

**“If I’m around Dutch people or around anything that is even slightly Dutch I feel very very Dutch and the other times I am mostly Canadian”**  
**A narrative account of the identities of Dutch-Canadian emerging adults**

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With this research I provide an empirical account of the way Dutch-Canadian emerging adults (EA) between the age of 19 and 26 perceive their Dutchness in relation to their identities in Canadian contexts. I build this research upon concepts of migration, identity and belonging, and by exploring the interrelationship of these three concepts. Through the analysis of nine interviews three major themes related to informants’ identification emerged: narratives of authenticity, narratives of self-exploration and narratives of negotiation. After analyzing these three themes four other themes came to the surface: language, roots and routes, behaviour, and appearance. Looking at how Dutch-Canadian EA narrate their experiences I aim to provide more insight into the complexities of identity as a narrative construction. With these findings I contribute to the fields of cultural and migration studies while also shedding some light on European migrants as this is a topic that not often reaches public debate. Even though the usage of the terms Dutch and Canadian implies homogeneity, this research shows that the Dutch, as well as Canadians, are hybrid, dynamic and diverse.

Key terms: Culture; anthropology; identity; migration; emerging adulthood; narratives.

## Introduction

*As teenagers we always have struggles with identity and commitment. Or like an identity crisis. Who am I and who am I supposed to be? But because I felt like I was transplanted from one place to the next I really didn't know where I belonged so that was hard.* (Marieke<sup>1</sup>)

In the short excerpt quoted above, a young Dutch-Canadian woman named Marieke points out one of the many questions faced by emerging adults (EA): who am I and where do I belong? The term EA captures the transitional period between a person's late teens to their mid to late twenties. During emerging adulthood, people try to become independent from their parents, question things around them, explore who they are and what they want to become while also experiencing feelings of in-between-ness and instability that are associated with these constant changes (Arnett 2007). Although questions like that of Marieke affect many people while growing up they seem to be very common among migrant youth, especially when looking at issues of diaspora, nationalism and dislocation (Anthias 2002). When talking about her second relocation Marieke later on refers to herself as a "tripod", indicating that she feels connected to three different places: The Netherlands, Alberta and Ontario. Narratives, such as the one from Marieke, demonstrate how there seems to be a constant quest to find out who we are and where we belong.

Habacon (2007, 4) mentions that second and third-generation descendants "have an incredible combined social, economic and cultural mobility. Their experience of cultural identity is so complex that it has been challenging to articulate." However, due to a large amount of immigrant communities, second and third-generation descendants in Canada seem to have the freedom to explore their different backgrounds without distancing themselves from Canada's mainstream culture (Wong & Guo 2015). Canada's multicultural policies and programs ensure that "unlike their Australian and American counterparts, Canadians are not burdened by having to cut their ties to a culturally rich ancestry in order to find acceptance as part of mainstream culture, or vice versa" (Habacon 2007, 4).

The increase of cultural globalization and mobility seems to have profound implications for identity formation during emerging adulthood as concepts of citizenship and national identity no longer equate attachments or loyalty to one particular nation state (Hoerder, Hébert & Schmitt 2005; Huntington 2004). The search for identity and belonging thus seems to go hand in hand with the concept of globalization. On the one hand, globalization contributes to homogeneity,

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<sup>1</sup> All names used in this study are pseudonyms, either chosen by informants or myself.

universality and unity as technologies have made it possible to bring people from different places together through, for example, the use of internet. On the other hand, globalization also contributes to heterogeneity, differentiation, and diversity as people from different backgrounds come into contact and realize their differences (Bornman 2003).

So far the majority of research into migration issues focuses on what happens to identity when people migrate from one country to the other (Anthias 2012). Research often questions whether migrant groups integrate and identify with the country of migration or with the homeland. The timing of my research coincides with the continuous debates about the current migrant 'crisis' in Europe. Up until now research in the field of culture and migration studies tends to focus on the Other, often non-European migrants, while putting emphasis on marginality and inequality (Dong 2012). However, limited research puts focus on European migrants. By focusing on European migrants who have migrated from one western country to another I hope to shift the focus in both the public debate and academic field by shedding some light on how Dutch-Canadian migrants in Canada shape, adapt, or create identities.

Altogether I found it interesting to figure out how Dutch-Canadians articulate themselves in relation to migration, identity, and belonging as these concepts influence one another greatly. Therefore, the central focus of my research was to investigate how Dutch-Canadian EA between the ages of 19 and 26 develop identities in relation to migration and settlement processes. I tried to do this by interviewing them about their experiences in relation to the Netherlands and Canada. Thus, this research addresses the following research question:

How do Dutch-Canadian EA mobilize Dutchness in relation to their identities in Canadian contexts and how do they shape, negotiate and narrate these identities?

## **Context**

### *Dutch migration to Canada*

According to the 2011 Statistics Canada Census, the Dutch population in Canada is one of the few ethnic minority groups that surpass the 1-million mark. In 2011, of the 32,852,320 ethnic origins in Canada, 1,067,245 were said to come from Dutch descent (Statistics Canada Census 2011). Dutch migration to Canada started when Dutch settlers made their way to the West of Canada between 1890 and 1914 (Ganzevoort 2009). This was followed by a second period of migration from 1923-1930 that was halted by the Great Depression. An estimated 25,000 Dutch or Dutch-American migrants entered Canada between the period of 1890 and

1930 (Klatter-Folmer & Kroon 1997). From then onwards there has been a continuing influx of Dutch migrants with the migratory peak being after World War II when over 170,000 migrants moved to Canada (Klatter-Folmer & Kroon 1997). After World War II the economy and job market in the Netherlands was at an all time low. In order to reduce the population and stimulate economic growth, the government decided to support migration by giving governmental grants (Klatter-Folmer & Kroon 1997).

As a whole, most Dutch migrants settled in the urban areas of the western provinces and nearly half settled in Ontario (Schryer 2006). Within these areas the linguistic landscape is characterized by visible landmarks such as Dutch stores, Dutch societies, Dutch churches and Dutch retirement homes. Although many Dutch landmarks still exist, Schryer (2006) states that Dutch migrants have been known for giving up their ethnic identity much faster than other Canadian migrant groups. The Dutch show a high level of linguistic assimilation resulting in second or third generations that often speak little Dutch. However, Schryer (2006) does state that the children of Dutch migrants in Canada often develop a strong awareness of their Dutch-Canadian origin when they grow up or approach marriage. It is therefore interesting to see how Dutch-Canadian EA deal with their Dutch roots while growing up in Canada and what is common among them.

## **Conceptual framework**

### *Migration*

Broadly speaking, migration could refer to all types of human movement ranging from cities to villages, from one village to another and even from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. Anthias (2012, 1) adds to this that migration can be identified “with movements of people across nation-state and territorial borders with issues of ethnicity, and cultural and social dislocation, being prominent concerns”. The movement from one country to another is often done for different reasons. While some people migrate to escape war and conflict, others migrate for economic or personal reasons. The latter is often referred to as voluntary migration as it focuses on migrants who have the freedom and ability to migrate to a new country for personal reasons. Not surprisingly, this type of migration often consists of people who move from one affluent, often first-world country, to another (Dong 2012). Until now, most of the research on migration focuses on how marginalized migrants adapt to their new environment and the degree of assimilation and integration that they demonstrate (Alba & Nee 1997). The focus often lies on marginalized groups who are portrayed to have problems integrating into their host countries. However, there is a small body of research on voluntary migrants

that demonstrates how they contribute to globalization by bringing diverse cultural and linguistic features into the country (Segal, Berry & Poortinga 1999).

Migration also raises questions on where we belong. It often makes people reassess their identity as processes such as adaptation and integration influence the way people identify themselves. Levitt (as cited in Vertovec 2003, 655) points out that migrants “self-consciously reflect upon their identities” by “making values of two worlds fit” in order to enhance the understanding of who they are and how they are affiliated with different cultures.

### *What is identification?*

Identity seems to embody a multitude of concepts that are open to different interpretations. While outdated theories have suggested that identity is singular and fixed, others believe in multiple identities that are negotiated in interaction, overlap, intersect and can change depending on what context a person is in (Josselson & Harway 2012). As Hall (Rutherford 1990) notes, identities are fluid and multiple in nature, meaning that they are constantly in the process of change. Another interpretation on identity is that of Bhabha (Rutherford 1990). Bhabha uses the term “third space” by linking identity to hybridity. He believes that when two or more cultures come into contact they merge together and evolve into new cultural forms and identities.

Although differences of opinion still exist, there appears to be some agreement that identity can be linked to individuals’ explicit or implicit answers to the question: “Who are you?” (McAdams 2008). At first glance this question might sound simple but the answers usually mask various complexities. First of all, the self can often be referred to as an autobiographical author who continuously shapes and reshapes their own life story. This internalized and evolving story is often referred to as narrative identity as it provides the self with an encompassing story about one’s past, present and imagined future (McAdams 2008). Identity narratives therefore often focus on questions such as “Who am I?”, “How did I come to be?” and “Where is my life heading?”. Habermas & Bluck (2000) note that this sort of reasoning does not happen until adolescence. McAdams (2017) adds to this that:

Adolescents and emerging adults author a narrative sense of the self by telling stories about their experiences to other people, monitoring the feedback they receive from the tellings, editing their stories in light of the feedback, gaining new experiences and telling stories about those, and on and on, as selves create stories that, in turn, create new selves.

This indicates that identity formation during adolescence entails the exploration and negotiation of old and new roles, norms, values, goals and perceptions through the construction of a person's individual life story (Erickson 1995). People seem to have some sort of agency when it comes to telling life stories as they can decide for themselves which stories to tell or not to tell. In contrast to agency, however, it must also be noted that stories are only partly of our own making as people often perform certain roles based on already existing scripts. It is therefore important to note that "who you think you are" is not necessarily the same as "who you act as being" (McAdams 2017). In some cases, migrants appear to adopt a hyphenated identification by using, for example, the labels "Dutch" or "Canadian" and vice versa depending on what identification they feel most strongly about (Tastsoglou & Petrinioti 2011). Accordingly, the self comes into being by performing various embodied characteristics on an imaginary stage (Butler 1988). These performative acts are usually related to social categories of gender, race, ethnicity and/or class. By answering questions about who we are we are unknowingly abiding by these available narrative scripts.

#### *Where do we belong?*

It is interesting to study how EA interact in relation to migration and transnational identification and this can further be studied through the concept of belonging. Although we might not always be aware of it, the spaces that we inhabit form an important role in constructing our identities and sense of belonging (Blunt & Dowling 2006). Traditionally, home has often been defined as a fixed place, as being "at home" meant "being stationary, centered, bounded, fitted, engaged and grounded" (Garrett 2011, 46). Nowadays, however, the conceptualization of home becomes more problematic due to migration. This is mainly because home is hard to define as people have different connotations with the term. So how, then, do we define home and how do we know where we belong?

According to Gilroy (1993) where we come from and what we identify with can be described by using the terms "roots" and "routes". Roots refers to how individuals identify themselves with a shared community or heritage group that constitutes of common historical experiences and shared frames of reference. Routes, however, recognizes that cultural identification is shaped by active encounters. This means that identities are often fluid and flexible as they change over time depending on the context that the individual is in. Yeoh, Willis & Fakhri (2003, 213) argue that "identities, behaviour and values are not limited by location [...] instead they construct and utilize flexible personal and national identities". I find it important to note that rooted identity is rather essentialist as it implies that being raised somewhere automatically links oneself to a certain place. Essentialist theorists even state that "natural identity" can only come from "full belonging,

the warm sensation that people understand not merely what you say but what you mean [and this] can only come when you are among your own people in your native land” (Ignatieff 1993, 7). This statement is different from constructionist theorists who claim that identities are formed and reformed through our interactions in the outside world. I partially agree with the constructionist approach as it shows us that identity often transcends national boundaries as traditional categories of nations, ethnicity, and language do not always apply. However, I also believe that both roots and routes influence each other and give us a more accurate perception of identity as migration has shown us that identity often transcends national boundaries as traditional categories of nations, ethnicity and language do not always apply. Moore (1994, 21) encourages the focus on routes by saying that:

we need to talk not about roots but about routes: trajectories, paths, interactions, links. The root itself is not a bad, false or wrong story. It is, rather, a narrowly true narrative in the midst of a broader and more tangled truth, or richer story... The metaphor for human culture should be more the mangrove than the tree.

When building upon the framework of roots and routes, we could therefore say that the notion of home could have multiple meanings and cannot necessarily be pre-defined as it depends on how groups or individuals construct their own meaning of home in new, or unknown contexts (Sigmon, WhitComb & Snyder 2002). From this, it can be concluded that home is not always tied to our place of birth but also to our creation of memories and ties. Hall (Rutherford 1990) refers to this conceptualization of identity as a matter of both “becoming” and “being” as it captures experiences of the past, present and future surpassing location, time, history and culture.

According to Loader (2006, 25), the question “Who am I?” is hard to separate from the question “Where do I belong?”, meaning that our identities are closely linked to place. Yuval-Davis (2003, 141) underlines this notion as “belonging is multiplex and multi-layered, continuous and shifting, dynamic and attached”. In that sense, belonging can be conceptualized at various scales as individuals’ sense of belonging varies considerably; it can concern our own house, our street, our neighbourhood, our municipality and even our national homeland. But what factors contribute to our sense of belonging? And how is this linked to the concept of home? Antonsich (2010) describes four important factors that contribute to the feelings of belongingness; auto-biographical, relational, cultural, and legal.

Firstly, auto-biographical factors describe a person’s past experiences, networks and history by focusing on memories and emotions that have linked a

person to a certain place. Examples can be found when looking at feelings that are associated with childhood memories, a person's place of birth or their ancestral country. Therefore, it can be said that in order to feel at home in a certain place one must have certain attachments to the place in order to make it their home.

Secondly, relational factors describe the interpersonal and social relations that an individual has with a given place and how they contribute to our sense of belonging. For example, family, friends and loved ones hugely affect our sense of belonging. These relations often constitute the self as they give us a feeling of stability and comfort. Bourdieu (cited in Richardson 1998) uses the term social capital to describe social networks as a resource that gives individuals a sense of belongingness to a group. Of course, not all relationships provide us with a sense of belonging. Baumeister & Leary (1995) assert that in order to feel a sense of belonging, relationships have to be long-lasting, positive and stable. In that sense, occasional everyday encounters do not necessarily provide us with feelings of belongingness as they do not always generate a deep sense of connectedness.

Thirdly, cultural factors play a major role when it comes to belonging. Among these factors language can be seen as one of the most important factors that help us feel at home (Buonfino & Thomson 2007). When people speak a common language it invokes a sense of community in which people not only understand each other but also know what meaning their words convey. In this sense, language can be seen as an element that contributes to a person's sense of belongingness as it captures the essence of feeling at home. Besides language other cultural factors such as traditions, habits, religion and food also contribute to a sense of belongingness. For example, some of my informants actively celebrated *Koningsdag*<sup>2</sup> ('King's Day'), got together with other Dutch people when the national soccer team had to play, or made *oliebollen*<sup>3</sup> on New Year's Eve.

Fourthly, legal factors such as citizenship and resident permits also produce security for migrants as it provides them with certain rights and benefits that open up new opportunities such as getting a job. Not surprisingly, there appears to be a link between an individual's legal status and their sense of belongingness (Nelson & Hiemstra 2008). The traditional conception of citizenship is formed upon the idea that individuals belong to only one nation-state and so migrants might feel left out when they are not provided with equal access to social, civil and political rights (Bloemraad et al. 2008). For example, Tamara mentioned that Dutch-Canadian dual citizenship is not possible for her in Canada as she was not born in Canada and arrived there after a certain age. In Tamara's case, not having a Canadian passport meant that she had to make certain sacrifices

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<sup>2</sup> A national holiday in the Netherlands, held on 27 April, to celebrate the birth of King Willem-Alexander.

<sup>3</sup> A Dutch deep-fried delicacy that is consumed around New Years Eve.



when it came to jobs that required Canadian passports. However, having a Dutch passport does have meaning for Tamara as it ties her down to the Netherlands. Bourdieu (cited in Richardson 1998, 47) calls this symbolic capital and describes this as "... any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value". Altogether, the combination of the four factors mentioned above can contribute to the feeling of belongingness and a sense of home among migrants.

### **Methodology**

To answer my research question, I employ a series of qualitative in-depth interviews with Dutch-Canadian EA. The results are analyzed in order to describe and explore the themes that emerge from the interviews. Thus, the purpose of this research is to better understand the role of identity as modern-day EA try to develop certain identities by adapting to life in Canada while also retaining some sort of attachment to what has been left behind. By analysing migrant communities in Canada I hope to understand the degree of integration of migrant communities and to uncover how certain themes can be related to research on migration, identity, and belonging. Studying identity formation and all its complexities calls for an approach that is flexible and focuses on the understanding of the different facets of identity. Therefore, I decided to use qualitative methods in order to understand the process through which Dutch-Canadian EA deal with issues of identity, belonging and migration. Qualitative methods offer an effective way of data collection as they are very suitable to capture, understand and describe the behaviours and experiences of this chosen research group (Boeije 2005). By adopting a qualitative research methodology, I was able to generate a holistic but explanatory description of the phenomena of identity formation among Dutch-Canadian EA. As this research is mainly exploratory I thus avoided hypothesizing an a priori relationship between migration, media and identity. Instead, I identified new themes that emerged from the interviews while keeping pre-existing models in mind.

#### *The researcher as an insider*

Working with a collection of data that has been obtained through interviews raises questions about the relationship between the researcher and the informants. I believe that my own background has played an important role in the data that I collected. I am part of Dutch-Canadian EA and have often struggled with the question of where I belong. This personal struggle has ignited my interest in the field of identity and migration. Of course, my personal familiarity with the topic

poses several advantages and disadvantages. Among the advantages is the fact that my background can enhance my understanding of Dutch-Canadian experiences and can provide a sense of trust with the informants. My informants were incredibly interested in my background and often asked me where I was from, which places I had visited in Canada and how often I went back. However, a disadvantage might be that my background could create some sort of bias regarding the outcome of this research. For example, it is possible that I highlighted themes and aspects that were equivalent to my own personal experience while potentially disregarding themes that I could not relate to. I find it important to be aware of the influences that I, as a researcher, might take with me while writing this research. This sort of reflexivity provided me with new impressions and interpretations that I would not have been able to get by merely observing informants (Sultana 2007).

#### *Sample selection and characteristics*

The data builds upon interviews and observations of nine Dutch-Canadians (see Table 1). Only nine informants were selected, due to a lack of time, resources and funding. Before collecting the data, I tried to set up criteria for selecting the informants. As I had no idea what to expect, I decided not to be too demanding, as I wanted to find as many informants as possible in order to set up a reliable research design. I decided to start with the age group of 19-26 as this age group is generally known for the alterations and growth of their self-awareness as they try to find out who they are in relation to the physical, cognitive and social changes that occur in their lives (Erickson 1995). Second, I looked for people who had Dutch roots, meaning that at least one of their (grand)parents grew up in the Netherlands. This criterion was mainly set in order to ensure some sort of affiliation with the Netherlands, however big or small. The third and final criterion was that the informants had lived in Canada for most of their life. This criterion was set in order to ensure that the informants had some experiences with life in Canada and had knowledge of the values and social norms of Canadian society.

All the informants that participated were aged between 19 and 26 with a mean age of 23. Seven of the informants were female while only two informants were male. The gender proportion was not intended to be out of balance. However, last minute cancellations left the composition of the group unbalanced. In addition, almost all informants were students or recent graduates from educational institutions. More information about informants' background, age and migration history can be found in appendix A.

As a whole the informants consist of second and third generation Dutch-Canadians. While a variety of definitions of the term generation exist, I refer to my informants as merely Dutch-Canadian. Of course, it is important to note that the

mere usage of terms such as Dutch-Canadian might suggest an essentialist view. However, I believe that identities and generations are not based on simple dichotomies such as “here” or “there” and “Dutch” or “Canadian”. Identities are never singular static entities but are hybrid, fluid and multiple entities that are in constant flux. Nevertheless, it must be noted that I use this term for conceptual purposes only as I am aware that this usage might not coincide with the self-identification of the informants involved in this research as some call themselves Canadian or Dutch as well. In order to honour at least one of their favoured self-identifications while maintaining conceptual consistency, I decided to use the term Dutch-Canadian throughout this research.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Gen der</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Nationality of parent(s)</i>	<i>Country of Birth</i>	<i>Country of residence</i>	<i>Grew up in</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
<b>Yvette</b>	F	23	British, Dutch-Canadian	Canada	The Netherlands (for studies)	Canada	Student
<b>Jay</b>	M	22	Dutch-Canadian, Dutch-German	Canada	Canada	Canada	Data analyst
<b>Nathalie</b>	F	26	Dutch	Canada	Canada	Canada	Teacher
<b>Marieke</b>	F	24	Dutch	The Netherlands	Canada	The Netherlands and Canada	Recent graduate
<b>Tara</b>	F	24	Dutch	Canada	Canada	Canada	Student
<b>Jolijn</b>	F	21	Dutch	The Netherlands	Germany (for studies)	The Netherlands and Canada	Student
<b>Lee</b>	M	19	Dutch, Irish	The Netherlands	Canada	The Netherlands and Canada	Student
<b>Tamara</b>	F	23	Dutch	The Netherlands	Canada	The Netherlands and Canada	Recent graduate
<b>Lisanne</b>	F	26	Dutch	The Netherlands	Canada	The Netherlands and Canada	Works part time for her parents, mother

Table 1. Overview of informants.

*Procedure*

During the first few weeks of data collection I tried to talk to as many people as possible about my topic of interest. Due to my familiarity with Dutch migrants in

Canada I was able to use my own network in order to access possible informants. I reached out to my online, and offline friends who helped me find names of possible informants. Thus, in order to recruit informants, I relied on snowball sampling, a method that obtains informants through a researcher's existing network where informants nominate others to expand the amount of data (Morgan 2008). A major advantage of the snowball method is that it opened up a diverse range of people that I could connect with easily. Initially, access to informants was made through a variety of channels. First, I reached out to my own network by telling people about my research through Facebook. People then tagged friends who fit the criteria in the post after which I sent them a message with more information about the research. Second, I reached out to several Dutch-Canadian Facebook groups where I posted a message about my research. The Facebook groups that were used are: Dutch-Canadian Friendship Garden (Bridgewater), Dutch-Canadian Association P.E.I., Dutch Treat Canada – Toronto/GTA, Dutch Canadian Society of London and District and Nederlanders in/rondom Calgary/Dutch people in/around Calgary (Canada). Within these Facebook groups people commented on posts and offered their help. Third, my parents knew several Dutch crop growers who moved to Canada. I contacted these growers through email and they kindly provided me with their networks as well.

### *Dealing with narratives*

Informants' narratives that were collected through the interviews were considered as the main material of analysis. Narratives are defined as subjective personal stories in which individuals position the Self and the Other in order to make sense of past, present and future experiences (Trahar 2009). Similar to plays, films, and books, narratives capture stories that include characters, a setting, plots and themes that provide individuals with meaning. As such, I decided to use narratives as my main source of data because I believe that this is the best way to capture the informants' feelings, experiences and views when it comes to their life stories. I mentioned before that the term identity is in constant flux and is an unstable, every-changing notion that is understood differently by many. As a result, identity is hard to capture through quantitative measures as it is hard to categorize. Through a qualitative discourse analysis of these narratives I thus hope to collect rich, detailed narratives about the informants and their perspective on their lives as Dutch-Canadians.

### *Interviews*

For the purpose of this research a total of nine semi-structured interviews were held with a total length of 298 minutes. Each interview lasted between 21 and 53

minutes. This has resulted in a word count of 33,367 that captured every word that had been recorded. As a whole, eight interviews were held through Facebook and one interview through Skype.

An ethics approval for interviews and human subjects was unnecessary as this research was written in the Netherlands under the supervision of Utrecht University. However, before undertaking the interviews the informants received a consent form that gave them a brief explanation of the research and asked for their informed consent to participate (Appendix B). In addition, the consent form informed informants about their guaranteed confidentiality as none of their information would be made available to anyone who was not directly involved in the research. In order to ensure their anonymity, the participants in this research will remain anonymous by using pseudonyms. In the interviews I therefore started with a brief introduction in which I explained the aim of the research, confirmed their anonymity, and asked whether they preferred a specific pseudonym (Appendix C). The interview continued with questions about upbringing and family as well as general questions about their age, country of residence and place of birth (Appendix C). Additionally, I also tried to link the questions to things I saw on their profiles in order to gain a more personal connection with the informants and to make them feel comfortable. After this the interview was more unstructured, following the pace set by the informants rather than that of the researcher. For each interview the same topic list was used in order to generate answers related to the purpose of this research. According to researchers, this semi-structured approach is one of the more practical ways to gain information about informants' lives (Edwards and Holland 2013). During the interviews I tried to ask open-ended questions that were formulated differently to fit the need of the informants. I hoped that this type of approach would yield more complex answers than simply yes or no. In addition, open-ended questions might reveal answers that could provide new insights in the field that could further be explored and studied.

### *Analysis*

As narratives are open to different interpretations it is possible that other representations than my own were possible. However, the data gained from this research has been coded based on what I thought was important. I started by transcribing all interviews verbatim. I then carefully read the transcripts and started coding and highlighting interesting responses that were related to the topic list while also taking into consideration answers that brought in new and unexpected issues. I immediately noticed that many informants saw their cultural background as an advantage and that this made them feel special and unique. Informants also indicated that they often compared the Netherlands with Canada while trying to find out where they belonged. In addition, most participants

continued certain Dutch practices in Canada while others tried to find some balance between the two cultures. In order to create some sort of predictability, as time was limited, I tried to keep in mind the theoretical frameworks that guided me to focus on certain patterns related to migration, identity, belonging, and media while also identifying and labelling new findings. I then reread the transcripts and revisited the initial coding so that I could rename and clarify certain codes in order to create consistency. These codes were then developed into a list of categories that were modified after an additional rereading of the transcripts (Straus and Corbin 1990). After revisiting these categories, I sorted them in order to create the following three themes: narratives of authenticity, narratives of self-exploration and narratives of negotiation. After analyzing these three themes four other themes came to the surface: language, roots and routes, behaviour, and appearance. These themes are discussed and analysed in the following section.

### **Analyses**

The following section describes three major themes related to informants' identification that emerged from the data: narratives of authenticity, narratives of self-exploration and narratives of negotiation. On top of these three themes four other themes came to the surface: language, roots and routes, behaviour, and appearance. Together, these themes form the basis of how Dutch-Canadian EA narrate their identities while also demonstrating how different cultural backgrounds are seen as a form of symbolic capital. After discussing these themes I will shortly discuss the limitations of my research.

#### *Narratives of authenticity*

*"I love being Dutch. I love that [...] it makes me different than most people and I ... Most people would not like being different but in that way I liked it."*  
(Lisanne)

A recurrent theme was the sense of authenticity amongst informants. Informants seemed to not only feel authentic and different from people around them but also from people with similar Dutch-Canadian roots. The theme of authenticity came up in, for example, discussions about growing up with Dutch influences but also when receiving remarks from outsiders about their Dutch features. Despite the fact that informants mentioned the diverse Canadian culture and the abundance of people with migrant backgrounds, informants still felt like they stood out from the rest. Throughout the interviews, words related to authenticity were very recurrent such as "special", "unique", "stand out" and "different". When asked

about Nathalie's experiences in Canada while growing up with Dutch influences she said:

I would say in my experience of knowing another language and growing up with another culture I think it was really beneficial and lovely to grow up with the experiences of two worlds rather than just one. And I think it was kind of nice because it did feel special at home having another language that I could speak with my family. It kind of made it like almost this special experience of having our own language and our own ... you know ... traditions that we did at home that were different than what everyone else at school was doing. I don't really remember meeting a lot of Dutch kids at school so it was kind of unique to us if that makes sense.

Nathalie seems to emphasize the importance of speaking a different language, having different traditions and growing up with another culture. She seems to use these features as markers of distinction in order to differentiate herself from her peers by noting that their lives were very different from those of many other people in Canada. EA perceive their Dutch and Canadian background as symbolic capital in the sense that they find it an asset that distinguishes them from the crowd. However, it is remarkable that in Lee's case being authentic also means being part of Canada's mainstream culture. He states that:

There's so many different cultures it's hard to say what Canada is strongest in. I feel like out of a country with so many different cultures it was easier for me to adjust to such a big move as a kid. Just because you meet other people who are maybe not from Europe but their parents are. I remember in elementary school that there were only thirty kids there but already over ten or fifteen different nationalities in a single classroom.

Lee indicates that migrant communities seem to be considered part of mainstream culture in Canada. In that sense it is possible to be authentic while also being part of the mainstream collective.

Besides the fact that informants felt different from their peers, illustrating the constructive and diverging forms of identification, some also seemed to have different perspectives on what it meant to be Dutch. It seems that growing up in the Netherlands provided some informants with a different experience than the informants who were born in Canada and had no direct experience when it came to living in the Netherlands. As Lianne puts it:

The area that we live in it's like all the Dutch people are here when they move here. There's the church I go to that is pretty much all Dutch people even if they are not directly from Holland ... their parents were or their grandparents were. And all the names ... it's all Dutch last names. There's

so many in this area it's crazy. Mostly when I meet them they are like "I'm Dutch" but it's more back further. When I say I'm Dutch to people they are like "oh yeah everybody is Dutch around here" but I'm like "I'm actually Dutch" and they are like "oohhh okay".

Lisanne mentioned a certain distinction that could be made based on Dutch-Canadians who were born or not born in Canada. Her search for authenticity underlines the internal heterogeneity that is present in Dutch-Canadian communities.

It was interesting to find that informants like Lisanne and Marieke also mentioned that even among Dutch people a distinction could be made based on generational differences. By looking at Jay's account of his Dutch heritage I noticed that he felt different from other Dutch people as he was not born there. During our interview Jay quite doubtfully said: "There's probably not too much I can tell you. I'm not myself ... I don't come from Holland. I'm just around all the Dutch stuff." This shows that some informants might not feel as Dutch as others because they were not born in the Netherlands. For others, however, identity is about performance and how they decide to enact certain parts of their heritage. Yvette's experiences were similar to Jay's because her personal identification with the Netherlands was made stronger after her first trip to the Netherlands. It is interesting that accounts like that of Lisanne, Marieke, Jay and Yvette, suggest the importance of place when it comes to our identities and sense of belonging.

#### *Narratives of self-exploration*

*"I feel both. I feel Dutch and I feel Canadian. I don't know. It's a really weird feeling. If I'm around Dutch people or around anything that is even slightly Dutch I feel very very Dutch and the other times I am mostly Canadian."*

(Lisanne)

A variety of views were expressed by informants in relation to their search of identity. They surfaced mainly in relation to how they came to be and how they made sense of having different backgrounds. An interesting finding that emerged from the narratives is that the informants often voiced their personal changes in life. They were often aware of their different backgrounds and tried to make sense of them while growing up. When asked about what his Irish, Dutch and Canadian backgrounds meant for him Lee said:

I tend to think about that a lot actually because it's hard to say oh well I'm born in Holland but my mom's from Ireland but I live in Canada. What really is my true home if I were to call it home? I call.. I mean obviously from like a birth right standpoint I would call Holland my home. But it's something



that I'm still looking the answer for I think. I probably will have it if I end up going back for a Masters or something like that. I just want to see ... I just want to relate back to what I thought Holland was like and then see it through my eyes now and be able to relate to it in other ways. But as a kid obviously I would say Holland was my home and then my mom ... after growing up I've had comments ... when my aunt came to Canada she was like "you look so much like your aunt or like your mom". So I think it's edging to Ireland right now as I'm growing up.

Lee seems to be very aware of his changing identity as it is constantly shifting while he grows older. For Lee, the Netherlands is his home from a birth place standpoint but is not necessarily what he identifies himself with at present. Experiences while growing up seem to affect how Lee identifies himself and he even states that he has received comments on his physical features as he looks like his Irish side of the family. Context and agency are influencing factors when it comes to identity construction. Lee's narratives exemplify that identity formation is a continuous process that is always in the making and can never be finalized. In addition, it shows that identity formation is, indeed, present in the lives of EA. While Lee tends to talk about Canada, the Netherlands and Ireland separately, Yvette often uses the hyphenated term Dutch-Canadian in order to describe her identity:

I've always sort of identified as English and British-Canadian and Dutch-Canadian. I was always very aware of the fact that three of my grandparents were not born in Canada and came from a different place. But when I had that first trip when I was 21 it definitely shifted to being Dutch-Canadian because just that part of the heritage and even it not being a family thing it just became a me thing. Because my sister does not really feel Dutch-Canadian at all but I've sort of discovered I quite liked it here so I've actively acknowledged that. That is part of my heritage ... I'm very happy to be Dutch-Canadian. To identify as both I also don't really always feel like I'm a very good Canadian I always feel very European. So this gives it sort of a grounding in a specific European place.

The use of hyphenated identity seems to imply the presence of a hybrid identity. It shows that both her Dutch and Canadian identities seem to merge into one as they influence each other. Similar to Lee's account, Yvette mentions that what she identifies with is largely a matter of personal choice. In comparison to her sister, Yvette actively pursues her Dutch heritage as a marker of individuality and authenticity. Marieke also alluded to the notion of hyphenated, or hybrid, identity as she mentioned that she does not pinpoint certain aspects in her life as "this is my Dutch culture" or "this is my Canadian culture". Rather, they seem to merge into a third space.

I find it remarkable that Yvette and Lee also touch upon the importance of location. For Yvette, it was important to be in the Netherlands physically in order to make sense of who she is and how she identifies herself. She even mentions that it grounded her European identification in “a specific European place”. For Lee, the Netherlands is his home from a birth place standpoint but is not necessarily what he identifies himself with at present. These narratives show that the interplay of roots and routes is constantly present and are understood differently for both informants.

The maintenance of the Dutch passport is another way in which both Tamara and Marieke stay connected to their Dutch roots. For example, Tamara said:

I still have a Dutch passport which I’ve always felt was something that would always tie me down. And I got offered a job here to work as a flight attendant for a Canadian company but they required a Canadian passport. I just wasn’t ready to give ... I just couldn’t do that.

Of course, having a Dutch passport does not necessarily mean that informants automatically feel affiliated with Dutch culture. However, the choice of deciding to get a Canadian passport gives informants some agency when it comes to their official nationality. Tamara seems to give social and personal meaning to having a passport. Although she mentions that having a Dutch passport might limit her from certain jobs that require a Canadian passport, she states that just having it makes her feel more Dutch as she has something that officially states this. In Tamara’s case, her Dutch passport can be seen as symbolic capital as it is of value to her and identifies her with the specific position of being Dutch.

### *Narratives of negotiation*

*“I feel like there’s pros and cons in both countries and you can’t really ... you can’t have both, you can’t just have all the goods so you have a bit of each.”* (Lisanne)

In their narratives informants were constantly making comparisons between the Netherlands and Canada. Almost all informants cited differences which marked the boundary separating Dutch and Canadian culture. For example, Jolijn, Lisanne and Tamara all reported a sense of difference when it comes to *gezelligheid*.<sup>4</sup> Both Jolijn and Lisanne point out that *gezelligheid* is something that they only

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<sup>4</sup> An untranslatable term that the Dutch often use to describe the cosiness or warmth that you feel when with loved ones.

experienced with other Dutch people as a certain feeling is missing with Canadians. In addition, Lee mentioned that he is sometimes frustrated with the differences between social relations in the Netherlands and Canada. He mentions that Canadians are very careful with their words and try not to offend people whereas Dutch people are more straight forward. Almost all informants seem to favour some parts of one culture over the other and have to find a way to negotiate between the two.

Although some informants seem to favour certain aspects of a culture others have accepted that one culture does not necessarily outweigh the other. Marieke states that, at the beginning, she often focused on distinct differences between cultures such as clothing or food. However, growing older she notes that she looks at it not as “this is better” or “this is better” but now has a more realistic perspective. At the same time Nathalie also considered she has changed since childhood since she now has a different perspective on the *Zwarte Piet*<sup>5</sup> (‘Black Peter’) debate:

It’s one of the things I noticed having grown up with Canadian culture but then also experiencing Dutch culture growing up. And I know a lot of people ... Dutch people do not like this ... I know they don’t ... but the whole *Sinterklaas* and *Zwarte Piet* and that whole you know ... where the tradition comes from ... a lot of people get super super defensive if they even ... even one little thing about it: IT’S NOT RACIST. If it wasn’t racist you don’t have to react ... have to defend it because there’s nothing to defend. I think it almost speaks to the fact that they know it’s not right like some of it. And you know it’s like he’s his helper he’s his helper and he’s his friend and then sometimes ... he’s only black from going down the chimney but then why does he have the big gold hoop earrings and the big red lips. That doesn’t make any sense right?

Nathalie seems to be using both of her upbringings in order to make sense of the debate by, in the end, choosing where she stands. She seems to be very critical about certain aspects of Dutch culture and differentiates herself from other Dutch people by saying that she does not share the same view when it comes to *Zwarte Piet* as this tradition is something that she does not take for granted unlike other Dutch people. She later on states:

I was able to say okay just because that’s what I experienced growing up doesn’t mean that that’s what necessarily should continue as an adult. I still

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<sup>5</sup> A now controversial character that helps *Sinterklaas* (Saint Nicholas) hand out sweets and presents to children during the annual celebration of *Sinterklaas* in the Netherlands. Traditionally those portraying *Zwarte Piet* put on black face-paint, golden earrings and red lips, although this has been criticized in recent years due to its colonial history.

would love to do *Sinterklaas* in the whole with the shoe out and everything with my kids. I think I would really love to do that but I think I would change it a little bit.

It is evident that Nathalie has decided to adjust certain Dutch traditions in order to fit her own perceptions. These perceptions probably arose while being immersed in Canada, a multicultural society where the idea of *Zwarte Piet* is problematized. She seems to internalize the Canadian moral structures when reflecting on the issue of *Zwarte Piet*. I found it interesting to see how informants state that growing up with two or more cultures has made them aware of certain differences that they either like or dislike and use their own interpretations according to their own set of norms and values. Altogether, identities can be sites of boundary construction and maintenance where informants are constantly negotiating meaning based on their different backgrounds. Whether the differences are positive or negative, informants have the opportunity to strengthen, sustain or desert particular characteristics. The boundaries between both cultures are therefore not static but are constantly being negotiated, changed or abandoned refining and deepening their cultural awareness in the process.

#### *Emerging themes*

After analysing the above three narratives I noticed that there were other themes that came to the surface: language, roots and routes, behaviour and appearance. These themes are also worth discussing as they provide us with a bigger picture of Dutch-Canadian EA in Canada.

*Language.* As mentioned by Buonfino and Thompson (2007), language plays a major role when it comes to belongingness and the essence of feeling at home. So what happens when EA move to a new country and have to learn how to speak the language? Lisanne and Marieke both indicate that they were hesitant about using English once they arrived to Canada. When talking about her first months in Canada, Lisanne states:

I refused to speak English. I was learning but I refused to speak it. I went to school and my teacher always told my parents I didn't say a word. And then all of a sudden one day I just spoke it fluently and kind of started and never stopped. We all kind of had a hard time with it. It took a long time to adjust but we did eventually.

The sudden switch to English might indicate that Lisanne finally started to feel at home in Canada. Although she did speak English at school she, just like other informants, indicates that speaking Dutch among family members was still

common. Alternatively, Nathalie indicates that when her father died her mother soon stopped talking Dutch and “transitioned over to the Canadian side of living”. This indicates that migrants need a social network in order to keep using their native language.

Once informants have interpersonal and social relations with Canadians they create social capital that provides them with stability, comfort and a sense of belongingness. For example, informants state that their families have become more diverse with the arrival of Canadian boyfriends and friends. Nathalie, Lisanne, Jolijn, Tamara, and Marieke mention that they used to speak only Dutch among family members. At present, however, they mention that they often end up speaking English in order to include people in the conversations. Interestingly, the use of the Dutch language makes some informants feel authentic. Yvette mentions that she felt special when her friends asked her “What’s an *oma* (‘grandmother’) and *opa* (‘grandfather’)?” Tara also states that she felt special when people asked her about her accent.

*Roots and routes.* I mentioned earlier that the term roots refers to how individuals identify themselves with a shared community or heritage. It seems that for some informants growing up in a common place does seem to matter. Talking about this issue Marieke mentioned that:

I don’t know if you know a lot about Dutch immigrants in Canada but they all kind of are very proud of it and I’m like ... really you’re not Dutch at all. Their ways are not Dutch at all and I think I really remember that from the beginning that we moved that people always claimed to be so Dutch and I was like you have no idea. You’ve never been. You don’t speak the language. You don’t know what you are talking about.

Marieke’s response indicates that, for her, being Dutch meant a lot more than just labelling oneself as Dutch; it meant speaking the language, being born there, and having visited the Netherlands. Marieke’s disqualification of Canadians with a Dutch heritage does not necessarily mean that she wants these Canadians to change. It merely shows that her own personal identity has probably been constructed by, on the one hand not identifying herself as Canadian or Dutch-Canadian, and on the other hand not identifying herself as an authentic Dutch person. In contrast, informants like Yvette and Nathalie identify themselves as Dutch, or Dutch-Canadian despite being born in Canada. When talking about her first trip to the Netherlands Yvette states:

My mom said in like first year of university ... she was like “do you want to go somewhere for a few days?” I was like “okay” and she said “where do you want to go?” and I’m like “I guess I’m half Dutch... not really thought

about it much before... might as well go there see what that's all about." And I think that immediately getting off the plane at Schiphol I'm just like (inhaling) "What is this feeling?" And so I sort of changed my plan for my Erasmus year. I ended up coming to the Netherlands and I really liked it. And I thought about doing a Masters. And everything sort of fell into place. The program I wanted was here, I knew the city I was comfortable here it just made sense to come back.

Yvette embodies the idea that identity can freely be regarded as something that is constantly in flux. Together, both examples show that informants have different ways of constructing their identities. For some, roots play a central role whereas for others identity is not limited, or predefined by location.

*Behaviour.* As mentioned earlier, cultural factors such as traditions, habits, religion and food also contribute to a sense of belongingness. Similar to language, traditions and customs slowly seem to die down after being in Canada for numerous years. Lisanne comments that:

I don't really remember that many traditions from Holland. So I don't know how many we still have but we kind of just adapted I guess. We kind of made sense of what we used to do there and what we can do here.

Having a hard time identifying her Dutch traditions might indicate that Lisanne is having a hard time distinguishing her old identity from the new. She emphasizes that both identities seem to overlap and that she has adapted to a new way of living. This is similar to the narrative where Nathalie mentions that she has adapted the celebration of *Sinterklaas* in order to fit her new norms and values. Moreover, Lisanne mentions that as she got older she started to switch more to Canadian traditions. Although her mother-in-law comments on the amount of work that goes into celebrating a "Dutch" birthday, Lisanne replies to her with:

I don't need everybody to bring presents every year, I just want everyone to show up and have a coffee and say happy birthday. I love the way that Dutch people celebrate birthdays, it just feels ... I don't know ... *gezellig*.<sup>6</sup>

Migrant nostalgia seems to play an important role in the lives of informants. Informants emphasize the longing for the Netherlands, with its traditions and culture, that they once were a part of. These autobiographical factors link informants to the Netherlands and give them a sense of belongingness.

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<sup>6</sup> See note 4.

In addition, religious practice also enhanced the sense of belonging to a Dutch community. Jay states: “All four of my grandparents are pretty religious so ever since I was a kid I went to Christian reformed church. It was almost like a Dutch community because everyone there was Dutch and it seems like they all stick together.” It seems as if going to church plays a significant role in Jay’s identity construction as many Dutch people appear to have a similar religious background. Lisanne also explains that she never really went to church while she was in the Netherlands. However, when they moved to Canada she indicates that they started going to church. By joining and creating these religious Dutch communities, people can communicate with each other in their own language while also practicing faith.

*Appearance.* Another notion that I picked up on during the interviews was that outsiders often noticed that informants were not originally from Canada. Informants seemed to have to negotiate with and defend themselves against how other people categorized them. The identities and labels that other people give us greatly affect the way people position and identify themselves. For example, Lisanne’s comment below touches upon the concept of these ascribed identities:

People hear me speak Dutch, especially for the first time, they are very like “Wow, what is that?” It’s very ... it’s ... I don’t know. I always got told that I looked different which makes no sense to me. Even my husband says it, he says “You don’t look Canadian.” And then I’m like “I’m not Canadian.” And his family always goes like “Oh you’re so Dutch.” And I’m like “It’s fake blond ... I don’t have blue eyes. The only thing I have is that I’m tall. I don’t know how you think I look Dutch but okay.”

Lisanne mentions that people often link her physical appearance to being Dutch. Her response to “You don’t look Canadian” clearly shows that she, in some way, seems to have to prove why she does not look Canadian or why she is not Canadian. It would be interesting to find out whether this racialization happens before, or after people find out that she is not Canadian. If she was Canadian and had the same traits she would probably have never been linked to being Dutch. In that sense, it seems as if certain traits are found a posteriori in order to justify that she is Dutch. Similar encounters have happened to Tamara who states:

Yeah most people notice we’re Dutch. They sometimes ... after I tell them they say yeah you kind of have an accent or people will ask me ... I’m a waitress ... so customers ask me if I’m Dutch because I’m tall blonde and have blue eyes.

In addition, Marieke mentions that people sometimes make comments such as “Oh you’re so Dutch” and “You’re so convenient” indicating that she has certain traits that can be ascribed to a stereotypical image of the Dutch. Marieke even states that even though she has been in Canada for most of her life she still finds it frustrating when people persistently ask her where she is really from. In most cases, she decides to either share, or not share where she is from based on the context. In both Lisanne, Tamara and Marieke’s cases their authenticity or uniqueness seems to be noticed by other people, which can sometimes result in negative or positive experiences.

### **Discussion**

Based on the above analysis, several limitations of this research need to be acknowledged. First, there were a number of issues that were not possible to deal with due to time constraints. It was impossible to do an in-depth ethnographic research as there was limited time to find and interview informants. Moreover, time constraints also made it hard to thoroughly analyse all the transcripts, and therefore it is possible that important themes might have been overlooked. Another limitation is the representativeness of the data. The data collected for this research was relatively small as it consisted of seven female, and two male informants. In addition, almost all my informants were either students or recent graduates. The data was therefore imbalanced when it came to the representation of people from different gender and class. This is a limitation because I did not have time to focus and analyse dimensions of age, gender and class as they were not equally distributed and I was dealing with a limited number of informants and a limited amount of time. Although the data might not be representative for the entire population of Dutch-Canadians in Canada it does give some insights into the lives of my informants. For obvious reasons, these insights cannot be generalized and therefore only relate to the informants that I interviewed. A third limitation was the subjectivity of the researcher. As mentioned before, there was a limited amount of time to categorize the transcripts and find key elements and themes. It is possible that other researchers would find completely different themes. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the analysis of the data is highly influenced by my positionality. The themes that emerged were based on my own personal interpretation of the data and might be influenced by my personal background with Dutch-Canadian identity. However, my position can also be considered an advantage because it made me see patterns that researchers with less familiarity of the subject might not have found.



## Conclusions

In this research I have presented a detailed empirical analysis on the relationships between migration, identity and belonging and, specifically, how Dutch-Canadian EA between the age of 19 and 26 articulate identities. Through in-depth interviews I established that migration seems to be accompanied by cultural and identity shifts among Dutch-Canadian EA. However, these shifts seem to vary among informants and are largely influenced by factors such as the amount of time spent in the Netherlands, whether they ever visited the Netherlands, and how much they were in contact with friends and family in the Netherlands. The three themes that emerged from the data clearly reflect the changes that Dutch-Canadian EA go through while growing up. Throughout these three major themes there were emerging themes such as language, roots and routes, behaviour, and appearance.

Narratives of authenticity show how informants feel unique and authentic when it comes to their language, appearance, and behaviour. In addition, informants not only feel unique and authentic from people around them but also from people with similar roots. Some informants touched upon the generational differences and how growing up in the Netherlands provided some informants with a different experience than the informants who were born in Canada and had no direct experience when it came to living in the Netherlands. Surprisingly, the importance of place recurs throughout informants' narratives and shows that the interplay of roots and routes is constantly present as informants deal differently with the question of where they belong or what they identify with. For some, home is seen from a birthright, or blood-based standpoint while others identify home as the place where they have most affiliations and connections with.

In narratives of self-exploration, I found out that identities can have different forms and are constantly changing while growing up. Context and agency seem to be influencing factors when it comes to identity construction as informants become less attached to their parents and try to forge their own path and form their own opinions. While some informants talked about different identities separately (e.g. Dutch or Canadian), others used hyphenated terms such as Dutch-Canadian to imply the presence of a dual identity. The influence of legal documents such as passports also seemed to contribute to symbolic capital of certain informants since keeping a passport tied them down to a certain nationality and officially identified them as being Dutch.

Narratives of negotiation gives a clear overview of how informants constantly compare the Netherlands and Canada. Almost all informants cited differences which marked the boundary separating Dutch and Canadian culture. Although some informants seem to favour certain aspects of a culture, others have accepted that one culture does not necessarily outweigh the other. Some

state that they can also pick and choose certain parts of a culture to make it fit into their worldview such as Nathalie's modification of the *Sinterklaas* tradition.

Despite its exploratory nature, the results of this research raise many questions in need for further research. Considerably more research needs to be done to fully capture identity construction among Dutch-Canadian EA. Since the writing of this research was limited due to lack of time it would be interesting to expand future research by focusing on a larger and more balanced set of data. Future research could further explore concepts that I left untouched such as gender, age, and class. It would also be interesting to further explore the concept of class as my informants were predominantly students and graduates which indicates that they are from at least middle class. Identity formation among lower class EA could therefore be different. The issue of place-belongingness would also be worth studying, as informants indicated that their identities changed after physically being in the Netherlands. Of course, my methods could be applied to other migrant groups as well. It would be interesting, for example, to focus on marginalized migrants to see how their behaviour differs from voluntary migrants.

Returning to the research questions posed at the beginning of this research, "How do Dutch-Canadian EA mobilize Dutchness in relation to their identities in Canadian contexts and how do they shape, negotiate and narrate these identities?", it is possible to say that Dutch-Canadian EA continuously negotiate, articulate, and perform multiple identities depending on the context that they are in. Even though the usage of the terms Dutch and Canadian implies homogeneity, this research shows that the Dutch, as well as Canadians are hybrid, dynamic and diverse. Thus, identity construction is not something that can be generalized, but rather, it is something unique that is experienced differently by everyone.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: MEET THE INFORMANTS

#### *Nathalie*

I got into contact with Nathalie through the Facebook group 'Dutch Treat Canada – Toronto/GTA'. Nathalie is 26 years old, was born in Canada and is currently living in Toronto with her husband. Nathalie's parents are both Dutch. Her father is deceased and her mother still lives in Canada. During the interview Nathalie brought up lots of interesting topics such as the controversy of *Zwarte Piet*. She seemed to be very aware of Dutch colonial history and the representation of 'blacks' in North America. It was refreshing to hear a different opinion on the matter and it seemed that she was able to decide for herself how to shape the tradition of *Sinterklaas* to fit her own world and thoughts. Nathalie had some cute bunnies roaming her garden that distracted me from the interview at times. She seems to travel a lot and enjoys her job as a supply teacher.

#### *Yvette*

I met Yvette through one of my Dutch friends in Ottawa. I posted a status on Facebook so that friends could help me with the search for Dutch-Canadians. Our mutual friend tagged Yvette and we got into contact. Yvette

is 23 years old, was born in Canada and has a British mother and a Dutch-Canadian father. Ever since her first visit to the Netherlands Yvette has been going back and forth between Canada and the Netherlands for her studies. She is currently doing her Masters in Nijmegen. From looking at her profile and talking to her I noticed that she has travelled a lot and has friends from all over the world. On top of that Yvette makes beautiful artworks and shares these on social media.

*Jay*

Jay and I came into contact through a mutual friend in Ottawa. Jay is 22 years old; she has a Dutch-Canadian father and a Dutch-German mother. Jay is currently working as a data analyst and hopes to get a full-time contract soon. Jay and I immediately hit it off and talked about a lot of non-study related things. He seems like a really relaxed guy and could tell me a lot about Dutch influences (and swear words!) that he picked up on while growing up. Although he has only visited the Netherlands once he hopes to go back soon.

*Jolijn*

I got into contact with Jolijn through one of the Dutch growers that I met through my parents. Jolijn was immediately interested in the search and was very glad to participate. Jolijn is 21 years old and moved to Canada from the Netherlands at the age of twelve. Jolijn is currently studying international business in Germany as part of her degree in Canada. Jolijn still seems to have a strong connection with the Netherlands and often goes back to visit friends and family, go shopping, and catch up on Dutch foods and *gezelligheid*.

*Tara*

I got into contact with Tara through the Facebook group Dutch Treat Canada – Toronto/GTA. Tara is 24 years old, was born in Canada and has Dutch parents. Tara is currently studying in North Bay at teacher's college. Tara has spent many summers in the Netherlands and seems to travel around a lot. She has done a study-abroad in France and planned to go to Curacao the week after our interview.

*Lee*

I got into contact with Lee through one of the Dutch growers that I met through my parents. Lee is 19 years old, has a Dutch father and an Irish mother and moved to Canada from the Netherlands at the age of seven. Just from talking to Lee it was evident that he had a great passion for architecture as he was very descriptive when it came to countries, cities and houses that he lived in. Not surprisingly, Lee is currently studying Architecture in Toronto. Lee often goes back to both the Netherlands and Ireland to visit friends and family. In addition, Lee is thinking about doing a Masters in Delft.

*Tamara*

I got into contact with Tamara through one of the Dutch growers that I met through my parents. Tamara is Jolijn's older sister who has also been interviewed. Tamara is 23 years old and moved to Canada from the Netherlands at the age of thirteen. Tamara recently graduated from political science and is looking into pursuing law school. Tamara goes back and forth between the Netherlands and Canada almost twice a year to visit family and friends. Moreover, she often celebrates King's Day in the Netherlands as well. It was interesting to see how her stories differed from that of her sister.

*Lisanne*

I got into contact with Lisanne through one of the Dutch growers that I met through my parents. Lisanne is 26 years old and moved to Canada from the Netherlands at the age of nine. Lisanne has her hands full as she is the mother of twins. Besides taking care of her twins she also works at her parents' company. Although Lisanne seems to go back to the Netherlands quite frequently she also enjoys exploring new countries.

*Marieke*

I got into contact with Marieke through the Facebook group 'Dutch Treat Canada – Toronto/GTA'. Marieke is 24 years old, was born in the Netherlands and moved to Canada when she was 13 years old. Both of her parents are Dutch. Marieke recently graduated from university with a bachelor of education and a bachelor in English and psychology. She seems to be very busy at the moment as she teaches grade 5 part-time and is also an educational assistant in grade 3 and grade 8 at a local Christian school.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Jasmin Keijzer  
Utrecht University, Utrecht, the Netherlands

I am writing to ask for your help with a study that is being conducted on young Dutch-Canadians in Canada. This research was carried out by Jasmin Keijzer, a young researcher from the Netherlands.

For this study one Skype conversation will take place in the month of January or March. The interviewer will ask about your Dutch-Canadian background and your experiences of the internet – this will include discussions about how you uses Facebook, Twitter, Skype and Instagram.

The interviews will be relaxed and informal and you are free to talk about whatever you feel comfortable with. Whatever information you will be able to provide will be of great help.

In addition, it would be much appreciated if you could show your social media activity to the researcher. For this purpose, Jasmin Keijzer has been in contact, and you have expressed initial willingness to give her access to your social media activity on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and/or YouTube. If you want to participate please connect to the researcher using the following details:

- Facebook:** (anonymized)
- Twitter:** (anonymized)
- Instagram:** (anonymized)

Everything you wish to share will be very useful to me. This phase will run for the maximum duration of 3 months (15 January, 2016 – 15 April, 2016). Your name and personal details will never be used by me or the university. Your privacy will be guaranteed; I will be the only one that studies your activity. Companies or authorities will not have access to your personal information. I do hope you will be able to take part in this important study.

**Are you happy to take part?**

Yes (circle and proceed to complete personal information below)

No (close)

Complete if consent given

- Name .....
- Date and place.....
- Nationality mother.....
- Nationality father.....
- Amount of years in Canada and/or other countries.....

If you have any questions about the research please ask!

For more information about the study you can write Jasmin Keijzer (email anonymized). Jasmin is supervised by Abder El Aissati, and questions and complains can be directed to him (email anonymized).

Thank you very much for taking part! - Jasmin Keijzer

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

*Background*

Age  
 Country of Birth  
 Nationality  
 Nationality parents  
 Occupation

*Personal*

Childhood/Upbringing  
 How was it growing up?  
 Life  
 What does your life look like at the moment?

*Migration*

Moving to Canada and first arrival  
 How did you feel?  
 Reasons to migrate  
 Did you know people there?  
 Did it take long to adapt to the country?

*Memories*

Memories of the Netherlands  
 Connections with Canada  
 Connections with the Netherlands  
 Friends and family in the Netherlands  
 Friends and family in Canada

**About the author**

Jasmin Francis Keijzer is a Dutch-Canadian researcher who was born in Nieuwveen, The Netherlands. Throughout her life Jasmin has resided in Lillooet, New Liskeard, Ottawa, Cambridge and Bonn. Having both a BA in English Language and Culture, and an MA in Intercultural Communication has led her to pursue her studies in the fields of linguistics, migration, media, culture and identity. Growing up with parents from different nationalities invoked a strong interest in studying the individual experiences of migration and ultimately resulted in this research. Jasmin is currently living in Amsterdam where she fulfils the role of a volunteer coordinator and brings together Dutch locals and newcomers. She also facilitates and teaches at two language cafés in Amsterdam where locals and newcomers can talk Dutch in an informal setting.  
 Author's contact: j.f.keijzer@outlook.com.

### **Un compte rendu narratif des identités d'adultes émergents canado-néerlandais**

Je présente, avec cette recherche, un rapport empirique sur la façon dont les adultes émergents canado-néerlandais entre les âges de 19 et 26 ans perçoivent leur héritage néerlandais en relation avec leurs identités dans des contextes canadiens. Cette recherche se fonde sur les notions de la migration, de l'identité et de l'appartenance. J'examine aussi les interactions entre ces trois concepts. Au cours de l'analyse de neuf interviews, trois thèmes clés liés aux identités des informateurs sont apparus : les narrations de l'authenticité, de l'auto-exploration et de la négociation. À travers une analyse de ces trois thèmes, quatre autres thèmes se sont révélés : la langue, les racines et routes, le comportement et l'apparence. En examinant comment les adultes émergents canado-néerlandais racontent leurs expériences, j'envisage d'offrir un aperçu plus détaillé sur les complexités de l'identité comme construction narrative. Avec l'aide de ces constatations, je contribue aux domaines des études culturelles et à celles de la migration tout en éclairant le sujet de migrants européens, ce qui ne touche pas souvent le débat public. Même si l'usage des termes « Néerlandais » et « Canadien » implique l'homogénéité, cette recherche révèle que les Néerlandais, ainsi que les Canadiens, sont des personnes hybrides, dynamiques et diversifiées.

### **Een narratieve analyse van de identiteit van Nederlands-Canadese jong-volwassenen**

Dit onderzoek geeft een empirische beschrijving van de manier waarop Nederlands-Canadese jongvolwassenen in de leeftijden tussen 19 en 26 jaar hun Nederlandsheid beleven in verhouding tot hun identiteit in de Canadese context. Het onderzoek bouwt op concepten gerelateerd aan migratie, identiteit en behoren, en verkent de relatie tussen deze drie thema's. Uit de analyse van negen interviews met Nederlands-Canadese jongvolwassenen kwamen drie hoofdthema's naar voren: authenticiteit, zelfontplooiing, en bemiddeling. Een nadere analyse bracht vier andere thema's naar boven: taal, wortels en wegen, gedrag, en uiterlijk. Door te kijken naar hoe Nederlands-Canadezen over hun ervaringen vertellen probeer ik meer inzicht te geven in de complexe narratieve constructie van identiteit. De resultaten leveren een bijdrage aan de vakgebieden cultural studies en migratiestudies, en werpen ook licht op Europese migranten, een onderwerp dat niet vaak deel uitmaakt van het publieke debat. Hoewel het gebruik van de termen 'Nederlands' en 'Canadees' homogeniteit impliceert, laat dit onderzoek ook zien dat de Nederlandse identiteit, net als de Canadese, hybride, dynamisch en divers is.