

# Enhancing Employment Prospects for Refugees: The Impact of Dutch and Home Country Identities

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, we examine the role of Dutch identity and home country identity in the chances of being employed for refugees in the Netherlands. Numerous refugees in the Netherlands are currently facing challenges with securing their employment. This research sheds a new light on possible factors that influence employment among refugees, since the specific relation between host country identity and employment and the enhancing effect of home country identity has not yet been thoroughly researched. The following research questions have been asked: ‘*To what extent does the strength of the Dutch identity of refugees influence the chances of being employed in the Netherlands?*’ and ‘*To what extent does the strength of home-country identity reinforce the effect of Dutch identity on the chances of being employed in the Netherlands?*’. Using several theories originating from the sociological and

psychological field, we studied whether Dutch identity could increase the chances of being employed by enhancing motivation, resilience, social inclusion, and access to opportunities. Furthermore, we investigated whether home country identity increases the effect of Dutch identity on chances of being employed, by enhancing the well-being and employment prospects of a refugee. To do so, the SIM 2020 (Survey Integration Minorities) is used, which aims to present the current state of minority group integration in the Netherlands, including responses from various minority groups and native groups (N=224). After performing binary logistic regression analysis, we could conclude that a stronger Dutch identity enlarges the chances of being employed for refugees in the Netherlands and that home country identity increases this effect. Furthermore, belonging to an older agegroup decreases the effects of Dutch identity and home country identity. Conclusively, stimulating both attaining Dutch identity while maintaining one's home country identity is important for increasing refugees' chances on being employed.

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# 1. Introduction

The majority of the refugees in the Netherlands is unemployed after eight years (CBS, 2023). With the arrival of large numbers of new refugees to the Netherlands, starting from 2014/2015, municipalities were tasked with guiding refugees towards employment. Together with employers, educational institutions, and civil society organizations, they collaborate to promote the labour participation of refugees in their municipalities. Refugees in the Netherlands are finding jobs more quickly than with a decade ago, but still, numerous refugees in the Netherlands are facing challenges with securing their employment (Movisie, 2020; Bakker, 2016; CBS, 2017). Research has widely explored the reasons behind refugees' unemployment (Bakker, Dagevos and Engbersen, 2017; Beiser, Johnson and Turner, 1993; Bevelander and Lundh, 2007; Born and Schwefer, 2016; Calvó-Armengol and Jackson, 2010; Fasani, Frattini and Minale, 2018). In this research, the possible effects of refugees' host- and home country identity on chances of being employed are being investigated.

Refugees in the Netherlands encounter a disadvantaged position at the labour market not only compared to native Dutch individuals, but also in comparison to migrants arriving in the Netherlands for reasons other than asylum (Huijnk, Dagevos & Miltenburg, 2017). This disadvantage is mostly caused by the traumatic experiences that led refugees to flee their country and their experiences during the flight according to Bakker (2016). Furthermore, Bakker states that the asylum procedure and a lack of resources are adding up to scars that are difficult to recover from. While the gap in labour market participation, known as the 'refugee gap', decreased over time, it persists (Bakker, 2016; Bakker et al., 2017).

On an individual level, unemployment restricts social interactions, financial independence, and can lead to adverse physical and psychological effects, potentially resulting in increased medical expenses (Movisie, 2020). Financial struggles that arise due to unemployment can lead to debts, exacerbating the refugees' social, physical and psychological situation (Fitch et al., 2011). This creates a vicious circle with intertwining problems of employment and refugees challenges. Moreover, unemployment among refugees impacts society as unemployed refugees do not contribute to income taxes, while placing a financial burden on the government and society to provide them social benefits (Movisie,

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<sup>1</sup> In this research, we focus on people who fled from their home country to the Netherlands, and cannot return due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

2020). Additionally, employment plays a crucial role in the successful integration of refugees (UNHCR, 2013; Smyth and Kum, 2010; Zikic et al., 2010), facilitating social connections and daily routines (Movisie, 2020).

Nekby & Rödin (2007) and Battu, Mwale, and Zenou (2003) underscore the significance of identity in labor market outcomes of refugees, and highlight how identification with the majority culture impacts the employment prospects of individuals, irrespective of their minority identity strength. National identity encompasses a nation's culture and its various facets, shaping individuals' ways of thinking, values, and self-understandings (Parekh, 1995). Refugees often face threats to their previous professional identities and may encounter new stigmatized identities in the host country, affecting their sense of self-worth and uniqueness (Petriglieri, 2011; Smyth & Kum, 2010; Esses et al., 2013; Stephan and Stephan, 2000; Eilam & Shamir, 2005). Therefore, identity is important to take into account when investigating refugees' working life in their host country (Wehrle et al., 2018).

The topic of integration of refugees is widely discussed in the Netherlands, while some argue that refugees should be free to maintain their home countries' national or cultural practices, others believe they should not (CBS, 2018; NOS, 2024; NOS, 2022). Berry (1997) outlines four acculturation strategies—integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Integration, associated with a strong sense of belonging to both ethnic and host country identities, is positively linked to well-being and social adaptation, whereas marginalization, which implies weak ties to both ethnic origins and the national identity, is associated with negative outcomes (Berry & Sam, 1997; Phinney et al., 2001). Research in cross-cultural psychology highlights the importance of a two-dimensional model for identity development (acculturation), which distinguishes the level of identification with the majority culture from that with the minority culture (Zikic and Richardson, 2016). The topic of refugee integration in the light of national identity has not been thoroughly researched yet in relation to employment. However, given the significance of minority identity for individual well-being, understanding its effects and role is important for integration- and labour market policies, and the Dutch society as a whole. This leads to the following research questions: *‘To what extent does the strength of the Dutch identity of refugees influence the chances of being employed in the Netherlands?’* and *‘To what extent does the strength of home-country identity reinforce the effect of Dutch identity on the chances of being employed in the Netherlands?’*

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Main relation: Dutch identity & employability

In this research, a combination of concepts of acculturation theory and cultural identity frames will contribute to a comprehensive framework supporting the relationship between the Dutch identity of refugees and their chances on being employed. Acculturation is originally defined by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), and entails individual-level changes, including cultural and psychological shifts in identity, preferences, attitudes, and habits. These stem from intercultural contact, affecting both individuals and groups in their contact with each other (Nekby & Rödin, 2007). Individuals with foreign backgrounds often navigate between two cultures: the (majority) host countries' culture and their own ethnic background culture (Nekby & Rödin, 2007). As the bidimensional conception of Berry (1974, 1980) and Phinney (1990) proposed, individuals can be connected in various ways to both their culture of origin and their society of settlement in the process of acculturation, forming two independent identities.

Drawing from the Social Identity Theory (SIT) of Tajfel and Turner (1979), individuals strive to cultivate a positive and unique understanding of themselves. Individuals' personal and social identities, as described by Gecas (1982) and Tajfel and Turner (1986), play a crucial role in shaping self-concepts. The attachment of values and beliefs to these identities defines individuals' perceptions and expectations within specific contexts (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). As people derive their social identity from belonging to various social groups, it is reasonable to assume that they seek social recognition, acceptance, and appreciation for their in-group. This offers them a meaningful and favorable social identity that they would like to maintain (Verkuyten, 2005). However, a lack of distinctiveness or a devalued social identity can create a threat to someone's home country identity, which can lead to the implementation of various identity management strategies (Verkuyten and Martinovic, 2012). An example of such a strategy mentioned by Verkuyten and Martinovic (2012) is that individuals stress their ethnic distinctiveness and distance themselves from the host community.

Self-identity plays a crucial role in motivational processes, intention formation, and behavioral enactment (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2006). Motivation that comes from within can assist individuals in managing stressful situations and viewing challenges as chances for growth (Trépanier et al., 2013). Consequently, motivated individuals will employ more effective coping mechanisms when being rejected and dedicate more time and effort to their job search (van den Hee, van Hooft & van Vianen, 2020), which could positively affect the search for employment opportunities and engaging in effective job search behaviors.

Feelings of belonging also have profound effects on emotional patterns, cognitive processes, psychological functioning and overall well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). According to Yildirim et al (2024), belongingness is also associated with higher flourishing scores, which taps on higher psychological and social aspects of well-being (Diener et al., 2010). These include personal resources such as having satisfactory social relationships, being respected by others, having a purposeful life, and being optimistic about the future. Personal well-being and optimism are positively related to psychological capital as well (Hmieleski et al., 2007). Psychological capital encompasses elements like self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism and is concerned with individuals' general positive outlook on life (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Furthermore, psychological capital is related to adaptive coping and flexibility in response to new situations (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994; Aspinwall, Richter, & Hoffman, 2001). In non-migrant populations, psychological capital has been found to be an important factor to success in the employment domain, positively effecting career adaptability, perceived employability, and job search (Tolentino et al., 2014; Chen & Lim, 2012).

The absence of prior work experience in the country, coupled with a determination to counteract prevailing stigmas and biases against migrants receiving social assistance, such as the perception of being a welfare magnet, may lead migrants to exhibit a stronger inclination towards reciprocation (Van Hoffen, 2019). Moreover, by embracing the Dutch identity, refugees may enhance their potential to secure and retain employment by enriching their human capital, encompassing skills, qualifications, and proficiency in the Dutch language (Movisie, 2020; Blonk, Van Twuijver, Van de Ven, & Hazelzet, 2015). Lastly, inclusion in the workplace has been linked to positive employee outcomes such as motivation, engagement, and performance (Sabharwal, 2014), which could potentially increase the likelihood of retaining employment.

In summary, a stronger identification with the host country can positively influence refugees' employment prospects by enhancing their motivation, resilience, social inclusion, and access to opportunities. Therefore, hypothesis 1 states as follows: *'The stronger a refugee identifies with being Dutch, the higher the chances of being employed.'*

## 2.2. The enhancing role of home country identity in the effect of Dutch identity on employment

To explain the moderating role of home country identity in the effect of host country identity on employability, the Social Identity Model of Identity Change (SIMIC) proposed by Iyer et al. (2009) and Jetten et al. (2010) is used. This is a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals maintain and enhance their well-being during significant transitions by utilizing multiple past identities. This model suggests that access to various social identity groups equips individuals with resources to navigate challenges in a new environment while maintaining a coherent sense of self.

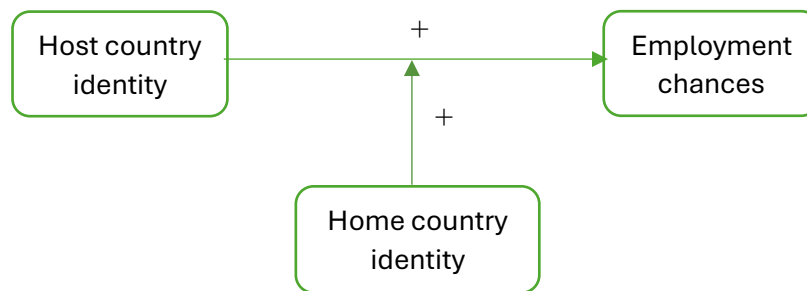
Bentley et al. (2019) expand on SIMIC by emphasizing the importance of constructing new identities that align with existing and future ones, thus ensuring self-continuity and well-being.

Individuals facing transitions, such as refugees, may experience identity challenges, since they often obtain lower jobs in the host country (Zikic & Richardson, 2016). Some refugees may engage in 'identity shadowing': seeking work that aligns with their professional identity in their home country to maintain a sense of connection and ease concerns about professional identity loss (Zikic & Richardson, 2016). Facing barriers such as limited job opportunities and strict credential requirements worsens identity challenges, making refugees feel like they don't belong and disconnected from who they truly are (Zikic & Richardson, 2016). In situations where individuals are forcibly displaced and defined by inflexible institutional processes, contextual constraints can limit their ability to maintain a stable sense of identity, thereby negatively affecting their well-being (Ballentyne et al., 2021). Having the opportunity to maintain parts of the home country identity is important, since social identity supports psychological health and stress management, often referred to as the 'social cure' (Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2012).

Social identity is derived from membership in social groups (Tajfel, 1974, 1982; Turner, 1987). It fulfils psychological needs, provides resources, emotional competences and acts as a buffer against stress and adversity (Drury, Cocking, & Reicher, 2009; Haslam et al., 2008; Iyer et al., 2009; Jetten et al., 2010; Kellezi & Reicher, 2012; Muldoon et al., 2017). Increased well-being and emotional competences derived from maintaining one's home country identity enable individuals to be more reflective of their feelings and considerate of others' emotions (Nelis et al., 2011). This enhanced emotional intelligence facilitates better stress management and results in responding to job interview questions in a calmer and more structured manner, and those qualities seem important to recruiters (Nelis et al., 2011). In the context of refugees seeking employment, "the selection effect" (Paul & Moser, 2009; Taris, 2002) suggests that low well-being can lead to inadequate job performance, increased sick leave, and absenteeism rates among employees (Parker & Kulik, 1995), all of which signal potential difficulties in current and future job roles (Mastekaasa, 1996). Similarly, Kasl (1982) posits that well-being positively affects job search outcomes for the unemployed.

In summary, preserving one's home country identity could enhance the well-being and employment prospects of a refugee. When both positive effects of acquiring the host country identity and maintaining one's home country identity are combined, this will result in increased well-being and more beneficial employment opportunities for refugees. This leads us to the second hypothesis: *'The stronger a refugee identifies with their home country, the stronger the positive effect of stronger identification with being Dutch will be on the chances of being employed.'*





## 3. Methods

### 3.1 Data collection

To test the formulated hypotheses, the Survey Integration Minorities (SIM) dataset from 2020 (SCP) is used. This dataset aims to present the current state of minority group integration in the Netherlands, including responses from various minority groups (Turkish, Polish, Iranian, Surinamese, Moroccan, Caribbean-Dutch, and Somali) as well as native individuals. It covers aspects such as cultural integration, employment, education, social contacts, religion, sports, and health. Labyrinth Onderzoek approached 15,498 individuals to ensure a representative sample, with 5,323 respondents completing the survey. The study focused on individuals aged 15 or older, with samples drawn from municipalities stratified by size and adjusted for certain migrant groups in municipalities where fewer individuals were registered. Both online forms (CAWI) and face-to-face methods (CAPI) were employed to collect responses between March 2020 and January 2021, with forms available in several languages. The dataset obtained 4,778 responses through CAWI and 545 through CAPI.

Due to COVID-19, the increase in the share of employed refugees stagnated in 2020 (CBS, 2021). COVID-19 particularly affected individuals with temporary contracts in sectors such as hospitality and staffing, where many refugees are employed (CBS, 2021). To ensure the reliability of the dataset, using the SIM dataset from 2015 was considered. However, there has been a substantial increase of employed refugees between 2015 and 2020 (as indicated in Appendix D and CBS, 2023). Furthermore, the context of the job market is important for migrants and their chances of entering the job market (Bakker & Dagevos, 2017). The current context and the context of 2020 are more similar compared to the context of 2015. Therefore, the SIM 2020 is expected to reflect the current rates of refugee employment more accurately, which led us to proceed the research with this dataset.

The sample used in this research does not necessarily represent the current refugee population in the Netherlands well. The division of home countries among the refugees in this

sample is not representative of the refugees in the Dutch population. Whereas the sample contains 0.4% Moroccan refugees, 3.6% Turkish refugees, 71% Somali refugees, and 25% Iranian refugees, Dutch society registers no Moroccan refugees, 8% Turkish refugees, 4% Somali refugees, and 3% Iranian refugees (SER, 2023). The largest refugee group in the Netherlands are Syrians and Iraqi, which are not at all included in the dataset. Furthermore, in terms of gender, the sample is not representative of the refugee population in the Netherlands either. Whereas 64.3% of the refugees in the sample are men, the percentage of refugee men in Dutch society is 36% (UNHCR, 2022B). Lastly, in our sample, 74.1% are employed, whereas in Dutch society the employment rate for refugees is 42% (SER, 2022). This means that the results of this research will not be generalizable to the refugee population in Dutch society in 2024. Unfortunately, this problem could not be prevented, as the dataset did not enable us to include a better sample, due to the high complexity of weighting several variables.

### 3.2. Independent, dependent, and moderating variables

To select refugees for analysis, the data was filtered to include only first-generation immigrants who migrated to the Netherlands for political reasons, are employed or receive social benefits, and have a Moroccan, Turkish, Iranian, or Somali ethnic background. The reason for migrating was determined by the question: ‘Why did you come to live in the Netherlands? Did you come to the Netherlands because of:’ In this database, all respondents who indicated they came as refugees are included, regardless of the year of migration, whether they have an asylum status or whether they have the Dutch nationality. This selection enlarges the sample size and thus enhances the reliability of the sample. Since early migration could strengthen Dutch identity and increase employment opportunities due to several factors such as enhanced language proficiency and cultural adaptation (Esser, 2006), year of migration will be included in extra analysis later on. The host country is determined by asking the question: ‘Where were you born?’ After applying these criteria, our sample consisted of 224 respondents.

Employment status is measured by asking the question, ‘Do you currently have paid work?’ If answered ‘no’, the follow-up question is, ‘What description best fits you?’ These two questions have been combined into one nominal variable indicating whether an individual is either employed or unemployed. The majority of our sample (166 respondents) is employed.

To measure the independent variable of national identity, the question, ‘To what extent do you feel Dutch?’ is asked. To determine the moderating variable of home country identity, the question, ‘To what extent do you feel [home country nationality]?’ is asked. The ordinal variables are rescaled to let a higher score mean that an individual identifies more strongly with their Dutch or home country nationality. Both dependent variables are on ordinal scale. On average, respondents report a stronger home country identity compared with host country identity.

### 3.3. Control variables

To measure the control variable sex, the question ‘What is your sex?’ was asked, resulting in a nominal variable with 144 men (64.3%) and 80 women (35.7%). Age was measured by asking ‘How old are you?’ Respondents selected an age category, resulting in an interval-level variable. All respondents are between 15 and 54 years old ( $SD = 1.18897$ ).

To measure mental well-being, several questions were asked, such as ‘How often did you have a lot of energy?’ and ‘How often did you feel depressed, that nothing could cheer you up?’ Additional questions for this variable are displayed in Appendix C. Factor analysis (see Appendix B) indicated two factors for well-being: one including happiness, calmness, and energy, and another including the absence of problems related to sleep, feelings of depression, dejection, and nervousness. These factors were computed into two new variables after conducting another factor analysis and measuring Cronbach’s Alpha. The first factor variable relates best to the positive effects of a stronger Dutch identity on employment chances, while the second variable relates best to the positive effects of maintaining one’s home country identity on the relationship between Dutch identity and employment chances. These variables are on an interval level. Overall, most respondents in our sample scored high on both factors of mental well-being.

The variable religion is measured by asking the question ‘To what extent do you agree with the following statement? ‘My faith is an important part of myself.’. This question connects religion to identity. To let a higher score imply a stronger faith, the responses are recoded. Most people in the sample indicate that faith is a very important part of themselves, with no respondents stating that faith was not an important part of themselves at all.

Although the control variables age, mental well-being, and religion are ordinal variables, they were not recoded into dummy variables, since the amount of control variables and their categories could cause trouble with the right interpretation of the results.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>
Being employed		.7411	.43909	0.00	1.00
Identifies with being Dutch		2.6250	.98532	0.00	4.00
Identifies with home country		3.1161	1.05665	0.00	4.00
Gender		.3571	.48023	.00	1.00
Age		1.88905	1.18897	.00	4.00
Feeling happy		2.5446	1.05362	.00	4.00
Feeling comfortable		2.9821	.96096	.00	4.00
Religion		3.3795	.75983	.00	3.00
Year migrated		.9598	.81091	.00	2.00

*Source: SIM (2020), N 224*

### 3.4. Methods

Since the dependent variable employment is of binary measurement level and the independent variable Dutch identity is of ordinal measurement level, a binary logistic regression model is chosen for analysing the relationship. The relationship between the independent variables and the binary dependent variable is modeled using the logistic function, and the estimated b-coefficients represent the log-odds of the outcome variable being in one category relative to the other category. Binary logistic regression assumes that the relationship between the dependent variable and the log-odds of the outcome variable is linear, and that there is no multicollinearity among the predictor variables. Furthermore, observations must be independent of each other and influential cases and outliers must be addressed for obtaining valid and reliable results. Tests on linearity indicate a linear relationship between the dependent variables and employment (see appendix E). The VIF values are lower than 10, which means that there is no multicollinearity, which allows for a logistic regression analysis to be performed. Based on the Cook's statistics, standard residuals and the DFBeta's of the sample, some outliers were detected (See Appendix G). The cases for to which the outliers

applied, have been looked into. However, as far as could be noticed, there was nothing that would justify excluding those cases.

## 4. Analysis and results

In this chapter, the aim is to obtain answers to the research questions by testing the formulated hypotheses. Firstly, the direct relationship between host country identity and employment among refugees are analysed with a binary logistic regression analysis. Afterwards, the moderating effect of home country identity on this relationship will be examined.

Furthermore, the odds-ratios will be inspected. Additionally, the effect of taking into account for home country identity and year of migration as extra predictors will be inspected as an additional analysis.

### 4.1. The effect of Dutch identity on employment

In model I of Table 2, the direct effect of Dutch identity is tested on employment. We expected a positive effect of Dutch identity on the chances of being employed. A significant effect of home Dutch identity on employment chances has been found. The odds of a refugee of being employed raise with 1.376 per category when identifying stronger with being Dutch with a 95% CI of 1.010 to 1.874.

### 4.2. The moderating effect of home country identity

In table 2, Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  shows that a small amount of 9.4% of the variance can be accounted to the predictor variables in the model when not including the interaction term, while 10.4% of the change can be accounted for when including the interaction term. This indicates that the interaction term does add to the explanation of employment chances for refugees and that it is a factor that explains a part of the relation between Dutch identity and the chances of being employed. We expected that a stronger home country identity would increase the positive effect of host country identity on the chances of being employed. Model II in table 2 shows that adding the created interaction term results in an increased chance for refugees of being employed. The odds of a refugee of being employed rose from 1.376 to 1.758 with a 95% CI of 1.055 to 2.930 when identifying stronger with home country identity as well.

### 4.3. Control variables

Model I in table 2 indicates that the variable age has a significant effect on chances of employment. The odds of a refugee of being employed decrease with .681 with a 95% CI of .516 to .899 when belonging to an older agegroup category. When taking the interaction effect of home country identity into account (see model II in table 2), the odds decrease per agegroup: .666 with a 95% CI of 5.02 to .884. The rest of the control variables display no significant effects on employment chances.

**Table 2. Binary logistic regression analysis**

	Model I		Exp (B)	Model II		
	B	SE		B	SE	Exp (B)
Intercept	2.666*	1.101	14.389	2.546	1.106	12.751
Identifies with being Dutch	.319*	.158	1.676	.564*	.261	1.758
Interaction home country identity				-.078	.064	.925
Gender	-.542	.329	.582	-.518	.331	.596
Age	-.384**	.142	.681	-.406**	.144	.666
Feeling happy	-.131	.185	.877	-.125	.186	.882
Feeling comfortable	-.043	.202	.958	.001	.204	1.001
Religion	-.293	.228	.746	-.288	.230	.749
Nagelkirke R2	.094			.104		
Hosmer-lemeshow	7.609			15.110		
Chi-Square	14.882*			16.509*		

Notes: \*  $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0,01$

Source: SIM (2020),  $N=224$

#### 4.4. Extra analysis

Since early migration can enhance Dutch identity and increase employment opportunities due to factors such as improved language proficiency and cultural adaptation (Esser, 2006), extra analysis are done in order to investigate whether those effects could also be found in this sample. When taking into account the year of migration as an extra predictor, there is no significant effect of Dutch identity on employment chances anymore (see model III of table 3). Age, however, remains to have a significant effect on employment chances: the odds of being employed for a refugee decrease with .632 when belonging to an older age category with a 95%CI of .462 to .866. When considering home country identity, the significant effect of age on the chance of being employed remains. The odds of being employed raised to .672 when belonging to an older age category with a 95%CI of .507 to .891.

**Table 3. Binary logistic regression extra analysis year of migration and home country identity**

	Model III		Model IV			
	B	SE	Exp (B)	B	SE	Exp (B)
Intercept	3,121	1.198	.22 .679	3. 004*	1. 205	20 .163
Identifies with being Dutch	.294	.160	1.341	.315	.158	1.370
Identifies with home country				-.117	.163	.473
Gender	-.556	.330	.574	-.526	.330	.591
Age	-.458*	.160	.632	-.398*	.144	.672
Feeling happy	-.107	.187	.898	-.130	.185	.878
Feeling comfortable	-.050	.203	.952	-.024	.203	.976
Religion	-.310	.229	.733	-.293	.229	.746
Migration year	-.231	.230	.794			
Nagelkerke R2	.101		.098			
Hosmer-lemeshow	6.772		240.815			
Chi-Square	15.411*					

Notes: \*  $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0,01$

Source: SIM (2020),  $N=224$

## 5. Conclusions and discussion

In this research, the effect of Dutch identity on the chances of being employed is investigated for refugees that are settled in the Netherlands. Furthermore, we researched whether home country identity reinforces this relationship. Additionally, the length of stay and the role of home country identity as normal factor is investigated. The research questions asked were ‘To what extent does the strength of the Dutch identity of refugees influence the chances of being employed in the Netherlands?’ and ‘To what extent does the strength of home-country identity reinforce the effect of Dutch identity on the chance of being employed in the Netherlands?’.



The findings of this research indicate that the expected positive effect of home- and host identity on employment chances is existing under the circumstances investigated. This means that a stronger identification with being Dutch enlarges the chances of being employed for refugees in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the results of this research indicate that the effect of Dutch identity on the chances of being employed is even larger when a refugee identifies stronger with their home country. This means that taking into account both strength home and host identity is important when looking at refugees' employment chances. Moreover, the findings indicate that age is an influential factor in employment chances for refugees: belonging to an older age group weakens the relationship between identity and the chances of being employed. Both the length of stay and the role of home country identity as normal factor did not influence the relationship between identity and the chances of being employed.

This research proves that stronger identification with being Dutch is important for the chances of being employed for refugees in the Netherlands. Moreover, maintaining one's host country identity increases the chances of being employed even more. These findings contradict the findings of the research of Nekby & Rödin (2007) and Battu, Mwale, and Zenou (2003), which stresses how identification with the majority culture significantly affect the employment prospects of individuals, irrespective of their minority identity strength. Therefore, this research succeeds in shedding a new light on possible factors that impact labour market success of refugees, being one of the first to relate the role of both identities to this employment.

Using theories from both sociological as well as psychological disciplines, this interdisciplinary research ensures that the problem is being addressed from several viewpoints. This resulted in a very plausible theoretical framework involving aspects of psychological competences, mental and psychological well-being, social relationships, and workplace aspects.

However, the sample used is small and not representative of Dutch society. Besides the composition of the sample in terms of country of origin, gender, and employment rates, the sample only includes respondents younger than 54. Those factors affect the reliability and external validity of the research and prevents generalization of the results to the broader Dutch society. Additionally, data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is important to consider when interpreting the results. The pandemic likely influenced various aspects of individuals' lives, such as employment, education, social life, financial situation,

and family dynamics, potentially altering the relationships studies (Settersten et al., 2020; Gayatri & Puspitasari, 2023).

Future research with a representative sample is necessary to enable generalization of these outcomes. Moreover, future research could follow up on this research by doing analysis on the possible mediating effects of daily experiences with stress or happiness on the relationship between identity and employment, aligning with the theoretical framework used in this research. Furthermore, it could be interesting to perform qualitative research on the willingness and motivations of refugees as well as the Dutch society on integration. Lastly, it is important to research the causality of the effect of employment on Dutch identity, since research has also proven that a positive effect of employment of Dutch identity exists (Marbach, Hainmueller & Hangartner, 2018; Müller, 2022; Feeney, 2000). By researching this relationship more thoroughly, conclusions about the effects of the new Dutch rules regarding work for refugees can be drawn (NOS, 2023).

Policymakers, employment agencies, social workers, organizations assisting refugees and the Dutch society can consider these findings when approaching refugees and guiding them towards employment, particularly by accounting for the effects of identity and age. By considering the effects of host- and home country identity on employment prospects, those stakeholders can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that improves the well-being and integration of refugees into the workforce. Examples for interventions are cultural sensitivity trainings for professionals guiding refugees (Costa et al., 2021), social events for both refugees and natives in which cultural aspects can be shared (Ager & Strang, 2008; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013) (such as picnicks, gardening), and buddy programs in which successful refugees are matched with refugees trying to integrate (Adamovic & Cooney-O'Donoghue, 2024).

When desiring to increase the chances on employment for refugees in the Netherlands, integration seems an important aspect in reaching this goal. This requires not only refugees to be willing to acquire the Dutch identity, but also Dutch society to accept and respect refugees' home country identity, as a sense of belonging and social inclusion seems fundamental for refugees in order to successfully settle in host countries (Ager & Strang, 2008; Beirens, Hughes, Hek, & Spicer, 2007; Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013, 2014; Taylor, 2004). This research provides new insights into the reasons behind (un)employment among refugees in the Netherlands, with the goal of reducing unemployment and improving overall integration and living conditions for refugees. The employment status of refugees is currently a critical issue in the Netherlands (Movisie, 2020; Fitch et al., 2011),

making it essential to continue exploring this complex, multi-layered problem from new perspectives to effectively address related challenges.

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## Syntax

*\*Selecting first generation refugees from Marrocco, Iran, Somalia or Turkey that are employed on receive social benefits*

Select if (redmigr\_polred = 1) .

Select if (generatiesd = 1).

Select if (etngba = 1) OR (etngba = 2) OR (etngba = 6) OR (etngba = 8).

Select if (NUWERK = 1) OR (hfdact = 1).

*\*Creating variable employed*

Compute employed = 0.

IF (hfdact = 1) employed = 0.

IF (nuwerk = 1) employed = 1.

Value labels employed 0'Not employed' 1'Employed'.

*\*Recoding Dutch identity*

Select if (voelnl=1) OR (voelnl=2) OR (voelnl=3) OR (voelnl=4) OR (voelnl=5) .

RECODE voelnl (1=4) (2=3) (3=2) (4=1) (5=0) INTO dutchid.

EXECUTE.

Value labels dutchid 0'Not at all Dutch' 1'Not Dutch' 2'Neutral' 3'Feel Dutch' 4'Very Dutch'.

*\*Recoding home country identity*

RECODE voellvh (1=4) (2=3) (3=2) (4=1) (5=0) INTO hcntryid.

EXECUTE.

Value labels hcntryid 0'Not at all' 1'Not hcntry' 2'Neutral' 3'Feel hcntry' 4'Very hcntry'.

select if (not missing (hcntryid)).

*\*Recoding year of migration*

recode migrjaar (lowest thru 1999=0) (2000 thru 2009=1) (2010 thru  
2019=2) INTO migyear.

value labels migyear 0'until 1999' 1'2000 thru 2009' 2'2010 thru 2019'.

*\*Deleting missings of variable year of migration*

select if migrjaar > 1977.

*\*Recoding age*

recode leeftijdsd\_kl (1=0) (2=0) (3=1) (4=2) (5=3) (6=4) into age.

value labels age 0'until 24' 1'25-34' 2'35-44' 3'44-54' 4'55 and older'.

*\*Recoding gender*

recode geslachtsd (1=0) (2=1) into sex.

*\*Recoding religion being part of identity*

RECODE relzelf (1=4) (2=3) (3=2) (4=1) (5=0) INTO religion.

EXECUTE.

Value labels religion 0'not at all religious' 1'not religious' 2'neutral' 3'religious' 4'strongly religious'.

*\*Deleting missings of variable religion being part of identity*

select if (religion=1) or (religion=2) or (religion=3) or (religion=4) or (religion=5).

*\*Recoding variables mental well-being*

RECODE mental\_kalm (1=6) (2=5) (3=4) (4=3) (5=2) (6=1) INTO kalmr.

EXECUTE.

RECODE mental\_energ (1=6) (2=5) (3=4) (4=3) (5=2) (6=1) INTO energr.

EXECUTE.

RECODE mental\_geluk (1=6) (2=5) (3=4) (4=3) (5=2) (6=1) INTO gelukr.



EXECUTE.

RECODE mental\_slaap (1=6) (2=5) (3=4) (4=3) (5=2) (6=1) INTO slaapr.

EXECUTE.

*\*Replacing missing items mental well-being*

corr kalmr energr gelukr slaapr mental\_depr mental\_neersl mental\_zenuw

compute kalm=kalmr.

if (missing(kalmr)) or (kalmr<0.00) kalm=gelukr.

compute energie=energr.

if (missing(energr)) or (energr<0.00) energie=kalmr.

compute geluk=gelukr.

if (missing(gelukr)) or (gelukr<0.00) geluk=slaapr.

compute slaap=slaapr.

if (missing(slaapr)) or (slaapr<0.00) slaap=gelukr.

compute depres=mental\_depr.

if (missing(mental\_depr)) or (mental\_depr<0.00) depres=mental\_neersl.

compute neerslicht=mental\_neersl.

if (missing(mental\_neersl)) or (mental\_neersl<0.00) neerslicht=mental\_depr.

compute zenuw=mental\_zenuw.

if (missing(mental\_zenuw)) or (mental\_zenuw<0.00) zenuw=mental\_neersl.

EXECUTE.

*\*Factoranalysis items mental well-being*

FACTOR

/VARIABLES kalm energie geluk slaap depres neerslicht zenuw

/MISSING LISTWISE

/ANALYSIS kalm energie geluk slaap depres neerslicht zenuw

/PRINT INITIAL CORRELATION EXTRACTION ROTATION

/PLOT EIGEN

/CRITERIA FACTORS(2) ITERATE(25)

/EXTRACTION PAF

/CRITERIA ITERATE(25)

/ROTATION VARIMAX

/METHOD=CORRELATION.

*\*Reliability analysis items mental well-being*

RELIABILITY

/VARIABLES=kalm energie geluk slaap depres neerslicht zenuw

/SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL

/MODEL=ALPHA

/SUMMARY=TOTAL.

*\*Factoranalysis items mental well-being factor 1*

FACTOR

/VARIABLES kalm energie geluk

/MISSING LISTWISE

/ANALYSIS kalm energie geluk

/PRINT INITIAL CORRELATION EXTRACTION ROTATION

/PLOT EIGEN

/CRITERIA FACTORS(2) ITERATE(25)

/EXTRACTION PAF

/CRITERIA ITERATE(25)

/ROTATION VARIMAX

/METHOD=CORRELATION.

*\*Reliability analysis items mental well-being*

RELIABILITY

/VARIABLES=kalm energie geluk

/SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL

/MODEL=ALPHA

/SUMMARY=TOTAL.

*\*Factoranalysis items mental well-being factor 2*

FACTOR

/VARIABLES slaap depres neerslicht zenuw

/MISSING LISTWISE

/ANALYSIS slaap depres neerslicht zenuw

/PRINT INITIAL CORRELATION EXTRACTION ROTATION

/PLOT EIGEN

/CRITERIA FACTORS(2) ITERATE(25)

/EXTRACTION PAF

/CRITERIA ITERATE(25)

/ROTATION VARIMAX

/METHOD=CORRELATION.

*\*Reliability analysis items mental well-being*

RELIABILITY

/VARIABLES=slaap depres neerslicht zenuw

/SCALE('ALL VARIABLES') ALL

/MODEL=ALPHA

/SUMMARY=TOTAL.

*\*Creating scale variable mental well-being for factor 1 and factor 2*

compute gelukk=mean.2(kalm, energie, geluk).

recode gelukk (lowest thru 2.23=0) (2.24 thru 3.18=1) (3.19 thru 4.13=2) (4.14 thru 5.08=3)  
(5.09 thru 6=4) INTO happy.

Value labels happy 0'feeling very bad' 1'feeling bad' 2'neutral' 3'feeling good' 4'feeling very good'.

compute stres=mean.2(slaap, depres, neerslcht, zenuw).

Recode stres (lowest thru 2.23=0) (2.24 thru 3.18=1) (3.19 thru 4.13=2) (4.14 thru 5.08=3)  
(5.09 thru 6=4) INTO relax.

Value labels relax 0'not at all relaxed' 1'not relaxed' 2'neutral' 3'feeling relaxed' 4'feeling very relaxed'.

*\*Deleting further missings of variable mental*

select if (not missing (happy)).

execute.

select if (not missing (relax)).

execute.

*\*Frequencies of variables*

fre religion geslachtsd age happy relax hcuntryid dutchid employed migyear etngba

*\*Descriptive statistics*

Des dutchid hcntryid sex age happy relax religion

*\*Testing on linearity for Dutch identity and home country identity*

*\*Create predictors that are the interaction between each predictor and the log of itself*

RECODE voelnl (1=5) (2=4) (3=3) (4=2) (5=1) INTO dutchidl.

EXECUTE.

Value labels dutchidl 1'Not at all Dutch' 2'Not Dutch' 3'Neutral' 4'Feel Dutch' 5'Very Dutch'.

RECODE voellvh (1=5) (2=4) (3=3) (4=2) (5=1) INTO hcidl.

EXECUTE.

Value labels hcidl 1'Not at all' 2'Not hcntry' 3'Neutral' 4'Feel hcntry' 5'Very hcntry'.

COMPUTE LnNLID=LN(dutchid).

VARIABLE LABELS LnNLID 'LnNLID'.

EXECUTE.

COMPUTE LnHCID=LN(hcidl).

VARIABLE LABELS LnHCID 'LnHCID'.

EXECUTE.

LOGISTIC REGRESSION VARIABLES employed

/METHOD=ENTER dutchid hcntryid LnNLID\*dutchid LnHCID\*hcntryid sex age happy  
relax religion migyear /CLASSPLOT

/CASEWISE OUTLIER(2)

/PRINT=GOODFIT ITER(1) CI(95)

/CRITERIA=PIN(0.05) POUT(0.10) ITERATE(20) CUT(0.5).

*\*Testing on collinearity*

REGRESSION

/MISSING LISTWISE

/STATISTICS COLLIN TOL

/CRITERIA=PIN(.05) POUT(.10)

/NOORIGIN

/DEPENDENT employed

/METHOD=ENTER dutchid sex age happy relax religion

*\*Looking at correlations*

corr employed dutchid hcntryid

*\*Performing binary logistic regression analysis with interaction*

LOGISTIC REGRESSION VARIABLES employed

/METHOD=ENTER dutchid sex age happy relax religion

/METHOD=ENTER dutchid dutchid\*hcntryid sex age happy relax religion

/SAVE=PRED PGROUP COOK LEVER DFBETA ZRESID

/CLASSPLOT

/CASEWISE OUTLIER(2)

/PRINT=GOODFIT ITER(1) CI(95)

/CRITERIA=PIN(0.05) POUT(0.10) ITERATE(20) CUT(0.5).

*\*Performing binary logistic regression analysis + extra analysis for home country identity*

LOGISTIC REGRESSION VARIABLES employed

/METHOD=ENTER dutchid relax happy religion sex age

/METHOD=ENTER dutchid sex age religion relax happy hcuntryid

/SAVE=PRED PGROUP ZRESID

/CASEWISE OUTLIER(2)

/PRINT=GOODFIT ITER(1) CI(95)

/CRITERIA=PIN(0.05) POUT(0.10) ITERATE(20) CUT(0.5).

LOGISTIC REGRESSION VARIABLES employed

/METHOD=ENTER dutchid relax happy religion sex age

/METHOD=ENTER dutchid sex age religion relax happy migyear

/SAVE=PRED PGROUP ZRESID

/CASEWISE OUTLIER(2)

/PRINT=GOODFIT ITER(1) CI(95)

/CRITERIA=PIN(0.05) POUT(0.10) ITERATE(20) CUT(0.5).



*\*Looking for outliers and influential cases*

SUMMARIZE

/TABLES=PRE\_3 PGR\_3 COO\_3 LEV\_3 SRE\_3 ZRE\_3 DFB0\_3 DFB1\_3 DFB2\_3  
DFB3\_3 DFB4\_3 DFB5\_3 DFB6\_3

DFB7\_3 DFB8\_3 DFB9\_3 DFB10\_3 DFB11\_3 DFB12\_3 DFB13\_3 DFB14\_3 DFB15\_3  
DFB16\_3 DFB17\_3 DFB18\_3 DFB19\_3

/FORMAT=VALIDLIST CASENUM TOTAL LIMIT=100

/TITLE='Case Summaries'

/MISSING=VARIABLE

/CELLS=NONE.

## Appendices

### Appendix A. Frequency

**Table of frequencies 1. Identification with being Dutch**

	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all feels Dutch	10	4.5
Doesn't feel Dutch	14	6.3
Neutral	64	28.6
Feels Dutch	98	43.8
Feels very Dutch	38	17.0
Totaal	224	100

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

**Table of frequencies 2. Identification with home country identity**

	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all identities with home country	10	4.5
Doesn't identity with home country	8	3.6
Neutral	29	12.9
Identifies with home country	76	33.9
Identifies strongly with home country	101	45.1
Totaal	227	100

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

**Table of frequencies 3. Sex**

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	144	64.3
Female	80	35.7
Totaal	224	100

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

**Table of frequencies 4. Age**

	Frequency	Percentage
Until 24 years old	30	13.4
Between 25 and 34 years old	62	27.7
Between 35 and 44 years old	61	27.2
Between 45 and 55 years old	49	21.9
55 years and older	22	9.8
Totaal	224	100

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

**Table of frequencies 5. Happiness**

	Frequency	Percentage
Very unhappy	7	3.1
Unhappy	29	12.9
Neutral	69	30.8
Happy	73	32.6
Very happy	46	20.5
Totaal	224	100

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

**Table of frequencies 6. Stress**

	Frequency	Percentage
Very uncomfortable	4	1.8
Uncomfortable	15	6.7
Neutral	36	16.1
Comfortable	95	42.4
Very comfortable	74	33.0
Totaal	224	100

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

**Table of frequencies 7. Religion**

	Frequency	Percentage
Not religious	5	2.2
Neutral	23	10.3
Religious	78	34.8
Strongly religious	118	52.7
Totaal	224	100

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

## Appendix B. Factor analysis of mental well-being

**Table 1. Factoranalysis 2. Feeling happy**

	Communalities	Factor
Calmness	.654	.879
Energy	.674	.907
Happiness	.393	.670
Eigenwaarde	2.230	
Proportion	77.343	
Cronbach's	.853	

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

**Table 2. Factoranalysis 2. Feeling comfortable**

	Communalities	Factor
Sleep	.576	.652
Depressed	.531	.729
Dejected	.822	.845
Nervous	.492	.699
Eigenwaarde	2.541	
Proportion	63.530	
Cronbach's	.807	

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

## Appendix C. Questions and answers survey

Variable	Question	Answer
Reason migrated	Why did you come to live in the Netherlands? Did you come to the Netherlands because of:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. work;</li> <li>2. study;</li> <li>3. social security benefits;</li> <li>4. political reasons / war / religious persecution;</li> <li>5. poverty / famine;</li> <li>6. I moved in with my parents or partner who already lived in the Netherlands;</li> <li>7. marriage (I got married or moved in with someone in the Netherlands);</li> <li>8. due to health, medical reasons;</li> <li>9. future children / children's education;</li> <li>10. came with parents;</li> <li>11. came with partner;</li> <li>12. other reason.</li> </ol>
Homecountry	Where were you born?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Morocco;</li> <li>2. Turkey;</li> <li>3. Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius or Sint Maarten;</li> <li>4. Suriname;</li> <li>5. Netherlands;</li> <li>6. Poland;</li> <li>7. Somalia;</li> <li>8. Iran;</li> <li>92. other country, namely...</li> </ol>
Employment	Do you currently have paid work?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. No</li> </ol>
Unemployment	What description best fits you?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. unemployed and/or seeking work;</li> <li>2. housewife/househusband;</li> <li>3. disabled/in WAO/in</li> </ol>

		WIA; 4. student; 5. early retirement; 6. retired/receives AOW; 7. other, namely....
Host country identity	To what extent do you feel Dutch?	1. very strongly; 2. strongly; 3. somewhat; 4. not; 5. not at all; 92. don't know
Home country identity	To what extent do you feel <home country nationality>?	1. very strongly; 2. strongly; 3. somewhat; 4. not; 5. not at all; 92. don't know
Gender	What is your sex?	1. Male 2. Female
Age	How old are you?	1. younger than 18 2. 18 – 24 years 3. 25 – 34 years 4. 35 – 44 years 5. 45 – 54 years 6. 55 – 64 years 7. 65 – 74 years 8. 74 years or older
Year migrated	In which year did you first come to live in the Netherlands?	Open

<p>Feeling happy</p>	<p>How often did you feel calm and peaceful? How often did you have a lot of energy? How often did you feel happy?</p>	<p>1. All the time; 2. Most of the time; 3. Often; 4. Sometimes; 5. Seldom; 6. Never</p>
<p>Feeling comfortable</p>	<p>How often did you sleep well? How often did you feel very nervous? How often did you feel down and depressed? How often did you feel depressed, that nothing could cheer you up?</p>	<p>1. All the time; 2. Most of the time; 3. Often; 4. Sometimes; 5. Seldom; 6. Never</p>



## Appendix D. Employment rates SIM 2015

**Table of frequencies 1. Employment rates 2015**

	Frequency	Percentage
Not employed	128	59.8
Employed	86	40.2
Total	214	100

*Source: SIM (2015) N=214*

**Table of frequencies 2. Employment rates 2020**

	Frequency	Percentage
Not employed	58	25.9
Employed	166	74.1
Total	224	100

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

## Appendix E. Testing the assumptions

**Table 1. Assumption of linearity**

	Sig.
LnNLID by dutchid	.065
LnHCID by hentryid	.991

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

**Table 2. Assumption of collinearity**

	Tolerance	VIF
Dutch identity	.945	1.058
Home country identity	.945	1.059

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

## Appendix F. Correlations

**Table 1. Correlations**

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	Pearson's	Significance
Employed – Dutch identity	.127	.058
Employed – Home country identity	-.051	.448
Dutch identity – Home country identity	-.044	.511

---

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*

## Appendix G. Binary logistic regression

**Table 1. Residuals**

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Case	ZResid	Sresid
61	-3.852	-2.932
109	-2.145	-2.104
126	-6.383	-2.783
199	-1.801	-2.048

---

*Source: SIM (2020) N=224*