Home and Migrant Identity in Dialogical Life Stories of Moroccan and Turkish Dutch

Muslim Minorities

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Home and Migrant Identity in Dialogical Life Stories of Moroccan and Turkish Dutch

By

Femke J. Stock

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To Jasmijn, Noor, Selma, Jakob, Adam, Kaoutar, Youssef, Jonas, Amana, Farah, Aya, Hassan and Nuri; and all the other children born in the course of this project.

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Acknowledgements

Sitting down for a life story interview, I generally use the metaphor of the journey: a life journey through time and space from one's past to the present and towards the future. Such journeys always include many encounters with people that carry the story towards its plot. The same is true for the journey that resulted in this book.

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Introduction

Aziza, a woman of Moroccan descent and working mother of three, tells me about leaving her parental home to get married. Until then she had always felt as if she was living in two parallel worlds: *'I really lived in two cultures.* [*Sometimes*] *you were completely Moroccan, and other times completely Dutch. And so after I went to live alone, with my husband, so when I left home* (...) *you could be both totally Moroccan like you wanted to be, but also totally Dutch like you wanted to be. So you could combine them, and that became your personality. And that is what I am today.* (...) *Once I left home, I suddenly just became a different person.'*

Aziza and I talk for hours about her memories, her dreams, and the various settings within which she lives her life. At another point during one of our two interview sessions, she also speaks about 'being herself', but this time relating to a very different setting, on a larger scale: *'You open the door of the aeroplane, you feel the heat of the sun – I smell Morocco again. This is my country! Here I can just be me.* (...) *And you enter the crowds, all those screaming people, and what have you. Ah, I'm home!* (...) *I don't need to answer to anyone, don't need to explain anything, you can just be completely yourself, with the idea of, here I won't be judged on how I am.* (...) *But still, once I've been there for five weeks, then I start to feel homesick. Then it's nice when we arrive at Schiphol, and we land and we drive here, then I think ha, it feels good to be home again.'*

Aziza is one of the twenty-nine descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants to the Netherlands who agreed to tell me their life story. The two interview excerpts above point at the themes that are central in this book: both quotes address the subjects of 'home' and 'identity'. Aziza talks about leaving her parental home and reminisces how her identity changed as she started her own home with her husband. But she also describes how she gets a sense of coming home upon arriving in Morocco, as well as when returning to the Netherlands a few weeks later.

While in both quotes Aziza refers to 'being herself', she explains this sense of identity in different ways, alluding to different levels of identification: first with reference to the merging of her Dutch and Moroccan sides into one integrated personality, and then, in the second quote, by pointing at the fact that in Morocco she feels accepted, no questions asked. But in each quote, 'being oneself' is related to being in a certain place. Her own house, Morocco and the Netherlands are meaningful places to Aziza, they are home – but they seem to be so primarily because of the specific people or groups inhabiting these places. These short excerpts show how a sense of home is embedded in social

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relationships. They illustrate that the subject of identity and home in the case of migrants' descendants is complex and multifaceted. In this book, this complex subject is explored in the narratives of adult descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants to the Netherlands.

1 Descendants of Migrants, Grown Up and Rooted

In the Netherlands, Moroccan and Turkish migrants and their descendants form a significant population, both because they are the two largest groups of so-called non-western migrants, and because of the massive, largely negative, attention they receive in contemporary public debates, which ties in both with national developments and with trends of global Islamophobia. In these debates, there is a growing stress on loyalty and cultural integration: (descendants of) Moroccan and Turkish migrants are suspected of identifying primarily with Islam and their country of origin, and refusing to make themselves at home in the Netherlands.

The groups have partly overlapping migration histories, and in each the presence of a substantial group of adults who grew up in the Netherlands and are rooted in this country is a relatively recent phenomenon. The question 'where is home?' is often more complex and pressing to those who 'inherited' migration than to those who lived it. This study focuses on this growing cohort of adult descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants, aged 25 and up. Many of the numerous studies which have been conducted regarding these migrant groups so far have focused either on the 'first generation' of original migrants, or on their adolescent or young adult offspring. In consonance with public and political emphases, particular attention has been paid to women on the one hand and, on the other, to individuals seen as 'deviant' (be it because of criminal behaviour or because of religious zeal deemed dangerous).

In this setting, and against the background of a hardening public discourse regarding migration, migrants and Islam, it is of particular importance to give a voice to the invisible majority of those who do not stand out – be it for exceptional achievements or for problematic behaviour – but who are, in everyday parlance, all too easily identified with those who attract most negative attention. In this study, it has been my aim to find out more about members of this invisible majority and their own perspective on questions of identity and home; to find out how the public scrutiny and discursive exclusion resonate in their stories, *and* what other things occupy their minds besides the overstated issues to which they are all too often reduced. For this, a life story approach and the concept of home are particularly suited. The specificity of the particular

research group has a prominent place in this work, yet it is not only (or even primarily) a book 'about' Moroccan and Turkish Dutch.

2 Dialogical Narratives on Home and Identity

Theories of 'narrative identity', which inform this work, state that individuals formulate provisional answers to the question of identity, 'who am I?' by articulating biographic narratives. People bring together their self-understandings in stories about how through their pasts they have become who they are at present, and how this relates to their orientations regarding the future. This makes (life) narratives a key tool in the study of identity. In this research, such narratives were generated in life story interviews and in-depth follow-up interviews. To address the subject of identity with reference to the specific group I am interested in, and to contribute to our understanding of narrative identity processes in diasporic settings in general, I particularly look at stories about home, which draw attention to the spatial and social embeddedness of personal identity.

I employ the notion of 'home' as a perspective to gain deeper insights in the identity processes of descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants, whom I interviewed both in the Netherlands and, whenever possible, during summer stays in Morocco and Turkey. In narratives on home, they speak about how they see themselves, in relation to the various groups and places which play a role in their life stories, and which they see as formative for how they have become who they are now. The concept of 'home' derives much of its power as a conceptual tool from the fact that it is also an emic notion. It often entails a tension between its strong associations of self-evident singular belonging on the one hand and the actual multiplicity and ambivalence of possible sites of home on the other, especially in a post-migration context.

'Home' is a powerful experience-near concept, thick with layers of emic meaning, yet flexible as an analytical tool. It offers a particularly open and non-essentialist view on questions of (migrant) identity. Rather than explaining away ambivalences, home allows us to see these as inherent in the experiences and words of those under study. In the anthropological employment of 'home', its bearing on questions of identity is frequently mentioned, but little elaborated on. In this study, identity as a subtext of home is actualised, more or less explicitly, throughout my analysis of my informants' narratives. The concept of home is enriched by studying it with the use of life stories, and by connecting it to a more substantive reading of identity, borrowed from psychological theories of narrative identity and the dialogical self.

It is no coincidence that I began this book with two interview quotes, rather than with one. The idea of the self as multivoiced and dialogically constructed is a fundamental point of departure for my approach to the subject of migrant identity through home. In the two quotes, similar themes are addressed from different angles and with different emphases. In the stories individual descendants of migrants tell about how the subject of identity and home figures in their lives, each person speaks with several different voices, which tell their story from a variety of positions. Departing from the idea of a dialogical self, one single perspective, one single quote, is never enough.

Since people speak about their lives from a multiplicity of dialogically interacting positions, this has implications for the ways we can study their subjective lifeworlds. I have turned to narrative as a key site of (dialogical) identity construction. Through the analysis of meaning-generating narratives, in which several different voices may take the floor, statements can be read in the context of the individual story, in contrast with other statements by the same person, and in comparison with the stories of others.

The combination of a view on identity as narratively and dialogically constructed on the one hand and a focus on home on the other allows for a comprehensive and nuanced outlook on the sometimes so politicised ties of belonging of my interviewees, and on (migrant) identity construction in context. I make extensive use of case study analysis to show that these issues are far more complex and nuanced than large-scale survey research is able to convey. Analysis on the micro-level of individual narratives is a necessity for bringing to the fore the dialogical nature of individuals' meaning-making regarding home and identifications, on national and other levels. From this perspective, this research provides, not only a refining and nuancing of sweeping statements on migrant identity, but also a critical footnote to the adequacy of quantitative research in this field.

This study brings together insights from anthropology and narrative psychology to sketch a multidimensional picture of the stories my interviewees tell from their specific and sometimes precarious positions in contemporary Dutch society, and from their positionings towards other localities. It has been shaped, both by my endeavour to conduct a scientifically sound and relevant analysis, and by my engagement to pay heed to the voices of ordinary members of stigmatised groups, which often remain unheard. At times, these two aims have appeared to be at variance with each other when it came to setting priorities for the content of this book, and I have wondered how to bring across the unique stories I have been told in the framework of an academic study. Still, in the end, it is exactly by not halting at a plain reproduction of interviewees' words (an endeavour which would equally imply a process of selecting and

editing) but by analysing and placing their stories into perspective in various ways, that I hope to do justice to the rich complexity of the narratives people told me.

3 About This Book

How do notions of 'home' feature in the narrative construction of identity by descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants in the Netherlands? This study addresses questions concerning (social) settings and biographical meanings of home; relating to and identifying with multiple homelands; social in- and exclusion; and the dialogical construction of home and identity.

After an introductory chapter on the key concepts of home, narrative identity and the dialogical self, and the ways in which these come together in my research on adult descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants, these questions are addressed in four empirical chapters.

Chapters 2 and 3 show how my informants relate to multiple settings which lay claim to the title of home. As I have found the national level to be of particular significance in this regard, I mainly focus on the meanings interviewees attach to 'their' different countries. Both these chapters address the (social) settings of home and the particular role of the Netherlands and the countries of origin as possible homelands. In these chapters, my analysis takes place on an aggregated level: I trace both shared patterns and individual variation in the ways informants relate to their multiple homelands.

In the subsequent Chapters 4 and 5, this focus is reversed. The topics central to these chapters demand in-depth case study analysis of individual narratives. Chapter 4 explores the social embeddedness of home in general, and the subject of social exclusion in particular, while Chapter 5 demonstrates the biographical specificity of shared themes such as family, gender, religion and exclusion. Both chapters are crucial in providing answers to questions regarding the biographically informed meanings of home and the dialogical construction of narratives on home and identity. The microanalysis of case study material brings to the fore the high level of complexity and heterogeneity of my informants' dialogical constructions of home and self.

Chapters 2 to 5 are each followed by a chapter epilogue that zooms in on a particular aspect of the material presented, or takes up related subjects from a slightly different angle. Chapter 6 concludes this works and dwells on its implications.

CHAPTER 1

Social Context and Theoretical Frame

This chapter addresses the social, theoretical and methodological issues that form the backbone of this study. In order to contextualise the later chapters, I subsequently discuss developments in Dutch society regarding discourses on migrants in general and Moroccan, Turkish or Muslim migrants in particular; present my own study against the background of previous research on the target group; lay out theoretical considerations both on home and on identity in terms of narrative and dialogue; and reflect on the dialogical nature of this (and every) research process.

1 The Dutch Context: Discourses of Belonging and Otherness

The interviews on which this book is based, are set against the background of contemporary Dutch society. The accounts of individual descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants need to be viewed in the light of the dominant Dutch public discourse on migrants, and more specifically, on Muslims and on Moroccans and Turks.[1] The ways in which interviewees position themselves with regard to this discourse, both implicitly and explicitly, play a major role in my analysis. Moreover, the research questions of this work also derive their societal urgency from the current Dutch situation. The public questioning of migrants' descendants' attachment to the Netherlands makes it especially important to explore the issue of home from their own perspective.

In parallel to international developments over the past years, the Netherlands has seen a growing concern with the otherness of migrants – particularly those with a Muslim background.[2] Public debates on migrant integration have intensified as well as hardened in tone, placing migrants (explicitly including their descendants) under constant scrutiny.[3] The

1 Cf. M.J.M. de Koning, *Moslims Tellen. Reflectie Op Onderzoek Naar Islam, Moslims En Secularisering in Nederland*, 2012, p. 160.

2 Cf. B. Prins & S. Saharso, *From Toleration to Repression. The Dutch Backlash Against Multiculturalism*, 2010, p. 87; J.W. Duyvendak, *The politics of home: belonging and nostalgia in Western Europe and the United States*, 2011, p. 90; M.W. Buitelaar, *Van huis uit Marokkaans: over verweven loyaliteiten van hoogopgeleide migrantendochters*, 2009, p. 17; Phalet & ter Wal 2004a, pp. 11–12.

3 Cf. Demant, Maussen & Rath 2006, pp. 38–39.

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compatibility of their cultural and religious credentials with Dutch 'norms and values' is openly questioned, and their presumed lack of attachment to the Netherlands is constructed as problematic for Dutch society as a whole.[4] The labels of Muslim, Moroccan, Turk and 'allochthonous' (foreigner)[5] are often used seemingly interchangeably.[6] Dutch Muslims in general, and Moroccan Dutch in particular,[7] have become the focal points of much negative attention.[8]

4 Similar observations are made by, a.o., Duyvendak 2011a, pp. 84–85; J. Omlo, *Integratie én uit de gratie? Perspectieven van Marokkaans-Nederlandse jongvolwassenen*, 2011, p. 18; Prins & Saharso 2010, p. 79; M.A. de Jong, *Ik ben die Marokkaan niet!: Onderzoek naar identiteitsvorming van Marokkaans-Nederlandse hbo-studenten*, 2012, p. 60; T. Pels & M. de Gruijter, *Emancipatie van de tweede generatie: Keuzen en kansen van jonge moeders van Marokkaanse en Turkse afkomst*, 2006, p. 166; E. Snel, G. Engbersen & A. Leerkes, *Transnational involvement and social integration*, 2006, p. 287.

5 The Dutch term 'allochtoon' was originally coined as a neutral term designating people born outside the Netherlands as well as individuals with one or two parents born abroad. It is, however, mainly employed selectively to describe 'non-western' migrants whose otherness is seen as problematic, and in common usage its connotation resembles that of 'foreigner'. As Yanow & van der Haar explain: 'That "allochtoon" used in general public discourse, without marking, more commonly denotes persons who would be classed "non-Western" in state usage completes the transformation of the category terms from what many statisticians apparently consider neutral designators (…) intended to serve as practical analytic tools into pejorative labelling in the wider societal discourse.' (D. Yanow & M. van der Haar, 'People out of place: Allochthony and autochthony in Netherlands identity discourse – metaphors and categories in action', 2013, pp. 247–248.) See also Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2007, pp. 55–56.

6 In the surge of Dutch Islamophobia, the image of Muslims migrants, and Moroccan Dutch most of all, as criminal, respectless and maladapted has been complemented by fears of religious radicalisation. While these two images contrast in content, they share a focus on the irreconcilable otherness of Moroccan Dutch. Cf. E. Bartels, *Antropologische dilemma's en onderzoek naar islam*, 2008, p. 3.

7 At the time of this study, Dutch of Turkish descent had slightly more leeway in the sense that they were less often specifically singled out as a problematic group (cf. M. Crul & L. Heering, *The position of the Turkish and Moroccan second generation in Amsterdam and Rotterdam: the TIES study in the Netherlands*, 2009, p. 121; Pels & de Gruijter 2006, p. 168; K.S. Prins, *Van 'gastarbeider' tot 'Nederlander': adaptatie van Marokkanen en Turken in Nederland*, 1996, p. 10), but were otherwise subject to similar scrutiny and suspicion. The leeway they seemed to have may well have vanished since, especially after the attempted military coup in Turkey in 2016, following which Turkish nationalist sentiments among Dutch of Turkish descent has become the issue of heated debates. Besides, the conflation of categories shows little awareness on the side of the Dutch general public about differences in background between those grouped together as problematic allochthones.

8 Cf. Bartels 2008; M. Eijberts, *Migrant Women Shout It Out Aloud. The Integration/Participation Strategies and Sense of Home of First- & Second-generation Women of Moroccan and Turkish Descent in the Netherlands*, 2013, p. 269.

Overall, these discourses are marked by rather essentialist understandings of culture, religion and identity.[9]

A number of events have become iconic for what is sometimes called a 'backlash' against diversity.[10] In the Netherlands, as elsewhere, the events of 9/11 strongly catalysed fears of Islamist terrorism and a fierce suspicion of Muslims in general.[11] After this date, migrants with a Muslim background have been increasingly profiled in terms of their religious otherness.[12] In the same period, the populist politician Pim Fortuyn enjoyed rapidly growing popularity with his critical stance towards Islam, migration and the prevailing 'political correctness' in Dutch public life. Fortuyn was assassinated in 2002 – an event often listed as another milestone in the backlash against diversity, despite the fact that his assassin was a Dutch radical environmentalist. A second political murder took place in 2004. This time the victim was the outspoken film-maker Theo van Gogh, and the murderer a descendant of Moroccan migrants. Van Gogh had made abusive remarks about Muslims himself, but more importantly he had produced a controversial anti-Islamic short film together with Dutch MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The latter had become an influential spokesperson in the growing public critique of Islam, focusing mainly on the suppression of women, and backing up her standpoints with references to personal experience.[13] The fact that Van Gogh had been murdered by a young man born and raised in the Netherlands spurred debates on the cultural and religious orientation of the descendants of Muslim migrants.

A final important player in the hardening of Dutch discourse on migration, migrants and Islam is the far-right populist politician Geert Wilders, who remains a very vocal MP at the time of writing. He stands out in his political programme and public statements by fiercely opposing the 'Islamisation' of Dutch society and advocating highly restrictive immigration policies. Except for one follow-up interview in 2012, all my interviews were conducted during the period in which Wilders enjoyed ever-growing political adherence and influence, up to the point when he held a key position in Dutch

9 Cf. Eijberts 2013.

10 See R.D. Grillo, *Backlash Against Diversity?: Identity and Cultural Politics in European Cities*, 2005. According to Vertovec and Wessendorf, the Netherlands is 'often cited as the prime example' of such a backlash: Vertovec & Wessendorf 2010, p. 23.

11 Cf. M.I. Maliepaard, *Religious trends and social integration: Muslim minorities in the Netherlands*, 2012, p. 154.

12 Cf. M.J.M. de Koning, *Zoeken naar een 'zuivere' islam: Geloofsbeleving en identiteitsvorming van jonge Marokkaans-Nederlandse moslims*, 2008, p. 41; O. Roy, *Muslims in Europe: From ethnic identity to religious recasting*, 2000.

13 For a detailed analysis of Hirsi Ali's reasoning, see E. Snel & F.J. Stock, *Debating Cultural Differences: Ayaan Hirsi Ali on Islam and Women*, 2008.

political decision-making, albeit without being a member of the actual government.[14]

Corresponding to these major developments determining the Dutch public landscape, over the past years we have also seen an increasing interest on the side of both politics and media for smaller incidents that involve migrants, especially those of Muslim background.[15] It has been extensively documented how the framing of these groups is increasingly taking place in terms of their religious otherness, taking their religious identity as their main or sole defining feature.[16] Still, this does not mean that debates are consistently set in religious rather than ethnic terms. In popular discourse, rather, various markers of otherness are often used as virtually interchangeable, without much awareness of the differences between labels such as migrant, Muslim, Moroccan, Turk or 'allochthonous'.[17]

When we look at developments in integration policies rather than at the public events I just described, we see more subtle changes at work. Many descriptions very schematically distinguish between three periods: first a period in which labour migration from Morocco and Turkey was still seen as temporary, and policies were aimed at facilitating migrants' eventual return. Then came a time in which integration was seen to profit from a positive cultural identity, and in which migrants' problems were interpreted in terms of socio-economic emancipation, with policies correspondingly stimulating both this emancipation and the cultivation of migrants' 'own' language and culture. Most recently, it is migrants' obligations rather than their rights that are accentuated, and individual migrants are given primary responsibility for their own 'civic integration'.[18] According to Ghorashi and Vieten, this implies 'a move

14 After his 'Freedom Party' PVV had gained over 15% of all votes in the Dutch 2010 elections, he signed a support agreement with the two parties that subsequently formed a minority government that depended on his party's parliamentary support for its continuation. This construction collapsed in 2012.

15 Cf. Phalet & ter Wal 2004b, pp. 43–44.

16 E.g. Buitelaar 2009, p. 25, N. Bouras, *Het land van herkomst: perspectieven op verbondenheid met Marokko, 1960–2010*, 2012, p. 291; K.H.A. Leurs, *Digital passages. Moroccan-Dutch youths performing diaspora, gender and youth cultural identities across digital space*, 2012, p. 14; M.J.M. de Koning, *Understanding Dutch Islam: Exploring the Relationship of Muslims With the State and the Public Sphere in the Netherlands*, 2010; Bartels 2008, p. 6; T. Sunier, *Disconnecting Religion and Ethnicity: Young Turkish Muslims in the Netherlands*, 1995, p. 70; F. Demant, *Islam is inspanning: De beleving van de islam en de sekseverhoudingen bij Marokkaanse jongeren in Nederland*, 2005, p. 8.

17 Cf. de Koning 2008, p. 105.

18 The Dutch term is 'inburgering'. See for this trend e.g. H. Ghorashi, *Iraanse vrouwen, transnationaal of nationaal? Een (de) territoriale benadering van 'thuis' in Nederland en*

away from multiculturalism or a shift towards assimilation'.[19] It is this last period that roughly coincides with the commonly observed backlash against diversity, although Prins and Saharso rightly point out that 'If we take account of the developments at the level of policies, the backlash against multiculturalism does not seem to have hit as hard as the tough public rhetoric suggests'.[20]

The idea of a 'backlash' against diversity/migrants/Islam is by no means uncontested.[21] The term suggests a more or less radical change from a prior, different attitude on diversity/migrants/Muslims to the current widespread scepticism, whereas many authors rightly point out the continuity in Dutch discourse on these issues.[22] Indeed, the public discourse was not completely overhauled after 9/11. Buitelaar and De Koning, for example, both argue that around the time of the Rushdie Affair in 1989, negative sentiments towards Muslims were already being voiced in the Netherlands, and Muslim migrants were increasingly addressed in terms of their religious otherness.[23] Around the same time, Dutch politician Frits Bolkestein started to address integration in terms of cultural incompatibilities.

More in general, the often-heard idea that 'before the backlash' the Netherlands was a particularly open, tolerant and multiculturalist society is dubitable.[24] But whereas the issues addressed, the terms in which they are framed, and the sentiments they arouse are not that new, I would argue that the shift

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de Verenigde Staten, 2003; I.C. van der Welle, *Flexibele burgers? Amsterdamse jongvolwassenen over lokale en nationale identiteiten*, 2011. For nuanced historical analyses of integration policies, see Prins & Saharso 2010, p. 85; Bouras 2012.

19 H. Ghorashi & U.M. Vieten, *Female narratives of 'new' citizens' belonging (s) and identities in Europe: case studies from the Netherlands and Britain*, 2012, p. 728, see also Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2007, pp. 35–36; N. Meuter, *Narrative Identität: Das Problem der personalen Identität in Anschluß an Ernst Tugendhat, Niklas Luhmann und Paul Ricoeur*, 1995, and Eijberts 2013, p. 43, who reminds us that in Dutch popular usage, integration can often be read to mean assimilation, and who speaks of the Dutch dominant discourse as 'assimilationist'.

20 Prins & Saharso 2010, p. 88, see also Vertovec & Wessendorf 2010, p. 21, and also Eijberts who states that government policies kept addressing economic integration even when the dominant discourse had turned towards the importance of cultural/affective integration: Eijberts 2013, p. 346.

21 Cf. M. Hurenkamp, E. Tonkens & J.W. Duyvendak, *Citizenship in the Netherlands: locally produced, nationally contested*, 2011, p. 207.

22 Duyvendak 2011a, p. 86; Bartels 2008, p. 4; Eijberts 2013, p. 333; M.I.L. Gijsberts, J.M. Dagevos, & J.A. Ross, *At Home in the Netherlands?: Trends in Integration of Non-Western Migrants: Annual Report on Integration 2009*, 2010, p. 267; F. Anthias, *Evaluating 'diaspora': beyond ethnicity?*, 1998.

23 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 25; de Koning 2008.

24 Cf. Duyvendak 2011a.

in intensity and tone of the debates on integration and Islam does warrant an analysis in terms of change besides continuity.[25] As we will see in later chapters, a sense of such change is also reported by virtually all of my informants, who feel that Dutch society has become significantly more hostile towards them ever since 9/11.[26]

It is characteristic for the current discourse to present itself as new, as breaking with former Dutch conventions for addressing issues of minority integration. The tone of the 'progressive elite' that is said to have dominated the integration debate in earlier decades is portrayed as naive multiculturalism or relativism that obscured the 'real problems' in the field of immigrant integration.[27] Opposed to this is what Prins and Saharso call a 'new realism' that does speak 'frankly' about these problems, breaks with the 'politically correct self-censorship' of the past, and gives a voice to the concerns of 'ordinary people'.[28] This new realism is more than a new voice that has been added to the public debate. Rather, it has coloured the tone of the debate as a whole: 'Much of the tough phraseology of new realism, moreover, has nowadays become commonplace.'[29] According to the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy, between 2001 and 2003 a critical stance towards multiculturalism became the new political norm.[30] While this norm is also contested from various sides,[31] its influence is pervasive. Let us take a look at the main ideas on migrant identity, integration and home which have become 'commonplace' in the Dutch public arena.

Part of the current discourse is a preoccupation with migrants' identifications and 'identity problems'.[32] The problems migrants face, but even more so the problems they are perceived to cause in society, are related to their allegedly failed integration.[33] Emotional attachment, culture and religion have become important criteria in assessing this integration: migrants are presumed to have isolated themselves by remaining loyal to their country, religion and culture of origin *instead of* subscribing to Dutch society and its cultural values (which are

25 Cf. de Jong 2012, p. 187.

26 Cf. the study of Crul and Heering, which indicates that over half of second-generation Moroccan migrants report 'less friendly' relationships with the Dutch population over the years: Crul & Heering 2009, p. 121.

27 Cf. Demant, Maussen & Rath 2006, pp. 39–41.

28 Prins & Saharso 2010, p. 74, see also Eijberts 2013, p. 334.

29 Prins & Saharso 2010, p. 84.

30 Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2007, p. 176.

31 Cf. Bartels 2008, p. 3.

32 Cf. M.J.A.M. Verkuyten, *Identiteit en diversiteit: de tegenstellingen voorbij*, 2010, p. 10; de Koning 2008, p. 68.

33 Cf. M.J.M. de Koning, *The Dutch 'Moroccans' Debate*, 2013.

rarely elaborated on, but implicitly presented as consistent, progressive and morally superior[34]).[35] All in all, the Dutch dominant discourse states that migrants can be expected to both adapt to Dutch culture and identify with the Netherlands as a community of values (the first being seen as a condition for the second). It also suggests that they currently fail to do so and actively opt for exclusive ties with the country of origin and fellow migrants, and that this causes problems for Dutch society as a whole.[36] Duyvendak shows how the issue of home plays an important role in this, as he terms it, 'culturalization of citizenship'.[37]

In this setting, migrants' feeling at home in the Netherlands seems to have become a requirement for the solution of a wide array of problems linked to migration, and even, according to Duyvendak, a prerequisite for the home feelings of native-born Dutch themselves.[38] In his study of home from the perspective of native Dutch, Duyvendak describes a 'thickening and historical rooting of Dutch identity' that makes it less and less accessible for the very newcomers that are more and more expected to subscribe to it: 'obliged to feel at home in their country of residence, this "home" is constructed in such a way that they can never really feel a part of it'.[39] And while the 'Dutch side' is made less accessible, migrants' bonds to their land and culture of origin as the other side are presented as somehow natural.[40] Ghorashi and Vieten use Malkki's term 'sedentary bias' to describe this: this bias 'considers the "rootedness" of migrants in their cultural background and/or the geographic territory of their country of origin as a natural and normal feature of their positioning'.[41] Moreover, an exclusive understanding of home implies that this natural rootedness cannot coexist with a genuine loyalty to Dutch society.[42]

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34 Cf. Duyvendak 2011a, p. 87.

35 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 81; Leurs 2012, p. 277; Eijberts 2013, p. 335.

36 Cf. Ghorashi 2003a; Bouras 2012; Omlo 2011; Verkuyten 2010; F.J. Buijs, *Muslims in the Netherlands: Social and political developments after 9/11*, 2009, p. 427; Eijberts 2013, p. 317; see for the analysis of a similar discourse in Germany: E. Bozkurt, *Conceptualising 'home': the question of belonging among Turkish families in Germany*, 2009, p. 216; Snel, Engbersen & Leerkes 2006, p. 299.

37 Duyvendak 2011a, p. 92. See also S. Bhatia, *Religious Identity on the Peripheries: Dialogical Self in a Global World*, 2013, p. 245, who argues that a problematic 'conflation of nation and culture' takes place in current academic discourse as well.

38 Duyvendak 2011a, p. 85; Rosenwald & Ochberg 1992, see also Eijberts 2013, p. 336; De Tona 2004.

39 Duyvendak 2011a, p. 101. A similar analysis of this paradox has been made by Eijberts: Eijberts 2013, p. 321.

40 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 337.

41 Ghorashi & Vieten 2012, p. 727.

42 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 323.

Paradoxically, then, migrants' feeling at home in the Dutch nation is constructed as both imperative and impossible. This is problematic in more than one way. A rigidly exclusive understanding of home leaves little room for the lived reality of multiple belongings, and according to Ghorashi even hampers the formation of new ties of belonging on several levels,[43] and leads migrants to base their own interpretations of their situation on similar ideas of exclusive national belonging.[44] Besides this, the constant questioning of their loyalty ties in with more general trends of discursive exclusion of migrants that do not fail to affect their identity development.[45] This book is both about the multiplicity of my informants' home feelings and about the ways in which they incorporate the tensions, which flow from the discrepancy between appropriated and allocated views on their identifications, into their identity narratives.

2 Background Data: Research on Descendants of Moroccan and Turkish Migrants in the Netherlands

2.1 *Descendants of Moroccan and Turkish Migrants in the Netherlands*

People of Moroccan and Turkish origin constitute two of the largest diasporic groups in the Netherlands, and the largest two labelled 'non-western' in Dutch statistics.[46] With over 390,000 people in 2012, the Turkish group is only slightly larger than the Moroccan one, numbering over 360,000 – respectively 11% and 10% of the total migrant population, or 2.3% and 2.2% of the total Dutch population.[47] Similarities both in their migration history and their position in Dutch society, as well as the fact that together they constitute the lion's share of the Dutch Muslim population,[48] have often caused researchers to address these two groups together.[49]

Migration to the Netherlands from both Turkey and Morocco started with so-called 'guest workers' arriving in the 1960s in response to the growing Dutch demand for uneducated workers. In the 1970s, possibilities for labour migration decreased, but rather than returning, as most guest workers

43 Ghorashi & Vieten 2012.

44 Ghorashi 2003a, p. 149.

45 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 25; de Koning 2008, p. 299; de Jong 2012, p. 144.

46 Statistics Netherlands: http://www.cbs.nl/en-B/menu/methoden/begrippen/default.htm?Languageswitch=on&ConceptID=1013.

47 Unless otherwise indicated, figures are from CBS Statline.

48 Together they account for about 70% of all Muslims in the Netherlands: FORUM – Instituut voor Multiculturele Vraagstukken 2012, p. 8.

49 E.g. Prins 1996, p. 104; see Bouras 2012, p. 19.

had originally planned, many stayed. From this time onwards, the main reason for migration from Morocco and Turkey was family reunification and formation.[50] While for most families an actual return became less realistic over time, the myth of return lingers on, especially among those who originally migrated.[51]

The category I focus on consists of adult descendants of the original Moroccan and Turkish migrants. More precisely, I focus on those aged between 25 and 40. Of all the people of Moroccan or Turkish origin in the Netherlands, Statistics Netherlands counts respectively 54% and 50% as second-generation. Most of these are still young; only 14% of all second-generation Moroccans and 19% of all second-generation Turks fall into the 25–40 age bracket (and again half of those are between 25 and 30).[52] Those between 25 and 40 form the top of the pyramid: almost all other members of the second generation are under 25. In other words, the presence of a significant number of *adults* of Moroccan and Turkish descent born and raised in the Netherlands is a relatively recent phenomenon. However, in the light of this study, the data from Statistics Netherlands is slightly misleading, as it is solely based on the criterion of birth: only people who were actually born in the Netherlands are counted as second-generation. In this study, the criterion was rather that informants were either born in the Netherlands or had migrated before the age of ten. Those in the latter category will have arrived well before the onset of adolescence and received at least part of their primary education in the Netherlands.[53]

This discrepancy already draws our attention to problems related to the categorisation of migrants and their descendants in terms of different 'generations' – a term I deliberately avoid in this work. All of my informants, whether they be first or second-generation according to official criteria, mainly grew up in the Netherlands and have a different starting position in Dutch society and a different relation to the country of 'origin' than their parents (or grandparents) who were adult actors in the process of migration. Over and

50 Cf. E.F. Ersanilli, *Comparing Integration: Host culture adaption and ethnic retention among Turkish immigrants and their descendents in France, Germany and the Netherlands*, 2010, p. 16; Bouras 2012, pp. 41–58.

51 E.g. Bouras 2012, p. 226.

52 For 2010, this meant 37,446 individuals of Turkish descent and 26,975 of Moroccan descent in the relevant age group.

53 Out of the 29 main informants in this study, almost half were born in the Netherlands: 5 out of 9 of those of Turkish descent, and 7 out of 20 of those with a Moroccan background.

above these obvious distinctions, the characteristics and experiences of individuals of migrant origin also vary more widely than a clear-cut division into generations would suggest.[54] Two more substantive objections against the usage of the terms first and second generation are that the terms are coloured by dominant discourses on integration, in which it is presupposed that different generations represent different problems, and that the term 'second generation', as Bouras rightly argues, turns people who never migrated into migrants.[55] All in all, I opt for the designation 'descendants of migrants' as both more accurate and more neutral than 'second generation'.[56]

2.2 *Characteristics of the Sample of Informants*

Between 2008 and the end of 2010, I met with 29 informants for hours of life story and in-depth interviewing. All informants in this study fall in the category described above and have lived in the Netherlands at least since they were ten years old.

A focus on adults over 25 is particularly interesting in several ways. As mentioned above, this age group constitutes a relatively recent category of descendants of former guest workers. Most qualitative studies up to date focus either on the original migrants or on their adolescent or young adult offspring.[57] Moreover, restriction of the sample to this age group results in life narratives that are more 'mature' as well as more easily comparable. Adolescence is generally presented as a period crucial in identity development.[58] Especially in the politicised Dutch context in which the issue of migrant identity is heavily scrutinised and problematised, it is astonishing that academic attention should, to a large extent, rest only on the life stage which is characterised by a rather dynamic exploration of, and experimentation and play with various identifications, without asking what such processes result in in later

54 Cf. H.M. van der Horst, *Materiality of belonging: the domestic interiors of Turkish migrants and their descendants in the Netherlands*, 2008, p. 9.

55 Bouras 2012, p. 13.

56 Notwithstanding this general choice, for reasons of variation I sometimes also use other terms to refer to the research population., e.g. Moroccan/Turkish Dutch, people of Moroccan/Turkish origin, or even second-generation migrants.

57 E.g. Bouras 2012; S. Ketner, *Marokkaanse wortels, Nederlandse grond. Exploratie, bindingen en identiteitsstrategieën van jongeren van Marokkaanse afkomst*, 2008; Leurs 2012; J.D.A. de Jong, *Kapot moeilijk : een etnografisch onderzoek naar opvallend delinquent groepsgedrag van 'Marokkaanse' jongens*, 2007; de Jong 2012; Omlo 2011. More on this in Section 2.4.

58 See Ketner 2008.

life.[59] On one side, I am particularly interested in the narratives of people who have concluded the adolescent stage of their lives and can look back on this explorative period from a somewhat more 'settled' position, while on the other side I believe that an exclusive focus on adolescence does not do justice to the fact that identity development is a lifelong process.[60] From this perspective, adults constitute an interesting category. The experiences that they have accumulated over the years and life stages, together with their progressive reflexivity, permit them to construct richer, fuller and more complex life narratives.[61] Finally, the issue of 'home' also gains complexity once individuals leave the parental home to establish their own household. The minimum age of 25 was chosen with the expectation that by this age most informants would have finished their education, entered the labour market, and established their own household – all markers of a different life stage from that of the adolescents or young adults addressed by the majority of existing studies.[62]

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59 Demant, for example, reports that many young Muslims speak about 'becoming serious' at a certain age. This illustrates how adolescents themselves also make a distinction between their identifications and priorities in the present and in an anticipated 'adult' future. See Demant 2005, p. 66.

60 In Section 14 I elaborate on the central role of theories of narrative and dialogical identity as well as the use of life story interviews in my research.

61 Cf. McAdams, who in his much-read publication on life stories links different life stages to the gradual development of an adult's 'personal myth' and even posits that 'Before adolescence, we have no life story. We have no identity.' D.P. McAdams, *The stories we live by: Personal myths and the making of the self*, 1993, p. 40.

62 Indeed, all informants in this study had already entered the labour market (although some of the women had become stay-at-home mothers by the time of the interview, and one male informant was unemployed). Some had, however, decided to continue their studies on a higher level alongside their career, or had the ambition to do so in the future. Only two of them continued to live with their parents, while all others lived in independent households and over half had already become parents themselves. Two women had a husband but no children, one man lived with his fiancée, and seven men lived on their own. Of the latter, all but one expressed general hopes or concrete plans to marry and start a family. Still, it is interesting that especially among the Moroccan men willing to talk to me, most had not started a family yet, while all women, except the one still living in her parental home, were married and generally had children. Some possible reasons for this may be that Moroccan-Dutch women tend to marry at a somewhat younger age than their male counterparts, and that during the recruitment in Morocco there was a selection bias due to differences in leisure patterns for male and female, married and unmarried holidaying migrants. But it is also possible that male informants living alone were less

While not being representative (nor aiming to be so), my research population was nevertheless large enough to allow me to strive for a balanced sample in several aspects. I aimed for equal numbers of informants of both genders, with both a higher and lower educational background, and residing in various parts of the country. The main use of this weighting is that it allows me to posit that my findings do not apply exclusively to, for example, women, higher educated individuals, or people living in or outside the big cities. In the Netherlands, about half of the population of Turkish or Moroccan origin live in the four biggest cities, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, which are all located in the west of the country and together constitute the major Dutch urban agglomeration called the 'Randstad'. Some researchers choose, often for pragmatic reasons, to restrict their research group to those living in Amsterdam and/or Rotterdam, the two cities with the largest share of Moroccan/Turkish inhabitants.[63] In my own research I took into account the experiences of people residing in a wide variety of settings. Out of 29, 13 informants lived in one of the big four cities, and a further 7 lived in smaller towns within the Randstad agglomeration. The remaining 9 lived in towns or villages in other parts of the Netherlands.

The differentiation of the non-random sample helps to broaden the scope of the insights gained through this research. With the same aim I also strove not to use snowball sampling in the sense of recruiting informants from within one and the same network. The informants I met in Morocco and Turkey did not know each other and spent their holidays in various manners and places.[64] The informants recruited in the Netherlands were all contacted through different entrances, most of them indirectly via Moroccan, Turkish or Dutch

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hesitant to allow me, a young female interviewer, into their homes for the extended interviews, although this remains hard to check – the married men I interviewed showed absolutely no hesitation on this point. What points into the direction of the latter explanation however is the fact that in this as well as in a previous project, the few male informants living with their parents preferred to be interviewed in a public venue rather than at home.

63 E.g. Crul & Heering 2009; Phalet & ter Wal 2004b; Eijberts 2013; van der Welle 2011. This trend is one of the reasons why Ketner chose to focus specifically on Moroccan youth living *outside* the 'big four' cities, in settings that are often more diverse than in the 'concentration quarters' in the big cities: Ketner 2008, pp. 9–10.

64 Of all 29 main informants, six of those of Moroccan and seven of those of Turkish descent were recruited in a Dutch setting. All others were people I had met on my summer stays in Morocco and Turkey, during which I also conducted additional, shorter interviews with other members of the 'target group'.

acquaintances in my own network.[65] Finally, 19 of the main informants were of Moroccan origin, while 10 had Turkish roots.[66]

An unexpected finding of this study was that there were hardly any (structural) differences between the life narratives and conceptualisations of home of the informants of Turkish and those of Moroccan origin. This came as a surprise for me: I expected to find many differences in the stories of people originating from such different backgrounds – both culturally and in the way national identity is constructed in Turkey and Morocco. Moreover, much of the literature addressing people of both origins does point out significant differences between the two.[67] Therefore, although when selecting informants I took into account several distinctions that might point to different 'categories' of informants, I did anticipate that ethnic differences would constitute the main axis of comparison in my analysis. But the narratives in my relatively small sample – 29 informants, besides a number of shorter additional interviews in Turkey and Morocco – gave me no reason to treat these two as structurally different categories. As I will argue, it seems that their shared frame of reference, as adult descendants of former guest workers from Mediterranean, mainly Muslim

65 There were only two exceptions: in one case both members of a couple were interviewed – they formed the only mixed Turkish-Moroccan couple I met. Two pairs of sisters, one Turkish and one Moroccan, also participated. All of these four women were interviewed separately both in the Netherlands and in Turkey or Morocco. Each agreed to be identified as the sister of the other interviewee, knowing that this might make their statements in this book recognisable for their own sibling.

66 Many of the Moroccan-Dutch informants originated from the north of Morocco and spoke a Berber language rather than Moroccan Arabic. This corresponds with the fact that over half of the Moroccan-Dutch population originates from the northern, mainly Berber speaking, provinces of Morocco. See W.G.F. Groenewold, *On being Dutch and Muslim: descendants of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants speak out about identity and religion*, 2009, p. 4; Bouras 2012, p. 52; H. van Amersfoort & A. van Heelsum, *Moroccan Berber Immigrants in The Netherlands, Their Associations and Transnational Ties: A Quest for Identity and Recognition*, 2007, p. 240; Ketner 2008, p. 8 Ketner mentions a percentage of 70%. According to Van Amersfoort and Van Heelsum, most of the 65% of Moroccan Dutch originating from the Rif area mainly speak a Berder language. Groenewold writes that 55% of second-generation Moroccans identify with Berbers – which is of course not the same measure as speaking a Berber language, and 14% of second-generation Turks identify with Kurds. However, none of my informants of Turkish origin reported links to the Kurdish minority. A slightly larger proportion of people from the Moroccan Rif region in my sample is due to the fact that part of the recruiting of interviewees took place during the summer months in that region.

67 E.g. Prins 1996; van der Horst 2008, p. 6; K. Phalet, *Moslim in Nederland: De constructie van identiteit en alteriteit*, 2005, p. 33; van der Welle 2011, p. 229; Groenewold 2009, p. 5.

areas, is more important than the different backgrounds of their parents. For all of those I interviewed, the Netherlands implicitly forms the primary frame of reference. This may help explain why in this study, with its focus on individual persons' narrative identity construction and meanings of home, one finds so little difference between descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants.

All of this means that this book is not about differences between Moroccan and Turkish migrants regarding their sense of home, but about the meanings of home and the narrative construction of identity of descendants of migrants, both of Turkish and of Moroccan origin. Throughout this book, my analysis pertains to the narratives of all informants, regardless of their ethnic background. In this light, in the course of initial interview analyses and further crystallisation of the research questions, comparison between equal groups of informants of Turkish and Moroccan descent has moved to the background.[68] The examples used are drawn from the entire sample irrespectively – thereby reflecting the fact that the sample of informants of Moroccan descent (19) is larger than the group of informants with a Turkish background (10).

2.3 *Migrants, Muslims, Home and Belonging in the Netherlands*

A number of larger studies have gathered quantitative data on topics such as social identity and integration for Dutch migrants and/or Muslims.[69] In the light of this study, such data is valuable as well as problematic. Some studies include questions of home, presenting home feelings as an indicator of integration[70] and concluding that a large majority of Muslims[71] or Moroccan and Turkish migrants[72] feel at home in the Netherlands, especially those of the second generation.[73] Several studies also show that members of these groups evaluate their own integration much more positively than native Dutch do.[74]

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68 See the appendix for an overview of informants, including their pseudonyms and background. Typically Turkish and Moroccan names were chosen as pseudonyms in order to facilitate recognising the various backgrounds while reading.

69 E.g. Crul & Heering 2009; Phalet & ter Wal 2004b; FORUM – Instituut voor Multiculturele Vraagstukken 2012; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2010; Maliepaard & Gijsberts 2012; Gijsberts, Dagevos & Ross 2010.

70 E.g. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2010, p. 169.

71 E.g. FORUM – Instituut voor Multiculturele Vraagstukken 2012, p. 14.

72 E.g. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2010, p. 170; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2012, p. 153 is a bit more conservative, quoting percentages of just over 60%.

73 See Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2010, p. 169.

74 E.g. Gijsberts, Dagevos & Ross 2010, p. 276; Y.M.J. van Osch & S.M. Breugelmans, *Perceived Intergroup Difference as an Organizing Principle of Intercultural Attitudes and Acculturation Attitudes*, 2012, p. 813.

A central issue seems to be that of ethnic identification, often boiling down to the question of whether migrants feel more Dutch or more Moroccan/Turkish/...[75] Operationalisations and findings vary, generally showing that few people feel 'only' Dutch and most feel either more Moroccan/Turkish or identify with both Dutch and Turks or Moroccans. Scales like these, however, illustrate the problematic nature of much quantitative data in the light of my research questions.

Apart from the fact that differences in emphasis and definition can lead to rather divergent findings,[76,77] the complexity and ambivalence of national or ethnic identifications, especially for descendants of migrants, is hard to translate into survey questions about the 'extent' of identification with several groups.[78] Without much context, it is hard to determine how individual informants interpret the choices presented, and to what extent the categories they are presented with correspond with their own. As we will see in this study, in their life stories informants typically formulated various and often contradicting identifications at different points of their narratives, all depending on context. What do informants mean when they state, for example, that they do not or hardly feel Dutch? The motives and argumentations leading to such concrete answers remain invisible in quantitative studies.[79] And what to think of the finding that 'half of the Turkish and Moroccan population (...) think that a Western lifestyle cannot be combined with an Islamic lifestyle',[80] without knowing the meaning each informant gave to the designations 'Islamic' and 'Western'?

A more fitting frame of reference for this study than the quantitative studies referred to above, is formed by the substantial number of recent qualitative studies, which I briefly address below. The lively academic interest in the

75 E.g. Crul & Heering 2009, p. 109; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2010, p. 170; Maliepaard & Gijsberts 2012, p. 140; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2012, p. 155; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2007, p. 178.

76 Which is especially problematic considering that quantitative research is often valued for providing 'hard' data on 'soft' topics.

77 See, for example, Groenewold, who points out that 'Much depends on how the figures are interpreted and where the emphasis is placed, because one in five informants among second-generation Turks and Moroccans felt no, or only a weak sense of being Dutch. At the same time, almost half of the second-generation Moroccans say they also identify strongly with others based on their Dutch nationality. This is less so among second-generation Turks': Groenewold 2009, p. 5.

78 Cf. Omlo 2011, p. 91.

79 Cf. Omlo 2011, p. 17.

80 Demant, Maussen & Rath 2006, p. 38.

Netherlands in the lifeworlds and identities of what used to be called 'guest workers' and, most of all, their descendants, is evident from a large number of recent publications on the subject.[81] When we compare the corpus of recent more qualitative studies dealing with Moroccan, or Turkish, migrants and their descendants with my own work, a number of things stand out.

Remarkably most qualitative works that discussed themes or groups intersecting with my own focused on people of Moroccan rather than Turkish descent.[82] The larger academic attention for Moroccan rather than Turkish-Dutch citizens may correspond with the fact that, as mentioned in Section 1, in the Dutch dominant discourse Moroccans are more often conceptualised as the most 'problematic' group. Therefore, research on members of this category may be seen as more 'relevant' to society, or researchers may feel a stronger need to redress misconceptions regarding Moroccan rather than Turkish Dutch.[83]

Next, like part of the larger quantitative studies mentioned above, a number of recent projects take the religious background of these groups as point of departure, researching religious practice and the meanings Islam can have for (descendants of) migrants.[84] Research focusing on Muslims in the Netherlands is relevant for my own work both because in practice it largely addresses the same part of the population and because religion is a factor of interest in this study as well. One advantage of a life story centred approach, in which religion is discussed but not presented as the main focus of the interview, is that it provides a different angle on the significance of religion in the life of informants.

81 Eijberts 2013; de Koning 2008; van der Horst 2008; van der Welle 2011; Omlo 2011; de Jong 2007; Ketner 2009; de Jong 2012; R.A. Strijp, *Om de moskee: het religieuze leven van Marokkaanse migranten in een Nederlandse provinciestad*, 1998; Ketner 2008; Bouras 2012; Leurs 2012; M. Gazzah, *Rhythms and rhymes of life: music and identification processes of Dutch-Moroccan youth*, 2008.

82 One exception is the interesting work by Hilje van der Horst: van der Horst 2008.

83 Cf. Bouras 2012; de Jong 2012. Besides this, researchers have also reported more difficulties in recruiting Turkish respondents. This is sometimes explained by pointing out that Turkish Dutch are said to be more oriented towards the Turkish 'community' than their Moroccan counterparts. A few more quantitative or mixed method dissertations are of a comparative nature and include several ethnic groups or several countries of residence: see e.g. van der Welle 2011; Ersanilli 2010; M. Maliepaard, M. Lubbers & M. Gijsberts, *Generational differences in ethnic and religious attachment and their interrelation. A study among Muslim minorities in the Netherlands*, 2010. There is one recent work, the thesis by Eijberts, that is similar to mine in taking together informants of Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds without making the comparison of these two groups a main feature: Eijberts 2013.

84 E.g. Strijp 1998; de Koning 2008; Maliepaard 2012; Abbaaziz, forthcoming.

When asked, most respondents of Moroccan and Turkish descent will state that religion is very important for them.[85] Respondents explicitly interviewed about religious issues will automatically focus on these aspects of their lives. Thus, an explicitly religion-oriented research focus runs the risk of overstating the importance of religion in the lives of those under study. In my own interviews I actively sought to allow interviewees to speak from several different positions.

To my surprise, especially in the life story part of the interviews, religion was mentioned much less emphatically than I would have expected, even by people who, when asked explicitly later on, spoke about the great significance Islam has in their lives.[86,87,88]

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85 E.g. Phalet & ter Wal 2004b. The answers to my own questions about the meanings given to religion confirm that it is generally viewed as an important factor in informants' lives.

86 Considering that interview content is always influenced by the setting of the interview and the interaction of interviewer and informant, we could also turn towards the interviewee-interviewer interactions for possible explanations of this finding. Informants may have anticipated that religion was of no concern to me and have fashioned their story accordingly, or they may have been hesitant to discuss this topic with a 'Dutch' interviewer, considering the current Islamophobic climate in the Netherlands. Still, I do not believe that these factors explain everything. During most life story interviews, a bond of trust quickly formed between myself and those interviewed, and many things were discussed that may be considered sensitive. Moreover, most informants were aware that I have a background in religious studies, which makes an interest in religious subjects rather probable. Besides the fact that the religiosity of descendants of Moroccan migrants has already been the subject of a number of high quality publications (e.g. de Koning 2008; M.W. Buitelaar, *Muslim Women's Narratives on Religious Identification in a Polarising Dutch Society*, 2010), the relatively infrequent occurrence of spontaneous accounts on religion in my interviews is the main reason that in this book religion plays a less dominant role than I had anticipated when embarking on my interviews.

87 The study of Dutch Muslims has been highly politicised in recent years, especially after 2001. The fact that Islam is regarded as problematic in dominant Dutch discourse has its impact on scientific research in this domain, and the same goes for research on Moroccan and Turkish migrants and their descendants. The ways in which individual researchers take this into account in their work strongly varies. We can broadly distinguish between (qualitative) studies explicitly focusing on topics or groups that are viewed as problematic in the dominant discourse, and studies that do take the societal relevance and politicisation of the field of study into account, but without making it their main concern. (E.g. for the former: de Jong 2007; Eijberts 2013; Omlo 2011; L.A. Brouwer, *Meiden met lef: Marokkaanse en Turkse wegloopsters*, 1997. For the latter: Buitelaar 2009; de Jong 2012; van der Horst 2008; Bouras 2012; Leurs 2012; Gazzah 2008; Ketner 2008) The latter generally take a broader perspective, sometimes with the explicit aim to counterweigh

Part of the research literature shows a special interest in issues of gender and focuses exclusively on women.[89] In much research gender continues to be a 'female thing', relating to how women as the marked category have different experiences from the men that are considered the norm, rather than to how men and women may experience things differently. (my own work is no exception in this regard). Partly such a focus is understandable. The fact that women continue to be seen as a marked category and are often cast in unequal power relations adds relevance to such 'women only' studies, as does the fact that Muslim women in particular have come to be seen as boundary markers from several sides, crucial in the dialectics of selfing and othering of Muslim minority versus settled majority in the Netherlands.[90] Yet the risk of developing blind spots looms large here. Issues of masculinity, on the other hand, are mainly raised when connected to problematic behaviour.[91] Less problematic categories of Moroccan Dutch risk to become invisible in dominant public as

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the distorted image of Dutch Muslims/Moroccans/Turks. Bouras complains that much contemporary literature contains research questions influenced by the public and political agenda, resulting in a one-sided focus on integration and problematic behaviour (Bouras 2012, p. 21) . While this may be so, it does not follow that problem-oriented studies are more 'biased'. While focusing on the 'hot topics' of Moroccan youth delinquency and migrant women's integration, the dissertations of Eijberts and De Jong, for example, also explicitly address these groups' emic perspective, striving to give voice to groups everybody talks *about* but forgets to talk *to*.

88 Another interesting trend in qualitative research on former guest workers and their descendants is that the lion share of studies focuses on youth. This can once again be explained at least partly by pointing to the public interest in Muslim/Moroccan youth as a problematic category associated with school drop-out, religious radicalisation, troublemaking and criminality. Other factors that may play a role are a broader academic interest in youth culture and the relevance of the phase of adolescence in identity formation. Finally, it simply has not been that long since the first cohort of children of migrants came of age. In that regard, my own research constitutes a next step by addressing adult descendants of migrants who spent all or most of their life in the Netherlands but do not belong to the 'pioneers' interviewed by Buitelaar; M.W. Buitelaar, *'Zij Lieten Hun Toekomst Achter Om Ons Een Betere Toekomst Te Bieden': Autonomie En Verbondenheid in De Levensverhalen Van Vrouwen Van Marokkaanse Afkomst*, 2005. Note that the 'pioneers' in her work are not so much the first children of guest workers growing up in the Netherlands but rather the first female ones reaching the higher segments of the Dutch educational system and labour market. Still, her research focuses on an earlier age cohort compared to my own.

89 E.g. Eijberts 2013; Brouwer 1997; Pels & de Gruijter 2006; Ballah forthcoming.

90 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 336.

91 E.g. de Jong 2007.

well as academic discourse.[92] The heightened interest in Moroccan or Muslim women now almost seems to render the 'normal' Moroccan-Dutch men who do not stand out, be it through problematic behaviour or extraordinary success, even more invisible. My own work aims to bring to the fore the unheard voices of 'normal', and thence invisible, Moroccan and Turkish Dutch, both male and female.

What virtually all of the qualitative studies discussed here share is an interest in identity – thereby illustrating the huge range of ways in which this term is thematised and operationalised, with studies using a.o. psychological scales or anthropological fieldwork, and sometimes employing means as diverse as material culture, virtual reality or music.[93]

3 Home

3.1 *Home*

In the life stories of migrants and their descendants, 'home' is a reoccurring concern.[94] In the research literature, mentions of this notion are equally frequent, although what is meant by the term by migrants on the one hand and by those studying them on the other does not always seem to match. We embrace 'home' because it is both concrete and symbolic, both a universal concern and strongly linked to migration, both about stability and about movement, both an everyday emic notion and a complex theoretical concept, referring both to positive sentiments and memories of belonging and to problems typically associated with migration.

Starting from one's own house as a first territorial base, 'home' may refer to different scales and multiple locations in various ways, or it may not be conceived of in territorial terms at all.[95] A focus on home offers a fruitful perspective to study the narrative construction of identity in a globalised world, where people occupy and move between numerous positions and relate to different localities at the same time. This is particularly the case in studying identity construction in a post-migration context. Narrations of home point

92 de Jong 2012, p. 16.

93 See Ketner 2008; de Koning 2008; Gazzah 2008; Leurs 2012.

94 Parts of this section are derived from my considerations on home as published previously in F.J. Stock, *Home and Memory*, 2012 and in Buitelaar & Stock 2010.

95 Cf. Al-Ali & Koser 2002, p. 8, Bozkurt 2009, p. 25.

to the translocal character of identity and draw attention to the openness and permeability of the self – a self which cannot be separated from those others who have a voice in where and with whom we are allowed or expected to be at home.

The many different ways in which home is conceptualised and employed in academia led Mallet to write: 'Is home (a) place(s), (a) space(s), feeling(s), practices, and/or an active state of being in the world? Home is variously described as conflated with or related to house, family, haven, self, gender, and journeying.'[96] Given this bewildering array of uses, it could be suggested that the concept of home becomes an empty one, a cypher which can mean anything and, in consequence, signifies nothing. Yet the term continues to be used in meaningful ways, both inside and outside academic writing. The fact that 'home' is such a familiar notion in everyday speech adds to its complexity. According to Duyvendak, the very familiarity of the term can cause scientists to use it in rather unreflective ways.[97]

Indeed, there are many romanticised images of home in popular culture. These meanings are important to understand the emotional and normative bearing of the notion, yet they only tell half the tale about the lived complexities of home. Especially in migration studies it is crucial to look beyond these images and arrive at an understanding of home that takes into account the contradictions, ambivalences and politics that the notion also entails. However, I believe that in order to steer clear of such often essentialist, one-sided understandings of the term, much recent scholarship has rather paid *too little* attention to the wealth of meanings clustering around popular understandings of home.

Earlier, Buitelaar and I argued that 'in the reality of diasporic settings even more than elsewhere, social and cultural belonging can no longer be seen as based within bounded and "fixed" places'.[97] For migrants and their descendants especially, their own 'home' is often far from self-evident, while at the same time the image of home as 'something self-evident' does persist.[99] True as this holds, it is also an example of the rather negative terms in which most discussions of home are set. Many otherwise excellent discussions of the term tend to lay so much stress on what home is *not* or not only, that we risk

96 Mallett 2004, p. 65.

97 Duyvendak 2011a, p. 26.

98 J. Ferguson & A. Gupta, *Space, identity, and the politics of difference*, 1992.

99 Buitelaar & Stock 2010, p. 165.

forgetting that it is in the shifting use of a repertoire of all such partial truths in which the meaningfulness of home lies in the first place.[100] The normative power of archetypical images of home[101] feeds into our more 'sophisticated' scholarly conceptions of home and remains salient for our understanding and use of the term.[102] 'Home' as an analytical tool gains its meaning through an ongoing creative tension with 'home' as an emic notion. It is this creative tension which I hope to express and incorporate here by focusing, not just on the ambivalences that makes home so fascinating and so useful a concept in the study of migrant experience, but also on the many intersecting layers of popular meaning that resonate in our usage of the notion.

Therefore, in what follows I *unpack* these meanings clinging to home. In discussing its different popular connotations, I can acknowledge that these are meanings that may resonate in our usage of the term, while also questioning their absoluteness and pointing out their limitations. Thereby I hope to arrive at a more positive understanding of 'home', without relapsing into essentialist readings of the concept. Rather than formulating a strict definition of the notion, in this work I endeavour to acknowledge its thickness by describing how I understand home: as a dynamic notion, rich, multi-layered and fuelled by emic meanings.[103]

3.2 *The Layeredness of Home*

More often than not, home consists of a complex interplay between layers of meaning highlighting spatial as well as social or symbolic aspects. There are many scholarly discussions of home that try to capture aspects of this layeredness. Often authors differentiate two contrasting dimensions, for example a material and an imaginative[104] or discursive[105] aspect. Talking specifically about home in diaspora, Brah distinguishes between a 'mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination' and 'the lived experience of a locality'.[106] Other authors make similar distinctions between home as a physical space one

100 E.g. H. Armbruster, *Homes in Crisis: Syrian Orthodox Christians in Turkey and Germany*, 2002, pp. 20–21; Al-Ali & Koser 2002, p. 6; K.E. Kuah-Pearce & A.P. Davidson, *At Home in the Chinese Diaspora: Memories, Identities and Belongings*, 2008, pp. 18–19; L.C. Manzo, *Beyond house and haven: toward a revisioning of emotional relationships with places*, 2003; J. Moore, *Placing home in context*, 2000.

101 E.g. Manzo 2003.

102 Cf. Basu 2004.

103 Cf. Duyvendak 2011a, pp. 37–38.

104 A. Blunt & R. Dowling, *Home*, 2006.

105 See J. Wiles, *Sense of home in a transnational social space: New Zealanders in London*, 2008.

106 Brah 1996, p. 92.

inhabits and as 'the symbolic conceptualization of where one belongs',[107] an 'actual place of lived experience and a metaphorical space of personal attachment and identification',[108] or as a 'conceptual or discursive space of identification and as a nodal point in concrete social relations'.[109] It is remarkable how each of these authors distinguishes between a realm of concrete locality and everyday experience on the one hand and a more ideational, symbolic or discursive realm on the other, while at the same time stressing that home entails both.[110] This broad distinction can be very useful when analysing the many meanings attached to home. When referring to such different dimensions in this work, I use the terms 'concrete' and 'symbolic' as shorthand. We will see that like any binary distinction, this one also evokes many tensions. It is exactly such tensions that are part of what makes home such an evocative and powerful research tool.

3.3 *Unpacking Home: House and Homeland*

Maybe the most basic usages of 'home', both in the English language and for the Dutch-speaking informants in this research, refer either to the house or dwelling or to 'feeling at home'.[111] The image of the *house* as the most typical home is as pervasive in popular discourse as it is in the research literature.[112] At the same time, it is also clear that one can 'feel at home' in many other ways and places, and that the house itself is not always a homely place. 'Feeling at home' is generally considered a positive sentiment modelled after, even though not forcibly connected to, the feeling one has in one's own house. Home is at once a reference to one's dwelling place and a metaphor which derives from, but also transcends and sometimes challenges, this usage of the term.

A key characteristic of 'home' in general is its association with safety. The safety of home can, of course, be falsified by pointing to power relations at work within homes that can determine whether its inhabitants feel safe there. Yet even in extreme cases concerning, for example, domestic violence, this unsafety of the (dwelling or family as) home is generally presented as an aberrance from the norm of home as a safe haven, rather than as a possible

107 Salih 2003.

108 Armbruster 2002, p. 120.

109 N. Rapport & A. Dawson, *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of movement*, 1998, p. 17.

110 Cf. Al-Ali & Koser 2002, p. 7.

111 The Dutch term for home, 'thuis', is closely related to the word for house, 'huis', and originally derives from 'te huis', meaning in or towards the house.

112 Moore 2000; Mallett 2004, p. 63.

characteristic of home as such. Safety, and many of the other qualities ascribed to home, which are discussed below, are also related to the setting of the house. People who do not experience such qualities in their dwelling often describe it as 'lacking' them and express that they cannot feel entirely at home there. They may long for another imagined or remembered home, or feel 'more at home' outside their house. This also points to the normative character of the notion. Certain environments, and the house first and foremost, are *expected* to function as homes to those who (used or wish to) inhabit them. The fact that 'home' can refer both to a material construction and to a feeling already points to the layeredness of the term. As Wiles rightly points out, home is often used in a 'slippery' way: 'there is "elasticity" to how we think about home'.[113] People easily shift between and combine different meanings of the term.

Another layer of meaning of 'home' that is also recurrent in the narratives analysed in this research, extends its territorial scale from the individual house to the 'collective' space of the country or nation.[114] Home in the sense of 'homeland' is a highly normative notion that infuses the site of the country or nation state with connotations of origin and a kind of primordial belonging.[115] Whereas on the one hand there is a stark contrast between the house as individual home and the country as a 'national' home, e.g. when we see the one as the ultimate site of privacy and the other as encompassing the public arena, on the other hand the word 'home' also allows for the projection of certain characteristics ascribed to home on a lower scale, such as intimacy, familiarity and community, to the imagery of the nation state. In the words of Blunt and Dowling, 'In both material and imaginative terms, the home is an important site for articulating wider debates about national belonging today'.[116] Both on the level of the house and on the national level, the terminology of home often functions to demarcate borders, to define who belongs and who is excluded as an outsider.[117] Home is then constructed as the 'domestic' as opposed to what is 'foreign'.[118]

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113 Wiles 2008, p. 123.

114 Cf. Armbruster 2002, p. 18; Blunt & Dowling 2006, p. 27; S. Egan, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self* (*review*), 2001; G. Lucius-Hoene, *Konstruktion und Rekonstruktion narrativer Identität*, 2000.

115 Cf. Bowlby, Gregory & McKie 1997, p. 347; Duyvendak 2011a, p. 22.

116 Blunt & Dowling 2006, p. 201.

117 Being so intimately tied up with processes of inclusion and exclusion, home can also have strong bearing on issues of identification and identity. I will explore this connection later on.

118 Cf. Blunt & Dowling 2006, p. 169.

The national level is especially relevant when we deal with the notion of home in diasporic settings – migrants being generally defined as those who have moved from one country to another. Descendants of migrants in particular can challenge simplistic conceptions of what is foreign and how borders of national belonging should be drawn. In much literature on migration there is talk of 'homelands' when referring to the countries to which migrants trace their origins (rather than when referring to a country in which an individual or group may feel 'at home').[119] The 'original' homeland, which of course gains new meanings through distance both in time and space, is then opposed to the country of residence or the 'host country'.[120] As time passes and migration becomes an inherited memory rather than a direct one, the imagery of homeland and host country becomes more complex.[121] For descendants of migrants, the 'new' land has never been new in the first place, and the perception and relevance of the 'homeland' (a label I do not use in the sense of an automatic identification of the land of origin as home) can be much more fragmented than for those who actually experienced migration.

Most talk about migration and mobility, old and new belongings, here and there, plays on the national scale as a seemingly self-evident frame of reference, notwithstanding the fact that we have long known the nation to be everything but a natural unity of a unified community with a clearly delineated territorial base,[122] and despite a growing stress on the transnational character of migrant experience.[123] For migrants themselves, the homeland and the national level as such can be highly significant units of meaning, but also powerful images that risk hegemonising a wider diversity of subjective experience. Yet we will see in Chapter 2 that as often as not they also constitute convenient denominators for talking about sameness and difference, presence and distance, longing and belonging even if the 'stuff' of such narratives may be more intimately connected to other scales in their actuality. To take an example from my interviews, an informant may talk at length about the differences between 'the Netherlands and Morocco', only to mention in passing that when talking of Morocco, 'of course' he means the specific city in which he spends his summer holiday – the rest of the country does not have any meaning for him. Without denouncing the national level as highly relevant, when exploring issues

119 See Levitt & Waters 2002; Salih 2003; M.W.H. Leung, *Memories, Belonging and Homemaking: Chinese Migrants in Germany*, 2008; Mallett 2004.

120 See Fortier 2000, p. 136.

121 Brah 1996, p. 194.

122 Cf. Hall et al. 1999; Baumann 1999.

123 E.g. Salih 2003.

of home in post-migration settings we have to bear in mind that the country and the homeland can also stand as cover terms for a much broader range of belongings.

House and nation are the most prominent landmarks in a vast continuum of spatial levels to which home can refer. Spatiality is one of the key features of home, which is sometimes defined as a specific relationship to place. Yet it is not only used in reference to physical place. Scholars of migration rightly stress that home need not necessarily be interpreted in spatial terms, and that it is never a place in itself, but rather the *relationship* one has developed with it, that is home-like.[124] While specific places often function as sites of belonging, a sense of home can also be evoked by or expressed through many other means. One can feel at home with specific people, in certain social settings or in imagined communities.[125] Feelings of home can also be triggered by telling familiar stories about memories, dreams and longings, through one's daily routines or the specific objects one surrounds oneself with.[126] In migration contexts, feelings of belonging can be directed towards physical spaces and remembered, imagined and/or symbolic places.[127] In such contexts spatial aspects of home become even more complicated. Feeling at home on one level can coincide with a sense of not belonging on another, and sometimes the ways home is conceptualised on one level can contradict meanings it has on another level. A person can, for example, very well feel at home in the town where he or she lives, but not foster a sense of belonging to the wider nation state. Alternatively, one can also cherish a general notion of a country of origin as home without being able to point out a specific place which to call 'my home'.[128] Home may refer to different scales and multiple locations in various ways.[129] Mobility and distance may complicate migrants' relationships to places. Yet to deny the spatial connotations of the term would be to deprive home of an important part of its specificity.[130] As is the case with many of the connotations of home discussed here, to do justice to the term its connection to place needs to be both transcended *and* recognised.

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124 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 273; Duyvendak 2011a, p. 37.

125 Anderson 1983; cf. Rapport & Dawson 1998.

126 Cf. J. Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives*, 1998; D. Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, 2008.

127 Cf. S. Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: essays and criticism 1981–1991*, 1991, p. 70; Salih 2003.

128 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 273.

129 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 117.

130 Cf. Bozkurt 2009, p. 212; Duyvendak 2011a, p. 37.

3.4 *Family and Familiarity*

The term 'home' has a strong relational dimension.[131] Home is first and foremost a 'home to' people. Especially when referring to the house, in western popular imaginaries home is tied up with the symbolism of family and familiarity.[132] Many of my informants claimed that it is the presence of their family that makes a place home-like. In their absence, the sense of home is lost or decreases. This shows that, although home is most easily formulated in spatial terms, once we start probing for its meanings, often social ties can play at least as important a role as fixed localities. Home is always dependent on social dynamics.

The family metaphor is not restricted to the house as home, but also often extends to the use of 'home' as referring to the larger context of the country or nation.[133] When talking about the nation in terms of home, citizenship can be represented as 'natural' by likening it to the family – the people as one big extended family, belonging to each other, resembling each other, caring for each other etc. Such imagery is, of course, based on a highly romanticised view both of home and family and of their concurrence. The notion of home often resonates with positive feelings of warmth, safety and well-being, even though these are anything but self-evident in actual homes, however they are defined.[134] The same goes for the family. In real life, families are about power inequalities and tensions as much as they are about warmth, care and belonging. One might feel completely out of place with one's relatives and much more at home with certain other people. Yet it would be too easy to just dismiss such warm 'flavours' as false or irrelevant. Once again, the many ambivalences that home entails partly flow from the ongoing relevance of exactly these one-sided connotations of the term.

Familiarity is often mentioned as a key characteristic of home, referring in the English language both to intimacy and family as important ingredients of home and to home as an environment that one is well acquainted with – in which one knows what to expect and how to act.[135] Home can provide familiarity not only in a spatial but also in a temporal sense: it is where everyday

131 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 275.

132 Cf. Mallett 2004, p. 74; Bowlby, Gregory & McKie 1997.

133 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 275; J. Friedman, *From roots to routes. Tropes for trippers*, 2002, p. 25. See Chapter 5 for my discussion of narrations on leaving the parental home.

134 Cf. C.M. Gurney, *'Half of me was satisfied': Making sense of home through episodic ethnographies*, 1997, p. 383.

135 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 274; Duyvendak 2011a, p. 27; Mallett 2004, p. 63.

life takes place, structured through routine. We will see that routine and predictability can be rejected as monotony as well as valued as familiarity. This double-sidedness can also be witnessed in the appreciation of home. Venturing out from home can mean a welcome break from routine, from the ordinary; it can mean freedom, but it can also cause one to miss and appreciate anew the qualities of a home environment.[136] Home can be characterised as 'special' (referring, for example, to things, activities, places, perceptions, memories that are seen as especially meaningful to one's person), as well as 'normal' (being the setting of daily routines, places, things that are self-evident in their familiarity). Paradoxically, part of what makes home such a 'special kind of place'[137] can be its very normalcy.

Home provides a prime example of the worn-out phrase 'you don't know what you've got until it's gone' – as it consists of what is given and familiar but, as with many self-evident things, gains meaning through distance.[138] The dynamics of 'home and away' are therefore crucial to the meaning of home. Once again, such dynamics are by no means unique to migrant experiences, yet they can be more poignant in a migration setting, in which the implicit idea that home is something self-evident is challenged more often and more explicitly, and which is often characterised by a large diversity of home spaces.[139] Paradoxically, the strong connotations of home as self-evident often remain perceptible in diasporic conceptualisations of home, despite a plurality of home spaces that challenge, for example, the idea of a remembered 'original' (family) home, now remote in time and space.[140] It is such tensions that make home such a compelling notion both for those who study diaspora and for those who live it.[141]

Familiarity in the sense of knowing one's way around, being profoundly familiar with the physical and social environment, may be seen as a precondition for home as an important locus of both personal autonomy and meaningful social relations. In narrative psychology these two basic human motives (whether formulated in terms of agency and communion,[142] self- and

136 Cf. D. Case, *Contributions of journeys away to the definition of home. An empirical study of a dialectical process*, 1996; Case 1996.

137 H. Easthope, *A place called home*, 2004, p. 135.

138 Cf. Duyvendak 2011a, p. 41.

139 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 89.

140 Cf. Al-Ali & Koser 2002, p. 7.

141 See Stock 2012.

142 McAdams 1993, p. 71. McAdams relates agency to power and achievement, as opposed to communion which revolves around love and intimacy.

other-motive,[143] or power and intimacy[144]) are distinguished as driving forces in narrative identity construction.[145] Part of the strong appeal of home is its functioning as a site of both agency and communion. Ideally, home could be seen as a familiar environment in which one feels most connected to others, most free to act,[146] and/or most able to be, and express, oneself. Indeed, most one-liners on home which occur in my interviews describe it in these terms of agency, communion, familiarity or sense of self: it is 'where I can be myself', 'where I make the rules', 'where my family or loved ones are', 'where I know my way around'. I would argue that the four motives of agency, communion, familiarity and a subjective sense of self are crucial for the analytical understanding of home. In Chapter 5, I use these motives in a case study analysis that brings together the various themes of this book. We will see that different motives are also often in tension both with each other and with the ambivalent lived realities to which the term refers in my interlocutors' narratives.

3.5 *Private, Feminine, Exclusive?*

A rather common characteristic of home is its privacy. The home is generally constructed as a private sphere, providing intimacy and shelter from external influences of the wider (public) world.[147] But as we just saw, home can also refer to far more 'public' spheres, the nation foremost amongst them. Some authors explicitly distinguish between private or personal and public or collective meanings of home.[148] Whereas the dwelling most typically provides a home for the family, the nation state can be constructed as a collective home to a people or nation. Often, however, public and private cannot easily be kept apart when it comes to home.[149] Together with the metaphor of the family, notions of privacy, for instance, can also be projected onto the imagined community of the nation. The home as, in one sense, the ultimate locus of the 'private sphere', is a prime setting for the deconstruction of the

143 H.J.M. Hermans & E. Hermans-Jansen, *Dialogical Processes and Development of the Self*, 2003, p. 2. The authors speak about 'striving for self-enhancement' on the one hand and 'longing for contact and union with the other' on the other.

144 E.g. D.P. McAdams, *Power, intimacy, and the life story. Personological inquiries into identity*, 1985.

145 E.g. Buitelaar 2013a.

146 Eijberts 2013, p. 275.

147 Cf. Duyvendak 2011a, p. 22; Mallett 2004, p. 71; G. Rose, *Family photographs and domestic spacings: a case study*, 2003, p. 9.

148 E.g. Duyvendak 2011a, p. 38; Bozkurt 2009, p. 13.

149 Cf. Duyvendak 2011b, p. 22; Buitelaar & Stock 2010.

private-public binary. Morley, for example, has shown how through modern media the 'outer world' enters the living room and further blurs any private-public distinction that might have held earlier.[150] As I will argue in this book, processes of home-making take place through dialogues with multiple collective and personal voices representing one's various positions in society, once again showing that a binary divide between 'private' and 'public' domains is hard to maintain, as is a strict distinction between what is 'personal' and what is 'social'.

Home as referring to the house, or rather to the domestic sphere, is often constructed as opposite to work.[151] This opposition ties in with the more general discourse of an opposition between home privacy and the public outside world. The tension between work and private life, and the difficulties in finding a 'balance' between these two poles, indeed form an important theme in many modern life narratives.[152] The importance of this balance also comes to the fore in situations where one pole is absent: Gurney observes the ambivalent relationship of a housewife to her home, exactly because she never 'gets out' to work.[153] It is often claimed that the unsettlement of not having a job is even stronger for men, who, often more than women, stress the importance of paid employment outside the home in the construction of their identity.[154] This is only one of the facets showing that meanings of home are strongly gendered. Once again, this is most apparent when we take home as referring to the house and the domestic sphere. This sphere is traditionally/stereotypically depicted as a (or even the) feminine realm, closely linked with notions such as privacy, domesticity, family and intimacy.[155] Such imagery – although it has always been an idealisation, and is so even more in contemporary times when gender roles are much less stringent – still resonates in everyday usages of 'home'. And it is also in light of the gendered differentiation between private and public,

150 D. Morley, *Belongings: place, space and identity in a mediated world*, 2001.

151 Cf. Mallett 2004, p. 71.

152 Cf. McAdams 1993. Also when we move beyond the work-home dichotomy to look at meanings of home other that the family dwelling, work and one's professional identity can constitute an important prerequisite for feeling at home in certain settings. Some informants in this research, for example, stated that although they did feel at home in the country of their parents, 'ultimately' home for them was in the Netherlands, where they had 'my house, my work, my friends'. Through such phrasings they tied into the broader framework of home both the private sphere of the house and the broader context of work and social relations constitutive of everyday life. Cf. Chapter 4.

153 Gurney 1997.

154 See Mallett 2004, p. 75.

155 Cf. Mallett 2004, p. 77; van der Horst 2008.

home and work, that traditional conceptions of home have maybe been criticised most fiercely by feminist thinkers, claiming that especially for women, home is far more ambivalent than these images confer, and may be a space of (domestic) work, oppression and confinement rather than of leisure, refuge and personal autonomy.[156]

Partly, such criticism still presupposes and thereby confirms the very gendered behavioural patterns that romantic images of home as warm and feminine confer. Several authors have pointed out the 'enormous disparity between feminist critiques of home and women's descriptions of the meaning of home',[157] while yet others have shown that despite this disparity, the term 'home' is far from gender-neutral.[158] Studying practices and ideas of home, whether they relate to the domestic sphere or to the various other, broader usages of the term, we need to remain sensitive to their gendered nature without reverting to simplistic notions of gender stereotypes This is even more crucial when dealing with migrants and their descendants, since they often have access to a broader variety of cultural repertoires evoking different configurations of gender roles. The Moroccan and Turkish contexts to which my informants relate, generally feature stronger articulations of gender segregation, for instance in the use of space.[159]

Closely related to home's privacy are its connotations of distinctness and exclusiveness. Homes are often seen as having fixed, even sacred boundaries. Even more importantly, especially in situations where what home means to whom is contested, home is seen as exclusive in more than one sense.[160] By defining one place or setting, whether real or imagined, as home, others are implicitly constructed as 'not home'. Also, claiming a home, for certain people, can mean the exclusion of others, because it is 'our home, not theirs'. The production of homes is bound up with processes of in- and exclusion.[161] Home is also easily constructed as exclusive in the sense that a person can only have one home, and that a place either is home or is not. The the reality

156 Cf. Blunt & Dowling 2006, p. 16; Mallett 2004, p. 72; Manzo 2003, p. 50; M. Douglas, *The idea of a home: A kind of space*, 1991; Bowlby, Gregory & McKie 1997.

157 Mallett 2004, p. 76.

158 E.g. Gurney 1997.

159 See e.g. M.W. Buitelaar, *Islam en het dagelijks leven: Religie en cultuur onder Marokkanen*, 2006, pp. 171–188.

160 Cf. Duyvendak 2011a, p. 39.

161 Indeed, as Duyvendak argues, 'What is felt as home, then, develops out of a dialectic between what belongs to the place and what does not; what is mentally near and what is far; what feels like "inside" and what does not; who are considered "we" and who are labelled "others".' Duyvendak 2011a, p. 31.

of belonging, wholly or partly, in more than one place, with more than one group, stands in constant tension with the aura of exclusivity that surrounds the notion of home. Migrants are by no means the only ones to live this tension, though it is probably more manifest in their experiences and narratives than elsewhere.

3.6 *Movement, Stability, Migration*

Scholars have pointed to an increasing fluidity of contemporary lifeworlds on many levels, as well as a seemingly growing desire of individuals and groups for the very stability that is perceived as waning.[162] This ambivalence is very immediate in the notion of home – regardless of the question whether it is considered a typically (post)modern condition or traced further back in human history.[163] In a world in which mobility has tempered the stability of locality, there seems to be a growing need for 'rooted' identifications. According to Gupta and Ferguson, 'imagined communities come to be attached to (…) remembered or imagined homelands, places, or communities in a world that seems increasingly to deny such firm territorialized anchors in their actuality'.[164]

Recent literature rightly contradicts essentialist conceptions of home, stressing its processual, fluid or constructed character. Yet the notion of home continues to evoke, and derive part of its appeal from, an ideal picture of stability both in space and in time. Home thus contains the paradox of consisting of what is felt as given, stable and self-evident while at the same time continuously changing and being contested. Home can be seen as an activity, a process of continuous redefinition and meaning-making. Belonging is as much about doing and making home as it is about having a (or several) home(s).

In the romantic image of home as stable over time, home is both where we live and where we come from, both where we originate and where we long to return. In lived reality, the above do not always coincide.[165] For people with a migration background, the discontinuity in space over time is particularly prominent,[166] and the question of whether their home is 'ultimately' located in the places of origin left behind, in the lived present in the country of residence,

162 E.g. H.J.M. Hermans & H.J.G. Kempen, *Moving Cultures: The Perilous Problems of Cultural Dichotomies in a Globalizing Society*, 1998; A. Gupta & J. Ferguson, *Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference*, 1992; Basu 2004; Duyvendak 2011a; K. Gergen, *The saturated self: Dilemmas of identity in contemporary life*, 1992.

163 Cf. Bozkurt 2009, pp. 25–27; Basu 2004, p. 157; Buitelaar 2009, p. 83.

164 Gupta & Ferguson 1992, pp. 10–11.

165 Cf. Ang 1994, p. 34, who dismisses 'the fantasy of a complete juncture of "where you're from" and "where you're at" so that, ideally, all diasporized peoples should return "home".'

166 Cf. Ghorashi 2003b, p. 133.

or in future destinations can become very poignant both for migrants and their descendants, and in public opinion.[167] Dominant Dutch discourse has been said to unjustly treat the issue of migrants and home as 'linked exclusively with ethnic membership'.[168]

In diasporic settings, the concept of home clearly has a temporal dimension. It emerges as a firmly grounded as well as highly ambivalent notion, referring to multiple places and spaces in past, present and future in various ways.[169] Indeed, the 'routes' humans take over the life course may be at least as formative of the meanings they give to home as the 'roots' to which they trace their origins.[170] I propose that in search of the meanings home can have for individuals (or, formulated the other way around, of the ways they employ home to give meaning to their lives) it is most fruitful to turn to life narratives, as retrospective explorations of these roots and routes in light of one's present situation.

3.7 *Home and Identity*

Home, in my view, offers important perspectives on (migrant) identity processes. Although the current scholarly interest in home as an analytical notion partly springs from its connection to identity issues and many authors refer to this connection,[171] it is generally evoked rather than systematically explored.[172] Still, it appears evident that on many levels home is closely connected to the self: 'Home is more than the experiencing of patterns that orient us in a familiar space, time and culture. There is a bonding that occurs between self and the experiences and places of home.'[173] The 'bonding' between self

167 Of course, this question can be seen as enforcing a 'false choice', doing an injustice to the complex layeredness of home, especially for migrants, and does not easily align with the notion of home as employed in this research. However, the question remains salient insofar as it is experienced as an actual dilemma by individuals and groups with a migration background, and formulated as such by those surrounding them. Cf. Chapter 3.

168 B. Prins, *Narrative Accounts of Origins A Blind Spot in the Intersectional Approach?*, 2006, p. 288.

169 Cf. Al-Ali & Koser 2002, p. 8; Salih 2003, p. 70.

170 Cf. Clifford 1997; P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 1993; Armbruster 2002, p. 25; Mallett 2004, p. 77; Gurney 1997, p. 367. More on the conceptual pair of roots and routes in Chapter 3.

171 E.g. Blunt & Dowling 2006, p. 24; A. Buttimer & D. Seamon, *The Human experience of space and place*, 1980; Al-Ali & Koser 2002, p. 7; Armbruster 2002, p. 20; Basu 2004, p. 157; Bozkurt 2009, p. 13; Case 1996, p. 12; L. Cuba & D.M. Hummon, *A place to call home: Identification with dwelling, community, and region*, 1993, p. 111; Duyvendak 2011a, p. 38; Easthope 2004, p. 132; Mallett 2004, p. 82; Moore 2000, p. 210; Wiles 2008, p. 123.

172 Eijberts 2013, p. 277 voices the same point of critique.

and home can be observed on collective as well as individual levels. Spaces are experienced as homes through processes of *identification with* the people, symbols, memories, habits etc. associated with them. An often-heard characteristic of home is that it is where one can 'be oneself', both in the sense of the expression of personal uniqueness and of belonging to larger entities and significant others.[174] Home is fostered by a subjective sense of self, and vice versa.

In the research literature, home has been described as 'where one best knows oneself',[175] as a 'staging of personal memory'[176] or 'an emotional sphere within which personal biographies are framed'.[177] Home is intimately related to identity,[178] especially from a narrative perspective that sees identity as expressed most tellingly through (life) stories.[179] Such stories provide both the narrator and the (real or imagined) audience with a dynamic frame of reference to interpret the meanings home is given, in statements both within the context of these stories and in other settings. Home is understood in relation to individual experiences and key events over the life course.[180] In telling about their homes and lives, people locate themselves in the present by considering past experiences and future directions as meaningful to their current situation.[181]

Through narrative, individuals can deal with ambivalence and discontinuity, whether they strive to merely express them in meaningful ways, or rather to resolve them in search for an overall sense of continuity and coherence. These are two poles in the field of tension of human meaning-making, especially when it comes to one's own life and identity: a felt need for coherence, continuity and meaning, and the reality and necessity of multiplicity, development and discrepancy.[182] This field of tension is strongly present when (descendants of) migrants discuss home, with its ingrained paradox of multiplicity and layeredness on the one hand and strong connotations of stability and self-evident belonging on the other.

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173 Case 1996, p. 12.

174 E.g. Rapport & Dawson 1998; Verkuyten 2010; for more see the next section.

175 Rapport & Dawson 1998, p. 9.

176 J. Pallasmaa, *Identity, Intimacy and Domicile. Notes on the phenomenology of home*, 1994.

177 Gurney 1997, p. 383.

178 Cf. Al-Ali & Koser 2002, p. 7.

179 Cf. Kraus 2006, p. 103.

180 Gurney 1997, p. 383; Buitelaar 2009, p. 89.

181 Cf. Buitelaar & Stock 2010; Ghorashi 2003b; Buitelaar 2009.

182 I discuss this tension in the next section.

Life stories take us on an imaginary journey across temporally and spatially situated experiences back to people's roots.[183] Furthermore, conceptualisations of home are bound to change over the life course, with different stages of life and dimensions of the self calling for different interpretations of 'home'.[184] The life story, then, is not merely a useful tool for those who happen to be interested in the notion of home. Much more, it points to the many ways in which this notion is deeply intertwined with (narrative) identity processes. It is exactly in their interwovenness that these two concepts constitute the theoretical backbone of my research project. One of the main aims of this book is to enrich the current anthropological understanding of home, in which the connection to identity is constantly evoked but has little 'body'. I do so by connecting it to a more substantive reading of identity, borrowed from psychological theories of narrative identity. These theories will be further explored in the following section.

In her work on 'sense of home' in relation to the integration/participation strategies of women of Turkish and Moroccan descent in the Netherlands, Eijberts argues for a focus on home, rather than on identity alone, in future research.[185] While she agrees that these terms overlap, rather than simply using home as a 'proxy for identity',[186] she stresses the different connotations these terms hold for her interviewees themselves. She concludes that a 'sense of home in the Netherlands seems to be more easily experienced and claimed than a Dutch identity or identification', explaining that while identity is generally interpreted in exclusivist, essentialist terms, home at least for now appears to remain more flexible and open.[187] This allowed the women she interviewed to express an attachment to the Netherlands which would be overlooked had the interviews been framed solely in terms of 'identity'.

Eijberts' study suggests that, as I would phrase it, the bigger emic openness of the notion of home (as compared to identity) makes it a more suitable etic concept as well. In a similar vein, Bozkurt equally employs the notion of home as closely related to, but also distinguished from identity in her work on the conceptualisations of home among several generations of Turkish migrants in Germany. She argues that home 'enables the conceptual access to everyday lives, experiences and expressions of people more than sociological or

183 Cf. G.H. Jr Elder & M. Kirkpatrick Johnson, *The Life Course and Aging: Challenges, Lessons, and New Directions*, 2003, p. 75: 'Where we have been in our lives tells a story of who we are'.

184 Gurney 1997.

185 Eijberts 2013, pp. 269–316.

186 Rapport & Dawson 1998, p. 16.

187 Eijberts 2013, p. 340.

psychological jargons'.[188] In line with these two studies, I also give priority to home as an emic notion more accessible to interviewees than exclusivist and reified ideas of identity. Indeed, in my own interviews I largely avoided the term 'identity' altogether because of its essentialist connotations, especially in connection to Dutch dominant discourses on identity and integration. As an analytical term, however, identity is to be less easily discarded than the studies mentioned may seem to suggest. In the succeeding chapters, the narrative, dialogical understanding of identity which I present in the next section on the one hand, and the notion of home on the other, can both be seen to enrich each other and to deepen our understanding of the individuals under study.

The notion of home directs our attention to the ways in which identity is always relational and embedded in (social) time and space.[189] A focus on home as an inherently *relational* concept allows us to see that there is no absolute boundary between self and other. It provides us with tools to study the inclusion in the self of real, remembered or imagined other persons, and material or sensory elements from one's environment. This reflects the fact that, although in identity theory we often distinguish between individual – or personal – and collective – or social – aspects of identity, there is constant interaction between these aspects which makes it impossible to separate them.[190] Home can be seen as encompassing personal as well as social aspects of identity and revealing the intersections between the two. Through the analysis of the stories of individual persons, I will trace back how processes of home-making are both highly personal and deeply embedded in larger society.

Once again, when we look at romantic/archetypical understandings of 'home', the difference between personal and collective homes can appear to be mainly one of scale – one's dwelling might be constructed as a personal home, whereas the neighbourhood, town and country in which it is located and the people dwelling there form ever wider circles of collective home settings. In the case of migrants, as mentioned, the discrepancy between such different 'levels' of home can be quite obvious.

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188 Bozkurt 2009, p. 13. Cf. also Benjamin, who dismisses attempts to come up with more precise analytical terms to replace the messy concept of home: 'The synthetic alternatives invented by some researchers may be more internally coherent, but have dubious and unproven connection to informant conceptions of space and time (especially if one is studying the emotional and spiritual aspects of places and occasions), and are more unwieldy and verbose in their construction.' D.N. Benjamin & D. Stea, *The home: words, interpretations, meanings, and environments*, 1995, p. 13.

189 Buitelaar 2009, p. 83.

190 Cf. M.W. Buitelaar & T.H. Zock, *Introduction: Religious Voices in Self-Narratives*, 2013, p. 11.

Here we also touch upon the normative power of the notion of home. It comes with the openness and permeability of the self implied by belonging that others have a voice in where and with whom we are allowed or expected to be at home. Brah argues that whether migrants locate home primarily 'here' or in a temporally and spatially faraway place is not simply a matter of personal choice, but is intrinsically linked with how processes of inclusion and exclusion operate to allow them to satisfy a 'homing desire'.[191] Particularly in the case of migrants, others (both from inside and from outside their own social circles) have a say in where or to whom they belong, and on what terms.[192] In the words of Ang, 'this means that the cultural context of "where you're at" always informs and articulates the meaning of "where you're from".'[193] Collective imaginaries of home and dominant discourses on belonging and otherness inform and restrict the options for developing notions of (non)home. Individual migrants may contest or accommodate elements from such discourses in the meanings they give to the notion themselves. The question of home, then, is about positioning oneself and being positioned in relation to others and concerns both political and personal struggles over the social regulation of 'belonging'.

The extent to which one can perceive oneself to be at home in relation to certain people, specific social settings or (imagined) communities is at least partly determined by the gaze of others.[194] This observation, as well as discrepancies in senses of home on different scales, draws our attention to the fact that home has special bearing in the negative sense. Often it is in the (perceived) absence of a single, self-evident home-locality that the relevance of home is experienced most strongly. Particularly, though not exclusively, for migrants and their descendants, notions of home are partially shaped through experiences of absence – through longing, leaving and returning, and feeling homesick or homeless.[195] More often than not, in the literature on home in migration settings, the reason to focus on issues of home is that they are perceived as problematic. In the treatment of home as problematic we find another clue to its connection with issues of identity: not-home is intimately related to not-self. Of course, the absence of any of the many characteristics ascribed to home can form a reason for depicting a certain space as not

191 Cf. Brah 1996, p. 192.

192 Cf. Salih 2003.

193 Ang 1994, p. 35. See also Buitelaar 2009, p. 73.

194 Cf. Kraus 2006, p. 109: 'People do not simply choose affiliations, they have to negotiate them with others and are positioned within them by others.'

195 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 84.

home or for expressly not feeling at home in a specific context. Yet an especially strong conjunction seems to exist between notions of 'not home' and experiences of exclusion and othering.[196] While 'being accepted' is sometimes positively referred to as enhancing a sense of home,[197] in my own interviews the relationship between acceptance and home was mainly brought up in the negative.

3.8 *To Conclude*

In this reflection on the notion of home, I have unpacked the layers of meaning of this rich term. I have endeavoured to strike a balance between the dismissal of various connotations or characteristics of the notion as one-dimensional, simplistic or essentialist on the one hand, and the recognition, on the other, that it is mainly these same connotations from which the term derives its salience in everyday experience and discourse. Home does indeed carry connotations of privacy, exclusivity, safety, self-evident familiarity, routine and stability. It is connected to family and opposed to work, it is related to origins as well as destinations, and it is most frequently used as referring to place, be it on the scale of the house or of the nation state. At the same time, it holds just as true that the concept, to be of any analytical use in studying migrant experiences, has to be recognised as transcending each of these aspects.

In my view, most recent discussions of home tend to be so preoccupied with showing that it is 'not just' a place/a feeling/a safe haven/… that they overlook the other side of the equation: the fact that deconstructing all these layers' partial truths leaves the term bare of the very thickness of meaning that makes it such a fascinating notion to study. For instance, especially in post-migration settings it is vital to recognise that home does not need to refer to place at all, and that a 'sense of home' can be constructed in many different ways. Yet to me it seems almost as vital to recognise that in its origins the notion remains a spatial one and that this spatiality continues to resonate, whether we are using the term in reference to physical places or to symbolic spaces, feelings or narratives.

Home remains an emic term which is highly salient for diasporic subjects themselves.[198] Although scholarly conceptualisations of home derive from this emic notion, and its meanings continuously feed into our analyses, paradoxically they are also perpetually trying to contradict and deconstruct it, insisting on the complexity, fluidity and ambivalent multiplicity of home.

196 Cf. Ghorashi 2003b, pp. 146–147; Bozkurt 2009, p. 16; Brah 1996, p. 193; Eijberts 2013.

197 Cf. Eijberts 2013, pp. 273–276.

198 Cf. Basu 2004.

It is the creative tension between the rich emic notion and the openness and layeredness of home as an analytical concept that makes it such a powerful tool.[199]

3.9 *The Concept of Home in Context: Diaspora, Transnationalism and Hybridity*

Interpreting my informants' narratives in terms of home and narrative identity, I aim to facilitate an open, non-essentialist approach that foregrounds the complex lived realities of migrants themselves (rather than departing from the question of how to fit them into the structures of the 'host country'). There is a number of other, overlapping concepts much in vogue in the broad international field of migration studies which share this aim: the notions of diaspora, transnationalism and hybridity.[200] An important merit of all three terms is that they do not view migration and movement as inherently problematic and migrants as deviating from implicit norms of stability and cultural purity. It is with the same general aims in mind that this study departs from the notion of home, which may turn out to do the job even better.

Studies about diaspora, transnationalism and/or hybridity feature much variation in both definitions and usages of these terms. Still, what is shared in much of the literature is the presentation of these concepts as remedies against rigid analytical and discursive frameworks that are deemed to obscure a nuanced view on all sorts of phenomena related to contemporary migration. Usages of concepts such as diaspora, hybridity and transnationalism are often defined *against* such currents.[201] This can be traced in the frequent usage of verbs like contest, subvert, transgress, defy, transcend, challenge, deny, disrupt, negotiate, break, span or counter.[202] The ideas and frameworks which these

199 As I mentioned early on in this reflection, the notion of home is a 'slippery' one. This reflection on the different meanings of home to a certain extent reproduces this slipperiness, the ease with which one can switch between and combine different ways of interpreting and using the term. Just like the people we study, as researchers we cannot escape tuning in and out of different modalities of home.

200 E.g. Bouras 2012, p. 12; A. Cavarero & P.A. Kottman, *Relating narratives: storytelling and selfhood*, 2000; R. Salih, *Gender in Transnationalism: Home, Longing and Belonging Among Moroccan Migrant Women*, 2003, p. 5; J. Clifford, *Diasporas*, 1994, p. 308; H. Streib, *Faith development research revisited: Accounting for diversity in structure, content, and narrativity of faith*, 2005; Anthias 1998, p. 560; N. Al-Ali & K. Koser, *Transnationalism, International Migration and Home*, 2002, p. 1; M. Baumann, *Diaspora: Genealogy of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison*, 2000, p. 314.

201 Clifford 1994, p. 308.

202 E.g. Salih 2003, p. 113; Anthias 1998; Al-Ali & Koser 2002; I. Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Postmodern Ethnicity and the Politics of Diaspora*, 1994; J. Clifford, *Routes: Travel and*

new approaches rightfully challenge include the nation state as a bounded social unit and natural frame of reference; primordial views of identity and ethnicity; ideas of fixed origin, absolute boundaries and exclusive attachments; a one-sided focus on host country integration; and myths of purity, stability, homogeneity and authenticity.[203] Besides stressing the 'subversive and transgressive potential'[204] of the concepts themselves or of the diasporic subject/hybrid/transmigrant, many authors in this field value a focus on agency, multiplicity and ambivalence, creativity and a positive approach to newness and difference. The question remains whether these programmatic points can only be achieved, or indeed the feared essentialist pitfalls avoided, through the usage of the specific vocabulary proposed.

Each of these three conceptual categorisations comes with its own field of meanings and can be criticised (or defended) in its own right. *Hybridity*, which functions on a somewhat different, more psychological, level than the other two, will be discussed in some length in the epilogue to Chapter 2. An important problem with the usage of this term is the tendency to approach the new cultural forms emerging in border zones in a celebratory tone that seems to presuppose a privileged cosmopolitanism.[205] While the positive and 'enabling' approach of proponents of all three concepts is laudable in itself, it does not always match the circumstances of marginality and power inequality under which many 'diasporic subjects' find themselves.[206] *Diaspora* as a concept has been criticised for its implied ongoing orientation towards a common past, its '[privileging] the point of "origin" in constructing identity and solidarity.'[207] The political deployment of the term (by both 'diasporas' themselves and sending countries seeking to safeguard their overseas interests) can also complicate its academic usage. Finally, the concept of *transnationalism* is

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translation in the late twentieth century, 1997; W. Kraus, *The narrative negotiation of identity and belonging*, 2006; S. Hall et al., *Thinking the diaspora: Home-thoughts from abroad*, 1999; J. Hutnyk, *Hybridity*, 2010; S. Bose, *Home and Away: Diasporas, Developments and Displacements in a Globalising World*, 2008; Bose 2008.

203 E.g. A. Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting identities*, 1996, p. 180; S. Mallett, *Understanding home: a critical review of the literature*, 2004; Clifford 1994, pp. 307–308; Bose 2008, p. 119; Hutnyk 2010; Salih 2003, pp. 5–10; A.M. Fortier, *Migrant belongings: memory, space, identity*, 2000, p. 146; P. van der Veer, *'The Enigma of Arrival': Hybridity and Authenticity in the Global Space*, 2000.

204 Anthias 1998, p. 566.

205 See also: Bhatia 2013, p. 249 ; Anthias 1998, p. 571.

206 See also: Anthias 1998, pp. 558, 568.

207 Anthias 1998, p. 558. See also e.g. Brah 1996, p. 182; U. Fuhrer, *Cultivating minds: identity as meaning-making practice*, 2004; Fortier 2000, pp. 17–18; Clifford 1994, p. 305; Baumann

problematic both because it has undergone serious inflation, frequently being used as a cover term to describe processes that seem international rather than transnational, and because it can lead to the overstressing of the importance of transnational processes in migrants' daily lives. To turn to my own research for an example, although my informants certainly move between and identify with more than one national setting, it would be stretching things to claim that their daily lives 'depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders'[208] or take place in a 'single social field'[209] that spans across borders.[210]

In defence of transnationalism, Levitt has argued that members of the 'second generation' especially may not be active transnationals in early life but do accumulate the resources that enable them to become transnationally active in later life stages.[211] More fundamentally, elsewhere she stresses that transnationalism does not mean that we should be 'interested only in dynamics that cross and go beyond or between nations or states', but rather that we let go of the idea that our units of action and analysis are prestructured by national borders.[212]

As such a defence already implies, to what extent a general critique of a conceptual tool applies, always depends on its specific usage. Different authors have managed in varying degrees to circumvent pitfalls in their definitions and operationalisations of diaspora, hybridity and transnationalism. Some of the best work dealing with migration which I encountered takes one or several of these concepts as their point of departure.[213] While I feel that this is mainly due to the individual scholars' *nuance*d and comprehensive approach (rather

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2000, p. 327; S. Bhatia & A. Ram, *Culture, hybridity, and the dialogical self: Cases from the South Asian diaspora*, 2004, p. 226.

208 N. Glick-Schiller, L. Basch & C.S. Blanc, *From immigrant to transmigrant: Theorizing transnational migration*, 1995, p. 48.

209 N. Glick-Schiller, L. Basch, & C. Szanton-Blanc, *Toward a transnational perspective on migration*, 1992, p. 2.

210 Cf. Hilje van der Horst, who concludes that 'Though it is tempting to view such dwellings through the lens of transnationalism, my fieldwork did not convince me that what was at work was transnational social space.': van der Horst 2008, p. 106. In a study of more recent, female Moroccan migrants to Italy, Salih on the contrary convincingly shows how in this particular context, with high levels of material and legal uncertainty, transnational ties are much more dominant and decisive in the understanding of these women's identity construction: Salih 2003.

211 Levitt & Waters 2002, p. 22.

212 P. Levitt, *Transnationalism*, 2010, pp. 40–41.

213 E.g. Salih 2003; Ang 1994; Ang 1994; P. Basu, *Route Metaphors of 'Roots-Tourism' in the Scottish Highland Diaspora*, 2004.

than inherent in the terms that they have chosen to employ), we have to acknowledge the great contribution scholarship in diaspora/transnationalism/hybridity has made in de-essentialising the field of migration studies. Without making substantive use of the terms myself, I do place my own work in the same research tradition.

That being said, for my own project as well as in general, I feel that the concept of home has several advantages over the ones discussed above. Even more than the latter, 'home' can function as an open heuristic device to probe the lived experiences of migrants without too many presuppositions about the emic relevance of labels and categorisations. It allows us to investigate how the personal experiences of individual migrants may or may not be characterised by (hybrid) newness and difference, (transnational) simultaneity or (diasporic) longing and collective identification.[214] While questions of home are highly relevant in migration (or, if you like, diasporic) settings, the concept has a universal appeal.[215] It thereby helps us to avoid the pitfall of setting migrant experience apart a priori as incomparable with that of non-migrants, and of interpreting all of migrants' experiences and identifications in terms of their migrant background. At the same time, it does not make us blind to the specificity of migrant experience either. Moreover, as an analytical tool that is derived from a deeply emic term, 'home' boasts a density of meaning that sets it apart from the more intellectually rooted concepts of hybridity, transnationalism and even diaspora.

4 Identity Through Narrative and Dialogue

4.1 *Introduction*

Home as an anthropological tool of analysis, I have just argued, offers a particularly open and non-essentialist perspective on questions of (migrant) identity. For a better understanding of identity, I have greatly profited from psychological insights in narrative identity construction and the dialogical character of the self. A key figure regarding the latter is Hubert Hermans, whose 'Dialogical Self Theory' is particularly useful for both theorising and

214 Cf. P. Levitt, *Roots and routes: understanding the lives of the second generation transnationally*, 2009, p. 1227.

215 Although Brah argues that diaspora space 'as a conceptual category is 'inhabited' not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous', this is much less directly evident than in the case of home: Brah 1996, p. 181.

analysing identity, home and meaning-making in a diasporic context.[216] He argues that an individual's 'I' should not be seen as a stable core, but rather as a space (a self-space) within which the 'I' can take different positions, so-called I-positions. In the following quote, Hermans presents his understanding of identity as a dialogical and narrative process: 'The I fluctuates among different and even opposed positions, and has the capacity imaginatively to endow each position with a voice so that dialogical relations between positions can be established. The voices function like interacting characters in a story, involved in a process of question and answer, agreement and disagreement. Each of them has a story to tell about his or her own experiences from his or her own stance. As different voices, these characters exchange information about their respective Me's, resulting in a complex, narratively structured self.'[217]

The theoretical framework which Hermans has developed over the years, based on this understanding of identity processes as quite literally situated both temporally and spatially, has proven a valuable resource in various settings. Hetty Zock has succinctly described a number of features of Dialogical Self Theory (DST), which can serve to summarise the main qualities of the theory for my own purposes: 'self processes are inherently a. sociocultural, embodied and materializing in space and time; b. plural, complex and dynamic; c. hierarchically ordered and involved in power relationships; and d. narratively structured and expressed'.[218] This enumeration evokes a number of aspects which I see as key features of the concept of home, thereby helping us to understand why home and DST form such a good match.[219] It also points at life stories, seen as 'personal constructions based on the cultural options and material that individuals and groups have at hand', as an evident starting point for my research.[220] In life story interviews, room is provided for a multiplicity of voices to take the stage, furthering insight in the relational nature of identity and the interwovenness of the social and the personal,

216 Cf. Bhatia & Ram 2004, p. 226; T.H. Zock, *Het Dialogische Zelf: Identiteit Als Dialoog Tussen Collectieve Stemmen*, 2008; Buitelaar 2014.

217 H.J.M. Hermans, *The Dialogical Self: Toward a Theory of Personal and Cultural Positioning*, 2001.

218 T.H. Zock, *Religious Voices in the Dialogical Self. Towards a Conceptual-Analytical Framework on the Basis of Hubert Hermans's Dialogical Self Theory*, 2013, p. 16, see also Buitelaar & Zock 2013, p. 3.

219 Cf. Bhatia & Ram 2004, p. 226.

220 Buitelaar & Zock 2013, p. 3; see also A.D. Christensen & S.Q. Jensen, *Doing Intersectional Analysis: Methodological Implications for Qualitative Research*, 2012, p. 114.

both of which can only be understood when taking into account power structures on various levels.[221] All of these features reappear throughout the chapters of this book, in which I also elaborate on and make use of some more specific aspects of DST. In the remaining part of this section, the focus lies on identity as narratively structured[222] – the other features from Zock's enumeration will be briefly discussed as issues within the field of narrative identity theory. To conclude, I will address the relationship between narrative identity theory and actual biographical narratives and present life story interviewing as my preferred method.

4.2 *Narrative Identity*

For this work, I was inspired by the broad field of narrative identity theories[223] which build upon the insight that 'As far as human affairs are concerned, it is above all through narrative that we make sense of the wider, more differentiated, and more complex texts and contexts of our experience.'[224] What makes a narrative perspective so attractive is that it allows us to focus, in the words of Lucius-Hoene and Depperman, on 'people's living in temporal structures, striving for meaningfulness, interpreting experiences in plots and fostering a sense of personal development.'[225] Individuals answer the question of identity, 'who am I?' by formulating autobiographical narratives.[226] In their

221 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 32; Ghorashi 2003b, pp. 32–33.

222 Cf. H.J.M. Hermans, *Conceptions of self and Identity: Toward a Dialogical View*, 2001, p. 50.

223 See the literature references in this subsection for a number of authors on narrative identity theory. DST has quite some overlap with these theories but, as we will see later on, also differs on some points. Hermans himself describes his dialogical understanding of the self as a next stage, superseding a narrative perspective: H.J. Hermans, *Moving through three paradigms, yet remaining the same thinker*, 2006.

224 J. Brockmeier & R. Harré, *Narrative: problems and promises of an alternative paradigm*, 1997, p. 264. See also McAdams 1993, p. 27. See also U. Popp-Baier, *'It Can't Be As Beautiful in Heaven As It Is Here'. Religious Turbulence in Christoph Schlingensief's Cancer Diary*, 2013, pp. 150–151.

225 G. Lucius-Hoene & A. Depperman, *Narrative Identity Empiricized: A Dialogical and Positioning Approach to Autobiographical Research Interviews*, 2000, p. 200; see also McAdams 1993.

226 Cf. Prins 2006: 'Identity cannot be grasped by a list of characteristics that informs us about the "what" of a person. It is about "who" someone is, and that, as Hannah Arendt (1998) aptly remarked, can only be shown through storytelling.' See also, e.g., D.P. McAdams, *Personality, Modernity, and the storied self: A contemporary framework for studying persons*, 1996; Verkuyten 2010, p. 43; Buitelaar 2009, p. 34.

life stories, they bring together their self-understandings in narrations about how through their pasts they have become who they are at present, and how this relates to their future expectations. Such situated stories, which can be told to oneself and to others, are continually revised in order to give meaning to one's life and person from the standpoint of the present.[227] They do not only reflect how we interpret and evaluate our selected memories, but also constitute a dynamic frame of reference from which to give meaning to new experiences. Stories like this are also referred to as 'self-narratives', in the sense of both being about the self and constructing the self.[228] In self-narratives people can bring together not only their past, present and future in meaningful ways, but also different aspects or dimensions of their lives and selves. The narrative form is considered as best suited to express human complexity: integrating articulations of uniqueness as well as connectedness; accommodating both a felt need for coherence and the given of ambivalence and change.

Understood in narrative terms, identity appears as something that we do rather than have.[229] While always embedded in social time and space, in this day and age identity is to be seen at least partly as forged by agentic individuals themselves.[230] Indeed, narrative approaches speak of identity as a process (rather than as a given entity), referring both to narrative identity as a reflexive project continually taking shape in context, and to the process of telling, in which narrators position themselves towards actual or virtual audiences. This process, as Ghorashi explains, 'in which identity is shaped and reshaped [,] occurs through an interaction between change and continuity.'[231] The accommodation of both change and continuity is an important function of life narratives.[232] While most authors will agree on this point, there is a related issue that provokes more debate: the tension between coherence and multiplicity.

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227 Cf. Kraus 2006, p. 104.

228 Cf. R. Faux, *Reflections: Doing Biographical Research*, 2003.

229 Cf. Kraus 2006; Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000, p. 220; M. Bamberg, *Is There Anything Behind Discourse? Narrative and the Local Accomplishment of Identities*, 1999, p. 226; Ghorashi 2003b, p. 30.

230 Although I also make use of the term 'identity construction', I have to agree with Polkinghorne that this term is somewhat misleading because 'the term connotes that the process is more of a consciously directed effort than is the case.' (D.E. Polkinghorne, *Explorations of narrative identity*, 1996, p. 365).

231 Ghorashi 2003b, p. 27.

232 Cf. Verkuyten 2010, p. 44.

4.3 *Personal and Social, Structure and Agency*

The idea of a multivoiced self, besides implying a multiplicity of 'inner' voices, also takes down the absolute divide between an inner and an outside world, between self and other. Power dynamics enter an extended self in which internal dialogues are entangled with external ones.[233] An aspect of DST which I will dwell on in more length in Chapter 4 is the idea of collective voices within the self as part of an individual's position repertoire. For now, what I would like to stress is that this theory, in the words of Zock, 'is a culture-sensitive psychology which emphasizes that self and society, i.e., inner-psychic and sociocultural processes, are closely interconnected and can only be studied in their mutual interaction.'[234]

Life narratives are at once highly personal and deeply cultural.[235] They bring to light the 'tension between uniqueness and sociocultural influences'.[236] According to Buitelaar, 'identification processes are informed by specific combinations of personal and societal circumstances',[237] and individuals 'speak through the collective voices of the various groups to which they belong, using the rules, conventions and worldviews held by these groups. Since individuals apply these discourses in their own specific context, they are simultaneously co-producers of those collective voices.'[238] The toolkit of shared meanings, which informs one's 'personal reconstructions of cultural external voices',[239] is employed, interpreted, re-created and challenged by individuals who use it to make sense of their own subjective reality. In this study, I show that a narrative, dialogical perspective is particularly helpful in preventing individual everyday agency to fall off the scientific radar.[240]

At the same time, we do not want to ignore the fact that individuals are always embedded in a social context that comes with systematic power structures and that we depend on shared meanings both in how we perceive and make sense of our own experiences and in how we communicate them

233 Cf. Zock 2008, p. 6; Buitelaar & Zock 2013, p. 7.

234 Zock 2013, p. 11.

235 Cf. Rosenwald & Ochberg 1992, p. 2; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber 1998, p. 9.

236 H. Alma & H. Zock, *I and Me: The Spiritual Dimension of Identity Formation*, 2002, p. 1.

237 Buitelaar 2010, p. 180.

238 Buitelaar 2010, p. 166; see also I.E. Josephs, *'The Hopi in Me': The Construction of a Voice in the Dialogical Self from a Cultural Psychological Perspective*, 2002, p. 170.

239 Zock 2013, p. 19.

240 Cf. N. Gültekin, L. Inowlocki & H. Lutz, *Quest and Query: Interpreting a Biographical Interview with a Turkish Woman Laborer in Germany*, 2003; Leurs 2012, p. 156; Buitelaar 2014; Buitelaar & Zock 2013, p. 2.

towards others.[241] To make use of another insightful formulation by Buitelaar: 'Much as we can bend the meanings of words that relate to established rules, conventions, and world views, if our self-representations are to be understood by others they must remain oriented towards the specific conceptual horizon of our listeners. The freedom of narrators to shape their own stories is therefore far from absolute.'[242] Stories about social exclusion, which I will analyse later on, distinctly bring this point home. Indeed, the narrative form is also particularly suited to trace the impacts of what Prins refers to as 'multiple axes of inequality'.[243] Examining the issue of home in personal narratives means recognising the reality of power structures as well as the possibility of agency and the pervasiveness of subjectivity.[244]

4.4 *Coherence and Multiplicity*

Coherence and sameness have long been seen as key aspects of identity. McAdams, a major player in the field of narrative identity, stresses the integrative power of life story telling, arguing that 'ultimately we seek unity as much as diversity. We seek to be one thing, for the story, no matter how complex, must still be the single story for a single life.'[245] Hermans, on the other hand, mainly endeavours to point out the centripetal forces at work in identity narratives and the fundamental multiplicity of the self. In this vein, Raggatt has argued that a focus on unity and coherence results in 'reducing the complex heterogeneity of a narrative'.[246]

This emphasis on coherence on the one side and multiplicity on the other may be seen as the extremes of a continuum rather than irreconcilable

241 Cf. Brockmeier & Harré 1997, p. 266; Buitelaar 2013a, p. 270; Bhatia 2013, p. 233; H.J.M. Hermans & G. Dimaggio, *Self, identity, and globalization in times of uncertainty: A dialogical analysis*, 2007.

242 Buitelaar 2013a, p. 245. See also Ghorashi 2003b, p. 35: 'Not just multiplicity based on choices but a limited multiplicity based on choices within available discourses', and D.P. McAdams, *The problem of narrative coherence*, 2006, p. 111: 'Whatever the motive or function behind the storytelling effort, the entire scenario falls apart if the audience cannot make sense of what the performer conveys.'.

243 Prins 2006, p. 282.

244 Cf. Buitelaar & Zock 2013, p. 2; Ghorashi 2003b, p. 35; Salih 2003, pp. 154–155.

245 McAdams 1993, p. 122, see also McAdams 1996, p. 306; Rosenwald & Ochberg 1992, pp. 5–6.

246 Raggatt 2006, p. 15. On the next page Raggatt proposes that 'The life story is really more like a conversation of narrators, or perhaps a war of historians in your head (…) instead of one story there are an array of possible starting places and stories that are oriented in space as well as time.'

opposites. Still it remains hard to reconcile the views of the two main players in this field of tension, Hermans and McAdams[247] – despite the fact that both have also tried to accommodate the other extreme in their work.[248] McAdams, for example, introduces 'imagoes' which, though a far cry from Hermans's 'voices', serve to act out central tensions in the life story and personify different aspects of the self.[249] Hermans, on the other hand, at times recognises coherence, as long as it is not promoted at the expense of multiplicity.[250] Together with Salgado he writes: 'In our view, unity and multiplicity of the self are two simultaneous by-products of a dialogical existence.'[251] Reflecting on the problem of coherence in Hermans's work, Zock engages with the issue more extensively than Hermans himself and, amongst other things, points at the importance of narrative capacities as well as his idea of a meta-position as ways to bring coherence and subjectivity into DST.[252] While she recognises both sides of the continuum in Hermans's work, it is clear where he himself lays the emphasis.[253] In my own analysis I tend towards Hermans's stress on multiplicity, but I do wish to take into account the human *desire* for coherence

247 E.g.: compare Hermans 2000, p. 224 'an autobiographical interview may reasonably lead to the construction of a set of incoherent narratives.' to McAdams 2006, p. 117 'a narrative that successfully integrates a life in time – is "better" than one that does not.'

248 E.g. Hermans 2000; McAdams 2006.

249 See McAdams 1993, p. 122: 'Modern life invites us to be many things. Our life stories welcome the debut and development of a wide cast of characters.' In a later article which explicitly addresses 'the problem of coherence', McAdams qualifies the criterion of coherence for a 'good' life story, but maintains the importance of a certain coherence on several levels. In this article he refers to Hermans, not as an antagonist, but as a theorist who, while foregrounding multiplicity, 'suggests that a kind of self-coherence can nonetheless be realized in the multivocal dialogue itself. Different voices, or I-positions, assert their separateness and autonomy, Hermans maintains, but they may also be seen as working together by virtue of participating in the same self-defining conversation.' See McAdams 2006, p. 119.

250 E.g.: 'It is my thesis that the construction of a coherent grand story makes sense only after the self's multiplicity and fragmentation is articulated, so that the resulting insight into the contrasts and contradictions of alternative stories may result in a "coherence of incoherences".' – Hermans 2000.

251 J. Salgado & H.J.M. Hermans, *The return of subjectivity: from a multiplicity of selves to a dialogical self*, 2005, p. 10.

252 E.g. Zock 2008, p. 6; T.H. Zock, *The Existential Sense of Self in a Culture of Multiplicity: Hubert Hermans's Theory of the Dialogical Self*, 2011, p. 172; H.S. Becker, *Tricks of the trade: how to think about your research while you're doing it*, 1998; C.C. Marcus, *House as a mirror of self: exploring the deeper meaning of home*, 1995.

253 Zock 2013, p. 17.

and the 'integrating power of narrative in the sense used by McAdams' (as well as the socio-cultural *demand* for a certain coherence for individual stories to be considered as convincing).[254] While consisting of plural stories narrated through a multiplicity of voices, the life stories I collected seemed to provide my interlocutors with a certain *sense* of coherence.[255]

4.5 *Identity – Life Story – Interview*

Ideas of narrative identity can hold a certain ambivalence: is this something that only 'exists' in the act of telling, or is there some kind of underlying psychic structure? And how does the abstract concept of 'narrative identity' relate to actual life narratives? McAdams, champion of the life story as method and theory, presumes that modern adults have a 'personal myth' which they continually revise.[256] He sees biographical interviewing as an attempt to come as close to this underlying myth as possible.[257] Other authors are more prudent regarding this point or deny that there is such a thing as an underlying life story.[258] In my view, the idea of one underlying 'grand narrative' is an illusion that is hard to sustain if we understand identity as fundamentally dialogically constructed. Life stories are inherently contextual, told in a specific place and time and directed towards certain (real or imagined) audiences. All of this influences which of multiple I-positions are foregrounded, or marginalised, in the remembering and telling. To the more general question 'is narrative identity something that only "exists" in the act of telling, or is there some kind of underlying psychic structure?' my own answer would be a non-committal 'a bit of both' – every telling of life narratives is in itself an act of meaning generation, but this does not preclude that the telling can also be guided by a stock of available resources.[259]

Regardless of the status ascribed to narrative identity as a theoretical concept, authors generally agree that we can try to gain insight into this concept through the analysis of concrete autobiographical narratives.[260] Even Hermans, although he generally focuses on dialogical processes rather than on the

254 Raggatt 2006, p. 21. See also McAdams 2006, p. 123.

255 Indeed, Ghorashi describes the advantage of a narrative approach to identity as allowing for 'having different selves and still being able to see the self as a coherent story' – Ghorashi 2003b, p. 30. See also Brah 1996, pp. 123–124.

256 McAdams 1993, p. 12; McAdams 1996, p. 307.

257 McAdams 1993, p. 20.

258 E.g. Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000, p. 206; Raggatt 2006, p. 21; Polkinghorne 1996.

259 Cf. Lucius-Hoene 2000; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber 1998, p. 8.

260 E.g. Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000, p. 201.

life story as a specific form, has also written that '[The] individual not only orients to the world from different positions, but also brings the meanings emerging from these positions together in a multivoiced self-narrative. In this narrative the different meanings are placed as parts in a composite whole, in which one meaning or voice is accorded a more influential place than another'.[261] Life stories, told in various voices, also provide us with insights into the dialogical construction of the self.[262] In the context of life story research and narrative identity theory, theory and method are often hard to separate, and the use of a life story method has direct analytical implications.

The task of telling one's 'whole story' to an interviewer is an extraordinary one. A life story as told in an interview setting can be seen as an artificial construction in the sense that it differs from the fragmentary fashion in which most of us speak about ourselves in daily life. Lucius-Hoene and Depperman give an insightful explanation about the specificity of life story interviews which also sheds more light on the question of the status of the life story in relation to narrative identity:

> The narrator is then expected to produce a personal account of what happened and its impact on himself in chronological order, weaving his personal view, his motives and emotions, and his self-presentation into the story. (…) However, the activity of telling the entire story of one's life has no precedent in everyday communication. (…) The story he will tell may be prefigured in reflexive or even preconscious mental activities or in fragments of conversational episodes. In everyday life, however, it is hardly ever brought into speech as a whole and socialized by explicitly being told. Although every person has a corpus of personal anecdotes, key stories and stories about personal developments and accounts at his disposal, they are hardly ever linked and related to each other in an act of forming a coherent biographical 'grand story'.[263]

This bringing together of fragments from one's 'corpus' implies that life story telling is both a question of expressing what was 'already there' and of in situ narrative construction and meaning generation. The extraordinary task of life story narrating has its bearing on what Lucius Hoene and Depperman call the 'autoepistemical' process in life story interviews.[264] We have seen above that

261 Hermans & Hermans-Jansen 2003, p. 548.

262 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 32.

263 Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000, p. 204.

264 Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000, p. 205.

narrative identity is constructed through narrative. Biographical narratives, more than being 'expressions' of one's narrative identity, are to be seen as moments of extraordinary reflection and interpretation, orchestrated through intensive narrative identity construction. We 'shape the self by describing it'.[265] Telling our life story, we alter our self-understanding, gain new insights and generate fresh meanings.[266] In a life story interview, the interviewee is anything but a passive informant. Indeed, as Buitelaar argues, 'Self-narration both demands and stimulates self-reflection and self-regulation, thus fostering agency.'[267]

This extraordinary task of telling one's 'whole story' also makes the issue of coherence more precarious, as we can also see in the above quote. The desire both to understand oneself and one's life in a coherent, integrated way, and to present the interviewer with a story that is consistent and thus credible, may make a striving for coherence a stronger force in life story interviews than in other, more fragmentary forms of self-narrative.[268] At the same time, coherence also becomes harder to achieve when such a broad array of biographical material needs to be covered. This does not imply, however, that incoherence has to do with narrative incompetence. Rather, inconsistencies, ambivalences and contradictions in life narratives are a natural reflection of the multivoicedness of the self and the fact that people do not possess a coherent, closed set of opinions, self-images, motivations and memories on which to base an unambiguous account of their lives.[269] In reaction to Lucius-Hoene and Depperman, Hermans has pointed out that 'autobiographical interview may reasonably lead to the construction of a set of incoherent narratives.'[270] In this book we will see many examples of multivoicedness and 'incoherence' in the life stories which I collected myself.

4.6 *A Dialogical Approach to Interviewing*

How did this extraordinary task of telling one's 'whole story' take shape in this particular study? What voices do we need to take into account in order to understand such a story? And how can a life story-based study take into account the contextuality of identity, as well as both the human need for coherence

265 S. Wortham, *Interactional positioning and narrative self-construction*, 2000, p. 157.

266 Cf. Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000, p. 219.

267 Buitelaar 2014.

268 Cf. Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000, p. 206; Polkinghorne 1996.

269 Cf. Leydesdorff, S., 'Geheugen, getuigen en herinneren. Voorbeelden uit een onderzoek naar het Amsterdamse joodse proletariaat tussen 1918 en 1940', in: Du Bois-Reymond, M. & Wagemakers, T. (red.), *Mondelinge geschiedenis. Over theorie en praktijk van het gebruik van mondelinge bronnen*, Amsterdam 1983, 80–100.

270 Hermans 2000, p. 224.

and the complex reality of multiplicity and ambivalence? In order to answer these questions and further contextualise the findings presented in this book, let us take a closer look at this study's main research instrument: the interview, as well as at the interviewing process.

The interview format used was designed in 2008 and subjected it to continuous fine-tuning for the rest of the interviewing period. From the beginning, the interviews had a twofold structure, both in time, extending over at least two sessions, and in content. They began as life story interviews and ended as in-depth qualitative interviews, with questions that were open but much more specific. For the life story part, I adapted the format of the godfather of life story interviewing: Dan P. McAdams.[271] As noted above, I do not share McAdams' idea of a 'personal myth', and do not make use of his explanations of how different elements take shape in different developmental stages over the life course. Nevertheless, the list of questions he developed to approximate this myth provides an excellent format for other purposes as well, as it is primarily aimed towards providing an open framework that gives informants some grip and helps them oversee the extraordinary task of narrating their 'whole lives', without being directive about the actual content of the narratives.

The core metaphor of McAdams' framework is that of one's life as a book. Informants are first asked to sketch their different life 'chapters' up to the present to provide a narrative framework. This is then further developed in several ways by asking about key events, significant people, a 'script' for future life chapters and specific tensions or challenges in the present.[272] Before ending by asking about an 'overall life theme', McAdams suggests a number of questions regarding the narrator's belief system and political views in order to explore informants' 'personal ideology'. Such questions can easily be adapted to one's specific research purposes, in my case merging them with specific questions about religion I was interested in. The life story part of the interview as adapted from McAdams was particularly suited to allow informants to set their own priorities and talk about the issues most meaningful to them.

The second part of the interview consisted of a variety of questions intended to stimulate the interviewees to talk about the various meanings the notion of home could have for them. In this part, I asked various questions about the different places in which their stories were set, about their bonds with different countries and (groups of) people, but also about their houses, about objects

271 McAdams 1993; McAdams 1996; McAdams, Josselson & Lieblich 2006.

272 McAdams 1993, pp. 251–564.

that carried special significance for them, and about meaningful sensory perceptions, all of which were seen as things in and through which a sense of home is evoked. In the Netherlands, whenever possible interviews took place in informants' homes and included a 'guided tour' through the house, during which they were invited to take pictures that represented how they saw their own house.[273] As what is discussed in the course of an interview always serves as a frame of reference for the remainder of the exchange and colours what comes later,[274] the interview format was structured to lead from open through ever more specific, direct questions towards a reflection on the notion that formed the core of my research interest. All interviews were concluded with a series of questions which explicitly addressed informants' understanding of the notion of home.[275]

The foregrounding of interlocutors' own experiences and interpretations (i.e. the person-centredness) and the openness of the interview format also allows a clearer view on the *relative* importance of the themes the researcher is interested in.[276] In life story interviews it is primarily up to the narrators to set thematic priorities. Of course, this by no means implies that in life story interviews we gain 'unmediated' data – I would rather argue that the contrary applies and that narrators always take into account the interviewer, their own expectations about his or her interests, and the impression they want to make on him or her. Still, it is telling to see whether, and if so how often and in what light, certain topics are introduced more or less spontaneously, and to distinguish such 'spontaneous' statements from narrations about these topics that are formulated in response to particular questions.

In this research, for example, issues of home, roots, here and there were discussed at length by virtually all informants, confirming my expectation that these were relevant themes in their own perceptions. The topic of religion, on the contrary, received much less attention than I had anticipated. It was often treated as a subject separate from the rest of 'the story', whereas when explicitly asked about religious issues in a later stage of the interview, many

273 Sometimes, the first of the interview sessions took place in a public place, often a café or restaurant, or in an informant's office at work. In those cases, after the interview we discussed the importance of holding the second session in their home environment, and all informants but one agreed to this.

274 Cf. J. Parr, *Theoretical Voices and Women's Own Voices: The Stories of Mature Women Students*, 1998.

275 For the importance of asking participants about their own interpretations of home, see Duyvendak 2011a, pp. 37–38.

276 See also Buitelaar 2009, p. 38.

informants did state that religion played a key role in their lives.[277] The open agenda of life story interviews can therefore provide a certain 'reality check' about the relative importance of one's research interests.

During the interview, starting off with thematic questions that betrayed my particular research interests might have 'coloured' the informants' life narratives. Because I began with the life stories, the least directive part, such colouring could be reduced: for even though most informants still had some notion of my interests because of the introductory letter they had received and the questions I had asked them earlier in Morocco or Turkey, this awareness was much less acute than if it had been triggered during this very interview session.

Moreover, because we took the life stories as a starting point, later on in the answers to the more specific questions informants could refer back to the shared frame of reference which they had built up with me through narrating their life stories.[278] I believe that thanks to the trust that, knowing their story, I would not misunderstand them, people often felt less inhibited to discuss certain things with me as a relative outsider.[279] Thanks to the synergy between different parts of the interview, my interlocutors generally reported that they experienced the two sessions of the interview as logically belonging together, despite the fact that the character of the questions was different.[280]

In the course of interviewing, the interview format that was initially designed based on these general premises soon underwent certain changes that helped bring to the fore my specific focus on home as well as on the dialogical production of self-narratives. Regarding the former, I developed the image

277 Cf. de Koning 2008, p. 308.

278 I also found the life story format to have certain advantages related to the attitudes of my interlocutors. Our rapport was generally strengthened through the interaction during the interview, the personal nature of the information they shared with me and by my positioning as an unbiased but empathetic listener. The telling of one's 'whole story' and the associated self-reflection were often perceived as positive and wholesome experiences, i.e. most informants enjoyed telling me their life stories, which of course confirmed their positive attitude towards me as an interviewer and their willingness to answer further questions.

279 Being a relative outsider also has its own (dis)advantages in an interview situation, but as this is not specific for the life story format I will save it for the next section.

280 The synergy between the different elements in the interviews also continues into this book, in which all chapters deal with elements from all parts of the interviews. There is a

of one's life as a journey. In the setting of my research this metaphor had particular advantages over the book metaphor suggested by McAdams.[281] The idea of a life journey, besides providing an open starting point for the narration that provided grip without being directive, had particular advantages. While the metaphor of a book foregrounds the individual's movements through time, the image of a journey evoked both the temporal and the spatial embeddedness of individual lives. In a study focusing on home, a general sensitivity to spatial aspects is thus rather advantageous. To include a sense of social embeddedness, using the book metaphor I had referred to the idea that the book had other characters besides the main character – the narrator. This was easily transferred to the image of meeting, as well as travelling with or alongside, different persons and groups in the course of one's journey. Besides the possibilities to talk about connectedness to others in this framework, the image of a journey also suggests a more agentic stance for the one journeying – journeys take place in contexts that have their particularities and restrictions, but within these parameters, the individual decides, alone or in consultation with others, which course to take.

Another aspect that makes the journey metaphor a valuable alternative to the book metaphor is its open-endedness. The idea that we are telling the story 'en route', and the request to look ahead to future stages of the journey, came much more naturally with this metaphor than the idea that people were 'telling a book' that was not yet finished and the request to anticipate coming chapters. The image of a journey, finally, is also more open to the idea of a multiplicity of goals, projects and storylines than that of a book containing one bounded story and working towards a clear plot.

The plurality of interview forms used corresponds to my understanding of narrative identity as a process involving dialogues between a multiplicity of

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difference in stress among chapters, however, which moves in the opposite direction to the interview format: Chapters 3 and 4 make more use of information from the 'thematic' second session than Chapters 5 and 6, in which the life stories of individual informants are more prominent.

281 The book metaphor, I noticed, immediately appealed to many informants, but not to all. It was especially some of those who had received less education who had difficulties taking up the metaphor, while a few of the most reflective informants told me that they 'did not really see their lives in terms of life chapters', and proposed a division in life 'phases' instead. The principal idea of a framework was to facilitate the story telling without di-

voiced positions. Considering that both the telling of life narratives and the setting of being interviewed can lead to the privileging of integration tendencies, as interviewer I am particularly keen to find ways that allow space for multiplicity and paradox. In several ways, I see my interview format as facilitating the telling of multivoiced narratives and the foregrounding of a variety of different I-positions. The simple fact that the sessions took place at different moments already allowed informants to switch between different, sometimes contradictory, positions more easily without immediately fearing that they were compromising their credibility by telling an inconsistent story. The same effect was achieved by the posing of questions from a variety of angles.

One element that proved particularly fruitful in bringing to the fore a greater variety of I-positions was the 'housing history'. This concept appealed to me for bringing together a focus on the house/home and a life course perspective. Adopting the housing history as a way to elicit narratives situated in both time and space, I soon found that asking interviewees to describe and reflect on the different houses they had lived in also brought to the fore new positions that had been absent or marginal in the preceding life stories.[282] Both in interviewing and in the subsequent analyses, the notion of home and the understanding of processes of identity construction as narrative and dialogical complemented each other in very productive ways – DST helped me to make sense of narratives on home, and questions about home helped bring to the fore the plurality of positions from which my informants understood and narrated their lives. The case of Farid tellingly illustrates how this could work out.

Farid's story illustrates how a housing history can bring to the fore the social and spatial embeddedness of the life story, stimulating the narrator to approach his or her own life from several different angles and bringing to the fore voices that had been marginalised in the 'grand narrative'.

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recting the content and I had no objection to the fact that many informants initially took up the idea of chapters only to forget about it once they got going. Still, it was of course important to start with a metaphor that everybody could relate to.

282 An added advantage of the use of a housing history became apparent in a number of interviews with people who tended to be rather concise in their answers and seemed to have little drive to construct elaborate narratives. In more than one case, the concreteness of this question appealed to them and soon got them more in the mood for elaborate storytelling, not only about the characteristics of different houses but also about the memories attached to them.

(Un)Settling Narratives: Farid's Housing History

In our first session, Farid (39, m, Moroccan) had told me a life story in which progress and improvement were crucial. 'Constructing'[283] was a main theme throughout the story. In the second session, I asked him about his housing history. His first response was consistent with the previous line of progress: The first house he remembers was a hut in a Moroccan slum. From the moment the family joined his father in the Netherlands, each house he moved into was an improvement on the last one, until he succeeded in purchasing his current house, 'in a street with no other immigrants!' Once again Farid told me a story of progress, now explicitly structured by references to his consecutive moves. His positive tone was challenged, however, when I asked him how he felt about the different houses he had lived in. He then told me how he had loved decorating and running his own place for the very first time, and how much adjustment it had taken to then share it with his new wife. The house he bought a few years later for his family, and which he still inhabits, he now described as 'one big lump of misery', reminding him of his divorce.

The topic of the house prompted Farid to talk about his life from a different perspective. A voice came to the fore that had been practically absent from his progress-oriented life story. In the following lines from the housing history part of our interview, he seems engaged in a dialogue with this other voice: 'Sure I feel at home here. But if it were up to me, I'd already have left. But the kids don't want to leave. But I see them walking about of course, my first and second wife. But then, even if you exchange your house for another one, the memories remain. (…) When you move you can really close the book. (…) Yet a building in itself doesn't do anything.'

In sum, there were several elements in my final interview design that facilitated the telling of sometimes contradictory stories from a variety of different I-positions.[284] Note that the 'normal' life stories were always already multivoiced in nature, and analysing them in terms of voices and dialogue helped me to interpret what was said. Such life narratives, however, have their

283 In Dutch: opbouwen.

284 However, unlike Hermans himself has suggested, I never invited informants, for example, to explicitly formulate different positions and speak from their perspectives.

own power dynamics, through which some voices become dominant and others are marginalised. The added value of the elements I introduced to facilitate polyphony lay in providing openings for such less dominant positions to come to the fore in other parts of the interview.

Change of Scenery? Interviewing Both 'Here' and 'There'

Understanding 'home' as a highly contextual notion, I expected it to refer, amongst other things, to settings within the two national contexts most relevant to my interviewees. Therefore, it was a key aim in my project to speak to a number of informants both in the Netherlands and during summer stays in Morocco and Turkey, in order to find out how different contexts would lead to changes of perspective and prompt people to foreground both different aspects of their notion of home and different voices in their life narratives.[285] Thus, in three consecutive summers I travelled to Morocco (2008, 2009) and Turkey (2010) in order to meet (and sometimes stay with) members of the 'target group' and learn about their perspectives, both on their summer stays in the country of 'origin' and on their lives in the Netherlands, from this perspective. The interviews conducted during these summers, were more thematic in nature than the longer, life story based interviews in the Netherlands, and were primarily intended to allow for the dialectic triangulation of data from the 'full' interviews. One interviewee was ready to meet for a full-fledged life story interview in Morocco – something I was keen to try because of the mentioned presupposition that people would foreground other I-positions and tell other (life) stories when interviewed in the 'other' country.

This idea of a regrouping of positions due to a change of perspective turned out differently from how I had expected. Upon later analysis, both of the themes discussed in interviews 'here' and 'there' and of the

(See Hermans 2000; H.J.M. Hermans, *The construction of a personal position repertoire: Method and practice*, 2001, pp. 246–247.) For me, multivoicedness is no goal in itself, nor do I intend to create an experimental setting to further develop DST. Rather, I see this theory as providing me with theoretical insights into the dynamics of identity construction, which are primarily of use for the analysis of the life stories and other narratives which people told me.

285 For the importance of this kind of multi-sited research among migrants and their descendants see, for example: R. Strijp, *Niet Zoals De Marokkanen Van Hier: Marokkaanse Migranten En Hun Bindingen Met Marokko*, 2007, p. 254; van der Horst 2008; see also Salih 2003, p. 76.

comparison between accounts of one and the same informant in two different settings, little difference emerged that could be ascribed to the different interview locations. Rather, to my surprise (and, initially, slight disappointment) it was the consistency of most stories that stood out.

Two possible factors accounting for such seeming context-independence can be found in informants' wish to tell a consistent story on the one hand, and my own person as a stable factor on the other hand. The social situation of talking to a 'Dutch' interviewer, expected to have a corresponding frame of reference, and speaking Dutch, may have been more important in establishing the 'interview setting' than the physical location of the interview. Pointing in this direction are the countless instances in which people confounded 'here' and 'there', as in Rachid's exclamation after one such slip of the tongue: '*oh, I thought we were in the Netherlands already!*' Just like home, 'context' cannot be reduced to a physical location. Besides this, there is of course the general motivation to tell a credible story, with consistency being one of the main conditions for general credibility. Dounia, for example, in later sessions regularly referred to our earlier conversations, telling me *'like I said last time, if you remember...'* – even though our second talk took place more than four months after our initial meeting in Morocco. Still, throughout this book I show how even within one interview people regularly contradict themselves. A general desire for consistency cannot alone account for the structural convergence of stories told in Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands.

More importantly, I believe that this convergence is a sign of the strong reflexivity which descendants of migrants develop through travelling to and from two different countries all of their lives. In the words of Gültekin (et al.): 'Because of their mobility, immigrants acquire reflexive biographical competence by looking at their own lives and their family members' lives from different angles and perspectives.'[286] This reflexive biographical competence, I will argue, does not only flow from migrants' mobility itself, but at least as much from being confronted with questions about home, belonging and loyalty in either country.[287]

An interview setting, which invited people to speak about their lives and homes at length and from various angles, possibly stimulated this reflexive stance. In this light, the apparent lack of divergence between stories told 'here and there' is a relevant finding in itself. Still, it meant that

286 Gültekin, Inowlocki & Lutz 2003, p. 11.

287 See e.g. Chapter 4, Section 42.3.

my journeys to Morocco and Turkey did not yield the kind of situated, contradictory narratives which I had expected to form the main added value of extending my interviewing activities to include those 'other' settings. Instead, my trips proved helpful in other ways which I had considered much less beforehand. I had met a large number of descendants of migrants who, it appeared, seemed much more open towards me as a person than they might have been had I approached them in the Netherlands.
In this sense, travelling from one country to the other did indeed trigger a change of perspective: identity categories were reformulated, and in Morocco and Turkey, rather than being seen as a (or yet another) unknown Dutch woman coming to ask all kinds of questions on sometimes sensitive issues, I was welcomed as a fellow Dutchman, and one with a particular interest in 'their' country, at that. A very basic advantage of my fieldwork trips therefore turned out to be the fact that it was much easier to find people willing to participate in my research in Morocco and Turkey where, moreover, they were more at leisure to sit down and talk to me. Thus, my journeys also helped establish good and trusting relationships with the people I interviewed, as well as giving them, and myself, a certain sense of a shared frame of reference.[288]

4.7 *It Takes Two to Talk – Engaging in Interview Dialogues*

Next to my endeavour to engage different I-positions of my interviewees in the interview process, I had to take into account my own positions as well. Farid was one of the first people I interviewed. Like many who came after him, after our interview he wanted to talk about me for a change. He asked how many people I was planning to interview, and then said: 'Just imagine Femke: when you have finished you will have about thirty people that you are a bit related to!

288 Adding to the great value of my field trips both in the light of subsequent interviewing in the Netherlands and in terms of the interviews I conducted there, in the course of this book I will also discuss a number of insights deriving from my interactions with holidaying Dutch Turks and Moroccans. In the way they approached me as a representative of 'the Dutch', for example, it was mainly people in Morocco who showed an eager concern about what I thought about the country and the people, and expressed hopes that I would help correct the bad image their countrymen had in the Netherlands. In Turkey such issues seemed much less relevant, and my good opinion of the country was often considered self-evident.

Now who can say about themselves that they have thirty families?'[289] I was touched by his remark, both because I agreed with him that it is a great privilege to be allowed into the worlds of the people I interviewed, and because his words suggested that he himself now considered me as, in a way, family. Farid's words and the metaphor of family have remained with me throughout the research process, for several reasons. The idea of 'becoming like family' illustrates that the transactions of interviewing and especially life story telling create some kind of relationship between the narrator and the listener/interviewer. Also, as with family, this relationship is not without tensions. Family can stand for warmth and support as well as entanglement and expectations.

Finally, while I am sure that not all informants would agree with Farid's words (which themselves were probably intended as general words of kindness as much as anything else), these remind us that our informants always develop certain images of us as a person and of our relationship. These images are relevant for interview 'outcomes', as life narratives are always 'co-constructed in a particular social context'.[290] In an interview setting, this social situatedness is particularly relevant. The interviewer becomes a co-author through the interlocutors' 'explicit or implicit positioning activities towards the interviewer'[291] which are informed by their own interpretation of the interviewer's person and aims.[292]

Awareness of and reflexivity on the performative setting of the interview is crucial. Yet the fact that life story accounts are always dialogically constructed, and therefore crucially influenced by the interview circumstances, need not be problematic in itself. Rather than seeing the social setting of the interview as 'interfering' with the collection of 'unbiased' data, the social setting is

289 In Dutch: 'Dertig mensen die een beetje familie van je zijn!'.

290 A. Thorne & M. Latzke, *Contextualizing the storied self*, 1996, p. 374.

291 Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000, p. 213.

292 Moreover, an interview setting brings along specific asymmetries in power and knowledge, with the interviewer setting the agenda and asking questions based on background knowledge that is, at best, only partly accessible to the interviewee. This power inequality continues after the interview, as the researcher is the one deciding how to analyse the interview and present it to a larger audience. The power inequality that is built into every interview situation may, however, be less poignant in life story interviews because of the explicit focus on the interviewee's experience and point of view and the open nature of the questions. This makes life story interviewing attractive from a moral point of view. While the interviewer is still the one determining the agenda and the theoretical expert, the interviewee is also approached as an expert: as the one person most knowledgeable about his own life and experience. By explicitly approaching my interlocutors in these terms, during my interviews I have strived towards a somewhat more even-handed interview dialogue.

a necessary constituent in a process of meaning generation.[293] Indeed, when we see narrative identity as inherently dialogical and situational, we realise that it can only be studied through situational dialogue. As a consequence, seeing the interview setting as a specific social situation will enhance rather than hamper our analysis.

The narratives I recorded have to be understood as narratives people *told me*. They addressed me as well as several other, more implicit, audiences. These audiences consisted both of the internal and external positions in dialogue with which their multivoiced narratives were told, and of the readers of this book, all as we were perceived or anticipated by the narrator. To bring to light the inherently dialogical nature of the data presented in this book, let me reflect on my own role as a dialogue partner and as a specific audience for the narratives of my informants.[294]

In my interactions with the people who participated in this project, I was perceived and addressed alternately in terms of sameness and otherness. I also played an active role in my so-called identity or impression management and presented or positioned myself in ways that made me more or less of an insider or outsider in relation to my interlocutors.[295] Taking seriously the fact that all the narratives were to a certain extent the dialogical co-production of the narrators and myself, let me consider how I was positioned both by myself and by those I interviewed.[296]

My position as a researcher comes in dialogue with, and in the modality of, other positions of myself: a young woman of a certain background, in a certain life stage and with certain interests and a certain outlook on life, and a diasporic subject myself. All of these aspects or positions intersected in various ways depending on circumstances and cannot be understood separately from the social settings in which they were addressed. It always depended on the interview partner and the situation which of my intersecting identities would enter the dialogue and in what ways. Some positions, however, were highlighted more frequently during the interview process, both implicitly

293 Cf. Lucius-Hoene & Depperman 2000, p. 206; Rosenwald & Ochberg 1992, p. 3.

294 For the importance of reflexivity for one's 'self as a researcher' see e.g. Ghorashi 2003b, p. 237.

295 E.g. M. Hammersley & P. Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in practice*, 1995; R. Tewksbury & P. Gagné, *Assumed and presumed identities: Problems of self-presentation in field research*, 1997.

296 It may be important to note that the lion's share of explicit dialogues about me and my positions which I report in this section took place in the margins of research encounters: before and after rather than during the interview sessions. These conversations were important sources of information about informants' attitudes towards me that remained

and explicitly. These positions generally evolved around shifting axes of self and other, most of all my ethnic and national identification. There was surprising flexibility in the ways I was positioned by interviewees during our encounters – a slipperiness which resonates with the way they categorised themselves.[297]

I recruited informants who fitted a certain preconceived category in which I was interested: descendants of Moroccan or Turkish migrants to the Netherlands. While I am not a member of this category, I do have my own migration history, having only moved to the Netherlands from Germany at the age of nine. This allowed me to take a specific insider-outsider position, as I was neither a member of the category under research, nor of the unmarked category of native Dutch. I found it important that informants knew about this, both because of the frequency with which Moroccan and Turkish Dutch are currently discursively opposed to native Dutch, and because my migration history implied that to some extent we shared a diasporic frame of reference. In the actual dialogues with informants, they would at some times recognise and value these commonalities, while at others they would stress the difference between my experiences and theirs. One man, for example, told me 'you may be a migrant, but old ladies don't grasp their purses more firmly when they meet *you* on the street!' Indeed, I do not have the same 'immigrant shadow' that is so hard to escape for my informants.[298,299] Germans belong to the category of 'western allochthones' that is perceived as unproblematic.[300] Finally, although we shared much laughter as I told people about my frustrations in getting my residence permit renewed, as an EU citizen I also have a much more secure legal status than, for example, some of the informants' spouses.

While I was sometimes addressed as a fellow migrant or as a different kind of migrant, at other times I was explicitly positioned as Dutch. The label 'Dutch', however, could in itself function as a marker of sameness as well as difference. Dutch could mean 'one of them' and be used to stress my otherness and my limited understanding of an informant's situation. But it could also

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more implicit during the interviews themselves as those focused on them and their own stories.

297 See the upcoming chapters, in particular Section 24.22 in Chapter 2.

298 For the term 'immigrant shadow' see Eijberts 2013.

299 Indeed, most people are surprised when I tell them that there are as many Germans in the Netherlands as there are Turks or Moroccans. See CBS Statline.

300 There is, moreover, a difference in class. Unlike myself, nearly all of those I spoke to were upwardly mobile as compared to their parents, most of whom had received little formal schooling. Except for one informant, whose father was a political refugee, all those interviewed were the children of so-called guest workers.

mean 'one of us'. During interviews, this was sometimes made explicit when people stressed that they were 'just like me', refusing to agree with the structural othering they experience in Dutch society. More strongly it came to the fore during my field trips to Morocco.[301] There I was consistently addressed and welcomed as a fellow Dutch.[302] Moroccan Dutch I met were often surprised but enthusiastic to meet me and exclaimed things like 'I can't believe you speak Dutch' or 'oh wow, how's the weather back home?' In Morocco more than in the Netherlands, our common Dutch background became a factor that united us and distinguished us from the resident Moroccans around us.

What also sometimes occurred in both contexts, but most frequently in Morocco and Turkey, was that at moments when people self-identified as Moroccan or Turkish as opposed to Dutch, I was awarded some kind of honorary membership of the in-group. When complaining, for instance, about the Dutch and their prejudices, people would say 'for you it's different, you have been here, you have seen the people, you know that we are not like that'. In a similar way, people could also sometimes emphasise my Dutch identity, because this made it more relevant and also more special that I would take an interest in them or in 'their' country and culture in general. Thus I could, positively or derogatively, be labelled as German, Dutch or migrant, and positioned as an insider or an outsider based on each of these labels. At times when I was asked about my religious background I identified as Christian, religiosity became another dimension on which I could be perceived both as same, a fellow believer, and, less frequently, as other, a non-Muslim.[303] However, the theme of my religiosity remained much less of an issue than that of my ethnicity.

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301 This was one of the few aspects on which there was a clear difference between the groups of Turkish and Moroccan descent. See Chapter 3, Section 34.44 under the heading 'Turkish vs. Moroccan: divergent backgrounds, converging stories'.

302 Ruba Salih reports similar experiences during her fieldwork in both Italy and Morocco: Salih 2003, p. 23.

303 The issue of religion raises the question of how much a researcher should 'disclose' of their personal views during research. Preventing one's person from 'colouring' the research findings more than necessary is a question of reflective dialogicality rather than of maintaining an illusion of neutrality. Especially in a politically charged research context, a stance of complete neutrality is not only impossible but can even be harmful. Not speaking out for example, when the issue came up in a conversation outside the formal interview, against xenophobe and Islamophobe tendencies in Dutch society could, for example, have planted a seed of suspicion about my motives and integrity as a researcher. While I kept my particular political opinions to myself at least until after the final interview session, I made no secret of my disapproval of the polarisation in Dutch debates on issues of migration and integration.

To conclude this section, let me note that it is not only the process of interviewing in itself that is to be seen in dialogical terms. This process is also the starting point for a wide range of internal and external dialogues of both those interviewed and me as an interviewer. The dialogical endeavour of (life story) interviewing leaves none of the dialogue partners as they were. Sometimes the interviews had rather direct, observable effects that show that we cannot study social reality without changing it. In our first session, Ozan had told me that although he regularly travelled to Turkey, he had not visited his town of origin in years because he felt alienated from his family members who still lived there. In our second meeting he told me: *Lately I was thinking, after the interview: hey, I could always just go to Mersin and stay in a hotel. As if there's only one house in all of Mersin, my granddad's, where I have to stay, so to speak.* (…) *The nice thing about the interview is that it really does get you thinking* (laughs). *Like, setting the family in Mersin aside, it's also just a really beautiful place that you can visit as a tourist.* The interview questions about Ozan's ties to Turkey had started an internal dialogue and a process of repositioning towards his parental hometown. The research subject was changed through the research itself.

CHAPTER 2

Country-talk

1 Introduction

Much thinking and talking about migrant identity concentrates on the fact that migrants and their descendants relate to more than one country. This chapter focuses on my interlocutors' descriptions of Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands. I see participants' 'country-talk' as a form of 'identity-talk'. Narratives about Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands tell us about the complex and dynamic ways in which, from multiple positions, individuals identify with these countries – or rather, identify with certain aspects of them, while distancing themselves from others. Participants in this research themselves paid much attention to the Netherlands and Morocco or Turkey when talking about their lives and homes, both spontaneously and in reaction to my questions. How descendants of migrants relate to these countries is a question that occupies themselves as well as those within their social surroundings.

To access their identity-talk, I enquire into individuals' *relationships to countries* rather than into their ethnic or *national identities*. My focus on home and on countries makes it easier to foreground the relational nature of identifications and steer away from the essentialist trap. The vocabulary of 'relating' to a country is active and dynamic almost by definition, in contrast to the more static formulations of 'being' Moroccan/Dutch/Turkish or 'having' a certain ethnic identity. Indeed, one of the great advantages of home as an analytical tool is that the hasty attachment of all kinds of labels, ethnic or other, without asking about their relevance to the people labelled, is rendered redundant.[1]

Correspondingly, in my analysis, as well as in the process of interviewing, asking about countries provided a relatively open framework. Interviewees were not primarily addressed 'as Moroccans/Turks' like they often are, but as subjects who maintain their own highly personal relationships to several countries and groups. When discussing these relationships, they almost inevitably also came to talk about the people living in these countries and about being Turkish/Moroccan and/or Dutch. But this was just one aspect, albeit an important one, in the wider scope of their complex narratives about the Netherlands, Morocco and Turkey. Stories about these countries, we will see, encompass

1 Cf. Rapport & Dawson 1998, p. 8; Eijberts 2013, p. 336.

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more than ethnicity or national identifications.[2] This is an important insight in itself when we consider how easily, in much dominant discourse, feeling attached to a country is confounded with identifying (exclusively) with its inhabitants.

In this chapter, I examine how individuals depict their country of 'origin' and the Netherlands in relation to each other and to their life (story), and ask what this tells us about their identity processes. I am interested in how they characterise the countries, i.e. the 'content' of their country-talk, as well as in its 'structure': despite the diversity and contextuality of country-talk, we will see that there are certain patterns discernable in how informants relate to the countries through their descriptions of them.[3] In the course of an interview, the same person could often be found to make contradicting statements about the characteristics of a country or about their own subjective assessment of such characteristics. The complexity of the ambivalent images thus evoked invites us to make sense of participants' stories in terms of Hermans's ideas of multivoicedness.

One overall pattern has guided the structuring of this chapter: descriptions of Morocco and Turkey are generally depicted in contrast to, or against the background of, the Dutch situation. I call this pattern the 'pairing' of countries: most narratives about the country of origin are imbued with, or at least followed by, references to the Netherlands. Contrarily, accounts of the Netherlands do not necessarily contain comparisons with the Moroccan or Turkish situation. Taking this structural pattern of 'pairing' into account, my analysis primarily focuses on descriptions of Morocco and Turkey, as these automatically also provide insight into my interlocutors' perceptions of the Netherlands. I even argue that this pattern points to the relative relevance of both countries in the lives of my informants. Morocco and Turkey, as it were, functioned as the marked categories in most interviews, which were compared to the self-evident setting of the Netherlands as the unmarked category.[4] At the same time, the emphasis on Morocco and Turkey also allows me to convey the significance which these countries *do* have for many of those I spoke to, and which is easily neglected in studies focusing exclusively on the Dutch situation.[5]

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2 People also talked about, for example, the physical environment, institutional structures, life opportunities and the weather.

3 Cf. Al-Ali & Koser 2002, p. 9.

4 Cf. Omlo 2011, p. 123.

5 The focus on narratives about Morocco and Turkey (which always imply the Netherlands) is carried on in Chapter 3 which, like the current chapter, also takes the national level as a starting point to discuss informants' perceptions of home and identity. Here in Chapter 2, I mainly examine what interviewees' country-talk, i.e. the descriptions of Morocco, Turkey and

The main argument in this chapter as well as in the next one is developed by drawing from all interviews. Parallel to it, the case of one woman will accompany us throughout both chapters. In text boxes separate from the main body of the text, the story of Naima takes up the important themes figuring in my argument, but discusses these in the context of an analysis of her own personal storyline. This dual approach illustrates how the general themes I distilled from all of my material may be woven into the complex fabrics of personal narratives.

Naima

Naima is 25 years old at the time of our first interview. Unmarried, she lives with her parents and commutes to the nearby city where she works as a researcher. Our first interview takes place in her office. When I tell her that usually I try to interview people at home, she jokingly replies that her work is her second home. Naima refuses one-dimensional categorisations; she does not want to be pinned down as 'typically' Dutch, Moroccan, female, intellectual… The only label she is willing to accept, on her own terms of course, is 'Muslim'. Her academic training as a researcher is apparent as she tells her life story in highly analytical terms. The first time she switches to a more descriptive mode is when she embarks on the subject of Morocco and her childhood holidays with her grandparents. Her parents travel to Morocco every year, and like her siblings, each year Naima makes her own decision as to whether or not to book herself a flight as well. If she does decide to go, she nowadays divides her time between her parents' house in a small town, her grandparental village, and other, larger towns where she stays with relatives.

Naima's Morocco: a case of country-talk

Naima came to the Netherlands when she was only a few years old, but recalls that the country made a favourable first impression: *everything was so green!* Remembering her first years, she tells of exciting new experiences, friendly encounters with Dutch peers and adults, and mutual curiosity about each other's backgrounds. *'I had heard that they only ate chicken*

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the Netherlands as meaningful in relation to themselves, *implies* about their personal perspectives on these countries as homes. In Chapter 4, I address their own *explicit reflections* on these countries as (im)possible homes. From my point of view, without taking into account how a person gives meaning to a country (which is what I explore in this chapter), the question whether they feel at home there (which I pose in the next chapter) becomes an empty one.

once a month or so! Haha! That's really special. Or chips or whatever, while we got chips like twice a week.' She valued growing up in a predominantly 'white' village, where although as a migrant girl she did feel different, the difference was mainly framed in terms of having a cultural 'bonus'. Even more, the village inhabitants' conservative and religious life style bore many resemblances to her own family's values, and in her eyes these often outweighed the differences. Although this harmonious picture was often disrupted as Naima pursued her educational career and widened her spatial scope, her overall picture of the Netherlands remained a positive one. Naima's case tellingly illustrates that we can learn a lot about how interviewees feel about the Netherlands from the way they present it as a contrast dimension when talking about Morocco or Turkey. Ever since they migrated, Naima and her family regularly spend their summers in Morocco. I ask her what she would like to do first if she were to take another trip right now: *'In Morocco I actually just want to be with family.* (…) *There's just something comforting about it, when you arrive you think yes, this really is my country. It's where my roots are, and I feel a certain connection because it's where I was born.* (…) *So much space, so many freedoms. And at the same time, I realise that I'm really quite constrained. Oh it's not as bad as all that, you just need to know where you stand, your responsibilities, and then you're given the freedom. But it just feels very warm. When I arrive – I'm home. Very strange.'* This quote shows both the thrill of arrival and what comes after, and illustrates the ambivalence in her stance towards the country. It also highlights the significance of her relatives.

To Naima, Morocco mainly means family. Most of her interactions in Morocco are with family, and she speaks with affection about her grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. She greatly values spending time with her relatives and appreciates the way family in Morocco 'orders' you to take time for each other. Some other characteristics of family are less appreciated though. During our first interview she anticipates next summer's main annoyance: [laughs out loud] *'You can bet that this year, yet again, they'll all be saying "Oh my god, you're turning twenty-six and you're still not married?"* [laughs out loud] *"No, I think education is important." "But you're actually already past your use-by date, so to speak."* (…) [*Y*]*ou know, marriage is such a hot topic over there, it's a constant part of daily conversation, and privately I think that I'm glad I don't live there all year round, that* (…) *I don't constantly have to talk about marriage, marriage, marriage marriage…'* Although Naima fondly recalls how as a girl she used to romanticise arranged marriages, this could not be further away

from her own current view on matrimony. Her relatives' obsession with marriage makes her very conscious of the differences between herself and them. Like many of those interviewed, Naima looks forward to her stay in Morocco and recalls the feelings of deep attachment upon arriving there, while at the same time telling me, and herself, that time and again there will also be things that alienate her from those living in Morocco. Naima's story illustrates how one may long for a remembered far-away home, but feel highly ambivalent about one's belonging there on return visits.[6]

Besides expectations about her life choices, Naima also encounters (gendered) prejudices about her 'European' lifestyle. Relatives, for example, regularly compliment her on her dancing: *' "Did you guys learn that in a disco in the Netherlands?" "Well, I'm sorry, but we don't go to those places!" I say: "What is it you think we're capable of, that we don't fear God at all?" '* Others express their doubts about whether people actually pray five times a day in the Netherlands.[7] Naima is very sensitive to questions and remarks concerning her religiosity and chastity, which is no surprise considering that gender, religion and education are central themes in her life narratives. She repeatedly mentions that although Morocco is an Islamic country, for her the Netherlands is a better place to live Islam. Precisely because Muslims are a minority there, so she says, they are more stimulated to seek knowledge about Islam and live out their faith than their Moroccan counterparts, who often take religion for granted.

Most constraints Naima mentions when talking about Morocco are gender-related. It is interesting to see that she generally underpins her position by referring to (often religious) values that are accepted by those trying to restrain her, rather than just dismissing their views as wrong altogether. When trying, for example, to convince her cousins that women should have more liberty, she does so using the religious discourse they share: *'For example, I often discuss the fact that my male cousins* (...) *are always leaving* [*their*] *sisters at home, and such.* (...) *I ask: "What are you basing that on, that your sister* (...) *couldn't behave properly* (...) *if she left the house?! I mean, Allah sees everything, right?"'* Naima also regularly refers to the concept of *sharaf*, honour. Responding to Moroccan voices both in the Netherlands and in Morocco that (might) denounce the liberties she takes as a young female, she underlines that she takes special care to

6 Salih 2003.

7 Cf. Strijp 1998, p. 250.

protect her *sharaf*, for example by not allowing men to sit next to her on the bus when travelling alone in Morocco.

For the annoyances Naima encounters are not restricted to the private sphere of the family. She finds it very frustrating, for instance, that Moroccan men seem to think that European girls are 'easy', especially when, like herself, they take the liberty of travelling alone. She explains that 'for us' travelling alone as a female is no big deal, but that 'they' think about that very differently. One time, a man asked whether he could sit next to her on a half empty bus. When she refused, he called her arrogant, asking whether she considered him her slave, just because she was European. *'I said no, I'm just correctly pointing out to you what the rules are here, and what is right for my honour. Then another man said he thought I was quite right, and the first man fell quiet straight away.'* In this incident, Naima stood up for her right to be treated with respect, just as any Moroccan girl should be treated. At the same time, she is conscious of the fact that by travelling alone she behaves differently from her Moroccan peers. At a later point during the interview Naima returns to this episode, adding that it probably went this smoothly because of her modest style of dress – had she dressed more 'western', the other passengers might have concluded 'that she was asking for it'.

Naima tries to find her own course in a landscape of conflicting values – sometimes agreeing with or yielding to the gendered expectations she encounters, sometimes challenging them and claiming her freedom. Expecting her father to take a 'Moroccan', i.e. more conservative, stance towards her travelling alone, she once went to him asking for permission to travel to a neighbouring Moroccan town. She proudly tells me that her question surprised her father. He reminded her that she always travels alone in the Netherlands. *'And so you see that my father has actually assumed the predominant mindset here in the Netherlands, that his own surprised response is that of: "Why are you even asking me this? Go!" Whereas other girls, my cousins who live there, would never dare travel alone.'* All the better for Naima, considering that she prefers to spend most of her summer time away from her parents' house, staying with family in a larger city or in the countryside. Her own town has few attractions, especially for 'European' women, who cannot even go shopping alone there.[8] This is also the reason her own brothers decided to buy holiday homes in a

8 Naima has fond memories of the vegetable market there, although she would not dream of going there now: *'As a woman you cannot really go there, especially not as a marriageable woman. The elder women do often shop there. And the girls from over there too, I have to say.*

larger city instead of staying with their parents in a town that has nothing to offer to their wives.

Naima's main holiday annoyances are also reflected in her response to the question of what she misses about the Netherlands when in Morocco: her mobility. In the Netherlands she can just take her car and drive wherever she wants and, maybe just as importantly, without everybody watching her. *'Moroccans always ask where I'm going. That's none of your business, you know. I do maintain a friendly smile, but* (…) *it's no fun. And in Morocco, it happens every step I take!'* According to Naima, this constant prying into other people's business is typically Moroccan. In the Netherlands, this is the reason she prefers to keep her distance from the Moroccan community in Ridderkerk, her Dutch hometown. In Morocco, the interference is much harder to evade. On this particular point, Naima likens Moroccans in Morocco to those in the Netherlands. More often, however, she stresses the differences in mentality between Dutch or European Moroccans on one side and 'Moroccan Moroccans' on the other. We saw this in her account of travelling alone. In many comparisons, Moroccan Dutch are presented as less conservative in their opinions on gender and other matters. But there is more:

> 'I also notice that materialism has a very strong presence there, [*in Morocco, FJS*] whereas here it's emotional things that are more important. (…) [T]hat they would sell their own grandmothers, so to speak, (…) I just find it really annoying, (…) I mean I get it, [but] (…) they think 'we need to exploit her' in a manner of speaking, they're much more materialistic. Whereas we are much less so, we're far more concerned with the emotional connection you make with someone, rather than with how much status or money they have. But I do understand it. It's part of a survival strategy.'

Naima is by no means the only one who told me that people 'over there' are 'materialistic and mean', that they are 'hard' people compared to the much 'softer' fellow Moroccan and Turkish Dutch.[9] What is typical for her approach though, is that she immediately introduces two different

But as a European woman you really should not venture into the hardcore vegetable market'. In this quote we see how she narrows down the category of women, who cannot enter the vegetable souq until it only contains young unmarried migrant women like herself.

9 See the subsection 'Hard or soft' in Section 3.2.

voices: one expressing her irritation and distancing herself from those living in Morocco, and another one articulating understanding for their stance by reminding herself of the harsh living circumstances that, in her view, provoke their behaviour. As we will see, there are many 'buts' in Naima's story. Morocco, in her words, is a beautiful but tiresome country. She sometimes identifies strongly with the country and its inhabitants, while at other times stresses the differences between them and (people like) herself. She praises their mentality when remembering their relaxed nature and family-mindedness, but despises their materialism, backwardness and meanness.

Like Naima, each participant in this study told me their own highly personal story about the country their parents came from. The story of Naima foreshadows a number of what we will later on find to be common threads that run through all or most of these personal stories. First of all, her story fits the general pattern of 'pairing': she often words her experiences of Morocco in terms of the contrast they provide to her daily life in the Netherlands (see also Section 3.1). Correspondingly, this part of her case study mainly focuses on her experiences in Morocco, and the way she evaluates them. The moment of arrival in Morocco is something special for her, and this goes for many of those interviewed (Section 2.1). Participants generally report a strong feeling of coming home, but this feeling is not always followed by feeling equally at home for the duration of their stay.

Naima's account features several of the main characteristics of Morocco, which I elaborate on below, as meaningful aspects of Morocco or Turkey in the eyes of my informants: the importance of family (Section 2.3) and of a larger sense of a caring community alongside irritations about expectations and meddlesomeness; the more flexible attitude towards time, which has positive and negative sides (subsection 'Time to live' in Section 3.3); the appreciation of a simpler lifestyle next to the missing of goods and services that are considered daily necessities (Section 3.4).

One theme lacking in this case study, which does occur in many interviews, is that of the 'Moroccan/Turkish system' – many informants are frustrated by their less-than-smooth interaction with Moroccan or Turkish authorities. They tell stories about spending half their holiday trying to obtain a birth certificate or a construction permission. On the other hand, they also voice frustrations about the Dutch system, with rules and taxes for most everything (Section 3.3). Naima hardly takes notice of this. What she does address, in much more detail

than do most others, is the social, gendered tensions she encounters and the expectations about her life choices. Yet the general theme of 'mentality differences' between local Turks or Moroccans and (descendants of) migrants is a common one and will receive its share of attention below (section 3.2).

Finally, Naima also introduced us to her ancestral village. Although not all interviews covered this topic as thoroughly as Naima's, most other interviewees spontaneously told me at least something about 'their' village, whether romanticising it like Naima does or dismissing it as 'backward'.[10] In her case, this ancestral village forms an important topic in itself as well as providing a starting point to discuss her stance towards Morocco in general. It is in this light that I address this topic in Section 3.5.

2 Arriving and Sojourning

2.1 *The Moment of Arrival*

Narratives about Turkey, Morocco and the Netherlands generally have both concrete and symbolic dimensions, and often these two are hard to separate. In some stories, however, the symbolic dimension of informants' relationship to the country where they trace their roots is particularly compelling. The moment of arrival in Morocco or Turkey can be seen as a focal point in time that highlights the experience of a symbolic sense of home in Turkey or Morocco, and we will see further on how people's ancestral village similarly serves as a focal point in space. Stories about these two themes express informants' strong attachment to these countries, but I will argue that they also point towards the limitations of this same attachment.

We saw that Naima's reflection on the value Morocco has for her was prompted by her recalling how it feels to arrive there. Naima is no exception; the 'moment of arrival' is a special one to many informants. In the case of Dounia (33, f, Moroccan),[11] for example, descriptions of the moment of arrival have an intensity that is lacking in her other descriptions of the country: *'When I arrive in Morocco,* (…) *I do kind of get goosebumps, I think "Oh my God, I'm here". It's just*

10 Some other themes, such as gender and religion, are brought up by Naima in connection to Morocco but will be addressed in more length in Chapter 5 – as I already mentioned, one of the advantages of my case studies is that they show how topics that are discussed separately in this book for the sake of argument are actually deeply intertwined on the personal level.

11 'Moroccan' (or 'Turkish') here refers to the background of the informants' parents. I indicate the name, gender and background of informants the first time their names are mentioned in each chapter. See the appendix for an overview of the individuals interviewed.

a feeling that washes over you, it's hard to even explain. But eventually I just can't wait to get back to the Netherlands, that's just your home base.' Dounia's interview is quoted on a more regular basis in this chapter and the next, making her story serve as a guide of sorts through my main argument.

Like in Dounia's words above, in many descriptions of the moment of arrival there is mention of warm feelings, roots, descent and attachment, even by interviewees who otherwise do not tend to speak about their countries in emotional terms. They connect this both to the symbolism of returning to where your parents set out from and to the familiar sensory experience of the country – feeling the heat, hearing the language, smelling familiar smells, blending in rather than sticking out as 'coloured'. Journeying between different countries makes one more conscious of the contrasts between them, and upon arrival this contrast between different 'worlds' is felt more intensely than usual, bringing to the fore the symbolic dimensions of one's relationship to the country. These contrasts work both ways: besides references to intense feelings of recognition and belonging, descriptions of arrival sometimes feature accounts of striking chaos, poverty and dirt.

In accounts of the arrival moment in the Netherlands, the emotional tone is less present. Stories of returning to the Netherlands tend to focus on going 'back to normal', something that can be a huge relief as well as a weight – back to the treadmill of daily life as well as back to a world that makes sense to the narrators. These different arrivals show us how home can be formulated as a 'special place' as well as 'the most normal place', and it is this normality, both missed and dreaded, that stands out upon returning to the Netherlands. On the other hand, back in the Netherlands there is also much less talk of homesickness – many of those interviewed told me that they soon 'turn the switch' once they are back, and only start thinking about Morocco or Turkey again when summer draws near.

Aziza (35, f, Moroccan) is one of the few informants who directly compare the moment of arrival back to the Netherlands to that of the arrival in Morocco or Turkey: *'When we land at Schiphol airport, and drive up here, I think hey! Good to be home!* (...) *The joy we feel when we leave* [*for Morocco*]*, the excitement, the adrenaline! And then the same thing when we return.'* Aziza's words show us that returning to her 'normal' Dutch home can be just as emotionally charged as arriving in her 'special' Moroccan one. In both directions, arriving means welcoming what one has missed as well as getting used again to certain things. Dounia, for instance, desperately misses her ordered daily routine when she is in Morocco, where everyone instead 'goes with the flow'. Yet upon returning it always takes her a couple of weeks and some nostalgic reminiscence to get into that same disciplined routine: *'It might seem strange, but it's the thing you*

run away from that you really do end up missing in the end.' Dounia describes this as a 'double' feeling.

Feelings at the moment of arrival do not tend to persist throughout interviewees' stays. Dounia reflects: *'It's mainly about coming home in the sense that you arrive, smell the sea, the beautiful blue sea, see the landscape, the mountains, nostalgia* (...) *But two weeks later, it's a completely different story.* [laughs] *And you start thinking, "I need to get out of here".* (...) *It's really stupid, no matter how much time you spend thinking about it, the shivers you get when you see it, still you don't even want to spend longer than a month there.'* There is a difference between the symbolic feelings of 'coming home' and a lasting sense of 'being at home' once settled in, the first one often being much stronger than the second.[12] Nevertheless, narratives on the 'special' moment of arrival can be informative of what interlocutors value and have missed about a country. That is why I asked all my informants, whether I spoke to them in Turkey, Morocco or the Netherlands, the same: 'What did you first do when you arrived here? And what would you do if you left for the other country right now?'

Their answers taught me much about the individuals' views on each country, as well as about themselves. Idriss (34, m, Moroccan), for example, loves spending time with his relatives in Morocco, yet upon returning he savours being alone for the first time in weeks: *'I put loud music on. Over there, you say goodbye to your private life for a couple of weeks. So the first thing I do when I get home* (...) *is put a* CD *on and enjoy being alone for a while.'* Idriss evaluates the positive and negative sides of social life in Morocco, and he does so by opposing them to the Dutch situation. His words are an illustration of country-talk as identity-talk: by highlighting the contrasting attractions of each country, he expresses something about himself – presenting himself as someone who values sociability as well as personal space, who tries to savour the moment rather than pining for what is missing, and who sees the fact that he relates to more than one country as unproblematic.

2.2 *Holiday Styles*

During my fieldwork in Morocco, many of my interlocutors stressed that I had seen more of the country than they had themselves. People's knowledge and opinion of 'their' country is always situational; it largely depends on where and how they spend their summers. Basically all informants refer to their time in

12 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, pp. 103–106. See also Chapter 3 for an extensive discussion of Morocco/Turkey as a 'temporary home'.

the country of their (grand)parents as 'holidays'.[13] Their accounts of Morocco and Turkey are coloured by the experiences they accumulate in these countries during their holidays there.[14]

What informants' summer stays look like depends on given conditions as well as on personal choices. Dounia, for one, has the bad luck that her in-laws live in a small town that has little entertainment to offer. While her husband tends to stay with his family, she herself prefers spending her days in nearby Al Hoceima, a seaside town in the Rif that has profited from the large numbers of migrants who originate from the town and the surrounding region and now return with their offspring to spend the summer. It is in an open-air restaurant in this town that Dounia and I meet, and she tells me: *'I just want more of what is close to me, a city and the people, and there are also lots of tourists, so I jump in the car and come here.'* Dounia's case illustrates two ways in which others shape an individual's holiday setting: the needs and wishes of significant others – parents, spouses and children – have to be taken into account, and the location where one's family resides is generally fixed. Some migrants happen to originate from areas that boast beaches or other tourist attractions, while others do not (Dounia's case being a bit in-between). Most informants also mention an 'ancestral village' from which their (grand)parents originate, and many attach symbolic value to this village(see Section 3.5), but for no one I spoke to is this still the primary holiday destination.

People's choices how to spend their holidays can differ greatly. Some stay with their relatives, drinking tea, shopping, chatting and, for the women, cooking, while others go to the beach every day or make round trips exploring the country. During the summers I spent in Turkey and Morocco, I would sometimes speak to several people during the day, and wonder at night whether these people where really all visiting the same country. Later, upon reflection, I saw that their holiday styles mainly differed in the amount of time that was spent on three main areas of activity: resting and hanging out (preferably on the beach), being with family in a more or less everyday setting, and touristic touring. Although some interlocutors focused solely on one of these areas, most were looking for a satisfactory balance between the different elements.[15]

Holiday styles nowadays show more variation than the vacations my informants recall from their childhood. I heard many a description of the 'traditional Moroccan/Turkish holiday from back then': arriving at one's grandparents'

13 A few of them also sometimes visit the country on business, to arrange family matters or to attend a wedding, but this is rather rare.

14 Not all interviewees seemed to reflect on this, cf. Buitelaar 2009, pp. 90–91.

15 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 109.

after days and days of driving in an old van, filled to the brim with children, baggage and gifts, being greeted by family and neighbours, settling in at the grandparental home or in one's own house for the whole summer. Starting on a different kind of everyday life. Spending one's days playing outside, sitting in on family meals, doing chores, visiting relatives and going shopping with one's parents. Watching television if there is electricity, or fetching water on a donkey in places where there is no tap water. Begging father to take you swimming, which he might concede to once or twice.

While the picture is rather consistent, the evaluations of these times are not. Malika (33, f, Moroccan) is one of those who hated this routine; she couldn't wait to go home again, and nowadays she hardly ever goes to Morocco at all. Many others have warm memories of carefree childhood vacations, or mixed feelings remembering boredom as well as togetherness. The tone of their childhood memories can colour their current image of the country. I have sometimes observed people sharing reminiscences of their comparable childhood holidays. This nostalgia about a shared repertoire of memories can create a sense of mutual understanding, even among those who have highly mixed feelings about these summer holidays.

Some descendants of migrants appear to spend their holidays in much the same fashion nowadays,[16] staying with family or visiting and receiving relatives from their own house. Others have developed patterns different from their parents'. We saw that Naima's pastimes lean more to the traditional side: she stays with her parents or other relatives, talking, cooking, eating and shopping, and tries to spend time in her grandfather's village. Yet, this also differs from the traditional image, as she divides her time over so many different locations and decides herself when to stay where. She also stresses that she uses the holidays to catch up on her reading, and that she has always sought the company of her European relatives rather than local family members, finding it easier to relate to people who share her frames of reference.

Like Naima, each participant had their own personal way of combining and assessing the different elements of a Moroccan (or Turkish) holiday. Let us look

16 This seems to go for holidays in Morocco more than for those in Turkey, where people placed more stress on tourist activities besides family time. However, considering the small number of Turkish interviewees, I can hardly even guess at whether this is a general trend, especially since I found all but two of my informants of Turkish background through networks in the Netherlands, whereas three quarters of those with Moroccan background agreed to be interviewed after I had met them in the Moroccan Rif – an area where there is a chance of meeting a disproportionate number of people tending towards more 'traditional' holiday styles.

at two contrasting examples. For Said (28, m, Moroccan) the family dimension of the holiday has almost disappeared. He used to spend all his time with his relatives, but in recent years has taken up travelling and spending his time at the beach. His current visits to Morocco are touristic rather than family affairs. Still, Morocco remains a special country to him: *'Last year I went with a group of friends to Benidorm, which was also lots of fun, but it was still different when we then came here* [in Morocco, FJS] *with the same group.'* Said also expresses a certain regret about using Morocco merely as a holiday destination and not seeing his relatives anymore. Latifa (38, f, Moroccan), on the contrary, holds no such regrets. She rarely visits Morocco at all, and when she does, she tries to fit her time there as neatly into her image of what a 'normal' holiday should look like as possible. This means she spends a few obligatory days with her mother before heading off to a hotel booked in advance: *'Then we just jump in the car, head off to our destination and have a normal holiday. To me, that's what a holiday is. Sitting around the house, going into town, doing some shopping and eating at home is not my idea of a holiday* [FJS: this is how she describes her sister's holiday style, as we will see in a case study of the two sisters in Chapter 5]. *You just don't get any real rest that way.'*

Although Latifa's style of spending the holiday is rather at the extreme side compared to others, she is by no means the only one to *claim* that she spends her time in quite a different way than 'most people' do. In her view, the family-oriented style is the most typical one. Yet I also spoke to people like Habib (25, m, Moroccan), who saw himself as atypical precisely because he spends his time with local relatives rather than at the beach. Apparently, individual interviewees do not only have different holiday styles, but also different perceptions of what the average Moroccan or Turkish holiday looks like. Part of this can be explained by differences in (social) location, gender and marital status – Habib's and Said's peers are young single males, many of whom focus on profiting from the freedom and relative wealth and status they enjoy as Europeans while on holiday, whereas Latifa compares herself to other women with families.[17] The examples of Habib and Said also point to another point of contextualisation: in Morocco, the summer is marked by the presence of large numbers of holidaying migrants, which also make for different dynamics from Moroccan everyday life during the rest of the year. One participant told me

17 Apparently, life stage also plays a role here, something also suggested by Said's changing holiday style. The next chapter will see an entire section dedicated to such changes in interviewees' position towards Morocco or Turkey, through the years and over the life course.

that many of her peers had a distorted image of what Morocco is like, because they only know it from the summers, when much effort is made to accommodate (and/or exploit) the holidaying crowds.

Besides variation in holiday styles, informants also differ in how often they visit Morocco or Turkey, and for how long. Some try to spend six weeks there basically every year, while others go every second year or even less frequently and may 'only' be staying for three weeks. Partly, this is because participants have different views on how long and how often is enough. For another part, people feel restricted by practical and social factors – like limited vacation times, other obligations and financial restraints on the one hand, and, on the other, family obligations and household negotiations (e.g. husbands wanting to stay longer than their wives do). Considerations about the length of one's stay are often charged with ambivalence. We hear interviewees say, for example, 'on the one hand, I would love to stay longer, but on the other hand, it can be a relief to say goodbye'.

2.3 *Family Settings*

Just as it is important to remember that the main setting in which my informants experience Morocco and Turkey is the summer holiday, we should also keep in mind that the most frequent and intense social interactions during their stays are generally with relatives. Although in the context of narratives on here and there, family and 'roots' are often brought up together, there is a big difference between a warm and 'timeless' sense of rootedness, appealing more to the symbolic dimension of home, and the actuality and mixed blessings of family life. Dounia clearly experiences this tension: *'They're still your roots. Yes. Although I often* (...) *wonder why those people are so backward or whatever, that fact doesn't change.'*

'Those' backward people are most likely her own relatives, considering that they are the ones she interacts with most during her stay. Family forms the social setting of many of the experiences that shape interviewees' images of the country and its inhabitants. When asked whom they associate with most during the summer, most informants mentioned relatives, both resident ones and fellow migrants. More often than not, when interviewees talk in general terms about how 'people in Turkey/Morocco' think and act, their image is based on their own relatives. The assessment of this image is all the more salient for the importance informants generally attached to family.

Family remains the main reason to travel to Turkey or Morocco, both for the people who originally left the country and for their descendants. Naima is by no means the only person to whom her parents' country mainly signifies family. This is an important connotation, even more so considering that

'family' also constitutes a major overall theme in many life stories, and a principal factor in participants' explicit conceptualisations of 'home'.[18]

3 'There' as Opposed to 'Here'

3.1 *Real Life Country-talk*

Considering that talking about the different countries can be understood as identity-talk, I am interested in both the content and the form of my interlocutors' country-talk to obtain a balanced view of the relationships they maintain with each country. As an illustration of both, let us look at a sample of concrete 'country-talk'. The following excerpt from a Morocco-based interview with Anouar (30, m, Moroccan) gives us a feel of the way in which the countries, home and identity come together in the interviews.

'It's not home in the same way. (…) *You notice very quickly that time is not a consideration in this country* [*Morocco,* FJS], (…) *and I like that. In the Netherlands I'm extremely time-dependent, and I have to be, but here I'm not at all, see. So to me that's a part of coming home, the way the system runs here, the people. And just things like good food, people living outdoors, whereas in the Netherlands people pretty much only live at the weekends. They're very system-dependent: working from Monday to Friday,* (…) *But here, it's almost like nobody works, that idea. So yeah, people just live. And that's what I'm like too, I enjoy it. But at the same time, there are lots of things that annoy me. The traffic. And of course the freedoms you have in the Netherlands. Security, simply in the sense that there is a legal system,* (…) *so no corruption, it's comfortable, in the end quite tolerant* (…). *But I do notice that the Dutch are very focused on themselves, and we have pretty much adapted in that respect. The fact that you can just knock on someone's door here and you're completely welcome, you know, that hospitality, um… I notice that we, the Moroccan community in the Netherlands, are far less like that now.'*

What does this quotation tell us about the 'form' of country-talk? Anouar explains his feeling at home in Morocco and the Netherlands in different ways, assessing various characterisations of each country in normative terms. Identifying with aspects of both countries, in this sample of identity-talk he expresses feeling at home in both by pointing out certain characteristics and expressing to what extent they are 'like him'.

Interestingly, his words also imply a critique of the Moroccan community in the Netherlands, of which he feels a part, as less hospitable than their Morocco based relatives. This is one out of many instances in my material that falsifies

18 See the epilogue to Chapter 5.

the common idea in social identity theory that people tend to ascribe positive characteristics to the groups they identify with as opposed to groups that are 'othered'.[19] Remarkably enough, my interlocutors frequently identify with aspects they evaluate as negative, and ascribe positive characteristics to others.

In this section I examine how, in their descriptions of Morocco or Turkey, participants allude to the Netherlands as a contrast dimension. It is striking how consistently the two different countries are staged in pairs in the narratives, often in terms of binary oppositions. A (binary) pole evaluated at one point as positive is generally accompanied by footnotes on its negative sides, and vice versa. In Anouar's example we can observe how this 'pairing' occurs in a concrete interview setting. He continuously switches between both countries he is attached to, using constructions such as 'in this country/here … whereas in the Netherlands…'[20] Every 'there' implies a 'here'.

Meanwhile, regarding the 'content' of individuals' country-talk, Anouar introduces shared themes that we will recognise below, when looking at the many evocations and descriptions of Morocco and Turkey in the narratives of all interviewees: ways in which the people living in Morocco are characterised, the characteristics ascribed to the country on the level of (social) infrastructure, and significant aspects of my informants' everyday lives during their holidays.

3.2 *Those that Never Left*
Mentality Differences

Discussing their relationship to Morocco or Turkey, interviewees automatically came to talk about the people living there. Thus their stories about these countries are also about Moroccan/Turkish and Dutch people, and about being Turkish/Moroccan, and Dutch. A topic that stands out in many such stories is that of 'mentality differences'.[21] During their holidays, informants notice that while they may strongly identify as Moroccans and Turks, they are different from the non-migrants.[22] Such contrasts are often explained by pointing to

19 See M. Savelkoul et al., *Anti-Muslim attitudes in the Netherlands: Tests of contradictory hypotheses derived from ethnic competition theory and intergroup contact theory*, 2011, p. 743.

20 In this specific fragment, this may have been inspired by my question whether Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands each constituted home in the same way. But similar juxtapositions of two countries can be found in virtually all passages dealing with Morocco or Turkey.

21 I use the term 'mentality' as an emic term, corresponding to the Dutch 'mentaliteit' that is commonly used by my informants.

22 Cf. Bouras 2012, p. 234; Salih 2003, p. 75.

what informants call their 'Dutch mentality'. Dounia makes many references to such differences in mindset. It is due to mentality differences, she indicates, that she prefers bustling Al Hoceima to the more 'traditional' town of her in-laws, and that she claims she could never, ever move to Morocco. *'In the long term I don't feel at home anymore, because I start noticing the differences too much. Being there as a tourist is different to living there.'*

Dounia presents her role as a 'tourist' as a condition for feeling at home in Morocco. She repeatedly stresses that the mentality differences with resident Moroccans are unsurmountable. Not everybody is as drastic on this account as she is, but most informants agree that the differences are significant. Both with references to resident Turks/Moroccans and to native Dutch, accounts of shared frameworks exist alongside those of mentality clashes.[23] Dounia, for example, also speaks about thinking differently from native Dutch, besides presenting herself as 'more Dutch than most Moroccans in the Netherlands' (e.g. claiming not to care about what 'Mohammed from next door' might think of her as much as other Moroccans do).

Note that in the Dutch context, Dounia contrasts native Dutch with Moroccans *in the Netherlands*. Indeed, I generally found that when talking about and identifying with 'Moroccans/Turks', rather than meaning these groups in general, interviewees were referring specifically to Moroccan or Turkish Dutch.[24] Moreover, the idea of a 'Dutch mentality', said to distinguish my interlocutors from their non-migrant counterparts, was generally presented as self-evident, leaving much less room for negotiation on this point than the proclaimed cultural differences between native Dutch and Turkish or Moroccan Dutch, which were sometimes evoked but just as often downplayed, denied or ignored. With reference to the self-evident context of the Netherlands, we witness dynamics of (dis)identification different from those in Morocco and Turkey.

During the holidays, mentality issues play their part in individual choices in social interaction, as with Naima who prefers spending time with her European relatives because she feels that they understand her way of thinking better. There are also participants who distinguish themselves from the vacationing crowd by emphasising that, contrary to others, they themselves show an interest in 'people over there and how they live' (stressing their closeness to

23 Yet, in the Dutch context, such differences are more often taken for granted and framed in terms of 'culture' rather than mentality. But since our focus here lies on the Moroccan or Turkish setting, for now we are able to steer clear of this complicated term and stick with the emic 'mentality'.

24 Cf. van der Horst 2008, pp. 8–9. See also Strijp, who observed how during their holidays his informants explicitly distanced themselves from resident Moroccans: Strijp 1998, p. 247.

residents, but still identifying themselves as different). The other way around, assumed differences in mindset can also influence how my interlocutors are seen and treated by locals. Interviewees alternate between positive and negative terms in their interpretations, both of these differences in mentality and of the social relations that are said to result from them.

More implicitly, many other contrasting characterisations can also be grouped under the umbrella term of 'mentality differences'. We have already observed the issue of *gender*. As often, it is mainly the women who point at the gendered expectations they encounter in Morocco and Turkey.[25] On the other hand, there is also talk of, for example, Turks and Moroccans being more respectful towards women, especially mothers, than Europeans. Sometimes this is related to *religious* issues. Naima concludes that Moroccans claim to be more religious, whereas she asserts that it is the other way around. My material shows variation in the characterisations of religious attitudes, both of Dutch and of resident Moroccans/Turks. Some informants see their resident counterparts as more observant or more embedded in an Islamic lifestyle. Others say that the Netherlands is more Islamic than Morocco or Turkey, where corruption is the norm and religious values are proclaimed but not put into practice. The Netherlands is also ascribed the advantage of being more respectful to difference.

Respect is yet another frequent topic. Participants often disagree about where it is that people feel and show more respect for each other in general and for themselves in particular. Respect for individuals is seen as more status-dependent in Morocco and Turkey, but respect for your parents and the importance of family ties in general is often considered as lacking in the Dutch mindset and self-evident in Turkey and Morocco. The upcoming sections will show several other themes involving perceived mentality differences, first of all the binary oppositions of 'warm' versus 'cold' and 'hard' versus 'soft'.

Warm or Cold

Corresponding to the countries' climates, their inhabitants are often described as warm versus cold.[26] Habib, for example, told me about the Netherlands: *'It's*

25 Naima talked about travelling alone, other women mention driving or sitting in a cafe – all activities that are self-evident for my interlocutors but eyed with suspicion by residents, who sometimes conclude that European women must be equally 'free' when it comes to sexuality.

26 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 95; Strijp 1998, p. 247. This distinction is by no means unique to the case of this group, or even of migrants in general. It blends into the vocabulary of orientalism, and even within a single European country, we can find stereotype images

essentially very cold and impersonal, especially when it rains and it's all dark and grey (…) *And of course it's not like that in Morocco.* (…) *There are always people who talk to each other,* (…) *the neighbours, doors are always open to people. But not here, all the doors are closed.'* There is a general image of Moroccans (as well as Turks) showing more 'warmth', more involvement with those around them than the 'cooler' Dutch, who tend to keep to themselves.

This seemingly one-dimensional binary categorisation can open up interesting insights into complex processes of meaning-giving and identification. First of all, one cannot predict with which side of the opposition interviewees themselves identify. A person may, for example, sometimes assert their difference from those cold Dutch, while in a different context contemplate on how Dutch they are themselves when compared to their overly social relatives. This vacillating of identifications recurs in most of the descriptions discussed here. Second, the warm-cold opposition cannot be translated in simple terms of good and bad. The social engagement that earns Moroccans and Turks the label 'warm' can also go too far according to many interlocutors, while the distance that Dutch maintain, according to this stereotype, also means more space for personal privacy. This can be demonstrated by looking at the issue of hospitality.

Hospitality is the trait most unanimously mentioned as typically Turkish/Moroccan. In Anouar's words on hospitality in Section 3.1, we see the ambiguity of the question whether hospitality is seen as a characteristic of oneself or of 'others': it is something Anouar considers 'Moroccan', and he identifies as Moroccan, yet he also comments that the Moroccan community in the Netherlands is losing this trait. In some passages, interlocutors pride themselves in being more hospitable than the Dutch, yet when talking about Morocco or Turkey, hospitality is ascribed to resident Moroccans orTurks in opposition to themselves: interviewees can only claim this 'Moroccan'/'Turkish' trait for themselves in as far as they 'still' resemble their relatives back in Morocco or Turkey. There is quite some nostalgia about the idea of always finding the door open, sometimes to the extent of idealising the seemingly unconditional welcoming of visitors. At the same time, many told me (like Anouar) that this is something that does not fit their own busy lifestyles 'anymore'[27] – nor their conceptions of privacy.

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of people from the northern regions being colder and more introvert. See for example J.W. Pennebaker, B. Rimé & V.E. Blankenship, *Stereotypes of emotional expressiveness of Northerners and Southerners: A cross-cultural test of Montesquieu's hypotheses*, 1996.

27 One informant explained that nowadays in the Netherlands, even family should ring you beforehand, as otherwise you might not have time to welcome them properly. In this case,

The example of hospitality shows that personal privacy is seen as something less valued in Morocco and Turkey. Instead, there is a much stronger stress on togetherness and social life, and one can expect to be surrounded by lots of other people 24/7. This of course has its pros and cons. On the positive side, people are described as less selfish and more caring – taking care of one's parents is a self-evident commitment; homes for the elderly are unheard of. Dounia misses the strong sociability upon returning to the Netherlands. Yet – turning to the negative side – in Morocco she is also happy to have her own house, which allows her the relief of retiring into her own space to get some rest from the hustle and bustle of family life. *'If we all lived together in the same house it wouldn't work out. No, the differences are just too great.'* Several participants stressed their need for one's own private quarters during the summer.

Not surprisingly, all of these were women. Although men equally spoke about the difference between warm and cold, sociability and privacy, in Morocco and Turkey women experience a greater contrast in gender expectations compared to their daily Dutch settings. The greater social involvement in Turkey and Morocco also means more meddling in one's business than most interviewees are used to or willing to accept. We saw this, for example, in Naima's frustration about her family's endless comments on her marital status and religious observance. Female informants especially, complained about gossip, criticism and towering expectations regarding their behaviour. They felt that during the summer 'every step you take' is being watched.

Thus, whether warm is better than cold, and whether people identify themselves as the one or the other, is not self-evident. Moroccans and Turks, described as helpful, involved and interested in others, sometimes to the extreme, are opposed to the Dutch, who are portrayed as more closed and privacy-oriented, respecting people's need for privacy, but also indifferent to others.[28] While the warmth of Turks and Moroccans is generally seen as an accomplishment compared to the Dutch chill, especially after some time 'warm' can also start to feel like 'too hot', and make informants long for the familiar, refreshing distance in Dutch social intercourse.

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there is a reinterpretation rather than a devaluation of 'hospitality' – from always welcoming guests to setting apart time especially for your visitors.

28 An issue related to this is that of discrimination – there are numerous accounts of being discriminated against in the Netherlands and accepted in 'one's own country' or, on the contrary, of exclusion of 'Europeans' as opposed to Dutch tolerance and solidarity – sometimes both types of juxtaposition can be found in one and the same interview. The topic of in- and exclusion in the Netherlands will be discussed in length in Chapter 4. Finally, quite some informants reported being treated as foreigners in both countries. This image will be addressed in the next chapter.

Hard or Soft

We saw another binary categorisation, equally schematic at first glance, in Naima's story: that of people in Morocco as 'hard', opposed to the much 'softer' Europeans. These terms are much less used explicitly across interviews than the distinction between warm and cold. Still, they form a convenient shorthand for a common type of characterisation. This time the main positive descriptor, of being more soft and gentle, is ascribed to the Dutch side. But once again, each positive trait comes with negative connotations, and vice versa.

The 'hard' nature of Morocco /Moroccans and Turkey /Turks is mainly argued in economic terms – Naima is no exception here. According to Farid (39, m, Moroccan), in Morocco, as opposed to the Netherlands, a person's value is determined by their wallet: *'That's Morocco for you, it's tough as nails. You're someone if you've got something. If you have nothing, you're nobody.'* Resident Moroccans, according to both Naima and Farid, are focused on material gain. They try hard to get any money they can and are harsh in their judgements of others, based on their financial situation and outer appearance, rather than personality. This attitude conveys some status to the relatively well-off European Moroccans, but it also exposes them to jealousy and manifold attempts by locals to benefit from their wealth.[29] Being heavily overcharged for goods and services, or cheated with less than perfect merchandise, is a universal holiday frustration.[30] The only ones not to complain about being overcharged were a handful of people to whom it is a matter of pride that, contrary to others, they fit in so well that nobody notices they are 'European'.

Such ambivalences are even stronger when we move from a public setting to more private realms. It is not only strangers who strive to take advantage of the visiting migrant population. Dounia told me that she cannot afford to come to Morocco each year, partly because of all the expenses for family – gifts as well as financial assistance, and many informants voice similar complaints.[31] Demands for assistance in medical costs, for example, are frequent and, coming from family, difficult to dismiss for most. (Descendants of) migrants may feel compassion and understanding for the needs of their relatives, and still be irritated sometimes by the heaping up of expectations and demands for assistance.[32] The same relatives who for many are the main reason to come to Morocco or Turkey can, after the initial joy of reunion when the symbolism of

29 Cf. Strijp 2007.

30 Cf. Salih 2003, p. 74.

31 Cf. Strijp 1998, p. 243.

32 Cf. Strijp 2007, p. 85.

coming home is strongly present, become one of the main annoyances there in concrete interaction.

The 'hard' mentality ascribed to Moroccans and Turks is assessed in several ways. Like Naima, interviewees sometimes claim a certain moral superiority, feeling that they are less shallow and materialist than their resident counterparts. On the other hand, some informants showed a certain respect for residents' sharp nose for business, presenting this as a positive trait as opposed to their own more 'passive' stance. A disagreeable consequence of residents' hard mentality for the softer migrants is that they are, in their own words, being milked and cheated by strangers and relatives alike. Apart from the actual financial drain, two main points seem to underlie informants' annoyance about this, both having to do with recognition. First, there is the somewhat bitter taste of being expected to pay for things, but not getting much recognition because people suppose you have more than enough money anyway.[33] For some participants this can spoil an entire holiday. Even people who told me that they willingly spend significant amounts on their relatives (and that certainly does not go for everybody) also mentioned that the recipients do not seem to realise how hard they have to work to earn this money. The second point is about being othered instead of recognised as a fellow Moroccan or Turk. This is what annoys Naima: *'It's your survival month, of course I understand that, but at the same time I don't get why as a European you're essentially different, and are actually regarded as inferior.'* What hurts her more than the generic unfairness of being overcharged, is the fact that local Moroccans feel free to do so because you are seen as different and inferior – because you do not belong there.[34] It may be partly in response to this frustration that she explicitly presents herself as softer, in a positive sense.

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33 We will see in Chapter 3 that it does not help their case that part of their fellow migrants cannot resist showing off their relative wealth during their holidays.

34 In the course of writing this chapter, I shared this specific analysis with two colleagues who are not only engaged in related research projects, but also descendants of Moroccan migrants themselves. They immediately jumped on the issue, exclaiming: 'Exactly! And that's a sore point, because that is precisely what happens in the Netherlands as well!' So while in these accounts of being taken advantage of in my interview material there is much less mention of how this connects or contrasts with the situation in the Netherlands than is the case with other themes, this reaction suggests that the frustration about being othered in Morocco or Turkey in this way is amplified because of corresponding experiences in the Netherlands. Being told all year long, implicitly or explicitly, that one does not belong in the Netherlands but rather in the country of origin, and then arriving in that land just to find the same thing there, feels like being hit on the same spot twice.

In Naima's words, we can recognise the ambivalence mentioned before: on the one hand, informants are irritated and hurt by the way they are seen and treated, on the other hand, they also feel compassion and responsibility for their family and understand that people are often driven by poverty. The balance between these considerations can differ greatly between individuals, but also within individual narratives, with informants sometimes ranting on about 'those mean people' and sometimes understanding and feeling sorry for them. In one way they feel misunderstood when people think that life is easy 'over here', in another way many told me that their summer visits also make them realise how lucky they are to be living in the Netherlands. And indeed, on the one hand interviewees can strongly identify as and with Moroccans/Turks, while on the other hand realising 'how Dutch they are' and how different this makes them from those around them.

3.3 (*Social*) *Infrastructure*

The previous section showed that talking about one's relation to a country often implies talking about, and positioning oneself vis-à-vis, its inhabitants. The question of people's relationship to several countries, however, is broader than that of their ethnic or national identifications.[35] This section addresses descriptions of the two countries in terms of (social) infrastructure. It shows how in various areas, the Netherlands is presented as providing more opportunities and security and being better organised than Morocco and Turkey. Turkey and Morocco are described as lacking wealth, healthcare, civil rights, bureaucracy, organisational structure, punctuality and order compared to that which informants are familiar with in the Netherlands. All of these advantages play their part in people's appreciation of the Netherlands as compared to Morocco/Turkey and their perception of the possibilities to feel at home in each country. But I will also show that many of these benefits come with their own disadvantages, for which Morocco and Turkey can provide (temporary) antidotes.

Prosperity, Care and Opportunity

Visiting Morocco or Turkey confronts informants with a contrast in welfare, and causes them to reflect on the opportunities that come with living in a rich, 'developed' country. Naima and Dounia both mentioned that had they stayed in Morocco, they would probably have had five children by now, and no career nor even education to speak of. Being in Turkey or Morocco prompts

35 Eijberts 2013, p. 288.

people who grew up in the Netherlands to contemplate on the opportunities (to develop, learn and work) migration has offered them. This difference in opportunities is, of course, gendered. Women in particular talk about having 'escaped' a life that would have been all about their roles as daughters, wives and mothers. Most women I spoke to had jobs, all others spoke about wanting to re-enter the labour market as soon as their children were older. All saw the fact that they had the opportunity to have a career as an advantage of living in the Netherlands. Yet, several women also questioned the idea that this meant that they automatically have a better life than their female relatives – Naima, for example, is proud of her career, but also envies her cousins who can devote their entire time to their children.

While gender plays an important part here, opportunity differences between the Netherlands and the countries their parents left form a theme addressed by both men and women. Informants of both genders talked about their life being 'completely different' due to the vocational opportunities present in the Netherlands, as well as the better state of the labour market. But even the evident opposition between poverty and relative wealth is given meaning in several different ways. As we already saw, Naima explains that because they are poor and concerned with survival, Moroccans are more materialistic than their European counterparts. For her, this is a negative though understandable characteristic. At other times, she takes a different position, an alternative to the 'poor = materialist' stance also adopted by many participants. She then tells me that it is mainly the rich in Morocco who are materialist, whereas poorer people abound in hospitality and generosity.[36]

Naima is by no means the only one to appreciate, and sometimes romanticise, the more simple living conditions in Morocco and Turkey in general and even more in the countryside. In the following quote, Metin (25, m, Turkish) goes a step further when he remarks that people in the Turkish village where we are visiting his grandparents actually have a better life: *'People work here too, but only a little. They spend a little time in the fields, and otherwise just enjoy life. It's much better.* [pause] *On the other hand, which is a good thing about the Netherlands, you still receive a benefit even if you don't have a job.'* Metin addresses the question of whether a 'better life' is dependent on issues like money and a career. He contemplates whether a more simple life may also be an easier one. Yet he also talks about the 'other side' of this better life: the lack of social security.

36 Others let the distinction between 'poor but generous' and 'rich but stingy' coincide with that between warm Moroccans/Turks and cold Dutch. In those cases the message remains: the poorer people are, the more they are willing to share what little they have.

While even in the opposition between wealth and poverty both are seen to have good and bad sides, when it comes to issues like social security and healthcare, my informants sing praise of the welfare state in unison.[37] I have heard numerous horror stories about Moroccan and Turkish hospitals and doctors, relatives unable to pay for treatments, handicapped people having to survive with no state assistance whatsoever Whether at any given moment my informants identify with Moroccans/Turks, e.g. complaining that 'we don't have decent hospitals', or with Dutch, e.g. when telling me how 'we cannot adapt to their standards', the message is clear: in the Netherlands, if worse comes to worst, you are taken care of. Over there, you are on your own.

(In)justice and Rights

Anouar's words earlier on pointed to another cluster of issues, besides the welfare state, that differentiate the Dutch state from the Moroccan and Turkish ones in the eyes of my informants: the Netherlands also has the advantage of justice and civil rights, safety, and freedom from corruption.[38] Referring to their 'Dutch mentality' of getting what you deserve, informants are often shocked by the corruption they meet with and the repression they hear about, in Morocco as well as in Turkey.[39] Rachid (35, m, Moroccan) here formulates the difference between the Netherlands and Morocco quite lively: *'For example, if I were to have a car accident with* (...) *Balkenende* [the Dutch prime minister at the time, FJS] *and it is his fault,* (...) *then he has to pay for my car.* (...) [*I*]*t wouldn't even cross my mind to fill in a claim form if I smashed into the Moroccan prime minister. With a bit of luck, they would just let me walk away – but only if it was his fault. If it were my fault, I would be done for. And it's not like that here, you know? Here you only get a fine if you really deserve it.'* In Morocco, according to Rachid, the authorities always have the final say. He greatly appreciates that in the Netherlands, citizens have the means to claim their rights in the face of government forces. A number of interviewees singled this out as the ultimate reason for never wanting to live anywhere else than in the Netherlands. Rachid

37 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 315.

38 According to him, this is also related to discrimination: he suggests that the Dutch discussions on immigration and integration are partly triggered by people's frustration about not being able to treat immigrants differently, because all citizens are equal before the law.

39 Not all informants engaged with this theme – note that my interviews took place before the beginning of the Arab Spring in the last days of 2010. Development since then may have triggered a greater interest into the political situation in Morocco on the part of descendants of Moroccan migrants.

himself, although addressing the issue, finds the lacking healthcare even more problematic – were it not for that, he might consider moving to Morocco – or so he says during our first conversation. In Chapter 4 we will see how between our interview sessions, a personal encounter with Moroccan authorities made him change his mind on this account.

'The System'

Less fundamental than the lack of civil rights or of high-level healthcare and a welfare state, yet often more directly affecting those visiting from the Netherlands, is what in the interviews is often called 'the system' in general – i.e. the organisational structure (or apparent lack thereof) of all kinds of authorities and services that interviewees are confronted with during their stay. The following words of Habib are telling in this regard: *'It always takes so much time. You usually have to wait an hour regardless, then you walk up to them and they need to go and get some document, then you need to make a copy, it's not a fast process. In the Netherlands you go up to a service desk, which is very nice. Not here – here you're squeezed in like sardines, and if someone steps in front of you with a big mouth, then they're next in line. In the Netherlands it's very different. It's just, well, yes it's your right, when it's your turn it's your turn.'*

Habib contrasts inefficiency, confusion and partiality with order, transparency and equal treatment. Both the official and unofficial structures and the way people deal with them and with each other seem to defy my informants' notions of logic and efficiency. The fact that the Dutch situation forms their primary frame of reference stands out clearly in their complaints. For Habib, the comparison clearly falls out in favour of the Netherlands. In some other accounts, we hear about the downsides of a regulated society. The following passage from Anouar's interview expresses an explicit ambivalence in this regard. First he seems to be in agreement with Habib's words, but then he destabilises the binary opposition between chaos and system.

'... that it's all organised. (...) *There* [*in the Netherlands*] *people treat you as a person, not based on your income or anything, that makes no difference. Here* (...) *in hospitals, you name it, it's all... it's not only more primitive, but the thought process is completely different. So if you're filthy rich, you can push in anywhere and everyone puts up with it. That's how the system works. In the Netherlands, things are so well organised that everyone is equal. And I think that's wonderful.* [FJS: And what about the reverse? Are there things about Morocco that you would like to see in the Netherlands?] *But then I'll start contradicting myself.* (...) *Well, there's the fact that there, there are too many rules.* (...) *There are pesky little laws and regulations for everything.* (...) *Here the focus is more on living, on freedom, there are people sitting in bars everywhere, in the Netherlands people*

take things too far. (…) *In the Netherlands, it's the system you want to get rid of.* (…) *But the flipside is that if you spend too long here, things get too chaotic of course. Legislation doesn't exist, officially there are laws, but nobody follows them. Then you want to get back to where things are fairly well-organised, you know? That's just one of those contradictions.'* Anouar hesitates for a moment before responding to my second question. He is very conscious of the ambivalence in his own stance: yes, of course, he prefers the organised state of affairs in the Netherlands. Yet, applying the contrast of organisation versus chaos to life in general, he shows that there is a price to pay for this systematic mentality.[40]

Another ambivalent subject is the feeling of being (treated) differently from the local population. Public servants reportedly tend to put your forms at the very bottom of the pile if they identify you as European. Participants find this unfair: *'Even though you're actually Moroccan/Turkish!'* The protest that you are a Moroccan/Turk and should be treated like anybody else does not seem to clash with the feeling that people in Morocco or Turkey think differently from 'us'. Resident Moroccans and Turks may sometimes be just as frustrated about, for instance, not getting a certain permit they need, but according to many informants 'they are used to it', and know how to work the system, knowledge they themselves lack dearly. This brings home to them their lack of familiarity with the land of their family. On different levels, claims of equality and claims of difference coexist – we could maybe ascribe these claims to different voices, some telling a story of contested belonging, others one of estrangement from those one once belonged to, and belonging in a new category.

Time to Live

Anouar introduces a common footnote to the success story of Dutch organisation: it leaves little room for spontaneity and 'life'. In Morocco and Turkey, people are said to be more concerned with just living. 'Focusing on life' is contrasted with several things in the Netherlands which apparently hinder this focus – rules, laws, system, rain, work, and monotony. The Dutch language provides a beautiful construction for this, allowing informants to speak about living (active) as opposed to 'being lived' (passive).[41] 'Being lived' refers to being stuck in the treadmill of daily life: *'The feeling that you are "being lived"*

40 Anouar also talks about the relative 'freedom' in Morocco. The issue of freedom as well as the importance of enjoying good weather, good food and beautiful scenery are topics that also recur in other descriptions of the different countries and will be discussed more in general in the next section.

41 The Dutch expression referred to is 'geleefd worden'.

instead of living for yourself; you stick to your calendar, go to work, by the time you finish and get home it's seven o'clock, you eat together and then it's nine o'clock.' (Fatih, 39, m, Turkish).

Informants also talk about 'living to work' as opposed to 'working to live'. Laila (31, f, Moroccan) feels that in the Netherlands she 'is lived' by her diary. In summer she escapes to Morocco: *'In Morocco, that entire stressful life is gone straight away. It's indescribable.* (…) *You take your watch off, put your diary aside. You've left it in the Netherlands. Just start out, and see how you will get through the day.* (…) *When you get home, you start thinking about letters, your diary, an appointment, working hours, "this thing and that thing", the weekend, the groceries, it's strange. During the last week of your holiday you think, oh God, we're going back to that stressful life.'*

Laila speaks about stepping out of her daily life of work and appointments into a more relaxed mode of living, where spontaneity rules over organisation. She presents this as typical of Morocco. Yet, like much of what is said about living versus being lived, it may sound rather familiar to the general reader. I am tempted to think that many working people, migrant or not, talk about their holidays in similar terms. As I mentioned earlier, informants' experiences and descriptions of Morocco and Turkey are coloured by the fact that they are on vacation there. For example, an advantage of these countries that nearly everybody I spoke to during the summers mentioned, was not receiving any mail while there. Adding to the actual differences that obviously exist between the pace of daily life in the Netherlands and the country of origin, what we see at work here is the general distinction between home and holiday. Duncan Case describes this as the dialectic of 'freedom from routine ↔ routine' and convincingly shows how this plays an important role in how journeys away help define the meaning of 'home'.[42]

This dialectic – escaping from the everyday routine at home, but also starting to appreciate that very same routine after the 'contrasting experience'[43] of being away from it – is clearly present in the ways my own informants reflect

42 E.g. Case 1996, p. 11: 'When people are away from their homes, they can escape the stress of routine and experience a certain degree of freedom. (…) The longer one is away from home, the stronger and more significant is the contrast, clarifying in people's minds what it is about home that they miss and wish to regain by returning to it. (…) The dialectical process "freedom from routine ↔ routine" reveals how fundamental "routine" is to the definition of home. Routine is essential to the promotion of comfort and security in the home.'

43 Case 1996, p. 5; Hermans 2001b.

on their summer stays in Turkey/Morocco and formulate their notions of home. Anouar, who expressed a certain ambivalence between enjoying the Dutch system at large, and wanting to get away from the structures governing his own daily life, later in our interview made this point explicit. He confessed that in the long run he could not do without 'Dutch' structure, yet when he returns from Morocco he always needs some time to get out of his 'holiday mode' and settle back into his daily routines. Most interviews reveal a comparable dialectic. The daily grind is spoken about as almost synonymous with life in the Netherlands, and paired with a longing for the Moroccan or Turkish spontaneity which, after some time away, gives way to a longing to have one's structured life back.

The balance between these two complementary desires can differ greatly between informants. Dounia begins to miss her routines desperately after just a few weeks in Morocco: *'I notice that it gets hectic, for me, but also for the children. The structure, that's what I miss* (...) *following a certain routine that everybody knows.* (...) *Just eating on time, and having your work and regular commitments. I just find that very important. And that's typically a non-Moroccan thing.'* Dounia is very outspoken about preferring the Dutch situation to the Moroccan one. She explicitly identifies as Dutch, referring to her 'structured mentality' that makes her unsuited for life in Morocco. Still, the temporary letting go of familiar structures in the form of a holiday in Morocco is a welcome break from her routine. Her conclusion mirrors the overall outcome of this section: in many ways 'things' are taken care of and organised better in the Netherlands, but especially for a short period of time Morocco and Turkey have their own charms – more spontaneity and room for living rather than being lived.

Something similar can be said about the different perceptions of time that are associated with Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands. The consensus is that in the former time is far more flexible than in the latter, and that this can be both a positive and a negative thing. Informants enjoy letting go and ignoring their agenda during the holidays and sometimes admire the relaxed attitudes of their resident Moroccan or Turkish peers. I already mentioned the nostalgic tones in which they describe how you used to be able to knock at anybody's door unannounced and be welcome. Some see this as 'still' possible in Morocco/Turkey, while others view it as disappearing there as well. Yet my interlocutors also confess that this mentality is not their own. They are used to Dutch punctuality and planning and hate having to wait for everything and everybody during the summer. People arriving later than agreed, not showing up at all, calling unannounced or not doing what they promised, are sources of general annoyance.

3.4 *That's the Life*

Mundane aspects such as freedom (in several senses), good weather and food, luxury and simplicity, modernity and authenticity, the familiar and the exotic – each provide another stage on which Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands are presented as offering contrasting, often complementary ingredients for an agreeable life and sources of identification.[44]

Freedom

Above, Anouar opposed the Dutch grid of 'being lived' to Moroccan freedom. 'Freedom' is mentioned regularly in descriptions of the different countries, and ascribed to each one in different ways. This is partly related to the workings of the different state systems – the Netherlands then stands for legal freedoms, most of all freedom of speech and protection of civil rights, whereas in Morocco (and in Turkey too, when compared to the Netherlands) there are less rules (or at least less effective ones), which means less protection but also a certain freedom from having to stick to too many rules and laws. The 'holiday setting' also allows for more freedom in how to spend one's day – in Morocco and Turkey informants report to have more time and more physical space to do what they want. The long, warm evenings and flexible opening hours are also mentioned as adding to a certain sense of freedom.

Nilay (38, f, Turkish) speaks about differences in freedom on yet another level. She sees freedom of speech not only on the institutional level but also in familial relationships: *'Freedom to express your opinions, that is something I don't see as much in Turkish culture. As a young person especially, your place is simply to listen.'* Although not everyone explicitly formulates such ideas in terms of freedom, Nilay is in no way alone in feeling that in Turkey and Morocco (or in Turkish/Moroccan culture, as we see in Nilay's words) there are many social rules and taboos that restrain one from expressing oneself as freely as one is used to doing in the Netherlands.

In this case, instead of being sketched in terms of opposing traits, which each have both positive and negative connotations, we see how the two countries are ascribed different versions of the same value: freedom. Redouan (25, m, Moroccan) illustrates this sharply, telling me in our first interview that he misses the freedom of walking hand in hand with his fiancée as he does in the Netherlands – something that would be seen as utterly inappropriate in his Moroccan surroundings. From a different position, in a later interview he

44 Cf. Gültekin, Inowlocki & Lutz 2003.

also talks about feeling more 'free' in Morocco because there he and this same fiancée can walk around without everybody scrutinising her headscarf. Different places, different liberties.

Sensations and Luxury

The weather is one of the few topics that features little ambivalence: Morocco and Turkey simply have more agreeable climates, and interviewees stress and often miss this in the Netherlands – although Dounia also complains that it is often too hot to really do something if you have small children to consider, and Nora (26, f, Moroccan) confesses that she always enjoys the rain back in the Netherlands. We already saw that Morocco and Turkey are described as 'warm' in more than one sense, and according to some informants, social warmth is even promoted by physical temperature, because the warm weather allows people to be outside and mingle more. The physical warmth is part of a sensual image of an 'agreeable life' that also includes references to the natural beauty (sea, mountains) and tasty food in Turkey and Morocco – the latter two having their own counter-images: interviewees also report appreciating the flat and ordered Dutch landscape upon returning, and missing 'normal' Dutch food when away. Dounia: *'Being able to eat cauliflower and potatoes again, like normal.'*

What is missed far more often, however, is the Dutch standard of life: hot showers, comfortable beds, easy internet access. I often heard descendants of migrants explain that they are so used to Dutch 'luxuries' that they would not be able to thrive elsewhere. The extent to which they manage to overcome this obstacle for the duration of their stay in Morocco or Turkey varies from person to person. While some complain about the hardships of cold showers from day one, others are willing to give up some luxury for a number of weeks. Still others take pride in not minding the 'primitive' circumstances at all. Here, another binary juxtaposition comes into view: that of luxury versus austerity. In the case study, we saw how Naima romanticises the 'basic' lifestyle of her rural relatives. Being content with what you have and focusing on human relationships rather than material luxuries is presented as the positive side of the absence of luxury. For Naima, this is a good thing per se. Rachid takes a slightly different stance, claiming repeatedly that unlike other Moroccan Dutch, *'I don't feel too good to sit in the dirt among the poor, I'm their equal'*. Rachid does not value dirt, nor does he idealise the life of the poor. Rather he makes a claim to belong: he uses his stance towards the Moroccan standard of life to define himself as a 'real' Moroccan and distance himself from those who are alienated from their roots and now feel too good for life in Morocco. In passing, Rachid also touches upon another not-so-ambivalent difference between the countries:

that between dirt and cleanliness. Said, presenting himself as a real Dutchman, even told me that visiting our southern neighbour Belgium reminds him of Morocco because of all the dirt.

Familiarity

In the assessment of various aspects, from social norms to cauliflower, their familiarity has been seen to play a key role. As a central motive in people's understandings of home, this theme will receive more attention in Chapter 5. Right now, it is interesting to note that just like mentality, familiarity as such is also posited as a country 'characteristic'.

For my informants, raised if not born in the Netherlands, the strongest pole of familiarity is generally found in the country of residence. There they know how to orient themselves in physical and social space, from the intimate scale of their own house and neighbourhood upwards to the Netherlands or even Europe in general. Opposed to this is not knowing one's way around during summer stays. This familiarity is by no means a strictly personal matter – locals easily pick out vacationers by their lack of everyday familiarity with their surroundings, and they treat them accordingly. This general opposition in familiarity comes with several footnotes.

First of all, we cannot simply categorise the familiar as positive and the unfamiliar as negative – we just looked at the dialectic between routine and breaks from routine, and earlier saw Naima talk about the 'exotic' allure of the unfamiliar. Secondly, mirroring the stories about the familiar environment of the Netherlands, there are also a number of accounts of (places in) Morocco/Turkey as being profoundly familiar, albeit often on a somewhat more limited scale: *'Meknes and Amsterdam are the two cities that I know like the back of my hand'*. Not everybody makes clear distinctions between a familiar and a less familiar environment to the same extent. Many who do, nevertheless agree that the land of their parents is still by far less unfamiliar to them than any random holiday destination. Finally, Morocco and Turkey can also be seen as familiar in a different way, referring more to the symbolic dimension of home than the lack of familiarity in more concrete dimensions. Some informants talk about a 'profound' sense of familiarity with the land of their parents, evoked by hearing everybody speak their language, seeing familiar faces and contemplating their roots in this country. It is this 'other' familiarity that gives Dounia the shivers when she arrives in Morocco.

Backward or Authentic?

Concluding the inventory of ways in which informants characterise Morocco and Turkey in comparison to the Netherlands, what remains to be addressed is

the issue of the modern. Turkey, and Morocco even more, is presented as less modern than the Netherlands when it comes to opinions and lifestyle as well as facilities and technical developments. The latter could pass under the heading of 'luxury', the former, which of course overlap with issues of mentality as discussed earlier on, are more complex. They raise the question to what exactly my informants oppose 'the modern', and how they evaluate this.

Dounia describes herself as 'maybe too modern' for many Moroccans, both here and there. In her view of the modern, gender relations play an important part – she and her husband are a modern family because she has a job and they share household chores and child-rearing activities. In Dounia's case, this is clearly presented as something positive. She is also one of the few participants who cite an explicit opposite to this modernity. At one point, she describes 'those people' in Morocco as backward. This idea is seldom mentioned in other interviews, yet present as an implicit contrast to a Dutch modern mentality.

Many informants also told me that Morocco and Turkey are now modernising at a fast rate. Opinions about this are, once again, mixed. On the one hand, we will see in the next chapter that Naima, for instance, finds it much easier to relate to Morocco thanks to recent modernising tendencies that narrow the gap between her own worldview and that of her relatives. On the other hand, there is also a certain nostalgia regarding the disappearing of the 'old'. Some informants feel sorry that 'things are becoming the same as here'.

This ambivalence points to the fact that modernity, besides being opposed to all things backward or old-fashioned, also has a more positive antipole: authenticity or simplicity. Few interviewees used this term, but many narratives implied it. The things Naima values about her grandfather's village, for example, could be summarised in terms of authenticity. Several informants who explicitly identify themselves as modern, at the same time feel sorry to see things changing in Morocco or Turkey, even though they realise that for the inhabitants this is a change for the better. In Morocco or Turkey they attach symbolic value to an authenticity that in the concrete context of the Netherlands they would find hard to combine with their 'real life'. These countries are valued exactly for providing a refreshing contrast to informants' dominant self-identifications, or maybe for bringing to the fore an aspect of their selves easily marginalised in their Dutch daily lives.

In many narratives, the epitome of authenticity is one's ancestral village. This village evokes ideal pictures of a certain lifestyle, sober, rural and traditional, for many interviewees – regardless of the current state of habitation of 'their' villages. The countryside is often referred to as the location of 'real' or 'authentic' Moroccan/Turkish culture, but also as a 'backward' area with

'old-fashioned' habits.[45] Whether evaluated positively or negatively, the countryside is seen as sharply contrasting with life in the Netherlands, while urban is more 'modern' or 'western' – and thus somewhat more like the Netherlands. This makes Dounia feel more at home in an urban environment, whereas Redouan, on the contrary, mentions that he might as well stay in the Netherlands if he were to go to Morocco just to stay in cities like Tanger. In the next section, Redouan's story demonstrates the significance of the village as a focal point in space for the experience of one's ties to Morocco or Turkey.

Naima's Village

Much of what Naima loves about Morocco can be found in her grandfather's village. A smile appears on her face when she embarks on the subject during our first interview, and, as mentioned, this is the first time she departs from the rather analytical mode in which she tells most of her story. I cannot resist letting the reader share in her enthusiasm in some length:

> Because you know, there's something basic about the country. You essentially get in touch with yourself. (…) It was actually really about the time you spent with each other, (…) I really loved that too, when I was young, with all my cousins, it was really fun, because we have none of that here, picking grapes, olives (…) oh, and nature, you know? (…) It's phenomenal, truly, and then there's also the entire farm. Cows, donkeys, hens, roosters, goats, everything … rabbits (…), and you also had to fetch water from the well, yeah we don't have that here you know? Not in the city either, it's a wonderful experience, really just those basic things, they also make you appreciate the culture more. (…) You have a good life, and yeah, that's all that matters, you know? And then you genuinely enjoy nature, and the animals and the people there. (…) [I] definitely recommend it, going travelling there. (…) [Y]ou need to brave unmade roads, like a survival course, and then you finally arrive, and you see a kind of little house, and you know, they really used to just build them themselves! (…) [Y]eah it's that earthiness, and maybe it's because you don't have that here, that you miss

45 This is, of course, a tendency not typical for this specific group and location. Indeed, images of the countryside as authentic, as well as backward, date at least as far back as ancient Rome, e.g. A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Elites and Trade in the Roman Town*, 2003.

> it even more. (…) [I]n the country things are much more serene, there's no hustle and bustle. And you lose all sense of time. Yeah it's really fantastic, if you're completely depressed and stressed out, that's where you need to go and you return completely – haha – healed. [*my italics, FJS*].

Naima paints a picture of countryside idyll with a hint of outdoors adventure. She fondly remembers playing outside and participating in farming activities, and nowadays, the peaceful and basic country life provides a welcome break from her busy everyday life. The image she calls up is rather a romantic one. It extends to her grandfather, whose charisma and serene authority she admires, despite her general dislike of male dominance. The way he still wears a traditional turban reminds her of the romantic images she cherishes of the 'Arab world' in general. Her grandfather's traditional clothes make for a setting that is 'totally foreign'. For her, this exotic allure is one of the attractions of 'the village', which illustrates that attachment to one's 'roots' is by no means the same thing as identifying with them. Naima has no problem with cherishing her traditional, rural roots (both in Morocco and in Ridderkerk, as we will see further on) as well as her modern urban life. And, typically for Naima, she is very conscious of her tendency to romanticise, as we can see in the following quote about her childhood thoughts when attending arranged marriages: *'You know, you think "but will they also get along?"* (…) [*A*]*s a child I had wild fantasies about that,* (…) *oh and I still do, I romanticise nearly everything about the far east, I think it's wonderful.'*

In the extended quote above, Naima repeatedly states that she appreciates these things all the more for the contrast they provide to her complex urban lifestyle. The same goes for two important characteristics of this village life: the absence of time pressure and the focus on togetherness rather than personal ambition. Both are recurring themes in Naima's narrations on Morocco in general and even more so in those on her grandfather's village. After the passage quoted above, she continues: *'The time pressure that exists here, constantly having to perform again and again, you're constantly judged as an individual. And there, in the country, you need to till the soil and so on, so collectivism is the most important thing, you need to do everything together, and then of course, you have time. Well, of course there are the harvest months and so on, I can imagine, but things move much more serenely. Because of the quiet. All around you.'* In the beginning of this passage, Naima continues to sing the praises of village life, here explicitly contrasted with her hectic existence in the Netherlands.

Then another voice (possibly echoing conversations she has had with others about this subject) enters the stage, reminding her of the harvest time, when working days are long and hard and the harsh reality of rural existence comes to the fore. She recognises this other side, although the voice emphasising serenity, warmth and rustic charm remains dominant.

Although the 'collective spirit' Naima values so much is located most explicitly in the setting of her grandfather's village, it is also one of the main things she appreciates about Morocco in general, and about being Moroccan. Her image of Morocco, and her account of the time she spends there, has many facets. Morocco means vacation time as well as family, freedom as well as gendered restrictions and tensions, warmth as well as conflicting mentalities. When asked what she misses about Morocco, Naima focuses on the aforementioned collective spirit, on family and on the fluid perception of time, so different from the Dutch 'time is money' attitude. She also misses the call for prayer, which makes religion a public rather than a private affair.

3.5 *The Village*

'The village' plays an important part in Naima's story. Her grandfather's village holds most of the positive connotations Morocco has for her – authenticity, community, peace, family, tradition. Like Naima, many participants gave their ancestral village a special place in their narrative, although few actually spend as much time there as she does.[46] Dounia, for example, tells me she went there two years ago for an 'intensive' visit during which she 'even' made a tour of the old houses on foot. In Dounia's case, a longer stay is hardly possible, since the houses her family used to inhabit are deserted and lie in ruin. She has no personal memories of 'her' village, yet she did value tracing her rural roots, imagining what it must have been like for her grandfather. Redouan also finds the house of his grandparents deserted when he returns there. Yet this house, and the village it is part of, play an important role in his narratives. His story gives a good impression of the meanings attached to the ancestral village, and by proxy to Morocco and Turkey in general. At the same time, his conception of 'the village' also points to the limitations of those meanings.

46 Most migration histories show double movements away from these villages: either the (grand)parents of my informants had moved from small hamlets to larger settlements before they migrated to the Netherlands, or they later acquired property in such towns and stopped spending most of their holiday time in these remote ancestral villages. Only a few of my informants had grandparents from an urban background.

I meet Redouan in the dusty small town in the middle of the Rif Mountains to which his grandparents relocated and where he spends his summers. He agrees to an interview on the spot. Concluding our conversation, I ask him what I should experience to gain an impression of his Moroccan experience. He is quick to answer *'You just need to go with someone, like me, into the village* (...) *How they lived and where they come from. Just the person's stories* (...) *where they were born.'* For Redouan, the place he consistently refers to as 'my village' is a highly symbolic place. It stands for his roots and links him to past and future generations. Knowing this specific place means knowing where you are from. Redouan tells me that most people of his generation share his nostalgia: *'Nearly all* (...) *of the Moroccans in the Netherlands have a place like this.'*

Interestingly, Redouan talks about 'how people live there' even though referring to a deserted house. He seems to be thinking of the 'authentic' lifestyle said to be preserved in these isolated hamlets. The focus of Redouan's romantic picture, however, lies on the physical environment and the memories attached to it rather than on this lifestyle. His enthusiasm shows when he describes the mountains, the nature, the olive groves surrounding a house without electricity or running water. *'There, quiet really does mean quiet! You actually need to experience it for yourself.'*

I eagerly accept Redouan's invitation to join him on a trip to his ancestral village. A few younger cousins come along, with their own agenda – the deserted mountain area is ideal for motor crossing. When we leave the asphalt and turn onto a rugged mountain road, Redouan becomes quiet for a moment. Then he continues talking with twice the enthusiasm: this is it, the road to his village. This is the very road he watched for days as a little boy, waiting for his father to come home from the Netherlands for the summer. He points out the poles lying on the roadside: the region is on the list for connection to the electricity network, the road will soon be neatly paved. Redouan is glad for the region's inhabitants, but secretly he would wish for the road to remain as it is now, a landscape of the past – every bump evoking memories of his youth, of the time before migration.

The road, the mud house we arrive at many bumps later, the village mosque – all serve as anchor points for Redouan's memories: *'Once you're back here, it all suddenly comes back to you.'* Redouan's family is actively engaged in the preservation of the 'original' village. He explains that some people modernise old houses, but that his father chose to keep and maintain the house exactly like it used to be. If it were not for this migrant interest, the house would either be modernised or fall into ruin. The olive groves surrounding the house are also cultivated for the enjoyment of those residing abroad. The oil from these olives – *'If you could taste them!'* – is shipped to the Netherlands.

Not everybody has personal memories of living in 'the village' like Redouan does, or family still residing there like Naima. But 'the village' also serves as a focal point for images of further-reaching continuity and family history. Redouan describes how he sometimes asks his grandfather to tell him about living in the village, about building his mud house with his own hands. He also talks about wanting to bring his future children to this place and teach them where they are 'from'. And a visit to the village does not only evoke the (family) past and future, but often also sees Redouan pondering his own current predicament. *'The village, the mountains,* (...) *when you're there,* (...) *you really just start to think about what you've been through in your life, like hey, in the end I came back here after all.'* To close the circle, Redouan also dreams of spending a few months in his village in the future, to sort out his life and refigure his future by reviving the past.

The peace of the countryside, and the contrast with one's daily life in the Netherlands, triggers reflections on where one is from and where one is going. The contrast sometimes makes informants feel grateful for the fact that they do not live here, that they have resources and opportunities they never would have had, had their (grand)parents stayed put. But, as we already saw above, the comparison can also be in favour of the 'original' rural lifestyle. In Redouan's words: *'In the village, you had nothing. And in the Netherlands you had plenty, even though you were actually happier in the village. And really that was where you had everything, which is the most beautiful part.'*

Like Naima (who explicitly praised 'the village' as 'foreign' and completely different from her Dutch daily life), Redouan also appreciates the village as an important antipole to his life in the Netherlands. At the end of our village visit of maybe one hour, not meeting a single soul unless you count the pigeons occupying the empty courtyard, he asks me whether I am already feeling 'all calm'. That is the effect the village has on him! In remarks like these, 'the village' functions as a focal point that demonstrates, and even magnifies, the contrasts between Morocco/Turkey and the Netherlands.

For Redouan, this focal point is reproduced in his Dutch environment. Back in the Netherlands, I interview him again, in his apartment. I do not notice anything special about it at first sight, but according to Redouan, it is imbued with references to his village. He explains how he decorated it with plants to remind him of the nature surrounding his village. In his attic, he dedicated a whole room to village and family memorabilia. Here he likes to sit at night and 'look at Morocco'. By proxy, this room also allows him to think over his life the way he told me he does in 'the village'. When, later on, I explicitly ask him what home means to him, he once again refers to his village: *'To me, "home" actually means my small village. I enter* (...) *my little patch of Morocco in the Netherlands.*

(…) *So this is my small village, in the Netherlands.'* For Redouan, his village becomes the ultimate symbol of home.

Accounts of 'the village' can thus serve several important roles in my informants' narratives. The contrast between 'the village' and life in the Netherlands can at times be read as a condensed version of the contrasts sketched between the Netherlands and Morocco or Turkey in general. Part of what makes Morocco and Turkey important to informants is the symbolic significance of one's roots. 'The village' is one very concrete benchmark for such roots symbolism in many accounts, a locus of roots and a focus for nostalgic longings. Some people focus on other levels, tracing their roots mainly to the Rif region, their parental house, or the whole country.

But for each of these levels, the same point applies: the high symbolism of descent and roots is but one of several dimensions of meaning attached to them. 'The village' as a symbol exists alongside the village as a concrete physical location, that may be more or less familiar and accessible, and as a social network one may or may not (want to) be a part of. Ahmed, for example, pays no heed to roots symbolism on the level of the village. Indeed, he told me that although he understands that his father wants to visit his family still living there, he feels no affinity with the place himself: *'Should we go to what's-it-called, to the village, well, there's so little to do there* (…) *yeah there's a pond, you can go and have a chinwag with the frogs, but at a certain point you've really had enough of it. And then you see a little bottle* (…) *of water* (…)*, that's what they use to wipe their bottoms, so I only want to stay there for one day and then I'm ready to leave again, before the toilet paper runs out, in a manner of speaking, and the local shop says they have no more toilet paper.'*

Ahmed focuses exclusively on the negative sides of 'the village', showing that the village can also stand for the absence of the modern in a negative sense. Many others, like Dounia, addressed several sides in their narratives, telling me how they enjoy the nostalgic idea of visiting the place of their ancestors, but begrudge the lack of facilities or the 'backward' ideas of 'traditional' villagers.

In some respects, the example of Redouan is an exceptional case – regarding both his predominantly positive stance towards 'the village' and the extent to which he tries to integrate it into his Dutch daily life and into his larger life narrative.[47] Most people I spoke to only refer to 'the village' when discussing their

47 Quite possibly the fact that we actually visited Redouan's village together has also enhanced the importance of this site in his narrative. The memory of this visit forms our shared frame of reference during the interview in the Netherlands and also may have given Redouan the impression that I am specifically interested in his village.

summers in Turkey/Morocco or their 'roots'. Yet in these passages they often speak about 'their' villages quite passionately. Consider Rachid: *'You've been going there on holiday ever since you were born, you don't know any better. You simply feel a connection with that sand, that soil, those mountains, you're a part of that village in a way.'* Rachid expresses a strong sense of belonging to 'the village', explaining his attachment by referring to the yearly visits throughout his life. In contexts like this, informants regularly named 'the village' as a home. Nora, for example, pays little attention to 'her' village in her life narrative, yet when explicitly discussing 'home' she tells me: *'The village where I come from. When you're there, even though I can't remember ever having lived there, it feels like coming home. It's actually very strange.'* What these examples have in common is that the narrators see 'the village' as a place that is meaningful for their lives. Whether they spend much time visiting or thinking about it can vary, but it remains a 'special place' that is positively valued.

At the same time, even in the case of Redouan we are advised not to overestimate the importance of 'the village' in his life. His case can also serve to indicate where this importance does *not* extend. When we leave the village, I ask him whether he sometimes spends the night here. He looks surprised – of course not! There is nothing here, no electricity, you would have to bring everything yourself! Only then do I remember that when he first mentioned it, he described the family house as *'purely historical – nobody lives there anymore'*. His great enthusiasm for the place once we started making plans to actually visit it, had made me forget what a short-term affair these village visits apparently are. The same goes for Naima: even though 'her' family house is inhabited by her grandfather and thus much better equipped, she still does not like to spend the night there, mentioning fear of snakes as the reason. Naima fondly remembers the time when there was no electricity, bemoaning the loss of those lovely oil lamps, but if she stays in the countryside, she sleeps at her European relatives' who have fully equipped houses.[48]

48 I visited a number of other such villages. In Turkey I joined a family for a day in the house of the (also Netherlands-based) grandparents – sharing a meal, taking a walk in the mountains, visiting some fields for a fresh produce snack, and ostentatiously showing the Dutch girl tagging along how you draw water from a well. In Morocco a father, returning from a day at the beach, took a detour to show me and his adolescent children 'his' village, where we sat in the fields, ate some fresh almonds, and then fled when we saw some children approaching – 'the spies' according to the father, whom we had to avoid because once spotted he would be obliged to actually enter the houses and visit uninteresting far-off relatives… The enthusiasm for this place was by no means matched by a desire to be a part of it, even for a short while.

Marginal Homelands? Positioned Priorities

Throughout this chapter, I have shown how in my informants' country-talk, Morocco and Turkey are compared to the Netherlands, the country that forms their primary frame of reference.[49] But the analysis of 'the village' as, so to say, a condensed version of Turkey/Morocco, makes clear that this should not be taken to mean that the latter are of little to no importance to participants' identities. If identity is about the stories we tell about how we have become who we are now, ancestral villages can play an important part as the place from which people departed, and to which they refer back, whether they do so actively or less so. Although even Redouan only visits his cherished village on a day trip, this does not make it less important, less special to him. For these descendants of migrants, 'the village', and Morocco or Turkey in general, figures largely in stories aimed at fulfilling the human need to know where one is from.[50]

When asking about the relative importance of two countries in the lives of migrants' offspring, the risk we often run is that we base our conclusions on only one of several positions they take. We then either conclude that the 'original homeland' is of great and enduring importance to them or that, their life being firmly based in the 'host country', this importance is waning to a nostalgic minimum. In various respects and from different positions, the relative significance of each country for individual informants can vary.

Sometimes these positions are voiced rather explicitly, like in the following words from my Morocco-based interview with Dounia, which sound like the ultimate confirmation of the prevalence of the Netherlands: *'There, everything falls into place. You mustn't forget that you are there the most and here the least. So it's logical that there, everything falls into place, and that Morocco is just something that you do now and then. But it's not really you.* (…) *It is, and always will be, a different country.'* Dounia is resolute about Morocco being of a different order of significance to her life and identity. In itself, this identity statement is in telling contrast with, for example, the following words of Tariq (26, m, Moroccan): *'In reality, Morocco is simply a part of my identity. I just am Morocco, you know, Morocco is just right, it's my country, and it will always stay that way.'* Here, Dounia identifies with the Netherlands, Tariq with Morocco. But from the contexts of their life stories, we know them to be the same woman that talked about a profound sense of home upon arriving in Morocco with tears in her eyes, and the same man that told me that it is easy enough to feel at home in Morocco as one knows one will be off again in a month anyway. Making light of the

49 Cf. Ghorashi, who argues that 'For those in diaspora their past is not what urges them to return, but a background that exists as a basis of negotiations within the new setting.' – Ghorashi 2003b, p. 136.

50 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 297; Prins 2006, p. 288; Verkuyten 2010, p. 52.

ambivalent ways in which people relate to the country of their forefathers, in other words, can both lead us to overstate and to understate the significance of these relationships in their lives.

Nevertheless, the narratives of Morocco and Turkey on the one hand and the Netherlands on the other, do show a certain difference in emphasis. The tension evoked here brings to mind the broad distinction between home as a realm of concrete locality and everyday experience on the one hand and home as a more ideational, symbolic or discursive realm on the other. Could we then say that the first can be found in the Netherlands while Morocco or Turkey can be called home mainly in the second sense? Is it the symbolic space, of Morocco, Turkey or a specific village, that constitutes a home for these descendants of migrants rather than the concrete experience of the physical places and actual people these spaces correspond to? And is this why, as I showed in the beginning of this chapter, people may have a profound sense of coming home when they arrive in Morocco or Turkey, but see this feeling waning with time during their stay?

Indeed, participants sometimes made statements that suggest as much, as we will see in the next chapter. It is often more difficult to construct Morocco/Turkey, for instance, as an everyday home, than to refer to it as home in more symbolic senses. But although this distinguishing between such different dimensions of meaning of home can be very helpful to interpret differences in emphasis, it would be a simplification to use these contrasting realms as straightforward labels denoting the two countries one-to-one. Both dimensions can generally be discerned in different contexts relating to both countries, and symbolic and concrete dimensions are always intertwined – in 'the village' as in other contexts.

I would maintain that home, slippery as it is in its meanings, is used more often in a symbolic sense when referring to a 'country of origin' and more often in concrete, everyday ways, when talking about the country of residence.[51]

4 Framing Country-talk: An Analysis

4.1 *Multivoiced Selfing and Othering*

The country-talk of participants, as I present it in this chapter, shows certain patterns. As we have seen, the stories about the different countries are not

51 This idea is taken up (and messed up) in the next chapter, where I undertake an analysis of participants' differentiated understandings of Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands as home. In Chapters 4 and 5 I also pay attention to interviewees' ponderings about 'return' migration.

merely descriptions but identity-talk. They inform us which aspects of the countries the narrators deem meaningful for themselves in their particular situation, often vacillating between positive and negative appraisals of certain traits. Their (dis)identifications do not always follow the same lines as their appraisals: informants regularly describe themselves as possessing typical traits that they see as more negative than those of permanent residents of Morocco and Turkey, stating, for example, that these countries stand for a degree of hospitality that they themselves are incapable of.

We can read the descriptions of the different countries as complex acts of selfing and othering.[52] What do depictions of countries in terms of value-laden opposites tell us about the role of both countries in the narrator's identity construction? And why is it that participants do not always position themselves at the 'positive end' of an opposition? A useful tool to look at these questions is provided by Gerd Baumann's 'grammars of identity/alterity'.[53] Borrowing from classical anthropological writings, Baumann has formulated several 'grammars' that can act as 'guides as to how different discourses order the relationships between self and other'.[54] These grammars are flexible tools that help us look beyond simple self/other dichotomies in identity-talk. Next to grammars of encompassment ('deep down, the other is but a part of our encompassing self') and segmentation (lower levels of division become irrelevant at higher levels in a situational hierarchy of selves and others) Baumann describes a third way of ordering relations between self and other which, borrowing from Edward Said's Orientalism, he calls an orientalising grammar.[55] While different grammars may be used within the same social situation, here I want to look into the third one as particularly suited to help us make sense of the country-talk I described above.

The orientalising grammar consists of a double movement in describing self and other: a broad description of one's own group as good and of outsiders as bad (in classical orientalism, e.g., rational versus irrational) is supplemented by also allowing for certain desirable traits of those same others that are lacking in oneself (e.g. sensuality as opposed to constraint). Baumann calls this 'reverse mirror imaging': 'selfing and othering condition each other in that both positive and negative characteristics are made to mirror each other in

52 The terms 'selfing and othering' are borrowed from Baumann & Gingrich 2004.

53 Baumann & Gingrich 2004.

54 G. Baumann, *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach*, 2004.

55 In the setting of this research, the reference to 'orientalism' is particularly fitting considering that many descriptions of Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands resonate with distinctions in classical orientalism. See E.W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1978.

reverse.'[56] This makes the other a valued albeit inferior counter-image in the act of selfing.[57] The other becomes a reverse mirror that confirms one's own identity as well as provoking self-critique. Thus the use of an orientalising grammar in talking about self and other results in a 'double-edged play between exclusion and exoticized appreciation'.[58] One example of this, which we have already seen, would be Naima's appreciation of her grandfather's village precisely because of its foreign, exotic allure.

Baumann's mirror imaging quite adequately catches the dynamics of much of the country-talk presented above, in which traits evaluated as positive were accompanied by negative footnotes and vice versa. The distinctions of warm versus cold and hard versus soft are clear examples, both joining an overall positive judgement of warm Morocco/Turkey or soft Dutchmen, with mirroring footnotes about the advantages of the cooler Netherlands and harder Moroccans/Turks. The latter are seen as shallow and materialist, but sharp in business, as opposed to the less materialist but passive Dutchmen. In this juxtaposition, participants tend to place themselves at the 'soft' side of the continuum, opposing their Dutch mentality to that of resident Moroccans and Turks.

In the case of the warm-cold binary (in which Turks or Moroccans are presented as helpful, involved and interested in others, sometimes to the extreme, as opposed to the Dutch as more closed and indifferent to others, but also respecting people's need for privacy), identifications vary much more. Some informants place themselves at one side of the warm-cold continuum, while others choose a position in the middle, explaining that they have some characteristics of both 'sides'. Yet others vacillate between different positions over the course of an interview, sometimes identifying with warm Morocco/Turkey and sometimes distancing themselves from it in favour of the Netherlands.[59] In sum, there is great variation between different persons as well as within individual narratives.

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56 Baumann 21.

57 Cf. Branscombe and Ellemers, who argue that 'While lower status groups acknowledge the superior performance of higher status comparison groups on dimensions that define the status difference between the groups, they also simultaneously favor the ingroup on alternative dimensions.': N.R. Branscombe & N. Ellemers, *Coping With Group-Based Discrimination: Individualistic Versus Group-Level Strategies*, 1998, p. 244.

58 Baumann 25.

59 The distinction between the Netherlands as modern and Morocco and Turkey as much less so could serve as a similar example.

This example reveals an important difference between participants' country-talk and 'classical' cases of selfing and othering along orientalist lines: in the narratives I analysed, it cannot be predicted with which of the two groups that are being contrasted the speaker identifies with at any given moment. The scheme of the orientalising grammar, 'we are [positive trait] and they are [negative trait], but they are also [complementary positive trait] while we are [complementary negative trait]', is thus taken a step further and extended into 'group A is [positive trait] but [complementary negative trait], group B is [negative trait] but [complementary positive trait], and I am/we are partly/entirely part of one group/both groups/neither group.' The grammars of identity/alterity already allow for great flexibility in the ways relations between self and other can be framed and in how the lines between self and other are drawn. However, they do presuppose that the speaker sees one side of the line as 'self' and the other side as 'other'. But here we see a 'grammar' even more complex: a double or two-way selfing and othering, with people alternately or synchronously identifying with and distancing themselves from *each* of the two countries/groups they are comparing. Of course, it happens just as often that interviewees unambiguously identify with one country, but the point remains that it cannot be predicted which 'camp' they choose – which side is self, and which is not, in any given situation. Thus we see that these individuals' identifications with both countries are layered, often partial, and always situational. Perhaps more than anything else, this variability in the 'direction' of my informants' identifications demonstrates the non-exclusive multiplicity of the ties of belonging that characterises migrants and their descendants. This crucial point is conveniently ignored when migrants are asked to define 'how much' they identify with each of several countries they relate to.[60]

I have extended on Baumann's orientalising grammar to illuminate the complex patterns of (dis)identification typically formulated by my informants. In this light, it is all the more interesting to follow up upon the fact that despite their problematic nature, binary oppositions between the two countries are so persistently used throughout participants' own narratives. Considering that the nation state is one of the most important levels of identification in our time, it is no surprise that descendants of migrants relate to this dominant discourse – even more so as national belonging is complicated through migration and a growing call for a 'unified' national identity in countries like the

60 For this point, see also chapters one and six. Cf. M.J.A.M. Verkuyten, *Etnische identiteit: Theoretische en empirische benaderingen*, 1999, p. 37; Omlo 2011, p. 91.

Netherlands.[61] Yet in their case the insight that binaries are 'intrinsically differentiated and unstable',[62] as Brah argues, is particularly poignant. Therefore, the zeal with which participants kept reconstructing binary categorisations that automatically problematise their own position is impressive. Baumann proposes to confront seeming binaries with what he calls a ternary challenge: 'a division-in-two will intrinsically raise the awkward question of what may be in the middle'.[63] In the case of my interviews, participants seem to construct a binary in which *they themselves* are 'in the middle'. This does not mean that they are, as the clichéd misconception would have it, 'in-between cultures'.[64] Still, by evoking this binary they do create a field of tension in which their own position is not self-evident.[65]

Above we have seen that navigating this field of tension my informants tend to identify with *and* distance themselves from both sides of the binary more often than simply choosing sides. A person can take different positions in relation to different themes,[66] or varying/ambivalent stances towards one and the same theme, for example evaluating it as positive on one point of the interview and as negative later on.[67] This may seem strange, but such apparent self-contradictions are a rather common part of human meaning-making. We gain more insight into the workings of such inconsistencies when, building upon insights from Dialogical Self Theory, we suppose that in the course of their narrative interviewees move between different 'relatively autonomous I-positions'[68] that each have their own stories to tell about who they are

61 Cf. Verkuyten 2010, p. 8. For more on the power-ladenness of informants' self-narratives, and the role of dominant discourse in their country-talk and self-narratives, see a.o. Chapter 4 and Section 4.2 of Chapter 3.

62 Brah 1996, p. 185.

63 Baumann 2004, p. 35.

64 Cf. Snel 2003.

65 This idea of positioning themselves in-between a self-evoked binary brings to mind Homi Bhabha's concept of a 'third space', to be found in the ambivalent but creative openings or interstices in which those in culture's border zones live out their hybrid lives. This concept propels us into a different theoretical discourse dealing with migrant experience: that of 'hybridity'. I explore the possibilities and limitations of this discourse in the epilogue to this chapter, as a reflection on how individuals can live cultural multiplicity.

66 E.g. feeling closer to Morocco or Turkey in terms of 'warmth' and to the Netherlands when it comes to being 'soft', and being ambivalent about the opposition between spontaneity and routine.

67 E.g. first idealising a 'simple life' in the countryside and then claiming one would go mad if one stayed in such a restricted environment for too long.

68 Hermans 2001c, p. 248.

and how they relate to their environment.[69] In the words of Hermans and Hermans-Jansen, 'The I moves in an imagined space (...) from the one to the other position, creating dynamic fields in which self-negotiations, self-contradictions, and self-integrations result in a great variety of meanings.'[70]

Not only are descendants of migrants more or less embedded in many different contexts, from various I-positions they also take different stances towards these contexts and their own place in them. For the countries they talk about, this results in the great variety of sometimes contradictory meanings that we have observed in this chapter. Sometimes different positions come to the fore quite clearly in contradictory descriptions, appreciations or identifications. Dounia, for example, described Morocco as *'busy busy busy, rush rush rush'* and then, in the very next sentence, talked of life in Morocco as *'easy-going, if things don't happen today, they'll happen tomorrow.'* Dounia also sometimes evaluated this hustle of Moroccan life as something attractive, while at other times stating quite the opposite – not just because you can have too much of a good thing, but also because she sees herself as more suited to ordered Dutch life. Also more in general, the topic 'mentality' is one that reveals many contrasting identifications. We see informants sometimes identifying with Turkish/Moroccan family-mindedness and sometimes with Dutch distance and individualism. Different positions can take the stage at different points in an interview, or they can appear side by side, engaging in dialogue.[71]

Understanding that (life) stories are told from several different (I-) positions thus gives us a framework to elucidate many ambivalences, be they implicit ones which only become apparent by looking at longer narratives, or passages that are explicitly and directly ambivalent, for example, because interviewees themselves weigh different positions against each other or even stage dialogues between different (internal or external) voices expressing contrasting views.[72] The latter kind appears more often in some interviews than in others. Dounia's story, for instance, holds few examples of explicit ambivalences, whereas in Naima's case study we already saw a number of examples of her staging different voices. Let us reconsider, for example, the following words from her account of Morocco: *'So much space, so many freedoms. – And at the same time, you realise that you're really quite constrained. – Oh it's not as bad as*

69 See e.g. H.J.M. Hermans, *The Dialogical Self as a Society of Mind*, 2002.

70 Hermans & Hermans-Jansen 2003, p. 544.

71 It is the latter that Hermans is most interested in: Hermans 2001c, p. 254; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka 2010.

72 See Chapter 4 for extensive analyses of such explicit and implicit ambivalences in the case of Jamila.

all that, you just need to know where you stand, your responsibilities, and then you're given the freedom.' (dashes mine, FJS). Here we can even observe a sort of turn-taking between two positions: one singing praise of Moroccan freedom, the other objecting by pointing out how restricted one is there, the first (or a third?) one reacting that it is not that bad as long as you know your place.

The framework of Hermans's Dialogical Self Theory and the image of a multiplicity of I-positions is useful on many levels. People who are less prone than Naima to formulate such explicit dialogues still take different positions towards Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands at different points of an interview. Apparently, they have several positions in their repertoire that are 'central' enough to be evoked alternately within one and the same social setting (the interview), rather than one voice being dominant and silencing others at least until a change of context provokes a repositioning. Evidently, there is great variation in stances towards the Netherlands and Morocco or Turkey within as well as between individuals. Whereas more often than not descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants disagree about the different meanings the countries have for them, what they share is the great differentiation, and often the ambivalence, of these personal meanings, and the multiplicity of their identifications.

4.2 *Mirror, Mirror: Symmetrical Depictions of Asymmetrical Homes*

In a number of cases, the pattern described above goes one step further. In this subsection I analyse a different instance of participants' tendency to identify with and distance themselves from both countries from several different positions, and relate this to their understandings of home. Rather than ascribing one set of characteristics to one country and a complementary set to the other one, narrators can also attach the *same* traits alternately to the Netherlands and to Morocco or Turkey. In line with the vocabulary of Baumann, who describes the use of the orientalising grammar as 'reverse mirror imaging', I propose to call this process 'mirror imaging'. Taking Naima as an example, we see that she often speaks about the freedom of movement that for her is characteristic of the Netherlands and lacking in Morocco. Yet in her words about Moroccan freedom quoted in the previous subsection, as on a number of other occasions, the tables are turned and she talks about Morocco as a country with more space and freedom than one finds in the Netherlands. At different points in her narrative and in different ways, then, both Morocco and the Netherlands can stand for freedom as well as for restriction.[73]

73 We could also say that from her position as a lover of freedom, Naima evaluates both countries in terms of the freedoms and restrictions they bring her.

The strongest instances of such mirror imaging occur in the story of Farid. To name one example, he describes Moroccans as honest, compared to the dishonesty of the Dutch, but elsewhere complains that he is used to Dutch sincerity, making him an easy victim of Moroccan deceitfulness. This pattern made his story rather confusing to me at moments, until I started looking at it as a fine example of a life narrative told from multiple, contrasting positions.[74] The most elaborate example of Farid's mirror imaging concerns the opposition of peace and repose versus chaos and stress. About his summers in Morocco, he told me: *'you're home then. But you won't get any rest while you're there. You come home tired from that country.'* Farid depicts his time in Morocco as chaotic and tiresome, contrasting it with coming home to his peaceful existence in the Netherlands.[75] In the course of Farid's interview we can find several instances of this contrast, but also of its mirror image: descriptions of the Netherlands as a place where he is always under pressure, never getting any peace, and from which he escapes to Morocco for some well-deserved rest.

Remarkably, for both Farid and Naima, the topics that are at stake match the ones they stressed when asked explicitly what 'home' meant to them. In the case of Farid, his first reply to this question was that being home meant being at rest, while Naima dwelt on freedom and the importance of other people's recognition of your liberties.[76] The things they consider as both present and missing in both contexts, in different ways and from different positions, appear to correspond with the things they value about home. The ways participants describe the different countries points towards their identifications with each and their feeling simultaneously at home and not at home in both. While most participants feel that both the Netherlands and Morocco/Turkey provide them with a sense of home in different (sometimes complementary, sometimes colliding) ways, the two countries seem to be tied into one and the same discourse about home.

A telling case of the thematic congruence between mirroring country-talk and understandings of home can be found in the story of Aziza. Quite typically

74 The analysis of multivoiced narratives may involve pursuing the question of what the various positions are from which a narrative is told. Chapter 4 pursues this question in a case study setting. But the identification of concrete positions is not always necessary, or even possible. In this chapter we see that already in itself, the awareness of a narrative's multivoicedness holds explanatory value.

75 Cf. Case, who argues that 'The experiences of "being at home" and "being away from home" are not uniformly stressful or relaxing': Case 1996, p. 11.

76 For an exploration of the answers interviewees offered me to explicit questions about the notion of home, see the epilogue to Chapter 5.

connecting home with being oneself, and not-home with being othered, Aziza responded to the question about what home means to her by saying *'Somewhere where I can be myself, without having to answer to anybody'*. This topic reappears in her account of arriving in Morocco: *'You open the door of the airplane, you feel the heat of the sun – I smell Morocco again. This is my country! Here I can just be me.* (…) *Ah, I'm home! There you can just completely be yourself, with the idea of "here I won't be judged on what I am like".'* Having here called Morocco 'her country', where she can 'be herself', later on she symmetrically uses the same words to describe the Netherlands – in a passage that also addresses the ambivalence of the Netherlands as home. She tells me how after 9/11 she was verbally abused by a complete stranger: *'In moments like that I wished I didn't live here – in my own country, where you can be yourself without being judged, right?'*[77] The rich complexity of interviewees' country-talk can thus be cast in terms of different positions stressing different layers of meaning, sometimes to the extreme of two positions claiming the same home-defining trait for both countries.

Contrasting Cases: Through with Morocco

Two women I spoke to seemed to form the exception to the rule of multiple attachments. Malika and Latifa also talk about home in terms of being accepted without further ado, but the patterns of relating to the two countries I laid out above do not seem to fit their stories. Their stories are different from many others in several ways, and I bring them up here to show the diversity of ways in which participants in this research related to the different countries, and that what seems to be a *pattern* in many stories is by no means a *rule* that applies to all.

In Malika's narratives, Morocco appears as a counter-image to what home means to her. She describes home as a space free from obligations, and Morocco as 'the country-of-must-ism',[78] full of obligations and expectations: *'As soon as I cross the border, I feel the must-ism enveloping me. I have to do this, and I have to do that.* (…) *Morocco and I are not on the same wavelength.'* Malika has no fond memories of the country nor does she like or wish to spend time there. Looking at her life narrative, we see no mirror-imaging of Morocco and the Netherlands, and little staging in pairs or ambivalence about positive and negative aspects of the two countries. The same goes for Latifa.

77 The stories of Aziza and her sister Latifa are discussed at length in Chapter 5.

78 Must-ism is a literal translation of Malika's innovative language use in Dutch: she speaks of 'moetisme'.

The atypical relation to Morocco this finding suggests is confirmed by many instances in the stories of Latifa and Malika. For both of them, the Netherlands is the place to be – although Latifa does have fond childhood memories of Morocco, whereas Malika is more absolute in her negative image of Morocco, telling me that the heritage of her parents' migration is *'...that I just don't like going to Morocco or thinking back to those times.'* Where others constantly try to find a satisfactory balance in the way they organise their holiday time in Morocco, for these two the issue is simple: holidays are meant to *'relax and recharge'*, and not being able to do so in Morocco, they prefer to stay away. Both have strong bonds with their parents and siblings, but do not speak of any ties with more distant relatives in Morocco. They also report feeling that they do not fit into Moroccan culture, and are among the very few women I have met with a non-Moroccan partner.

One could say that these two have done away with Morocco to focus on the Netherlands. But this is not quite the case: despite their clear preferences, both women, each in her own way, still attach certain personal meanings to the countries whence they came with their parents. In Malika's case, this became most evident when she gave me a tour of her house. The first thing she pointed out was her 'Moroccan chamber', a corner of her living room decorated with Moroccan couches, low tables, carpets – the works. References to Morocco were more explicit and more elaborate here than in most houses I have visited. Malika explained this is a *'piece of culture'* she really wanted in her house. Placing this remark in the context of her life story, I came to realise that, although her general image of Morocco is quite negative, the country also has certain positive connotations for her. These are almost exclusively to be found in the aesthetic and sensual realms: she spoke with nostalgia about Morocco's fruits, flowers and spices, as well as the Arabic language, whilst only wishing to keep away from its inhabitants. Though for Malika, home is clearly located in a Dutch context – she speaks passionately about her house, the country and, most of all, the city she grew up in[79] – she still felt a desire to incorporate those aspects of her Moroccan background which she *does* value into her living environment. Besides creating this Moroccan chamber, she also tries to grow fruit bearing plants in her garden, uses

79 In this sense, too, Malika forms an exception, elaborating on her ties to her city in much more detail and length than other informants.

spices in her cooking that remind her of Morocco, and makes a point of making small references to the Arabic language and script here and there.[80]

Latifa has also carved out a very specific domain in her life story in which there is place for a more positive image of Morocco: the past. She cherishes her childhood memories of growing up in a Moroccan village. Declarations of having 'no ties at all' with Morocco and being fully out of touch with Moroccan culture can be found in her interview alongside stories about the wealth of this childhood: playing outdoors freely, learning basic values and being imbued with a self-evident sense of respect for oneself and one's surroundings. For Latifa, these experiences form the foundation for the person she has become. It is exactly for this reason, so she tells me, that she does not want to return to this village: *'It's like a little paradise, what I experienced, and I want to keep it that way. If I go back, I know for sure that that image will disappear, because everything that I was connected to simply no longer exists.'* The Morocco Latifa loves is a home of the past. Travelling there, for her, would mean a confrontation both with the loss of her own paradise and with the fact that her mentality sets her apart from everybody else there.

Latifa and Malika can make us sensitive to the great diversity of meanings a country can have for individual descendants of migrants. Although the other narratives I heard tend to bear much greater resemblance to each other than to the stories of these two women, each person I spoke to had their own way of giving meaning to the different countries. And even these 'atypical' women, who have allegedly 'crossed over' to a Dutch way of life, maintain their own connection to Morocco. In a somewhat extreme way, Latifa's connection can even serve as an illustration of 'the village' as an important layer of meaning ascribed to Morocco or Turkey. In her story the village of her birth figures as a highly symbolic locus for her Moroccan roots, relatively separate from the concrete actuality of her (Dutch) daily life.[81]

80 Van der Horst, who studied and categorised the interiors of her informants of Turkish descent in much more detail, would have described Malika's interior as an example of the 'ethnic style' in which 'traditional' objects are placed 'against a backdrop of modern furniture'. See van der Horst 2008, p. 54. Cf. M.W. Buitelaar, *Boushra's Waterkruik: Sporen Van Marokko in Een Nederlandse Vinexwijk*, 2007.

81 Latifa's case will be discussed in Chapter 5, together with that of her sister Aziza.

5 Conclusion

The Netherlands and Morocco or Turkey – these countries have an important place in the stories participants in this research told me and in their understandings of home. Moreover, their stories about these countries tell us as much about themselves and their complex identifications as about the countries discussed: their country-talk can be read as identity-talk. This chapter was dedicated to a detailed exploration of this identity-talk. Exactly because the meanings the countries carry for descendants of migrants are so multifaceted, it would be easy to foreground some dimensions at the expense of others, were we to pose the question of home without first dwelling on the landscapes of meaning on which these homes are built. I have looked at which aspects of Morocco and Turkey participants foreground, to what extent they identify with these aspects, whether they present certain characteristics as positive or negative, and how they formulate their descriptions. The complexity of meanings attached to each country, which I unpacked in this chapter, is crucial background knowledge when in the next chapter I pose the question of home more explicitly.

Analysis of informants' country-talk creates a complex image of contextual meanings. Many accounts follow certain patterns. I found a structural 'pairing' of descriptions of Morocco/Turkey with contrasting images of the Netherlands, which shows that in their narratives about the countries their parents left behind, descendants of migrants may be telling us almost as much about the country they live in. Often this pairing occurred in terms of binary oppositions which, notably, create fields of tension in which the interviewees' own positions are often unclear. For these descendants of migrants, it cannot be predicted with which side of a constructed opposition they will identify at any given moment. Moreover, such oppositions are part of ambivalent and sometimes contradictory descriptions. Characteristics ascribed to one or both countries can be assessed both positively and negatively, and such value assessments can become nuanced by pointing out the downsides of things valued positively, and vice versa.

This complex country-talk was framed with the help of Baumann's orientalising grammar of selfing and othering, and Hermans's understanding of the dialogical self. Individual informants relate to the countries from several positions, which may overlap but also disagree or place different emphases, resulting in the great array of meanings presented in this chapter. From several angles I have addressed the ways in which they make sense of their relationships to more than one country, talking from various positions that stress different aspects, and shown how this elucidates participants' multiple

attachments and identifications. The non-exclusive multiplicity of the ties of belonging that characterises migrants and their descendants became particularly obvious in the analysis of instances of 'mirroring' in which, from different positions, people ascribed both a home-defining trait and its opposite, to each of the two countries under comparison.

The ambivalent, contradictory descriptions of Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands, express tension fields in the interviewees' lives. Their stories bespeak both their commitment to both countries, and the complexity of their relations to each one. However differently individuals may think about Turkey and Morocco, for almost every participant the Netherlands remains the primary frame of reference, the benchmark against which everything else is measured.[82] The meanings given to Morocco or Turkey are meanings given to a country of 'origin' from the perspective of the country of residence. In a way, the importance of Morocco and Turkey in informants' lives is questioned by this finding, even though the differences between individuals on this account are significant.

There are, however, several footnotes to the 'secondary' importance of Morocco and Turkey. First of all, 'importance' is not such an informative term when referring to the complex meanings we have seen the countries to hold. The narratives of Turkey or Morocco on the one hand and the Netherlands on the other do show a certain difference in emphasis. My exploration of the moment of arrival and the ancestral village have brought under attention a deep symbolic sense of belonging in Morocco or Turkey. Stories about these focal points in time and space characteristically contain references to Morocco or Turkey as home. While the Netherlands can boast on being the main locus of concrete familiarity, Morocco or Turkey, and 'the village' in particular, is the champion of symbolic authenticity.[83]

The idea of Turkey and Morocco being relatively less important than, or secondary to, the Netherlands is also complicated by the multivoicedness of interviewees' narratives. This is my second footnote. People can downtalk the importance of Morocco or Turkey in their lives from a position in which they

82 Cf. Omlo 2011, pp. 123–124.

83 This analysis of countries as homes in different senses prepares the ground for the next chapter, which focuses more explicitly on differentiated understandings of 'home'. The tension evoked in this chapter when discussing the moment of arrival and the ancestral village, with the special feelings at arrival fading away after some time there, and visits to the villages being a temporary outing even for their most ardent fans like Redouan and Naima, is articulated in the Chapter 3 in terms of Morocco/Turkey as a home both timeless and temporary.

stress the prevalence of their everyday Dutch frame of reference. Speaking from another position, they may be more sensitive to the symbolic relevance of their 'roots' and claim that the country is extremely important for them. From yet another position, they may oppose the comparison of the two countries in terms of importance altogether. The notion of a multivoiced self warns us against hasty conclusions based on isolated statements and, if only for that reason, is of particular importance for a balanced approach to questions of home in a post-migration context.

Statements about roots, about which national football team one supports, or where one wants to be buried, are equally significant, and equally fragmentary. Words depicting Morocco and Turkey as rather marginal are as 'true' as those putting it centre stage. In different ways, viewed from differing positions, the relative meaning and importance of the two different countries to these sons and daughters of migration varies. Research that focuses on one of these stories only, i.e. either on migrants' embeddedness in the 'host country' or on their persistent ties with the 'country of origin', risks to neglect the fact that individuals generally tell, and live, both these stories.

A third footnote to the 'secondary' importance of Turkey and Morocco is that a relatively marginal position for the *country* by no means implies the same for the social identity.[84] *Being Moroccan/Turkish* is a substantial theme in the narratives I analysed. While people can easily go stretches of time in the Netherlands without thinking much about the other country to which they also relate, being Moroccan or Turkish, like being Muslim, is particularly relevant in the Dutch context, as chapters four and five will demonstrate. In the current chapter, we saw how narratives about countries included stories about the people living there, about their differences and the extent to which the narrator identified with them and as Moroccan/Turkish, Dutch, both or neither. While country-talk is also about ethnicity, I do not employ an 'ethnic lens' to examine my material.[85] Rather, I look at how informants in their stories make sense of their multiple identifications – part of which can be called ethnic. In their identifications with and as Moroccans or Turks, people's attachment to their parents and close relatives often plays a significant role, as we have seen in the case study.[86] Furthermore, I have noted that when people talk about themselves as 'Moroccans'/'Turks', they generally seem to have their fellow Moroccans or Turks in the Netherlands in mind rather than those residing in Morocco or Turkey. In many accounts 'Moroccan' and 'Turkish' can be said to

84 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 277.

85 Anthias 1998, p. 559.

86 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 88.

be subcategories of 'Dutch'. In talking about ethnicity, too, as researchers we have to note both the significance people may attach to their Moroccan or Turkish identity (at least in the positive sense in which they appropriate it, often in defiance of negative discursive stereotyping) and the fact that they generally speak from a Dutch frame of reference.

6 Chapter Epilogue: Making Sense of Cultural Multiplicity

This epilogue consists of a theoretical excursion to another, related, discourse that has made important contributions to the theorising of migrant experience and identity: the discourse around the concept of 'hybridity'. In Chapter 1 I referred to hybridity as one of the concepts which, despite considerable thematic and programmatic overlap, I have chosen not to employ, preferring the use of 'home' as an open heuristic device to probe the lived experiences of migrants. Now that we have embarked on the analysis of my interviews and become acquainted with Hermans's Dialogical Self Theory as a useful tool in this endeavour, I want to revisit the concept of hybridity in more detail. I will explore its benefits and limitations and show how, in my view, Hermans's insights provide a more flexible and encompassing toolkit for my analyses than the concept of hybridity. By thus applying it to questions of migrant identity, this epilogue also further elaborates on my use of Dialogical Self Theory. To begin this excursion, the case of Idriss (34, m, Moroccan) provides an illustration of the issue of cultural multiplicity, on which hybridity provides a particular perspective.

Cultural Multiplicity Materialised

The main room in Idriss's flat is divided in two by sliding doors. In the front living room, Moroccan couches and many Moroccan souvenirs leave no doubt about Idriss's background. As we start our tour around the apartment, Idriss points out a poster, in browns and oranges, depicting the Moroccan mud houses that were the starting point for his decoration of the flat: *'I said, that's what it should look like: arid, but warm. Because that is what southern Morocco, where we originally came from, is like.'* Idriss has only visited the south of Morocco once. He usually spends the summer in the central city of Fes, where his grandparents settled when his father was a child. Nevertheless, Idriss connects to his ancestral 'roots' by attempting to recreate its atmosphere in his Dutch home.

Walking through the front room, Idriss points out the lamps, pottery, and other souvenirs that his mother and sisters have provided him with, to add to the 'Moroccan' style in his flat. For each object, he mentions the family member who has bought it, which may indicate that he appreciates these souvenirs as much for their references to family bonds as for their Moroccanness. In the back room that he uses as a study, Idriss points out objects that are related to his hobbies, his passion for reading, his job, and other achievements, often adding: *'that is another part of me.'* In a sense, then, Idriss gives me a tour of the various aspects of his self-image and his daily life, which together constitute his identity and make him feel at home. In telling me about his apartment, he expresses his attachments to his family and to the Morocco of his holiday memories as well as to the 'original' Morocco of his southern roots.

As Idriss points out, the Moroccan presents from his family are all situated in the front room, while there are no references to Morocco in the study. Jokingly, he volunteers that some might say that he is a schizophrenic, explaining that while the front room represents his Moroccan side, the back room expresses his Dutch side: *'A psychologist might say that those two are only just kept in balance by the overall colour scheme. Because I haven't mixed them. Some people claim that you should do that.'*

6.1 *Contesting Hybridity*

In the last quote of the example above, Idriss challenges the stance of 'some people' who apparently claim that one can only 'balance' one's belonging in two countries by 'mixing' them. Idriss himself takes a more flexible stance towards his Dutch and Moroccan 'sides'. At this point in the interview, he talks about having two cultural 'backpacks' from which he can pick what suits him best in a specific context. Yet in other instances he talks about the 'merging' of his Dutch and Moroccan identifications. Even more frequently, he maintains that there is 'no real difference' between the two. Idriss's shifting positions call up the general issue of how people deal with cultural multiplicity on the individual level.

Hybridity as a framework offers an answer to the question of how cultural multiplicity works on an individual level – albeit an often vague and morally charged answer.[87] Advocates of the concept present hybridity as an antidote

87 There are, of course, manifold, partly overlapping terms dealing with this – Vertovec lists 'notions of translation, creolization, crossover, cut "n" mix, hyphenated, bricolage, hybridity, syncretism, third space, multiculture, transculturation and diasporic consciousness': S. Vertovec & A. Rogers, *Introduction*, 1998, p. 5.

to essentialism, as the opposite of purity or authenticity, and as a sophisticated answer to earlier, overly simplistic attempts to grasp the idea of individuals and groups living between/within/through several perceivably different cultures. A focus on hybridity tends to lay emphasis on ambivalence and fluidity, on 'routes' rather than 'roots',[88] and on the 'newness' of cultural forms being produced at the borders, as opposed to the idea of migrants just putting together or switching between various elements that remain linked to different 'original' cultural backgrounds.[89] The most convincing and nuanced consideration in favour of hybridity I found in the work of Ang, who stresses that the space 'in-between' cultural borders is not as empty as stuck-between-cultures arguments would have it, but rather one filled up 'with *new* forms of culture at the collision of the two: *hybrid* cultural forms born out of a productive, creative syncretism'.[90] While remaining critical of the pitfalls this term can have, she concludes that hybridity 'best describes this world, in which the complicated entanglement of togetherness in difference has become a "normal" state of affairs'.[91]

My own material certainly does resonate with several of the elements central to notions of hybridity. In this chapter I have dwelt on the dynamic tensions evoked by not-fitting/problematic binaries, and indeed there is much to be gained in the multiperspectival positions migrants can take vis-à-vis the different cultural contexts they engage with: belonging *and* being able to take an outsider position from which to critique both Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands and offer new, creative perspectives. Hybridity has the advantage of pointing out the ill-suitedness of conventional categorisations to describe migrants (or others with less common combinations of social/cultural identities) and of proposing a focus on ambivalences and the combating of essentialism. Still, in my view, advocates of hybridity often seem most certain about what it is defined *against*.[92]

Much of what hybridity positively entails has become commonplace for scholars studying issues of migration and culture. Most would agree that new, combinatory and creative forms of 'culture' and 'identity' are being produced, especially on borders. It is equally accepted that notably migrants often do not fit conventional niches, and that they invent or inhabit new ones (whether they do or do not name these), or struggle to fit into or break out of categorisations

88 See Chapter 3 for my own exploration of these two terms.

89 Cf. Hutnyk 2010, p. 59.

90 Ang 1994, p. 35.

91 Ang 1994, p. 17.

92 Cf. A. Easthope, *Bhabha, hybridity and identity*, 1998, p. 342.

that do not seem to accommodate them. Likewise, there is a broad consensus on the fact that human experience and expression, especially in this age, cannot be reduced to fit labels such as ethnic/national/religious/.... So in that sense, hybridity is a fact, and it is everywhere.[93]

Moreover, because hybridity is not only a 'migrant thing' – with its advocates stressing that there is no such thing as bounded, 'pure' cultures that get hybridised but that, rather, 'all cultures in modernity are always-already hybrid, always the impure products of intersecting influences and flows'[94] – the concept can also deconstruct absolute boundaries between migrant and native, between people of 'mixed' and 'pure' background. The downside of this potential is that it can also lead to a dismissal of the specificity of migrant experience, subsuming it under the general statement that heterogeneity is the norm for everybody.[95] This downside brings me to a number of related objections against many uses of the concept of hybridity: a risk of flattening out actual difference, a one-sided focus on newness, and a normative celebration of hybridity.[96]

To start with the latter: several authors have convincingly pointed at the tendency to uncritically 'celebrate' the condition of hybridity for its defiance of essentialism and hierarchy, and to idealise the creative and subversive potential of in-betweenness, while neglecting more problematic aspects of cultural marginality, especially for those less powerful.[97] Friedman even speaks of hybridity as an 'ideology' that presents movement and change as morally preferable over fixedness and stability.[98] He charges the champions of transnationalist discourse with celebrating movement and hybridity as 'solutions' to the problem of essentialism. The deconstruction of 'supposedly pure or homogeneous categories'[99] comes to be seen as a goal in itself rather than a tool for social analysis. This then becomes a highly normative endeavour in which hybridity is presented as somehow morally better than (perceived) homogeneity, moving as superior to staying put. This normative use of the term, and its embracing of universal heterogeneity, according to Ang 'paradoxically only leads to a complacent *in*difference toward real differences.'[100] The enthusiasm

93 Cf. Salih 2003, p. 162.

94 Ang 1994, p. 197.

95 See Ang 1994, p. 24.

96 Cf. Anthias 1998, p. 575.

97 Ang 1994, p. 197, van der Veer 2000, pp. 102–104; Bhatia 2013, pp. 237–238; Duyvendak 2011a, p. 16.

98 Friedman 2002, p. 28.

99 Friedman, 26.

100 Ang 1994, p. 24.

about creativity, 'newness' and agency, seemingly suggesting a new kind of fluid, decontextualised humanity, risks to become just as unbalanced as a stress on embeddedness.

In the debate of structure versus agency, proponents of hybridity easily slide to one extreme of the continuum. Social, cultural, historical and political structures are conveniently ignored, both in their directive force and in their meaning-making potential. In this chapter we have seen how binary categories such as Dutch – Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish are meaningful as well as ambivalent, embodied as well as imposed. Why is it so hard to value the old as well as the new, to see people as embodying and being embedded in culture while also allowing for change, creativity and agency?[101] Culture is not only reified when presented as an all-defining, unchanging whole, but also when conceived of as a wardrobe one can redesign or even discard at a whim.[102] The concept of hybridity carries the risk of amounting to a 'new essentialism.'[103] It is this somewhat naive celebration of an abstract, privileged and unrestricted hybridity, full of praise for the subversive potential of an ambivalent third space, but less sensitive for the actual power imbalances many migrants see themselves faced with and the ways they themselves interpret their situation in meaningful manners, that might restrict the usefulness of the concept, at least outside of the field of Cultural Studies.[104]

After these points of critique, the question remains if we can 'rescue' hybridity as a fruitful theoretical concept. This is the course Ang takes, adopting the concept 'as a heuristic device for analysing complicated entanglement'[105] while avoiding the traps laid out for it: 'in arguing *for* hybridity I am not denying the cultural and political significance of ethnic identifications today; nor do I wish to essentialise essentialism by suggesting that all (self-) essentialising strategies are the same and necessarily "bad".'[106] Vertovec on the other hand discards the term altogether and focuses on alternative approaches to the issue of cultural multiplicity and complexity in migration settings. He sees

101 Cf. G. Baumann, *Contesting Cultures: Discourses of identity in multi-ethnic London*, 1996, p. 205; Salih 2003, p. 155.

102 Baumann 1999, p. 95; Salih 2003, p. 120.

103 Vertovec & Rogers 1998, p. 6.

104 van der Veer 2000; Ang 1994, p. 147; see also Anthias 1998, p. 575, who rightly criticises the assumption 'that cultural elements can all freely mix through the voluntaristic agency of individuals; that all cultural components of the cultural melange are equal in terms of power'.

105 Ang 1994, p. 17.

106 Ang 1994, p. 199.

a renewed focus on multiple cultural competences as more rather than less anti-essentialist than hybridity (somewhat polemically interpreted as 'just adopting and adapting some (singular) new course which is neither that of their immigrant parents' origin nor that of their ethnic majority peers'[107]). He concludes that 'individuals accumulate, through their own life experiences, and use, for improvising situationally competent action and generating new practices, a kind of repertoire comprised of complex backgrounds and multiple traditions.'[108]

My own material has the potential to support either of these two 'camps' (the more nuanced accounts on either side being, as always, less far apart than they are sometimes constructed to be), showing many instances both of code switching between several 'given', albeit continuously reinterpreted, repertoires on the one hand and the possibility of new or syncretic forms emerging in the ambivalent space of cultural diversity on the other.[109] Baumann's idea of a 'dual discursive competence' can be of use here, distinguishing between a dominant discourse in which culture is often reified and instrumentalised, and a demotic discourse allowing for a more dynamic, processual perception of culture, and showing that both of these make sense in their own way.[110] The more people engage in 'multicultural practice', the more they develop this competence to use and vacillate between these different discourses depending on the context.[111]

My interviews contain instances both of people presenting themselves as creatively drawing from or being caught between a multiplicity of relatively separate cultural traditions perceived as fixed, and of the same people refusing any rigid categorisations or speaking from a 'third space'. Sometimes we see individuals strongly identifying as Moroccan or Turkish, then switching to an explicitly Dutch point of view (although both of these 'generic' positions are of course coloured by their personal history and migration background). At other times we see new positions emerging, out of multiperspectival creativity and living difference, that cannot easily be equated with either 'ingredient' – although this does not mean that they do not incorporate 'older' positions. People (re)produce binaries on the one hand and circumvent or deconstruct them on the other hand, and both dynamics and stability have their positive

107 Vertovec & Rogers 1998, p. 6.
108 Vertovec & Rogers 1998, p. 8.
109 Cf. Salih 2003, p. 161.
110 Baumann 1999, pp. 92–96.
111 Baumann 1999, p. 93.

and their negative sides.[112] As we will see in the next chapter, the narratives I analysed make use of a 'roots' logic as well as a 'routes' logic.

An awareness of hybridity is mainly formulated in terms of a demotic discourse and does not preclude the simultaneous significance of a dominant discourse. I certainly do not mean to equate theories of 'code switching' with an essentialist view of culture as opposed to a more processual stance by the hybridity camp – we have just seen Vertovec argue for a rather processual take on multiple cultural competence, and I pointed out the risk of hybridity becoming a new essentialism. Rather, my point is that different ways of dealing with cultural multiplicity on the personal level exist side by side, and that each can be experienced as positive or negative, as liberating or confining, depending on the specific context and the individual speaking. Different discursive currents in academic debates on individual dealings with cultural multiplicity/difference each offer useful insights. To me, the question of which framework is (most) 'right' has little urgency, especially considering how the various dynamics highlighted can all fit into Hermans's theory of the multivoiced, dialogical self.

Departing from this theory helps us to see how from different positions, individuals can voice essentialist as well as processual understandings of culture. We can notice how people formulate different, sometimes very heterogeneous, 'cultural' positions; not only switching between those as circumstance requires, but also staging dialogical relationships between them that may be harmonious or rather conflictual. These positions constantly develop, partly due to such dialogues. But we can also find people developing new positions that are more than 'just' a combination or fusion of old positions, positions that show the ambivalent creativity of in-betweenness and make possible new developments. Different cultural positions can coexist, with or without much dialogue going on between them. Alternatively, there can be friction and clashes between them, they can develop, fuse or give rise to something new;[113] all depending on how individuals organise their self-space[114] in the context of their own life story and the social relationships and power structures they are embedded in.[115] This goes for 'natives' as well as migrants, but for the latter power structures can be more asymmetrical, and cultural positions often

112 Cf. Salih 2003, p. 155.

113 Hermans 2001c, p. 258.

114 See Hermans 2001c, p. 359.

115 T.H. Zock, *Dialoog en dominantie: Hubert J.M. Hermans over identiteitsontwikkeling en culturele diversiteit*, 2006.

perceived as further apart. This greater complexity can be experienced as enriching as well as constraining.

But at least as important as this framework allowing for different kinds of relations between cultural positions is a focus on the complexity and deep intersectionality of each separate I-position.[116] It can be tempting to view cultural I-positions as coinciding with certain social identifications, e.g. 'I as Moroccan', 'I as Dutch' or 'I as a Dutch Turk'. But even though we often can trace positions formulated in such terms, we should not mistake their labels for complete descriptions of the complex content of such positions, as 'all the voices that sound in the self are coloured at the same time by one's personal character and life history, and by the cultural groups one is part of or is in touch with'.[117] When analysing individual narratives, we have to remain sensitive to the fact that a position like 'I as Moroccan' may be discerned in many narratives, but the content, the meaning of this position is both socially embedded and highly personal.[118] One individual can even have several different 'Moroccan/Turkish voices' speaking about different aspects of what it means to this person to be Moroccan or Turkish. This is a sensitivity that, although certainly engrained in Hermans's theory, is open to further elaboration in his own excursions about cultural multiplicity.[119] Hermans, for instance, while confirming that all voices are at once personal and cultural, at times seems to revert to a more rigid division between collective and personal voices and an understanding of culture that, to anthropological ears, sounds somewhat straightforward.[120] In this sense, his theories can not only enrich my own analysis, but also be further developed for use in migration studies/anthropology. I hope to contribute to the development of DST's potential to provide a 'culture-sensitive psychology' in this work, especially in Chapter 4.

116 Cf. Buitelaar 2013a.

117 Zock 2006, p. 169.

118 Zock 2008, p. 5. See also Josephs 2002.

119 E.g. Hermans 2001c, p. 258; Hermans & Kempen 1998, p. 1118.

120 See e.g. Hermans 2001c, p. 262, where he speaks about culture as 'organizing and constraining' meaning systems. Hermans's direct treatment of migrant identity also offers important observations while also leaving room for further elaboration, see e.g. Hermans & Hermans-Jansen 2003.

CHAPTER 3

Homelands

Naima on 'home'

Naima addresses the issue of home in our second interview when talking about Ridderkerk, the Dutch village where she lives with her parents and siblings. 'Sure' she feels at home there – 'but'! This is one of many 'buts' in Naima's story. In this case, she is referring to the limitations of village life: *'But so safe and so protective, it almost isolates you, you can't develop because there are so many opportunities that aren't here.'* This safe home environment is compared to Rotterdam, the big city where she works as a researcher and where *'the sky is the limit'*. Explaining that she knows her way in this urban environment, she depicts it as a 'second home'. I take the opportunity to ask her if she has any more 'homes' other than the two mentioned. Her first reaction is a reflection on Morocco as home: *'Of course Morocco is a home, but a home for the short term.'* She explains that Morocco feels more and more like a home as she grows older and more reflexive, but also as the country itself develops. This is a rather recent development for Naima, as we will see later on. Yet, while she enjoys the country's calm and beauty, she knows that if she were to stay there longer than a month or two she would feel confined and ever less at home. There are many other instances in her interview that suggest that for Naima, Morocco is a home that is both temporary and highly ambivalent. I ask her again whether she has any more homes to add to the list: *'Yeah I feel at home in the Netherlands in any case, in a general sense. I know the traffic here, I know the general things, I like travelling within the Netherlands.'* We have been talking about home for some time before Naima mentions the Netherlands as a home. Although one could infer that other home spaces are simply more important for her than this country, the expression *'in any case'* suggests that it is rather too self-evident to mention, confirming the idea that the Netherlands serves as a primary frame of reference, so self-evident that in many parts of the narratives analysed it remains invisible.[1]

1 This may also account for the fact that so much of the talk about the Netherlands concerns either stories in which it is contrasted with a different country, as we saw in the previous chapter, or feelings of being more and more excluded by Dutch society over the past few

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At the end of our interview, I ask Naima explicitly what 'home' means to her. Referring to earlier statements about not feeling at home when excluded, she answers: *'Yeah but that's true, by associating "home" with "people" I mean that they also give you the freedom to actually make choices. They can stand in your way, it's not only the appreciation they show* [*that is important to make you feel at home*]*, but certainly also the freedoms that you desire – sure you also try to fit in with certain norms, since that's a way to show respect, but it can also clash with your principles. And certain Islamic principles too, things that I think I have a right to.'* Naima is very conscious of the multiple meanings home can have. Having already depicted her Dutch village, urban working environment, country of birth and country of residence as home in different ways, she now focuses on the importance of being valued and her freedom being respected by others as a prerequisite for feeling at home. This is a very important point to bear in mind in the following discussions on home, roots and routes. These notions do have spatial connotations, evoking the ways people can relate to place, and this is reflected in the interview passages I quote. However, just like Naima's accounts of home, most narratives also bring up more or less directly the great importance of social relationships in shaping ideas of home and belonging.[2]

There is a certain tension, we will see, between the understanding of Morocco or Turkey as home and the idea of going on a 'holiday' there. Unlike many other informants, Naima does not extensively dwell on the issue of whether or not visiting to Morocco can be seen as 'going on a holiday'. Still, we saw above that she appreciates the country as a place where you can rest, and when she talks about going to or staying in Morocco she consistently calls those visits 'holidays'. She describes her activities correspondingly: *'Oh, not much. No, really just pottering with the family a*

years, as we will see in Chapter 4. In such accounts, the Netherlands becomes more visible in the narrative because the feeling of self-evident belonging is undermined.

2 This quote also bespeaks a recurring tension in Naima's story. On the one hand she claims her freedom of choice and movement, on the other hand she also wishes to comply with the images of a well-behaved young woman that are projected on her by what she calls her 'Moroccan environment'. Two of the ways in which she handles this tension are by presenting her wish to 'behave' as an active choice, (Cf. de Jong 2012, p. 146) or by resorting to Islamic values. Because the ultimate authority of Islam is recognised by her 'Moroccan surroundings', Islamic endorsements of freedom of choice can overrule 'cultural' norms that Naima experiences as constraining. In the further analysis of the role of Morocco and the Netherlands in Naima's story, we will come across several formulations of such ambivalences and examples of her ways to accommodate them.

bit, (…) you wake up in the morning and have breakfast together, clean up together, then you just have a read or something, stuff you don't get around to here, maybe visit family, shopping, a siesta, then another meal – it's very, serene, kind of. You don't really think about a schedule.' For the moment, Naima generally enjoys the slow pace of events, the idea that time does not really matter. Smiling, she explains that people sometimes have dinner as late as 10 o'clock at night, if that is when they feel like eating. Her own parents have struck a compromise: back in the Netherlands they eat at six, in Morocco they settle for the intermediate and eat around eight. Temporariness pervades both her accounts of such details and her general remarks on Morocco as home: *'Of course Morocco is a home, but a home for the short term. (…) And now there is a certain movement of critical self-examination going on there, so in that sense I kind of do feel at home. (…) And I think it's a beautiful country! (…) The calm, the schedule-free life and less of a focus on performance are aspects of Morocco that I find beautiful. And at those moments I do feel at home, but I realise that it would be limiting me if I were to stay there longer than two months, for example.'* Naima refers to several quite different aspects of Morocco that make it home for her *'in that sense'* – apparently 'home' needs specification in order to see whether or not the term applies to the country. specifying 'home' in various senses that make it apply to the country, while in some other senses it does not. She can feel at home there for a limited stretch of time only, but home is also discussed in temporal terms more positively: as time has gone by, and she traced new routes in the old country, she herself has created a stronger connection to the country, making herself more at home there than she formerly had been. This is a far cry from a (seemingly) more 'timeless' sense of rootedness which many informants, Naima included, reported to feel upon entering the country of their (parents') birth.

1 Introduction: Homelands

Against the background of my previous exploration of how participants in this research relate to the Netherlands, Morocco and Turkey in meaningful ways, we can now ask the question how and in what sense they understand these countries as homelands. We move the focus from the patterns I found in their descriptions of each country to their own reflections on and interpretations of their relationships to their multiple homelands. The concept of 'home', constantly implied in the analysis up until now, becomes the explicit focal

point of this chapter. The notion of 'home' was often invoked by informants spontaneously in their narratives about Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands, and their answers to my concluding questions about home almost invariably referred to both countries.[3] Despite variation between, and also within, individual accounts, home 'here and there' is a concern for each of them. Home, in short, is strongly linked up with homelands.

The narratives feature a complex array of meanings attributed to the two countries as contested homelands. Different things are expected from different kinds of home, and from different I-positions, individuals often foreground different aspects of Morocco/Turkey and the Netherlands as homes. In their multivoiced narratives, informants employ a contextual, differentiated notion of home in order to make sense of their complex relationships to Turkey or Morocco and the Netherlands. These three overarching principles structure this chapter's unpacking of the diversity of meanings attached to homelands: the *differentiated* nature of the notion of home, its *embeddedness* in time and social space, and the premise that individuals may articulate different understandings of the notion as they slip between a *variety of dialogical I-positions*.

In Section 2, each of these three principles is clarified using one informant's reflections on home 'here and there'. This offers both an analytical lens for this chapter, and a more hands-on sense of how people speak about home on the level of the country. In Section 3, the *differentiated* nature of home is explored through the use of two partly overlapping conceptual pairs. First, the country of origin as a homeland is qualified in terms of *temporariness* as well as *timelessness*. Second, for the analysis of the comparing of two different homelands, a distinction between the logics of '*roots*' and '*routes*' is helpful. Next, in Section 4, the attention shifts to the *embeddedness* of meanings.[4] Home, especially on the national level, is by no means an affair of personal interpretation and choice only. It is at least as much about being positioned by others as it is about positioning oneself. Sometimes informants' stories showed an acute awareness of the contextuality of home. They explicitly reflected on the fact that it depends on the context whether or not, or in what sense, they perceive Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands as homes.

Throughout Chapters 2 and 3 the main focus is on the 'marked category' Morocco/Turkey, as compared to the Netherlands. Towards the end of this chapter, the Dutch setting comes to the fore more explicitly, to investigate how informants' conceptualisations of home on the national level are shaped by

3 See the epilogue to Chapter 5.

4 Cf. Al-Ali & Koser 2002, p. 9: 'the "here" and "there" referred to on different occasions could have different meanings attached to them, depending on who talks and in which context'.

their own 'Dutch' frame of reference and by the Dutch dominant exclusivist discourse. Looking back on Chapters 2 and 3, we can reflect on the place the national level holds in the narratives analysed. This reflection also lays the ground for an investigation of the differences found between informants of Moroccan and Turkish descent, or rather of the lack thereof. This chapter's discussion of individuals' ties to both the Netherlands and Turkey/Morocco, challenges certain of premises underlying the Dutch dominant discourse on migrants. In the conclusion to this chapter, I will address these premises and show how my material puts them into perspective. The chapter is wrapped up with an epilogue focusing in on the story of Naima one last time.

2 Points of Departure: Multivoiced Narratives, Differentiated Understandings, Embedded Homelands

2.1 *Differentiated Understandings of Home*

One of the ways in which informants structurally express and handle the ambivalence of 'home' is by narrowing down its meanings through further specification. They draw on the broad repertoire of traits ascribed to Morocco, Turkey or the Netherlands to underpin whether and how these countries are seen as home, thus arriving at more *differentiated* understandings of that notion. We saw Naima do this when she said *'in that sense I do feel at home'*, and continued with an enumeration of aspects that she appreciates about Morocco. Seeing home as a differentiated notion clarifies how a country can be experienced as home in one sense (e.g. due to one set of characteristics) even if in another sense it is not.

A telling instance of home being ascribed different meanings when referring to the two different countries can be found in my interview with Rachid (35, m, Moroccan).[5] His certainly is a differentiated notion of home: *'I feel completely at home here* [in the Netherlands, FJS], [*but*] *it's a different thing. I don't feel a connection to the soil here. There, I feel a real connection to that mountain over there, you understand? But I do feel connected to the freedom here and the people you know and everything.'* Specifying different reasons for feeling at home, Rachid speaks about the Netherlands in terms of ideals and people, while in reference to Morocco, he buys into a discourse that words an emotional attachment in physical terms – *'that soil, that mountain!'*

5 As mentioned previously, I indicate the name, gender and background of informants the first time their names are mentioned in each chapter. See the appendix for an overview of the individuals interviewed.

Missing

Rachid's case can also serve to illustrate the particular significance of the subject of 'missing'. It is often in its absence that home becomes salient, and the differentiation of home can then take shape in the negative form of longing. After some time in his beloved Morocco, Rachid always starts to miss the Netherlands. The elements he recounts as missing match the things he mentioned above to specify in what ways the Netherlands is a home for him: his friends and the sense of freedom. The repertoire of meanings explored in Chapter 2 can also be traced in accounts of missing (in both directions). Aspects missed while in Morocco and Turkey thus range from the Dutch healthcare system, via the Dutch language and mentality, to friends and family. Familiarity as such is also often missed.[6] A sense of home can be fostered by 'positive' characteristics of a place – these are often the things one longs for when away. Similarly negative traits – such as, for Turkey and Morocco, chaos, corruption, long waiting hours and being cheated – can hinder a sense of home. For people with more than one possible geographical home, the meaning of each place is not only informed by the characteristics of that particular place itself, but also by the implication of the absence of other things or places, big or small. A multiplicity of homes also implies a multiplicity of sites of longing.

2.2 *Multivoiced Understandings of Home*

In many statements about home(lands), different layers of meaning are addressed more or less simultaneously. The continuous slippage of meanings of home within individual accounts may be an indicator of *multivoicedness* in these statements or stories. The following words of Faruk (38, m, Turkish) show

6 This may be why, besides missing her familiar routines, Dounia also longs for the familiar taste of Dutch pastry. Many participants named food items or similar small elements of daily life that they start missing after some time, be it because these symbolise a sense of longing on larger scales, or because the familiarity of all such 'little things' can be an important part of what constitutes home. For Dounia, this small scale missing goes in one direction only. In the Netherlands she does not miss little Moroccan things. Her own explanation for this is that '*we already have a Moroccan store*'. But considering the fervour with which some others stressed that the flavours of Morocco/Turkey cannot be found in import stores, Dounia's indifference on this account is informative about her particular way of relating to the two countries. While in Morocco she is focused on little things that evoke the familiarity of her Dutch home, in the Netherlands she has no such desire for the intimate everyday familiarity of her Moroccan home.

how, from several I-positions, he formulates different answers to the question of home on the national level: *'Do I feel at home here? Yes and no. Do I feel at home in Turkey? Yes and no.* (...) *But I do think about going to live in Turkey later in life,* (...) *and then see whether I feel at home. The answer will probably be no. And it will be no here as well. You can feel at home if people also show you that it's your home too.* (...) *But yeah, I've been here for 38 years now, I feel more at home here than there, that much is certain.'* Faruk ponders over the meaning of having two homelands and over the home-like qualities of each. He vacillates between different meanings, or specifications, of home. In his case we see a slippage between making home dependent on time or on social recognition.[7] For the future, he considers creating a home in Turkey. Still, a few sentences later he takes a different position and considers that, having spent most of his life in the Netherlands, he views the country as more of a home than Turkey. In-between these two statements addressing home in temporal terms, he switches to a perspective foregrounding a different specification of home. He predicts that neither country can fulfil the social criteria for a home: nowhere he experiences full recognition of his belonging. Therefore, his conclusion remains an ambivalent 'yes and no'.

2.3 *Embedded Understandings of Home*

The third principle that will help us unpack interviewees' understandings of home concerns the contextuality or *embeddedness* of meanings of home, both in biographical time and in social space. Of the *temporal embeddedness* of home, we find an instance in the story of Habib (25, m, Moroccan). He claims to forget all about Morocco once he is back in his most familiar environment in the Netherlands. Throughout the year he has one single self-evident home: the Netherlands. The image of Morocco as a (second) home fades and is only activated when summer draws near again. His perception of home is thus dependent on his position in time and space.

Habib also reflects on the *social embeddedness* of his sense of home. Interestingly, unlike most other interviewees, Habib tells me that in Morocco his feeling of standing out as different is stronger than in the Netherlands. He even brings this up as an explanation for foregrounding Morocco as home rather than the Netherlands: *'It's more of a home base. When I arrive I know that I'm back in my own country. I experience that here too, sure,* (...) *but perhaps a little less, because it's less of a big deal. It's not something people focus on here in the Netherlands, everyone is equal, everyone is normal.* (...) *But when you arrive as*

7 Cf. Verkuyten 2010, p. 57.

a Moroccan-Dutch person in Morocco, people notice very quickly. Because people can see that you're from the Netherlands.' Habib's reasoning in this passage shows how sensitive he is to the contextuality of home: home is a topic mainly connected to Morocco, because there his standing out makes it a more pressing *issue* than it is in the Netherlands. Although 'of course' Habib also feels like coming home upon entering the Netherlands, the feeling is more poignant when he arrives in Morocco. Rather than pointing at social exclusion as hindering a sense of home, he seems to feel that in Morocco, his difference from resident Moroccans triggers a more conscious sense of home.

From a position actively engaging with his summer stays in Morocco, Habib foregrounds this country as most home-like, while other positions put other meanings of the term centre stage and thus reach different conclusions as to the main location of home. Which position he takes is highly dependent on context. Thus, the example of Habib illustrates all three principles central to my analysis: the plurality of positions from which stories are told as well as the embeddedness and differentiation of home.[8]

3 Differentiated Homelands

3.1 (*Dis*)*continuity*

The idea of home as a location of more or less continuous dwelling is problematised in a context of migration and movement, where neither of several countries can completely fulfil the condition of continuity. Informants' everyday Dutch dwelling place is not continuous with an 'original' home which, according to most, is located in Morocco/Turkey. Their experiences in Turkey or Morocco are also marked by discontinuity, as they only spend short periods of time there in the present and generally do not expect this to change in the future. The experience of these patterns of (dis)continuity in time and space plays a pivotal role in interviewees' differentiated conceptualisations of Turkey, Morocco and the Netherlands as possible homes. I have found that Morocco and Turkey as a home are described as both timeless and temporary, and framed in terms of roots as well as routes.

These key themes can be foreshadowed by looking at our 'guide' Dounia (33, f, Moroccan). The following example can be seen as representative of the

8 The example of Habib also shows that in his narratives he himself consciously engages with the complexity and ambivalence of home. This reflexivity marked the narratives of informants from all sorts of backgrounds, certainly not exclusively the higher educated ones. Habib, for example, is a factory worker without any formal education above high school level.

most prevalent views on the Netherlands and Morocco as home. When I ask Dounia what 'home' means to her, she first dwells on her own house as a home. Without further prompting, she then broadens her scope from the level of the house to that of the country: *'And speaking in a more general sense, as in, whether you feel at home in the Netherlands or in your country of origin, then I can say, if I have to choose then it's the Netherlands of course. Because I grew up here, so I also feel at home in the Netherlands, because I took on the social norms and values, and I am very much integrated. And I feel very connected to my country of birth. It still affects me, I still start crying whenever I cross the border. Only it's different. I have become so estranged, there's no way I could ever truly find my place there as a person anymore. So that place is also a kind of second home to me, but in a different way. It's nice for a holiday, and I once again feel completely, I really feel my roots, you really feel it in your body, but it's not a place that I could call home for the long term. Ultimately that's the house here in the Netherlands, yes, that is my home.'* Dounia's words confirm that on a national scale, issues of home are as salient as they are ambivalent. She gives a differentiated account of the two countries as home, summarising how she and many peers formulate the issue: the Netherlands, 'of course', 'in the end', are her home, while Morocco is 'sort of' a 'second home', 'but different', more about roots than about actual dwelling. Besides her Moroccan roots, Dounia mentions what we could call her personal 'routes', mainly located in the Netherlands. This is the reason why she feels that 'as a person', imbued with Dutch norms and values, she does not belong in Morocco 'anymore'. If we look at home as a place where one's identity is best accommodated,[9] it will be clear where Dounia positions herself.

For Dounia, Morocco is always a temporary affair – however much she does feel at home there for a short period that she tellingly calls 'a holiday'. While they trace their roots to Morocco or Turkey, and often create a further sense of continuity by travelling to the country repeatedly, when actually in their country of origin, informants are confronted with the fact that the bulk of their 'life routes' lie (and lead) elsewhere. But we also have to note the intensity with which Dounia describes her embodied attachment to the country: tears in her eyes upon arrival, physically feeling the permanent connection to her roots. The feelings she 'still' harbours for Morocco are even growing stronger over the years. Apparently when the emphasis lies on roots, Morocco can be a most powerful home-place. For the duration of Dounia's stay, Morocco really is much more than just a holiday destination. Not least because of all the relatives still living there, it feels like a second home, temporary *and* timeless.

9 Cf. Rapport & Dawson 1998, p. 9.

Framing home in terms of (dis)continuity, the narratives analysed in this study share a pattern pointing in two contrasting directions: the halo of original timelessness of the country of origin on the one hand and, on the other hand, its eternal temporariness (the latter sometimes making it less of a home, sometimes paradoxically forming a condition for feeling at home there at all). This tension may be the central paradox of Turkey/Morocco as a homeland as well as a holiday destination. It has emerged as key to framing and understanding the pervasively ambivalent place of a Moroccan or Turkish homeland in each individual's life and story.

3.2 *A Holiday Home: Temporary and Timeless* Home and/or Holiday?

Portraying the country of origin as a holiday destination – and thus as an enjoyable but temporary affair, away from home – sometimes clashes with calling the country a homeland,[10] and always colours the meanings given to Morocco/Turkey as a home.[11] Many of the characteristics informants assign to Turkey and Morocco – warmth, a more fluid perception of time, living life rather than 'being lived' – resonate very well with the holiday nature of their stays there, but also double as much-quoted reasons to feel at home. How do interviewees employ the potentially conflicting, yet entangled, labels of 'home' and 'holiday' in talking about Morocco or Turkey?

Basically all informants refer to their time in the country of their (grand) parents as 'holidays'. This can be experienced as a negative label, (with the temporariness hindering a sense of home or promoting exclusion by resident countrymen) but the fact that it is holiday time often also adds to the charm the country holds. Dounia for example is very conscious of this. For her, the key to a nice holiday in Morocco is balancing the positively evaluated 'foreignness' of the country with the familiarity of her Dutch habits. Talking about different places where she feels at home, she told me: *'Yeah of course I think the house in Morocco is a very nice place to be, of course it's mostly a place you go to on holiday, holidays are often pleasant.* (…) *It's a place all your own, in another country.* (…) [*It*]*'s a typical place where you can unreservedly be yourself. A typical, good-old*

10 Incidentally, the specific term 'homeland' (Dutch: thuisland) is rarely employed by the interviewees – only two used it referring to their country of 'origin' while two others called the Netherlands their homeland.

11 Cf. Bouras 2012, p. 260. My research does not, however, support Omlo's claim that descendants of Moroccan migrants see the country merely as a place for holidays, see Omlo 2011, p. 96.

Dutch house in the middle of Morocco. We also just eat boiled vegetables, nice and Dutch so to speak, with the normal Dutch channels on the satellite, you know? (…) *Once you've been out and about and you've seen beautiful Morocco and you go back home, it's nice of course to just have your own little spot. Home.'*

In this passage Dounia plays with the notion of home on different scales. Talking about the level of the country, she describes Morocco as a holiday destination, a beautiful but foreign place that can be enjoyed without forcibly being identity-near. It is her house in Morocco that is described as a home, a place that is really hers, where she can be herself and where things are 'normal'. This normality consists of cherished, symbolically Dutch elements, which she introduces into her Moroccan environment to make it more familiar and home-like.[12] The combination of being in Morocco, enjoying the exotic beauty of the country, with the possibility of retiring into a more familiar private sphere, and the fact that it is holiday time, together make for an enjoyable stay in Morocco. In formulating this comparison between a Moroccan outside and a Dutch inside, Dounia foregrounds one specific set of meanings Morocco has for her, leaving out the sense of familiarity and rootedness which, in other parts of her narrative, she also evokes with regard to Morocco.

Whereas Dounia endeavours to complement the holiday experience of Morocco with things reminding her of her Dutch home, Ozan (31, m, Turkish) used to call Turkey 'home', because his parents did so, but now rationalises his childhood fondness of Turkey in terms of the break the country provided from his day-to-day home environment: *'Turkey was associated with holidays. All year you had bad weather, boring school, things you have to do* (…) *and then you have holidays, when you can sleep in and it's nice weather. Turkey – yeah of course it's awesome there.'* Nowadays Ozan positions himself explicitly as a tourist, rather than as a homecomer. To him, Turkey is little more than a beautiful holiday destination. Farid (39, m, Moroccan) would not agree with Ozan. Morocco is a lot of things to him, but certainly not a holiday destination. There are too many strings attached (his family, his house). *'If it's holidays we want, then we can forget about Morocco. Then we need to go to Egypt.* (…) *But then I still need to go to Morocco too. Because that country… it's really strange, it's like it's constantly calling.* (…) *And you are actually at home there too. But rest? Nuh-uh.'* Farid would actually like to travel elsewhere and experience more of a holoiday feeling, but he keeps going to Morocco, because, in a way, it keeps pulling at him as a home.

12 Cf. Salih 2003, p. 78, who describes similar patterns for Moroccan migrant women in Italy.

Dounia, Ozan and Farid use the labels 'home' and 'holiday' with regard to Morocco or Turkey in different ways. They agree that 'holiday' is a positive thing, although they disagree on whether or not the term can be applied to their country of origin, or combined with a sense of home. Other participants interviewed held different positions on the connotations of 'holiday' and its relationship to 'home'. Some were less sure about the positive connotations of 'holiday'. For them, the term denoted a relationship to Morocco or Turkey incompatible with and inferior to a sense of home. They feared, for instance, that their children would no longer feel at home in Morocco or Turkey and see it as 'just' a holiday location. Several informants even felt guilty for their own lack of attachment to the country, as we saw in the case of Said in the previous chapter. They feel that this country is, or should be, more than a holiday. It should be home. Yet others do not seem to experience any incompatibility between 'home' and 'holiday'. Often they use the two terms next to each other without any tension, stating that 'when I go on a holiday to Morocco, I really feel at home there'. In varying accounts of people's relationship to Turkey and Morocco, the labels home and holiday may complement or challenge each other in various ways, and serve to express the ambivalent image of Morocco/Turkey as a temporary homeland.

Part of what Ozan and many others value about their vacation in the country of origin is that it provides a break from their daily routines in the Netherlands. Here we see the dialectic relationship between being away and feeling at home (see Chapter 2) at work in the framing of Turkey and Morocco in terms of holiday and/or home. People who stress the added value of the country as different from their familiar Dutch home environment emphasise the positive break from routine.[13] Others, on the contrary, talk about Morocco/Turkey as 'more than a holiday' and focus more on that country's familiarity. While each country can be framed as home, in the sense of having *special* meaning for those interviewed, it is mainly the Netherlands that can also claim a status as home in the sense of being their most *normal* environment, familiar in all its details and inscribed with daily routines. As a holiday destination, the country of origin is often all the more valued for *not* being normal, whether this also means that it is less 'home' than the Netherlands, or just home in a different way.

What most informants agree on, is that while for the generation of their parents travelling to Morocco or Turkey means 'going back/returning',[14] for

13 Cf. Wiles 2008, p. 133.

14 In Dutch: teruggaan.

their own cohort it is always the journey in the other direction, back to the Netherlands, that is formulated as returning.[15] Some see this as an important difference between themselves and their parents. Although most descendants of migrants I spoke to stated that in a certain sense they feel they have two homelands, the phrasing 'going home' invariably meant going back to the Netherlands (or to one's smaller-scale home within the Netherlands) after one's holidays.

Still, already in the light of the complexity presented in the previous chapter, it would be too easy to say that apparently for descendants of migrants the tables are turned – that instead of reproducing their parents' understanding of Morocco/Turkey as a self-evident home and belonging in the Netherlands as problematic, my informants automatically prioritise the Netherlands as home and see the other homeland as marginal or problematic. Rather, it is my argument that home comprises the tension between its aura of being self-evident and its actual ambivalence. This is especially so on the national level and for people like my interviewees, who have several countries that may lay claim to their attachment and loyalty, and whose belonging within each of them is often publicly and privately contested.

A Temporary Homeland?

Considerations about home versus holiday implicitly bespeak the temporariness of Turkey and Morocco for my informants. Next I explore the various ways in which my interviewees explicitly combined home and temporariness in their accounts of Morocco or Turkey, thus differentiating the meanings of these countries as homelands. The ambivalent experiences descendants of migrants have of the different countries as 'home' are often expressed in calling Morocco or Turkey a 'temporary home' or a 'holiday home' – terms that convey the tension between the notion of home, imbued as it is with connotations of stability and continuity, and the temporary nature of summer stays. The image of Turkey/Morocco as temporary is shared by all, but opinions diverge on what this means for one's sense of home in the country.

Tariq (26, m, Moroccan), for example, speaks about the temporariness of Morocco as restricting his sense of home there, in two different ways. First, he explains that he can feel completely at home in Morocco – provided that

15 The few interviewees that did not explicitly agree with this remark made a point of showing how they were different from their generation in talking about a 'return' to Morocco or Turkey. These seem to be the exception, confirming the rule that for these descendants of migrants the logical point of departure, and of return, has become the Netherlands.

he is there for a short holiday. If he stays longer he gets frustrated about being treated as a tourist by resident Moroccans and longs to go home again.[16] This is one way in which my informants explain the idea of a temporary home: for a restricted period of time it is home, for a longer time it ceases to be so.

But Morocco/Turkey as a homeland is also temporary in a more pervasive sense. The temporariness also directly feeds into the meanings Turkey and Morocco have as homelands, making them a 'different home'. Later on during our interview, Tariq remarks: *'It's home, but in a different way. Here is really "home" home* (…) *In Morocco I know that it's just for the time being, just a month. In principle it also feels like home, but* (…) *you do miss a certain feeling, you know. I think that's just normal.'* Tariq's remark that the temporary nature of his stays make Morocco lack a 'certain feeling' shows once more that there is more to the Netherlands than a practical, concrete home that could be opposed to a Moroccan emotional, symbolic home.

Besides being seen as restricting the meaning of home, as in the case of Tariq, temporariness can also be presented as an inherent and even necessary condition for the understanding of a country as home. This is a position regularly taken by Dounia: *'I feel at home there, yeah, but temporarily.* (…) *Of course I'm not really a tourist, I mean, I have family there and so on. But you're there temporarily and then things are different, because nothing is expected of you.'* Dounia does not only consider the temporariness of Morocco as something that qualifies its importance as home, as we saw her state above. Here she shows that in some ways it can be *easier* to feel at home there knowing that you will leave again. The temporariness allows both migrants and residents to overlook their mutual differences. Said (28, m, Moroccan) is even more explicit about this non-committal temporariness: he agrees that it is easy to 'integrate' in Morocco, exactly because *'Here everything's so obligation-free, so to speak, it's all holiday, and in the Netherlands it's all really, like, that's your real life.'*

Clearly, then, not all homes (have to) meet the same requirements. Morocco and Turkey, where one's 'real life' does not take place, can be temporary for informants and still serve as a home in a certain sense, be it more easily as a 'special home' than as a 'normal home'. Take Redouan, building his idea of home around the image of his natal village, a place he only visits on day trips.[17] This key locus of home from his narrative is clearly a temporary thing, but Redouan doesn't mind, because it is also *timeless*, the permanent focal point of his

16 Once again, for participants there is a difference between seeing one's own stay in Morocco as a touristic one and being addressed as a tourist by others.

17 See Chapter 2, Section 3.5.

origins. He is not the only one using the image of 'recharging' during his holidays before returning home. Morocco, or Turkey, does not have to be a permanent dwelling place to be a home. It has to 'be there', accessible for temporary visits and long distance reminiscence.

Aygul: Keeping Her Eyes on Turkey

How individuals integrate the common theme of temporariness into their conceptions of home can differ greatly. Just how greatly we can see by focusing on the interestingly different story of Aygul (30, f, Turkish). While she uses the same elements I found in other stories – the temporariness of summer visits, the paradox of feeling at home despite this, starting to long for the Netherlands after some time, and feeling excluded in Turkey as well as in the Netherlands – she attaches different meanings to these things in her story. While most interviewees talk about the temporariness of Morocco or Turkey as self-evident, Aygul problematises it. She sees it as a barrier to being more at home in the country that, in other aspects, feels most home-like to her: Turkey. Her dream is to move to Turkey permanently and do away with all temporariness. Aygul forms an exceptional case, both in exploring how temporariness can be given meaning in relation to home on the individual level, and in tracing how individuals take different positions within their narrative. She is also a somewhat extreme example of the tendency to stress the more concrete dimensions of home in the case of the Netherlands and the symbolic dimensions when discussing the country of origin.

Aygul was introduced to me as a 'very Dutch' Turkish lady.[18] She agrees that she is very well 'integrated' in Dutch society and tells me how often people are surprised to hear that she is Turkish. Yet, at the same time, she prioritises her Turkish identity to the extent of stating that she does not identify with the Netherlands or the Dutch whatsoever.[19] Her case thus clearly contradicts the presumption, underlying many recent Dutch

18 As with several other informants, the third party introducing us was a little hesitant whether her 'Dutchness' would make her less suitable for my research: 'I have a Turkish colleague, but she's really very Dutch you know'. Possibly she was seen as 'too much like us' to make her representative of 'them'.

19 On this account she is maybe more nationalist and stereotypically 'Turkish' than the other descendants of Turkish migrants I spoke to – Cf. M. Crul & J. Doomernik, *The Turkish and Moroccan second generation in the Netherlands: divergent trends between and polarization within the two groups*, 2003, p. 1043.

debates, that a sense of attachment and identification with the Netherlands is crucial for integration (and that a lack thereof makes migrants unable to function well in society). This woman, a textbook example of integration, denies all identification with the Netherlands.

I talk to Aygul on three occasions: two interview sessions take place in her house in the Netherlands, and in-between those two I visit her in her apartment on the Turkish Mediterranean. Especially during our second and third talk, Aygul is quite outspoken about seeing the Netherlands as a functional home only to which she fosters no feelings of attachment. But already during our first talk she tells me: *'What I feel for Turkey, I don't feel for the Netherlands, if I'm to be honest. I'm just really proud to be Turkish. I'm not allowed to say that, but I can't say that I feel Dutch myself, absolutely not. People do say it, they tell me I'm also Dutch. Well, no way, not at all. I just don't have that feeling. Yes I live here, and my children are growing up here, but a real connection with the Netherlands? Nope. People don't understand it either when I say so, but yeah, there's really nothing else I can say, sorry.'* In dialogue with external voices that expect her to 'feel Dutch' and even forbid her to deny such feelings, Aygul admits that her life takes place in the Netherlands, but denies any form of symbolic attachment to the country. She is exceptionally consistent on this point – unlike most other interviewees, who made at least some mention of the Netherlands as a symbolic home as well.

When Aygul talks about what she does value about the Netherlands, she restricts herself to concrete dimensions of home. During our first session, her main focus is on the importance of these dimensions to create a sense of home in the Netherlands, especially on the local level. In our next conversations she is more focused on Turkey, stressing that concrete things like security are actually all that keeps her in the Netherlands: *'My relationship with the Netherlands, like, the feeling I have, is that it's just a necessity. It's no more than that, actually. If they told me I could go back to Turkey with the same security that I have in the Netherlands, I wouldn't need to think twice. There* [in the Netherlands, FJS] *it's just more like, you know where you stand. And the people just follow the rules. You have a fixed structure, something that I also find very important.'* According to Aygul, the elements she sees as constituting her everyday home in the Netherlands, security, structure and predictability, are not necessarily connected to this country. She would gladly transfer them to Turkey to be able to call that country her home entirely. Elsewhere she makes a comparable remark about her house: if only she could move the building to Turkey,

there would be nothing left to keep her in the Netherlands. She presents the homely aspects of the Netherlands as isolated features, transferable to another context. Her account of Turkey is much more positive. When I visit her in Turkey she tells me how much she feels at home there: *'What I have here in Turkey is that, your "rock" really is here. For my family. Whenever I'm here I genuinely feel at home, despite only being here for four weeks, I still feel at home.* (...) *You just feel good inside ... it really is your own country. Strange, you're only here for a month and yet it remains your own country.'*

This quote touches upon the tension between the temporariness of Aygul's stays in Turkey and calling the country home. She reflects on the strangeness of feeling at home in a place where she only spends one month a year. During our earlier interview in the Netherlands, she took a different position in this field of tension and concluded that this temporariness precluded a sense of home in Turkey. This latter position is the most dominant one in most of Aygul's accounts. Living in the Netherlands, she sees herself as homeless compared to her Turkish compatriots: *'I think they have a good life.* (...) *The climate is good, and they live in their own country. To be honest, I'm really quite jealous. They feel ... at least they have something they really feel is home. And well, I don't think I have that.* (...) *When I'm here, it's not like I feel really like, wow, I really feel at home here in the Netherlands. I would like to feel at home over there, but you know, it's only for a short time.'* Aygul states that she is jealous of resident Turks for whom Turkey is a continuous and self-evident home. The short duration of her own stay there only confronts her with her lack of a home rather than also, as we see in most other cases, making her direct her view towards her other home in the Netherlands. The temporariness of one homeland does not automatically mean that it is 'overruled' by more permanent possible homes, as Aygul's case makes clear: *'You know, when I go there I suddenly feel like, wow. Hey, this is where I really belong. And then you're there for four weeks and you miss things here, that's the funny thing. That's how I see it. It sometimes seems as though I'm a guest here* [*in the Netherlands*] *but... Yeah, I'm just really in love with Turkey.'*

Embedded in this last quote – another assertion of Turkey as home and the Netherlands as not home – is Aygul's only reference to the standard pattern of 'missing the Netherlands after a few weeks away'. Typically for her story, this remark seems wholly unconnected to what she says before and after. Aygul's stories about Turkey and the Netherlands often seem to feature different voices side by side without any dialogue. Her most dominant voice is the one focusing on Turkey as the 'real' home, often

idealising it and expressing the wish to move there in order to lead a happier life and feel completely at home. This voice does not engage in much dialogue with other voices that occasionally speak up. Aygul's husband is mostly presented as an externalised counter-voice that is critical of her Turkish dream: *'So he says like, "During the holidays you just don't see Turkey, what it's really like.* (…) *You wouldn't get along there, it wouldn't work, you and Turkey." He says: "You go there on holiday for four or five weeks, and that's it." I think, he thinks that I'm not serious enough. And of course I realise that it wouldn't be all fun and games every day, but still you're in your own country and the climate is much better. I'm simply convinced that things would be better for the children there, where they're not second-class, how do you put it, citizens. They're not foreigners, so that's one less problem at the outset.'* In this passage Aygul does react to her husband's voice, but only by bringing up more arguments for her own position. She does not engage with his suggestion that life in Turkey might be completely different from her holiday experiences, and even incompatible with her own personality. Like elsewhere in her story, Aygul does *allow* for voices that qualify the idea of Turkey as an uncomplicated possible home, but chooses not to enter into an active *dialogue* with them, or combine them in a third position. Apparently her dominant voice is better served by keeping a distance from any criticism. It seems like she refuses to engage in a dialogue that would further complicate her ideas of Turkey as a home by deepening the sense of temporariness.[20]

Towards the end of this passage, Aygul brings up the argument of exclusion: in Turkey, her children would not be treated as foreigners and second-rate citizens. This is interesting in the larger context of her life story, for unlike most others, Aygul hardly talks about experiences of othering and discrimination in the Netherlands. The topic only occurs as an argument in favour of Turkey and as an explanation for her explicit claim not to feel at home in the Netherlands. It is hard to assess this finding: do these scarce references mean that Aygul is little concerned with exclusion in the Netherlands and mainly brings it up here because it is yet another argument supporting her stance? Or could we also interpret them as clues to a deeper feeling of exclusion underlying Aygul's focus on Turkey as a far more attractive possible home than the Netherlands? Either way,

20 Another thing Aygul does not reflect on is that, interestingly enough, her children do not speak a word of Turkish: she raises them Dutch-speaking only, despite the fact that her husband is a first-generation migrant. This fact is in seeming contradiction with concrete short-term migration plans.

this focus makes it easy to understand Aygul's great frustration about the fact that the temporariness of her stays in Turkey makes her subject to similar treatment in Turkey: *'They are the real Turks, so to speak, and we're kind of like the fake ones. Fake Turks, who join in now and again, turn up once a year and that's all, then we leave again.* (...) *You aren't ever really included. Not here, and not there ... it is quite strange. And unpleasant too.'*

Aygul's strong focus on Turkey as a possible home and her emotional investment in this country make her all the more vulnerable to exclusion by resident Turks. She hates being seen as a tourist in the very place where she longs to belong most. Aygul is very explicit about preferring Turkey to the Netherlands. Yet the temporariness of her stays in the former restricts her options for feeling at home there. She always knows that after some time she will leave again. Her life in Turkey lacks the structure and concrete familiarity that come with permanent dwelling, and on top of that, resident Turks consider the fact that she is there temporarily a reason to exclude her as a 'fake' Turk.

3.3 *Temporary but Timeless: Family Forever*

Unlike Aygul, Dounia has little desire to 'go local' in Morocco. She is quite happy about her in-between status. As a tourist she does not have to conform to the same social expectations as resident Moroccans. From a different angle, however, her position is unlike that of a tourist because of her permanent family ties. Both in concrete and in more symbolic dimensions, family plays a crucial role in making people see Morocco or Turkey as a home.[21] I have already mentioned that most of the time in these countries is spent with relatives. Moreover, one may oneself be only visiting the country every now and then, but in the meantime, rest assured that the presence of relatives makes for an enduring connection. Thus, family is an important element in informants' temporary stays, as well as in their accounts of the country of their parents as a timeless home. The fact that interactions with family can also be fraught with conflict (especially in the longer run) does not undo the strong symbolism of family belonging, of being among people who share both blood and history.

For Bilal (25, m, Moroccan), the fact that he is 'among his own' makes all the difference in seeing Morocco as a home instead of a holiday destination: *'When I think of Morocco now, I think of my cousin, my uncle and aunts, so family again.* (...) *When you're with family you're at home, in any case you're always welcome, and you feel welcome too. So it's true that you can say, going there is like going*

21 Cf. Hall et al. 1999, p. 2.

home in a way. (…) *It's not like you've booked an all-inclusive hotel for four weeks, no, you sleep, as it were, in your own bed. You eat, as it were, from your own plate. With your family sitting beside you. So when I think of Morocco, in the broadest sense, I just think of family, of being at home.'*

To Bilal, home equals family, and this is what makes Morocco home to him. In the Dutch context it is his parents and siblings that play an important part in his accounts of belonging. This is a recurrent connection in many interviews. Although the language of 'home' often refers to attachments to *places*, my interviews affirm that these places need to be understood to include the *social ties* more or less embedded in them. Family generally plays a key role in the social construction of home.[22] In the case of Faruk, both the ties to his family and the way in which he constructs the country of his parents as a homeland take shape in a different way than we just saw with Bilal.

Faruk does agree that having close ties with family members makes all the difference in feeling at home. In his case, this comes up when he explains that he hardly knows his Turkish relatives because the untimely death of both his parents broke the linkage. His roots do not 'live on' through his local relatives as they do for Bilal. Turkey, now, is little more to Faruk than a holiday destination of which he conveniently speaks the language. Therefore, when he travels to Turkey he does take a day trip to show his children the ancestral village and visit the graveyard, to familiarise them with their symbolic roots. But these are not complemented by concrete relationships with living family members, and even though he expresses a nostalgic longing for his village, after a few hours there he is happy to spend the rest of his time touring the country. Due to the lack of concrete family ties, for Faruk, Turkey is a much less 'thick' home than Morocco is for Bilal. It is something to look back at rather than to live in. His visits to his ancestral village are mainly oriented towards the past, evoking old memories and general notions of origin. Still, this more symbolic function provides him with a sense of continuity and familial connectedness over time that also reaches into the future – like many others, Faruk stresses the importance of showing one's children 'where they are from'.[23]

In many narratives featuring origins and family ties, Morocco/Turkey is constructed in terms of continuity or referred to as a *timeless* home. This cluster

22 See also Chapter 5.

23 Actually, Faruk consistently talks about showing his children 'where their grandparents are from', depicting Turkey as origins once-removed rather than directly. Most other participants alternated between talking about 'where I am from/where we are from' and 'where my parents are from'. Redouan, like some others, told me he wanted his future children to know where 'they' are from.

of meanings is quite adequately summarised by Dounia: *'My connection with Morocco is, of course, the connection I have because I was born there. And my roots were maintained because we went there on holiday every year. Your family, your country, your customs, your faith, you see it all again. So that's the connection I have.'* Dounia refers to two kinds of continuity. She accumulated concrete experiences of the country during her holiday times spent there. These regular visits to Morocco literally familiarised her with what her parents left behind. But there is another, more symbolic side to her ties that is not fully dependent on (recurrent) concrete experiences. Even descendants of migrants who have never visited the country of their ancestors generally foster a certain attachment to that country.[24] Morocco is the place where Dounia was born, where she traces her origins. The country is the symbolic starting point of her existence, an anchor point to refer back to from her current position in space and time.

This dimension of Morocco or Turkey as home can be conceptualised in terms of 'roots'. While the meanings of people's 'roots' are highly situational, the *image* that is evoked by talking about roots, the roots discourse, is one of timelessness. In the next section I discuss the timeless roots symbolism in my informants' narratives. In the ensuing sections, we will see how the concept of roots propels us towards another level of analysis; the conceptual pair of roots and 'routes' encompasses both Turkey or Morocco and the Netherlands in the narratives of those interviewed, and allows me to explore *and* transcend the here-there dichotomy.

3.4 *Timeless Roots and Timely Routes*

Roots, and Routes

Morocco/Turkey is often presented as 'home' because it is the country of origin; it is 'where I am (or where we are) *from*'. This is how Dounia explains her shivers upon entering the country even though she would never want to live there: *'It's more like, the feeling that that's where you come from, your roots, you know?'* As descendants of migrants, most people I spoke to engage with the question of where they are 'from',[25] and over half of them explicitly mentioned

24 Basu 2004; Levitt & Waters 2002.

25 Note that asking oneself 'where am I from?' is very different from being asked 'where are you from?' and the meaning of the latter depends on who is asking whom. My interlocutors, when asked by a fellow Moroccan or Turkish Dutch, may automatically name their parents' place of birth without thinking much of it. But once power differences come into play the question becomes a different one. From a Dutchman the same question is often

their 'roots'.[26] People look at (stories about) their ancestral homesteads with the desire to 'know where they came from'. This phrase reappears time and again in the interviews, generally with little to no explanation of what there is to know, or why one would want to know this. Apparently the desire to know your roots is seen as something self-evident.[27]

We touched upon this topic in the previous chapter when discussing the ancestral village as a rich source of roots symbolism – whether individuals choose to actively engage with these roots or not. Within the larger context of the country of origin, 'the village' is often quoted as 'where we are *really* from'. Remember Redouan's story about his village roots:[28] it is important for him to know that the village is there, a timeless anchor point, the location of his roots. It is a home to refer to rather than a place to live, an important symbol in his self-narrative. It is a place that allows him to tell himself and his future children a tale of continuity that complements narratives that focus on migration, change and movement.

Like 'home', the metaphor of 'roots' has been taken up by social scientists interested in people's (and especially migrants' and other 'displaced' people's) relationships to place. Gustafson describes the notion as:

> part of a metaphorical system (including the soil, the land, and so forth) linking people to place, identity to territory. In this context, roots signify emotional bonds with the physical environment but often also contain notions of local community, shared culture, and so forth. [29]

I use this metaphor, both as part of interviewees' own vocabulary, and as a cover term for this 'metaphorical system' that evokes the complexity of symbolic attachment to Morocco and Turkey – the fact that the country is meaningful to

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experienced as excluding, implying that one does not belong in the Netherlands, and informants report being hurt, or defensively replying 'well, from Amsterdam!' See Ang 1994, pp. 29–30. Issues like this one will recur in the next chapter.

26 Using the Dutch equivalent 'wortels' or, like both Naima and Dounia do, borrowing the iconic English term, pointing out their 'roots' as an important part of what makes this place special.

27 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 297. Buitelaar refers to adopted children's search for their biological parents to illustrate the seemingly basic human need to have a story to tell about one's origins. See also Prins 2006, p. 288; Verkuyten 2010, p. 52.

28 See Chapter 2, Section 3.5.

29 P. Gustafson, *Roots and routes: exploring the relationship between place attachment and mobility*, 2001, p. 670.

the interviewees regardless of the concrete ties they may or may not maintain to the country in the present. Nilay (38, f, Turkish), for example, hardly spoke about Turkey until I explicitly asked. Her shows that the logic of roots does not only apply for people who maintain strong ties with a country of origin: *'It's a nice country for a holiday. It means nothing more to me than it does to you... Well hang on, I don't think that's entirely true. I do have my roots there, and family members of course.'* Nilay's dominant view of Turkey is that of a convenient holiday destination – she has not been to her city of origin in almost ten years. Only upon second thought she adds that of course she still has her roots there, her relatives. Even though it is clear that these do not play an important part in her present life, her roots are brought in as what makes her relationship to Turkey different from mine.

Many instances of 'roots talk' have a certain fuzziness about them and may not actually feature the term 'roots'. This chapter's main character Dounia does use this word, but she, too, is at a loss for words to explain the meaning of her roots: *'Morocco has always been important to me. Despite growing up in the Netherlands, it has always had a place in my heart. It has always affected me. They're still roots, in the end. I don't know how to explain it. We always used to go over by boat, and when we were in Morocco, maybe it sounds stupid, but I always teared up a little bit. It sounds very strange, because I didn't really grow up there. But there's still a sense of, like, everything here is such a part of you, despite not living the culture to that same extent yourself, but you recognise a lot of things.'*

For Dounia, the term 'roots' sums up her blurry but intense conception of belonging in Morocco[30] – she uses the word in several passages. She here presents her roots as what connects her to Morocco *despite* the factors suggesting otherwise – her growing up in the Netherlands, her distance from Moroccan culture. Even while talking about this, she also comments on the peculiarity of her feelings. Much like home, the roots metaphor comes to the fore when the permanence or continuity it implies is not self-evident. A focus on timeless roots, on continuity and stability, is generally intertwined with perceptions of movement and change. According to many authors this applies to the (post) modern world in general, in which increasing rates of mobility and change are seen to trigger a 'corresponding nostalgia for the (imagined) stability and coherence of past times and places'.[31] We may agree with this observation or

30 Cf. Basu 161.

31 Basu 158, see also: Gupta & Ferguson 1992, p. 10 and Hermans & Hermans-Jansen 2003, p. 255. Gupta and Ferguson argue that 'the irony of these times (...) is that as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient. It is here that it becomes most

object that globalising mobility is not that new, or not that pervasive, or not that destabilising.[32] Either way, it is easier to see the relevance of the roots metaphor in migration contexts, where one's roots are explicitly traced to elsewhere.

Accounts like Dounia's earlier remark that her roots *'were maintained'* through yearly visits also suggest that there is more to roots than a retrospective sense of permanence. In reaction to a notion of roots perceived as too static, scientists have suggested the metaphor of 'routes', affirming a 'view of human location as constituted by displacement as much as by stasis'.[33] As Paul Basu formulates it in a beautiful article on 'roots-tourism' in Scotland: 'For members of diasporic populations who feel uprooted or displaced, the quest for old country roots thus also constitutes a route to this "other" place, the lost homeland'.[34] In my interpretation, the concept of routes not only points towards movement besides stasis, but also emphasises the importance of the individual life course in understanding people's relationship to place. Below I analyse how my informants differentiate between different meanings of home by employing the logics of both roots and routes. I will argue that the complementary notions of roots and routes provide an elegant tool to examine diverse and often contradictory tendencies in the construction of home.

The Logics of Roots and Routes in Action

To articulate how they feel at home in each country, informants use arguments related to both fields of meaning: roots and routes. Taking up the metaphor of a 'life journey' that I proposed to her at the beginning of our conversation,[35] Dounia tells me: *'Of course, ultimately the Netherlands is my home base, after all it's actually where I've travelled most, to put it that way. Most of my journey has been in the Netherlands, and it will most probably stay that way. Because it's here that I have my own habits, and where you were raised and bred, of course. Only they are still two different feelings, but I can't explain.* (...) [*T*]*here I have the strange feeling I'm at home, but at the same time, I'm not,* (...) *just a feeling that washes over you, it's hard to explain. But eventually I just can't wait to get back*

visible how imagined communities come to be attached to imagined places, as displaced peoples cluster around remembered or imagined homelands, places, or communities in a world that seems increasingly to deny such firm territorialised anchors in their actuality.'

32 E.g. Friedman 2002, p. 33.

33 Clifford 1997, p. 2. See also Armbruster 2002, p. 26.

34 Basu 2004, p. 156.

35 She is, by the way, the only one who explicitly integrated this metaphor into her own story.

to the Netherlands, that's just my home base. Only here, of course, is where you do most of your living.' Here I am most interested in the logic Dounia uses in her comparison between the Netherlands and Morocco.[36] This is a typical example of the way I found the 'routes' logic to feature in my material: references to home in terms of where and how you live your life through time, as opposed to other dimensions of meaning that focus more on roots and origins, on home as where you are from.

Besides describing roots and routes in terms of (perceived) stasis and movement, continuity and change, I thus propose that routes and roots as home metaphors in the life stories of these descendants of migrants differ in their focus on place (roots) versus time (routes).[37] Of course both metaphors are embedded in time *and* space, but a stress on one or the other is part of the power of each metaphor. A roots logic will generally highlight the symbolic significance of a specific place, while discourses employing a routes logic will foreground the concrete time spent in places. The routes logics I came across in the interviews focus on people's personal history with certain places of countries; on the times spent there, accumulating memories, learning and developing, and building relationships, as well as on the future directions they envisage for themselves, taking their current endeavours and past origins as points of orientation. Routes are not confined to one's 'future orientation',[38] as some scholars interpret the term. Rather, they concern people's embeddedness through lived time in past, present and future – their life routes we travelled as well as those we plan. When looking at home in terms of routes, for the participants in this research the Netherlands generally 'beat' Morocco or Turkey. Although a timeless home in terms of roots, the latter countries can boast much less personal routes than the Netherlands. During their short stays over there, informants are confronted with the fact that most of their concrete life, in past, present and future, lies elsewhere. The long Dutch routes make the temporariness of Turkey and Morocco stand out, and this of course affects the meanings the country can have as home.

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36 Another interesting thing about this passage is the frequent use of words like 'just, of course, naturally' (Dutch: gewoon, natuurlijk), referring to the Netherlands as a 'normal' home as contrasted with the 'strange' feelings of belonging in Morocco. This illustrates how, in Basu's words about home, 'there is much to justify the view that this seemingly most commonplace of locations has, in an age characterised by movement, also become one of the most elusive', Basu 2004, p. 157.

37 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 279.

38 E.g. Eijberts 2013, p. 278.

Dounia stresses her Dutch routes to explain her preference for the Netherlands. Laila (31, f, Moroccan) on the contrary, employing a roots logic, presents her attachment to Morocco as the most enduring *'That's where my roots, uh, developed, is that how you say it? And I always say that when they die, I'll go back there. So I'll be buried there* (…) *So whoever you are, that's who you'll stay. Wherever you go in the world, ultimately you end up back in your place.'* Laila describes the ultimate continuity of her 'roots home', which defines who she is regardless of where her routes may take her. But in Laila's story, as in all others, we see an alternation between the different logics rather than a pervasive stress on a timeless idea of 'roots only'. On other moments during our interviews she also talks, for instance, about how, having grown up in the Netherlands, she cannot quite be herself in Morocco and is glad to return home after some time.

Speaking about home in terms of roots and routes logics helps us understand how not every home has to meet the same requirements. The notion is differentiated: different homes are 'home' for different reasons. For most interviewees, Morocco and Turkey do not *have* to be home in the same way the Netherlands is. Dounia explains that Morocco is home in terms of roots, but because it is much less so in terms of routes, her feeling at home there is of a temporary nature: *'I think that after a couple of months there, you've really seen enough. Because you didn't grow up there.* (…) *So it's more like, the feeling that that's where you come from, roots, you know.'* Very broadly, Dounia here represents the trend to talk about a country of 'origin' as home in terms of roots, and about the Netherlands in terms of routes. One is home because it is where she 'is from', the other because it is where she grew up and envisages her future.[39]

Dounia is very conscious of the fact that the person she is now and the stories she has to tell are informed by both the roots she started out from and the routes she travelled and continues to travel – in the Netherlands and to and from Morocco, 'maintaining' her roots. I quoted her above talking about her ties to Morocco through birth and the annual maintenance of her roots. Right after this roots talk, she switches from roots logic to routes logic and talks about how her Dutch routes shaped the person she has become: *'The Netherlands has meant a lot to me in terms of my development, I was raised there. So the Netherlands has ultimately made me into what I am today, through schooling, all the stages you go through, and your work. Everything shapes you into what you are, and it has to do with the place where you are, I mean, the country you grew up in. And that is the Netherlands, and that is the relationship I have with the Netherlands.'*

39 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 117.

Dounia describes a sense of concurrency with the Netherlands, having been 'shaped' in and by the country in the many years she spent there. Looking at roots and routes thus also taps into the intimate links between home and identity. This goes for both what we often call personal identity and its counterpart, social identity. Dounia's case also provides us with examples of the latter. She evokes her roots and routes in her considerations about being Moroccan and/or Dutch. At two different points in our interviews, she takes two different stances as to her 'real' national identity: (1) *'It is my home country. I am a native born Moroccan, after all. It's true that I have two nationalities, but I am a native Moroccan. So my connection to Morocco is* (...) *well, yeah, your roots, in the end.'* (2) *'But it's more my development here that I've gone through* (...) *that has shaped me into the Dutch person that I am today. Because ultimately, although I am Moroccan by birth, I am Dutch. Because someone who has lived here for 34 years can't really be called a Moroccan anymore.'* In the first quote, Dounia identifies herself as ultimately Moroccan because of her roots. In the second one, she contradicts that national identity is fixed at birth, and argues that because of her Dutch routes, she is now clearly Dutch. Depending on whether they focus on the logics of roots or those of routes, descendants of migrants can draw different conclusions as to who they are and where they belong. For an adequate understanding of their conceptions of home and homeland, we need to be sensitive to both these logics, as well as to the way they contextualise each other.[40]

Routes vs. Roots?

Number one 'routes' advocate James Clifford challenges the idea that 'roots always precede routes':[41] in his view, displacement is just as '*constitutive* of cultural meanings'[42] as dwelling, and roots may be shaped through routes. While my own material points towards the importance of a 'routes' concept besides the strength of the 'roots' metaphor, a word of caution is in place here.

40 In her dissertation on the integration strategies and sense of home of Dutch migrant women, Eijberts, for example, argues that second-generation women have a stronger sense of home in the Netherlands than in the country of their parents. Her meticulous underpinning of this finding is based on what I would call her informants' routes logic, and although I largely agree with her argument, I would argue that it lacks attention for the roots logic which is also present in people's stories on home and homeland. (Note that Eijberts makes use of the terms roots and routes in a slightly different way, see Section 3.5). See Eijberts 2013, p. 339.

41 Clifford 1997, p. 3.

42 Clifford, ibidem.

The premise that both roots *and* routes deserve attention should not lead us to ignore the differences between the two concepts, or indeed to present routes as an alternative to roots rather than a complementary notion.

While Clifford is quite right that movement is no less 'natural' than is stasis, there is an important difference between roots and routes.[43] The term roots, like home, is regularly employed by my interlocutors in their narratives. Routes, at least as part of the roots & routes pair, is an *analytical concept*, inspired by scientists' apprehension of the incompleteness of the roots metaphor to grasp the complexity of migrant experience. When we start looking for them, we can discern route metaphors in migrants' narratives as well,[44] but at least in my interviews these by no means share the iconic status of the roots metaphor.[45] An exclusive focus on (myths of) rootedness may result in a distorted image of migrant experience, but so does a stressing of routes which underestimates, in the words of Basu, 'the significance of the *subjective* reality of such "myths" for the individuals who live by them' (italics in original).[46]

In our enthusiasm for the added value of a routes metaphor, we need to beware to see it as complementing rather than replacing a roots metaphor (just as we have seen in the epilogue to Chapter 2 that hybridity may be all too easily presented as a 'cure' for essentialism). This is a point brought to the fore by Jonathan Friedman, who argues that Clifford's routes refer to an underlying opposition between homogeneity and hybridity.[47] Agreeing with Friedman, I 'fail to see the need to take sides here'.[48] Of course, as scientists, we need to deconstruct essentialist categories that hinder a better view on the complexity of social relationships and processes of meaning construction. But that does not imply that we have to one-sidedly restrict ourselves to notions of movement, hybridity, fluidity – to focus on 'routes only' and deny all forms of (perceived)

43 Despite his emphasis on movement, it would not do Clifford justice to identify him with a simplistic either-or approach to roots and routes, considering that he writes, for example, that 'stasis and purity are asserted – creatively and violently – against historical forces of movement and contamination' – Clifford 1997, p. 7.

44 See Basu once again for a discussion on notions like quest and pilgrimage as emic route metaphors: Basu 2004, p. 152.

45 And this despite the fact that I invited my interlocutors to use the image of a 'journey' as a framework to tell me their life story, thus supplying them with a ready-to-use 'route image' (although this was not the reason I chose this metaphor).

46 Basu 2004, p. 159.

47 Friedman 2002, p. 26.

48 Friedman 2002, p. 29.

continuity and rootedness.[49] As for the danger of essentialising: while we have to steer clear of essentialism in our own academic reasoning, we should respect, and analyse, that the people we study *themselves* employ 'essentialist' conceptions of culture, place, home, alongside more fluid uses of the same notions.[50] I argue that it is exactly the combination of roots *and* routes that provides us with a dynamic pair of metaphors which provides us with tools to remain sensitive to continuity as well as change, stability as well as movement, in questions of place, home and identity in the words and lives of those we study.[51]

I have argued that participants in this research use the logics of both roots and routes. The remainder of this setion serves to show the complexity of their usage of these two logics. Above I sketched, in very broad lines, the Netherlands as home in terms of routes and Morocco and Turkey as home in terms of roots. This is a distinction that holds for many, but certainly not all of the accounts I heard about the different countries. Reality, as always, is both more diverse and more messy than such general categorisations may make us believe. Turkey and Morocco are described in terms of both roots *and* routes, and the Netherlands even more so. I have referred to various seemingly binary classifications the interviewees evoked when talking about 'home', such as normal versus special, symbolic versus concrete, or roots versus routes. These binary pairs can help us to gain insight into the differentiated way in which interviewees think about home, but as binaries go, they can only do so much. To go beyond overly simple classifications of Morocco/Turkey as a special, symbolic, emotional roots home, opposed to the Netherlands as the normal, concrete, practical routes home, we have to let these binaries invite us to mess them up.[52]

Rather than immediately dismissing such general classifications as inadequate, I want to unpack them. By first engaging with them and then putting them into perspective, we can increase our insight into their usefulness *and* into the complexities they fail to grasp. Using a number of instances from my interviews, in what follows I aim to mess up/enrich the Turkish/Moroccan roots – Dutch routes binary. The roots metaphor is often used by my

49 Or as Ang, addressing related issues of fixity versus fluidity, convincingly argues: 'in the midst of the postmodern flux of nomadic subjectivities we need to recognise the continuing and continuous operation of 'fixing' performed by the categories of race and ethnicity, as well as class, gender, geography, etc. on the formation of 'identity'' – Ang 1994, p. 24.

50 See Baumann (Baumann 1996) for an insightful discussion of this 'dual discursive competence'. See also Ang 1994, p. 199.

51 Armbruster 2002, p. 26; Gustafson 2001, p. 115.

52 Baumann 2004, p. 35, Salih 2003, p. 155; Riemann 2003, Brah 1996, p. 185.

interlocutors in ways more dynamic than much of the literature would have us perceive it. Roots, it appears, can not only be kept alive over long distances in time and space, they can also develop, grow and spread in different directions adapting to circumstances. Being less 'thick' in terms of emic meanings than that of roots, the concept of routes is even more open to situational (re)definition. Finally, we will see how routes and roots continuously contextualise each other.

Moroccan/Turkish Roots, Dutch Routes? Messing Up Binaries

It is too easy to let a distinction between roots and routes coincide with one between Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands. Three qualifications in response to this general image are in place here. First, we just saw that migrants' 'routes' take them to and from several different countries. Sometimes in the interviews, the roots-routes division is simply reversed. Bilge (32, f, Turkish), for example, told me that Turkey 'as such' does not feel like home to her – this feeling is restricted to those places where she has dwelt during her holidays, because only these places hold personal memories. Here, Turkey is a home in terms of routes rather than roots, there is an emphasis on time over place.

My material also challenges the ascription of fixed characteristics to roots and routes, such as the idea that roots are more symbolic and emotional than routes, and signify stability as opposed to dynamic, mobile routes. While it is sometimes tempting to see the routes imagery as less emotionally charged than images of roots, and correspondingly see Turkey or Morocco as a prototypical 'emotional' home compared to the more 'functional' Dutch home, this interpretation should nog be generalised.[53] Therefore, my second qualification is that feelings of attachment can be fostered through routes as well as roots, as can be illustrated by quoting Bilal: *'Here is where I have built up my entire existence, and why? Because this is where I am for 11 of the 12 months in a year. So here I have more time, and more paths to travel, but here is also where I have more opportunities to take, more possibilities for constructing my life. In Morocco it's different, I would have to do everything in one month. I wouldn't succeed, no.* (…) *I do have things in Morocco, only there I don't have the time, and haven't gone through the development that I went through here. Here is where I went to school, where I studied, you name it.* (…) *Because a connection is something you feel, right? And what I feel towards the Netherlands is so much more complete, in terms of my personal life, business, development, my future* (…) *than my feelings*

53 Here, of course, we also feel the partial overlap with the distinction made earlier between symbolic and concrete dimensions of home.

towards Morocco.' Because Bilal has spent so much more time in the Netherlands than in Morocco, and will continue to do so, his ties with the country feel more 'complete' than those with Morocco, so he argues. For most of those interviewed, the Netherlands is an 'emotional' home as well. In fact, I want to argue that the country is not only the most self-evident frame of reference for these descendants of migrants but also, as Bilal has it, a more 'complete' home than Morocco or Turkey.[54] Whereas the latter countries can indeed be seen as home mainly in terms of roots, descriptions of the Netherlands as home can cover a much broader range of dimensions both concrete and symbolic.

Third, on the stability-movement axis we can also note that for these descendants of migrants, narratives on the Netherlands are marked by a sense of stability and continuity at least as often as they are by displacement and the discontinuity with a past far away.[55] Informants also explicitly used the roots metaphor when talking about the Netherlands, albeit not as often as in stories about Morocco and Turkey. Tariq, for example, stated that he feels at home in the Netherlands, explicitly locating his roots there: *'The Netherlands of course. Yeah you live ... in the end, the Netherlands kind of really is my language, my roots, so to speak.* (...) *especially my parents too, my parents' houses of course, where I grew up.'* Tariq's family is very important in his general conception of home. His words show that, for my informants, roots do not only refer to faraway origins, but also to *becoming rooted* in a place through one's routes – the time you spend there and the relationships located there.[56] Through their routes, people can grow their own personal roots, without necessarily becoming cut off from origins further away in time and space. By fostering familiarity and embeddedness, routes also can lead to fixity and stability, rather than always relating to movement and change.

Routes Shaping Roots Shaping Routes

Such inversions of the roots-routes binary demonstrate that my interlocutors employ the roots logic in more dynamic ways than the focus on 'stasis' in the literature suggests. The ways in which people *relate* to their roots is always contextual, and thus changes in the course of biographical developments. Dounia told us that her roots have been 'maintained' by yearly movement to and from Morocco. One's routes help shape the conceptualisation of one's roots.[57] The different life 'routes' of Bilal and Faruk (as described above in Section 3.3) can

54 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 281.
55 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 339.
56 Cf. Brah 1996, p. 182.
57 Cf. Ang 1994, p. 30.

explain much of the variation in the ways each relates to his village roots and show that these roots are, in their embedded actuality, much less 'timeless' than their image suggests.

Ozan: Routes over Roots

One story that stands out from the rest is that of Ozan, the man who prefers seeing Turkey as a holiday destination rather than a home.[58] He makes extensive use of both roots and routes logics, but the value and meaning he assigns to his roots in relation to his routes make him a contrast case in this sample, elucidating both the 'normal' pattern and the width of the spectrum of meanings which descendants of migrants give to their roots and routes. Ozan explicitly identifies the small Dutch town where he grew up as his 'roots' – Turkey is only of relevance if you go 'even further back' to his parents. They taught him to see Turkey as his home, but now that he is older he has let go of this view: *'Turkey doesn't mean that much to me anymore. Because I didn't grow up there, of course I have been there a few times, but I don't see it like – many of my friends do feel that way, they want to go back to Turkey. They still see it as their landscape, so to speak, where they feel at home. I don't feel like I would feel particularly at home in Turkey or in the Netherlands. To me the world is just… I notice that I like the idea of travelling around,* (…) *that anywhere can be your home country.'* Ozan distances himself from both his ascribed Turkish and his self-assigned Dutch roots, choosing to conceptualise home in terms of routes: every place can *become* home. Throughout Ozan's story, the main theme seems to be letting go of whatever roots he has, orienting himself to a future as a traveller. He talks about moving away from his home town, familiarising himself with new places time and again, distancing himself from his Turkish relatives, rather enjoying Turkey through travel, and making plans to migrate to a different country altogether. He is outspoken about feeling at home in the Netherlands rather than in Turkey, but would be more than ready to give up this home for something entirely new. He acknowledges his ties to the places of his past, but his final verdict is: *'You can't erase it, but you can let go of it.'* Although Ozan's conception of what his roots *are* is similar to that of other informants, the way he *relates* to these roots (or chooses not to relate to them) is strikingly different. He actively directs his routes away from his roots.

58 See Section 3.2.

Also interesting in this regard is the case of Latifa's (38, f, Moroccan) ancestral village, which I discussed in the previous chapter. Latifa refuses to travel to the village where she traces her roots, in order not to damage her memories. Hers could be seen as a prime example of 'static' roots – ossified memories of paradisiacal origins placed outside time, untouched by the here and now. But even, or especially, in her case, the decision to treat her roots as she does is clearly inspired by her very specific trajectory in the Netherlands.[59] Roots have an important part to play in my interlocutors' narrative self-understandings. But the ways in which they perceive their 'origins' are shaped by their Dutch frames of reference as well as by their personal biographies. As Ang argues: 'the cultural context of "where you're at" always informs and articulates the meaning of "where you're from".'[60] Roots and routes continually contextualise each other.

This contextualisation is made especially clear if we focus on the development of notions of home over time, as I will do in more depth in Section 4.1. Here, I want to give two more examples of the explicit reinterpretation of individuals' roots over the life course. For a first instance we can turn to Dounia again: *'When I reflect on my youth, the older I got the stronger my feelings for Morocco became. And by that I mean a feeling of "this is where I come from". And this is what has shaped me into what I am. My origins, my roots.'* As she matures, Dounia's interest in her roots increases and she starts to actively seek them out, to find new routes to her original roots.

Other participants talked of falling out of touch with their country of origin and their family as they grow older and more entrenched in their daily encumbrances, or on the contrary about feeling or having once felt unable to relate to their parents' roots. The latter we see in Bahar's (29, f, Turkish) story. Presently she feels strongly committed to her Turkish relatives, but this has not always been the case: *'Family that just gets shoved in front of you, like, "this is your uncle, this is your cousin", and then just having to deal with it.* (…) *You have to feel at home, suddenly, from one day to the next, because this is where we are now. I have found that quite difficult in the past.* (…) *If I don't see them for a few years, what kind of connection do you share for God's sake? Yeah, blood ties, and nothing else.'* Bahar's parents, using a roots logic, expected her to instantly reproduce the affinity they had with their country and relatives, but she felt incapable of doing so. It was only through repeated contact over the years, through her own routes, that she built up a relationship to her family roots. Each individual

59 Latifa's trajectory is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, alongside the story of her sister Aziza.

60 Ang 1994, p. 35.

I spoke to had their own personal story about how the relationship to their roots changes and develops throughout their life.

While a shared discourse of roots can be discerned in my interviews alongside recurring routes logics, the differences between as well as within personal narratives are significant. Different configurations of roots and routes range, to bring together a number of examples I have presented, from Redouan who builds his entire narrative around the imagery of his village roots and Naima who stresses the way these roots complement her Dutch life, to Ozan who deliberately chooses routes over roots and Nilay, so absorbed in her Dutch life routes that her Turkish roots appear as little more than an afterthought (at least at this point in her life). There are many other examples in my material of the diversity of meanings attached to roots and routes, all nuancing and questioning a rigid interpretation of these metaphors. They show how distinction between roots and routes can help us to see broad trends in how migrants understand their relationship to several countries and, used in dynamic ways, it can also help us to see beyond those broad trends. Both metaphors are employed in various more or less typical ways by participants to articulate how they do or do not feel at home in two different countries and arrive at a differentiated understanding of home.

Routes imagery can provide alternatives to the roots logic, but the two metaphors also continually contextualise each other.[61] Together, roots and routes help us make sense of home. My argument has centred on the complementary nature of their contrasting logics and their creative tension, rather than employing them as distinct categories. Eijberts, for example, relates migrants' (past) roots to perceptions of identity, whereas a sense of home is seen as related to their (present and future) routes.[62] This distinction is made more decidedly than my own understanding of roots and routes, home and identity, would allow for. In my perception, identity can be found in the multivoiced narratives people tell about their lives to give meaning to how they have become who they are now and how this relates to their future orientations. The concept of home allows me to make sense of such identity narratives. What makes home so interesting, is that it is an emic notion, the ambivalence of

61 Ideas of roots and routes can of course be deconstructed far more fundamentally in analytical terms, but this is not the place to do this. First, I feel that the material presented tells enough in itself, and second I agree with Jonathan Schwarz's words (as cited in Basu): 'the art of deconstruction can be rigorously applied to this [as any other] root metaphor, but those who live by the metaphor will not give it up'. Basu 2004, p. 157.

62 Eijberts 2013, p. 288.

which is clarified when we see how it pertains to both roots and routes, rather than only to one of the two.

4 Embedded Homelands

4.1 *Chapter Pit-stop*
Looking Back

So far in this chapter, I have discussed the complexity of home in a context of multiple (possible) homelands by exploring perceptions of (dis)continuity in time and space. Informants evoked images of Morocco or Turkey as a temporary as well as a timeless home. The finding that this dynamic tension pervades their stories, has structured my unravelling of the different, sometimes contradictory strands in the narratives on their two unsymmetrical homelands. Home emerges from the narratives analysed as a highly differentiated notion.

I have concretised the ambivalence of 'home' on the national level in two ways: first in terms of a 'timeless home' in its dissonance with a sense of temporariness, and next through a focus on these seemingly timeless 'roots' in their dialectic relationship with the complementary notion of 'routes'. There is an ongoing attachment to Turkey/Morocco that is, amongst other things, expressed through regular journeys to and from the country. These repeated visits can reinforce a sense of continuity, often articulated in terms of roots. At the same time, those interviewed are keenly aware of the limited duration of their stays. Eventually they will return to the Netherlands, where they are embedded through their past, present and future routes. In various manners, interviewees integrate this awareness into their narratives, sometimes even positing temporariness as a precondition for a sense of home.

From all of this, a sometimes rather ambivalent picture arises. On the one hand, we have the great emotional value of Turkey and Morocco, ideas of roots and original belonging, and on the other, the awareness of the lack of 'fit' between the country and one's own person, and the realisation that you cannot thrive there apart from the holiday setting because your routes lead elsewhere. Interviewees may describe Morocco/Turkey and being Turkish/Moroccan as an important part of their lives and selves, yet sometimes look at their time in these countries as an excursion rather than as a return home. Furthermore, upon closer scrutiny, the stories about both roots and routes ascribe great importance to the social dimensions of home, and more specifically to the value of family. Family ties carry great weight both in stories of timelessness and of temporariness, in terms of roots as well as routes.

Despite considerable overlap, especially between the idea of a timeless home and the concept of roots, the conceptual pair of roots and routes is more encompassing than the distinction between temporary and timeless with which I started off. The concepts of roots and routes have helped me to grasp patterns in informants' *overall*, differentiated understandings of home and homeland. The distinction I made between temporary and timeless, however, was particularly suited for the description of the complex ways in which participants formulated their relationships to *Morocco/Turkey* as a homeland.

Different places have to meet different criteria to qualify as home. Analysing the various manners in which countries are depicted as home, or not, I have broadly distinguished between Turkey and Morocco as homes mostly in terms of roots, and the Netherlands as the most common 'routes home'. Informants differ as to which 'sort' of home they value most, and they may slip between different expressed preferences depending on whether they apply a roots logic or a routes logic from any given position. Both logics are applied to each country. Yet, I have also argued that in the end, the Netherlands figures in most narratives as a more 'complete' home. It is perceived as a homeland in terms of concrete embeddedness as well as emotional and symbolic investment, in terms of roots as well as routes, to a further extent than Morocco/Turkey.

In describing this, I have argued that we need to avoid regarding roots and routes as two distinct discourses excluding each other. The pairing of roots and routes should lead to a dynamic perception of both in their entanglement, rather than to a rigid binary opposition between static timeless (Turkish/Moroccan) roots and fluid dynamic (Dutch) routes. Roots can wither or grow and extend in new directions, depending on the routes a person takes. They can be buried and (re)discovered. The once taken for granted location of one's roots can, through one's routes, turn into a temporary home. Routes, in particular, place the issue of home in a temporal perspective and thus also point to future directions and developments. Routes lead to and from differently conceptualised roots in past and present, carving out old and new spaces of belonging and heading towards whatever may lie ahead. Routes and roots inform, contextualise and shape each other.

Looking Ahead

We have seen that the logic of routes differs from that of roots in its prioritisation of time over place. The concept of routes focuses our attention on the dynamics of home as a relational notion developing over time. The importance of a dynamic understanding of home is underlined in the second half of this chapter. Here the focus moves from the differentiated nature of the concept of home to its embeddedness, both socially and temporally. Understandings of

countries in terms of routes and roots, and as temporary and timeless homes, are subject to constant development over individuals' life course, as well as to perennial contestation. Homelands change, both in the sense that countries go through their own developments, and because individuals' apprehension of their homeliness and the ways they wish to relate to their homelands change over the personal life course.

People change, countries change, and individuals' perceptions of two countries as homelands change concurrently. These developments are by no means isolated processes occurring in individual minds. The multiple homelands of my informants are also continually contested through both internal and external dialogues. The strong social dimension of home has come to the fore in my discussion of the crucial role of family in my interlocutors' sense of home. Homes, however, are not only constructed but also contested relationally. Individuals continuously reposition themselves towards the two countries that can lay claims to the title of homeland. But they are also just as continuously positioned by others.[63] Social interactions and power relations are crucial to comprehend how descendants of migrants understand themselves in relation to their two homelands and the people that inhabit them. This contestation of home takes place within the individual self-space as well as between different individuals and groups. In what follows, the multivoicedness of individuals' formulations of home is especially brought to the fore in the case-studies of Karima and Naima.

My interlocutors were often very conscious of the temporal embeddedness of home. Below I discuss their own reflections on the developmental aspect of their positionings towards Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands. I want to shed light on the diverse factors influencing such developments and illustrate their dynamics. This section shows how statements about home are always embedded in the larger life story and thus informed by past memories and future plans, and that meanings articulated by descendants of migrants today do not automatically hold for the future. Both in academia and in the public arena, this is important to keep in mind when interpreting migrant statements – especially when these statements sometimes sound rather absolute. In interaction with personal and societal circumstances, the various meanings attached to the countries as homes are continuously rearranged, prioritised or marginalised, reproduced and transformed.

As we have seen, roots and routes are mutually constitutive. Participants' relationships with their 'roots' are dynamic, highly situational, always informed by their life routes and thus subject to continuous change over the life course.

63 Hermans & Hermans-Konopka 2010, p. 8.

In this section I elaborate on these changes over time. In Section 4.3 I address the social embeddedness and contestation of home and homeland, and the issue of 'return' migration. But first let us look at the ways my interlocutors themselves reflect on the dynamic nature of their relationships with the two countries, as seen from the perspective of their current lives in the Netherlands, and as affecting who they are today. These reflections pertain to personal developments over the life course on the one hand, and broader societal changes in both countries on the other. As I am at least as interested in the dynamics of such changing relationships as in the outcomes, in the text box following this section I undertake a microanalysis of these dynamics in the case of Naima. By focusing in on individual cases we can begin to grasp how understandings of home are also relational in the sense that they are embedded in the dialogical space of the self, and subject to contestation in the dialogues between the different shifting I-positions of each individual interviewee, with each position always being personal and social at once.[64]

4.2 *Embedded Meanings: Time & Development*

Biographical Embeddedness

In their reflections, informants showed a keen awareness of the biographical embeddedness of their (changing) attitudes towards Turkey, Morocco and the Netherlands.[65] They talked about various factors which they regarded as influential: the general process of maturing, the impact of life stage and major life events such as marriage, bereavement and parenthood, and more specific individual turning points. When she was younger, Dounia simply tagged along with her parents, like many others, on the classic family holidays, without much reflection about the meaning of either country.[66] Her own interest in Morocco increases as she matures: *'You become older and wiser.* (…) *And I really do notice that, in terms of my roots, I want to know more and more about where I actually come from* (…) *You become more intertwined with your culture, more intertwined with your origins.'*

The theme of a growing interest in one's roots is a recurrent one in the interviews. Habib, for example, notices that he has become more serious over the years.[67] Previously he was mainly focused on partying and swimming during his holidays, but nowadays he prefers to spend time with his family and try to

64 Cf. Zock 2008, pp. 4–6.

65 Cf. Bouras 2012, p. 256.

66 Cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.2.

67 Cf. F. van Gemert, *Ieder voor zich: Kansen, cultuur en criminaliteit van Marokkaanse jongeren*, 1998, pp. 172–174.

learn more about what life is like for resident Moroccans. Rachid agrees. After years of seeking amusemend in the cities, he now finds himself returning to the village of his childhood, and proudly tells me that his children start nagging him about wanting to go back to 'grandpa-Morocco' when he takes them on a short trip away from the village. Rachid does not relate his new-found fondness of the village directly to the birth of his children. Other informants do make such connections to major life events explicit. Bilge, for example, has much less fun in Turkey now that she is no longer single. Going out with her cousins has lost its charm, and it does not help that her husband is much less fond of travelling than she had hoped. Aziza, on the contrary, enjoys the liberty marriage brought her to determine her own holiday itinerary. Finally, Anouar (30, m, Moroccan), notices that his visits have become less non-committal ever since his parents died. He feels he has inherited a certain responsibility towards his Moroccan relatives, which makes for a more intensive but also more complicated connection.

Besides 'generic' life events such as marriage and bereavement, which are often associated with specific life stages, participants also quoted more individual experiences that made them rethink their connections to Morocco and Turkey. Bilal used to spend all his time with his relatives, until some friends told him about their wonderful trip to Marrakesh. Finding it awkward that Dutch friends knew more about 'his' country than he did himself, he has started travelling around the country during his visits, and now he hardly sees his relatives at all. From a site for family reunion, Morocco has become a country to explore, a holiday destination with a roots bonus. Unfortunately, the lion share of stories about personal turning points in one's relationship with the country are more negative in tenour, referring to a reorientation towards Morocco or Turkey after experiences of exclusion in the Netherlands. Idriss's (34, m, Moroccan) story is a case in point. His uncomplicated sense of home in the Netherlands was shaken when he was severely beaten up on racist grounds. *'Then I started focusing more on the question of, okay, where do I actually come from? So yes, there's that.* (...) *But it has never occurred to me, for example, to decide to pick up and go back to Morocco, to go back and live there.'* In the next chapter we will see how Jamila, purportedly in reaction to experiences of (subtle) discrimination, does make up her mind to relocate to Morocco.

These are all examples of interviewees' conscious reflections on how they revise their relationships to Morocco or Turkey following personal developments and generic or specific life events. Their accounts of home need to be read as embedded in their personal biographies – as well as in the societal contexts they inhabit.

Changing Countries, Changing Contexts

Besides the biographical developments that imply individual repositionings vis-à-vis Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands, the countries themselves and their inhabitants also change through time.[68] My interlocutors often brought this up as reasons for their own attitude developing.

Regarding the countries of their parents, positive developments are noted as well as changes for the worse. Morocco and Turkey, according to some, are losing the warmth from the old days. The nostalgic terms in which such statements are set are hardly specific to the interviewees. Stories about 'the good old days', when everything was better than it is now, will ring familiar to most contemporary readers, as will the themes evoked.[69] Such accounts are mainly about the loss of the country's distinct characteristics – they speak of individualisation, modernisation, and materialism, which they present as replacing community spirit, hospitality, authenticity and generosity. Partly these are the same developments that are also designated as positive ones, sometimes by the very same people when speaking from a different position. Turkey and Morocco become 'more like the Netherlands', and this can be interpreted both as a welcome narrowing of the gap between oneself and the country and as a loss of what made this place so special.

Other positive developments referred to are also formulated in terms of country characteristics. Informants speak of improvements in the organisational structure of the country, growing wealth and career opportunities, and more progressive ideas, for example about gender issues.[70] According to Jamila (30, f, Moroccan), resident Moroccans have surpassed their migrant relatives when it comes to gender equality: *'True, the people here have latched onto their ideas from when they came here. But things were different then, of course. The people there have progressed in the meantime.'* When looking for a spouse, she found that her male Moroccan peers in the Netherlands expect their future wife to automatically stay at home, something unthinkable for herself and her Morocco-raised husband.

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68 Cf. Ghorashi 2003b, p. 134.

69 See D. Crispell, *Which good old days?* 1996; Duyvendak 2011a, pp. 107, 122–123.

70 'Progressive' can of course be interpreted in different ways. Nora (26, f, Moroccan), for example, told me how when the new trend of wearing a headscarf as a young woman spread to the Netherlands, her Moroccan cousins thought her old-fashioned and did not want to be seen with her. By now this trend has 'reached' Morocco, and her headscarf is seen as something normal there once again.

In Morocco and Turkey, interviewees also notice a change in attitude towards themselves as descendants of migrants. As living standards improve and (social) media provides locals with more detailed and nuanced information about life in Europe, the idea of the Netherlands as some sort of promised land where money grows on trees is waning. Especially with news abounding about Islamophobia and discrimination in the Netherlands, some interviewees now feel pitied rather than envied by their Moroccan or Turkish peers. Jamila told me that people have recently started asking her why on earth she is staying in the country, and she has begun to pose herself the same question.[71]

My informants also reflected on changes taking place in the Netherlands. Many expressed a nostalgia for the old days, not unlike the one just mentioned in relation to Turkey and Morocco, and often identical to the nostalgic complaints voiced by indigenous Dutch. Rachid told me: *'Things all just used to be much better, you could trust everyone, you could leave your bike unlocked on the street.* (…) *People just left strings hanging out of their letterboxes* (…) *I can still remember that the milkman came and just hung his delivery on the doorhandle.'*[72] For Rachid, this was the 'true' Netherlands, in which neighbours were charmed by his cute black curls rather than appalled at the sight of yet another foreign family moving in. Such accounts echo the general nostalgic sentiments in Dutch society[73] as well as the nostalgia for the open and tolerant Netherlands of the past that has been described for the first generation of Moroccan migrants.[74] But they also testify to the specific experience of descendants of migrants who feel increasingly marginalised in the society they grew up in. I will return to this experience in Section 4.3, and more extensively in the next chapter.

Not all changes are for the worse, fortunately. Interviewees sometimes describe, for example, how much the Moroccan and Turkish communities in the Netherlands have developed – individuals have become more 'integrated' and successful in socio-economic terms, and 'the communities' are catering for its specific needs through supermarkets, mosques etc.[75] Nevertheless, stories

71 See Chapter 4, where her case is discussed in detail.

72 These three, not having to lock your bicycle, the milkman leaving your milk on the steps, and leaving a cord in the mailbox that allowed children playing outside to open the front door, are pretty much the most cliché nostalgic images in Dutch parlance about the times when you could still trust people.

73 'Tolerance' also figures as a lost value in nostalgic images of native Dutch, see Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011.

74 See A. Cottaar, N. Bouras, & F. Laouikili, *Marokkanen in Nederland: De pioniers vertellen*, 2009.

75 Cf. Bouras 2012.

about developments in the Netherlands are much less diverse than those about Morocco and Turkey, and hardly describe the country itself as 'progressing'. In considerations about moving countries that I present in Section 4.3, the perceived changes in both countries play an important role, the situation in the Netherlands (whether presented as stable and boring or as deteriorating) being stressed more often than the advantages and positive developments in Morocco or Turkey. But before discussing this 'exit option', I turn to Naima for a better understanding of the dynamics of developing relationships on the individual level. Her story can serve to document how relations to Morocco/Turkey and the Netherlands are deeply embedded in highly personal life narratives, and to demonstrate the workings of the processes in which these relationships are constantly reviewed and reformulated in view of both personal developments and broader changes taking place in these countries. This results in a dynamic play of shifting positions towards the different countries and their inhabitants.

Shifting Positionings: Back to Naima

In the previous chapter we have seen Naima comment on the 'meanness' of resident Moroccans. What she finds particularly mean is their stance towards their European counterparts. She understands residents' attempts to overcharge migrants, considering that poverty reigns and the summer season is the time to make some extra cash. What hurts her, however, is her impression that she is treated as inferior. This is something, she tells me, which she did not realise when she was younger. Retrospectively, she had wonderful times in Morocco before puberty, when she was a free child rather than a restrained young woman. Remembering her childhood both in the Netherlands and in Morocco, Naima looks back at a time when she did not yet feel different from her peers. Still, even at that earlier age, she also recalls preferring to spend her time in Morocco with her European cousins, *'because I simply get along better with them.'* Her nostalgia about her grandfather's village includes harvesting grapes and olives with her European cousins, rather than with local family members. Now, as an adult, she is very outspoken about the existence of a mentality rift between 'us' and 'them'.

The first time I interview Naima, she talks passionately about the Moroccan village and family she is soon to visit, but she also predicts some trouble: *'And I'm sure that that* [prejudices about European Moroccans' presumed lack of religious observance, FJS] *will irritate me this year again too* (...) *We have learned a certain* (...) *kind of respect: that we must not offend others. And I'm talking about us Moroccans here* [*in the*

Netherlands, FJS]. *But they think that we are really quite naïve, that they have the right to treat us without respect, by correcting us straight away, whereas we* (...) *pity them in a certain way,* (...) *they are worse off than we are, so we are hesitant to answer back to them.'* The main problem with 'them', according to Naima, seems to be their disrespect of 'us' – and what makes 'us' superior is exactly the fact that we do respect and even pity 'them', because we know that as migrants we are much better off than those who still live in Morocco. Actually, one of the advantages of visiting Morocco, according to Naima, is that the confrontation with the limited possibilities there motivates one to make the most of all the opportunities the Netherlands has to offer. Still, Naima already anticipates that she is going to be irritated by resident Moroccans' attitude as soon as the warm emotions of the first arrival wear off.

In the previous quote, Naima does not only reflect on her past experiences in Morocco, but also anticipates what her next visit is going to feel like. This is particularly interesting because our second interview took place *after* the anticipated trip. We can therefore follow the development she goes through between these two interview sessions almost in real time. As we will see below, her most recent stay in Morocco has somewhat changed her perspective, both on Morocco and on her life in the Netherlands. She found her relatives more reflexive and her stay there much more peaceful and refreshing than she now says she expected beforehand. Naima ascribes this change to a growing maturity on her part as well as to developments in Morocco. Not only does she now speak about Morocco differently, she also articulates a different perspective on her own relationship to Morocco *before* this trip.

In the first interview, Naima looked forward to seeing her family, but dreaded their main topic of conversation: marriage. This was all the more an issue because many of her cousins had got married since she had last visited Morocco two years earlier. This would not only mean that everybody would be wondering when it was her turn, but also that she would have to find new ways to spend her time: her cousins would be absent or busy with their families and her grandmother, a very important figure in Naima's story, had passed away recently.

Upon her return from Morocco, Naima tells a different story. Many of her cousins are not as happy in their marriage as expected. This has caused everyone to re-examine their views. This goes especially for her cousins' mothers, Naima's aunts. They now have more respect for Naima's choice to prioritise her education and postpone matrimony. The respect is mutual, as Naima also sees, and sometimes envies, the advantages of

her cousins' family life. She now asserts that she always had a better connection to her aunts than to her cousins 'anyway'. This is interesting, because in our first interview session there was no mention of these aunts, only of cousins. This subtle discrepancy does not have to mean that from her current position she is assigning an importance to her aunts that they never really had. She may, however, be retrospectively highlighting memories about getting along with her aunts that are more salient in view of her new perspective on her Moroccan relatives. A different voice has now taken the floor, telling another story about Morocco and, as we will see later on, calling up a 'past voice' as its counterpart.

Compared to earlier visits, Naima finds that Moroccans are less focused on material needs and more reflective on their own shortcomings than before. Again, she focuses on her aunts, who have realised that their own children in Morocco have less knowledge about Islam than their European cousins: *'You hear the call to prayer again and again, and those children don't pray at all, whereas we hurry off, we check our watches and ask well, when can we start?'* In contrast to her earlier frustrations about prejudices on the religiosity of Europeans, Naima now encountered recognition for her persistent religious observance in a non-Islamic context. She also found that her educational background now gave her a certain status: *'They are less keen to criticise some educated people. And in those cases it doesn't matter whether you're a man or a woman, at least that's what I think, these days.'* Incidentally, this respect for education she also finds to apply to her position in the Moroccan community back in the Netherlands.

Both on the front of religion and on that of life choices, Naima now feels much more appreciated in Morocco. At the same time, she has also developed more appreciation for the country itself: *'I do feel much more proud of it these days, it's really making progress! It used to be such a developing country, now you can see that things have improved, in terms of infrastructure, but everyone also got hot water this year* (...) *In that sense I have felt my connection grow with Morocco, within myself too.*' Progress is found both in Morocco and in her own attitude: *'I also think in a mature way, like, alright, that's how things are. And it's not necessarily bad, it also has its advantages, like family relationships, expecting things from one another: you just need to make time for each other. That time is not such a limiting factor in life. And seize the day, so to speak.'* Naima's change of perspective on Morocco lays bare the entangledness of life course and broader development in shaping informants' relationship to the country of their (grand)parents. She mentions both of these side by side when

reflecting on how she feels at home there: *'I also think that it's age-related, I feel increasingly more at home.* (...) *And now there is a certain movement of critical self-examination going on there, so in that sense I kind of do feel at home.'*

What makes this specific case even more interesting is that Naima does not just take a different stance vis-à-vis Morocco after the summer than she did before, but that she has also altered the way she speaks about her former viewpoints. In our first interview I found her outlook rather more balanced – we saw earlier that she speaks about her attachments as well as about her annoyances. Yet in our second interview, when she refers to how she 'used to' feel about Morocco, she only dwells on the negative aspects. Retrospectively, she ascribes herself a more critical stance towards Morocco than I had made out from our first interview. The more positive voice, which we had heard tempering her criticism in our first encounter, is now constructed as something new. She sees it as a sign of her growing maturity that she can now say that *'It is not necessarily bad.'* She now also recalls that she used to have discussions with her aunt in which each was defending 'her own country'. Now that her aunt is more self-critical, they are able to find some common ground: *'Whenever she conceded certain things, I did the same: "things aren't all as rosy as they seem here either, you know." Whereas we only ever used to get defensive.'*

This memory of always defending the Netherlands in conversations with her Moroccan family was completely absent in our first interview. It might just not have come up this time, thereby illustrating how the information produced during one or even several interviews is always a partial narrative (re)construction. Yet a number of other remarks Naima made during our second and third meetings rather indicate that she now evokes a different picture of her attitude towards Morocco than before – be it because the first time she did not want me to know how negatively she actually felt about the country and thus silenced those positions that might have expressed criticism, or because in contrast to her new-found attachment she now mainly remembers the negative aspects of her prior opinions. Before her trip, Naima affirmed that she was looking forward to it. Yet afterwards she told me that she was surprised to enjoy it, exclaiming: *'For the first time, I really had the feeling that I had actually had an enjoyable holiday in Morocco!'* Besides the developments just sketched, the charms she remembers from this specific holiday coincide with the positive aspects she already ascribed to Morocco earlier: rural authenticity, family-mindedness, rest, and a disregard for time. Yet apparently to Naima, this time it feels completely different. In conclusion she remarks:

'I really had quite low expectations, like "oh God, I have to go there again" [laughs]'. This assertion is quite different in tone from her declaration in our first conversation that, like everybody in her family, she only travels to Morocco when she feels like it. At this point I strategically remark that I had not gathered from our last interview that she had previously been so reluctant to go to Morocco. I half expect her to 'back out', but she keeps up her 'new old/retrospective voice': *'Yeaaah, and especially the gender relations, you know, I really couldn't stand it at all!'*

Naima's shift in attitude towards Morocco does not foreground radically new themes. Most of all it seems to be a repositioning of existent voices that emphasise different aspects of her relationship to Morocco and its inhabitants. The shift also illustrates how situated and fragile our interpretations of interview accounts always are. A second conversation, not even that much later, even if conducted in a comparable setting and with the same conversation partners, may render a different story. In the next chapter, we will hear about Jamila, who changed her views about Morocco as a home quite drastically within the scope of a single year. For now, Naima's case serves to demonstrate how the various themes and patterns I have discussed in analytical terms intersect in the complex texture of actual narratives.

4.3 *Social Embeddedness: Who Defines Home?*

Naima is often annoyed about resident Moroccans, not only because of the perceived (though decreasing) mentality rift, but also because of their stance towards migrants. She speaks about disrespect and being treated as inferior. Although her own family has adopted a more nuanced stance towards Naima's specific situation, her general image of Moroccans treating migrants differently remains unchanged. Time and again we see that this social dimension looms large, shaping the discursive space people have to give personal meanings to home(lands).[76] Home, especially on the level of the nation, is a subject of intense social contestation. As the party whose belonging is little questioned, residents both in the Netherlands and in Morocco and Turkey have the power to exclude migrants from or include them into the imagined national community.

Below I show how this contestation is reflected in my interlocutors' narratives, thus further contextualising their understanding of Morocco/Turkey as

76 Easthope 2004, p. 6; J.A. Holstein & J.F. Gubrium, *The self we live by: Narrative identity in a postmodern world*, 2000.

a homeland. In dialogue with collective and individual voices, my informants position themselves and respond to being positioned, towards the various countries and with reference to dominant discourses on home and homelands. A double exclusion in both 'homelands' often leads to frustrations about being a foreigner everywhere, but not everybody shares this imagery. The idea of an 'exclusive choice' between two homelands and the question of 'return' migration are also taken up in many narratives, illustrating how collective voices become integrated into the self-space.

Always a Foreigner

Home symbolism can function as a marker of exclusion, in either country. The imagery of temporariness can be employed by others to draw lines of exclusion that affect individuals' sense of home. The complex place of temporariness in migrants' conception of home is, for example, conveniently ignored by many Dutchmen that my informants encounter. They eye migrants' attachment to a second country with suspicion.[77] In Turkey and Morocco, the temporariness of migrants' presence is also frequently pointed out by residents. Take Aziza (35, f, Moroccan), whose resident relatives often ask her 'when she will be going home'. While on the one hand she understands this question and agrees with them that her stay is only temporary, on the other she feels excluded by it: *'I say, why do I need to go home, I mean, this is my home too, right?* (…) *What I want to get across is like, geez, we're not home there and we're not home here, so where are we at home? Here, people often ask you if you're ever going to return to Morocco for good.'*

Hearing the same question, 'when are you going back?' in both countries, makes Aziza protest that this leaves her without an uncontested home. Like many descendants of migrants, she sometimes feels like a foreigner wherever she goes. Dounia explains this feeling of double exclusion: *'Actually we are strangers everywhere, both here and there. So we don't really have our own home anywhere, because we get strange looks wherever we go – we're foreigners there, and we're foreigners here.'* This stance illustrates that the perceived othering by residents restricts descendants of migrants in their options for developing a sense of home in Morocco/Turkey, or the Netherlands.

Yet as Strijp argues, remarks about being excluded in both societies also imply that migrants form part of each one.[78] Indeed, I would say that complaints

77 In the next chapter I go into the case of Jamila, whose colleagues respond to her enthusiasm about her time in Morocco by asking, not without sarcasm, why 'in that case' she does not move there altogether.

78 Strijp 1998, p. 254.

about being treated as a foreigner in Turkey or Morocco bespeak participants' wish to belong there. However, the fact that informants generally show less concern about being othered in the country of their parents than about the same treatment in the Netherlands, also indicates that the wish to be accepted in Morocco or Turkey is less acute than the desire to be accepted in Dutch society.

Resident Moroccans'/Turks' failure to recognise their Netherlands-based relatives as fellow countrymen, (partly) excluding them from the national imaginary, leaves my interlocutors feeling like foreigners in both their homelands, as Dounia's words show.[79] There is one other occasion on which she mentions the image of being a 'double foreigner', but that time she quotes this as something others say, and which does not quite match the way she feels herself. This denial makes it even clearer that the image of the double foreigner is part of a shared vocabulary which descendants of migrants use to articulate their ambivalent belongings in several countries. From one position Dounia makes use of this vocabulary herself, from another position she contests its validity.

While many informants make use of the same vocabulary, they may arrive at varying conclusions about the impact of this double othering, as the following examples of Bilal and Said show. For Said, for instance, the othering in Morocco is reason enough to negate feeling at home there: *'Feeling at home? I don't think so. No, I'm sure of it, because* (...) *you're just as much of a foreigner here. Because here, that's how you're viewed and treated. Here, people who live here are given priority. They even say things like ... egging them on so to speak, because "they're not from Morocco anyway". And in the Netherlands – that's the funny thing – you're treated the same way.'* Said points out the irony of being classified as a foreigner in the Netherlands because his parents are from Morocco, and then being just as much othered in Morocco as being from abroad. We could say that his exclusion is based on his Moroccan roots in the Netherlands, and on his Dutch routes in Morocco.

Bilal uses similar wordings, but without sharing Said's conclusion that this double othering leaves him without a homeland: *'What I do think is funny, and not that I mind that much or whatever, is that you are regarded as a foreigner both here and there as well* (...) *But I do just come home, of course.* (...) *So I am a privileged person, having two homes.'* It is important to dwell on this last remark for a moment. For all the talk about people feeling 'less at home' due to this or that, we might risk viewing home as a problem only, rather than as a rich and meaningful concept, albeit ambivalent for sure. In many interviews we find

79 Omlo 2011, p. 115; Strijp 1998, p. 253.

statements like Bilal's: expressions of multiple belongings alongside those of multiple otherings.[80]

Dounia, too, talks about inclusion as well as exclusion in Morocco. One of the things that makes her feel at home instantly when she arrives is *'That you don't feel any different: that you are once again among the people who are the same as you, who speak the same, have the same physical characteristics, of Moroccans, dark-skinned, who have the same faith, and what have you. That's the "homecoming" that I'm talking about. Once you are there and it's a week later, then you think like, "I'm already so sick of all their bickering and bad behaviour". Because then you realise the true nature of people, plus to them you are, after all, nothing more than someone passing through, a vagabond.* (...) *So in fact, we have no permanent home base.'* This quote prompts several considerations. Finding herself among people who all look like her is a highly symbolic moment for her and prompts her to tell me, and herself, a tale of belonging that she shares with many. Parallel to this runs the story of what happens after this symbolic homecoming: upon second thought, in concrete interactions the people that look like her and share her religion are not that similar to her after all. Their bad habits begin to annoy her, as well as the fact that from their perspective she is not their equal at all. Dounia's words thus document how others can positively contribute to one's feeling at home as well as hindering feelings of belonging through their behaviour.

Dounia here quite explicitly differentiates her notion of Morocco as a home. She distinguishes between an acute sense of coming home based on similarity and identification, and a feeling of estrangement that arises as soon as she starts to actually interact with the people that triggered this sense. It is easier for her to come home to Morocco than to be at home there. Elsewhere, she uses different specifications to arrive at a similar conclusion. Comparing Morocco to the Netherlands, she tells me that in the Netherlands you constantly have to justify yourself for being different. In this specific sense, she says, she feels more at home in Morocco.[81] *'In terms of culture and so on, I have no need to feel*

80 Cf. Omlo 2011, p. 106.

81 The idea of Morocco as home in the sense of not having to justify oneself is also applied to religion by both Dounia and Naima. In Morocco, being Muslim is normal, and this forms a welcome break from the constant scrutiny of their religious selves in the Netherlands. Hearing the call for prayer on the streets gives Naima a warm sense of belonging. Still, when I ask her to name the places that have to do with her religion, she focuses on the Netherlands, saying that exactly because Muslims are a minority there she is more stimulated to seek out knowledge and live by her faith than her Moroccan cousins who take religion for granted.

ashamed. But that's where it ends, because there are also simply a lot of things that I really just like doing the normal Dutch way.' Dounia calls each country home in its own specific ways, and she reports feeling different in both of them – in the Netherlands because *others point out* her difference, and in Morocco because, despite the relief of not standing out, she *herself feels* different from the residents in many ways.

These two quotes also show that the social embeddedness of understandings of home is not restricted to experiences of in- and exclusion. Dounia also talks about people's cultural *characteristics* and behaviour in general (rather than towards her as a migrant) as influencing her sense of (not) being at home among them, and about the ways in which she does or does not feel *similar* to them. These aspects point towards the social embeddedness of home in three different ways: a sense of home can be influenced by the perceived characteristics of a social group (e.g. negative behaviour like squabbling, gossiping and materialism, and positive things like warmth and hospitality), by the extent to which the person in question sees similarities and thus identifies with this group, and by the ways in which members of this group behave towards the person, in terms of in- and exclusion. While experiences of in- and exclusion are reported in both countries, it is with regard to Morocco/Turkey that interviewees most often evoke the second level, explaining a hampered sense of home in terms of the dissimilarity with residents.

Variations on the Foreigner Theme

A number of informants do not use the imagery of double exclusion and do not share a sense of being othered by resident Moroccans or Turks, at least not significantly. Some of those were content being incorporated in their own family or circle of friends and did not care what outsiders might think of them. Some others told me that they blend in with the local crowd much better than their fellow migrants do, like Rachid: *'Not me, I'm just exactly the same as they are.'* They took pride in quoting that they were 'different', 'just like us', 'not like them'. Interestingly, these were often the same informants that protest loudest when Dutch people tell them that they are 'not like other Turks/Moroccans'. Rachid, once again: *'I could really kill them when they say "Yeah, but you're different". No, I'm no different.* (…) *I'm just like everybody else!'* In the Netherlands, Rachid is confronted with negative stereotypes of Moroccans that are upheld by singling out 'good' Moroccan Dutch as exceptions, and he claims to be just like everybody else.[82] In the context of Morocco, he agrees at least partly with

82 Cf. Bhatia 2013. In Chapter 4 I dedicate a separate text box to interviewees' reactions to the phrase 'but you are different'.

the negative image residents have of those same Moroccan Dutch, and he is proud to be seen as the exception. In two different situations, Rachid reacts differently to being set apart as positively 'different' from other Moroccan Dutch by members of the dominant majority. But in both cases he does so by stressing his positive identification as 'really Moroccan'.

Most other interviewees do not boast a status as 'honorary local', but they do also point at others as (partly) causing the bad image European Moroccans or Turks have in Morocco or Turkey. Thus they contest the grounds on which residents in those countries exclude them and negotiate their identifications. Interviewees frequently distance themselves from those Dutch or other European descendants of migrants that come to the country of their parents playing the successful emigrant, lavishly spending money, cruising their expensive (generally rented) cars, partying and generally showing off and making the locals despise their arrogance and loose manners whilst envying their wealth. Many interviewees feel that these show-offs ruin their image as a group and give locals a distorted image of migrant life in the Netherlands as involving much money and few moral standards.[83] By distancing themselves from migrants that 'misbehave' during their holidays, participants place at least part of the cause of the negative attention they receive during their holidays outside themselves. They also blame resident Moroccans or Turks for unjustly excluding them, as we have heard Naima complain in the case study.

It may appear contradictory that informants on the one hand elaborate on the great (mentality) differences between themselves and resident Turks and Moroccans, and on the other hand protest when these same residents treat them differently. They wish to be accepted as real fellow countrymen, who belong there just as much as their resident counterparts.[84] The disagreement here revolves around the question of how relevant the differences are as criteria for belonging. Migrants agree with residents that they are different, but they do not see this difference as a valid ground for exclusion from the national community.

Individuals differ in how much they care about being othered as well as about how strongly they feel excluded. Apart from those who are frustrated about double exclusion and those who do not feel that excluded in their country of origin, there are also participants who do not identify with residents enough to *mind* being seen as different by them. Malika (33, f, Moroccan), for instance,

83 For more about this, see Strijp 2007. See also Bouras 2012, pp. 233–234. Unlike Strijp, I have not spoken to anybody who could be considered one of these show-offs, though a few of the men I interviewed hinted at having had their share of partying and womanising when they were younger.

84 Salih 2003, pp. 90–93; Josselson & Lieblich 1995.

even turns the image around. She complains that people do not let her be her Dutch self in Morocco: *'Another thing I find so hypocritical is that they treat tourists differently to me. Whereas in reality, I'm also just a tourist. But because I'm Moroccan, I suddenly need to fall in line.'* Malika experiences a forced inclusion by people she does not identify with. Malika is a rather exceptional case in having no wish whatsoever to belong in the country of her parents, but she shares with other participants the discrepancy between how one wishes to relate to the country on the one hand, and how others frame this relationship on the other.

Karima, whose case I discuss in the text box below, also experiences this discrepancy. The various accounts she gives of home and exclusion in the course of our interviews show particularly clearly how contestations of home do not only take place between migrants and their social surroundings, but also take the form of positionings and repositionings within the individual narrative.

Karima: Positioning and Being Positioned

Karima (36, f, Moroccan), too, uses the image of being a foreigner in both countries: *'I grew up here, which makes it my country. Here I feel more – because in the Netherlands we're foreigners, in Morocco we're foreigners, so when we go to Morocco they say hey, look, foreigners. Or they call us beggars. Once you're back in the Netherlands, you get suspicious looks here too, like hey, there go the immigrants, or Moroccans. And then you think oh, where in God's name should I go?* [*laughs*] *But whatever, I don't let it get to me, I do my work, I live my life.'* In this passage Karima speaks from at least three different positions: she starts out saying that she feels closer to the Netherlands than to Morocco, then interrupts herself to speak about being othered in Morocco as well as in the Netherlands, and concludes by claiming not to mind. Later, when we talk about home explicitly, she takes yet another position and talks about considering all of Morocco as home, while in the Netherlands she only feels at home with family: *'In the Netherlands, only with family.* (…) [*H*]*ere you go shopping, and you get suspicious looks from people. It's a kind of discrimination, like "Oh, there go the headscarves…" But in Morocco you think, no, I'm in my country, I feel at ease. So you don't get stared at even if you wear a headscarf, or a long dress, that's very normal there. But here, you quite simply just have to adapt.'* Karima mentions being eyed with suspicion in the Netherlands for the way she dresses as the reason that here she only feels at home in the private sphere of her own family, whilst in Morocco her dress code is seen as normal. In this passage she takes a different position and pays no heed to

the othering by Moroccans mentioned in the first quote. Here the home-balance comes out in favour of Morocco.

In yet another part of the interview, she gives a different reason for not worrying about experiences of othering in Morocco. Whereas in the Netherlands she is much concerned about how people look at her, about Morocco she says: *'It's holidays, so no, I pay no attention to whether I get stared at. But they do give you looks, like "hey, Dutchie" or "the July crowd".'* [85] This is yet another point of view, from which Karima downplays the importance of how resident Moroccans feel about her, because hey, it's only the holidays! This position has already been introduced earlier in the interview, when she told me: *'So then you get to Morocco and you think like, hey, I don't feel at home here after all, it's just some kind of holiday country. Or like, when can we go home, to my own country. So the Netherlands is a home country to us now.* (…) *I see Morocco as my holiday country, so when I'm there, it's fantastic, but after four weeks I'm raring to get back to the Netherlands, make no mistake.'*

Within one interview, Karima takes several different positions towards Morocco and the Netherlands as homes. She calls both countries 'my country', but also dismisses Morocco as merely a holiday location. She talks about being more at home in the Netherlands or in Morocco, about being excluded or not and minding this exclusion, or not, on various grounds. If anything, this cautions us against easy interpretations of statements like 'we are foreigners in both countries' by showing that the triangle of home, country and identification opens up a large field of slippery meanings and ambivalences.

False Choices and Double Binds

Often going unnoticed in everyday usage, the differentiated, embedded, 'slippery' nature of home can become problematic when different dimensions of meaning are used interchangeably in the public arena. Discussions about

85 By comparison: Aziza, who above complained about being asked when she is going 'back' both in Morocco and the Netherlands, also told me that she did not mind the question in Morocco as much as she did in the Netherlands: 'That's where your roots are, there you don't feel chased away so easily.' Aziza refers to her 'timeless' Moroccan roots as shielding her from being hurt by references to the temporary nature of her stay there. Feeling more secure about her right to belong, she is less vulnerable to others' questioning of this right. Unlike Karima, who stresses the temporariness of her stay in Morocco, Aziza evokes her roots, the timelessness of her connection to Morocco in order to dismiss people's questioning of her right to be at home there.

dual citizenship, for example, often focus on 'double loyalties' of migrants as a problem for Dutch society.[86] Informants do not only encounter a 'double exclusion' as 'foreigners' in both countries, but also double claims to their (exclusive) loyalty. In what follows I show how such claims resonate in the words of my informants.

In the Netherlands, there is a tendency to panic over the idea of descendants of migrants 'still' expressing strong attachments to, for example, Morocco. But for the people interviewed, the great (partly symbolic) value of Morocco or Turkey as a home does not interfere with investing in the Netherlands as the primary location of their lives. Claiming Morocco or Turkey as a home does not impede on one's functioning in Dutch society.[87] Redouan, for example, who feels strongly about Morocco and narratively positions his ancestral village at the centre of his personal universe,[88] besides being a well-educated, Dutch-speaking, tax-paying citizen, is also a reservist in the Dutch army.

The only times Redouan talks about something like a loyalty conflict is when he reports conversations with *others* who ask him which side he would choose in case of a war. He would rather not think about scenarios like that at all. Yet he volunteers that he knows he would choose the Dutch side. It is telling that he feels a need to state where his ultimate loyalties lie, before he continues to protest against being asked such questions in the first place. His unwillingness to make a choice which he experiences as imposed, transpires even stronger when later on in the same interview he gives a revised version of his first statement. Spontaneously returning to the idea of a war between the Netherlands and Morocco, this time he only elaborates on the impossibility of choosing, and omits his earlier stated choice for the Netherlands: *'I'd actually stand in the middle. Or just move away completely, I couldn't choose between the two countries.'*

In my interviews I purposefully omitted questions relating to the idea of 'choosing sides'. I saw those questions as unfair and irrelevant to the experience of my informants: they present people with a false choice because they presuppose that home and loyalty are simple and exclusive rather than complex and (potentially) multiple. Yet, to my surprise, the issue of choosing between two countries was brought up time and again by the very people whom I wanted to 'spare' this false choice. Participants talked both in terms of exclusive 'choices' and about less committal 'preferences' for one or the other country. Depending on which dimensions of their understanding of home they focused on at any given moment, they explained in which one they felt 'most at home' in a specific sense.

86 Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011, p. 3.

87 Brah 1996, p. 194, Omlo 2011, p. 124.

88 See Chapter 2, Section 3.5.

When addressing the issue of choice explicitly, as in the example of Redouan, outcomes are less varied. The interviewees either protest against the idea of having to choose, like Redouan does, or they state their choice in favour of the Netherlands – also like Redouan does.[89] The arguments brought up to explain this choice resemble each other: after so many years in the Netherlands, the interviewees feel more Dutch than Moroccan or Turkish. When *forced* to choose, they let their Dutch routes outweigh their Moroccan/Turkish roots. I believe that at least part of the reason why informants so often spontaneously brought up the issue of choosing, lies in this discursive 'force' of social expectations.[90]

Like Redouan, some participants report that they are asked directly what country they would choose if they had to. Sometimes they also formulate a more general impression that Dutch society dictates such a choice – or a fear that it will someday. For Dounia, for example, a real choice between the countries is 'not an issue' right now, but she does address the possibility: *'It's logical that you have more of a connection with the Netherlands. Just imagine if I had to choose, and I sincerely hope I never have to … then I would choose the Netherlands. Because I would never be able to truly settle in Morocco, that's logical.* (…) [*J*]*ust like you would never have a child choose between its father and mother. Because they are equally familiar, you know?'* Dounia rejects the idea of choosing,[91] yet she does know which choice she would make herself. What struck me in her words is that she expresses the hope never to find herself in such a situation. It is that remark which makes this statement something more than purely hypothetical, more than a stylistic form to express her attachments.

Like Dounia, Bilge both stresses her primary loyalty to the Netherlands, but also anticipates that someday she may be better off in Turkey: *'I might actually be more Dutch than Turkish, you know. Because here is where I break my bread, I mean, I also think loyalty is very important.* (…) *Being loyal to the country where you live. And if the country changes, if you get the feeling that you are no longer welcome, then yeah, I think that that loyalty starts to dwindle. And in that case, you can always go back to Turkey.'*[92] Based on the current social climate,

89 Cf. Omlo 2011, p. 78.

90 Cf. Eijberts 2013, p. 421.

91 In my view, dominant discourses in the Netherlands often seem to propose loyalty as exclusive, likening it to spousal loyalty in a monogamous relationship rather than adopting the more adequate metaphor of loyalty to more than one parent, which Dounia employs here. For the latter metaphor cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 120.

92 In an interesting contrast with Aygul, who as we saw earlier does not claim any attachment to the Netherlands as a country, but raises her children Dutch-speaking only, Bilge's

interviewees do not exclude the possibility that developments might someday force them to reconsider whether there is still place for them in the Netherlands.[93] Now already, they see themselves placed in a double bind, being treated as outsiders who can never really belong on the one hand, and more and more expected to stress their unambiguous loyalty to the Netherlands on the other.[94]

Appeals to Dutch citizens of migrant descent to 'prove' their primary loyalty to the Netherlands can leave people feeling that their commitment to the Netherlands is disregarded *and* their largely symbolic attachment to the country of their parents is being challenged. Dounia's reaction: *'Yeah of course we are Moroccan Dutch, but* (...) *especially considering everything that's been happening recently* (...) *they don't see you as a fully fledged Dutch person. There's always a question mark or a "but" somewhere.* (...) *And then you feel different here* [in Morocco]*, you feel included straight away.'* Although Dounia defines her category as 'Moroccan Dutch' and identifies much more with the Dutch than with Moroccans, she never feels fully accepted as Dutch, whereas in Morocco she has an immediate sense of inclusion. This increases the importance she ascribes to Morocco and her desire to discover her roots.[95] Calls upon descendants of migrants to symbolically distance themselves from their countries of origin, for example by giving up their 'foreign' passport, can thus easily backfire.[96] It can make people feel less welcome and accepted in the societies they

young son only speaks Turkish. She explains this however, not as an principled choice, but as a pragmatic one: as her husband is rather taciturn, she fears that her son would not learn any Turkish at all, would she choose to address him in Dutch herself.

93 Verkuyten 2010, p. 55.

94 Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011, p. 6. In the case study of Jamila in Chapter 4, we will see how native Dutch can be rather touchy when it comes to her own appreciation of Morocco. Their reactions betray that on the one hand, resident Dutch can be offended by the idea that migrants might even consider leaving the Netherlands, while on the other hand, themselves pointing at remigration as an almost logical consequence of this perceived lack of loyalty.

95 Cf. Ghorashi 2003a, p. 149. Of course, this desire is not solely based on her sense of exclusion in the Netherlands. The 'search for roots' is a contemporary phenomenon that is widespread also among less controversial groups. See for example Basu for a beautiful piece on the roots-tourism of Americans who set out to explore their Scottish origins: Basu 2004.

96 See Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2007, p. 182, where the connection between legal nationality and emotional loyalties in the case of Dutch migrants is problematised.

consider their homes, and more likely to foreground I-positions identifying with the countries their parents left behind.[97]

Time to Move?

When we address the subject of (return) migration, the hypothetical choice between several countries becomes somewhat less hypothetical. Most informants in some way address the possibility to move to Morocco or Turkey as part of their projected future, at some point during our talks. For some it is their big dream, for others the ultimate nightmare. Many sometimes muse about the issue, more or less in passing. The migrant 'dream of return' lives on in the second generation – or so it seems. Yet, very few informants connected their own considerations to the return plans of their parents (most of whom still live in the Netherlands) or even employ the term 'return'.[98] Rachid is one of those few, but he, too, makes clear distinctions between his father's project of 'return' (to Morocco) and his own plans to 'leave' (the Netherlands): *'Look, of course my father came here with the intention of earning some money and going back again. He never did return, and he'll probably go back in his coffin. And now I say that if I get the opportunity to leave, then I'll leave. Because society here has become so cold.'* Rachid busts the parental myth of return, just like his peers. They speak about it with a mixture of empathy and disdain. Their own ideas in this direction are not formulated as fulfilling their parents' dream of return, as a regaining of the life left behind, but as an individual choice in very specific circumstances in the present or projected future.

Individuals' personal considerations about migration are underpinned with many reasons. The number one motive for wanting to move to Morocco or Turkey – or perhaps just behind the attractiveness of a Mediterranean climate – was a wish to leave behind the life we saw characterised as 'being lived' in Chapter 2. The general sense of being 'stuck' in one's current life, the critique of Dutch life as stressful, boring and unfulfilling, and the image of a better life elsewhere, bears great resemblance to the migration dreams of many Dutch people, and probably of many others all over the world.[99] The second most common motive is mentioned by Rachid above. His remark that society in the Netherlands has become 'cold' refers to the Dutch 'multicultural backlash' and growing Islamophobia. In Morocco, so Rachid says, at least you are like

97 Cf. Omlo 2011, p. 92; Ghorashi 2003b, p. 242.

98 For this reason, I do not speak about remigration here but rather about migration. For these descendants of migrants, having lived in the Netherlands most of their lives, moving to Morocco appears closer to migration than to remigration or return.

99 G. Hage, *A not so multi-sited ethnography of a not so imagined community*, 2005.

everybody else. In other words, even the 'remigration discourse' is articulated from a Dutch perspective: the two most important reasons interviewees name for wanting to move to Turkey or Morocco describe these countries as 'a better place than the Netherlands'. Dutch push-factors outweigh Moroccan/Turkish pull-factors.[100] People's attachments to family, roots or the country as such do also figure as reasons for migration, as does the hope to devote oneself more fully to one's religion in an Islamic country, but much less dominantly.

Morocco and Turkey, and all their positive connotations, form a genuine attraction for many. But as long as life in the Netherlands is pleasant, this apparently is not seen as enough reason in itself to consider migration. Think of Idriss[101] and Dounia, both fond of Morocco and expressing a growing interest in their roots, but without the slightest intention to actually go and live there. Even Redouan's dream of returning to his village is limited in time: he would love to return to his roots, and talks about spending several months there, maybe even a few years – if he had the money, if only his fiancée agreed, etc. 'If only' is an often-used phrase in ponderings over moving. If only there were less corruption, better healthcare/opportunities/human rights … then we could envisage living there.

After the negative characteristics of the country, which we recognise from my exploration in Chapter 2,[102] the second major group of reasons against living in Morocco or Turkey revolves around informants' routes, and rootedness, in the Netherlands. As Dounia said it in Section 3.2: '*I have become so like, estranged, there's no way I could ever truly find my place there as a person anymore.'* There are many such 'routes quotes' in my material, documenting what informants have built up in the Netherlands and their unwillingness to give that up. These quotes also describe the incompatibilities their life routes have created between their own lifestyle and life in Turkey or Morocco.

Such considerations against, and in favour of, life in Morocco,Turkey and the Netherlands are made by all interviewees, and about half of them did not judge in favour of the Netherlands. Yet this number should not lead us to anticipate a massive exodus of second-generation Moroccans and Turks from the Netherlands.[103] Most migration ambitions remain rather vague or seem more

100 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 179.

101 Whom we heard say *'But it never occurred to me, for example, to decide to pick up and go back to Morocco, to go back and live there',* see Section 4.2.

102 See Section 23 in Chapter 2.

103 Indeed, other studies do not seem to find such a broadly shared wish to migrate, see e.g. Nabben, Yesilgöz & Korf 2006, p. 147; Buitelaar 2009, pp. 102, 108, van der Welle 2011, p. 181. This discrepancy in findings may partly suggest that what I am describing is a relatively

like something one thinks about every once in a while (like one might, for example, consider a trip around the world) rather than a concrete goal one consistently works towards. Many plans are placed in the distant future, projecting Morocco or Turkey as a good place to retire to rather than to spend one's working life. In the course of an interview, people often qualify, or even contradict, their stated migration wish more or less explicitly. Speaking about their future, most implicitly presuppose that this future will be in the Netherlands, even if at another point they speak about wanting to move to Turkey or Morocco.[104]

Some wishes to migrate are also subtly refined by explaining that 'of course' informants did not want to quit the Netherlands entirely, but rather that they wished to move more freely between home bases in both countries. In response to a survey question, about half of my informants might have answered that they wish to relocate to their land of 'origin'.[105] In such a situation, the

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recent trend (cf. Klaver, Stouten & van der Welle 2010, p. 98). Buitelaar does observe a growing orientation towards Morocco in her follow-up interview sessions (see p. 110). It may also reflect the particular multifacetedness and nuances of my interview data. Informants who at *some* point in our extensive conversations expressed a wish to migrate (while at other moments appearing to see their future in the Netherlands), might not present such a wish in a more succinct conversation on the topic. According to Netherlands statistics, in 2004 less than 10% of young Moroccans and less than 20% of young Turks in the Netherlands stated a wish to return to the country of their parents. The rest had no wish to migrate, or had never even thought about it (almost 20% for both groups). Much lower, the actual percentage of second-generation Moroccans leaving the Netherlands (presumably for Morocco) has risen from 0.5% or less (i.e. about 500 persons a year) in the late 1990s to 1%, 0.7% and 0.8% respectively in the years in which I conducted my interviews, 2008–2010. Just before, the percentage and absolute number of emigrants had peaked in 2007, with 1851 individuals, or 1.1% of second-generation Moroccans, leaving the Netherlands. Numbers for descendants of Turkish migrants for this period are quite similar. The rise in numbers of migrant sons and daughters leaving the country roughly corresponds with my informants' indication of the period in which they felt the degree of acceptance in Dutch society to decrease drastically. See A. de Graaf, *Terug naar Turkije en Marokko*, 2005; CBS Statline 2013.

104 Of course, there are exceptions – Rachid, for example, told me during our second talk that, having recently changed his mind about migration, he has to pursue a different business strategy. Before, he did not make any long-term investment, reasoning that he would be off to Morocco soon anyway.

105 As we have seen, the numbers from Netherlands Statistics for 2004 are much lower. Although I believe that the desire to migrate has indeed grown between that year and the time of my own interviews, this probably does not account for all of the discrepancy. It is probable that part of those who told me in the course of our interviews that they wished to relocate, would not have made so bold a statement in the setting of a survey. Still, the decontextualised nature of similar data does not allow us to verify such presumptions.

caveats behind these wishes brought to the fore here would remain unheard, resulting in a distorted image of the numbers of potential return migrants.

Let us look into the complex considerations behind an expressed wish to migrate. Farid sounds sure enough about his own return plans being more substantial than that of his parents: *'Only it's not "for a little while longer", it's "I'm going back!" '* Yet only minutes later his words are much more prudent: *'At a certain point I think it's okay, then you've worked until 55. 'You know, it's not possible to return 100%. Not completely.* (…) *Because in fact you're also in love with this country,* (…) *just the infrastructure of the Netherlands, to us it's familiar territory.'* Elsewhere, Farid also addresses an audience of native Dutch through me, telling them to stop bullying Moroccan Dutch, because they will never go back anyway, unless they start murdering them. From different positions, Farid both voices a determination to relocate to Morocco, and puts into perspective the option of return migration, both for himself and for Moroccan Dutch in general.

Like other aspects in the relationship with Turkey, Morocco and the Netherlands, thoughts about migration are dynamic and prone to change over the life course – sometimes even in the short time span between two interviews, as we will see in Chapter 4. Changing personal circumstances can prompt individuals who now told me they have a desire (or no desire) to migrate to change their minds. Laila, although explicitly stating a wish to grow old in Morocco, already anticipates such a change of mind: *'Yeah it depends, for example, my mother also said "as soon as my youngest turns 18, I want to go back". But now she has grandchildren, so yeah, that holds you back.* (…) *Because of course, she's involved with everything they do. So if I don't have that feeling later on, for me the choice will be easy, then I'll go back, because I'll think, it's not like there's anyone who really needs me here.'*[106]

Now Laila's wish to 'return' is conditioned even further: it will only remain an option if she does not get too involved with her future grandchildren. Moving before her own children are independent is no option either, because she does not want them to experience the same sense of rupture she herself says to have suffered when she moved to the Netherlands at the age of ten. But, as we saw in Section 4.12, positions change due to societal developments as well

106 Laila's and Farid's words show that there are resemblances as well as discrepancies between the ways their own generation and that of their parents think about (re)migration. Although their motives to migrate are formulated as more complex and personal than their parents' 'logical wish to return to where they came from', social and structural embeddedness in the Netherlands is an impediment for all of them.

as personal ones. Laila also refers to the Dutch political climate: were it to become even more hostile, this would stimulate her to migrate at once.

The fact that about half of those I interviewed expressed a wish to move to Morocco or Turkey does not mean that many of them will actually do so in the foreseeable future. I do not want to imply that these people do not mean what they say. Their longing is genuine, and of course there are some people who actually take the leap and move. But the currency of migration plans *and* the great impediments to realise them are mostly meaningful because they inform us about the ambivalent relationships descendants of migrants maintain with both their homelands. As Ang has argued, 'It is clear that many members of ethnic minorities derive a sense of joy and dignity, as well as a sense of (vicarious) belonging from their identification with a "homeland" which is elsewhere. But this very identification with an imagined "where you're from" is also often a sign of, and surrender to, a condition of actual marginalization on the place "where you're at".'[107] There is much less reason to worry about an exodus of Moroccan and Turkish Dutch than there is to worry about the prevalence of a sense of exclusion as a motive for migration much stronger than, for example, a wish to return to one's roots. The main motives for migration are to be found in the Netherlands, not elsewhere.

4.4 *Embedded Reflections*
Reflections on the National Level

When studying home in a post-migration setting, it is not self-evident to focus on the national level, as I have done in the previous and current chapter. The significance of the national level as a research focus merits explicit reflection. While dominant Dutch discourses continue to prioritise this national level, migration scholars have paid attention to a greater plurality of levels. Besides a focus on migrants' transnational activities and identities, in Dutch research there is growing attention for their identifications on more local levels. Several authors have argued that, in the Netherlands, migrants appear to prioritise local identifications over national ones, and that the level of the city or neighbourhood is indeed more accessible and less politically or symbolically charged than that of the nation.[108] These studies rightly point out that national

107 Ang 1994, p. 34.

108 E.g. Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011, p. 7; Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak 2011, p. 219; van der Welle 2011, p. 249; Groenewold 2009, p. 4; E. Ersanilli, *Identificatie van Turkse migrantenjongeren in Nederland, Frankrijk en Duitsland*, 2009, p. 188; Snel, Engbersen & Leerkes 2006.

belonging is far from self-evident for migrants themselves, and that research should include other levels of reference.

In my own research, I started off with an understanding of the notion of home as explicitly multiscalar and layered. However, in the interviews, the level that kept coming up most frequently remained that of the nation (together with, in response to explicit questions on home, the house). When prompted, several of my informants did indeed state that they felt more affinity with their home town than with the Netherlands as a whole.[109] Interestingly, this applied equally to people living in larger cities with an outspoken urban identity, such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam or The Hague, and to inhabitants of smaller, more peripheral towns. Compared to informants' ambivalent stances towards the Netherlands (or Morocco/Turkey), the praise of their home towns was unequivocally positive. At first glance, this seems to confirm the call for more attention for the local level. After this praise, however, there generally was little left to say, stories dried up, and the local level soon moved to the background again. Similarly, in narratives about Turkey and Morocco, ancestral villages could be assigned great symbolic significance, but still the main point of reference in these narratives remained 'Morocco' and 'Turkey', not 'my village' or 'the Rif area'.

Based on these findings, I would argue that while local identifications may be more accessible to migrants, they are also much thinner, compared to the thick, emotionally and politically charged national level. There are two points which I would like to make in this regard. First of all, references to countries may at times serve as cover terms for a multitude of underlying levels and meanings.[110] Take Farid for an example. He talks about Morocco in great length, but then remarks: *'You see, to us Morocco means Nador. We don't go to Rabat or Casablanca. That's a different Morocco.'* Farid explicitly talks about 'different Moroccos', conscious of the fact that Morocco can mean different things to different people, or even to the same people in different circumstances. Nador is the only part of Morocco that is meaningful to Farid, to the extent that the word 'Morocco' can be replaced by 'Nador'. Other informants, too, regularly seemed to use countries as a totum pro parte, talking about a country while thinking mainly of specific aspects (such as swimming, or family) or lower spatial scales (e.g. Nador). Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands can be containers for meanings on many different levels, referring to smaller-scale places as well as to culture or social relationships.

109 Cf. Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak 2011, p. 217.

110 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 38.

Nevertheless, although he may be thinking of Nador, even Farid consistently *talks* about Morocco. While many levels have a role to play in my informants' understandings of home, meanings are most commonly articulated on the national level. In everyday parlance, it is common to refer to a country without actually having the 'whole thing' in mind. It is a notion so fraught with meanings as should make us suspicious of any one-dimensional interpretation. Yet, it appears that exactly in power-laden contexts such as debates on migration and integration, in which the meaning of various countries is highly symbolic and politicised, this very point is often conveniently ignored.

Migrants themselves may refer to countries as convenient denominators for other levels, but they do also address them as significant units of meaning in themselves. This brings me to my second point. While researchers should keep a critical stance towards the categories of meaning taken for granted in public discourses, my material suggests that neither should they underestimate the extent to which such categories may inform and shape the ways in which individual descendants of migrants formulate their self-narratives.[111] Institutions, power structures, and discourses of culture and integration, are all formulated on the national level. For Ghorashi and Vieten, the prevalence of the national level is particularly clear in the Dutch case. They write: 'Even though there is a growing local reference of belonging in the Netherlands – such as identifying as an Amsterdammer – the dominant point of reference in public debates remain issues of national level.'[112] Correspondingly, while stories about and identifications with the national level may be more ambivalent than stances toward other more local levels, they are also much more elaborate and prominent in the interviews.[113]

All in all, the country, whether as a label or as a symbol, and whatever experiences (shared or not by conversation partners) it evokes, plays a central role in public discourses on migration and belonging, as well as in my informants' narratives. This is why I chose to focus primarily on the national level in Chapters 2 and 3. The thickness and complexity of the national level, its layeredness which implies that it can also serve as a cover term for other levels, in my view

111 Cf. Salih 2003, pp. 155–156; S. Mizuno, *Transformative Experiences of A Turkish Woman in Germany: A Case-Mediated Approach Toward An Autobiographical Narrative Interview*, 2003.

112 Ghorashi & Vieten 2012, p. 737, see also van der Welle 2011, p. 27.

113 In light of my argument that stories about the country of origin are narrated from a Dutch frame of reference, the strong emphasis on the national level in the context of the Netherlands may also contribute to my informants' tendency to articulate their ties with their other home on the national level.

only adds to the importance of studying people's country-talk – including its different layers and levels, as in my discussion of the special significance of Turkish and Moroccan ancestral villages.

Indicating an ongoing significance of the national level, my analysis does not support earlier findings by Duyvendak, Tonkens and Hurenkamp, who repeatedly stressed that their informants showed little interest in that level, or that their 'home feelings do not seem to be connected to the nation.'[114] One reason for this difference in findings might lie in the research methods. The mentioned authors, for instance, suggest that in the focus group setting, migrant informants 'either considered the discussion not worthwhile given the present political climate, or perhaps did not trust the focus group setting enough to show their deepest emotions.'[115] This may have prevented participants from addressing the subject of the country at length, whereas they had less to lose in claiming belonging on the local level. I surmise that an in-depth, life story centred approach, which allows a certain bond of trust to form between the interviewer and the interviewee, may leave fewer obstacles to include lengthy references to the national level, and more space to trace the differences in 'thickness' between national and local identifications.

On one point, however, I do share the observation of the authors mentioned above. While the various countries play a crucial role in my informants' formulations of home, 'national' issues such as the national imagined community and the politics of national identification are, indeed, seldom addressed. The words of Bilal indicate his lack of interest: *'If you ask me what … well of course I know which city is the capital of Morocco, but does it mean anything to me? No.'* While Bilal expresses a strong attachment to 'Morocco' in his narratives, he stresses that he feels tied to the region of origin of his family, not the country and its symbols. While the national *level*, the idea of feeling at home in the Netherlands and/or a country of origin, and feeling Dutch and/or Moroccan/Turkish, did have a prominent place in my material, references to the imagined community or *construct* of the nation were virtually absent from the interviews.[116]

Regarding the Netherlands, the striking absence of references to a national imaginary in the narratives can be interpreted in the context of the inaccessibility of the Dutch imagined national community for migrants and their descendants. This Dutch imagined community is highly symbolic and politicised.

114 Duyvendak 2011a, p. 103, see also Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak 2011, p. 219; Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011, p. 5.

115 Hurenkamp, Tonkens & Duyvendak 2011, p. 219.

116 I reflect on this absence towards the end of Chapter 3.

The way it is formulated does not accommodate (recent) migrants, and leaves little room to redefine the national imaginary in a more inclusive manner. Tonkens and Hurenkamp recently described the Dutch national imaginary as closed, rather vague and abstract, 'based more on history lessons or on public claims of politicians about the character of the Netherlands than on events or feelings informants could claim as their own'.[117] They aptly remarked that 'the nation becomes a "political claim" more than an imagined community'.[118]

This closed conception of national community in the Netherlands may be one reason why people leave out the national imaginary from their life stories: this politicised symbolic level is not accessible for them, and thus they simply do not engage with it. In the words of Tonkens and Hurenkamp: 'Immigrants do not always dare to claim the nation as theirs.'[119] While I do not share these authors' conclusion that therefore the national level is less relevant for migrants than more local forms of identification, I do agree that my informants are hesitant to engage with a national imaginary that leaves little room for them.

What would seem to support this idea is that, even though in my material the Dutch national imaginary is largely invisible in a positive sense, it does sometimes come up in the negative. The national community is primarily referred to as something my informants feel excluded from. Politics and the media, important producers of public discourse on the nation, are mainly discussed as sources of what informants call *beeldvorming.* This term is perhaps best translated as 'imaging', a common shorthand to denote everything contributing to the (generally negative) image of the Moroccan/Turkish/Muslim/immigrant community in the Netherlands.

Thus, the issues of national imaginary and the symbolism of national citizenship are rarely addressed directly in my material, but they do sometimes shine through. In line with my open, non-directive interview format, I refrained from specifically probing about these issues, not wanting to politicise the conversation myself when my interlocutors did not. In its concise, largely implicit treatment of these issues, my analysis thus reflects the place they take in the narratives analysed. Yet, to understand participants' silence about these matters, it remains important to realise that my interviews are always set against the backdrop of the Netherlands and its politicisation and symbolisation of citizenship.

The relative absence of references to the nation and national(ist) symbolism should not tempt us to present these descendants of migrants as primarily

117 Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011, p. 5.

118 Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011, p. 5.

119 Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011, p. 6. See also Brah 1996, p. 193.

transnational actors with a post-national mindset.[120] I hope to have shown that the country as a structural and cultural level is dominantly present in my informants' narratives on home, whether as a relevant frame of reference or as a container term for multiscalar meanings.[121] Neither could we conclude that apparently these people do not identify with the Netherlands or as Dutch. They often report to feel Dutch in many ways – they just do not include this 'symbolic national citizenship' in their identifications. The same appears to go for Morocco or Turkey: people identify with the country and its inhabitants without evoking an image of some national community.[122] Some informants even explicitly distanced themselves from national symbolism, telling me that they did not care about 'the king and things like that', like Bilal above.[123]

120 Cf. Ghorashi 2003a, p. 140, Hage 2005.

121 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 228.

122 My interviews all took place before the Arab spring. It would be interesting to see how current developments change the position of Moroccan 'diaspora' towards Morocco. In my personal network, I now notice more interest in Moroccan politics, democratisation movements, and discussions about the role of the king, for example. The interviews also took place after the attempted coup by the Turkish military in June 2016. The failed coup in Turkey resulted in a strong nationalist reaction in the Turkish 'diaspora' in the Netherlands and in other West-European countries, which in turn provoked an anti-Turkish reaction in Dutch politics and the public opinion in the Netherlands. Dutch-Turkish residents were reproached to identify more with Turkey and the Turkish rulers than with the Netherlands. Moreover, Dutch-Turkish protesters who supported the Turkish regime were reproached to be anti-democratic.

123 Like many of my informants, Bilal is of Berber origin. The only reason I am aware of this aspect of his background, however, is that Bilal mentions the Rif region as the area where he feels at home, and that in passing he mentions not speaking Arabic. Other informants made similar, short remarks about their Riffian roots. This background as part of a minority with a history of marginality and discrimination within the Moroccan nation state may be an explanatory factor in my informants' lack of interest in the Moroccan national imaginary. However, this has not come to the fore as a major reason. First of all, I did not note any differences with regard to this subject between Berber- and Arabic-speaking informants. Secondly, although in the Netherlands there is talk of a rediscovery of Berber or Amazigh identity by descendants of migrants (see e.g. van Amersfoort & van Heelsum 2007; A. El Aissati, *Amazigh in Nederland. Nieuwe perspectieven*, 2010; N.F.F. Karrouche, *Memories from the Rif: Moroccan-Berber Activists Between History and Myth*, 2013), in my own interviews Berber culture or identity were not thematised by my informants. Apparently, in the context of our interviews, people did not find it relevant to differentiate their 'Moroccan' identity in terms of their Berber background. My small sample did not include any informants actively engaged in a revaluation of their Berber roots. Additional possible reasons for the absence of Berber identity as an explicit theme might lie in the

Similarly, this difference in thickness does not mean that the relevance of local levels should be discarded altogether. The meanings of local levels in the lives of migrants deserve attention in their own right, and all the more so as they can help correct the one-sided national focus in dominant discourse on integration by shedding light on the local engagement of migrants and their descendants.[124] However, whereas some individuals may feel that local commitment and a sense of belonging and acceptance within one's networks make up for feeling excluded at the national level, this is not a trade-off that can be presented as a structural mechanism. Therefore, we have to choose our words carefully when talking about local identifications as a 'solution' to the inaccessibility of the national level for migrants.[125]

Turkish vs. Moroccan: Divergent Backgrounds, Converging Stories

The manner of dealing (or not dealing) with national imaginaries is one of the things in which the descendants of Turkish migrants showed different patterns from their Moroccan counterparts.[126] The comparison between informants of Turkish and Moroccan descent is another subject that came up much less prominently in my material than I had expected. Like the omission of the national imaginary, the similarity of the accounts of people with two different backgrounds is interesting in itself. There are differences between Turkish and Moroccan country-talk for sure, but considering the great differences between Morocco and Turkey, they are much less manifest than one would expect. The socio-economical infrastructure of Turkey, for example, seems to make it easier for descendants of Turkish migrants to see a future move to Turkey as a realistic option.[127] Stories about the place of religion in public life are different for the two countries – I heard more accounts about religious diversity and tolerance regarding Turkey than regarding Morocco, but unlike the interviewees

fact that, considering that within the Moroccan-Dutch population Berbers form a majority rather than a minority, they regarded this as self-evident, or that they did not expect a Dutch researcher with an interest in their lives 'here and there' to be interested in the topic of Berber identity. The latter suggestion is congruent with the general stress on the Dutch frame of reference apparent in the narratives I recorded. As we will see below, this frame of reference also accounts for the relative insignificance of differences between the stories of informants of Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds.

124 Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011, p. 9.

125 See e.g. van der Welle 2011, p. 262.

126 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 315 – Van der Welle however finds more marked differences between the two groups than I do.

127 Cf. Klaver, Stouten & van der Welle 2010, pp. 71, 109.

of Moroccan descent, some Turkish informants also told me that acceptance of an Islamic lifestyle is greater in the Netherlands than in secularist Turkey.

The image of Turkey as a holiday destination is another distinguishing theme. Compared to stories about the 'traditional Moroccan holiday', the memories of childhood holidays in Turkey were more varied. One Turkish-Dutch vacationer told me that much sooner than Moroccans, Turks discovered that a holiday in Turkey has more to offer than staying with your family, seeing nothing except the village or neighbourhood of origin. The holiday styles of the very limited number of Turks I spoke to seem to correspond with this remark. Yet this is mostly a question of variation in the balance informants maintained between the different elements of their holidays.[128] There were also slightly more informants whose parents had an urban background in Turkey than in Morocco, and fewer who felt a special connection to 'their' village or neighbourhood.

I also saw a difference in how people reacted to me travelling in each country. The Moroccans I spoke to in the Rif area, where the tourist crowd consists solely of (diasporic) Moroccans, were generally quite enthusiastic about my presence there, and/or rather worried about my safety in travelling alone. Countless times have I been told how touching it was that I, as a Dutch woman, took an interest in their country and culture – and warned that resident Moroccans are not to be trusted. Moroccan Dutch in Morocco felt responsible for my safety and good opinion of 'their' country. None of that in Turkey. The self-evident way in which people greeted me, listened to my travel plans and accepted my praise of the country bespoke a familiarity with the idea of Turkey as a tourist destination – but also a pride in Turkey as a country.[129] In Morocco (and when speaking about my travels with Moroccans in the Netherlands), such pride generally mingled with a frustration about the aforementioned *beeldvorming/imaging*, a frustration that was more intense than most of what I heard from descendants of Turkish migrants. Indeed, the latter find themselves at least somewhat less in the centre of public negative attention than their Moroccan counterparts.[130]

Finally, clear differences also occur when it comes to dealing with national imaginaries. A majority of interviewees of Turkish descent presented

128 A certain distortion of this image may have resulted from the fact that a number of Moroccan informants were recruited during my tour of non-touristic Rifi villages.

129 Cf. Prins 1996, pp. 104–107.

130 See e.g. Andriessen et al. 2007, p. 170; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen 2003; E.J. Nievers, I. Andriessen, & J.A. Ross, *Discriminatiemonitor niet-westerse migranten op de arbeidsmarkt 2010*, 2010, p. 7; Raggatt 2006. See also Chapter 1.

themselves as either nationalist or opposing Turkish nationalism. They talked about feelings of national pride and about politics in ways that were not paralleled in interviews with descendants of Moroccan migrants. Also when interviewees explicitly distanced themselves from any nationalist tendencies, they thereby included the topic of nationalism into their descriptions of Turkey and Turkishness. The fact that they vocalised their position in the matter of nationalism implies that, unlike for people of Moroccan origin, the nation certainly is an *issue* for those with Turkish roots. But this stronger focus on the Turkish nation does not automatically translate into more attention for corresponding dimensions when talking about the Netherlands.[131] Although the national imaginary as a topic played a role with regard to Turkey, this did not 'activate' discussions of the subject with regard to the Netherlands. In this respect, the Turkish Dutch did not differ from the Moroccan Dutch. From their Dutch perspective, differences are, once again, rather marginal.

More remarkable than the differences between informants with Moroccan and with Turkish backgrounds, is the fact that there are so few. There are large individual differences between my interlocutors, but against my initial expectations, these hardly seem to run along ethnic fault lines. In their life stories, as well as in their understanding of home, I found shared patterns rather than structural distinctions between informants of Turkish and of Moroccan descent. However different the countries of origin may be, in the interviews they are both depicted in similar terms, whether interviewees address warmth or chaos, corruption or family-mindedness, poverty or religiosity, hospitality or perception of time.

The key to this convergence lies in the pairing of countries: both countries are described in comparison to the Dutch situation. These narratives are, in short, stories about how Morocco and Turkey *compare to the Netherlands*. This perspective may have been stimulated by the interview setting: participants categorised me as a Dutch person and tried to explain themselves from a Dutch point of view.[132] But this is only a minor explanatory factor. This Dutch point of view is much more than an adopted stance. These descendants of migrants themselves see their lives, and thus tell their stories, from a predominantly Netherlands-centred perspective.[133] Without denying the great importance

131 I have not extensively probed this subject though, and in subsequent research, an explicit focus on the question whether more focus on national symbolism of the 'country of origin' correlates with a migrant's position towards Dutch national symbolism would be interesting.

132 See Chapter 1 for a reflection on my own ambivalent national identity.

133 Part of this perspective is, of course, informants' migration background and their shared experiences of exclusion. As Ghorashi describes: 'In spite of their particularities, (…)

Morocco or Turkey holds, the images of the two countries as homes, even if 'mirrored', are far from symmetrical.[134]

5 Conclusion

For these descendants of migrants, the meanings of each 'homeland' are partly shaped by their awareness of other homes elsewhere. In their narratives, the Netherlands and the country of origin condition each other's homeliness. This, however, by no means implies an overall symmetry in how the two countries are understood as homes. The conspicuous absence of references to symbolic national citizenship taken aside, I argue that informants' relationship to the Netherlands is more 'complete', more self-evident and central, than that to their other homeland. The Dutch home comprises attachment as well as practical, social and emotional embeddedness, a self-proclaimed Dutch mindset, and extensive use of a Dutch 'cultural toolkit'. This is the country where their 'real life' takes place. While descriptions of each homeland comprise both concrete and symbolic dimensions, the latter are especially relevant when it comes to the country of origin, which can boast less everyday familiarity and compatibility with one's person than the Netherlands. In sorting out the meanings attached to Morocco or Turkey (and more or less implicitly also to the Netherlands) in the present and previous chapter, I have shown in what ways their country of origin matters to my interlocutors – and in what ways it does not.

Meanings of home and homeland are highly differentiated and strongly contextual, and in individual narratives, there is a constant slippage between different layers of meaning as people move between various I-positions from which they lay different emphases. This has important implications for the conclusions we can, and cannot, draw from isolated statements migrants may make about home and identity. The slipperiness and multivoicedness *within* individual stories makes the interpretation of differences in positions toward home *between* individuals, and thus the drawing of more general conclusions, all the more trying: in cases of contrasting statements about home, do people

> The conditions of displacement, nostalgia toward the past, a continuous search for a lost home, the myth of return and the feelings of exclusion and estrangement, create a common background through which the narratives seem familiar to many who have experienced the conditions. (…) For example, the feeling of otherness in the Netherlands as expressed by the women of this book in the Netherlands has been similar to other narratives of migrants in the same context.' – Ghorashi 2003b, p. 243.

134 Cf. Bouras 2012, p. 258.

actually feel that differently about their belonging here and there, or do the differences observed mainly depend on which facet of home a person had in mind at the moment of speaking, which voice they were foregrounding?

As so often, the answer lies somewhere in the middle. There are considerable similarities in many stories: most generally, they share the idea that both Turkey/Morocco and the Netherlands lay claim to the title of homeland, but not quite in the same way. Different criteria are used for different places to qualify as home. The same goes for the fact that – contrary to the self-evident sense of belonging that is implied by the term 'home' – in the context of multiple countries, each home always comes with ifs and buts. We have also seen quite some overlap in the images various individuals evoke in their differentiation of the Netherlands and Morocco or Turkey as different types of home. Besides these shared parameters, however, significant differences in how people present and live the relationships to their multiple homelands also came to the fore.

The simultaneity of timelessness and temporariness elucidates the ambivalence of interviewees' stance towards their country of origin. Morocco, and Turkey alike, is described as a homeland that is both temporary and timeless, a place related to holidays as well as to symbolic ideas of origin. Time in Morocco or Turkey is holiday time, and this can be seen as a positive break from and contrast to ordinary life in the Netherlands, but it can also hamper a sense of home. The temporariness of sojourns in Turkey/Morocco shapes the meanings of this country as a homeland in heterogeneous ways. It can be experienced as precluding a sense of home or, on the other end of the continuum, as a precondition for feeling at home.

Relatives in Turkey or Morocco play a crucial role in the ways participants experience a country and conceptualise it as a homeland, whether they focus more on its temporary or on its timeless quality. The idea of a timeless home in terms of 'roots' has led us towards the more established conceptual pair of roots and routes, which is of great use for the analysis of the ambivalent, sometimes contradictory strands in people's life stories, especially regarding their two homelands. I have maintained that in their narratives, my informants speak about their roots, but also make frequent use of a 'routes logic'. A second contribution this chapter makes to the theorising of home in a post-migration context concerns the usage of this conceptual pair. My analysis has shown that a routes logic, besides foregrounding change rather than continuity, also prioritises time over space, and that a roots logic can be used in rather dynamic ways and with reference to the Netherlands as well as to the country of origin. Depending on which logic informants foreground at any given moment, they tell different stories about the two countries.

The significance of their life routes in the Netherlands is one of the most prominent themes in narratives about this country, as is a sense of self-evident familiarity. The self-evident embeddedness of my interviewees in the Netherlands is mainly contested from 'the outside', by external voices of exclusion, which are often also internalised. In Morocco and Turkey, the experience of exclusion is complemented by my informants' own sense of incompatibility between their own lifestyle and life in Morocco. Morocco's 'own' self-evident quality as a home is informed partly by interviewees' routes in and towards the country, but mainly by a powerful roots logic.

The logics of roots and routes can thus serve to differentiate between the specific meanings of respectively Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands as homes. However, besides pointing out significant differences between the two, I have also endeavoured to qualify and complicate such broad distinctions. The significance of roots generally comes to the fore when their status as self-evident is questioned through change and movement. Stories about roots call up questions of routes almost by definition. My interlocutors creatively reappropriate their 'roots' from the perspective of their lives in the Netherlands. Roots and routes are by no means mutually exclusive, and each country is described using both of the complementary logics. There is no straightforward binary categorisation. Emotional attachment to a home can not only be expressed in terms of roots, but also through a routes logic.

Most importantly, roots and routes always inform and contextualise each other in individual lives. It is precisely this dynamic interwovenness of these two concepts that brings out the complexity of migrant experience. This conceptual pair helps us to unpack stories of home, which tell us about narrative identity as constructed by people with a migrant background. The meanings of home, routes and roots emerge out of personal stories, told from informants' unique person and experience, and from a frame of reference that is at least partly shared. The narratives need to be interpreted in this light. Thus, they can enrich our understanding of both these individuals and their frames of reference.

The contextual nature of notions of home was my point of departure in the second half of this chapter. In interaction with biographical and societal circumstances, the various meanings attached to the countries as homes are continuously rearranged, prioritised or marginalised, reproduced and transformed. I have described how my informants consciously reflected on shifts over time in their relationships to their homelands, and how they spoke, often less consciously, from several different positions from which they related to these countries in contrasting ways. Indeed, many of the narratives demonstrated a strong reflexivity regarding the complex ambivalences of home and

identity. My informants' perceptions of home are, amongst other things, contextualised through their 'migration routes and migrant roots'.[135] Having travelled to and from two different countries all of their lives, and having been confronted with questions about home, belonging and loyalty in both of them, these descendants of migrants have learned to take a meta-position and reflect on these issues with a certain distance. The interview settings were particularly suited to bring these positions to the fore, as the invitation to tell one's life story prompted informants to take a reflexive stance.[136]

The formulation of one's relationships to homelands is very much embedded in the context of various kinds of social relationships. For instance, descendants of migrants often agree with resident Turks, Moroccans or Dutch that they are different in ways, but they do not see these differences as valid grounds for the exclusion they often experience. In their positioning, people always also respond to the ways in which they are positioned by others who may contest their understandings of home or, on the other hand, evoke and foster a sense of belonging. The discursive space to give personal meanings to home(lands) is shaped by how people feel treated, both individually and as members of a specific minority. In- and exclusion by powerful others form parameters for individual interpretations and formulations of home and identity.[137]

A number of premises underlie the claim that concrete and symbolic ties to a country of origin get in the way of being rooted as a Dutch citizen: (1) that national belonging is more or less exclusive, (2) that migrants are by definition most attached to their country of 'origin', and (3) that this impedes on their loyalty to and functioning in Dutch society.[138] Such imagery is far removed from the complex processes of prioritising which my interlocutors described. The Dutch dominant discourse that is based in these premises is problematic both because of the negative impact it has on migrants' sense of being at home in the Netherlands,[139] and because of the dubitable nature of each of its

135 A.P. Davidson & K.E. Kuah-Pearce, *Introduction: Diasporic Memories and Identities*, 2008, p. 2.

136 See also Chapter 1.

137 Cf. Bhatia 2013, p. 227, see also Elder and Kirkpatrick, who aptly write: 'The social forces of particular times and places shape individual pathways and together become constituents of human development and aging. Where we have been in our lives tells a story of who we are.' – Elder & Kirkpatrick Johnson 2003, p. 75.

138 Cf. e.g. van der Welle 2011, p. 20; Ghorashi 2003b, p. 140; C. Linde, *Life stories: the creation of coherence*, 1993; Verkuyten 2010, p. 7.

139 See Chapter 4.

premises. This chapter has shown that these are based on a false perception of home as exclusive that disregards both participants' differentiated understanding of home and the multiplicity of contextual positions each individual may take. This discourse leaves no room for my finding that the Netherlands figures as the primary frame of reference for these descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants. The country is a home base that can sometimes collide, but also coexists in complex ways with the idea of a Turkish or Moroccan home which is framed mainly in terms of roots and temporariness.

The construction of Morocco and Turkey as homelands and the importance descendants of migrants attach to their Moroccanness or Turkishness do not (in themselves) stand in the way of their sense of home in the Netherlands. For most of my interlocutors, Turkey or Morocco are an important and enduring part of their lives without hindering their participation in and loyalty to Dutch society.[140] Nevertheless, such claims continue to be made in current Dutch debates. As part of a dominant discourse, the preoccupation with national belonging as exclusive also resonates in the narratives of my informants. Individuals respond to such ideas or engage in this discourse themselves. This may explain the frequency with which informants alluded to the subject of having to choose between their homelands – despite the fact that their narratives contradict the exclusivity of home and loyalty.[141]

The section that focused on their musings about the possibility of 'return' migration elaborated upon the idea of choosing and brought home the point that the main setting of participants' stories is the Netherlands, and that even considerations about relocating to Morocco or Turkey focus more on informants' relationship to the Netherlands than on Turkey/Morocco per se. Questions about loyalty incriminate enduring ties to Morocco or Turkey and simultaneously discredit people's paramount commitment to the Netherlands,

140 Cf. Verkuyten 2010, p. 37; van der Welle 2011, pp. 315–316. See also Bouras 2012, p. 257; Snel, Engbersen & Leerkes 2006; Leurs 2012, p. 280.

141 Even if loyalty were as exclusive as dominant discourse would have it, linking loyalty to successful integration remains highly problematic. For an example, we can compare two informants who have featured in this chapter. Aygul, a model of integration who speaks perfect Dutch, raises her children in this language, participates in society, is educated and employed, typically Dutch in her style of dressing, interior design, child-rearing practices, etc. Yet, her primary loyalty lies with Turkey. Bilge, on the other hand, explicitly states her primary loyalty to the Netherlands, but would be judged as 'less integrated' for watching nothing but Turkish television, eating Turkish food, and staying at home raising her children strictly Turkish speaking. Their cases clearly contradict the idea of a one-dimensional scale of integration/loyalty and the possibility to lump those two terms together. Cf. Verkuyten 2010, p. 37.

especially when such questions are posed by those who have the power to exclude people who are found lacking from the imagined national community.[142] I would argue that it is the disregard for ambivalent ties, rather than the ambivalence as such, that is problematic.[143] The constant problematisation of migrants' enduring ties to another country and the denial of the multiplicity of homes holds the threat of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.[144]

6 Chapter Epilogue: Naima Navigating Worlds

This epilogue brings to a close both the two chapters focusing on the national level, and the sequential case study of Naima. Previously, we have seen several instances of how Naima describes, compares and interweaves the meanings the Netherlands and Morocco have for her. Now, by analysing her positionings, I want to demonstrate in detail how the comparison of Morocco (/Turkey) and the Netherlands, or Moroccan (/Turkish) versus Dutch, takes place on many different levels besides that of two distant countries separated by physical borders.[145] The microanalysis of Naima's narrative positioning in, and negotiations with, her different 'worlds' forms a bridge between the previous and upcoming chapters, engaging with the themes of the current chapter and interweaving them with important topics in the chapters to come: exclusion, gender, family.

Reflecting on external demands to identify herself in unambiguous terms, Naima's primary reaction is a refusal to make any either-or choices: *'I've never felt that it has to be either-or. I'm not one or the other, Dutch or Moroccan. I am Muslim first and foremost,* (...) *there's no question about that. But I've never wanted to conform to a certain label. So you look for solutions that will allow you to build bridges between the two worlds that others define, by emphasising the very things that are universal. Because of all the influences on you, you have so many perspectives, from both white and Moroccan environments, you just see that in fact, you focus more on commonalities than on differences.'* Apart from prioritising her Muslim identity, Naima does not want to be labelled, but rather always points toward universals and looks beyond differences. There is a universalising voice that runs through both of our interviews. Yet, there is something else as well. Reflective as always, at some point, speaking from a different position Naima recognises two different strands in her account: *'In the end, you do need to find*

142 Ghorashi 2003a, p. 149, Omlo 2011, p. 128.

143 This specific point is also made in de Koning 2008, p. 314.

144 Cf. Eijberts 2013, pp. 271–272.

145 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 103; Bouras 2012, p. 246.

ways to relate to both worlds, yes, you actually do (*haha*). *I notice that I do draw distinctions. There are universal things, but it's true that there are differences too, that's unavoidable.'* Once she has acknowledged living in two worlds in a certain way (or maybe once she has recognised this duality more clearly through the act of telling) they come up time and again in her narrative. Most of the time, she chooses to keep them separate in her life. The idea of different worlds is something I encountered time and again during my research. This epilogue shows that this two-world imagery is easily but wrongly represented in terms of one-dimensional dualism.[146]

What then are Naima's two worlds? In her narrative she sometimes distinguishes between her work on the one hand and family life on the other, sometimes between Ridderkerk, the village in which she lives and Rotterdam, the city where she works, and sometimes between her 'Moroccan environment' and 'white setting'. Often these three overlap, so we can broadly distinguish Naima's 'inside' world of Moroccan family life in Ridderkerk from the outside world of work in a predominantly Dutch, urban context. What she foregrounds about her 'Moroccan' home setting resembles what she values about Morocco: it is a place where you can relax, be with your family, and not think too much about work issues – or about anything at all, actually: *'Home – that's where you cook and do other things, and just switch your mind off.'* It is also a place where Naima plays out her role as a good daughter who assists her mother in household duties. In the past she regularly had quarrels over gender roles with her mother, who expected her to learn how to cook and clean while she felt she did not have time for that next to her studies. Naima was frustrated both by the fact that her brothers did not have to help out and by her mother's fear that she would 'deliver a bad daughter-in-law' to her future in-laws.

By now, relations are more harmonious at home: *'But now she appreciates it. And I've also learned to appreciate her position more.* (...) *In the end, you do need to find ways to relate to both worlds, yes, you actually do* (*haha*).*'* Mother and daughter have learned to respect each other's point of view. Her mother is proud of her daughter's achievements both in the kitchen and career-wise, Naima is glad that she mastered the skills appreciated in 'that world' as well, and actually enjoys cooking and baking when she finds the time. These developments resemble what Naima told me about the recent equilibrium of mutual respect she arrived at with her aunts and cousins in Morocco.

Where it comes to gender relations and expectations, Naima addresses the same themes referring to her family situation as when talking about Morocco. Gender has been an important issue in her life since puberty. It bothers her

146 This subject will be further treated in Chapter 5.

that girls are treated differently from boys and especially by Moroccans' 'obsession' with marriage. She wants to claim her freedom and found that education is an important tool for this. On the other hand, she also values her femininity, mentions motherhood as maybe her most important calling, and has learned to respect women who devote their lives to their families. She does not deny the validity of her family's views. Rather, she stresses that *besides* her role as a daughter, and future wife and mother, she has other roles to play as well, and that these should be respected and accommodated.

The biggest contrast in Naima's story, both when talking about Morocco and when discussing her family world, is that between her working life on the one hand and her holidays in Morocco/free time with her Moroccan family on the other. In the past, this contrast caused her to rebel against the restrictions, surveillance and expectations she encountered in the 'Moroccan settings' in which she moves. Nowadays, she has mellowed and focuses on the positive sides of the Moroccan outlook, accepting its negative sides as inevitable. In the Netherlands, she seems to have opted for a neat separation between her inside and outside worlds. This separation gives her a certain peace, allowing her to leave work at work and to circumvent complications due to the fact that her family members do not understand what is going on in her 'outside life': *'It's a kind of self-preservation. Other people's frame of reference is not the same as yours, after all.'*

An event which Naima mentions several times in her narrative is her graduation ceremony. This was an important occasion for her, not just because of the personal achievement of being one of the first Moroccan girls in her environment that gained a master's degree, but mainly because it meant bringing together what she normally kept separate. Not only was her family present at the graduation, they also witnessed her thesis presentation, which dealt with issues that are often considered off-limits in Moroccan-Dutch circles. Naima was mightily relieved that her family did not reject the content of her thesis. Yet this event also brought the message of her two worlds home to her quite sharply: *'It was quite a confrontation, for then I realised that I indeed do make that distinction. Between home and work, and studying before that. And that I've actually pretty much done it alone in recent years.'* The lack of a shared frame of reference with her family also means that she can expect little support from them when it comes to the challenges she faces in her studies and working life. According to Naima, the upside of this is that, because people do not know exactly what she does for a living, she does not have to face the same high expectations in Ridderkerk as she does in Rotterdam.

As I mentioned before, Naima's inside/family/Moroccan world is located both in Morocco and in Ridderkerk, whereas her outside/working/Dutch world

is situated in Rotterdam. Naima enjoys travelling between these two places and profiting from the best in each of both the worlds they represent. She is passionate about Rotterdam, which feels like a second home by now. But she also thinks city life comes with 'too many impressions', and is relieved to retire to the countryside at the end of a hectic working day. And although she mainly describes Rotterdam as a 'white' context, once we dig into this neat dichotomy, it gets messed up. In Rotterdam there are far more Moroccans and other minorities than 'back home' in Ridderkerk. With the larger numbers, according to Naima, comes more exclusion than she was used to in Ridderkerk, where her cultural background was often considered a special asset rather than a handicap. Rotterdam offers better opportunities for development, but there are also more obstacles to overcome. This, she tells me, causes a tougher attitude on the part of urban young Moroccans, as well as a tendency to stick together. This was new for Naima when she first came to the city to study. Before that time her circle of friends in Ridderkerk was almost completely 'white'. Nowadays Naima's friends can mainly be found in Rotterdam, amongst other highly educated descendants of migrants (Moroccan or other), who understand both her worlds – and the fact that she keeps these worlds apart. Likewise, in Morocco she prefers the company of other European Moroccans with whom she can communicate and identify more easily.

Naima's Moroccan friends mainly live in her 'white' city world. In her small town, on the contrary, she likes to keep her distance from the Moroccan community where everybody knows everybody and the gossip and social pressure remind her of Morocco in a negative sense. Ridderkerk, which I have above grouped together with Morocco as part of Naima's inside world and which is connected to family life and rest as well as to confinement, isolation and peer pressure, is also presented as the 'white setting' in which Naima grew up, not feeling very different from her Dutch peers – as opposed to her Rotterdam friends who had to deal with stigmatisation and exclusion from an early age. Summing up: both in her 'Moroccan' family world in Ridderkerk and in her 'white' world of work in Rotterdam, there are Dutch *and* Moroccan elements. The meanings Naima ascribes to these elements depend on the context in which they occur. Although it is clear that she often feels like living in two different worlds, one mainly Moroccan and the other Dutch (or in Naima's words 'white', something that suggests that she distinguishes between these worlds in ethnic rather than national terms) we cannot easily define these worlds or keep them apart in analytical terms. Similar to what we saw in Naima's descriptions of Morocco and the Netherlands, the characterisation of each world is more often than not articulated as a counter-image of the other one.

Even Naima's own family is not as 'typically Moroccan' (in her own sense of the term) as we might think. To her, Morocco mainly means family, and in the Netherlands her family often stands for what is Moroccan. It constitutes the core of her 'Moroccan inside world' and the main site of her socialisation into 'Moroccan culture'. However, upon closer reading, I noticed that her close family members are characterised in ways that are often antithetical to what she considers as 'typically Moroccan'. This already starts with how she describes her grandmother, who, being an illiterate housewife herself and having had little exposure to alternative life trajectories most of her life, has always stimulated Naima to study and become independent. According to Naima, the general Moroccan stance is *'Get married as soon as possible* (...) *That's pretty much institutionalised in our community.'* Still, her own grandmother encouraged her to postpone marriage and defended Naima's educational ambitions to her mother.

Naima characterises her mother as a typically Moroccan mother, reproducing stereotypical gender roles and concerned about delivering a good future daughter-in-law. Yet she also speaks about her as a free spirit, and in their own household Naima's father regularly helps with household chores and even serves tea to guests without losing his dignity. Her brothers were never assigned chores in the family household, yet now that they are married, they share the housekeeping tasks with their wives. At one point Naima even notes that actually her family is much more progressive than the other Dutch families in her street in Ridderkerk, and that this might be the reason that she has achieved much more careerwise than her former classmates. Here she seems to be speaking from a different position than when telling about the extra difficulties she had to surmount in her educational career because of her Moroccan background combined with her gender.

Naima also describes her own family members as 'individualistic', for example, in their travel behaviour, whereas she elsewhere opposes Moroccan collectivism to Dutch individualism. Despite the fact that she recognises the built-in individualism of her own lifestyle, she likes to position herself at the collectivistic, 'Moroccan' end of the continuum, as we can see in this wonderfully ambivalent remark: *'That individualism is very much ingrained, but I've never really been a true individualist. I never wanted to conform to that image, because in fact I always act as part of a collective.'* This refusal of individualism makes sense in the context of the Netherlands, where she constructs her focus on the collective as an important part of her personal identity. In her Dutch achievement-oriented work setting, Naima stresses her collective mentality, but when it comes to Moroccan settings the picture is reversed. As we saw

earlier, her brothers opted for holiday homes away from their parents. Each member of her family makes their own decisions as to when to visit Morocco: *'My family is also quite individualistic,* (...) *we even all arrive separately. So now my brother is leaving tomorrow, I'll leave Monday,* (...) *you know it's not like we travel as a group, we travel whenever we feel like we need our home country. And that might be every year, but sometimes there have been three or four years between visits.'*

Her parents do not mind if Naima stays at home alone while they are in Morocco. *'People think like, a woman who is home alone'll transform into a party animal or something.'* The 'people' in this quote voice the Moroccan distrust of women which Naima addresses regularly, but which apparently does not apply to her own parents. Her father and mother also do not mind her travelling alone because they know they can trust her. Still, there are limits – Naima would never be allowed to move out before marriage: *'What would a girl do by herself? Then you actually wouldn't be protecting your child. Even if you trust her* (...) *yeah, it's what everybody else thinks.'* The finding that in some aspects Naima's family turns the image of what is typically Moroccan upside down does not contradict their embeddedness in a local Moroccan community that keeps a close eye on them. Although she explicitly states that she 'hardly knows' other Moroccan Dutch of her age in Ridderkerk, Naima herself also regularly refers to her 'Moroccan environment' as a factor she has to take into account. Naima regularly has to negotiate with her parents to avoid clashes between the demands from that environment and her own objectives, but these negotiations are (nowadays) always on friendly terms, because she respects and often agrees with the values her parents uphold.

In the Netherlands, Naima's family constitutes the core of her 'Moroccan world' as opposed to her 'Dutch world'. But many of the characteristics she ascribes to her family members rather conform to her image of what is typically Dutch. As we saw in her discussion of her holidays in Morocco, she often makes a clear distinction between *them*, the Moroccans living there, and *us*, the European Moroccans. Of course, the interesting thing here is not only that categories such as Moroccan, Dutch, Moroccan-Dutch or white are highly complex and situational for Naima and her family. This, by now, can be considered self-evident in the study of (descendants of) migrants and their lifeworlds. Naima's story, with its sometimes onion-like structure of Moroccan and white layers, also illustrates that these categories are continuously contested and reconstructed *in terms of each other*, as interdependent, co-constitutive parts of a whole. The same goes for her representations of both Morocco and the Netherlands as home.

In this epilogue I have shown that within the Netherlands, Naima distinguishes between Moroccan and 'white' settings or 'worlds' within and towards which she positions herself. These in themselves are also complex and ambivalent, especially with regard to Naima's portrayal of her own close family members. Identifications with and descriptions of Morocco/Turkey and the Netherlands, or rather of Moroccan, Turkish and Dutch 'worlds', are incredibly layered and subtly but completely entangled with the personal life narrative.

Although certain general distinctions are discernible in my material – for example between Turkey/Morocco as a special place, a roots-home, warm but fraught with ambivalences, and the Netherlands as an everyday home, not as fuzzy but far more self-evident – there are many layers of differentiation to take into account. Especially in Naima's story, what makes these two countries 'home' is more often than not articulated in terms of how one differs from (or compares to) the other – or indeed how one country is actualised within the setting of the other, as in Naima's Moroccan worlds in the Netherlands (or earlier in Dounia's Dutch house in Morocco). When we think of the Netherlands as the primary frame of reference for my interviewees, it is important to realise that their perception of the Netherlands may partly be shaped by the Turkish or Moroccan 'worlds' which form an integral part of their Dutch habitus.[147] Through the microanalysis of the places of Morocco and the Netherlands in one single narrative, I have complicated the juxtaposition of these countries even further. Moreover, focusing in closely on one particular life story elucidates that, although migrants move within and between various often contrasting contexts and may perceive of these in terms of different 'worlds', these worlds are coloured by individual circumstances and by no means easily divided into 'purely' Dutch or Moroccan(/Turkish) worlds – let alone coincide with the physical boundaries of two nation states.

The sequential analysis of Naima's story over these two chapters has served, amongst other things, to remind us that all isolated remarks I quote are fragments of complex interview texts in which people often slip between different positions which emphasise contrasting meanings. Discussing this specific case study also demonstrated that the various themes that were addressed separately for heuristic purposes on a more aggregated level, actually co-construct each other to the extent of being hard to separate at all. This epilogue in particular shows that some things are difficult, if not impossible, to describe outside the framework of a concrete individual story.

147 Cf. Bouras 2012, pp. 225–246.

Taking this insight into account, the following chapters revolve around individual cases, rather than shared patterns. The case study chapters address important themes from my interview material in the context of specific lives and stories. This allows me to examine the dialogical nature of participants' narratives and take into account meanings formulated from a variety of different positions. In what follows we can see how various parts of a narrative contextualise each other and are brought together to constitute a story that tells us about the narrator's identity.

CHAPTER 4

Making Sense of Exclusion: A Dialogical Approach

1 Introduction

> *'I now feel there* [in Morocco, FJS] *what I used to feel here* [in the Netherlands, FJS], (...) *feeling at home in the sense of feeling accepted and so on. I never used to feel that there. And now I do.'*

Jamila, a civil servant in her thirties, has had it with the Netherlands. In the year that passed between our first and second interview, her view on where her home is has changed quite drastically. She has moved from viewing the Netherlands as her self-evident home base and Morocco as merely a wonderful holiday destination, to distancing herself from the Netherlands, where she grew up. Now she harbours a wish to return to Morocco, where she was born. In the above quote from our second interview, she relates feeling at home to feeling accepted. At the time of that interview, she expressed feeling accepted in Morocco and not in the Netherlands, whereas this used to be the other way around. This connection between home and acceptance by others is a recurrent topic in the interviews and plays a central role in this chapter. When focusing on the social dimensions of home, it is a sense of exclusion in Dutch society that stands out as the shared dominant theme.

The gaze of others strongly influences the extent to which one may feel at home.[1] In the narratives I analysed, the social or relational dimension of home, to which the notion of 'belonging' refers, appeared to be a factor of great importance. Often it did so in a positive sense, but even more prominently it featured in a negative manner: virtually all interviewees mentioned experiences of exclusion as a reason for not feeling at home, despite their attachments to certain places or social settings. Others have a voice in where and with whom we feel at home. The impact of being positioned as an outsider is particularly pervasive in the Dutch setting, where informants' 'real life' takes place, and where the unequal power relations between (descendants of) migrants and 'native' residents is more pronounced.

1.1 *About This Chapter*

This chapter addresses social exclusion as a main factor in the problematisation of home for descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants. In the first

1 Cf. Bozkurt 2009, p. 215; Buitelaar 2009, p. 83.

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part, I inventory the wide array of ways in which interviewees (report to) react to social exclusion. The most important contribution that this work can make to the study of the ways individuals make sense of social exclusion, however, requires a focus on the microdynamics in individual narratives rather than the comparison of shared topics across interviews. This is where Jamila comes in.

The main focus in her story, which I analyse in the second part of this chapter, is on the impact that her sense of being increasingly othered has on her perception of home, rather than on her 'strategies' in reaction to experiences on migration. This focus matches my own interest in the *meanings* people ascribe to experiences of othering and discrimination. Faced with comparable experiences of othering, the people I spoke to differ widely in the ways they incorporate them into their personal stories about home and self.[2] I am particularly interested in the notion of home as at once deeply embedded in larger society *and* highly personal. It is through the case study that this chapter demonstrates both the irretrievable interwovenness of factors that are often studied separately as either 'personal' or 'social',[3] and the ways we can build upon the insights of Dialogical Self Theory to show this.[4]

This makes Jamila's story much more than a concretisation and elaboration of the topic of exclusion. This case study, together with the case study of Latifa and Aziza in Chapter 5, allow me to demonstrate and analyse the microdynamics of home-making and identity processes over time, on the level of the individual life narrative. In this sense, these are case studies directly covering my main research interests.[5] This is the chapter in which I engage most extensively with Hermans's psychological theory of the multivoiced self as a tool to better grasp the complexity of identity and belonging on the level of the individual.

Jamila's story is both highly specific and representative of broader patterns. Indeed, in this and the coming case study chapter, my aim is both to create general insights into the ways multivoiced individuals psychologically integrate and give meaning to social and personal developments over the life course in their narrative construction of home, *and* to underline the individuality of

2 Cf. Salih 2003, p. 10; Buitelaar 2009, p. 14.

3 I thus agree with Christensen and Jensen who 'consider life-stories to be an important way of empirically approaching not only constructions of identities but also the role that social structures play in people's lives': Christensen & Jensen 2012.

4 For the latter, see e.g., Bhatia 2013, p. 220.

5 In Chapter 5 I will adopt an integral approach, working towards a synthesis of various dimensions of home in the setting of the two women's life stories, and bringing together the various lines set out in this book. While many of these lines also appear in the case study in the current chapter, here the focus is more thematic: Jamila's multivoiced articulations of experiences of in- and exclusion.

each and every case by focusing on the interwovenness of personal and social factors in this specific case rather than bringing out shared features. In the text boxes that are presented in this and the coming chapter, I make brief excursions to address such commonalities.

In the case study epilogue I add a third, additional interview to the analysis, which I conducted with Jamila after I had completed my case study of our first two conversations. This third interview sheds a new light on her story. More than the case study itself, this epilogue points to the relevance of the four questions regarding exclusion which I distinguish in the first part of the chapter. Furthermore, the epilogue both elucidates my findings from the initial case study and allows me to further elaborate on the topic of religion as an important thread in Jamila's narratives of both exclusion and belonging. As this epilogue specifically complements the case study rather than the chapter as a whole, it precedes rather than follows the conclusion.

2 Excluded at Home: Descendants of Migrants and Dutch Society

'Home' is a spatial metaphor, and many of the stories about home that I collected indeed connect home to certain places. But we have also seen that, more often than not, whether or not a place constitutes a home depends on social factors. Particularly in the case of migrants, others have a say in where or to whom they belong, and on what terms.[6] The home-making of migrants takes place in specific, power-laden historical contexts. It is tied to a set of political positions and based on negotiation, dislocation and conflict.[7] Certain homes are ascribed to my interviewees through public opinion and by significant others in both the Netherlands and Morocco or Turkey. Dominant discourses on home and otherness inform and restrict their options for developing notions of (non)home.[8] Individual migrants may contest and/or accommodate elements from such discourses in their home-making. In what places migrants feel at home and how they perceive the notion of home is intrinsically linked with how processes of inclusion and exclusion operate.[9]

It is people who make, or break, a home. That is what we will see again in this chapter – focusing rather more on the breaking than on the making. To feel at home is highly complex and often hard to grasp. *Not* feeling at home,

6 Cf. Brah 1996; Salih 2003.

7 Cf. Bhatia & Ram 2004.

8 Cf. Brah 1996, p. 193.

9 Cf. Brah 1996, p. 182; Smyth & Croft 2006.

on the contrary, is at once more poignant and more straightforward.[10] In the stories informants told me, not feeling at home (in places where one would expect otherwise) is invariably connected to social relations. These narratives are either about specific people – several women, for example, mentioned not feeling at home with their in-laws – or about social settings, ranging from one's street, to one's place of work or school, to the national level. On these larger scales, the main reason for not feeling at home is perceived exclusion, a lack of acceptance by others. In what follows, I explore how my informants' notions of home are socially constructed and influenced by the many types of exclusion and discrimination which they experience in contemporary Dutch society, whether subtle or overt, whether intentional or not, aimed at individuals or groups and voiced by conversation partners, politicians or media.

2.1 *Two Conflicting Problematisations of Home*

(Muslim) migrants' feelings of belonging in the Netherlands are problematised, both in Dutch public debates and in the stories of those I interviewed. Public debates mainly focus on the idea that migrants 'should' feel (more) at home in the Netherlands, because emotional investment in and loyalty to the country are deemed vital to integration – and a lack of integration is held responsible for many perceived minority problems.[11] In such public discourse, home is problematised in terms of failed integration and of persisting homeland ties.[12] But territorial identifications, as Van der Welle argues, do not amount to a 'zero-sum game'.[13] Brah also stresses that 'the double, triple, or multi-placedness of "home" in the imaginary of people in the diaspora does not mean that such groups do not feel anchored in the place of settlement'.[14] Indeed, in the previous two chapters I have shown that the importance of

10 Cf. Duyvendak 2011a, p. 41.

11 Cf. Chapter 1 of this book.

12 Duyvendak describes an even broader problematisation of home, in which native Dutch make their own sense of belonging dependent on that of their migrant neighbours: 'Immigrants have to prove (…) that they feel at home in their country of settlement by subscribing to its dominant ideas, convictions, habits and emotions. If they don't, politicians claim the native-born will no longer feel at home in their "own" country.' (Duyvendak 2011a, p. 87). Paradoxically, it is this same discourse that deepens migrants' sense of exclusion.

13 van der Welle 2011, p. 36; Hoskins 1998. See also Eijberts 2013. The same can of course be said for social identity in general, see, for example, Buitelaar or Prins, who argue against a view of social identities as additive and plead for an intersectional approach (Buitelaar 2006a; Prins 2006). See also my own discussion of intersectionality in Section 43.2.

14 Brah 1996, p. 194.

Turkey and Morocco for descendants of migrants from these countries does not need to stand in the way of rootedness in the Netherlands. And while 'integration' is a contested term, my informants univocally claim – and I would agree – that they are very well integrated and certainly do not pose any actual problems to Dutch society.[15]

From the perspective of the informants themselves, home is also problematised, but in different terms. Here the focus is not on the perceived orientation of migrants, but on the society that surrounds them.[16] At present, Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch Muslim citizens find their public and private personae under intense scrutiny and evaluation both from within Moroccan and Turkish circles in the Netherlands and from the wider Dutch society.[17] In general, my interlocutors report an increased preoccupation, on the part of others, with their background.[18] They are increasingly labelled and addressed as 'Muslims' and pressed to state their undivided loyalty in 'either-or' terms. Making homes in such a climate is hard work, to say the least. In the problematisation of home by my interlocutors, the shared sense of social exclusion threatens their perception of the Netherlands as home. We find a telling expression of this threat in Faruk's (38, m, Turkish) story:[19]

> *'You're of Muslim faith, right, you're kind of pushed in a certain direction, like you're not a part of society, in the Netherlands. Especially things certain people say on television, make you feel like whoa, yep, they're talking about us again.* (…) *So you do actually feel at home here, 38 years old, born here. And then some weirdo comes along who tars everybody with the same brush, and then everyone is bad all of a sudden. At times like that, yeah what do I think? I don't feel at home* (…) *You know, you can feel at home if people also show you that it's your home too.* (…) *I have Dutch*

15 A number of informants did, however, note that the problematisation of integration and belonging does hold for certain members of the Moroccan and Turkish community in the Netherlands, but always stressed that these form a small minority that is blown out of proportion in the public arena.

16 Cf. Ghorashi, who reminds us that feelings of home in the case of migrants depend not just on the migrants themselves, but also on 'discussions about in- and exclusion by the dominant culture' (Ghorashi 2003a, p. 150, my translation).

17 de Koning 2008, e.g. pp. 76–82.

18 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 316; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2007, p. 196.

19 As mentioned previously, I indicate the name, gender and background of informants the first time their names are mentioned in each chapter. See the appendix for an overview of the individuals interviewed.

> *citizenship, and I can call myself Dutch as much as I want, but you're still a foreigner. Just look at your skin. Would you still feel at home then?'*

Faruk's words contain a number of familiar ingredients: exclusion and marginalisation, as a foreigner but primarily as a Muslim, a sense of belonging in the Netherlands, and the idea that social exclusion affects one's sense of home.[20] These ingredients are common to most interviews.[21] Yet not everybody I spoke to draws the same conclusion as Faruk: that indeed his experiences of being othered make him feel less at home in the Netherlands. Take, for example, Aziza (35, f, Moroccan), who said about the Netherlands: *'It is a part of me, I wouldn't know what else to call it, but people can simply cause you not to feel at home.'* Similarly, Naima, the guiding character in the previous two chapters, told me *'If I feel excluded, I no longer feel at home either.'* But if we compare the two women further, it turns out that Aziza explicitly told me that due to instances of exclusion she is starting to feel less at home in the Netherlands than she used to. In Naima's story, on the contrary, while all the 'ingredients' are also present, these do not amount to a weakening of her overall sense of belonging in the Netherlands.

Regarding the relationship between social exclusion and a sense of home, several positions can be distinguished in the interviews. First of all there are those informants who did explicitly address the bearing which othering had on their feeling at home in the Netherlands, and those who did not. Besides this distinction, a few said that they did not feel affected as yet, but did envision that they would no longer feel at home here if things were to get worse. Furthermore, a number of informants told me that while they did observe a collective marginalisation of their groups in the public sphere, they did not feel much affected in their private life. Finally, several informants actively refused to be affected.[22] Redouan (25, m, Moroccan) for example: *'As a Moroccan, people look at you differently in the Netherlands. Recently I went to Scheveningen with my girlfriend who wears a headscarf, and you get looks like "what is she doing here with that thing on? That doesn't belong here." But whatever, we are third generation now, and this is our home, simple as that.'* By describing an instance of being othered and then asserting his belonging in the Netherlands as a member of the third generation, he indicates that feeling less at home would be a logical consequence, but that he is not willing to draw this conclusion. In

20 Cf. Omlo 2011, p. 103 Gijsberts, Dagevos & Ross 2010, p. 281.

21 With the exception of Aygul (30, f, Turkish), who told me that she never felt at home in the Netherlands in the first place.

22 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 180.

doing so, he implicitly affirms that there is a connection between social exclusion and a hampered sense of home.

Interviews generally report a trend of migrants' descendants problematising their feelings of belonging in the Netherlands due to frequent exclusion and othering in mainstream society, with their otherness increasingly being framed in religious terms. This is not to negate the many instances of inclusion which interviewees also report.[23] Unfortunately, exclusion is the more dominant trend in the interviews, even if we take into account that inclusion and home are unproblematic and almost automatically less 'visible' than instances of exclusion and the lacking of a sense of home. Given the relatively small number of individuals I interviewed it does not make sense to express this trend and its impact in numbers and percentages. Other studies are much better suited to do this.[24] What this in-depth qualitative study can do is unravel the complex dynamics behind (and thereby sometimes problematise the validity of or suggest improvements to) surveys that 'measure' migrants' experiences of being othered or their sense of belonging.[25]

2.2 *Responding to Discrimination*

The negative image of Muslims and migrants (and more specifically Moroccans), and the myriad forms of othering and outright discrimination relating to this image, constitute a common thread that runs through all of the narratives. My data confirms the generally observed negative impact of stigmatisation and exclusion:[26] a growing sense of being excluded is an often-mentioned reason for feeling less at home in Dutch society. Yet we will see throughout this chapter that how and to what extent exclusion affects one's sense of home varies considerably and depends, among other things, on how this exclusion is perceived and reacted to.

Fatih (39, m, Turkish), for example, told me: *'But right now, why should I not feel at home? No, that's the other person's problem. I know where I stand and I refuse to let myself be like, boxed in by someone who thinks I'm someone else entirely, sorry but that's their bad luck.'* Fatih talks about people according to whom he does not belong in the Netherlands. Yet in his reasoning, he problematises those others, rather than his own home feelings. He refuses to be marginalised. Other individuals I spoke to described comparable situations,

23 Omlo 2011, p. 106.

24 E.g. Phalet & ter Wal 2004b; Crul & Heering 2009; van der Welle 2011.

25 E.g. FORUM – Instituut voor Multiculturele Vraagstukken 2012, p. 14; Crul & Heering 2009, pp. 108–111.

26 E.g. C. Camilleri & G. Malewska-Peyre, *Socialization and Identity Strategies*, 1997, p. 59.

but reacted differently. How people respond to experiences of exclusion and which 'strategies' they employ to deal with such experiences varies widely.[27] Of several lists of strategies suggested in other research, the enumeration that may be closest to my own material is that of Ketner in her work on identity formation processes of Dutch adolescents of Moroccan descent.[28] Most of the 'strategies' Ketner distinguishes can be related to my own findings, but each of them also gives rise to additional considerations. An overall consideration which I want to address is the heterogeneity of the list, in which strategies of rather different types are treated equally by the author.

When confronted with discriminatory remarks, Ketner's informants often report *reacting calmly* by explaining themselves. My own informants, too, frequently counter prejudice by providing explanations. Said (28, m, Moroccan), for example, told me how he met with much implicit hostility among his colleagues; during the month of Ramadan his practice of fasting reminded them of his being a Muslim. He responded by explaining the meaning fasting had for him. However, in the following year the same colleagues asked him the same questions about Ramadan. Said refused to repeat himself. I found that being asked explanations about one's background or fellow believers repeatedly is in itself experienced as an act of exclusion by many of my informants.[29] The constant scrutiny makes them feel like they are being reduced from a complex individual to a one-dimensional representative of their group. One of those complaining about this is Jamila, whom we will hear more about in the case study below.

Ketner's informants also report responding with verbal or physical *aggression*. Maybe due to the difference in age groups, such reactions were virtually absent in the stories produced in the interviews with my interlocutors. Indeed, some individuals told me that they 'used to get really mad' when they were younger. On this point, a partly overlapping categorisation by Omlo is more useful for my analysis.[30] In his analysis of argumentations on integration by young Moroccan-Dutch adults, he comes up with five different responses to discrimination: fighting, fleeing, enduring, comprehending and defending[31] – the latter equalling Ketner's strategy of 'reacting calmly'.[32] Omlo's 'fighting'

27 Cf. Verkuyten 2010, p. 58 ff; Omlo 2011, p. 83 ff; Ketner 2008.

28 Ketner 2008, pp. 116–123.

29 Cf. O. Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, 2004, p. 24.

30 Omlo 2011.

31 My translation of the Dutch terminology: vechten, vluchten, verdragen, verplaatsen in, verdedigen.

32 Omlo 2011, pp. 83–86.

refers less to aggressive behaviour than to verbal disqualifications of one's antagonist by pointing at their own faults as in an ad hominem argument. This is a strategy found much more frequently in the narratives I was told.

A third strategy Ketner distinguishes is *undertaking action* to improve one's group's reputation (for example by doing voluntary work). This strategy is on a different level than the previous ones in that it is a delayed response rather than a response in situ to specific acts of discrimination. Ketner mentions that some of the adolescents she interviewed indicated that, indeed, improving their group's reputation was a motive for participating in the research project. One of the many informants expressing this same motive for participating in my own interviews was Bilal (25, m, Moroccan). He, too, engages in voluntary work, but his aim is broader than improving the image of his 'own group'. Rather, he endeavours to promote civil conduct in all local youth, regardless of ethnic or religious distinctions. The same goes for several other people I spoke to: their social engagement does not necessarily run along the same fault lines as their perception of othering does, although the sense of being treated unjustly does appear to be a motivation to strive for more social justice in Dutch society in general.

Ketner lists strategies that are rather heterogeneous, a fact that she acknowledges and which is understandable, considering she presents a bottom up organisation of reactions found in her empirical material. The strategies are employed on several levels and in reaction to various forms of discrimination. The three strategies discussed up to now can be labelled as assertive types of responses. Swim et al. note that most literature distinguishes between assertive, nonassertive and psychological responses.[33] A typical nonassertive response is the use of *humour* – a strategy certainly employed by my informants. Aziza, for example, sometimes feels like people at work treat her differently. She responds by joking that she needs more time to understand something because she has 'an extra layer' (i.e., a headscarf) on her head. Ketner recognises the use of humour as a possible strategy, but has not found any evidence of this in her interviews. The remaining strategies she does find I would label as being of the third type: psychological responses.

Most of the strategies that could be categorised as psychological responses appear frequently in the narratives I analysed. One of them is *acceptance*, either of the fact that discrimination occurs or of the negative image people hold of Moroccans (or Turks). This acceptance, I have found, is sometimes followed by 'retreat', as in the case of Dounia (33, f, Moroccan), who chooses not to enter

33 J.K. Swim, L.L. Cohen & L.L. Hyers, *Experiencing Everyday Prejudice and Discrimination*, 1998, p. 50.

into any conversations about her background with her colleagues, or, more to the extreme, Tariq (26, m, Moroccan), who quit his job because he was the only Moroccan there and felt uncomfortable about the remarks of his colleagues. Avoiding situations in which discrimination may occur is a strategy mentioned in several studies on discrimination.[34]

Ketner also mentions several strategies through which youngsters *distance themselves* from the negative image of Moroccans. This is done by blaming the media for the negative image of Moroccans (/Muslims), by declaring that prejudices against Moroccans are unfounded, or by stressing that personally, one is 'not like that'. The first two of these three reactions figure prominently in many accounts I heard. Regarding the second one, many of my informants indeed called up the image of the rotten apple spoiling the barrel to explain how a small minority of delinquents domineers general perception. Only the last reaction was rare in my conversations, at least in the form reported by Ketner. Some informants did tell me *'I don't think that applies to me'* – but this was presented as an active choice not to be bothered by general misconceptions rather than as a claim to be excepted from the negative image on an individual basis.

A stance that many of my informants adopted (some more frequently than others) is one of downplaying the impact of discrimination on their personal life, of letting go of their frustration and sometimes consciously ignoring the negative image. In my view, this is neither a passive form of acceptance nor strictly a strategy of distancing – as they would still say that the negative image is a reality, that it includes their own persons, and that this is unacceptable. Rather, I would argue that these people display their agency in striving not to be *bothered* by discrimination and focusing their attention on other aspects of life.

Another strategy that Ketner describes is that of *reversal* of the negative group image. This is done either by stressing the positive qualities of the group (e.g. hospitality) to counter the negative image, or by down-talking the other who is doing the excluding – i.e. by focusing on the negative aspects of Dutch culture. My interview data fully backs these two as frequent responses, but once again prompts me to make an addition. Besides this reversal of arguments, I also observed a reversal of focus, scrutinising the *people* doing the discriminating rather than the discriminatory *message*. This reversal takes several forms. Anouar (30, m, Moroccan), for example, told me that he could understand why Dutch people get a negative image of Moroccans if they witness criminal acts committed by Moroccans without seeing them punished – this is a reaction similar to that recorded by Omlo as 'comprehending'.[35] Another way

34 E.g. Branscombe & Ellemers 1998, Verkuyten 2010.

35 Omlo 2011, pp. 83–86.

of focusing on the other is pathologising them by calling them dumb, stubborn or, as Aygul calls it, 'just pathetic'. Finally, some talked about holding up a mirror to their colleagues, and confronting them with their own (discriminatory) behaviour. This is a third, more assertive way of problematising the sender rather than the message.

Finally, a strategy that I rarely encountered is that of *denial*.[36] Ketner reports that some of her informants claimed not (or 'not really') to experience any discrimination. Actively searching for similar remarks in my interviews I found but one example, a claim by Laila (31, f, Moroccan). Yet at other points in our interview (talking from a different position) shee, too, recounted stories disproving her claim that she always felt included. This shows how one person can simultaneously employ more than one of the strategies mentioned.[37] While it may be that the people I talked to sometimes deal with certain experiences by refusing to recognise them as discrimination, explicit denials of the sort Ketner describes were virtually absent in my data. Possible reasons for this disparity may be found in age difference as well as recent societal developments – some of my own informants stated that nowadays in the Netherlands it is impossible to avoid being confronted with one's difference as a Muslim and a Moroccan/Turk on a daily basis: 'it's everywhere!'

Many informants did, however, make a distinction between structural discrimination of their group in the public sphere and experiences of direct discrimination against their own person in everyday interactions.[38] Eight out of twenty-nine informants actually stated that personally they encounter little or no discrimination in their face-to-face encounters.[39] Were the stories about discrimination of this group to share certain other characteristics, this would suggest that a certain 'profile' could be discerned of those informants feeling less affected by discrimination. But this does not appear to be the case. The informants concerned differ, for example, in the extent to which they report to suffer under the more structural forms of discrimination against Moroccans, Turks, Muslims, or migrants. There is also variation in how much they identify with these groups and actually feel personally attacked by discriminatory public discourse. Two informants even criticised their fellow migrants for complaining about discrimination, as they feel that discrimination is much

36 Cf. Swim, Cohen & Hyers 1998, p. 51.

37 Contra Branscombe & Ellemers 1998, pp. 116–123.

38 Cf. Ketner 2008, p. 118; Demant, Maussen & Rath 2006, p. 30.

39 The eight informants referred to are Fatih (39, m, Turkish), Bahar (29, f, Turkish), Malika (33, f, Moroccan), Nilay (38, f, Turkish), Bilge (32, f, Turkish), Habib (25, m, Moroccan), Laila (31, f, Moroccan), and Coskun (26, m, Turkish).

harsher and more prevalent in Turkey or Morocco than in the Netherlands. Moreover, some informants actually did mention instances of discrimination against them personally, but regarded these as isolated and insisted that they did not experience personal exclusion. Habib (25, m, Moroccan), for example, told me: *'I've never encountered any obstacles. Of course you notice little things, like when you go to the supermarket that the manager sizes you up a bit, that's normal.'* It also varies what reasons interviewees put forward for the absence of personal discrimination – whether they ascribe this to their own personality or their social setting, or whether they feel that in general structural discrimination is much more prevalent than personal exclusion.

The frequency of personal discrimination is one of the few dimensions in which I found a remarkable difference between informants of Turkish and Moroccan descent. The group of people who do not feel discriminated against personally consists of five (out of ten) Turkish informants and three (out of nineteen) Moroccans. Indeed, as I have mentioned, at the time of the interviews Dutch dominant discourse most explicitly targeted Moroccan migrants, so individuals of Turkish background may have had somewhat more leeway on this account than their Moroccan counterparts.[40] Even more specifically, four out of five more highly educated people of Turkish descent fall into this category of informants reporting no experiences of personal discrimination. We could therefore look at the different social networks and socio-economic status of these individuals for explanations of their limited experiences of personal discrimination. Yet once again, when we contextualise this finding, it is hard to maintain that it points towards a predictable pattern.

I want to give a brief discussion of each of the four highly educated Turkish respondents who report not to have any personal experience with discrimination. One of them stands out in several ways. He is the only one who was not raised a Muslim, and whose parents did not come to the Netherlands as labour migrants. He hardly identifies with a Turkish-Dutch community, and not at all with Dutch Muslims – although he sympathises with their plight.[41] It is not

40 Particularly after the attempted military coup in Turkey in June 2016, there are also strong anti-Turkish sentiments in the Dutch public and political discourses particularly against Dutch-Turkish supporters of the Turkish regime in the Netherlands.

41 This sympathising we also find in the case of the only other person who no longer identifies as Muslim: a woman of Moroccan descent (and who also is one of the group of eight who reported no experiences of personal discrimination). Both these informants also have Dutch life partners and could be said to have employed the strategy Branscombe and Ellemers (1998) call 'individual mobility' to evade experiences of exclusion. Yet this strategy is predicted to come at the cost of good relationships with other group members, and this does not seem to apply to my informants. While the aforementioned woman,

surprising that in these days of 'Islamisation' of Dutch polarising discourse this should be easier to evade for people who do not identify with or as Muslims.[42]

The second man in this highly educated foursome of Turkish descent, on the other hand, has an extended Turkish network and is active in the local mosque. Out of the two women, one has a Dutch husband and a predominantly Dutch working environment in which she feels addressed as an individual rather than a representative of 'her kind'. The other woman lives in a major city as a stay-at-home mum. Talking about not experiencing any discrimination as a person, she points out that she hardly encounters any Dutch people in her daily life, as she socialises almost exclusively with other Turks, so that there is little occasion to be confronted with her difference as long as she does not enter the labour market again.

Therefore, when we look at the persons behind the numbers, we find a rather diverse group that is hard to categorise. The few Moroccans who also expressed that they do not personally experience any discrimination do not fit any shared profile either. Qualitative studies like this one fulfil the function of making us wary of overinterpreting quantitative findings and overstating the decisiveness of shared elements of characteristics in explaining phenomena. In this case: it is one thing to find that highly educated descendants of Turkish migrants experience less discrimination than their Moroccan or less educated Turkish counterparts, but quite another to ascribe this finding to their perceived group attributes.

Most of the various strategies formulated by Ketner can be found in my own interviews. None of the strategies is found to dominate – nor do I think this would be the most relevant finding, considering the relatively small number of informants in my study. What my discussion of the different responses does achieve is showing the diversity of responses to the 'given' of discrimination – as well as the limitations of such a list of responses. To some extent these limitations can be addressed by refining category descriptions and/or by adding more categories, as I have done above. From Omlo's partly overlapping categorisation I borrowed the terms 'fighting' and 'comprehending', and I myself would like to add 'letting go' and 'focusing on the antagonist' to the list.

But fine-tuning the list does not suffice to grasp the complexities of discrimination, its impact on the targeted people, and their individual reactions. As I mentioned above, Ketner's list of strategies is rather heterogeneous. This is

for example, has a Dutch husband and extensive Dutch network, she also immediately volunteered a long list of Moroccan friends whom she could prevail upon if I needed any more informants.

42 Cf. Maliepaard & Gijsberts 2012, p. 139.

partly because there are various aspects to the question of perception and impact of discrimination. Below I suggest that, in order to differentiate between those different aspects, it is helpful to formulate *several* questions on exclusion rather than focusing solely on the strategies employed in response to exclusion.

2.3 *A Broader Reading of Social Exclusion: Four Questions*

So far in this first part of the chapter, I have argued that the image of the Netherlands as home for the descendants of migrants is called into question in Dutch public discourse – an excluding discourse which in itself is pointed out by my informants as complicating their subjective sense of home. I have posed the question of how individuals react to experiences of exclusion, and turned to previous research that describes different 'strategies' employed to deal with such experiences. These strategies provide me with a first entry into the wide diversity of ways in which my informants make sense of discrimination. The narrative analysis I undertake in the second part of this chapter (from Section 3) evokes a rather more complex picture than a categorisation of strategies deduced from informants' reported behaviour.

But before moving to this different level of analysis, I would like to broaden the initial question 'how individuals react to experiences of exclusion' to encompass more than an isolated typology of strategies/reactions to discriminatory practices. I suggest that larger-scale investigations should pose, and differentiate between, at least four interrelated questions to obtain a more nuanced view of the impact of discrimination: We have to ask not only how individuals or groups *react* to discrimination, but also to what extent people *perceive* discrimination, how much *importance* they ascribe to such experiences, and how this affects their construction of *identity* and home at large. Let me briefly clarify each of these four questions.

First of all, we will want to know about individuals' *perception* of discrimination (question 1). Do people perceive discrimination, to what extent, and what types of discrimination do they distinguish?[43] In some accounts, discrimination appears to be more pervasive than in others – whether this is because some people encounter less discrimination or because, in the context of their own specific identity narratives, they are less inclined to interpret experiences as constituting discrimination.

One factor we have to take into account is that several interviewees displayed a certain reluctance to label incidents as entailing discrimination and portray themselves as victims. They prefer more agentic self-images that allow

43 Cf. Swim, Cohen & Hyers 1998, p. 37; Alma & Zock 2002.

for a stronger sense of control over one's situation.[44] This is especially relevant in the light of a tendency in Dutch public discourse to accuse (Muslim) migrants of playing the victim instead of taking responsibility for problems in 'their' communities. In this line of reasoning, complaints about discrimination are viewed as an 'easy excuse'. It may be with such accusations in mind that Bilge, for instance, qualifies: *'But I never just want to ascribe everything to being a foreigner,* (...) *if I don't feel at home in a situation, that doesn't necessarily mean like, oh, that's because I'm an immigrant.'*

Regarding the 'types of discrimination', we have, for example, seen a distinction between subtle and overt or blatant discrimination, and between structural discrimination directed against minority groups or direct discrimination against one's own person.[45] As we have seen in the previous section, a significant number of participants in my research indicated that they experience little to no direct, personal discrimination. Moreover, the strategy of 'letting go' that many informants say they have developed allows them to be less emotionally affected by discrimination, but also helps them, in time, to pay less heed to possible instances of othering, and thus to subjectively experience less discrimination.

Secondly, we have seen the great diversity of *responses* to perceived discrimination, both in terms of direct reactions towards those who discriminate and in terms of identity strategies employed to cope with experiences of exclusion (question 2). This was my main focus in the previous section, although many of the strategies discussed there also touch upon other questions.[46] But while a focus on such strategies presupposes that individuals are negatively affected by discrimination, it provides little to no information about the importance they attach to such experiences. We also have to ask, put very bluntly, how much people actually mind exclusion.

Therefore, the third question is what *importance* individuals ascribe to experiences of being othered (question 3). As I will argue, for different reasons discrimination can play a less crucial role in most other stories than in that of Jamila.[47] For some of the informants who only complained about structural rather than personal discrimination it is easier to downplay the importance of discrimination in their own lives, as it does not concern them directly. Others,

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44 Cf. Branscombe & Ellemers 1998, p. 246; Buitelaar 2009, p. 300.

45 T.F. Pettigrew & R.W. Meertens, *Subtle and blatant prejudice in Western Europe*, 1995; Ketner 2008.

46 This is one of the reasons for the heterogeneity of the strategies listed together.

47 Similarly, in the previous chapter we saw that exclusion in Morocco or Turkey was of little importance to a number of interviewees, while others were highly frustrated about it.

however, did feel deeply affected by structural discrimination. Think, for example, of the great frustration many informants experience when being told that they are 'different': despite the fact that they are not themselves targeted by direct discriminatory messages, their personal efforts are disqualified and the good impression they make is not perceived as representative of the group of which they feel part.[48]

Branscombe and Ellemers argue that responses to discrimination will differ according to one's level of group identification.[49] People with high group identification will be more affected by structural discrimination targeting them as group members than people with lower group identification. The latter will mainly mind when they are personally (and, in their view, unjustly) addressed. I would like to add that high levels of identification with the Netherlands can also lead to greater frustration about exclusion.[50]

My material suggests that the extent to which people are affected by the discrimination they experience is an important factor, shaping their sense of belonging in the Netherlands and their evaluation of push- and pull-factors of both the Netherlands and the country of their parents. Whether this actually leads to a dismissal of the Netherlands as home and a wish to migrate depends on myriad other factors, and certainly not on some 'measure' of how much discrimination is 'too much'. The fourth question I want to formulate here therefore concerns the broader *implications* of perceived exclusion in individuals' lives, or the *meanings* given to discrimination as a factor in one's life narrative (question 4).[51]

Exposure to constant discrimination in terms of one's group membership can, for example, lead people to identify more strongly as and with Muslims or (Dutch) Moroccans/Turks.[52] These dynamics can only be detected in part of the narratives I collected. What is shared by everybody, however, is that in the current Dutch climate it has become impossible *not* to reflect on these identity labels due to which these descendants of migrants are under continuous scrutiny.[53] As I argued from Chapter 1, interviewees showed a heightened

48 I will dwell on this frustration in the text box 'But *You* are not like *Them*'.

49 Branscombe & Ellemers 1998.

50 Cf. Verkuyten 2010, p. 59. This might be an additional reason for the fact that, as I described in the previous chapter in Section 4.3, as a Dutch researcher travelling in Morocco I was greeted quite differently by Moroccan Dutch than I was by their Turkish counterparts during my fieldwork trip to Turkey.

51 Branscombe & Ellemers 1998, pp. 58–65; Verkuyten 2010.

52 Branscombe & Ellemers 1998.

53 Cf. Roy 2004, p. 24. Whether this actually means that these interviewees nowadays focus more on their ethnic and religious background than they would have done otherwise is of

reflexivity on the very themes that form the subject matter of this study.[54] It is with regard to issues of exclusion that this reflexivity was addressed most explicitly by interviewees themselves.

With regard to this fourth question, in the light of my research focus I am primarily interested in how discrimination enters into informants' conceptualisations of home. I have noted an overall trend of problematising the Netherlands as home due to the hardening of the Dutch climate, but also hope to show that this problematisation can take many different forms. There are no uniform conclusions which all informants automatically draw from their shared sense of being increasingly othered.

It is this fourth question which plays a central role in my following analysis of the story of Jamila and her turnaround. Following the line of her narrative, the issue of strategies is seldomly raised, while the questions of perception and importance are treated mostly implicitly. In the case study epilogue, however, when I discuss the account of Jamila's developments after our initial two interviews, I address the relevance of all four questions I have just distinguished more directly. There we will see how a changed attitude on her part regarding the experience of social exclusion can be formulated in terms of a different set of answers to the four basic questions on exclusion. What the case study will mainly show, however, is that even the more differentiated questioning of social exclusion which I just proposed falls short of capturing the complex insights which a narrative approach can provide into the dynamics of making sense of exclusion on the individual level. After reading Jamila's case study, I believe the reader will not be surprised that other people, with other stories and other life trajectories, may react to similar instances of exclusion in very different ways.

3 Case Study: The Stories of Jamila

3.1 *Jamila's Turnaround: Introduction*

Leaning back in the shade at the Moroccan seaside in 2009, her baby son on her lap, Jamila smiles when I ask her about her summer vacation in Morocco: *'It's nice for a while, recharging, and then it's really wonderful going home again.'*

course difficult to estimate – especially considering the fact that, as I have shown above, turning points leading to a heightened awareness of one's ethnic identity have been described in the literature long before the events which form the collective turning points for this cohort took place.

54 See the text box that concludes section 4.6.

When we speak again a year later, drinking tea in her Dutch living room just after another summer in Morocco, things look rather different: *'It's very strange, really when I spoke to you last year I was so enthusiastic about the Netherlands and my little house. And within the space of one year, everything has completely turned around.* (...) *I never thought that I could ever think of my life that way. I always thought, this is my house and I'm going to die here, end of story. But it's not like that at all anymore.'* Jamila has moved from seeing the Netherlands as her one and only home to questioning her belonging there, to the extent of now wishing to settle in Morocco in the foreseeable future and calling that country her real home. Throughout our interview, this U-turn in her orientation is her main concern. In my analysis I will refer to her radical change of mind as her 'turnaround'.

Regarding her wish to actually migrate to Morocco because she no longer feels accepted in the Netherlands, Jamila is a rather extreme instance of the impact exclusion can have on an individual. At the same time, upon closer scrutiny Jamila's story is not that different from many other life stories. What her story illustrates very clearly is the embeddedness of (the impact of) experiences of othering in the greater setting of her life. My analysis will show how in a migrant context, creating a home takes place at the interface of societal and personal development.

Jamila offers several contrasting interpretations of her turnaround. Her words reveal an ongoing internal dialogue about the nature, causes and consequences of her change of heart. At one point during the interview, she describes how the welcoming home the Netherlands once was, gradually turned against her. By now, she feels, there is no room left for her and her family. At another point, she depicts her reorientation rather as a gradual discovering of the truth: she never has been welcome in the Netherlands, she just did not realise it before.[55] Either way, Jamila makes it very clear that her turnaround was triggered by social factors: *'I notice that I am being rejected by the community where I have always felt at home. And it seems as though the other side is standing there with open arms, as if to say "See? This really is your home, and this is where you belong".'* Jamila's story serves to illustrate the highly relational nature of home. In the previous quote, as in the rest of our interview, she speaks of home as depending on social and power relations, narrating how rejection by the community to which she formerly felt to belong, and new openings toward the Moroccan

55 This ambivalence is recurrent in other interviews as well. Interviewees sometimes represent the Dutch as a formerly tolerant nation which now has turned against them, and at other times see the development as a personal one: the Dutch were always like this, it is we who were ignorant of their intolerance.

community, triggered her turnaround. By focusing on this turnaround I will also demonstrate how what we tend to call 'social' is intrinsically intertwined with what is 'personal' – with each individual's life course and psychological make-up. It is exactly this 'telling together' of the social and the personal, of individuals and the world around them, that makes Hermans's Dialogical Self Theory such a fruitful heuristic interpretive device.[56]

Jamila's account of her turnaround, although dominating her narrative, by no means goes unchallenged during our interview. Her statements about home are full of ambivalences. Regarding the Netherlands, for example, she ponders: *'Yeah, what is "home"? Right now it's not here anymore, that idea is gone in any case.'* Yet right after this, when I ask her to distinguish between homes on different levels, she lists her city, her work, her parents' house and the mosque, all of which are located in the Netherlands, and even explicitly includes the country as such. Similar ambivalences about the meanings of home are common in the narratives I analysed. Speaking from multiple I-positions, informants formulate different and sometimes conflicting understandings of home.

In Jamila's case, such multivoicedness is particularly evident. This is one of the reasons why her case is particularly suited to display patterns that are more implicitly present in other cases. Jamila points out herself that she has different homes depending on which position she takes up at a particular place and time and interacting with particular (groups of) people: *'My job is my home occasionally. I seek refuge there now and then if I want to forget the Moroccan community for a while, then I'm just surrounded by Dutch colleagues and their straightforwardness, and that's also my home now and then. Home is also with my parents, if I want to feel like a child again for a while. So there a little bit, and the mosque. I don't attend mosque, but when I am there, I do feel at home in terms of my faith.'* Depending on whether she positions herself as a child, as a Moroccan Dutch, as a believer, home has different meanings for Jamila. Although not always with this degree of reflexivity, she switches between different positions regularly and smoothly – sometimes contradicting her own words in the very next utterance, as we just saw. Throughout the interview, Jamila engages in dialogue with herself and with her environment about the turnaround in her understanding of the Netherlands and Morocco as homes. To examine the ways she reconstructs this process, which is both highly personal and deeply social, I turn to Hermans's theory of the dialogical self once again.

56 Cf. Buitelaar & Zock 2013, who bring out Hermans's emphasis on 'the interplay between psychological and cultural processes' (p. 3) and also bring out that identity formation is to be seen 'in the context of specific constellations of power' (idem).

According to Hermans, 'The dialogical self is "social", not in the sense that a self-contained individual enters into social interactions with other outside people, but in the sense that other people occupy positions in a multivoiced self.'[57] This breaking down of the Cartesian dichotomy between the individual and its social surroundings allows me to analyse the workings of social relationships, power structures and discrimination *within the self* rather than as purely external factors affecting a bounded individual.[58] Analysing Jamila's search for new meanings of home and self as a dialogical endeavour helps to make sense of ambivalences such as her contradictory stances about belonging or not belonging in the Netherlands, while respecting her narrative integrity. Her story is an ongoing discussion between different voiced positions, both personal and collective, addressing diverse, often internalised audiences. Her case provides a vivid illustration of how the meanings of home are formulated through social and power relations, showing how on an individual level so-called 'social' and 'personal' factors intersect.

3.2 *Theoretical Caveats*

The dialogicality of narratives such as Jamila's is highly complex, and unravelling it in terms of a multiplicity of I-positions is not always self-evident. During my analysis I have not only profited from Hermans's theoretical insights into the dialogical self, but also struggled with the question of how such a multiplicity of I-positions, as he frames it, is to be understood. I encountered two main problems in this regard, which I want to discuss here as caveats before taking up these theoretical tools for my own analysis. First of all, more often than not it proved difficult to point out a number of clearly distinguishable I-positions, let alone to determine what utterances were to be ascribed to which of these positions, even when there were clear indications of shifts between different voices in the text. Secondly, I wondered how to combine Hermans's work with its many examples of clearly formulated and labelled I-positions, such as *I-as-a-woman* or *I-as-a-Moroccan*, with the concept of intersectionality. The latter directs our attention to how on the individual level social categories shape and depend on each other, or in the words of Prins, 'how particular identities are lived in the modalities of other categories of identity, such that gender is always lived in the modalities of ethnicity and class, nationality in the modalities of gender and race, and class in the modalities of gender and nationality'.[59] Hermans's theoretical framework showed that different positions, referring to

57 Hermans 2001c, p. 250.

58 Hermans & Hermans-Jansen 2003, pp. 540–543; Bhatia 2013, pp. 219–220.

59 Prins 2006, p. 278.

such different identifications, are in constant dialogue, but did it also allow for the crucial insight that each of them, while having its own dynamics, is actually co-constructed in terms of the others?[60]

To address the first problem, we have to look at the context from which Hermans's insights arise and in which they are further developed: the practice of psychotherapy. Hermans takes the dialogical nature of the self as a starting point to stimulate clients to formulate specific I-positions, find out how they relate to each other and how this may explain their problems, with the aim of developing these relationships further in order to enhance psychological well-being. The metaphor of the dialogical self is put into action for therapeutical purposes. Even when he uses case studies collected for research purposes, the informants involved are explicitly invited to formulate and speak from different I-positions.[61] Such examples in which the speaker is, as it were, co-opted are most suitable for the purpose of clarifying Dialogical Self Theory, and the insights into the inherently dialogical nature of the self thus gained can prove valuable in analysing all sorts of identity-talk. We should not expect, however, that people will spontaneously come up with equally 'complete' and clearly distinguishable voices in other forms of narrative. As Hermans himself also notes, multivoicedness and dialogue are generally more fragmentary than his textbook examples may suggest.[62]

Often in spoken word, dialogical *processes* are more easily identified (and more interesting[63]) than the more or less separate positions that may be underlying them. The insight that apparent ambivalences in a narrative can often be traced back to a switch or conflict of positions enhances our understanding of such dialogical processes in the narrative construction of identity. This insight is valuable in itself. It shows that Dialogical Self Theory can be of use, regardless of whether or not in the given situation it is possible, or desirable, to determine the 'authorship' of each contradictory statement by attributing it to a specific, clearly delineated voice. Instances of dialogical tension did, however, also help me to identify several voices in Jamila's story. These could then be discerned as operating in other sections of the interview as well. Her case contains examples both of clearly discernable voices and of more implicit instances of dialogicality.[64] Hermans's Dialogical Self Theory does indeed offer

60 Buitelaar 2006a, p. 273.

61 Hermans 2001c.

62 Hermans 2001a, p. 354.

63 Hermans 2001c, p. 254.

64 The extensiveness and structure of my interview format – giving informants time to construct their own life narrative as well as posing questions from several angles in order to

sensitive tools for analysis that can help avoid an essentialist approach of the self and of self/other relationships. But this safeguard against essentialism only applies when we take into account the metaphorical nature of his vocabulary and remain wary of the constant risk of reification of concepts such as the I-position. This is the first caveat.

In more clinical settings it is useful to flesh out the metaphor and somewhat artificially differentiate between specific, clearly described I-positions, rather than – to turn to the second caveat – immediately 'messing up' distinctions by considering the intrinsic intersectionality of each position. Consequently, as Buitelaar argues '[d]eriving tools from Dialogical Self Theory to analyse how one identification always comes in the modality of others is less obvious.'[65] This problem is not fully solved in Hermans's own work. Therefore, my second caveat concerns the question of whether Dialogical Self Theory allows room for intersectionality. Fortunately, the research literature in which Hermans's theoretical insights are applied to other settings shows their compatibility with an intersectional approach.[66] Engaging directly with Hermans's theory, Zock convincingly argues that 'all the voices that sound in the self are colored at the same time by one's personal character and life history, and by the cultural groups one is part of or is in touch with.'[67] While intersectionality does not appear as a part of Hermans's theory, I see these different insights as complementary rather than incompatible. Dialogical Self Theory can be enriched by taking into account the concept of intersectionality.

One of the openings Hermans himself suggests to further develop this point is the concept of a coalition of I-positions. This is an interesting concept because it directs our attention to the dynamic *relationships* between different I-positions and, according to Hermans himself, shows that 'positions in a person's repertoire are not as neatly separated as a list of positions (…) would suggest. Positions may actually operate as combinations and as groups, and they do so on a quite implicit level and in a quite natural way in our daily lives.'[68] Operating in coalition, in some situations several positions may even speak with a single voice. The concept of coalitions of I-positions, however, is in need of further development and as yet does not amount to a recognition

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allow space for different voices to partake in the process of narration – resulted in a density of data that allows me to search for voices that may turn up more or less frequently in the course of an interview and that would be less recognisable in other types of data.

65 Buitelaar 2013a, pp. 269–270.

66 E.g. Buitelaar 2006a; Bhatia & Ram 2004; Buitelaar 2013a.

67 Zock 2011, p. 169.

68 Hermans 2001a, p. 354.

of the inherent intersectionality of each position.[69] Still, as part of my analytical toolkit, the idea of a coalition of voices has proved very fruitful in my analysis of Jamila's story. Below I follow up on this idea to unravel the dialogical structuring of Jamila's narrative of her turnaround which I see as backed up by a dynamic coalition of diverse positions joining forces to promote her project to migrate to Morocco. As a first step in my analysis, in the next section I distil a number of I-positions from Jamila's narrative that are crucial in understanding her turnaround, in their separate dynamics but even more so in their interaction.

3.3 *A New Coalition: Positions Joining Forces in Support of Migration*

In the reconstruction of Jamila's turnaround we can observe the 'content, organization and reorganization' of parts of her 'position repertoire':[70] the dynamics of different positions that gain or lose prominence, form new coalitions or even switch sides.[71] At the time of our second meeting, a voice denouncing the Netherlands dominates Jamila's narrative. Several I-positions together tell the story of Jamila's turnaround, referring to personal as well as societal developments, and reconfirming and encouraging each other within a newly formed coalition while retaining their own perspective.[72] The different positions making up (or contradicting) this coalition can be discerned in the various themes I will address in this case study. For analytical purposes, in introducing this coalition before exploring the different themes in more detail, I refer to these I-positions by using Hermans's construction of 'I-as-…'. E.g., I call Jamila's 'religious position' *I-as-Muslim*. This position has recently gained prominence in Jamila's repertoire. While her own interest in religious matters grows, she feels that acceptance of Muslims in the Netherlands is decreasing. Jamila has become more sensitive to the attractions of Morocco as a setting in which her religiosity is not questioned.

By contrast, the position *I-as-Dutch* is less central now than it used to be: *'I used to associate myself a lot with Dutch society and the Dutch side. I found Moroccans old-fashioned, they didn't understand anything, it wasn't for me.* (…) *I was far less concerned then. But not now, now you're thrust in that direction.'* Still, Jamila mentions several times that it is not just as a Moroccan Muslim that she has had it with the Netherlands. She stresses that she is Dutch, too, and that just like herself other Dutch people also see little future in the

69 Buitelaar 2013a, p. 270.

70 Hermans 2001a, p. 324.

71 Cf. Buitelaar 2006a, p. 262.

72 Hermans 2001a, p. 247.

Netherlands and consider migration. This way even her position as explicitly Dutch is included in the coalition advocating migration to Morocco. The 'mirror position'[73] *I-as-Moroccan* is hardly audible, except when activated in reaction to outside judgements. When Jamila talks about being Moroccan, it is generally in reference to people in the Netherlands or in Morocco accepting her (or the Moroccan-Dutch community) or failing to do so. Apart from a few remarks about certain practices or ideas being 'common in the Moroccan community', Jamila's account of Moroccanness is about boundary marking rather than content. Especially in the Dutch context, *I-as-Moroccan* sounds almost synonymous to *I-as-excluded*.

A number of other positions that are related to her self-identification as Dutch have actually changed sides: they used to support her feeling at home in the Netherlands, but now tend towards the contrary. There is a work-related position which we could dub *I-as-colleague*. Together with the public discourse about Muslims and Moroccans in politics and national media, the subtle discrimination Jamila experiences at work seems to be the most important reason for her feeling of no longer belonging in the Netherlands. As we will see further on, her work is of great importance for Jamila's views on (her place in) Dutch society. She used to love her job as a civil servant, and in our first conversation in Morocco she told me that she misses her colleagues, with whom she discusses more things than with her own family.

However, in our second interview a year later, the manifold stories about her work and colleagues are all about exclusion and frustration. She feels that her own attitude of accepting people 'as a person' is no longer reciprocated. From being treated as herself, as *'just Jamila'* she has gone to being addressed as some kind of *'ambassador'* for the Muslim and Moroccan community.[74] Her indignation about such treatment touches upon what I shall call Jamila's *moral position*, part of which consists of her openness to accept people as they are and her wish to be treated in the same way. Her new perspective on Dutch people, and her colleagues in particular, is that they do not share her moral attitude of mutual respect and acceptance. At some points in the interview people in Morocco are also judged from this moral position. Yet while in the past such moral criticism led Jamila to distance herself from Moroccans, she now excuses them: *'But they're not bad people or anything, they all have good hearts.'*

The most explicit repositioning regarding Morocco and the Netherlands is undertaken by a position we can call *I-as-modern*. After yet another rendition

73 Cf. Chapter 2, Section 24.2.

74 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 295, for similar complaints voiced by the highly educated women of Moroccan descent she interviewed.

of her turnaround, Jamila goes on to explain it thus: *'I felt different back then, more modern. But now they've overtaken me, they've progressed even further. It's as though I've started feeling more old-fashioned again.'* It is clear from the interview that Jamila considers herself a modern woman. In the past this made her feel out of place in Morocco and more at home in the Netherlands. Her 'modern position' even used to be central to her relationship to Morocco: the simple fact that she was 'just too modern' for Morocco was enough to not even consider the option of living there. But now the tables are turned and she focuses on modernising trends in Morocco: in terms of the educational facilities as well as consumption patterns and matters of gender equality, the country is becoming more 'like the Netherlands'. In the above quote Jamila even suggests that by now her peers in Morocco might be more rather than less modern than herself. Elsewhere, she argues that resident Moroccans are certainly more progressive than the average Moroccan Dutch when it comes to marriage and gender relations. Her 'modern' voice now speaks in favour of rather than against Morocco. Her new stress on Morocco's modernising tendencies allows Jamila to feel at home there from the perspective of her modern position. This position is also the one intersecting most often with her references to issues of gender, presenting herself as a modern woman and also as more 'masculine' than her more traditional Moroccan counterparts.[75]

Thus, despite the apparently radical turnaround Jamila made between our first and second interview, the positions backing this turnaround are not entirely new. Rather, we see a new coalition emerging from a reconfiguration and reorientation of existing I-positions triggered by personal and social developments. Moreover, this new coalition, although dominant, is by no means unchallenged. Time and again during the interview we find ambivalences that can be traced to positions that contradict the absoluteness of Jamila's turnaround. We will see examples of her continued attachment to the Netherlands as well as of her doubts about the 'fit' between Morocco/Moroccans and herself, and more practical cracks in the certainty of her migration project.

75 Jamila talks about this with a sense of pride: *I come across as very masculine* (...) *I can have my conversations more easily with men, you know, than with women.* (...) *Most Moroccan women aren't like that. Like really going for it and solving problems. If my television is broken I don't go whinge to my husband right off the bat, I go and look for a solution myself first.* She also refers to a connection between gender and modernity when she points at the more equal gender relations among resident Moroccans as a sign of their modernity on comparison to their migrant relatives.

Throughout Jamila's story I have traced several voiced positions, some more personal (such as her modern or her moral position) and some more collective in nature (i.e. positions that can be seen as her own renditions of social identities such as Dutch, Moroccan and Muslim, although as we will see below the latter one in particular illustrates that the personal-collective dichotomy is often untenable). All of these, in their own vernacular, support the goal of their new coalition: reorientation towards migration to Morocco. These 'internal' I-positions are in constant interaction with external voices, both within the metaphorical space of the self and in the 'actual' outside world.[76] Jamila is constantly positioning herself towards, and reacting to being positioned by, these external voices.[77] Some of them are called upon to reinforce her newly formed coalition, for example the voices of her husband and parents. Jamila also mentions friends and a cousin who have *'already'* moved to Morocco, Dutch colleagues who, like herself, see no future for themselves in the Netherlands, and several voices, amongst which once again her colleagues, that negatively reinforce the coalition through their acts of exclusion and discrimination. In the remainder of this case study I discuss the different voices that constitute (or oppose) the new coalition, and the themes they discuss, to examine Jamila's internal and external dialogues about her repositioning towards Morocco and the Netherlands as homes.

3.4 *New Perceptions of Othering*

Repositioning herself towards Morocco and the Netherlands, Jamila formulates new answers to the questions of where she belongs and feels at home. Although she does name the positive assets of Morocco as a newly discovered

76 The use of 'external' and 'internal' in Hermans's vocabulary can become somewhat confusing. On the one hand he distinguishes between internal dialogues taking place within the metaphorical space of the self as opposed to external dialogues with 'real' outside others. But besides this, within the self-space he also differentiates between internal I-positions and external ones, the latter being representations of external others that are relevant to the self and have become integrated in a person's position repertoire as 'part of a self that is intrinsically extended to the environment' (Hermans 2001c, p. 252, see also Zock 2013, p. 17). In Jamila's case, 'my husband' and 'my parents' are important examples of such external I-positions. This means that, in terms of Hermans's vocabulary, we can talk about 'internal dialogues' (i.e. dialogues that do not involve 'real' others) which nevertheless figure in both internal *and* external I-positions. We will see an ambivalent example of such a dialogue in the next section.

77 Hermans & Hermans-Konopka 2010, pp. 7–8.

home, far more often she talks about being forced to adopt this new stance. She is very sensitive to being positioned as (not) belonging by others, who enter her narrative as various external positions. Jamila's language betrays the experience of a strong power imbalance: she speaks about being 'forced', 'pushed' and 'hunted' and uses passive constructions very frequently. Even during our first interview in Morocco, which she later looks back on as a touchstone of her point of view *before* her turnaround, this 'disempowered' voice is present when, speaking about politicians denigrating Moroccans, she remarks *'That stuff forces you to take another look at Morocco.'* In her second interview Jamila vacillates between such expressions of impotence in the face of societal forces and a more agentic stance from which she stresses that, unlike those who suffer in silence and only dream of a better life, she chooses to actively strive towards this better life in Morocco. We see both a general fierceness in taking a stand about her new orientation, exclaiming that she is 'done' with the Netherlands, and a deep sense of loss transpiring in her story when she talks about how 'sad' this turnaround is. Her very last statement in concluding our interview bespeaks this impotent sadness: *'I could have lived here longer, I would have liked to, but it's just not working anymore.'*

The decisive factor in Jamila's turnaround is the way she is currently addressed in the Netherlands based on her background as a Moroccan Muslim. As we have seen, the social labels of 'Moroccan' and 'Muslim' also figure as important identity-near I-positions in Jamila's self-space, but she is unhappy with the content Dutch people nowadays ascribe to these labels, without making any real effort to verify their opinions. Moreover, she is frustrated by the way the two labels are often equated, and it bothers her that they have come to dictate the image others have of her and the manner in which they relate to her: *'I never used to get any questions about my background, about where I came from, I was just Jamila.* (...) *But now you get things like, why are you people like that, and* (...) *yeah just those questions about the Muslim community. And I think they're two separate things, being Moroccan and being Muslim. But apparently these days, they're mostly seen as one and the same. And of course you're no ambassador à la Morocco, but that is how you are perceived.'* Jamila complains that instead of being addressed as an individual like before, she is now being seen mainly as a carrier of a vague undifferentiated Moroccan-Muslim group identity.[78]

78 Jamila herself often uses the terms 'Moroccan' and 'Muslim' together in much the same manner, but this generally occurs when she is talking about exclusion and apparently reproducing the terms in which she is addressed.

Double Bind

Many people I spoke to told me that the Dutch show an increased preoccupation with their connectedness to Islam and their Moroccan or Turkish roots. They also report feeling pressured to relinquish these connections and assimilate into Dutch society. As Jamila complains, her colleagues now address her as a representative of 'her kind', while at the same time making their friendship dependent on whether or not she shares their 'Dutch' opinions on sensitive issues. The paradoxical situation this leaves people in has been discussed extensively in the literature. Marjo Buitelaar and I have argued elsewhere that being summoned to privatise and mitigate their religious attachments on the one hand and being addressed first and foremost as Muslims on the other hand, Turkish and Moroccan Dutch are caught in a 'double bind': it is impossible for them to comply simultaneously with the conflicting demands confronting them.[79] Other Dutch authors have employed the term 'integration paradox', arguing that the more migrants endeavour to integrate into Dutch society, the more they are exposed[80] or sensitive to exclusion and discrimination.[81] Focusing on national discourse rather than individual experience, Duyvendak demonstrates how on the one hand, 'migrants are forced to identify with the Dutch nation more than ever before',[82] while on the other, Dutch national identity is formulated in increasingly exclusive terms. While all of these authors talk primarily about 'migrants' rather than 'Muslims', in public discourse, the otherness of migrants is more often than not formulated in religious terms. In line with current (inter)national developments, othering mainly takes place through the construction of a binary divide between a non-Muslim (Dutch) self and a Muslim other.

Her reactions to this vary, from reluctantly accepting this role and calmly responding to the questions posed, to avoiding such topics or reflecting her frustration back to her colleagues, using the strategy which I described above

79 See Buitelaar & Stock 2010. Cf. P. Watzlawick, J.H. Beavin Bavelas, & D.D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of human communication: A study of interactional patterns, pathologies, and paradoxes*, 1967; Eijberts 2013, p. 421.

80 Ketner 2008; Eijberts 2013, p. 271.

81 Verkuyten 2010;F.J. Buijs, F.A. Demant, & A.H. Hamdy, *Strijders van eigen bodem. Radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland*, 2006.

82 Duyvendak 2011a, p. 101.

as confronting people with their own (discriminatory) behaviour. But in her narrative, what 'strategies' she employs to deal with reductionist and excluding remarks from her colleagues gets much less attention than the fact that Jamila is confronted with these remarks in the first place, and the frustrations she consequently feels.

The exclusion Jamila describes takes several forms, from a constant stream of subtle implicit messages about her otherness to incidents of downright discrimination.[83] Moreover, she feels under intense moral scrutiny as a Muslim: *'People don't let you practice your faith, no matter how free things are here. Because it's completely different if I comment in the media about certain things than if a non-Muslim does the same. It counts for more.'* Jamila feels that the simple fact that she is a Muslim places her under suspicion, with Dutch people demanding that she explicitly distances herself from extremist views and actions, or automatically assuming that she supports them: *' "Oh so you must think it's a good thing that Theo van Gogh was murdered". Well no, not at all, but (...) yeah people think that straight away, like "see, you approve, you're Muslim after all, right...?" '* Besides being presented as eyeing her religious ideas, Dutch people are also presented in her accounts as being overly sensitive to any presumed indications of a lack of loyalty to the Netherlands. Jamila has learned to be careful in her praise of Morocco and criticism of the Netherlands and certainly does not bother her colleagues with her ideas of moving to Morocco lest she confirm their suspicions: *'Yeah people don't want to hear that you don't* [*like*] *the country here, they say well pack your things, just leave.'* Although it lies outside my scope to go into this to any extent, such touchiness is remarkable considering that Jamila's Dutch conversation partners can be seen as the more powerful party, speaking from a majority position.[84] Jamila is not the only one who mentions such sensitivity, but she puts specific stress on it, which can be interpreted in terms of one of the strategies I discussed above: 'pathologising' the discriminating other. Her witty response to such remarks by colleagues has already been quoted in the previous chapter, but is of interest here as well: *'Then I think, yeah well you like Lloret de Mar as well, don't you? Why don't you go and live there? I mean, to me that's not ... you can't say that to someone.'*

This retort, addressed to a colleague with whom she is on friendly terms, gives rise to three considerations. First of all it challenges Jamila's internal unanimity about her intentions to actually move to Morocco, ridiculing the

83 Cf. Pettigrew & Meertens 1995.

84 Cf. Omlo 2011, p. 65; J. Peacock, *Religion and Life History: An Exploration in Cultural Psychology*, 1984. See for an extensive analysis of home and the backlash against diversity from the perspective of native Dutch: Duyvendak 2011a.

idea by comparing it to her colleague's moving to a Spanish beach resort. Her comment seems phrased from a position that (still) regards her belonging in the Netherlands as self-evident. Secondly, the reply illustrates the importance of context, and more specifically of asymmetrical power relations, in the construction of meaning.[85] The question 'why do you stay in the Netherlands instead of moving to Morocco?' is posed to Jamila from several sides. Besides her colleague, a cousin in Morocco is quoted as having asked the same thing. In this case, Jamila's response is quite different: *'I mean that's sad right, if someone, a lad of 16 says that. And it really is sad.'* Coming from a Moroccan relative rather than a Dutch colleague, the question sounds much less offensive and more reasonable, although it makes her sad that even her young cousin has realised that not all is well in the Netherlands. The same question, posed by a representative of a different group with different power relationships to the addressee, becomes a different question. Both these anecdotes are part of the larger narrative fabric that comprises different voices discussing Jamila's relationship to Morocco and the Netherlands – suggesting that the question is also one that Jamila repeatedly asks *herself* and tries to answer throughout our interview. At some points she makes this self-questioning explicit: *'I started thinking, like, what am I still doing here?'*

My third consideration regarding Jamila's sharp reply to her colleague's question concerns the unclear status of her response: from the exact words she uses to describe the incident, we cannot make out whether she actually posed her colleague the counterquestion why she does not move to Lloret de Mar (thus employing the strategy of confronting her colleague with the discriminatory ring of her own words), or whether she just tells me what she was *thinking*, or now thinks, about her colleagues question. It is thus unclear whether this remark is part of a dialogue with an actual other, or the internal continuation of this conversation – an imaginal dialogue in which (a personal reconstruction of) her colleague is addressed as an external I-position in her self-space. Of course it makes a difference whether Jamila was addressing her colleague as an actual other or as an other inside the self. As Hermans himself writes, 'An imagined dialogue may take an entirely different direction in comparison with an actual dialogue.'[86]

Indeed, in Jamila's case it is quite an important question whether or not she is still ready to engage in actual dialogues on sensitive issues with her colleagues, and I regret not having noticed this during the interview when I could

85 Cf. Hermans 2001c, p. 265.

86 Hermans 2001c, p. 255.

still have asked her about it.[87] Yet this actual conversation, that may or may not have continued as an internal dialogue, also points to the strong interwovenness of internal and external dialogues. It shows how this particular colleague, and Jamila's colleagues more in general, can figure as external I-positions in her position repertoire and become part of her internal dialogues. Telling her life story, Jamila regularly voices or addresses such external I-positions, corresponding to individual or collective 'outside others' that may be more or less identity-near (e.g. her parents) or identity-distant (e.g. a discriminating colleague).[88] More particularly, throughout her story I found many instances of internalised voices of exclusion.

Through such internalisation, others and their (perceived) attitude regarding oneself can be of significant influence also when physically absent. The voice of a probing colleague, for example, is activated as soon as Jamila is confronted with news items relating to Islam: *'When something happens on TV, then you think oh God, tomorrow you'll be interrogated again by so-and-so.'* In anticipation of her next working day, in Jamila's mind her colleague's interrogation has already started. Moreover, these external I-positions can be present and working in the self, even when silent. Sometimes the presence of excluding others in Jamila's self-space is more implicit when they serve as internalised *audiences* towards which Jamila's statements are addressed rather than as active dialogue partners.[89] Talking about her relationship with her husband, to name just one example, she stresses that they 'just happened to fall in love with each other' and that she was certainly not forced to marry. Knowing that at work she conceals the fact that her husband is also her cousin, *'Purely to avoid the bloody discussion that goes with it'* (a stance that matches the psychological response of acceptance and retreat I discussed above), I see these declarations as addressing not just me, but also an internalised 'Dutch' audience, ready to jump at any perceived proof of their suspicion that Moroccan Muslim women are victims of their suppressive religious culture.[90]

87 In our later follow-up interview she did say in general that she always kept responding to remarks by colleagues, even in her most frustrated period, but we did not discuss this specific anecdote.

88 Cf. H.J.M. Hermans, *Dialoog en misverstand: Leven met de toenemende bevolking van onze innerlijke ruimte*, 2006, p. 105.

89 For a comparable analysis in terms of audiences, cf. Buitelaar 2013a, p. 271.

90 Of course, as an interviewer I am also part of Jamila's projected audience, and it may be that in her declarations she also anticipates prejudices I as a Dutch or at least European woman might have on the subject, even though during our talk she also grants me a special status as being unlike those other Dutch always intent on judging her. This special position may have been facilitated by numerous factors – the fact that we met in

As I already mentioned, the excluding external I-positions populating Jamila's self-space correspond to actual others in the outside world. Zock reminds us that these positions are 'personal reconstructions'[91] rather than objective representations of such others. Jamila's own reconstruction of an 'excluding Dutch voice' as an external I-position takes place in response to her personal experiences of being positioned as an outsider to Dutch culture and community because of her ethnic and religious background. In the next section I focus on the main settings in which she frames these experiences.

3.5 *Settings of Othering: Excluded at Work, Excluded at Large*

The main settings in which Jamila presents her narrative of exclusion are her work place and public discourse – the latter consisting, in Jamila's accounts, of national politics and the media. Based on our first interview, before her turnaround, I would have categorised Jamila as one of those who are frustrated by structural discrimination in the public domain, but claim not to experience much othering directed at themselves in everyday interaction. But not so during our second encounter a year later. Through her working environment, the experience of exclusion has pervaded her daily life. In the following discussion I address how both these settings of exclusion figure in Jamila's story, and show that the differentiation between direct, personal exclusion and general, more indirect but structural discourses of otherness is a partial one at best.

Public Discourse

Both 'the media' and 'politics' can be discerned in Jamila's narrative as collective voices that increasingly marginalise and stigmatise her: through negative

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Morocco, my professed interest in Moroccan migrants including herself and her personal story, but also the affinity developed through the sharing of her life story as well as personal convergence (we were both pregnant at the time of our second encounter). At the end of our conversation, she actually told me: Yeah I've never talked to someone about this subject for so long, without knowing that the person who's asking the questions, you know… With other people, I already know like, you've got your opinion all ready to go and your prejudice, you know, I've got nothing to say to you. And so I didn't tell them anything. But [I've never talked to] someone who's neutral. I found this remark analytically interesting as well as personally touching. On the one hand, I was glad to have come across (or at least to be addressed), as I desired, as a 'neutral' conversation partner listening to her story without judging it. On the other hand, I was saddened to hear her say that this was the first time ever that she had not encountered the usual prejudices. Disregarding the question whether this is 'objectively true', her remark forms further proof of the pervasiveness of Jamila's perception of being rejected by the Netherlands and the Dutch.

91 Zock 2011, p. 169.

attention for Moroccans and Muslims, by spreading an essentialist image of the Moroccan/Muslim community and by tarring the whole community, including Jamila, with the same brush. Like nearly everybody I spoke to, and in seeming concurrence with the strategy of distancing oneself from discrimination by blaming the media, Jamila criticised the Dutch media for participating in and magnifying all of the above.[92] Her own turnaround over the last year is set against the background of a longer process of Islamophobia increasingly entering the public sphere over the last years – according to Jamila, you would have to turn back time ten years to restore things to 'normal'.[93] She mentions several landmarks in this process: the events of 9/11, the murders of Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn and film director Theo van Gogh, both critical of Islam, and most recently the political rise of the populist politician Geert Wilders who at the time of this interview had made the battle against the 'Islamisation' of Dutch society the centrepiece of his political programme. In Jamila's interview, Wilders stands out as the main proponent of the 'exclusivist Dutch position'. Although she does not explicitly say that for her Wilders was the straw that broke the camel's back, she does mention him repeatedly, and the year in which her turnaround reportedly took place coincides with a period of great political successes for Wilders: in the 2010 elections Wilders's party received over 15% of votes, and during Jamila's summer stay in Morocco he negotiated and agreed to support the minority government, casting his party in an influential role. Asked to pinpoint when her turnaround took place, she also refers to the 'developments' in the Netherlands over the year preceding the interview: *'Yeah for a year now, since what has happened, the questions you get asked, the discrimination that you have to deal with every now and again both at work and on the street, you name it. A lot has happened in one year, we simply can't deny it, in the Netherlands.'* Talking about her 2010 summer holidays, she casually mentions that while, unlike in previous years, she did not miss the Netherlands a bit, she did check on the news about the Dutch government formation negotiations (in which Wilders participated) on a daily basis – partly to be relieved that, for the moment, she did not have to partake in all of 'that'.

Work

In the other main setting of Jamila's experiences of exclusion and her consequent repositioning towards the Netherlands, her place of work, we can hear echoes of voices from the public domain. These echoes are both indirect, as her colleagues, too, are influenced by and participate in the new Dutch exclusive

92 Omlo 2011, describes similar frustrations for his interviewees.

93 Our interview took place in 2010.

discourse, and more direct, when they ask her about news reports regarding 'her group' or engage her in political discussions. I would like to quote a longer interview excerpt here in which Jamila recounts a dialogue at work. This excerpt shows how collective and individual, internal and external voices intertwine, how politics resonate in Jamila's personal contact with her colleagues, all to the effect of deepening her sense of not belonging here.

> *'The prime example: Wilders. They think it's strange that I don't accept him. And I don't accept him at all, no. Sure, we live in a country of freedom, or rather, freedom of speech. But he takes it to the point where I feel personally affected. Because he thinks all Muslims are terrorists. Well I'm no terrorist, I don't walk around with bombs in my bag. But if a colleague, or you say, hey Jam, I like you and you're different, because you're not like that. And then I hear that you – and it's up to you, I really don't mind – then go and vote for Wilders at the booth and then you say that you voted for Rutte, it's just so strange to me. Because then, in the meantime, you do agree with his way of thinking. So in principle you think I'm a terrorist too. While every morning you say good morning, I get coffee for you, you get coffee for me. I've never put a bomb under your chair. But it's that kind of thing, you know ... it affects ... it really does make me feel strange.'*

This excerpt exemplifies several things: it illustrates the everyday othering Jamila deals with in her life, her own sensitivity on this point, and her use of both the strategy of distancing described by Ketner and of 'fighting' in the sense Omlo gives to this term. This passage is also a vivid instance of dialogicality in all its common messiness. Clearly Jamila summons up several different voices, but to what positions these voices belong, and which voice is speaking when, is much less clear. The first sentences show Jamila ('as a colleague') and her colleagues (plural) disagreeing about Wilders. The reference to Wilders's political ideas include him as a party in the dialogue. The argument of freedom of speech is brought up – and here we encounter the difficulty of 'pinning down' the various positions involved, because who exactly is talking here? Her colleagues? Jamila may be quoting fragments of an actual conversation here, or referring to a pattern in the Dutch public debate, in which Wilders's viewpoints themselves are not endorsed, but his right to freedom of speech is defended. In such debates, there are also voices which claim that Wilders goes 'too far' in his interpretation of this right – this is the standpoint Jamila is taking here. But her allusion to freedom of speech may also come from her own 'moral I-position', which certainly plays a role in this passage. This already starts when she says *'I don't accept him at all'*: with this remark she departs from

her own moral self-image as accepting everybody as a person. She has spoken with this moral voice the very moments before the passage quoted, when complaining that her accepting attitude is not reciprocated by her colleague. So when she now refuses to accept Wilders as a person, she owes an explanation not just to her colleagues but also to herself.

This explanation follows straight away: Wilders is going too far; by branding every Muslim a terrorist he attacks her personally. While Wilders never literally said 'every Muslim is a terrorist', Jamila here articulates the feelings of many of those I spoke to, and exemplifies the direct impact which Islamophobe, exclusivist voices in the public sphere have on individual members of the groups targeted. In Jamila's view, Wilders's message is clear: being a Muslim automatically renders her suspect. And for her, supporting Wilders just as automatically means sharing his judgement of her as a person. That her colleague should vote for Wilders implicitly means, according to Jamila, that (s)he sees her as a terrorist. Her moral voice speaks up again, charging at the supposed hypocrisy of this colleague – whose position is very clear now, she addresses him or her directly: *you* think I'm a terrorist! And meanwhile you act as if we are normal, well-meaning colleagues, fetching me coffee and greeting me in the morning. You even tell me that you do not have a problem with me because I am 'not like that'.[94] Jamila concludes this anecdote with a final remark which falsifies her colleague's assumed suspicions. This remark is at once a rhetorical recourse to her moral position: *'I've never put a bomb under your chair.'*[95]

But *You* are Not like *Them*

Jamila does dwell on the intended 'compliments' of her colleague, who tells her *'But you're different, 'cause you're not like that.'* Similar remarks are reported in nearly all interviews, and most other informants are not amused at them. Habib is a notable exception: he interprets the remark as a personal compliment, indicating that he is being judged based on personal merits rather than group image. Rachid (35, m, Moroccan) agrees

94 Jamila does not go into the meaning of this specific remark, which many other informants found very offensive in itself, see the next text box.

95 It has been argued that the image of Muslim women in dominant discourse has developed from mainly portraying them as oppressed victims to focusing on the risk of radicalisation and even terrorism. See e.g. A. Moors, *The Dutch and the face-veil: The politics of discomfort*, 2009. Indeed, the women I spoke to regularly complained about being seen as terrorists, and rarely referred to prejudices about their supposed oppression. This new discriminatory stance, focusing on radicalism rather than suppression, seems to be less gender-specific.

that he is being judged on his personal merits, but certainly does not see this as a compliment: *'I could kill them when they say "Yeah, but you're different". No, I'm not different. Those others that you're talking about, that scum, that small percentage are the different ones. I'm just like everybody else. But then you're the only one they know, so you're the "good" one.'* These two different responses illustrate the double message inherent to such remarks and point to two different levels on which people can be offended by discriminatory remarks. Discrimination can be felt as unjust because one feels undeservingly attacked as a person and/or because the group one identifies with is under attack.[96] The message 'you are different' circumvents the first level by complimenting the individual, but does so at the expense of the group he or she belongs to, thus negating a relevant dimension of a person's identity.[97] This is what Rachid finds so frustrating. Besides slighting the Moroccan-Dutch community and denying his identification with this community, the people singling him out as different also deny him the possibility to improve the image of Moroccan Dutch through his own positive impression. In the words of another informant, Bilal: *' "Yeah but we put you in a separate category, you're different." Alright, so then I've managed to prove myself to this person or group of people. But what about the hundred others who never got that chance, but who are just the same, or maybe even better than me?* (...) *They are still regarded differently.'* This frustration is shared by most informants: whereas examples of criminality, poor integration or extremism directly reflect on the whole group, spoiling their image, their own achievements are ascribed solely to individual merits and seen as the exception that proves the rule.[98]

In a sense, we could say that a bomb *is* being placed: not by Jamila but by her conversation partners, and not under her colleague's chair, but under the bond of trust between Jamila and her colleagues. In that sense the message of this passage is that at work Jamila feels condemned without a trial and without being regarded as an individual. Moreover, the fact that her colleague does not own up to having voted for Wilders and even lies about it suggests that Jamila

96 Branscombe & Ellemers 1998.

97 Cf. Baumann & Gingrich 2004, p. 40.

98 This mechanism of bracketing a familiar individual as 'different' from the group about which prejudices are held, can sometimes frustrate the commonly formulated hope (e.g. Buitelaar 2009, p. 300) that personal contact between members of different groups will result in lower levels of prejudice.

feels she can no longer take the people around her at face value: they may be kind to her just until she turns her back. This message of trust undermined is not restricted to Jamila's working environment. By implication it also applies to Dutch society as a whole, as in her story her working environment often stands for Dutch society in general.

The personal importance Jamila attaches to her work and colleagues is clear from the start of our first interview in Morocco (before her turnaround), when her answer to my question of whether she misses anything from the Netherlands is *'mostly my colleagues'.* She explains that she spends more time with them and discusses more with them than with her own family. Her mention of work as a home at moments when she feels a need to distance herself from the Moroccan community and to be surrounded by Dutch common sense endorses the image of her work as representing Dutch society as a whole. This image is reinforced by the fact that her story contains no references to other contexts of intensive interaction with Dutch peers. Although she also briefly mentions discrimination 'on the street', in fact all Jamila's accounts of how Dutch people think about her or treat her are illustrated with stories about her colleagues. Everything points towards her work as the main setting of personal interaction with Dutch society. It is in this same working environment that she describes the shift from being treated as a person and being reduced to an 'ambassador' of Moroccan Muslims, or even a potential terrorist. The episode analysed is part of the storyline in which Jamila's I-position *I-as-a-colleague* explains how she came to embrace the project of migration to Morocco.[99]

The perception of being excluded, both in public discourse and at work, is a dominant factor in the process leading up to Jamila's turnaround. Of course, the connection is not one of linear causality – otherwise I might have found most of my informants laying out their plans to migrate. Rather, Jamila's story helps us to understand how the impact of such 'external' forces as discrimination and othering depends on the individuals in question and the way they make sense of these forces in the context of the specificity of their own personal lives. In Jamila's case we have to take into account the fact that her education and work in the past constituted important sources of positive identification that reinforced both her feeling of belonging in the Netherlands and her self-image as a modern working woman.

There are three more factors in Jamila's life story which are relevant to contextualise her turnaround, even though she herself does not connect them. All

99 Regarding experiences of exclusion at work, Eijberts writes that some of the women she interviewed opted out of the labour market following similar experiences, and that some, like Jamila, even contemplated emigration (Eijberts 2013, pp. 304–311; De Tona 2004).

three factors point to issues that are very specific to Jamila's unique story, but as we will see, the first and especially the second one also point towards a pattern that can be discerned in many other stories as well.

First of all, Jamila's current frustration with work extends beyond her complaints about exclusion and discrimination. In passing, she also mentions that she is looking for another job because she no longer feels challenged in her current position, and that the stability of being a civil servant is starting to look boring to her rather than comforting. It is conceivable that Jamila's overall discontent with her current job also prompts her to focus on the negative aspects of her working environment.[100] Considering that 'work' and 'Dutch society' are strongly linked in Jamila's story, her desire to quit her job can be seen as related to her wish to quit the Netherlands and the life she leads here. This wish, the outcome of her turnaround, is to be seen in the light of her personal development as well as her changing perception of Dutch and Moroccan society and the experience of discrimination in the former. Indeed, talking about how she envisages her future in Morocco, she mentions that she would like to quit working altogether: *'Calm, nice slow mornings, and raising my children properly. I don't want to keep working either, I want to stop working altogether, it's been long enough, having worked for twelve-and-a-half years.'* This quote provides a clue towards the second contextualising factor, which is related to gender roles.

Expressing the wish to stop working entirely is quite something coming from Jamila, whose education, ambitions and work play an important part in her life narrative. It also challenges her position as a modern woman – earlier in the interview she tells me how glad she is that her (Moroccan) husband is so much more modern than previous (Moroccan-Dutch) suitors who expected women to stay at home once they were married. The proximity of the remarks that she wishes to raise her children well and that she would like to stop working suggests that life stage may also play its part in Jamila's change of mind about her work. At the time of this remark (during our second interview), she had a young son and was pregnant with another child. Motherhood may have caused her to re-examine her priorities regarding work and family life. Finding a satisfactory balance between different life spheres, and most of all between work and family life, is often seen as a major challenge associated with modern life.[101] Considering the persisting structural gender difference in expectations

100 The fact that some of her colleagues are also her friends, as she told me during our first interview, is not acknowledged at all in our second conversation. The only instances of friendly colleagues in this interview are when she introduces the colleague who asks her why she does not move to Morocco as a 'really nice' colleague, and when she tells about another colleague joking about her being a terrorist – while some of her colleagues found this very funny, some others did come to her defence.

101 E.g. McAdams 1993, pp. 118–121.

about childcaring responsibilities in the Netherlands (and elsewhere), this challenge is probably most acute for working mothers of younger children. In this sense, Jamila's ambivalent stance regarding her current equilibrium between her roles as a mother and a working woman fits into a broader pattern in Dutch society.[102] Still, her migrant background and multiple cultural competences do provide her with an alternative for framing her situation as a working mother which she experiences as stressful. Her familiarity with several, often widely differing, frames of reference allows her to critically reflect on the different contexts, both Dutch and Moroccan, between which she regularly moves. More specifically concerning the balance between work and motherhood, she has the option to interpret the tension she experiences from a migrant perspective, in terms of differences between the Netherlands and Morocco.

Indeed, in Morocco, other more 'traditional' views about the gendered division of work and family duties continue to prevail. Prioritising childcare over career is more accepted and often even expected of women. Thus, Jamila can examine her ambivalent feelings regarding her busy existence as a successful working mother by projecting her frustrations about both her work and the current balance between work and family onto the possibility of a different existence situated in Morocco.[103] Notwithstanding the fact that on many other points Jamila is critical about Moroccan gender relations and certainly not intent to give up her role as an independent modern woman, from her position of frustration about her work-family balance, the formulation of plans to move to Morocco can be a relief in itself. The very act of playing with the thought of migrating and becoming a stay-at-home mum presents her with an outlet to vent her frustrations.

This is where the struggle of Jamila to find a satisfying balance between work and motherhood ties in with a broader pattern in my informants' musings about moving to Morocco or Turkey. Playing with the thought of migration has more functions than just coming to a decision about whether or not to put these thoughts into action. The idea of having a choice, fantasising about

102 Cf. H. Groenendijk, *Werken en zorgen: de moeite waard. Een onderzoek naar het welbevinden van buitenshuiswerkende moeders* [*Working and caring: Worth the effort. A study on well-being of working mothers*], 1998.

103 Cf. Buitelaar, who argues that fantasies about how one's life would have been if one's parents had not migrated fulfil a similar function, and shows that several of her informants also fantasise about what they presume to be the less 'complicated' lives of Moroccan wives and mothers: Buitelaar 2009, p. 101; J. Thielmann, *The Shaping of Islamic Fields in Europe: A Case Study in South West Germany*, 2005. Elsewhere, she also notes that their Moroccan origins 'supply them with powerful images and words to describe their experiences': Buitelaar 2007b, p. 21.

a life that might be, by itself can provide an imaginary escape from tensions in one's actual predicament. In that sense, the formulation of migration wishes can become a strategy to cope with the pressures resulting from the Dutch contemporary climate of exclusion (as well as prevailing gender roles and other stressful aspects of one's personal life).

The third factor in Jamila's life story that can help to contextualise her turnaround regarding the Netherlands in general and her work in particular relates to her sensitivity to being excluded by her colleagues. Throughout Jamila's life narrative, we encounter stories that, although not explicitly linked by Jamila herself, share a common theme: her sensitivity to negative judgements by others. These stories can be seen as part of a specific chain of memories leading up to her current vulnerability in the face of the hardened Dutch climate.[104] Talking about her childhood, for example, she recalls the shame of being forced by her father to return a candy stolen from a shop and apologise to the shopkeeper. She also brings up memories of performance anxiety that inhibited her achievements at school. During adolescence, she stopped hanging out on the streets entirely after a fight with a girl from her neighbourhood, and she was greatly distressed by a teacher's comment that she was not smart enough to attain the educational level she was aiming for.

It is not so much the exact content of these memories which is of interest here as the fact that Jamila selects so many memories which share this common theme. There seems to be an I-position which we might name *I-as-vulnerable to others' negative opinion* from which this chain of memories is narrated.[105] Activated by her remembered experiences of exclusion, this position can be an important part of the coalition I introduced in Section 3.3 and help explain why her repositioning in reaction to these experiences is more radical than that of many others I spoke to. Simultaneously, considering that a life story is always told from the perspective of the narrator in the here and now and constructed to give meaning to one's current self-image and situation,[106] we also need to see her highlighting of memories told from her vulnerable position in the light of the current importance of this position.[107]

The same can be said regarding the previous points about her work: her current dissatisfaction with her work may trigger the less pleasant memories

104 For another discussion of different chains of memories told from different I-positions, see Buitelaar 2013a, especially p. 245.

105 Cf. Buitelaar 2006a, p. 262.

106 To describe this, Brockmeier coins the useful term 'retrospective teleology': J. Brockmeier, *Autobiographical time*, 2000, p. 60. See also: D. Draaisma, *De heimweefabriek: Geheugen, tijd en ouderdom*, 2008, pp. 113–118.

107 Cf. E.G. Mishler, *Work, identity, and narrative: An artist-craftsman's story*, 1992.

about her interaction with colleagues, just as the perception of increasing othering in the working environment may contribute to her present dislike of her job. And whereas from a position counting on a future in the Netherlands she is considering looking for another job, from another position oriented towards life in Morocco she dismisses this idea (together with the option of climbing the educational ladder as she says she envisaged before) and plays with the idea of opting out altogether.

Interfaces with Dutch Society

Jamila's equation of her colleagues with 'the Dutch' underlines how strongly the image of Dutch society that forms minority individuals' frames of reference depends on actual day-to-day interactions (besides public discourse). The work place is Jamila's most important 'interface' with Dutch society, or her main setting of what social psychologists call 'intergroup contact'. The importance of the working place as a site of intergroup contact is confirmed in many of my informants' narratives.[108] While Jamila considers some of her colleagues as friends, most other informants have weak rather than strong social ties with their colleagues. Other more or less public settings in which informants maintain predominantly weak ties with native Dutch include school (for both students and parents) and voluntary associations. Several informants report having had very strong ties with certain neighbours in the past. Hardly anyone spoke of similar ties in the present, while many mentioned their current neighbours' attitudes, which range from disinterest to outright suspicion. The quality of interaction in such settings is particularly salient for the minority of informants who have little experience with strong intergroup ties in more private spheres.[109] On the other side of the continuum I spoke to several people who (used to) have a native Dutch partner. (These were mainly men, however. Of the Moroccan-Dutch women I spoke to, one had a husband of Dutch descent, and one other was married to a man of Turkish background. Of the Turkish women, one was married to a native Dutchman.) Friendship ties with native Dutch or migrants from other groups were important to many, although it was especially informants who were

108 Snel, Engbersen & Leerkes 2006, p. 304.

109 Some interviewees described their prime settings of intergroup contact in terms of a Dutch as opposed to a Moroccan or Turkish 'world', as we saw in the case of Naima in the epilogue to Chapter 3. For more about this, see Chapter 5.

parents themselves who mentioned that in their stage of life family became much more relevant than friendship.

Some informants singled out specific relationships as formative for their perception of native Dutch. In Habib's narrative, for example, his ex-girlfriend and her family are described as having provided him with more intimate knowledge of 'Dutch culture'. This family displayed an openness in discussing sensitive issues that felt new and liberating to Habib. Aziza contrastingly describes her own special relationship, with an upper class family for whom she served as a nanny, as mutually enriching rather than liberating. Latifa (38, f, Moroccan) is one of those who hold nostalgic memories of a childhood neighbour who helped the family find their way in Dutch society.[110] Fatih spoke in much broader terms when explaining how for some time he felt less at home in Dutch society due to the negative public discourse about Muslims. But then, examining his personal relationships with colleagues and neighbours, he realised that this negativity did not apply to his everyday life and thus put his sense of alienation into perspective. Yet not everybody has such positive personal experiences to counterbalance the growing sense of exclusion, and not everybody who does draws the same conclusions as Fatih does.

Many assessments of intergroup contact focus either on these contacts as a measure for migrants' 'integration'[111] – a rather meagre measure for a dubitable concept, in my view – or as a means to diminish majority members' prejudices.[112] Many informants confirmed that intergroup contacts do have the latter effect – or that they would, if Dutch people would but open up to such contacts in the first place. But the stories of Jamila and others do not fit this one-dimensional, problem-oriented focus on integration on the minority and prejudice on the majority side. My own major concern here is, rather, to show the significance of these contacts in shaping the images (descendants of) migrants themselves hold of native Dutch.[113]

110 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 23.

111 B. Martinovic, F. van Tubergen & I. Maas, *Dynamics of interethnic contact: a panel study of immigrants in the Netherlands*, 2009.

112 J. Hamberger & M. Hewstone, *Inter-ethnic contact as a predictor of blatant and subtle prejudice: Tests of a model in four West European nations*, 2011; T.F. Pettigrew, *Generalized intergroup contact effects on prejudice*, 1997; M.J.A.M. Verkuyten, J. Thijs & H. Bekhuis, *Intergroup Contact and Ingroup Reappraisal Examining the Deprovincialization Thesis*, 2010.

113 Cf. Verkuyten, Thijs & Bekhuis 2010, p. 413.

3.6 *Dutch Positions: Insiders Wishing to Move Out*

Personal and structural public exclusion are important topics in Jamila's repositioning towards the Netherlands as (no longer) her home. But she also underlines that dissatisfaction with the Netherlands is a phenomenon that is not limited to citizens with migration backgrounds. According to her, many native Dutch are also growing tired of the Netherlands. The reasons she gives for this resemble the characterisations of the Netherlands I presented in Chapter 2: bureaucracy, rules and taxes for everything, too much mail, and the general monotony of daily life. One example, in Jamila's words: *'I don't see much of a future in the Netherlands anymore. But I'm not the only one, I think lots of people feel that way. And by that I don't mean the Moroccan community – I mean Dutch people. So often I talk to colleagues who say like, "I can't see myself still living here in a few years either".* (…) *It's all just one big factory here.'* Here, once again, Jamila's colleagues are her point of reference in depicting 'the Dutch'. This time, rather than harassing her for not belonging here, these Dutch are airing their own dissatisfaction with life in the Netherlands.

There is a clear line of more general critique of contemporary Dutch society in Jamila's words. At the same time, her story illustrates that different threads are hard to separate from the larger fabric of the narrative. Jamila's more 'general' critique of the Netherlands is closely related to her more 'specific' accounts of exclusion. Talking about her youth, for example, she reminisces: *'And the naïvety that was still around then, and how the people viewed the guest workers and so on. Now they just don't want anything to do with it, most people.* (…) *And that our* [*Dutch*] *neighbour would drop by our place for a cuppa. And we would go to see her, for a biscuit. Oh wait – another thing I can still remember were those strings, you just can't do that anymore: In the neighbourhood we had those strings hanging out* [*of the mail slot*] *so you didn't have to take the key with you, you just pulled on the string and went inside. And the milk that got left in front of the door.'* Comparing a rosy childhood with a grim present, Jamila expresses her nostalgia about the naivety of the past, which she relates both to the openness with which Dutch people used to regard guest workers ('specific' critique: in contrast to current exclusion) and to leaving your door unlocked and finding your groceries on the doorstep ('general' critique: in contrast to current crime). Jamila's specific and more general dismissals of the Netherlands flow together in her narratives, in terms of narrative proximity, style, and even vocabulary. For instance, Jamila repeatedly speaks about being 'persecuted' in the Netherlands, referring, at different times, to the constant pressure to achieve at work as well as to the continuous public scrutiny she finds herself under as a member of the Muslim/Moroccan minority. She also feels herself being 'watched', employing this term when talking both about the same public scrutiny and

about the omnipresence of surveillance cameras or colleagues looking up each other's private addresses on Google Street View.

Reasoning against the Netherlands in this more general line, Jamila not only argues that 'they too' are frustrated about life in the Netherlands, but she also identifies herself as a member of this group of frustrated Dutch: *'The Netherlands and I are through. But Dutch people think that themselves too. I'm Dutch myself: when I spend too much time there, then I also think like, what am I actually?'* Jamila distances herself from the Netherlands while simultaneously identifying as Dutch. She voices her discontent from a Dutch insider position. This way even her I-position *I-as-Dutch* can identify with the wish to migrate and be included in her new coalition. By explicitly identifying as Dutch, Jamila fortifies her internal support base for the project of migration. At the same time she averts the (internalised) criticism that her wish to migrate only shows that she is poorly integrated and 'not Dutch enough'. 'On the contrary', she seems to be saying through remarks like the above, 'it is exactly *as a Dutchwoman* that I no longer see any point in staying in this country!'

3.7 *At Home in the Netherlands? Internal Contestations about a Relationship in Crisis*

Both as an excluded Moroccan and Muslim, and as a Dutchwoman, Jamila paints a gloomy picture of the Netherlands. Yet, this picture does not stand unchallenged in her story either. Jamila's words about the country are marked by deep ambivalence. As I demonstrated in Section 3.1, the implicit question of whether she is at home in the Netherlands is answered with a sometimes explicit, sometimes more implicit yes as well as a definite no. Although the now dominant image of the Netherlands pushing Jamila away could already be distinguished as a critical footnote during our first interview, by then 'yes' still dominated: feeling at home in the Netherlands was a given, Morocco was no more than a wonderful holiday destination. This 'old' position is marginalised during the second interview, but has not disappeared altogether. An important aspect of the image of Morocco as temporary, for example, was the idea of 'not fitting in' there. And while Jamila no longer dwells on the relief she used to feel upon returning from Morocco, she does still mention not fitting in there. In such remarks her 'old' view on Morocco sometimes asserts its ongoing presence in her position repertoire.

Especially during our second interview, Jamila speaks about the Netherlands quite passionately, from several positions, evoking a complex image of this country. The profundity of her attachment shines through in her current sarcasm: when her husband receives an official letter warning him that he will have to leave the country if he does not renew his residence permit in time, she

sneers that the authorities act as if they are evicting people from 'heaven'.[114] She also quotes her husband reminding her of her former enthusiasm for the Netherlands: *'Is this supposed to be the promised land that you told me all about? How fantastic everything was here?'*

I have so far focused on Jamila's discontent with the Netherlands. Many of her statements, however, bespeak a sense of loss and even grief for something loved rather than 'discontent'. Maybe the most vivid expression of this are her following words: *'And I love the Dutch, their mentality, very much. I'm crazy about that straightforwardness, you know... But somehow, the Netherlands doesn't love me anymore, that's it, that's the feeling I have.'* If we take up Jamila's metaphor of a romantic relationship, I would contend that at the time of our second interview her relationship with the Netherlands is certainly not over but rather in crisis. Her stories about her new feeling of rejection are also about her Dutch routes; about the way this country has shaped who she is and how very much at home she used to feel here. The image of thwarted love resonates in the speed with which Jamila switches between positions fiercely contradicting each other on the matter of her relationship to the Netherlands.[115] When during our second interview I ask her what this country means to her, her first reply is an emphatic 'everything!' Exactly three minutes later, she rages: *'The Netherlands hasn't given me anything, nothing at all.'*

Jamila fluctuates between expressing her gratefulness for everything the Netherlands has given her and exclaiming that she owes this country nothing at all. The different voices in her narrative seem to be acting out a conflict of loyalty that in itself proves how rooted she is in the Netherlands. Sometimes we can follow this dialogue in real time, for example in her remark *'Look, on the one hand, we've had a good life here, that's not the issue, blah blah blah...'* This comment is a digression in a passage in which she is critical of the Netherlands. Apparently during this passage another voice defending the country is trying to interrupt, and is acknowledged but downplayed and quickly silenced by the critical voice speaking.

Contradictory statements such as these can point to underlying questions that motivate an individual's internal dialogue. In the course of our interview, Jamila poses herself the question of what the Netherlands has yielded her, and from different positions she formulates different, conflicting considerations and answers. Sometimes she is herself surprised about the massive shift in her

114 In this specific case there was an actual, although improbable, threat of expulsion. There were, however, several informants who pondered over the theoretical possibility that one day they would no longer be allowed to live in the Netherlands, and presented this as a relatively new concern.

115 Cf. Hermans 2006, pp. 62–63.

positioning, as we remember her saying at the beginning of this chapter: *'I never thought that I could ever think of my life that way. I always thought, this is my house and I'm going to die here, end of story. But it's not like that at all anymore.'* Jamila's negotiations are, of course, more than an internal dialogue. They are voiced in the setting of a formal interview and at least partly also intended as a message to the broader anticipated audience of my research report. At the end of our exchange I ask her which aspect of all the things she told me she would most like for me to put into my book. Her answer did not come as a surprise: *'How I thought about the Netherlands,* (...) *there, and now, one year later, how so much could change within a year. That process, the complete turnaround, how it happened, I've told you that.* [FJS: True, that's right. And what are your thoughts on that, on that process?] *Yeah, I think it's really terrible, that things can change like that, in the space of a year. And it's only getting worse.'* Presuming that Jamila expects that Dutch people in particular will constitute an audience for my book, and resorting to her metaphor of thwarted love once more, could we not say that she wants her once-beloved country to know about the love it lost, to realise what it did to her and how it caused her to turn away?

Oncoming Traffic: Rachid's Turnaround

Jamila's turnaround is at once highly personal and deeply embedded in societal developments. It takes place in an era in which, as I have described, we witness growing Islamophobia and a Dutch backlash against diversity. In this light, the direction of her development makes sense. In Rachid's story, however, we see a turnaround in another direction, which makes sense mainly in terms of his personal life course. Rachid's case is of interest here because upon first sight his turnaround is quite the opposite of Jamila's. Nevertheless, contrasting the dynamics of these two cases can serve to highlight how the ways in which societal developments are given meaning, need to be seen in light of the personal life course, and vice versa. Besides Jamila, Rachid is the only person I spoke to who reported a radical turnaround in orientation in the course of our several interviews. There are other ways in which their two stories also resemble each other far more closely than any of the other stories I recorded. Rachid is very nostalgic about the Netherlands of his youth, but harsh in his verdict of the country in its present state: *'The Netherlands, it's where I grew up, it's my country, simple as that. But I'm not welcome in my own country.'*

During our first encounter in Morocco, in the same summer in which I also spoke to Jamila, Rachid recounts many instances of blatant discrimination (this is one of the points on which his account differs from

that of Jamila, who mainly speaks about more subtle forms of discrimination) and concludes: *'Oh I've had it with the Netherlands, I can tell you. With everything. Legislation, discrimination, all of it.* (...) *And it leads to a lot of frustration. And I'm sick of the media there too.'* From the time of our first interview in the Netherlands, to the spring months of the next year, this view has not changed much. Full of frustration, Rachid tells me that the Netherlands has let him down and how he longs to leave this country of bullying behind and move to Morocco. One more summer stay passes before we meet for our final interview six months later. But like in Jamila's case, this single summer has changed his perspective: *'If you had asked me earlier, you would have never dared to write or say that I would change my mind.* (...) *I was always 100 per cent convinced* [hits the table] *that I would go back, period.* (...) *And now I'm 100 per cent not going back.'* Rachid tells me the reason for his turnaround: upon arriving in Morocco, he was mistreated by the customs officers. He witnessed the powerlessness of Moroccan citizens vis-à-vis the authorities: *'They have the last word, nothing you say is important at all.'* As in Jamila's case, new experiences in Morocco have prompted a reorientation concerning the possibility of making Morocco an everyday home.

According to Rachid, his image of the Netherlands has not changed, except that he now plans his future there, since moving to Morocco is no longer an option. Yet in the course of this final interview, a milder voice also entered the stage from time to time. In some passages we now observe Rachid adopting the strategy of 'letting go': *'I was always getting worked up* (...). *You know, they're all bark and no bite, you shouldn't lose any sleep over it. Look, it's no fun seeing that stuff on* TV *all the time. But at a certain point you need to get through it, see past it and look elsewhere, you know?* (...) *But I've sort of resigned myself to it, but I mean, in the Netherlands, here you can do what you like, you know? You can go to the mosques, take Arabic lessons,* (...) *you have freedom here.'* Not only is Rachid much milder in his reaction to perceived discrimination than during earlier interviews – he also takes time to consider positive aspects of the Netherlands. Moreover, in this excerpt he does not mention his experiences of face-to-face discrimination, but rather focuses on his new ability to put the public discourse on Muslims and Moroccans into perspective.

In terms of the four questions on social exclusion which I formulated in the first part of this chapter, the example of Rachid illustrates the relevance of life course development to the question of importance ascribed to experiences of exclusion (the third question I discussed). His perception of high levels of discrimination (the first question) has not

changed between our encounters. Still, he has left much of his frustration behind and actively decided to save his energy for other things. He now feels less affected by the discrimination he is confronted with. This has also altered his responses to such cases (the second question). He has now adopted 'letting go' as a strategy to deal with the discriminatory incidents he reports.

Both Rachid and Jamila, through their opposite trajectories, illustrate how the meanings of Morocco (or Turkey) and the Netherlands as home co-construct each other – and how life course and broader society intersect in unique individual formulations of home.

3.8 *Moroccan Voices*

Simultaneously, with her repositioning towards the Netherlands, Jamila is also reviewing her relationship with her other home country: Morocco. As we saw in the previous chapters, in the interviews I conducted Morocco and Turkey are often mirrored with the Netherlands. Indeed, in opposition to the stories about the Netherlands pushing Jamila away stands the image of Morocco welcoming her with open arms. As feeling at home in the Netherlands becomes problematic, Morocco starts to look more and more home-like. This at least is the consensus of the new coalition of I-positions I have identified. Jamila dwells on Morocco's pull-factors much less elaborately than on the Dutch push-factors just described. When we focus on what she does say about the country, the image that occurs is, once again, ambivalent. She talks about her relationship to Morocco from different positions, and her staging of 'Moroccans' as a collective external position is multivoiced too – so in fact there is more than one external 'Moroccan voice'.[116]

Jamila's story contains both positively and negatively valued Moroccan voices. As in many stories, Moroccans are depicted as warm, hospitable and accepting. The latter has become particularly important to Jamila in view of her recent experiences with Islamophobia: *'I was never really a Muslim to the outside world. And you do notice that you really are drawn into that group like, "well we do accept you and we won't ask any questions, because we don't find it all that*

116 The multiplicity of Moroccan voices is a clear example of openness to ambivalences in Jamila's narrative. At some other points Jamila tends to be rather more absolute in her opinions than most other informants – for example in her switch from depicting the Netherlands as her one and only home in our first interview to fiercely dismissing the country the second time we meet, and from loving her work and colleagues to wishing herself far away from them. Still, I have also shown that these strong opinions are themselves far from immune to contestation and ambivalence.

strange." ' Another quality of Moroccans which Jamila values is what she characterises as their relaxed attitude, which forms a pleasant contrast with the Dutch unrelenting bureaucracy. Jamila likes to identify with this trait, but cannot do so unambiguously because she also knows how much she herself values punctuality and has internalised the 'Dutch' mentality of 'a deal is a deal'. This makes her relationship to the 'relaxed' Moroccan voice a good example of the two-sided orientalist selfing and othering I discussed in Chapter 2.[117] In this case, Jamila tells herself that this is simply something she will have to deal with if she moves to Morocco: *'So that's just how things are there, in principle if you want to live there, you just have to learn what the people there are like to get along with them, you mustn't get mad at them, because that's how they are.'*

The positively valued Moroccan voices facilitate Jamila's repositioning towards Morocco as her 'real' home. For the more ambivalent example in the last quote, this is more complicated, but Jamila still engages with this position from within her coalition by concluding that this is a disadvantage she will have to accept. Other accounts are less compatible with Jamila's new-found enthusiasm for Morocco. Moroccans are, for example, sometimes presented as hypocrites with 'two faces', and as an outsider Jamila never quite knows which face she is dealing with. At other times they are presented as cheating or greedy, as seeing people from Europe merely as a source of income or as discriminating them as '*étrangers*'. Jamila dislikes this discrimination, but the othering in Morocco does not affect her as profoundly as the othering she is subjected to in the Netherlands does, where the stakes are higher and power relations more asymmetrical. Jamila also introduces a new Moroccan voice, which mocks the poor European Moroccans who still think they have a better life over there.[118] As we have seen, this is a voice Jamila actually agrees with.

In response to these various Moroccan voices, Jamila shifts between I-positions strongly identifying with Morocco and Moroccans and positions in which she distances herself from them and stresses her otherness. At different points in the interview she explicitly identifies herself as Moroccan or as Dutch, and sometimes she also reflects on this: *'It can be anything. "We" as in, I like croquettes, "we" like croquettes.*[119] *"We" meaning "we" like couscous.'* The fact that Jamila is reorienting herself towards a future in Morocco does not mean that she will automatically fit in there, and she is very much aware of

117 See Chapter 2, Section 24.

118 Unlike some other informants who told me that resident Moroccans/Turks recently have found out that their European relatives are, in fact, second-rate citizens in their countries of residence, Jamila makes no mention of her Moroccan peers' awareness of the discrimination occurring in the Netherlands.

119 Croquettes, 'kroketten', are a typically Dutch snack.

this, although in the light of the relative dominance of the new coalition she prefers not to dwell on this fact explicitly.

At one point we even see how Jamila brings up a seemingly negative trait of Moroccans as something positive compared to the current Dutch situation. Her earlier comment that Moroccans measure your value according to what they expect to gain from you, is turned around: *'There, if they can gain something from you, you'll run into them, but if not they won't bother you. And here, even if you live by the rules, even if you do everything right, it's never enough.'* Here Jamila quotes her own negative description of Moroccans, only to reinscribe it with new meaning from her current position. Her searching for new meanings and staging of very different Moroccan voices show Jamila in the middle of her quest for the meaning Morocco can now have for her. She is asking herself if there are enough reasons to identify with Moroccans and/or adapt to them to justify her wish to live among them. Jamila's ambivalent stance towards Morocco is demonstrated most vividly when we focus on the account of her most recent summer stay.

3.9 *Marking the Turnaround: 'Since last summer...'*

Jamila's 2010 summer stay in Morocco is an important point of reference in her accounts of her turnaround. She talks about it as a time during which she observed new developments in the country and came to see life in Morocco as a realistic and attractive alternative. As we have seen, during this stay she did not miss the Netherlands at all. She only checked on the Dutch news to follow up on the developments regarding the possible participation of Geert Wilders's Freedom Party (PVV) in the Dutch government to be formed, which made her even happier to be away for the moment. In other stories about her turnaround she often mentions the changes that took place 'this year' (i.e. 2009–2010): *'Morocco as a whole, it really is, in one way or another, it's your home after all. Ever since this year, I really have been seeing it differently.'* Most of her references to her 2010 stay in Morocco share this message supporting her new stance towards Morocco, but there is one passage in the interview that puzzled me.

Her husband, who initially was glad to put some miles between himself and his family in Morocco, is now starting to miss them. At his request, he and Jamila spent the whole summer of 2010 in his parents' house instead of taking lodgings near the seaside. For Jamila this was, in her own words, *'a bit of a drawback'.* In her explanation she emphasises how much she differs from her in-laws in cultural terms: *'Commotion, noise, it's very different of course, it's like I already said, we are very different after all.* (...) *We in Dutch culture. Freer, sometimes things slip out and you really get a response from them, like what are you doing? You just can't say that, you can't do that. Well, for myself, I just had to block*

my ears for a month. For him, for him I just sat there calmly, I can imagine that if you don't see your parents for a year that you do miss them. (…) *You do need to make an effort sometimes.'*

It transpires from Jamila's words that it was only for the sake of her husband that she endured a whole month in the proximity of people who are so different from herself. This was certainly not her own idea of a nice holiday. Yet this challenging month is the very same summer stay that made her change her mind about where she is most at home, the stay about which she later tells me during our second interview: *'Until last year Morocco wasn't important to me, I just went there on holiday, and after four weeks I had had enough. And this year I found my rest there. Plus I noticed that it developed, in the sense of it being like here, so everything that I had here but not there, I now have there too.'* Not only does Jamila not refer back to the less pleasant sides of this summer turning point, she actually talks about Morocco in diametrically opposing terms, having spoken about *'commotion'* in the previous quote (from the very same 2010 interview) and speaking about *'rest'* in this one! This illustrates my argument in Chapter 2 that such opposing characterisations of one country result from the multivoicedness of my informants' narratives: referring to one and the same stay, from one position Jamila complains about continual disquiet, while from another she claims to have found her rest in Morocco.[120]

Landmarks

The shift from a more or less unquestioned sense of belonging to a problematisation of the Netherlands as home is a recurring pattern in the accounts I collected. On a micro-level, this pattern bears resemblance to psychological stage models of identity development. Phinney and Rosenthal, for example, describe how after a stage of 'unexamined ethnic identity', 'typically during adolescence, an experience that makes ethnicity salient is seen as triggering an exploration of what it means to be a member of a specific minority group in society.'[121] Many of my informants report such 'triggering experiences', although they are most often set in early adulthood rather than in adolescence.[122] This timing

120 Cf. G.S. Gregg, *Religious Voices and Identity in the Life-Narratives of Young Adult Moroccans*, 2013, p. 83.

121 J.S. Phinney & D.A. Rosenthal, *Ethnic Identity in Adolescence: Process, Context, and Outcome*, 1992, p. 150.

122 The fact that 'triggering experiences' have been described for minorities in rather different situations calls up the question of how to interpret the finding that virtually all

is understandable, looking at the macro-setting of Dutch society: it is as young adults that most of the informants were confronted with the Dutch backlash against diversity and growing Islamophobia. Correspondingly, most of these 'wake-up calls' concern situations in which informants felt excluded as Muslims. In many life stories, landmarks of the Dutch backlash – such as the successive rises of Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders, the murders of the former and of Theo van Gogh, and the events of 9/11[123] – are integrated in the narratives as personal turning points. Other landmarks are less collectively shared: Idriss (34, m, Moroccan), for example, looks back at being attacked on the street for holding hands with a blonde, and Rachid has seen his perspective change when he started his own business and had to deal with discrimination from authorities and customers.

The passage about her reluctant stay with her in-laws provides a critical footnote to the dominant storyline featuring a growing sense of belonging in Morocco. It shows that despite her more positive image of the country, Jamila still sometimes sees herself as different from resident Moroccans and positions herself as an outsider in Moroccan settings. In this passage she does not engage with her other, more positive, positions towards Morocco – something which she might have done, for example, by claiming that although staying

informants agree that exclusion has become much worse since 9/11. How much weight should we attach to the fact that for this age cohort the time of the 9/11 attacks roughly corresponded with their early adulthood? (see A.J. Stewart & J.M. Healy, *Linking individual development and social changes*, 1989; Elder & Kirkpatrick Johnson 2003, p. 4, but see also the work of Draaisma, who shows that at which stage in life we experience something affects the likelihood we will remember it as important later in life: Draaisma 2008). Here the research conducted by Marjo Buitelaar is helpful: the informants in her research project are somewhat older and were interviewed for the first time before the year 2000. In a round of follow-up interviews ten years later, these informants, too, reported a sense of increasing exclusion and othering (Buitelaar 2009, e.g. pp. 110, 291–301). Specifically regarding landmarks, Buitelaar describes a political controversy about the double nationality of a Dutch politician of Turkish descent as a key episode in the accounts of several of her informants. She relates this both to the fact that this was one of the most recent controversies at the time of her interviews, and to the fact that her informants, being the first highly educated Moroccan-Dutch women, have invested a lot in blending in in Dutch society and feel all the more disappointed to see their loyalty questioned purely based on their passport. In my own interviews, however, I found similar reactions to this and other collective landmarks regardless of informants' educational level.

123 Prins & Saharso 2010, Buitelaar 2010, Duyvendak 2011a.

with her in-laws was taxing, it did allow her to gain new insights into Moroccan society. Likewise, in all other passages about this summer stay, references to its disadvantages and to the fact that she spent this summer differently from earlier stays are absent. The isolated position of Jamila's critical footnote appears to underline the dominance of the new coalition's more positive discourse. Yet it could also be interpreted as a symptom of the relative fragility of this discourse: it is possible that in order to convince herself, Jamila feels a need to keep at bay arguments which challenge her new stance regarding Morocco.[124]

3.10 *Articulating Internal Positions: Jamila as Religious / Moral*

In Section 3.3 I introduced the new coalition of I-positions that has formed around Jamila's wish to move to Morocco. By now we have heard Jamila talk from many of those positions – e.g. her Dutch, Moroccan, work-related, modern and vulnerable positions. There are two other positions that deserve some more attention because they play a crucial role in her turnaround: her religious and moral positions.

Jamila has recently started to engage more intensively with Islam.[125] At the same time she feels more and more marginalised in the Netherlands because of that same religion. According to Jamila, in the past Islam was 'not an issue' in Dutch society. Her being a Muslim has become more important to her identity, both from her own point of view and in the eyes of the outside world.[126] Jamila now actively asks herself what faith and being a good Muslim mean to her. She is also starting to wonder what it means to raise her children in accordance with Islam. It is from this position as a new mother that she notices things in Dutch society that did not bother her before – the openness about drug use, for example. So apart from the growing sense of exclusion, the Netherlands is also becoming a less favourable setting because of certain incompatibilities between Dutch lifestyle and the Islamic values she wishes to teach her children.

Jamila is engaged in a process of questioning the place of religion in her life. Her religious position is certainly problematised in the context of her work. She

124 This sometimes even seems to result in overly optimistic depictions of the country, e.g. when Jamila states that the level of Moroccan education is higher than that in the Netherlands, or that at prayer time the streets fall completely empty. The enlarging of positive features of Morocco supports her narrative in working towards her turnaround.

125 Jamila does not specify when this development began, so we cannot determine to what extent it coincides with her turnaround.

126 Jamila does not link her own attention for religious matters to the increased social scrutiny, but such a connection has indeed been suggested, for instance by de Koning 2008, p. 77.

brings up her job as a reason for not wearing a headscarf yet: *'Your faith mustn't stand in the way of you doing things like earning your living, I think. That's more important, which is what the faith also says.'* Although headscarves are formally allowed in her working environment, Jamila points at the difference between theory and practice: *'But laws are not colleagues. And your manager can have you out of there in two seconds, if he wants, and for a completely different reason that has nothing to do with the headscarf.'* In a sense, Jamila opts for the strategy of 'hiding' her otherness as a Muslim, or at least not stressing it by donning a headscarf, as she estimates that informally this would endanger her position at work. In Morocco, on the contrary, to Jamila's relief wearing a headscarf is nothing special. She expresses her wish to conform to Islamic dress requirements once she settles in Morocco.

From her religious position Jamila thus opposes her working environment (and thus indirectly the Netherlands as a whole) to Morocco, with Morocco being the more favourable option. Her answer to my question of how she envisages her life in Morocco points in the same direction: she would like to raise her children well, quit working and focus on her religion *'100 per cent'*. There is another instance of this opposition which is of interest here. Talking about times in which she is more or less preoccupied with religion, she brings up Morocco as a setting in which religion becomes tangible, for example when the streets fall silent around prayer time. Her description of her working environment is quite the contrary: *'At work I almost forget it, I'm just in a totally different … you're not in the environment, um, where it's present.'* At her work, it seems, there is no place for her religion, either in the image she wants others to have of her or in her own consciousness.

There is a certain distinction here between Jamila's personal religiosity and her social identity as a Muslim. Her religious position is differentiated – we could contend that she has several different religious I-positions.[127] At work, this social identity is very much present, in a negative sense: it is considered relevant by her co-workers, whereas Jamila herself tries not to emphasise it, both because she prefers to be seen as an individual rather than as a representative of a Muslim community and because she is afraid of the professional disadvantages which profiling herself as explicitly Muslim might bring. Her personal religiosity, on the other hand, which brings her peace and is becoming more important in her personal life, is neglected at work; it does not belong there. Only during the most recent fasting month of Ramadan did she make an

127 Cf. Zock 2013, who argues that although I-positions always combine social and personal aspects, analytically it makes sense to distinguish between more personal and more social religious voices.

extra effort to perform her prayers at work, retiring to the archive room to do so discreetly.

For Jamila, her religiosity is a personal matter which she wishes to safeguard from outside intrusion. She stresses her religious independence and refuses external religious authority rather fiercely*: 'I have nothing to do with anyone, nothing at all. I don't meet with groups, or go and sit in groups in mosques, no. I did just say that the Muslim community opens its arms to me, but no what I mean is the faith itself. I don't believe in people, because nobody's perfect. I'm immune to influence as well, totally immune.* (...) *The Prophet, yes, the Prophet is very important to me, Allah is very important to me, but not the imam.'* This passage appears to confirm the idea of a differentiation of her religious position(s). Jamila herself sees her personal religiosity as something strictly separate from her social environment.

In my view, however, in all their firmness Jamila's words also demonstrate how social and personal aspects of religion cannot be seen as really separate. I would argue that her stress on religious independence needs to be seen in the context of (Dutch) dominant images of Islam and, more specifically, of Muslim women. Jamila is very sensitive to these images. That is why she does not wear a headscarf yet and hides the fact that her husband is her cousin. In the eyes of her colleagues, Jamila expects, a veiled woman married to a cousin is the very opposite of independent.[128] Her complaint that people automatically assume that she agrees with the views of Islamist extremists and terrorists bespeaks the same prejudice. Against this background, Jamila's refusal of religious authority can be viewed as a reaction to collective (Dutch) external I-positions which deny her religious independence. By demanding a status aparte for her religiosity, Jamila escapes from a double bind: she can at once reclaim her religious independence, comply with the Dutch dominant view of religion as a private matter, and safeguard her religiosity from corrupting influences both 'inside' and 'outside' of Islam.

When we look for instances of such influences in other parts of the interview, once again Morocco appears as the more attractive setting from a religious perspective. In Morocco Jamila is relieved by the absence of outside voices full of prejudices against Islam. And while one might expect that pressure from inside Muslim circles to succumb to religious authority would be stronger in Morocco, according to Jamila the opposite applies. In her own family religiosity is regarded as a personal affair: *'Everyone is like hey, I deal with my own faults, and leave yours alone.'* As Jamila gradually places more emphasis on religion, her appreciation for Moroccans' acceptance of her Muslim identity

128 Cf. Prins & Saharso 2010, p. 75.

and of her religious freedom grows. This is also reflected in the fact that she associates religion and home with the same concept: *'calm'.* In several respects, her religious position is an increasingly important pillar in the coalition of I-positions that prefer Morocco to the Netherlands.

In Jamila's life story, one incident allows us to trace her refusal of religious authority back to her childhood. But curiously enough, this early refusal is cast in a rather different light. She tells me about her indignation when a girl whose father was a friend of the imam turned up in Qur'an class without the obligatory headscarf and remained unpunished. In protest Jamila left her own headscarf off for the next class and was consequently beaten by the imam. This incident made her decide to stop attending Qur'an class. Nowadays she blames herself for not having learned Arabic: *'I really regret it, because now I can't read the Qur'an. All because of a stupid mistake, being too stubborn.'* What might be interpreted by Jamila as an early proof of her refusal of corrupt religious authority is instead presented as regrettable stubbornness.

Let me attempt an interpretation of this paradoxical story. Confronted with the injustice of unequal treatment, Jamila reacted from a moral I-position, disregarding her religious 'duty' (regardless whether this was, at the time, mainly a question of the authority of her father who sent her to Qur'an class or an internal sense of religious obligation). Looking back at the incident from the present situation in which she increasingly values Islam, Jamila now feels it was wrong to prioritise this moral position. Here we discern another religious position, which does not coincide with the religious position that stresses independence. From this other position she blames herself for having let her 'foolish' sense of justice ruin the opportunity she had to learn about her religion. Her 'independent' religious I-position can be seen as supporting the dominant coalition in some aspects, yet in this specific situation it is overruled by this 'other' religious position. Not only does this example confirm that indeed Jamila speaks from more than one 'religious position', it also points to the existence of an at least partly separate 'moral' position.[129]

This moral position agrees with her religious position(s) in the shared project of migration to Morocco and on a few other points, but more often it functions as a separate position without reference to religion or, as in the incident discussed, even in opposition to a religious position. The latter is gaining ground, as we see, for example, in an episode about homosexuality: there Jamila on the one hand asserts that she has always been on friendly terms with

129 Note that the distinction between 'religious' and 'moral' positions here does not imply a theoretical stance on the relationship between religion and ethics, but only serves as a characterisation of Jamila's various I-positions.

homosexuals, but on the other wonders whether she should raise her children in a society which so openly endorses un-Islamic practices – here she brings in alcohol consumption and drug use as well as homosexuality. Now that she is a mother, she says, she starts to see the advantages of the Moroccan way: *'Here you're really exposed to it, you can be open about it and it's fine. Of course it's okay, it would trouble me greatly if my child were unhappy. But on the other hand, I do think, like, about ostrich policy.* (...) *don't parade it about.* (...) *If I decide to be a full Muslim, then there are things I would rather not expose my child to.'* From her new perspective as a mother, Jamila is clearly searching for a satisfactory balance between her moral emphasis on tolerance and her wish to provide her children with a religiously 'correct' frame of reference. In the passage quoted, it is the religious position that dominates.

Jamila's moral position, asserting honesty, openness, directness, and tolerance, is strongly engaged in her struggle with the Netherlands as her home. We have already seen it in action in her dialogue with the colleague voting for Wilders. This dialogue has a religious edge, with her colleague indirectly accusing her of terrorism. Yet Jamila's answer is explicitly formulated from her moral rather than her religious position: she focuses on his hypocrisy and on her own moral conduct. One of the reasons for this, we can surmise, is that her moral vocabulary is more compatible with the Dutch discourse of norms and values, and thus her moral voice is a more acceptable dialogue partner for Dutchmen who eye religious language with suspicion. This I-position is rooted in the Dutch context, although Jamila certainly does not identify her moral stance as typically Dutch but on the contrary opposes it to Dutch hypocrisy. It is also from this position that she emphasises how well integrated she is in Dutch society: she lives by the rules, pays her bills and never gets a fine. By doing so, Jamila presents herself as beating the Dutch at their own moral game; she claims to practise the values to which they only pay lip service: tolerance and honesty.

Besides being rooted in the Dutch context, Jamila's moral position is also strongly coloured by the figure of her father. Most stories Jamila tells about him relate him to her moral position. It is he who taught her not to steal and who set the right example by never breaking any rules or forsaking his obligations: *'My father has never received a reminder letter at home for anything he still needed to pay. Thankfully we inherited that from him, because that's what I'm like too.'* Her father also showed respect for his daughter's integrity: when young men came to ask for her hand he referred them to her, knowing she would refuse them. He also allowed her to go on school outings because he trusted her to behave correctly. As a mentor for her internal moral I-position, 'my father' is an important external I-position in Jamila's position repertoire, showing how

closely internal and external I-positions can be related.[130] In the next section I look at the importance of her parents and her husband as external I-positions supporting her new coalition.

3.11 *Articulating External Positions: Significant Others Supporting the Coalition*

Asked about the most important people in her life, Jamila lists her parents and husband. Apart from her son she refuses to single out anybody else as important. Obviously, these main characters in her life story are important for her in many different ways. In this section I limit myself to discussing their role in developing the plot of Jamila's turnaround in their capacity as external I-positions in her position repertoire.

While in passages touching upon moral issues Jamila generally talks about her father, in relation to her repositioning towards the Netherlands she often brings up both her parents together. Her most virulent criticism of the Netherlands is voiced in connection to the harsh migrant lives her parents lived here. In Section 3.7 I mentioned her remark that the Netherlands have given her nothing. Now consider the sentences directly following this statement: *'The Netherlands has given me nothing, nothing at all. Things like, my education, I could have done there as well, because the standard there is even higher than here. The Netherlands has given my parents nothing, given me nothing, only a ton of misery, and for my parents especially, yeah, to me that's the worst thing, my parents.'* In this remark Jamila clearly speaks in coalition with a parental voice. It is they, most of all, who suffered under migration. Speaking for herself, Jamila also sees the advantages of having grown up in the Netherlands. What is a question for Jamila, 'what have the Netherlands yielded me?' she presents as a certainty for her parents: 'nothing whatsoever!' Therefore, as external I-positions in her position repertoire, her parents fulfil the narrative function of allowing her to express her disappointment about the Netherlands in stronger terms than she could were she speaking strictly for herself.

In some instances, Jamila blames her father for coming to the Netherlands: *'You think you did us a favour, but no you've really split us apart. You don't know whether you're Dutch, or Moroccan, or somewhere in-between.'* At times Jamila

130 In the case of Jamila's father, there is one thing which stands out from the overall picture of a moral role model. When Jamila talks about the importance her mother has in her life, she mentions that her mother managed to raise the family despite the fact that her father was a heavy gambler who failed to provide for his family. Similar to the case of the ambivalent summer stay, this one mention of her father's dark side stands alone and is ignored in the rest of her narrative.

sees her multiple cultural competence as enriching, but at other times it feels more like a curse, dooming her to be 'split' forever. This split is rather acutely symbolised by Jamila's parents themselves: her mother still lives in the Netherlands whereas her father has returned to Morocco. For him it is a matter of principle that he never applied for Dutch citizenship: *'He says "I'm no Dutchman, the Netherlands has destroyed me and sent me away".'* In Jamila's story her parents stand for all the grief of the migrant condition and for the darkest side of the Netherlands.[131]

The other external I-position I would like to discuss here is that of her husband. About him, we hear nothing but praise from Jamila's lips: he is everything she hoped a husband would be, and more. They have been married for a decade now, and from the beginning he has been supportive of her, including her career, and eager to integrate into the society she called her home. She portrays him as having gone through a development comparable to hers, despite the considerable differences in their backgrounds. Moving to the Netherlands as an 'import groom', it did not take him long to start feeling at home there. But then the incidents that triggered Dutch Islamophobia started to heap up. The changing tide did not fail to affect the newly arrived, according to Jamila: *'And he experienced all that. All that commotion, and everything to do with it. And that it was all purely aimed at the Moroccan community. He thought like, is this supposed to be the promised land that you told me all about? How fantastic everything was here?'*

Her husband's change of heart mirrors Jamila's own development, and now he is also quoted as holding a mirror up to her by confronting her with her past enthusiasm for the Netherlands. According to Jamila, his most recent turning point also coincides with her own: *'He had had enough of it this year too.'* Thus mirroring her own development in many points, the position of Jamila's husband consolidates her new coalition of I-positions. The fact that he is her cousin, moreover, only sharpens her sense of exclusion – this is something she does not even dare tell her Dutch peers for fear of the *'bloody arguments'* this would result in.

At the same time, her husband also helps Jamila to put into perspective the importance of all those voices judging and excluding her. She declares that he has a stronger impact on her happiness than they do: *'It is because of him that I was happy, or still am happy, here in the Netherlands. So in principle, wherever I am with him, I'm happy.'* By adding that she can be happy wherever he

131 In addition to the hard times Jamila's parents may indeed have had in the Netherlands, her father may also have fallen prey to the homesickness for his country of origin which Draaisma describes as typical for ageing migrants, see Draaisma 2008, pp. 123–136.

is, Jamila implicitly brings up another argument supporting her idea that she could live a fulfilling life in Morocco: as long as he is by her side, she will be happy. This is one of the passages that first alerted me to the fact that Jamila, while talking to me, is also engaging in a dialogue with herself, negotiating in which country she can and wants to see her future.

4 Reflection: Placing Jamila's Case in Perspective

This chapter's case study began with Jamila's account of her turnaround: *'And within the space of one year, everything has completely turned around.'* Throughout our interview, Jamila refers to this as an absolute and completely new development. In this section, I examine the question of whether this turnaround is as radical as it seems, and to what extent it makes Jamila's story different from those of others who are less absolute in their conclusions.

4.1 (*Dis*)*continuity in Jamila's Story*

Jamila stresses the *discontinuity* between the past, when the Netherlands was her undisputed home, and the present in which the opposite holds. It is very clear that she experiences her own turnaround as a radical one. Yet I surmise that she may have portrayed the contrast in sharper lines than strictly necessary. We can trace Jamila's 'new' voices back to the times before her turnaround just as much as we have seen that her 'old' voices have not entirely disappeared, but rather become more marginal in the organisation of her position repertoire. The timing of Jamila's turnaround may have been less exact than the current plot of her story suggests. Talking about her husband, for example, at one point in our second (2010) interview she tells me that when he joined her in the Netherlands, this made life here bearable 'again': *'He made everything here much more colourful, he made it possible and bearable.'*

This remark challenges the dominant image of Jamila having been perfectly happy in the Netherlands until recently. And while this example was formulated after the turnaround and might be interpreted in terms of retrospective teleology, fortunately I had also talked to Jamila in Morocco one year earlier. This first interview is a returning point of reference in Jamila's narrative of her turnaround: she refers to it as representing her previous point of view. But let us look at this excerpt, drawn from the very first minutes of that interview: *'Certain factors there do make things difficult. People who don't respect you. I don't need to name names, the people in politics who malign you as a Moroccan or Islamite. Yeah and then you do feel like, see, I really am a Moroccan after all, I should just go back. Or something.* [FJS But at the same time, didn't you say

that you don't really feel at home here (in Morocco, FJS)?] *No but that stuff forces you to take another look at Morocco.'*

This passage suggests that at the time of the interview in 2009, Jamila did not see Morocco as a home. In hindsight, however, the voice in this passage sounds oddly familiar in the light of our second interview. She speaks of politicians scapegoating her as a Moroccan Muslim, and of being 'forced' to turn her gaze towards Morocco. Jamila's coalition of voices promoting her turnaround may be new, but the voices which *form* this coalition have older roots, just as the 'old' voices, outside the coalition, have not vanished altogether. Jamila's repositioning is not as linear a process as the narrative plot suggests. This continuity in her position repertoire may also help explain how people can experience radical changes such as this turnaround without questioning their sense of a consistent self-identity over time.

4.2 *Nothing Final*

Based on my analysis, I would interpret Jamila's turnaround in less absolute terms than she presents it herself. I have shown that her turnaround is less a final conclusion than an intermediate agreement in an ongoing negotiation. Not all voices in her narrative form part of her new coalition, or are equally sure about the idea of a future in Morocco. During our interview Jamila makes a number of remarks that indicate that she does not expect to move there any time soon. Talking about her house, for example, she elaborates on all the improvements she is planning to make it fit her own taste, in a manner that implies that she sees her living there as something permanent. When the subject of house ownership in Morocco comes up, rather than musing about the kind of house she would like to live in permanently, she mentions the option of buying an apartment in a special programme for 'foreigners' that allows overseas Moroccans to purchase a holiday home in Morocco. Meanwhile, when I talk about the deadline for my book she assures me that by then she will have left, so that I will have to send it to Morocco for her to read. These seeming inconsistencies illustrate that speaking from different positions Jamila formulates different possible futures.

In 2010, Jamila herself claims that the only thing that could mend things between her and the Netherlands would be turning back the clock to how things were ten years ago. I would suggest, however, that given the right circumstances (which might be personal, social or both), a reconfiguration in Jamila's position repertoire may occur which could strengthen her feeling of belonging in the Netherlands once more, or make the idea of moving to Morocco less attractive. Presently dominant positions may become marginalised and vice versa, positions may 'change camps' (like the modern position and the

Dutch position did between the first and second interview), and entirely new positions may be added to the repertoire which could introduce new views and dynamics. While it is not sure that Jamila will actually 'change her mind' about moving to Morocco and discard the current coalition altogether, we can assume that the I-positions of which this coalition consists will continue to develop over time and reformulate the stories she tells about herself.

At the very end of our second interview, Jamila actually takes a meta-position from which she herself anticipates such a reformulation: *'Yeah of course I've said a lot about going back and this and that, because you caught me at a time when I had just got back. Perhaps if you had come two weeks later or so, I would have been used to it again and thought like "yeah well I do think about that" or "I don't know for certain". But right now you're copping the full brunt of it.'* With this concluding disclaimer, Jamila seems to qualify our entire conversation. They do not undo her narrative of repositioning, her stories of exclusion and disappointment. They do, however, show that Jamila herself is aware of the complexity of her dialogues, the dynamic nature of her positioning and the substance of her attachment to the Netherlands as something not so easily discarded. For this is another outcome of this case study: in all its vehemence, Jamila's story testifies to the intensity of her Dutch roots and routes.

4.3 *Jamila's Specificity*

Discussing my case study with a colleague, I was confronted with the question of why this informant has formulated a concrete wish to return to the country of her parents while others have not. I believe that there is no such thing as a final explanation for such a turnaround, at least not on an individual level. Nevertheless, in my analysis I do think I have pointed out a number of factors that are relevant in this specific case. Jamila may experience more discrimination, or be more prone to notice instances of othering; she is especially sensitive to this othering, and she draws more far-reaching conclusions than other informants. The factors I discuss here can be related to several of the basic questions on exclusion I formulated in the first part of this chapter.

First of all, there is the I-position which I named I-as-vulnerable to others' negative opinion. Jamila's story shows more instances of such vulnerability than other stories. As I have argued, this vulnerability may intensify the impact the structural exclusion that marks the present-day Dutch climate has on her – or, in terms of the 'four questions', it leads her to ascribe more *importance* to her experiences of exclusion (question 3). Moreover, the fact that for Jamila her working environment used to be an important source of positive identification and the centrality of her work-related I-position makes her more sensitive to her colleagues' increasing othering – she is thus prone to *perceive* more

discrimination than many others (question 1). Also, Jamila's distancing from the Netherlands is paralleled by a new appreciation of Morocco. This parallel development has an impact on the way her experiences of exclusion shape her perceptions of *home* (question 4). Of course, this appreciation of Morocco is partly triggered by Dutch developments 'forcing' her gaze southwards, but the stories of other informants confirm that this is by no means a natural consequence.[132] In that respect, Jamila's disappointing summer stay with her in-laws may indeed have had positive sides to it. Although she found it rather taxing to be around them all the time, this stay seems to have given her more concrete impressions of Moroccan daily life, providing some valuable openings for, to name one example, her I-position *I-as-modern* to find new ways to identify with Morocco.

The discussion of these personal factors that inform Jamila's reactions to the social reality of othering, illustrates one of the main points I have aimed to make through my case study of Jamila and her turnaround. In interpreting the impact socio-political developments may have on individuals, the importance of personal and life span factors – such as memories, self-image, personality and current situation[133] – should not be underestimated.[134] This does not mean that these social tendencies are non-committal, but it does imply that the way they affect us as individuals is never a given.[135] In this light, it is in

132 Latifa, for example, also complains about no longer being allowed to feel at home in the Netherlands however Dutch she has become, but feeling forced to look at Morocco as an alternative only strengthens her view that she could never be at home there. For her, the conclusion is that she is left homeless, because Morocco is more foreign to her than the Netherlands could ever become.

133 Many other factors may be distinguished. See, for example, Buitelaar on the relevance of early attachment and parental style: Buitelaar 2013a.

134 See the text box on 'Landmarks', but also Buitelaar 2013a, p. 271. On quite a different level, another reason for the difference in tone between Jamila's story and that of most others might be found in the timing of the interview. My second encounter with Jamila was one of the few interviews with descendants of Moroccan migrants which I conducted after the electoral victory of Geert Wilders. His successes and his presence in the media have played an important role in Jamila's turnaround, which as we know was a rather recent development. It may be that some of my informants would have told stories more similar to that of Jamila, had I interviewed them after said electoral victory.

135 In that sense I agree heartily with Prins when she argues: 'On the one hand, our stories of our selves and others are only partly of our own making: we enter upon a stage already set, and our lives for the most part follow the course of already available narrative scripts. On the other hand, our stories are multilayered and contradictory; the scripts of gender, race, ethnicity and class play a constitutive role, but never in the same way, never as mere determining factors.' (Prins 2006, p. 281) See also Buitelaar, who also brings together the

no way surprising that in my interviews I found both an alarming unanimity regarding the hardening of the Dutch climate, and an enormous diversity in personal reactions to this hardening. Jamila has shown how the meanings ascribed to experiences of othering and the strategies employed in response are interwoven with personal factors and dependent on the configuration of a dynamic multiplicity of I-positions. My analysis of those personal factors shows both Jamila's specificity *and* the fact that in the end, despite her rather fierce stance, she is not that different from other people I interviewed and whose narratives also take place at the interface of societal and personal development. This is an insight that can be of importance in interpreting data on discrimination on other levels.

Approaching Jamila's story about her turnaround as a multivoiced narrative helps me to refine my readings of it, while recognising her own interpretation of her turnaround as the central feature of her story. The presence of different, contradicting voices within selves makes Jamila and her stance less radically different from those people who, just like her, suffer under the hardening climate in the Netherlands and see the advantages of Morocco or Turkey in this respect, but without drawing the same conclusions. Fortunately, I would say, among my informants Jamila is one of the more extreme cases. Most people are more positive about their current situation, be it because they experience less exclusion than Jamila does (or are less disposed to view situations as constituting exclusion), because they interpret these experiences differently and see them as less crucial, because they make more efficient use of strategies to deal with social exclusion, or because other memories and positions provide a positive counterweight to their negative experiences. Many of Jamila's 'pro and con' voices are akin to voices in other narratives, but there they appear in different patterns of dominance and speaking in different configurations.

5 Case Study Epilogue

5.1 *Two Years Later: New Perspectives*

Writing this chapter, my thoughts dwelt on Jamila and her story, and I could not help wondering how it had continued. Had she moved to Morocco yet,

personal and the social, structure and agency, in showing how 'cognitive development, parental styles and other life span factors, in addition to personal traits, gender and educational levels inform the dispositions and competences that individuals develop to respond to the power relations that shape the personal and societal contexts in which they construct their identities in dialogues with others'. (Buitelaar 2013a, p. 271).

or maybe changed her mind? Had her strong wish to migrate really been formulated in the heat of the moment, in the short period of getting used to the Netherlands again after her summer stay? How had her relationship with her colleagues evolved? In the autumn of 2012, two years after our second interview, I decided to contact Jamila again. She agreed to meet me once more for coffee and a short follow-up interview.

Jamila gets right to the point – again. The last time we spoke, in 2010, before I even managed to switch on the voice recorder, she had already told me: *'Well, it's completely different to last year.'* This time, while we are looking for our seats, she again announces her position regarding her turnaround straight away: *'Well you'll see, it hasn't changed a bit you know, my view of the Netherlands, it's only gotten worse!'* Once the interview gets going, however, she starts to revise this announcement. Afterwards we both agree that her position has indeed changed considerably. Jamila herself is pleasantly surprised about the positive developments she has just discerned in her own story about the past two years, and half-jokingly asks whether I could maybe offer her a fourth interview session.

Jamila's revised story contains changes that can be described in terms of new answers to the four basic questions on exclusion which I formulated in the first part of this chapter. She perceives much less discrimination than she previously did and her way of responding to experiences of discrimination has changed. She no longer lets herself be guided by her frustration about being excluded, and her present sense of home is much less negatively influenced by issues of discrimination – even though she still depicts Morocco as 'more of a home' than the Netherlands.

Jamila's turnaround has proven persistent in the sense that she still wishes to 'return' to Morocco. By now, however, this wish is framed differently and formulated in much more positive terms. Her story now is one of resilience rather than frustration. It features an interplay of developments within herself, her direct social surroundings, her work, and wider society. She feels more accepted again in her working environment as well as in society, has assigned a more clear and dominant place to her religious position, and also states that she has changed herself, that she has become calmer and more realistic. Her continuous frustration about other people's lack of acceptation has made way for an even stronger endeavour to cultivate an accepting attitude herself. Furthermore, her image of life in Morocco has become more concrete and is no longer mainly based on the fact that it is 'away from the Netherlands'.

An important touchstone in these developments is the recent passing of her father-in-law. His death has put in motion many things. Above all, this and other confrontations with death and suffering have stimulated Jamila to

reorient herself towards Islam and the afterlife, and have thereby triggered very concrete changes in her current life.[136] This new-found attention for religious matters is a second touchstone, besides the passing away of her father-in-law, that recurs throughout our conversation. To her own surprise, she has not received any negative reactions from the side of Dutch people to her intensified religious self-profiling. This, together with her religiously inspired venture to 'give everybody a chance', makes Jamila herself much more positive on 'the Dutch' than she was previously. As I wrote in the case study, at the time of our second interview session, in 2010, she was engaged in a process of questioning the place religion could have in her life and story. By now she has achieved more clarity on this account. In this follow-up interview her religious position plays an important role, also and particularly in the integration of various other elements.[137]

5.2 *Renewed Belonging – As a Muslim*

We see this more prominent and more integrated place of religion quite clearly in her stories about work. She has started to wear a headscarf, and now takes time to perform her prayers at work, without feeling judged and self-conscious. In a broader sense, Jamila is also more positive about her colleagues as well as about Dutch people in general – once again these two groups more or less coincide in her story. She points out four factors of importance regarding this repositioning. First of all, a number of her old colleagues who 'were not used to diversity' have left, and her current manager has invested in more diversity in the department, much to Jamila's content.[138]

Secondly, Jamila herself has adopted a more open attitude, which she underpins in religious terms. She explains: offenses against God, like skipping a prayer, can be forgiven by God. But the offenses you commit against humans have to be forgiven by *them*. With this idea in mind, Jamila tries to come to terms with the people surrounding her and to give everybody a fair chance. She now says that this also means getting over her own prejudices and not calling someone a racist based on one single remark: *'But back then I was really feisty,*

136 Cf. Buitelaar 2014, p.6: 'The confrontation with human fragility begs for contemplation on the meaning of life and for a re-evaluation of one's wishes for future achievements and forms of relatedness.'

137 I had planned to ask Jamila explicitly about the place of religion during our follow-up interview, but there was no need to prompt her on this account.

138 The positive impact of a more inclusive working environment on Jamila confirms the importance of organisational culture for migrants' sense of belonging, see e.g. Eijberts 2013, p. 342.

and now I've mellowed somewhat. I think that hormones played a big part. But it's true that now I contemplate things a lot, and give everybody time. And a chance. I never used to do that, I judged everybody straight away, if they said something then it was decided, they were a racist, end of story. They just don't want to talk to me. But now I think no, speak to them a little, then you'll know why they said what they said.' Due to this personal development, she is more prudent in perceiving things as discriminatory, and also ascribes less importance to unkind remarks. She actively tries to understand why people say certain things and to respond in constructive ways.

Thirdly, at work Jamila also notes the repercussions of a broader trend in Dutch society towards more acceptance of Muslim migrants. Looking back, she analyses: *'The rise of the* PVV ["Freedom Party"] *has changed a lot of people, including in terms of how they treat foreigners. But now, I think the* PVV *hasn't really achieved anything.* (...) *The Dutch themselves realise that not even the* PVV *can drive them away.* (...) *Let's just treat each other normally. And you do notice it, that people are starting to just act normally again. Back then, you couldn't even go for a walk without seeing that people gave you strange looks, stuff like that. But things aren't like that anymore.'* To Jamila's relief, the Dutch have reverted to their 'normal behaviour'. The incidental lack of understanding does not disconcert her anymore: her stance now is that disrespectful people can be found anywhere. By and large, Jamila now sees, and takes, more space in the Netherlands to live out her faith in confidence.

The fourth important factor in Jamila's repositioning is her decision to wear a headscarf, and the reactions she received to this. She dreaded her colleagues' reactions, but everybody was interested rather than dismissive. Whereas she had expected things to get even rougher than before at work when she started to cover, the opposite appeared to happen. Jamila has been veiling for several months now, and cannot recall a single incident in which she felt not accepted: *'The acceptance, that process really is over I think. Seriously, I don't have those problems anymore. Especially now, wearing the headscarf, I don't notice anything strange. I haven't experienced a single thing since I've been wearing my headscarf.'*

It is interesting that Jamila claims to have experienced no exclusion at all since she started wearing the headscarf. Although we may well wonder whether this change is 'really' one from lots of exclusion in the past to none at all in the present, this is not the most important issue here. Her statement points towards a new answer to the first of the four basic questions on exclusion I formulated in the first part of this chapter: the question about the perception of discrimination. In saying that she takes more care not to label people as racist, she shows a consciousness of her own part in this process of perception. Indeed, the gist of Jamila's new developments can be summarised by looking

at the interview through the lens of these four questions. Besides her altered perception of discrimination (question 1), we see that she responds differently to the given of experiences of exclusion (question 2). Inspired by religious motives, she has successfully adopted the strategy of 'letting go'. In this light it is no surprise that she ascribes less importance to experiences of being othered than she used to (question 3). In light of her broader life narrative, we can see that her view on both her present life in the Netherlands and her envisioned future life in Morocco are less dominated by her frustrations about exclusion (question 4, more about this in the next section). Morocco has become a more positive home, and the Netherlands is at least seen as more home-like, a good place to be for now, rather than a loved but lost home that turned against her. This summary of my narrative analysis in terms of the more systematic basic questions illustrates the usefulness of these questions and helps to bring together the two parts of this chapter.

To return to Jamila and her headscarf: when I ask her how her final decision came about, the conversation turns to her father-in-law again. It transpires that he influenced her religious developments more directly than just through the fact that his passing away confronted her with her own mortality, as she maintained earlier in our interview. Now she describes a conversation they had when she attended to him in the last week of his life: *'So I would always sit beside him, and he would look at me and say "You look so beautiful with a headscarf."* [*she was wearing a headscarf for her prayers*] *Yes I know, I said. So he'd say "So why don't you want to wear it, why not do it?" I said that the problem was my job. He asked if I had ever asked the people at work about it. I said no, not really. I had always automatically assumed that they wouldn't accept it anyway. He said "I would just do it, if that's what you want".'* Upon her return to the Netherlands after the funeral, Jamila indeed discussed the subject with her colleagues: '*Yeah they thought it was strange that I hadn't done it ages ago. "What's stopping you?" they said, "Do it, if it's what you really want."* (...) *Yeah, I really discussed it with them. They thought it was very considerate of me to bring it up, but there was really no need, I could have just gone ahead and worn it.'* After this conversation Jamila felt free to act. She experiences covering her head as a big leap towards God, and the non-appearance of the feared negative reaction as a great relief.

The increased prominence of Jamila's religious position is paired to more self-confidence in this matter. About praying at work, for example, she tells me: *'Towards my colleagues, I felt like, with my faith, I don't want them to, um... And now I think this is who I am, and prayer is a part of that so I just do it. But whether anything has changed, no not really. I could have done it back then too, I think, only I wasn't brave enough.'* It took courage for Jamila to make her faith visible at work by performing her prayers and wearing a headscarf. She asserts that

it was God himself who helped her take these steps: *'Every day I prayed, "God, please help me to wear a headscarf". And when I wore it, at work, then I knew, like, you see? God is drawing me even closer. Because I couldn't say, no, I won't do it, at least – if God doesn't support you, you won't wear it. Then all kinds of other factors appear to stop you.'* That Jamila involves God in her story so directly is a new thing. Whereas she certainly did not refer to God in such a way in the previous interviews, she does so three times in a row in this much shorter third conversation. Besides pointing to the relevance of Islam in her current story, this also constitutes an expression, towards me as an interviewer, of her increased religious self-confidence. Without scruples, she now points at divine intervention as a factor, alongside other personal and social factors, in her own development. This way, she explicitly places her life in a religious perspective.

Now that Jamila strives, from her religious position, to give everybody a 'fair chance' and shows more openness towards her colleagues, this position is much more in alignment with her moral, accepting position. Her stress on acceptance has been incorporated into her reformulated religious position. Her moral voice now sounds much milder: she feels less prompted to stand up against a perceived lack of acceptance, and more inclined to focus on what she can do herself in order to give everybody a chance. The frequent passive constructions that stood out in her narratives earlier do not reappear in this interview. Her emphasis has shifted, from desiring to be accepted by others and complaining from her moral position that this is not the case, to actively cultivating an accepting attitude herself, towards both people and situations. Jamila feels less excluded and more able to take responsibility for her own happiness. Whereas previously the role of her religious position in her position repertoire was unclear, it now appears to have a central place and even to bring harmony into the ensemble. There no longer is any friction between her religious and moral, nor between her religious and work-related, positions. The earlier division, between a social religious position focusing on discrimination on the one hand, and a personal religious position that was more positively valued, but kept private, on the other, seems to have become oblivious. Jamila now feels that her religiosity is a part of her which deserves recognition.

In its new modality, Jamila's religious position has come to play the role of a promoter position. Such a position, in the words of Hermans, 'is distinctive by its relevance to the future development of the self, by its potential to produce a diverse range of more specialised positions and by its power to integrate and synthesise positions.'[139] From a marginal or at least uncertain place in her position repertoire, Jamila's religious position has moved to centre stage.

139 Hermans & Hermans-Konopka 2010, p. 13.

As a promoter position it fosters harmony and development for several other I-positions and in the overall organisation of the self-space.[140]

This new role for religiosity in Jamila's story is an example of descendants of migrants creatively engaging with their cultural repertoires (in this case, Islam) in ways meaningful to their own specific situation in life. It shows how, as Prins puts it, 'Markers of identity such as gender, class or ethnicity are not merely exclusive and limiting forms of categorisation, but simultaneously provide narrative and enabling resources'.[141] Especially when focusing on a subject as problematic as social exclusion in situations of power inequality, it is vital to also remember such other, more positive stories of creative potential of those excluded. I fully agree with Buitelaar in her plea for more attention for 'cultural resilience' besides the focus on 'cultural estrangement' that characterises Dutch dominant discourse.[142] In Jamila's case, at the time of our follow-up interview this cultural resilience has gained the upper hand over her frustration about the Netherlands in general and more specifically the Dutch climate of exclusion and Islamophobia. In many other cases I have encountered, the relatively mild impact of experiences of exclusion can be understood in light of the cultural resilience that is also part of the story.

Revised Horizons: A New Moroccan Future

Jamila has regained a more unproblematic sense of belonging in the Netherlands. She experiences, and claims, more room for her religious position, at work and in society. Her narrative also shows how this religious position plays an important role in her more understanding attitude towards others, and towards their prejudices. Nevertheless, she still tends to depict Morocco and the Netherlands in contrasting terms, and to connect religion primarily and explicitly to Morocco. When talking about her migration plans, for example, she says: *'But then I really will leave the Dutch mentality behind,* (...) *because I want to start exploring my faith even more.'*

Remarks like this one suggest a contradiction between Jamila's 'Dutch mentality' and her desire to give her religion a more prominent place in her life. A few minutes later, she elucidates this contradiction. Once again, she relates the Netherlands to 'work' and Morocco to 'religion': *'And my faith especially. I want to explore my faith, and over there I have that freedom. And the time.*

140 Cf. Hermans 2006, p. 47.

141 Prins 2006, p. 280.

142 Buitelaar 2009, pp. 14, 300–301. According to Buitelaar, a stress on cultural estrangement does not do justice to both her informants' engagement with Dutch society *and* their ongoing ties with the cultural heritage of their parents.

Every Friday here when I work, I miss the Friday afternoon prayer. And reciting the Qur'an at night during Ramadan – I just don't have the time, here everything revolves around work. Not there. Shops just close for the afternoon prayer. Faith takes precedence, for most people I know. That is certainly one of the reasons.' In her current life, Jamila misses the time she wishes she could devote to religious activities. She does not address the option of reorganising her life in the Netherlands to allow for these activities. The image she has of her possible life in Morocco does include more time for religion, and in our interview this is her most prominent reason for wanting to settle in Morocco permanently.

At the same time, Jamila stresses that she is realistic about the disadvantages of life in Morocco, now that she is less driven by her frustration about the Netherlands. In this regard, too, her accepting religious position serves her well. Reflecting on the differences in social etiquette, she now announces that she will just have to adapt. She feels that she can learn to accept that in Morocco people visit without warning, and that when visiting others she will be expected to help in the kitchen even when nobody asks her to. Furthermore, the plurality of Moroccan voices which resounded during our earlier interviews is absent this time. Remarks about 'those people' structurally refer to her family-in-law. Her in-laws now appear to represent Moroccans in general, just like her colleagues represent the Dutch.

Generally, Jamila intends to adopt an accepting attitude towards Moroccan practices that clash with her Dutch mentality. In her interactions with her mother-in-law, she has already experienced how much peace of mind this shift in attitude can bring her. In the past, her mother-in-law's interference bothered her a lot, especially when it came to how she was raising her children: *'How I was supposed to do everything, you know, the Moroccan customs. And I was having none of it, because I was used to the Dutch way of doing things. Call me before you come over, blah blah blah. And I really do ... when she's around, I'm really Moroccan. I also adopt Moroccan behaviours. And I just notice that it's less stressful.'* Letting go is far from easy for Jamila, but it is a price she is willing to pay. She even seems to consider it a good opportunity to cultivate her accepting attitude. Her relationship with her mother-in-law has also improved during the sickbed of her father-in-law.

Jamila suggests a connection between her new perspective and the improved relationships with the people around her (her Moroccan mother-in-law as well as her Dutch colleagues). But even more, she draws inspiration from her confrontations with death, and the nudge her father-in-law gave her during his last days. Others, she tells me, may be happy about the inheritance he left behind, but for her, his parting words are his greatest gift. Nevertheless, the material legacy also plays a role: as co-owners of the family business, Jamila

and her husband now have concrete prospects in Morocco. They want to stay in the Netherlands and save money until the business is profitable enough to provide them with a family income. This means that Jamila's ideal picture of Morocco as a place where she can live her religion to the full, is complemented by a concrete idea of how her life in Morocco might look like.

Jamila has many plans for this new life. While she is raving about her last visit to Morocco, she also stresses that 'real life' in Morocco will look different: *'It was wonderful. Sleeping, eating, doing nothing for a while. But of course it won't be like that if and when I move there soon. I actually really want to do something. And I've had lots of ideas: things to help society, but also starting something myself. So yes, there's that.'* These words sound rather different than the desire to quit working altogether which she formulated in our previous interview. Surely this desire was at least partly motivated by her frustrations about her work at the time. These frustrations now belong to the past, although she still wishes to give work a less prominent place in her life. Her present expectations are to help out in the family business, but also to do 'something' for sick Moroccan children. This latter wish was inspired by, once again, her experiences during her father-in-law's sickbed. She found out that his expensive catheters were handed out for free by a Dutch organisation which collects left-over medical supplies. With the supplies she obtained from this organisation, she has been able to help many people besides her husband's father.

This experience has opened up a whole new world for Jamila. She was fascinated to find that there are all kinds of NGOs in the Netherlands that collect obsolete medical supplies which are still more than welcome in other parts of the world. She hopes to play a mediating role for such organisations once she lives in Morocco. This would allow her to use her familiarity with both Morocco and the Netherlands to the benefit of others. Jamila's charitable plans, about which she speaks passionately, indicate that she is developing what McAdams would call a 'generativity script', a part of a maturing adult's life story 'specifying what he or she plans to do in the future in order to leave a legacy of the self'.[143] In accordance with her personal developments and her recent confrontations with death and suffering, Jamila is pondering the question of how she could contribute to the well-being of others and the world at large. While she does not formulate the connection herself, possibly her new focus on charity also ties in with her intensifying religious interests.

143 McAdams 1993, p. 240ff. To clarify, on page 113 in the same volume, McAdams explains about the evolving personal myth: 'Mature identity in adulthood requires a creative involvement in a social world that is larger and more enduring than the self. It is to that world, as well as to the self, that the myth must be oriented.'

Another effect of the help she has received, is that it has renewed her positive feelings towards the Netherlands: '*But when I was in a bind, with my father-in-law, I did receive help, just like that.* (…) *So that meant that I – in Morocco that doesn't happen I tell you, they're not as helpful as people are here with that kind of thing.*' Jamila highly appreciates the Dutch who disinterestedly commit themselves to these causes. Also more in general, she speaks about the Netherlands in much less negative terms. Her ties to the Netherlands are less prominent as a topic in her current narrative than they were during our very first meeting. But compared to the second interview, after her turnaround, in this follow-up interview these ties constitute a valuable asset rather than a burden. In the underpinning of her wish to migrate, the emphasis has shifted from Dutch push-factors to Moroccan pull-factors.

The most important push-factor, feeling rejected by Dutch society, has 'disappeared' according to Jamila: she feels included once again. In retrospect, she tells me how she feared that things would get worse rather than better: *'You do simply belong, in the end. And I do have that feeling now, you know, that's not the issue. But when you interviewed me back then, I didn't have that feeling. I was like, I'm done. It will only get worse, we'll just get burned at the stake if things keep going like this.'* As I indicated above, Jamila speaks both about a change of attitude on the part of the Dutch, and about her own increasing drive towards acceptance. Below I quote the first time that Jamila mentions these two issues together, still somewhat prudent in her choice of words: *'Well, back then I experienced, I think I can still remember a little, lots of unpleasantness, with colleagues, comments and so on. I have to say that that's better now. Also in the sense that, now I wear a headscarf, and it doesn't happen anymore.* (…) *But I do think that back then, my view of the Netherlands… I have also started to understand the people more.'*

Now that the factor of exclusion no longer plays a prominent role, what remains are the more general Dutch push-factors: *'Tax, weather, you name it, and let's be honest, now VAT going up to 21%…'* Jamila also mentions the taste of fresh food, which she finds much more pronounced in Morocco, and the current economic crisis. Jamila's personal impression about the latter, she tells me, is that in Morocco things are going up, while in the Netherlands everything is falling down. These are all push-factors which, once again, also serve to legitimate Jamila's wish to migrate from a Dutch perspective. We return to the question about which she was so indignant in our previous interview: 'then why don't you go back?' Nowadays, when colleagues pose this question to her, she confidently retorts: '*Yes but I'm going to! I say that now. And I will too. And then they ask, indeed, why not straight away? Well, I haven't saved enough yet, but I'm going to do that too.* (…) *Then you see people really getting jealous.* (…) *Yeah, I'm going*

back to a warm country.' This quote shows that there have been shifts both in Jamila's own perception of the question 'then why don't you go back?' and in her colleagues' responses to her reply. Jamila no longer sees the question as an insult, and now depicts her colleagues as jealous of her sunny prospects rather than spiteful about her presumed lack of loyalty to the Netherlands.

While Jamila does still want to move to Morocco, the Netherlands is no longer presented as merely a place to run from. She envisages a future in which she has her fixed domicile in Morocco, but can also profit from the good things the Netherlands has to offer. She is glad, she tells me, that she will have the freedom to travel to the Netherlands in order to collect charity items, see her family, and receive medical attention if need be. The Netherlands now plays a modest, but positive role in Jamila's narratives on her future. 'And until then?' I ask her. Jamila contemplates that for her, the situation in the Netherlands does feel rather temporary now. She cannot be bothered to worry about her career, for example, as it might well be that she will move on in a year or two. However, for the 2–9 years she estimates to have left in the Netherlands, she does try to live in the present and make the best of it. She no longer feels that her life consists of working all year long only in order to spend one month in Morocco, as she claimed in our previous interview: *'I'm now concentrating on my life here. There are times when I think, oh yeah, I do need to think about sorting things out over there. Because of course, we want to go back. But right now I'm here, and my mind isn't over there, no no.'*

5.3 *Happy Ending?*

All in all, at the time of this follow-up interview, Jamila is much more at peace. She has a clearer picture of her future prospects in Morocco and feels less scrutinised and harassed in the Netherlands. She also has the feeling that she is increasingly 'on the right track' with regard to her religious and moral attitudes, and that she is given the space she wishes for her religion. Finally, Jamila has reconciled herself both with the Dutch and with Moroccans. She is more accepting and understanding of their respective shortcomings.

When I ask Jamila about her current stance on 'home', her first answer is a firm confirmation of her turnaround. In this instance, Jamila seems to contradict the progressive insights about the Netherlands which she has just voiced: *'No, my home now really is Morocco,* (...) *really and truly.* (...) *I used to say, that's my home and I'm here for work. And that is still how I see it.'* After this reply, however, she gives a different interpretation of the meanings of 'home' than she did previously. Back then, she spoke about home as a refuge, a place where she can lay down her head without feeling harassed. This time, she elaborates on 'warmth' and 'rest'. Towards the end of this interview, I pointed out this

contrast to Jamila, and asked her whether feeling less harassed in the Netherlands also resulted in a stronger sense of home: *'... Yes... Especially since wearing my headscarf I totally feel like, I don't know what I was going on about back then, but I am being accepted, yes.'*

So while Jamila continues to call Morocco her one and only home, her image of the Netherlands has become significantly more positive. Although her wish to migrate remains, she now also qualifies this wish: *'I know I'm going there, but right now I'm here, and I'm making the best of it. And who knows, something might happen that stops me going back for good. So I'm not going to jeopardise my security here. I know that I won't go back until I know for sure that I can settle there properly. Back then I had nothing, and was like "I want to go back, I want to go back!" But now I'm more like, "If you don't have anything, you can't go back". I began to see reality,* (...) *and not just think it would be an endless holiday, that's not it. I think it's also because I'm a little older now.'* In this excerpt, Jamila interprets her more 'realist' attitude in terms of personal development. While she repeatedly brings up her personal development, societal change and even divine interference as reasons for her changed attitude, naturally this does not mean that she is aware of the interplay of these factors at each moment of the interview and from each possible I-position.

To sum up, Jamila's position repertoire has undergone a process of development and repositioning, in ways quite different from what I could have anticipated.[144] Her persistent wish to migrate is now framed differently. The previous main reason for this wish has disappeared now that she no longer feels structurally excluded at work and in Dutch society at large. A different reason, which she had already mentioned in our previous interview, has gained importance: in Morocco, Jamila hopes to be able to devote herself to her religion more fully. Religion, and God in particular, take prominence in her revised story. Her current drive to give people a chance and to cultivate an accepting attitude rather than fret about not being accepted oneself, she explains by referring to her efforts to come to terms with God, and consequently with her fellow human beings. Her religious motivation, merged with her 'old' moral position, creates peace and harmony in her position repertoire.

In the course of this book, I repeatedly counter the misconception that ties with Morocco or Turkey undermine the development of robust ties with the Netherlands. A common version of this misconception is framed in terms of religion. In the Netherlands, concerns have been voiced that the 'Islamisation',

144 Cf. H.J. Hermans & E. Hermans-Jansen, *Self-narratives: The construction of meaning in psychotherapy*, 2001, p. 9.

in particular of descendants of migrants, would hinder their integration.[145] Stories like that of Jamila also invalidate this misconception.[146] Although Jamila expresses a certain tension between her 'Dutch mentality' and her faith, what is more prominent in her narrative is the *integrating* role of her religious identity. It is from her religious position in particular that Jamila has recovered her place in Dutch society. With this position in the leading part, Jamila creates a narrative fabric which brings together various threads, referring to developments at work and in Dutch society, the maturing of her own personality, and life course events.

6 To Conclude

In this chapter I have foregrounded the social dimensions of home. My main focus has been on the experiences of exclusion which are, to a certain extent, shared by virtually all informants, although interpreted differently by each. I provided a first glimpse of this diversity by building upon, as well as qualifying, previous research on different 'strategies' in reaction to discrimination. We can gain more comprehensive and adequate insights if we differentiate the question about the impact of discrimination on individuals. To this end I formulated four questions: We have to ask how individuals or groups *respond* to discrimination; but also to what extent people *perceive* discrimination; how much *importance* they ascribe to such experiences; and how this affects their construction of *identity* and home at large. These basic questions should be useful for quantitative as well as qualitative studies that focus on social exclusion at the level of the individual.

Moving to the micro-level, in the second part of the chapter I discussed the story of Jamila and her turnaround. Focusing on the story of one individual allowed me to explore the social dimensions of home in their full complexity; to demonstrate that, in the end, they cannot be separated from other, more personal dimensions; and to highlight the part played by social exclusion in this dynamic whole. I analysed the different ambivalent currents in Jamila's words with the help of Hermans's Dialogical Self Theory, showing how she introduces different internal and external dialogical voices that, sometimes colliding, sometimes in coalition, tell complex stories about exclusion and home. We have seen how in the production of homes, collective voices partake in our

145 See Chapter 1, Section 11.

146 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, p. 25; N. Constable, *At home but not at home: Filipina narratives of ambivalent returns*, 1999.

internal dialogues as parts of the self, but we may also be forced to position ourselves in relation to the external voices of collective and individual others.[147] Speaking about home implies an ongoing process of positioning oneself and being positioned in relation to others, who have a voice in where and to whom we are allowed or expected to belong.

In the text boxes accompanying the case study I showed how Jamila's story fits into the whole of my interview material. I brought forward a number of themes that are shared by many other stories besides that of Jamila.[148] I maintained that understandings of home are in constant flow and change as positions within the personal position repertoire shift and change over the life course in interaction with social dynamics. The case study epilogue in particular showed how Jamila's story has evolved after our initial two interviews in ways I could not have foretold. This epilogue called attention to the constructive role of religion in Jamila's narratives on home and the importance of cultural resilience.

In the beginning of this chapter (Section 2.1) I have shown how in Dutch public discourse (descendants of) migrants' feeling at home in the Netherlands is problematised. My research falsifies the common idea that ties which are perceived as foreign – with a country of origin or with Islam (see the case study epilogue specifically on the latter) – are stumbling stones that hinder migrants' integration and prevent them from making the Netherlands their home.[149] What does, however, constitute such a stumbling stone is precisely this problematisation of my informants' multiple attachments. The constant concern about their otherness significantly adds to their sense of being increasingly excluded by and from Dutch society. I have dwelt extensively on this issue, not least because I deem it of utter importance to demonstrate the prevalence of exclusion and the impact this can have on individuals.[150] Jamila's story shows that such exclusion can alienate people who previously considered the Netherlands their home. Her case thereby highlights the inherently relational nature of home, and shows that social exclusion can be a crucial factor in hampering a sense of home.

This being said, Jamila's case also warns us against drawing fast conclusions about causality. In the epilogue we saw that she no longer foregrounds

147 Cf. Hermans 2001b; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka 2010, p. 8.

148 E.g. the experience of a double bind, the various settings of intergroup contact, the impact of 'landmark experiences' on individual perceptions of exclusion, and the excluding effect of being singled out as positively 'different'.

149 In her dissertation on transnational ties of (first-generation) Moroccan migrants to the Netherlands, Nadia Bouras draws similar conclusions: Bouras 2012.

150 Cf. Salih 2003, p. 10.

experiences of exclusion in her narrative, but that she still plans to migrate to Morocco. Return migration cannot simply be described, as sometimes happens, as an indicator of 'failure' – neither as a failure of migrants to integrate, nor as a failure of Dutch society to grant migrants the space to make themselves at home. The most recent material in the case study epilogue shows that focusing exclusively on exclusion would be telling a one-sided story. Two issues which can serve to counter such one-sidedness are inclusion and agency.

Firstly, in showing how these descendants of migrants suffer from exclusion, I certainly do not intend to portray them as passive victims of the circumstances.[151] My multi-levelled study of how individuals ascribe meaning to experiences of exclusion also shows their great resilience.[152] In the first part of the chapter, the different 'strategies' descendants of migrants employ in response to discrimination bespeak their agency.[153] Furthermore, throughout the chapter I have emphasised the variety and personal specificity of the ways in which informants give meaning to their perceptions of exclusion and integrate them into their greater narratives. This emphasis portrays them as active agents, facing complex circumstances, and navigating within the parameters of asymmetrical power structures in highly personal ways.[154]

Indeed, it is one of the advantages of a narrative approach that it favours the visibility of individual agency, even (or in fact especially) when the primary focus is on exclusion and asymmetrical power constellations. By analysing informants' narratives in terms of a multiplicity of positions that are both socially embedded and individually formulated, and that enter into dialogue with each other and with external voices, I have been able to demonstrate the simultaneity of agency and structure rather than engaging in fruitless deliberations about which of these is paramount.[155] As Buitelaar and Zock also argue, 'self-narratives are particularly informative about the ways agency is instantiated in everyday cultural practices and discursively embedded in power relations.'[156] Moreover, the formulation of meanings of home, identity and

151 Cf. Bhatia 2013, p. 215.

152 Cf. de Jong 2012, p. 197.

153 See Buitelaar 2013: 'Besides the capacity to formulate and pursue life plans, agency also includes coping strategies: one's response to challenges and threats that may jeopardise one's life plans.'

154 Cf. Ghorashi 2003b, p. 35, who argues that 'Identity formation is a relational process, shaped through interaction within various social settings. But this does not mean that individuals are totally subjected to these social settings They have certain possibilities to choose and flexibility to maneuver.' See also de Koning 2008, p. 299.

155 Cf. Salih 2003, pp. 154–155; S. Schielke & L. Debevec, *Introduction*, 2012, p. 11.

156 Buitelaar & Zock 2013, p. 2.

other similarly contested issues in one's own terms through narrative, can in itself be interpreted as an agentic act.[157]

Secondly, all this attention for exclusion and the problematisation of home should not be taken as a denial of the existence of more positive stories of inclusion and belonging. As I pointed out in Section 2, in my interviews the social dimension of home is much more clearly discernible in the negative. Inclusion is less explicitly thematised in the narratives people told me. Yet, a positive sense of belonging and inclusion does also transpire from the accounts I collected.[158] Jamila's refound acceptance which I discussed in the case study epilogue is a case in point, and so is my discussion, in the preceding chapters, of the Netherlands as the primary frame of reference for my informants' stories. Still, choosing to focus on the impact of exclusion I go against the call by the more ideological advocates of hybridity to foreground the creative and subversive potential of migrants.[159] While I have observed and described many instances of such potential, it would be unrealistic, and thereby not very respectful towards my informants, to focus primarily on this potential and downplay the substantial problems they often see themselves faced with.[160] Despite my wish to tell a balanced story about the social dimensions of home, I found

157 See also Ghorashi & Vieten 2012, p. 738. Even more, this point is convincingly defended by Leurs, who argues that 'In voicing themselves they are able to strategically foreground alternative collective ethnic, gender and religious identities and voice the essentials of their belongings in their own terms (Spivak, 1990, p. 11). The grasped opportunity for re-signification is a significant form of agency. By voicing themselves, they take the opportunity to speak for themselves, instead of being positioned by Dutch societal, Moroccan-Dutch community and familial social norms as well as religious authorities.' – Leurs 2012, p. 156. The last part of this quote refers to the fact that people such as my informants are not only being positioned by the dominant majority in Dutch (as well as Moroccan/Turkish) society, but also by other members of 'their' minorities. We have seen as much in the story of Naima in the previous chapters. However, in most other interviews, social scrutiny and expectations from fellow Turks/Moroccans/Muslims/migrants were much less thematised than the social exclusion discussed in the current chapter. One factor partially accounting for this may be that, especially in the light of their negative image in Dutch society, informants might have been hesitant to discuss such 'internal' dynamics with me as an outsider.

158 See e.g. F. Anthias, *Belongings in a Globalising and Unequal World: Rethinking Translocations*, 2006, p. 21, as quoted in Ghorashi & Vieten 2012, and Bozkurt 2009, p. 215, for the close linkage between social inclusion and belonging.

159 See my discussion of the concept of hybridity in the epilogue to Chapter 2.

160 Addressing the same tension, Prins reminds us that we as researchers should always take into account both the reality of power structures affecting individuals and those individuals' agency: Prins 2006, p. 280.

that I needed to dedicate this chapter primarily to experiences of exclusion in order to do justice to the alarmingly prominent role this issue played in most of my interviews. My analysis shows that making oneself at home in Dutch society requires hard work.[161]

To conclude, there are a number of things I hope to have achieved by choosing a case study of Jamila to address the topic of social exclusion and discrimination. The Dutch multicultural backlash,[162] the growing climate of Islamophobia and its impact on Muslim migrants have been documented widely.[163] With this case study, I hope to have furthered our insights into how agentic individuals respond to external voices of exclusion and integrate them into their multivoiced identity narratives. By doing so, I have placed a critical footnote to social scientists' endeavour to explain migrants' attitudes in terms of general trends or patterns (including my own attempts in this domain): although the role of social factors in individuals' meaning-making is formidable, Jamila's case points out the significance of personal experiences and psychological factors such as life stage, key memories and 'personality'. I have not only shown *that* such factors matter, but also *in what ways* they matter, and how on the individual level factors which we often treat separately as 'social' or 'personal' are irretrievably intertwined in the narrative texture of the polyphonous self-space.[164]

Another critical footnote concerns the validity of (quantitative) survey responses, especially when addressing 'subjective' fields such as home and belonging. As we have seen in Jamila's case, she has several, sometimes contradicting stories to tell about, for example, where she envisages her future. She thus provides several conflicting answers to the kind of questions likely to be formulated in survey research, such as 'In which country would you prefer to live?' or '(To what extent) do you feel at home in the Netherlands?' Which out of several equally 'true' answers would she choose to give in a questionnaire? How would we tick the boxes for her, having heard her story? Survey findings regarding, for example, migrants' attachments, loyalties or (much en vogue nowadays) religious viewpoints, are put into perspective by the insight that each person has their own repertoire of I-positions, socially embedded but unique, from which they can tell several possibly conflicting stories about their own life.

161 Buitelaar 2009, p. 89; Buitelaar & Stock 2010.

162 Snel & Stock 2008, Vertovec & Wessendorf 2010.

163 E.g. Omlo 2011; Phalet & ter Wal 2004b; Eijberts 2013.

164 Cf. Zock 2013, pp. 11, 33.

Moreover, these stories are continually revised. Following Jamila's development over a relatively short span of three years has provided insight into the considerable shifts in her positioning over time. She has gone from (mainly) viewing the Netherlands as her one and only home to (mainly) feeling dumped by this country and turning towards Morocco out of frustration, and from that to (mainly) reconciling herself with the Netherlands while maintaining a wish to move to Morocco. As a student of life stories I am always wary of drawing too far-reaching conclusions from my highly contextual, snapshot-like data. I would encourage this kind of awareness in fields where the situatedness of findings may be, at first sight, less obvious.

CHAPTER 5

Home in the Life Story: A Case Study of Two Sisters

1 Introduction

1.1 *Welcome to My Place: Aziza – and Latifa*

Aziza (35), whom I had first met waiting for a flight out of Morocco, welcomes me in the apartment which she has been sharing with her husband and children for almost two decades now. There she introduces me to her sister Latifa (38), who joins us for some breakfast and small talk. Before leaving Aziza and me alone for the interview, Latifa asks about my research project, and in reaction the two sisters provide me with a sneak preview of their lives. They talk about their first childhood years in Morocco, and about Latifa's turbulent relationship with their parents. Presently they are on very good terms again, and to the sisters' hilarity Latifa jokes that nowadays their parents hardly call Aziza anymore, because they come running to her with every little problem.

Aziza and I have been talking for a while when our interview is interrupted by her youngest daughter coming home from school for a short break. No problem, she has freed all day for me, so we are in no hurry. Seeing her off again, Aziza explains that one of the things she likes about this apartment is its proximity to her children's school, as well as to her work: only a few minutes away, by bike. The multicultural neighbourhood agrees with her as well – too bad, in her view, that the media portrayals of this area only describe the negative aspects. The only real disadvantage she experiences is that the apartment is in a different part of town from that in which most of her family lives. But overall, she is quite content about the home which she has built with her husband: *'This is where we spent our whole life together. With all the kids* (…) *yeah, this really is our life together.'*

Aziza is one of the informants who clearly enjoyed giving me a 'guided tour' of her apartment and reflecting on various objects we encountered. Besides talking about her plans to redecorate and about her taste, there were a number of items in her home which she pointed out to me: a picture of Mecca, a Moroccan tajine, lots of pictures of her family, a vase she received from a Dutch family where she had been a nanny, when she left to fulfil her wish to become a nurse, and a porcelain statue a patient had given her. The significance of each of these objects comes to the fore when they are related to the stories she told me about her life. What at first appeared (to me) as random items turned out to be identity statements closely connected to the narrated life story.

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The stories of Aziza and her elder sister Latifa, whom I interviewed more than a year after meeting her at her sister's, are told and compared in this final chapter. At the end of the case study, I will return to Aziza's description of her apartment and the items on display there, to show how they fit into what we have learned about her.

1.2 *This Chapter*

In this chapter, various key themes which I distilled from participants' narratives of home and identity are brought together and, as it were, (re)contextualised, by presenting them in the context from which they were distilled: individual life stories. I will do so by presenting and comparing the stories of Latifa and Aziza. Moreover, the detailed analysis of their stories also brings to the fore a number of general motives related to the notion of home.

The two sisters were in their late thirties when I met them. They had spent three decades in the city of Utrecht, having migrated there aged six (Aziza) and eight (Latifa). Both sisters are married mothers with part-time work. From their shared background, they have developed to lead rather different lives about which they tell contrasting stories. Using both their stories as points of reference allows me to show the diversity as well as the relatedness of their stories. The comparison gains an extra dimension because the lives of the two women are, to a certain extent, intertwined. Not only do they have a shared background, they also talked about their parents and about each other's role in their respective lives as well as about their differences. Despite their contrasting lives there are many shared themes in their stories. These themes figure in their narratives in highly personal ways. In this sense the comparison of their cases is representative, not for all the people I interviewed, but for the diversity and individuality of the broad spectrum of stories I heard, as well as for the thematic relatedness this spectrum also shows and for the biographical embeddedness of shared themes in each single case.

As the structure of this chapter follows the main lines in the life stories of Aziza and Latifa, key themes discussed in previous chapters will make their appearance where they are relevant to the case studies. These are specific themes which colour the understandings of home for this particular category of people in the setting of contemporary Dutch society: ties to Morocco or Turkey and the Netherlands, roots and routes, and social exclusion. Here they are brought together on the microlevel of the specific life narratives of two women and their articulations of home. In a sense, then, this chapter can be read as a 'grounded synthesis' of the focus of this book, as well as an argument for a case study approach to questions of home and identity. Moreover, the focus on the entire life story interview also allows for a clearer view of a number of

themes which were more central to my informants' stories and understandings of home than their fragmentary treatment in earlier chapters would suggest: the relevance of family, the role of religion, and the genderedness of meanings of home. What these three heterogeneous topics have in common is that their significance is best understood in the context of an integral approach to specific life narratives.

This book does not have a separate chapter dedicated to the role of *religion*, and indeed in this chapter I argue against the tendency to overstate the pervasiveness of religion as an explanatory factor in the lives of Muslims. This is something other than suggesting that Islam is irrelevant for the people I interviewed. We have already seen several instances to the contrary, most of all in the earlier case studies. Think of Naima striving for recognition of both her religious integrity and her personal agency, and of Jamila, in whose stories religion featured both as a ground for exclusion in Dutch society and as an integrating force in her life narrative. This chapter provides a more explicit case study of the meanings of Islam in individual stories, and allows me to reflect on the relative isolation of religious themes in the entirety of the narratives.

Gender may be the most typical example of a dimension that intersects with just about everything else, and is best addressed in the context of concrete situations or stories. Concurrently, until now the topic has mainly figured in the stories of Naima and Jamila, although it also received fragmentary attention in the more general parts of my analysis on points where I found specific differences between men and women, for example in the (im)possibilities for spending one's time during summer stays in Morocco or Turkey. The design of this final chapter helps me to point out the genderedness of understandings of home and self in their biographical embeddedness, rather than attempting broad statements about the subject that risk becoming either essentialising or overly obvious.

Finally, *family* is a theme that pops up however one approaches the narratives, and especially so from the perspective of home. In Chapters 2 and 3 I have dedicated separate sections to the topic of family. The integral focus of this final chapter is particularly suited to underline the pervasive importance of this particular theme for the sons and daughters of migrants who told me their stories.[1] As with the topics of gender and religion, family relationships (and intimate social relations more in general) shape the stories people tell in highly individual ways, and are most adequately addressed through case study research. It is not my aim to present an exhaustive overview of the occurrence of these themes in my material. Rather, this chapter serves to demonstrate

1 Cf. Bozkurt 2009, p. 12.

their broad relevance by analysing how they figure in the two specific cases under discussion.

In what follows I address a number of key episodes from the life stories of the two sisters, and make topical comparisons between their respective stories and home trajectories. Several of these episodes address the topic of 'leaving home' as a focal point to analyse life course related developments in individuals' understandings of home, and focus on different meanings home can have for people. The leaving behind of familiar 'old homes' often triggers reflections on the part of the narrators which lay bare central themes in their self-understandings. The analysis of key episodes from the sisters' narratives shows their changing understandings of home with the help of four motives which are outlined below. Besides the focus on developments over the years, this chapter also further substantiates my earlier statements about the relational nature of home. In the previous chapter I addressed the social dynamics of exclusion and their impact on understandings of home. The current chapter focuses on home on the microlevel of one's dwelling, family relationships and life story – where, why and with whom do people feel at home at different times in their lives? How does this change along with life stages, living arrangements, and personal experiences? At the same time, this chapter also shows how the grand themes mentioned above form a part of these intimate, personal understandings of home, as they emerge in the setting of the individual, socially embedded life course. Once again, we see how the social and the personal, the public and the private, cannot be told apart in the lives of individuals.

A focus on home through life stories works in two directions: it provides fruitful insights into the meanings individuals give to their lives and selves in context, and at the same time, it also contributes to the development of the theoretical concept of home. There are four motives which I have come to see as central to my analytical understanding of home. The distinct *familiarity* of certain places, social settings and cultural or discursive fields is a crucial element in articulations of home. Yet familiarity alone, acquired through time in interaction with one's (social) surroundings, does not automatically imply a sense of home. I have also found that informants explicitly relate home to a *subjective sense of self*: they want to 'be themselves', and to see this sense of self acknowledged by and reflected in their environment.

Familiarity and a subjective sense of self are specifically relevant motives in my informants' narratives on home and identity. In addition to these two, the common motives of *agency* and *communion* also logically present themselves in the light of a life story approach. The conflicts and ambivalences that drive a story on towards a plot are often interpreted in terms of the search for a satisfying balance between agentic and communal dispositions and desires.

The conceptual pair of agency and communion forms an analytical tool, used in narrative identity theory to distinguish between two contrasting and often conflicting basic human motives.[2] I adopt the use of the terms agency and communion from the work of McAdams. Agency refers to a person's striving for autonomy, recognition, achievement, or a sense of control, while communion is more about a sense of connectedness to other individuals and groups, intimacy and belonging.[3] As Buitelaar notes, an individual's I-positions often differ in the balanced levels of agency and communion they strive after.[4]

Satisfactory and balanced levels of both agency and communion, together with familiarity and a subjective sense of self, help to foster a sense of home in particular settings. In this chapter, I address these four home motives in their intricate embeddedness in the individual narratives of Latifa and Aziza. The motives will serve as vectors that, in various constellations and from several angles, shed light on the variety of meanings associated with home in the context of the life story. By showing how we can make sense of individual home narratives with the help of these four general motives, this chapter also underlines the close connectedness of home and identity.

Towards the end of each final interview session I made the subtext of home, more or less implicit up to then, explicit by asking my interlocutors directly to reflect on what 'home' means to them. Following this final chapter is an epilogue, dedicated to the explicit descriptions and definitions of home which participants provided me with. There, too, I pay special attention to Latifa and Aziza, in order to show how personal 'home-definitions' become all the more meaningful when we can read them against the background of the narrator's life story.

2 Case study

2.1 *Childhood: Nostalgia*

> I was born, and raised, on a mountain. I rode horses 'til I dropped, which for other people is something really special. I've climbed trees, I've picked fruit.
>
> LATIFA

2 As indicated in Chapter 1, variations on this distinction are used by several different authors.

3 McAdams, *The Stories We Live by: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self*, 1993, p. 71. See also: McAdams 1993, p. 71; Buitelaar 2009; Buitelaar 2007b, p. 4; Hermans 2001a, pp. 347–348.

4 Buitelaar 2009, p. 37.

> Very safe. Yeah, it's an amazingly free environment, (…) having fun, then coming home, and horse riding, that kind of thing. (…) But the image I have of it is just really green, and oh, those little fish in the water, like, yeah, it really looked incredible. Really, reeeeeally beautiful, absolutely. Pure and natural.
>
> AZIZA

Latifa and Aziza each start their stories with memories of a carefree childhood in a Moroccan hamlet surrounded by nature, where they lived under the loving care of their mother and grandmother, embedded in a warm extended family. Latifa refers to this time as paradisiacal, and to herself as a 'valley girl', roaming around the woods and mountains in complete liberty, unrestrained by paternal rules – their father had already migrated to the Netherlands. Freedom is a key value in Latifa's whole life story, and she explains both her urge for and her ability to cope with freedom by referring to the freedoms she enjoyed during her childhood. This stress on liberty is complemented by memories of warm family relationships and friendly ties with neighbours.

Each woman's childhood narratives contain strong references to agency as well as communion, and to both familiarity and a sense of self. Aziza reflected on the importance of this familiarity in her first home: *'It was all just very stable, carefree. You were simply treated as the person that you are. It was just, your house, you lived there, and the people around you were your family, your friends, your neighbours, who saw you grow up as a little girl, they know you through and through, and there you do have a kind of stability, like, a basis. Something that is just firmly in place. It was just very pure, without anything negative from outside.'*

In this safe and familiar environment, both sisters told me, values were transmitted to them which they now see as constitutive for who they are: *'It really has shaped us into what we are today – respect, norms and values, that much was instilled into us. To me it seems like that's mainly where I learned those things.'* Note that Aziza here speaks in the plural, automatically including Latifa. The great overlap in themes and style of the stories about their shared childhood suggests that the two sisters draw from a shared repertoire of childhood memories. Indeed during the breakfast I shared with the sisters (the only time I met both of them together), they soon started to reminisce about this time. One of them also mentioned that they often share memories of their Moroccan years when they get together. Their Moroccan childhood was not only experienced together, but also remembered together. Then came migration to the Netherlands and family reunion. From that point on, the lives and narratives of the two sisters gradually start to move in diverging directions.

2.2 *Migration & Adolescence: Two Worlds*

Migration is a key memory in Aziza's and Latifa's stories. After their move away from the familiar home of their early childhood to the Netherlands, the two sisters, then aged six and eight, had to get used to their new lives. But whereas Aziza's story about this episode focuses on learning the language and building new friendships, Latifa mainly talks about her loss of agency: about the physical environment of a small apartment in a big and strange city where she had to be quiet and needed permission to go outside, but most of all about the presence of a father she hardly knew and whose rules and authority she found hard to accept. Building up a family life in a new setting after years of separation seems to have been hard on all family members.

Still, both sisters gradually started to feel at home in the Netherlands. They speak fondly of school and friends, and these communal ties fostered a growing sense of belonging. A Dutch neighbour, who became a father-like figure in these first years, also contributed to their sense of home.[5] He familiarised them with many new Dutch things, taking them to the beach, teaching them how to skate and ride a bike, paint and play the piano. In Latifa's story however, such memories take up little space. This for example is how she continues after talking about the first hardships of migration: *'But yeah, the older I got … you really do start to construct your own way of living. And after three years of living, school, friends in the Netherlands, I really did start to like it. Like oh, this isn't bad either. Then I turned fifteen, and people already started talking to my father.'*

Three phrases only about the good childhood times in the Netherlands, then on to the next hardship. To Latifa's horror, adolescence presented her with a new set of roles, restrictions and dangers. More and more, she was treated as a 'little woman' instead of a child. And with the onset of womanhood came social scrutiny and parental restriction, inspired by a new preoccupation with her virtue and, by implication, the family reputation.[6] As the eldest daughter she was expected to stay at home and help her mother with household tasks, as a woman she was closely monitored and no longer allowed to play outside, and as a girl of fifteen she became an object of interest for Moroccans looking for

5 Many of the stories I heard contain similar references to such friendly Dutch neighbours and their help in finding one's way in Dutch society.

6 See, e.g., Buitelaar 2009, p. 293. Buitelaar points out that worldwide, migrant women and daughters are seen as the symbolic guardians of cultural values, and thus faced with more restrictions of their personal freedom than their male counterparts. In her own research on highly schooled daughters of Moroccan migrants, Buitelaar also found that issues of gender and identity figured prominently in women's narratives about adolescence.

a bride for their sons. But Latifa, in dialogue with voices in the Dutch context with which she had familiarised herself, had developed self-images and expectations for the future that felt incompatible with the roles in which she was cast at home. The more she was confronted with gendered expectations and restrictions, the more she felt as if she was living in two different worlds: a world at home that was dominated by her father's ideas of the ideal Moroccan daughter, and an outside world in which she tried to combine multiple frames of reference and felt she could be more herself.

Aziza, albeit more positive about the period of adolescence than her sister, shares the image of 'two worlds'. She stresses that both the inside world of her Moroccan family home and the Dutch outside world have contributed to her identity formation: *'It kind of did play a large part in my development.* (…) *And I really was living in two cultures. At home you got back to your origins, and out of the house you were, yeah, a different person for a while. You were just a little, yeah, less traditional. Nice and free. All that politeness, sedateness, shame, that sort of thing, just like whoop! you left all that at home with family, friends and acquaintances, and just went out as someone who goes to school, as an adolescent* (…) *who likes things like make-up and hair, or boyfriends – not that I had many boyfriends, but like, when you like someone and you talk to your girlfriends about it – and what you want to become, those were the things you were concerned with. And that was what you shared with your outside friends. I didn't discuss those things at home.'*

Aziza had become familiar with both 'worlds' she experienced, and navigated between the different expectations and conceptions of femininity in either. Compared to Latifa, Aziza's stories of these worlds sound more agentic, with more stress on this 'navigating between' rather than on being 'forced into' two worlds. She talks, for example, about a colleague who repeatedly asked her out: *'So I was always very honest and said like, sorry but I'm not allowed to go out.* (…) *I'm a very good girl, and I really have to be back home with my parents by eight o'clock. And they would say "But girl, you're seventeen, aren't you free to make your own choices? Just look at you…", because I always had a very modern look,* (…) *nice tight outfits, that was no problem at home, I could wear whatever I wanted.* (…) *And they couldn't understand that at work. Because I really did come across as very free, for a Moroccan girl. But I still stuck to my rules.'* Note that Aziza mentions that her parents did not put any restrictions on the way she dressed, and that she talks in a rather active stance: she refers to '*my* rules' rather than the rules of her parents. Her explanation that she is a *'a very good girl'* by focusing on her own characteristics, also underlines her agency more than if she had only referred to her parents as sources of authority forbidding her to go out.

Two Worlds

Cultural multiplicity is expressed in many different ways in migrant stories. The image of living in two worlds or two cultures is a recurring one that reminds us of the differences between emic and etic formulations. As students of migrants, we are and should be wary of descriptions that reduce complex experiences to such dualist descriptions. Diasporic subjects themselves, however, can and do make use of these images to describe their experiences.[7] In Naima's story in Chapters 2 and 3 we already saw a similar description of her parental home and the surrounding environment as two different worlds. Amongst those I interviewed, one other woman and two other men also made explicit use of the imagery of different worlds in the same fashion. These numbers are far too small to say something about the relevance of gender with regard to two-world-imagery, even in my own sample. Still based on the stories of Aziza, Latifa and Naima we can say that at least in their cases, divergent conceptions of femininity played a crucial role in the accentuation of the boundaries between their self-declared worlds.

Both Aziza and Latifa engage with their parents' position. Aziza for example regrets, from one position, that they never stimulated her to do well in school, *'maybe because girls are going to get married someday anyway'.* She thinks that she could have achieved much more with their support, but also stresses that she does not blame them. She is also able to take their point of view: *'They feel like they've done their best. That's the difference. I can understand that.'* Latifa's understanding of her parents' position is less explicit than in her sister's case: *'Um, there were lots of things we weren't allowed to do. He wanted us to grow up with a certain quality, but in that way I actually see it as a kind of torture, since you can't develop the way you really are.'* Latifa relives her adolescent frustration in strong terms, calling her father's upbringing *'a kind of torture'.* But in the

7 Cf. Baumann 1996, p. 204; Buitelaar 2007b, p. 10 (see also p. 20). Buitelaar recognises the tendency to talk about living in two cultures, but argues 'that the biographical work that they face in finding a satisfactory balance between autonomy and communion, – while often cast in terms of finding a balance between Islamic and/or Moroccan values of collective identity and respect to one's parents on the one hand, and Dutch values of individuality on the other – in fact has less to do with ethnic or religious differences, but rather with class differences and the impact that migration has on family relations and expectations of self-realization.' Overall, this publication has many interesting parallels with the topics discussed in this subsection.

same sentence a different position seems to voice her understanding of her father's good intentions.

Both Latifa and Aziza remember how their father in particular tried to regulate their (social) life, but their stories clearly differ in tone, with Aziza passing a milder judgement than her elder sister. About house rules for example, Aziza told me: *'I wouldn't say a strict upbringing, but there were lots of rules, just normal house rules. Back by a certain time, girlfriends fine but that doesn't mean it's like an open house and that anyone can just wander in, yeah that's what my father always called it. But I had a certain group of girlfriends who were always welcome at home.'* Latifa evokes a different image of her father's rules: *'I couldn't just leave the house whenever I wanted, I couldn't just have girlfriends. And after school, um, they just asked to see my timetable, so they knew exactly what time I was finished.* (…) *Sometimes I watch programmes about prisons and I think Jesus, they have fewer rules than I ever had. That's how extreme things were with me.'* [8]

The lack of agency which Latifa experienced dominates her memories of growing up. Aziza's account is more mixed, vacillating between fond memories of fun with friends and especially with Latifa, and casual remarks about experiences of restriction:

> *'Good times. Really normal, average family, Moroccan family, went to school. You got home, helped your mum,* (…) *at the time yeah, I didn't like that very much. I was like, do we need to babysit, then my mum would go out, to do the shopping or visit someone, but then my sister and I were stuck at home.* (…) *And actually it went without saying that we would babysit, so it wasn't something you thought about. But we were certainly able to enjoy all the little things, that's true. It might sound weird, but we always managed to amuse ourselves.'* Aziza evokes agentic as well as communal images of her adolescence.

Possibly Latifa, as the eldest daughter, also faced more severe expectations and restrictions than her younger sister. At one point Latifa herself alludes to this special burden of the eldest daughter. While with the onset of puberty the parental home became more ambivalent for both sisters, the house remained a home for Aziza while becoming more like a prison for Latifa.

Each sister presents migration as moving to a 'different world'. In the first few years, this world became more and more home-like: the social and physical environment became familiar and communal bonds were created, allowing

8 Cf. Pels & de Gruijter 2006, pp. 75–76 for similar accounts of the restrictions on adolescent girls' freedom of movement.

the girls to take a more active part in the different social spheres in which they moved. Still the concrete image of 'living in two worlds' only became relevant with adolescence, when the divergent gendered expectations of their parents and their Dutch peers accentuated the differences between the sisters' home environment and the outside world. At the same time, as for most adolescents, questions of self and identity became salient for Latifa and Aziza. Above, Aziza talks about being *'someone else'* in each of her two worlds, whereas Latifa felt that there was little room for her 'true self' at home. Both experienced that their different 'worlds' appealed to different aspects of their selves, or we could say to different clusters of I-positions.

2.3 *Leaving Home: Latifa the Runaway*

What follows is a key episode in Latifa's life story: *'You are forced to take on everything from other people, so you forget yourself, your own things, your ideas. Around age sixteen I became really depressed, because of that. So depressed that I thought, I just don't want this life anymore, why do I have to listen to all this, and just keep waiting? No: I packed my things and left. At age sixteen.* (…) *I loved my family very much, but I had to put myself first in the end.'* Latifa talks about fears of being forced to marry, although it remains vague whether this was a general fear or an actual threat. Running away from home was a tough decision, albeit one which she now presents as the only way to stay true to herself. But being away from home also came with many new challenges.

In terms of agency, leaving home changed everything: *'Yeah first you're not allowed to do anything … and then you can do whatever you want. Quite simply, it's two different worlds.'* However, this new 'agentic' world was hard on Latifa because of the disbalance in terms of communion. In the first period after she left, there was no contact with her parents, and her siblings were forbidden to see her. Her numerous accounts of this time bespeak the vehement dialogues in which she was engaged, being angry with her parents on the one hand and missing her family on the other: *'To me it was a very strange combination. I missed them, but at the same time I was also angry… So it really felt like, I actually didn't want to see them, but I needed to see them, really strange.'*

Buitelaar has aptly written that her informants 'face the biographical task of finding a satisfactory balance between the acquired need for personal autonomy on the one hand, and the loyalty and connectedness to a parental milieu which is characterized by family values and a hierarchal family structure which allows for less freedom of movement than the women wish for themselves on the other.'[9] The tension which this task creates can be found in the narratives of most people I spoke to (of either gender), but it is more acute and

9 Buitelaar 2007b, p. 19.

painful in Latifa's story than in most others'. Below is a longer passage from our interview, in which she reflects on this tension and how she tried to deal with it in time. The excerpt combines several themes that are recurrent throughout Latifa's story. Her account of leaving the parental home is a telling example of the fact that the different motives which may foster a sense of home, can be seen to compete and even collide.

'I only had Dutch friends, there was nobody telling me what to do. (...) *And maybe if I had stayed with my parents, well, they were the ones who were supposed to help me develop. But yeah, I had already left home by then, so I was in charge of my own development. It was really very hard, because there actually were a lot of things I wanted to hold on to, but also lots of things I wanted to let go of. If you run off in anger, there's a time when you just let go of everything, you want nothing to do with it, because that's the reason you're unhappy. But yeah, in time, and with development, the older you get, you do end up coming to terms with some things, you know? And that's actually what happened with me. I went out, had friends and we went on holiday, I had a boyfriend. Just, that whole subculture of mine, where everything was forbidden, it just wasn't there. But I wasn't all that free either, since I often put the brakes on myself, thinking like, I need to prove that I can do it, that there's nothing wrong with being alone, with developing yourself, with wanting to do things on your own. That sort of thing did cost me a couple of years of warring with my parents. It was hard for them to understand, I get that, because with the values they were brought up with, it's just terrifying, you know, if your daughter suddenly goes off to live by herself. So I had to fight tooth and nail for it. I wanted to maintain a good relationship with them, but I didn't want to lose my freedom to do what I wanted either.'* In the last phrase of this passage, Latifa sums up her struggle to safeguard both her relationship with her family and her personal freedom. Her desires for both agency and communion were hard to satisfy after she had left the parental home.

Latifa's anger at her parents also led her to reject *'that whole subculture of mine'* – for a while she wanted nothing to do with Moroccans and Moroccan culture whatsoever. This restrictive Moroccan culture is contrasted with her new life of freedom which is associated with Dutch culture, as the phrasing *'I only had Dutch friends'* suggests. That Latifa did not simply leave one of her 'two worlds' behind in favour of the other becomes clear, amongst other things, in her reported self-restraint.[10] She keeps positioning herself towards the norms of her parents, who play an important part in her position repertoire as external I-positions. Once again, we see that besides protesting against her parents, she also voices her understanding for their point of view.

10 Cf. Buitelaar 2007b, p. 14; Brouwer 1997, p. 249.

In this as well as in other interview passages, Latifa expresses an enormous drive to prove that there is nothing inherently bad in her lifestyle, that she could live up to her parents' values despite contradicting their norms.[11] This drive was not only inspired by her wish to be accepted by her parents, but also by the fact that she had internalised their views to such an extent that they continued to figure in her own internal dialogues.[12] The key theme in Latifa's narrative is not just demanding personal freedom, it is striving to use her freedom the right way. It is situated agency she wants for herself, not unbridled freedom. Latifa is very conscious of the fact that 'personal autonomy can never be absolute; it is always relational'.[13] Similar to the women in Buitelaar's research, Latifa and the other people I interviewed spoke about their parents with great respect and unfailing loyalty, despite the sometimes strong friction between their own life goals and their parents' expectations.[14]

The above interview excerpt also illustrates how stories about the past are always formulated and evaluated from the narrator's current perspective. Looking back on her time alone, Latifa gives two contradictory accounts of how she related to her parents' cultural heritage. First she says that she wanted to keep many things and let go of many others. But in the next sentence she recalls that in the beginning she was so mad at her parents that she wanted nothing to do with their culture whatsoever, and that only over time did she start to recover selected elements of her heritage. This inconsistency is a clear example of the merging of past memories with later evaluations. One possible explanation could be that Latifa's first phrasing results from a projection onto her former self of her current concern to balance her, in her own words, predominantly Dutch lifestyle with the aspects of her upbringing which she does value – most importantly Islam, as we will see later on. Then this position is countered by the voice of the young rebellious Latifa who discarded everything that reminded her of home in protest. Subsequently she reflects on her own development over time towards a more balanced view. Indeed I will show later on how during our holiday interview, which preceded the life story interview in the Netherlands, Latifa was more explicit in remarking that it is only over the past few years that she has come to reappreciate her 'Moroccan side' as part of her self.

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11 Cf. Brouwer 1997, p. 248.

12 See also Buitelaar 2009, p. 249, who quite similarly explains how many women she interviewed are ambivalent about their own behaviours insofar as they conflict with parental norms.

13 Buitelaar 2007b, p. 16.

14 See also, e.g., Buitelaar 2007b; de Jong 2012, p. 100.

The life story interview itself took place during another hard period of Latifa's life. She had been ill for months and interpreted her sickness as a necessary step in coming to terms with her past. Therefore our interview came at a point in her life when she was particularly prone to reflect on her decision to leave home at sixteen. This may be an additional explanation for the fact that virtually all important themes in her story were related to this decision: the relationship with her husband and children, with Morocco and the Netherlands, the meanings of being Dutch and Moroccan, the relevance of Islam, her childhood memories of unquestioned liberty – everything is set in the light of this episode.[15] The way Latifa once left home is crucial to her current understanding of herself and the meanings she ascribes to home.[16] We will see as much below, when I analyse a number of other key episodes from her life story. But first, I turn to Aziza.

2.4 *Aziza: Staying behind and Making Amends*

While Latifa was struggling to find her way alone, Aziza and her younger siblings stayed behind in an unsettled home. She mentions her sister's departure as a low point in her own life: *'... my relationship with my sister, we were so close, and then I never saw her that often, and when I did we actually had to do it on the sly. It's really odd, arranging to meet up somewhere with your sister like that. And when we did see each other we did so much fun stuff. Only I couldn't say those things at home, like yeah I saw Latifa, yada yada yada, mum would get angry (...) "Just let her know what it feels like to be alone". So yeah, those were really bitter times.'* Aziza talks about the negative atmosphere at home during this period. She missed her sister and she disagreed with the unforgiving way

15 Latifa is not the only one whose life story was dominated by a specific theme. Metin (25, m, Turkish) for example was expecting his first child when we spoke, and he tended to relate almost everything either to his relationship or to his future fatherhood. Whereas his was one of the interviews in which I had to do quite some probing to elicit substantial narratives, when it came to the episode in which he met his wife, Metin had no trouble elaborating and talked in great detail about his thoughts, his words, her words, their doubts, other's reactions, etcetera.

16 Cf. Mallett, who writes that 'The pathway taken out of home, whether chosen or imposed, is often crucial in how (...) people and/or their (past, present and future) homes are identified and defined.' – Mallett 2004, p. 78. Many aspects in Latifa's narrative on running away are quite typical of the stories of many runaway migrant daughters. See Brouwer 1997 about, for example, the desire to keep in touch with one's parents despite everything, agreeing with parents about the value of virginity, but rejecting the way this is secured, and wishing to prove that being from home does not make one bad. I do not go into these similarities at length, as my focus here is on the whole life story of Latifa and her running away as a key passage in our interview, rather than on the theme of running away from home in itself.

in which her parents talked about her. But she also saw her parents' grief and felt deeply sorry for them. Meanwhile, Aziza felt an enormous pressure to do well and make up for her sister's 'failure'.

Thus after Latifa ran away, both sisters, each in their own way, were preoccupied with proving themselves 'good' girls and daughters. Aziza tried so hard to live up to their parents' high expectations that for a while she lost sight of her own wishes. This is the time during which she gave up her educational ambitions and quit school. Aziza also formulates a direct connection between the strained situation at home and another key event in her life story: her decision to get married at the age of nineteen. *'And that's also the reason why I married at a very young age, so I could say now it's my turn and I'm leaving home, but I wanted to do it in a way that was okay for them, and not disappoint them again, leaving home without a husband* (...) *So they feel proud at least, but I also have my freedom back, and I no longer need to conform so much to the "ideal picture".'* By getting married, Aziza left home in a way that was acceptable to her parents' gendered expectations, and allowed her to fulfil both her desire for more agency and her wish for communion, with both her family and her husband.

2.5 *Leaving without Rushing: The Merging of Aziza's Worlds*

The life event of leaving home to get married meant gradual as well as radical changes in Aziza's perceptions of home and self. A radical change, which later on she also mentioned as the central theme of her entire life story, is the merging of her two worlds: *'I really lived in two cultures.* [*Sometimes*] *you were completely Moroccan, and other times completely Dutch. And so after I went to live alone, with my husband, so when I left home, you could suddenly just mix those two* [she joins her hands] *together! Combine them, merge them with one another. So then you could be both totally Moroccan like you wanted to be, but also totally Dutch like you wanted to be. So you could combine them, and that became your personality. And that is what I am today. So yeah, I merged the two together. Once I left home, I suddenly just became a different person.'*

Moving Out: Freedom or Responsibility?

Leaving home is a benchmark in many of the life stories I was told. In Aziza's story, this process is related to a great sense of freedom, whereas Latifa, while striving after freedom, mainly encountered the huge responsibility of living alone without the support of her parents. The two women are not alone. My first impression after the completion of my interviews was that it was mainly the women who talked about freedom upon

moving out, whereas the men stressed the new responsibility – possibly because living at home had meant more responsibilities and less freedom for the women than for the men. Upon closer reading however, the difference between the two camps appeared to be one of marital status rather than gender. Aziza is an exception in talking mostly about freedom. Most of those informants, male and female, who left the parental home to get married, rather foregrounded new responsibilities. Freedom was a subject more frequently mentioned by those who left their parents to live on their own. Although freedom seems to have more positive connotations than responsibility (the latter could be seen as the downside of autonomy), both terms could be interpreted in positive or negative ways – with some interviewees talking about 'too much freedom' or welcoming their new responsibilities. Aziza and a few others did distinguish between a 'free' period before they had children, and a time of more responsibilities once they became parents. It also happened regularly that people would, at different points in an interview, address both aspects of their experience of moving out. Finally, some informants did not engage with the question of freedom or responsibility at all, but rather foregrounded communal aspects such as missing their family as well as creating new ties, or they showed their renewed appreciation of the familiarity of the old home.

Aziza's parental home stood for one of the two worlds she lived in. Her own house came to symbolise the merging of these worlds. This shift in the meaning of 'home' reflects a narrative reconfiguration of her identity – from having 'Dutch' and 'Moroccan' selves to being both at once. The relationship with her husband was crucial in making this merging of worlds possible: *'At a certain point I didn't feel inhibited in my actions in life. With my husband I could discuss anything, we could do whatever we wanted. He's also a very liberal fellow himself. So that has never held me back in being very free myself, and thank goodness, because otherwise I would have felt restricted again by someone else's world, and I might not have been so happy. Because now I'm just myself, how I want to be.'*

According to Aziza, the merging of her worlds allows her to fully become who she wants to be. Living with her husband has created a space, we could say, for the emerging of new I-positions that draw more freely from the multiplicity of cultural repertoires Aziza calls her own – or for more intimate relations between her 'Moroccan' and 'Dutch' I-positions. She describes the new life that she started, with her husband, in their own apartment, in highly agentic as well as communal terms: she enjoyed her new freedom of movement and the liberty to bring together aspects of herself which she had formerly

seen as belonging to separate worlds; and she savoured her relationship with her equally free husband, with whom she could share everything. Aziza and her fiancé had respected her parents' conservative views on premarital contact as not-done *'within the Moroccan, Islamic community'*. After the wedding they made up for this by going out together as much as they liked, with friends often noting that they were never seen apart and were always having fun together.

Interestingly, Aziza's stories about her newfound freedom also disclose, indirectly, more about the restrictions she experienced in her adolescence than her earlier accounts of that period did: *'That was the first thing I thought. My mother and father are no longer the boss of me – ha! There. Done.'* When initially describing the time before Latifa left in a positive tone, Aziza foregrounded memories of fun times and adolescent mischief. This may also be because she was contrasting this time with the difficult period that followed – but even that period is more described in terms of grief and trying to make amends than in terms of suppression. Now that she compares her adolescent years with her sister to her married life, however, the picture looks somewhat different.[17]

Now that the positive aspects of her new existence come first, at this point in her story Aziza becomes more explicit about what she disliked about living at home: *'Yeah at that age you're still very young of course, and you'd really rather just go have a good time with your girlfriends. Going off and having fun, not sitting at home and having to be back by seven. I didn't like that so much. And of course the fact that you lived in one small house with six kids, you simply had very little room for just you. And I did notice, after I left home, that I missed it terribly (…), that constant feeling of being together.'* This quote also reminds us that Aziza's 'change of focus' is more of a difference in emphasis than a question of telling completely different stories. Before, while stressing the positive times, Aziza also allowed for ambivalence in her account and made at least

17 There is a certain similarity here with the case of Naima in Chapter 3. As I noted there, looking back on her last trip to Morocco, Naima painted a picture of her expectations of that trip, that was much more negative than the way in which she talked about her expectations in our interview prior to the trip. It is not impossible that both women were initially careful not to talk too negatively about, respectively, Morocco and their parents towards me as an outsider. They may have been consciously or unconsciously anticipating stereotypes about Moroccan backwardness and authoritarian parenting styles which they did not want to confirm through their stories. At a later point and from some distance, it may have been easier for voices addressing the darker sides of the women's experiences to slip through – in Naima's case because her trip had actually changed her view of Morocco for the better, and in Aziza's because she was now focusing her attention on a later period and looking at the time before that in double retrospect (looking back at how she then looked back on her adolescence).

some mention of the less agreeable sides of her adolescent life. Similarly, in her narratives on her life as newly married, the overall relief of having left the parental home is nuanced by remarks that 'despite all' she did start to miss the old house and its inhabitants.

However agentic, communal and identity-near Aziza felt in her new home, the familiarity of the family home did continue to appeal to her, and she missed the closeness to her parents and siblings: *'And yet, I still missed certain things at home. You were suddenly alone, those brothers and sisters who were constantly bugging you weren't there anymore. You start appreciating them, cherishing them.* (…) *Always going to visit, three times a week. And that gradually tapered off with time, of course. But* (…) *I was still very attached to the house. And that attachment … yeah slowly over the years it really did loosen off. Like totally done, finished. Now my children are a little older* (…). *And before you know it, you notice that you've really completely forgotten your parents' house. So now it no longer feels like, when I'm there I don't feel like I've come home.'* While Aziza formulates her change of identity upon marriage through the merging of her worlds as a rather radical change, the change of her feelings of home was of a more gradual nature. It was only in due time that her parental house lost the status of 'home'. Only with her own children growing up did the connection loosen and her own house become her primary home.

2.6 *Latifa: Making Her Own Home*

In Aziza's case, the benchmarks of leaving the parental home, establishing her own household and getting married coincide. Not so in the case of Latifa. During the life story part of our interview she does not go into the material consequences of running away, but my subsequent questions on the meanings of home prompt her to talk about how, as a minor runaway, she ended up in a room in a supported housing project. This is where she lived in the period in which she reportedly felt at home nowhere. This living environment felt very temporary and was lacking in opportunities for agency and communion as well as in familiarity: there was no contact with her family, but lots of new rules and restrictions to cope with. Moving into her first independent flat was a great relief: *'My first little flat. I really did feel very at home there, because like, I shut the door and it was mine, you know?'* Now Latifa could begin to make herself at home.

A briefly mentioned attempt to mend things with her parents and marry a man she had met ended in failure, both because her parents did not agree and because, according to Latifa, the base for the relationship was not sound. This failure made Latifa even more resentful of 'everything Moroccan'. Still this attempt illustrates that Latifa, despite her anger at her parents, was willing to go

to great lengths to restore the relationship.[18] It would take several more years and more battles before she finally succeeded in this. When the time came that she visited the parental house again for the first time, it sure did not call up homey feelings, despite its familiarity. Rather than a slow but steady distancing as in the case of her sister, the trajectory of Latifa's relationship with her parental home was one of a painful break-up followed by very gradual repair: *'The first time I saw my parents afterwards was very, very, very difficult, yes.* (…) *I didn't feel at home the first time I went back to see my parents after I had gone to live by myself. It was once my house, but I didn't feel like it was my house anymore.'* Nowadays, Latifa does feel at home again when she visits her parents, yet as we will see later on, some ambivalence lingers.

In time, Latifa met the man who would become her husband and the father of her children. Although a Muslim, he is not Moroccan, and her father vehemently opposed the match. Latifa has few happy memories of her wedding: *'My parents didn't accept it in any case. So there was never really a wedding. Recently my son asked me, because we had been to a wedding, whether he could also see my video. And I said well, trust me, you really don't want to see mum's video. I only have a photograph of us exchanging rings, and apart from that, nothing at all. Because your family should be there when you get married. And the people you know, your friends, your whole community. But if the most important ingredient isn't there, what is there to celebrate? Then it's just better to be alone together, and wait it out until they've come around.* (…) *No I never had a Moroccan wedding.* (…) *That's a completely different ball game, three days of partying, you get spoilt, people all around you are happy as can be, dressed nicely, and so on. I never had that opportunity. When I had to choose my husband, well, it was war, pure and simple, I was very sad, despite having chosen him. Because I had a very desolate father on the other side.* (…) *And it doesn't matter if you're right, at that moment you're still causing him sadness. And that just makes things really trying,* (…) *so no, I've never experienced that whole wedding to-do as a Moroccan.'*

Once again, Latifa was highly ambivalent about making independent life choices – she was and is convinced that she did the only right thing to stay true to herself, but she also suffered under the awareness that her independent choices hurt her parents. There are several passages in our interview in which Latifa brings up her arguments in an almost defensive way that suggests ongoing internal dialogues with I-positions that question the legitimacy of her choices. Furthermore, her ambivalence about the Moroccan culture she had largely rejected upon leaving home is apparent in her remarks about not having experienced marrying 'as a Moroccan'. She describes what the real Moroccan

18 Cf. Buitelaar 2007b.

wedding she missed out on should have been like. But most of all, the absence of her family, which 'should be there' when one gets married, meant that her own wedding was hardly a cause for celebration. In both sisters' view, a happy marriage depends on both the love for one's spouse and the acceptance by one's parents.[19] Nevertheless, Latifa and her husband could now start to build a home together. Latifa loves their current house and proudly talks about her 'completely European' taste in home decoration and the surprised reactions of visitors, who find it hard to believe that this is the house of a Moroccan woman. Even her garden is often seen as very Dutch (although Latifa herself also points out the fig trees and grapes they planted to create a Mediterranean atmosphere). She points at the differences in home decoration between herself and Aziza as illustrating their differing characters: *'Yeah you can really see it in my character, how I'm kind of, yeah different to my sister.* (…) *My sister prefers more glitter and gold,* (…) *and that does absolutely nothing for me. I'm more likely to go with a more Jan-des-Bouvrie-type style.'*[20] It happens more frequently that Latifa describes her sister as 'Moroccan' in comparison to herself, in her way of life and also in her holiday style, as we will see below.

Marriage between Worlds

There were more informants who faced the question of how to give shape to their intercultural wedding, although Latifa was the only one for whom this meant that she could not have a 'real' wedding at all. The parents of three other informants did consent to their choice of spouse, and they found different ways to combine cultural elements from their different backgrounds. Nilay's (38, f, Turkish)[21] Dutch husband made things easy by proposing that they would have an 'entirely Turkish' wedding – the only thing the couple vetoed was the customary public announcing of the exact amounts of money different guests offered. This they would have found embarrassing, if only because the groom's guests gave significantly cheaper gifts than the bride's. Idriss (34, m, Moroccan) negotiated with a church council about the couple's wish to read from both the bible and the qur'an during the ceremony. He fondly remembers: *That still*

19 Cf. Buitelaar 2009 for the significance of parental acceptance.

20 Jan des Bouvrie: Dutch bourgeois interior designer for aspiring socialites, famous for his use of white and one of the first in the country to turn his own name into a brand.

21 As mentioned previously, I indicate the name, gender and background of informants the first time their names are mentioned in each chapter. See the appendix for an overview of the individuals interviewed.

always makes me laugh, people say the first generation of Moroccans are all unintegrated. But then I think of my mother, with her unintegrated appearance, sitting in a pew up front, in a reformed church, with her headscarf on, together with my father, kind of trying (…) *to half sing along.*

Lastly, Malika's (33, f, Moroccan) wedding description is consistent with what we read about her in Chapter 2: that her positive associations with Morocco are mainly to be found in the aesthetic and sensual realms. The Moroccan 'touch' of her wedding mainly consisted of an 'Arabic evening', during which everything, including the bride and the guests, was decorated in Moroccan style. There were dates and milk, and a belly-dancing workshop. Although all of this might call up images of a theme party, for Malika and her husband, including a 'Moroccan part' into their wedding was a highly significant and symbolic choice. Malika cherishes the memories: *That we were granted the possibility to do this, to have a Moroccan part and a Dutch part, keeping everybody happy. That we really had those two worlds present next to each other on that day. And because for some other people this is simply not possible, I really had the feeling that we were accomplishing something, that we were doing something big.* The Moroccan part of their wedding became a symbol of the fact that their love had managed to bring together worlds often deemed incompatible.[22]

2.7 *Aziza Leaving Another Home: From Visitor to Home-owner in Morocco*

After getting married, Aziza started her own household in the Netherlands. During her yearly summers in Morocco, however, the couple always stayed with family, mainly her in-laws. Buying an apartment of their own in Morocco allowed the couple to leave their 'Moroccan parental homes'. This, so she tells me, was an important event in Aziza's life: *'We always went to visit people at their houses. But it never really felt like home. No, it was always someone else's. I mean, the country itself did feel good. When I arrived, it was like "Oh, I'm in my fatherland". That was the feeling. But not the house we stayed in. And that changed once I had my own house.* (…) *It's really important to have your own space; only there can you really feel at home. It's something all your own, that*

22 Cf. Buitelaar 2009, pp. 243–245, who describes the case of a woman who explained how at her wedding, her Dutch and Moroccan 'sides' became more visible to her friends and family who generally knew but one of these sides. Buitelaar shows how this visibility, to the woman involved, implied a more full recognition of her identity by many of her near ones. I believe Malika's staging of Moroccanness may have had a similar function.

you've created yourself. Or like, with someone you love. (…) *In my own house, if I don't feel like cooking, then we go out to eat. And if you're staying with someone, if you go out to eat you need to take the whole group with you. And if you eat at home, you need to help out in the kitchen. So you always have to take others into consideration. And I don't need to do that in my own house.* (…) *That's the freedom that you feel…'*

Having a place of her own allows Aziza to feel at home in Morocco on more levels than before. She enjoys both the freedom her own place affords her and the fact that this is something which she accomplished together with her husband. She also notes that her children feel more comfortable in Morocco now that they have their own place there. Her sense of Morocco as home on this level is embedded in the concrete social relationships she maintains both with her husband and children and with their extended families. The above quote alludes to Aziza's homing desire with reference to Morocco.[23] She could also have interpreted the acquisition of her own house as a way, for example, to make her stay in Morocco more holiday-like, as some other people I spoke to did.[24] But Aziza rather stresses that 'having your own place' is a prerequisite to feeling at home. She chose to buy this place in a town at some distance from her in-laws – near enough for mutual visits, distant enough for some breathing space. Purchasing their own apartment has allowed her family, but most of all Aziza herself, to balance out in more than one way her desires for both agency and communion during her stays in Morocco.

Latifa relates to Morocco in rather different ways than Aziza. Both sisters, however, speak about the disadvantages of the country in strongly gendered terms. It is particularly the gendered expectations of their resident family members that they refer to as hampering their agency. Above we heard Aziza complain that as a guest, she has no choice but to help with the cooking, and cannot skip this duty by eating out unless she invites everybody else along.[25] Latifa tells me that around her Moroccan family she has to adapt in many ways: refrain from smoking because this is not done for women, dress differently, talk differently, choose 'feminine' topics of conversation… But the two women have different strategies to circumvent exposure to these expectations. For Aziza, it is enough to have her own apartment in Morocco to which she can retire when she wishes. Latifa does not see this as an option, she prefers not to visit

23 For the term 'homing desire' see Brah 1996, p. 180. Cf. also Chapter 1, Section 3.8.

24 Also see Buitelaar 2009, p. 109.

25 Likewise, Van der Horst found that women's experiences of Turkey differ from that of men because of the different patterns of daily life they encounter: 'Fulfilling norms of hospitality thus came at a cost that mainly the women in a household had to pay.' – van der Horst 2008, p. 89.

Morocco at all, unless in a strictly holiday setting similar to her holidays elsewhere: sightseeing, sunbathing and staying in hotels.

Unlike Aziza, whose wish it is to feel at home in Morocco, Latifa talks about the country as a potential holiday destination and about Moroccan culture (as represented by her relatives) as hindering the holiday feeling. The sisters are very conscious and respectful of their differences. Latifa explains: *'We sense each other's needs. But how she lives and how I live are just different. I mean, I don't go on holiday with her* (...) *because otherwise I just can't be myself. I want to go lie in the sun, go swimming, enjoy a proper holiday.* (...) *They go off to their little house, do the shopping, cook at home, eat out somewhere in the neighbourhood now and then. Go sit under a parasol on the beach. For me, that's just not enough* (laughs). *And she's okay with it and I think that's fine.'* In Morocco, Latifa feels that she cannot be herself in the home-like setting Aziza creates there. It is only by seeing the country as a holiday location rather than a second home that she feels that Morocco becomes somewhat compatible with herself.

2.8 *Home No More: Shifting Perspectives on Here and There*

There is one other specific locus of home for Aziza in Morocco: the ancestral house of her grandparents. This, however, does not feel as home-like anymore since her grandmother passed away. The first time she visited the house again was several years after her grandmother's death. Being in the place where she had last seen the woman who had helped raise her made Aziza realise that she was really gone. She was moved to tears. Her resident relatives did not understand why their cousin had to cry so hard, years after the actual death. This lack of understanding only deepened Aziza's feelings of alienation: *'the beautiful image of the past, the warmth, is gone. It's shallow now. After three days I thought, "I want to go home!"'* She could not have expressed more clearly that her childhood house had ceased to feel like home. During our interview she told me that actually her sister was quite right in her decision not to visit their birthplace anymore.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Latifa also talked about this choice, which she made in order to safeguard her paradisiacal memories of the place: *'If I were to go there,* (...) *it would ruin my dream, I think. What I feel for Morocco now? Um, actually, besides those dreams and memories, not much, no.'* During our interview in the Netherlands, Latifa's dominant message was that these memories were the only remaining connection she had to Morocco. She rarely visits the country at all, and our holiday interview took place during a family holiday at a Turkish beach resort. During this interview, there were a few mild challenges to the dominant voice denouncing Morocco as something from the past. Below is one of the very few passages in Latifa's interviews in which a comparison between the Netherlands and Morocco is in favour of the latter: *'Yeah well, actually it's a mechanical life we're living. In the Netherlands. Look, you do miss*

that flexibility, that social warmth, towards one another being there and doing things for each other. Yeah you really do miss that in the Netherlands, because the Netherlands is more about "me", my stuff. (…) *See, and that's the one thing I miss.'* Here Latifa speaks with a voice more akin to those we heard in many other accounts of Morocco and the Netherlands in Chapter 2, preferring the Moroccan social warmth over Dutch cold self-centeredness. But, she hastens to add, this is the only thing she misses in the Netherlands. In fact she does not even mention Morocco explicitly, leaving open the option that she is thinking of Turkey or of 'Mediterranean culture' in general as much as about Morocco when she makes this contrast.

Latifa's most explicit positive remark about Morocco, and about the 'good things' of the country which she would like to retain, also comes from our conversation in Turkey. It is embedded in an account of the great ambivalence in her relationship to everything Moroccan: *'But don't forget, I went to live alone when I was sixteen because I was so mad at that culture – it had nothing to do with faith. It was a culture, a tradition that monitors your behaviour. Truth be told, it made me a little sick to my stomach. So I've taken on the good things, and by that I mean my faith; the country is beautiful regardless, a country to lose one's heart to, the smells, nice weather. But feeling at home? No, not at all.'* It is in the context of an explanation as to why she does *not* feel at home in Morocco that Latifa concedes that the country also has sides which she loves.

This quote can also serve to illustrate Latifa's tendency to connect various themes and episodes in her life story to the crucial experience of leaving home at sixteen. Here she explains that it was specifically Moroccan culture which she ran away from. She then takes care to exempt religion from the traditions which made her 'sick' and the culture she distanced herself from. After naming the good things which she has salvaged from her Moroccan background, she concludes by saying that this does not mean she feels at home in Morocco. Throughout both interviews, Latifa is consistent in naming the Netherlands as her one and only home. This makes it all the more painful, she tells me, to realise that over the past years she has come to feel less welcome in the Netherlands:

> *'Especially if you've always thought "the Netherlands is my country". I mean, I've spent more years here than in my own country. I've taken on the mentality more, the character traits – things that Dutch people like, I like too. And if there's a discussion in the Lower House like, Islam, tax on headscarves and Islam just needs to be over and done with* [*referring to a proposal by MP Geert Wilders to introduce a tax on headscarves*], *and really important people are listening to that stuff and he even gets a seat, then you get scared. Like, this is not my country anymore, but where do I belong? Because*

> *Morocco isn't my country* (…) *anymore either. Seriously people, do I really need to start all over again? At age forty?'*

Like many others I spoke to, Latifa refers to her Dutch routes and mentality to underline that the Netherlands is her home, and to public exclusion as a threat to her feelings of belonging. As we already read in Chapter 3, she even wonders whether there will still be a place for her in the Netherlands in the future. In the above quote, she singles out the growing public acceptance of Islamophobia, implying that it is as a Muslim that she feels ever more excluded. This challenges her sense of home, especially as for Latifa, Morocco is even less of an option as an alternative locus of home than it is for others.

Interestingly, despite the latter, when it comes to the theme of discrimination, Latifa explicitly positions herself as Moroccan. While she refuses to identify *with* Moroccans and reports no personal discrimination towards her person, she does repeatedly identify *as* Moroccan and feels greatly frustrated by the structural forms of discrimination in the Netherlands.[26] In her own words: *'I don't feel it from the neighbours, people I know, not at all. But yeah, in the big picture, from society I do feel it. You feel it very strongly.'* It is the structural negativity about Moroccans and Muslims in Dutch society that leads Latifa to ask, at least rhetorically, whether in the future she will have to create from scratch a new home elsewhere.

2.9 *New Dimensions: Aziza's Religious Biography*

The last few quotes above introduced the topic of religion as a factor in Latifa's story. Islam and being Muslim are themes of significance in both sisters' stories, but not with the same frequency and intensity. Indeed Aziza's life story alludes to religious aspects more often, not only than that of Latifa, but also than those of most other participants. Interestingly, this does not apply for the first part of our interview, in which she laid out her different 'life chapters'. In these chapters, religion mainly figures as a marker of otherness that sets her apart from her Dutch surroundings. In these accounts Aziza often casts herself in a teacher-like role, always ready to explain what Islam is about to her colleagues, patients or other people asking her questions, striving to express herself in simple, accessible language. It was only when she concluded this part of the interview by looking ahead to the future that the theme of her own religiosity became more prominent. After telling me that she hoped to perform the *hajj*

26 For the distinction between identifying as and identifying with see Verkuyten 1999, pp. 54–55.

(obligatory pilgrimage) to Mecca one day, Aziza added: *'I also do want to say that I really try to do my best to be a good Muslim, to try to develop an awareness myself of all the day-to-day things you do. That's also one of my chapters in life. That's the bonus chapter that you get, the part about my faith, and what that means to me.'*

It is remarkable that Aziza presents her religion as a separate 'life chapter'. This fits into a trend that I noticed in my interviews to set religion apart from other life concerns. This trend is discussed in the box below. In the case of Aziza, this means that it is easiest to describe her personal religiosity in terms of a separate 'religious biography'. Let us trace how religious dimensions appear in several ways in the remainder of our life story interview, from the moment that she has opened up the subject with the words quoted above. Aziza's account illustrates how the role of religion changes over the life course. During our interview, her own religious developments are not laid out in strictly chronological order. Rather, on three or four different occasions in the course of her life story she brings up overlapping elements of her religious biography. As many other believers do, Aziza describes an overall trajectory from Islam as a taken-for-granted aspect of her upbringing towards a more conscious and personal engagement with religious principles.[27]

As we saw above, she first embarks on the subject of her religious biography by mentioning the end goal of her trajectory, a pilgrimage to Mecca, as part of her wishes for the future. After the remark about presenting me with a *'bonus'* chapter on her faith, she tells me that at home she had only learned the Islamic 'basics': the obligations to pray, follow dietary rules, and fast during Ramadan. As an adult, she started her own search for the meanings behind the things her parents had taught her. Aziza joined a study group of friends who met weekly to read and discuss. She fondly remembers: *'I really learned and benefited a lot from the group, becoming really self-aware like, who am I, what is ... yeah this is the faith, but what does it entail, what do I do with it? Am I really faithful, am I doing things properly? What am I doing wrong? So it's actually about calling yourself to account and correcting yourself. No evil tongues, and be as forgiving as possible. Lots of forgiveness towards everybody, and simply setting a good example. And that's how things should be. So that's also a part of my life story, and really speaks about who I am.'* Aziza started to ask questions about the reasons behind the familiar obligations, and to address and question her own behaviour from a religious angle. The dialogue with the other young women from the group stimulated her own, internal dialogues.

27 Cf. Phalet & ter Wal 2004b; Demant 2005.

Aziza concludes this quote by confirming once more that her faith is part of her life story and of who she is. From the position from which she speaks here, she seems to strive to compensate for the fact that this aspect had been virtually absent from the previous life chapters, and to emphasise it all the more in this bonus chapter. Indeed after some more accounts of her study group and how spiritual and peaceful these meetings had made her, she concludes with the following words: *'Yeah you can use it as Chapter 5if you like – religious beliefs. I think that's also quite special, I'd like for it to be included in my life story, precisely because it's such an important pillar of my life.'* Aziza clearly wants to make sure that her audiences – me and the readers of my work – understand that her story is incomplete without its religious dimension.

The second time Aziza talks about her religious biography is when I ask her to name a turning point in her life. She chooses her decision to start wearing a headscarf. Her husband was rather surprised at first: *'He was like "Yeah well, it's your decision of course, but can you really handle it, blah blah blah". And I think "Why? Because I always spend two hours in front of the mirror, you mean?"'* Her mother on the other hand was thrilled, but Aziza asserts her independence from her husband's doubts as well as her mother's encouragement or other people's opinions: *'And of course there was one of those Hajjis there with a beard and everything, who praised me to the heavens. I was the perfect woman. And I thought pffff, well, if you only think that because of the headscarf, well guys you can forget it. Of course my mum was extremely proud too, because as a Muslim of course you like to see your kids doing the same thing. But I didn't do it for them, or for anyone else, I did it for myself and for God.'*[28] Her headscarf, so she says, marked the starting point rather than the conclusion of her personal quest: *'And that was really when my religious journey began. First the headscarf, then the searching. Little by little, buying books and reading reading reading, to understand what it was I was doing, and that feeling became stronger and stronger, bit by bit I pieced my faith together – yeah how should I put it, I've always believed, but it had been fragmentary. So I brought everything together like, this is how I feel. And all the pieces fell into place.'*

Whereas in her first account, her study group was presented as a catalyst in her religious development, in this episode Aziza stresses her autonomy: making her own decisions regardless of the opinions of her loved ones; accumulating knowledge by buying and reading books; and working towards the

28 By stressing that her choice was not motivated by the expectations of others, Aziza claims not just autonomy but also religious authenticity. Cf. de Koning, who argues that Dutch Muslims of various ages see practising Islam out of one's own will rather than out of conformity as a sign of authenticity: de Koning 2008, p. 312.

integration of the scattered fragments that had constituted her faith before.[29] In the quote she once again concludes with a reference to how religion shapes her sense of self. Aziza now presents her faith as a 'guiding principle' in her life, that has made her happier and helped her overcome hardships such as a period of disease and depression which she mentions here for the first time: *'And it was actually my faith that helped me get through it.'*

Much later, towards the end of our final interview session, Aziza gives a third account of her religious biography. This time she is responding to my explicit interview question asking her whether there had been certain changes or periods of intensive development in her position on religious matters over the years. Once again, she first sketches her initial position of little interest in religion apart from the 'basics'. But now for the first time she foregrounds the role of her husband in triggering her personal quest. He had accumulated much knowledge on Islamic issues during his studies in Morocco and could answer many of her questions. *'So I also had lots of discussions, in that sense, I really started attaching a lot of value to my faith.'* Through these conversations, *'the feeling that I wanted to do it'*, as she calls it, grew until she finally decided to don the headscarf.

What is also interesting in this later episode, is how she continues straight after her mention of the headscarf. Whereas earlier she had centred on her decision as a starting point for a personal quest for religious meaning and ethical behaviour, this time she follows up by listing the behaviours she adopted at this time: praying, dressing modestly (even when at the beach), maintaining a certain reserve in her interactions with other Moroccan men. Apart from the prayer, these are all highly gendered behaviours associated with a religiously inspired stress on female virtue. On this point, Aziza takes a different stance from that of her elder sister, who does not care for such things, which she deems to be about outer appearances. In Aziza's own story, this behavioural dimension also figures much less prominently than the endeavours to gain and share knowledge and to question and improve one's own ethical conduct.[30]

Upon first sight the developments evoked in each of these three biographical fragments only need to be set in chronological order to form a coherent religious biography. But although they broadly converge and do not show any real contradictions, the fragments place different emphases that suggest that they are told from slightly different positions. Indeed these accounts can help us realise that multivoicedness may lead to instances of high ambivalence and

29 She consistently talks about 'my faith' (in Dutch: mijn geloof) rather than about, for example, 'Islam'.

30 Cf. S. Mahmood, *Politics of piety: the islamic revival and the feminist subject*, 2005.

clearly contradictory statements, but equally well to more subtle variations within a person's narrative.[31]

Indeed in each of these three accounts of her religious development, Aziza emphasises other aspects, both agentic and communal: the first episode is mainly about the moral implications of a greater religious engagement – doing good, and cultivating a forgiving attitude. The second episode presents religiosity as a source of strength and support in periods of personal hardship: her faith helped her get over her depression and keep believing in a happy ending. In the third episode, as I just mentioned, Aziza lists a number of gendered behaviour norms she adopted to match her intensified religious engagement. Besides this focus on different aspects of religiosity, the three fragments also differ in the explanation of Aziza's development. In the first one, it is mostly her religious study group that is foregrounded as a catalyst of reflection, whereas in the second one, Aziza highlights her autonomy in making decisions and explicitly claims not to have been influenced by others. Finally in the third fragment, she brings in the dialogues with her husband as a relevant factor in her development.

In each of the three biographic fragments, Aziza highlights a different agent of change as well as different dimensions of this change. What they share is a general account of a development, in dialogue with herself and with significant others, from little concern and unreflexive religious practice in her youth towards a more reflexive and active commitment to Islam.[32] But still other remarks during the interview nuance the image of a linear development. At the time of the interviews, for example, she declares to be less actively engaged with spirituality than in the years of her study group. Indeed we can identify a peak of religious activity in the time that she first discussed many things with her husband, then decided to wear a headscarf, and finally joined the study group. After this peak things became less intense. As to the future, Aziza anticipates another peak around her projected pilgrimage to Mecca. This she sees as the beginning of a new phase in which she can restart her relationship to God with a clean slate.

Aziza's first religious highlight, her headscarf, is described as a turning point in more than one way: in how she herself relates to her religion, but also in how others relate to her as a religious person, or rather, as a Muslim woman. Ever

31 Cf. Hermans 2001a, p. 354.

32 The trend to spend more time and attention to Islamic issues as one grows older has been widely documented for young Muslims, both in the Netherlands (Nabben, Yesilgöz & Korf 2006, p. 68; Demant 2005) and elsewhere (Vertovec & Rogers 1998; M.W. Buitelaar, *Ramadan: Sultan van alle maanden*, 2002).

since she started covering her head, Aziza feels that people look at her differently. She describes how, although she prefers not to interpret others' behaviour as discriminating if she can help it, she does encounter many prejudices as well as many ignorant questions.

Luckily her frustration on this front is outweighed in her narrative by at least as many positive reactions, by her colleagues as well as her patients; people complimenting her on her headscarf fitting her outfit, showing genuine interest in her religion or adjusting their opinions following her explanations. Aziza talks with some pride about the conversations she has with Dutch people who ask her about Islam, often repeating how she answered a particular question and how that changed her conversation partner's mind. In the context of her Dutch surroundings, Aziza's social identity as a Muslim is presented as an occasion, not just for exclusion, but also for exchange, belonging and inclusion. Moreover, it is not exclusively associated with her 'Moroccan world'. While she serves me lunch after our last interview session, Aziza looks back on the image of two worlds and states that she feels 'among her own' both amidst her Dutch colleagues and in her Moroccan parental home, but also in her study group, which consists of Dutch as well as Moroccan women and forms a context in which the women primarily address each other as fellow believers.[33]

2.10 *Latifa: Claiming Her Own Personal Relationship to God*

In Latifa's story, as in her life, Islam plays a different role than in Aziza's. We have seen that her social Muslim identity is far less outspoken than that of her younger sister, if only because she looks much less like the prototypical Muslim woman than Aziza does. She therefore mentions neither the negative nor the positive kind of input Aziza gets from others in reaction to her religious identity, but only the structural discrimination against Muslims and Moroccans she witnesses in Dutch society. Most of the themes Aziza addresses also featured in Latifa's story, but less dominantly and with different implications for daily life. Whereas in her younger sister's story religion gets a separate chapter, Latifa generally only mentions the topic in passing. Rather than being connected to key events in her life story, Latifa's religious development is presented as something that happened more gradually over the years.

The meanings Latifa attaches to her personal religiosity mainly pertain to a morally sound lifestyle: *'Yeah some people refuse to shake hands, others walk*

33 In this afterthought, Aziza appears to single out her Muslim identity as something that transcends, or at least is not hindered by, national identifications. Presenting religion as transcending national differences has been described as a common strategy among (young) Dutch Muslims. See e.g. M.J.M. de Koning & E. Bartels, *For Allah and Myself*, 2006.

around wearing something like this [face veil, FJS]. (…) *But it's not about that, it's about a proper way of thinking, a good heart. Being able to help people if they need it. Just being a good person, that's all.'* Latifa cherishes her personal relationship to God and the ethical guidelines she derives from Islam. As we have seen above, Aziza's account also ascribes an important place to this moral dimension, but in her case this focus is less exclusive than in Latifa's. At one point she does mention the fact that she sometimes prays, but mainly to stress that she only does so because it makes her feel better, and not because of a sense of obligation. In consonance with her larger story, she stresses her own independent attitude when it comes to religious issues. She speaks of God in communal terms, but emphasises her autonomy in choosing how to actualise her faith in her own life and in her relationships with others.

The point that Latifa repeats most frequently is that religion, for her, is a strictly personal affair: *'Islam is between me and God!'* This also means that she does not feel bound to all kinds of rules and expectations which other Moroccans link to being Muslim: *'I don't listen to what people say anymore.'* No way would Latifa, like Aziza would, refrain from wearing a bikini at the beach. Yet her sister, while much more conforming to social norms, at times also stresses the personal nature of her faith. We have already seen that she claims complete autonomy in her choice to wear a headscarf. Later she also expresses her wish to be judged on personal rather than religious merits: *'Try to get to know me as a person, then you can judge me. I want to be judged on my own character, and not by my appearance or what I wear.'*

Aziza and Latifa agree in rejecting the idea of religious conformity for the sake of others' good opinion, and both emphasise that what is really important is one's personal relationship to God. In Latifa's story these themes are, however, more central than in Aziza's. Furthermore, Latifa's refusal to let herself be guided by social judgement pertains to all domains of life, not just to Islamic matters. One thing she reproaches her parents for are their worries about the good opinion of others: *'Instead of living for themselves, my parents have always lived for other people.* (…) *They never really made their own decisions, they always thought like, what will everyone else think and say?'*[34] This same lifestyle was expected from her as the eldest daughter. But according to Latifa, her parents' expectations almost led her to forget herself and her own identity. Being true to oneself is one of the core values that she conveys in her story: *'I want to live my own ideas, and not anyone else's.'*

Another regard in which Latifa explicitly distances herself from her parents is their failure to distinguish between religion and culture or tradition: *'That's*

34 Cf. for similar comments on Moroccan parents: Pels & de Gruijter 2006, p. 78.

how their predecessors did it, and that's the way it continued. And yeah, the Qur'an or Islam actually have nothing to do with it, because there it says something completely different.' The much-discussed tendency amongst descendants of Muslim migrants to explicitly differentiate 'pure' Islam from the 'cultural' ideas and customs of their parents,[35] can be recognised in the stories of both sisters. Aziza tells me that she is very keen on the risk that things that are 'actually' part of Moroccan culture be passed off as religious. She often refers to this distinction when people ask her about Islam, explaining that many questionable practices are inspired by cultural custom rather than by religion, and often actually forbidden in Islam. She observes lots of 'mixing', as she calls it, within the Moroccan community, also by her own mother: *'My mother is a woman who sometimes confuses those types of things. Then I say mum, that's tradition you know, it's not written in the Qur'an.'* For Aziza this distinction is important because she wants to do 'the right thing'. While she feels bound to religious prescriptions, she sees cultural rules as optional at best, and even dangerous in situations where they contradict religious prescriptions.

In the story of Latifa, the problematic mingling of religion and culture is related to her protest against the restrictive climate of her youth. The Islam she remembers from her parents was a straightjacket rather than a source of comfort: *'Nor did I ever hear about the nice things, it was always just "you can't do that", "forbidden", "bad", oh boy, "hell". But I never heard anything about heaven.'* After leaving home, Latifa started her own religious quest. She concluded that much of what had been expected of her by her family could not be legitimated in religious terms at all: *'Yeah like, this actually isn't what Islam says things should be like at all! Under Islam, a woman is supposed to study, so that she can pass on her education to her children. Women are totally allowed to work. Women are not obliged to cook for you and manage your household. Really, it's all there in black and white* (…) *So I did some investigating, and none of it has anything to do with religion. It's just a man's world, that's all.'*

As these words illustrate, Latifa is very critical of the ways in which Islam is evoked as an argument for curtailing especially women's freedom. Finding that Islamic sources also allow for, and in her view even prescribe, equality between the sexes, was of great importance to Latifa. It helped her legitimate her own choices, first of all towards herself but also towards her family. Distinguishing between restrictive tradition and empowering religion forms a crucial step in

35 Cf. de Koning 2008; Vertovec & Rogers 1998; Roy 2004, p. 260; Eijberts 2013, pp. 208–209. Note that De Koning shows that although the Muslim youngsters in his research made sharp *discursive* distinctions between religion and culture, this did not mean that they consistently separated them in practice (e.g. pp. 143–144).

Latifa's development of her current attitude towards her heritage. The following quote suggests that, when she talks about discarding the bad things and maintaining the good things from her youth, she is mainly speaking of Islam: *'So to me, the thing I really value is my faith. It's the only thing I've held on to from, like, all of it. My faith is extremely important. My mother, and me too, I'm really very religious. And that's the only thing that, like, makes me one with my fellow Moroccans, the rest really means nothing to me. For I detest all the things they love.'* Although Latifa stages herself and her mother together as two very religious people, for herself holding on to Islam is made possible by separating it from issues of culture and gender with which it is inextricably intertwined in her mother's perception.[36]

Latifa is little concerned with exact chronological ordering in the telling of her life, and it is hard to pin down around what time she turned from rebelling against everything Moroccan towards selectively choosing which elements of her cultural repertoire were worth maintaining, or indeed whether she excluded religion from her protest right from the beginning or not. We already saw in the story of her departure from the parental home how past memories and later evaluations are hard to separate in a life story that is always told in retrospect. Isolated remarks, however, suggest that it is mainly in the last few years that she has carefully started to reappraise further aspects of the heritage from her upbringing, and that there may be some more positive elements to be salvaged besides religion.[37] Yet as the above quote shows, she still identifies against rather than with fellow Moroccans, and points at Islam as the only thing she shares with them.

All in all, the two sisters both tend to set religion apart, at least narratively, from other concerns in their lives: Aziza by presenting it as a separate chapter (although it also features in other, later parts of her story), and Latifa by bracketing and isolating it from the rest of her cultural heritage. My own treatment

36 Besides protesting against the religious legitimation of gender inequality, Latifa also distances herself from another stereotype linked to Islam: religious extremism. Her interviews contain several references to Islamism and religious terrorism, which are denounced as fundamentally unislamic. Like many participants, Latifa is frustrated about the fact that the views and deeds of extremist minorities colour the general image of Muslims and provide people like Geert Wilders with arguments to support his point of view.

37 This relatively recent reappraisal, bringing together various lines from Latifa's tumultuous past, may be typical for her life stage of middle adulthood, about which McAdams writes: "with the movement through our middle years in adulthood, we become increasingly concerned about conflict and reconciliation among different narrative characters". See McAdams 1993, p. 204.

of religion as a distinct topic within their case study flows from this finding. At the same time, both sisters also stress the great importance Islam has for them, and my discussion of the ways in which religion figures in their respective narratives shows that these have to be understood against the background of their overall life stories.

Setting Religion Apart

It is not just in the case of the two sisters that religion holds an ambivalent position. Even though many informants stated that Islam is an important element in their lives, religion figures in the interviews as a theme that stands relatively separate from other concerns and story lines – both when mentioned spontaneously and when inquired about explicitly. Religious voices seldom dominate in the narratives, and although religious positions are inevitably voiced in the context of the larger life story and in the modality of other identifications, religious positions seem to be less intertwined with other positions than, for example, positions that foreground issues of ethnicity or gender. I would not have been able, for example, to distil a separate 'gender biography' or a 'Dutch/Moroccan biography' from a life story with the same ease as I did with Aziza's religious biography.

In the light of my focus on home and identity, Islam has turned out to be a much less significant factor than I had anticipated. With regard to home, religion mainly figures in a negative sense: as we saw in Chapter 4, many informants stated that they feel less at home in the Netherlands because of the increasingly Islamophobic climate. In Jamila's case, Morocco was presented as a more tolerant alternative when it comes to religion, whereas Naima, as we saw in her case study, rather sees the Netherlands as the best setting for Islam. These examples also show that informants did indeed sometimes bring up religion when discussing issues of belonging. Nevertheless, I was surprised by the relative scarcity of such instances in my material. Some informants themselves reflected on the status aparte of religion in their narratives. Nora (26, f, Moroccan), for example, had told a life story in which references to religious meanings were virtually absent. When we came to the explicit questions about this subject, she mused: '*Strange, now you mention it – that I see that as separate from my life. Maybe because you do always try to, well, keep them apart for yourself, my religion and my life. On the one hand it's not separated, because it also makes you who you are, but on the other hand I don't talk about it that much. Except for, well, the obvious – me, how I look* [pointing at headscarf].'

Nora's own explanation was that she does not like to be labelled according to specific characteristics, but rather wants to be seen as an individual and judged on her personality. She refuses to be reduced to a stereotyped version of one of her many I-positions. There are several different factors that might explain part of Nora's, and many others', tendency to sidetrack religion as an element of their lives and life stories. First of all, the current Islamophobic atmosphere in the Netherlands might inhibit informants from letting their religious voices speak freely and to present their religiosity as a self-evident part of their lives towards me as an interviewer and towards the anticipated (Dutch) audience of my work.[38] It could also be concluded that informants have developed a rather 'secular' mindset, viewing their religion as a private matter separate from other concerns. A third reason may be found in the discursive separation of religion and culture I discussed above.[39] The endeavour to safeguard religious 'purity' could lead people to isolate religion from other life concerns.

Once more, I certainly do not mean to imply that Islam is unimportant for those interviewed – we have seen quite the contrary in the stories of, amongst others, Latifa, Aziza and Jamila.[40] Indeed, several informants told me that they prioritise their Muslim identity over their ideas of being Moroccan, Turkish and/or Dutch.[41] But this should not be taken to mean that their whole life, their whole story, their whole identity can be interpreted in religious terms. The observation that religion plays a relatively marginal role both in the stories people told me and in this study can serve as an antidote to the widespread tendency to think of, and address, people with a Muslim background almost exclusively in terms of their religious identity. Such a one-sided approach fails to do justice to the rich many-sidedness of their stories and identities, and hinders a more comprehensive understanding of that same religious identity by overstating it and ignoring the complex context in which individuals' religious positions develop and manifest themselves in dialogue with other positions.[42]

38 Cf. Bhatia 2013, p. 235.

39 For more about this tendency see Roy 2004, e.g. p. 117.

40 Cf. de Koning, who concludes that young Moroccan Dutch strongly value their Muslim identity while at the same time often prioritising other concerns in their daily lives: de Koning 2008, p. 308.

41 Cf. e.g. S. Ketner, *Ik denk niet in culturen … ik denk eigenlijk meer in mijn geloof*, 2008.

42 Cf. Verkuyten 1999, p. 29.

2.11 *Like Leaving Home All over Again: Aziza's Dutch Connection*

Aziza spent the first period of her marriage enjoying her new life and taking care of her children. After a few years, she felt ready for a new occupation, away from home. She got engaged in a local volunteer project and eventually started working as a nanny for a well-to-do family, *'A truly Dutch family in the heart of Utrecht, as white as white can be.'* In the four years she stayed with this family she developed friendly relationships with the parents and, as she told me, came to love the children like her own. When she finally decided to realise her old dream to work as a nurse, leaving this family was harder on her than she had expected. She recalls her last day in much detail – the words of goodbye, the tears, the gifts, even which day of the week it was. It sounds like an account of leaving home all over again: she left behind the beloved familiarity of a place and people she had learned to love, in order to spread out her wings and start on a new phase in her own life.

Besides the personal bonds she developed with all members of this family, what Aziza also appreciates about her time as a nanny is that it gave her the opportunity to share her own background with people from an entirely Dutch setting: *'And what I also find really interesting is that these are people who have absolutely no contact with foreigners.* (...) *And yet, as a Moroccan I ended up in the middle of that family, they also just got to know me really well as a Moroccan. I discussed things with them a lot, they were always really nice discussions, I would explain things, and explain them again* (laughs). *But always with good intentions.* (...) *I expanded their horizons a little.'* Aziza is glad that the close contact with this family enabled her to do her bit for a better understanding of Moroccans and Moroccan culture. And the enrichment was mutual: *'Because through the children I also ended up in other family homes.* (...) *So I also really got to know the Dutch up close and personal, to put it like that. From the ground up, to see how they really live. I found it really special, looking into their world, and they also got a glimpse of my world. So they got to know more about us, and I got to know more about them.'*

Aziza's marriage had allowed her to bring together the Dutch and Moroccan aspects of her own world. Her time as a nanny she values because it allowed for an encounter and mutual enrichment of different worlds on the intimate level of the family home. Her story expresses how much she has come to feel at home in Dutch society and among Dutch people. All Aziza's accounts of other work-related contacts with Dutch, from her side job as a teenager through her time as a volunteer to her current occupation as a nurse, equally radiate belonging. She tells of feeling 'just as Dutch' as her colleagues, of feeling at home among them, and of encountering interest and understanding from colleagues and patients when offering explanations about her background. Similar to

Jamila from Chapter 4, and to many others, her work figures as a main site of regular contact and exchange with Dutch colleagues as representatives of Dutch society. But unlike Jamila, she speaks of inclusion much more than she does of exclusion.

2.12 *Dutch and/or Moroccan? Slippery Labelling*

Aziza's stories about her working environments also illustrate the fluid nature of ethnic identifications. Especially with reference to her work as a nanny she positions herself as Moroccan and emphasises the added value of her otherness. Talking about her side job and current work, she pays attention both to being Dutch, just like her colleagues, and to feeling and being addressed as different because of her Moroccan and Muslim background. The labels Aziza ascribes to herself are always formulated in context – that is why statistics measuring 'how Dutch' and 'how Moroccan' people feel, as they are used in more quantitative approaches, remain problematic.[43] Yet this does not mean that nothing can be said about general preferences of individuals. Latifa for example clearly identifies more explicitly, overall, as Dutch than as Moroccan, whereas her sister stresses the importance of both 'sides' in shaping who she has become.

Latifa also uses ethnic labels in order to explain the difference between herself and Aziza: *'I think Aziza is ... she's really just a typical Moroccan woman, I think. In the way she thinks too. I see her life as really Moroccan. Her place is also Moroccan, simple as that.'* Latifa describes Aziza as typically Moroccan in several aspects, each of which can be paralleled by statements about herself as typically Dutch in her lifestyle, her way of thinking, and as we saw even her home decoration. Latifa wants to make sure that her message comes across: there are virtually no differences between herself and a Dutchwoman: *'If you were to interview a Dutch woman, except for the discrimination stuff there really is no difference. Between what I think and what she thinks. Really truly, there's no difference. But between my mother and her – huge difference! And between me and someone from Morocco – huge difference! So to me, what I actually value more is my faith.'* The only things that set Latifa apart from other Dutch, in her own view, are religion and discrimination. As we saw above, in response to discrimination Latifa does identify as Moroccan.

The centrality of Latifa's identification as Dutch also comes to the fore when she speaks about Turkey, where her in-laws live. In the more rural areas, she

43 See e.g. Maliepaard & Gijsberts 2012, p. 140; van der Welle 2011, p. 243; Crul & Heering 2009, p. 109 for examples of such scales.

tells me, she adapts her behaviour: *'I wear long clothes, wrapped in one of those scarves too! It's just respect* (...) *Look I mean, I do conform.* (...) *But when I come here* [in a Turkish beach resort, FJS], *I just walk around in my bikini. But that's just because, in the Netherlands we grew up with so many cultures around, that we've learned to treat them with respect.'* Out of respect, Latifa says, she dresses more conservatively in rural Turkey. She could have traced this respect to her upbringing (as she indeed does later on in the same interview), and referred to her Moroccan roots as helping her understand cultural expectation in Turkey. But instead of this, she makes no mention of her Moroccan background whatsoever, but rather explains that it is *as a Dutchwoman* that she has become used to and learned to respect cultural diversity.

During our interview in the Netherlands, the voice asserting to be 'more Dutch than the Dutch' consistently had the upper hand. Earlier when we spoke in Turkey however, Latifa brought up other considerations as well. Comparing herself with siblings born in the Netherlands, she said to be glad to have been formed by her Moroccan roots: *'So in hindsight I really am quite happy, that on the one hand I got that type of upbringing. Because it has made me who I am today, in the sense that Moroccan culture is really instilled into you. In the meantime of course, you get a bit older, more mature so then you start choosing your own paths.* (...) *At first you go back and forth, thinking, what am I actually? Do I think the Moroccan or the Dutch way? If I choose Dutch, then I think no wait that's not true at all, because there are some things that I do think about the Moroccan way. But that has passed now, because now I am who I am. I don't label myself anymore like oh Moroccan or Dutch, I'm just Latifa and that's it, that's all there is to it.'*

In this fragment, Latifa speaks with a different voice, from a position that allows more leeway for appreciation of her 'Moroccan sides'. She reflects on her changing identifications over the course of her life, remembering a time in which she struggled to decide whether she was Dutch or Moroccan. But here she concludes that this insecurity is all in the past, as now she simply identifies as 'Latifa'. Her subjective sense of self no longer depends on the application of ill-fitting labels. There were several other informants (including Aziza) who made similar statements, dismissing different kinds of categorisations and concluding that they were simply themselves. The fact that in Latifa's case this statement was made in our first interview, aptly illustrates that we cannot think of (ethnic) identifications as going through linear developments. From one position Latifa may have left her worries about defining herself in ethnic terms behind, but from another one, which is more dominant in our second interview, the issue is 'still' rather acute.

2.13 *Parents and Parenting*

The reconciliation between Latifa and her parents also figures as a key episode – in the life story of Aziza. She mentions her defence of her elder sister's choice of spouse as an important moment in her life. She and her husband mobilised relatives to convince her father to approve of the match. She proudly tells how she also employed religious arguments: *'I said "Dad, then you have to tell me which verse in the Qur'an says that your child is not allowed to marry a non-Moroccan. Because as far as I see it, in Islam, as a Muslim, the more important question is whether he's a Muslim, right? And he is."* (…) *And that brought him down a notch, because that's a real argument, using religion. You can't get more powerful than that. I'd done my homework.'* This is the only episode in which Aziza talks about openly standing up to her parents. Her loyalty towards her sister and her sense of injustice outweighed her desire to please and respect her parents. Aziza is proud to have contributed to their father's eventual acceptance, which, in her words, 'set Latifa free'.

Latifa, too, is glad that the relationship with her parents has been restored. Yet when telling her story she made no mention at all of how the reconciliation came about. Even when I explicitly asked her about it, she did not elaborate on the subject. She indicated that her eldest child was over a year old when things finally got less tense and her siblings were allowed to visit her again. The fact that her relationship with her parents has since been restored is clear from the start of our interview, but this is always mentioned almost as an aside, with the main stress being on the times of trouble. From her emphases it is clear that the story she has to tell at this point in her life (or at least in this interview setting[44]) is not about the reconciliation, however happy she is about this, but about the fight that preceded it. Indeed when at the end of our second interview session I ask her about the central theme of her narrative, this is what comes up: *'If I had to write down my story, yeah it would be about a girl who lived in two worlds. And who had to fight hard to achieve anything.'*

Latifa does, like her sister, talk about the surprisingly good relationship she now has with her parents: *'Yeah they're really proud of me now, definitely. If there's something they need to say, they call me first. If they want to complain, I'm also the first one they want. And if there's a problem I'm the one who has to go, instead of my other brothers and sisters. Um … yeah I'm the best child in their eyes right now. But it's only because they ultimately did end up giving me a chance, to get to know me properly.'* Latifa has gone from being the black sheep, to being

44 Remember that she is ill at the moment of the Dutch interview, and sees this illness as something she has to go through to come to terms with her traumatic past.

the primary confidante of her parents. As Latifa and Aziza both indicated, in the past their respective roles have been different from what they see as the 'normal' situation, in which the eldest daughter should set an example in supporting her parents and being the most responsible as well as the most religious child. Instead, it is Aziza who for long scored highest in these matters. While she is still the only daughter to wear a headscarf and the one most actively involved in maintaining family cohesion, when it comes to supporting their parents we could say that Latifa has reclaimed her rightful place as the eldest sister. As we saw in the introduction, the time I spoke to both sisters together informally, they joked that in the past it was Aziza who had to carry most of the filial burden, but now Latifa had taken over.

In Latifa's account of her reconciliation, she foregrounds her own battle to restore the relationship and achieving, not just that her parents accept her current lifestyle, but also that they recognise how they have misjudged her in the past: *'I fought for it, and won in the end, yeah.* (...) *Now they understand that I actually wasn't a bad child after all,* [smiles] *that I actually didn't go too far at all, and that I was actually quite a good person.'* Latifa has succeeded in changing her image back from that of a 'bad woman' to the 'good daughter', without compromising her own ideas. She does not go into the part Aziza had to play in bringing about this change of mind. In more general terms, however, she does allude to her sister's support: *'You wouldn't pick us as sisters, as having grown up in the same house. But she's a dear, I love her and she has given me a lot of support. Through thick and thin. And I haven't forgotten that, and I will always continue to appreciate it.'*

Aziza is equally positive, both about her sister's personality and about their relationship: *'I really have an incredible bond with my sister. Really. It's fantastic, she truly is a wonderful person, you know: she has a heart of diamond, not of gold. She supports every one of our family members until the bitter end.'* It is clear that for both sisters their family in general, and the other sister in particular, is of great importance. Aziza's love for both her sister and her parents is tellingly expressed in the following quote: *'That I can also vent to her about my parents, for example, I wouldn't do that with a girlfriend. They're my parents. And what I feel, my sister feels too, and when we're done, we say: they're our parents and we'll love them 'til the day we die. Whatever happens. I think that's the nicest thing.'*

This fragment also suggests that in Aziza's view, critical remarks about her parents, especially towards outsiders such as her friends or me as an interviewer, are 'not done'.[45] Indeed Aziza makes sure that (almost) all stories about her

45 This example is indicative of a more general, partly methodological issue. Like Aziza, more participants may have been inclined not to share with an outside interviewer too

parents have a positive tone, even when she mentions, for example, the restrictions of her youth. In fact even in the words of Latifa, whose fierce criticism of her parents' upbringing forms a major part of her central theme, this criticism is always formulated in the past tense. In her remarks about her parents in the present, quite like Aziza she refrains from speaking ill of them at all times. The only exception the sisters appear to make is their mild criticism of their mother's tendency to confuse culture and religion. Both their life stories and their tone in talking about their parents underline the great emotional significance of their parents in their lives. In this respect their stories are representative for those of virtually all other respondents, in which family, and most of all parents and children, are attributed great importance.

Latifa shows that, while her parents represent many things which she rejects for herself, this by no means implies a rejection of her parents themselves. The same goes for another informant in whose case, similar to Latifa, the contrast between her own lifestyle and that of her parents is even starker than for most other informants: Malika. She is a special case because she has also rejected Islam as a part of her life. It took her some pain to have her choices accepted by her parents. Still her mother plays an important part in her life (she is even looking for a suitable apartment for her mother in her own neighbourhood in order to have her living nearby), and the memory of her father and the bond she had with him hovers over much of her story. For Latifa and Malika as in other cases, the tensions that often arise from these descendants of migrants' endeavours to find their own way, do not undo their strong commitment to their parents.

Family also figures large in informants' reflections on what home means to them. As we have seen in the story of Aziza, the parental house does not

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many negative stories or critiques of 'their' people, be it their direct family or an ethnic or religious community. This risk is especially poignant seen the discursive vulnerability of Moroccan and Turkish Muslim migrants in contemporary society. While I depart from the presupposition that there is no such thing as a 'true story' which informants either tell or withhold, it is still relevant to reflect on this issue in terms of being part of the situatedness of the stories I was told. Yet I think Aziza's example here also suggests a qualification of this risk in this specific research. In the course of the intensive in-depth interviews, a certain bond of trust was established and informants were given the opportunity to nuance their opinions and make sure that I understood what they meant to say. Through close reading of their accounts, I have found ample evidence of reflection and (self-)criticism in the narratives, whether explicit or between the lines as in this example of Aziza. Throughout this book I have shown that participants told me stories about their lives that were far from polished and one-dimensional, but rather featured a multiplicity of different voices telling contrasting, ambivalent and sometimes contradictory stories.

automatically cease to feel like home once people establish their own households, yet once they become parents themselves, this often leads to a less dominant role for the parental house in their understanding of home.

Children are the Future

The importance of one's children is one of the subjects that have received relatively little attention in this book, in comparison with the relevance of this theme during the interviews. In the life stories, children figure prominently in the scenarios and dreams informants formulate for their future. Most informants who were childless expressed a wish to have their own family in the future, and ensuring a good future for their children was a primary goal for parents. The topic of children prompted interviewees to talk about what they valued about their various cultural repertoires. They reflected on what they had learned from their upbringing, and which things they wanted to approach differently, or exactly the same, with their own children. This also means that talking about raising one's children provided a way to formulate mild criticism about one's parents. Several people talked about offering their children, for example, a careless childhood, support in their formal education, or freedom to make their own choices. But generally they would also agree with Aziza's qualification: *'So I REFUSE to blame them for it. In their eyes, they've done their best.'* One thing that often comes up is that interviewees hope that they will be able to show the same loving warmth and devotion to their children's wellbeing as their parents, and especially their mothers, did. Regarding their parents' country of origin, several informants mentioned 'showing my children where they/ their (grand)parents are from' as an important motivation to visit regularly. Besides these shared themes, stories about one's children also often reflect the personal emphases people lay in their life stories. We can see as much in Latifa's and Aziza's remarks about their offspring.

There are more instances in Aziza's life story in which the significance of her children is emphasised, besides their role in her shifting understanding of where home is. Asked about important persons in her life, she tells me that her sister and parents are immensely important to her, but that her husband and children come first. The birth of her first child is mentioned as a highlight in her life, which brought about a change in her own attitude because from then on she prioritised her child's needs above her own: *'That was the moment*

when things didn't revolve around me anymore.' Also in the formulation of her wishes for the future, the three things she focuses on are a good future for her offspring, a journey to Mecca, and advances in her career.

The way Aziza talks about her children illustrates the general tone of her story. As we have seen, she does not conceal her more difficult and painful memories, but her bottom line is always a positive one. She expresses gratitude for her beautiful childhood, the fun times of her adolescence, her great sister and husband, the enrichment of having two cultures, and the fact that after some detours, in the end she also got her career on track. In part Aziza's life story is about counting her blessings, and one of those blessings is having healthy and happy children.

While Latifa also takes pride in her positive attitude, this case study will have made clear that at least at this point, her story concentrates on the hardships she encountered due to her pasts conflicts with her parents about her life choices. This theme also resonates in how she talks about her own parenthood: *'I'm not really the sort of person to have six children, it's not what I want either. I need to be able to live as well, instead of just raising children all the time. But I do try to give lots of love to the two children I have. To ensure their education, and I do to try to steer their development somewhat, so things will be easier for them later on. And will I be strict if my child has a boyfriend from another culture? I don't think so. I'll certainly talk about what the dangers are, you know, because I have experience myself. But otherwise, I don't think I'll treat them like my parents did, not at all. Because we, well, we give each other cuddles. We say "I love you" to each other all day, there's just a really strong connection. One that I didn't have with my parents, because you were too ashamed to say "I love you".'* In her attitude towards her children, Latifa consciously strives not to make the mistakes that she believes her parents made.

The arrival of her children has impacted on Latifa's life in several ways. At one point, she explains her newfound ability to dismiss ethnic labels as irrelevant to her life, by pointing to her children. They have helped her, so she tells me, to focus on her own family life rather than worrying about what outsiders may think of her and in what terms she should define herself. Besides, the fact that both times I asked her about her reconciliation with her parents, the only indication she gave was that it occurred when her eldest child was one year old, suggests that the presence of a grandchild may have prompted her parents to let go of their last grudge. Now, a decade later, Latifa regularly visits her parents again. Still her relationship to her parental home shows the scars of her tumultuous past: *'Wellll, I do enjoy being at my mother's, drinking coffee and that type of thing. And then I come back to my own house. It really does feel very different than the first time I returned there after running away from that*

home. During those first few months, I didn't feel at home at all. (…) *Yeah it is the home where you once belonged, but still it's different. So yeah, it really is a home that you've distanced yourself from.'* In Latifa's accounts of her parental home, like in Aziza's, we see how personal meanings of home are situationally formulated over individual life courses in which people strive to balance out their desires for both agency and communion as well as for familiarity and a subjective sense of self, in the contexts in which they find themselves.

2.14 *Aziza's Place Revisited*

In the introduction to this chapter we heard Aziza talk about her apartment. Returning to the things she pointed out, we can now see that they correspond to important elements in her life story. She values the apartment for being close to both her children's school and her own work, and because it is where she built up her life together with her husband and children. Indeed we have seen that her children, her husband and her work are important in Aziza's story. Besides identifying as a mother, a wife and a nurse, Aziza also presents herself as a good daughter and a family person – a reference to this can be found in the fact that she regrets living in a different neighbourhood than her parents and relatives. Her description of the neighbourhood is typical for Aziza's balanced positive style: she mentions the negative image the area has, but concludes that overall, she herself rather likes it there.

The items Aziza explicitly points out during our tour of the house, too, can each be related to important dimensions of her life. I have mentioned the picture of Mecca, the place where Aziza told me she hopes to travel in the future to fulfil her faith and start with a clean slate. During our tour she explains: *'You see things from Mecca dotted around here and there … and that's simply because I do also feel a great connection, with my faith.'* In her kitchen she pointed out the Moroccan tajine: *'I'm very traditional in the kitchen,* (…) *a real tajine, so a real Moroccan one.'* This remark can be related to the observation that Aziza cherishes her Moroccan heritage.[46] The abundance of family pictures, each of which she explained in detail, point to her commitment to her husband and children as well as the rest of her family.[47] Prominently displayed in her living room is the vase which she tells me was a goodbye gift from the Dutch family for whom she used to work – we have seen how this forms an important

46 Most participants pointed out at least some Moroccan or Turkish items during our tour. We could say that displaying such items in their homes allowed these people to express a symbolic proximity to their Turkish or Moroccan 'homes' in the context of their daily lives in the Netherlands. Particularly for the relevance of food, see Salih 2003, p.70.

47 Cf. Salih 2003, p. 123.

episode in her life, both because of the personal relationships she built with all family members and because of the mutual cultural enrichment her work entailed.

The porcelain statue which seemed, to me as an outsider, a bit out of place in the interior is valued for its history: *'I received this from a patient, who was very grateful to me. At work.'* I see how much Aziza cherishes this token of gratitude, as I can place it in the light of the obstacles she had to overcome to become a nurse, of the mixed reactions she gets from patients as a headscarved nurse, and of the caring role in which she casts herself both personally and professionally. Thus, as I mentioned in the introduction, what at first seemed (to me) to be random items turned out to be identity statements closely connected to the narrated life story. In a way, both by using and displaying these items in her home, and by pointing them out to me, Aziza was telling me and herself who she is. Indeed home-making can, in the words of Ruba Salih, be seen 'as a significant site whereby broader feelings and narratives of displacement and belonging can be grasped'.[48] My findings appear to back her argument that migrants 'objectify' themselves and who they have become through items in their multiple homes.[49] However, placed against the background of the complexities of Aziza's narrated story, in the context of my own analysis these material aspects have little function, apart from being colourful illustrations of things we also learned from Aziza's words. In Chapter 2 I argued that, in the context of this specific research, the material aspects discussed generally gain meaning through the stories to which they can be related, rather than adding something new to these stories.[50] This is confirmed by the example of Aziza's apartment.

3 Conclusion

3.1 *Family, Gender, Religion*

Before a more general reflection on the understandings of home presented in this chapter, I want to pay specific attention to the three 'new' topics this chapter highlighted: family, gender and religion. The centrality of family points towards the highly relational nature of home. In Chapter 4 we have seen the negative effects of social marginalisation and exclusion on feelings of home. The importance of more intimate social relations, and most of all family, is most visible when we zoom in on individual stories. The topic has featured in the case studies of both Naima – most of all in the final part of her case study

48 Salih 2003, p. 157.

49 Salih 2003, p. 78.

50 See Section 3.2 in Chapter 2.

in the epilogue to Chapter 3 – and Jamila – with her motherhood and her relationships to her parents, her in-laws and her husband forming significant parameters for her positioning towards Morocco and the Netherlands. In Chapter 3, family was mentioned as an important element in making informants feel at home in Morocco or Turkey. But these references could not do justice to the key role family plays in many of the interviews I conducted.[51] The stories of Aziza and Latifa have allowed me to highlight issues related to family in various ways and show how they colour understandings of home and identity.

Gender is another otherwise slightly underexposed theme that received more attention in this final chapter. Gender is a tricky issue: we often tend to either ignore it or see it everywhere. In this chapter I have tried to treat gender, not as a separate issue, but as a dimension of complex social situations, a dimension that pops up in myriad ways in people's lives and stories. It will be clear from the casus that life experiences and narratives, and certainly also understandings of home, are always gendered. Not all stories were as outspoken in this regard as that of Latifa. But various conceptions of femininity and masculinity in the different 'worlds' individuals relate to, and the influence these conceptions have on their life choices and the parameters within which they build their households and homes, make gender a much broader and more constitutive issue in the light of this research than just relating to the stereotypical idea that the house is a female domain and home-making a feminine activity.[52] More or less prominently, gender co-constructs the different personal and social identifications which people voice in their narratives. I want to stress that this should not be taken to mean that individuals are passively shaped by dominant conceptions of gender. Rather, as Prins writes, 'Markers of identity such as gender, class or ethnicity are not merely exclusive and limiting forms of categorization, but simultaneously provide narrative and enabling resources'.[53]

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51 As I stated from the beginning, this is a book making use of life stories to answer certain questions rather than one taking life stories themselves as a point of departure. I therefore do not see it as problematic in itself to neglect certain subjects that did figure in informants' stories. Yet the topic of family was not only of crucial importance to virtually all informants, it also plays an unmistakable role in their conceptions of home and therefore deserves more elaborate treatment.

52 Nevertheless, in my research too, gender is generally 'about women'. As I already stated in Chapters 1 and 2, my data seem to confirm that most men, being in the unmarked category, pay little attention to what makes their experiences different from those of their female counterparts.

53 Prins 2006, p. 280.

The way gender figures in the narratives I analysed reflects the intersectional nature of all I-positions. Each voice in self-narratives speaks from a position that is set in the modality of one's personal history as well as one's various social identities. Hermans refers to this modality when discussing the role of culture: 'Cultural positions have the power to influence a large variety of social and personal positions from the beginning of life and thus, to a large degree implicitly, influence and organize the position repertoire as a whole.'[54] I would add that this applies to all kinds of social categorisations and systems of power and meaning. As Buitelaar concretises the workings of intersectionality in her own interviews: 'To activate a certain "register" my interlocutors have at their disposal I could invite them to tell them from their I-position as a Muslim, for example, but their experiences as a Muslim only come in the modality of being a Muslim migrant daughter in a Dutch/Western context where anti-Islam sentiments dominate. (…) [E]ach identification can only exist in the manifestation or experience of another position. More importantly, whether and how voices speaking from intersecting identities may be expressed or muted depends on power relations and dominant discourses in society.'[55]

In line with Buitelaar's work, my analysis of Aziza's multiple 'religious biographies' shows that there is no such thing as a single, 'purely' religious position, separate from other concerns, from which individuals can speak 'as a Muslim'. This was demonstrated by the story of Jamila in Chapter 4 as well. The cases of the three women described in the last two chapters have demonstrated the manifold ways in which religion figures in stories and in lives. We have seen many differences both in the narrative embeddedness of the topic, in the themes or dimensions of religion and religiosity the women addressed, and the dominance of the theme in the overall life story. We found the ambivalence of Islam, on the one hand, being presented as a highly relevant factor in their lives, but, on the other hand, also set apart from other concerns in a certain sense. The ambivalent status participants in this research ascribed to religion is reflected in the ways they talked, or often did not talk, about the role of Islam in their lives.

Despite its apparent intersectionality, religion is much less integrated in all of the narratives than the topics of family and gender. I have described this as an indication of the status aparte religion generally seems to hold in the interviews. Disregarding the question of generalisability, my findings fulfil the important role of alerting us to the danger of overstating religious identity, especially in the case of Muslims. Islam is easily presented as the ruling principle

54 Hermans 2001a, p. 360.

55 Buitelaar 2013a, p. 270.

of Muslim believers' lives – both by outsiders and by believers themselves. This also applies to my own interview material, in which the tension between not allowing religion to play a dominant role in one's own life narrative while at the same time placing it above other concerns, is what makes the role of religion so ambivalent. The latter tendency may be enforced by Islamic discursive conventions: typically for religious discourse, religion tends to be presented as the ultimate concern applying to all aspects of a person's life. While informants may partake in this discourse wholeheartedly, as researchers we should not be tempted to automatically interpret this as descriptive rather than prescriptive. The actuality and relevance of the different religious positions one individual may take at any given time, is always situational. There is no such thing as 'the' Muslim identity, and it is certainly wrong to think of such an identity as continually present and dominant, or even relevant, in Muslims' thinking and acting. As I have argued, this fallacy not only leads us to overstate religious identity, but also to overlook the complex ways in which religion can, indeed, be a crucial element in a person's life.

3.2 *Home in the Life Story*

While this chapter started from key episodes in the life stories of the two sisters, rather than from a focused inventory of the meanings they ascribe to the notion of home, in following Aziza and Latifa in their tour down memory lane up to the present day, and sharing in their wishes for the future, we have encountered an abundance of narratively embedded, contextual meanings of home or not-home, on a variety of levels. The parental house had different meanings for the two sisters and at different points in their lives. Aziza's story of gradually fading home feelings stands in contrast with Latifa's ambivalent stance towards a parental house that was discarded for lack of room for her agency, yet missed painfully for its communion and familiarity, and cautiously restored as more or less home-like again later on. Aziza had her own story of alienation to tell about the house of her birth, which to both women was strongly connected to the presence of their late grandmother. Both sisters talked about the significance of having one's own place, be it in contrast to living with, and adapting to, Moroccan in-laws or to the ill-fitting confinements of supported housing. The way the women spoke about their current dwellings supported the self-images they presented in their other narratives.

But we have also seen stories about feeling (or coming to feel) at home in several cultural 'worlds' within the Netherlands, and about wanting or not wanting to be at home in Morocco, on various levels. The sisters named specific people with whom they feel at home – parents (some of the time), partners and children, but also a study group. I have described how these very specific ties often intertwine with home-feelings on other scales, as in the case

of Aziza's bonds with the Dutch family that employed her and made her more intimately familiar with Dutch culture in general. Home was also related to specific social constellations – Aziza for example felt less at home in the parental house when her sister had left, both because she missed her and because of the grief and the heightened expectations she experienced from her parents. These changes challenged her space for agency and her sense of communion at home, and, in her own words, caused her to 'forget herself' for some time. Alongside these intimate dynamics of home, Aziza and Latifa expressed their sense of belonging, or lack thereof, with Moroccans or Dutch in general, and in Dutch or Moroccan society, and we experienced, once again, the impact of exclusion.

All of these accounts relate to a notion of home that is highly contextual – embedded in time and space as well as in individual memories and narratives. Throughout this book, I employ 'home', not as a strictly defined and circumscribed concept, but as a dynamic notion, rich and multi-layered. This dynamic notion is fuelled by emic meanings that stand in creative tension with the usage of home as a de-essentialising analytical concept. As I argued in Chapter 1, in view of multiple identifications and attachments, a narrative approach to identity through the concept of 'home' accommodates both attempts to integrate different parts of one's life in meaningful ways and ambivalent, conflicting or parallel storylines. In this chapter, the stories of Aziza and Latifa have substantiated this argument. By providing the kind of context-dependent knowledge upon which the study of human affairs is built,[56] I hope that their stories will have served the purpose of exploring the intimate connections between home and identity as they appear in the stories with which descendants of migrants endeavour to answer the twin questions 'who am I?' and 'where do I belong?' better than any generalising reasoning could do.

The four general motives which I pointed out in relation to home, were also best studied in action: in the context of actual (life) narratives. In this chapter they have served as vectors that may shed light on individuals' understandings of home as informative of their identity processes. It was in particular the focus on developments over the personal life course that brought to the fore the relevance of agency and communion, familiarity and a subjective sense of self as combining, competing or colliding motives driving on the stories onward, with various I-positions prioritising different motives.

In retrospect, we can see how these motives are also present more or less implicitly in the themes covered in earlier chapters. I have described the

56 Flyvberg 2006, p. 221.

central role of the communal theme of family, and the question whether or not one feels free to be and express oneself around them. The house was presented as a locus of agency as well as communion with loved ones (and as a thoroughly familiar space one could adapt to correspond to one's person), and thus as home. Roots and routes were each seen to foster a different sense of familiarity, to relate to particular aspects of one's self, and to account for ties with significant others near and far. Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands were described as homes because of their familiarity, their possibilities for agency, the 'fit' with one's self and the people to whom one relates. In the case of the Netherlands, in particular, question marks were posed to the country as home, because informants felt excluded from the community and not accepted 'as they are'. Exclusion has everything to do with (lacking) communion, but can also restrict people in their agency, threaten their subjective sense of self, and render a once-familiar setting uncomfortable. In all these examples, the relationships between and specific manifestations of these 'general' motives are to be read as part of people's situational formulations of home in the context of their life stories.

3.3 *A Case Study Approach: Advantages and Lessons*

Life stories can serve to contextualise many different things. This ranges from minute cherished objects to grand themes that can be traced through the lives of the different people I interviewed. The case studies of the stories told by Latifa and Aziza have allowed me to bring together many of the themes featuring in the previous chapters, and analyse these in the contexts from which they have been distilled: individual narratives about informants' lives and homes. Key topics from the earlier chapters – the relationship to two different countries, roots and routes, exclusion – are presented in their interwovenness with three crucial topics which have remained more implicit before: family, gender and religion. I stated in the introduction that this chapter can be read as a 'grounded synthesis' of my entire research.

Tracing the same themes in detail in two different stories, and pointing at the dynamics of agency, communion, familiarity and a subjective sense of self in their articulations of home, I have shown both the diversity and the thematic relatedness of the stories participants have told me. The sisters' disparate coordinates in various shared dimensions serve as indicators of the vast space of diversity covered by all my interviews in these dimensions. By taking two different but related stories as a point of departure for my recontextualisation, I have demonstrated how even within one single family, two children can grow up to lead very different lives and tell divergent stories about their

homes. Through this, I was able to show how various themes can figure in rather contrasting fashions in different lives and how much this thematisation is an integral part of the rest of an individual's life story. The sisters' narratives show how their understandings of home have changed over the course of their lives – not always as radically as with Jamila in Chapter 4, but nevertheless significant for how they understand themselves and their place in the world. They show that home is a highly dynamic notion that is subject to continuous development. As the story of our life and self changes, so too does our conception of home.

The stories of the two sisters run parallel for the first years of their life journey. After that, they move in divergent directions, but nevertheless throughout their lives we can trace thematic parallels, issues which they both address, each from her own unique perspective. At present, their situations have become more comparable again – both of them have left the most tumultuous times behind, have settled down and started a family, combine work and motherhood, and live in harmony with their parents and further extended family. But the differing routes that led them to this point, the memories and stories that make them who they are now, resound in the present, as well as in their ambitions for the future.

What I have also been able to demonstrate more thoroughly in this chapter thanks to the double case study, is the natural inconsistency of life stories. We saw, to name one example, how Aziza talked about her adolescence in mainly positive terms, but then, remembering her newly married self looking back on the same period, gave a more negative account of the same period and the restrictions she had been confronted with. Despite people's drive to tell acceptable and more or less coherent stories about themselves, it is an illusion to think that individuals live according to one consistent truth and have one single story to tell about themselves, voiced by one 'true self' – rather than being able to tell several, equally 'true', situated stories about their lives from a multiplicity of dialogical positions. Some elements of the sisters' stories make sense when considered together – others simply do not. That's life. If we want to study human affairs or 'social reality', we'd better start paying attention to human inconsistency as a given rather than as a problem to be explained.[57]

I have pointed out before that the inherent multivoicedness, and thus apparent inconsistency, of contemporary selves poses challenges to quantitative approaches in the social sciences. The analysis of the two sisters' stories brings this point home. Think for example of the question as to whether migrants

57 Cf. Schielke & Debevec 2012, p. 11; J. Peterson, *Going to the Mulid*, 2012, p. 125.

feel more Dutch or more Moroccan/Turkish/...[58] I have shown that Latifa generally appears to feel 'more Dutch than Moroccan', but also that she is not always consistent as to whether she does not feel Moroccan at all. As for Aziza, she is presented as 'more Moroccan' than her sister, and indeed does say she feels Moroccan. But Aziza, too, sometimes primarily identifies as Dutch: *'That I sometimes, like nine times out of ten, get asked "May I ask where you're from?" So people are automatically like, you're a foreigner, where do you come from? And I think: where am I from? I'm from the Netherlands! And then I think like, I'm Dutch. And then they say "Yeah but where are your parents from?"'* In reaction to people who automatically categorise her as a foreigner, Aziza asserts her Dutchness. In her subtle narrative play of situational identifications, it is hard to predict which angle would be foregrounded, had she to indicate her relative identification with a number of fixed labels.

A case study approach allows space both for the unpacking, and for the falsification of the kind of preconceived categories that seem inevitable when working with much larger samples.[59] The point is that many themes in which social scientists are interested are deeply embedded in countless individual lives and are best understood in the context of their own stories. This argument in favour of case study research does not mean that generalising, quantitative research is impossible or useless – this would disregard the fact that different questions need different methodologies, and that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are 'necessary for a sound development of social science'.[60] It does mean that we need to remember that behind each filled-in questionnaire lies a complex human reality.

4 Chapter Epilogue: Speaking of Home

The explicit question 'what does home mean to you?' was one of the closing questions of my interview format. Here, before turning to my final conclusions, I make interviewees' own descriptions of 'home' the direct object of inquiry rather than using the concept as a general perspective. What meanings of 'home' did informants formulate when explicitly reflecting on this notion? In their narratives, informants regularly made use of the term. Sometimes they

58 E.g. Crul & Heering 2009, pp. 109–110; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2010, p. 170; Maliepaard & Gijsberts 2012; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek 2012, p. 155; Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 2007, p. 178.

59 Flyvberg 2006, p. 235.

60 Flyvberg 2006, p. 241.

also formulated their own 'definitions' of home, for instance in order to explain why a certain place did or did not feel like home to them.

This epilogue begins with an overview of the main themes which feature in their descriptions of home. Most of these descriptions were formulated in response to my direct questions about the term, at the end of each concluding interview session. By that time, the interviewees and I had developed a shared frame of reference consisting of the narratives they had told me in the course of our interviews. Their descriptions of home can be understood against the background of these narratives.

In the second part of the epilogue I zoom in on the descriptions Aziza and Latifa formulated. Because of the background knowledge which this chapter has provided about the sisters, their descriptions of home appear much more thick and meaningful, in comparison to the descriptions presented in the first part of the epilogue. We can place the sisters' words about 'home' in the context of what we know about their particular life stories. Therefore, through this second part, the epilogue also carries on my argument in favour of a case study approach.

4.1 *Describing 'home'*

Asked about 'home', Coskun's (26, m, Turkish) first association was with his loved ones: *'the people around you, who you love.' Love* was a main theme in many replies.[61] Said (28, m, Moroccan) agrees that home is about who you share it with: *'So to me, coming home means someone being there waiting for you, and vice versa. That's coming home to me.'* Bahar (29, f, Turkish) also talks about such communal themes, but her first response highlights a different aspect: *'Safety, I think, first and foremost. Your rest.'* Both *safety* and rest, or calm and peacefulness,[62] are other common themes in the home descriptions. Safety is often presented as a basic precondition for a sense of home. Nora sees this rest as a proof that a place feels like home: *'You feel a certain kind of peace, when you're at home. And then it doesn't matter where, like, which home.'* For Baris (40, m, Turkish), peacefulness is the main characteristic of home, but he has his own specific interpretation of the term: *'Calm is not just about quiet. You can also feel peaceful if the children are screaming their lungs out at each other – because I've been missing it all day, and it's what I want to hear.'*

61 Cf. Gurney, who writes that there is 'overwhelming evidence(…) to suggest that emotional discourses stressing family, intimacy, and love are the most significant rationalisations drawn upon in making sense of home.' – Gurney 1997, p. 393.

62 The Dutch term 'rust' has both connotations.

Frequently, participants also explicitly referred to the *familiarity* of their surroundings as making them feel at home. According to Idriss, this familiarity makes him feel both at ease and in charge in his own environment: *'I feel at home when I'm in a place where I know how things are organised. I would almost say, I'm at home wherever I know where the peanut butter is.'* Here Idriss connects home to agency-based-on-familiarity. He continues with a detailed description of places that fit this criterion, on various levels: his own house is most familiar, but other Dutch houses are still much more familiar than an African hut; he knows his way around in both Morocco and the Netherlands, but not in as much detail as in Rotterdam and Fes. It is when trying to explain the familiarity of home that some informants also mentioned the otherwise largely ignored material aspects as meaningful to their feelings of home. Tariq (26, m, Moroccan) for example said that he felt at home in his house because he has created his own familiar environment there in which he has his own routine way of doing things: *'So you have gone and created your own little things here, you know, your own environment, and that ... that just gives you that "home" feeling.* (...) *That you just open your own fridge and can just enjoy making your own meal, you know? That just so gives me the ultimate feel-at-home feeling, it really does. And yeah when I just see my own stuff again, you get me, it just makes me feel nice and like you're coming home.'*

In passing, Tariq mentions that he himself has 'created' his home. There were two people in this research who stood out for basing their entire descriptions of home on such a *processual* understanding of the notion, that is, the idea that home is something you make, or do, rather than something you own. Fatih (39, m, Turkish) first brackets his family as the number one locus of home before embarking on his argument: *'Of course with your family it goes without saying, because they're the people you have the closest connection with. But otherwise, no. But that feeling, you can also develop it over time, even with complete strangers.* (...) *And if you then say like, I feel at home there, then you've probably had to make some kind of effort, I would say.'* Fatih refuses to commit to a certain place or even to certain people, other than his family, as constituting home. He likes his town, his friends and his network, but his point is that he could build a similar network and feel similarly at home elsewhere, provided that he took the effort to make himself at home there. Ozan (31, m, Turkish) agrees: *'I feel at home whenever, um, yeah whenever I just, like, just take steps to make myself feel at home. And that can be anywhere.'* Ozan, we have seen in Chapter 3, explicitly favours his routes over his roots, and this is reflected in how he talks about home. Unlike Fatih, Ozan also excludes his family from his understanding of home, at least in the present. His parental house is home no more, and he has no wish to recreate its atmosphere or be close to its inhabitants.

Nora brings up another often mentioned element of home that expresses the motive of agency: *freedom*. *'I think that that's home ... feeling free.'* Many interviewees told me how at home they feel free to act as they like. Some added ownership as a prerequisite to allowing for this freedom and for a feeling of home. Home was seen as an agentic setting in which one can make one's own decisions without taking into account what other people might think. Take Aygul (30, f, Turkish) for an example: *'Feeling at home, yeah when I feel at ease, when I can do whatever I like... If right now, for example, I feel like eating cake. So yeah, I'll just go into the kitchen and bake a cake. I don't need to, like, take anybody into consideration, I can just do my own thing.'* Idriss adds that this freedom to judge and act as one pleases means that his home is where he can most be himself : *'And I'm just myself when I'm at home, because then I'm the one who makes the rules.'*

Indeed *being oneself* was a popular theme in the home descriptions. Karima (36, f, Moroccan): *'Home is ... just enjoying being yourself.'* Bilge (32, f, Turkish) agrees and adds that being oneself 'like at home' can also make one feel at home elsewhere: *'Yeah to me, home is a place ... where I can behave like I would in my own house* (...) *Where I can be myself.'* A prerequisite for this experienced sense of self is the welcoming attitude of the people one is with. Being oneself often implies being *allowed* to be oneself, being accepted by others. In the words of Malika: *'Where I can properly be myself,* (...) *genuinely not "having" to do anything. Just you being there is already enough, so to speak. To me, that really is a very important criterion.'* The connection between acceptance and home, and maybe even more between exclusion and not feeling at home, which I have shown in the preceding chapters, is also reflected in the descriptions of the notion informants gave me. As Faruk (38, m, Turkish) phrased it: *'You know, you can feel at home if people also show you that it's your home too.'* Like safety, acceptance is posited by my informants as a basic precondition for a sense of home. Yet, especially on the national level, the contestation of their right to belong in the Netherlands also leads several respondents to actively claim the country as their home *despite* others' ideas.[63] Said is one of them: *'Well, I can tell you, I feel at home in the Netherlands. Only people don't look at me that way. But I simply feel at home in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is my country, it's my home, simple as that. Full stop. I was born and raised there. And the fact that people don't see me that way doesn't automatically mean that I don't feel at home.'*

Inasmuch as informants relate their descriptions of home to specific places, one's own *dwelling* is by far the place that is most frequently mentioned. But as the above quote illustrates, home is sometimes also directly related to the level

63 Cf. van der Welle 2011, p. 180.

of the country. Finally informants also regularly talked about feeling at home in other people's dwellings. In either environment people say to feel 'good', 'happy' or 'at ease'. Coskun's criterion for this was whether he would feel free to help himself to something to eat or drink without asking for permission to a host: *'So somewhere I can just open the fridge, that's where I feel at home.'* There were several others who used similar wordings which reveal the *relational* nature of home. What the descriptions of one's own house, other dwellings and even countries share, is that what makes them home is more often than not described in relational, communal terms: once again it is in social interaction that a place can or cannot be considered home. As Bilge told me: *'So for example, you might be somewhere that feels really uncomfortable, but perhaps if you had the right people with you, you could also feel at home there, and safe.'*

In this light it is no surprise that the award for the most often mentioned ingredient of home goes to the *family*. Metin (25, m, Turkish): *'Just ... when you see your family ... then I do feel at home.'* Interviewees talk about their family in general as Metin does, about their parents, or about their partner and children: *'Yeah, I feel at home with my husband, and with my daughter'* (Nora); *'your children, your wife, they make your home. I can't imagine being at home on a Sunday and not having anyone around me. Then it's not a home anymore, then it's just accommodation'* (Rachid); *'If I get home and my mother isn't there, then I feel like I'm walking into an empty house. To me it no longer feels like coming home'* (Said). Many people told me that when they come home to an empty house, it does not really feel like home. Feeling at home in the houses of close relatives, or simply feeling at home as long as one is surrounded by family, were also prominent themes in many remarks on home. Bilal (25, m, Moroccan) mentions that he feels more at home in his new apartment, even though he has not even decorated it yet, than in his old place, simply because he now lives close to his parents as well as to his brothers and sisters – he has his own key to each of their houses, and has already made spare copies of his own new key for them. There was hardly anyone who did not bring up family in one way or another when I asked them to explain what home meant to them.

With family heading the list, combinations of the above themes figured in all 'definitions' of home that respondents gave me. Generally several themes were mentioned alongside each other without going into the possible friction between them. Habib (25, m, Moroccan), for example, in his first reaction mentioned his parents: *'My home is just when I get home and yeah, my parents.'* Besides his parental home, to which he refers here and where he spends his nights, Habib also rents a small flat in which to hang out during the day. This is where our interview takes place, and he tells me: *'I actually do feel at home here, because I can roll my own ciggies, and well, determine things myself.'*

In the case of Habib, there is a very concrete differentiation of definitions of home. Different aspects of his understanding of the notion are highlighted as he speaks about two different dwellings as homes: one is a communal home because of the presence of his parents – Habib could sleep in his own flat, but he tells me he feels much easier when he sleeps at home, and so does his mother. His flat is depicted in more agentic terms: it is home because there he can do whatever he wants to – hang out, smoke, watch Dutch television. This differentiation becomes more insightful once we learn that Habib has also told me about feeling somewhat alienated from his parents' lifestyle, with his father rising early every morning to recite qur'anic verses, and Moroccan television being turned on all day. In the past there has been a lot of conflict regarding his relationship with his Dutch girlfriend – a relationship which, as we saw in Chapter 4, he describes as an enriching and even liberating encounter with Dutch culture. Now that the relationship has ended, peace at home is restored, yet Habib does enjoy having a private space to express aspects of himself that are out of place in his parental home.

The ambivalence of and friction between various understandings of home does not come to the fore in individuals' specific, short descriptions of what home means to them. Rather they are to be found in the stories behind those few words. Think of Jamila, whom we met in Chapter 4. Her answer to the question of home was the following: *'Feeling at home, hmm, what that means to me? Somewhere you're calm and not always, um, where you can sleep, without conjuring up all kinds of scenarios in your mind. You just go, lie down, and sleep. That's where I feel at home. Without having to think, about whether I can still live in my house tomorrow... Somewhere where you don't feel chased.'* Knowing Jamila's story, this response seems tailored to her message that she no longer feels at home in the Netherlands, a country in which she feels *'chased'* in more than one sense. The examples of Habib and Jamila show how the life stories that participants told me, help to contextualise isolated statements they made about many things, including home. Profiting from this background knowledge and backing my case for case study research, I will now return to Aziza and Latifa and see how *they* responded to my explicit questions about the notion of home.

4.2 *Latifa and Aziza: Reflecting on 'home'*

In the course of the interview section explicitly thematising 'home', both sisters gave several descriptions of how they understood home. Latifa had already advanced one explanation in the context of our first interview in Turkey, when she told me that she feels at home there and I asked her to explain: *'I can be myself. Here I'm Latifa, and not anyone else.'* She goes on to talk about how, out

of consideration, she is willing to adapt to the habits in her husband's village of origin, but apparently not having to do so makes this beach resort more home-like than the village. Later in the Netherlands, when I ask her what home means to her, she is confused at first: *'You mean the Netherlands right? Or just your own house?'* After my clarification that I am not after a specific level but curious about her own understanding of the notion of home, she goes into both levels: *'To me, home is simply, my family, where I live, what I do, to me that's home... When I'm in Morocco, to me that's holidays. Even if I had a house there, it would still be holidays. Ultimately, when I have to go back home, then in the end, yeah that's here. Because here, I've been living here for more than thirty years, it just makes sense that I feel like the Netherlands is my home.* (...) *But otherwise, yeah home, to me it's warmth, love, family ... your freedom too, in the end. That you never need to ask anyone's permission. That you just do your own things in your own house, organise things from your own house and that you just feel safe in your own house. That's what home is to me.'*

In this exposition of home on two levels, Latifa stresses familiarity and routes, repeats that the Netherlands is her ultimate home, and refers to communal as well as agentic characteristics of home at the level of the house. Shortly after this first reply, she embarks on another description that emphasises family ties rather than specific locations: *'I feel at home ... yeah, with people I love, actually.* (...) *So my children, my husband, my parents ... my sisters. To me, that's actually what feeling at home means. Whether I'm at my mum's or my sister's, to me, it's still a feeling of home.'*

Next in line are a number of negative statements, descriptions of not feeling at home, all of which refer to the disrupted relationship with her parents: *'When I didn't feel at home? Yeah actually when my parents and I had separated. And then I didn't feel at home anywhere, no matter where I was. But that was just because I was an unhappy person.'* Latifa translated her unhappiness about the break with her parents into a general feeling of homelessness. This feeling was especially prominent the first few times she set foot in her parents' house again and realised that she felt anything but at home there.

One level that did not come up spontaneously, neither in Latifa's descriptions of home nor in others, was that of the city or town. In Latifa's case I explicitly asked her about it, and she confirmed: *'Utrecht, it's just, I mean, I grew up here, you know? Yes, that's my home. I know it back-to-front, every corner, every street. So yeah, you automatically feel at home. Other places, I don't know, no, I don't think I could do it.'* Latifa refers to her routes in Utrecht, which have made her profoundly familiar with the city and allow for a self-evident feeling of belonging. Still the fact that none of the participants included this level into their explanations of the notion of home, even though elsewhere several did

talk about a very specific attachment to their town or city in general, seems to confirm my impression that this intermediate level is less directly relevant to my informants' identifications than is sometimes suggested.[64] Besides this the consistent absence of the level of the city/town in home definitions may also point to the discursive dominance of the house and the nation in shared images of home. These two also recur in Aziza's first reaction to my questions about home.

'Yeah where do I feel at home? Of course I feel most at home in my own house now, so this is where I really feel at home. This is my place. And when I'm on holiday in Morocco, I have my own house there too, I can also really feel at home there. Because it's really mine, and also because it was something my husband and I did together.' Aziza's houses both in Morocco and in the Netherlands are her own, and they are homes that she managed to create together with her husband. Unlike Latifa, whom I quoted as calling Morocco holiday rather than home, Aziza does not juxtapose these two and feels at home in her house for the duration of her holidays. Next she tells me *'Feeling at home, for me, is the environment where you are happiest.'* According to Aziza, outside her own house she is more susceptible to outside interruption of her home-feelings. She illustrates this with a story about an outing on which she accompanied some Muslim women who did not speak much Dutch to a Dutch tourist town. Upon seeing how these women were treated there, she decided that she could never feel at home in that town.

Her next description of 'home' also refers to the obstacle of othering: *'To me, home is being somewhere where I can be myself, without people questioning this and that. I can divide my life into two sections. The first part was, like, before I wore my headscarf: nobody asked me about anything,* (...) *people couldn't see as easily where I came from, so they never asked me where I came from as often, or "who are you", or this or that. Or discrimination, for example. That never happened to me at the time. After I started wearing a headscarf, I noticed that people do start treating you differently, as soon as you start talking to them they give you a surprised look, like oh, you speak Dutch.'*

Aziza first makes a general statement about the feeling that home is where she can be herself. The explanation that follows makes clear that in this sense, home in the Netherlands has become more problematic ever since she began covering her head and others no longer accepted her belonging here as self-evident. When I summarised her words in similar terms during our interview in order to verify my interpretation, she agreed but immediately added a claim to home, regardless of others' opinions: *'Well, I feel like I want to, I don't let*

64 For example in Tonkens & Hurenkamp 2011.

anything prevent me from feeling at home, believe you me. I'm no shrinking violet, I can tell you. I know my rights, and I demand my respect.'

A final episode which I want to bring up here as a description of 'home' stems, not from our explicit discussion of the term, but from the last minutes of my first interview session with Aziza. She reflected on her different ethnic identifications and concluded: *'When I'm with my Moroccan friends, I'm really totally Moroccan, and when I'm with my Dutch friends, I'm as Dutch as can be.* (...) *But what I truly am? Mostly myself. I'm mostly myself, and I feel rich, that I carry two cultures within me. I'm really very lucky that I have two cultures inside me. So both the Dutch culture and the Moroccan culture, in the end they are both alive in me. And I make full use of them, so no matter where I go, I can feel completely at home.'* This quote relates Aziza's central topic of the merging of worlds to her understanding of home. Because of the way in which she feels she embodies two different cultures, she feels that she can be herself and thus feel at home everywhere, that is both in Dutch and in Moroccan social contexts. Her words do not only evoke the significance of familiarity (in this case with different cultural contexts) and of a subjective sense of self for the understanding of home, but also point to the relational nature of the notion. Furthermore they bring home the fact that descriptions of 'home' can be clarified and contextualised by placing them against the background of life narratives and, in turn, allow us further access to the meanings formulated in such narratives.

The descriptions the two sisters gave of 'home' correspond with the commonly shared elements listed above. To varying degrees they both talked about the house, two countries, and their relatives' places, mentioned their family, love, safety and freedom, and referred to ownership and the relational nature of home. They also brought up familiarity, acceptance and 'being oneself' as necessities for feeling at home, and sometimes claimed a home that others appeared to deny them. But besides being typical for most of the people I spoke to, their answers were also highly personal and contained many references to their individual stories and specific positions. In Latifa's descriptions we can recognise her urge to be herself, her desire for freedom and her wish to free herself from cultural restrictions, her distancing herself from Morocco and her identification with the Netherlands, the centrality of her struggle with her past as a runaway daughter, and the ongoing significance of family relationships despite all. Similarly, Aziza's descriptions recall things such as the importance of her decision to wear a headscarf, her multiple belongings, and the positive and grateful tone in which she sets most of her narrative. The sisters' life stories resonate in their words about home, including the ambivalences these stories hold. This is particularly important when we realise that the same goes for all statements about home quoted here: they were selected from complex longer

narratives (which themselves also form active selections from the biographical material represented in telling). All these personal 'background' stories, which remain largely untold in this work, colour the specific words quoted.

In making sense of the narratives of my informants, placing explicit descriptions of home against the context of my broader usage of the notion not only enhances our insight into these descriptions, but also shows that they do not tell everything. In Aziza's replies to my questions about home, for example, there is little mention of her parents, whereas we know that they have a significant role in both her larger story and her understanding of home. Moreover, the questions about home concluded several in-depth interview sessions which had created a certain bond of trust between me and the interviewee, provided us with a shared frame of reference, and stimulated participants' narrative fluency. Asking them to make their understandings of home explicit was as much an afterthought as it was a core question in the context of the entire interviews.

Conclusion

1 Taking Stock

How do notions of 'home' feature in the narrative construction of identity by adult descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants in the Netherlands? In order to find answers to this question, I have asked twenty-nine of them to tell me their life stories. Questions of home and identity are deeply embedded in individual lives. Like many of the themes in which social scientists are interested, they are best understood in the context of individuals' stories. By presenting my informants' understandings of home in their embeddedness in complex, multivoiced life narratives, I hope to have expressed, and stimulated, 'a sensitivity to the issues at hand that cannot be obtained from theory'.[1] Case study based research sensitises us to the fact that scholarly findings, both quantitative and qualitative, always constitute abstractions from more complex human realities. Keeping the limitations of generalisation in mind, let us review the yields of a case study approach in this specific study.

2 (Social) Settings of Home

In narratives of people with a migrant background, it becomes particularly evident that home is not an exclusive, singular place. At each moment in time, various home-settings may compete, collide, overlap, coexist or complement each other on different levels. These settings, although often described in spatial terms, are decidedly social. How one relates to them can vary greatly, and individuals' understanding and sense of home are partly fostered through the specific social relationships they maintain within these settings. From the microlevel of one-to-one interactions to the national level and beyond, good social relationships facilitate a sense of home.[2] What, then, are the (social) settings within which participants in this research formulate their understandings of home? And how is their sense of home derived from the social relationships they maintain within these settings?

1 Flyvberg 2006, pp. 238–239.

2 The strong impact of more negative experiences on the other hand, most specifically the perception of exclusion, will be recapitulated further on, as will the roles of the Netherlands and the country of origin as possible homelands for this particular group of descendants of migrants.

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2.1 *Principal Settings*

Most importantly, interviewees talked about their families and their dwellings, and about the Netherlands and Morocco or Turkey in terms of home. *Family* is a key theme in the life stories in general, and in interviewees' accounts of home in particular. The presence of family was often mentioned as a precondition for feeling at home. But family also forms a setting in which the ambivalences of home become evident on the intimate level of personal relationships. Family ties inform individuals' sense of home, both explicitly and implicitly. Regarding Turkey/Morocco as a homeland, one's relatives there are of great concrete as well as symbolic significance.[3] These relatives shape the meanings these countries have for descendants of migrants: as primary peers during holiday visits, and as embodying a sense of continuity.[4] Case studies proved to be particularly suited to bring to the fore the pervasive significance of family in individual stories.[5] Even instances of familial friction underline the crucial role of family in my informants' understandings of home. I have demonstrated how intimate personal ties, with family members and more in general with significant others, often intertwine with issues concerning home on various scales.

The *house* as a basic setting with regard to home, and generally as the dwelling place of one's family, was often mentioned in answer to explicit questions about home.[6] However, the extent to which the house featured in the overall narratives differed widely. Examples of such the divergent meanings attached to the level of the house were therefore mainly provided in the various case studies. In Chapter 5 I discussed several instances of the process of leaving home and making oneself at home in new situations. Stories about these life events provided focal points that bring to the fore the reconfigurations of social and spatial relationships over the life course, thus illustrating the dynamic nature of home. Leaving behind familiar 'old homes' often triggers reflections on the part of the narrator which lay bare key themes in their self-understandings, for example about the ways their decisions about moving or staying are driven by their desire for specific agentic or communal goals. Besides referring to the self-evident familiarity of one's own house, the room it allows to express oneself, and the setting it provides for personal strivings after both agency and communion, individual stories about dwellings also brought together references to biographical issues and to homes and identifications on

3 See Chapter 2, Section 3.3.

4 See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.

5 See in particular the stories of Aziza and Latifa in Chapter 5, but also the case of Jamila in Chapter 4 and that of Naima in Chapters 3 and 4.

6 See the epilogue to Chapter 5.

other scales.[7] Yet in all its familiarity and specificity, the house as a level proved to be less prominent in people's identity narratives than the level of the country and the social setting of the family.

Besides family, the prime settings within which informants formulated the understandings of home which shed light on their identity processes, were formed by *the Netherlands and the countries of origin*. Even though I had explicitly chosen to take a multiscalar understanding of home as my point of departure, the classic level of the homeland proved of particular relevance in the narratives (both in its own right and as a 'container' for meanings on various levels). Alternative levels of identification which have been emphasised by a number of recent studies, such as the city, did have a role to play, and indeed interviewees often confirmed their attachment to regional levels in more absolute terms than when talking about 'their' countries.[8] Yet I do not fully agree with Duyvendak, who has argued that because of the 'exclusive connotations' of the Dutch nation, Moroccan Dutch revert to other levels of identification.[9] While my informants do indeed leave out the national imaginary and the symbolism of national citizenship from their accounts of home, this bracketing is specific to the *construct* of the nation rather than the national *level*.[10] This level retains its primary relevance exactly because of the thickness of ambivalent meanings generally ascribed to it, in contrast to the less ambivalent, but also much thinner, sense of home on more local levels. When it comes to spatial levels, it is the national level which turned out to be most informative about my informants' understandings of their lives and selves, and which I have explored in detail in this book, unpacking the complexity of meanings ascribed to two different possible homelands.

The house, the family, and the country thus emerge as important social settings, with reference to which people formulate understandings of home, in dialogue with the external and internal voices resounding in these settings. These understandings are always relational and generally ambivalent. It is therefore of little use to simply ask 'whether or not' these settings constitute home for the individuals interviewed. Rather, I have explored how these various settings frame and inform the complex narratives of home and homelessness through which my informants made sense of their situated lives.

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7 E.g. in the case of Aziza, see the introduction and conclusion to Chapter 5.

8 See Section 2.1 in Chapter 2.

9 Duyvendak 2011a, p. 103.

10 See Chapter 3, Section 4.2, subsection 'The imagined national community: reflections on a blind spot'.

2.2 *Dutch, Turkish and Moroccan 'worlds'*

We need to be aware that individuals' perception of the Netherlands may partly be shaped by the various 'worlds' which form an integral part of their Dutch habitus. Most typically, a 'Dutch' outside world of work and school may be contrasted to a 'Moroccan' or 'Turkish' inside world in which family plays an important part. Within the Netherlands, a number of informants talked about their work in terms of home. While this did not appear as an overall trend, the working environment does constitute one of the settings within which many informants formulate their *understandings* of home. Interactions with Dutch colleagues figure prominently in interviewees' accounts of their relationships with 'the Dutch' in general. Their narratives about both in- and exclusion confirm the importance of organisational culture for migrants' sense of belonging in Dutch society.[11] Awareness of this could benefit policy makers, both in the public sector and on company level.

Work, and in earlier stages school, is often described as a specifically Dutch setting. Informants' categorisation of the various contexts within which they move, were sometimes formulated in terms of several 'worlds'.[12] These are fleeting (social) contexts evoked by my informants and situationally labelled as Moroccan/Turkish or Dutch. Such worlds can be narratively depicted as (amongst other things) colliding as well as coexisting or merging (remember the two sisters in Chapter 5), and may contain complex layers of interwoven categorisations as Dutch and/or Moroccan/Turkish in references to specific physical or social settings (as I argued specifically in the epilogue to Chapter 3).

While people's own talk about different worlds should not lead us to describe their existence in terms of living 'between' incompatible, essentialised worlds or cultures, the metaphor does point to real experiences of discrepancy between various social contexts, whether or not this leads to friction. Various 'worlds' come with different social relationships, possibilities, values and expectations. In the (female) case studies I discussed, divergent conceptions of femininity played a crucial role in the accentuation of the boundaries between worlds. Moving within these different worlds is never merely a matter of personal choice. In the case of Latifa the runaway, we saw how she kept

11 See Chaper 5, Section 3.5, especially the text box on 'Interfaces with Dutch society'.

12 It is in this metaphorical, emic sense that I speak about Dutch and Moroccan or Turkish worlds within the Netherlands, rather than in the sense of a delineated Turkish-Dutch or Moroccan-Dutch community and its infrastructure, as described in the work of Bouras. While in my case study analyses I follow up on the metaphor of 'worlds' as used by my informants, I do not otherwise employ the term as an analytical notion. See Bouras 2012, pp. 240–241.

positioning herself within and towards the 'Moroccan world' from which she had fled. Her internal dialogues with individual and collective voices belonging to her internalised Moroccan world continued even when there was virtually no actual contact with this world.

3 The Netherlands, Morocco, Turkey: Asymmetrical Homelands

The way in which the people in this book relate to both their country of origin and the Netherlands in terms of home is crucial for our understanding of their narrative identity processes. My analysis of the sometimes contradictory meanings attached to these countries as possible homelands, is firmly grounded in the variety of particular characteristics and connotations my informants ascribed to their country of origin and the Netherlands. Thereby I kept together, in their creative tension, the concept of home as an open, de-essentialising analytical tool and the rich layeredness of interviewees' own understandings of home. Their understandings of home are differentiated through their positioned (dis)identification with selected characteristics of each country and its inhabitants. Meanwhile, I have also shown the centrality of the Netherlands, rather than the country of origin, in how participants in this research framed the stories of their lives and homes.

3.1 *Analysing Ccountry-talk: Positioned Identifications with Two Different Countries*

Scrutinising the terms in which interviewees describe and contrast their two home countries in their narratives, certain patterns emerge that help analyse their 'country-talk' as instances of 'identity-talk'.[13] The countries of origin in particular were generally presented in *comparison* to the Netherlands. This finding allowed me to take descriptions of Morocco and Turkey as a point of departure in my analysis of country-talk. This way I could avoid the fallacy of regarding the country of residence as the only relevant setting for migrants' identity construction. At the same time, because of the striking consistency of the 'pairing' of both countries, analyses of stories about Morocco and Turkey by implication also included the Netherlands, as the backdrop against which descriptions of these other countries were staged. Paradoxically, a principal focus on the country of 'origin' brings to the fore the limitations of this country's relevance as well as its ongoing significance in the lives of descendants of migrants.

13 See Chapter 2.

In their country-talk, people speak of mentality differences, describing Moroccans and Turks as warm and Dutch as cold, Turks or Moroccans as hard and Dutch as soft, Dutch as modern and Moroccans/Turks as authentic, or backward. Interviewees reflect on the different perception of time and the different liberties each country has to offer, and address the differences between countries on the level of structures of opportunity, welfare and civil rights, and refer to the variation in sensory perceptions and luxury.[14] Along the lines of these diverse (often binary) categorisations, the narratives revealed complex patterns of identification and disidentification with both Turkey/Morocco and the Netherlands.

These patterns can be seen as shifting, due to the multivoiced nature of the self.[15] In the narratives analysed, the interviewees relate to the countries from several positions. These may overlap but also disagree or call for different emphases. Concurrently, depending on the positions taken at any given moment, different characterisations of the countries are foregrounded as most relevant. These are variously assessed in positive or negative terms, resulting in shifting conclusions on where a better life might be found. Note that describing a place as possessing the most positive characteristics does not automatically imply describing it as most home-like. In their identifications with selected characteristics ascribed to the two countries, interviewees regularly identified with a characteristic which they described as less desirable than the counterpart ascribed to the other country (e.g., many informants praised Moroccan or Turkish hospitality, but several described themselves as more Dutch and reserved in their stance towards guests).

The shifting, positioned (dis)identifications with two different countries indicate that both Morocco/Turkey and the Netherlands are highly relevant contexts for the identity processes of descendants of Turkish and Moroccan migrants. Moreover, these contexts are intricately interrelated: stances towards one country are always formulated in relation to one's positions in the other one. Much of my informants' country-talk is characterised by what Baumann calls an orientalising grammar of selfing and othering.[16] However, the narratives complicate this grammar. In the case of my informants there is no clear division between which side of any binary categorisation is deemed self, and which is other. Participants were found to alternately or synchronously identify

14 See Section 4 in Chapter 2.

15 See Chapter 2, Section 5.

16 See Section 4.1 in Chapter 2 for an exploration of this grammar, in which a broad description of one's own group as 'good' and of outsiders as 'bad' is supplemented by also allowing for certain desirable traits of those same others that are lacking in oneself.

with and distance themselves from both of the two countries or groups they were comparing. Moreover, I have also described processes of what I call 'mirror imaging', in which, from different positions, a narrator attaches the same, home-defining traits variously to the Netherlands and to Morocco or Turkey, rather than describing the countries in contrasting terms.[17]

3.2 *Unpacking Binary Categorisations: Towards a Differentiated Understanding of 'home'*

In their narratives, descendants of migrants make sense of their relationships to more than one country, stressing different aspects as they talk from various positions. The ways in which they do so elucidate the complex patterns of their multiple attachments and identifications. In my analysis of these patterns I have identified a variety of binary categorisations -both regarding specific characterisations of two countries and in the juxtaposing of concepts such as temporariness and timelessness, roots and routes. In the light of informants' selective, multiple identifications with both the country of origin and the Netherlands however, descriptions of the two countries in binary terms by implication problematise the position of the narrators themselves.[18] Indeed my analyses demonstrate how such binaries are everything but static, but rather unstable and always containing a ternary challenge.[19] Yet simply dismissing such general classifications as inadequate is no satisfactory solution either.

In order to remain grounded in the specificity of the particular people under study, our analyses have to *engage* general categories of meaning first, and only then address their limitations in grasping the complexities of real life. This is the approach I have taken throughout this work, unpacking the layered meanings of home in Chapter 1 and those of two countries in Chapter 2, describing multiple homelands in terms of roots and routes, temporariness and timelessness in Chapter 3, and engaging with the social and personal aspects of interviewees' dealing with exclusion in Chapter 4; all the time moving between different levels of generalisation and contextualisation. By unpacking various categorisations, I have thus problematised and qualified them without losing sight of these categorisations' usefulness, also as analytical tools. The cautious use of these tools allows the researcher to reveal trends and patterns of meaning in the material under study, as well as to move beyond such generalisations and show the complexities that general classifications fail to grasp.

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17 See Chapter 2, Section 4.2.

18 See Section 5 in Chapter 2.

19 Baumann 2004, p. 35. See also Brah 1996, p. 185; Baumann 2004, p. 35; Ghorashi 2003b, p. 134.

Descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants' understanding of home is *differentiated*:[20] different things are expected from different kinds of home. For most interviewees the country of their parents does not have to be home in the same way that the Netherlands is. Individuals draw on a broad repertoire of characterisations and categorisations to present the countries as home in some senses, and less so in others. Moreover, in individual narratives (on the two countries as well as on other home-settings) there is a constant slippage between different layers of meaning as people move between various I-positions that place different emphases as to the meanings of home and homeland.[21]

3.3 *Roots and Routes*

One of the ways in which the understanding of home is differentiated is through the use of the complementary logics of roots and routes. This conceptual pair provides fruitful metaphors for a differentiated understanding of home, especially in the context of people with a migrant background relating to more than one possible homeland.[22] A distinction between roots and routes can help us to see broad trends in how (descendants of) migrants understand their relationship to several countries. It can also help us to see beyond these broad trends. Roots and routes engage the ambivalence of home and identity as encompassing both stability and movement, and continuity and change. In my interpretation of the metaphors, a roots logic places special emphasis on people's embeddedness in specific *places*, whereas a routes logic focuses more on lived *time* as crucial for a sense of home.[23] Home is about where we are from and how we live our lives – both shape our identities.

Depending on whether they focus on the logic of roots or that of routes, descendants of migrants draw different conclusions as to who they are and where they belong. In most narratives, the country of origin is mainly depicted as a homeland in terms of roots, while routes play a crucial role in interviewees' understanding of the Netherlands as home. However, an important part of my argument concerns the fact that, contrary to the way in which the terms are often employed in migration research, the logics of roots and routes are also applied in various less typical ways.[24] This greatly adds to the value of the metaphors in approaching the complexity of migrants' narratives of belonging. Using the roots logic in more creative ways, participants also speak about

20 See Chapter 3, Section 3.

21 See Section 2 of Chapter 3.

22 See Chapter 3, Section 3.3.

23 See Chapter 3, Section 3.3, subsection 'The logics of roots and routes in action'.

24 See the last two subsections of Section 3.3 in Chapter 3.

the Netherlands in terms of roots. Roots can wither or grow and spread in new directions, depending on the routes a person takes. They can be buried and (re)discovered. Likewise, my informants have roots in Morocco/Turkey, but also refer to the routes in, to and from the country.

Routes in particular, with their stress on temporal embeddedness, cover all dimensions of the life story. In my usage of the concept it does not only imply an orientedness towards the future, but also the paths already taken. Routes lead to and from differently conceptualised roots in the past and the present, carving out old and new spaces of belonging and heading towards whatever may lie ahead. Roots and routes, in my view, therefore form a complementary pair rather than a binary opposition. In their entanglement, their contrasting logics evoke tensions that may be creative as well as problematic. The ambivalence of home is evoked when we understand that the concept implies both roots and routes. Like home, roots become an issue when their implied self-evidence is challenged. People's perceptions of their roots are always coloured by their routes, and vice versa.

This mutual contextualisation becomes particularly evident in the way my informants speak about Turkey/Morocco as a homeland that is both timeless and temporary. Unlike the metaphors of roots and routes, an established conceptual pair, the partly overlapping distinction between timelessness and temporariness was inductively derived from my own material. The simultaneity of stories of timeless roots and of pervasive temporariness confirms my point that a routes logic, rather than forming a hybridising alternative 'solution' to a more static, outdated roots logic as some seem to suggest, coexists with the latter and places it in another, more dynamic light.[25] Routes and roots inform, contextualise and shape each other.

3.4 *The Country of Origin as Home: Temporary and Timeless*

The fact that most of the time spent in the country of 'origin' is holiday time, colours the images my informants have of the country. The experiences on which they base their descriptions of the country are framed by the holiday setting, and the sense of temporariness which flows from this setting, shape its meanings as a homeland in multifarious ways.[26] The tension between timelessness and temporariness forms the central paradox in understandings of the country of origin in terms of home. There is an ongoing attachment to Morocco or Turkey that is, amongst other things, expressed and shaped through regular journeys. These repeated visits can reinforce a sense of continuity with

25 See for this point the subsection 'Routes vs. roots?' in Section 3.3 of Chapter 3.

26 See in Chapter 3 the first subsection of Section 3.1: 'Home and/or holiday?'.

a 'timeless' homeland, often articulated in terms of roots. At the same time, those interviewed are keenly aware of the limited duration of their visits to their country of origin (and they are frequently reminded of this by others).[27] Eventually they will return to the Netherlands, where they are embedded through their past, present and future routes. In various ways they integrate both temporariness and timelessness into their narratives on Morocco or Turkey as home.

While timelessness and temporariness refer to contradictory tendencies in descendants of migrants' understandings of their land of 'origin', in their stories these two are also seen to complement each other in complex and shifting ways. Informants told me, for example, that they do not mind the fact that their stays are always temporary, as their timeless rootedness in Morocco compensates for the temporal discontinuity. In contrast, some would also formulate temporariness as a precondition for a sense of home: they could only feel at home in their country of origin thanks to the fact that they knew their time there was limited. It is the precarious simultaneity of shifting perceptions of timelessness and temporariness that marks my interlocutors' understanding of Turkey or Morocco as a homeland.

3.5 *The Asymmetry of Two Homelands*

Home emerges in this work as differentiated along many axes – of timelessness and temporariness, routes and roots logics, and the myriad seemingly binary characteristics ascribed to each country. The life stories of descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants bespeak their commitment to both countries, but also the complexity and ambivalence of their relations to either one. In each context, a self-evident sense of home is challenged by external voices contesting migrants' belonging. In the context of the country of origin, the challenge also comes from 'within', as participants experience strong discrepancies between themselves and residents of the countries of their (grand)parents.[28] In the narratives I analysed, the two countries constitute 'home' in different ways. Each is familiar in its own particular sense, facilitates both agency and communion in divergent ways, and provides varying points of (dis)identification that inform informants' sense of self.

Differentiating home does not imply a flattening out of differences between the various settings which are relevant to participants' senses of home and self. In the end, the Netherlands figures in most narratives as a more 'complete'

27 See in Chapter 3 the second subsection of Section 3.1: 'A temporary homeland?'.

28 See e.g. Chapter 2, Section 4.2.

home.[29] Morocco and Turkey are mainly described as 'special', albeit temporary, homes, in symbolic terms and with a dominant roots logic. Descriptions of the Netherlands, on the contrary, depict the country as a homeland in terms of concrete embeddedness as well as emotional and symbolic investment, in terms of roots as well as routes, and combine meanings of home as special and normal to a further extent than descriptions of Turkey and Morocco. My analyses clearly posit the Netherlands as the primary frame of reference for these descendants of migrants, against which their country of origin stands out as the marked category. Yet we have also seen in what ways this marked category nevertheless has a significant role to play in the lives and stories of those I interviewed. Stories about ancestral villages, for example, provide particular resources to satisfy the universal desire to know where one is from.[30] Moreover, the relative importance of, and the specific meanings ascribed to, either country vary greatly – between individuals, but also within individual narratives, as homelands are addressed from different I-positions, and described as embedded in developments both on the societal and on the personal level.[31]

Approaches one-sidedly foregrounding only one of these stories, focusing either on migrants' embeddedness in the 'host country' or on their persistent ties with the 'country of origin', risk neglecting the fact that individuals generally tell, and live, both these stories.[32] There is no reason to problematise or ignore the ongoing relevance of the Moroccan or Turkish context in the lives of descendants of migrants. The idea of Morocco/Turkey as a homeland sometimes collides, but also coexists in complex ways with a Dutch home that forms my informants' primary frame of reference.

It is from this perspective that we can also understand the relative insignificance of differences between the stories informants with a Turkish background and those with a Moroccan background told me about home.[33] Despite the considerable differences between Morocco and Turkey, against the background of life in the Netherlands both countries can be described as places where one spends one's holidays, where one's status as a migrant compatriot is ambivalent, where life is more relaxed but also less structured, where Islam is more self-evidently embedded in social life, where people are generally

29 See Chapter 3, Section 3.3, subsection 'Moroccan roots, Dutch routes? Messing up binaries'.

30 See Chapter 2, Section 4.5.

31 See Section 4 of Chapter 3.

32 See Chapter 3, Section 6 (Conclusion).

33 See Chapter 3, Section 4.4.

poor but hospitable, and where culture can be experienced both as strange (contrasting with the familiar Dutch context) and as familiar (from one's parental home environment). The fine weather and beautiful surroundings can make both Morocco and Turkey objects of longing, as can the warm family ties and the deep sense of rooted belonging, which persist despite the fact that one would not willingly stay there for more than a few weeks.

In this regard, from the perspective of the adult, rooted descendants of those who originally migrated to the Netherlands, both Turkey and Morocco can be seen to fulfil rather comparable functions. The main differences that did emerge from the narratives could largely be grouped under the heading of national self-confidence. People with a Turkish background regarded my own enthusiasm for 'their' country as self-evident and showed less eagerness to 'prove' that Turkey and the Turks were not that bad after all. They also positioned themselves more explicitly vis-à-vis issues of (Turkish) nationalism than their Moroccan counterparts. Still, this difference did not seem to lead to a structurally different positioning regarding questions of national identification in the Dutch context. Thus the relative insignificance of differences between individuals of Turkish and Moroccan descent appears to support the argument that they primarily frame their lives and selves from a Dutch perspective.

3.6 *Migrants' Reflexive Positionings*

Another axis of comparison that proved much less relevant than I had anticipated, is that of interviews conducted in the Netherlands as compared to those that took place during holiday stays in Morocco or Turkey. Interviewees could be seen to continually (re)position themselves towards the contexts under discussion in their narratives, but they did not do so in structurally different ways whilst in the country of origin than when speaking from their Dutch home settings. I have posited that one important reason for the unexpected consistency of stories told in divergent contexts, resides in the strong reflexivity of my informants, especially with regard to their multiple homes. Having travelled to and from two different countries all of their lives, and having been confronted with questions about home, belonging and loyalty in both of them, it is no wonder that these descendants of migrants are able to take a step back and reflect on these issues from a meta-position. In the current Dutch climate, in which people of Moroccan, Turkish and Muslim background are under constant social scrutiny, it has become impossible for them not to reflect on their labels. The interview setting, moreover, was particularly suited to bring these positions to the fore, as the invitation to tell one's life story prompted people to take a reflective stance. Indeed I have presented my life story interviews as

moments of extraordinary reflection and interpretation and of orchestrated, intensive narrative identity construction.[34]

Thanks to the reflexivity that is stimulated by informants' embeddedness in a variety of settings that may not always appear immediately compatible, they are also 'able to question the concepts and notions taken for granted by more than one culture.'[35] Thus a multiplicity of divergent home-settings can not only lead to tensions and conflicts (as I will discuss further on), but also cultivate a creative critical potential on the part of individuals with a migrant background. This point is rightly stressed (although often overstated as well) in scholarly discourses on hybridity.[36] In their narratives about the different countries, participants in this research reflected on the social, spatial and temporal embeddedness of their own understandings of home. Despite the fact that they also spoke about these issues in more (self-)reifying terms, time and again their narratives showed an awareness of the fact that in matters of home and identity, there are no independent variables: all factors in the mix are dialogically related.

4 Social In- and Exclusion: Home Contested

The issue of social in- and exclusion brings to the fore the inherently relational nature of home: it is people that make, or break, a home.[37] Social identities, life narratives, and homes all depend partly on the recognition and validation by others. How, then, do narrations on 'home' relate to dominant discourses on belonging and otherness, in a social context where interviewees' sense of home is increasingly questioned?

4.1 *Home: A Relational Concept*

Narrations of home point to the translocal character of identity and draw attention to the openness and permeability of the self: the self cannot be separated from others who have a voice in where and with whom we are allowed or expected to be at home. In- and exclusion by powerful others and dominant discourses form parameters for individual interpretations and formulations of home and identity. Moreover, the use of Hermans's Dialogical Self Theory has allowed me to trace the workings of social relationships, power structures and

34 See Chapter 1, Sections 4.5 and 4.6.

35 Ghorashi 2003b, p. 246.

36 Regarding this concept see the epilogue to Chapter 2.

37 See e.g. Chapter 4, Section 2.

discrimination *within the self* rather than as purely external factors impacting upon a bounded individual. I have described the ways in which interviewees made sense of home in terms of ongoing discussions between different voiced positions, both personal and collective, both internal and external, and addressing diverse, often internalised, audiences.[38]

The relational nature of home is of particular importance with regard to the question as to how interviewees make sense of dominant, excluding discourses which problematise the loyalties, identifications and sense of home of this specific group of migrants and their descendants.[39] My analyses have shown that (dialogical) articulations of home and identity are always embedded in power relationships. In the case of migrants, these power relationships may be particularly asymmetrical, shaping the discursive space people have to give personal meanings to home(lands). Home is subject to intensive social contestation between and within individuals and groups, especially on the level of the nation. As the party whose belonging is little questioned, residents in the Netherlands and in Morocco and Turkey have the power to exclude migrants from or to include them in the imagined national community.

In the case of people with a migration background, the poignant multiplicity of homes also implies multiple settings of social exclusion and othering. Many informants speak about feeling like a foreigner in both Turkey/Morocco and the Netherlands.[40] This image is part of a shared vocabulary which these descendants of migrants use when articulating their belongings in several countries. The image, however, suggests a symmetry between two homelands which, upon closer scrutiny, does not match the complex underlying meanings in participants' narratives. Complaints about being treated as a foreigner in the country of origin bespeak participants' wish to belong there. However, the fact that interviewees generally show less concern about being othered in Morocco or Turkey than about the same treatment in the Netherlands, also shows that this wish to be accepted in Morocco or Turkey is less acute than their desire to be accepted in Dutch society, where stakes are clearly higher. In narratives about social exclusion, too, the Netherlands are the primary frame of reference.

4.2 *Making Sense of Exclusion*

For descendants of migrants, moving within (rather than being trapped in between) multiple cultural contexts, there are several places which they can

38 See in particular Section 3 in Chapter 4.

39 See Chapter 4.

40 See Chapter 3, Section 4.2.

call home. While this multiplicity of contrasting home settings may be ambivalent, it is not problematic as such. Exclusivist understandings of home that problematise the simple fact that descendants of migrants relate to more than one country in terms of home, become untenable once we come to see the Netherlands as their primary frame of reference, home ties as multiple (albeit ambivalent), and humans as multivoiced. This conclusion goes against the public Dutch discourses that suggest causal relations between migrants' national, ethnic and religious identifications and their integration and participation in Dutch society.

Since the turn of the millennium, Dutch public debates on the integration of migrants have intensified as well as hardened in tone, placing migrants (explicitly including their descendants) under constant scrutiny.[41] Dutch Muslims, and Moroccan Dutch more in particular, have become the focal points of much negative attention. Part of the current discourse is a preoccupation with migrants' identifications and 'identity problems'. The problems migrants face, but most of all the problems they are perceived to cause in society, are related to their allegedly failed integration. While academically, the newness of Dutch Islamophobia and the alleged 'backlash' against diversity can be questioned, the hardening of Dutch discourse is a shared experience referred to by virtually all of my informants. My focus has been on this shared experience and its resonance in personal stories. I have described how agentic individuals position themselves with regard to external voices of exclusion and integrate them in their multivoiced identity narratives.

In our enquiries into the impact of social exclusion on minorities, differentiated questions lead to differentiated results.[42] Four basic questions may prove useful for quantitative as well as qualitative studies which focus on social exclusion on the level of the individual: Besides studying how individuals or groups *respond* to discrimination, we should also ask to what extent people *perceive* discrimination, how much *importance* they ascribe to such experiences, and how this affects their construction of *identity* and home in general. I found a large diversity regarding each of these questions in the narratives of my informants. An overall trend can be noted of informants problematising the Netherlands as home in response to the hardening of the Dutch climate, but I have also shown that this problematisation can take various forms. There are no general conclusions which all informants automatically draw from shared experiences of being increasingly othered. What is, however, shared by everybody is the stance that in the current Dutch climate it has become

41 See Section 1 of Chapter 1.

42 See Chapter 4, Section 2.3.

impossible *not to reflect* on the identity labels which put these descendants of migrants under continuous scrutiny. It is with regard to issues of exclusion that the heightened reflexivity discussed above[43] was addressed most explicitly by interviewees themselves. This also shows that such reflexivity can be viewed as both an asset, as described above, and a burden. Other people's preoccupation with their identifications, makes participants feel as if they are being reduced to a one-dimensional representative of their group.[44]

The 'slippery' nature of home, which often goes unnoticed in everyday usage, can become problematic when in the public arena the concept's various dimensions of meaning are used interchangeably. This happens, for example, when the wish by migrants to keep their 'original' nationality is perceived as implying that they feel more at home in the country of origin than in the Netherlands, and when this in turn is interpreted as a lack of loyalty and commitment to Dutch society. Dutch dominant discourses on migrant issues leave little room for the ambivalences which, as I have shown, structurally accompany questions of home for the descendants of migrants. It is this public disregard for ambivalent ties, rather than the ambivalence as such, that is problematic. In their narratives, interviewees show different ways of relating and responding to the (collective) voices that demand univocal identification. The narratives often express tensions that flow from a discrepancy between how one wishes to relate to one's multiple homelands and how others frame that relationship.[45] What is more, contestations of home take place between migrants and their social surroundings, but also take the form of positionings and repositionings within the individual narrative. The collective voices also resound in dialogues within the self-space, and people may themselves problematise their ambivalent belongings or opt for unambivalent formulations of their identifications and notions of home.

Essentialist discourses on home as exclusive and loyalties as absolute were therefore not only contested but also reproduced in the narratives analysed. The idea of choosing between one's two countries is an example of this. Not wanting to confront my informants with such a false choice, in my interviews I purposefully omitted questions relating to the idea of 'choosing sides'. Indeed, in their narratives, their identifications proved multiple, and their preferences regarding the different countries, situational. Depending on which dimensions of their understanding of home they focused on, and from what positions they were speaking, at any given moment, interviewees explained

43 See Section 3.6 in this chapter.

44 See Section 2.2 in Chapter 4.

45 See Section 4.3 in Chapter 3.

in which country they felt 'most at home' in a specific sense. Yet on occasion, many also spoke about their relationships to the two countries in terms of a (hypothetical) exclusive choice. On such occasions, informants generally expressed a preference for the Netherlands rather than Morocco or Turkey, although sometimes they would protest against the very idea of having to make such a choice. I have suggested that at least part of the explanation as to why informants so often brought up the issue of choosing, without my asking about it, lies in the discursive power of social expectations.[46]

When forced to choose, interviewees would let their Dutch routes outweigh their Turkish/Moroccan roots. Yet the voices demanding this very choice in favour of the Netherlands, also continually address migrants primarily in terms of their foreign roots. More often than not my informants find themselves in situations where, in the words of Ang, 'the question of "where you're from" threatens to overwhelm the reality of "where you're at",' a situation in which diasporic multiplicity becomes disempowering rather than enabling.[47] Migrants and their descendants see themselves being confronted with a double bind, being treated as outsiders that can never really be at home here on the one hand, and called upon to 'integrate' and to express their unambiguous loyalty to the Netherlands on the other. Paradoxically, then, migrants' feeling at home in the Dutch nation is constructed as both imperative and impossible.

The growing sense of exclusion and the prevalence of discourses that place migrants in a double bind are much quoted as reasons for considering to migrate to the country of their parents. The finding that about half of my informants formulated a wish to migrate to Morocco or Turkey, is qualified by placing their expressed wishes in the context of narratives in which other voices contradict, problematise and put into perspective both the desire and the possibilities to actually migrate.[48] Indeed, based on my findings there is little reason to expect an exodus of these descendants of migrants. Rather, the frequency of wishes to migrate raises concerns about the prevalence of a sense of exclusion as a motive for migration which is much stronger than, for example, a wish to return to one's roots. The main motives for migration wishes are to be found in the Netherlands, not in Morocco and Turkey.

In the end the currency of migration plans, and the significant impediments realising them, are mostly meaningful because they are informative of the ambivalent relationships descendants of migrants maintain with both their homelands. Contesting the idea that 're'migration implies a 'failure' of home – whether this refers to a failure of migrants to integrate, or a failure of

46 See the subsection 'False choices and double binds' in Section 4.3, Chapter 3.

47 Ang 1994, p. 34.

48 See Section 4.3 in Chapter 3, subsection 'Time to move?'.

Dutch society to accommodate their home-making[49] – I have shown the complexity lying behind an expressed wish to migrate. This complexity became particularly evident in my analysis of the case of Jamila in Chapter 4. In her case, the articulation of her wish to migrate was shown to relate to her specific relationship with, amongst others, her husband, her Moroccan in-laws, and her Dutch colleagues.

The case study analysis of individual stories allowed me to explore the social dimensions of home in their full complexity; to demonstrate how, in the end, they cannot be separated from other, more personal dimensions; and to highlight the part played by social exclusion in this dynamic whole. The grand themes I focussed on also form a part of intimate, personal understandings of home, as they emerge in the setting of the individual, socially embedded life course. Neglecting the significance of personal, less generalisable factors, can easily lead us to overstate the decisiveness of shared elements or characteristics in explaining phenomena. This places a critical footnote to endeavours to explain migrants' attitudes in terms of general trends or patterns (including my own attempts in this domain): shared characteristics sometimes tell us little about underlying subjectivities.[50] Although the role of social factors in individuals' meaning-making is formidable, so is the significance of personal experiences and factors such as life stage and personality traits. This study shows that such factors matter (which most would agree they do), but also *how* they matter, and how on the individual level all these different factors which we often place apart as 'social' or 'personal' are intertwined in the narrative texture of the multivoiced self-space. The meanings ascribed to experiences of othering are interwoven with personal factors and dependent on the configuration of a dynamic multiplicity of I-positions. It is insights like these, which address what Ghorashi calls 'the intersection of uniqueness and commonality',[51] that make research into (life)narratives compelling and, I would argue, imperative.

4.3 *A Dialogical Approach: Accommodating Both Social Forces and Personal Agency*

Studying individual (life) narratives with the help of Dialogical Self Theory has the advantage of showing both the considerable impact which dominant discourses of integration and otherness have on individuals with a migrant

49 See the conclusion to Chapter 4.

50 I have shown, for example, that several informants of Turkish background with a higher education claimed not to experience any direct discrimination against their person, but that the reasons they provided for this differed widely and could not be linked to their educational and ethnic background.

51 Ghorashi 2003b, p. 243.

background, and the same individuals' personal agency in dealing with these discourses. The constant problematisation or denial of the multiplicity of homes holds the threat of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. It makes these descendants of migrants feel less welcome and accepted in the societies they consider their homes, and more likely to foreground I-positions identifying with the countries their parents left behind. This, however, does not mean that social exclusion forms an all-pervasive theme in the lives of each and every migrant; rather it is but one element in the complex texture of their self-narratives. As little as we can understand my informants if we address them solely in terms of their Muslim identity, as little can we grasp their experiences if we reduce them to marginalised objects of social forces of exclusion.

While these social forces are anything but non-committal, the way they affect individuals is never a given. I have shown how in the telling of (life)narratives, interviewees express their agency, both in the sense that they describe and position themselves as agentic individuals and co-producers of the collective voices to which they relate, and because life story telling can in itself be interpreted as an agentic act of giving meaning.[52] It is one of the great advantages of a dialogical perspective that it allows us to see the actuality of power structures, as well as the inherent scope for personal agency and the pervasiveness of subjectivity.[53] Examining the issue of home in personal narratives in terms of a multiplicity of positions that are both socially embedded and individually formulated in creative ways, I have been able to portray my informants as agentic individuals in complex, power-laden circumstances, and to demonstrate the simultaneity of agency and structure rather than engaging in fruitless deliberations about which of these is paramount. This is of particular importance in cases where the primary focus is on exclusion and asymmetrical power constellations.[54]

5 The Dialogical Construction of Narratives on Home and Identity

Dialogical Self Theory as employed throughout this work, implies an understanding of identity processes as quite literally situated, temporally as well as spatially.[55] I have analysed informants' stories about their lives and homes as dialogically constructed and told from a variety of 'relatively autonomous

52 See Chapter 4, Section 6 (To conclude).

53 See Chapter 4.

54 See also Chapter 1, Section 4.3.

55 See in particular Chapter 1, Section 4, and Chapter 2, Section 5.1.

I-positions',[56] both internal and external. This perspective also implied a certain sensitivity to the fact that my material consisted of narratives obtained in dialogical interview settings. In these settings interviewees faced the extraordinary task of telling their 'whole' story, directing themselves directly towards me, as well as towards a variety of (anticipated) internal and external audiences.[57]

What does the multivoicedness of migrants' narratives imply for our interpretations of migrants' statements regarding home and identity? In this study, a dialogical understanding of the self featured both as an underlying perspective on individuals and their narratives, and as a concrete tool of analysis.[58] In Chapters 2 and 3, departing from an aggregated level to map the interrelated meanings ascribed to Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands, awareness of the multivoicedness of individual narratives mainly functioned as a key to understand ambivalences and contradictions in informants' narratives on home and homeland in terms of a dynamic interplay of positioned (dis)identifications. Meanings of home are in constant flow and change as positions within the personal position repertoire shift and change over the life course, in dialogue with each other, and in interaction with social dynamics.

In the 'case study chapters' four and five, besides being an underlying perspective, the metaphor of a multiplicity of dialogically related I-positions allowed me to shed light on the complex ambivalences that pervaded the stories of my informants, while respecting their narrative integrity. Specific statements and narrative fragments are contextualised and qualified when we interpret them as intermediate outcomes of ongoing dialogues rather than as final conclusions.[59] The internal and external positions partaking in these dialogues, moreover, each go through their own developments. Central positions in the personal position repertoire can be discerned throughout the narratives and shown to be at work in specific statements or narrative fragments. In their dialogues, positions can contradict and contest other positions, but they can

56 Hermans 2001c, p. 248 McAdams 2006, p. 119.

57 I have reflected on my own role as a dialogue partner with specific (perceived) characteristics and attitudes, both in the first chapter and, where particularly relevant, in the course of my further analysis.

58 Earlier on in this conclusion we have already encountered several elements from Dialogical Self Theory, explaining, for example, the intrinsic interwovenness of 'social' and 'personal' factors in individual narratives, the great reflexivity of my informants, and the conjunction of personal agency with individuals' embeddedness in social relationships that are charged with power inequalities.

59 See Chapter 4, Section 4.2.

also form coalitions, reconfirm and inspire each other.[60] Indeed Dialogical Self Theory provides an open perspective accommodating not only ambivalence, multiplicity and discontinuity, but also continuity and coherence.[61] I have described personal developments as often entailing reconfigurations and reorientations of existing I-positions, which remain more or less connected through their dialogical relationships.

The multivoicedness of personal narratives and the dialogues between various voices can be straightforward at times, but more often they are implicit and fragmentary.[62] Analysing the many instances both of distinctly discernable voices and of more subtle and implicit instances of dialogicality in the narratives, has enhanced our understanding of the processes of identity construction in these narratives. This sort of microanalysis of the narrative dialogical processes through which individual descendants of migrants make sense of their homes, lives and selves, is a main contribution I wish to make to the study of migrant identity. My in-depth analysis aims at enhancing our sensitivity for the lived complexity of migrant identity construction.[63] It shows that the social realities we wish to study are infinitely more layered and complex than our general categorisations and grand theories may deceive us into thinking.

5.1 *Advantages and Implications of a Dialogical Perspective*

Together with a focus on home through narrative, the dialogical perspective is what differentiates this study from most previous research on Moroccan and Turkish migrants and their descendants in the Netherlands.[64] This perspective adds depth and clarity to, as well as indicating the ambivalences contained in, general findings which I share with other studies, e.g. that people's ties with the country of origin do not impede on their sense of home in and identification with the Netherlands;[65] that the current call for integration/assimilation, especially as addressed to Muslims, functions as a mechanism of exclusion and is contested by migrants themselves;[66] or that people suffer under negative labelling as Turk/Moroccan/Muslim/allochthone, but that they also reappropriate such labels and give them more positive meanings.[67] I have integrated

60 See e.g. Section 3.3 in Chapter 4.

61 In this work, see Chapter 1, Section 4.4, but also cf. Salgado & Hermans 2005, p. 10.

62 See Section 3.2 of Chapter 4.

63 See the conclusion to Chapter 5.

64 With the work of Buitelaar as the most evident exception, see e.g. M.W. Buitelaar, *Dialogical Constructions of a Muslim Self Through Life Story Telling*, 2013.

65 Cf. Bouras 2012; Duyvendak 2011a; van der Welle 2011; Strijp 1998.

66 Cf. Eijberts 2013; Omlo 2011; de Jong 2012; de Koning 2008; Leurs 2012.

67 Cf. Eijberts 2013; de Koning 2008; Ketner 2008; Leurs 2012.

psychological insights regarding the dialogical nature of the self into the anthropological study of post-migration contexts, in an effort to contribute to the understanding of the identity processes of a group in Dutch society whose identifications are under intense public and private scrutiny.

A dialogical perspective can help us look beyond binary classifications. In this work we have seen this on a variety of levels,[68] noting that a dialogical perspective goes beyond, or encompasses, issues of agency and structure, coherence and multiplicity. Specifically with regard to migration contexts, this approach also goes beyond seeming contradictions, or differences in emphasis, between various perspectives on cultural multiplicity. Proponents of the concept of hybridity, while rightly countering older, essentialising understandings of migrant identity, can easily succumb to a one-sided stress on, and celebration of, newness and creativity. Through the use of a dialogical perspective I have shown how, speaking from different positions, individuals can voice essentialist as well as processual understandings of culture.[69]

Applying Dialogical Self Theory to questions of cultural multiplicity, we see how positions relating to different 'cultural' identifications can peacefully coexist, with or without much dialogue going on between them, and with people shifting between them with more or less frequency and ease; there can be friction and clashes between them; they can develop, fuse or give rise to something new;[70] all depending on how individuals organise their self-space in the context of their own life story and the social relationships and power structures they are embedded in.[71] All of this goes for non-migrants as well as migrants, but for the latter, power structures tend to be more asymmetrical, and various cultural positions are often perceived as further apart.[72] This greater complexity can be experienced as enriching as well as constraining by individuals themselves. As researchers, when thinking in terms of cultural diversity we should be particularly wary of the risk to reify positions that stress cultural identifications. This is a sensitivity which I have tried to enhance in comparison to the original framework of Hermans's work on the dialogical self.[73] Furthermore I have pointed out that in all of this, it is crucial to remember

68 These levels range from characterisations of Morocco/Turkey as compared to the Netherlands, to the use of conceptual pairs such as roots and routes, temporariness and timelessness.

69 See the epilogue to Chapter 2.

70 Hermans 2001c, p. 258.

71 Zock 2006.

72 Cf. Salih 2003, p. 143.

73 See the last paragraphs of the epilogue to Chapter 2.

that, besides being dialogically related to other positions, each I-position is also intersectional in nature, with various individual and collective I-positions always informing and co-constructing each other.[74]

The implications of a dialogical perspective reach further still. The inherent multivoicedness, and thus apparent inconsistency, of contemporary selves poses challenges to quantitative approaches in the social sciences, especially as regards the measuring of personal attitudes. The inconsistency of my informants' stories does not stem from narrative incompetence. Rather, inconsistencies, ambivalences, and contradictions in life narratives are a natural reflection of the multivoicedness of the self and the fact that people do not possess a coherent, closed set of opinions, self-images, motivations and memories on which to base an unambiguous account of their lives.

Despite people's drive to tell acceptable and more or less coherent stories about themselves, it is an illusion to think of individuals as living according to one consistent truth and having one single story to tell about themselves, with this story voiced by one 'true self' – rather than being able to tell several, equally 'true', situated stories about their lives and homes from a multiplicity of dialogical positions.[75] If we want to study human affairs or 'social reality', we'd better pay attention to human inconsistency as a given rather than as a problem to be explained.

If people speak about their lives from a multiplicity of dialogically interacting positions and produce inconsistent narratives, this has implications for the ways their personal lifeworlds can be studied. Isolated statements about, for example, where and with whom a person feels at home, cannot be taken at face value. This is particularly important with regard to politically sensitive opinions, such as the stated intention of many of my informants to relocate to the country of origin permanently. By treating such seemingly resolute preferences as momentary outcomes of ongoing dialogues, we remind ourselves that these statements are internally contested and subject to development. This certainly does not provide grounds to disqualify any statements our informants may make. On the contrary: to take informants' experiences seriously, we have to listen to their words, but at the same time avoid reducing them to isolated statements and absolutising one single voice as representative of an individual's complex whole of positionings. It is this reductionist and absolutising mechanism that we should remain aware of when interpreting the numbers

74 See Chapter 4, Section 3.2.

75 See Chapter 5, particularly the conclusion, subsection 'A case study approach: advantages and lessons'.

and percentages about migrants' 'attitudes', which feature prominently both in quantitative studies and in the current media coverage of this subject.

By implication, rather than expecting subjects to express their identifications and understandings of home in unequivocal terms, we will want to map their situated multiple positionings regarding these issues, taking into account the contexts within which their statements are made. Consequently, we will ask both about the position from which a statement is formulated, and about possible other positions from which the same individual may give different, sometimes even contradictory meanings to notions such as that of home. The interpretation of quantitative data, both inside and outside of academia, would benefit from a larger awareness of the dialogical production of these data.

6 Meanings of Home in the Life Story

What meanings do descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants in the Netherlands ascribe to the notion of home? And how are these meanings informed by, and embedded in, their personal life trajectories, as we see them remembered and presented in their (life) narratives? I have employed 'home', not as a strictly defined and circumscribed concept, but as a dynamic notion, rich, multi-layered and fuelled by emic meanings that stand in creative tension with the usage of home as a de-essentialising analytical concept. Particularly in post-migration contexts, home is an ambivalent notion, referring to multiple places and spaces in the past, the present and the future in various ways.

There is no short answer to the question about meanings of home for my informants: the notion cannot be separated from the particular settings within which it is interpreted and used, referring to various places, situations, groups, individuals or worlds. My long answer to the question about meanings of home for my informants is formed by this work as a whole. The life stories analysed in this book relate to a notion of home that is highly contextual – embedded in time and space as well as in individual memories and narratives. Home can be remembered, lived, longed for. I have reviewed home as a notion that is differentiated and ambivalent, relational and dialogical. I have emphasised the multiplicity of understandings and settings of home, and at the constant slippage, in our usage of the term, between its many layers of meaning.

This book has discussed home as a notion grounded in self-narratives, and as a perspective on such narratives. The shifting of the personal position repertoire over the life course results in narrative reconfigurations of one's perspectives on past, present and future homes. The routes which humans

take over the life course may be at least as formative of the meanings they give to home as the roots to which they trace their origins. It is by eliciting and analysing narratives, retrospective explorations of these roots and routes in light of interviewees' present situation and future plans, that this study has shown how individuals give meaning to the notion of home or, conversely, how they employ home to give meaning to their lives and selves. Below I want to reflect on the shared topics in interviewees' life narratives that shape the understandings of home for this specific group of individuals, and I will return to the four general motives which, I have argued, form key constituents of a sense of home.

6.1 *Shared Meanings of Home: Grand Themes and Personal Experiences*

Informants' understandings of home are closely bound up with central topics in their individual life narratives. Indeed, 'home' has provided the lens through which I have explored these topics in the stories I was told. I have addressed the importance, both of shared 'grand themes' as Morocco/Turkey and the Netherlands, religion, gender, social in- and exclusion, and roots & routes, and of intimate stories about family, the house and personal themes or key memories. But as I have argued above, a strict distinction between the 'personal' and the 'social' is untenable on the level of life narratives, which take place at the individually unique interface of social and personal developments. The 'grand themes' mentioned also form a part of interviewees' intimate, personal understandings of home, as they emerge in the setting of the individual, socially embedded life course.[76] Reciprocally, in the various case studies I have shown how specific personal experiences, such as the loss of a father in law, a summer holiday, marriage or a domestic conflict, inform understandings of home and shape the ways in which individuals relate to shared 'grand themes'. These case studies were crucial to show the diversity and individuality of the broad spectrum of stories I heard, the thematic relatedness this spectrum also shows, and the biographical embeddedness of shared themes in each single case. Thereby they have served to demonstrate both the possibilities and the limitations of generalisations based on individual life story accounts.

Thematising Religion and Gender

Two important topics remain to be addressed: religion and gender. The theme of religion was best explored in the context of individual life narratives. In the case studies, we have seen that Islam and being Muslim play important, but

76 See Chapter 5, particularly the conclusion, subsection 'A case study approach : advantages and lessons'.

highly varying roles in the lives of various informants.[77] I have addressed religion both as a boundary marker in dynamics of in- and exclusion, especially in the Dutch context,[78] and as a meaningful factor in the personal lives of those I interviewed. Their stories bear witness to the fact that the place and meanings religion has in their lives is never a given. The actuality and relevance of the different religious positions one individual may take at any given time, is always situational.

The case studies also back my central point that, paradoxically, these descendants of migrants often cite religion as a highly relevant factor in their lives, and yet marginalise it in various ways in their narratives. I have suggested several possible reasons for this tendency.[79] It could be concluded that informants have developed a rather secular mindset, in the sense of viewing their religion as a private matter separate from other concerns. Another reason may be found in the previously discussed tendency to discursively separate religion and culture. The endeavour to safeguard religious 'purity' could then lead people to isolate religion from other life concerns. Finally, the current Islamophobic atmosphere in the Netherlands might inhibit informants from letting their religious voices speak freely and from presenting their religiosity as a self-evident part of their lives towards me as an interviewer and towards the anticipated (Dutch) audience for my work.

Whatever the underlying reasons, the fact remains that, although religious positions are inevitably voiced in the context of the larger life story and in the modality of other identifications, religious concerns appear to have a status aparte. Islam was less dominant in overall story lines than expected. While many interesting things can be said about the role of religion for Moroccan and Turkish migrants and their descendants,[80] in the light of my research questions, this finding has dictated a less central place for this topic in the whole of this study. Irrespective of questions about the generalisability of these findings, they fulfil the important role of alerting us to the danger of overstating religion. This is of special importance in the case of Muslims, who are structurally thought of, and addressed, in terms of their religious identity. Islam is easily presented as the ruling principle of Muslim believers' lives – both by outsiders and by believers themselves. This work can be read as an antidote to this widespread tendency. I have maintained that while informants

77 See the case studies of Naima, Jamila, Aziza and Latifa in Chapters 2–5.

78 See Chapter 4.

79 See text box 'Setting religion apart' in Chapter 5.

80 See e.g. the work of Abaaziz (forthcoming), various publications by Buitelaar, and de Koning 2008, Nabben, Yesilgöz & Korf 2006.

may participate in this discourse wholeheartedly, researchers should not automatically interpret it as descriptive rather than prescriptive. Besides its inaccuracy, such an interpretation would be problematic in the light of the Dutch public debates in which adherence and 'exclusive' loyalty to Islam is wrongly presented as frustrating migrant integration. My material clearly demonstrates that such a causality is wrong.[81]

Acknowledging that descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants greatly value religion by no means implies that their whole life, their whole story, their whole identity, can be interpreted in religious terms. There is no such thing as 'the' Muslim identity, and it is certainly wrong to think of such an identity as continually present and dominant, or even relevant, in the ways that Muslims think and act.[82] This fallacy fails to do justice to the many facets of their stories and identities, as it ignores the complex contexts in which individuals' religious positions develop and manifest themselves in dialogue with other positions. Such a one-sided approach could lead us to overstate religious identity and, at the same time, to overlook the ways in which religion can, indeed, be a crucial element in a person's life.[83]

Another 'grand theme' that played a somewhat secondary role in this work is gender. Gender always has a part to play in matters of home, and all the more so in the case of migrants and their descendants, who often encounter disparate perceptions of gender roles in the various contexts in which they move. Women in particular are confronted with divergent patterns of gendered expectations from various sides regarding their behaviour, appearance and life choices, in intersection with their labels as Muslim/Dutch/migrant/Moroccan or Turkish.[84] It is also with regard to gender expectations that informants most frequently mentioned being scrutinised by other Moroccan, Turkish or Muslim Dutch (rather than speaking about the more common instances of 'outside' scrutiny from resident Turks, Moroccans or Dutch).[85]

Throughout this work I have treated gender not as a separate issue, but as a dimension of complex social situations, a dimension that pops up in myriad ways in people's lives and stories.[86] Various conceptions of femininity and masculinity in the different 'worlds' individuals relate to, and the influence these conceptions have on their life choices and the parameters within which they build their households and homes, make gender an integral issue

81 See e.g. the end of the case study epilogue in Chapter 4.

82 See the conclusion of Chapter 5.

83 The various case studies in this book, particularly those in Chapters 4 and 5, give illustrations of the latter.

84 Cf. Buitelaar 2006a.

85 See in particular the case study of Naima in Chapter 2 and that of Latifa in Chapter 5.

86 See the conclusion to Chapter 5.

in the light of this research. The case studies in particular have shown that life experiences and narratives, and certainly also understandings of home, are always gendered to some extent (in some narratives more prominently than in others).

While this study confirms the genderedness of (migrant) experiences and narratives, informants' genders and their views on gender roles received but little stress in their own narratives. Therefore my inductive analyses did not suggest a prominent role for this subject in the whole of this work. Moreover, the case studies have shown that the ways in which gender intersects with other dimensions, and co-constructs the different personal and social identifications which people voice in their narratives, is very specific to personal cases. Sometimes enquiries into the role of gender may be better served by contextualisation rather than by generalisation.

The variation in how religion, gender and other 'grand themes' can figure in highly personal life narratives has been demonstrated in Chapter 5, where I explored the contrasting stories of two sisters. Their disparate coordinates in various shared dimensions served as indicators of the vast space of diversity covered by all my interviews in these dimensions. By taking two different but related stories as a point of departure for my recontextualisation of the meanings of home, I have described how even within one single family, two children can grow up to lead very different lives and tell divergent stories about their homes. Through this, I have shown how various topics, ranging from grand themes such as religion to biographical episodes such as leaving the parental home, can figure in rather contrasting fashions in different lives, and how this thematisation is an integral part of the rest of an individual's life story.

6.2 *Four General Home Motives*

The analysis of the particular life stories of this specific group has also contributed to our general understanding of the theoretical concept of home. I have pleaded for a differentiated, relational and contextual understanding of the term. Particularly in Chapter 5, I maintained that the various specific stories about home feature four recurring/underlying general motives: agency, communion, familiarity and a subjective sense of self. Here again, it was through the analysis of individual stories that I was best able to present these four basic motives in their dynamics. The narratives bespeak interviewees' desires for freedom, control and similar agentic themes; for communion with one's family, children, spouse, significant others; the value of familiarity, but also the need to let go of what is familiar in one's striving for new goals; and the urge to be (or become) oneself and to be seen and recognised by others 'as one is'. Each of these motives helps to foster a sense of home. Ideally, home could be seen as

a familiar environment in which one feels connected to others, free to act, and able to be, and express, oneself.

These four grounded motives, I would argue, are crucial for the analytical understanding of home. They are also often in tension, both with each other and with the ambivalent lived realities to which 'home' refers in my interlocutors' narratives. We have seen this quite clearly in narratives about leaving homes and making new ones.[87] Personal meanings of home are situationally formulated over individual life courses in which people strive to balance out and narratively account for their desires for agency and communion, familiarity and a sense of self. These motives can both condition and nourish each other, and both compete or collide.

Stories about the topics I described as specific to the home narratives of this particular group can often be traced back to these four general motives.[88] I would predict that other individuals with different backgrounds will tell stories about home that also feature the same motives. The specific ways in which they are pursued by my informants, however, are informed by their own socially embedded roots and routes.[89] By examining the specific life narratives of unique individuals with a Moroccan or Turkish background in terms of home, this study has served to enrich both the study of descendants of (Moroccan and Turkish) migrants, and the study of home and identity. Home, in this work, has become an object of investigation as well as a perspective.

7 Home and Identity: Perspectives on Lives

In these times of intensified globalisation (and even more so in post-migration settings), places, communities, and the ways in which individuals relate to

87 In Chapter 5 for example, we saw how Latifa's story revolves around her choice to leave behind the familiarity and communion of a parental home that restricted her agency and had become a place where she could no longer be herself. In this example, Latifa felt that she had to choose her freedom over her family, and her agency and sense of self over familiarity and communion. This initial choice was followed by a long trajectory in order to restore the relationship with her parents without compromising herself and giving up her freedom.

88 Besides this, however, either of these underlying motives can also move to the foreground, for example when informants articulate home more or less directly in terms of togetherness, familiarity, or empowerment. In that sense, my distinction between specific shared themes on the one hand, and these more general motives in the meanings informants give to home on the other, is an analytical one, separating, for heuristic purposes, what is interwoven in the fabric of concrete narratives.

89 Cf. Buitelaar 2007b, pp. 20–21.

either, have lost any self-evidence they might have claimed in the past. Most anthropological research on descendants of migrants involves the subject of identity. What distinguishes this work is the grounding of this overly broad notion by making use, both of conceptualisations of home and of theorisations of identity processes as dialogical and narrative.

In the study of migrants and their descendants, 'home' can function as an open, heuristic device to probe migrant experiences without too many presuppositions about the emic relevance of labels and categorisations. I have shown this concept to be particularly flexible in comparison to other possible theoretical vocabularies regarding post-migration identity. Especially in combination with a narrative, dialogical perspective, 'home' allows for the investigation of how the personal experiences of individual migrants may or may not be characterised by ('hybrid') newness and creative difference, ('transnational') simultaneity or ('diasporic') longing and collective identification.[90] Combining a de-essentialising openness with the thickness of home as an emic notion, my focus on home has yielded rich insights into the identity processes of the sons and daughters of Moroccan and Turkish migrants to the Netherlands.

'Identity' and 'home' are sometimes referred to as separate, albeit related, measures of migrants' positionings. Eijberts for example notes that her respondents often identify primarily as Turkish or Moroccan rather than Dutch, whereas they express a stronger sense of home regarding the Netherlands than regarding their countries of 'origin'.[91] Besides the fact that I have found such expressed preferences to be more variable, I also contend that such distinctions between 'home' and 'identity' with regard to migrants' attachments, are based on a restricted view of identity in terms of identification with preconceived ethnic or national categories. While I agree that the two concepts cannot be used interchangeably but rather complement each other, I think that such a strict distinction fails to do justice to either of the two. Similarly, rather than relating identity to an essentialising roots logic and home to a more flexible routes logic,[92] I have proposed to foreground the complementary nature of these two metaphors in their creative tension.[93] Like roots and routes, when given the possibility to mutually enrich each other in complex ways, as theoretical concepts home and identity have the potential to become powerful analytical tools in the understanding of the experiences of migrants and their descendants.

90 See Chapter 1, Section 3.1.

91 Eijberts 2013, pp. 288–297.

92 Eijberts 2013, p. 288.

93 See Section 3.3 in Chapter 3.

Indeed, the theoretical backbone of this study has been formed by the reciprocal cross-fertilisation of the notions of home and identity. Psychological understandings of identity as narratively expressed and dialogically produced, have given substance to my reading of identity as a subtext of home. Thus enriched, the anthropological concept of 'home' has enabled me to make sense of the narratives participants told me about their life routes and roots as formative for who they have become. Conversely, I have also argued that individuals' understandings of home can only be understood in their embeddedness in life narratives: the stories informants have to tell about how they see themselves, in relationship with the people around them and the social and spatial contexts they navigate.

This theoretical framework allows for a cautious and balanced outlook on the sometimes so politicised ties of belonging of my interviewees, and on the contextuality of (post-migrant) identity processes. Rather than explaining away ambivalence and multivoicedness, home allows us to see these as inherent in the experiences and words of those under study. The use of a dialogical perspective on both home and identity allows us to debunk exclusivist discourses on migrants' identifications in society, and to go beyond absolutist distinctions between self and other, social and personal, or agency and structure in academia. From this perspective, I have endeavoured to listen to, and make audible for the reader, the voices of descendants of Moroccan and Turkish migrants. Voices of unique, agentic adults, making sense of their socially embedded lives by telling complex, multivoiced stories of home and identity.

Appendix: Table of Informants

Name	Gender	Age at first interview	Background	Interviews in years	Interview in Morocco/Turkey?
Anouar	male	30	Moroccan	2009	yes
Aygul	female	30	Turkish	2010	yes
Aziza	female	35	Moroccan	2008, 2009	yes
Bahar	female	29	Turkish	2010	yes
Baris	male	40	Turkish	2010	yes
Bilal	male	25	Moroccan	2009, 2010	yes
Bilge	female	32	Turkish	2010	no
Coskun	male	26	Turkish	2010	no
Dounia	female	33	Moroccan	2009, 2010, 2011	yes
Farid	male	39	Moroccan	2008	no
Faruk	male	38	Turkish	2010	yes
Fatih	male	39	Turkish	2008	no
Habib	male	25	Moroccan	2009, 2010	yes
Idriss	male	34	Moroccan	2008	no
Jamila	female	30	Moroccan	2009, 2010, 2012	yes
Karima	female	36	Moroccan	2010	no
Khadija	female	36	Moroccan	2009	no
Laila	female	31	Moroccan	2010	no
Latifa	female	38	Moroccan	2010, 2011	yes
Malika	female	33	Moroccan	2009	no
Metin	male	25	Turkish	2010	yes
Naima	female	25	Moroccan	2008, 2009	no
Nilay	female	38	Turkish	2010	yes
Nora	female	26	Moroccan	2009, 2010	yes
Ozan	male	31	Turkish	2010	no
Rachid	male	35	Moroccan	2009, 2010	yes
Redouan	male	25	Moroccan	2009, 2010	yes
Said	male	28	Moroccan	2009	yes
Tariq	male	26	Moroccan	2010	yes

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