whatever I do or say"

(Norbert Elias in *Vrij Nederland*; cited in Verkuyten 1999: 37; translated from Dutch)

Thus, although a person may not agree with the way he or she is 'categorized' in society, according to Verkuyten (1999), this categorization is decisive for one's position within that society. However, as Verkuyten (1999) also argues, self-definitions are often much more nuanced than the definitions developed by the society at large: although their social identity tells us something different, not every Moroccan is the same. Self-definitions are based on personal characteristics, experiences and personal relations with other people and as Verkuyten (1999) argues, these may be contradictory to the experiences that a society has with, for example, Moroccans in general and on which social identities are thus based.

Verkuyten (1999) furthermore argues that identities are 'situational'. This relates to the definition of identity as made up of different parts, such as gender, age, socio-economic status and ethnicity. Depending on the situation, different aspects of one's identity become salient. For example, when a person is taking part in a soliciting procedure for a job, his or her educational achievement becomes a salient part of his/her identity. However, this partial identity does not matter when one is deciding with friends to which movie they want to go. In this situation, educational achievement will probably not come to the fore. Instead, personal preferences regarding different movie genres will be more salient.

2.3.2 *Ethnic identity*

Now that I have introduced some basic notions of identity, it is time to turn to the adjective 'ethnic' which is often added to the concept of identity, when immigrants are considered:

"Within the social sciences, many writers have asserted that ethnic identity is crucial to the self-concept and psychological functioning of ethnic group members (e.g. Gruin & Epps 1975)."

(Phinney 1990: 499)

It is thus a concept that cannot be ignored in this research. Several authors (Tsai *et al.* 2002; Phinney 1990; Gleason 1983) point to the 1960s as the period in which the concept of ethnic

identity emerged and gained academic interest. Phinney (1990) mentions the 'ethnic revitalization movements' (p. 499) of this period as the trigger of this development. In response to governmental assimilation policies, and increased discrimination by the society at large, ethnic minority groups demonstrated for the recognition and positive appraisal of their ethnic identities (see Phinney 1990). Tsai *et al.* (2002) also note that the initial definition of ethnic identity was primarily political and only later were cultural, social and psychological dimensions added.

According to Tsai *et al.* (2002) the academic literature on ethnic identity has boomed during the 1990s, when the number of articles published was twice as much as in the 1980s. This also shows in Phinney's article on ethnic identity in adolescents and adults, published in 1990. She argues that research on ethnic identity and how minority group members refer to their own group is still limited at that time. She also notes that research so far had been mainly theoretical and that empirical research at that time was still largely lacking. The rise of multicultural societies throughout the globe, largely due to increased flows of transnational migration, is one of the causes of this heightened interest in concepts such as ethnicity, acculturation, cultural orientation and ethnic identity (Tsai *et al.* 2002; Phinney 1990).

Research on ethnicity and the study of ethnic groups predominantly originates from the United States (Phinney 1990). Thereby, Jews, the more general group 'blacks' or 'African-Americans', and Hispanics are the ethnic groups that are mostly studied. Since Phinney's article in 1990, studies on Asian Americans have also been on the rise (see Tsai *et al.* 2002).

Definitions of 'ethnic identity' are numerous and contradictory. Tajfel (1981: 225; cited in Phinney 1990) introduced the following definition: ethnic identity is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". Similarly although more nuanced, Verkuyten (1999) defines ethnic identity as a 'partial identity': it is part of someone's 'whole identity', which besides ethnicity consists of other components such as gender, age, personal interests, educational achievement, socio-economic position, etcetera.

Several authors (Tsai *et al.*; Stephenson 2000; Verkuyten 1999) argue that ethnicity, as well as identity, is socially constructed. Instead of ethnicity being a fixed aspect of one's identity – an important feature of primordial notions of ethnicity (see Gleason 1983) - it becomes a salient characteristic through interpersonal encounters. Thus, one becomes aware of the ethnic aspect of his or her identity through interaction with the larger society as well as their direct social environment. Portes (1999) refers to this process as 'reactive ethnicity'. In his article on the origins of transnational practices, he mainly points to how discrimination by the society at large, or significant groups within this society, provokes awareness among (a group of) individuals that they are 'ethnically distinct' from the society at large. Phinney (1990) adds that ethnic identity becomes salient only in situations where two ethnically distinct groups are confronted with each other. She argues that in an 'ethnically homogenous society' (1990: 501), ethnicity is unlikely to become an issue.

Tsai *et al.* (2002: 42) have a very straightforward definition of ethnic identity: "the degree to which one views oneself as a member of a particular ethnic group". In the same sentence they also introduce a definition for the concept of 'cultural orientation': "one's feeling toward and levels of engagement in different cultures." The difference between these two concepts, Tsai *et al.* (2002) argue, lies in the fact that ethnic identity is something that is consciously referred to, whereas cultural orientation may be only salient in an

individual's practices. What this comes down to is that, although an individual may perform activities that are assumed to be characteristic for a certain culture, the individual may not consciously or explicitly identify with that culture. Thus, the individual reveals a cultural orientation towards the culture, but does not ascribe his or her ethnic identity to that culture. Concepts such as ethnic identity and cultural orientation can be studied in multiple domains. Among others, Tsai *et al.* (2002:59) mention 'cultural knowledge', 'positive and negative feelings toward one's ethnic group', 'participation in culturally relevant activities', 'linguistic preferences' and 'political and ideological views and activity'. The majority of these domains are also recognized by Phinney (1990), who adds another important factor for identifying ethnic identity and assessing cultural orientation, which is the assessment of a 'sense of belonging' that an individual feels toward a certain ethnic group. She argues that a sense of belonging can also be studied in a negative way, by assessing to what extent individuals feel that they do not belong to or are excluded from a certain ethnic group.

Tsai *et al.* (2002: 43) argue that "the development of ethnic identity peaks during adolescence", which relates to Verkuyten's (1994) argument that the period of adolescence is one in which a person is most actively trying to find out who he or she is (see previous section). As Phinney (1990) argues, it may very well be that thinking about one's ethnic identity makes an individual decide that ethnicity plays only a marginal role in his/her life. Evaluation of one's ethnic identity does not always lead to an increased importance of ethnicity in a person's life. However, as Phinney (1990: 504) also argues, for 'ethnics' or immigrants "the issue is less *whether* to use an ethnic label than *which* label to adopt". Rejecting ethnicity entirely thus seems impossible, since explicitly choosing to self-identify with the majority population and not with one's minority ethnic population, implies choosing for self-identifying with the *ethnic characteristics* of the majority population.

According to Phinney (1990) research on ethnic identity and ethnicity have mainly focused on whether identification with an ethnic minority group results in positive or negative self-concepts and whether identification with an ethnic minority group contributes to or deters acculturation into the dominant or majority group. A smaller group has also focused on differences in ethnic identification across generations of immigrants (Phinney 1990). Researchers on this topic seem to be divided between those that argue that ethnic identity becomes weaker after a few generations of immigrants and those who argue that ethnic identity either remains stable across generations or experiences a revival among the younger generations of immigrants (see Phinney 1990). Phinney (1990) also points to limited research on gender and ethnic identity, which reveals that women in general reveal a greater 'involvement' in processes of ethnic self-identification than men.

3 Research Methodology

In this chapter, the research methodology of this thesis is outlined, which include the research units, the research sites and the research techniques that were used in this research. The nature of this thesis research is qualitative and explorative. As already mentioned earlier, little qualitative research has been conducted that deals with children of immigrants and their bonds with their parents' country of origin.

3.1 Research unit

This paragraph focuses on the selection criteria and the selection procedures that were used to select the research unit of this thesis, which consists of the Dutch-Moroccan youngsters that were interviewed. Furthermore, a general description of this research unit is given, including the age and education level of the respondents, as well as the amount of interviews that were held with them.

3.1.1 Selection criteria

This thesis is about Dutch-Moroccan youngsters who were either born in the Netherlands or who came to the Netherlands when they were too young to remember anything from their life in Morocco.

At the start of this research, the aim was to have a varied group with differences in education levels, gender and age. Because this research deals with Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, it was decided to select respondents between the age of 15 and 25. Thereby the research would include respondents that are still in school, as well as respondents that have already graduated and are working.

Furthermore, it was decided at the start of the research that both Dutch-Moroccan youngsters that travel to Morocco as well as youngsters that do not visit their parents' country of origin anymore will be selected. This is a strategy to reveal the diversity in degrees of identification with the parents' country of origin.

In total, 14 respondents were found and interviewed at least once. Of these respondents, 8 were interviewed more than once. In total, 23 interviews were conducted, which had a length of 30 to 70 minutes.

The majority of the respondents was female (10). Of the four male respondents that were included in this research, only one respondent was interviewed more than once. The age of the respondents ranges between 16 and 26 years old and there was a good variation in ages within this range. Education levels were also differing. Although a slight majority was enjoying vocational education, there were also respondents who were in secondary education, Bachelor university and two of the respondents had just graduated and started working. Surprisingly, no university students responded to the announcements that were placed on Dutch-Moroccan websites. All of the respondents had two parents with a Moroccan ethnicity. Most of these parents were born and raised in Morocco, and came to the Netherlands as guest workers. Only one respondent identified herself as a 'third generation Dutch-Moroccan': her grandparents were the actual immigrants, who came to the Netherlands. A more detailed list with information on each respondent can be found in Appendix I.

3.1.2 Selection procedure

For the selection of the respondents, several Moroccan and/or Muslim organisations were contacted, such as the Dutch-Moroccan organisation for cooperation (SMN), a Muslim student organisation in Nijmegen and a Moroccan volunteering organization in Veenendaal. These organisations were either approached by telephone or by e-mail. They were requested to distribute an announcement among their members, stating that respondents were sought for a research on Dutch-Moroccan youngsters and their holidays to Morocco. This strategy was not very fruitful. There was either no response from the organisations themselves or their efforts did not reap any respondents for my research.

After this disappointing start, I decided to go on the Internet and find Moroccan websites and forums. I found several of these and discovered that holidays were also discussed on these websites and forums. I decided to post requests on some of these forums (www.marokko.nl; www.tanteinmarokko.nl en www.marokko-vakantie.hyves.nl). Below is an example of one of the announcements (translated from Dutch) which I had posted:

ANNOUNCEMENT: Dutch-Moroccan youngsters wanted

For my thesis research (about the influence of the holidays to Morocco on the identity-formation of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters), I am looking for Dutch-Moroccan youngsters (between 15 and 25 years old) who would like to be interviewed one or more times about this topic. Are you interested in this topic, and do you want to contribute to my research?

Please contact me by e-mail: [my email](#).

The placement of these announcements proved to be more effective. On every request which I posted, an average of 3 people responded and stated that they wanted to be interviewed. I posted the same request several times, because after a while the messages would get out of sight, due to the high amount of messages posted daily on these forums.

I found out that the disadvantage of selecting your respondents through the Internet is the fact that online, respondents seem to be more eager for an interview than 'offline'. It happened several times that a respondent did not show up at the appointment that I had made with him or her and that I never heard of the respondent again. Also when it comes down to setting a date for the interview, some respondents suddenly seem to have disappeared and never responded again. Because I had experienced these 'no shows' already at the time I was writing the research proposal, I had decided not to set a fixed number of respondents that I would require for my research.

My fieldtrip to Morocco also proved to be fruitful for finding respondents. In total I have interviewed 6 Dutch-Moroccan youngsters during their holiday in Morocco. I approached them on the boulevards in Tangier and Tetouan, where they would often stroll with fellow Dutch-Moroccan youngsters. I limited the interviews in time and the amount of questions asked, because I did not want to take up too much of their free time and because many of the respondents were accompanied by friends or relatives, who had to wait for the respondent to be finished with the interview, before they could continue their activities. All of the respondents agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview when they would be back in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, not all of these respondents could be contacted for a follow-up interview or they did not show up at the second appointment that was made with them. Therefore, I only had follow-up interviews with three of them.

A few times even a respondent with whom I had already had an interview before did not show up for a second interview, although we had made a clear appointment, including a date, a time and a place, by phone. These respondents would not answer their mobile phones anymore, nor would they respond to the e-mails that I had sent them. For me, it was unclear why these respondents did not show up at the agreed upon date and time. The results from the first interviews with these respondents did not reveal anything that might explain their behaviour: they did not seem uncomfortable with my questions. They all seemed enthusiastic about the topic and willing to contribute to the research. My supervisors also had a look at the questions that I was asking to my respondents as well as to the transcripts of some of the interviews, and they could not find anything disturbing either. It remains a mystery why these respondents would make an appointment for an interview and then not show up. Two other researches on Dutch-Moroccan youngsters seem to have had the same problems. Jaksche (2006), who studied the influence of ICT-use on the identity formation of young Turkish and Moroccan women in the Netherlands also reported difficulties with finding reliable respondents. She too experienced several 'no shows' of girls with whom she had made a very clear appointment about when and where to meet. Another research on identity strategies among Dutch-Moroccan adolescent girls (Ketner *et al.*, 2004) also had relatively few respondents. This might also be due to difficulties that the researchers have experienced with finding reliable and useful respondents, however the authors are not clear on the reason for this relatively low number of respondents.

Nevertheless, the selection of respondents through the Internet has provided me with some very useful respondents who had interesting stories to tell. Some of the 'Internet respondents' also provided me with more respondents. Many of the respondents were willing to be interviewed several times. During the field trip in Morocco, I was even invited by one of the respondents to stay at his family's apartment and spend a few days with him and his sisters.

3.2 Research sites

At the start of the research, it was decided that respondents would be interviewed before, during and after the summer holidays and research would thus take place both in the Netherlands as well as in Morocco. A field trip of 3,5 weeks to Morocco was planned to be able to interview those respondents that were going to Morocco during their summer holiday. Unfortunately, of the respondents that I had interviewed before the summer holiday, I could only interview one during his holiday in Morocco. Other respondents became so-called 'no shows' after the first interview, or they were not going on a holiday to Morocco this year. However, as already mentioned earlier, the trip to Morocco provided me with some new respondents, some of which I was able to interview after their holidays as well.

In the Netherlands, I mainly held interviews in public places such as libraries or cafés in the respondents' place of residence. The reason for choosing public places was that it would provide some sort of 'neutral ground' for both the respondent as well as for me, on which the interview could take place. Inviting myself into a respondents' home did not feel appropriate, especially when we would meet for the first time: the respondent or his/her relatives might feel uncomfortable having a stranger in his or her house. Inviting the respondents into my house also seemed inappropriate to me, concerning the costs that I

would then ask the respondents to make to travel to my house (the respondents lived in different places across the Netherlands) as well as demanding them to come to a stranger's house.

3.3 Research techniques

This paragraph outlines the three research techniques that were used during this research. Initially, another research technique was selected, which revolved around the construction of video diaries or written diaries by the respondents during their holiday in Morocco. The idea behind this research technique was that video diaries or written diaries would reveal interesting information about the experiences of the respondents during the holidays in Morocco. Unfortunately, no respondents could be found that were able, or willing to record their holidays on video or in a diary. This research technique could thus not be a part of this research. Nevertheless, the remaining research techniques provided sufficient interesting data, as will be shown in the results of this research.

3.3.1 Unstructured and semi-structured interviews

The initial idea for the interviews was that respondents that would go on a holiday to Morocco during the summer would be interviewed before, during and after their holiday. Other respondents, who would not go on a holiday this year, would be interviewed throughout the entire period when fieldwork was conducted. In the end, only one respondent was actually interviewed before, during, and after his holiday to Morocco. The problems that were described in the previous paragraph severely obstructed this initial idea for the interviews. Some of the respondents were interviewed only once, while other respondents were only interviewed on two out of the three occasions: either before and after, or during and after the holiday to Morocco.

The interviews would furthermore have the structure of a follow-up interview: every interview would be a sort of continuation of the conversation that unfolded in the previous interview. The idea behind this was that through the follow-up structure, one could go deeper into certain topics and ask for clarifications if some things from previous interviews remain unclear. The follow-up structure also resulted to be useful for building trust between the researcher and the respondent. In some cases, respondents would open up more to the researcher after the first interview and talk about things which they would not have mentioned during the first interview. Unfortunately, I have not been able to arrange follow-up interviews with all of the respondents, because some respondents did not show up the second time or were unable to be contacted for a follow-up interview.

3.3.2 (Participant) observation

Participant observation was selected to complement the information obtained from the respondents themselves about their holidays to Morocco. Participant observation was conducted to find out what Dutch-Moroccan youngsters do during a holiday in Morocco, which places they visit and with whom they interact.

The initial idea was to travel to Morocco with a Dutch-Moroccan family with adolescent children. This strategy was considered useful for experiencing all the aspects of

the trip, including the long car trip across half of Europe, and to be able to observe the experiences of the Dutch-Moroccan adolescents from close by. However, it resulted that within the short period that a family had to be found it seemed impossible to find one that was willing or able to take me with them in their car.

As an alternative strategy, it was decided to travel to Morocco independently and by airplane, and to visit the respondents 'on site', to spend a day or two with them for participant observation and also to set up an interview. Although Morocco is a big country, it resulted that the majority of the respondents 'lived' in the northern area of the country, thus travelling from one respondent to the other would not take a lot of time.

As already mentioned earlier, it resulted very difficult to find respondents that I could interview before their holiday to Morocco, visit during this holiday and interview again after the holiday. I succeeded to conduct participant observation during the holiday with only two respondents. Youssef had invited me to stay with him and his sisters for a few days. This gave me an opportunity to conduct participant observation on him and his younger sister Chaimae, whom I also interviewed after the holiday.

Although participant observation was thus limited in this research, I was able to do more general observations during my stay in Morocco, and I got a good impression of what Dutch-Moroccans generally do when they are on a holiday in Morocco, where they go to, and who they interact with. I will go deeper into these observations in the chapter 6.

3.3.3 Secondary data collection

Secondary data was obtained through a literature research on the concepts and theories used for this research. The literature research also provided me with introductory information on the Moroccan immigrant community in the Netherlands and their history. Throughout the period in which field work was conducted, new literature was regularly consulted to see whether it was necessary to add new concepts to the theoretical framework, or to leave others out.

3.4 Operationalization of research questions

For this thesis, two main research questions were developed in accordance with the research objective. They were presented in the introductory chapter and will be repeated in this paragraph. In addition, the corresponding specific research questions are outlined and operationalized in this paragraph. These questions have been linked to relevant theories and concepts from the theoretical framework of this thesis. I will also present the types of questions that were asked to the respondents to get to an answer to each of the specific research questions. For an example of a question list, see appendix II.

To recall from chapter 1, the research objective is:

To analyze how Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self- identify with their parents' country of origin. The focus will thereby be on the experiences of their holidays to Morocco, as well as their daily life activities.

In accordance with this research objective, two main research questions were formulated. The first main research question is as follows:

3. How do Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with their parents' country of origin in their everyday lives?

For this main research question, three specific research questions were developed:

1.1 What reasons do Dutch-Moroccan youngsters give for their self-identification with their parents' country of origin?

The line of thought behind this question is that people never just simply self-identify with a certain 'social category'. They often develop a story containing several arguments for this self-identification: it becomes logical for themselves to self-identify with a specific social category, but they also want to make it look logical for others. Feelings of belonging to a certain social category are important here, but also identification by significant others seem to play a role in the process of self-identification. Verkuyten's 'social identity'-concept (1999) thus seems relevant for this question. This concept is outlined in the theoretical framework of this thesis.

To come to an answer on this specific research question, respondents were asked several questions. First of all, they were asked to introduce themselves at the beginning of the first interview, in terms of who they are and what they do. This question was meant to reveal which things the respondents considered as important to mention when they met a person for the first time and of course to see whether their Moroccan ethnic identity was part of this introduction.

Secondly, they were asked whether they identified as Moroccan or with Morocco, and if so, what were the things that made them self-identify as such. This question was meant to reveal what it meant for the respondents to self-identify as Moroccan and what criteria they used when self-identifying as a Moroccan or to identify someone else as a Moroccan. This question would reveal the 'story' that respondents develop around their self-identification as Moroccan or with Morocco.

Thirdly they were asked what Morocco meant to them, as well as what the Netherlands meant to them and whether they (also) self-identified as Dutch. The reason for asking them also about the Netherlands is that, when focusing only on Morocco, you might come to the 'false' conclusion that Morocco is very important to a person and he or she self-identifies very strongly with Morocco or as a Moroccan. Asking the respondents about their bonds with the Netherlands, which is after all their place of residence, puts their self-identification as Moroccan or with Morocco in a more relative perspective.

1.2 What role do Dutch-Moroccan youngsters ascribe to their Moroccan ethnic identity in their everyday lives?

This question relates to Tsai *et al.*'s (2002) concept of 'cultural orientation, which is an important part of the theoretical framework of this thesis. Asking the respondents about their daily activities might reveal the extent to which they are culturally oriented towards Morocco. Cultural orientation, in turn, might reveal something about how and the extent to which the respondents self-identify as Moroccans or with Morocco. To recall from the

theoretical framework, cultural orientation is evaluated against activities that can be classified as characteristic for a specific culture. Thus, in the case of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, I have evaluated their activities against what they themselves characterize as Moroccan, but also against what I characterize as Moroccan. For example, when a respondent would tell me that he or she liked to read a lot, I would ask the respondent what kind of things he or she liked to read. If the respondent would answer that he or she mainly liked to read books from Moroccan writers, or with Morocco as the topic, I would evaluate this activity as revealing a strong cultural orientation towards Morocco.

First, the respondents were straightforwardly asked to describe the role of their Moroccan ethnic identity in their everyday lives by asking them: 'Does your ethnic identity influence the things you do in your daily life?'. In this question, the interviewer directly refers to the respondents' Moroccan ethnic identity. This question was meant to assess whether the respondents have a clear idea of which activities in their daily lives are influenced by their Moroccan ethnic identity or their Moroccan background.

Then, questions were asked about their main daily activities (work or study), what they did or liked to do in their free time, what they thought was important in life, how they perceived their own future and how they perceived the world in which they were living. These questions were meant to more indirectly lead to answers that would reveal the extent to which their Moroccan ethnic identity played a role in the respondents' everyday lives and the extent to which they were culturally oriented towards Morocco. When asking these questions, the interviewer did not refer to their Moroccan ethnic identity. The respondents could answer the questions in any way they liked; referring to any identity that they thought was relevant.

1.3 To what extent are Dutch-Moroccan youngsters undertaking activities that can be typified as 'transnational'?

An important part of the theoretical framework revolves around the concept of transnationalism. The main point that is made in the theoretical framework is that in modern times, immigrant populations are characterised by social, emotional, cultural and economic ties with the country of origin. These ties are often persistent throughout generations. This third specific research question is meant to reveal whether the respondents employ activities that explicitly link them to Morocco and how they value these transnational linkages. The holidays to Morocco are of course an obvious example of transnational activities. This question is therefore meant to reveal other types of activities, such as visiting and posting comments on Moroccan websites, following all news features on Morocco, visiting relatives in countries other than Morocco and the Netherlands, and so on.

The second main research question of this thesis is as follows:

2. How do Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with their parents' country of origin on holidays to this country?

This second main research question is guided by the following specific research questions:

2.1. What does a holiday to Morocco mean for Dutch-Moroccan youngsters?

This specific research question was meant to assess the relevancy of the holiday to respondents, and whether this correlates with the extent to which they self-identify as Moroccans in their everyday lives.

The respondents were asked to indicate how important the holidays to Morocco were to them and why these holidays were or were not important. They were also asked whether they have been on holidays to other countries and if so, how they compared those holidays with a holiday to Morocco. The respondents were furthermore asked about their earliest as well as their favourite memories of the holidays to Morocco. They were also asked whether throughout the years, the holiday to Morocco has gained a different meaning to them.

The answers to these questions were evaluated against the motivations and experiences that were extracted from studies on VFR tourism, to assess whether the respondents reveal motivations for the holiday to Morocco that are similar to the general motivations identified by these studies.

2.2. How do Dutch-Moroccan youngsters experience a holiday to Morocco?

This question is obviously meant to reveal how the respondents experience a holiday to Morocco. However, this question is also important to find out whether these experiences influence the way in which the respondents self-identify in their everyday lives. Do the respondents talk differently about themselves and their bonds with Morocco around a holiday to this country?

The respondents were asked how they experienced a holiday to Morocco in general, but they were also asked more specifically how they felt during the weeks coming up to the holiday, during the first days when they are there, and during the first days or weeks when they are back in the Netherlands. These specific questions were meant to reveal whether the holiday influences the process of self-identification as a Moroccan: do they self-identify more or less as a Moroccan when preparing for, being on or returning from a holiday to Morocco? Respondents were furthermore asked how they experienced holidays to other countries than Morocco.

Concepts and theories regarding the way in which people experience a holiday to their or their parents' country of origin were extracted from studies on VFR tourism and evaluated against the respondents' answers to the above-mentioned questions.

3.5 Data analysis

Since the nature of this research was qualitative, corresponding data analysis has been conducted. Furthermore a particular type of analysis has been chosen, which is the case study. It was decided to add this type of analysis to the research methodology because it resulted that it would provide interesting insights into how the respondents self-identified with different 'categories' such as Dutch or Moroccan or Dutch-Moroccan throughout the interviews, how they move back and forth between such self-identifications as well as how they develop their own story around these self-identifications.

Two respondents have been selected for these case studies. Selection was mainly based on the amount of interviews that I have had with these respondents, as well as the amount of relevant data that these interviews yielded.

3.6 Reflection on research

In this paragraph I would like to point to some challenges and problems that I have come along during the research and how they have influenced the conditions under which the research was conducted.

As already mentioned before, the selection of respondents was perhaps the most challenging part of this thesis. Due to the difficulties described above, concerning the finding of respondents, the respondents base was relatively small and therefore the scope of the research rather limited. Therefore, if generalizations about Dutch-Moroccan youngsters could be made at all, the results of this research are not sufficient to make them. This especially concerns Dutch-Moroccan adolescent men, since very few of them are included in this research. Furthermore, the fact that I mainly 'recruited' respondents through Internet forums that were especially designed for Dutch-Moroccans, might have resulted in a bias in my respondents base and therefore also in my results towards those Dutch-Moroccan youngsters for whom Morocco and the holidays to this country are very important. Perhaps, if I would have included other recruiting strategies, such as visiting schools or youth centers, I would have found more respondents for whom Morocco was not so important and who do not self-identify as Moroccan.

One thing that I have considered as a personal constraint for the research was my interviewing skills at the beginning of this research. They were practically none. The first interviews were therefore of a relatively low quality, although not entirely irrelevant. Throughout the research, I have grown much in this skill. However, the limited time for the research has possibly constrained the quality of the data extracted from the interviews.

4 Case studies

As already mentioned in the introduction of this paragraph, the case study was selected as a special type of data analysis. It was decided to add this to the research methodology because it resulted that it would provide interesting insights into the ways in which respondents self-identify – as Moroccan, Dutch, or something else - during the interviews as well as how they develop their own story around these self-identifications. As Taspinar (2003: 65; in Jaksche 2006: 3) notes:

“Identity formation is the quest for your own story with which you want to come out. An individual story, formed by that what you have experienced in the past, permanently supplemented with confrontations with the here and now.”

The two case studies presented in this chapter are examples of how the respondents of this research developed their own ‘identity story’ throughout the interviews. The topics presented in this chapter are the topics that came up when I asked Saliha and Chaimae about who they are, what they stand for, and why they thought so. The case study is an opportunity to put the Moroccan ethnic identity of the respondents in perspective. Saliha’s and Chaimae’s bonds with Morocco and self-identifications are presented in relation to other elements of their life: their bonds with the Netherlands, their future plans, their values, and so on. Presenting results from the interviews with Saliha and Chaimae as case studies supplements the data presented in the following chapter on identity. In the following chapter, the stories of the respondents will be split up into different segments and analyzed in a more academic way. This chapter focuses on what a person’s identity story looks like when these pieces are put together.

4.1 Saliha

Saliha responded to an announcement I had placed on a Dutch-Moroccan website (www.marokko.nl). She told me she was interested in being interviewed for my research. We met for the first time in June 2009, at the train station of Gouda, the city where she lives. She had brought a friend, also a Dutch-Moroccan girl (Asmae) who later on became one of my respondents as well. In total I have interviewed Saliha four times. Two times I spoke only with her and the other two interviews were together with or in the presence of Asmae. The last two interviews were held in the public library in Utrecht. Saliha was willing to come to Utrecht for the interview, so that it would take me less time to travel all the way to Gouda. The interviews took up between 40 to 60 minutes.

During the first two interviews, it seemed that Saliha was very focused on Morocco and she self-identified strongly as a Moroccan. The holidays to Morocco were of great importance to her and many of her future plans were focused on this country as well. However, after these first two interviews, she seemed to become more ‘nuanced’ in her self-identifications with Morocco and other future plans and ambitions also came to the fore, many of which were focused more on the Netherlands. In the last two interviews, she also talked about more personal affairs, such as the fact that she did not go to school for three years, that her parents are analphabetic and that her elder brother totally lives up to the

dominant profile of a Dutch-Moroccan youngster: a school drop-out, unemployed young man who hangs out on the street all day, yelling at anyone that passes by. This case study is meant to reveal how she makes sense of all these things and how they influence the way she lives her life.

Who is she?

Saliha is 20 years old and studies to become a management-assistant. She lives in Gouda, which is a small city in the southwest of the Netherlands. Besides her study, she also has a part-time job as a desk employee at a Dutch establishment of 'Banque Populaire', a Moroccan bank. In her free time, she likes to go to the movies, have dinner or go shopping with her friends. She also likes to read a lot. She has a membership at a digital book club where she can buy books on discount. During the summer she likes to go for walks in nature areas. She likes nature very much; she even enjoys a simple stretch of grass passing by her window when she sits in the train. This, in short, is Saliha. Only her name may perhaps reveal that, although she enjoys Dutch citizenship, her roots lie somewhere else. These roots, however, are an important aspect of Saliha's identity, as will be shown below. Furthermore, Saliha wears a headscarf, a visible identification mark of her religion: she is a Muslim. These two features have a great influence on the way Saliha shapes her life and the way in which her life so far has been shaped.

Her Moroccan ethnic identity

Saliha was born in Al Hoceima, Morocco but came to the Netherlands when she was 4 years old. She remembers hardly anything from the time that she was living in Morocco. As she says so herself:

"I can't remember anything from the time I was living in Morocco. I could just as well have been born in the Netherlands."

She was 8 when she returned to Morocco for the first time, for a holiday combined with visiting Moroccan relatives. Since then, she goes to Morocco every other summer holiday, with her family, for 4 to 5 weeks. This is her so-called 'interim'-year: she went to Morocco last year, so she has to wait another year before she will visit her country of origin again. For Saliha, this interim-year is difficult. She would like to go to Morocco every year because she likes being there so much. She has even considered living there for a longer period, to get to know her country and its culture and people better, but her father does not allow her to do that. Nevertheless, she thinks that one day, she will permanently return to Morocco. However, she also thinks that she can never leave the Netherlands fully behind, because a great part of her life took place there. Just like Morocco, the Netherlands are part of who she is as well. She would like to turn things around: live in Morocco and go to the Netherlands for a holiday.

Saliha argues that, at home, she has not learned much about Moroccan culture. The only thing that she knew was the Moroccan cuisine and Moroccan language. Her parents have never told her much about Morocco. Saliha thinks it is because her parents do not have a very romantic picture of their homeland: they are mainly reminded of hard work and poverty when they think of Morocco. From the age of 17 onwards, Saliha started to

investigate Moroccan culture more thoroughly, mainly by looking up many things on the Internet.

What Saliha likes about Morocco is the fact that there are mosques everywhere, which reminds her of her religion, the Islam. She also appreciates Moroccan nature, its music and its cuisine. She thinks that, because it is the country where her parents come from and where she was also born, that everything is more special and more beautiful. For example, she said:

‘Even when I look at a donkey, which you can also find on a farm in the Netherlands, it just looks more beautiful in Morocco. When you are there, you appreciate things that you would not even have eyes for in the Netherlands’.

What she likes less is the character of the Moroccans. She claims it is hard to make appointments with them and that it always seems that they just do whatever they like. She also dislikes other cultural things that according to her typify Moroccans. For example, she does not like the way in which women are inferior to men. In such cases, she prefers the ‘norms and values’ described in the Quran, where men and women are equal.

Saliha identifies more with the region of Al Hoceima in specific than with Morocco in general. She is not very anxious to know other parts of Morocco, they do not interest her and she does not feel very related to these other parts:

“Most of the times we go by plane, but sometimes we also go by car. Then, when you get off the boat in Morocco, you see other places, but they do not interest me very much. I really have a special bond with Al Hoceima. The rest does not really interest me.”

Also in the Netherlands, she feels more related to Moroccans that come from the same area as where she was born, which is the ‘Berber area’ in the North of Morocco. She says that, when she visits those people, she immediately feels at home. This feeling is less strong with Dutch-Moroccans who come from other parts of Morocco. She explains her feelings by arguing that she feels more connected to the region of Al Hoceima because she was born there and because her whole family comes from that region.

The interviews that were held together with Asmae sometimes turned out into discussions about what it meant to be Moroccan and what the criteria were for a person to be able to claim a Moroccan identity. During the first interview in the public library in Gouda, a young Dutch-Moroccan man overheard our interview and introduced his view on Dutch-Moroccan youngsters and their relation with Morocco. He argued that Dutch-Moroccan youngsters who claim to be Moroccan forget that during their holiday in Morocco, they feel rather ‘Dutch’ because they are not like the Moroccans there. Asmae claimed that during the holiday in Morocco she still feels Moroccan because she feels at home there. Saliha argued that Asmae is more Dutch than Moroccan because she listens to Dutch music and she does not speak Moroccan. Besides descending from parents who were born in Morocco, speaking Moroccan or Berber is one of the most important criteria for Saliha to identify someone as Moroccan.

Saliha is especially aware of her ethnicity when it is being 'attacked'. She argues:

"When you are welcome, when Dutch people are relaxed with you, you feel Dutch as well. But with people like Geert Wilders¹, they really make you feel like a Moroccan, like a foreigner."

She feels that her Moroccan background matters more to her when other people approach it in a negative way. In such cases, she has the feeling that she needs to defend her ethnicity, as well as her religion. She thinks that, if Moroccans and Muslims were not such an issue in the Netherlands, she might never have placed so much importance on her Moroccan roots. Denying her roots, however, is not an option in the current situation in the Netherlands, where Moroccans and their assimilation into Dutch society is a hotly debated issue:

"It's no use, because people will consider you as a Moroccan anyway, regardless of whether you feel Moroccan or not."

However, she does think that it has become a kind of cliché to constantly defend her ethnicity and explain to other people that not all Moroccans are the same. I will return to this debate later on in this case study.

Her self-identification as a Moroccan also greatly influences Saliha's social life. Most of her friends are Moroccan. Although she is not intently selecting on Moroccan ethnicity when picking her friends, she argues that with other Moroccans, there is some kind of immediately felt connection:

'I don't really know what it is, but somehow you share the same mentality and interests. I think language plays a role too, the fact that you can talk about things in your own language. And of course Dutch people would not be very interested in talking about Morocco or Islam all the time.'

Just as she had argued that being of Moroccan descent and speaking the Moroccan language are important criteria for identification as a Moroccan, she also seems to like to share these characteristics with her friends.

Study

Besides her Moroccan background, her study is also very important to her. After completing secondary education, she started a study, international business for which she had to go abroad to do the compulsory internship. Her parents did not agree with this, so she had to quit this study. The following three years she was not very motivated to take up another study. Instead she had several part-time jobs here and there. She is not completely happy with her current study either, but she is determined to finish it and get her diploma, so that she can start the Law study at university. One day she hopes to receive her Master's degree. Saliha thinks that she has always been slightly more ambitious than her classmates. She remembers that she always had a lot of questions about everything, because she truly wanted to understand the study material, while her classmates seemed to study for the

¹ Geert Wilders is a Dutch politician who has some very outspoken opinions on allochtonous people and Moroccans in particular. He is very critical of Islam as well.

exams and then tried to forget what they had learned as soon as possible. Saliha wanted to learn because she considered it important to have a large general knowledge base. She thinks her ambition stems from the fact that she is the only family member that actually got *and* took the chance to study. She also thinks that her parents' illiteracy and how that limited their job perspectives has made her more determined to be a good student and aim higher than her classmates would.

Her parents have high expectations of her, concerning her study and her future career. Saliha is sometimes afraid that she cannot live up to these expectations. For example, when she would find out that she actually does not really like the Law study, her parents would be very disappointed if she would quit. Saliha herself would probably feel ashamed to quit because it would feel like she left out on an opportunity to prepare for a beautiful career. In her family situation, studying at university is something highly valued because so few of her relatives managed to reach that level.

Parents

Her parents' illiteracy gave Saliha a sense of responsibility already at a relatively early age. Her childhood is marked by reading and translating every letter that came in for her parents, and accompanying them to any occasion where her parents had to converse in Dutch, sign important papers, and so on. Sometimes this was really hard, because her knowledge of the Berber language is not perfect. She often experienced difficulties explaining to her parents what they were required to do or say. Saliha thinks that this typifies many childhoods of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters: illiteracy is something quite common among the elder generation of Moroccans, the first generation that came to the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, the advice from her parents about certain matters is very important for Saliha. She discusses many things with them and appreciates their opinion because she thinks that in the end, her parents will always know what is best for her. Sometimes she would like her parents to be less strict on her, for example with the idea of going to Morocco for a longer period. In such cases, Saliha thinks that her parents are a little too protective. However, she will always respect the opinion of her parents and will never do anything that her parents will not allow her to do:

"The opinion of my parents is paramount. If my parents say 'no', then it's 'no' for me too. I really believe that, if you do something against your parents' will, it will fail. Some curse will rest on it or something like that. Everything that I do, I do it with the permission of my parents. I think that will give you the most blessing and you will achieve everything that you undertake."

Religion

Since 1,5 year, Saliha wears a headscarf. Just like the Moroccan culture, religion is something that she has not been brought up with in a very active way. She became interested in Islam when she was about 17 years old. At that time, she started studying her religion more in depth and since then she realized that *'Islam is more than just Ramadan'*. The idea that she had of her religion, that it was something that forbade many things, made way for a religion where many things were possible. At that point she also decided to start wearing a headscarf. For her, it is not enough that *'religion is just in your hart'*, as some of her friends,

who do not wear headscarves, say. For Saliha, it is important that religion is in your deeds as well. She compares religion with love:

'you can say that you love someone, but if you never show or tell that person that you love him or her, that person will feel like you do not want to make an effort for love'.

For Saliha, wearing a headscarf is thus a deed to show that she cares for her religion. For a while she also thought of wearing a 'ghimaar'.² However, she decided to wear only a headscarf because she thinks that, in the Netherlands, there are too much prejudices about women wearing the 'ghimaar'. So far, she has never experienced discriminating behavior related to her headscarf. She thinks that, when she would wear a 'ghimaar', she would experience more of this discriminating behavior: it would probably be harder to find a job, or as she says: *'people would think I am a religious extremist'*. Saliha is critical of girls who do not wear headscarves out of religion but out of fashion. She argues that these girls practice their religion in a very contradictory way, because although they wear a headscarf, the intention of which is to protect women from the eager eyes of men, many of these girls have boyfriends. In Saliha's opinion, headscarves and boyfriends do not combine.

Religion also influences the way Saliha looks upon the world she lives in. She sees the world as 'a test' for the hereafter. In this world, you have to learn as much as possible to prepare yourself for your 'life after the earthly phase'. This 'preparation' consists of treating other people and animals well, taking good care of yourself and living a healthy and peaceful life. Donating money to those people or projects that are in need of some is also something that is 'prescribed' by her religion and, as mentioned earlier in this case study, this is something that she takes very seriously.

Furthermore she thinks it is important to help other people, with realizing their dreams but also when they just ask for small favors. Helping other people realizing their dreams inspires her to realize her own dreams as well, as she argues:

"If I see that a person is very motivated to do something, I also become motivated to do something. That does not have to be the same thing, but it makes me think: I want to realize my dreams too."

Saliha also thinks that by helping other people, she becomes so-called 'added value' to the world. She once heard someone saying that if you had no added value to the world, it made no difference whether you were dead or alive. This phrase inspired her very much and in her own way she tries to create added value to the world. One thing through which she tries to reach this goal is by donating money to development projects elsewhere in the world. She also cherishes a dream of financing the construction of a well in a developing country. She has looked up on the Internet about the costs of such a well and found out that at the moment she does not have the financial means to support the construction. However, it is a dream she will keep for the future.

² A 'ghimaar' is a traditional type of clothing used by Muslim women to cover up their body. The clothing is as such that you can only see the face of the woman. All other body parts are covered by clothing that even masks the contours of the body.

Holidays

For Saliha, a holiday to Morocco is an opportunity to 'recharge'. She feels that, when going to Morocco, she can leave everything behind and return refreshed. She also claims that she could not 'recharge' the same way in France or another country than she could in Morocco. She has been to other countries than Morocco for a holiday, but she argues that countries such as Spain and France resemble the Netherlands so much that she does not really feel like she is on a holiday:

"I don't know, it's like, when you go there [to Morocco], and you come back, it's like you've recharged yourself. It feels that way. It's like if you go there, and you leave everything behind, when you come back, you can face your problems and worries again. And if you don't go, you feel like you stay in that daily routine. But when you go away for a while, I don't know. Also when you go to France for two weeks, that's very different from going to Morocco for two weeks, because in Morocco, you have family, but it also just feels like your own country. In France, you also visit relatives, but you only hear a different language. The rest of that country is just like the Netherlands, very European."

During the holiday in Morocco, Saliha likes to be with her Moroccan relatives and help them with their daily activities such as fetching water and herding cattle. She speaks Arabic well enough to have small conversations with them. She also likes to go to the beach. At night, she often goes to the main square of the town Al Hoceima, where there is a music festival. There, she mainly hangs out with other Dutch-Moroccan youngsters who are also on a holiday.

Although she feels a strong bond with Morocco, she does not feel fully Moroccan when she is actually there. She realizes that Moroccans will never consider her as a Moroccan, because she was raised and is still living in the Netherlands. She is not and probably will never be 'one of them', which prevents her from feeling 100% Moroccan.

"When you're there [in Morocco] you do not really feel like them [the Moroccans]. You feel Dutch, that's my opinion. When I'm in Morocco, I feel Dutch. (...) They [the Moroccans in Morocco] look at you in a twisted way. In Morocco, when we are on a holiday there, we are not treated as equals. (...) They can see that you are from Europe, they can even see whether you are from the Netherlands or from France, they can see it in your clothing and in your behavior. (...) When you are there, you do not feel like you are one of them. Here [the Netherlands] you feel like a Moroccan, but there, you do not feel like a Moroccan."

Discrimination and prejudice

Saliha realizes that there are a lot of prejudices about Moroccans in the Netherlands. She realizes that many Dutch people think that Moroccan girls wear headscarves because they are told to do so by the Islam. She also regrets that many people think of aggressive trouble-making youngsters when they hear the term 'Moroccan', because it is only those troublemakers that reach the news headlines. She wishes that the Dutch media would not put so much attention on these boys and rather focus on more positive aspects of Moroccan culture, or just show that most of the Moroccans are just as normal as Dutch people.

She likes to meet with people who are different than she is because she wants to avoid having too much of these prejudices herself about other people. During one of the interviews, she talked about the idea she had with a friend to go to Groningen, a northern province of the Netherlands, because she and her friends had the prejudice that there were only farmers living in that province. They wanted to go there and just talk to people on the streets, to know what life is like in Groningen.

Saliha also said that she talked to elderly (Dutch) people in her hometown. She said that it was easier to talk to these elderly people than to Dutch youngsters, because she feels that elderly people are more honest with her and do not feel ashamed to ask her about her headscarf, her religion and her Moroccan background. She gave the example of her high school classmates who did not want to work in groups with her, because they thought that, as she was Moroccan, she would be lazy and unwilling to contribute to the group work. They would not explicitly state that they would not want to work with her; instead they would quickly form groups without including her. She argued that she sometimes thought about moving to a lower level of education in high school, because at this lower level she would have had more Moroccan classmates. However, since a few years she notices that younger (Dutch) people in her environment are also 'opening up' and are approaching her with less prejudice. She thinks that nowadays she is considered less as a Moroccan than a few years ago: people are looking more and more at the individual behind the headscarf.

Saliha thinks and hopes that within 50 years, all prejudices about Moroccans will have faded and that no one will speak of 'the Moroccans' as outcasts of society anymore. She already notices some changes in the Dutch society. She mentioned Geert Wilders again, who is now also condemned by many Dutch citizens for his explicit and often unjustified opinions about immigrants and especially Moroccans. Saliha argues that a few years before, when another Dutch politician with similar views entered the stage, she felt that all Dutch people were supporting this politician and nobody was criticizing him.³

Saliha thinks that in the future, a new group of immigrants will probably have taken the stage as trouble-makers and people that have difficulties assimilating into Dutch society. Considering discrimination of a certain ethnic group by the larger society, Saliha thinks that history will repeat itself and that there will always be a group of people that will be considered as outcasts.

Future

When I first asked Saliha about her dreams and plans for the future, she mentioned things that were mainly focused on Morocco. She would like to set up some sort of enterprise there, or help out in a development project. However, she is careful with such wishes because she realizes that she does not know what 'real life' is like in Morocco. She is very much aware of the fact that, because she has only seen Morocco while being there on a holiday, she might have a distorted and romanticized idea of everyday life in Morocco. She therefore considers going to Morocco for a longer period than a summer holiday as an important test to see whether she would actually be happy there.

At first, she had less inspiration for an eventual future in the Netherlands: she argued that here, she probably would not come any further than a boring office job from 9 to 5,

³ The politician Saliha referred to was Pim Fortuyn. He was a right-wing politician who had an opinion about immigrants and Islam that was similar to those of Geert Wilders. He was murdered by an extremist animal rights activist, a few weeks before the Dutch national elections in 2002.

something she does not prefer to anticipate for herself. However, a few interviews later, she told me that she wanted to study Law because she had always dreamed of becoming a lawyer. She loves to help other people and investigate cases to find out who is right and who is wrong.

Another dream for the future, which she thinks will probably interfere with her anticipated career as a successful lawyer is 'the traditional Moroccan one' of getting married and creating a family. She argued that on this matter, she is a typical Dutch-Moroccan girl:

"Dutch-Moroccan girls are attracted to the idea of getting married and having children, haha. And preferably not at a very old age. And if you are having children, I don't think that you can still work a lot, travel around and do so many things. It just gets too busy. But I think that [being a mother] is the biggest role in your life."

4.2 Chaimae

I met Chaimae during my trip in Morocco. Her elder brother, Youssef, whom I had already interviewed in the Netherlands, introduced me to her. I interviewed her for the first time when I was staying with her and her brother and two elder sisters for a few days. Back in the Netherlands, I interviewed her a second time, at her parents' house. Both interviews took about 50 minutes. During the two interviews, Chaimae seemed to be rather consistent in the extent to which she self-identified as Moroccan. Unlike Saliha, she did not seem to become more oriented towards either the Netherlands or Morocco during the second interview. Chaimae's case is very illustrative of the way in which many respondents seemingly naturally shifted between self-identifications as Moroccan and self-identifications as Dutch or other social categories.

Who is she?

Chaimae is 16 years old. She is in her final year of secondary education. She already knows which study she will start next year, when she passes her exams: international business at Bachelor University. Chaimae considers herself to be an independent, slightly feminist young woman: she would like to show the world that women too are smart and can have successful (international) careers. In her free time, she likes to hang out with her cousin and go to the city centre, chat with her friends on MSN, or go to the movies.

Her Moroccan background

It is only since about four years that Chaimae has felt a strong connection with Morocco and that she realized that her ethnicity is an important part of who she is. Since then she realizes that, because her parents were born there and an important part of their lives has taken place there, Morocco is incorporated in her own life and identity as well. Her parents' history is hers as well, in a way. Through conversations with her classmates about Moroccan guest workers and Moroccan immigrants in general, Chaimae says she has also become more aware of her Moroccan background and how it differs from the background of her Dutch classmates. Since then, she considers Morocco more as 'her home country' too:

“About four years ago, I started to realize that Morocco is actually a very important country for me, not just the Netherlands. Morocco is actually your country. It’s your parents’ country, where they come from. Of course you do not understand when you are young, that your parents come from a different culture, that your father came to the Netherlands as a guest worker. But now we talk about such things at school, and when your father says that he comes from a small farmer village, you actually think about it, and you know what it means.”

During the interviews Chaimae said that she is now in a phase of her life where she thinks a lot about who she is and what she stands for. She has been thinking a lot about whether she feels more Dutch or Moroccan. She hears other people saying ‘in the Netherlands you are considered as a Moroccan, while in Morocco you are considered as Dutch’ and she evaluates her own feelings against these arguments. However, she is not really confused about who she is or ‘where she belongs’:

“You’re just a Moroccan who lives in the Netherlands, you have to be proud of yourself and respect who you are”

Being independent is very important to Chaimae. When she looks at other female Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, she regrets that so many of them study but in the end decide to marry and stay home to raise the kids. For her, working is not only important to be financially independent, but she also thinks that she should work just because she has the opportunity to do so. She thereby refers to what she experiences in Morocco, that many Moroccan women do not get this opportunity and end up as housewives, even though they are so intelligent. Thus, as a woman and as a female Moroccan, she feels responsible for becoming a successful employee.

Chaimae has both Moroccan and Dutch friends. She thinks it is weird that some Dutch-Moroccan youngsters only have Moroccan friends:

‘Some of my Moroccan friends do not hang out with Dutch people at all. I think that is really weird, I mean: what are you doing here, you know?’

Religion

Her religion is her so-called ‘manual for life’. She extracts important values from it, such as respect, trust, love, and honesty. Furthermore, it tells her how to live a good life and be a good human being. Her worldview is also extracted from her religion: she sees life in general as a test for the hereafter:

“This life is a test and in the hereafter, you actually live, so to say. This life is to see whether you can live your life in a good way, whether you are honest with other people and with your faith.”

She does not think that religion limits her actions, it just helps her making certain choices. For example, going out to a club is something she will probably never do. She does not like to be in an environment where a lot of people are drinking alcohol and totally going loose. It is something that is too much at strike with her own values. Her parents would not

allow her to go to such places either, but in the first place it is her own choice not to visit clubs and cafés.

Islam is important to her, but she says that 'it is mainly in your hart'. She does not feel the need to 'identify herself' as religious by wearing a headscarf. Her parents have never pushed her to wear a headscarf either. She thinks that many Dutch-Moroccan girls who wear a headscarf are either told to do so by their parents or because of the fact that it has become a 'fashion trend' to wear a headscarf. However, she does not doubt that these girls are religious too and she respects the fact that they realize their faith in a different way. Respect is an important value that she extracts from Islamic faith and with which she has been raised by her parents as well. She has learned the important lesson from her mother that she should respect people despite the fact that they are different. Chaimae claims that this has made her better able than her Moroccan friends to adjust to 'strange' people and circumstances:

"I can adapt very well to a different environment. I know Moroccan girls who cannot adapt to 'gothics' for example, or another culture. I can. I just talk to them, even though we do not share the same worldview or something. I think that adaptation is very important. You have to stay true to yourself but you also have to open up to other people's opinions and worldviews."

Family

Family is very important for Chaimae, not only her direct relatives in the Netherlands, but those in Morocco as well. Family is one of the first things that enters her mind when she thinks of Morocco. She thinks she has a very nice and closely-knit family. I noticed that during my stay with her and her relatives in Morocco, she was constantly away from the apartment, hanging out with her cousin or visiting other relatives. In the Netherlands she also hangs out a lot with one of her cousins who is about the same age. Family thus is not only important for Chaimae simply because it is family, but also because some of them are close friends of hers.

Her sisters seem to be important examples in life to Chaimae. She would like to take part in an exchange program after high school, preferably to the United States, just like her sisters have done. She is anxious to find out what it is like to be living on your own and earning her own income, since all her elder sisters and brother are living on their own and working. However, she cannot imagine herself living apart from her mother during the time she will be studying in another city. She argues that she is too close with her mother to be living apart from her. During the interview in Morocco, she also claims that she misses her mom. Her mom has always been very present in her life and this is one of the first times that her mom is not close-by:

"I am really a mother's child. I would like to go to some place for 4 or 5 months, but that is just to see the world. If I would go to study in a different city, I would not search for a student house or something to live in. My mom also tells me: 'just stay with me. My other daughters are already living in Amsterdam and Leeuwarden, you just stay here with me.' But actually, I do not mind my mother saying that."

Holidays

When I met her, she was in Morocco for the first time without her parents. Her mother had been ill and was not fit enough to travel to Morocco this year, so her parents decided to stay at home and skip their biannual holiday to their country of origin. However, two elder sisters and her elder brother were going anyway and her parents gave her permission to travel with them. The holiday to Morocco would thus be twice as exciting for Chaimae this year!

Throughout the interviews, it becomes clear that Chaimae likes to be in Morocco very much and that the holidays are therefore very important to her. In one of the interviews, she said that 'being on the streets in Morocco also feels like being at home'. She compared these feelings with what she feels in Netherlands where she claims to experience different feelings at home and out on the street. She thinks that in Morocco she feels this way because, out on the street, she is also surrounded with family members and other people she knows. Furthermore, just like at home in The Netherlands, she speaks Arabic with everyone on the street in Morocco.

Although she has not seen much of Morocco yet, because her parents never took her to other places than their home town Targuiste⁴ and the larger city Tetouan, she is determined to get to know other places in Morocco, preferably before she goes to the U.S. She feels that, as a person of Moroccan descent, she is obliged to know 'her country', before she goes anywhere else. Although in the first place she claims to be Dutch, she will not neglect to tell that she is of Moroccan descent and that it is an important part of who she is as well:

"Here in the Netherlands, when people ask me where I'm from, I would say 'Morocco'. But if I would go to the U.S., that is a difficult question. I would say 'the Netherlands', but after that I would also say that I am Moroccan. Because actually I am not Dutch. But I would always also say the Netherlands. It is the place where I grew up, so of course it is also a very important place to me."

This summer, it was not only the first time for Chaimae to go to Morocco without her parents, but she also travelled around the country for a bit, and she had her first 'European holiday' in Spain, together with her elder sisters. The small trip through villages nearby Tangier was very impressive to her. She got to see a new part of Morocco she did not know before. The 'European holiday' which consisted of a few days in Malaga, Spain, was very special for her too. It was her first holiday to a country other than Morocco, and where Islamic culture is not dominant. She feels that she now knows what her Dutch classmates are talking about when they say they went on a holiday somewhere in Europe. She said that she felt really Dutch, partly due to the fact that she heard a lot of people speaking Dutch on the beaches.

Discrimination and prejudice

She is aware of the fact that Moroccans are mainly in the news in a negative way and she somewhat understands why Dutch people think like that, although she regrets that people only see the negative things. However, she also sees a change happening where more and more news features concerning Dutch-Moroccans are about success stories. She would like

⁴ Targuiste is a small town in the province of Al Hoceima.

to contribute to this change by becoming a successful female Moroccan business woman, to show that 'there are other Moroccans as well'.

Future

The future is something that Chaimae likes to look at. Not because she is not happy with the way things currently are, she just likes to make plans for the future and see what is coming for her. When finishing her study of international business, she does not know exactly yet what she would like to do for a living, she just wants to go into the world of big business. However, she does know that she prefers to travel around the world instead of sitting in an office all day. Her job will also have a higher purpose: to show the world that women too can fulfill leading roles in large international companies. She can easily imagine herself having a 'top job' in Dubai. At times she is uncertain about her high goals, asking herself why she cannot be happy with less, but she can simply not help it being ambitious. She explains that the history of her parents as immigrant workers is partly responsible for her decisiveness to reach for only the highest, although her mother often tells her that she should be happy with whatever comes her way. She thinks that her parents' history and the fact that she is a Dutch-Moroccan has made her more ambitious than her classmates and more determined to be successful in life.

"Yes, I think I am a bit more ambitious than my classmates, but maybe that is because, if I would have a really good job, than it is really like 'wow'. Maybe because my father used to be a guest worker. Dutch people may not have that feeling that much. Even if they do voluntary work, that is also okay. But we [Dutch-Moroccans] think more about a good job, it all has to turn out well. You [Dutch people] think more in terms of 'as long as I'm happy, that's all that matters'. And actually you are right about that. We [Dutch-Moroccans] would not be satisfied with that, and sometimes that bothers me. Why can't I be happy with doing voluntary work in Brazil, or something like that? I can imagine that it could make you very happy."

Besides obtaining a successful career, Chaimae also hopes that one day she can call herself a mother of many kids. She was brought up in a large family herself, with many brothers and sisters, and she hopes that one day her own children can enjoy the warmth of a large family as well. However, she thinks that she will never give up her professional career entirely and dedicate her life completely to her children, neither does she want to give up on her dream to travel around the world and see all the different cultures it contains. As she argues:

"My parents could only tell me something about Morocco. I want to have more to tell to my children than that, I think that is very important"

However, it is important for Chaimae that her children get to know Morocco in particular because it will also be an important part of who they are as well. Furthermore, she would like her future children to learn the Moroccan language. However she also realizes that future generations will probably have less and less connections with Morocco and will therefore also feel less inclined to travel regularly to their "ancestors' country of origin".

5 Identity

This chapter will deal with the way in which the respondents talked about themselves throughout the interviews. First, I will focus on the way in which the respondents describe themselves and how and to what extent they refer to Morocco or Moroccan culture during the interviews. In the middle-part of this chapter, I will go into the reasons that respondents gave for their self-identification as Moroccans or with Moroccan culture. Furthermore, I will also focus on the daily lives of the respondents, how their Moroccan identity is reflected in their activities, thoughts and dreams and to what extent they are culturally oriented towards Morocco. The last part of the chapter focuses on the transnational practices of the respondents and how these connect them with their parents' country of origin. In the conclusion, I will evaluate the results against the concepts and theories presented in the theoretical framework.

5.1 Who are you?

At the beginning of the first interview, all respondents were asked to introduce themselves. Later on in the interview or during follow-up interviews, I asked the respondents to describe themselves in terms of personal characteristics and they were asked how they thought they were perceived by other people. They were also asked to indicate how important Morocco was to them as well as how important the Netherlands were to them. Furthermore, they had to think of situations in which they were aware or more aware of their Moroccan identity or in which situation this part of their identity became more salient. Moroccan identity is hereby defined as that part of an individual's whole identity, which is influenced by his or her upbringing, experiences and actions which can be typified as Moroccan, or which reveal a strong orientation towards Morocco. For example, eating Moroccan food could be considered as an aspect of an individual's Moroccan identity, but also reading books from Moroccan authors or with Morocco as the topic.

5.1.1 Self-identification

When the respondents were asked to introduce themselves at the beginning of the interview⁵, there were very few of them who referred to their Moroccan identity. Most of the respondents mentioned their age, their place of residence and their main activity: work or study. Fatiha was one of the few respondents who mentioned her Moroccan roots when she introduced herself:

*"My name is Fatiha, I am 23 years old. I work for a funeral insurance company. Next year I would like to go back to school to study socio-psychological welfare work. **I am of Moroccan descent.** I was born in Morocco and came to the Netherlands when I was five months old".*

At later points in the interviews, other respondents also mentioned their Moroccan origin or background and it resulted that all of the respondents self-identified as (partly) Moroccan.

⁵ The specific question that was asked was: 'Could you introduce yourself again for the tape recording, like who are you and what do you do?'

Most of the respondents also claimed that they felt slightly more Moroccan than Dutch. There were no respondents that identified themselves as entirely Dutch or entirely Moroccan. The cultures of both Morocco and the Netherlands had an influence on their lives, and thus they identified with both these cultures in varying combinations:

Souad: *"It's pretty important for me, Morocco is my background."*

Chaimae: *"Netherlands is the place where I grew up, of course it is an important place for me"*

Youssef: *"It used to be Morocco, Morocco, Morocco, you just had to go there. It's your country and you have to see it. Nowadays, it's a little less for me, but I have as little association with Morocco as I have with the Netherlands. I do not really have some sort of identity crisis, it's just that if I was offered a nice job tomorrow in Poland, for example, I would work there tomorrow."*

Fatiha: *"My bonds with Morocco are my memories, the pretty moments when we still went on a holiday with the whole family. That's my bond, but I realize that it is not so strong anymore."*

Most of the respondents did not seem to feel very troubled by the fact that they identified both as Moroccan and Dutch. In literature on immigrant populations and their integration in to the host society, there is an often discussed theory that second and later generation of immigrants stand in between two cultures (Anthias 2002). This 'standing in between two cultures' is often problematised because it is argued to give immigrants the feeling that they do not belong anywhere and that they loose track of who they are. This theory did not seem to hold for the respondents of this research. It seemed more that they felt comfortable *within* two different cultures: they both felt comfortable with Moroccan cultural habits, as well as Dutch ones. Below are some examples of how respondents try to describe who they are, when asked whether they identified more as Dutch or as Moroccan:

Abdelmoumen (16, male): *"I am just Dutch, but with a Moroccan background, that is how they [the Moroccans] look at it in Morocco too."*

Chaimae (16, female): *"Actually you should be bothered by it, because when are you actually just yourself? Who or what are you? But you are just a Moroccan who lives in the Netherlands, and you should be proud of yourself and respect yourself"*

Youssef (26, male): *"I can't really say that I am Moroccan either, because here [the Netherlands] I am a foreigner, but in Morocco I am a foreigner too"*

Again, the quotes presented above illustrate that the respondents in general refer to both Morocco and the Netherlands when asked with which country or culture they identify (most). When talking about themselves and where they feel they belong, the respondents move back and forth between Morocco and the Netherlands. Both countries have their good and bad sides. Even the last quote by Youssef, which is more of a negative self-identification with both countries (I neither belong here nor there), illustrates that he evaluates his

identity both against Moroccan culture as well as the Dutch culture. Thus, considering nationalities and ethnicities, the respondents did not strongly self-identify with only Morocco, or only the Netherlands. Some respondents might have self-identified strongly as a Moroccan when certain questions were asked, but they 'weakened' this self-identification when other questions were asked. For example, during the first half of the first interview with Saliha, I had the feeling that she self-identified very strongly as a Moroccan and with Morocco, and that she almost did not self-identify as Dutch or with the Netherlands. She said that Morocco was very important to her and she even considered living there for an extensive period. However, when later on in the interview a discussion evolved between her, a friend that she had also brought to the interview and another Moroccan young man, Saliha argued that Dutch-Moroccan youngsters (including herself) had to be realistic about their bond with Morocco and be aware of the fact that they are probably more used to Dutch culture than to Moroccan culture. She argued that she wanted to know what the real life was like in Morocco, but that she would probably not like it, because she did not like the mentality of the Moroccans.

Such statements might sound contradictory since in one instance Saliha claims that Morocco means everything to her, while in another instance she argues that she does not feel very related to Moroccans in Morocco. However, such contradictory statements should be evaluated in the light of 'situational identities'. An important element of the theoretical framework of this thesis is Verkuyten's (1999) argument that identities are partial and situational. An individual's identity is made up out of several 'partial identities', such as gender, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, lifestyle, and so on. The concept of situational identities implies that these different partial identities become salient in different situations.

Depending on the situation, or - in the case of this research - the types of questions asked to the respondents, their ethnic identity becomes more salient, and thus seemingly more important to them.

Saliha's 'contradictory' statements also reveal something about the extent to which she is culturally oriented towards Morocco. In the paragraph on ethnic identity (3.3.2), two concepts from Tsai *et al.* (2002) were introduced: ethnic identity and cultural orientation. Ethnic identity is defined as the extent to which an individual feels that he or she belongs to a certain ethnic group. On the other hand, cultural orientation is defined as "*one's feelings towards and levels of engagement in different cultures*" (Tsai *et al.* 2002: 42). According to Tsai *et al.* (2002), there is another important difference between these two concepts, in that ethnic identity is something that is often consciously referred to by the individual him- or herself, while cultural orientation is something that mostly becomes salient through the individual's practices. Thus, cultural orientation is something that people are often not aware of, but which tells something about the importance of their ethnic identity as part of their whole identity. Especially during the first interview, Saliha seemed to be very culturally oriented towards Morocco, because she was referring to this country very much, while she hardly talked about the Netherlands. As her interviewer, I got the idea that her 'feelings' towards Morocco, which is an important marker of cultural orientation, were very strong in a positive sense. During the follow-up interviews, this cultural orientation towards Morocco was 'weakened', when she started talking more and more about what the Netherlands meant to her and how she perceived her future in the Netherlands.

5.1.2 Identification

Respondents were also asked to indicate in which situations they felt (more) Moroccan or were (more) conscious of their Moroccan identity⁶. The respondents said the following:

Fatima (24, female): *“if something happens in the [Dutch] media and it is about Moroccans, people expect me to say something, to speak in the name of all Moroccans. Well, yes, I wear a headscarf and I will always be a Moroccan. Also at work, I am sometimes approached in my own language by Moroccans who need help. You are Moroccan and they expect you to help them”.*

Saliha (20, female): *“When Moroccans are being attacked [verbally, not physically!]. If you continuously hear ‘Moroccans do this, Moroccans do that’, you feel like you have to defend yourself as well as other Moroccans. Then you feel really Moroccan. But when other people are just relaxed with you then you really think: ‘what does my [Moroccan] background actually matter?’”*

Asmae (18, female): *“I had a job interview last week and this man asks me about what I do in my daily life, this and that. And then he says: ‘AND you are Moroccan, right?’. I said: ‘no, I am Dutch’. The man said: ‘yeah, yeah, you are Dutch, but I mean you are Dutch-Moroccan’. So you are always considered as a Moroccan.”*

Other respondents have stated similar things. It seems that they are especially aware of their Moroccan identity if it is approached by non-Moroccans, and even more so when it is approached in a negative way. Some of the respondents feel the need to defend their Moroccan identity and convince non-Moroccans that there are good Dutch-Moroccans as well. Other respondents wish they did not have to do this all the time. As Fatima argues *“I wish I could just speak for myself, instead of being interpreted as speaking for the entire Moroccan community”*. Saliha furthermore said that she thinks she would never have placed so much importance on her Moroccan identity if it was not such an (negative) issue in the Netherlands. These findings are theoretically supported by Phinney (1990). To recall from the theoretical framework, Phinney (1990) argued that ethnicity especially becomes an issue when two ethnically distinct groups are being confronted with each other. The respondents of this research are thus identified by the Dutch society as belonging to a Moroccan ethnic community. In return, the respondents are well aware that it is the Dutch society, a group of non-Moroccans, that identifies them as Moroccan.

The way in which Dutch-Moroccans, and especially Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, are perceived by the Dutch society, was an issue that often came up during the interviews and that all respondents seemed to have thought about a lot. Many respondents think and hope, that within 10 years, Moroccans will not be such a problematic issue anymore in the Netherlands. They look at the Dutch history and realize that, before the Moroccans, there were other ethnic minorities within the Netherlands, such as the Spanish and the Surinamese, that had a bad reputation and people of these minorities were discriminated against. Nowadays, these minorities seem to be fully incorporated into Dutch society and nobody considers them as foreigners, or a threat anymore. Respondents hope that the same

⁶ The specific question that was asked was: ‘when are you aware or more aware of your Moroccan background?’

will happen to the Dutch-Moroccans, and that within 10 years, nobody will speak of Dutch-Moroccans as foreigners anymore. Some respondents have even argued that you may not be able to speak of Dutch-Moroccans at all anymore within a few decades, because more and more Dutch-Moroccan youngsters are marrying people with a background other than Moroccan. The connection with Morocco will also become weaker, when more and more generations of Dutch-Moroccans weaken the connection between the first generation that came to the Netherlands as guest workers and the latest 'newborn' generation that is born and raised in the Netherlands, by parents who are also born and raised in the Netherlands. Therefore, according to some respondents, they will be less and less identifiable as people of Moroccan descent in the future.

The above-mentioned findings seem to support Erikson's (1950; in Gleason 1983) as well as Verkuyten's (1994) argument introduced in the theoretical framework. To recall from this theoretical framework, both processes of self-identification and identification are involved in the process of identity construction. In short, self-identification is the process through which an individual comes to ascribe him- or herself to certain (social) categories. On the other hand, identification is the process through which that same individual is ascribed to certain (social) categories by others. Identity development is thus a personal process, which is influenced, among other things, by the way in which an individual is perceived by the larger society or by significant others, as illustrated by the above-mentioned findings. According to many respondents, the Dutch society gives them the feeling that their Moroccan identity is important – although it is mostly important in a negative way - and so they place importance on this part of their identity. On the other hand, they also think that in the future, the Dutch society will identify people of Moroccan descent less as such. Therefore, they think that future generations of Dutch-Moroccans will also place less importance on their Moroccan ethnic identity.

5.2 What makes you say that?

Respondents were asked why they self-identified (or did not self-identify) with Morocco⁷ and what were the things – considering their personality and the things they do – that made them self-identify as a Moroccan. Although the respondents gave various and differing reasons for their self-identification as Moroccans, there was one reason that was important to all of them: ancestry. The respondents self-identified as (partly) Moroccans because they were of Moroccan descent. All of the respondents' parents were born in Morocco. Some of the respondents were born in Morocco themselves too, and came to the Netherlands when they were still very young.

Besides descent, respondents often gave at least a second reason for their self-identification as Moroccans. These reasons were various. Some respondents argued that they were raised in 'a Moroccan way' and therefore self-identified with the norms and values of the Moroccan culture:

Fatima: "My upbringing, the norms and values that I was taught at home make me a Moroccan."

⁷Specific questions that were asked were: 'could you indicate what things make you Moroccan?' and 'why is Morocco important to you?'

Youssef: *"I was raised in a Moroccan way, in the sense that I was taught Moroccan norms and values, and we spoke two languages: Moroccan-Berber and Dutch."*

Other respondents claimed to self-identify as Moroccan because their character or personality was typically Moroccan:

Saliha: *"I think I have a Moroccan character. Moroccans are really, a bit of temperament, they are very present and a bit headstrong. That is really Moroccan. And of course I speak the language. And what makes me really Moroccan is that I like the food."*

What already became clear of the previous section was that many respondents self-identified as Moroccans because they were identified as such by other people. Whether you self-identify as Moroccan or not, you will always be considered as a Moroccan by other people, thus for many respondents it was no use *not* to self-identify as a Moroccan:

Asmae: *"It just feels that way, I don't know. Maybe because you distinguish yourself from the rest, or you are being distinguished from the rest, from the Dutch people. (...) I have something Moroccan because my parents were born there, and I am a Muslim. So actually I am not Dutch but Muslim. And Moroccan, well yeah, because everybody gives me that feeling"*.

Saliha: *"People can tell that you are a Moroccan, it's no use denying it."*

Souelha: *"Despite the fact that I have a Dutch passport, my classmates consider me as a Moroccan"*

In the theoretical framework, Norbert Elias was quoted (in Verkuyten 1999) who argued that he will always be considered a Jew, no matter what he does or says. He had no choice whether to self-identify as Jewish or not. The respondents seem to share his opinion by arguing that it does not matter how they self-identify, because they will always be identified by others as Moroccan. It is interesting to note here that this opinion was shared among respondents who lived in different areas throughout the Netherlands. Some of the respondents lived in areas where the Moroccan community was very large and other's lived in areas where mainly non-Moroccans were living. This did not seem to have a large influence on the way in which they self-identified as Moroccan. It seems that, when identification by others is considered as a reason to self-identify as Moroccan, the respondents refer to the Dutch society as a whole and the way in which Dutch-Moroccans are depicted in the Dutch media, and not the Dutch people in their direct environment.

So far, I have been talking about Dutch-Moroccan youngsters who self-identify *as Moroccans*. This research was meant to reveal how and to what extent Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify *with Morocco* or with Moroccan culture. The results from the interviews indicated that there is a slight but essential difference in self-identification *as Moroccans* and self-identification *with Morocco*. Throughout the interviews, the respondents have been identifying themselves *as Moroccans*, for the reasons mentioned above. However, many respondents have indicated that they do not feel very connected to the Moroccan culture and the Moroccans living in Morocco. When asked whether they could imagine themselves living in Morocco for an extensive period, many respondents have

indicated that they have thought about it, but that they cannot imagine themselves living in Morocco: they do not like the rules that prevail there and they have problems with the mentality of the Moroccans in Morocco.

Abdul: *“Morocco has its good sides and its bad sides. A bad characteristic is that, you see the way people are thinking here, and it makes you think how you are better off in the Netherlands.”*

Saliha: *“In Morocco, people’s honor is very important. If you say to a person that he or she is wrong, they will immediately feel offended because they feel that you attack their honor. So they will immediately say something like ‘you’re stupid, you don’t know what you’re talking about’. Here in the Netherlands, they won’t say that you are stupid if you say something like that. But in Morocco they do. They will call you ‘dumb’ or ‘stupid donkey’, things like that. I think the people there are really heartless. And also the culture, for example, that a woman has to be a virgin until she marries, and a man doesn’t. Those are all cultural things, that’s not religion. What I do like about Morocco is its music, that’s culture too. Also the buildings, and the language, the way things are said. But the way people think in Morocco, that really stinks.”*

It thus seems that Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, when self-identifying as Moroccan, do not mean that they self-identify with Morocco as a country or with Moroccans. Throughout the interviews, it seemed that respondents self-identified with fellow Dutch-Moroccan youngsters or with some sort of Dutch-Moroccan community in general. Youssef had the following idea about this:

Youssef: *“I think that there is actually a new culture that has emerged now. Because nowadays you have the really Dutch culture, and you have the really Moroccan culture, but you also have the Dutch-Moroccan culture. This is a mixture of things from the Dutch and the Moroccan culture, and every Dutch-Moroccan makes his own mixture. In my group of [Dutch-Moroccan] friends, I can see that there is a 50-50 mixture: 50 percent Moroccan and 50 percent Dutch. My father is more like 90 to 10: 90 percent Moroccan and 10 percent Dutch. But I also know Dutch-Moroccans who are maybe 5 percent Moroccan and 95 percent Dutch. Maybe they eat couscous sometimes but that is all that relates to their Moroccan identity.”*

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned that the respondents in general did not have the feeling that they were standing in between two cultures, because they felt comfortable enough with both, to self-identify with Moroccan as well as with Dutch culture. The quote from Youssef does however indicate that Dutch-Moroccan youngsters seem to self-identify with a certain culture that meets somewhere between the Moroccan and the Dutch culture. Youssef and the friends that he talks about, self-identify with both Moroccan and Dutch culture, but they make their own mixture of different cultural characteristics from both cultures. This furthermore indicates that it is not a question of ‘either, or’ for Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, but rather a situation of ‘and, and’. They do not have the feeling that they are in some sort of ‘cultural vacuum’ between the Dutch and the Moroccan culture, as is sometimes suggested by literature on immigrants (see Anthias 2002). They are actively working on incorporating elements from both cultures into their identity.

5.3 There is more to a Moroccan than ethnic identity

Since identities are complex and not just comprised of nationality or ethnicity, I think it is important to mention a few other 'identity components' that were revealed throughout the interviews. As was already mentioned before, self-identifications with a certain ethnicity or national culture, be it Moroccan or Dutch, were not always very strong among the respondents. There were no respondents that explicitly claimed they were Moroccan, or Dutch. Throughout the interviews, it became clear that there was a component that was very important to all of the respondents and with which the respondents very explicitly self-identified. This component was religion. All of the respondents self-identified strongly as Muslim and they stated that their religion provides them an important and useful life philosophy. However, the degree to which they think that religion should be reflected in their daily activities differs. For some, praying and fasting during Ramadan is enough, while other respondents think it is essential to wear a headscarf and to actively work on the 3rd pillar of the Islam: the giving of alms.

Asmae: *"I have something Moroccan because my parents were born there, and I am a Muslim. So actually I am not Dutch, but Muslim. (...) Islam is the 'manual' of my life. Just with certain things I do, I always think: is that okay within my religion, will it be accepted?"*

Chaimae: *"Commitment to my religion is very important to me".*

Fatiha: *"Islam is very important to me. I will never forget my religion. As long as you make an effort in life to help other people. Just the five important pillars⁸ of the Islam, that's enough for me".*

Sanna: *"Considering my religion, I also feel more at home in Morocco, because Islam is dominant there and it makes it easier for me to practice my religion. The Netherlands is the country where I was born and where I work and study, that's all I can say about it because it is not the country where I feel at home. The fact that Moroccans are perceived in a negative way makes me feel under appreciated, while I just try to live by the rules like all other Dutch citizens."*

Youssef: *"My religion is really important to me. I do not think that I could live in a place where there are very few Moroccans or Muslims. For example, when I was in Santiago [Chile], there were only five Moroccans in that country, and I really thought... you kind of start forgetting who you are. For me, it's really important that I live in a place where I can practice my religion, and where there are other people who practice the same religion."*

When asked to describe their personality and characteristics and how they thought they were perceived by others, a large proportion of the respondents claimed that they were honest and not afraid to give their opinion, sometimes up to the point where people would consider them as harsh. This was especially the case when they thought of how they were perceived by other Moroccans. In Moroccan culture, it is considered to be very impolite to be honest about something if that will hurt the other person. Being polite is more

⁸ The five pillars represent the five duties that a true Muslim has to fulfill in his life: 1. profession of faith; 2. prayers; 3. giving of alms; 4. fasting during Ramadan; 5. pilgrimage to Mecca. (source: Wikipedia)

important than being honest. Respondents claimed that on this matter, they were rather 'Dutch', in that they preferred to be honest and direct to people. For example, Youssef stated that his parents would probably never refuse anyone into their home, even if they absolutely did not like that person. In Moroccan culture, it is considered as very rude and impolite to do that. Youssef stated that on this aspect he was different from his parents: if there was someone he could not get along with, he would be honest with that person and explain that it is ridiculous to keep inviting each other into each other's homes.

Besides honesty, many respondents pointed out that they like to help other people. Below are some examples of how respondents described themselves:

Asmae: "People sometimes think I'm harsh, but I am honest. I like to help other people, to be there for them. What people often do not expect from me is that I am very caring. When I am being harsh to them, it is often because I care about them and I am worried about them. Only people who know me can see through that".

Saliha: "People consider me as a harsh person. They say I do not talk with feeling but more like: that's just the way it is. But they also say I am honest."

Sanna: "I am a person who likes to make herself heard. I like to give my opinion, but I respect the opinion of others as well. I consider myself as outgoing, so I like to meet new people".

When I asked the respondents why they liked to help other people, many of them were again referring to their religion. They said that an important value which they were taught by their religion is that one should care about their fellow men. One way to show your fellow men that you care about them, is to help them with anything they need your help with. Again, this shows that religion is an important life philosophy for the respondents and many of their actions are guided by their religious values.

5.4 Dutch-Moroccan youngsters and their daily lives

To find out what role their Moroccan identity played in their everyday lives, they were asked what they did in their free time, what was important for them in life, but also how they perceived their future and what plans they had considering this future. Talking about their daily activities as well as their dreams and future plans, might also reveal something about the extent to which the respondents are culturally oriented towards Morocco in their daily lives.

First, the respondents were asked straightforward whether they could describe the role that their Moroccan identity played in their everyday lives. In general, respondents could not really think of activities or other aspects of their daily lives which were influenced by their Moroccan identity, if a certain context in which these activities could take place was not given by the interviewer. Therefore most of them concluded that their Moroccan identity was not very important in their everyday lives. Another conclusion that can be drawn from these answers is that, at first sight, the respondents did not seem to be very culturally oriented towards Morocco in their daily lives.

The respondents were also asked questions in which a certain context was created by the interviewer. For example, they were asked about what they liked to do in their free time,

what they thought was important in life, what their future dreams were and how they looked upon the world. When asking these questions, I did not explicitly ask them to think of activities or thoughts that related to their ethnic identity (see appendix II for examples). These questions revealed more connections and references to their Moroccan identity, as well as to their Muslim identity. However, references to their ethnic identity and Muslim identity were often not made very explicitly. In most cases, I identified the answers as 'relating to their Moroccan ethnic identity' or their Muslim identity. For example, when Asmae told me that she was volunteering as an informant for Moroccan parents about drug abuse among their children, she did not mention this activity as something that was related to her Moroccan identity. In this case, I identified the activity as influenced by her Moroccan identity. After all, it would be less likely that she would have been an informant especially for Moroccan parents, if she did not self-identify as Moroccan.

Below are some quotes from respondents who tried to explain the role of their Moroccan identity in their everyday lives, when they were asked to do so without a certain context that was shaped by the interviewer:

Asmae: "I try to cook Moroccan cuisine, I think that's important. (..) Moroccan culture does not play a big part in my daily life, actually it is not part of it at all."

Saliha: "What I want to achieve, I think a lot of people would like to achieve that, I don't think that only a Moroccan would want to achieve that. Let's say it is nothing Moroccan."

Fatiha: "I do not really have a connection with Morocco in my daily life. It's more like I am anti-Morocco, that I consciously distance myself from it. I notice this in my group of friends: in the past I had only Moroccan friends, now there are less and less Moroccans in my group of friends."

The above-mentioned quotes illustrate that, when answering my rather straightforward and abstract question, for most of the respondents, their Moroccan identity does not play a big role in their everyday lives. However, Asmae later on revealed that she was a volunteer at a community centre and that she informed Moroccan parents about drug abuse and how they could prevent their children from using drugs. Also Saliha turned out to have a part-time job at a Dutch department of a Moroccan bank. Furthermore, Abdelmoumen had a part-time job at a catering business which specialized in Moroccan weddings. Youssef had been providing 'homework support' to Moroccan youngsters at the local mosque. Souad had been helping out at her brother's youth centre, and talked to Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, how they behaved on the streets and how this influenced the perception of the Dutch society on Dutch-Moroccan youth. Thus, although the respondents themselves could not come up with activities in their daily lives that connected them with Morocco or their Moroccan identity when they were straightforwardly asked about it, connections could definitely be made when other, more indirect and 'context' questions were asked.

5.4.1 What about your future?

Asking the respondents about their plans, ambitions and dreams for the future also revealed that their Moroccan and/or Muslim identity had more influence on their daily lives and that they were more culturally oriented towards Morocco than they initially indicated.

Several respondents spoke of future plans that they probably would not have had if they did not self-identify as Moroccan or Muslim:

Youssef: *“Five years ago I wanted to set up a small ICT-business in Morocco that would provide internship positions for Moroccan ICT students.”*

Souad: *“In the future, I hope to have my own bureau for maternity care, with a special focus on Muslim women. As far as I know such a bureau does not exist yet.”*

Fatiha: *“One of my dreams for the future is to work for the Red Cross, somewhere in the Middle-East on some women’s project. (..) At the moment I am trying to set up a funeral insurance business that focuses especially on the ‘Islamic market’.*

Some of the respondents stated that they also thought about ‘returning’ to Morocco when they were older, or that they wanted to get a home in Morocco so that they could live there during a few months of the year.

5.4.2 What really matters?

Respondents were also asked to indicate what things or which persons were important to them. The importance of religion became very salient when this question was asked. Other things that resulted to be very important to them were family, education, and again helping other people:

Chaimae: *“Binding with religion is very important to me. That is actually all-inclusive, it includes many things. Trust is also important. If you can’t trust people, you have no direction in life. Furthermore, love, for my father and mother, and respect for each other.”*

Fatima: *“First of all my parents are important, they have raised me. My brothers and other relatives are also important. What else, my job and my education, not in the sense that I think that status is important, I just think that it is important to develop yourself. I need a little bit of a challenge, and ambition.”*

Saliha: *“First of all my religion is very important. Also my education, I am determined to get my degree. I think it is important to get rich with experiences, not rich with money but just that you have seen a lot of things in life. I also think it is important to help other people who are in need of something, even if it just a very small thing.”*

Sanna: *“I think it is important to respect other people and to deal with each other in a normal way, we have to live together after all”.*

Souad: *“My faith, my family and my job. I also think it is important to help other people, that is something I have learned through my religion.”*

Fatiha: *“What is important to me is my future. Education. I want to get certain things sorted out. I’m 23 years old now and I am still exploring. The most important thing to me is my health, a happy life, be it here or in Morocco.”*

Asmae: *“Islam plays a big role in my life. It is a sort of manual for me. It does not influence my choice of education or anything like that but it does influence, for example, whom I’m going to marry: he should be a Muslim too. And I do not drink alcohol either. There are just a few of these things that are important to me. I cannot imagine my life without my religion.”*

Many respondents explained the importance of education by stating that they had the feeling they had to make up for their parents, who came to the Netherlands as guest workers and were only offered low-paid jobs for which an education was not required. Chaimae argued that she wants to show the world that Moroccans, and especially Moroccan women, can also be very intelligent, accomplish a study at university and acquire an important and well-paid position at a large company. Saliha stated that the fact that both her parents are illiterate and need help with everything that involves something written, has made her determined to get a good education and become an independent woman who can financially take care of herself. Thus, not only their parents’ ethnicity influences the process of self-identification and cultural orientation, also their history and socio-economic position in the Dutch society seem to have an influence on the ambitions and life goals of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters.

5.4.3 *What does your world look like?*

Another thing that respondents were asked to do was to describe the world in which they were living and to indicate how they perceived their role or position in that world. Again, religion seemed to have a large influence on the way in which the respondents perceived the world. What is striking about the quotes mentioned below is that many respondents have described the world in the exact same way. It is a description that they have literally extracted from the Quran, which illustrates what respondents have argued already before: that their religion is a very practical tool in their everyday lives. What furthermore became clear from the answers to this question was that the respondents are very concerned with their fellow human beings. As already stated a few times before, many respondents argued that they thought it was important to help other people, especially those that are less endowed than they are themselves. For many respondents, helping people is not limited to one’s direct environment. As can be concluded from some of the quotes below, many respondents are concerned about poverty elsewhere in the world and they would like to do, or were already doing something that could alleviate it (e.g. donating money to an NGO).

Saliha: *“I see the world as a test. It is something that has been given to you by God and you just have to make the best of it. It is a test to see whether you ‘treat’ life as you should. You have to take care of yourself and live as peacefully and healthy as possible. And you have to learn a lot in this world. I think that’s what it is, at least that is what it is according to my religion. My role in that world is to be added value to it. I’ve heard someone say once that if you have no added value to the world, you could as well be dead. I think it is important that people support each other.”*

Chaimae: *"I see it as a kind of test, that's how we see the world according to Islam. It is a test for the hereafter, to see whether you do well in life, whether you are an honest person and whether you are loyal to your faith. What else... I think that people are important to each other, we need each other in this world. I think my role is not very big in that world, but I think that nobody has a very big role in this world."*

Sanna: *"I don't really know how to describe the world. I am a Muslim and I believe that I was created by the Lord. I live for my Lord and I will return to him after this life. Earthly life, for a Muslim, is nothing more than a test."*

Souad: *"I see that people all over the world are very different. What I also see is that war in a certain country has its effects on other countries as well, and that there is still a lot of poverty in the world. My role in that world is to help people where I can".*

Fatima: *"I see that these days a lot of things are related to identity. Worldwide you see that happening with Islam and it annoys me that I have to justify for that. I also see that the gap between rich and poor gets bigger and bigger, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. The rich are helping the poor but somehow it does not seem to be enough because there is still a lot of poverty, for example in Africa or in the Middle-East. But these are countries through which the rich have become wealthy. We are worried about which product to use to dye our hair, while in some parts of the world they do not even have clean drinking water. There is some development, but by far it is not enough. In my own way I try to contribute to that development, by sending money, clothes or other things that are of basic necessity."*

5.4.4 Leisure activities

Respondents were also asked what they like to do in their free time, and who they hang out with. Many respondents mentioned the 'usual' things that an adolescent likes to do: watching TV, reading, surfing on the internet, or shopping with friends. Respondents were also specifically asked what they thought about going out to a bar or a club. Many respondents indicated that they would not do this, because a lot of things happen in these cafés and clubs that are in conflict with their (religious) values, such as drinking alcohol and showing off your body to men:

Chaimae: *"I can imagine that it is nice. When my Dutch friends go out, I ask them 'why?' and they say 'because it's nice and sociable', and I understand that. But to be in an environment where a lot of people drink alcohol, I don't like that at all. I went to Amsterdam with some friends, on Queensday, that was one big party. I liked it, but I tried to omit a few things I saw from my mind. It was my first experience with 'going out'. I have thought about it, but it is not something that I want."*

Meryem: *"To be honest, my parents do not allow me to go out to a bar or a club. But I would not want to myself either. I did in one time, my brother took me to a club, but I didn't like it at all. Everyone looks at you, there are too many people."*

Respondents were also asked what their group of friends looked like: do they have mainly Moroccan friends, is it more of a mixture between Moroccan and Dutch or do they only have Dutch friends? Answers were very diverse. There were respondents who mainly had Moroccan friends, arguing that they were automatically 'attracted' to these fellow Moroccans. According to these respondents, there was some sort of instant click with fellow Moroccans and you could freely talk about issues such as Morocco or Islam. Other respondents stated that they had a mixture of friends with different nationalities (Moroccan, Dutch, but also other nationalities). Some of these respondents argued that they deliberately created such a mixture, because they thought that their group of friends should reflect the society in which they were living, which was also comprised of people with different ethnicities.

Chaimae: *"When you only hang out with Dutch people, that is kind of, well your parents are Moroccan so it's kind of logical that you have Moroccan friends too, I consider that as an obligation, actually. I have many Moroccan friends who do not hang out with Dutch people, that is very strange to me. I mean, what are you doing here?"*

There were no respondents who stated that they had no friends of Moroccan descent: all of them had at least a few friends with whom they shared their Moroccan background.

5.5 Transnational activities

An important aspect of the theoretical framework of this thesis is the concept of transnationalism. Looking at transnational practices among the respondents might also tell us something about the extent to which they are culturally oriented towards Morocco as well as how they value their social and cultural ties with Morocco. To recall from the theoretical framework of this thesis, transnationalism can be defined as:

"Sustained ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders across multiple nation-states, ranging from little to highly institutionalized forms." (Faist 2000: 189)

Immigrant populations are an example of transnational communities, because they often maintain close ties with relatives and friends in their country of origin. The respondents were also asked several questions that were meant to reveal to what extent they are part of a transnational network of Moroccans or to what extent they undertake activities that connect them with such a network. The holidays to Morocco are an obvious practice that connects the respondents with not only their relatives in Morocco, but also relatives that have migrated to countries other than the Netherlands. This paragraph focuses on activities that the respondents employ in their daily lives, which connect them with Morocco or other Moroccans. For the practices to be labelled as transnational, it is important that these activities are border-crossing, in that they connect the respondents with people or activities beyond the Dutch borders.

First of all, the respondents were asked whether they held close contact with relatives in Morocco, outside the holiday period. Most of the respondents confirmed that they did. The main technology through which communication with Moroccan relatives takes place is through Internet chat services, like MSN. This is a modern type of communication

technology, whereby the respondents can talk through a microphone with their Moroccan relatives, and they can also see them through the webcam. It is a good example of new communication and transportation technologies facilitating the establishment and maintenance of transnational social ties (Faist 2000; Portes 1999; Basch *et al.* 1997). Some respondents, like Youssef, said that, if such technologies did not exist, they probably would not have that much contact with their Moroccan relatives, besides during the summer holidays:

Youssef: "I talk with my cousins in Morocco through MSN. I ask them to turn on the webcam so that I can wave at my aunt. But it's purely through MSN. If that would not exist, I don't think that I would have that much contact with my relatives in Morocco, except for my sister, whom I also call spontaneously."

Respondents were also asked what it is that they talk about with their Moroccan relatives. It resulted that communication with Moroccan relatives is mainly 'small talk'. They ask each other how they are doing and how their relatives are doing, but it is not really that friendships are established, or in-depth discussions are being held. The language barrier that often exists between the respondents and their Moroccan relatives might explain why these conversations only include some formalities.

Besides chatting with their Moroccan relatives, they also communicate with relatives who live in other countries than Morocco and the Netherlands. Many respondents have relatives living in different countries across Europe. They chat with cousins who are of the same age. All these relatives come together in Morocco during the summer holiday. Some respondents have also visited these relatives in their country of residence.

The respondents were also asked whether they were very active on the Dutch-Moroccan forums through which I had contacted them for the interviews, or if they were active on any other forums that were especially founded for Moroccans. Most of the respondents were not very active on these forums. They would read a few posts from other users but in general they did not actively participate in the discussions. Only one respondent confirmed that she likes to help out other people through the Dutch-Moroccan forums. She gave an example of a person who posted a letter of application on the forum, asking other forum members to comment on the letter before she would send it to the company she wanted to apply at. The respondent said that she liked helping out people who were asking for such small favours. Most of the forums that are designed for Moroccans in general are in French. Here, the respondents again face a language barrier which impedes upon their possibility to participate in ongoing discussions on these websites.

5.6 Conclusion

At first sight, respondents did not seem to self-identify very strongly as Moroccans. They did not introduce themselves as Moroccans and they argued that their Moroccan identity did not play a very big role in their everyday lives. Many respondents talked about their Moroccan 'background', which already indicated that Morocco or their Moroccan identity was not something that was very much on the front stage. Revealing self-identifications with or cultural orientations towards Morocco therefore also took some digging work by asking more indirect questions.

The fact that Moroccan identity is not reflected in all the answers of the respondents seems to support Verkuyten's (1999) theory of 'situational identities'. Where a person's ethnic identity is not important, it will probably not become salient. The respondents claimed that they were more aware of their Moroccan identity when it was touched upon by other people and in such cases they self-identified more strongly, more explicitly as Moroccans. They became more 'conscious' of that part of their identity. When they were asked to introduce themselves, their Moroccan identity was not mentioned as a point of reference, and thus it did not become a salient aspect in their answers. Instead, other aspects of their identity came to the fore, such as their age, and 'socio-economic status' (student or worker).

What the above-mentioned finding furthermore illustrates, is that identities are not static. They consist of many elements, of which Moroccan ethnicity is just one. The respondents revealed that religion was another important element of their identity, and then there is of course personality which in no way can be equated to a person's ethnic identity. The respondents furthermore had dreams and ambitions, which all formed part of who they are as well as what their position in this world is.

Eventually, all of the respondents self-identified at least as partly Moroccan and their Moroccan identity had an influence on some aspect of their lives, such as future prospects or the people they socialize with. In the theoretical framework of this thesis, both the primordial notion of ethnicity as well as the socially constructed notion of ethnicity were introduced. The results of this research reveal that the respondents refer to both notions of ethnicity when they talk about their Moroccan identity. They claim to self-identify as Moroccans because they are of Moroccan descent, which is a primordial notion of ethnicity. However, a socially constructed notion of ethnicity can also be detected among the respondents, as they claim to self-identify as Moroccans because they are considered as such by other people.

The results of this research also seem to confirm the difference between ethnic identity and cultural orientation, that was proposed by Tsai *et al.* (2002). All of the respondents have indicated that their Moroccan identity - or to rephrase it into the words of Tsai *et al.*: their Moroccan ethnic identity - is an important part of their whole identity and they can come up with several reasons why this is so. However, when they have to consider the extent to which, their Moroccan identity plays a role in their everyday lives, which would be the extent of cultural orientation towards Morocco, according to Tsai *et al.*, they often do not ascribe a big role to their Moroccan identity, and thus do not show an explicit orientation towards this culture. However, this cultural orientation becomes more explicit when the respondents talk about their future and about the things they do every day.

Another important conclusion of this chapter is that self-identification as a Moroccan is not the same as self-identification with Morocco: all of the respondents self-identified at least as partly Moroccan. However, many respondents have indicated that they cannot imagine themselves as Moroccan citizens, because they do not like the rules and customs of the country, and the mentality of its people. Thus, although the respondents self-identify as Moroccans, it is not because they feel like they 'connect' with Moroccans who actually live in Morocco.

A third important finding of this chapter is the fact that respondents do not self-identify with either Morocco or the Netherlands. Thereby, they seem to contradict the theory that children of immigrants often stand in-between two cultures, and that they experience some sort of cultural vacuum in which they feel lost: not knowing where they

actually belong to. The results of this research revealed that none of the respondents really struggled with such cultural dilemmas. They do think about what Morocco means for them, and what the Netherlands mean to them, but it does not seem to be something that bothers them. It is just part of the process of finding out who they are. Most of the respondents felt comfortable in both the Moroccan and the Dutch culture, and they were selecting the best of both cultures to combine it into a 'hybrid' Dutch-Moroccan culture. Feeling comfortable in different cultures did not seem to be a problem for the respondents.

The last paragraph of this chapter has focused on the transnational activities of the respondents. The respondents employ a range of transnational activities, such as visiting Morocco and chatting with their Moroccan relatives in Morocco as well as those living in other countries across Europe. However, such transnational activities are mainly confined to the family. The interviews held with the respondents did not reveal that they are part of some sort of transnational community which connects them to other Moroccans living in Morocco, which are not their relatives. The regular communication with relatives across Europe and Morocco does however indicate that many respondents are part of a transnational family which comprises multiple nation-states.

6 Holidays

This chapter will focus on the holidays of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters to Morocco: their parents' country of origin and in a few cases also their own country of origin. First, I will outline the importance that the respondents attach to these holidays and what such a holiday means to them. The middle-part of this chapter will focus on the activities experiences of the respondents during such a holiday. Finally, I will turn to how the experiences during the holiday in Morocco influence the way in which the respondents talk about themselves and their relation with Morocco. In concluding paragraph, the results will be evaluated against the concepts and theories on VFR tourism that were introduced in the theoretical framework.

The respondents spend somewhere between 3 to 6 weeks in Morocco. This holiday takes place during the Dutch summer holidays in July and/or August. Some of the respondents go every year, while others go every other year. Only one respondent did not go to Morocco anymore since a few years. The younger respondents – under 20 years – mostly go together with their family members: parents, brothers and/or sisters. Some of the elder respondents did not go with their family members anymore, but went with friends instead. Most of the respondents stated that their family had a house or an apartment somewhere in Morocco, where they stayed during the holiday. Other respondents moved in with Moroccan relatives. Most of the respondents stayed in one location during the entire holiday, and only made a few small trips to places that were close-by. A few respondents travelled longer distances to see other parts of Morocco which they had not seen before.

6.1 The importance of a holiday to Morocco

In general, the respondents attach a lot of importance to the holidays to their parents' country of origin. Most of the respondents prefer to go every year and they claim that the summer holidays will always be reserved for Morocco. If they want to go on a holiday to another country, they would probably plan this trip during another time of the year, for example during the Christmas holidays. Below are some quotes of respondents who talk about the holiday to Morocco, what it means to them and why it is so important for them. Between brackets the location and time of the interview (before, during or after the summer holidays) is mentioned:

Asmae (Netherlands; before): *“Those holidays are really important to me. I want my children to know something about Moroccan culture as well. And of course it's also an important opportunity to see my family in Morocco, and to 'taste' a bit of my own culture.”*

Fatima (Netherlands; before): *“It's very important to me. After all I am a Moroccan. I have relatives living there and no matter how you twist or turn it around, I will always be a Moroccan. I think it's also important for my future children, that they do not forget about their roots. It's like a Spaniard who returns to Spain or an American who returns to America every year and who says: this is where I come from, this is where my ancestors come from, this is my origin.”*

Sanna (Morocco; during): *“For me it’s really important. Here, I can just feel like a Moroccan, like one of them, while in the Netherlands I feel always kind of singled out the Moroccan. And also concerning my religion, here it is no big deal, I can just practise it without any problems.”*

Chaimae (Morocco; during): *“It’s very important to me. At first my mother told me that we wouldn’t go this year. I felt very sad about that. That was really strange, because at first I did not really feel like I had to go to Morocco every year. But now, it’s really important, not just because of my relatives here [in Morocco], but also to enjoy the ambience. I don’t exactly know what it is, but there is a certain ambience here, a really nice ambience and you can only experience it once a year, or once very other year. And when you get to hear that you will not go, that’s really disappointing.”*

Souelha (Morocco; during): *“This holiday is important to me because I can see my Moroccan relatives and it’s really nice here. We have good neighbours, and of course the weather is really good here.”*

Saliha (Morocco; before): *“I think it’s really important. If I stay in the Netherlands for too long, it really breaks me down. When you go to Morocco and after the holiday you come back to the Netherlands, it’s like you’ve recharged. That’s what it feels like. It’s like you go there, and you can leave everything behind. When you come back, you can face your problems and worries again.”*

What becomes clear from the quotes mentioned above is that to almost all respondents the holidays to Morocco are very important, but they have different reasons for it. What holds for all of the respondents is that the holiday is important to them because it provides an opportunity to enhance the relationships with their Moroccan relatives. Many respondents stated that they also highly valued good relationships with family members in their daily lives. The maintenance of good relationships with your relatives (even distant ones) is an important value in Moroccan culture.

A second reason that is revealed by the quotes presented above, is that many respondents think the holiday is very important to them, because it provides them with an opportunity to know more about their ‘country of origin’. This is not only important because they get a better understanding of where they come from and what it means to be a Moroccan, but it also makes them better able to ‘transfer’ the Moroccan roots on to their future children. It is an interesting fact that many respondents have already thought about what Morocco will mean, or at least what they would like it to mean to their (future) children. Most respondents also realize that Morocco will become less and less important to future generations. Nevertheless, many respondents are determined to teach their future children about Morocco and to continue the regular holidays to Morocco.

A third reason is identified in the quotes of Sanna and Saliha, although they express it in a different way. Sanna talks about the possibility of being *just a Moroccan*, like everyone else, instead of feeling like *the Moroccan*, which is the case for her in the Netherlands. Saliha talks about recharging and feeling like you can face your everyday problems again. Both motivations have to do with ‘escaping’ from a certain situation. This is a well-known motivation in tourism studies (see theoretical framework), which also holds for many tourists who do not travel to a certain country of origin. However, for Sanna and Saliha, and maybe for other Dutch-Moroccan youngsters who would give this reason, it has an extra

dimension. If your only motivation is to escape from work and your social obligations, then in theory, it does not really matter where your holiday takes place: as long as the weather is nice and you do not accidentally run into your neighbours, you can relax and recharge anywhere you like. However, for Sanna and Saliha, the holiday to Morocco is also an escape from Dutch society, in which they sometimes feel stigmatized and singled out as Moroccans. The holiday to Morocco is an escape from the stress of constantly defending their ethnicity as well as their religion, and working twice as hard as non-Moroccans to achieve the same level of appreciation:

Sanna (The Netherlands; after): *"[In Morocco] it feels better when, for example, I wear my headscarf, because in Morocco that is a normal thing to do, while in the Netherlands it is considered as a suppression of women, while I consider my headscarf as a freedom. (...) The Netherlands is where I was born. I live, work and study here. That's all I can say about it, because this [the Netherlands] is not the country where I feel at home. The fact that people have a bad impression of Moroccans and they look at us in a negative and distorted way makes me feel underappreciated."*

Morocco, for respondents such as Saliha, is an opportunity to feel as 'one of them', to feel at home, even though they realize after being there for several weeks that Morocco is not their home either. Thus, Sanna and Saliha cannot just escape to any destination beyond the Netherlands, it is only in Morocco that they can fully relax and recharge.

A fourth reason is identified by Chaimae and is supported by other respondents of this research, but who are not quoted above. Chaimae talks about enjoying the ambience in Morocco that she considers very special and particular. She says that it is something you can only experience once a year, or once every other year, when you go on a holiday to Morocco. Some respondents have also indicated that they sometimes thought about going to another holiday destination during summer, but in the end they always decide to go to Morocco, because they do not want to miss out on that ambience.

There were two respondents who did not attach so much importance to the holiday to Morocco. One of them was Fatiha, who also claimed that she did not attach so much importance to her Moroccan background in her daily life. Fatiha said the following about her feelings towards the holidays to Morocco:

"I have a big family, with 12 brothers and sisters, and normally it's like this: in the Netherlands everyone eats together at 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening. But in my family, everyone just came in and out and ate when it was convenient for him or her. So we never ate together as a family. But on a holiday, you suddenly all eat together and you create some kind of family feeling."

Fatiha is the only respondent that has decided not to go to Morocco every year anymore. Her elder brothers and sisters all got married and now go with their own children. A few years ago, her father died and since then she does not feel the need to go to Morocco anymore. She argued that her father was the person who could hold the entire family together, but now that he is gone, she feels that her family members just all go their own ways. The main reason why she liked the holidays was that this family feeling was created, when the whole family did things together. Now that the whole family does not go on a holiday together anymore, she prefers to go to other countries, to get to know other places

in the world. For her, Morocco is not a necessary holiday destination during the summer, like it is for some other respondents. This also became clear when I asked her how important the holiday was to her⁹. In this question, I was actually referring to the holidays to Morocco, but Fatiha answered as follows:

“For me it’s really important. It is a moment in which you can just relax. Sometimes I also organize weekend trips to France or somewhere else. From time to time, you have to escape from the Netherlands”

Where other respondents would answer this question in reference to their holidays to Morocco, Fatiha interpreted the question as referring to holidays in general. To me this furthermore showed that the holiday to Morocco was not important to her, and it contributed to the idea that I got from her that she was one of the respondents that hardly self-identified as Moroccan and that did not attach importance to her Moroccan background in her daily life.

6.2 Activities employed during the holiday

For most of the respondents, the main activity during the holiday in Morocco is visiting their Moroccan relatives, especially during the first part of the holiday. Upon arrival, they are often given a warm welcome by their Moroccan relatives and even though they have had a long trip, there will only be time for resting after all the relatives have been greeted and talked to. During my stay with Youssef and his sisters, I noticed that they also often face ‘social dilemmas’. It often happens that they are invited by two or more relatives at the same time. Since it is rude not to accept an invitation, this brings a lot of problems and sometimes also stress upon the Dutch-Moroccans. It often happened that Youssef and his sisters had breakfast or another meal twice, because they were invited by two different family members for this occasion. For many respondents, it is not uncommon to have weddings during their holidays. Many of their Moroccan relatives plan their weddings during the summer holidays, so that the relatives who live outside of Morocco can also be a part of it. Sometimes Dutch-Moroccan couples also decide to marry in Morocco during the summer holiday, so that their Moroccan relatives can also attend the wedding.

Another major activity during the summer holidays is going to the beach. Many respondents stayed in cities or villages along the Mediterranean coast. The mornings and evenings were often reserved for visiting or doing things with Moroccan relatives and friends, while the afternoons were often spent on the beach. During the heat of the day, the beach is a nice location to cool off a bit by swimming in the sea, but also just to feel the cool sea breeze on your face. The last days of the holidays are often dedicated to shopping for some typically Moroccan things which you cannot get or which are of a poorer quality in the Netherlands. These things are mostly clothes, like the traditional ‘djellaba’s’¹⁰, or some

⁹ The question that I asked, also to other respondents was ‘How important is this holiday to you?’. The question was part of a list of questions about the holiday to Morocco. Therefore, most respondents were also referring only to the holiday to Morocco when answering this question, except for Fatiha.

¹⁰ A djellaba is a traditional robe with long sleeves and sometimes a hood, which is worn by both men and women in many Arabic countries. Some of the respondents liked to wear it all the time in Morocco, because it was an airy type of clothing which was very suitable for the hot weather.

headscarves. Sometimes also foodstuff was bought, especially some herbs which were hard to get or very expensive in the Netherlands, like Saffron.

As already stated in the introduction of this chapter: the majority of the respondents did not travel around during the holiday, and only stayed where their Moroccan relatives lived. In general, those respondents that came to Morocco with a group of friends instead of relatives, were more inclined to travel to different places during their holiday. The fact that the majority of the respondents did not travel around might be related to the main motivations for them to go on a holiday to Morocco. The most important motive is to visit their Moroccan relatives. If these relatives all live in one place, then it is not necessary to travel around the country. A second important motivation was to get to know one's country of origin. This motivation could require some travelling around, since Morocco is a diverse country which will only be revealed if one visits different places. However, the majority of the respondents travel to Morocco together with their parents. Their parents often do not feel the need to travel around: they have come to Morocco to see their parents, brothers and sisters. It is not common for the respondents to travel independently, if they have come to Morocco with their parents. The third and fourth motivation identified in the previous paragraph do not require the respondents to travel around either. To fulfil the 'escape'-motivation, it simply requires travelling from the Netherlands to Morocco. Once in Morocco, they have escaped from their everyday lives in the Netherlands. Furthermore, it does not really matter where they are in Morocco, to experience the specific Moroccan ambience. Although this ambience might be a bit obscured in places like Al Hoceima and Tangier, because of the presence of so many European tourists during the summer, most of the respondents argued that they also feel the Moroccan ambience there.

Most of the respondents, besides visiting their Moroccan relatives, did not hang around with Moroccans a lot. They preferred to go to the beach or to walk down the boulevard with fellow Dutch-Moroccans. I also observed this during my stay in Morocco. At night, I would stroll along the boulevards of the Mediterranean cities, looking for potential respondents. The youngsters that I approached were often strolling along the boulevard with their brothers and sisters, or with Dutch-Moroccan friends. There is often a language as well as a cultural barrier between Dutch-Moroccan youngsters and their Moroccan counterparts. Therefore, most Dutch-Moroccan youngsters prefer to hang around with other Dutch-Moroccan youngsters because they feel like they have more in common. Only a few of the respondents stated that they preferred to hang out with Moroccan relatives or friends. Saliha was one of them, and she stated that she really liked to help out her cousins with work that had to be done on the land, or with getting water. She liked to 'immerse' herself into the true Moroccan life, by participating in the activities of her Moroccan relatives. Also Chaimae stated that she really liked to hang out with her Moroccan cousin, who was about the same age. Both Saliha and Chaimae have a good knowledge of the Moroccan language, so they do not face the language barrier that other Dutch-Moroccan youngsters might have and which holds them back from hanging around with their Moroccan relatives. Although both Saliha and Chaimae are aware of some cultural differences between them and their Moroccan relatives, they do not experience these as barriers. Instead, they are very interested in understanding these differences.

6.3 Experiences

Respondents were asked to explain as best as they could how they experienced the holidays to Morocco. They were asked to describe how or what they felt when they were in Morocco, how they felt in the weeks before going on the holiday and how they reflected on their holiday afterwards. They were also asked to compare a holiday to Morocco with a holiday to another country, in terms of experiences.

6.3.1 *“Summertime, and the living is easy”*

Below are some quotes of respondents, stating how they experienced a holiday in Morocco. Again, between brackets, the location and the time of the interview from which the quote was extracted, is mentioned:

Chaimae (the Netherlands; after): *“What I mainly felt was that everyone respects each other. Everyone knows each other, it is a very nice atmosphere. It’s like you’re at home all day. The feeling that you get when you are at home, you feel free, at ease. And when you are outside there, on the street, you still feel the same, you know what I mean? And you can only experience this once a year”.*

Abdul (Morocco; during): *“It’s kind of nice, it’s just that Morocco is a country that, how shall I say it, it’s maybe a bit boring to stay at the same location every day. But I like it, it’s nice for a change. After a year of hard work or studying you definitely need it.*

Fatiha (the Netherlands; before): *“The first days after arrival, it’s a lot of family coming over. You are also very aware of the different smells and the rhythm. When you are in Morocco, it’s like you get up refreshed everyday, no back aches or whatever. It’s long days. During the day, you sleep mostly, some kind of siesta after lunch. At night, all the activity starts. Here in the Netherlands, everything closes at 6 o’clock in the evening, but in Morocco, it’s just never-ending. Everything continues until the next morning.”*

Saliha (the Netherlands; before): *“It’s always really nice, I don’t really know how to describe it. It’s very different from the Netherlands, with the mosques and the muezzins calling for prayer. You don’t have that in the Netherlands, and that’s why I like it so much in Morocco. Everything is more beautiful in Morocco, also the nature, the landscapes. In Morocco it’s very small things you appreciate, while you would not even turn your head for those same things in the Netherlands.”*

Salima (Morocco; during): *“It feels really great. The feeling that you have missed: your family, the beach the ambience. (..) You are among the Moroccans, actually. In the Netherlands, you are always the Moroccan, and here you are just a Moroccan. And the religion, you have no problems here, so to say. Everything is perfect here”.*

Souelha (Morocco; during): *“The first couple of days I wanted to go back to the Netherlands. I missed it, my friends and everything.”*

Many respondents refer to the ambience, a certain 'vibe' they feel or a feeling they have when they are in Morocco, and which they experience as very pleasant. For many respondents, it was very hard to explain to me what they actually meant with this ambience or vibe. They said that it was just something they felt, and they probably felt it because they are of Moroccan descent and have a Moroccan background. Chaimae eventually explained the ambience she experienced as 'feeling at home'. She said that she feels more at home during a holiday in Morocco than when she is actually 'at home' in the Netherlands. Some respondents have also indicated that they really liked that they could practice their religion in a more natural way, without worrying that they are considered as a religious extremist because they pray five times a day. In Morocco, as many respondents have indicated, being and feeling like a Moroccan is something positive which does not have to be defended or justified or explained all the time, like in the Netherlands.

Some respondents have also said that a holiday to Morocco is rather hectic, because of all the social obligations. Even though they love to see their Moroccan relatives, the trip to Morocco is also supposed to be a holiday, from which you should return refreshed and totally relaxed, ready for another year of work or study. Some respondents have indicated that it was difficult for them to relax in Morocco because they always had something to do or someone to visit. However, such social obligations were not considered as so stressful that they could not look forward to the holiday. Visiting their Moroccan relatives does not feel as an obligation all the time. Of course, they also like to see their grandparents, aunts, uncles, nephews and cousins and have a good time with them.

Throughout the interviews, it became clear that many respondents consider the car trip from the Netherlands to Morocco as an important aspect of the holiday. Although the amount of respondents that comes to Morocco by car was almost equal to the amount of respondents that go by plane, most of the respondents preferred to go to Morocco by car. They argued that if you go by car, you get into that 'Moroccan holiday mood' more gradually and already before you have even arrived yet. The further you get along the road, the more you share that road with fellow Moroccans from the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Spain, who all go to Morocco to visit relatives and enjoy that special Moroccan atmosphere:

Saliha (the Netherlands; before): *"When you are in France or whatever, you meet other Moroccans on the parking lots. Not just Moroccans from the Netherlands but also from Belgium and other countries. And then you think: 'hey, they're all going too'."*

Asmae (the Netherlands; before): *"You are stuffed in the car with your brothers and sisters, and when you get out for a break, it's really nice. You go picnicking and you meet other people [Moroccans] from the Netherlands and from Belgium and other countries as well. It's really nice."*

6.3.2 Holidays to other countries

In order to get a better idea of why and how the respondents thought a holiday to Morocco was different than a holiday to another country, they were asked about holidays to other countries and how they experienced these. Most of the respondents have also been on holidays to other countries. The majority of the respondents has visited only some countries within Europe. Comparing those holidays with the holidays to Morocco, respondents said the following:

Asmae (the Netherlands; before): *“I’ve been to Spain, France, Germany and Belgium. Those countries are just like the Netherlands, in Europe it’s all the same to me. It does not really feel like a holiday because you stay in just one place and you do just one thing. In Morocco, you go everywhere and you meet relatives, you go to the beach or to the park, and it’s different everywhere.”*

Saliha (the Netherlands; before): *“I’ve been to France and Spain, because I have relatives there as well. But I think it’s quite the same as the Netherlands, you only hear the people speaking a different language. Going to Morocco for two weeks is very different from going to another country.”*

Souad (Morocco; during): *“I’ve been on weekends to Germany, Spain, France and other countries. I liked those trips too but they are more relaxing and it is really meant to chill out. Morocco is more like, you are busy all day: you go to the beach or to town, visit relatives, you are constantly busy. At the end of the holiday you notice that you are in need of some rest, but of course it’s all fun.”*

Sanna (Morocco; during): *“I’ve been to France during Christmas holiday, but that did not really feel like a holiday. I don’t know why, maybe it’s because here [in Morocco] you just know where you are, you feel more comfortable.”*

It is clear that the majority of the respondents prefer a holiday to Morocco because there, they have the feeling that they are really away from the Netherlands, that they are really on a holiday. Elsewhere in Europe, many respondents feel that they are still in the Netherlands, because the cultures are so much alike. However, Souad states that a holiday to another country than Morocco feels more like a holiday, because she is better able to relax. Souad is one of the respondents who argued that a holiday to Morocco can be quite stressful because of all the social obligations. It is then quite logical that a holiday to another country is more like a holiday to her. Souad’s opinion is partly shared by Fatiha. Fatiha does not like a holiday to another country in Europe very much, because, like other respondents, she thinks that those countries resemble the Netherlands too much. However, she has thought about going on a holiday to countries outside of Europe and about such holidays, she states the following:

Fatiha (the Netherlands; before): *“I think that a holiday to Thailand is different than a holiday to Morocco, because in Thailand you can just do your thing. In Morocco, you have to stick to the rules that prevail there, but in Thailand that would be different. I think you will also see more and meet a different kind of people. I mean, in the Netherlands, we already live among the Moroccans, we already have perceptions about the Moroccans in Morocco. When you go to a different country, you will also meet a different kind of people.”*

In this quote, Fatiha sketches the typical tourist behaviour which she would like to perform during a holiday, but which she states she cannot perform in Morocco. Within tourism studies, it is a well-known fact that tourists often behave slightly different than they do at home. They are often in an environment where nobody knows them, so they do not have to live up to expectations from friends, relatives, or colleagues. People, when on a holiday,

often do things that they would never do at home. Fatiha states that she would probably experience a holiday to Thailand differently than a holiday to Morocco, because in Morocco she still has to live up to the expectations of her Moroccan relatives. For Fatiha, going to Morocco does not feel like a complete holiday, because she is not totally free from obligations. For most respondents, however, these social obligations are not as such that they do not experience the trip to Morocco as a holiday. The social obligations do not take up the entire holiday, and there is still plenty of room to relax.

6.4 Self-identification during and after a holiday in Morocco

Respondents were asked to describe the bond they feel with Morocco. They were asked how they felt during the first days of their holiday in Morocco, as well as how they felt the first days or weeks after returning from the holiday.

For many respondents, the holiday seems to be an important period in which social and cultural ties with Morocco are evaluated. It seems to be an important period for the respondents to assess whether the bonds with Morocco, which they feel or which they are imagining in the Netherlands are real and 'correct'. Are they really as Moroccan as they think or feel they are? Is living in Morocco for an extensive period a real option or was it nicer to imagine that while being in the Netherlands? Those are some questions which the respondents seem to ask themselves around the holiday to Morocco. Many respondents have stated that, when they are in Morocco, they do not feel or consider themselves as Moroccan as they feel and consider themselves when they are in the Netherlands.

Saliha (the Netherlands; before): *"When you are in Morocco, you feel kind of Dutch."*

The respondents seem to evaluate their character and behaviour against that of their Moroccan relatives and other Moroccans and they realize that they are not so much alike. They realize that they have more Dutch characteristics than they thought. Here, again, identification by others also plays a role. Many respondents have indicated that they are not considered as fully Moroccan by their Moroccan relatives and friends. These relatives and friends point to the fact that they have been born and raised in the Netherlands, which significantly distinguishes them in character from the Moroccans. Many respondents have indicated that this is also a reason why they do not feel 100% Moroccan. The fact that the respondents do not self-identify very strongly with their Moroccan relatives also becomes clear when one looks at who it is that they hang out with during the holiday in Morocco. As already mentioned earlier, it is mainly Dutch-Moroccan youngsters that hang out with each other, than Dutch-Moroccan youngsters hanging out with Moroccan relatives or friends. This is not only because of the language barrier that many of the respondents often experience between them and their Moroccan relatives, but they also feel more comfortable hanging out with fellow Dutch-Moroccans, because they share the same values and interests. Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify more with each other than with Moroccan relatives and friends. This is partly due to the fact that they were brought up in the same society and thus they share more of the same values and worldviews. During a holiday in Morocco, many of the respondents realize that their lives differ too much from that of their Moroccan counterparts. Thus, as much as they like to be in Morocco for a holiday, most respondents realize that their future is not in this country:

Youssef (the Netherlands; before): *“When you get older, you will see more often that, what I remember from the holidays lately is that it is fun and all but you increasingly look at daily life in Morocco too and then you think: I could not live here [Morocco], with the rules they have here. It’s different”*

Souad (Morocco; during): *“I have thought about living in Morocco for a longer while, but I could not do it. I am used to life in the Netherlands, to the Dutch ‘system of life’. Here, they are different and I do not feel like adapting to a new way of life. I really like to come here during the summer holidays, but I could not live here for a longer period.”*

By realizing this, it is not only the bonds with Morocco that the respondents become more aware of. Many respondents evaluate their bonds with Morocco against the connection they feel with the Netherlands and it is here where an answer to the important question ‘where do I belong?’ is being sought. Many respondents seem to come to realize that the bond with the Netherlands is stronger than they imagined it to be, while being in the Netherlands:

Abdul (Morocco; during): *“Being here on a holiday tells you something about life and how you can deal with it as a personality. In a country like the Netherlands, you can broaden yourself, your horizon. You can determine your future according to your own guidelines. Here [Morocco] you don’t have that. You can study as much as you can here, but whether it reaps benefits is still the question”.*

6.5 Conclusion

In the theoretical framework, several possible reasons for immigrants undertaking VFR tourism were introduced, which in short were: (re) establish social ties with relatives ‘back home’; (re-)affirming one’s (ethnic) identity; (re-)connect with home country’s culture; relaxation; and ‘escapism’. These motives were introduced by Duval (2003).¹¹ It was argued that most of the motives would hold for the children of immigrants as well. Indeed, in this chapter, several of the above-mentioned motives were identified during the research.

In general, the respondents indicate that the holiday to Morocco is very important to them. First of all, the holiday is important for visiting Moroccan relatives. This motive relates to the first motive identified by Duval (2003), which is the (re) establishment of social ties with relatives who still live in the home country. Secondly, the holiday provides the respondents with an opportunity to learn more about Moroccan culture and how this culture is a part of their own background. In this motive, both Duval’s (2003) motives of the (re-)affirmation of one’s (ethnic) identity as well as the (re-)connection with the home country’s culture are incorporated. Thirdly, the holiday is a means to escape from their daily lives in the Netherlands. What is important here is that it is not just an escape from the stress of work or study, which relates to Duval’s (2003) motive or ‘relaxation’, but also the frustration of stigmatization and discrimination of Moroccans in general, which hurts many respondents personally. A holiday to Morocco provides them with an opportunity to be just *a* Moroccan instead of *the* Moroccan. This is exactly what Duval (2003) means by the term ‘escapism’.

¹¹ A detailed description of these motives can be found in the theoretical framework, paragraph 3.2

In Morocco, the respondents dedicate a lot of their time to visiting relatives. Family is very important in Moroccan culture and many respondents indicate that they feel a close bond with their relatives in Morocco. Besides visiting relatives, the respondents spend a lot of time with fellow Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, with whom they go to the beach during the day and stroll on the boulevard at night. Dutch-Moroccan youngsters often face a language barrier as well as cultural barrier when they want to interact with their Moroccan counterparts. Therefore, they prefer to hang out with people with whom they share a more similar background and the same language.

In general, the holidays to Morocco are experienced as very pleasant. Only a few respondents indicate that they experience the holiday as rather stressful, because of the social obligations towards their Moroccan relatives. The respondents enjoy the Moroccan ambience, weather, parties, food and the omnipresence of their religion. Many respondents consider the car trip from the Netherlands to Morocco as an important aspect of the holiday. They argue that they can get into the holiday mood more gradually than if they would go by plane, and along the road they meet many other Moroccans from other European countries, who all go to Morocco for the same purpose. All of the respondents agree that a holiday to Morocco is very different from a holiday to another country. Most of the respondents have been on a holiday to one or more European countries, and they often argue that these trips do not feel like a holiday, because those countries resemble the Netherlands too much. Only a few respondents argue that in comparison to a holiday somewhere in Europe, going to Morocco does not feel like a holiday, because of the social obligations that are attached to it.

When it comes to self-identification, the holidays to Morocco seem to have an influence on the way in which the respondents self-identify. They seem to reflect a lot on their social and cultural ties with Morocco and what their Moroccan background actually means to them. Many respondents seem to come to realize through the holidays to Morocco, that they are not as Moroccan as they may consider themselves to be in the Netherlands. They are often not considered as Moroccans by their relatives, which implies that also during the holiday in Morocco, processes of identification by others influences the process of self-identification of the respondents. According to many respondents, it is because they are not identified by their Moroccan relatives as Moroccan, that they cannot self-identify as such.

Besides this 'lack of identification' by their Moroccan relatives, there are also certain aspects of Moroccan culture that the respondents do not self-identify with. Many respondents have thought about living in Morocco for an extensive period, but through the holidays they realize that they are used to a kind of life that is too different from that in Morocco. Through the holidays to Morocco, some respondents not only come to realize that their emotional and cultural bonds with Morocco are less strong as they might have imagined, they also realize that they are more attached to the Netherlands than they would have thought.

In the theoretical framework of this thesis, it was argued that the migrants, when visiting their original homeland, are often not considered as fellow citizens anymore because of their upgraded socio-economic status and the slight changes in appearance (Strijp 2007; Stephenson 2002). This lack of recognition might be a shocking and confusing experience to migrants. They do not understand anymore where they belong and where they feel most at home. It is important to note here that in general, lack of identification as Moroccan by their Moroccan relatives did not result in any kind of 'identity crisis' among the respondents. Going to Morocco and realizing that you are maybe not as Moroccan as you thought, is all

part of a bigger process of trying to find your true self: who you are and what you stand for. Many of the respondents indicate that Morocco is an important part of their background, but that does not mean that it encompasses their entire identity. Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, when realizing that they are less Moroccan or more Dutch than they thought they were, do not feel lost, or betrayed. This discovery just brings them a step closer to finding out who they are, and maybe also where they belong.

7 Conclusion

This thesis is the result of an exploratory and qualitative research that was meant to reveal how, to what extent and for what reasons Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with their parents' country of origin in their everyday lives and during a holiday in Morocco. Through semi-structured interviews and participant observation, a light was shed on the ways and moments in which the respondents self-identified as Moroccans or with Morocco, but also on the moments in which they did not self-identify as such. Concepts and theories on transnationalism, VFR tourism and (ethnic) identity added theoretical content to this thesis and lifted the data analysis to an academic level.

In the previous two chapters, the results of this thesis were presented. For the sake of clarity, the conclusions of these previous chapters will be briefly repeated below. Then, it is time to come to a final conclusion and answer the two main research questions of this thesis. In the final paragraph of this chapter, some discussion points will be addressed and some recommendations for future research on this subject will be put forward.

7.1 Identity

In chapter 5, the first set of specific research questions was answered, which revolved around the process of self-identification of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters. The chapter focused on how, for what reasons and to what extent Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identified as Moroccans or with Morocco, and what role their Moroccan identity played in their everyday lives.

7.1.1 *Self-identification and identification*

An important finding from this chapter was that the way in which the respondents self-identified seemed to be largely influenced by the way in which they were identified by the Dutch society at large. The respondents, when asked why they self-identify as a Moroccan, often argued that they do so because other people will always think of them as a Moroccan, whether they self-identify as such or not. Furthermore, it is especially in situations where their Moroccan ethnicity is approached, mostly in a negative way, that they become more aware of their Moroccan identity and when they also attach more importance to this identity. Thereby, Verkuyten's (1999) theory seems to be supported by this thesis. He also argued that self-identification is largely influenced by the way in which a person is perceived by the larger society and that there is no 'escape' from these identifications done by society. Another important motivation for the respondents to self-identify as a Moroccan was the fact that their parents were born and raised in Morocco, and that they have had a 'Moroccan' upbringing.

This research has furthermore revealed that, for the respondents, self-identification as a Moroccan is not the same as self-identification with Morocco. All of the respondents self-identified as a Moroccan, although to different extents. However, many respondents argued that they did not feel very 'connected' with Moroccans living in Morocco and that they do not like the rules and customs of the country. Thus, when the respondents self-

identified as Moroccan, this did not mean that they self-identified with Moroccan culture or with Moroccans living in Morocco.

7.1.2 Identities are partial and situational

Throughout the interviews, respondents seemed very contradictory about their self-identification as a Moroccan. At one moment they would self-identify very strongly as a Moroccan and argue that Morocco meant a lot to them, while at another moment they would argue that Morocco or Moroccan culture was not important to them at all. Verkuyten's theory of situational identities (1999) provided an explanation for this ambiguity, in that an individual's identity consists of several 'partial identities' which become salient in different situations. Thus, besides Dutch-Moroccan, respondents are also male, female, student, employee, feminist, Muslim, ICT specialist, soccer player, and so on. All these different partial identities become salient in different situations. According to many respondents, their Moroccan identity becomes salient when others point to it, while their Dutch identity seems to become salient when their Moroccan relatives identify them as Dutch.

7.1.3 Ethnic identity and cultural orientation

Looking at the respondents' everyday lives revealed the extent to which they were culturally oriented towards Morocco. According to Tsai *et al.* (2002), cultural orientation is something that people are often not aware of, but which tells something about the importance of their ethnic identity as part of their whole identity as well as the role it plays in their everyday lives. Furthermore, ethnic identity is something that people generally refer consciously to, while cultural orientation is something that is implicit in their activities and thoughts (Tsai *et al.* 2002). The results of this research also seem to indicate that there is a difference between ethnic identity and cultural orientation. The respondents explicitly self-identified as (partly) Moroccan and they could give reasons for it. However, when asked whether they saw their ethnic identity reflected in their daily activities, the answer was often 'no'. Only when indirect questions were asked, or specific categories of activities were mentioned, the respondents named activities and thoughts in which the influence of their Moroccan ethnic identity and background was clearly reflected.

7.1.4 Belonging to a hybrid Dutch-Moroccan culture?

Although in differing degrees, all respondents self-identified as Moroccan. However, when describing and explaining who they are, they also often referred to the Netherlands. After all, most of the respondents were born, and all of the respondents were raised in the Netherlands. For many respondents it was impossible to give an 'either, or' answer to the question 'where do I belong?'. They felt comfortable with Moroccan as well as with Dutch culture and therefore moving back and forth between these two countries, when talking about who they are and where they feel most at home. Most of the respondents preferred a mixture of Moroccan and Dutch cultural characteristics. They argued that they did not have the feeling at all that they were living in some sort of 'cultural vacuum', where they stand in-between Moroccan and Dutch culture. Most of the respondents were not bothered at all by the fact that they have two cultural backgrounds. They share this background with fellow

Dutch-Moroccans and together, they seem to create a new 'hybrid' Dutch-Moroccan culture. The often discussed theory that immigrants and their children often stand in-between two cultures and that they feel that they have to choose between one or the other (Anthias 2002), does not seem to hold for the respondents of this research.

7.1.5 Belonging to a transnational Moroccan community?

Besides the holiday to Morocco, the respondents also employed activities in their daily lives which connected them with their relatives in Morocco, as well as with relatives living in countries across Europe. Most of the respondents had regular contact with these relatives through MSN. Some respondents also visited relatives who were living in countries across Europe. Such activities can be classified as transnational (Portes 2003). The results support the idea that improved communication transportation technologies facilitate the establishment and maintenance of transnational social ties (Faist 2000; Portes 1999; Basch *et al.* 1997), such as those between the respondents and their Moroccan relatives. Some respondents have argued that, if it was not for the Internet, they probably would not have regular contact with their Moroccan relatives besides the holidays.

Transnational activities were however limited to the family. The respondents did not feel that they were part of some transnational Moroccan community nor did they employ activities that connected them to such a community. Maintaining social and cultural ties with Morocco was thus mainly done through the maintenance of social ties with relatives.

7.2 Holidays

In chapter 8, the second set of specific research questions was addressed, which revolved around the holidays of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters to Morocco and how such holidays influence the way in which the respondents describe themselves and their bond with Morocco. The chapter focused on why the respondents thought this holiday was important, how they experienced this holiday, and how they talked about themselves and their bond with Morocco around such a holiday.

7.2.1 The importance of a holiday to Morocco

For most of the respondents, the holiday to Morocco was very important. All of the respondents have relatives living in Morocco, and this is the main reason to go there on a holiday. The family is a central element in Moroccan culture, and it is important to invest in the maintenance of social ties with your relatives. For many respondents, the holiday is also an opportunity to learn more about their Moroccan background and how this influences their Moroccan ethnic identity. Another important reason why this holiday is important and which many respondents mentioned was the opportunity to escape from their everyday lives, that the holiday to Morocco provided. This is a well-known motive within tourism studies in general. However, for the respondents it had an additional element. The holiday to Morocco was not only an opportunity to escape from work, study and/or social obligations towards the people they meet in their everyday lives, but also from the ongoing prejudices and discrimination against Dutch-Moroccans in the Dutch society. Many respondents have argued that the holiday to Morocco provides them with an opportunity to

feel like 'one of them' or just *a Moroccan*, instead of being singled out as *the Moroccan* in the Netherlands. Therefore, it was also essential for many respondents that the destination of their holidays is Morocco. The reasons that the respondents gave for the importance they attach to the holiday to Morocco largely reflect those reasons identified by Duval (2003), regarding motivations for migrants to undertake 'return visits' to their original homeland.

7.2.2 Experiences

In general, the holidays to Morocco are positively experienced by the respondents. Only a few respondents argued that the holidays also bring stress to a certain extent. This stress experience refers to the social obligations that have to be met during the holidays: respondents often face social dilemmas concerning which relative to visit first, or which invitation to kindly reject, because they were already invited by someone else. Nevertheless, these social obligations are not as such that it is something which respondents worry about before they go on a holiday to Morocco. Visiting relatives is something that most of the respondents look forward to very much. The respondents like the ambience, the weather, the (wedding) parties and the food when they are on a holiday in Morocco. Most of the respondents cannot imagine missing out on that special ambience that they experience when they are in Morocco. This ambience, together with the presence of their Moroccan relatives, makes a holiday to Morocco so different from a holiday to another country.

7.2.3 Self-identification

The holiday and the weeks before and after it, seemed to be a period in which the respondents reflect a lot on their Moroccan identity and their bond with Morocco. Many respondents seem to come to realize through the holidays to Morocco, that they are not as Moroccan as they may have considered themselves to be while being in the Netherlands. They are often not considered as Moroccans by their relatives, and the respondents do not self-identify very much with Moroccans living in Morocco. Strijp (2007) and Stephenson (2002) already pointed to the fact that migrants are often not considered as fellow citizens anymore in their original homeland, because of their upgraded socio-economic status and their different appearance. They argued that this 'lack of recognition' often comes as a shock to migrants, because they consider themselves as fellow citizens in their original homeland. The results of this research did not indicate that the respondents were shocked by the fact that they are not considered as fellow Moroccans by their Moroccan relatives. For the respondents, it seems rather logical that they are not considered as fellow Moroccans. After all, they were born and raised in the Netherlands.

7.3 Combining the results...

The purpose of this paragraph is to combine the conclusions of the previous two paragraphs and to relate the respondents' experiences of the holidays to Morocco to the ways in which they self-identified in their everyday lives. Do holiday experiences influence the way in which respondents self-identify in their everyday lives? This question is the central focus of this paragraph.

Looking at the previous two paragraphs, both differences and similarities can be found between self-identification during a holiday and self-identification in the everyday life. A striking similarity is that both in the everyday life as well as during the holiday, identifications by others influences the way in which the respondents self-identify. In the Netherlands, many respondents argued that they self-identify as Moroccan because they are often considered as such by the society at large. However, those same respondents also argued that during a holiday in Morocco, they cannot self-identify as fully Moroccan, because they are considered as Dutch by their Moroccan relatives.

The respondents, when self-identifying as Moroccan or not, are thus largely guided by how they are perceived by other people, both in their everyday lives as well as during a holiday in Morocco. However, in their everyday lives, this leads to different outcomes than during a holiday in Morocco. In the Netherlands, the respondents are mainly identified as Moroccan by other people. This is an important motivation for them to self-identify as Moroccan. In the Netherlands, they are also very well aware that they are of Moroccan descent, and that they have therefore a different background than their fellow Dutch citizens. On the other hand, in Morocco, the respondents are identified as Dutch or European and it seems that this makes them look more critical at their self-identification as Moroccan. They seem to come to realize that, just as well as Morocco is an important part of their background and of who they are, so are the Netherlands. When faced with the culture and living conditions in Morocco, it seems that many respondents come to realize that things are not so bad in the Netherlands as they may seem when they work or study there every day. The focus on the Netherlands thus seems to become stronger after a holiday to Morocco.

The fact that self-identification with the Netherlands or as Dutch seems to become stronger during and after a holiday to Morocco, looks like an issue of 'the grass is always greener on the other side'. In the Netherlands, when faced with discrimination and prejudice, life in Morocco might seem so much nicer for the respondents: in Morocco, they are at least 'one of them', instead of being singled out as the Moroccan. However, when actually on a holiday in Morocco, they are confronted with Moroccan daily life and they seem to become more aware of the bright sides of living in the Netherlands: better educational opportunities, a well-functioning social security system, more equality between men and women, and so on. In my opinion, this is a normal thing to do for any individual. In their daily lives, people always find something to complain about – like the weather, or the fact that life moves by so fast - and they can imagine that somewhere else, things are so much better. But when they actually go somewhere else, they realize that life over there is not perfect either. The weather is too hot, or everything goes too slow and chaotic for them. Duval (2003) argued that an important motivation for migrants to make the 'return visit' was to reconnect to their original homeland. However, looking at the results of this research, I think that such a return visit is also an important event for an individual to reconnect to 'home'. Home, for the respondents, is not Morocco or the Netherlands. 'Home' seems to be a combination between their organized lives in the Netherlands, and the Moroccan way of cooking, caring about their relatives, throwing a party and practicing their religion.

7.4 To come to a final conclusion....

Identities are complex constructs, and self-identifications are hard to clarify. The scope of this research has been far too limited to make any generalizations regarding the way in which Dutch-Moroccan youngsters in general self-identify with their parents' country of origin in their everyday lives or during a holiday to Morocco. However, this does not mean that this research has not yielded any results at all regarding the way in which the respondents self-identify. Within the framework of an exploratory and qualitative research, this thesis has been able to shed light on how 14 Dutch-Moroccan youngsters make sense of their Moroccan background and give shape to a Moroccan ethnic identity, as part of who they are as a whole. Their Moroccan ethnicity is something they cannot deny because others will not deny it either, and it thus has to be given a certain place and role in their lives. The holiday to Morocco seems to be an important instrument to help the respondents to position their Moroccan ethnic identity in their everyday lives: where does it have meaning and purpose? For most respondents, their Moroccan ethnic identity had meaning when it was debated upon in the Dutch society, and it had purpose when dreams and plans for the future were developed.

The main research questions focus on how Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with Morocco as a country. Perhaps one of the most important findings of this research is that the respondents did not seem to self-identify with Morocco as a country. Rather, they seemed to self-identify as Moroccans. Thereby, it is not that they self-identify with their Moroccan relatives, or other Moroccan citizens, but rather with fellow Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, with whom they share a common background and face common challenges in the Dutch society. The holidays to Morocco also seem to be an important moment where Dutch-Moroccan youngsters come to realize that it is not Moroccans that they self-identify with, but rather Dutch-Moroccans. Thus, to come to a final conclusion, Dutch-Moroccan youngsters do not self-identify so much with their parents' country of origin. However, this does not mean that Morocco is not important to them. It is still the country where their roots lie, and where they also feel at home to a certain extent. However, the place where they feel most at home and with which they thus self-identify the most does not seem to have a geographical location. It is somewhere between the Netherlands and Morocco, a somewhere which they seem to find among their fellow Dutch-Moroccan friends. With them, they share a common background, rooted in two countries: Morocco *and* the Netherlands.

7.5 Discussion: what is left for further research?

When finishing a research like this, there are always many questions that remain unanswered. Some questions were already there at the beginning of the research, but they could not be answered due to the course that the research had taken. Other questions pop up along the way. Although the questions that remained after finishing this research are manifold, there are three specific issues which I think are very interesting to be further researched.

The first issue is about gender differences, age differences and educational differences regarding the ways in which people self-identify. At the start of the research, I also intended to look at differences between men and women, between different ages as

well as different education levels, regarding the way in which Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with their parents' country of origin. Unfortunately, the amount of respondents, as well as the fact that only three of the respondents were male, has made it impossible to draw any conclusions on possible gender differences, age differences or differences between education levels. However, it would be interesting to see that such factors are considered in further research on immigrant children and the ways in which they self-identify, not only with their parents' country of origin but also with their country of residence and perhaps even with a transnational community.

Another interesting issue for further research would be to compare the ways in which Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify with how other ethnic minority youth in the Netherlands self-identify. How do other ethnic minority youngsters, such as Turks or Surinamese, relate to their parents' country of origin? Do they also maintain close ties with relatives in their parents' country of origin? Do they visit that country often? How do they deal with a multi-cultural background? Those are interesting questions to ask not only to Dutch-Moroccan youngsters, but also to other ethnic minority youngsters. Furthermore, researching another group of ethnic youngsters and the way in which individuals from this group self-identify, might in turn tell us something more about how Dutch-Moroccan youngsters self-identify; especially how they might differ in their self-identification from other youngsters with a multi-cultural background.

The third issue which I would like to recommend as an interesting topic for further research is the possible existence of a Dutch-Moroccan youth community. In this thesis, it is argued that Dutch-Moroccan youngsters seem to feel most 'at home' when they are among fellow Dutch-Moroccan youngsters. This implies that there is a specific Dutch-Moroccan culture in which their multi-cultural background is understood and shared with other people. It would be interesting to research how this Dutch-Moroccan community or culture is defined by its 'members'. How are the boundaries around this community drawn by its members? What are the characteristics of such a community? What are the so-called criteria to 'become' a member? Who is in and who is out? Research on this topic might further reveal something about the life worlds of Dutch-Moroccan youngsters.

The above-mentioned topics are just three issues that remain to be answered by further research. Many more questions can be thought of, which only further emphasize the importance of continued research on immigrant children. The Netherlands is argued to have a multi-cultural society. Through research such as that conducted for this thesis, we might come to a better understanding of what it actually means to be multi-cultural; to be living together with people from various cultural backgrounds and to understand and respect where they come from. Instead of considering a multi-cultural society as a threat or a problem, research on immigrant populations might enable us to be proud of living in such a society.

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Appendix-I: Information on respondents

Naam	Leeftijd	Woonplaats	Hoe leren kennen	Datum Interview(s)	Vertrek naar Marokko	Verblijfplaats Marokko
Abdelmoumen (man)	16	Amsterdam	Tanteinmarokko.nl	15-05-2009	?	Tetouan
Abdul (man)	22	?	MacDonalds in Tanger	18-07-2009	14-07-2009	Tetouan
Mohamed (man)	20	Maastricht	Marokko.nl	Verschillende msn-gesprekken	?	Al Hoceima
Fatima (vrouw)	24	Amsterdam	Marokko.nl	29-05-2009 11-09-2009	1 juli 2009	Tanger/Al Hoceima
Saliha (vrouw)	20	Gouda	Marokko.nl	04-06-2009 24-06-2009 11-09-2009 23-09-2009	Gaat dit jaar niet	Al Hoceima
Salima (vrouw)	18	Soesterberg	Boulevard in Tetouan	14-07-2009	9 juli 2009	Tetouan
Sanna (vrouw)	16	Utrecht	Boulevard in Tetouan	14-07-2009 25-09-2009	9 juli 2009	Tetouan
Selma (vrouw)	16	Woerden	Tanteinmarokko.nl	26-06-2009	Begin juli	Al Hoceima
Chaimae (vrouw)	16	Veenendaal	Via Youssef	13-07-2009 27-08-2009	10 juli 2009	Tetouan/Targuist
Souad (vrouw)	20	Utrecht	Boulevard Tanger (zus van souelha)	15-07-2009 28-09-2009	10 juli 2009	Tanger
Souelha (vrouw)	18	Utrecht	Boulevard Tanger (zusje van souad)	15-07-2009	10 juli 2009	Tanger
Asmae (vrouw)	18	Utrecht	Via Saliha	23-06-2009 23-09-2009	Gaat dit jaar niet	Al Hoceima
Fatiha (vrouw)	23	Rotterdam	Via Saliha	24-06-2009	Gaat dit jaar niet	Fez
Youssef (man)	26	Veenendaal	Via studiegenoot	25-06-2009 02-11-2009	7 juli 2009	Tussen Tanger en Al Hoceima

Appendix-II: List of questions and topics for a specific interview (translated to English)

This question list was for a follow-up interview with a respondent who had been on a holiday to Morocco.

- how was holiday in Morocco, any special activities, experiences?
- how does it feel to be back in the Netherlands?
- Previous interview difficulties to describe the 'special ambience' in Morocco, now that respondent has spent more days in Morocco, ask again about 'special ambience'.
- Previous interview difficulties with describing what was typically Moroccan, ask again.
- Previous interview, she indicated that as a Moroccan she felt obliged to know her country, before she would go anywhere else. When someone in another country would ask her where she was from, what would you say: Morocco or the Netherlands? Or both?
- How would you describe yourself? (Character)
- What do you think is important in life? (education? Norms and values? Family? Religion?)
- Do you consider yourself as an ambitious person (also in comparison with others)?
- Describe the world in which you live & your role in that world.
- What do you like to do in your free time?