On my office desk, I keep my stationary utensils in four modest melamine containers which I bought a couple of years ago at Xenos, a popular Dutch chain store selling everything from household utensils to home decorations, and a random selection of preserved foods from all around the world. Its odd assortment and low prices make the Xenos an excellent place to find small gifts. At a cost of about one euro each, I did not think twice to treat myself to the collection of four of these containers, which I regard as straightforward visualizations of everyday Dutchness. The objects speak to me because they articulate the intense permeation of Dutch food culture with fast food.

Each container is a durable version of one of the typical plastic disposables tailored to the shapes and sizes of the most popular Dutch fast food snacks. Like their originals, these melamine copies are white. However, the bottom of each one is decorated with a life-size photo of the according snack, so as to create the impression of being filled, but also illustrating the specific uses. Thus, the largest container – the one with my paperclips and mini pincer – is meant to be filled with French fries (patat, patates frites or friet), and includes the usual separate space for mayonnaise, ketchup or peanut sauce (satésaus). The latter is part of the culinary heritage from the Dutch Indies colonial past. Sauces may also be eaten combined, a popular mixture being French fries with mayonnaise and ketchup topped with raw onion, the so-called patatje oorlog (‘French fries à la war’). Another container – long and narrow, so perfect for pens and pencils – is meant to serve the frikandel (or frikadel), a deep-fried skinless sausage. Also the frikandel usually goes with mayonnaise and/or ketchup and/or raw onion, over the entire
length of the sausage. A shorter narrow container — mine housing a sharpener, some erasers and a pocketknife — is intended for the kroket (croquette), again a deep-fried sausage-shaped snack, this time existing of ragout coated with breadcrumbs. The croquette is usually eaten with mustard, except for the satékroket, which may come with a sweet and spicy sauce. And, last but not least, there is a bitterbal container, broader, rectangular — large enough to pile up six to eight balls — but on my desk filled with sugar bags and a variety of small things. The bitterbal is a small, round croquette, also to be served with mustard.\footnote{The described snacks are part and parcel of everyday life in the Netherlands, and therefore deserve some serious attention when trying to understand ‘the Netherlands Now’. What fascinates me in this permeation, is that these snacks are not only a substantial part of many people’s everyday diet, and thus represent the very ordinary, but also the food to accompany moments of leisure and celebration, occasions which are interrupting the everyday. One area where this festive element is explicitly expressed is advertising. Virtually all consumer-directed French fries or snack advertising show (overall white) family situations at home with happy children or adults in a festive mood or setting. I have come to think of this paradox as ‘festive everydayness’: the ordinary as a marker of the extraordinary.}

The idea of the ‘festive everydayness’ of Dutch fast food snacks came to my mind during fieldwork excursions to so-called braderieën, village (market) fairs, where my interest in Dutch fast food was evoked. Village fairs are held all over the country, especially during the summer, in popular, countryside holidaying regions.\footnote{It struck me that at virtually no braderie any other ready-to-eat food was sold than fast food and poffertjes (small pancakes). No homemade pastries, snacks or regional specialties, or anything other than the industrial products that can be found anywhere, anytime. My awareness of the omnipresence of fast food thus was actually induced by the remarkable absence of other food, leaving me with no other choice.}
when feeling hungry. In this respect, the Dutch \textit{braderie} seriously differs from, for instance, summer markets in Britain, Belgium or France, which events are \textit{the} occasion to present a \textit{cuisine de terroir} or to raise money for charities by selling homemade delicacies. In the first instance, my implicit expectations made me stumble into the pitfall signaled by Holzman.

In addition, the limitation to fast food seemed to me in striking contrast with the everyday popular culture around ‘food’, by which I mean the whole range of practices involving knowledge, cooking, serving and eating. An infinite variety of television programs on cooking, with or without celebrity cooks, highlight the significance of fresh ingredients, aesthetics, health, and the pleasures and pride of cooking. The trend goes with cookery web logs, cook books, and cooking competitions – the program \textit{Heel Holland Bakt}, the Dutch version of \textit{The Great British Bake Off}, being the latest version. But if ‘All of Holland is Baking’ indeed, if cooking is such a pleasant pastime, if homemade food is so appreciated, and if fresh and healthy food is really so important – no day seems to pass without news on the worsening obesity epidemic – why then don’t events like the \textit{braderie} show the slightest glimpse of this food consciousness? Apparently, there is a gap between the morally informed presentations of ideal food ways, and the unruly, taken-for-granted reality of habits, tastes and preferences.

Rather than offering a comprehensive analysis of this discrepancy, this essay is meant as a modest call for further ethnographic explorations of Dutch food culture, and the place of fast food therein. Social-economic background, gender, age and ethnicity are important dimensions in understanding people’s preferences, possibilities and practices in relation to food. Food and eating being strong markers of distinction (Bourdieu 1986), fast food is generally associated with the life and manners of the lower classes.\textsuperscript{5} Yet, Dutch fast food snacks are in the Netherlands appreciated by people from all walks of life – or at least as far as white, autochthonous Dutch are concerned.\textsuperscript{6} In one of the few social-scientific studies dedicated to snacks and snack culture in the Netherlands, Adri A. de la Bruhèze and Anneke H. van Otterloo show how the eating of fast food snacks became integrated into daily life in the course of the twentieth century (2003: 327), and how ‘snack outlets … became more respectable and even in vogue for everybody’ (ibid.: 329). According to the authors, the popularity of such food and places is ‘typically Dutch’ in the sense that ‘the Dutch like cheap, but filling, simple food in an informal setting’ (ibid.: 332). The current niche market of quality hand-made, organic or vegetarian fast food snacks, catering to the higher echelons of society, is interesting in this respect. In my view, this new mode of distinction articulates poignantly the overall Dutchness of the snacks involved, a Dutchness that goes beyond wealth or class (although probably not beyond ethnic background). A telling example is the food line of the recently established Vegetarian Butcher. The range largely consists of Dutch fast food snacks, with the vegetarian croquette as its first release.\textsuperscript{7}

Precisely its self-evidence makes Dutch fast food what Barthes calls ‘an institution’, equivalent, for instance, to the unassailable superabundance of sugar in the United States, or of wine in France. ‘And these institutions necessarily imply a set of images, dreams, tastes, choices and values’ (1997: 20). It would be inter-
On our way to the annual evening summer market in Harskamp (3,500 inhabitants), my husband and I conduct a quick survey of the freezers in the village’s Plus supermarket. They offer sixteen varieties of deep-frozen patat, among which boerenfriet (farmers’ fries), kreukelfriet (wrinkle fries), Hollandse frieten (Dutch fries) and Oma’s smulfriet (Grandma’s yummy fries). The supermarket’s range of snacks entails the entire pantheon of traditional Dutch fast food snacks: frikandellen, kroketten and bitterballen in various brands, sizes, shapes and packages. Nearly complete is the range of Asia-inspired snacks, which’ development - just as the satésaus and satékroket already mentioned - dates back to the decolonization of the Dutch East Indies, when 200.000 ‘repatriated’ civilians and 100.000 demobilized troops were shipped to the Netherlands. Typical Asian-Dutch snacks dating from this period are the nasibal (a breadcrumbs-coated deep-fried rice ball), the bamischijf (a similarly coated and flavoured flat-shaped noodle snack), the loempia (a large-size spring roll) and saté (grilled or fried pieces of chicken or meat on a bamboo stick, to be eaten with satésaus (peanut sauce). In addition, the Plus supermarket offers some contemporary international snacks, such as chicken nuggets, hamburgers, and cheeseburgers. At the other end of the food chain, the supermarket has placed two containers at the parking lot where people can deposit their used deep-frying fats and -oils - the shop offers ten varieties - for recycling into biofuels.
esting to investigate ethnographically how memories of the indispensable fries that form the finale of any good Dutch children’s birthday party resonate in later fast food consumption. A second helpful observation of Barthes is that ‘food has a constant tendency to transform itself into situation’ (ibid.: 26, italics in original). One of his examples is the business lunch, a predefined setting and a taken-for-granted environment of foods, rooms, dress codes and topics of conversation. As an institution, Dutch fast food manifests itself in many ‘situations’, summer markets being but one example of a situation or setting where otherwise unnoticed collective practices and imaginations surrounding fast food may surface.

‘Camping site the Veluwe’

So far, my investigation of the braderie phenomenon has mainly taken place at the Veluwe, a sandy-soiled, forest-rich region in the center of the Netherlands and a major domestic holiday destination since tourism took off in the early twentieth century, especially for city dwellers from the western provinces. The Veluwe’s paramount attraction is ‘Nature’. With approximately a thousand square kilometers of ‘uninterrupted’ forests, sand-drifts and heathlands, the Veluwe is the largest nature area of the Netherlands. Annually, over two million people (most of them Dutch) spend a holiday in the area, while the Veluwe is the destination of 100 million day trips. Most tourists stay at camping sites in a caravan or tent, or at a modest holiday home. The presence of caravans, mobile or not, has taken massive forms: in some areas the camping sites are so close to each other that they form veritable caravan suburbs. As a tourist region, the Veluwe actually stretches beyond the forested ridge of diluvium sand hills into the adjacent parts of the bordering lower, agricultural area, the Gelderse Vallei (Gelderland Valley). This is not merely because of the large number of camping sites catering for Veluwe tourists, but also because ‘border’ villages tend to present themselves as part of the Veluwe.

The joys of the outdoors and nature are wrapped in the numerous attractions available (zoo’s, theme parks, museums), and organized activities. Next to (open air) art exhibitions, cultural performances and ‘excursions under the guidance of the forester,’ braderieën are predominant. There is virtually no village or town that does not organize one or more summer markets in July or August, the larger ones having a braderie every week or every other week. The two-weekly advertorial and recreational calendar RecreatieKrant de Veluwe of July 27, 2013, for instance, announces 37 braderieën to be held between July 27 and August 10, plus several theme markets with an entrance fee, but apart from that very much of a braderie character. A long-time Veluwe tourist myself, although always avoiding touristic hotspots, I could not prevent an anthropological interest in the braderie phenomenon from taking shape after I had started working on the Netherlands. First, I began to realize the abundance of braderieën, at the Veluwe as well as in other tourist regions. This made me wonder about possible similarities and differences within the braderie phenomenon. What kind of event was a braderie anyhow, in addition to being some kind of market?

So far, not much has been written on the Dutch braderie. Yet, for the researcher with a particular
interest in everyday life in the Netherlands the braderie certainly may offer interesting insights. Five years ago I started a modest investigation on Veluvian braderieën, each year visiting a few of them: being within biking distance from Kootwijk, the village where I spend my summer holidays, was the criterion to be included in the research.

On the Veluwe, the average braderie comprises several activities: a modest second-hand market of local inhabitants (often children), their merchandise exhibited on bed sheets spread on a stretch of pavement or green (kleedjesmarkt); one or two attractions for young children (a bouncy castle, a merry-go-round); a market with stalls run by local shop owners (the bookstore, the supermarket, the bakery), stalls run by, generally, local women with a modest, private enterprise, and stalls of braderie-traveling professional vendors. These vendors, selling items like bags and belts, cheap watches and jewelry, fake Crocs, sunglasses, plastic toys, T-shirts and summer fruits (cherries, strawberries), together with this one-and-the-same butcher selling ‘traditional, regional’ dried sausages, will appear time and again at most braderieën in the region. Another important feature is the folkloristic touch provided by demonstrations of old crafts (wooden shoe making; making bobbin lace; beekeeping, basket weaving), usually conducted by men and women in ‘traditional’ Dutch/Veluven costume. Folkloristic dance and music groups may also add to the atmosphere. In the town of Barneveld, with a braderie called ‘de Oud-Veluwse Markt’ (the Oldstyle Veluvian Market) held on eight Thursdays in July and August, the folkloristic touch is ensured by making traditional costume obligatory for all vendors.

Apart from this nostalgic presence of ‘Veluvian-light folklore’, a contemporary regional identity of a non-constructed kind is recognizable as well. A large portion of the Veluwe is part of the Dutch Bible Belt (refostrook), which gives the region a cultural flavor of its own. Many inhabitants belong to the stricter Calvinist denominations. For them, the Sunday rest is still an important value. The Sunday rest implies a taboo on ‘work’, which in practice entails a taboo on any activity that is audible or visible to others: typical weekend jobs like lawn mowing, car washing or DIY activities are heavily frowned upon. The roadside selling of farmhouse products, mainly eggs, often goes with a sign ‘noz’ (Niet Op Zondag, Not On Sundays). Commercial activities with a secular background catering to tourists never close down on Sundays, however: restaurants, zoo’s, museums are open, the nature reserve ‘De Hoge Veluwe’ organizes excursions like on any other day of the week, and theater and
music are performed at various theaters. But local retailers – usually the organizational force behind a braderie – will not work on a Sunday. Irrespective whether out of personal religious conviction or under the pressure of social control, work is impossible, which explains why braderieën never take place on Sundays.15

The Bible Belt culture of the Veluwe gives quite a few braderieën a distinctive Christian touch. The annual braderie of Uddel (4,000 inhabitants),16 for instance, hosted three Christian book stalls, one also selling, and playing, ‘church music’,17 a stall of Adullam, an organization to provide care ‘with a Christian identity’ to mentally disabled children,18 and three Christian charity stalls: support for prosecuted Christians in Belarus, the project ‘Christians for Israel’, and a mission project directed at ‘orphans in Zambia’.

Although not explicitly Christian, the neat style of dressing and overall appearance of many of the visitors reveals their local background. The men, short-haired and clean-shaven, wear long, light-colored trousers and
Upon leaving the supermarket, it starts to rain and we decide to have a beer at one of the four local *snackbars* and to try, inspired by our Plus excursion, two different brands of *kroket*. Seated on the terrace we have a good view on the other customers. It is clearly dinnertime (just before 6 PM): there is a constant coming and going of customers, most coming for take-away. The *snackbar* together with the adjacent cafe-restaurant offers a large choice of main dishes, some from foreign cuisines that have reached the Netherlands over the last decades. *Shoarma*, *döner*, *kebab* and *falafel* are presently firmly incorporated into the Dutch snack culture, albeit often in specialized shops with a *snackbar* character, especially in the urban areas. In an - almost entirely 'white' - countryside village like Harskamp, such dishes may appear as an extension of the regular *snackbar* menu. However, the most recent urban snack invention, *kapsalon* (literally: hairdresser's saloon), a sizeable compilation of *patat*, *shoarma*, cheese, salad, and sauces, has not made its way to Harskamp, yet.\(^{19}\)

At the table next to ours, a family of parents and three young children, clearly recognizable as local, has a meal of *patat* with mayonnaise and each a *frikandel* or *kroket*. Before beginning to eat, they say an evening prayer, the man taking off his cap, and that of the little boy. At another table, an elderly tourist couple orders *patat*, the man with a *berenhap pinda* ('bear chunk peanut', a deep-fried sliced meatball on a bamboo stick, the slices interlaced with a sliced onion, the whole topped with peanut sauce). Without exception, the other customers on the terrace have also chosen *patat*, most of them with an extra snack. At a certain moment I recognize several earlier customers passing by, biking in the direction of the summer market, apparently having finished their take-away meals. After a while, the rain stops and we decide to leave for the market too.
ironed shirts, mostly with a blocked or striped pattern in blue or red shades. Almost without exception, the women appear in calf-long skirts, or – the younger ones, including little girls – somewhat shorter skirts (mainly blue or red) over three-quarter, white leggings. Turquoise, mint green and pink are other popular colors. A large number of forty-plus women wear their (greyish) hair in a knot, sometimes made up from a braid, a hairstyle that elsewhere in the Netherlands is regarded as old-fashioned. The so-called orgelpijpjes (literally ‘little organ pipes’) are another characteristic presence: families with four or more children arranged to age and length, brothers in the same trousers and shirts, sisters in the same skirts or dresses, their hair in braids or tails. The whole appearance strongly contrasts with most tourists’ summer outfits of shorts, undershirts, uncovered shoulders, and sunglasses. They are dressed like any person in a non-Calvinist area in the Netherlands on a summer day in leisure time.

The above intermezzo gives a glimpse of the snackbar as a distinctive and structuring element within Dutch fast food culture. Although the concept of the snackbar was introduced from the United States, over the course of time it has become truly localized. The snackbar may best be described as a modest counter (without seats) or cafeteria (with a few seats) selling patat, kroket and frikandel as a core business, together with other, later introduced deep-fried snacks. Characteristic is the display of the bleak, unfried snacks under the counter annex showcase. Sometimes, at larger railway stations and in urban entertainment centers in particular, the snackbar includes a so-called automatiek (automat). The essential part of the automatiek is de muur (‘the wall’), an inner or outer wall of the snackbar, fitted with a grid of about a hundred or more rectangular, electrically heated and lighted compartments with glass hatches. The grid is vertically divided in accordance with the various deep-fried snacks on offer. After inserting an amount of money into a slot in the column of his choice, the customer can open one single hatch, to obtain the desired snack without any direct interference of an attendant. Patat is never sold this way since it has to be consumed immediately upon frying. The automatiek reached its high point in the 1960s and 1970s (Van Otterloo 1991; Van Otterloo and De la Bruhèze 2003), but still is characteristic for Dutch fast food culture. The automatiek added the expression ‘eating from the wall’ (uit de muur eten) to Dutch vocabulary.20

It is no exaggeration to state that there is virtually no place in the Netherlands – village, town or city – without one or more snackbars. Of course, McDonalds, KFC and other international fast food restaurants are part of Dutch fast food culture too.21 Their presence, though, (236 McDonalds, 40 kfc s at the moment of writing) is of a different nature than that of the thousands of modest (mainly individually owned) snackbars and cafeterias that give the Dutch fast food scape a flavor of its own. The crucial difference is that most international fast food restaurants have settled in urban shopping and entertainment centers and along high roads, while the snackbar is always around the corner.22

From snack to food

For an understanding of how Dutch fast food acquired its position as an apparently unassailable, ‘institution’, I will make a short digression on the advance of Dutch
fast food culture in the twentieth century, addressing its evolvement from outdoor snack to an integral part of the daily meal at home, too. Like other segments of convenience food – ready-to-eat foods that only need unwrapping or heating – snack food has become normal food, which can be bought in the supermarket as just any other food product. For this section, I will rely in particular on the joined historical work of Adri A. de la Bruhèze and Anneke H. van Otterloo.

According to De la Bruhèze and Van Otterloo (2003), Dutch snack culture evolved out of two interrelated developments: the expanding popularity of patat and the steadily increasing habit of ‘eating out’, both developments that began in the 1950s. Yet, in its early days, snack consumption predated upon eating out in restaurants, something that most Dutch rarely did before the 1960s. Eating a snack outdoors – especially a kroket, but also a sandwich, soup or potato salad – became a common habit of city dwellers in the course of the 1920s. However, Dutch snack culture really took off with the national ‘discovery’ of patates frites. Traditionally a Belgian snack, the southern part of the Netherlands had already become acquainted with French fries in the 1930s. It was, however, not before the 1950s that patat conquered also the North, first disseminated via fairs and markets, and next by ice-cream shops who found in the sale of French fries compensation for the decline in ice-cream turnovers during winter. In a 1955 issue of the specialist magazine De Conservator, the owner of an ice-cream annex French fries shop in Amsterdam described how in a few years only French fries had become more important to his business than ice cream, even during the summer season. In addition, he mentioned that selling fries, bringing in ever more new customers in general, in its turn increased the ice cream turnover during the winter season (Van Otterloo and De la Bruhèze 2003: 145). A new youth culture that was taking shape was another factor in the discovery of patat: the snack became a ‘craze’ in the 1950s and 1960s: ‘Cafeterias became meeting points for youngsters, in public eyes chiefly nozems (rowdies), whose behavior was frowned upon by the public authorities’ (De la Bruhèze and Van Otterloo 2003: 325). Yet, irrespective this ‘countercultural’ connotation, snack food would soon become part of many people’s everyday diet: ‘the combination of cheap patates frites and a croquette or frikadel was increasingly perceived as food that could replace one of the daily three meals’ (ibid.).

The rise of snacks, patat in particular, went together with the development of a high-tech fast food industry in the Netherlands, which in its turn further influenced the Dutch fast food culture. De la Bruhèze and Van Otterloo (2003) point at the significance of new techniques in this respect. Cooling and freezing enabled a large-scale production and long-lasting stocks. Freezers, cooled counters and thermostat-controlled deep-fryers became standard equipment, also at small-scale enterprises like the snackbar. Standardization and industrialization of the snack production made the products convenient enough to reach other establishments as well, like canteens, chain store lunchrooms and small restaurants. De la Bruhèze and Van Otterloo write that (corporate) canteens – at work as well as at sport clubs – played a particularly important role as the industry’s ‘test markets’ for new snack products. In the context of the present-day concern with the ‘obesity epidemic’, this factual observation becomes more than ironic.
The Harskamp _braderie_ is so modest and local that it is not listed in the _RekreatieKrant_ calendar. Only several billboards in the village have announced the event. Nevertheless, the visiting public is a mixture of locals and tourists, since Harskamp has several large camping sites. The _braderie_ has no stalls selling bags, belts or Crocs, but the dried-sausages vendor is present, as is a cherry stand. Most stalls are run by local shops - the Plus supermarket, the bakery, the drugstore, the bicycle shop - and there are also a few women with private enterprises. With a _kleedjesmarkt_, a bouncy castle, the lottery of the local brass band, a sweets stall and a _patat_ stand, the Harskamp summer market is a _braderie_ in its own right. The _patat_ stand, using household deep-frying equipment, is barely able to meet the demand. At the tables provided, strolling around, or seated behind their stalls, everywhere people are enjoying their portion of fries. Given the combination of time (dinner time) and situation (_braderie_), another choice is apparently hardly possible.
What images, dreams, tastes, choices and values are part of Dutch fast food as an institution? The empirical substance of this essay is an insufficient base even to begin formulating an answer to this question. As a possible topic of research ‘fast food’ came to me as a spinoff of my interest in Dutch summer markets. With this brief exploration I have tried to give some empirical substantiation to my perception of Dutch fast food as an institution that deserves serious attention when trying to understand everyday life in the Netherlands. Questioning the unnoticed obviousness of *patat* (as a pars pro toto for Dutch fast food snacks) as convenience food from the supermarket, as a quick outdoor snack when on the move or as the indispensable accompaniment of many different leisure activities, sport events, fancy fairs, festivals, theme parks, the beach, spending an evening out, or a *braderie*, helps to bring out implicit connotations and meanings.

Returning to Barthes idea of food signifying the situation, we might tentatively say that *patat* in its festive everydayness embodies a conviviality that apparently is a vital value in Dutch everyday life.

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**Notes**

1. As I found out when writing this essay, this idiomatic expression has been used as a title before by Ileen Montijn (1990). However Montijn is writing about special sweets, cookies and chocolates handed out at specific festivities.
2. The *bitterbal* – originally eaten with a *bittertje*, a bitter herbal spirit, also remembered in the outdated Dutch expression *bitteruurtje* (‘bitter hour’) for ‘cocktail time’ – is usually served in cafes with alcoholic drinks. *Bitterballen* are a popular snack at receptions and parties, too.
3. The word *braderie* has been borrowed from French twice. First in the Middle Ages and, after a long period of disuse, again in the twentieth century. In the 1950s still regarded as a Southern Netherlands word, it eventually became standard Dutch (see www.etymologiebank.nl), an indication of the increasing popularity of the *braderie* all over the country.
4. Further exceptions are herring and fried fish at the larger markets, and occasionally *oliebollen* sold for a charity. The *oliebol* is a sweet, deep-fried, globular doughnut, which is associated with New Year’s Eve and fancy fairs in particular.
5. For the Netherlands, see for instance Van Otterloo and Van Ogrop 1989.
6. It remains unclear whether and to what extent Dutch from an, for instance, Afro-Surinamese, Moroccan or Turkish background do appreciate typical Dutch snacks.
8. When ordered in a *snackbar* a *boerenfriet* consists of fries with fried mushrooms, onions and bacon on top.
9. Repatriation is a contested term since many had never been *in patria* before.
10. Their arrival gave an impetus to the development of the so-called ‘Chinese-Indonesian restaurant’, restaurants that serve Chinese and Indonesian dishes, adapted to the Dutch taste.
The nationwide success of these restaurants resulted in its turn in the development of the mentioned Asia-inspired snacks (De la Bruhèze and Van Otterloo 2003:325).

11 Although the hamburger is very common these days, it took the Dutch long to learn to appreciate it. According to De la Bruhèze and Van Otterloo (2003: 327), people initially preferred their own kroketten, frikandellen and the grilled half chicken (the latter added to the snack menu in the 1970s, but by now in decline).

12 These containers are a recent development. In the Netherlands, the disposal of used deep-frying fats is a main cause of clogging of the sewerage system.

13 In contrast, its historical predecessors, the medieval, sixteenth and seventeenth century annual markets, fairs and feasts are a classical theme in folklore studies.

14 Most of these women are engaged in ‘Direct Sale’, the direct (i.e. person-to-person) marketing and selling of products from a pyramid-structured sales organization, usually cleaning agents, herbal health products or cosmetics. Other women sell handmade presents, usually intended for bridal and baby showers or other life cycle celebrations. Direct Sale is a widespread, hardly studied phenomenon, the involvement of women in particular – that usually remains hidden in private rooms, but surfaces at braderieën. There is no space in this essay to address the topic more fully.

15 For an anthropological study of the role of religion in a Dutch Bible Belt community, see Verrips (2005).


17 This was the stall of Christian Bookstore De Pelgrim (The Pilgrim) in IJsselmuiden (www.depelgrim.nl). IJsselmuiden is not a Veluvian town, but is also part of the Bible Belt. The presence of this bookstore at this local fair demonstrates the cultural distinctiveness of the Bible Belt within the Netherlands and, for that matter, within ‘Dutch culture’.

18 See www.adullamzorg.nl

19 See Van de Laar (2012) for an account on the invention of the kapsalon in the city of Rotterdam and how since then (around 2005) the snack has become popular throughout the Netherlands and even abroad. According to Van de Laar, the snack deserves the status of ‘Rotterdam heritage’.

20 See Van Otterloo (1991) for a more elaborate description and contextualization of the automatiek in Dutch snack culture.

21 To cater to the Dutch taste McDonalds introduced the McKroket, a standard McDonalds bun with a croquette in the shape of a hamburger.

22 The public of international fast food chain branches in urban areas is much less one-dimensional ‘white’ than that of the branches in rural areas.

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