The Constitution, Negotiation and Representation of Immigrant Student Identities in South African Schools

'Think, instead of identity as a "production" which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation' (Hall, 2000).

Abstract

The easing of legal and unauthorized entry to South Africa has made the country a new destination for Black immigrants. As this population continues to grow, its children have begun to experience South African schools in an array of uniquely challenging ways. For these immigrant youth, forging a sense of identity may be their single greatest challenge. Accordingly, this study asks how do immigrant students construct, negotiate, and represent their identities within the South African schooling context. Findings were multifold in nature.

First, although immigrant students' ease of assimilation into the chosen reference group was to some degree sanctioned by their phenotypic racial features, their attempt at *'psychosocial passing'* was politically motivated. Second, immigrant students did not readily classify themselves according to skin pigmentocracy. Third, the majority of immigrant students heightened their ethnic self-awareness in forming their identity, but also assumed hyphenated identities. Fourth, immigrant students were not seen as having an identity, but rather as being *'plugged into a category with associated characteristics or features'*. Fifth, immigrant students forged a *'continental identity'*. And sixth, the selfagency of immigrant students was twofold in nature; not only did they want to improve their own condition, but there seemed to be an inherent drive to improve the human

condition of others.

Introduction

The demise of formal apartheid has created new and as yet only partially understood opportunities for migration in South Africa. One of the most notable post-apartheid shifts is the sheer volume and diversity of human traffic now crossing South Africa's borders. South Africa is increasingly host to a truly pan-African and global constituency of legal and undocumented migrants.

Legal migration from other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, for example, increased almost tenfold since 1990 to over four million visitors per year. South Africa's (re)insertion into the global economy has also brought new streams of legal and undocumented migrants from outside the SADC region and new ethnic constellations within. The easing of legal and unauthorized entry to South Africa has made the country a new destination for African asylum-seekers, long-distance traders, entrepreneurs, students, and professionals (Bouillon 1996; Saasa 1996; Rogerson 1997a; de la Hunt 1998; Perbedy & Crush 1998b; Ramphele 1999; Klotz, 2000). Consequently, traditional forms of migration are being reconfigured and new forms of migrant linkage are emerging with traditional neighbours (Crush et al. 1991). These reconfigured and new forms of migrant linkages hold serious implications for immigrant children in South African schools as the dynamics of belonging is no where so harsh as it is as in the day-to-day activities on the classroom floor and in the schoolyard. Many scholars claim that the structure of immigrant students' journeys to their new homes follows multiple pathways that are motivated by a variety of factors, namely, relief from political, religious, or ethnic persecution; economic incentives; as well as the opportunity to be reunited with family members (Berry, 1997; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Furthermore, these scholars argue that immigrant students are stripped of many of their sustaining social relationships as well as the social roles that provide them with culturally scripted notions of how they fit into the world, which often results in acculturative stress (Berry, 1997; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

'For these immigrant youth, forging a sense of identity may be their single greatest challenge. Do they feel comfortable in their homeland? Do they feel accepted by the "native-born" of the host country? What relationship do they have with their parents' country of origin? Is their sense of identity rooted "here",

"there", "everywhere", or "nowhere"' (Suarez-Orozco, 2001:176)? How do they forge collective identities that honour both their parents' culture of origin as well as their new home in South Africa? How can they develop a sense of belonging while coping with the dissonance of 'excluded citizenship' (Suarez-Orozco, 2004)?

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, most public schools in South Africa in addition to opening their doors to all South African children irrespective of race, colour, or creed, have also opened their doors to a number of [black] immigrant children. There is however, very little research on the ways in which immigrant student identities[2] are framed, challenged, asserted, and negotiated within the *dominant institutional cultures* of schools. Accordingly, this study asks how do immigrant students construct, negotiate, and represent their identities within the South African schooling context. Are new forms of immigrant students' self-identities beginning to emerge? The argument is presented as follows. I begin by sketching the background context of the study. This is followed by a review of the literature that informs research on immigrant students' identities. Conceptual markers and theoretical groundings of this research study are subsequently presented. I then describe the design and sampling of this research study. Findings in the form of emergent themes from interviews and observations of immigrant students are then presented. I conclude with an analysis and discussion of findings, and examine ways in which immigrant students' identities are constituted, negotiated, and represented within the South African schooling context.

Background Context

To date, studies in this field have focused mainly on the black and white dynamics of South African students. There is very little, if any, research on the experiences of [black] immigrant students within South African schools. In much of the research on hybridity and transculturalisation, the important role of schooling as a mediating force in identity-making processes has also received little attention. Schools, through both formal and informal relationships, represent powerful interpretations of what it means to be 'South African', 'Mozambican', or 'Zimbabwean', that is, of belonging and nonbelonging. This research study sets out to explore how [black] immigrant students construct, mediate, and negotiate their identity within South African schools. The context of this study was limited

to the Gauteng[3] province of South Africa.

The central cities of Gauteng have some of the largest numbers of Black immigrants, who are diverse not only in terms of national origin, but by ethnic affiliation, cultural tradition, and generational status. The majority of Black immigrants in the Gauteng province of South Africa are from Mozambique, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Swaziland, Botswana, Angola, and Malawi, but substantial numbers of immigrants also come from Zambia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Namibia, India, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Ruwanda, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Mauritius (Gauteng Department of Education, Ten day statistics – 2008). As this population continues to grow, its children have begun to experience South African schools in an array of uniquely challenging ways. As a result of these demographic trends, researchers have increased their focus on how Black immigrant youth fare once in South African schools. Some of the data capture of this research study occurred during the height of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa (Hassim, Kupe, & Worby, 2008). Larger societal tension fuelled by sensationalistic media attention had much more saliency in the formation of immigrant student identities, and in everyday interactions between South African and immigrant students at schools. The perpetrators of the violence in May explicitly targeted the *makwerekwere.* [4] These xenophobic attacks illustrated violent verbal and physical acts being directed towards Black immigrants by their Black South African counterparts who often erroneously perceived their Black immigrant peers' lack of familiarity with so-called 'South African norms' as intentionally distancing themselves from Black South Africans and related anti-Black South African arrogance. This 'shack on shack violence' (Hassim, Kupe, & Worby, 2008:16) was distinctive in several respects (Verryn, 2008). First, the attacks were on black foreign nationals. There is no record as far as any whites or Indians being caught up in these attacks. Second, it was mainly the poorer and more vulnerable foreign nationals that were exposed to the most vicious onslaught. Third, at least a third of the people killed were South African. And fourth, the violence was visited on the particularly marginalised of society, taking on ethnic and xenophobic connotations.

The Architecture of Identity

Theorizing Identity

A number of scholars claim that identity goes through a variety of permutations during adolescence as the individual experiments with different identity strategies (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Suarez-Orozco, 2004; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Murrell, 1999; Marcia et al., 1993; Marcia 1980; Parham 1989). Some argue that all youth move steadily from a stage of ethnic or 'racial unawareness' to one of 'exploration' to a final stage of an 'achieved' sense of racial or ethnic identity (Marcia, 1966; Erikson, 1968). Others point out that the process of identity formation is, rather than linear, more accurately described as 'spiralling' back to revisit previous stages, each time from a different vantage point (Parham, 1989). Yet, others claim that identity is 'an internal selfconstructed, dynamic organisation of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history' (Marcia, 1980:159), which facilitates psychological differentiation from others. A sense of emerging identity characterised by 'a flexible unity', that makes an individual less likely to rely on others views and expectations for self-definition.

Suarez-Orozco (2004:177) challenges the view held by Erikson and argues that identity formation is not simply a process, by which one passes through a variety of stages on the way to achieving a stable identity. Rather it is a process that is fluid and contextually driven. The social context is essential in predicting which identity is constructed (Suarez-Orozco, 2000). Many immigrant youth today are articulating and performing complex multiple identifications that involve bringing together disparate cultural streams. Immigrant students are constantly reinventing and rediscovering themselves through interactions in social structures, particularly peer reference groups and institutionally circumscribed roles, values, and ideologies. Among these social worlds, inconsistencies in the codes, values, roles, or expectations add to the difficulty of identity development (Suarez-Orozco, 2004). Identity is thus 'socially constructed'. It is an interaction between an internal psychological process and an external process of categorisation and evaluation imposed by others. The social context is thus essential in predicting which identity is constructed (Suarez-Orozco, 2000).

Negotiating the Currents of a Complex Society

Negotiating the currents of identities for immigrant students can be particularly complex. The pathways they take, and the identities they form are determined in multiple ways. Resources, experiences, stresses, and trauma, as well as the coping strategies that immigrant students bring with them, play a key role. Critical to the formation of their identities is the structural and attitudinal

environment, within which they find themselves (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Taylor, 1994). Immigrant students must not only deal with aspects of personal development shared by all adolescents (relationships, work choices, examining values) but also often confront culture-related differences concerning these choices. They must also seek to create a sense of identity through personal choices surrounding relationships, occupation, worldviews, and values, which sometimes may conflict with parental and other family expectations (Murrell, 1999; Dion, 2006).

The single greatest developmental task of adolescence is to forge a coherent sense of identity (Erickson, 1964). Erickson (1964) argued that for optimal development, there needs to be a certain amount of complementarity between the individual's sense of self and the varied social milieus he or she must traverse. However, in an increasingly fractured, heterogeneous, transnational world, there is much less complementarity between social spaces (Suarez-Orozco, 2000). The ethos of reception plays a critical role in the adaptation of immigrant students (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Although the structural exclusion suffered by immigrants and their children is tangibly detrimental to their ability to participate in the opportunity structure, prejudicial attitudes and psychological violence also play a toxic role (Taylor, 1994). One of the ways in which this plays out is that of the social mirror (Suarez-Orozco, 2000). When the reflected image is generally positive, the individual is able to feel that she is worthwhile and competent. When the reflection is generally negative, it is extremely difficult to maintain an unblemished sense of self-worth. The social mirror creates the fertile conditions for what Du Bois (1903/1989) termed 'double-consciousness' to thrive.

'Double-consciousness' is a complex and constant play between the exclusionary conditions of social structure marked by race and the psychological and cultural strategies employed by the racially excluded and marginalised to accommodate themselves to every indignities as well as to resist them (Essed & Goldberg, 2002).

One way of overcoming the effects of the social mirror is that of psychosocial passing. 'Psychosocial passing' refers to people who seek to render invisible the visible differences between themselves and a desired or chosen reference group. By behaving in ways that are consistent with other group members, they subconsciously seek to avoid having their differences noticed. Phenotypic racial features have considerable implications for the ease of assimilation. In this era of

globalisation immigrants, ability to 'pass' or be fully assimilated unnoticed is no longer possible for most new arrivals and this can lead to undue stress (Berry, 1997; Nesdale, Rooney, & Smith, 1997; Suarez-Orozco, 2000). Identities of immigrant students manifest themselves within the context of social worlds in numerous and multiple forms, namely Achieved or an Ascribed [imposed] Identities (Suarez-Orozco, 2004; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, 2000; Helms, 1990; DeVos, 1980); Performing Identities (Maestes, 2000; Waters, 1886); Global Identity (Arnett, 2002); Dominating Identities (Murrell, 1999); Ethnic Identities (Phinney & Ong, 2007); and Hyphenating and Perforating Identities (Sirin & Fine, 2008).

Furthermore the identity pathways or styles of adaptation of immigrant students differ. Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (1995) noted that youth attempting to traverse discontinuous cultural, political, and economic spaces tended to gravitate towards one of the dominant styles of adaptation: 'ethnic flight', 'adversarial', 'bi-cultural', and 'transcultural'. These styles are not fixed or mutually exclusive. '*Ethnic flight*' is characterised by immigrant students who willingly attempt to symbolically and psychologically dissemble and gain distance from their families and ethnic groups. The '*adversarial style*' is characterised by immigrant students who structure their identities around a process of rejection by institutions of the dominant culture. These youths respond to negative social mirroring by developing a defensively ppositional attitude and are likely to act out behaviourally (Aronowitz, 1984; Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, 1997). The '*bi-cultural style*' deploys what is termed 'transnational strategies'. These children typically emerge as 'cultural brokers', mediating the often conflicting cultural currents of home culture and host culture (Suarez-Orozco, 1989; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). The '*transcultural style*' is characterised by youth who creatively fuse aspects of two or more cultures – the parental tradition and the new cultures. In so doing, they synthesize an identity that does not require them to choose between cultures but rather allows them to incorporate traits of different cultures while fusing additive elements (Falicov, 2002).

Theoretical Moorings

The problem of identity has been theorised through different competing paradigms. The two most relevant theoretical frameworks that have a bearing on this research study are Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Hall's (Grossberg, 1996) figures of identification. CRT provides a theoretical framework, through which

individually and institutionally motivated racist acts can be highlighted, critiqued, and corrected (Tate, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Lynn, 1999; Tyson, 2003). It distinguishes between individual racism and institutional racism. CRT is an important construct for understanding Black immigrants who have made South Africa their home. It sheds light on the fact that Black immigrants are racialised as Black in South Africa, despite their varied self-identification on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, language, and other cultural signifiers, and are therefore subjected to the same racial prejudices and discrimination as their native Black counterparts. The concern of critical race theory is to re-narrativise the globalisation story in a way that places historically marginalised parts of the world at the centre rather than the periphery of the education and globalisation debate, and, thus, ultimately to bring about social change (Amnesty International, 2000). Scholars across disciplines have identified several dominant and unifying themes that describe the basic tenets of CRT (Velez et al., 2008; Yosso, 2006; Tyson, 2003; Lynn, 1999; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993; Tate, 1993).

First, race is a social construct, not a biological phenomenon. It is not rooted in biology or genetics but is instead a product of social contexts and social organisations. The construct of races involves categories that society creates, revises, and retires as needed. Second, racism is endemic to life and should not be regarded as an aberration. Socially constructed racial categorisations are a fundamental organising principle of society. Individual, cultural, and institutional expressions of racism reflect the racial stratification that is part of the fabric of society. Race and racism is part of the dominant cultural ideology that manifests in multiple contexts, and are central and defining factors to consider in understanding individual and group experience. Third, racism benefits those who are privileged and serves the interests of the powerful to maintain the status quo with respect to racial stratification. Fourth, CRT represents a challenge to the dominant social ideology of colour-blindness and meritocracy. Race neutrality and the myth of equal opportunity ignore the reality of the deeply embedded racial stratification in society and the impact it has on the quality of life. Fifth, racial identity and racial identification are influenced by the racial stratification that permeates society. The perceived salience of race, the significance of racial and ethnic group membership to the self-concept, the degree to which racial and ethnic heritage and practices are embraced or rejected, and the affiliations and identifications that are made within and outside of one's own racial and ethnic

group are all influenced by the dominant cultural narrative of superiority. Sixth, assimilation and racial integration are not always in the best interests of the subordinated group. Seven, CRT considers the significance of within-group heterogeneity and the existence of simultaneous, multiple, and intersecting identities. This is often referred to as anti-essentialism or inter-sectionality. All people have overlapping identities and multiple lenses through which the world is experienced.

CRT challenges the idea that any person has a uni-dimensional identity within a single category (e.g., race or ethnicity) or that racial groups are monolithic entities. Eight, CRT argues for the centrality, legitimacy, and appropriateness of the lived experience of racial or ethnic minorities in any analysis of racial stratification. CRT has advocated for marginalised people to tell their often unheard and unacknowledged stories, and for these perspectives to be applied to the existing dominant narratives that influence the law. Ninth, CRT insists on a contextual analysis by placing race and racism in a cultural and historical context, as well as a contemporary socio-political context. And, tenth, the ultimate goals of CRT are to inform social justice efforts and the elimination of racial oppression. The figures of identification as propounded by Hall (1996) comprise *Difference, Fragmentation, Hybridity, Border,* and *Diaspora.* The figure of *Difference* is constituted by the logic of difference through which the subject is constructed as an 'adversarial space' living in 'anxiety of contamination by its other' (Huyssen, 1986: vii). The figure of *Fragmentation* emphasises the multiplicity of identities and of positions within any apparent identity (Haraway, 1991).

Identities can, therefore, be contradictory and are always situational… we are all involved in a series of political games around fractured or decentered identities… since black signifies a range of experiences, the act of representation becomes not just about decentering the subject but actually exploring the kaleidoscopic conditions of blackness (Hall, 1992:21).

The figure of *Hybridity* is used synonymously with the other figures. Hall (1996) uses it to describe three images of border existences of subaltern identities existing between two competing identities. Images of a '*third space*' (Bhabha), literally of defining an 'in-between place inhabited by the subaltern'. Images of '*liminality*' collapse the geography of the third space into the border itself, the subaltern lives, as it were, on the border. Images of '*bordercrossing*' mark an image of 'between-ness' out of which identities are produced. The *Diaspora*

experience is defined by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; and by *hybridity. Diaspora* identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.

Research Strategy

The research study was both exploratory and descriptive in nature. The overall school environment with particular reference to how immigrant students construct, negotiate, and represent their identity within the schooling context of South Africa was the unit of analysis. Particular emphasis was placed on the dynamics of institutional culture, and the climate of the school and the classroom. The research design was qualitative in nature, and the narrative method and case study approach was used. Three secondary schools located in the Gauteng province of South Africa provide the research sites for this study; a former white Model C school, a former Indian school, and an inner city school that had a majority of black immigrant learners. The rationale for selecting secondary school students is that these students are at the adolescent stage of their lives, where the selfcreation of one's identity, which is often triggered by biological changes associated with puberty, the maturation of cognitive abilities and changing societal expectations, and the process of simultaneous reflection and observation is commonly experienced (Tatum, 1999). Criteria used in the selection of students were based on racial background and gender.

The data-gathering techniques that were used in this study included a mix of semi-structured interviews, observations, and field notes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of immigrant students to determine how their identities are constituted, negotiated, and represented in schools. The researcher selected approximately fifteen [black] immigrant students (Lesotho, Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Congo, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) across Grades 8 to10 at each school. The selection of immigrant students depended on the mixture that was found at each of the identified schools. An attempt was made to include both Anglophone and Francophone immigrant students in this study. A total of 45 students were interviewed. These interviews were conducted in 2008 over a period of six months. Questions comprised five to six broad categories and were openended.

The duration of interviews ranged between 1½ to 2 hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, the School Management Team, the School Governing Body, selected teachers of these Grades (8 -10), and parents of immigrant children at each of the three research sites to explore the phenomenon of immigrant student identities. Observations were conducted to coincide with the interview period. Researchers observed immigrant students over a period of six weeks at each school with a focus on their experiences of school life, and how it plays out on the classroom floor and on the school grounds. Observations of classroom practice, activities, and associations during the break sessions, assemblies, and other activities of the school, including after school activities, were captured. It must, however, be noted that there are advantages and limitations of observations at a small number of schools. The advantages of such a technique is that it provides a lens into the 'lived experiences' of classroom life over a period of time that allows for in-depth study and creates the opportunity for patterns (if any) to emerge. The limitation is that the small number of schools observations could be seen as instructive and illustrative, and not as representative of all schools.

In order to get a better feel of the schooling and learning environment, various field notes were written, based on informal observations of these schools (ethos, culture, and practices of the school). Informal conversations were conducted with some teachers. Attention was also given to the physical appearance of the school, which included observations of artefacts such as paintings, décor, photographs, portraits, and school magazines to provide a sense of the institutional culture of the school. Do immigrant students feel a sense of belonging and being at home at the school? Particular emphasis was on the experiences of immigrant students, and how they constructed, negotiated, and represented their identities within these schooling contexts, and how these contexts influenced their identity formation.

Data was analysed utilising qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000; Sandelowski, 2000). Codes were generated from the data and continuously modified by the researcher's treatment of the data 'to accommodate new data and new insights about those data' (Sandelowski, 2000:338). This was a reflexive and an interactive process that yielded extensive codes and themes. The extensive codes were further analyzed to identify data related to key concepts in the research question, theoretical frameworks, and literature review (Miles &

Huberman, 1994). Multiple readings of the data were conducted, organizing codes and themes into higher levels of categories within and across the interviews, observations, and other sources of data (Merriam, 1998).

Findings

Major findings that contrasted with what was found in the voluminous literature in this field were multifold in nature. First, although immigrant students' ease of assimilation into the chosen reference group was to some degree sanctioned by their phenotypic racial features, their attempt at *'psychosocial passing'* (Robinson, 1999) was politically motivated. They claimed that because of the political status of the host country, it was in their interest to *'pass'* as local blacks, but they wanted to do this in terms of appearance only and nothing else. For many immigrant students, the behaviour and code of conduct of their local black peers in the host country represented a site of contamination and shame. The concept of *'passing'* within the black community in the western world traditionally referred to blacks who pass for white because of their light skin colour (Wu, 2002). However, in the South African context this concept refers to black immigrant students who 'pass' for local black students because of similar phenotypic racialised features.

I can honestly say, I have not once noticed that the girls treat them any differently to a South African Zulu girl or a South African Xhosa girl or a South African Sotho girl, they look the same. It is really difficult to tell them apart physically (Ms Wilson, Grade 10 teacher).

They don't really react badly because they say I look mostly like a South African, like a Venda. I don't look like a foreigner. I mean I look like a Venda. So when I tell them I am from another country they actually get surprised (Effi, Zambia).

I fit in well, like the other South African Indians in this school. I speak English well, I don't really have an 'Indian' accent so I am like one of them (Jeet, Pakistan).

Well they didn't really see me as an immigrant; I was just like one of them. So I just let them go on believing that I am one of them. I don't let them know that I am really an immigrant (Vena, Zimbabwean).

The ability to join the mainstream unnoticed is more challenging when one is racially marked. However, in the South African context the most discernible marker among black immigrant students was not one of race, but that of language and accent. In the case of black [African] immigrant students it was their lack of proficiency in indigenous languages that signalled their *'foreignness'*. Whereas with black [Indian] immigrant students, it was their lack of proficiency in English that made them conspicuous as foreigners. In both cases *'accent'* in the use of the English language was the critical signifier of the *'Other'*. A secondary instantaneous indicator was that of *'shades of blackness'*. Indigenous black students could immediately recognise black [African] immigrant students by the *'blackness of their skin pigmentation'*. Wu (2002) argues that immigrants ability to *'pass'* or be fully assimilated unnoticed is no longer possible for most new arrivals in this era of globalisation. Kevin who could physically identify with the local black students because of a similar *'shade of blackness'*, tried to desperately *'pass'* as one of them by addressing his shortcoming in terms of learning an indigenous language.

He claims: *I do not want to be identified by my culture. I look like South African black people. I have made an effort to learn Sepedi to try to fit in and to communicate with the local blacks so that they do not say I am a makwerekwere.*

Immigrant students chose varied ways to present and orientate themselves in relation to others in the host country. What is important to note is that although the phenotypic features of many immigrant students allowed them to *'pass'* for one of the local blacks, all immigrant students were resolute in maintaining their sense of moral integrity. Second, immigrant students did not readily classify themselves according to skin pigmentocracy. They initially identified themselves in terms of personality traits and subsequently in terms of ethnicity linked to culture, traditions, language, and country of origin. The label of 'Black' was something that was ascribed to them on entry into the host country and something that they learnt to incorporate as part of their identity, given that they shared similar phenotype features as indigenous black students, as evident from this vignette.

Interviewer: Would you class yourself according to colour?

Immigrant: Yes.

Interviewer: Who would you say you are?

Immigrant: I'm black; I'm African.

Interviewer: Why do you say you are an African?

Immigrant: Because I originate from Africa.

Interviewer: And why do you call yourself black?

Immigrant: Because that's how we're classified by the South African government.

Interviewer: And are you happy with that?

Immigrant: Not really, because I've heard so many people complain about being called black because our skin colour is naturally black.

Interviewer: So you won't classify yourself as black in Zambia?

Immigrant: Me, no, no, no definitely not! I was not identified as 'black' in Zambia, but here I am told that I am 'black' because I look more like the local black Africans than like the Indians and whites.

Interviewer: In Zambia, how would you classify yourself?

Immigrant: As African.

Interviewer: Just African?

Immigrant: Yes. It is only when I came to South Africa that I realized that I've got another label, now I am a black African.

Interviewer: How does this make you feel?

Immigrant: I feel bad because I am not 'black' I am 'African'... because I come from Africa. 'I am not happy about being called black. I prefer being called African'. Also, my culture is totally different from theirs [black South Africans] and in my culture we are taught to respect and behave well. We also dress differently. There are so many differences with them, so how can people see me like one of them? I am just an African student in South Africa from Zambia... all these other labels; black and all that doesn't get into my identity.

And another student's response:

In Burundi we just say our culture and language, but when I came to South Africa I learnt that I am now 'black' (Andrew).

I am Zimbabwean and I'm black and I speak Kalanga...I say I am 'black' because when I came to South Africa I was told by the learners, teachers and the principal that I am black and I could also see that I look like the 'black South Africans'. No, in Zimbabwe I was not 'black'. I was just from the Kalanga tribe (Vena).

Third, the majority of immigrant students heightened their ethnic self-awareness in forming their identity, but also assumed hyphenated identities, as much as the hyphen was heavily skewed in favour of the country of origin. Immigrant students negotiated the balance and contours of the hyphen as they navigated their way through the social contexts of the host country:

I am Rwandan, but I am living now for 12 years in South Africa, so I'd say I am Rwandan but also becoming South African. I am a Rwandan-South African. [Sighs] I don't... I wouldn't say I'm a foreigner, no. I am a Congolese-South African, yes. I'm... who I am is two different cultures that play a huge, huge, impact on me and sadly I'm going say it's more South African than Congolese people that have made me who I am. But because culture means a lot to me, I have to say I am Congolese-South African (Vanessa, DRC).

Fourth, immigrant students were not seen as having an identity, but rather as being 'cast into a category with associated characteristics or features'. In terms of *'Othering'* they were ascribed the group categorisation of *'makwerekwere'*. A further sub-categorisation process occurred within this group category and was based on *'Shades of Blackness'*, which further negatively influenced many immigrant students' formation of social identities and their sense of belonging to groups. Students who come from Congo, Zambia, Somalia, and Malawi are naturally darker skinned than indigenous African learners. According to one of the principals:

They say this is a terrible thing which is part of our country, how dark the person is, because now South African students identify and discriminate against black immigrant students on the basis of darkness of skin colour because they say that person's too dark to be South African. This places the immigrant child under much stress and the child feels isolated.

Some immigrant student responses in this regard:

They use my surname Dakkar to mock at me and they say I am dark. I am a makwerekwere and I must go back to Zambia. They say you are black, like you are black more than other learners; you must be Congolese or maybe you from Somalia? There was this one time we were arguing with some other people. So they were dissing me [slang: insult someone] and so I also dissed them and they say I'm dark. I must go back to Malawi and stuff.

Fifth, in order to counteract the social representation of being a foreigner, and to seek a sense of inclusion, many black [African] immigrant students forged a 'continental identity' to create a sense of solidarity with local black students. Thus, their identities became subjected to a process of evolution and modification within the new social context. There seemed to be an increasing emphasis on an 'African' identity:

In Zimbabwe, I was a Zimbabwean, but now they say Unapa is a makwerekwere. That's not who I am. I am an African from Zimbabwe. I'm a Congolese girl from the DRC. They say I am a foreigner; a makwerekwere and they push me and say 'Go back to your country'. I don't see myself as a foreigner. I am an African from Africa (Jeanette, DRC).

Andrew was resolute in his thinking and preferred to present himself in relation to others in terms of a continental perspective. Since the context within which he now found himself forced him to be classified according to colour, he vehemently denied being 'black', instead he argued:

I do not classify myself as 'black' according to South African racial categories. I am 'coffee brown'. I am an African since like them [South Africans] I too am from the continent of Africa. How can they [South Africans] call me a makwerekwere? (Andrew, Ghana).

And sixth, immigrant student self-agency was twofold in nature. They not only wanted to improve their own condition, as much of the literature in the field reports, but there seemed to be an inherent drive to improve the human condition of others. There was genuine concern and a form of empathy. They wanted to assist indigenous black students in the spirit of 'brotherhood' [we are the same we are all 'Africans'] to improve the moral, academic, and social fibre of South

African society.

I see a kind of deficiency in the attitude of learners. For me, this is something that I can use to build the school into a better school and make the learners see that what they are doing is wrong. The South African government is giving the youth too many rights. I mean like already at the age of 12 you can have an abortion. That is just wrong in the Bible and it is wrong as a person (Chanda, Zambia). I can't say we really different, we look more or less the same except I am slightly lighter in colour then them but where we are different is in the attitude. The only difference is attitude. I'll change them. I will want them to understand what education is really about and how to treat elders. They must really get to understand that (Kevin, Zimbabwe).

The black people the way they treat people. I don't think we treat people the same way. I'd like to teach them about respect and how to treat people well (Athailiah, Mozambique).

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The influence of race and the effects of racism on black immigrant students were glaringly visible in this research study. Black immigrants were racialized as Black and were, therefore, subjected to the same racial prejudices and discrimination as their indigenous black counterparts. The homogeneous categorization of Blacks ignores the important national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, political, and even racial differences that exist within the population. In particular, homogenous descriptions ignore the fact that for many Black immigrant youth, racial and ethnic identities are fluid and complex; thus many do not strictly identify with the rigid and dichotomous Black/White constructs, through which racial and ethnic identities are based in South Africa. However, within the stream of *'Blackness'* prejudices against particular nationalities and ethnicities were clearly evident. Indigenous Black students demonstrated little incentive to eliminate racism. From a CRT analysis, this feature is known as *'interest convergence'* or material determinism (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Efforts to eliminate racism occur only when the change will benefit the privileged group in some way. Both Black and Indian students did not perceive any benefit from the Black immigrant students, but viewed them as a threat. This tenet encourages an exploration of the role of societal need and power interests in a way that specific

qualities are associated with particular racial groups.

In addition, many Black immigrant students experienced challenges in forming their identity in their very different home and school environments. They experienced difficulty in reconciling the expectations placed upon them by their traditional culture and those that hailed from South Africa, or the Eurocentric culture generally found in South African school settings. They thus took on hybrid and hyphenated identities as a measure of reconciling these disparate cultural streams. However, the hyphen assumed a skewed formation, as many black immigrant students leaned heavily on their ethnic identities that provided the foundation of their cultural and moral mores. This seemed to comply with Hall's figure of *Difference* where the black immigrant student was constructed as an *'adversarial space'* living in *'anxiety of contamination by its other'* (Huyssen, 1986: vii). The multiplicity of identities and of positions within any apparent identity as characteristic of Hall's figure of *fragmentation* was evident in the manner in which immigrant student identities manifested themselves. Black immigrant students were ascribed identities, namely *'makwerekwere'*, *'black'*, and were further cast into categories according to *'Shades of Blackness'*. Furthermore, they were ascribed identities according to the country of origin, namely Nigerians were categorised as thieves, womanisers, drug lords, and people who were unhygienic. Zimbabweans were ostracised because of the perception that they came from a poverty-stricken country that lacked resources and a country that would seem to be *'uncivilised'* and *'backward'*. Dominating identities of immigrant students were very much in the form of an ethnic identity.

While at the same time there was overwhelming evidence of hyphenating and perforating identities. There was also a very strong association with a *'Continental identity'*. The emphasis on a *'Continental identity'* by Black immigrant students was one way of counteracting the social representation of being a foreigner, and seeking a sense of belonging. Images of a *'third space'* (Bhabha, 1990), literally of defining an *'inbetween place inhabited by immigrant students'*. And, images of *'bordercrossing'*, that mark an image of *'between-ness'* out of which identities are produced, seemed to be the favoured options. The identity pathways of immigrant students leaned more towards the bicultural and transcultural styles of adaptation. None of the black immigrant students chose to willingly attempt to symbolically and psychologically dissemble and gain distance from their families and ethnic groups, nor did they opt for an adversarial style

that centred on rejecting institutions of the dominant culture. They, however, rejected norms and values of South African culture; they just did not actively act out against it. In contrast, there seemed to be genuine empathy and a collective sense of *'brotherhood'* with indigenous students, as evident from the manner in which their self-agency unfolded. Hence, the *Diaspora* experience was very much evident in the way immigrant students recognised the necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; and by *hybridity.* Through this *Diaspora* experience, immigrant students constantly produced and reproduced themselves anew, through transformation and difference by subjecting their identities to a process of evolution and modification within the new social context, as evident from their increasing emphasis on an *'African'* identity.

Conclusion

Reactions of indigenous students to Black immigrant students reflect the racial stratification that is part of the fabric of South Africa. In a CRT analysis, this endorses the tenet that races are categories society creates and that individual, cultural, and institutional expressions of racism are part of the dominant cultural ideology that manifests in multiple contexts. Current manifestations of racial stratification occur within a broader historical landscape that has shaped the present forms and expressions of racism. This research study uncovered both similarities and differences with what was found in the literature review. The similarities are that immigrant students in the South African context also have to contend with discrimination and harassment, but this is largely in terms of intra-black dynamics, while they struggle with issues of language, curriculum, and instructional strategies that do not address their cultural or linguistic background, and they feel a sense of alienation rather than one of belonging. These findings are in significant contrast with the literature in terms of the aspects of psychosocial passing, agency, identity, and language as a tool of exclusion. Black immigrant students have different stories to tell regarding the way race affects their life experiences. These stories have not had as significant an influence on policies, practices, and opinions as have the dominant cultural narratives about race. Black immigrant students have unique perspectives on racial matters and their voices speak of experiences involving marginalisation, devaluation, and stigmatisation. It becomes clear from these narratives that 'South Africanness' is not just a question of citizenship in official documentation.

It is also about contests over the more concrete (and often mundane) daily requirements of life, and the territoriality and space that accompany them. It becomes imperative to not only acknowledge and recognise the heterogeneous constitution of black groups in South Africa but to incorporate the linguistic and cultural capital of these differing groups into the very fabric of schooling so as to ensure that all students feel a sense of belonging and feeling at home. It is only in this way that all students can truly become 'cosmopolitan citizens' of the world, guided by common human values. Research from the CRT framework should contribute to efforts to facilitate the empowerment of marginalised and disenfranchised groups, and to inform strategies for eliminating racism and other forms of oppression.

[1] This chapter stems from a broader SANPAD-funded project on Immigrant student identities in South African schools. Parts of this chapter have already been published in Education Inquiry. Vol. 1 (4):347–365 and the Journal of Educational Development.

[2] *Identities* – In this chapter the *'multiple'* and *'fluid'* identities that are addressed are those of race, ethnicity, nationality, language, and related identifi cations; not class and gender.

[3] *Gauteng* – One of the nine provinces of South Africa.

[4] *Makwerekwere* – people who were identified as not properly belonging to the South African nation. Makwerekwere is the derogatory term used by Black South Africans to describe non-South African blacks. It refers to Black immigrants from the rest of Africa.

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CDA: een niet onbelangrijke programmatische verandering

Church of Burgum

Op 9 juni 2010 vond wederom een verkiezing van de leden van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal plaats. In totaal 9.442.977 kiesgerechtigden (opkomstpercentage 75,4) maakten letterlijk of figuurlijk de gang naar het stemlokaal, van wie er 9.416.001 een geldige stem uitbrachten. Zij hadden de keuze uit een aanbod van 18 politieke partijen of kandidatenlijsten, zij het dat niet in alle (19) kieskringen al deze lijsten zich aan de kiesgerechtigden presenteerden. Van de deelnemende partijen slaagden er tien in voldoende stemmen te behalen om vertegenwoordigers naar de Tweede Kamer te mogen afvaardigen. De VVD werd nipt de grootste partij met 31 zetels, gevolgd door de

PvdA (30), de PVV (24), het CDA (21), de SP (15), GroenLinks (10), D66 (10), CU (5), de PvdD (2) en de SGP (2).

Dat deze uitslag en verdeling van zetels over de partijen zou leiden tot een verre van eenvoudige kabinetsformatie, was direct duidelijk. De uitkomst van het (in)formatieproces was vervolgens hoogst opmerkelijk: een bijzonder minderheids- of misschien toch meerderheidskabinet gevormd door twee partijen vertegenwoordigd in de coalitie (VVD en CDA), maar met steun in de Tweede Kamer van de PVV. In twee documenten werden afspraken vastgelegd die de basis dienden te vormen van deze bijzondere samenwerking: een Regeerakkoord met als motto *'Vrijheid en Verantwoordelijkheid'* en een Gedoogakkoord.

De vorming van het kabinet-Rutte-Verhagen, met VVD-leider Mark Rutte als eerste liberale minister-president na bijna een eeuw tijd, maakt het extra interessant om de verkiezingsprogramma's van 2010 nog eens op een aantal punten nader te bezien en te vergelijken met standpunten van 2006. Het doel van deze slechts als illustratie bedoelde vergelijking is duidelijk te maken dat de inhoud van die programma's interessanter en betekenisvoller is dan menig kiezer, commentator en onderzoeker, en wellicht zelfs politicus, lijkt te denken. Gezien de samenstelling van het nieuwe kabinet ligt voor de hand om de visie van de VVD en het CDA ten aanzien van religie in het algemeen en de islam in het bijzonder onder de loep te nemen. De eerste bijlage van het Gedoogakkoord opent niet helemaal toevallig met de volgende constatering: *"De drie partijen VVD, PVV en CDA verschillen van mening over aard en karakter van de islam".*

De VVD schrijft in haar verkiezingsprogramma van 2010 dat niet één bepaalde cultuur maar de rechtsorde als leidend moet worden genomen:

Liberalen kijken niet naar geloof maar naar gedrag, niet naar iemands afkomst maar naar zijn toekomst, en niet naar de groep maar naar het individu. (...) De VVD bemoeit zich in beginsel niet met religie, maar accepteert niet dat onder de vlag van religie inbreuk wordt gemaakt op onze kernwaarden, onze democratische rechtsorde en de bijbehorende instituties en wetten. Shariarechtspraak is fundamenteel in strijd met onze rechtsstaat en voor de VVD onacceptabel. (p.6)

Het gedrag van een individu moet aldus in overeenstemming zijn met de regels van de rechtsorde, ongeacht tot welke groep men behoort. In 2010 wordt echter

niet meer uitgesproken dat iedereen zich moet gedragen naar Nederlandse waarden en normen, zoals in het programma van 2003 nog te lezen is. Hieruit zou men kunnen afleiden dat de VVD in 2010 terugkeert naar een meer klassiek liberaal standpunt, waarbij het gedrag van een individu wordt beoordeeld aan de hand van de regels van de (publieke) rechtsorde en de culturele opvattingen van een persoon behoren tot zijn privé-domein.

Een vergelijking van standpunten van het CDA door de tijd kan duidelijk maken of ook deze partij in haar positie ten aanzien van religie een verandering heeft ondergaan. Het CDA schrijft in zijn verkiezingsprogramma van 2006:

Religieuze gemeenschappen versterken onderlinge bindingen, het saamhorigheidsgevoel, en inspireren mensen om een bijdrage te leveren aan de samenleving. Dat geldt ook voor islamitische instellingen, waaronder scholen. (p.26)

En:

Godsdienst en levensovertuiging zijn een bron van inspiratie om het leven vorm te geven vanuit diepere waarden en bezieling. Daarvoor moet volop ruimte zijn. Naast de joodse, christelijke en humanistische traditie maken de islam, het boeddhisme, hindoeïsme en andere levensbeschouwingen deel uit van onze samenleving. (p.40)

In het CDA-programma van 2010 staat te lezen:

Wie naar Nederland komt mag in vrijheid zijn geloof belijden. Want hij komt in een samenleving waar de joods-christelijke en humanistische traditie en cultuur de samenleving kleuren. Dat betekent dat de Westerse cultuur en waarden en normen leidend zijn voor de samenleving. (p.13)

Uit de vergelijking van de beide passages valt af te leiden dat het CDA in vier jaar tijd een niet onbelangrijke programmatische verandering heeft ondergaan, een verandering die overigens al wat eerder in de tijd een aanvang heeft genomen. In 2006 wordt de islam nog expliciet genoemd als één van de religieuze gemeenschappen die functioneren als cement van de samenleving. Vier jaar later lijkt die op behandeling van godsdiensten op voet van gelijkheid te zijn verlaten en neemt het CDA een positie in die opmerkelijke gelijkenis vertoont met de opvatting van wijlen Pim Fortuyn, die in bijvoorbeeld *De islamisering van onze*

cultuur. Nederlandse identiteit als fundament (2001) eveneens de opvatting verkondigde dat de joods-christelijke humanistische cultuur leidend moeten zijn voor de Nederlandse samenleving. Het CDA geeft overigens in zijn programma geen antwoord op de vraag wat de maatschappij of overheid te doen staat als een groep personen in vrijheid hun geloof belijden en deze religie niet of niet geheel overeenstemt met de leidende Westerse cultuur en waarden en normen.

Voor het antwoord op die vraag kunnen we terecht bij de PVV. In het programma van de PVV wordt namelijk expliciet gekozen voor bestrijding van de islam (zie paragraaf *'Kiezen voor islambestrijding en tegen de massa-immigratie'*). De PVV maakt daarbij geen onderscheid tussen de islam en een gematigde islam; *"wat zeker niet bestaat is een gematigde islam"*. Aldus gaat de PVV onder aanvoering van Geert Wilders een stap verder dan Fortuyn, die zich uitdrukkelijk eerst en vooral afzette tegen het fundamentalisme van of binnen de islam.

Gezien de opmerkelijke samenstelling van (de steun voor) het kabinet-Rutte hebben we er hier voor gekozen om heel beknopt de visies van het VVD, CDA en PVV ten aanzien van de Westerse cultuur en de houding ten opzichte van de islam te belichten. De notie van de joods-christelijke humanistische cultuur als leidend voor de Nederlandse samenleving wordt in 2010 door het CDA en de PVV gedeeld, maar niet door de VVD. Bovendien spreekt de PVV uit dat zij de joods-christelijke humanistische cultuur wil afdwingen door de islam actief te bestrijden.

Bij het lezen van de verkiezingsprogramma's van 2010 zijn nog tal van andere interessante aspecten te ontdekken van andere partijen. Die interessante en politiekrelevante facetten tonen zich bij een programvergelijking voor het jaar 2010, maar zeker niet minder als de verkiezingsprogramma's van 2010 worden vergeleken met die van de betrokken partijen in eerdere jaren. De bundel (zie: hieronder) maakt de eerste soort van vergelijkingen en analyses mogelijk, terwijl eerdere bundels de niet minder belangwekkende vergelijking door de tijd heen mogelijk maken.

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De verzameling verkiezingsprogramma's van 2010 – in de papieren versie de integrale overname van de programma's van die partijen die na 9 juni 2010 verkozen waren in de Tweede Kamer, in de bijgeleverde cd-rom deze

programma's plus die van de overige deelnemende partijen – is tot stand gekomen met medewerking van de betrokken partijen, en met steun van het Instituut voor Politieke Wetenschap van de Universiteit Leiden, het Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, en het Montesquieu Instituut. Publicatie van deze bundel inclusief cd-rom is mogelijk gemaakt door het Montesquieu Instituut.

11 mei 2011: De bundel met alle verkiezingsprogramma's verschijnt over enkele weken bij Rozenberg Publishers. Alle partijprogramma's worden dan ook online geplaatst.

Lejos de la Costa ~ Far from the Costas. Introducción ~ Introduction

Monroy
Photo: Ab den Held

Introducción
Extremadura es una de las regiones más occidentales de España, situada junto a la frontera portuguesa. Muy pocos extranjeros han oído hablar de esta región y la han visitado.

Es una región poco conocida de la que uno desea que siga siendo así. Una región con mucho espacio natural, donde lo más habitual es la tranquilidad, donde las puestas de sol presentan una amplia gama de colores entre nubes y donde la luna aparece completamente redonda. Una región con muchos pájaros donde las campanas de las vacas tintinean día y noche.

Se puede caminar o montar a caballo o en bicicleta por los extensos campos e ir de pueblo en pueblo, junto a las viejas cercas, por vías pecuarias o a través de campos de cultivo con encinas. Uno se imagina situado en la Edad Media con un retroceso de varios siglos.

Pero hay también alegría y cultura española. También en Extremadura hay veranos españoles con tardes largas, plazas ruidosas, festivales rurales (fiestas) y procesiones. Llegando esta época de verano la vida tranquila se convierte en una actividad bulliciosa, doblándose el número de habitantes en los pueblos, donde acuden los que en su día se marcharon para encontrarse con la familia, los viejos amigos y beber los vinos locales y cerveza con tapas de jamón ibérico, y además charlar y charlar. Uno de estos pueblos de Extremadura es Monroy.

Monroy, cuyas familias vivieron con dificultad durante siglos, es un pueblo donde el tiempo se detuvo. No es por ello de extrañar que los grandes conquistadores se fuesen de esta región. Todavía se encuentra en este pueblo el viejo castillo que ofreció protección durante la reconquista, restos de una antigua Villa Romana y

viejas vías pecuarias.

Castillo desde XII siglo
Castle from XII century

Introduction
Extremadura is the most western province of Spain, along the Portuguese border. Only a few foreigners have heard of the region, and sometimes somebody has travelled through the area.
A hidden country, of which you hope that it will always remain this way. A spacious area where tranquility is so common, where the sun sets multicolored with splendid cloud parties and the moon rises full and round. A country with so many birds, where the cow bells tinkle day and night.
You can walk or ride infinitely through the fields, from village to village; between age-old walls, over cattle roads or through farming fields with mighty stone oaks. You imagine yourself in the middle ages, far back in time.

But there is also Spanish liveliness and culture. Summer evenings in the Extremadura are long and filled with noisy squares, rural festivals (fiestas) and processions. The quiet life accelerates and the number of inhabitants doubles when family and old friends come to the villages from all wind regions, to drink the local wines or cervesa (beer) with the tapa jamon Iberico and talk and talk.. One of these villages in the Extremadura is *Monroy*.

Monroy, historically a place where ordinary man had difficulty surviving. Therefore, from time immemorial, a place where one got away from. It's no surprise that the great conquistadores came from this region. Still standing are the old castle which offered protection during the Reconquista and the remainders of the Villa Romana and the old cattle roads.

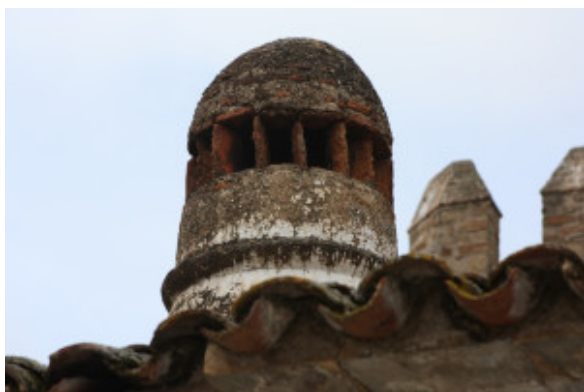**Next:** *[Monroy – Un pueblo de Extremadura ~ A village in the Extremadura](#)*

Lejos de la Costa ~ Far from the Costas. Monroy. Un pueblo de Extremadura ~ A village in the Extremadura

La chimenea más antigua del pueblo
The oldest chimney of the village

Un pueblo de Extremadura

Monroy está situado a unos 30 km de Cáceres, en medio del triángulo formado por Cáceres, Trujillo y Plasencia. Extremadura se encuentra rodeada por montañas que están situadas al norte, este y oeste. Tiene un clima continental con inviernos fríos y veranos calurosos y durante mucho tiempo ha estado aislada del resto de España, siendo actualmente una de las regiones más pobres.

El pueblo de Monroy está situado en lo alto de una altiplanicie, donde existen

varias fuentes por lo que fue un lugar estratégico para construir un castillo. Esto ocurrió a principios del siglo XIV. Los alrededores de la población ya estuvieron habitados durante la edad del bronce así como durante la época de los romanos y los visigodos. En 1309 el rey Fernando IV concedió al noble Hernán Pérez de Monroy el privilegio de fundar una aldea y construir un castillo.

Lo típico de los pueblos de esta región es su estructura. La parte antigua de la población con su iglesia y su castillo. Alrededor del pueblo se encuentran los viejos corrales donde se cultivan verduras y se guarda el ganado, los caballos, los cerdos y las gallinas. Alrededor del pueblo se encuentran las cercas que son terrenos de algunas hectáreas de extensión donde se guarda y pasta el ganado y los caballos. También en los alrededores del pueblo se encuentra el área comunal donde pastan las ovejas, las cabras y el ganado de los vecinos. Rodeando todo lo anterior se encuentra las grandes extensiones de terreno, que son fincas donde se da la ganadería extensiva y los toros de lidia.

A village in the Extremadura

Monroy lies about 30 km from Cáceres, in the middle of the triangle Cáceres-Trujillo-Plasencia. Extremadura is surrounded by the mountains in the west, the north and the east. It has a continental climate with cold winters and hot summers and for ages it has been a fairly isolated area in Spain and until now still one of the poorest regions.

The village lies on a hillock in the highland and has been surrounded by water sources, and therefore in the past a good strategic spot for building a castle. That was at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Already before that the surroundings were inhabited in the bronze time and at the time of the Roman and the Visgoten.

In 1309 King Ferdinand IV granted to the nobleman Hernán Pérez the Monroy the privilege for founding the village and the construction of a castle Typically of the villages in this region is the composition. The old centre with church and castle, at the edge of the village the old corals where one grows vegetables, keeps cattle, horses, pigs and chickens and around the village the cercas, small plots of a few

hectares where one mostly keeps cattle and also horses. Around the village the communal area, the grazing area for the sheep and cattle and to a lesser degree the goats. Bordering to the communal area are situated the haciëndas, large farms with extensive livestock-farming and bull-breeding.

Iglesia de Santa Catalina de Monroy desde XIV siglo Santa Catalina Church from XIV century

Doña Maria Teresa

Vestibulo en la casa de Doña Maria
Teresa
Doña Maria Teresa
Vestibule in Doña Maria Teresa's
house

Hermanos Galea – fábrica de

embutidos y jamones Factory of sausages and hams

Tienda de la fábrica
Shop at the factory

From The Web – The Digital Scriptorium

The Digital Scriptorium is a growing image database of medieval and renaissance manuscripts that unites scattered resources from many institutions into an international tool for teaching and scholarly research.

As a visual catalog, DS allows scholars to verify with their own eyes cataloguing information about places and dates of origin, scripts, artists, and quality. Special emphasis is placed on the touchstone materials: manuscripts signed and dated by their scribes. DS records manuscripts that traditionally would have been unlikely candidates for reproduction. It fosters public viewing of materials otherwise available only within libraries. Because it is web-based, it encourages interaction between the knowledge of scholars and the holdings of libraries to build a reciprocal flow of information. Digital Scriptorium looks to the needs of a very diverse community of medievalists, classicists, musicologists, paleographers, diplomatists and art historians. At the same time Digital Scriptorium recognizes the limited resources of libraries; it bridges the gap between needs and resources by means of extensive rather than intensive cataloguing, often based on legacy data, and sample imaging.

Digital Scriptorium institutional partners have instituted a governance structure to plan jointly for the future of the program, in terms of scope, sustainability, and content.

Read more:

Dutch Wonderland!

Rembrandt van
Rhijn

Tolerance ranks high among the markers of being Dutch. In paintings of Rembrandt van Rijn one can possibly see that he was liberal and tolerant (Hoekveld-Meijer). Many scholars and politicians maintain that the Netherlands has a tradition of tolerance that harkens back to the 17th Century, generated by the Dutch tradesman spirit.

'It's a misconception that the Dutch are *essentially* racist and that they discriminate' (Derksen, 2005, 38; italics mine -ldj). Paul Scheffer, who coined the concept of 'a multicultural drama' in the Netherlands, upholds his confidence in the Dutch: 'Most people have essentially nothing against the presence of immigrants, and they want to live peacefully with them (Hooven, 2006, 112; italics mine -ldj). These reassurances of the Dutch being *essentially* good people may be an indication that nowadays the Dutch tend to behave differently than in the immigrant era of the 17th Century, suggesting that the Dutch have temporarily wandered off from the correct Dutch course. This Golden Century, as it is called in the Netherlands, still serves as a rich source for Dutch identity construction.

Being Dutch is clad with undisputed and rather sturdy securities: the rule of law,

individual freedoms, social and healthcare securities, free education and leisure time, and guaranteed subsistence levels. These securities and services are constantly scrutinized, subject to political debate and parliamentary decision, and balanced with a significant tax burden to maintain Dutch Wonderland, upgraded one day or downgraded the next. Dutch Wonderland did not just happen; it is a complex political construction that requires ideological drive and savvy political skills.

All told social solidarity has for decades been a cornerstone of Dutch politics. A hundred years ago *free education* and *voting rights* were defining issues on the Dutch political agenda, complemented with *minimum wage*; *low premium health insurance* (Amsterdam first, in 1846; Health Insurance Fund for labourers, in 1870); *unemployment benefits*; *public housing* (Woningwet 1901); *rent subsidies* (Wet Individuele Huursubsidie 1986); and *old age pension* (AOW, for residents 65 and over; since 1957). These rights and services are found in most Western European countries, though in varying degree. The Netherlands stands out in particular with regards to public housing, provided by *Housing Corporations*. As part of their building activities, these Corporations are bound to provide social housing, including its maintenance. At the end of the 1990s 36 % of all housing in the Netherlands was classified as social housing against a European average of just 18 % (Duijndam, 2009, 31). In 2004 the Netherlands' social housing share had fallen to 34 %, yet the shares in other European countries were still much lower: Italy 5 %, France 17 %, Germany 5 %, Denmark 19 %, and the United Kingdom 20 %. Over the years a political majority within the Dutch multi-party system agreed to keep this social edifice standing, financed with public funds, general taxes or specific premiums.

According to a recent study Americans spend twice as much as residents of other developed countries on healthcare, but get lower quality, less efficiency and have the least equitable system. The Netherlands ranked first overall on all measures of healthcare-quality, efficiency, access to care, equity and the ability to lead long, healthy, productive lives. Better than Britain, Canada, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and the USA.

Well-Off

The tax burden of Dutch Wonderland does not stand in the way of living well. A recent study by the Netherlands' Central Planning Office compares the social and

economic indicators of the Netherlands with those of other countries. These countries are grouped into the Scandinavian (government) model, the Continental (corporate or Rhineland) model, the Mediterranean (family-oriented) model and the Anglo-Saxon (free market) model. This study summarizes 'that a high tax burden is quite compatible with a high level of welfare and prosperity. In nearly all respects, the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands outperform the Continental, Mediterranean and Anglo-Saxon countries. Poverty is low, older people are better off, there is less discrimination, and the level of health care and education is higher. These countries score high on the European Union "Lisbon" agenda (2009) of social cohesion, economic resilience and dynamism' (Cnossen, 2009).

USA expatriates who live and work in the Netherlands are at first stunned by the maximum rate of the tax they have to pay on their income: 52% (Shorto, 2009). After a while they count the blessings of what government returns: monies for child benefits, school-materials, and children's day care; vacation money on top of salary and a minimum of 4 weeks vacation; universal healthcare with hardly any co-payments. Shorto, himself an American expatriate for some years, observes: *'The Dutch seem to be happier than we are'*, quoting a 2007 UNICEF study of the well-being of children in 21 developed countries that ranked Dutch children at the top and American children second from the bottom (UNICEF, 2007). Nonetheless, vociferous dissidents argue that the Netherlands' social safety net is in tatters because of the game of free *marketeers* that has replaced government care and provision. People, who are not fit to survive on their own, or who lack the merits to compete in *free* markets, the *unproductibles* (*onrendabelen*) as it were, are falling through the cracks (Dam, 2009).

Knowing that the best is not good enough, and that Dutch comforts may have been better in the past, or even need repair, the Dutch are well off by almost all standards of personal freedom, individual security and social wellbeing. Against this illustrious background of a Dutch Wonderland, the Dutch sense of insecurity about their present day identity – *who are we?* – may appear hard to understand. Equally surprising is the lack of Dutch imagination of *who do we want to be?*, addressing the futuristic flipside of their identity complex.

Power of Imagination

The imagination of what it means to be Dutch is powered by a strong historical

remembrance. In 2006 the Netherlands' Prime Minister called upon the VOC mentality of the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; VOC*) that existed in the days of the 17th Century when Holland ruled the waves. In reaction to parliamentary opposition he argued: *We can do it again!*, claiming success for his government coalition, and attempting to perk up the nation. The 17th Century '*was surely the "Golden Age" of the Dutch slave trade*' when taking together both slave trades, by the VOC and the Dutch West India Company (*West Indische Compagnie; WIC*) (Wely, 2008, 71). In this recall the Prime Minister did not pay much attention to Dutch descendents of the slave trade of the Dutch West India Company, living in the Netherlands and on Dutch Caribbean islands.

Republiek – kaart

The immigrant character of Dutch society in the Golden Century has been chronicled by Jonathan Israel (Israel, 1998, 623-628). In this century student enrolment at the universities was for a substantial part foreign born, especially at Leiden. During the quarter 1626-1650 more students at Leiden's university were foreign born than Dutch (Israel, 1998, 901). The manpower employed in Dutch shipping could be sustained only by means of continuous and large-scale immigration. Despite the rising level of immigration from the inland provinces, most immigrants in Amsterdam continued to be foreign born. In the 1650s more foreign-born men married in Amsterdam than newcomers born in the Dutch Republic outside Amsterdam. This was also the case in the 1690s. More than 40 % of the seamen employed by the *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* in the 1650s were foreign born. The navy was heavily reliant on foreigners. The towns in Holland and Zeeland competed for Huguenots from France – and their money and skills – with each other and also with other inland towns. Huguenots amounted to 7 % of the population of the large towns. 17th Century Dutch cities were

populated with large numbers of immigrants, and that for good economic reason.

A boost to Dutch identity has been the recent interest in *New Amsterdam* (1626-1664) as the center of the world, where it all began – that is, for New York and America. Russell Shorto wrote a polished and charming story of *New Amsterdam*, Dutch Manhattan and the forgotten colony that shaped America. He emphasizes '*the crucial role of the Dutch in making America what it is today*' (Shorto, 2004, book jacket). Shorto describes the 17th Century Netherlands' provinces as the *melting pot* of Europe where immigrants from all corners in Europe settled, learned the Dutch language, took on a Batavian name; it was essentially a world where others could also have a place. This appealing image Shorto projects on *New Amsterdam*, and argues that much of this legacy is still to be found in present day New York: '*The Dutch colony was one of the most culturally mixed places on earth in the 17th century – by one account, 18 languages were being spoken in the streets of New Amsterdam at a time when its total population was perhaps 500 – and this diversity provided the stock for New York's ethnic stew. Factionalism being the essence of politics, New York thus had in its founding the ingredients to make it the nation's laboratory of political ideas.*' Thanks to the Dutch, at least in the eye of the beholder!

Shorto argues that 'America's first mixed society never really went away but is woven into the nation's DNA.' His story is uploaded with Dutch cookies, Speculaas and Sinterklaas (Santa Claus). He romanticizes the 17th Century Dutch settlers as the forgotten Pilgrims, or the *Un-Pilgrims*, whose multicultural history competes still to this day with the puritanical legacy of the Pilgrim Fathers. He calls upon an image of a Dutch way of life in a small settlement on the coast of America, *New Amsterdam*, with *freedom of conscience*, imposed by grand merchants in Holland, to explain today's New York liberalism. According to Shorto, this Dutch footprint certifies the American divide between Puritanism and Liberalism. He claims that 17th Century Dutch identity still has an impact in present day New York, or even the whole of the USA.

Shorto contrasts the Pilgrim Fathers' legacy with early 17th Century Dutch liberalism imported to New York. The bearers of the Pilgrim's legacy had their goal to keep the *barbarians* outside, and the social order unchanged, in a nostalgic imagination of the past. The puritanical fear of immigrants who will demographically overrun the *WASPs* (*White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant*) feeds fierce opposition to USA federal government's attempts at legalizing undocumented

immigrants in the first decade of the 21st Century. Yet in New York, all immigrants, including the *undocumented* immigrants, are welcome: *They are America.* In 2010, Bloomberg, New York's Mayor, repeated this once more: '*No city on earth has been more rewarded by immigrant labor, more renewed by immigrant ideas, more revitalized by immigrant culture.*'

This sharply contrasts with immigrant anxiety in other parts of America (Caldwell, 2009, 340). Over there the plight of a legion of ca.12 million illegal immigrants is extremely uncertain. In some states rumours about raids on *illegals* are causing wild flight; children are abruptly taken from school; workers flee their workplace; families go underground: '*a 14-year-old told [that] she and her parents live in constant fear.*' Federal initiatives to legalize undocumented immigrants, mainly *Latinos*, were answered in 2006 by local authorities with arbitrary controls, which delivered scores of *illegals* into the hands of immigration authorities, to be locked up in detention centres before being deported. Caldwell asserts, '*the American public still does not like immigration*', when quoting a 2006 poll by the Pew Research Center that a majority of Americans – 53 % – think all illegal immigrants should be required to go home (Caldwell, 2009, 340). Making such an eye-catching statement, Caldwell overlooks the fact that immigration and *illegals* are not in the same bracket. Even so, thanks to the footprint the Dutch left centuries ago in *New Amsterdam* on the Hudson, New York still stands out as a haven for immigrants. Imagine that! What once was Dutch is no more, at least not in the Netherlands on the North Sea but still manifest in a *Dutch* footprint in the USA.

The open-minded liberalism that New York supposedly inherited in the 17th Century from far away Holland fails to manifest itself these days in the Netherlands. Today the Netherlands seems on better terms with the rest of the USA where: '... *some have warned that in their opinion the nation's cultural identity could be washed away by a flood of low-income Spanish-speaking workers from Central and Latin America.*' Statements about cohorts of non-western immigrants and Muslims threatening Dutch identity must sound pretty familiar to those Americans. Apparently the power of imagination is able to bridge the Atlantic and several centuries in time, but loses its magic close to the original Dutch home.

Just some forty years ago the Dutch *live and let live* state of mind in the 1960s and 70s perfectly fitted Shorto's image of 17th Century Holland and *New Amsterdam*. And present day Dutch liberalism as well as the Netherlands' welfare

state outshine *The American Way* and *New York, New York* (Minelli, 1977) in respectable differences. By many standards the Dutch consider themselves a well-endowed nation indeed. Tamimi Arab recalls the medal of enlightenment the Netherlands earned by being safe haven for Spinoza, Voltaire, Bayle and Locke, at a time when most of Europe still wandered in darkness. Also today the Netherlands is a liberal forerunner, especially when compared to the USA with its divisive controversies over abortion, euthanasia, soft drugs and same-sex marriage. The Netherlands sits on the just side of history; a guide to the rest of the world indeed (Tamimi Arab, Eutopia, 2009)!

Illustrative of how good the Dutch feel about themselves is *'Simon'*, a Dutch movie by Eddy Terstall (2006), portraying Amsterdam as a sunny city of relaxed people, abundant love and sex, fun and leisure, and gay marriage. The Dutch are portrayed with *savoir vivre.* Simon, the movie's main character, a truly life-loving character in his forties, is diagnosed with an incurable brain tumor. The movie details his decision of being euthanized, according to a legally recognized protocol of how to do so, which includes assistance of professional medical and ethical staff. In his final moments, family, children and friends, who all have agreed with his decision, surround Simon, showing respect for a beloved person's chosen end-of-life event.

Euthanasia is practiced as an extension of personal freedom, under strictly defined and controlled conditions. The same applies to abortion. Capital punishment is outlawed and considered not right in a civilized society. The use of soft drugs is a personal matter, hard drugs are forbidden. When people want to marry, they do so according to preference, be it to a man or a woman. Most of these attainments are carried by a large consensus, including Catholics and Protestants of various shades and grades. A social welfare net takes care of people who cannot take care of themselves. Pensions are secure, and based on real accumulated capital, not on paperwork. The Netherlands figures in the highest ranks of providing development aid to poor countries.

Elsewhere these Dutch values and practices have caused condemnation of the *Lowlands* (sic) as a deranged country, a NARCO state, a country where the unborn, elderly and disabled may just be terminated. These overstuffed images of the Dutch are debatable; they vary with the mindset of the beholder. More often than not, the level of actual information does not matter. Yet it cannot be denied that a wide consensus prevails that the Netherlands' public authorities facilitate

liberties where other states put restrictions in place. The Netherlands is by many standards a liberal nation. Precisely this being so raises the question: why are the Dutch so liberal for themselves and have become so cramped about the presence of the non-western Dutch? Could it be that the *true Dutch* are preoccupied with what they own, and that they fear their social and liberal achievements being endangered by the numbers of non-western immigrants on their home turf? The question remains whether an un-doctored *True Dutch* legacy can be identified. One day the Dutch believed to be a guide to the world, the next day the closing of the Dutch mind shocks the world. Over the years an abundant number of respectable *doctors* have become talking heads on the subject of Dutch identity, all making sense of their particular conception of Dutch Wonderland.

Malleable Legacies

Of course it feels good to be Dutch when viewing the legacy of great Dutch painters in the 17th Century, Rembrandt van Rijn, Frans Hals, and Johannes Vermeer (just to name a few). Or perhaps when counting the blessings of the hundreds of years of water management (barriers, waterways, levels, and water quality) that keep feet dry in a country of which 20 % is below sea level. Dutch water control boards (*waterschappen* or *hoogheemraadschappen*) are among the oldest forms of local government in the Netherlands, some of them having been founded in the 13th Century. A definitive pacification of religious adversary by the *Peace of Westphalia* treaties in 1648 brought peace. Much later – in the 1950s – the Dutch welfare state provided for people in need. These instances reconstitute a good feeling to be Dutch; they actually articulate the best about being Dutch.

One may *feel* Dutch, more or less, which is to be distinguished from the fact that one *is* Dutch by firm proof of being a Netherlands citizen with a Dutch passport and voting rights, who pays steep taxes and has access to excellent healthcare, good education and generous provisions of the Dutch welfare state. These attributes constitute the *hardware* of one's identity, which is run by *software* that

facilitates how to operate being Dutch, or being an American. For instance, an American of Asian ancestry, born in Britain, who had become a USA citizen living in the USA, stated that he felt he was an American indeed: *'Yes, more or less; not so much during the Bush years, but with Obama at the helm much more.'* This American expressed a political underpinning of his American identity, which fluctuated, depending upon who was elected to the White House. Some days he felt more American than other days. One can feel more or less Dutch, but not by who is heading the state, as the Netherlands is a Kingdom with hereditary succession. Yet the King's hereditary succession may be evaluated differently; an antiquated relic of bygone times, or a treasured symbol of historic continuity, national unity and Dutch identity. In other words, the King's significance is also in the eye of the beholder, for some a relic, for others a national symbol, and at the time of USA independence at the end of the 18th Century, a British institution to do away with.

Being Dutch does not exclude moments when it does not feel good to be Dutch, for instance when bringing to mind Dutch participation in the slave trade during the 17th and 18th Century; or the Dutch fighting – and losing – a colonial war in Indonesia in the second half of the 1940s, which was euphemistically toned down to *Police Actions (Politionele Acties)*. Or the Dutch collaboration with the Nazis in the Holocaust, sending Dutch Jews to death camps during the German occupation of the Netherlands in 1940-1945. Though the interpretation of these episodes in Dutch history vary, they carry for many people no added value to their Dutch identity. On the contrary, some feel to be ashamed to be Dutch in the face of these histories; they put a distance between their Dutch identity and Dutch dark episodes. In other words, for them being Dutch basically amounts to positive assets, something to feel good about or even to be proud of. They feel uneasy or deceived by histories of Dutch crimes and misdemeanours, as if these dark spots should not be part of Dutch identity. To feel good again about being Dutch, these histories must be covered up, embedded in the particular conditions of their time, smoothed over, or reconstructed.

A head on confrontation with historical *black pages* may serve as an alternative process to cleanse the seamy side of one's national identity. This painful face-to-face encounter may enable one to draw a line, and make a new start, *to feel good again*. A case in point is the *Historikerstreit* (*Historians dispute* or *Historians controversy*) in Germany since the 1980s about the variance in understanding the

rise and crimes of Nazi Germany culminating in World War II (Kershaw, 2008). In her study *German National Identity after the Holocaust*, Mary Fulbrook summarizes the historians' controversy as a difference on 'normalization' of history for the sake of German identity construction (Fulbrook, 1991, 101-141). Conservative historians demanded a 'normalization' of the past and a relativization of Germany's crimes, to resurrect some pride again in being German. They argued that Germany was not uniquely evil and should be freed from the enormous burden of guilt; German history should be 'normalized.' One of them, Stürmer, entered a plea for the re-appropriation of history for the construction of national identity, which he judged as morally legitimate and politically essential. Jürgen Habermas, among others, countered these attempts by presenting a scathing critique of such 'apologetic tendencies.' Habermas opposed a single historical interpretation (by government fiat), and made a plea for western values and 'constitutional patriotism' as the basis of West German identity. The German *Historikerstreit* was in its core a battle over how to reconstruct German identity after World War II, 'the past which refuses to become history.'

Historiography is not a straightforward bastion upon which identity construction can rest. One feels Dutch, more or less, according to how one personally appreciates specific historical and actual conditions. These conditions are not a given, but pass a reality check in the course of a selective process in which many agents play their part: historians and educators; politics and circumstance, media and academe, resulting in a cluster of consensuses at any given moment in time. Exemplary of this selective process is the change in consensus on Dutch behaviour during German occupation from 1940-1945. Until the 1970s a consensus prevailed on brave Dutch resistance during the occupation years. This consensus was dispersed when accounts of widespread indifference and more than incidental collaboration with the Nazis could no longer be overlooked. These accounts did not correspond with the Dutch resistance image. In addition to documentation of heroic acts of resistance, indifference to the plights of the Jews, looking away, and active collaboration with the Nazis became part of Dutch history – though rather hesitantly.

Equally striking was a changeover in the perception of the overseas refuge of the Dutch government. Cabinet, Queen and family went into exile during the days of the German invasion in May 1940, and sought refuge in England and Canada

during the war years. At first many people were stunned when hearing of this royal departure, but during the occupation and the first decades since, a public relations campaign steered attention to the bravery and the encouragement of Queen Wilhelmina's radio talks and those of the Dutch Prime-Minister from their safe haven in London to the Dutch people in occupied territory. A few weeks after the German invasion, a Royal Court minister concocted a poem that actually lauded the Queen's departure, which became an instant popular success:

No, You did not Flee.

But followed God's call

I don't ask what You have been through

A Struggle, so heavy, so deep

The mayor of Zwolle, a medium size city, who had in May 1940 expressed his bewilderment about the royal getaway, was never forgiven. During the war he was arrested by the German authority for obstruction, and subsequently removed from office. After the war his 1940 *faux pas* stood in the way of his being reinstalled in a similar position by the Dutch authorities.

Decades later some historians reviewed this exile of government as an abandonment with dire consequences, leaving the country in the hands of the Secretaries-General, senior Dutch officials, who by their bureaucratic nature and signature were more inclined to follow the commands of the occupying authorities (Zee, 1997). They engaged in a form of tactical collaboration, thus unwittingly lending legitimacy to anti-Semitic laws by tacitly condoning them and supplying Dutch bureaucrats and police in order to implement them (Oliner, 1992, 34-35). How much of the Dutch Jewish death-camp score under Nazi-Germany can be attributed to the *abandonment* proposition is impossible to estimate; nonetheless this feature has now become, belatedly, part of Dutch history of the German occupation of 1940-45. The image of a Dutch nation, all bravely standing up to the Nazis, is more nuanced with dark shades of civic indifference, bystanders, bureaucratic collaboration and government abandonment. Both sides of the picture still hold, depending on what is told, what one knows, and what one prefers to know or to believe. History's contribution in answering national identity questions about *who are we?* is not straightforward, yet it serves as a rich reservoir to work with, for better or worse.

Next Time: A Dutch-European Canon

For long, the consumption of Dutch history was a common affair with little controversy and ideological prescription, a matter of course. But with the rise in education, the decline of traditional authority and the recognition of an immigrant presence, Dutch history became questioned by critical minds; it became a partisan subject, just as elsewhere, for example in the US. In 2010 the Texas Board of Education tried to put a conservative stamp on history and economic textbooks, stressing the superiority of American capitalism, questioning the Founding Father's commitment to a purely secular government, and presenting Republican philosophies in a more positive light. The conservative Board members maintained that they were trying to correct what they saw as a liberal bias among the teachers. In previous years an ideological battle over Darwinism and the separation of church and state had divided the Board. Efforts by the large Hispanic population to have its presence accounted for were defeated: *'They [Texas Board members] can just pretend this is a white America and Hispanics don't exist [...] they are not experts, they are not historians [...].'* A protest rally called *'Don't White-Out our History'* included the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 'Rewriting History in Texas', an editorial in the New York Times emphasized that students deserve to have a curriculum chosen for its educational value, not politics or ideology.

Also the Netherlands has begotten a heterogeneous nation where history is no longer taken for granted. Omnipotent pressures of immigration and globalisation have invigorated a need to bolster knowledge of Dutch culture and history, or as some say, to (*re-*) *write* Dutch history. This resulted in a government enterprise, assigning a group of academics the task to select significant moments in Dutch history, to be included in a Dutch Historical Canon, not so much as an historical guideline but rather as a selection of chapters that could be opened to learn more about significant Dutch episodes. The Canon of Dutch History was developed in the early years of the 21st Century to inform the Dutch and the Netherlands' immigrants in a systematic way on Dutch history and culture. The Canon aimed at a minimal body of knowledge that all Dutch people must be familiar. Interestingly the Canon Committee pointed out that *'Netherlands'* and *'Dutch'* are rather recent concepts without long-term historical depth; these concepts contradict that this region was all along a 'Dutch' entity (*Note on Outline of the Canon*):

It is important to use terms like "Netherlands", "Dutch culture" and "Dutch

history" with careful consideration. Until the nineteenth century the term "Netherlands" is an anachronism, and the adjective "Dutch" for the early history remains problematic. Any reference in this text to the history of the Dutch language and culture, the Dutch territory and the Dutch state, in fact means, "pertaining to this region", without suggesting that this region was all along a cultural, political or linguistic entity. These topics are treated as historical phenomena.

The Canon is based – as a matter of course – on a selective historical narrative, with 14 headlines, the first one *Lowland by the Sea*, about the struggle against water, and the last one *Netherlands in Europe*, and 50 chapters detailing the headline in specific emblematic episodes and happenings. According to the Canon makers the following headlines present Netherlands' history:

Lowlands by the Sea

On the periphery of Europe

A Christianized country

A Dutch language

An urbanized country and a trading hub at the mouth of the Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt

The Republic of the United Netherlands: arisen by revolt

The glory of the ' Golden Age'

Merchant spirit and colonial power

Unitary state, constitutional monarchy

The emergency of a modern society

Netherlands in a time of world wars: 1914-1945

The welfare state, democratization and secularization

Netherlands gets colour

Netherlands in Europe

Some have qualified this canonization as a provincial fear for change, intellectual poverty and official dirigisme. Others considered the *Dutch Canon* as teaching material designed by the *True Dutch* for the immigrant populations, serving as a demarcation of the Dutch homeland. Even so, the Canon enjoyed a remarkably positive reception.

'The Netherlands never existed' was a tantalizing comment in one of the Canon reviews. Most of the 50 specific chapters cover border-crossing history, exemplifying that Netherlands' history is shared with other nations; it is not happenstance but interconnected with history elsewhere, sharing persons, circumstances and activities. Unmistakably the Canon Committee was partial to the view that there have never been *good old times* that the Dutch were among themselves, in isolation, sticking together around the fire. The Committee's compilation of the Canon implies that there has never been a pure Dutch identity, untainted by foreign elements (*van vreemde smetten vrij*).

In retrospect the Canon Committee stated that it steered away from connecting the historical Canon with national pride and identity. In an inflammable climate (such as in the Netherlands) one person's pride could easily be interpreted as a declassification or exclusion of the other. But, the Committee added, the Canon does reflect indeed some collective identity with which people may feel connected. The Committee argued that the Canon may very well support a civilized form of Netherlands' citizenship and self-awareness, provided that such goes hand in hand with a sense of relativity as well as an open eye for the black pages in Netherlands' history. According to the Committee, such a Canon undoubtedly contributes to responsible Netherlands' citizenship (*verantwoord burgerschap*) that includes all. By emphasizing all-inclusive *responsible citizenship*, the Canon distanced itself from the *integration* discourse, which makes a special distinction for immigrants who must *integrate.* The Canon founders followed the politically correct mode that *responsible citizenship* must 'keep things together', applicable to all Dutch people, irrespective of color, ethnicity and origin.

By its nature the Dutch Canon touches only lightly on the *living history* of changes at home as well as in the rest of the world that impact Dutch identity: *Netherlands gets colour*, and *Netherlands in Europe*. It is precisely this *living history* that calls for a redefinition of Dutch identity. However meaningful for educational purposes, the retrieval of *Dutch* histories to sustain *responsible*

citizenship is lopsided. Dutch nationals, some more than others, are increasingly affected by globalization. They can no longer evade the fact that the terms of Dutch identity are challenged by the porosity of national borders, going hand in hand with a deepening democratic deficit on the ground. Bolstering responsible citizenship must take the changing national and international stage into account, its present-day playing field. For too long the *thickening* of international relations (Hirsch Ballin, 2005, 12) and economic preponderance has been left out of the equation, which induced the prevalent sense of insecurity, causing many of the Dutch to be prey to populist appeals. The efforts put into an educational Dutch Canon call for a follow up of a *Dutch Global Vista* to assist the Dutch in grasping where they are going and who they want to be. No doubt, such an assignment comes close to walking on water, as it demands the impossible task of fixing the future.

Responsible citizenship that is confined to the Netherlands local domain is a contradiction in terms. Netherlands self-government is an illusion; Dutch government is essentially local government that operates under layers of powers imposed from outside, more or less beyond Dutch control. Dutch national democracy as well as Dutch national citizenship has limited purview. This may explain the lack of trust many Dutch citizens have in Netherlands' social institutions. *Responsible citizenship* requires a futuristic window, not frozen in local time, but an imaginative work in progress, evolving as time goes by. To begin with a *Dutch-European Canon* might help the Dutch to understand how much of their *Wonderland* has been wrought by European governance. Within a European context the Dutch are *Dutch-European* citizens with a 'hyphenated' citizenship that yet has to be developed as a cornerstone of a Dutch identity. They must become aware that their bread is buttered on both sides of the hyphen (Caldwell, 2009, 338). From the point of view of *responsible citizenship* a *Dutch-European Canon* certainly must include a headline *European Democracy*, raising red flags to those who still think that all politics is local. Building Dutch-European *responsible citizenship* would require that a European Union wide political platform be formed to tackle Europe's democratic deficit. This should be a prime concern for Netherlands' politics on *responsible citizenship.* It is not.

'Who do we want to be?'

Any definition of Dutch identity is immediately questioned: so many heads, so many minds (*zoveel hoofden, zoveel zinnen*). These differences are a reflection of

a high degree of political and societal pluralism. Recognition of difference in opinion and belief is deeply anchored in the Netherlands law (Government Paper, 2008, 6). The reality of Dutch politics is that any Netherlands' government is built on a coalition of partners who together have achieved a majority; it is a fractioned majority, a sum of minorities. Respecting the rights, opinions and votes of minorities is therefore a cornerstone of Netherlands' democracy and politics. At the same time, *typical* Dutch characteristics are recognized in unison as typically Dutch: tolerance; open-mindedness; wealthy but stingy; un-heroic; cleaning the stoop and all that, but not the armpits and the rest (Huizinga, 1935, 14).

Fort nieuw Amsterdam op de Manhatans.

In 1935, Jan Huizinga wrote about the Netherlands' spirit and soul (*Nederland's Geestesmerk*) and marked being *un-heroic* as a basic characteristic of the Dutch character *(volksaard)*. Even heroes as Piet Pieterszoon Heyn (Piet Heyn) who conquered in 1628 *La Flota*, the Spanish Treasure Fleet, kept a modest demeanour. How could it be different, Huizinga asked. States that are built on well-to-do *burghers* living in relatively small cities and reasonably content farmers' communities [in 1935; now no more] are no breeding ground for what one labels *heroic*. Commitment and a sense of duty suffice for the Dutch. That explains, according to Huizinga, their poorly developed military mindset as opposed to a much stronger trade orientation. By the way, according to Dutch history it is believed that *New Amsterdam* on the Hudson was not conquered, but was acquired as a business deal with American Indians! Already then the Dutch preferred business terms. Being un-heroic also fits the almost absent tendency of popular revolt, and in general the flatness of national life, but Dutch wantonness as well, the lack of good manners and being stingy (Huizinga, 1935, 8-17).

Huizinga brushes up the concept *liberal,* meaning: *all that is of value to a free man*, and defines the untranslatable Dutch concept *burgerlijk*: *all what belongs to city life, the culture that germinates and grows in cities*. The Dutch are *liberal* and *burgerlijk*, city dwellers and countrymen as well. As distances are short, countryside and city population are not worlds apart. Huizinga claims that the Dutch nurture a need for simple, unadorned truth and honesty; reliability, order and harmony, in sum a need for spiritual purity. This purity correlates with the

obvious Dutch cleanliness as expressed in manifold Dutch words: *zindelijk; proper; frisch; net; helder; zuiver; schoon*. Elsewhere this complex has been labelled as a typical feature of Dutch Calvinism. Other historians have made a different correlation, literally down to earth. As early as the 14th Century, long before Calvinism struck home, as much as 50 % of the Dutch households had some kind of dairy production, which required hygienic conditions, as a matter of economics. Spiritual purity, Calvinism and *butter and cheese* hygiene-economics, all speak out for the Dutch character. The biggest virtue of the Dutch, as Huizinga elects, is their high degree of respecting the rights and opinions of others, which flipside, however, is a tendency for a bit of wangle and privilege for one's friends. Finally, to end these dated Dutch intimacies, Huizinga explicitly professes that the Dutch have shown themselves to be immune to strong expressions of political extremism (Huizinga, 1935, 8-17).

Since Huizinga's times, that obviously has changed. More than 70 years later, Job Cohen, Mayor of Amsterdam until 2010, and known for his policy of *keeping things together* in a city with over 180 nationalities, also attempted to characterise a collective Dutch identity, manifest over centuries in different expressions of 'our people' (Cohen, 2009). Cohen's Dutch *character* contains the following properties: a sense of freedom; openness for things, people, ideas and places; an external orientation: trade, travel, discovery; a live and let live sentiment; rich but pretending otherwise; and always talking about other people, neither being jovial nor too serious (*zeuren*). Cohen doesn't take this Dutch character too seriously, rejecting absolutism; another characterization is possible as well. He questions which of these characteristics the Dutch may want to preserve, and which can be thrown in the dustbin because of being of no use in the 21st century. Cohen approaches the question of Dutch identity from the angle that it is a social construction, a dynamic concept, malleable, more a question of *who do we want to be*, than a cry for *who are we*? Cohen presents this activist interpretation of Dutch identity as a challenge to update a yet unchartered territory of Dutch Wonderland. How will future generations look back at the living history of today's dominant Dutch narrow-minded identity complex? As much of the Dutch wealth is garnered across the borders of the nation, it does not make *practical* sense to withdraw to a *home sweet home*. More importantly, such withdrawal would create a bipolar disturbance from a moral point of view. *Dutch Wonderland* loses its shine and credibility when lacking interest and engagement to fight discrimination, segregation and gross inequalties. National identity is

stamped on two sides of the same coin: *who are we?* while looking back in time, and *who do we want to be?* in view of the demands of modern times. The Dutch have to work towards an update of their identity that appreciates their local comforts and engages a world that has changed irreversibly, at home and worldwide (see Chapter 7). When Dutch identity becomes jammed in the preservation of *True Dutch* comforts, schizophrenia will overtake the nation. The writings on the wall are that this is indeed happening.

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Dr. Lammert de Jong (1942) served 9 years between 1985 and 1998 as resident-representative of the Netherlands government in the Netherlands Antilles. Prior to this he was attached to the University of Zambia and the National Institute of Public Administration in Lusaka, Zambia (1972-1976). In the People's Republic of Bénin, he was director of the Netherlands Development Aid Organization (1980-1984). He received a PhD in Social Sciences at the Free University, Amsterdam (1972), and published during his academic years about public administration and participation.

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