Marginal position of migrants

In spite of the reputation of The Netherlands as an open and democratic society, the presence of migrants has caused a lot of bitter debates. Participating in these debates the majority of Dutch researchers focus on the field of 'social hardware'. They prefer to carry out research into structural characteristics like demographic development, the migrants' position in the labour market or the degree in which they participate in education. Less emphasis is placed on the more cultural aspects (values, political ideals, religious concepts, etc.). This is not only because less systematically gathered data are available but it is also because researchers are proponents of a type of philosophical 'materialism'. They think that life in a modern society is first and foremost determined by 'tough' circumstances regarding work or living conditions. The objective of this article is to correct such a one-sided view. We shall present a number of social-cultural processes and determine whether we can understand the marginal situation of migrants in the Netherlands from this angle.

1. General approach.

Our basic assumption is that migration, particularly from a cultural viewpoint, entails an uncertain adventure not only for the migrants themselves but also for the society they have come to live in. Migrants bring their own culture with them and want to pass this on to their children. This can involve such diverse aspects as behaviour, musical traditions, religious concepts or their own language. Communally, for those concerned these are valuable matters; things that they consider to be very valuable and therefore these are not easily relinquished (Veraart, 1996, Vogels, Geense & Martens, 1999, Phalet & Ter Wal, 2004). The difficulty is that the recipient society has its own values and traditions, which they equally are not willing to relinquish. In other words, there is always a certain tension between the demands from the new environment towards groups of migrants on the one hand and, the cultural heritage that these groups bring with them from their past or countries of origin on the other hand.

The big question is how far both parties can accommodate each other. There can be a perfect 'fit' when, for example, migrants come from a country where they were used to working hard for their income and move to a country that desperately needs this kind of workforce. But there is also a case of a 'misfit' when, for example, parents believe that their children's misbehaviour will be corrected by the police whereas the police expect a great deal of self-discipline from individuals. It is possible that this tension will decrease over a period of time but generally this will only happen when both sides make concrete efforts. It costs the migrants and their families a lot of effort to find out what Dutch society's demands are and it takes perhaps even more effort to meet these demands. On the other hand, it costs Dutch society an equal amount of trouble to accommodate the positive and negative idiosyncrasies of the migrants' cultural background. This is the main question we want to pose in this article. It particularly concerns the question how

this cultural heritage and the Dutch environment affect one another and, in this respect, this study concerns research into cultural interaction.[1]

In order to elaborate on this, we need to fulfil two conditions. On the one hand, we must sketch a more specific view of the social-cultural environment in which migrants are living. This comprises many implicit values or expectations that play a role in the daily life of the Dutch population. On the other hand, we need to show a more specific view of the cultural heritage that different migrant groups bring with them from their own background. Of course this is a rather broad approach. Therefore, I will concentrate on a specific but interesting case: the situation of migrants in Rotterdam. Their case illustrates the marginal position of migrants in Dutch society in a more general sense. Let me start by giving a short description of the environment in which migrants are living.[2]

2. About Dutch society.

To typify the social-cultural climate I have used comparative research into the everyday values carried out by Hofstede in numerous countries.[3] He differentiated four dimensions and used these to characterise the 'mental programme' of a population. The first dimension concerns the relationship people have towards power differences. In certain countries differences in power are cultivated but in other countries these differences are kept as small as possible. Hofstede formulated a special standard in order to measure the countries involved: this is the so-called power distance index varying from 0 to 100. The higher a certain country scores on this index, the more this country cultivates power differences (Hofstede, 1998, p. 38-67). A second dimension indicates how gender differences are perceived. This allows the comparison between a masculine and a feminine position. The first means that the society makes a strong distinction between specific male and female tasks. Generally men are involved in tasks outside the home requiring them to be tough, assertive and competitive whereas women do the housekeeping and take care of the children or the animals. In a feminine society these tasks often intertwine and there is less emphasis, also by men, on toughness. In order to determine the score of these countries, Hofstede built a 'masculinity index' which again varied on a scale from 0 to 100 (Hofstede, 1998, p. 105-139).

A third dimension concerns the question whether society leans more towards individualism than towards collectivism. A culture is individualistic when ties are somewhat loose. Individuals are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate family members. Collectivism means that from birth people are part of a closely-knit group offering life-long protection, which in exchange expects unconditional loyalty. This difference partly affects family life. A collectivistic culture often involves an extended family that is firmly headed by a patriarchal figure. An individualistic culture generally comprises of nuclear families. This allows the composition of a general index showing the degree of collectivism per country by a figure ranging between 0 and 100 (Hofstede, 1998, p. 68-104). A fourth and final dimension refers to the way in which people deal with uncertainty. There are cultures in which people try to avoid risks as much as possible. They cling to rules, are quick to find legal or institutional security and

strive for a high degree of predictability. In this respect Hofstede talks about avoiding insecurity and I shall refer to this attitude as aiming for regulation. The degree of regulation is expressed in both their private and public life (Hofstede, 1998, p. 140-175).

Table 1
Average score per dimension for the Netherlands and other regions

	Netherlands	NW-Europe	Europe	Rest
power distance	38	30	40	70
Masculinity	14	24	45	48
Collectivism	20	27	33	75
Regulation	53	39	62	64
average	31	30	45	64

Based on Hofstede 1998 p. 41, 73, 111 en 145.

Table 1 shows successively the score attained by the Netherlands (column 1); North-West Europe (column 2); the whole of Europe (column 3) and non-European countries (column 4) on Hofstede's four dimensions. As we can see, the Netherlands differentiates itself in two aspects by scoring average points. Its position is quite extreme regarding its avoidance of collectivism (20 points) and there is a noticeable dislike for masculinity (14 points). For both items the distance between the Netherlands and even North-European countries is quite big but this is not the case for two other aspects. With regard to the attitude towards uncertainties (53 points) and power (38 points) the Netherlands scores fairly the same as the European average (62 and 40 points). It is this combination of values that specifically denotes Dutch society and perhaps its complexity: with regard to rules and authority it is typically European but in relation to gender and collectivism the Netherlands shows radical preferences. The peculiarity of this profile becomes much clearer when we compare it with non-European countries. There is not a lot of difference in the approach to uncertainties (11 points) but there are big differences in the relationship towards difference in gender and power (34 and 32 points) whereas there is a fundamental difference concerning the appreciation of individualism (55 points). This is important because the majority of migrants who come to the Netherlands originate from

non-European countries and they are the ones who are confronted with this unpronounced code of Dutch society.

This code entails that daily life in the Netherlands is based on specific values or principles. For example, the Dutch value equal relationships and do not appreciate too much display of power. This can be seen, for example, in public life. Administrators, politicians and other authorities do not usually have an authoritarian attitude. They act as low key as possible and try to approach their fellow countrymen as equals. A second element of this code is a 'feminine' preference for meetings, communication and consultation. Many Dutch believe that the best way of dealing with problems or conflicts is to discuss them. This is often done in the family circle. Generally, it is considered important that feelings or personal experiences are discussed not only between husband and wife but also between the parents and children. A third aspect of this code is that a strong emphasis lies on each individual's conscience. The Dutch expect every citizen to participate in social life as an independent individual and they look down on those who meet the demands of their family, an ethnic group or other community too easily. This tendency can also be seen in their religious life. The Dutch consider religious matters as a very personal affair and see collective norms or institutes as a restriction of their individual freedom. A fourth aspect of this code is that the Dutch dislike uncertainty and are used to have things organized. These arrangements are sometimes explicit but can also be implicit.

The majority of the native Dutch 'know' how they should behave in certain circumstances and immediately notice if someone deviates from this behaviour. This can be seen in the educational field and in the business world. There are numerous unwritten rules that determine how a child should behave with other children, how teachers solve problems in the class, what the parents' attitude should be towards a school, etc. There are just as many rules to determine how you should act towards your boss, your attitude as to how you carry out your job, the way you should solve problems, etc. In addition, there are also many legal rules regarding these aspects. They often cause certain rigidity towards all kinds of problems that drag on and could otherwise have easily been solved if they had been approached in a more informal manner. Overall this illustrates that Hofstede's dimensions are very relevant for everyday life. Dutch culture should not be seen as an object that we can separate from daily life. Dutch culture is primarily apparent in many norms or expectations that play a role in the citizens' everyday life and, can only be learnt through participation. This is the migrants' social and cultural environment and in this respect we have to determine whether there is a 'fit' or a 'misfit' regarding the preferences or values that migrants bring with them from elsewhere.

3. About migrants in Rotterdam.

That brings us to the question how the cultural heritage of migrants can be described. To answer this question we have gathered a big amount of information about life-experiences of migrants in Rotterdam. In fact, we carried out a number of in-depth

interviews[4] and have published the results two years ago in a book (Van den Brink, 2006).

These in-depth interviews reveal a great number of relevant facts. They not only show which values and notions are important for immigrants but also indicate which points cause tension in the Dutch environment. These interviews covered the whole migration history: from the moment that the migrants or their (grand) parents left their country until the time of the interview. The objective was to gain more insight into all the experiences during these periods: the reason why they left, the journey to the Netherlands, events that had happened during the first years of their stay but also how their life was at the time of the interview, the way our respondents viewed the Netherlands, how they envisaged their future, etc. This enabled us to register a large part of the course of their lives and that of their parents and/or children. In addition, we particularly asked the interviewees to give their own opinion. This was not so much as to obtain an objective analysis of true events but to find out about the subjective meaning of these events for those involved. Thus the emphasis was, to a large extent, on their life story as told by those interviewed.

Three practical considerations played a role during the set up of the survey. The first was the question as to which migrant groups we should choose. The largest groups should be represented but we did not want to restrict this to the well-known group of four: Surinamese, Antilleans, Turks and Moroccans. That is why we included the Chinese and the Cape Verdeans. Moreover, it was important that the interviews were held by journalists and students who spoke both Dutch and the corresponding language and who were also well informed about sensitive issues in the community. This work is intensive but it is an approach that ensures the trustworthiness of our findings. Finally, we divided the subjects into a few specific domains. Consequently, we looked into the stories about migrants' upbringing and family life, about their work and education, about religion and religious life and about the way they see Dutch society. I present below our most important findings in which I summarize the differences between migrants with an Islamic background (Turks and Moroccans) and a group I designate as Caribbean migrants (Surinamese, Antilleans and Cape Verdeans) and a group originating from Asia (Chinese and Hindustani).

4. The Islamic story.

During our talks with Moroccans and Turks it was evident that family life is very important for them.[5] Nearly 80 per cent of the older people in this group have weekly contacts with their relatives who still live in their country of origin. Many Moroccans travel yearly to Morocco and take money and goods for their family. In addition, they regularly transfer money from the Netherlands (especially on religious holidays). In fact, family forms the most important network for mutual assistance and support. These older migrants often receive help from their children, for example, in writing or translating a letter or when they need to interact with the authorities. Their children assist their parents when they are elderly or needy. This is why Turks and Moroccans very seldom go into a nursing home when they are elderly. Family also plays an important role in choosing a

partner for their children. It is often the case by Moroccans that the parents choose a bride or bridegroom and preferably this is either a nephew or a niece. After marriage the traditional division of tasks is, in most cases, adhered to. The husband goes to work and the wife stays at home to take care of the children. This pattern occurs more often in Moroccan families than in Turkish ones and depends on the degree of urbanisation. Migrants from the countryside tend to lean more towards a traditional pattern than those who come from a city. This traditional approach prevails in education too. Parents particularly expect obedience from their children and for many families father's will is law. Not much is said about the interrelationships during our talks. The affectionate side of family life was barely mentioned. What children think or feel was apparently not a subject for discussion.

What do migrants think about work and school? It is indisputable that both the Turks and the Moroccans greatly value good schooling for their children. They understand that in the Netherlands you cannot achieve much without a school diploma. Nevertheless, we observed a couple of different emphasises. It was significant, for example, that many Turkish parents adopt an instrumental approach towards education. They want their children to study in the hope that they can gain a better social status. For this reason they prefer to choose professions such as, for example, a doctor, an engineer or a judge. A good education is important to parents whether they originate from the countryside or a city. There is a (greater) risk of Moroccan children getting into difficulties if their parents originate from the Rif Mountains than for those whose parents come from Rabat. This difference between the city and the countryside also plays a role for Turks because it is known that Turks originating from a city often have (more) skilled work. The situation at home also plays an important role because children have more (chances of) success at school if their parents help them by, for example, making sure that they do their homework. There is little variation regarding work motivation. All of the Turkish and Moroccan respondents showed a strong work ethic. However, they seldom manage to penetrate modern sectors of the labour market. Relatively few Turks and Moroccans work in public services. Strikingly enough they often do have a job that is connected to their own social-cultural background. The modern labour market makes not only professional but also social and cultural demands on its employees. This could be the reason why Turks and Moroccans have less chance of finding employment.

Then we come to their attitude towards religious affairs. Nearly all of those interviewed considered themselves to be religious. Only one second-generation Turkish person said that he was agnostic. Many first-generation Muslims see the mosque in a strictly religious light: its only purpose being to pray and attend sermons. The second-generation sees the mosque more for social and cultural purposes: it can also be used for language or computer courses. There seems to be some disagreement about the political implications of religion. Although Dutch mosques seldom offer room for political discourse there is sometimes an atmosphere of religious fanaticism. Most Muslims find this annoying. They choose a moderate and peaceful interpretation of the Koran. Furthermore, it is striking that religious perception is collective. There are a few Turks who choose an individual approach but the majority of migrants see themselves as members of the religious community. Finally, it appears that the social customs among those who are

religious are quite formal. Attempts for individual development are strongly restricted by rules of Islam. It takes a lot of effort to achieve a more informal lifestyle. A Muslim woman wearing a headscarf even refers to the code.

I mention the attitude towards Dutch society and politics last. Both Moroccans and Turks indicate that they were often assisted shortly after their arrival in the Netherlands. At first the neighbours often came round for tea and were friendly but over the years this declined. More and more immigrants came to live in the area and this had a negative effect on the neighbourhood. The opportunity to make contact with the native residents fell dramatically. The present situation is one where a woman who does not work outside the home seldom has the opportunity to mingle with indigenous Dutch. This creates a risk of developing ghettos where mostly Turks and Moroccans meet each other and social control grows stronger. This thwarts any chances of developing modern customs. The same is true for their groups of friends. Both Turks and Moroccans increasingly socialise with people from their own ethnic background. This trend is also true for the second-generation. It means that in general, our migrants are adopting a more ambivalent attitude towards Dutch society. There is this same ambivalent feeling about public life. On the one hand they are complimentary about the way things are organised in the Netherlands. They appreciate the trustworthiness of people and officials and are eager to make use of the social security and health-care facilities that are available. On the other hand they miss their country of origin. Quite a number of migrants miss their traditional dishes, the weather and the pleasant memories of their youth. The result is that they make no real choices. Many first-generation Turks and Moroccans would like to return 'home' but they are withheld from doing so because their children were born in the Netherlands.

5. The Caribbean story.

For Cape Verdeans, Surinamese and Antillean family also is a very important.[6] One of them said, for example, 'Even though you do not have a God, then in this world you still have a family'. Cape Verdeans often maintain contacts with numerous uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces. They phone, email, write or visit them and send money and goods home to their families. Migrants from the Caribbean area also do this. Forty per cent of Surinamese and Antilleans have daily contacts with children who no longer live at home. The general impression is that in this group family life is busy and close. It is therefore not surprising that this group is negative about Dutch individualism. They find that the Dutch do not know how to be hospitable, that they grossly neglect their relations and have little respect for their elders. Marriage relationships are particularly special. Starting a family is a personal matter within this ethnic group in which women have a strong position. For example, it often occurs that women over the years have several relationships and have children with a number of different men. When marriage problems arise, the woman is the one who terminates the relationship. In many cases the woman has a great deal of independence. With regard to housekeeping and educating the children this is her domain and she can be considered as fully emancipated. Nevertheless, the relationship between parent and child is rather traditional. Strong discipline is characteristic of Cape Verdeans, Surinamese and Antilleans. The parents are definitely in

charge and are not afraid of correcting misbehaviour with a slap. They are proponents of good behaviour and find that Dutch children are imprudent or brazen. This is not contrary to informal relationships. There is often a warm and trusting relationship between family members particularly among the Surinamese and Antilleans. There is no taboo about sexuality or other intimate subjects and there is a lot of consideration for the individual development of children.

The majority of those interviewed with a Caribbean background were very clear about their ambitions regarding education. They realise that education and training in the Netherlands are very important. It is not by chance that the respondents from this group have often put a lot of time and effort into education. Many of them have first completed a junior general secondary education, and have gone on to higher professional education or to university. The dependent factors here are the same as for the Turks and Moroccans. It depends on the region where the migrant came from. Cape Verdeans, Surinamese or Antilleans born in the Netherlands have nearly all had a good education. The opposite is true for those born in Surinam or the Cape Verde Islands. Besides geographical location, family history is also important. A number of those interviewed were stimulated by the stories of members of their family who had studied and made careers for themselves. Some of the Antilleans in our group purposely sent their children to a white school and emphasize great ambitions in this respect. They are also able to help their children with their studies because they are acquainted with the Dutch school system and because of their command of Dutch. On the whole this means that there is a good fit with the Dutch pattern of culture. Migrants from the Caribbean area emphasize the importance of assertiveness and self-motivation. Children should take the opportunities society offers. This ambition should not be restricted to education. The majority of migrants in this group take an active role also in their work. It is striking that they prefer to draw a strict line between work and their private life. This group has no problems with working hard as long as work does not interfere with their personal relationships. Finally, some of the members of this group complain that they are discriminated against. They have a hostile view of their employer or boss and are not very enthusiastic to go to work. In general many migrants in this group are very serious about their work. However, the extrinsic motivation is dominant and personal development has little to do with their jobs.

What do Cape Verdeans, Surinamese and Antilleans think about religious life? The majority believe unquestionably in God. They describe their belief as a source of comfort or as a force that helps them in difficult moments. They do not cling very strongly to just one tradition. They are generally Christian but also adopt certain elements of West African traditions. They are also interested in more recent trends like Reiki. Several migrants describe their belief as a mix between European and African traditions. In that respect they choose a less orthodox approach. This attitude is also perceptible towards the church as an institution. They do not appreciate clerical hierarchy and like to follow their own leadership. This does not mean that they choose a strictly individualistic type of faith. On the contrary, the collective aspects of religious life are very important. For Cape Verdeans their social and religious life is very much intermingled. For Antilleans social and religious communities are one. Surinamese are proud of their culture, part of which refers to their shared background of slavery. The latter also plays a role for Antilleans but

in their case this has a negative connotation. They see themselves as victims of racism, discrimination or exclusion and choose a passive attitude.

How do these migrants see themselves in public life? According to many, over the years the contacts with native Dutch has strongly declined. Surinamese have increasingly made friends with people from their own background. They do not have any problems with the Dutch during their work but that is where it ends. In other words, there is a tendency towards segregation even for migrants who can easily make social contacts. On the other hand, the Surinamese are very eager to participate in civil society. In comparison with the previous group, Surinamese, Antilleans and Cape Verdeans generally participate in many activities. They each have their own preferences. The Cape Verdeans are generally active in music whereas the Antilleans are keen on sports. Remarkably enough there is a lot of criticism about the Dutch welfare system. A middle-class group appears to be developing which wants to take care of its own income. They seem to be annoyed by those who do not work and consume their tax money. Although these migrants like to dream about the nature, the music and the sociability they had back home, they do not have serious plans for returning. Most of the migrants in this group not only value Dutch society, but they encourage their children to take advantage of the opportunities the Netherlands has to offer.

6. The Asian story.

Migrants of Asian origin also attach great value to their own family ties and family life. This is especially the case for the Chinese. Chinese youths do not find it unusual, besides studying, to help their parents in the restaurant. In addition, (as long as they do not have any children of their own) they also give their parents part of their salary. In general, children are expected to show a lot of respect for their parents. It is exceptional for elderly Chinese to go to a nursing home. They expect their children to take care of them. Marriage and family life is often very traditional. Parents still have a say in the choice of a partner. More exactly: that is what they would like to have because the younger generation are beginning to resent this. There are, of course, Chinese parents who allow their children to make their own choice but there are also some cases where members of the family put a lot of pressure on these young partners. The same situation occurs in Hindustani families: some parents are in favour of arranged marriages whereas others allow their children their freedom to choose. In regard to the division of tasks, the Chinese prefer the classical pattern between men and women. They cannot imagine a man doing household work. Their views about the upbringing of children are rather traditional: parents should protect their children and children must obey their parents. There is no question of parents treating their children as equals. Several respondents say that they were physically punished as a child. Mutual relations can be described as formal and rigid. Second and third-generation migrants complain about hardly ever having a talk about personal experiences with their parents. Politeness and the protection of the good family name are apparently more important.

We know that not only do the Hindustani and Chinese migrants consider good education extremely important but that they are willing to make great sacrifices to achieve it. That is why this group has long learning tracks. We learnt of examples where some had started in junior general secondary education and, via senior general secondary education went on to higher professional education or to university. Furthermore, it is striking that this group often scores higher than others when it comes to ambitions. Geographical location and family history again play a role in this ambition. Among Chinese migrants there is a remarkable contrast between those from Hong-Kong and those from the continent. The latter consider their social status as being very important. They want to earn a lot of money and often allow their children to work for them. Chinese from Hong Kong are in this respect more modern. They stimulate their children more to learn and have had a better education themselves. We observed the same ambition in respect to work. Most of the Chinese are hard workers. They are hesitant to employ 'strangers'. In their opinion, everything concerning restaurants – which until recently is where most of the Chinese worked – is better done by family. There are some instances of discrimination but they do not cause any indignation. In this respect the Chinese prefer to solve their own problems.

As far as religion is concerned, migrants with a Hindustani and Chinese background differ. They cannot be considered 'religious' in the Western sense. The personal relationship with God that in both the Islamic and Christian beliefs is seen as a source of strength plays a minor role in Hinduism or Confucianism. For the majority of migrants in this group religion is part of their cultural heritage. Confucianism is seen as a moral code that maintains social order. Its principal values like working hard and sacrifice for the good of the community, are manifest in many Chinese but they are values which are not aimed at personal gain. Furthermore, there is a lot of religious diversity among Asians. Although they appreciate the importance of a certain religious tradition, in practice they adopt diverse attitudes towards this tradition. What is far less variable is their attitude towards national culture. The country of origin plays an important role for the self-image of these migrants. And this does not imply their origin in the biographical sense but rather the cultural sense. This means that the Hindustani do not focus on the country where they were born (Suriname) but towards the country where they originally came from (India). Because of their modest education they are often denied admission to the higher-class Indian culture. In spite of this they are all the more enthusiastic about Indian folklore like its music, rituals, feasts, culinary dishes, films, websites etcetera. This is also the case for many Chinese. They are very much focussed on their original culture. They cook their own traditional dishes, continue to speak Chinese, watch Chinese films, like to play Chinese games etcetera. This attitude is pre-eminently collective and offers little room for an individual identity or personal development.

In respect to public life it is noticeable that the Chinese have little contact with their neighbours. They remain distant in contacts with native Dutch. Their associations with the Dutch at work hardly ever (just like the migrants from the Caribbean area) lead to friendship. This is also true for young people born in the Netherlands who have generally had a lot of schooling . An increasing number of higher educated Chinese are drawn towards their ethnic community. Furthermore, there is little interest in civil society. Out of all the migrant groups the Chinese serve the least as a volunteer. They have hardly any

contacts in the area of sport or hobbies. This is partly due to a lack of spare time. Chinese migrants spend most of their time working long hours and want to spend their spare time with their families. But there is also a cultural factor and that is that historically the Chinese community has always shown very little openness towards the Dutch community. There are very few Chinese migrants who are interested in politics. They prefer not to use the services of the welfare state. They find it rather strange that you can receive money from the government and prefer to solve their own problems. The drawback to this attitude is that they hardly have any ties with the Dutch. Many Chinese live in a closed world and participate very little in Dutch society. As previously mentioned they also have very little contact with other cultures. Mentally they are still very much focused on their fellow Chinese and the Chinese culture. Their opinion about other ethnic groups is as harsh as it is negative. 'Chinese do not like Turks and that kind of people' said one of our respondents with an all-endearing honesty. They are patronizing about Surinamese and Antilleans. They consider the Dutch to be naive and hope that their children come home with a Chinese fiancé. Both implicitly and explicitly they consider their own culture to be superior to another.

7. Cultural differences.

Now there are two components to provide a solution to our puzzle. On the one hand, the principles that play an important role in the everyday life of the Dutch and, in this respect, form the cultural 'environment' for these migrants. On the other hand, the preferences of our respondents that are part of their cultural heritage. The question is, what happens when we put these two components together. Do the values or preferences of these migrants conform to those of everyday life in the Netherlands? Is there a misfit? And where does this misfit occur exactly? To answer these questions I will indicate by domain what the strong and weak points are within each group of migrants. But first I will give a more general picture of the cultural differences between Dutch society on the one hand and the societies of origin on the other. These can be illustrated with the score of several regions in Hofstede's four dimensions (see table 2).

These scores indicate how far a certain region is from the Netherlands. It is not so much the absolute value that is important but more the differences with the Netherlands' score. Take for example the differences regarding the authoritarian behaviour. There is a large distance between the attitude in the Caribbean area, in the Chinese region or in the Islamic countries in comparison with the preferred attitude in the Netherlands. The difference is 23 respectively 25 and 35 points. This will often result in a more authoritarian attitude by migrants from that region. There are also clear contrasts as far as masculinity indexes are concerned. Whereas the Netherlands scores low in this dimension, the scores in the Caribbean, Chinese and Islamic regions are much higher. The contrast results in 43 respectively 37 and 35 points of difference and it would be strange if this did not affect the migrant's attitude. Our research confirms that in this respect cultural heritage is a persistent trait and is in any case perceptible up to the third-generation. When it concerns the contrast between collectivism and individualism, the contrast is even stronger scoring differences of 50 respectively 59 and 33 points. We also

Table 2
Some cultural regions indicating the average score per dimension.

	Netherlands	Caribbean	Chinese	Islamic
power distance	38	61	63	73
Masculinity	14	57	51	49
Collectivism	20	70	79	63
Regulation	53	34	49	76
Average	31	56	61	65

saw in our research an example of the big importance that migrants attach to their family and (in our eyes) harsh way in which family interests are imposed on the individual. The only exception in this pattern is the attitude towards uncertainty. We see that the Netherlands scores quite high with 53 points while the Caribbean and the Chinese with 34 and 49 points score lower.

We have to admit that there is quite a big difference between the scores of the Netherlands and those of less modern regions outside Europe. Based on the average score (last line) we can say that these three large areas are reasonably far removed from modern society but that there is a certain ranking order. The difference between the Islamic region is the biggest within the group (34 points) and that the smallest difference is in the Caribbean area (25 points) whereas the Chinese area is in the middle (30 points). This conclusion, however, is not very satisfying because it is no very precise. In fact, the main question of our study concerns the interaction of the migrants' cultural heritage and Dutch environment in specific domains. Let us therefore sum up the results of our analysis and answer the question what the strong and weak points within each group of migrants could be.

8. Results per domain.

We observe that there is a lot of tension in the domain of *family life*. Whether it is about the way a marriage is arranged, the task division in the housekeeping, the upbringing of the children or the affective aspects in the family: none of these expectations which exist in modern Dutch society fit in well with the preferences that many Turkish and Moroccan migrants have. Migrants with an Asian background generally also keep to their traditional patterns. The collective family has a lot of influence, women often have a subordinate role, the children must above all obey their parents and there appears to be little room for personal feelings. Many of these factors apply a lot less to migrants from the Caribbean area. Choosing a partner there is considered to be something private where the family should not interfere. Women are often independent. They consider housekeeping and bringing the children up as their domain where the man has no role. The upbringing is sometimes a little too harsh (at least in Dutch eyes) but there is a good degree of involvement. A lot of attention is given to the personal development of their children and personal problems are discussed. Cape Verdeans, Surinamese and Antilleans all take a strong position on these points whereas other migrants have a lot weaker view.

In regard to the domain of *work and education* the distribution of weak and strong points is very different. The majority of migrants show a high standard of work ethic. They want to improve themselves through their work and recognize the importance of a good education. However, the Dutch job market demands are quite high, not only in the technical and cognitive sense but also in the social-cultural sense (WRR, 2007). It is partly because of this that only a few Turkish and Moroccan workers penetrate into the modern sectors of business and industry. In this respect, migrants from Caribbean area are better equipped. They regard the Netherlands as a tough society but one that does offer opportunities. They are prepared to work hard and follow a lot of courses. Their strictly businesslike approach to their job is striking; they primarily work for an income and choose other domains for their personal development. Most Chinese and Hindustani are also hard workers. They work long hours and are not afraid to take risks. Parents go to a lot of lengths to ensure that their children have a good education and several of our respondents have a university degree. Here it is clear that there is a good 'fit' between the cultural heritage that on the one hand the migrants have from their past background and, on the other hand the demands of modern society.

In respect to *religious life* we observed hardly any secularization among the Turkish and Moroccan migrants while room for individual perception of religion is very limited. Collective behaviour codes and religious obligations weigh heavily on the commitment to the Islam. Many of these issues contrast sharply with the demands of a modern society that – as far as religion has any significance – sees faith as a strictly private matter. This is also the case of the Asian migrants. The relationship with their own national and religious culture does not fit in well with Dutch expectations. Quite a number of migrants from this group want to keep their own traditions. Our Asian respondents showed little openness or respect for other groups and they definitely do not uphold any modern views. That is different for migrants from the Caribbean area. They see religion as a source of comfort and strength. Although their views on religious life are collective, there is no

tendency towards authoritarian or strict beliefs. Openness towards or a mixing of several religious traditions seems to be prevalent.

Many Turks and Moroccans have mixed feelings about *public life* in the Netherlands. They live, partly because of the segregation processes that take place in large cities, to an increasing degree close to one another, which means that there are fewer contacts between native Dutch and themselves. They acknowledge that many things are well organized in the Netherlands but their loyalty lies primarily with their own family and with their country of origin. Surinamese and Antilleans are quite negative about other migrants and are quick to accuse the Dutch of racism and discrimination. They see life in their neighbourhood deteriorate and consider the Dutch welfare state to be too generous with providing social benefits. In contrast they develop a reasonable amount of initiatives in civil society. Asian migrants show little interest in public affairs and rarely develop any initiative in the area of civil society. They reserve their spare time especially for their own people and are seldom heard when it involves voicing public opinion. At the same time they want to cause as little nuisance as possible.

On the whole it is clear that the main thesis of our analysis has to be differentiated. We discovered varying situations in our respondents' stories. For some migrants and domains their own cultural background fits in well with a modern environment, in other cases,

Table 3
Relative position of the main ethnic groups in four social domains in Rotterdam.

	family life	professional life	religious life	public domain
Islamic	weak	moderate	weak	Weak
Caribbean	strong	strong	moderate	Moderate
Asian	weak	strong	weak	Weak

Based on: Van den Brink 2006, pp. 266-269.

there is an outright 'misfit' and, there are still other cases where interaction is ambiguous. In fact, all ethnic groups seem to have their own strong and weak points. Table 3 indicates the global results of our analysis. Perhaps it is superfluous to mention here that the terms strong or weak do not have any normative meaning. They indicate the distance per domain between the group's own cultural heritage and the demands made by modern society. Where this distance is small, the position of the group involved will be relatively strong whereas generally a large distance will result in a relatively weak position.

9. Discussion.

Our main conclusion is that general concepts like 'migrant' or 'native' are of little use to analyze cultural processes. They do not take into account the fact that there are large differences *between* ethnic groups. From the foregoing we have seen that the Turkish or Moroccan migrants' position in several domains is weak and that they appreciate cultural values that do not fit in well with the demands made by these domains. In this respect migrants from the Caribbean area have, in general, a more favourable position. Furthermore, it appears that there are important differences *within* ethnic groups. The degree in which migrants meet the demands of a modern society partly depends on the family or region where they come from. In general, migrants from the countryside have more difficulty with integrating than we those who come from a city. This is also true for the question as to which generation the migrant belongs. Research shows among other things that first-generation migrants prefer to stick to their religions or national traditions while their children do that a lot less. We also see that younger generations pursue education or training relatively more easily.

These are all arguments that demand a high level of differentiation for the research into migrants. To exaggerate this one could say that 'migrant' is a meaningless term because in reality it is always about specific people and specific circumstances. However, one can also draw the conclusion that migration has far more implications than the neutral term 'migrant' suggests. Our research suggests that migrants' cultural backgrounds have many more consequences than is generally believed. Some commentators expect the large differences between migrants and the Dutch society will disappear within the next two or three generations. But this optimistic view is denied by the facts. Indeed, if these differences disappeared quickly, migrants would then find it easier to integrate into modern Dutch society. It is precisely because integration costs a lot of effort that these cultural contrasts are quite persistent. Therefore, the question as to which region a migrant comes from will stay relevant for a long time.

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Notes

[1]   The use of terms like 'heritage' and 'environment' as well as posing the question as to the degree in which these two variables fit in with one another refers to evolution theory. I consider the evolutionary approach to be applicable for two reasons. Firstly, because there is indeed a question of survival for migrants and their families. They want to pass on their own values whereas the social environment is often hostile to this. Secondly, because the dynamics of a modern society is to a high degree determined by evolutionary mechanisms like variation and selection. For more details concerning the latter see Van den Brink 2007.

[2]   Of course social and political institutions form an important aspect of the environment in which migrants are living. The effect of these institutions could be that migrants are marginalized. But the probability of this effect is not very high. In fact Dutch institutions and policymakers explicitly try to stimulate the participation of migrants in social life. In my opinion their marginal position has to be understood as an result from social interaction itself.

[3]   The well known work of Hofstede is used here because he has compared several countries *systematically*. Furthermore, the focus of his research is on intercultural communication and that is exactly the main subject of the present study (see section 2).

[4]   There were a total of 63 Rotterdam inhabitants interviewed. The following ethnic division was made: Antilleans (10), Chinese (10), Turkish (9), Cape Verdeans (8), Moroccans (6), Surinamese (5), Hindustanis (5) and native Dutch (10).

[5]   Linking these groups together is justified because they have been influenced by the Islam for a very long time. Todd (1987) shows that this leads to very similar family ties and these can be differentiated from other cultural regions.

[6]   It can be argued whether it is justified to join these two groups. It would appear in first instance that there is a big difference between West-African countries and small countries that lie in the Caribbean area. However, anthropological surveys show that family ties in Africa also affect the Caribbean area (Todd 1987). In addition, from interviews held in Rotterdam it indicates that there are many similarities with regard to family life between Cape Verdeans, Surinamese and Antilleans. As far as I am concerned, this justifies grouping these migrants as those with a Caribbean background.