

DUTCH BOSNIAN BUT NEITHER ‘DUTCH’ NOR ‘BOSNIAN’

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCES OF DUTCH BOSNIAN YOUNG
ADULTS IN ROTTERDAM REGARDING THEIR LAYERED IDENTITY AND POSITION
IN DUTCH SOCIETY

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1. Introduction: setting the scene

The focus of this research project is on developing a holistic understanding of how Dutch Bosnian young adults residing in the Rotterdam region construct and experience their identity. Building on existing research dealing with second-generation immigrants, transnationalism, integration, superdiversity, identity, and symbolic interactionism a contextualised account of their lived experiences will be produced to arrive at an explanatory framework of how they come to view, express, and understand themselves. A combination of 10 thematically analysed in-depth interviews and insights from 84 hours of ethnographic fieldwork constitutes the empirical foundation of this research.

The history of the Bosnian diasporic community in the Netherlands can be traced to the guest worker programmes of the 1960s and the subsequent chain migration. Hence in the build-up to the Yugoslavian War (1992-1995), there was already a small community of Yugoslavian immigrants with their own cultural organisations present in the Netherlands (de Boom et al, 2008). Due to the Yugoslavian war in the early 1990s, 25,000 Bosnians had sought political asylum, while by 2021 the total number of people with a Bosnian background was 38,900 (allecijfers.nl, 2022). The highest concentration can be found in Rotterdam where 4,200 thousand Bosnians are registered while the total number of people from the Former Republic of Yugoslavia is 12,000. Rotterdam - on which this research will focus - is the second most populous city in the Netherlands with 651,000 inhabitants of which 52% have a non-Dutch background (CBS Statline, 2022)

There have been considerable studies on the Bosnian diaspora in the decades following the Bosnian war (1992-1995), both in terms of objective integration criteria and subjective experiences (see Valenta & Ramet, 2011 for an extensive overview). Studies focusing on second and third generation young adult Bosnians who have been born and raised in the Netherlands are however lacking.

The research on people with Bosnian roots in the Netherlands is generally limited to objective structural integration parameters related to labour, education, and social outcomes (see Gijsberts & Dagevos, 2007; Hessels, 2005; Van den Maagdenberg, 2004). When it does focus on lived experiences, however, it is limited to refugees (see Verlasevic, 2019), the influence of war experiences on Bosnian families (see van den Akker & Wiefferink, 2008), or

Bosnians who (re)migrated to Bosnia (Bisselink, 2020). Most contemporary migration and integration research seems to be focused on the four major non-Dutch ethnic groups; the recent influx of eastern-European migrants from Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania; and on Syrian refugees (see Djundeva & Ellwardt, 2020; Fokkema & Conkova, 2018; Wachter & Fleischmann, 2018; Van Liempt & Starring, 2021). The lived experience of young adult Dutch Bosnians and the way they develop a sense of self and belonging within Dutch society – let alone Rotterdam – is however missing.

Therefore, this research project specifically aims to gain insight into the lived experiences of Dutch Bosnian youth regarding the way they make sense of the fact they were born and grew up in the Netherlands while also having a Bosnian background. My aim, importantly, is not merely to arrive at an account of how Dutch Bosnians talk about their identity and experiences, but also to observe the way they act and express themselves and ultimately link these insights to the wider context.

In light of this purpose, it is thus important to get a sense of the context in which Dutch Bosnians construct and negotiate their identity. People's identities are time and place-specific due to their socially constructed nature (Goffman, 1968). The culture and society in which a given individual is situated are thus fundamental to how that person will be seen by others in society and consequently how they will see themselves (Clarke, 2008). Similarly, Alba and Nee (2009) argue that immigrant adaptation outcomes are significantly affected by the institutional and cultural characteristics of the host society.

Considering all of this, the **first research question** is constructivist and focuses on lived experiences: *How do Dutch youth of Bosnian descent living in Rotterdam make sense of their layered Dutch Bosnian identity?* Building on this, the **second research question** is more post-positivistic and focuses on social action: *How does the way they behave and act in their daily lives reflect certain aspects of their layered Dutch Bosnian identity?* The **third research question** is post-positivist/critical and will link the lived experiences and behaviour to the context: *How do their experiences and behaviour fit into wider discourses regarding integration in the Netherlands and the superdiverse context of Rotterdam?*

The rest of the paper is divided into four parts. First, a literature review follows which focuses on setting the scene, but also on developing a rudimentary understanding of the

individual, emphasising how their reflexive and intentional actions are crucial to understanding the social world. Section three subsequently outlines the chosen methodological approach regarding the collection and analysis of data. Section four is dedicated to presenting the findings in the form of three interrelated themes which synthesise into an explanatory theoretical framework. Finally, the conclusion will discuss the value and relevance of the findings by linking it to the existing literature and societal context. Furthermore, the prospects for future research on second- and third-generation immigrants, superdiversity, integration and identity will be discussed.

2. Literature Review

First, a macro perspective on the development of Dutch integration policy (i.e., how integration has come to be a political issue) and the general attitude towards immigrants will be discussed. This will be followed by considering the question of 'Dutchness' so as to understand what it means to be Dutch and when someone is actually considered 'Dutch' as well as the place of Bosnians in Dutch society. The focus will subsequently shift towards meso-level factors such as the superdiverse character of Rotterdam and the presence of a Bosnian diasporic/transnational community. Lastly a more micro-level view will be adopted to gain a better understanding of agentic individuals and how they come to develop a sense of self with a focus on second generation immigrants in particular.

2.1. Dutch integration and immigration discourse – Who is Dutch?

The Netherlands has a reputation for being a tolerant country with a rich history of attracting immigrants and refugees dating back to the 17th century (Albada et al, 2021). However, it was only following the second world war and the subsequent post-colonial migration (from the 1950's on) and the influx of guest workers (starting in the 1960's) that it started receiving many immigrants from culturally more distant countries (Scholten & Van Nispen, 2008). Migration from the colonies came mainly from Indonesia, Suriname, and the Dutch Antilles, following their respective independences (van Meeteren et al., 2013). Guest workers came mainly from Southern Europe, Morocco, Turkey, and Yugoslavia up until the oil crisis of 1973 (van Meeteren et al., 2013). The Dutch government put a halt to the guest worker programme

and encouraged those already in the country to go back to their countries of origin, most however, decided to stay (Entzinger, 2013).

Consequently, by the end of the 1970's a tension emerged between the dominant self-conception of the Netherlands as not being a "country of immigration" and the rising number of permanent immigrants (Scholten & Van Nispen, 2008). It was only in the 1980's that the Netherlands devised a coherent national integration policy because up until that point it was not deemed necessary: migrants – be it from the colonies or guest workers – were temporary, meaning there was no need to integrate them into Dutch society (Duyvendak et al, 2011). Up until then, the responsibility for accommodating newcomers was decentralised and taken up by the local municipalities, churches, and welfare organisations who in the absence of an overarching framework employed a pragmatic approach (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007). This pragmatic approach focused on recognising immigrant groups and developing tailor made projects for dealing with problems as they came, with the main aim being to preserve group cohesion (Duyvendak & Scholten, 2011).

The first official integration policy in the 1980's was dubbed as the *Minorities policy* whose aim was "integration while maintaining one's own identity" with integration here signifying cultural emancipation as a way to improve the socio-economic position of immigrants. (Duyvendak et al, 2011, p. 132). It became a policy centred on strengthening the legal position (equal treatment) and the retention of cultural identities of immigrant groups who were now labelled as *minorities* (Scholten & Van Nispen, 2008). Integration of groups rather than individuals was the focus at this time (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007). Dutch society thus came to be reframed as multicultural with a majority group consisting of those considered to be ethnically Dutch and minority groups consisting of those who deviate (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007). An effort was made to recognise these minority groups as a way of enabling them to be part of Dutch society and contribute economically (Scholten & Holzhaecker, 2009). During this time, integration policy had not been politicised – it was a technocratic matter – and thus liberal immigration rules concerning family reunification were seen as a way for strengthening minority groups (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007).

In the 1990's, following continuing social deprivation and stagnating upward social mobility among "minorities" a *Realist* shift happened whereby the individual became the locus of the integration discourse rather than the group (Bonjour & Duyvendak, 2018). The

government distanced itself from the responsibility for the preservation of immigrant cultures and instead shifted more to an explicit and direct effort to increase the participation of individual minorities through measures geared towards employment, education, and other socio-economic factors (Entzinger, 2013). Being a good citizen or rather, a good minority citizen, entailed more than anything contributing to the country's economy and becoming economically independent; integration in the cultural sense was seen as assisting this goal but not yet a goal in itself (Schinkel, 2008; Duyvendak & Scholten, 2011).

The turn of the century marks the *assimilationist turn* in the form of an *Integration Policy New Style* resulting from the widely held belief that integration policy up until 2002 had been a failure (Scholten & Van Nispen, 2008). Over the course of the 1990's, issues surrounding integration became increasingly politicised and problematised within the public discourse by populist and culturalist politicians, Pim Fortuyn being the most influential (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007). Through their anti-immigration and anti-Islam discourse, immigration and integration became salient *political issues* among the general population (Entzinger, 2013; Uitermark, 2012).

In contrast to the development of the *Minorities policy* in the 80's and the subsequent *Realist shift* in the 90's towards the individual's socio-economic participation, the *Integration Policy New Style* was thus a result of pressures from politicians and regular citizens under the influence of a "culturalist discourse" rather than pragmatic or technocratic solutions based on scientific reports (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007; Uitermark, 2012). Uitermark defines culturalism as "a discourse organised around the idea that the world is divided into cultures and that our enlightened, liberal culture should be defended against the claims of minorities committed to illiberal religions and ideologies." (2012, p.15).

Fortuyn was able to mobilise a large voter base through appealing, unfiltered, and blunt statements regarding the threat of multiculturalism – especially Islam – to the Dutch national culture and identity (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., 2007). In 2002, following the rising discontent and frustration regarding inadequate socio-cultural integration, parliament had set up the "Blok committee" tasked with investigating why integration policy had failed (Scholten & Van Nispen), 2008). The committee eventually concluded that integration had actually been relatively successful in some areas like education and housing and to a lesser extent labour participation (Entzinger, 2013). Parliament, however, disputed the main conclusion that

integration was “totally or partially successful” on the grounds that it did not consider cultural factors – only socio-economic parameters (Scholten & Van Nispen, 2008).

The *assimilationist turn* was then an effort to restore Dutch culture, history, norms, and values. It further shifted the responsibility to integrate on those who culturally deviated from the Dutch ideal type (Schinkel, 2008). Since the 2000's, the Netherlands even developed one of the most stringent immigration and integration policies in the EU (Batteau et al., 2018). Since 2005, it has introduced mandatory – and expensive – civic integration programmes and tests, both for those already in the country and those abroad seeking to enter the country through family reunification or asylum programmes (Richardson, 2018).

Richardson (2018) thus questions whether this civic integration process, rather than serving to facilitate integration, rather acts to discourage and exclude prospecting immigrants who are deemed to be too poor or too culturally distant to contribute to the Dutch welfare state. She (2018) furthermore notes that as part of a preparation package that the Dutch state provides for prospecting immigrants, a film is included which seemingly provides them with a descriptive account of Dutch cultural practices. Implicitly, however, it also serves to discourage prospecting immigrants by presenting a negative image of life in the Netherlands using stereotypes to portray Dutch culture, norms, and values thereby maximising the perceived cultural distance (Richardson, 2018)

The message is clear: to be a Dutch citizen, you must embody, or at least accept and respect the Dutch norms, values, and culture while being a full, active, and loyal participant in society. You could thus have formal citizenship (i.e., legal citizen status) but not what Schinkel (2008) calls *moral* citizenship which is a “normative concept of a good citizen” and essentially equates citizenship with integration into the Dutch imagined community. It is thus evident that Dutch citizenship is not merely a matter of holding a passport but also involves adhering to normative cultural and social expectations which denote a certain “Dutchness”.

Gordijn (2010) echoes this view and argues that the renowned Dutch “tolerance” exists only on paper while in practice it is conformity which is at the core of Dutch culture. He (2010) considers this discrepancy to be counter-productive to the integration of immigrants because integration per definition is a two-way process that requires adjustment from both the “natives” and those considered “non-native”. Verlasevic (2019) adds to this by saying that

when integration instead becomes a one-way process whereby most of the burden is put on those perceived as “other” it will make it more difficult for them to integrate, because the demands put on them are too great. According to Dutch sociologist Jan Rath (1991) it is specifically the degree of (non-)conformity to certain social cultural standards which determines the ability of people to fully participate in Dutch social, economic, and political life.

The stress on conformity at the same time begs the question of what it is that outsiders are exactly supposed to conform to. Gordijn (2010) contends that Dutch culture and Dutch identity as such were mostly self-evident up until the *assimilationist turn* which has prompted the construction of an essentialised Dutch ethnic identity motivated by the need to delineate the boundary between “us” and “them” within the Dutch imagined community.

The key aim so far has been to trace the historical development of a discourse within the Netherlands which designates some people as ‘natives’ (*autochtonen*) and others as “non-natives” (*allochtonen*). I have relied upon the terms “ethnicity”, “nationality”, and “citizenship” to describe how this discourse makes distinctions based on norms, values, customs, language, religion, and kinship. It is of importance however to clarify the meaning of these terms and how they are interrelated.

Schinkel’s (2010) previously elaborated distinction between formal and moral citizenship is useful to distinguish between nationality and ethnicity. Generally national identity refers to the legal allegiance and belonging of a person to a certain nation-state, while ethnic identity has more to do with a person’s ancestry, religion, and cultural background (Safran, 1997). The former is an ascribed identity while the latter is more of an achieved or performed identity hence aligning well with the ideas of formal and moral citizenship.

The two concepts are however characterised by ambiguity and tend to overlap. Bauman (2013) demonstrates this complexity by outlining their intertwined relationship. He (2013) notes that the formation of European nation-states was characterised by a de-ethnicization of citizenship, which in practice meant that national identity based on a common language, hegemonic values, and myths became the principal uniting force among an otherwise ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse population. National identity in effect constituted the focal point of an inclusive national imagined community. Following large scale post-

colonial and guest-worker immigration since the 1950s. there seems to have been a re-ethnicization of national identity across Europe (Bauman, 2013). This refers to a process by which national identity comes to be reframed more and more as an essentialised and exclusionary ethnic identity grounded in a common ancestry and race (Bauman, 2013). It is a reactionary phenomenon which restricts access to a redefined ethno-national imagined community which according to Hobsbawm (1992) can be explained by the fact that nation-states legitimise themselves by their cultural homogeneity. In the case of the Netherlands, it suggests that Dutch nationality and citizenship in and of themselves have declined in significance and as a result have become less effective as sources of unity and communality; instead, the emphasis has shifted towards the ethnic identity component as the main bearer of "Dutchness".

As we are interested here in the discursive boundary making it is imperative to recognise that ethnicity is not a property of a group but rather the property of the relationship between groups (Eriksen, 2001). In other words, it is relational and situational, not inherent to a particular group. Since the assimilationist turn of the 1990s in particular, Dutch ethnic identity has been framed and constructed in relation to non-Western Muslim immigrants. This means that differences – be it cultural, political, religious, or social – with this outgroup specifically are identified and emphasised to assert a distance (Korteweg & Triadafilopoulos, 2013). The following quote by Eriksen (2001) summarises this point well:

Ethnicity is an enduring system of communication of cultural differences between groups considering themselves to be distinct. It appears whenever cultural differences are made relevant in social interaction, and it should thus be studied at the level of social life, not at the level of symbolic culture. (p. 46)

In this sense ethnicity is akin to a discourse a la Foucault; namely a power infused system of knowledge which shapes the lived reality and very identity of individuals (Miller, 1990). Experiences and practices gain their meaning and truth through discourse (Teubert, 2010). The experience of being or feeling Dutch for example, is made possible by a discourse which identifies and organises cultural differences, social practices, and biological characteristics into meaningful categories of ethnicity (Scholten & Holzacker, 2009;). Decorating your house in orange when the Dutch National football team plays would thus constitute a social

practice which signifies not only support for a sports team but also a certain “Dutchness” (Korteweg & Triadafilopoulos, 2013). This experience of being Dutch would however not be possible if Dutch ethnic identity is not perceived as a truth within people’s lived reality which of course necessitates a legitimising discourse (Crul et al., 2019; Teubert, 2010).

For Teubert (2010) a discourse is like an all-encompassing blog which unites humankind: we learn how to act and how we experience things through the narratives of others. Some narratives dominate more than others and therefore become more significant and influential in people’s lives and sense of self. It is important to recognise that discourses do not appear out of thin air, they are characterised by a certain historicity and are formed within a socio-political context (Scholten & Holzacker, 2009). They are co-constitutive with individuals, groups, and institutions which all act upon discourses but at the same time also alter them as interpretations and meanings are challenged and transformed (Teubert, 2013; Nightingale & Cromby, 2002). This means that discourses not only shape people’s lived experiences but also emerge from them and depend on them for their existence. So, while the current idea of a “Dutch identity” is a discursive social fact it would be an inaccuracy to ignore that its roots lie within the lived reality of people. The social practices, cultural elements, feelings, and experiences that are associated with Dutch identity today, existed in some form or another before the current discourse took shape (Petterson, 2023).

In section 2.4 more attention will be devoted towards the agency of individuals and their lived experience in relation to structures and discourses. For now, however, a crucial takeaway is that discourses are tied to and reflect their societal context. In the case of the Netherlands, we saw that the assimilationist discourses surrounding migration and integration emerged from a context where political entrepreneurs such as Pim Fortuyn were able to recognise and mobilise certain feelings of discontent among the population towards their own identitarian political goals. Therefore, although there might have been some feeling of dissatisfaction among the ‘native’ population regarding the immigration and integration policy, this feeling was given form and rationalised in a way that emphasised a distance toward the threatening group of newcomers. In line with Simmel’s rule, which suggests that the internal cohesion of a group intensifies in response to (apparent) external

pressure and threats, the affirmation of an essentialised and exclusive Dutch national identity has been a logical consequence of this political project (Eriksen, 2001; Scholten & Holzacker, 2009).

While it is arguably a logical consequence considering the context, it is by no means an inevitable one. In the United States and Australia, national identity is for example more inclusionary and encompasses different ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Anglo-Americans, Italian-Americans, and African Americans) and religions (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) (Bauman, 2013). Anyone with some familiarity with the history and the current political situation of the US is undoubtedly aware that some groups have faced and still face difficulties to be considered as true members of the American imagined community (Safran, 1997). It is nonetheless easier to become and feel American compared to Dutch, which can be attributed to Americanness being more a matter of adhering to abstract social norms and legal values as the American nationality has not been ethnicised (Safran, 1997; Bauman, 2013).

Whether we are talking about ethnicity, nationality or citizenship, the sense of belonging is a central theme which characterises each of these identity denotations. The Dutch identity discourse is one which creates a bright boundary between a pure 'native' Dutch in-group and an impure "other" non-Dutch out-group (Alba, 2006). It is a bright boundary because it imposes a rigid distinction, where belonging to an outgroup is incompatible with belonging to the Dutch in-group (Pettersen, 2013). For Burawoy (2019) this constitutes a form of symbolic violence in the Bourdieusian sense which trickles down into the lifeworld of individuals and influences the way they see themselves and their position in relation to the Dutch ideal type.

As emphasised earlier, since the late 1990's, the discourses surrounding immigration and integration in the Netherlands have mainly revolved around the Islam and its supposed incompatibility with Dutch culture (Duyvendak, 2021). In general, this discourse is aimed at non-Western immigrants considered to have lower integration prospects due to lacking the social and cultural dispositions deemed necessary to participate in Dutch or European society – influenced by certain ethnocentric conceptions of "modernity" and "progress" (Essed & Trienekens, 2008).

It is hence important to recognise that not all immigrant groups are affected equally by this restrictive immigration and integration discourse in terms of their ability to claim Dutch

citizenship and truly belong, both in the *formal* and *moral* sense. Gloria Wekker (2016) elaborates on this point in her book *White Innocence* by arguing that despite the Netherlands being a country of descendants of immigrants, “depending on the country of birth, interpellating especially the four largest migrant groups—Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Antilleans—the children and grandchildren of migrants remain migrants until the fourth generation.” (p.6). It signifies a hierarchy based on country of origin whereby there is a distinction between immigrant groups originating from within Europe and those outside of it. While this suggests a distinction based on culture it is also inadvertently one based on race, so that a person’s physical appearance - regardless of how well they have embodied the moral Dutch citizenship - marks them as “other” (Wekker, 2016).

2.2. In-between East and West – The Balkan conundrum

The question then becomes how and where the Dutch-Bosnian community in the Netherlands – and specifically individuals within it – would fit in this hierarchy. Especially considering that Bosnia is an Eastern European country with a communist past and that it is one of the only European countries with a majority Muslim population (Pew Research Center, 2017). Following the break-up of Yugoslavia, however, Bosnia has undergone a process of Europeanisation and Westernisation in terms of its political and economic structures as well as norms, values, and consumption patterns among the population (Becker, 2008).

According to Voskopulous (2001) there is nevertheless a strong political, cultural, and social cleavage that causes countries in the Western Balkans to be considered uncivilised, anti-modern and hence as distinct from Western-Europe. Huntington’s (2000) highly influential postulation of different distinct civilisations similarly leaves the Balkans – and Bosnia specifically – in an ambiguous position as not being fully part of the West nor East, but rather as occupying an intermediate position. As a result, Bosnia and the wider Western Balkans region finds itself in a rift between being perceived as Western and Non-Western.

The term “Western Balkans” itself indeed has a more geopolitical and cultural connotation rather than geographic. Most notably it is used by the EU to define a group of countries which have the “potential” to become members in the future (Fouéré, 2019). Similarly, Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek (1999) has commented on the phenomenon whereby the idea of “Balkans” has served as a tool for othering and marking the boundaries of “civilised” Europe

in opposition to the “barbaric” Slavic people of the East. Such negative connotations associated with the Balkan region are for instance evident in the pejorative geopolitical term “Balkanisation” (Velju, 2019). The reference to the Balkans serves to ascribe a negative meaning to the – widely historically observed – process of state fragmentation as being undesirable; the Balkan region serves as an example, albeit a negative one (Velju, 2019).

Edward Saïd's ideas regarding Orientalism are fitting here in the sense that there exists a Western discourse which represents the Balkan “other” as distinct from the European “self” (Saïd, 1978). Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova (2009) built on Saïd’s ideas and coined the term “Balkanism” which – while similar to orientalism – denotes an imputed *ambiguity* rather than an imputed *opposition*. The Balkans represent an incomplete *self* rather than a distinct “other”; they constitute a transitory, liminal entity between East and West in terms of geographic, socio-cultural, and economic features (Todorova, 2009).

Concrete empirical qualitative studies by Valenta (2009) in Norway and Colic-Peisker (2006) in Australia tend to confirm this as they find that Bosnians are not immune to othering, stigmatisation, and discrimination. They do however tend to have considerable personal discretion to achieve greater acceptance in the host society by suppressing elements of their Muslim identity and instead emphasising “Western” elements of their identity (appearance, lifestyle, use of language etc.) compared to non-European (Muslim) immigrants (Valenta & Ramet, 2011). This indicates that the boundary for belonging in “Western” imagined communities is more blurred or permeable for Bosnian Muslims precisely because of their liminal status (Alba, 2006).

2.2.1. The position of Bosnians in Dutch society

The general ambiguity discussed so far also trickles down into the context of Dutch society and identity discourse. The Dutch-Bosnian sociologist Dino Suhonic (2021) for instance, emphasises that the case of Bosnian immigrants in the Netherlands manifests the absurdity of the Western/non-Western dichotomy which is used by the Dutch government for matters such as immigration, foreign relations, demographics, and research. This is because despite Bosnians being othered, they generally perform as one of the best in terms of objective integration indicators in relation to other non-western immigrant groups, but also because appearance wise, they can easily pass as white and hence Dutch (Hessels, 2005; Colic-Peisker,

2006; Barslund et al, 2016; Suhonic, 2021). When looking at norms and values for example, Valenta and Ramet (2011) state that the gender roles and values of Bosnians are in general more compatible with the demands of Western European labour markets and societies compared to non-European immigrant groups. The latter are characterised by less female labour market participation which is accompanied with a lower household income and female educational achievement (Valenta & Ramet, 2011)

In terms of education for instance, second-generation citizens with an ex-Yugoslav background outperform those with a background from the four largest immigrant groups and almost match native Dutch citizens in terms of the average educational level attained (De Boom et al. 2008; Hessels, 2005). Likewise, Gijsberts and Dagevos (2007) in their research on the integration of the main ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands found that ex-Yugoslavs along with Iranians had the most interaction with "natives" and other ethnic groups. Van den Maagdenberg (2004) in a similar study found that 89% of ex-Yugoslavs had Dutch friends which – notwithstanding the more established Antillean and Surinamese ethnic groups – accounts for the highest percentage among the nine ethnic minority groups studied. Additionally, she (2004) shows that 92% of ex-Yugoslavs have contact with "natives" in their free time which entails the highest share and is significantly larger when compared to Moroccans (69%) and Turks (68%).

Nevertheless, one can perceive an ambivalent position of Bosnians in the Netherlands which manifests itself in contradictions. According to the government agency *Statistics Netherlands* (2022) for instance, people with a Bosnian background qualify as Western while the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (2021) considers Bosnia a non-Western country (Suhonic, 2021). This ambivalent cultural and geopolitical position of Bosnians within Dutch society (i.e., falling in between categories of Western and non-Western) as well as the general pressure to conform to a certain notion of "Dutchness" thus constitute the macro-level context wherein second-generation Dutch Bosnians grow up, engage in social actions and interactions, develop their identities, and simply live their lives. Since the focus of the research here is on Rotterdam specifically, it is important to also consider the characteristics of Rotterdam as a more local context within the overarching national environment and discourse (Entzinger, 2019).

2.3. Rotterdam as a Meso-level context

Rotterdam is a unique city in the Netherlands; along with Amsterdam it has been labelled as a *superdiverse* city in the literature on ethnic diversity (Scholten et al. 2019; Crul & Lelie, 2017). The concept of superdiversity was coined by Vertovec (2007) to describe the trend in big cities whereby a large multitude of ethnic groups, age groups and socio-economic groups live together on a neighbourhood level. Crul and Lelie (2017) further emphasise that superdiversity is most useful as a concept in cases where there is no real numerical majority ethnic group anymore i.e., more than 50% having a non-Dutch background. They furthermore specify that it is also most useful in cases where there is an absence of ethnic enclaves and where there are more than two or three big ethnic groups. Rotterdam as a whole and its various neighbourhoods exhibit the aforementioned characteristics which is why it is considered a superdiverse city (Vertovec, 2019).

The significance of this lies in the fact that such a superdiverse context has implications for how the process of integration plays out compared to usual cases where one ethnic group is the clear (numerical) majority (Crul & Lelie, 2017). Classical theories of assimilation developed by Robert Park (1950) and Milton Gordon (1961) typically focus on such situations, where minorities (e.g., first- and second-generation immigrants) go through stages of acculturation and social integration that eventually result in full identification with the majority ethnic group and culture of the host society (Morawska, 1994). Integration in such cases thus takes the form of assimilation which in essence means that distinct social, cultural, and behavioural characteristics of different ethnic groups completely disappear due to a convergence to the dominant group (Park, 1950; Gordon, 1961).

Section 2.4. will devote more attention to the theories surrounding acculturation and assimilation. For now, however, it is simply important to consider that because of the superdiverse character of Rotterdam, migrants and their children are not merely integrating into the majority Dutch ethnic group (i.e., Dutch society and culture) but rather into an amalgamation of different ethnic groups (Crul & Lelie, 2017). In such a superdiverse context, Dutch 'natives' too, need to integrate because they are not the outright dominant ethnic group, meaning that they need to adapt and learn how to live in an environment where they are exposed to and encounter different ethnic groups daily (Crul & Lelie, 2017)

What this ultimately seems to suggest is that while overall the Netherlands as a relatively homogeneous country (75% of the population is ethnic Dutch) is a bastion of the Dutch

nation, Rotterdam as a superdiverse city constitutes a meso-level context which influences the actions and self-understanding of individuals and ends up mediating the pressure to conform to and embody certain Dutch social norms and values and cultural practices dominant on the societal level (Crul et al., 2013).

Crul and Lelie (2017) investigated how 'native' Dutch people experience and deal with living in superdiverse environments, where they are merely one ethnic group among many, meaning that their dominant and taken-for-granted position is somewhat challenged. They found significant differences between Amsterdam and Rotterdam in terms of how Dutch 'natives' perceived their superdiverse living environments. While in Amsterdam there was a generally positive perception with people tending to embrace the diversity, in Rotterdam the perception was more negative with people tending to feel threatened by the diversity (Crul & Lelie, 2017). The reason for this lies in the fact that Rotterdam as a traditional industrial city has been affected more adversely by processes of globalisation and deindustrialisation which in combination with an influx of low-skilled immigrants has led to a disappointed and disgruntled white-working class (Scholten et al., 2019).

Since the late 1990's this has led to a contradictory situation whereby Rotterdam despite its superdiverse character has been a breeding ground for anti-immigrant and assimilationist discourses most notably through the emblematic populist figure of Pim Fortuyn. Contrary to other parties he managed to mobilise this supposed "trauma of loss" among Dutch natives, caused by the disappearance of an ethnic homogenous community and a loss of working-class identity due to decreasing job and social security (Scholten et al., 2019). In Amsterdam on the other hand, a truly cosmopolitan global city with a large middle class, the diversity quickly became a constitutive part of its urban identity, and it is perceived as positive by Dutch 'natives' which is echoed by a general voting tendency towards diversity-friendly social democrat and green parties (Entzinger, 2019).

In general, the integration policies and discourses in Rotterdam are largely congruent with those on the national level discussed in the beginning (Dekker et al., 2015). In fact, it seems that Rotterdam (as a social, political, and discursive context) has actually played an important role in shaping the national policies and discourses precisely because of its superdiverse character and the resulting tension between Dutch natives and those with a non-Dutch background (Dekker et al., 2015).

Thus, we arrive at a somewhat paradoxical situation: the superdiverse context seems, on the one hand, to engender a more hospitable environment for people with a non-Dutch background, because there is no true majority anymore. Pressure to completely embody a Dutch ethnic social and cultural identity is consequently reduced. On the other hand, this superdiverse context seems to have led to ethnic competition and has resulted in a perceived threat to the group identity of Dutch 'natives' in terms of their declining numerical strength, status, and symbolic dominance. The rise of anti-immigrant and assimilationist discourses has ultimately been one of the consequences (Vertovec, 2019).

2.3.1. The Bosnian diasporic community in Rotterdam as a meso-level mediator

Before shifting the focus to the agentic individual, it is important to also consider diasporic communities and organisations as constituting a meso-level context with an important mediating role in terms of identity formation. Building on existing literature Adamson (2012) conceptualises "diaspora" as both a descriptive and prescriptive term. In the first place "diaspora" is used to denote "transnational ethnic groups defined by a common identity and attachment to a real or imagined homeland" (Adamson, 2012, p.5). At the same time, the notion of a "diaspora" has a constructivist aspect: it is a means for constructing a de-territorialised social, cultural, or political imagined community (Adamson, 2012).

Diasporas can furthermore be seen as "transnational identity networks" or "transnational communities" within which people are able to be both "here" and "there" (Vertovec, 2001). Transnationalism refers to the myriad of ties, interactions and practices that link people across national and cultural borders (Vertovec, 2009). They allow people to live dual lives by combining and incorporating interests and goals that on the one hand pertain to their life in the country of residence and on the other hand are conducive towards maintaining a connection with their country of origin (Portes, 1997).

The question becomes whether globally displaced Bosnian communities constitute a diaspora – or transnational identity network. According to Halilovich (2012) they do, because despite their scattered global existence they are nonetheless bound by a collective vision and memory of their (imaginary) homeland. Among Bosnians living outside of Bosnia there exists a communal consciousness and solidarity which plays a key role in the formation and maintenance of a collective identity (Halilovich, 2015). He (2015) furthermore notes that

based on interviews with Bosnians in the US, Australia, and Europe many believe they will never be fully accepted into their respected host societies and therefore they look to meet their social and cultural needs in either formal Bosnian diasporic organisations or informal networks of like-minded Bosnians.

It would however be false to say that transnational attachments merely result from the inability to integrate into the receiving society. (Vertovec, 2009; Morwaska, 2004). Portes and colleagues (2002) have found that transnational practices among immigrants and refugees in the US correlate positively with integration into the receiving society. The same positive correlation has also been identified among Bosnians, whereby their upward mobility is closely linked with an increase in transnational practices such as visits to Bosnia or sending remittances (Povrazanovic-Frykman, 2011).

Accordingly, the main point here is that desires to integrate into the host-society and the acquisition of a middle-class lifestyle are not mutually exclusive with transnational practices because they can in fact aid such practices (Valenta & Ramet, 2011). In the case of St. Louis (Missouri) – where more than 70,000 Bosnians live – the presence of a strong cohesive Bosnian community even aided individuals to adapt to the wider American society itself (Hume, 2015). This suggests that transnational practices can also positively influence the integration process.

While formal diasporic organisations can play an important role in the construction and maintenance of a collective transnational identity, most Bosnian migrants are however not involved in Bosnian organisations or clubs. It is, however, important to clarify that this does not suggest they are not at all involved in any individual or informal transnational activities or that they do not feel a connection to Bosnia and the Bosnian culture (Valenta & Ramet, 2011).

Bosnian diasporic organisations nonetheless do exist in the Netherlands (and Rotterdam) with their central aim being bonding with “home” and people from the homeland (Van Gorp & Smets, 2014). They are about creating a sense of belonging through organising festivities and events that put the Bosnian culture and roots at the fore – though it is worth noting that they mostly consist of first-generation Bosnians (Van Gorp & Smets, 2014). For Vertovec (2009) an important question is whether such transnational involvement and identity formation among second-generation Bosnians will continue or rather diminish.

2.4. The individual – a theoretical framework

So far, a relatively thorough contextual framework within which Dutch Bosnians grow up and live their lives has been provided. While having a good sense of the context and structural conditions is crucial for an interpretative understanding of how and why people experience, feel, and act in certain ways it is equally important to turn the gaze inwards to the meaning-making, reflexive, and agentic individual (Weber, 1964; Giddens, 1993). This research thus draws heavily from social phenomenological and symbolic interactionist approaches towards understanding the social world and the actors within it. Gaining insight into what Alfred Schutz calls the 'life-world' of people (i.e., the individual yet intersubjective experience) is key to avoid disconnecting social structures, conditions and meanings from the individuals who constantly produce, reproduce, and interact with them (Vargas, 2020; Ritzer & Goodman, 2004; Blumer, 1969). Blumer in his paradigm defining book *Symbolic Interactionism* (1969) writes the following:

Conceptual schemes that depict society in some other fashion can only be derivations from the complex of ongoing activity that constitutes group life. This is true of the two dominant conceptions of society in contemporary sociology—that of culture and that of social structure. (p.6)

What he seeks to convey here is that the structures or the organisation of actions and meanings (e.g., identities, status positions, roles, norms, values, diaspora organisations, political institutions, discourses) are all the product of interacting individuals. Similarly, for Giddens, structures only become visible through what people say and do and therefore it does not make sense to look at structures as completely detached entities which dominate the individual (Giddens, 1993). While Giddens' theoretical framework does inform the research approach here, it is important to distinguish it from Giddens' approach to sociological inquiry, since for him, the departure point is neither the structures nor the individual but rather "practices" which tie the two together (Craib, 2011).

As was made clear in the introduction, my goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of how Dutch Bosnians experience and make sense of their layered identity by interviewing and observing them. Subsequently the aim is to contextualise this insight by placing it into the wider discourse on integration in the Netherlands while also considering more meso-level

living conditions within the Bosnian community in Rotterdam. I thus want to avoid providing an overly deterministic structuralist account but also do not want to restrict my analysis to the subjective experiences of individuals. Rather I want to explore how Dutch Bosnian individuals through their identity formation contribute to maintaining small-scale and large-scale structures while at the same time being influenced by them.

In this sense the theoretical approach of this research paper is most similar to that of Stryker (1987) who departs from the basic assumptions of symbolic interactionism but emphasises the role of social structures as affecting the probability individuals will enter certain social networks based on their background and resources. Individuals may live their lives and construct meanings through interaction, but they do so in relatively small, specialised networks of social relationships which are embedded within larger – enabling and constraining – social structures (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Stryker sees these large-scale structures such as gender, class and ethnicity as shaping the content and organisation of the *self* through more intermediate structures such as neighbourhoods and diasporic communities i.e., the meso-level context discussed before (Stryker, 2008).

Before moving on to the description of the methodological approach it is important to delve a bit deeper into theories on the *self* and identity with a focus on second generation immigrants specifically.

In the symbolic interactionist and constructionist literature the “self” is seen not as something we are as such but an object we construct and perform through meaningful interaction (using symbols) with others (Valenta, 2009). Humans have minds that allow them to think and act i.e., a certain agency and intentionality (Blumer, 1969). This enables them to reflect on and rationalise the thoughts and actions of others, but also their own, which means they symbolically develop a sense of who they are in relation to others (Stets & Burke, 2014). Society then is a constellation of relatively durable patterned interactions and relations which themselves are the result of a process whereby people’s “selves” become attuned to each other as they adjust their actions and thoughts and take up role positions which facilitate mutual engagement and cooperation (Stryker, 2001).

This construction of self is an ongoing process mediated by the context and the resources at the disposal of the individual in question (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). People’s identity is

thus never fixed, nor do people have one single identity; they have multiple selves which are contingent on the different positions and roles they take in society: someone can be a father, husband, son, and professor with each one of these role-identities being accompanied by different meanings and expectations internalised through an intersubjective social and cultural realm i.e., discourse (Stets & Burke, 2014).

Social identity theory expands on this and looks at group membership and belonging in small local organisations like a churches or diaspora organisations, but also in broad social categories such as class, nationality, ethnicity, and gender which are inherently social identities and in contrast to role-identities are almost always relevant for a person across different situations (Stets & Burke, 2014). What social identity theory is concerned with are intergroup relations, more precisely how people come to regard themselves as members of an in-group in relation to an out-group and the attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioural consequences of this self-categorisation (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Being part of a group means that to a certain extent a uniformity of perception and action exists among its members regarding relevant and salient social, cultural, or political features in society (Stryker, 2008). Important to consider, however, is that the degree to which a person identifies with the in-group positively correlates with the degree to which they will embody this uniform propensity to perceive, think and act one way rather than another (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

What is particularly interesting for the aims of this research paper is the presence of multiple identities within a person. Research on this topic has been scarce partly due to the difficulty in operationalising identity and measuring it empirically (Stryker & Burke, 2000). While I do not claim to necessarily succeed in this regard, I do take inspiration from the questions they (2000) bring up regarding the relationship between identities and the social structure (e.g., how is one's position in the social structures tied to the multitude of identities one has and the commitment and salience of those identities?) and to the internal workings of identities (e.g., do they operate independently? Are they in tension?)

Since the focus of this paper is on the layered identity of Dutch Bosnian young adults, (Structural) symbolic interactionism and social identity theory prove very useful for understanding the transnational, transcultural and transformational identities of individuals who are exposed to the cultures, social practices, norms, and values of two different countries (Pozarlik, 2013). In such case their identities are constructed and negotiated within a “multi-

local lifeworld” or “transnational social space”; not restricted to one specific country or imagined community (Vetovec, 2001). This complex and multi-faceted context can give rise to transnational identities where people adopt and identify with elements of two or more national/ethnic imagined communities (Bradatan et al., 2010).

There are however also cases where people tend to identify more - or even completely - with either their country of residence or the one of origin. This depends on people’s reasons for migrating and their sentiments towards either the country of residence or origin, but also their position and status in those countries which is shaped by the discourses surrounding identity and integration (Bradatan et al., 2010; Crul & Vermeulen, 2003). With the second generation it is somewhat different because they are born and raised in the host-society just like ‘natives’ which is not to say that the reasons for migration and the level of acculturation of their family do not matter (Portes & Rumbaut, 2005). The migrant family’s social, economic, and cultural capital do play an important role in the different integration outcomes of their children (Erel, 2010).

The theory of segmented assimilation specifically deals with different patterns of integration whereby some migrants tend to retain a strong identification with their ethnic background and can experience it as a source of pride and strength, helping them in their upward mobility, while for others it can be experienced as an obstacle and thus lead to downward mobility (Portes & Zhou, 1993). It is thus also possible that some migrants might identify much more strongly with the host-society rather than with their ethnic background and experience upward mobility this way (Portes & Rumbaut, 2005). The general assumption underlying most of these classical assimilation and integration theories, however, is that structural integration positively correlates with cultural integration (Tolsma et al., 2012). Ethnic minorities whose education and income levels are on par with those of the ethnic majority are thus expected to have more contact with them (e.g., at work and in the neighbourhood) and to feel closer to them socially and culturally (Steinmann, 2019).

More recently there has been rising evidence of the reverse pattern: ethnic minorities who are more structurally integrated come to feel *less* sociocultural proximity to ethnic majorities (Steinmann, 2019). This phenomenon has been coined “the paradox of integration” and has been observed across two generations of the four largest ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands (de Vroome et al., 2013). The reasoning is that as immigrants and their

offspring become more educated and advance their socio-economic position, they will also become more aware of their relatively marginal position within the host society (Steinmann, 2019). Increased contact with 'natives' can increase the risk of being othered and discriminated for instance. Increased exposure to 'natives' furthermore has the potential to transform their frame of reference, making it more likely to compare themselves to 'natives'; this can result in a sense of relative deprivation manifested in feelings of inadequacy or estrangement (de Vroome et al., 2013; Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008). A clear consensus on the paradox of integration is however lacking with some authors arguing the term should be used with care (Tolsma et al., 2012). It will therefore be interesting to see whether the paradox of integration applies to any of the participants in this research project.

With this in mind Alba and Nee's (2004) "New Assimilation Theory" which stresses the differential processes and outcomes of integration by considering contextual factors appears to be the more flexible and appropriate within the aims of this research. Crul and Schneider (2010 as cited in Yilmaz, 2020) too, emphasise the context within which migrants integrate, specifically the institutional arrangements and political discourses that negotiate migrants' participation in the host-society. What they (2010) however also stress is the role of active individuals who can challenge the opportunity structure they face. Barth (1994) puts an even stronger emphasis on the role of the individual and collectives by arguing that ethnic boundaries are actively constructed, meaning that it does not make much sense to talk about ethnic groups or cultures as rigid objects.

Eriksen (2001) who shares a similar position, notes that "redefinitions of societal cleavages are possible insofar they do not contradict people's everyday experiences too obviously" (p. 63). In the lead up to the violent conflict in Bosnia, ethno-religious tensions were for instance dismissed in multiethnic urban areas like Sarajevo as an urban/rural divide because ethnic and religious identity was simply not as salient as in rural areas. The significance here lies in the fact that a dominant societal discourse is not necessarily accepted and internalised uniformly by all. Instead, contextual (e.g., a superdiverse city) and individual factors (e.g., socio-economic position and ethnic background) affect how a discourse is perceived and the influence it exerts on individuals.

This, ultimately, is what is important in this research paper as well. Yes, macro-structural factors are significant, but it is vital not to fetishize them and take them as a given and assume

they have the same effect on everyone. Rather, it is crucial to see how individuals *themselves* perceive and interpret their context (the opportunity structure), structural features (e.g., identity, culture, and ethnicity), and social processes (e.g., integration and inter-ethnic contact) and how this perception ends up shaping how the context and structures in turn affect them. The theory surrounding transnationalism therefore resonates most with the aims of this paper because it looks at how individuals through their perceptions, attitudes and practices construct and develop a certain identity that is hard to categorise in terms of one ethnicity, nation, or culture.

2.5. Concluding remarks literature review

The aim of this literature review has been mainly to provide a theoretical framework that illuminates the discursive and contextual conditions wherein Dutch Bosnians find themselves, but also to illuminate how individuals develop a sense of self and how this process grows more complex for the descendants of first-generation immigrants. At the same time, it also demonstrates how the research questions build on insights from literature on integration discourse in the Netherlands, the Bosnian diaspora, superdiversity, transnationalism and symbolic interactionism and aim to bring them together to gain an understanding of how Dutch Bosnian young adults specifically come to make sense of and express their layered identity while also considering the role of the dominant integration discourse and the superdiverse character of Rotterdam.

This theoretical framework for a large part informs the chosen qualitative constructivist methodological approach which will be elaborated upon further soon. However, the value of the literature review will become especially apparent in the results section because it will aid in gaining a thorough and interpretative understanding of the interviewees' experiences and my ethnographic observations. A more auxiliary purpose of the literature review has been to show in what other research areas my findings could contribute valuable insight which will be discussed more extensively in the conclusion.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research questions

Considering the chosen research questions and the heavy influence of phenomenological and symbolic interactionist schools of thought, a qualitative approach is most fitting. As mentioned in the introduction, the first research question is constructivist: it is interested in how individuals subjectively experience and perceive things rather than focusing on certain objective parameters or phenomena as would be the case in more positivistic studies which assume the existence of a real objective reality which can be accurately measured and revealed using quantitative methods and analysis techniques (Neuman, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The second research question is more post-positivist because it is oriented towards interpreting how the actions and behaviours of individuals reveal something about their identity. Post-positivism can be considered as being in between positivist and constructivist approaches avoiding both extreme empiricism and relativism (Panhwar et al., 2017). While there are two streams within post-positivism (a realist and constructivist) the assumption is usually that there is a social reality which can be grasped and understood to a certain degree (Fox, 2008). The realist stream is most suitable for the purposes of this research and shares many of its postulates with the theoretical work of Berger & Luckmann (1991) on social constructionism.

Social reality from this perspective is conceptualised as possessing a dual character; it is assumed to be a product of the constructive work of human beings which makes it multifaceted, value-laden, and contingent (Fox, 2008). Yet since this construction happens intersubjectively, the social world (or parts of it) gains a certain unity and relative independence from any of the individuals involved (Onwuegbuzie, 2002). In practice parts of social reality therefore exhibit a stable and almost taken for granted character aided by the presence of institutions, discourses, traditions, and rituals which socialise people into this structured social reality (Fox, 2008). In fact, if this was not the case sociological inquiry would itself be futile, unable to yield any observable patterns, trends, and regularities (such as ethnic identity and social inequality) in the social world (Letherby et al., 2013).

It is thus of fundamental importance in post-positivist research to be conscious of the fact that our interpretations of social reality are always value-laden and context-dependent. This makes completely objective accounts of the social world nearly impossible, all we can strive

for is to come as close as possible to describing and explaining things in all their complexities and nuances (Alcoff, 2010).

The third research question also has an element of post-positivism because it seeks to link the lived experience to a certain context (reality) that is assumed to exist but also imperfectly apprehendable and thus always subject to change; this means relations between actors and phenomena can be identified while overly deterministic accounts are avoided (Aliyu et al., 2014). It has also an element of critical theory because it looks at discourse (i.e., how reality is presented and constructed through language and texts as a result of certain historically contingent power relations) and how it is linked to people's sense of self (Neuman, 2014).

The reliance on multiple philosophical approaches towards studying social reality might seem contradictory but in practice it is essential for the holistic approach I seek to realise. While some researchers clearly align themselves with one approach it is not uncommon to mix approaches and perspectives especially because they can be complementary (Puddepath, 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). I thus echo the view of Onwuegbuzie (2002) that epistemological purity is best to be avoided as it tends to simplify and reduce the social world to fit certain paradigmatic assumptions and thereby restricts the full potential of research. With this in mind, methodologies and perspectives should as such be merely considered as tools which can enable us to further our understanding of social phenomena (Onwuegbuzie, 2002).

Overall, however, constructivism constitutes the foundation of this research in the sense that ontological and epistemological primacy is given to the individual and their subjective experiences notwithstanding the consideration of structural and contextual conditions to reach a more holistic understanding. The structural conditions are importantly not assumed to shape or determine individuals in and of themselves; it is rather the interplay between interpreting individuals and certain real discourses and structural conditions which are given attention here. This approach thus bears resemblance to Weber's *Verstehen*: an interpretative methodology which emphasises that social realities need to be understood from the perspective of the agentic subject and their context rather than the observer imposing causal explanations (Fox, 2008).

These research questions are intended to be open and are conducive to an explorative and flexible research design; they do not set out to test a theory or hypothesis and make minimal assumptions. They are largely grounded in my own experiences as a Dutch Bosnian and have been refined throughout the research process based on emerging insights from the literature, data collection and analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted, transcribed, and analysed in the summer of 2022 yielding three prominent themes. While these initial results provided valuable insights into how the dual identity is experienced, I made the decision to continue the research and added another research question (RQ2). This eventually led me to conduct ethnographic participant observations in the first half of 2023. These observations were informed by a need to supply the personal accounts of the interviewees with an understanding of how their actions and behaviour reflect their dual identity but also by a need to accrue a more profound cognizance of their everyday context in Dutch society and more specifically Rotterdam. Additionally, the observations allowed me to reflect on my role as a researcher and become more aware of how that affected my interpretations.

The remaining parts of the methodology section will discuss the two stages of data sampling, collection and analysis underlying this research: In-depth interviews and ethnographic observations. In addition, a reflection on ethical considerations throughout the research and the positionality of the researcher will be provided. The methodology section will be concluded with a timeline of research activities.

3.2. In-depth interviews: Sample and sampling process

In line with the requirements of the research questions the sample's homogeneity is ensured since all the interviewees are Rotterdam-born youth between the ages of 19 and 23 years with at least one Bosnian parent (see table 1). Other variables such as gender, educational level, etc., were not specifically considered throughout the sampling process. In total I contacted 12 people personally¹ out of which 8 responded positively, 2 responded, but we were unable to arrange a suitable time, and 2 did not respond, resulting in a response rate of 66% which is deemed adequate for qualitative research (Badger & Werret, 2005). Two other interviewees reached out to me after I had contacted a Bosnian youth organisation. Overall,

¹ See appendix 1 to get a sense of how I went about asking people to do an interview.

the sampling process went very smoothly as people seemed interested and enthusiastic; no big issues were encountered.

The total sample size of interviewees thus consisted of 10 people which – considering the homogeneity of the sample and the specificity of the target population – meets the requirement for doing qualitative research that uses interviews for data collection (Francis et al., 2009). It is important to note that there is not a consensus regarding the optimal sample size for qualitative research, but salient factors include: saturation, time, resources, and sample homogeneity (Marshall et al., 2013). Guest and colleagues (2006) suggest saturation is often achieved between 6 to 12 in-depth interviews. Francis and colleagues (2009), likewise suggest that from around 10 interviews saturation is often reached. In my case the most important codes and findings were already found among the first couple of interviews and considering time limitations, doing more would not have been worthwhile. The sample size of 10 is also appropriate for thematic analysis which is effective even for small sample sizes of 1-2 subjects (Clarke & Braun, 2012).

Table 1: Sample Overview

No.	Interviewee	Residing in	Background	Age	Gender	Family	Contacted
1	James	Rotterdam	Bosnia	23	Man	Yes	Personally
2	Lejla	Rotterdam	Bosnia	21	Woman	Yes	Personally
3	Ellie	Rotterdam	Bosnia/Montenegro	20	Woman	Yes	Personally
4	Danijela	Rotterdam	Bosnia/Croatia	21	Woman	No	Personally
5	Adin	Rotterdam	Bosnia	21	Man	No	Organisation
6	Mario	Rotterdam	Bosnia/Croatia	19	Man	No	Personally
7	Almira	Rotterdam	Bosnia	22	Woman	No	Organisation
8	Jonas	Rotterdam	Bosnia/Australia	23	Man	No	Personally
9	Armin	Rotterdam	Bosnia	22	Man	No	Personally
10	Andreas	Rotterdam	Bosnia/Slovakia	21	Man	No	Personally

3.3. In-depth interviews: Data collection

Considering the constructivist foundations of this research, interviews are a suitable means to gain insight into the lived experience of subjective individuals and allow for an in-depth exploration of a certain topic with which the interviewee has a sense of familiarity and

connection (Roberts, 2020). Indeed, the very goal of interviews is to get a sense of how people see and understand things and a personal topic such as identity is hence a fitting topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). In interviews, knowledge and understanding are produced through a collective effort by both the interviewer and interviewee; they construct a reality together (Rapley, 2001). The structure of the interview in terms of questions and the active engagement of the interviewer are key for guiding the interviewee unbiasedly in the direction of the research aims to eventually gain insights about theoretically relevant things that facilitate a better understanding of a particular phenomenon (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015; Roberts, 2020).

The interview questions and the structure of the interview² align closely with the demands of the research aims and questions. Before every interview (conducted through Teams) I tried to make the interviewee (and myself) at ease by emphasising that there are no wrong answers and giving a short rundown of how we would proceed. I tried to create a relaxed atmosphere so that it would feel more like a friendly conversation. Starting off with a couple of drop-off questions (Q1) – to break the ice and obtain some rudimentary information – followed by two general introductory questions (Q2, Q3) about their life in Rotterdam and experiences with diversity in combination with a general question (Q4) asking them to describe themselves (personality, norms, values and hobbies) proved to be a very effective way to get the conversation rolling in a spontaneous and natural manner and inspire the interviewee to talk about themselves before transitioning to the more central questions.

That is not to say that the answers to these introductory questions had no relevance, it is just that Q5 and Q6 (focusing on their Bosnian background); Q7 and Q8 (focusing on Dutch elements of their identity); Q9 (focusing on the interplay between their Bosnian background and life in the Netherlands); and Q10 (focusing on their views on integration in the Netherlands) are all more closely linked to the aims of the research questions. They deal directly with how the interviewees make sense of their layered Dutch and Bosnian identity, their experiences in Rotterdam and their perception of what shape integration should take. Furthermore, it is important to note that each of the main questions had several specific probes to help the interviewees break down the main questions when needed.

² See appendix 2 for the English version of the interview questionnaire in full.

The main questions remained largely the same across all 10 interviews but follow up questions did change depending on insights that came up in previous interviews. It is important to note that at this stage, no cyclical approach was employed as is common in a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2008). The main reason being the small scale of the project as it was initially only meant to last one year for the purposes of my bachelor paper. This is why I prioritised developing a descriptive understanding rather than a full-fledged explanatory theory which would be infeasible with the time at hand.

There were no major issues in terms of time management during the interviews (see table 2). The median time is 57.5 minutes which is within the prescribed 45-60 minutes guideline. What matters more, however, is the quality of the interview itself in terms of content which was mostly good. The majority of interviewees seemed very willing to talk, but some needed more follow-up questions than others to reach the same level of depth. The interview with Andreas is an outlier as answers largely did not extend beyond a few sentences.³

Table 2: Interview duration in minutes

<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>James</i>	<i>Lejla</i>	<i>Ellie</i>	<i>Danijela</i>	<i>Adin</i>	<i>Mario</i>	<i>Almira</i>	<i>Jonas</i>	<i>Armin</i>	<i>Andreas</i>
<i>Duration</i>	65	61	58	52	57	47	69	60	57	42

Notwithstanding some variation in length and quality all interviews yielded interesting and relevant insights resulting from pleasant and casual conversations with plenty of interaction. I tried to personalise the questions whenever the possibility arose based on what the interviewee was saying and what I already knew about them to make it more personal and elicit more meaningful responses. For similar reasons I also used personal anecdotes such as in the example below:

Researcher: And are there also some of those very small differences? Eh I know I lived in Breda for a while, for instance, in a very Dutch neighbourhood and at school I was only with native Dutch people and then you feel a bit different, but it's really the little things like: “they

³ See the report at the end of “Interview with ‘Andreas’ Transcription” in the annexed Zip file for a more detailed explanation of what went wrong.

eat at five and we don't eat until eight sometimes” or “they drink Ranja and I don't drink that”, so it's really the little cultural differences like, oh yes, also walking around the house with your shoes; all those little things that make you feel different, have you experienced that?

Almira: Yes, also eh or for example um a friend of mine has a dog... [**continues**].

There was also room for improvement. At times for instance, opportunities to probe were missed because I was already thinking about the next question. I also tended to ask multiple questions to help the interviewees, but in doing so, some questions were overlooked, and as a result the interviewees might have been guided too much, which could have been avoided.

3.4. In-depth interviews: Data analysis

The first step after completing the interviews was to transcribe them. While the transcription process is not the most exciting part of doing research, it is a crucial part in terms of familiarizing yourself with the data and producing accurate transcriptions ready for analysis (Bailey, 2008). I used transcription software (Google speech-to-text) to assist me, but because of the relatively high inaccuracy I went through each of the interview recordings again and tidied them up. While transcribing, I opted for a more denaturalized approach i.e., focusing on the substance of what was said rather than how it was said (Oliver et al., 2005). I did include pauses, stutters, “ehms”, and laughter but it was not a priority in general. In some cases, however, denoting a pause was crucial for conveying the substance, such as in the following example to show hesitation:

Researcher: Yes, and would you say that you feel more Bosnian than Dutch?

Armin: [**Long pause**] Yes more Bosnian then.

After transcribing I went through the transcriptions and wrote a short review regarding the content and performance of the interviewee and myself which helped with getting even more familiar with the data.

I mostly followed Braun and Clarke's (2012 & 2016) version of thematic analysis (TA) to analyse the data because it is a flexible and effective way to identify patterns of meaning across a data set giving insight into shared experiences among people in relation to the research questions which fits nicely with the research aims. I went through each transcript one by one using NVivo and coded the data inductively; I had no pre-developed codes that I

applied deductively. I tried to stick close to the data while coding, but I also applied some more general codes developed in one transcript to other transcripts. Sometimes I coded line per line, at other times I coded whole paragraphs and sometimes both, as multiple codes could apply to one piece of text.⁴ While coding, I was theoretically sensitized by the literature which along with the research questions influenced what I considered important to code (i.e., things related to Bosnian and Dutch identity, integration, superdiversity etc.).

Once done, I was left with 565 codes which subsequently were reduced, merged, and organised into 7 core topics containing around 38 main codes in total with each of the main codes consisting of 1-20 sub-codes.⁵ Three relevant themes were constructed in the end and will be presented in the findings section.

3.5. Ethnographic observations: A shift towards a grounded and emergent method

Although I initially had no intention of continuing the research after completing the bachelor paper, the potential and interest to explore the topic and delve deeper into the interview findings had always been present. Once I decided to do the Masters in sociology at UGent and the opportunity arose to retain my supervisor it made sense to continue from where I left off and realise the full potential. My main aim was to refine and enrich the descriptive account by moving towards developing an explanatory framework that captures how Dutch Bosnian young adults experience and deal with their dual identity in relation to their superdiverse yet assimilationist context. Before providing a more detailed account of the process of data sampling, collection and analysis that followed, I would like to first discuss how methodological aspects of this second stage of research are inspired by key facets of grounded theory approaches.

Grounded theory is both a method and methodology developed originally by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a reaction against the dominance of positivist quantitative-based hypothesis testing in social science, but also to remedy the shortcomings of too detailed, contingent, and overly descriptive interpretative studies (Turner & Astin, 2021). The essence and value of grounded theory thus lies in its ability to generate an explanatory theory which is informed by the data rather than seeking to fit the data into a hypothesis for instance (Engward, 2013).

⁴ See appendix 3 for an example of how a coded piece of data looks like

⁵ See appendix 4 for a coding tree that shows the overall coding structure.

Grounded theory is thus very useful to conceptually explore how people in particular contexts make sense of social phenomena and especially so in cases where there is minimal pre-existing research and theory (Engward, 2013). It can for example also aid in the further development of theory “for a particular sample population that possesses potentially valuable variables and characteristics of interest” as is the case here (Groen et al., 2017, p. 2).

Since the development of Glaser and Strauss’ initial approach, which is sometimes labelled as classic or post-positivist grounded theory, a wide range of variants have emerged, most notably the constructivist grounded theory of Kathy Charmaz – a student of Strauss (Groen et al., 2017). Charmaz’ approach is heavily influenced by symbolic interactionism and pragmatism, making it a more fluid and open approach suitable for interpretative studies which focus on subjectivity and relativity. The differences between grounded theory variants range from minor to substantial but in general there does seem to be some agreement on a set of fundamental principles. My approach to research here is primarily congruent with these general fundamental principles rather than with any specific grounded theory variant.

One of the foremost characteristics of grounded theory which has been incorporated throughout my research process is that it relies on an open and flexible inductive approach (Groen et al., 2017; Engward, 2013). It is an inherently emergent method whereby theoretical understanding emerges from the data rather than from preconceived ideas (Suddaby, 2006). As such the role of literature should be limited to (at most) sensitising the researcher to theories and concepts (Puddephat, 2006). In other words, literature should not be used to impose explanations onto the data but more to help the researcher with interpreting the data in a holistic manner. In my case, the literature review is relatively extensive but functioned mainly as a means to establish a thorough contextual understanding of the relations between individuals, processes of identity formation and structures. Literature was besides consulted throughout the whole research process, not just in the initial stages. The fact that the research questions do not seek to test hypotheses imbued with theoretical assumptions is furthermore indicative of the open and flexible nature of the approach here.

Related to the inductive approach and its emergent character is an adherence to a cyclical approach whereby data collection and data analysis happen concurrently and inform each other (Engler, 2021). The goal of grounded theory is to reach theoretical saturation which in its purest form means that data gathering, and analysis continues until new data does not

shed any new light on the developed theoretical explanations and conceptual categories (Charmaz, 2014). As new findings and insights emerge from the analysis, the research questions might need to change - or one might be added as in my case - to account for any gaps or unexplored areas of interest and reach theoretical saturation (Groen et al., 2017). Theoretical sampling is therefore a crucial method in this cyclical process; it refers to sampling based on the theoretical insights that emerge throughout the research so that each new data source can help explore or fill apparent gaps in the theory (Charmaz, 2014). Although I do not wish to proclaim that theoretical saturation has been reached in the strict sense, it is noteworthy to report that I reached a stage where no new significant codes or themes emerged both during the interviews and observations. I however do not consider this to be a problem since this master thesis is not the endpoint of my research but rather an intermediate documentation of the work that I have done so far.

I want to emphasise again that I do not want to describe my research here as being “grounded theory” but merely show how elements of such an established and highly regarded methodology within the social sciences have pragmatically informed my methodological framework and research activities. Whether my efforts here actually qualify as grounded theory is a matter of methodological orthodoxy and categorisation which is not of great concern to me.

3.6. Ethnographic observations: data sampling, collection, and analysis

Rereading my bachelor paper and scrutinizing the findings was a crucial first step to identify what direction the research would go in next. Considering that I had obtained insight into the lived experience through interviews, using a different method such as ethnographic observations would allow me to look at the phenomenon of dual identity and the process of identity formation from a different light. Instead of relying again on the personal accounts of the interviewees, my aim became to immerse myself in the daily lives of Dutch Bosnian young adults and observe how the things they do and say reflect elements of their dual identity.

The observations would besides allow for me to get a feel for the context of Rotterdam by reflecting on my own experience in different situations and places in the city. The main reasoning behind the observations was thus to see how what was said during the interviews compares to how Dutch Bosnian young adults act and present themselves in their everyday

lives within the superdiverse yet assimilationist context of Rotterdam. The use of multiple methods is common in grounded theory and is referred to as methodological triangulation (Carter et al., 2014). It allows the researcher to obtain multiple perspectives on the phenomenon under scrutiny which increases both the richness and validity of the findings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Ethnography as a method is well suited for open and inductive research seeking to explore the nature of social phenomena based on interpretation and the emergence of insights rather than the testing of hypotheses (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998). It furthermore complements the aim to move towards a more explanatory understanding, because it is inherently a matter of comprehending how people construct and experience their world through immersion and interpretation by the researcher (Nurani, 2008). This therefore presupposes the need for a contextualised explanation of the social phenomenon or process in question i.e., if you want to understand something about the individual you have to consider their relations with other individuals and their context (Nader, 2011). And since theoretical understanding is conceptualised by Nader (2011) as the analysis of a set of facts and the relations between them, she argues that ethnography consequently is a theoretical endeavour rather than mere description.

There are a wide range of definitions, descriptions, and prescriptions about ethnography but fundamentally it is a method whereby the researcher studies a group of people who have something in common (e.g., living in the same city and having the same ethnic background) in their natural setting to gain insight into their lifeworld (Sangasubana, 2011). It is also a participatory method which means that the researcher constructs an understanding through interactions with the people under study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). This requires the researcher to participate and familiarise themselves with the set of meanings and perceptions that shape the experiences and actions of people in their everyday lives (Nader, 2011). At the same time the researcher should be able to see the strange in the familiar, meaning that there should be a balance between immersion and distance so that the intricacies and nuances of certain underlying structured experiences and patterned actions can be identified and analysed in relation to the context (Nurani, 2008).

A fair amount of planning and preparation was needed before the actual fieldwork was able to be carried out. First of all, the field itself had to be identified which included

determining where the observations would be conducted. While Rotterdam was an obvious answer it was also too broad. To further refine and specify the field, it was necessary to decide on what it was that I wanted to observe and gain insight into.

As mentioned earlier, the aims mainly boiled down to exploring the two original research questions (the experience of dual identity and the presence of assimilationist discourses in superdiverse Rotterdam) using a different method but also by exploring a new research question (the relation between their behaviour, context, and dual identity). Since there is not really a Bosnian neighbourhood or enclave in Rotterdam, opportunities to just walk around observe and approach Dutch Bosnians in public were very limited. The initial plan was thus to meet up with some of my interviewees in Rotterdam and do things they would normally do in their daily lives. This would allow me to observe how they feel and act in certain situations and link it to what they said during the interviews about how they experience their dual identity. In addition, I planned to dedicate time specifically to observing the composition, atmosphere, and dynamics of different places and contexts across the city. In doing so, I could reflect on my own feelings and experiences as a Dutch Bosnian and connect them to those of the interviewees.

Observations as a result were spread across different locations and different social and cultural contexts, depending on who I was with, what we were doing and which direction the data analysis took me. This is common in multi-sited ethnography which is used to study social phenomena and processes characterised by fluidity and dispersion; the traditional assumption that the field should be a well-defined physical site is thereby rejected (Kurotani, 2004). The field is instead assumed to evolve and develop depending on the trajectory of the research.

Once I established the aims for doing observations and the reasoning behind it, the next step was to gain access and carry out the intended observations. This required me to contact my interviewees to organise meetings. I decided to focus my attention on two of the ten interviewees (James and Ellie) as it would allow me to spend more time with them and yield deeper level observations and insights. This decision was partly motivated by the fact that they are my cousins meaning that there is already a strong foundation of trust and familiarity which allows for more spontaneous and meaningful interactions. With interviewees that I know less well it would take time to get to a more natural stage of interaction. Of course, too

much familiarity also has its disadvantages because it is easier to take things for granted and overlook important nuances or details about the person. More attention to this dilemma will be devoted in section 3.8 on positionality.

Another reason for choosing James and Ellie was that theoretically they were interesting to explore further (cf. theoretical sampling) as they represented two ideal types within the sample; James is an example of someone who identifies more with his Bosnian background and feels he clearly stands out from Dutch 'natives' while Ellie identifies more with her Dutch side and feels like she can seamlessly blend in with 'natives'.

A last thing I did before commencing observations was to do my homework. Pre-fieldwork preparation is important in ethnographic research because while it is impossible to predict where your observations will take you, thinking about possible courses of action and problems can help you to stay committed to the research goals while in the field (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). I for example created a one-to-two-page summary of James and Ellie's interviews. This summary included notable things they said, interests, opinions, background information and how they related to Dutch and Bosnian aspects of their identity. The reasoning behind this summary was that it provided me a quick overview which I could consult before observing and would help me stay conscious of and pick up on relevant information, signs, and patterns during my fieldwork.

The preparation also consisted of consulting ethnographic studies that focused on ethnic identity, assimilation, and superdiversity so that I would have a better idea of how to go about observing and identifying theoretically significant things. Ethnic identity is conceptualised by Yeh & Hwang (2017) as having both an internal and an external component. I planned to focus mainly on the external component which refers to observable social and cultural behaviours and patterns such as language use, social networks, participation in events and activities, cultural preferences (e.g., food and music) and maintenance of traditions and customs (Yeh & Hwang, 2017). Multiple authors emphasise the need to consider ethnic identity as fluid, relational and contingent which means that expressions of it can differ depending on the context or situation (Boccagni, 2014; Kiang et al., 2007; Dwairy, 2004). Depending on how comfortable a person feels they can for example feel the need to adjust themselves and perform a certain role to fit in. Considering that the research focus is on dual identity made it especially crucial to continuously take a relational perspective while observing and to remain

conscious of the fact that the actions of people are not merely a reflection of internal processes but also of interpersonal, social, cultural, and political dynamics (Clark et al., 1976). That is an important reason why I ended up observing James and Ellie in different situations and contexts, as it eventually enabled me to compare how the way they feel and behave changes between more diverse contexts and more Dutch or Bosnian ones.

Since the context itself was expected to be a big theme during the observations I additionally read up on ethnographic research in transnational urban spaces focusing on superdiversity and ethnic identity. The study by Hall (2015) was particularly relevant because it provided useful insights into exploring signs of the impacts and expressions of macro level structures such as exclusionary identity discourses in urban localities through observations. She (2015) similarly also sets out to understand how superdiversity as a macro-level concept manifests itself specifically in concrete urban contexts and the lifeworld of the people within them. Her devotion to link structural conditions with the specific local dynamics and lived experiences (without privileging either) was thus a source of great inspiration. Olwig (2013) in a similar fashion discusses specific ways to meaningfully observe ethnic diversity within the urban landscape, emphasising the importance of considering power relations which requires the researcher to adopt a critical awareness of the intersection between ethnicity and socio-economic status for instance while observing.

The eventual data collection and analysis happened in three waves and yielded a total of 84 hours of observations across 13 days. The first wave was from the 15th to the 18th of March, the second was from the 13th of April until the 16th and the third wave was from the 27th of April until the 1st of May. In total, I interacted and observed seven out of the ten interviewees to varying degrees. During the fieldwork I also interacted and observed other Dutch Bosnians who I had not interviewed before such as family and friends and people I had never met before. My observations were however not limited to Dutch Bosnians; people they interacted with (e.g. acquaintances) and members of the general public were also observed.

During my fieldwork in Rotterdam, I mainly stayed at my Bosnian grandmother's apartment in a suburban area in the eastern part of the city, but I also slept a couple of times at my cousin James' place in the centre of the city. While in Rotterdam, it was hard to make rigid distinctions between when I was doing fieldwork and when I was not. This was largely because a large part of my observations were not only about other Dutch Bosnian young

Dutch Bosnian but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'

adults but also about my own experience as a Dutch Bosnian young adult in Rotterdam. A lot of my time was thus spent reflecting on how different contexts and situations made me feel, like in the example below from my field notes:

Already I feel in the apartment building where my grandma lives that it's mostly elderly white native Dutch people. So whenever I enter or leave and I encounter some people I feel a certain vigilance: do I appear like a foreigner, do I sound Dutch? What will they think or how will they react or feel if they sense that I'm not a real Dutchman? Will they be less frivolous, less willing to interact with me? Will they be more withdrawn, or will they feel uncomfortable, unsafe even?

I furthermore also reflected upon on the interactions I had with my grandmother while at her place for instance, but I did not consider this as fieldwork. Fieldwork and observations were for me a planned and conscious activity shaped by certain research goals or the need to explore theoretically interesting themes. The goals were at times broad, especially when observing the context, while at other times they were more specific - often the case when meeting with people. Whether guided by broad or specific goals, fieldwork was thus always intentional and motivated by underlying reasons while remaining flexible and open to unexpected findings. Table 3 below gives an overview of each wave and what I did during each wave.

Table 3: Observations overview

	Date	Hours observed	Place of observations	People observed
Wave 1	March 15 th	2	Bouldering gym	Ellie and her boyfriend + strangers
	March 16 th	8	James' workplace, Lejla's engagement party, public transport, shopping mall	James, Lejla, Ellie, Armin, family members, party guests, general public
	March 17 th	11	Public transport, James' and Lejla's home, friend's home, gym, car, and billiard bar	James, Lejla, Armin, James' friends, general public
	March 18 th	7.5	Cultural event by Dutch Bosnian youth organisation and a Dutch Bosnian party	Adin, Almira, James, Armin, Jonas, Andreas, and other Dutch Bosnian youth
Wave 2	April 13 th	9	Rotterdam center, low- and high-end stores, grandma's apartment building, gym, public transport	James and his friend, grandma, myself, general public
	April 14 th	5	Rotterdam center, art museum, bouldering gym, public transport	Grandma, myself, and general public

Dutch Bosnian but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'

	April 15 th	6	Train, Utrecht center, cafes	Myself, Alen, and general public
	April 16 th	4	Grandma's apartment building, Rotterdam marathon, Flixbus	Grandma, TV marathon commentators, marathon audience
	April 27 th	9	Thalys, various locations and events across Rotterdam during Kingsday	Myself and general public celebrating Kingsday
Wave 3	April 28 th	8	At grandma's doctor, Albert Heijn, car, IKEA, McDonalds's	Grandma, cousin Camila and her boyfriend, myself and general public
	April 29 th	7	Various locations across Rotterdam which have a special meaning to me.	Myself and general public
	April 30 th	2.25	Grandma's apartment	Grandma, aunt, uncle, and Ellie
	May 1 st	5	Rotterdam center, public transport, bouldering gym	Ellie and her boyfriend, general public

Fieldwork was in addition always accompanied by note taking on either my phone or little notebook whenever the opportunity arose during the observing itself. These notes were a mix of descriptions of notable things I did and observed, my thoughts and feelings and the timing of key events. After the fieldwork was finished (usually the end of the day or morning after) I would go over my notes and write them out on my laptop in a more structured and detailed manner while also including reflections on and interpretations of my observations. These daily syntheses as I call it, were for me a way to simultaneously construct, engage with and analyse the data. The insights and reflections from one daily synthesis could thereby inform the fieldwork of the following day.

Similarly, after the completion of each wave of fieldwork (consisting of 4 to 5 days' worth of observations) I would read through all the notes I made and reflect on the gained insights and link them to the interview findings. This allowed me to determine and plan out more precisely what I would focus on during the subsequent wave of fieldwork. It for instance made it possible to engage in theoretical sampling of the context, type of situations and people that I could observe. Consistent with a grounded theory approach I thus committed to a cyclical approach and method of constant comparison whereby data sampling, collection, and analysis all overlap and inform each other.

In the end, I had a total of 39 pages of synthesised observation notes at my disposal to enrich the interview findings with and develop a more theoretically driven understanding of being a Dutch Bosnian young adult in Rotterdam. Considering that the syntheses were a

combination of observation notes, reflections, and interpretations, I did not feel a strong need to systematically analyse (e.g., coding using thematic analysis) all of this already processed observation data again after the fieldwork was completed. I was satisfied with the insights from the syntheses and relied upon them to refine the themes that emerged from the interviews.

3.7. Ethics

Throughout the project there were not any significant ethical issues or dilemmas. In general, I followed standard procedures and ethical guidelines. I for instance sent a consent form⁶ to all the interviewees which they read and filled in allowing me to record the interviews for analysis purposes while ensuring no real names are used in the presentation of the data. Before the start of each recording, I again made sure to get the consent of the interviewees. Furthermore, I also emphasized that they could at any point refuse to answer a question or stop the interview.

Regarding the observations, I only informed James, Ellie and my grandma of my general research activities, which they had no issue with. I did not tell them my specific aims but just that I continued with my project on Dutch Bosnians by doing observations. In all other cases and with all other people I did not disclose my position as a researcher. This was simply not possible, practical, or relevant most of the time. While on the metro or in any public space I for example could not inform every single person that I was observing them, nor would it have been relevant to do so.

I besides did not seek to discuss any sensitive or very personal matters with most of the people I was with, nor did I include it in my observation notes. It was mostly a matter of observing behaviour, speech, and certain contextual dynamics, not so much about me seeking to extract specific personal information as during the interviews. Explicitly disclosing myself in such situations would have risked disrupting the natural and spontaneous behaviour of the people I was with. In these conditions (i.e., when observing in public settings and extracting non-personal information) Zahle (2017) argues that informed consent is not required to engage in participant observation. It was nonetheless a priority to ensure the privacy of all

⁶ See appendix 5 for the consent form used

those I observed was respected by using pseudonyms and avoiding any information that could give away their identity in the presentation of the findings.

3.8. Positionality

I shortly want to emphasise that just as my target group, I am a young adult, have Bosnian roots, was born in Rotterdam, spent considerable time there, and have Bosnian family living there. I have ruminated often about where my place is, where home is, and often found that despite feeling most connected with the Netherlands as a country, I do not feel completely at home anywhere because I am considered different wherever I go. This is also what inspired me to do this research: using sociological inquiry to gain a better understanding of how others experience their layered identity to gain a better understanding of myself - a type of Bourdieusian socio self-analysis (Bourdieu, 2004).

As an insider, my proximity to both the research topic and the research participants comes with advantages and disadvantages. A supposed disadvantage is that my proximity comes with biases and a risk of overlooking "the ordinary" thus obstructing an objective interpretation (Chavez-Reyes, 2008). However, all researchers – even outsiders – have their biases and might overlook or misinterpret important details due to their distance (Merriam et al., 2001). The advantages of being an insider are easier access to the target population and the ability to produce a unique and nuanced account of a certain phenomenon (Chavez-Reyes, 2008). This is already evident in the fact that I decided to focus on such an understudied topic and group of the population. I am, however, not a full insider because I have spent most of my life outside of Rotterdam having lived in various countries (Banks, 1998).

In the end both being an outsider or insider have their advantages and disadvantages, the most important is to be aware of how this can affect the methodological integrity of the research (Chavez-Reyes, 2008). Personally, the partial insider status helped to create a relatively equal relation, a level of understanding, and familiarity with the interviewees and other Dutch Bosnians I observed. This was especially the case with family and people I knew, but also with people I did not. Otherwise, the most difficult thing was not taking things for granted, but by being aware of this, I tried to limit the adverse effects – of course it is difficult to personally say how well I did in this regard.

3.9. Timeline of research activities

Summer 2022: Interviews

Friday 8th of July - Friday 22nd of July: Sampling process and gaining access

I sent out the first messages on the 8th of July but remained in contact with potential interviewees up until the last interview on the 22nd of July.

Sunday 10th of July - Friday 22nd of July: Conducting interviews

The first seven interviews were conducted by Thursday the 14th of July but that day I also fell ill and did not feel well enough to plan or do interviews so I resumed again on Monday the 18th finishing four days later.

Friday 22nd of July- Friday 29th of July: Transcribing interviews

Transcribing is a painstakingly long and energy intensive process which ended up taking a week. Some interviews were longer than others and the accuracy of the transcriptions software also varied widely so some interviews took a full day of transcribing but on average I managed to do around 1,5 interviews a day.

Friday 29th of July-Sunday 31st of July: Reviewing interviews.

After the transcribing I needed a lighter activity which I found in the form of reading and reviewing the interviews by writing a short summary of the main findings and a performance review.

Monday 1st of August - Sunday 7th of August: Coding and theme development

Being relatively familiar with the data - up to the point of dreaming about interviews - it was time to analyse it. Three days were spent coding the data, the following two days I tidied up the codes and organised them into a coding structure and already started identifying certain themes. Over the weekend I took it easy and eventually arrived at my three final themes which will be discussed next.

Winter/Spring 2023: Ethnographic observations

18th of February – 14th of March: Pre-fieldwork preparation

I set out research goals, read through literature on ethnographic research, studied interview transcripts and summarised those of James, Lejla, and Ellie, started planning what I would do each day and reached out to people to meet up.

Wednesday 15th of March – Saturday 18th of March: First wave of observations

An intense four days of observing, note taking, reflecting, analysing, and synthesising, I mainly focused on the first two research questions and observed Dutch Bosnians of my age.

Thursday 13th of April – Sunday 16th of April: Second wave of observations

Based on the reflections and insights from the previous wave I decided to focus more on the context of Rotterdam and Dutch society within which Dutch Bosnians live (RQ3). I tried to put myself in their shoes of how it feels to do certain things and be in certain places. I thus shifted the attention more towards myself and my interactions with the context.

Thursday 27th of April – Monday 1st of May: third wave of observations

After reflecting on the second wave, I felt like I needed to go to Rotterdam one more time and observe the context and my experiences within it in more detail. The fact that Kingsday was celebrated in Rotterdam was besides a big motivation to go.

4. Findings

4.1. General overview of findings

In this section, I will present the core findings in the form of three interrelated themes⁷ that together offer a descriptive account and an explanatory theoretical framework to understand how Dutch Bosnian young adults' construct, experience, and express their identity. The main theme is that *everyone seems to have constructed their own unique hybrid identity and ultimately feel comfortable with it (Dutch Bosnian but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian')*. The two other themes relate to this, with the first sub-theme being that *Rotterdam as a superdiverse context is perceived as a hospitable climate for hybrid identities (difference as making the difference in superdiverse Rotterdam)* and the second sub-theme being that *Integration into Dutch society and feeling connected with Dutch identity are perceived as important (Dutch culture and identity remain the obvious normative mainstream)*. The main theme relates mostly to the first and second research questions (to do with identity) while the other two relate mostly to the third research question (to do with the context). Before delving into these themes, however, I will elaborate on how the focus shifted during the analysis resulting eventually in the aforementioned themes.

As discussed in the previous section, I was left with 565 codes after the initial coding. It required a degree of organising and piecing together of codes to identify prominent patterns in the data relevant to the research questions. It was not particularly difficult to identify relevant codes, but it was initially somewhat challenging to arrive at a theoretically noteworthy theme that applies to all or most of the interviewees i.e., some overarching shared experience regarding their identity and position in the Netherlands. This was primarily because there was a lot of variety in how they experienced their layered identity: most seemed to feel more Bosnian than Dutch, two felt more resonance with their Dutch side, one person felt fifty-fifty and yet another felt a detachment from both.

I expected this diversity before commencing the research, but what I was mainly hoping for was to gain insight into how this variety could be explained by relating it to the context. Unsurprisingly, the influence of parents and wider family seemed to play a significant role in the extent to which the interviewees connected with both Bosnia and the Netherlands. Many

⁷ See appendix 6 for an overview of themes and their corresponding codes

of them clearly acknowledged the influence of parents on their identity, but what they crucially also tended to emphasise, and show is their own agency in exploring and coming to terms with their Dutch lived reality and Bosnian background. This was an important insight because it accentuated the complex nature of identity formation and opened the door for a deeper analysis.

The eventual analysis was guided by two general contrasting, yet interrelated aims. Namely, to understand the differences regarding the extent to which those in my sample identify as either Dutch or Bosnian and additionally, to uncover the similarities that underlie the differences in the way they experience and express their layered identity. What turned out to be most interesting is that all the research participants constructed their own distinct hybrid identity made up of both Dutch and Bosnian elements. This may seem self-evident (and indeed was experienced as such by most), but that is exactly what makes it intriguing; sociology is after all about questioning that which is taken for granted. This, and the role of the context (superdiversity and Dutch integration discourse) will be the focus in the following sections.

This section continues with a discussion of the three themes mentioned earlier. Each theme will be described in detail and its significance and relevance explained. Afterwards a synthesis of the themes and their insights follows which will allow us to arrive at a coherent theoretical explanation in relation to the posed research questions.

4.2. 'Dutch Bosnian' but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'

Something that became apparent in all interviews and during the observations is that despite the large variety in the extent to which the young adults in the sample identified as either Dutch or Bosnian, practically no one identified fully with either the Netherlands or Bosnia. Hence, even if someone felt far more Bosnian than Dutch, it did not mean that they had a full connection with Bosnia or had no connection to the Netherlands (and vice versa). Some level of distance was always noticeable to the side with which they identified more, while at the same time some level of proximity existed towards the side with which they identified less. This ambiguity will be illustrated below with specific examples and cases.

All interviewees, for instance, expressed a preference to remain living in the Netherlands in the future regardless of the extent to which they felt Dutch. Adin who identified much more

with his Bosnian side and mentioned that in the future he would want to build a house in Bosnia nonetheless emphasised that in the foreseeable future he would prefer to stay in Rotterdam. Lejla (21) who even feels homesick for Bosnia nonetheless also expressed a desire to stay in the Rotterdam region long-term and open a hairdresser saloon. It was thus clear that even those who felt more Bosnian seemed to be largely comfortable with their lives in the Netherlands and specifically Rotterdam.

Whether at work, school, the gym, football club, or in private, interactions with Dutch natives are unsurprisingly unavoidable. Although most of those who felt more Bosnian mentioned that they occasionally had uncomfortable or problematic experiences with 'natives', the general sentiment towards them and Dutch culture was one of indifference and tolerance. Some had 'native' Dutch friends, others had pleasant experiences with natives and acknowledged that while on holiday they were happy to see Dutch people and felt some connection to them. At first it might seem counterintuitive that those who do not feel fully part of the Dutch imagined community because of a lack of connection with Dutch natives and Dutch culture would still prefer to live in the Netherlands. But for the Dutch Bosnians in this sample, as will be explained in this section, it makes complete sense.

Similarly, all interviewees also emphasised that they would want to retain some level of connection to Bosnia irrespective of their degree of identification with Bosnian culture and people. Ellie (20) and Danijela (21) were the two research participants who explicitly made clear that they felt more resonance with the Netherlands and Dutch people. This was also evident in the fact that their friend group consisted mainly of Dutch 'natives' and that both had a 'native' Dutch partner. Even they, however, felt a desire to be in touch with their Bosnian background⁸. This took the form of maintaining some level of proficiency in the Bosnian language, listening to Bosnian music, learning about Bosnian cuisine, and visiting from time to time. Both of them additionally emphasised that they would want to pass on their Bosnian heritage to their children.

During the course of the ethnographic fieldwork, Ellie's desire to retain a connection to her Bosnian heritage was apparent as well. While bouldering with her and her boyfriend Teun⁹

⁸ Danijela has a Bosnian and Croatian parent but identifies more with her Croatian background. Bosnia and Croatia were both part of Yugoslavia. The cultures and language are largely similar with the biggest difference being religion, as Croatia is mostly Catholic and Bosnia mostly Muslim.

⁹ The field notes are not included in the appendix out of privacy concerns but will be provided.

for example, Teun told me that she taught him some Bosnian words and expressions and exposed him to Bosnian music. While talking to him he seemed to be very open and willing to learn about Ellie's Bosnian background; he even used some Bosnian words during our conversations. She in addition introduces him to Bosnian cuisine when they visit '*majka*' (Bosnian for grandmother). Ellie does not speak Bosnian fluently but whenever she interacted with our *majka*, she tried to speak it and was apologetic about her mistakes. *Majka* visibly appreciated her efforts and was always keen to compliment and encourage her.

Even Jonas (23), who felt a weak connection with both Bosnia and the Netherlands conveyed some desire to learn Bosnian and to pass it on to his kids. He is part of the same Dutch Bosnian friend group as James, which seems to be quite tight knitted; they meet up regularly in Rotterdam and have gone on trips to Bosnia together a few times. During my fieldwork I accompanied Jonas and James to one of the Bosnian parties they frequently attend. On the way to the party, I for instance noticed that James seems to be helping Jonas learn Bosnian, by teaching him a word now and then. During the party the music was overwhelmingly Bosnian and Jonas seemed to sing along with many of the songs. This to me was indicative of how being part of a group can exert an influence regarding identity construction and expression.

A key question that arises from these findings is how we can explain that all interviewees feel a certain connection to both the Netherlands and Bosnia and as a result lack a full identification with either?

Firstly, the Bosnian connection seems mostly grounded in culture and upbringing. Being born in the Netherlands to parents with a Bosnian background inadvertently means that some of their Bosnian cultural dispositions, practices, norms, and values will trickle down to you. This has to do with 'the family' being the principal source of primary socialisation, meaning that parents have a large formative influence on the development of a child's 'self' (Potts, 2015). Unsurprisingly, most interviewees thus stressed that their identification with Bosnia is down to being exposed to certain socio-cultural elements throughout their upbringing. The following remark by James captures the general feeling of those who feel more Bosnian:

I just feel more Bosnian than Dutch, but I think that's logical because I'm also raised that way and eh and if it were the other way around it would also have been exactly the same; if I were a Dutchman in Bosnia then I would have felt more Dutch than Bosnian.

For those who feel more Bosnian, the connection thus seems ingrained in and constitutive for who they are. Their connection is characterised by a visceral feeling manifesting itself in feeling genuinely at home in Bosnia and with Bosnian people coupled with a strong attraction towards the culture. Bosnia as a country, Bosnian people, Bosnian culture, music, and food symbolize parts within themselves in the sense that they invoke a feeling of belonging which Lejla eloquently describes below:

(T)hat also makes that bond with Bosnia for me, in the sense of you know: a whole piece of character; you can really recognize where it comes from and eh... just landscape there eh yes again the culture, food, and “gezelligheid” - that especially!

While observing Lejla at her engagement party it was thus not difficult to notice manifestations of her Bosnian identity: Bosnian folk music was played intermittently with Turkish music throughout the evening and was accompanied by guests (including James, Ellie, and myself) dancing the ‘*kolo*’ (a Bosnian folk dance). While Lejla and James had done it countless times before and were naturals, Ellie and I meanwhile had little experience and were not doing as great¹⁰ (but at least *majka* appreciated our efforts). The contrast between us reflected well the discrepancy in the degree to which we identified as Bosnian. James and Lejla were like fish in the water, they have regular contact with the rest of our Bosnian family while Ellie and I had not seen many family members in years. Many of our interactions with them were therefore limited and relatively superficial.

In one way or another even those who did not feel overwhelmingly more Bosnian like Ellie still mentioned things which implied a level of closeness to Bosnia and Bosnian culture. While they did acknowledge the significance of their Bosnian heritage and upbringing for who they are, they tended to do so in a way that explained why they did not feel they completely fit in with Dutch ‘natives’ socially and culturally. They thus appear to regard their Bosnian aspects more as markers of difference in relation to their conception of what it means to be a Dutch ‘native’ rather than sources of deep connection and belonging,

Throughout my observations this was something I could relate to as well, especially in majority ‘native’ contexts. In such situations it became easier to see how and why I am different. This could be things like the way people dress, speak, what they talk about and the

¹⁰ See appendix 7 for a picture of me trying

jokes they make for instance but also patterns of behaviour like the places they tend to be in and the activities they tend to do. In and of themselves these differences are neither positive nor negative, but I noticed that I quickly attached value judgements to them. These differences as a result came to signify an estrangement from 'natives' but also from my own sense of 'Dutchness'. I felt like I did not meet all the criteria and therefore had no full claim to the Dutch identity. In other words, my experience of being and feeling Dutch did not match that of 'natives'. This is a feeling which many of the interviewees like Danijela experienced as well:

It's just really: I feel Dutch because I was born in the Netherlands and that's it really. But I don't really notice that I ehm have certain Dutch things, like for example my Dutch friends have eh, for example, with the eh being less hospitable and so on and I don't know what else, but that I don't have.

Secondly, the Dutch connection is not so much grounded in culture and upbringing but has more to do with them being born and growing up in the Netherlands. It is more pragmatic and manifests itself in them having built a life for themselves in the Netherlands. This means that in a way, their 'sense of self' becomes linked with the Netherlands. Secondary socialisation applies here which happens mostly outside the family when individuals enter new social and institutional settings such as friend groups, schools and other organisations or groups, but also refers to the influence of media (Potts, 2015; De Jager et al., 2020). It is a process that involves learning the appropriate skills, norms and values required for certain roles in society e.g., being a student and being a citizen (Nash and Calonica, 1996). It requires adopting and negotiating the formative influence of new reference groups in relation to existing ones (Shibutani, 1962).

All interviewees stressed that being born in the Netherlands – and especially having lived their whole life there – constitutes the main source of connection to the Netherlands. This was evident in both the interviews and the observations. There were not many signs of a genuine connection with Dutch people and culture; most indeed struggled to describe what Dutch culture is and rather stressed that they feel different from Dutch natives. Even those who felt more Dutch and have 'native' friends like Danijela, did not feel much resonance with Dutch culture per se as seen in the previous quote. This distance is usually caused by an amalgamation of perceived micro-differences (e.g., lifestyle habits and customs), micro-

invalidations (e.g. questions and comments about their name or appearance) and outright discrimination (e.g. being rejected by a school because of their name).

Being Dutch as such constitutes a pragmatic feeling for the Dutch Bosnians in this sample. It is a feeling which is grounded in their day-to-day lives and thus ties their identity to the context. Since this context happens to be the Dutch city of Rotterdam, they are born as Dutch nationals, speak Dutch and become exposed to particular social and cultural patterns of behaviour which they might adopt partially through secondary socialisation in particular. In addition, most develop a social network consisting of friends and extended family all over the Netherlands. The result is that they feel comfortable and at place in their own conception of the Netherlands and the Dutch imagined community which is influenced by the superdiverse character of Rotterdam and their Bosnian background. The crucial point is that their conceptions tend to differ from the dominant national identity discourse which as discussed in section 2.1 is grounded in an exclusionary ethnic identity.

Considering all of this, it is not surprising that the Dutch Bosnians in this sample would prefer living in the Netherlands in the future and consider it their home. In spite of this, distance to Dutch culture was overall mentioned more than distance to Bosnian culture even by those who did not feel more Bosnian (the significance of this will be discussed later). In line with this Almira who feels half Dutch and half Bosnian said the following for example:

When someone abroad, for example, if I am not in Bosnia eh, and that person asks me, “Where are you from?” then I automatically say “The Netherlands”, eh because I feel Dutch eh up to a certain point. And that point is kind of in the cultural sense ehm: what makes me, is not Dutch. So, the upbringing, the person that I am at the core, is not Dutch, so that is never going to be Dutch because I am not.

What this quote captures well is the ambiguity, which has been the focus so far. Essentially, all feel Dutch and Bosnian to an extent, but since a full identification with either country is lacking, the label ‘Dutch Bosnian’ seems most appropriate. This also constitutes the main point: all research participants form a hybrid identity with which they feel comfortable by integrating both elements of life in the Netherlands and their Bosnian background in a way that is idiosyncratic.

Most for instance tend to speak both Dutch and Bosnian in various contexts. At home and with other Dutch Bosnians many indicated that they usually speak a mix. This can be because

one of the parents is not completely proficient in Dutch for example. Switches between Dutch and Bosnian are in addition sometimes used to denote emphasis or transitions in mood. A number of interviewees commented on how they or their parents switched to Bosnian when emotional. This is something I observed often during the fieldwork and have experienced myself as well. Dutch, however, appears to be the default language especially when discussing everyday matters or when more specific or complex vocabulary is required.

Almira and Adin both members of a Bosnian youth organisation additionally mentioned how at events they speak a mix of Dutch and Bosnian:

Almira: We talk quite a lot of Dutch to each other when we are together, but you can sort of mix it up. So, if you don't know a word you can just throw it in in Bosnian and I really like that because that's the way I would have preferred to talk - sort of fifty-fifty.

This was something I noticed firsthand while observing at the '*dan kulture*' (day of culture), an event organized to celebrate the Bosnian culture which included an art exhibition, food, music, and talks. My conversations were primarily in Dutch with a Bosnian word or expression here and there, but I did switch to Bosnian if the other person preferred it.

The event itself was furthermore an exemplary depiction of the prominent role Bosnia and Bosnian culture occupy within the lifeworld of the young adult Dutch Bosnians I spoke with. I met a brother and sister who shared their favourite folk songs with me, joked with a guy about a folk belief called *promaja* (a 'dangerous' cold draft), and talked about the history and politics of Bosnia with another. At the same time, it was evident that most of the people at this organisation were born and raised in the Netherlands. They did not seem to have plans to pack their bags and move to Bosnia soon. All seemed to be either studying or starting up their careers.

Neither were the conversations fully about Bosnia; the topics ranged from personal stories, hobbies, and beliefs to current events and philosophy. I even misrecognized some people as Dutch 'natives' (there were some present) purely because of how they spoke and looked like and what they talked about. Generally, there did not seem to be a sign of uneasiness or tension in the behaviour of the Dutch Bosnians present.

During the interviews most of the interviewees had already mentioned that they feel largely comfortable with their hybrid identity. Although they experienced their dual identity

as an obstacle to fully fitting in in a particular country or culture – and possibly for their life chances (e.g., discrimination and racism) – they would not have preferred to be fully Dutch or Bosnian. One of the reasons for this was that they enjoy the flexibility and freedom of not being fully immersed in and constrained by one culture. They have grown accustomed to being something in-between and struggle to imagine themselves being either or the other fully - whatever shape that takes for them. They can neither completely erase their Bosnian heritage nor can they reverse their life in the Netherlands. Acceptance of this fact was something all research participants had in common, but we have also seen that the degree to which they leaned towards either their Bosnian or Dutch side varied.

The following selection of quotes by Andreas serves as a good summary of what this theme is all about. In response to whether he feels different to 'native' Bosnians he said: *"That for sure, yes that for sure.... but no for sure **they don't see me as a real Bosnian; bit like an outsider, but that's normal.**"* A comparable reply followed when asked whether he considers himself Dutch or a foreigner:

Yeah no, **I don't really see myself as a foreigner**, but.... Yes, sometimes for example, like I said at the club, in my football team you only have Dutch guys and then sometimes.... Look, I do feel at home there, but they only listen to Dutch songs and so on... And if they start singing, for example, then **you don't quite feel at home at that moment**, you know. So, I don't know, I don't know.

When asked whether he would want to be fully Dutch he retorted: *"No not at all actually. **I can act really Dutch though so to say, yaknow?**"* He, however, seemed comfortable with this ambiguity because when asked whether he would have liked to be a 'native' Bosnian he retorted again: *"No not that either, because **life there is also different**, you have less income and generally a different mentality."*

Ultimately thus, the interviewees tend to experience distance and disconnect in both overwhelmingly Dutch and to a lesser extent Bosnian contexts which is why most seem to prefer a diverse living environment where they do not stand out as will be discussed in more detail below.

4.3. Difference as making the difference in superdiverse Rotterdam

In the previous section it was made clear that most would prefer to continue living in the Netherlands. This needs to be nuanced, because it is in fact Rotterdam and the broader Randstad region¹¹ to which they feel most connected and which they perceive as distinct from the rest of the Netherlands. This largely comes down to them having grown up there; they have family, friends, got used to life there and thus simply come to feel at home in such an urban environment.

A wide range of reasons were given by interviewees for why they valued their lives in Rotterdam including the feeling of living in a global urban area, with many opportunities and possibilities in terms of (public) services, activities, and careers. In addition, the diversity and multiculturalism also seemed to be of fundamental importance for why they cherished Rotterdam. It was a theme which all interviewees emphasised diversity; it was in fact one of the first things that most interviewees mentioned during the introductory questions and remained a recurring theme throughout the interviews.

All interviewees mentioned that they experienced a large degree of diversity at school for instance, albeit to varying degrees. Almira, Danijela and Ellie, for instance, noticed that diversity seemed to decrease as they progressed from comprehensive primary schools to ability-tracked secondary schools and eventually university, thus becoming increasingly exposed to contexts where they were the clear minority. It is therefore not surprising that they are also the ones who appear to have a significant number of close 'native' friends. This is very clear in the following quote from Danijela:

At elementary school it did not really matter where you came from it was just always a pretty tight-knit class, so everyone was just good with each other. Then when we went to secondary school most went to different schools so then yes, you no longer really have contact with each other and then I made new friends there ... And yes, those are all Dutch, and they tend to stick around because they also go on to university etc.

While the opportunity to meet and interact with people of different backgrounds appears to decrease for some, ultimately, everyone stated that they have a diverse group of friends or at least regularly come into contact with people from various backgrounds. For Ellie this was at her student job for example, while for Danijela she remained in touch with primary school

¹¹ A conurbation comprising the four largest metropolitan areas of the Netherlands and almost half the country's population.

friends through social media.

Most of the other interviewees (those who felt the least Dutch) seemed to have little or no close 'native' Dutch friends. Unlike Almira, Ellie and Danijela they attended diverse secondary schools and did not continue their studies at homogenous universities. Most of their friends had either the same background as them or had another foreign background such as Surinamese, Turkish, Moroccan, Italian, and Chinese. When I asked Jonas whether he had any 'native' Dutch friends, for instance, he appeared almost flustered:

No... they always had some foreign background, but I think it was... yeah... I really don't know why! Yes, I do have Dutch people but it's not really that I chill with them or anything. But lately I have been like.... Yes "they are okay". I also met a Dutch guy at the gym. In the beginning I thought "he is a bit weird, he always laughs" I come, and he laughs right away. But I really like talking to him.

Similarly, during my observations at the bouldering gym – which tended to be dominated by 'natives' – I noticed how a visible minority guy barely interacted until he came across and greeted two other visible minorities who he seemed to have met before. This form of segregation, as will become clear throughout this section, was not an isolated case but a pattern I observed during my observations throughout the city.

During the fieldwork I additionally also went to the gym with James and his Italian friend and both times James encountered people he knew, but none of them were Dutch 'natives'. James' only close 'native' friends live in the same neighbourhood as he, where they grew up together since they were toddlers. James is very sociable, so he does have plenty of acquaintances and colleagues who are 'native'. When I observed him at work, for instance, where most of his colleagues are Dutch 'natives', he seemed to get along very well with them. Like Jonas, his closest friends were either Dutch Bosnians or had another foreign background.

Generally, the interviewees' experiences thus align with the existing literature that labels Rotterdam as a *superdiverse* context (Scholten et al., 2019). The significance of this, remember, lies in the fact that it has implications for the integration process: migrants do not integrate chiefly into the Dutch ethnic group in such cases (Crul & Lelie, 2017). What the experiences of the interviewees hence seem to confirm is that a superdiverse context mediates the pressure to conform to certain 'native' Dutch socio-cultural dispositions, practices, norms, and values. Despite not embodying a "full" Dutch identity, most

acknowledged that overall, they do not really feel 'different' or disconnected per se. James for example expressed a feeling which most of the interviewees and people I observed seemed to embody:

Well, the thing about Rotterdam is that it's easy to grow up, because you see so many different people from different cultures. And that is actually pretty chill because then you don't feel different than the rest because everyone is different.

Being surrounded by diversity in general seems to take some pressure of the shoulders of the interviewees and as such come to experience it as a relieving. Almira similarly describes it as *"you don't feel kind of weird because of the fact you are different"* while Mario feels *"more comfortable to have various culture together"*. As mentioned, it is thus mostly in overwhelmingly 'native' Dutch contexts that a genuine difference, disconnect and discomfort is felt. This can be accompanied with vigilance rooted in a fear of being othered or facing prejudice such as feeling uncomfortable if you match certain characteristics associated which are associated with harmful stereotypes about Muslims. With this in mind, it is understandable that many of the interviewees clearly expressed their preference for the multicultural environment of the Randstad over other Dutch places where there is less diversity.

Almira was one of those who mentioned a Randstad/non-Randstad divide and emphasises that Dutch people in the Randstad are different to those outside of it as in the following quote:

...(I)n my uni seminar group of 30 people I was eh the only one with a migration background ehm and the thing was.... The difference is between Dutch people from Rotterdam and Dutch people from outside the Randstad. And there I noticed the gap, so to speak, that I just wasn't eh sort of comfortable with them.

What a significant number of interviewees seemed to encounter is that Dutch 'natives' around their age in Rotterdam are quite open and embrace diversity which aids in feeling comfortable with their Bosnian background. This is because those who noted this mostly – notwithstanding some othering and discrimination – do not feel they are treated differently. Andreas is one of those and feels no need to hide his Bosnian background because he is proud of it.

This relates to the comfort most feel with their hybrid identity: Not only do they tend to be in diverse contexts where they do not stand out, but they also have their personal interests

and hobbies which keep them busy as well as a social network which contribute to their needs for meaning and belonging. So even if they might not feel like they are part of an exclusionary imagined community of Dutch 'natives' this potential feeling of exclusion and estrangement becomes supplanted by a personally developed sense of meaning and belonging.

The superdiverse context of Rotterdam – acting like a buffer – thus appears particularly hospitable for developing hybrid identities because the Dutch 'natives' are not the outright majority ethnic group, and a significant portion are perceived to largely embrace diversity. Transnational practices and identities comprising both elements of their Dutch life and Bosnian background are thus enabled and very present among this particular sample of Dutch Bosnians.

A final interesting finding is that most of the interviewees struggled to define Dutch culture and even scrutinized the idea of a single "Dutch culture". They to a certain degree consider the Netherlands as a place where different cultures come together which is indicative of them feeling comfortable with their hybrid position. Openness and acceptance are indeed what most of the interviewees seemed to consider as their core Dutch values. In general, however, the interviewees seemed to struggle when asked what comes to their mind when thinking about Dutch culture. Andreas' response below is representative of this common sentiment:

Dutch culture... Actually nothing at all honestly... Yes, seriously, there is not really one culture here for example in Rotterdam, but probably in eh Goes (a smaller town in Zeeland) you know, where only Dutch (native) people live, for example, there is, but here it is really multicultural so there is not one culture.

Mario likewise even feels that Rotterdam is so different in terms of culture that it is almost "*a mini country*". This uniqueness could also be noticed during the main *Koningsdag* festivities – a national holiday celebrating the king's birthday – which were organised in Rotterdam this year. The idea is that that each year a selected city showcases itself to the royal family and the rest of the country as it is live streamed on national TV. The day revolved around a walk by the royal family through Rotterdam along key landmarks. *Koningsdag* is traditionally considered a celebration of the Dutch nation and culture. During my observations this was apparent because the streets and shops were filled with orange decorations and people in Orange as well as Dutch flags. Interestingly there was also plenty of white and green (colours

of Rotterdam) as the organisers wanted to emphasise not only the celebration of Dutch identity but also that of Rotterdam.

The main theme centred around diversity with the aim of including every Rotterdammer regardless of their individual differences. While being a genuine effort to create a feeling of unity, the fact that special attention is needed to ensure everyone is included in such a quintessentially Dutch national celebration is in itself a sign of not everyone being included in the Dutch imagined community. It is indicative of how Rotterdam as a socio-cultural context deviates significantly from the dominant discourse on Dutch identity. It is thus unsurprising that many of the Dutch Bosnians in this sample consider Rotterdam as distinct and prefer it over less diverse non-Randstad places. Indeed, their sense of self and conception of what it means to be Dutch are inherently rooted in this superdiverse context.

4.4. Dutch culture and identity remain the obvious mainstream

What the first theme revealed was that interviewees tend to have hybrid identities consisting of both Dutch and Bosnian elements to varying degrees, while full identification with the respective countries and cultures is lacking. The second theme contextualized this finding by considering how diversity and multiculturalism facilitate transnational practices and the formation of transnational hybrid identities by reducing the perceived need to embody a 'native' Dutch identity. Ultimately it became evident that everyone feels largely at ease with having a Bosnian background in the Netherlands, experiencing no real need or desire to feel and be fully Dutch.

We have already seen that the main reason why most identify as Dutch is because they grew up in the Netherlands. The focus of this theme, however, is on how the general Dutch integration discourse – as discussed in the literature review – emphasising assimilation into Dutch society and culture also seems to trickle down to the context of Rotterdam and manifest itself in the accounts of the interviewees. Based on their experiences in the Netherlands and their own thoughts on integration it became evident that despite superdiversity relieving the pressure to assimilate, Dutch normative culture and identity nonetheless loom in the background. The feeling of being different or not fitting in completely is thus not necessarily gone, it is just less prominent and consequential for their lives.

This feeling was apparent in most of the interviews such as the one with Danijela who despite feeling more Dutch admitted that *"in a completely Dutch class at my high school I did*

always feel like a foreigner actually.... In the end, I don't see myself as a pure Dutch person". She nonetheless felt largely comfortable at school where she had good friends and generally had positive experiences with teachers, but sometimes she did feel afraid that teachers would have prejudices about her because of her surname for instance. Ellie similarly recalled how during her internship the supervisor assumed she was not from the Netherlands because of her surname.

Almira in addition remarks on how her appearance and the way she speaks reveal that she is not a Dutch 'native':

People also say "you really talk like a Dutch person" that's right eh, but for the rest eh... actually, even just based on how I talk they would probably notice something off I think, but I think when I walk into a room that everyone immediately doesn't think I'm Dutch, which is logical too.

I found this very intriguing because in contrast to some other interviewees who used slang words and spoke with a 'street' accent (usually associated with minorities), Almira's Dutch (like Ellie's and Danijela's) sounded exactly like the typical Dutch that is usually associated with Dutch 'natives' from the Randstad. The fact she feels this way signifies how even when certain expectations regarding integration are met, feelings of being othered and not belonging to the Dutch imagined community do not dissipate. This resonates with the argument that the Dutch integration discourse establishes an essentialised conception of 'Dutchness' and thereby draws a bright boundary making it practically impossible for outsiders to feel like they truly belong (Gordijn, 2010; Verlasevic, 2019; Rath, 1991).

Interestingly enough most of the interviewees' views on the integration of immigrants bore a level of resemblance to that of the dominant integration discourse Almira for example stressed that:

So, I think yes, you have to integrate, and if you don't integrate, then I don't think you can complain about being discriminated against, that's... This is very harsh, but it is true eh, but suppose you are normally integrated and you are aware of your environment, what is happening, how it all works, and then you are discriminated against: I think that is bad; that is bad eh... Discrimination is generally bad... Ehm, but I'm also not of the opinion that you should write off your own identity, because that's important too. So, I would say eh eh, yeah very difficult eh... If you come here: learn the language as well as you can and try to do your best.

This quote gives an accurate representation of what most of the other interviewees to differing extents were hinting at. Danijela, for instance, provided a very similar response as she argued that immigrants “*should give up some things, but they shouldn't erase their whole culture just because they come to live in the Netherlands*”. Despite Rotterdam being considered as a multicultural context by most interviewees and not feeling completely Dutch themselves, they nonetheless thus emphasised the importance of ‘outsiders’ adapting to life in the Netherlands. Most however struggled to determine the extent to which outsiders should conform but tended to involve demands like the need to accept Dutch norms and values, respecting Dutch traditions, learning the language, contributing economically, and being politically and socially involved. For James however it is a relatively simple matter:

I don't think it's right to introduce new rules to exclude certain people and cultures. But I do think that if you come here you have to abide by the rules that are already here, regardless of what you are accustomed to; you know the conditions (when moving to the Netherlands), so you have to abide by them because the people who have grown up here, also with a different background, have also lived with these rules and conditions and grown up with them, so as an immigrant you should be able do that as well...

This was one of the more assimilationist remarks, but it reflects well the general conviction among interviewees that The Netherlands should remain *The Netherlands* (whatever shape it takes for them) and that therefore it is reasonable and logical that outsiders need to adapt if they deviate excessively. Although the level of conformity and what it is that outsiders need to conform to might vary depending on the interviewee's idea of what it means to be Dutch, there is nonetheless a clear resemblance between their views and the dominant political discourse on immigration and integration.

Ultimately, the interviewees' experience of not feeling completely Dutch and their convictions that outsiders should make an effort to adapt to life in the Netherlands point towards them partially having internalised the general Dutch (political) discourse on integration and immigration which stresses a high level of conformity. This is reflected in the way they seem to engage in ‘othering’ whereby they include themselves in a Dutch ‘we’ and exclude others who do not integrate properly in a non-Dutch ‘them’. This boundary making process could be a means for the Dutch Bosnians to construct and legitimate their own sense of ‘Dutchness’ in relation to an imagined ‘other’. They in a sense redraw the boundary that defines what it

means to be well integrated in a way that includes themselves. In doing so however they to a degree participate in the same political discourse that prevents them being full members of the Dutch imagined community.

Accordingly, while the Netherlands (and more specifically the Randstad region) might be becoming more and more diverse and multicultural, the Dutch ethnic group and culture nonetheless occupy a privileged and dominant position. Even if in Rotterdam the Dutch ethnic group is in the numerical minority, it does not necessarily seem to challenge their established and institutionalised influence. The Netherlands remains a nation-state, which as we have seen means that *formal* citizenship is fused with *moral* citizenship (Schinkel, 2008). Simply by growing up in the Netherlands you get exposed to normative cultural and social expectations of what it means to be a 'good' Dutch citizen which you eventually consciously or unconsciously (partly) incorporate into your identity. This can be through school, media, or any other regular interactions with Dutch people or cultural elements for example. Ultimately however, there is little doubt: second- and third-generation Dutch Bosnians remain othered as long as they hold on to their cultural heritage. This was very much the case for Lejla as the quotes below show:

I think it's really annoying, because due to that (othering) you can't make that connection with Dutch people or with the Dutch nationality, because no matter how you look at it you will always be considered as a foreigner; even though you were born here, despite the fact that you speak the language and are very good in conversations and everything... you will always remain for them, in their eyes, foreign.

When asked whether she could ever be considered as fully Dutch she replied: "*if I would leave that Bosnian part behind me or if I hadn't acquired it at all then yes*". Most of the others shared a similar feeling. It thus seems impossible for them, despite having formed their own idea of what it means to be Dutch to fully identify as Dutch, because to be Dutch they need to be *only* Dutch. But does this necessarily constitute a problem? Everyone, after all, emphasised they are not and would not want to be 'fully' Dutch.

This, however, should be nuanced, because what they come to associate with being 'fully' Dutch is embodying a 'native' Dutch socio-cultural identity. The very reason why they do not want to be 'fully Dutch' appears to emerge from a (political) discourse which delineates what it means to be 'fully' Dutch. The consequence of this discourse is that it instils a distance

between Dutch identity and people who have a non-Dutch background and incorporate it into their personal identity; Dutch identity is fundamentally mutually exclusive with other national, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds. What some nonetheless noted, is that it is not the same for all immigrant groups. Andreas for example said the following in response to whether it is possible to be considered Dutch with a foreign background: *"I think I could, but a Moroccan not for example. Yeah, that's just how it is."* Adin likewise elaborated on how Bosnians fly a bit under the radar and how some people are surprised that he is Muslim:

(W)ith Bosnians it is a different experience compared to other Islamic groups in the Netherlands. I always have people asking me "are you Bosnian" and then I say, 'yes of course' and then they ask, "are you Catholic or Muslim?" and then I say "yes Muslim". And the people who don't really know about Bosnians in general - eh be it Dutch or non-Dutch - they look quite shocked like: "How can a white person suddenly be from Bosnia" **[Both laughing]**

Generally, most of the Dutch Bosnians in the sample seemed to be aware that negative perceptions on diversity and immigrants were widespread within a segment of Dutch society. This existential awareness of being seen as different and the negative connotations it potentially brings with it appear to influence the extent to which they feel Dutch but also the degree to which they try to fit in to avoid standing out. Almira conveys this point well:

I don't necessarily need to belong, but I've always grown up in an environment where it doesn't matter if you belong or not because it was always, you always found someone. But if you sort of come into an environment where you just don't belong at all and you know that you're not going to belong, because you... you look different and you act different and I don't know what else... you don't celebrate Christmas or something or you don't have a Christmas tree, I don't know eh then you want to be like the rest, because you also just want to have fun or be normal eh... So, I do think that then you might even against your own will eh, be a bit more Dutch. I have certainly seen those examples. It is yes... yes you have to; survival I would say.

She compares here her own experience in a superdiverse environment like Rotterdam and a hypothetical experience of someone who grows up in a completely Dutch context. She cleverly argues that being in the latter environment increases the need to fit in and therefore that person will inadvertently feel more Dutch as well. I do however want to underscore the central point of this theme which is that even in a superdiverse context such as Rotterdam normative expectations linked to an essentialised, and exclusionary Dutch identity are present. This means - as we have seen in this section - that the pressure to conform and feel

Dutch remains prominent.

This was something I noticed and felt during the fieldwork as well. Rotterdam might be a superdiverse city, but it is also one characterised by segregation in all spheres of life (i.e., economic, social, and cultural). I observed in a wide range of places across the city, and it was clear that some places were significantly more diverse than others. The municipality of Feijenoord in the southern and poorer part of the city was for instance dominated by minorities. I could see it simply by observing and listening people on the street but also while walking down the Beijerlandselaan, where every other store seemed to have a sign in a foreign language and every other restaurant seemed to be a kebab place.

In the municipality of Kralingen in the east of the city the diversity was a lot less prominent. Here people looked and sounded like 'natives' and tended to live primarily in (semi-)detached or terraced houses rather than apartment blocks and social housing. The urban landscape also looked wealthier, more organised, and tidier compared to the more diverse places I visited. Storefronts looked more professional and luxurious while low budget supermarkets were not a common sight. It was additionally quieter and greener, as streets were lined with trees and the largest park in Rotterdam was nearby.

The city centre was more diverse in terms of people but here the lack of interethnic mixing and contact was notable. Whenever I saw groups of people or couples, they tended to be homogenous. Similarly, it was a common sight to see 'native' looking people in formal clothes like suits while conversely it was more common to see minorities working as cleaners, garbagemen, construction workers, and security for example. The discrepancy was also noticeable indoors in stores, restaurants, bars, and cafes. I visited a variety of stores, and noticed that in bookstores, high-end clothing stores, and niche stores it was mostly Dutch 'natives' while in low-end clothing stores and sportswear stores the customers were much more diverse. Likewise, *terrassen* (outdoor café/bar seating areas) were almost exclusively occupied by Dutch 'natives', in shisha lounges on the other hand I saw no visible 'natives' at all.

There are countless of other examples like my visit to a museum where the public was relatively homogenous, but the overarching point is that applying the label superdiversity to a whole city can be deceptive because within that city the degree of diversity varies from

neighbourhood to neighbourhood and from store to store. When this insight is combined with insights from the literature review and the fact that most of the interviewees who feel more Bosnian, have little to no close Dutch 'native' friends or contacts, have not obtained nor are in the process of obtaining a tertiary education degree it appears as if parallel lives are being lived in Rotterdam.

On one side you have Dutch 'natives' who in general have relatively high educational levels, occupy high-paying jobs, and are overrepresented in the wealthier neighbourhoods and areas of the city. On the other you have those with a foreign background and they in contrast seem to have relatively low educational levels, low-paying jobs and are concentrated in poorer more run-down areas of the city. Socio-economic status and ethnic identity thus seem to intersect.

There are of course exceptions to these patterns, but it is noteworthy that both during the interviews and the fieldwork, those with a non-Dutch background tended to feel, look, behave, and act more like 'natives' the higher their position on the socio-economic ladder. This could be explained by the reality that as minorities rise up the socio-economic ladder they also become increasingly exposed to 'native' Dutch contexts. Since being and acting 'Dutch' is the norm in these contexts the pressure to adapt and assimilate becomes larger, even in a superdiverse context like Rotterdam. Conversely minorities who occupy the lower strata of society have limited interactions with 'natives' and appear (despite being othered) not to feel the same level of pressure to conform.

4.5. Towards a synthesised explanatory framework

The three presented themes together offer an understanding of how young adult Dutch Bosnians in this sample tend to develop a hybrid identity in relation to relevant social conditions and processes. What we see is that Individuals are not born with a Dutch, Bosnian or any kind of identity; they develop one through social interactions. What these interrelated themes have primarily demonstrated are the similarities and differences in how a hybrid Dutch Bosnian identity is constructed, experienced, and expressed by the research participants. The themes further revealed how the role of Rotterdam as a superdiverse city enables those with a Bosnian background to engage in transnational practices and develop transnational identities consisting of both Dutch and Bosnian elements. Simultaneously,

however, the dominant political discourse on Dutch identity and integration prevents Dutch Bosnians from fully identifying with the Netherlands due to its ethnocentric and exclusionary character.

Consequently, despite most feeling some level of connection to their Bosnian background and feeling comfortable with it in a superdiverse context, it is nonetheless this connection which serves as the precondition for them not being able to fit in completely in the Netherlands. Being Dutch is not fully compatible with holding onto a non-Dutch national and cultural background, because Dutch ethnicity and culture occupy a normative position to which people are expected to conform. Despite the inherent diversity of Rotterdam, it is primarily the attributes and behaviours aligned with a narrow conception of 'Dutchness' that hold the greatest value and receive the most recognition within Dutch society. It is therefore understandable that distance to the Dutch identity was overwhelmingly emphasised during the interviews and observed during the fieldwork.

The three discussed themes provide us with a set of concepts and ideas which together synthesise into an emergent explanatory framework that illuminates the process of hybrid identity development among Dutch Bosnian young adults in Rotterdam. The rest of the findings section is dedicated to outlining this synthesis and elaborating on the key concepts and relationships that it captures. Ultimately the value of this explanatory framework is not merely limited to the sample in question but could theoretically also be adapted and applied to fit the purposes of future research aiming to understand the identity formation and societal position of a given minority group within a specific country. This could be in studies focusing on the integration process of a Bosnian diaspora in a different country or other minority groups in the Netherlands for instance.

Hybrid identity: Identity as a continuum rather than category

A key concept which has emerged out of this research is that of *hybrid identity*. While it was clear that some of the research participants felt more proximity to one culture or country over the other, none of them identified fully with either. The lived reality in the country of birth and residence combined with the cultural heritage constitute the raw material for the development of a sense of self or identity. In this particular sample it was evident that these conditions in and of themselves do not necessarily result in a feeling of being half Dutch and

half Bosnian. The extent to which they feel that they belong differs depending on the context, time, and situation. It was for example possible for someone who significantly felt more Bosnian to feel homesick for the Netherlands while on holiday in Bosnia. Similarly, a person who feels significantly more Dutch could at the same time feel little to no cultural resonance with Dutch people.

As such it is important to use identity labels and categories with care to avoid essentialising or oversimplifying the experience of individuals. In addition, being aware of the fact that nationality and ethnicity are not the only sources of meaning and belonging is crucial, especially in contemporary globalised societies. Employing a fluid and relational approach towards identity, grounded in the subjective experience of the individual is thus preferable.

Superdiversity: importance of the everyday socio-cultural environment

While the subjective experience of the individual is fundamental to consider, it is also important to link it to the *socio-cultural context* within which their subjective experience is shaped. In the confines of this research the superdiverse character of Rotterdam in particular has proven to be of considerable importance and influence. It contributes to creating a context in which the Dutch Bosnian young adults can explore and develop their sense of self without experiencing constant othering or being under continuous scrutiny for having a non-Dutch background. While growing up they were thus partly relieved of a pressure to conform to certain normative expectations of what it means to be Dutch, something which most indeed mentioned.

Studies that explore identity construction and the integration of minorities should with this in mind take care to identify and consider ways in which a given socio-cultural context shapes and could shape the identity outcomes of a group of people. This ensures that both the subjective experience and possible structural effects are accounted for.

National integration discourse: Influence of political discourses and economic conditions

In addition to the immediate socio-cultural context, the role of broader *political discourses and economic conditions* should also be acknowledged and understood. In a Western-European nation-state like the Netherlands where an exclusionary notion of Dutch identity dominates and where minorities are overrepresented in the lower strata of society, pressures to assimilate remain prominent. Although the Dutch Bosnians in this sample did not seem to

encounter huge problems, it was still noticeable that they and their identity were affected by these macro-structural forces. The assimilationist identity discourse clashes with their own conception of what it means to be Dutch which as a result reduces their sense of belonging in the wider Dutch imagined community. The fact that class intersects with ethnicity furthermore means that minorities (e.g., their characteristics and lifestyles) come to be largely associated with being lower class and hence low status. Especially minorities who move up the social ladder, therefore, tend to experience more pressure to shed certain behaviours and habits and instead act in a more desired way like 'natives'.

There is usually a myriad of contextual factors which can exert an influence on the subjective experience of people. Rather than assuming what these factors might be, a more suitable approach is to infer and determine them through what the group of individuals being researched says or does. This is a good way to link the subjective experiences to an intersubjective or more objective reality which both enables and constrains the individuals. This approach and framework additionally avoid assuming that structural effects are generalised for all since the perception of the individual is taken into account.

In the final analysis, it was thus a question of understanding the relationships between these concepts (i.e., hybrid identity, superdiversity, and integration discourse) as a way to explain the experiences of young adult Dutch Bosnians in a holistic manner. These relationships are summarised below.

Hybrid identity and superdiversity

1. The superdiverse context of Rotterdam provides a space where hybrid identities are to a certain extent accepted and celebrated.
2. Young adults growing up within this superdiverse context are empowered and enabled to embrace their non-Dutch heritage which encourages the construction of hybrid identities.
3. Feelings of being accepted and valued in such a superdiverse environment create a positive feedback-loop which instils young adults with a sense of comfort regarding their hybrid identity.

Hybrid identity and national integration discourse

1. The pervasiveness of a political discourse which draws a boundary between a native Dutch 'we' and a non-native Dutch 'them' excludes those with a foreign background from the Dutch imagined community.
2. Exposure to majority 'native' contexts, ideas, and symbols as well as interactions with 'natives' compel those with a foreign background to conform to a notion of 'Dutchness' which requires a level of identity negotiation and reconstruction to fit in.
3. The need to balance and integrate both elements of their Dutch lived reality and Bosnian heritage contributes to the development of hybrid identities that seek to bridge gaps between the two sides and create a coherent sense of self.

Superdiversity and national integration discourse

1. The high level of diversity in Rotterdam reduces the feeling of standing out and thereby mitigates the overarching pressure to conform to an exclusive notion of 'Dutchness'.
2. The intersection between ethnic segregation and socio-economic inequality means that the level of diversity within Rotterdam differs depending on the socio-economic status associated with a given place, lifestyle, or job.
3. Places, lifestyles, and jobs characterised by a high-level diversity come to be associated with a low socio-economic status while the converse is true in cases of 'native' homogeneity.
4. Othering thus remains an issue in Rotterdam while the pressure for minorities to conform differs based on their level of education and socio-economic status.

Ultimately, the outlined relationships between the key concepts together have provided a comprehensive framework to interpret the experiences of Dutch Bosnian young adults in a way that transcends their subjective experiences. Instead, it allows us to draw connections with specific contextual features. As such, it was for example possible to account for how some Dutch Bosnians in the sample feel more Dutch than others by linking it to how the pressure to conform seems to increase for those with a higher level of education.

5. Concluding remarks

To conclude this research, it is important to consider the significance and implications of the main findings. We have learned that this particular sample of young adult Dutch Bosnians living in Rotterdam develop hybrid identities. They come to feel both Dutch and Bosnian – for different reasons and to different degrees – but neither fully Dutch nor Bosnian. The combination of an integration discourse, which emphasises conformity to a normative Dutch identity, and a superdiverse context mediating the very need to conform, constitute the macro and meso level context which prompts Dutch Bosnians to develop these ambiguous identities of being neither this nor that.

It might seem logical that a person with a Bosnian background in the Netherlands incorporates elements of both the Netherlands and Bosnia, but it is important to remember that according to existing theories on integration and assimilation different integration outcomes are possible (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Some immigrant groups for example live in highly concentrated and large enclaves which can hinder integration into the host-society and culture (Danzer & Yaman, 2013). Likewise, Erel (2010) notes that the role of the parents is also influential regarding the extent to which a person will integrate into the host-society or feel resonance with their background, which was evident in this research project as well.

The point is ultimately that there is a plethora of factors involved in the identity development of second-generation immigrants and that any given outcome should not be seen as self-evident. The focus of the research here was specifically on considering the role of superdiversity and integration discourse, which by no means exhausts all the possible factors involved. It was a theoretical choice based on existing literature, personal accounts of interviewees, and my own discretion and judgement as a Dutch Bosnian sociology student.

With regard to the existing literature, this research project contributes some valuable insights. First of all, the findings here fill a gap in the research dealing with diversity, immigration, integration, and identity in the Netherlands by providing an account of how an understudied segment of the population experience their place in Dutch society. In that sense it builds on the extensive work of Dutch sociologists such as Maurice Crul, Frans Lelie, Peter Scholten, Jan Willem Duyvendak and others who focus on migration and integration.

What the findings and accounts presented here show well in particular, is how the tension between the living reality of superdiversity (enabling the retention of one's cultural background) and the latent influence of an assimilationist and culturalist integration discourse (stressing conformity to a normative Dutch identity) seems to be a salient factor in how second-generation Bosnians come to make sense of their identity and their position in Dutch society. The interviewees' experiences with diversity, the way they talk about their Dutch/Bosnian identity and their opinions on integration are all indicative of an unbridgeable gap between themselves and feeling genuinely and unconditionally Dutch. This is in line with Gordijn's (2010) argument that the construction of an essentialized Dutch identity following the assimilationist turn of the 2000s serves to create a boundary between 'natives' and others. Likewise, it also supports Jan Rath's (1991) argument that this boundary ends up complicating the integration process of immigrants because it prevents them from becoming full members of the Dutch imagined community and thus citizens.

Ultimately, the reason why Dutch Bosnians lack a full identification with their Dutch identity is not merely due to them also feeling Bosnian, but rather because the notion of Dutch citizenship and identity is inherently exclusionary and unaccommodating of other ethnic, national, and cultural influences (Diez & Squire, 2008). There is no reason why people could not identify as genuinely both Dutch and Bosnian; people in any case tend to have multiple identities (Stets & Burke, 2014). The fact that most of the research participants feel comfortable with their hybrid identity, they are aware that their idiosyncratic versions of being Dutch do not fit the normative idea of what it means to be Dutch, which thus creates an unnecessary distance.

Based on the findings of this research I would agree with Crul and his colleagues (2013) who suggest that the increasing diversity in the Netherlands calls for reconceptualizing what it means to be integrated, because in superdiverse contexts such as Rotterdam "young people of the second generation are more likely to be the 'born and bred' group than other young city dwellers from the old majority group" (p.15).

Considering the increasing diversity and the problematic conceptualization of what it means to be Dutch, it is important to understand how second- and third-generation immigrants especially, experience and come to feel at home in the Netherlands so that a more

inclusive form of Dutch citizenship can be created which allows for multiple ways of being Dutch rather than imposing one version on everyone.

As most Western-European nation-states are becoming increasingly diverse, governments will need to devise more inclusive forms of citizenship that foster two-sided integration of both 'natives' and "foreigners" to ensure all citizens feel at home and have the same opportunities. Culture and nationality are by far not the only ways in which people can differ or be alike. Differences between people are an existential reality but should not form the basis for exclusion or inequality. Developments towards a more fluid and inclusionary form of national citizenship such as in the US or Canada would not necessarily solve the aforementioned issues but would nonetheless reflect a commitment towards a Dutch imagined community where everyone is included.

This is exactly where future social scientific research can come into play and can help in two prominent ways: 1) lay bare the problems surrounding citizenship and integration; and 2) support governments in devising integration policies to deal effectively with diversity.

The research here provides a useful methodological approach and interpretative framework that could be applied in such future studies. The framework allows for the development of a holistic understanding that combines both the subjective experiences of individuals while considering the influence of contextual factors. The produced insights can ultimately make manifest pertinent issues on the meso or macro level as was the case here.

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Appendix

Some important things referred to throughout the text are included below for easy access. Other relevant documents can be found in the zip folder which has been submitted through canvas.



Bachelor Paper Annex.zip

Appendix 1: sample message used to contact potential interviewees

Voor mijn scriptie doe ik onderzoek naar hoe Rotterdamse jongvolwassenen met een Bosnische/Kroatische afkomst naar hun duale identiteit kijken (de Nederlandse en Bosnische aspecten) en ermee omgaan.

Om hier een beter inzicht in te krijgen heb ik mensen nodig om te interviewen. Zo'n interview duurt ongeveer 45 á 50 minuten en 60 minuten max. Het interview zelf is niet gecompliceerd ofzo, het gaat gewoon de vorm van een vriendelijk open gesprek nemen over identiteit, nationaliteit,, integratie en cultuur; dingen die mij persoonlijk interesseren en daarmee ook het mikpunt zijn van mijn onderzoek. Het interview geeft je de vrijheid en ruimte om al je gedachtes en ideeën te uiten :)

Dus mocht je hiervoor openstaan en het je niet al te intimiderend of saai lijkt zou ik het enorm waarderen mocht je willen meedoen aan een interview.

Appendix 2: Interview Questionnaire: Dutch Bosnians and self-identity

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) How do Dutch youth of Bosnian descent living in Rotterdam make sense of their layered identity? (Constructivist)
 - a) How does the way they talk about their identity fit into wider discourses regarding integration in the Netherlands and the superdiverse context of Rotterdam? (Critical/post-positivist)

THE QUESTIONS

First make the participant at ease: explain what my aim is and what the expectations are i.e. I want to understand how they experienced their life and identity

Ice-breaker Questions

- 1) Drop-off questions
 - a) How old are you?
 - b) Where were you born?
 - c) Did you live there most of your life as well?
 - d) Where do your parents come from?
 - e) How many languages do you speak and which?
 - f) Are you at all religious and if so what religion?
 - g) Are you currently studying or working?

Introduction Questions: Rotterdam and Upbringing

- 2) So, you grew up in Rotterdam, how do you look back on your upbringing and life here? What are some of the fondest/unpleasant memories?
 - a) **Probe:** Do you see yourself living here in the future?
- 3) Rotterdam is a pretty diverse city, over 50% of the people have a migratory background from 170 different countries. Would you say that your friends and the people you usually spend time with reflect this diversity? (At school, sports clubs, etc.)
 - a) **Probe:** Are people's ethnicity, nationality, culture or religion in general an important factor when making friends for you?

Transition Question: Identity

- 4) You are now (insert years old) do you think you have a good sense of who you are? If you had to describe yourself to someone who doesn't know you, what would be some things they would have to know about you?
- a) **Probe:** What is important to you? What do you enjoy doing? Do you have any strong convictions, beliefs, or values of some sort?

Key Questions: Bosnian Identity

- 5) I obviously already know that you have a Bosnian background, but I am wondering how you feel about this. What is your relationship to Bosnia, Bosnian culture, and Bosnian people in general?
- a) **Probe:** When you think of Bosnia, Bosnian culture and Bosnian people in general, what comes to mind? (What ideas, practices, views, feelings, emotions etc. do you associate with it?)
- 6) Considering what you just told me would you then say that you personally feel a certain connection to this Bosnian side of your identity? (to what extent and why?)
- a) **Probe:** Do you feel Bosnian and is it an important aspect of who you are? To what extent and why? (Are you involved with the Bosnian community in Rotterdam, do you visit Bosnia regularly, do you have Bosnian friends? Do you listen to Bosnian music, eat Bosnian food etc.)

Key Questions: Dutch Identity

- 7) Now, having discussed your Bosnian side, I'd like to talk more about your Dutch side. You obviously grew up in the Netherlands and have been in contact with Dutch culture and people considerably. Do you consider yourself Dutch and if so, what does it mean for you to be Dutch?
- a) **Probe:** What ideas, practices, views, feelings, emotions etc. do you associate with it?
- 8) Do you feel that this Dutch side of you is an important aspect of who you are and to what extent? (in how you think, what you do, your social life, hobbies etc.)

Key Questions: Interplay between Dutch and Bosnian identity

- 9) We've now discussed the Bosnian and Dutch sides of your identity separately but what I'm interested in now is to see how you deal with and experience these two aspects of your

Dutch Bosnian but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'

identity? (**Probe:** Is there a tension between them? Do they contradict? is it something you have considered or have thought about before? Discussed with others? etc.)

- a) Do you feel like you feel different or behave differently when you are with Bosnian family and friends compared to when you are with Dutch friends or in general at school, at work or in public? If so, what are the differences?
 - i) Do you ever feel like you have to hide your Bosnian aspect in everyday life and if so why? (e.g. hyper vigilance, speaking ABN, etc.)
 - ii) Related to this: do you think native Dutch people would consider you fully Dutch? If not, do you think you could ever be considered fully Dutch? Would you even want to be considered fully Dutch? Are you comfortable with your mixed identity?

Key Question: Integration in Netherlands

- 10) Integration has been a hot topic in Dutch politics with parties like the PVV and FVD in particular seeking to restrict the inflow of immigrants while at the same time emphasising the need for immigrants to integrate and even assimilate to the Dutch culture, value and norms, which in essence means erasing and devaluing their mother culture. What are your views on this? Imagine if you were a politician and you had the power to implement laws and draw up policies; what would you do? Do you think immigrants and children of immigrants should prioritise the Dutch culture at the expense of their own or do you think there should be room for the ethnicity of origin to exist alongside the Dutch identity? (Zwarte Piet, Islam)

Closing Questions

- 11) *Optional question in case it is not discussed before:* As a researcher I'm focusing on the tension between your Dutch and Bosnian aspects but do you yourself feel this is the most salient aspect of your identity? (If not what is? Maybe they feel more like a Rotterdammer or perhaps identify with a sub-culture e.g. football fandoms, local youth culture, or perhaps a global cosmopolitan culture)
- 12) Thank you that was it! Do you have any comments or questions? Do you want to come back to something we discussed?

Dutch Bosnian but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'

Appendix 3: Example of coded piece of data in NVivo

The screenshot displays an interview transcript on the left and a list of code stripes on the right. The transcript includes dialogue between Almira and Edwin, with several segments highlighted in yellow. The code stripes on the right are color-coded to match the highlights in the transcript.

Transcript Excerpt:

ja of over iets vroeger dan eh switcht zij ook vaak naar Bosnisch ofzo of ja als ze boos is ofzo dan eh...

Almira: Oh ja ja dat is wel een favoriet, Oh die was ik vergeten. Goed dat je die zegt. **[Both laughing]**

Edwin: Ja het is een goede taal om in te vloeken. En ja als je in Nederland bent luister je dan ook naar Bosnische muziek ehm of kijk je Bosnische tv eh ben je op de hoogte van wat er in Bosnië gaande is?

Almira: Eh ik kijk, we kijken geen Bosnische tv überhaupt, eh want mijn ouders zijn zo van we wonen in Nederland en het is belangrijk dat je weet wat hier gebeurt, eh mijn vader leest dan wel een soort van in de avond wel even de Bosnische krant op de telefoon dus hij weet het wel eh, ik hoor het via hem eh maar dan ook echt alleen wat ik interessant vind om te horen. Ik vind het nou echt niet interessant dat er een nieuwe snelweg wordt aangelegd ofzo... maar dat vindt hij heel interessant eh zeg maar ja weet je wel, als Bosnië een keer voetbaalspeelt of als iemand wat op de olympische Spelen heeft gewonnen, politieke situaties - steeds meer bag in ik dat te begrijpen. Ik had me daar heel specifiek van afgezonderd 22 jaar lang ehm, nou ja, dat begin ik nu ook steeds meer te begrijpen, dus daar zit dan ook wel weer wat interesse eh, maar echt dat ik heb bewust ga kijken: nee daar heb ik geen behoefte aan en Bosnische muziek ehm... Ja ja op zich wel niet elke dag. Wekelijks wel, dat hangt een beetje van mijn mood af, wat mijn Spotify aanraadt. Maar ik heb wel een eh een een Bosnische Balkan playlist die ik geregeld luister ja.

Edwin: En zijn het vooral nummers die je vaak als kind hoorde?

Almira: Ja toevalig wel ja. Echt artiesten die mijn ouders luisteren, ik luister geen eh, bijna geen eh nieuwe hedsongs turbo volk rappers **[Both laughing]** Ja ik kan ze allemaal hoor, maar omdat ik geforceerd ben om naar te luisteren weet je, maar ik leer wel old school dingetjes.

Edwin: En ja je ouders, hebben die ook wel veel Nederlandse vrienden zou je zeggen?

Almira: Hmm... ja collega's maar niet per se echt ehm... even nadenken... wel gehad die ik me als kind zijnde herinner maar nu bijna niet eigenlijk.

Edwin: Dus als mensen op bezoek kwamen of jullie gingen ergens op bezoek waren het vooral ja andere Bosniërs?

Almira: Ja terecht we... ja **[Laughs]** heb ik nooit echt bij stilgestaan. K loopt ja het was allemaal Bosnisch inderdaad.

Edwin: Ja bij mij ook hoor toen ik klein was.

Almira: Ja ik zit echt erover na te denken van: "ja je hebt echt een punt".

Edwin: Ja oké dat was de Bosnische kant ehm nu wil ik wat meer naar die Nederlandse kant gaan. Je bent natuurlijk opgegroed in Nederland, je bent in contact geweest met Nederlanders, Nederlandse cultuur, Nederlandse taal ehm dus ja je ze 50/50; in hoeverre beschouw je jezelf als Nederlander dan qua wat voor opzichten?

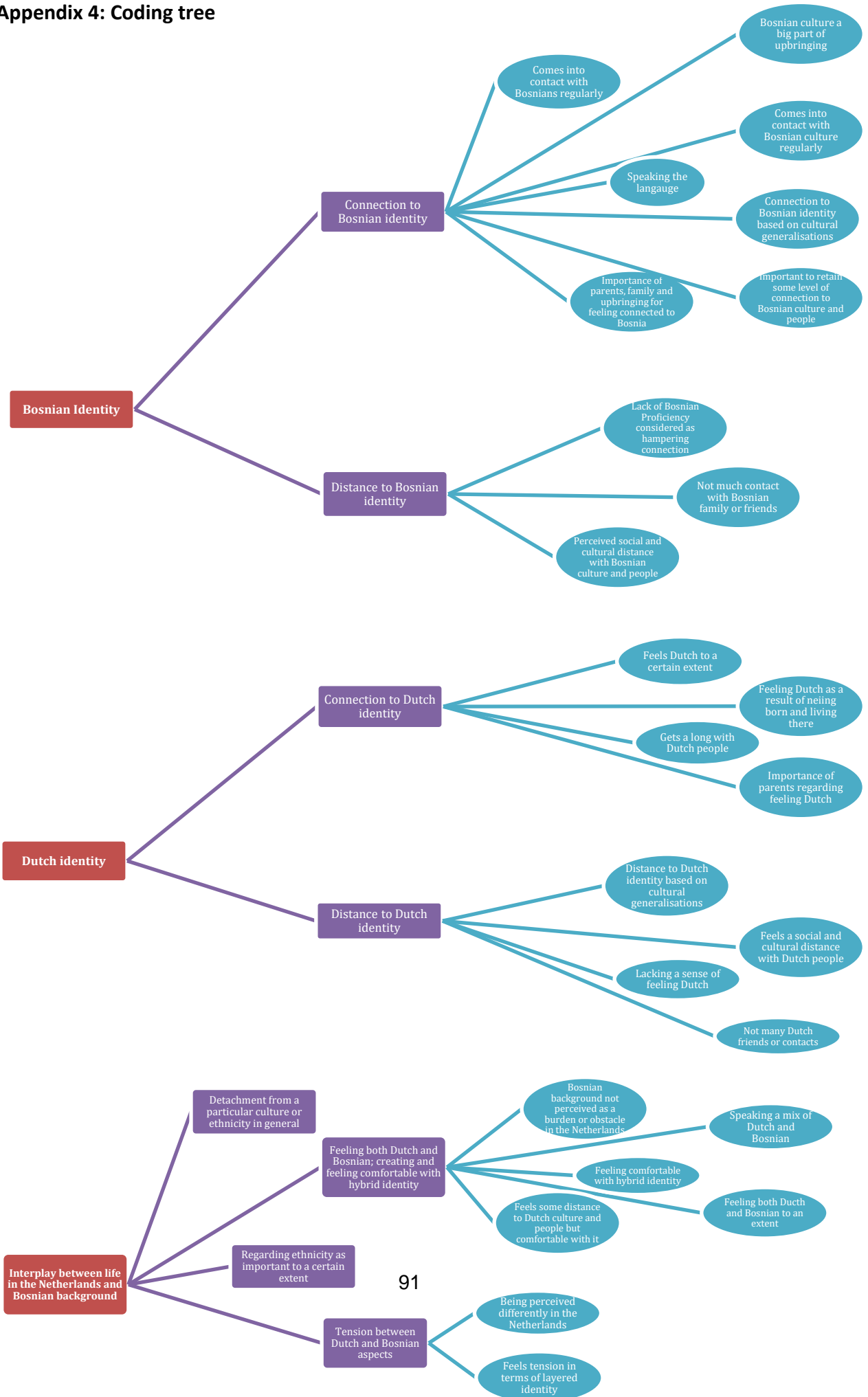
Almira: A ls iemand bijvoorbeeld in het buitenland. A ls ik niet in Bosnië ben eh en diegene vraagt aan mij: "Waar kom je vandaan?" dan zeg ik automatisch Nederland, eh want ik voel mij Nederlands eh tot een bepaald punt. En dat punt is soort van het het culturele soort van ehm: wat mij maakt is niet Nederlands, dus de opvoeding, de persoon die ik ben in de kern, is niet Nederlands dus dat gaat ook nooit Nederlands zijn want dat ben ik niet eh maar alles eromheen. Dus eh dat ik open minded ben, dat ik outgoing ben, dat ik iets meer extravert ben, dat is wel het Nederlands dus dat ehm... Maar ik ben

Code Stripes:

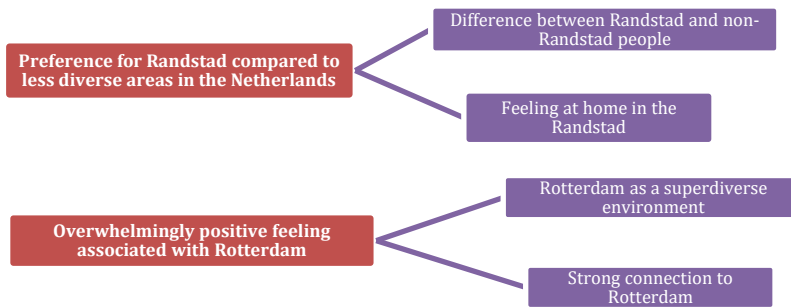
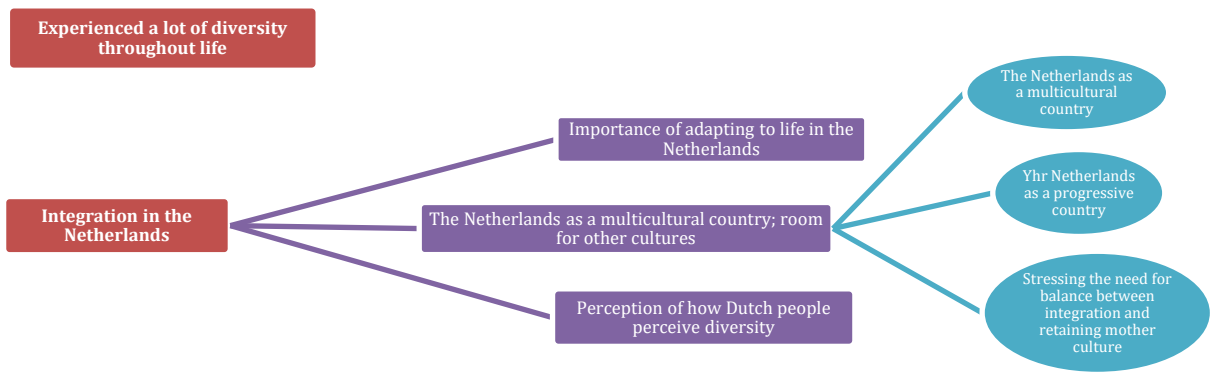
- Parents had a lot of connections with other Bosnians in NL
- Parents also religious (Muslim)
- Positive view on and proud of Bosnian background in terms of culture, people and time spent there
- Home feeling in Bosnia or when thinking about it, family and roots
- Feels genuinely Bosnian, feels natural and self-evident, feels at home
- Feeling Bosnian in terms of personality and identity
- FEELING BOSNIAN TO AN EXTENT
- Bosnians not a very extravagant or flamboyant people
- Bosnians as more immersed in their culture and closed minded
- Bosnians as hospitable and friendly people
- Bosnians as a warm and tight-knit people
- CONNECTION TO BOSNIAN IDENTITY BASED ON CULTURAL GENERALISATIONS
- Visits Bosnia regularly (at least once a year)
 - Interested in political situation in Bosnia
- Follows Bosnian sports news and achievements
- Feels religious (Muslim)
- COMES INTO CONTACT WITH BOSNIAN CULTURE REGULARLY
- Visiting Bosnia for friends and family
- Stressing importance of Bosnian friends both in Bosnia and in NL regarding feeling connected to Bosnia
- Spends a lot of time with other Bosnians in NL
- Part of a Bosnian youth organisation
- Large family in both Bosnia and NL
- Has regular contact with Bosnian friends and family in Bosnia
- Has a Bosnian friendgroup through a youth organisation
- Feel like they can talk and bond over similar struggles and experiences with other Dutch Bosnians
- Bosnian community in Rotterdam very connected
- COMES INTO CONTACT WITH BOSNIANS REGULARLY
- Went to Mosque school for 4 years
- Role of parents as key in terms of connection to Bosnian culture is how they raise you
- Parents play an important role in creating a connection with Bosnia but also up to yourself, do you embrace it and do you want to sustain it
- Islam a big part of life and upbringing and norms and values
- BOSNIAN CULTURE BIG PART OF UPRISING
- CONNECTION TO BOSNIAN IDENTITY
- BOSNIAN IDENTITY
- Coding Density

Dutch Bosnian but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'

Appendix 4: Coding tree



Dutch Bosnian but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'



Appendix 5: Consent form sample (English version)

Participation on bachelor thesis research project on identity and Dutch youth of Bosnian descent.

Dear,

As part of my bachelor thesis under supervision by Prof. Dr. Peter Stevens of the faculty of Political and Social Sciences of Ghent University, I am conducting research to gain an understanding of how Dutch youth of Bosnian descent deal with and make sense of their layered identity. The idea is to use this understanding and see how it fits into to the wider discourse on immigration and integration in the Netherlands.

During the month of July in 2022 I will be interviewing Dutch-born people living in Rotterdam between the ages of 18 and 30 years old who have a Bosnian background.

I would like to ask you to participate in an interview. An interview usually takes between 45 and 60 minutes and will be recorded digitally for analysis purposes. Only I, the professor and his assistants can use this data in relationship to specific educational tasks related to the course.

I promise to:

- 1 Destroy the data at the end of the academic year. The professor will keep the data on a safe location at the university. No real names will be used in the presentation of/reporting on the data.
- 2 Only share the gathered data with the professor and teaching assistants
- 3 Only conduct the interview if the interviewer him/herself and the respondent have signed this letter, and each received a copy of this signed letter.

Please contact me for more information on this assignment.

Sincerely,

July 2022

Edwin Dizdagic



Email: edwin.dizdagic@vub.be

+32468352347

Phone:

I,(name of the person taking part in the interview) have read and understood the contents of this letter and WILL/ WILL NOT (delete/cross/mark where applicable) take part with an interview within the frame of this research

Date

Surname, Name

Signature

Appendix 6: Theme structure and composition

Main theme: 'Dutch Bosnian' but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'		
<u>Code/subcode name</u>	<u>Number of sources mentioned in</u>	<u>Number of total code references</u>
Experiences with Bosnian Identity	10	388
<u>Connection with Bosnian identity</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>296</u>
Bosnian culture big part of upbringing	10	33
Comes into contact with Bosnian culture regularly	9	53
Comes into contact with Bosnians regularly	10	45
Connection based on cultural generalization	9	30
Feeling Bosnian to an extent	10	64
Emphasise importance of parents and upbringing	7	17
Important to retain some level of connection	10	37
Speaking the language well	7	17
<u>Distance with Bosnian identity</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>92</u>
Commenting on economic deprivation in Bosnia	5	5
Lack of Bosnian proficiency perceived as obstacle	5	13
Lack of contact with Bosnian family or friends	6	14
Perceived social and cultural distance to Bosnia and Bosnians	10	60
Lack of feeling Bosnian	9	27
Perceived distance with Bosnians	9	33
Experiences with Dutch identity	10	216
<u>Connection with Dutch identity</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>108</u>
Feeling Dutch to a certain extent	10	40
Feeling Dutch due to being born and living there	10	43
Gets along with Dutch people	7	18
Importance of parents	5	7
<u>Distance to Dutch identity</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>108</u>
Distance based on cultural generalization	8	24
Cultural and social distance with Dutch people	9	45
Not many Dutch friends or contacts	7	15
Lacking a sense of feeling Dutch	9	24
Interplay between life in the Netherlands and Bosnian background	10	281
<u>Feeling detachment from any particular ethnicity or culture</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>57</u>
<u>Regard ethnicity and culture as partly significant in general</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>18</u>

Dutch Bosnian but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'

<u>Feeling both Dutch and Bosnian to an extent and feeling confident with their hybrid identity</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>141</u>
Bosnian background not considered as obstacle	9	27
Feeling both Dutch and Bosnian to an extent	7	26
Feeling comfortable with hybrid identity	10	59
Feeling some distance to Dutch culture and people but comfortable with it	7	10
Speaking a mix of Dutch and Bosnian	7	19
<u>Tension between Dutch and Bosnian elements</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>65</u>
Being perceived differently in the Netherlands	8	48
Tension regarding layered identity	8	17

Sub-theme: Difference as making the difference in superdiverse Rotterdam

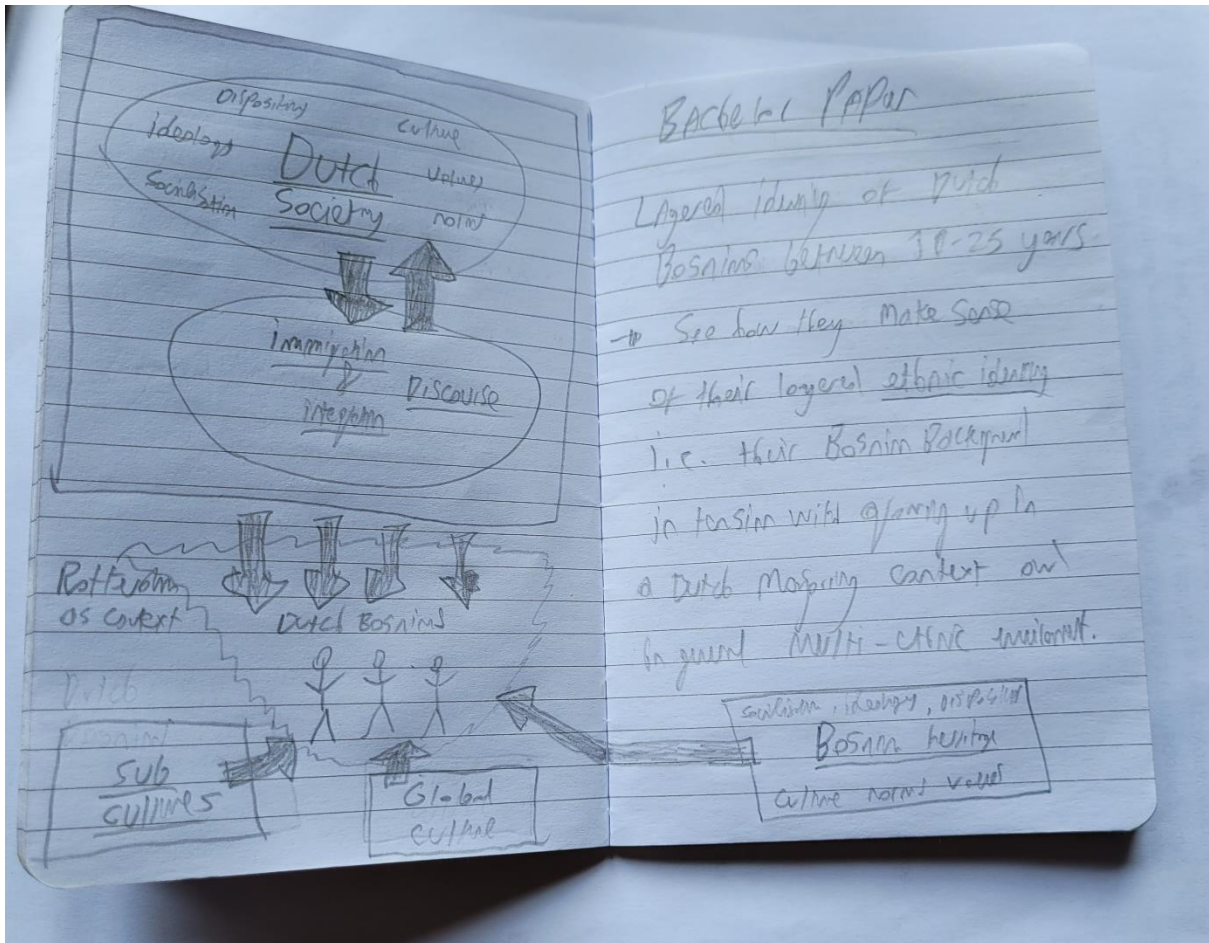
<u>Code/subcode name</u>	<u>Number of sources mentioned in</u>	<u>Number of total code references</u>
Overwhelmingly positive feelings associated with Rotterdam	10	55
<u>Rotterdam as a superdiverse context</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Strong connection to Rotterdam</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>41</u>
Preference for the Randstad over less diverse areas in the Netherlands	10	36
<u>Difference between Randstad and non-Randstad people</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Feeling at home in the Randstad</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>22</u>
Experienced a lot of diversity throughout life	10	38

Sub-theme: Dutch culture and identity remain the obvious normative mainstream

<u>Code/subcode name</u>	<u>Number of sources mentioned in</u>	<u>Number of total code references</u>
Views on integration in the Netherlands	10	113
<u>Importance of adapting to life in NL and feeling connected</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>43</u>
<u>The Netherlands considered as a multicultural country</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>The Netherlands considered as a progressive country</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Stressing importance of balancing adaptation and retention of background</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Perception of how Dutch people perceive diversity</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>22</u>

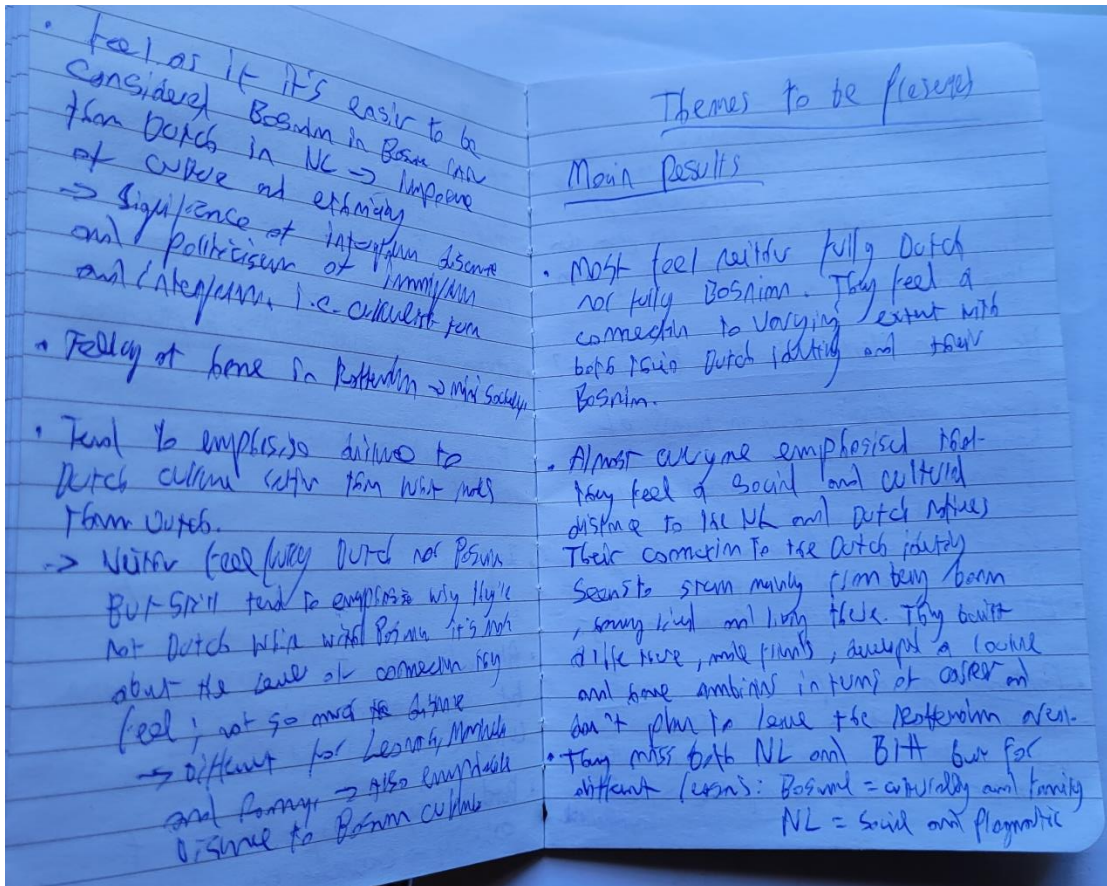
Appendix 7: extracts from notebook used for planning and developing ideas

A visual representation of the theoretical framework underpinning the research. Despite being bad at drawing, drawings like the one below did aid in making sense of data and theory.

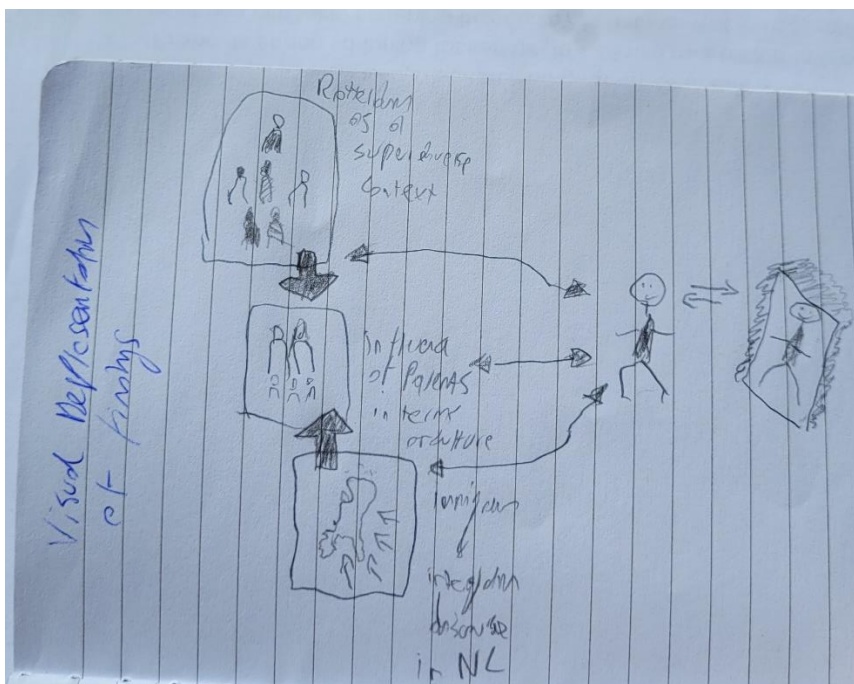


Dutch Bosnian but neither 'Dutch' nor 'Bosnian'

Most of the time I would use my laptop to work on the project but sometimes I would fall back on my little notebook which turned out to be quite handy.



A visual representation of the eventual findings



Appendix 8: picture of researcher in the field (aka me dancing the *kolo*)

