

‘From Involvement to Influence’

*A research on highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants
living in the Netherlands*

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Radboud University Nijmegen



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Master thesis Human Geographies

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Nijmegen, November 2011

*‘Wie huis en haard verlaat, is niet meer dezelfde.’*¹

[Kader Abdollah, De Kraai, p. 37]

¹ ‘Who leaves hearth and home, will never be the same.’ (Translated by the author, AS)

Preface

In front of you lies my thesis 'From involvement to influence – a research on highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants living in the Netherlands'. This thesis forms the closure of the Master specialisation *Globalisation, Migration and Development* of Human Geography which I attended at the Radboud University Nijmegen. Apart from all useful knowledge gathered during this Master, it provided me with insights and a way of thinking that formed me as a person. Conducting this research was a valuable process for me, since it helped me to figure out where my interests lie and how I would like to apply these in my future career.

Although I conducted this research independently, writing this thesis would not have been possible without the support of many. I want to take this opportunity to mention some people who deserve a thank you. A first thanks is for my supervisor Jackie van de Walle, who guided me through the process from the first vague research plans to the final thesis as presented here.

Then I would like to thank COS Gelderland that offered me the opportunity to carry out this research and at the same time gave me the possibility to gain work experience, which has been very valuable for me personally. In particular, two dear COS-colleagues deserve a special thank you. Moniek, who enthusiastically read every piece of text I sent to her and provided it with useful insights and well-considered feedback. Qader, who believed in the importance of this research from the very beginning and who helped me giving direction to the exact content of the study. Moreover, the migrants that are central in this study all went through an acculturation process. Better than any book or scientific theory, he provided me with insights of what it means when your roots are disrupted from the soil they have grown in and have to be re-established in a completely new and unknown environment.

I also owe thanks to the representatives of the development organisations who found the possibility to schedule me in their agendas, despite these uncertain and busy times of cutbacks and changes in the sector as a whole. Last but not least, the biggest thank you is for the twelve persons who generously allowed me some of their precious time. As one thing became evident, it was that time is a very valuable asset in order to meet all demands as a Dutch citizen, as a husband, wife, father, mother, friend and employer and at the same time create room to express their involvement with people in their home country. I am grateful that they trusted me with their stories and gave me such a frank look into their lives.

Before I started this Master specialisation, I had an education in Anthropology and International Development Studies, which provided me with some due experience for this research. One of the things I was taught during this education, was the importance of 'mirror making'. That is exactly what I aimed at with this research. I tried to 'unpack' the backpack that the migrants in this study brought along on their journey to the Netherlands and unravel the memories, experiences, hopes, fears and dreams that are in it. By doing so I hope that the present study holds up a mirror to society and succeeded in painting a picture of this valuable, but underexposed group of migrants.

Executive summary (In Dutch)

Deze Master thesis is uitgevoerd als onderdeel van de Masterspecialisatie '*Globalisaton, Migration and Development*' en tevens het eindproduct van een onderzoeksstage bij COS Gelderland, Centrum voor Internationale Samenwerking.

Het besef dat migranten een serieuze speler zijn binnen ontwikkelingssamenwerking waar rekening mee moet worden gehouden, is de laatste jaren sterk gegroeid. Hun geldelijke overmakingen naar landen van herkomst overstijgen de het bedrag aan ODA (*Offical Development Assistance*) en hun betrokkenheid in transnationale netwerken verschaft hen toegang die traditionele actoren binnen de sector niet hebben.

Tallose onderzoeken zijn gewijd aan het thema migratie en ontwikkeling, maar vaak ontbreekt het perspectief van de migrant. Precies dat perspectief staat centraal in dit onderzoek: wat is de visie van de migrant op zijn of haar rol in en betekenis voor ontwikkelingssamenwerking en wat betekent betrokkenheid bij ontwikkelingssamenwerking voor de migrant? De doelgroep van dit onderzoek betreft hoger opgeleide migranten uit sub-Sahara Afrika. Over deze doelgroep is nauwelijks informatie beschikbaar, terwijl het aantal migranten uit sub-Sahara Afrika toeneemt. Hun hoge opleiding betekent dat deze migranten intellectueel kapitaal met zich meebrengen naar Nederland wat hen tot een veelbelovende groep migranten maakt.

De hoofdvraag van dit onderzoek luidde als volgt: hoe ziet de maatschappelijke positie van hoogopgeleide migranten uit sub-Sahara Afrika in hun land van aankomst er uit en hoe wordt hun intellectueel kapitaal ingezet voor de ontwikkeling van landen van herkomst? Het doel van dit onderzoek was tweeledig: enerzijds beoogde het deze onderbelichte groep migranten zichtbaar te maken. Daarnaast had het onderzoek tot doel een eerste inzicht te verschaffen in de relatie tussen de maatschappelijke positie van de migranten *hier* en hun betrokkenheid bij landen van herkomst *daar*.

Het hart van dit kwalitatieve onderzoek werd gevormd door case studies. Door middel van semi-gestructureerde diepte-interviews werden de verhalen van twaalf migranten opgetekend en geanalyseerd. Daarnaast is er gesproken met vertegenwoordigers van vier Nederlandse ontwikkelingsorganisaties, te weten Cordaid, ICCO/Kerk in actie, Oxfam Novib en Wilde Ganzen, om zo het verhaal van de migranten in een breder perspectief te plaatsen.

Conclusies

Migranten in deze studie hebben, vrijwillig of onvrijwillig, op een dag het land verlaten waar zij zijn opgegroeid en zijn in Nederland beland waar zijn een acculturatieproces ondergingen. Gebaseerd op het Acculturatie Framework van Berry (1997a & 1997b) is dit proces nader bekeken om zo inzicht te verkrijgen in hun maatschappelijke positie.

Hoe het acculturatieproces wordt beleefd, verschilt sterk per individu. Een belangrijk onderscheid dat steeds terugkeert, is dat tussen migranten en vluchtelingen. Hun uitgangsposities van hun verblijf in Nederland zijn totaal verschillend. Voor vluchtelingen geldt dan hun banden in het land van herkomst abrupt worden losgesneden en bij vertrek hadden ze geen idee waar van hun eindbestemming, met als gevolg dat zij totaal onvoorbereid in Nederland belandden.

Voor deze groep hoogopgeleide migranten geldt dat met name de factor *status* een belangrijke rol speelt. De meeste migranten hebben te maken gehad met statusverlies na aankomst in Nederland. Een belangrijke ooraak hiervoor is het ontbreken van (in Nederland geldige) diploma's. Ondanks dat het acculturatie proces gepaard gaat met stress en frustratie, valt het op dat het hier

een groep migranten betreft die volop meedoet in de samenleving en die er in is geslaagd zich een goede positie te verwerven.

Kijkend naar hun betrokkenheid bij ontwikkelingssamenwerking, kan worden gesteld dat de wens om invloed uit te oefenen op de ontwikkeling van landen van herkomst alom aanwezig is. Dit uit zich op allerlei verschillende wijzen: respondenten sturen geld en ontplooien via Particuliere Initiatieven (PIs), Non-gouvernementele Organisaties (NGOs) en kleine bedrijfjes activiteiten op het gebied van ontwikkelingssamenwerking. Wat opvalt, is dat deze activiteiten van een hoog niveau zijn, gebaseerd op een weldoordachte visie met oog voor de lange termijn en zo het niveau van amateurisme ver overstijgen. Bovendien beperken de activiteiten zich niet tot hun land van herkomst, maar zijn grensoverschrijdend.

Wat betreft het verband tussen de positie van de migranten in Nederland en hun activiteiten gericht op landen van herkomst, komt heel duidelijk het beeld naar voren van een positieve relatie. Een zekere mate van integratie in Nederland bevordert en vergemakkelijkt het uitvoeren van ontwikkelingsactiviteiten. Maar zeker zo belangrijk is het feit dat de mogelijkheid invloed aan te wenden voor ontwikkeling van landen van herkomst de positie van de migranten hier bevordert. Er is geenszins sprake van een zero-sum game waarbij activiteiten gericht op landen van herkomst ten koste zouden gaan van hun positie in Nederland, zoals wordt voorgedaan in huidige maatschappelijke discussies. In plaats daarvan, verankert de betrokkenheid *daar* hun positie *hier*; de migranten raken betrokken in netwerken hier en voelen zich nuttig wat bijdraagt aan hun welzijn hier. Er lijkt dus eerder sprake te zijn van een win-win situatie.

Aanbevelingen

- Er zou meer aandacht komen voor ‘sense of belonging’ in discussies rond acculturatie en integratie van migranten. Het hebben van een ‘sense of belonging’ is essentieel voor het verzekeren van een goede positie van migranten in de Nederlandse samenleving. Het acculturatieproces van migranten wordt echter vaak gezien als iets wat bij de migrant zelf ligt, terwijl de rol van de ontvangende samenleving niet moet worden onderschat. Naast hun wens om betrokken te zijn en te blijven bij landen van herkomst, is het gevoel welkom te zijn en van waarde te zijn voor de ontvangende samenleving minstens zo belangrijk.
- Voordat betrokkenheid van migranten kan worden omgezet naar invloed binnen ontwikkelingsorganisaties, moeten ontwikkelingsorganisaties eerst *intern* een dialoog aangaan over hoe zij zich verhouden tot migranten in het Noorden die invloed willen uitoefenen op wat gebeurt in het Zuiden. Als gevolg hebben zij geen antwoord op de vraag wat migranten kunnen betekenen voor hun organisaties. Deze interne dialoog zou gevolgd moeten worden door een externe dialoog *met* (in plaats van *over*) migranten om zo wederzijdse verwachtingen op elkaar af te stemmen.
- Ook de migranten moeten bij zichzelf te rade gaan en zich afvragen waar hun inspanningen het meeste effect opleveren: op welke manier is de kans op daadwerkelijke invloed het grootst? Aangezien een van de sterke punten van migranten het feit is dat ze signaleren van problemen in landen van herkomst, is lobbyen in dit opzicht een veelbelovend en weinig onderzocht terrein./
- Er is verder onderzoek nodig naar het vormgeven van diversiteitsbeleid binnen de sector van ontwikkelingssamenwerking. Inspelen op het aantal werknemers met een migrantenachtergrond alleen is niet voldoende. Migrant zoals die in deze studie brengen nieuwe netwerken en nieuwe impulsen met zich mee. Voor ontwikkelingsorganisaties

betekent dit dat ze zich moeten afvragen hoe ze dit kunnen inlijven in hun organisaties op zo'n manier dat het ingezet kan worden voor effectievere hulp. Wellicht vraagt dit om een andere manier van werken en een aanpassing van bestaande instrumenten.

Huidig beleid en actuele politieke en maatschappelijke discussies benadrukken migratie als iets wat problemen oplevert en wat zoveel mogelijk ingeperkt zou moeten worden. Vanuit dit perspectief worden migranten graag als geïntegreerde (of geassimileerde) Nederlandse burgers en gaat ervan uit dat een focus op landen van herkomst dit belemmert. Echter, migratiestromen zullen blijven voortduren en migranten zullen altijd betrokken zijn bij waar zij vandaag komen. Voor hen is het aanwenden van hun capaciteiten en talenten voor ontwikkeling van landen van herkomst een manier om te waken over hun wortels. Het uitgangspunt in beleid en discussie zou dan ook moeten verplaatsen van problemen en bedreigingen naar de mogelijke *kansen* die deze veelbelovende migranten bieden.

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1. Introduction

Attention for the relation between migration and development is increasing: does migration encourage development of countries of origin or hinder such development (Castles & Miller, 2009)? Despite that the precise relation between migration and development is complex and certainly not unambiguous, the realisation that migrants can be a valuable actor for development of countries of origin gets across to all different levels of policy makers; from international organisations like the World Bank, to national governments of both home and host countries and traditional development organisations.

A question that is asked less often is what does being involved in development cooperation mean to migrants themselves? Can a relation be found between being involved in the home country and their functioning in the country of destination? Therefore, this research puts the perspective of the migrant in the centre and zooms in on a relatively unknown group of migrants: highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants living in the Netherlands. The central research question then is: *What does the social position of highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants look like in their country of destination and how is their intellectual capital applied for development cooperation regarding countries of origin?* This introductory chapter considers the role of migrants in development cooperation (section 1.1) and the gap between good intentions in this respect and practice (section 1.2). Section 1.3 then elaborates on the target group of this research and finally section 1.4 discusses the goal and relevance of the present study. Finally, section 1.5 presents the outline of this thesis.

1.1 The migrant as valuable actor in development cooperation

We live in a world in which distances become shorter and time shrinks. This phenomenon of time-space compression is one of the most mentioned features of our globalisation era (Schech & Haggis, 2000). Due to developments that go hand in hand with this globalisation, people travel more and over larger distances: being mobile has become easier. Consequently, a central dynamic within globalisation is international migration. Some even speak of the 'age of migration' (Castles & Miller, 2009). Momentous events around the world increasingly concern international migration and movements involve all regions of the world. However, more frequent and longer-distance movement does not mean that the connection between the migrant and its roots declines.

In fact, the opposite seems to be true, as another feature of globalisation is the emergence of transnational communities. What common people have done in response to this globalisation process is creating communities that sit astride political borders and that are 'neither here nor there', but in both places simultaneously (Portes, 1996). Many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders. Migrants have always been connected to their country of origin and countries in which other people of their community live, but thanks to the internet, mobile phones and e-mail these diaspora communities maintain stronger ties than ever (Gowricharn, 2010).

This transnational involvement can be expressed in many ways. Examples are migrant entrepreneurs investing in both countries of origin and destination, migrants remitting money to support people in their home countries, migrants who are politically active for their home country or apply their capacities for institutions back home (Gowricharn, 2010). As a result, the awareness by both home and host societies that migrants in 'the North' can be a huge potential for development of countries in 'the South' is rising.

Regarding home countries, the discovery of the economic benefits of migration by means of financial remittances has been important. Financial remittances are the flows of money sent from

countries of destination to countries of origin (Faist, 2008). Since they can have a positive effect on household's incomes, contribute to less poverty and increase the foreign currencies of poor countries, migrants are perceived to play a meaningful role in poverty reduction. This idea was given a boost especially since the publication of the World Development Report 2003 (World Bank, 2003), which states that the amount of financial remittances to home countries exceeds the total amount of official development assistance (ODA). Remittances transferred to developing countries have increased sharply over recent years. Despite the economic crisis they are expected to reach \$375 billion in 2012 and \$404 billion by 2013 (Mohapatra et al., 2011).

Besides sending money, migrants can also contribute to socio-economic or political development of home countries by so-called social remittances: the transfers of ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital from receiving- to sending-country communities (Levitt, 1998). Although the effects of these financial and human capital transfers from North to South are disputed (e.g. De Haan, 2006), they are an important element in the recognition of migrants as a valuable development actor.

At the same time, in countries of destination the awareness that migrants can have specific knowledge and expertise on their regions of origin and access to networks and resources that other traditional development actors have not, gave rise to the interest in migrants as partner in development cooperation (Gowricharn, 2010). In the Netherlands, a traditional immigration country, this topic has been high on the agenda's of traditional Dutch development organisations for years. For example, in 2003 Cordaid, Oikos and SMS started their Migration and Development project.² This project aimed at connecting migrants with organisations, scientists, entrepreneurs and policy makers from the development sector in order to exchange knowledge and experience concerning both themes. In the final conference of this project in 2009, Zeki Shehu, former director of SMS, stated that we can speak of a 'civil society of migrants' in the Netherlands.³ Migrants increasingly join forces to devote their efforts to the development of their country of origin and have exceeded the traditional image of amateurs engaged in small family projects.

The Dutch government realises that efforts of migrants regarding development cooperation become more professional as well. This vision can be found in the Policy Memorandum 'International Migration and Development 2008' of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFa, 2008). The Ministry wants to apply knowledge and experience of migrants more effectively for poverty reduction in development countries and sees its task as creating favourable economic and political contexts that are necessary to stimulate the development opportunities that migration can bring. Therefore, they formulated six policy priorities, that form the Migration and Development Programme (see Appendix 1). For instance, the government wants to give migrants a temporary function as experts in their country of origin, contributing to development or reconstruction. Besides, in the Netherlands, migrant organisations should be involved more closely when discussing and carrying out policy concerning development cooperation.

Despite good intentions of policy makers at all different levels to involve migrants as actor in the sector of development cooperation and the wish to let them become equal partners, it is essential to put the migrant into the centre of interest. Research that has the migrant's view as point of departure is rare. How do they see this role themselves? Are they involved in development cooperation yet? And what do their ambitions on this domain look like?

² SMS is the Dutch abbreviation of 'Stichting Mondiale Samenleving', translated as Global Society Foundation, and was declared bankrupt in August 2011.

³ Conference '*The changing role of migrants in development*'. Attended in The Hague, 18 December 2009.

1.2 The gap between paper and practice

From a policy perspective attention for the migration-development link is increasing. The international community, the national government and traditional Dutch development organisations view migrants as important actors in development cooperation. However, it is important to consider how these intentions on paper work out in actual practice.

During the conference '*The changing role of migrants in development*' Alexander Kohnstamm (director of Partos) called migrants 'the best kept secret' of development cooperation.⁴ Knowledge and experience is there, but how to apply it productively is a question the branch struggles with. For instance, migrants are hardly represented in (boards of) development organisations. Moreover, in memoranda that followed on the Policy Memorandum 'International Migration and Development' (MoFA, 2008), attention for the added value of migrants in development cooperation seems to drop out of the picture. In the Policy Memorandum of 2009 that set the framework of the new co-financing system, 'MFS 2.0', no mentioning could be found that the government wants to cooperate with migrant organisations at all (MoFA, 2009).⁵ The possible added value of migrants and the role migrant organisations can play with regard to the Dutch sector of development cooperation remains underexposed and there is no attention for a distinction between migrant organisations and traditional development organisations in criteria they have to live up to concerning MFS 2.0. Actually, in the final subsidy round of MFS 2.0 no migrant organisations were included at all. For the migrants involved in the preceding policy dialogue, this was a huge disappointment.⁶

This brings us to the next question, namely if the ambition to contribute to development of their home country is present, what are in the perception of migrants their possibilities to convert these ambitions in actual deeds? Attention should be paid to obstacles that migrants face in applying their capacities for development cooperation. One can think of practical barriers, such as finding their way through the Dutch subsidy system. More severe barriers are those when migrants have a feeling of underestimation. In the research of Van Naerssen et al. (2006) migrants mentioned that they did not feel taken seriously and are not seen as full partners in development cooperation. In this way, their influence in development cooperation will stay limited.

1.3 The target group

This research focuses on highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants. Africa is the continent that poses the biggest development challenges and where most work still needs to be done. Hence, we need those migrants who can build bridges between their countries of origin and destination; people who are specialists by experience, have local knowledge and are part of networks that are inaccessible for traditional development actors.

By focusing specifically on *sub-Saharan* Africa, Moroccan migrants are excluded from this research. Together with Antillean, Surinamese and Turkish, they form the four 'classical migrant groups', that receive a lot of attention. Figures of the Central Statistical Office (CSO) show that in the beginning of 2011 there were over 180.000 sub-Saharan African migrants living in the Netherlands.^{7 8}

⁴ Conference '*The changing role of migrants in development*'. Attended in The Hague, 18 December 2009.

⁵ MFS 2.0. is the Dutch abbreviation of 'Medefinancieringsstelsel 2.0', translated as Co-financing System. MFS 2.0 is the subsidy framework for the period 2011-2015 that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed to contribute to poverty reduction by means of the (re)construction and strengthening of the civil society in the South.

⁶ Expressed by migrants taking part in the debate '*Politics without borders: migrants inspire the new politics*'. Attended in Amsterdam, 27 Mei 2010.

⁷ Central Statistical Office (CSO) is the abbreviation used to refer to the Dutch *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* (CBS).

⁸ Figures as they were valid on 1 January 2011. Source: CSO (1), retrieved from www.cbs.nl (accessed 9 September 2011).

Compared to figures from 2000, this means an increase of 48%. For comparison, the number of Moroccan migrants increased with 36% and that of Turkish migrants with 26%. The expectation is that the number of sub-Saharan migrants will keep on growing with approximately 8,000 persons a year, partly because of natural growth of the population and partly because of unpredictable conflicts arising in sub-Saharan Africa (Van Heelsum, 2005). Despite this increasing number of sub-Saharan African migrants, they are rarely subject of research, publications and media coverage. Data that is known about them, can usually be found lumped together in a 'rest-category'.

A second characteristic of the target group is that they are highly-educated. They distinguish themselves from other migrants, because they bring with them intellectual capital that can be applied for the development practice. By narrowing down the target group in this way, I expect to reach these migrants, who have insight in and knowledge on local (development) structures. I expect them to do more than 'just' remitting money and in this way I hope to reach people that can make a change.

Of course, not every migrant that fits in with this target group is per definition a good development actor. There are pitfalls as well. Social networks and knowledge of different cultures can be useful, but it can also constrain development, since strong links and obligations may produce inefficiencies. Besides, local knowledge and relations cannot always make up for the lack of professional and technical skills (Smith & van Naerssen, 2009). Moreover, after migrants have left their country, there can be changes in the home country that migrants are less aware of than local people. In this way they can become virtual outsiders (Smith & van Naerssen). And when political influence is used to (financially) support resistance movements or the supply of armies for example, their contribution can even become controversial (Nyberg-Sorensen et al., 2002). However, by not (sufficiently) involving this group in development cooperation, the Dutch sector of development cooperation would leave a great potential unused. That is why it is extremely important that the potential that is present among these migrants becomes evident and is used in an effective way that contributes to the development of their countries.

Previous research found that the positive contribution that migrants can make to development of their countries of origin strongly depends on the degree of success they enjoy in the country of destination (Koser, 2007). This means that next to their activities regarding home countries, the social position of the target group in the destination country should receive attention as well.

Media coverage frequently reports on the marginal position of highly-educated immigrants in the Dutch society: *'Immigrants often work below their level'*⁹; *'Give Ahmed a job on his level'*; *'The degree certificate, but not the job: immigrants work below their educational level'*; *'Afghan middle class becomes Dutch subclass'*; *'Immigrant graduates miss the boat'*; *'Knowledge refugee does not count'*. These are just a few examples showing that highly-educated immigrants are often forced to work below their level. Furthermore, figures of the CSO show that their average occupational level is considerably lower than that of natives. Non-Western migrants with an academic degree have an average occupational level of 3.8, in case of natives this is 4.5 (based on a 5-point scale).¹⁰

⁹ Titles of the articles are translated by the author [AS]. Respectively: *'Allochtonen werken vaak onder hun niveau'* (Trouw, 20 December 2004, accessed 8 May 2011); *'Geef Ahmed een baan op niveau'* (Volkskrant, 27 August 2005, accessed 8 May 2011); *'Wel de bul, maar niet de baan: allochtonen werken op lager niveau dan hun opleiding'* (Personeelsnet, 19 February 2007, accessed 8 May 2011); *'Afghaanse middenklasse wordt Nederlandse onderklasse'* (Wereldjournalisten, 20 September 2007, accessed 8 May 2011); *'Allochtonen afgestudeerden missen de boot'* (NOS, 30 July 2010, accessed 8 May 2011).; *'Kenniss vluchteling telt niet mee'* (Trouw, 12 August 2011, accessed 15 August).

¹⁰ The Central Statistical Office classifies jobs based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (basic level) to 5 (academic level). So, the higher the number, the higher the occupational level.

As we discussed before, the contradiction between paper and practice in recognising the value of migrants for development cooperation in countries of departure, it seems that their intellectual capital in their country of destination cannot fully flourish either. Concerning the finding that the migrants' position in the country of destination is intrinsically linked to the contribution he or she can make to the home country, this could be problematic. This makes the social position of these migrants in the Dutch society starting point and an indispensable part of this research.

1.4 Goal and relevance

Taken all together, the central question in this research is: *What does the social position of highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants look like in their country of destination, the Netherlands, and how is their intellectual capital applied for development cooperation regarding countries of origin?* Based on the discussions above, three sub-questions were formulated in order to answer the central question:

1. What does the social position of highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants in the Dutch society looks like?
2. In what way are highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants involved in development cooperation and what are their possibilities to apply their intellectual capital for the development practice?
3. What relation can be found between these migrants' involvement in development cooperation regarding home countries and their social position in the destination country?

The most important concepts stemming from these questions are operationalised in chapter three, that deals with the research approach.

The goal of this research then is two-fold. Considering the limited knowledge on the target group, this research aimed to bring the story of this invisible, but valuable group of migrants to the surface by putting the migrants themselves in the centre of interest. By reviewing *their* perspective on their position in society and the way they can apply their intellectual capital for the sake of development cooperation, the research should contribute to decreasing the existing knowledge gap. Besides providing insight in backgrounds of the target group, this research aimed at making a first attempt to unravel the interplay between the position of the migrants under study *here* and their involvement *there*: what can they mean for development cooperation and what can being involved in the development of countries of origin mean to them?

Resulting from the research goal as pointed out above, this research is practice oriented and not so much occupied with theory testing or developing. The scientific relevance of this study can be found in the fact that it contributes to narrowing down the existing knowledge gap on African migrants in general, and more specifically regarding highly educated Africans and their ambitions concerning development cooperation. By highlighting the position, ambitions and potentials of these migrants, this research makes this under exposed group visible. Second, it responds to another deficiency of current scientific research: the lack of the perspective of *the migrants themselves*. As discussed above, good intentions on paper do not always match with the implementation in reality. Since current policy debates and papers are characterised by talking *about* migrants, instead of actual involving them in the dialogue, this research attempted to bring up their voices, views, insights, challenges, practical experiences, et cetera. It is exactly this perspective that makes this current study distinguishing from and a valuable addition to existing research in the migration and development domain.

The societal relevance of this research can be found in the general trend of international migration flows resulting in a changing demographic composition of the Dutch society. This is irreversible and regarding current global development as discussed above, the involvement of migrants in the sector of development cooperation is expected to increase rather than decrease. This makes that development organisations have no choice but to seriously consider the role migrants and their expertise can play for their organisations. If there is indeed a great potential left unused, policy makers should be able to link up to this topic and do everything they can to make the most of the ambitions of these migrants.

More specifically, the societal relevance of this study is linked to the research internship I occupied at COS Gelderland, Centre for International Cooperation. This organisation gave me the opportunity to carry out this research. With regard to migrants living in the Netherlands, COS Gelderland supports Private Initiatives (PIs) in their activities concerning international cooperation in countries of origin.¹¹ Among these PIs are migrant organisations, which have considerably increased last years. Besides, COS Gelderland aims at contributing to the participation and integration of migrants *here*, in the Netherlands. One of the reasons why this research was interesting for the organisation, is that they point out a current problem in society: the lack of the moving up of highly educated, ambitious migrants in influential positions, such as boards of recommendations, advisory bodies and leadership functions in national as well as international organisations. Insights gathered by this research have contributed to the development of the 'Academy for Colourful Leadership' of COS Gelderland in which highly-educated migrant professionals are offered leadership tools to their political and governmental participation. Central question in this Academy is *How to convert my involvement into actual influence?* The academy has started in September 2011 and the first attendants will be certified in January 2012.¹²

1.5 Outline thesis

The next chapter reviews the notion of 'acculturation' and portrays the analytical framework that formed the theoretical foundation of this research. Subsequently, chapter three outlines how this research was conducted by presenting the research approach and gives a short introduction on the twelve cases of migrants that are central in this research. Chapters four, five and six are the empirical chapters in which the gathered data is presented. Chapter four discusses the social position of the respondents in the Dutch society, chapter five takes a look at the perception of the respondents on their possibilities to use their intellectual capital for the development sector and chapter six brings these two issues together as it considers the relation between the migrants' position in society *here* and their involvement in development cooperation *there*. Finally, in chapter seven one can find the most important conclusions.

¹¹ A private initiative (PI) is a small-scale organisation based on volunteers, that has development cooperation as its key task and is directly linked to structural development activities in a development country (based on Schulpen, 2007).

¹² For more information on the vision and activities of COS Gelderland and the Colourful Leadership Academy in particular ('Academie voor Kleurrijk Leiderschap' in Dutch), view www.cosgelderland.nl.

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter will present the theoretical foundation of this research to the social position of highly-educated African migrants *here* and the way they apply their intellectual capital for development cooperation *there*. Basis is the acculturation framework of Berry (1997a), originating from cross-cultural psychology, presented in chapter 2.2. In order to make this framework workable for this research, some adaptations were made. This resulted in the analytical framework as presented in chapter 2.3. First, the notion of acculturation is considered.

2.1 Acculturation

In the introduction the finding was discussed that the positive contribution that migrants can make to development in their countries of origin, is considerably influenced by the degree of success they enjoy in their country of destination (Koser, 2007). Hence, considering their social position *here* is ample part of this research: what happens to individuals who have developed in one cultural context when they attempt to re-establish their lives in another one? This process of intercultural contact is called acculturation, classically defined as ‘those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups’ (Redfield et al. 1936).

Graves (1967) made a distinction between acculturation as a collective phenomenon, referring to acculturation as a change in the culture of the *group*, and psychological acculturation, meaning a change in the psychology of the *individual*. As said, this study distinguishes itself from other studies regarding migration and development, since the perspective of the individual migrant is central. Therefore, acculturation is considered at the *individual level* and not at the group-level experienced by a collective.

Groups of individuals experiencing intercultural contact greatly vary; from international students, and guest workers to asylum seekers. This variety is mainly due to three factors (Berry, 1997b): voluntariness (one can voluntarily enter into the acculturation process or experience acculturation without having sought it out), mobility (some are in contact because they have migrated to a new location, while others have had the new culture brought to them) and permanence (among those who migrated, some are relatively permanently settled into the process, while for others the situation is a temporary one).

What people in the target group of this research have in common are the factors *mobility* (they migrated to a new location themselves) and *permanence* (their migration to the Netherlands can be interpreted as relatively permanent). What differs, is that some chose to move, while others were forced to do so. That is why in the course of this thesis, refugees are distinguished from ‘regular’ migrants. As the latter are individuals who *voluntary* move from one society to another, the migration of refugees has been involuntary (Berry, 1997b).¹³

While general changes may be profound in the group, social and psychological outcomes greatly vary when individual are considered (Berry, 1970; Furnham & Bochner, 1986). For example, individuals can experience different levels of difficulty during the acculturation process. Three levels of difficulty can be identified (Berry, 1997b). First, when psychological changes are rather easy to

¹³ The official definition of a refugee, based on the 1951 Refugee Convention, is a person who ‘owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country’. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org> (accessed 10-01-2011).

accomplish, 'behavioural shifts' occur. Psychological adaptations to acculturation are seen as a matter of learning a new behavioural repertoire that fits in with the new cultural context (Berry, 1997b). Changes are rather easy and behavioural shifts will follow smoothly. Stress is minimal and personal consequences of intercultural contact are by and large positive.

Second, in cases where serious conflict exists, individuals may experience 'acculturative stress'. Greater levels of conflict are experienced and perceived to be problematic, but controllable. Depending on if acculturative problems (stressors) can be surmounted, stress will be low and immediate effects positive or stress will be higher and effects more negative.

The third level of difficulty is the 'psychopathology' level. Major difficulties are experienced and outcomes are negative. Individuals cannot cope with changes in the cultural context, which leads to high levels of stress and serious psychological problems, such as personal crises, anxiety and depression (Berry, 1997b). It is beyond the scope of the research to analyse acculturation outcomes according to these three different levels of difficulty into detail, but since the matter of 'stress' occurred frequently in the stories of the respondents, they demand some attention.

Before turning to the next section, it should be noted that a concept that is very close to that of acculturation is the notion of 'integration'. Although the concept of integration does not form part of the theoretical foundation of this research, one will see it pop up several times in the course of this thesis, since in society the word 'integration' is a more common word to use than 'acculturation'.

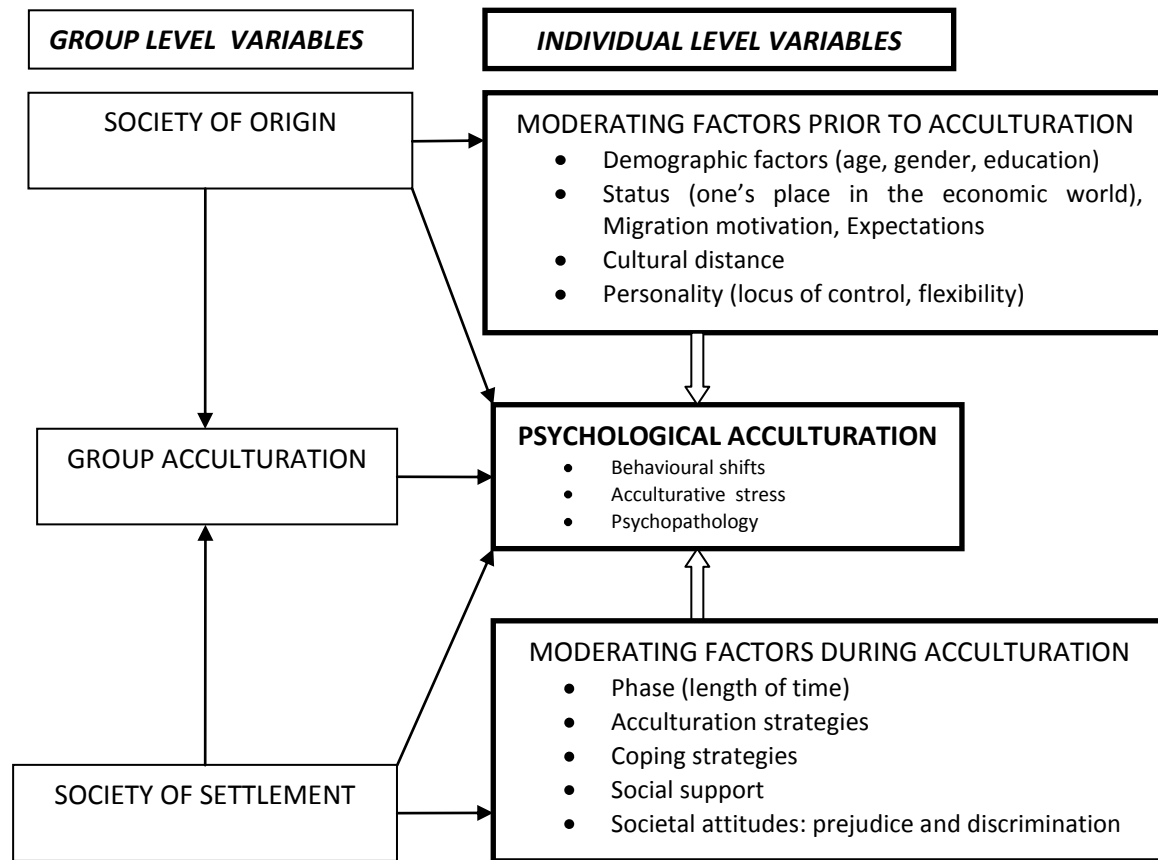
2.2 The acculturation framework of Berry

In literature multiple frameworks can be found in attempts to structure factors affecting individuals' acculturation process. One such framework is that of Berry (see Figure 2.1). This framework 'shows the key variables that should be attended to when carrying out studies of psychological acculturation' and aims at 'systematising the process of acculturation and illustrating the main factors that affect an individual's adaptation' (Berry, 1997a).

The framework distinguishes between group level and individual level variables. The first are mainly *situational* variables relating to the country of origin on the one hand (for example the political situation, economic conditions and demographic factors) and to the country of settlement on the other. In this latter category, immigration policies and attitudes towards immigration are considered, for instance. These situational variables influence the acculturation phenomena of the group. At the individual level, *person* variables can be found that affect the individual experiencing acculturation. Here, Berry distinguishes between features *existing prior to* and features *arising during* the process of acculturation.

Since the perspective of the individual migrant is central, individual level variables are considered in detail. I do not go very deeply into the group level variables: factors relating to the society of origin (the combination of political, economic and demographic conditions that migrants face in their home country) and factors relating to the society of settlement (e.g. formal laws or attitudes in the host society regarding migrants). This was beyond the scope of current study. As a result, this research does not include all the broad classes of variables outlined in the framework and therefore it is per definition an incomplete study when it comes to understanding individuals experiencing acculturation. However, until now there is no single study that has incorporated or verified all aspects of the framework (Berry, 1997a). In the light of this present research, the framework should be taken as a means to come at grips with the social position of the migrants in this study and the relation of their position *here* with their involvement *there* (i.e. in countries of origin). Below, individual level variables are considered more in detail.

Figure 2.1 The acculturation framework of Berry



Based on: Berry (1997a & 1997b).

Factors existing prior to acculturation

Individuals begin the acculturation process with a number of personal characteristics of both a demographic and social nature (Berry, 1997a). A first demographic factor is **age**. When acculturation starts early (prior to primary school), the integration process is generally more smooth. When it begins in later life, for example when older parents migrate for family reunification, there appears to be increased risks (Beiser et al., 1988). A whole life in one cultural setting cannot easily be ignored when living in a new cultural context (Berry, 1997a). Also **gender** can be of influence on the integration process. When there is a substantial difference between two cultures in gender roles, attempts to take on new role in the society of settlement may bring migrants into conflict with their heritage culture. Since age and gender are both fixed factors, they are included in the overview of characteristics of the respondents (view Appendix 2), but not considered into detail.

A non-fixed demographic factor that *is* emphasised in this research, is education. The target group of this research is highly educated. It is precisely this high **education** (assuming a high intellectual capital) that makes them high-potential development actors. Since their educational level is fixed, it is not education per se, but the effects of their higher education level that should be considered. In principle, a higher education is a predictor of greater opportunities and lower stress in the country of destination (Beiser et al, 1988). Education is a personal resource in itself, it is a correlate of other resources, such as income, occupational status and supportive networks, and third, education may attune migrants to features of the society into which they settle (Berry, 1997a).

Although it is said that a higher education is related to success in the country of destination, in literature this relation is not that clear-cut. For example, in their study among refugees in the Netherlands Van der Tillaart et al. (2000) found that there is no relation between the education level refugees have reached in their country of origin and finding a job (at their level) in the Netherlands. This is a worrying finding, since it suggests that having a high education does not give you per definition an advantage at the Dutch labour market. At the same time the authors argue that educational efforts *in the Netherlands* more often lead to a job at one's level (Van der Tillaart et al.). So, it is important to consider *where* respondents have had their education; before migration in their countries of origin or after migrating in the Netherlands? And what are consequences of their educational level for their social position? That is why education is a factor of importance both *prior to* and *during* acculturation and it should be placed at both ends in the framework.

Related to education is the position of the migrant at the formal **labour market**, referred to by Berry (1997a) as one's place in the economic world. This factor again should be included in the framework as a factor *prior to* and *arising during* acculturation. In Berry's framework it is only incorporated as a factor prior to acculturation. During the research, it was considered what the migrants' position at the formal labour market looked like before their migration to the Netherlands.

Both educational level and labour market position are important for considering respondents' **status**. Berry (1997a) relates status to one's place in the economic world. Regarding this research, it is worth to elaborate on this concept more in detail. First, a distinction should be made between *legal status* and *social status*, something Berry does not do. Legal status refers to status defined by the law and can be described as the situation a person is in with regard to his or her rights and duties. In this research, all respondents have a residence permit; they are allowed to live in the Netherlands and do not face the risk of being expelled, which is of course a factor that highly influences the level of stress a person experiences *during* his or her acculturation process. So, the legal status of the respondents is fixed. In this research then, the focus was on the concept of *social status*, referring to the position that someone occupies in society and the position and the prestige attached to it (Kottak, 2006).

Another distinction that is added and stressed in this research, is between a migrants' departure status and entry status. *Departure status* refers to the status the migrant had in the country of origin (i.e. their status *prior to* acculturation, a factor at the top of the framework), while *entry status* refers to the status occupied in the destination country (i.e. their status *during* acculturation, a factor along the bottom). Central is the *perception* of migrants themselves about their departure and entry status.

Migration motives is a next factor to consider. Reasons for people to migrate highly vary and this has consequences for the life migrants live in the Netherlands. It is important to distinguish pull motivations (pro-active, including voluntary migration) from push motivations (reactive, including involuntary or forced migration) (Richmond, 1993). One can imagine that the life of a migrant that comes to the Netherlands because of a job offer, differs from a refugee who had no choice but to leave his or her country of origin. African migration is especially characterised by refugees, which means push rather than pull migration. In her study among six groups of sub-Saharan Africans, Van Heelsum (2005) indeed found that asylum is the most dominant reason to migrate (see Table 2.1). However, we should not forget that other motives can be at stake as well; not every African migrant is a refugee. The table shows that, for example, 23% of the Ethiopians and Eritreans study was the migration motive and that 33% of the Nigerians in this study migrated because of family formation. Especially in case of highly-educated refugees, one can imagine that study or work could be the reason to migrate.

Table 2.1 African migrants according to country of origin and migration motive (in % of total)

<i>Abs. = 100%</i>	Asylum	Work	Family reunification	Family formation	Study
Angola	87	6	4	0	0
Congo	75	2	14	5	-
Ethiopia/Eritrea	33	4	3	14	23
Nigeria	25	17	9	33	8
Sudan	70	1	11	16	1
Somalia	63	1	26	10	0

Source: Van Heelsum (2005).

Both departure status and the migration motive are intrinsically linked to the **expectations** migrants have of their migration in advance. Obviously, those migrants with high ‘push’ motivation have more psychological adaptation problems. However, it appears that those with high pull motivations, being highly proactive, are likely to have as great a number of problems, caused by their excessively high (even unrealistic) expectations about their life in the new society. Especially migrants that had a high departure status and who are pro-active are likely to have high expectations about their life in the new society (Berry, 1997a). If these expectations are not met, this disillusion can lead to greater stress and will negatively influence a migrant’s acculturation process and his or her efforts, which can be extended to their development ambitions. Hence, it is important to consider what these expectations were by departure to the Netherlands (*prior to acculturation*) and if and how these are adjusted during their stay (*arising during acculturation*), which means that this factor should be added to the lower side of the framework as well.

Next, **cultural distance** (i.e. how dissimilar the cultures of origin and the Dutch culture are; Berry, 1997a) can be found in the framework as factor *prior* to acculturation. Since respondents can only reflect on this factor once getting in touch with the culture in their country of destination, I choose to replace this factor to the other side of the framework, as a *factor arising during acculturation*.

Finally, Berry includes **personality** in the framework, including for example one’s locus of control and one’s flexibility and adaptability. Since consistent findings on the influence of these factors on acculturation have been rare, I choose not to deal with them explicitly. Besides, studying the relation between personality and, for instance stress reactions, demands a total different research. However, it is good to be aware of the possible influence of one’s personality on acculturation effects and outcomes.

Factors arising during acculturation

Along the bottom of the framework are factors that arise during acculturation, affecting the individual experiencing intercultural contact. How long a person has been experiencing acculturation influences the kind and extent of problems (Berry, 1997a). With longer residence, migrants are more likely to be integrated into their country of residence, which should benefit their social position here (Berry, 2006). The general idea is that at an early stage, only few problems are present, followed by more serious problems later, and finally a more positive long-term adaptation is achieved (Berry, 1997a). However, there is little empirical evidence for this idea. Since the precise relation is not clear, the factor **phase of residence** is not dealt with extensively. Of course, to get a good impression of the different situations of the respondents in this study, the length of residence in the Netherlands is made clear.

Berry's pays much attention to **acculturation strategies**, which describe the way individuals deal with the issue of *how* to acculturate. There are four possible strategies, determined by *cultural maintenance* (to what extent should one's identity and culture of origin be maintained?) and *contact and participation* (to what extent should relationships with the larger host society be maintained?). These four strategies are integration (both cultural maintenance of one's original culture and participation in the larger society of settlement), assimilation (no wish for cultural maintenance and seeking daily interactions with other cultures), segregation (holding on to the original culture and avoiding interaction with others) and marginalisation (little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance and little interest in having relations with others). One will notice that in the course of this thesis, the word 'integration' is used several times by respondents. This is not so much linked to the specific acculturation strategy as described here, but to the general acculturation process of migrants. In stead of reviewing respondents' acculturation strategies, I deal with the issues of identity formation and contacts in both country of origin and destination separately. These two factors are elaborated on later on in this section.

Individuals try to find ways in order to deal with problematic experiences, these are called **coping strategies**. In literature, three major coping strategies are identified: *problem-focused coping* (attempting to change or solve the problem), *emotion-focused coping* (attempting to regulate the emotions associated with the problem) and *avoidance-oriented coping* (Endler & Parker, 1990). Since an elaboration of the way migrants deal with these problematic experiences demands a totally different research, migrants' coping strategies were not included in this study.

A next factor in the framework is **social support**. In this research this concept concentrates on the contacts respondents maintain in both their society of origin (referred to as **national contacts**) and destination (referred to as **transnational contacts**). Several studies emphasise that supportive relationships with both cultures are most predictive of successful integration (Berry, 2006). Moreover, more and more migrants are able to maintain a transnational style of living these days. It is important to get insight in transnational contacts of the migrants, because they can be part of the migrants' motivation to be, or not to be involved in development cooperation. To what extent do respondents succeed in maintaining the networks they had *there* and build new ones *here*?

The last factor in Berry's framework is prejudice and discrimination. In media coverage, African migration is linked to popular images of extreme poverty, starvation and warfare result in the stereotypical image of 'African misery' as the assumed causes of their 'invasion' (de Haas, 2008). How do migrants perceive that the Dutch society is reacting on them? What is the image they face and are they confronted with prejudice or discrimination? If yes, what does this do with their ambitions? Is it an obstacle in their way to be involved in development sector? Negative image formation and perceived discrimination are negatively related to integration and might cause that migrants turn their back to society in stead of being actively involved in it (Berry, 2006). To what extent does the target group experiences negative image formation and what are consequences for them personally? Does this form a barrier to possible ambitions to be actively involved in development cooperation? From now on, I will refer to this factor as **image formation**.

As said, a number of factors have both a component in migrants' places of residence, *prior to* contact with the Dutch society, and *during* acculturation in the society of settlement. This is the case with education, the respondents' position at the formal labour market, social status and expectations of migration. Therefore, these factors were added along the bottom line of the framework as well.

Although a high education was brought up before as a beneficial resource, in the introduction it was stressed that having had a high education in the country of origin is no guarantee for a good

position at the formal labour market in the Netherlands, country of destination. No surprisingly, this is a risk factor to stress and other psychological problems. Both educational and occupational position arising during acculturation significantly influence the entry status of the migrants. In case this entry status is lower than their departure status, migrants experience status loss or limited status mobility (Aycaan & Berry, 1996). Reasons can partly lie in personal qualities brought to the acculturation process, but they can also reside in the interaction between the migrant and the institutions of the society of settlement (Berry, 1997a). To what extent can problems of status loss and limited mobility be addressed during the course of acculturation? If ambitions are thwarted this way, this can have consequences for the efforts migrants can or want to make for development cooperation.

The previous section also discussed that not meeting the expectations causes stress and negatively influences a migrant's acculturation process and probably his or her development ambitions. Therefore, what has become true of the expectations migrants had before their migration (**expectations in retrospective**) is also considered. Another kind of expectations should be added to the framework as well: **expectations that others impose on the migrant**. Migrants that come to the Netherlands are expected to integrate and participate in the Dutch society. At the same time, their society of origin has expectations, too, to stay involved with their home country. How do the migrants deal with these expectations?

As said in the previous section, since **cultural distance** reveals itself *during* the acculturation process, this factor is replaced within the framework from *factors prior to*, to *factors during* acculturation. The general finding is that the greater the cultural differences, the less positive is the adaptation. The greater the cultural difference, the more problems one might expect in developing and maintaining relationships, meeting social needs, communicating effectively, and in general adapting to the culture (Redmond, 2000). Of course, this lies not uniquely in the background of the acculturating individual but in the dissimilarity between the two cultures in contact (Berry, 1997a). However, it is the perception of the respondent that is considered.

Finally, I added a factor to the framework of which I think it is highly important when considering migrants' social position here in the context of acculturation and that is absent in Berry's design: **identity formation**. When migrants have arrived in their society of settlement and become familiar with (parts of) this new cultural context, they develop a bi-cultural identity, described as integrating two cultural orientations (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). This bi-cultural identity is one of the reasons why migrants are such interesting actors for development cooperation. They have knowledge of both home and host society and they are considered to be pre-eminently capable of building bridges between these two cultures. Research confirms that having a bicultural identity is related to better adjustment in the society of destination. Migrants maintaining a bicultural identity are better adjusted, more flexible and better able to mediate acculturative stress in their acculturation process than those who identified primarily with either the ethnic or the mainstream culture (Domanico et al., 1994).

Moreover, despite findings that an orientation on the country of origin is not per definition a predictor of less or bad integration (De Haas, 2005; Engbersen et al, 2003), the prevailing idea in society is that a migrant's focus on the culture of origin distorts the integration process (De Haas, 2005). Being involved in countries of origin would come at the expense of loyalty for the Netherlands. These two developments do not correspond with each other. By putting identity formation in the framework I want to consider if the target group is able to translate their bi-cultural

identity indeed in the expected positive efforts for development cooperation or does it make them stay put?

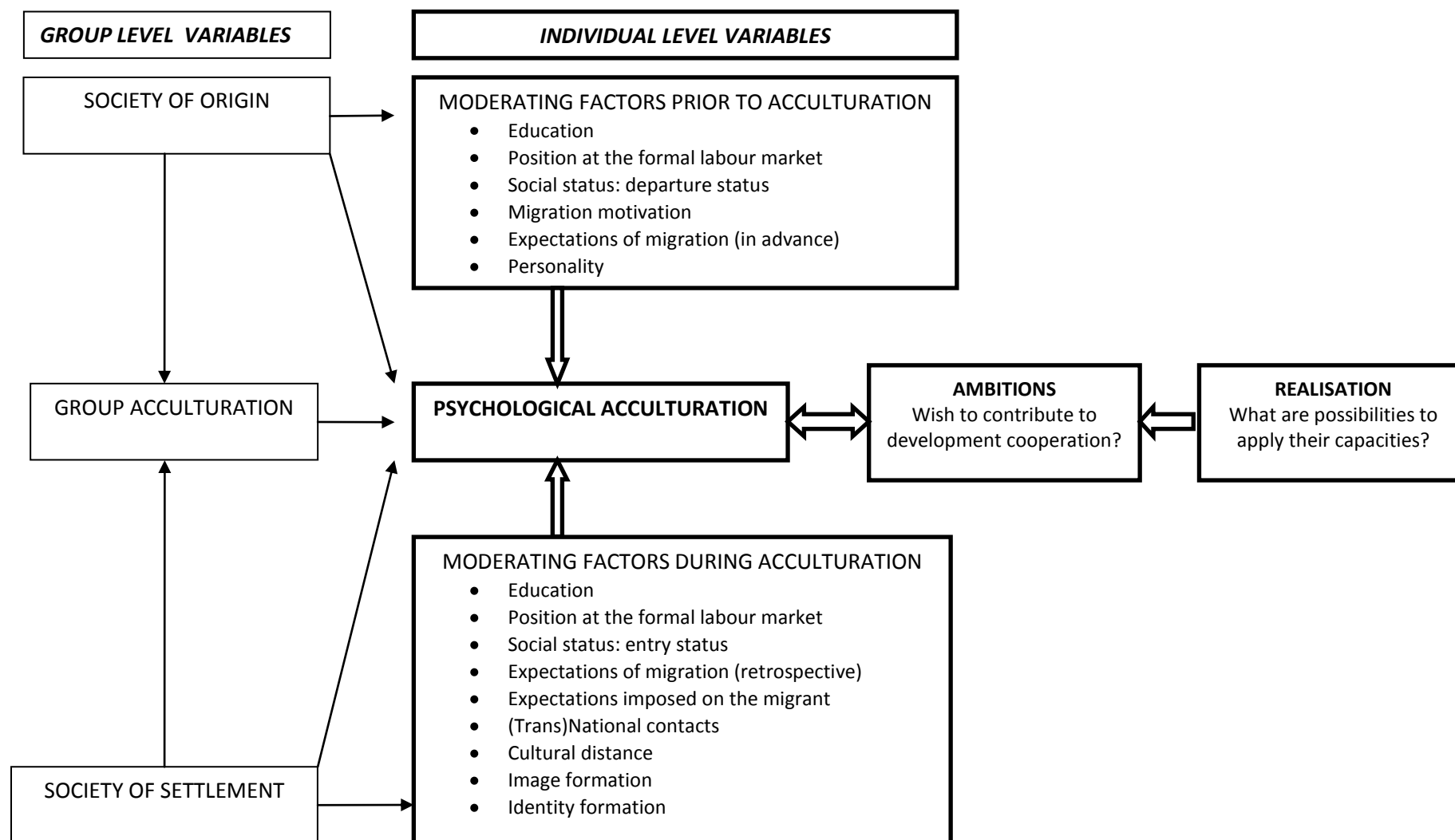
2.3 Analytical framework

After discussing the original framework of Berry extensively, now the adapted framework that serves as basis for present research can be presented (see Figure 2.2). Factors that were added to the original framework are social status (departure status and entry status); expectations (expectations in retrospective and expectations imposed on the migrant); and identity formation. This analytical framework serves two ends. At first, it is used as a means to form a picture of the social position of the highly-educated migrants included in this research. Second, the framework should help to get insight in the relation between the migrants' position in the Dutch society and their efforts for their home country, or broader, development cooperation in general.

It was stressed that the migrants' position in their destination country is of influence on their ambitions and efforts regarding their country of origin (Koser, 2007). It might be that there is also a relation the other way around; as having ambitions to contribute to the development of the country of origin (and especially the potential to realise these ambitions) can be an important factor influencing the position of the migrant and the way migrants feel at ease in their society of destination. One can imagine that when migrants have the wish to contribute to the development of their home country and are convinced that they have the capacities to do so, but cannot find a way to realise these ambitions in practice, this will result in negative outcomes, a turn away from the Dutch society, for example.

This means that stimulating these ambitions and trying to implement them as effective as possible is of crucial importance. On the one hand, because we have seen that migrants can have unique capacities that other development actors have not. On the other, because this stimulates the social position of these migrants in society. Because of this, one finds a reverse arrow between 'integration' and 'ambitions' pointing to a two-way process: the acculturation process of migrants affects the ambitions they have, but at the same time, these ambitions will influence the position of the migrants concerned. This relation again is strongly affected by the potential to realise these ambitions and to use the capacities of the highly educated migrants in practice. It is to be expected that if migrants find many obstacles on the way to realise their ambitions, these ambitions will decrease or even disappear. Therefore, this research also considers the question in what way the intellectual capital of the highly-educated migrants is and can be applied for the development sector. All this results in the following analytical framework:

Figure 2.2 Analytical Framework



3. Research Approach

This chapter presents the methods used to conduct the research and the reasons why decision to do so are made. The added value of this research is that the perception of the migrant is central. Therefore, the approach chosen is a qualitative one, since qualitative information makes it possible to describe phenomena as experienced by the studied population in their own terms (Ritchie, 2003). The case study forms the research framework that is filled in with semi-structured in-depth interviews as core method. Preparations for this research started in April 2010. The actual field work, the interviews, took place between June and November 2010. These were conducted in the Netherlands. Section 3.1 elaborates on the research questions, section 3.2 considers the research strategy and section 3.3 gives a description of the twelve cases that were at the core of this research.

3.1 Research questions

The elaboration in the theoretical framework has led to the central research question '*what does the social position of highly-educated sub-Sahara African migrants look like in their country of destination and how is their intellectual capital applied for development cooperation regarding countries of origin?*' To answer this central research question, three sub-questions were formulated:

1. What does the social position of highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants in the Dutch society looks like?
2. In what way are highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants involved in development cooperation and what are their possibilities to apply their intellectual capital for the development practice?
3. What relation can be found between these migrants' involvement in development cooperation regarding home countries and their social position in the destination country?

A number of concepts needed to be operationalised. First, the concept of intellectual capital is often used with regard to organisations and is seen as an asset, transforming raw material into something more valuable (Stewart, nd). According to Stewart it consists of three elements: human, structural and customer capital. Human capital are the skills, competencies, and abilities of individuals and groups. Structural capital are the knowledge assets that are company property, like copyrights or computer networks, whereas customer capital comprises the value of relationships with suppliers, allies and customers. Since intellectual capital in this research is used regarding individual migrants, focus is on the human capital aspect. Therefore, intellectual capital is defined as the skills, competencies and abilities of individuals.

The concept of country of destination refers to the Netherlands, but it should not imply that migrants in this study will never move anymore. Country of origin refers to the country in Africa where respondents were born.¹⁴ For most of them, this is the country in which they spent most of their time in Africa. It is also important to keep in mind that not all respondents directly came from their country of origin to the Netherlands. In stead, most of them have spent some time in other transition countries of which they might have thought by then as their country of destination. Other words that are used for country of origin are *country of departure* and *home country*. In stead of

¹⁴ An exception is the case of Ade, since he was born in London. In his case 'country of origin does not refer to the UK, but to Nigeria.

country of destination, *country of settlement* and *host country* can be used. Moreover, 'country' and 'society' are interchangeable.

Finally, 'social position' refers to the general functioning of the migrants in the Dutch society. As the perception of the migrants is at the core of this research, the unit of analysis that is central is the individual. What do *they* think they can add to the development sector and what is done with their capacities in *their* view? What does it mean to *them*? In order to come to triangulation of data, Dutch development organisations were interviewed as well. They were asked about their vision on the possible added value of the target group for the sector, their possibilities to apply these capacities in the development practice and the relation between the migrants' position in society and their efforts for their home country.

3.2 Research strategy

The wish to bring to the surface the *perception* of the individual migrants asked for an in-depth research, aiming for a small-scale approach. As a consequence, generalisation of data was not possible, but it offered the opportunity to go into depth and make detailed descriptions of the situation and complexity of the research subject (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007). From this followed the choice for a qualitative, interpreting research approach in stead of a quantitative approach, focusing on figures and facts. Related to this qualitative approach was the choice for a field research to gather and analyse data, rather than a desk research. This section elaborates on *how* this qualitative field research was conducted by outlining the research strategy, including the gathering and analysis of data in order to formulate well-founded answers to the research questions.

Research framework: the case-study

The research framework is formed by the use of case studies. Case studies do not aim at discovering common properties or some general patterns in a population as a whole, but are used to 'concern how some causal process works out in a particular case or a limited number of cases' (Sayer, 1992). So, by using case studies I am not looking for generalisable 'laws' which can be applied to the target group as a whole, but for investigating causality directly by considering in detail how the process works within particular cases (Thomas et al., 1998). The goal of using case studies as a research framework is to build a coherent story.

The case study lend itself in particular for 'how' and 'why' questions (Thomas et al., 1998): *How* can the position of the target group in society be described? *How* is this target group of highly-educated African migrants involved in development cooperation, *why* do they do so and *how* do they view possibilities to apply their intellectual capital in this domain? In the end, I wanted to unravel the relation between their position *here* and their involvement *there*.

An advantage of using a case study framework in a practice-oriented research is that it offers the possibility to create an integral picture of the research object; highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants in this case. Moreover, in contrast to surveys or experiments for instance, a case study approach needs little preliminary structuring, which makes it far more manoeuvrable (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007). Hence, adaptations in the course of the research were easier to make and that was an advantage, since the research object is a relatively unknown group. A disadvantage was that the external validity is under pressure by using the case study as investigation framework (Verschuren & Doorewaard). This is discussed below when the research limitations are considered.

Selecting cases

Within the research period I interviewed twelve migrants extensively and noted down their stories.¹⁵ Coming to a selection of cases was not a matter of finding a small representative sample as this would require a statistical population from which a sample could be taken (Thomas et al., 1998). Such a sample is impossible, since the total population of highly-educated, sub-Saharan African migrants is not known. There is hardly any data about this group available and in case there are data-sets, sub-Saharan African migrants are lumped together under a rest-category.

This research is an example of a study in which a multiple case strategy is pursued. A number of characteristics were used to decide if individuals were eligible for selection. First of all, this research focused on migrants. ‘Migrant’ has been defined numerous times in different ways and a universally accepted definition lacks. For this study, it is important that the migrants’ stay in the Netherlands has a relatively permanent character. Therefore the definition of the United Nations was used, which defines a migrant as *‘an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate’*.¹⁶ This definition does not include those travelling for shorter periods, for instance tourists, exchange students or businesspersons. Moreover, it includes both voluntary migrants and refugees. When I refer to *migrants* in the course of this text, this is used to refer to the respondents in general. When the distinction between voluntary and involuntary migrants (i.e. refugees) is of importance, I will explicitly mention this.

Then, the target group was geographically demarcated to migrants coming from **sub-Saharan Africa**. According to the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSTATS) ‘the designation sub-Saharan Africa is commonly used to indicate all of Africa except northern Africa, with the Sudan included in sub-Saharan Africa’.¹⁷ This means that African countries that are *not* included in sub-Saharan Africa are Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Western Sahara. The green countries in the map in figure 3.1 are the countries covered by the term sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁸

Figure 3.1 Sub-Saharan Africa



Source: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

¹⁵ For an overview of the conducted interviews with the twelve migrants, view Appendix 3.

¹⁶ Retrieved from <http://www.iom.int> (accessed 12 January, 2011).

¹⁷ Retrieved from <http://unstats.un.org> (accessed 10 September 2011).

¹⁸ One of the respondents was born in London, UK, but since both of his parents are Nigerian and he spend most of his childhood in Nigeria, I consider him to be a sub-Saharan African migrant as well.

Third, a selection criterion was that migrants in this study should be highly-educated. According to the CSO a person is highly-educated, when he or she has finished an education at a college of advanced education or university.¹⁹ Regarding the particular target group of this research, this way of defining 'highly-educated' caused some problems, since diplomas obtained in Africa often are not recognised in the Netherlands and have to be revalued. Moreover, in case of refugees, some of the respondents were not able to take their credentials with them.

In six cases there was no doubt about the educational level, as these respondents had finished an education at a Dutch college of advanced education or university since their arrival here. Four respondents obtained an academic degree in another European country (i.e. in Belgium, France, Sweden and the UK). For these credentials are acknowledged in the Netherlands as well, this was no problem either.

Then two respondents are left. One obtained her Commercial Business diploma in Africa. At the time of the interview, she was waiting for a revaluation of it and was without a job. I consider her to be highly-educated, because of her study and previous working activities she did in her home country. Moreover, she had plans to start a higher education as soon as possible. The last respondent had no credentials when she arrived here, because she was only a child and due to circumstances she has not been able to finish a higher or academic education in the Netherlands. However, regarding her current working activities and courses she has attended at the university and colleges of advanced education in the meanwhile, I considered her to be highly educated as well. In the course of this thesis, the terms highly-educated and highly skilled are interchangeable.

If migrants did not meet the above mentioned criteria, they were excluded from this research. Finding people meeting all above mentioned criteria was hard, since data lacks and my own connections were limited. That is why snowball sampling was used to come to the selection of case studies. Snowball sampling is a chain referral method used when studying hard-to-find populations (Bernard, 2006). Via contacts of COS Gelderland and a key informant. I approached the first respondents. By means of asking them if they had names of other interesting respondents, I came to the final selection of 12 cases.²⁰ Although these twelve cases by no means are representative for the whole population of highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants in the Netherlands, I tried to come to a selection that would be a reflection (no representation) of the larger target group. By influencing the selection, for instance by asking for female respondents, I came to a balance in gender (male and female respondents), migration motive (voluntary and involuntary migrants) and country of origin.

Methods used

The use of case-studies should be viewed as the research framework of investigation, not as a specific method per se (Thomas et al., 1998). Within this framework in-depth interviews served as most important research method. As topic lists with open questions were used, the interviews were semi-structured, appropriate to answer the 'why' and 'how' questions referred to above, as well as the 'what' question, to gain insight in the relatively unknown social position of the target group (Thomas et al.).

Before the interviews could be conducted, some other steps had to be taken. First I did a small literature research. This served as basis for clearly defining the theoretical research framework and was the starting point for making the topic lists. Second, I had exploratory talks with two persons

¹⁹ Source: CSO (2), retrieved from www.cbs.nl (accessed 10 April 2011).

²⁰ For an overview of the characteristics of the twelve cases, view Appendix 2.

from the target group to lend weight to the whole research by finding out if the research topics I set up were in their eyes worth investigating. Do they talk about these topics themselves? Do they think these are important issues to denounce? Based on their feedback I made some adaptations in the final topic list.²¹ Finally, to be well-prepared for the interviews, I read up on the background of every 'case' before the interview appointment: what is known about this respondent and his or her country of origin?

Furthermore, during the research period I documented on the progress of the study by making notes on the interviews (adaptations made in the topic list, suggestions for further investigations and points of considerations to take into account) and other documents obtained (policy documents, media coverage, et cetera), which enabled me to go back and check which data was gathered where and when.

One of the central ways of validating research evidence is triangulation (Ritchie, 2003). Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of information to test and modify one's understanding of a given problem or situation. It includes both using different methods of investigation and getting evidence from several sources (Thomas et al., 1998). With regard to the methods used, I combined the use of in-depth interviews with studying published literature and policy documents. Moreover, I had informal conversations and attended a number of meetings, conferences and discussions on the topic of migration and development.²² Concerning the source of information, I included viewpoints of representatives of four Dutch development organisations: Cordaid, ICCO/Kerk in Actie, Oxfam Novib and Wilde Ganzen. All these four organisations are included as funding organisations in the Linkis-portal.²³ By interviews them, I could cross-check my findings following from the case studies and place the migrants' stories in a broader perspective.²⁴

The data gathered by means of the in-depth interviews had to be interpreted based on a qualitative analysis (Bernard, 2006). The interviews were literally transcribed to verbatim texts. All qualitative data gathered during fieldwork was coded, labelled and organised according to the steps as outlined in Baarda et al. (1998). Each interview received a code, all relevant information was selected and the text was broken up into fragments, which were all given a unique fragment number. Finally, every fragment was labelled. After the first interview, the second interview was labelled and it was assessed whether the labels of interview 1 were applicable to interview 2 as well. If necessary, labels were removed or combined, or new ones were added. By evaluation of the interviews between times I was able to see what information I gathered and what was still missing, so the topic list of the next interview could be adapted. In the end, all fragments with the same label were put together and these were organised according to the research questions. This way of structuring and analysing data was the foundation for writing a coherent text in which the research questions were answered by summarising, paraphrasing and quoting the interview texts.

²¹ Topic lists can be found in Appendices 5 and 6.

²² For an overview of attended meetings, view Appendix 4.

²³ Linkis means Laagdrempelige Initiatieven en Kenniscentrum voor Internationale Samenwerking, translated as Approachable Initiatives and Knowledge Centre for International Cooperation [AS]. Advisory and funding organisations work together to support development initiatives in order to make international cooperation accessible for every citizen. Advice is given by regional COSsen (Centres for International Cooperation); financial support is given by Cordaid, Impulsis (a cooperation of Icco, Kerk in Actie and Edukans.), Oxfam Novib and Wilde Ganzen. For more information, view www.linkis.nl.

²⁴ For an overview of interviews conducted with the representatives of these four development organisations, view Appendix 3.

Research limitations

During the research, I faced two serious research constraints. The first is language. Respondents were born abroad and learnt the Dutch language at an advanced age. The ability to speak Dutch varied; most interviews were conducted in Dutch, but others had to be done in English. This meant that either me or the respondent could not converse in the mother tongue. This undoubtedly has affected the conversations.

A second limitation has already been mentioned: the representativeness of the gathered data, because of the (im)possibility to generalise outcomes. It was impossible to draw conclusions about *the* highly educated African migrant. Nevertheless, although *statistical* generalisation was not possible, it was achievable to come to some general conclusions based on a small number of cases (Thomas et al., 1998). Moreover, the goal of this research was not to make quantitative statements about the target group that can be generalised to the whole population, but to ‘unpack’ the views, dreams, hopes and difficulties of this under exposed group of migrants and make them visible. In this way, the extensive stories of the migrants involved in the case studies form an indication with which more highly-educated African migrants in the Netherlands can identify themselves. Since statistical generalisation is not possible, one will find expressions such as ‘most of the respondents’ or ‘almost none of the migrants’ in stead of the mentioning of exact numbers.

3.3 Overview of the twelve cases

In order to bring the twelve cases studied to live and make it easier to picture them when reading their stories in the empirical chapters, every ‘case’ is shortly introduced.

Amadou has lived in the Netherlands since 1989. His country of origin is Mauritania. He studied law and was teaching at the university and was also the spokesperson of a political movement. His work brought him into trouble and he had to escape his country. The idea was to go to France, but he got stuck in the Netherlands without his passport and had to stay here. In the Netherlands his diploma was not recognised, so he started over his law study. Now he lives in Nijmegen with his son and daughter. His relatives live in Mauritania, he is the only one living here. Amadou works as policymaker at an organisation occupied with participation of migrants and refugees and as location coordinator of a welfare organisation in Nijmegen. He also works as freelance intercultural and interreligious trainer, coach and teacher. Amadou has not yet decided where his future will be; it could be here, but there certainly is a chance that he will go back to Mauritania.

Hmed has had his primary and secondary education in his home country Sudan. In 1987 he received a scholarship for studying geology in Libya. After his study, he worked as a geography teacher at a secondary school in Sudan. In 1995 he had to leave his country of birth and came on his own to the Netherlands as a political refugee. It took him 2,5 years to get a residence permit, which he needed to be able to work. Finding a job on his level was not easy and he did manufacturing work for a while. When he lost this job he decided he wanted to study again and studied Social Work. After a few years living here, Hmed married a Sudanese woman and she came to the Netherlands as well. Together they have three children and they live in Nijmegen. Hmed’s relatives all live in Sudan.

Julie is a development sociologist and ethnologist. In Congo she studied Classics. Then she moved to Belgium for studying Social Work and Sociology. After finishing these studies, she went back to Congo to work in the development sector. She worked as a region-representative for an international organisation. The reason to leave Congo for the second time was love. Back in Congo she met a Dutch man, fell in love and moved with him to the Netherlands in 1988. Now she lives with her husband and their two sons nearby Leiden. In 2008, Julie obtained her doctorate at the Africa Studies

Centre (ASC) in Leiden with a thesis on the dynamics of identity transformation among Congolese women and religious social movements in Congo-Kinshasa, the Netherlands and Belgium. Her work also investigates the effects of migration to Europe on citizens of the Great Lakes Region. At the moment, she is looking for a suitable job. She would like to teach at a university. If possible, partly in the Netherlands and partly in Congo, so she could spread her knowledge in her country of origin.

Fatma was born in Somaliland. Somaliland is not an internationally recognised country, we know it as the Northern part of Somalia. Because of dictatorship and oppression Fatma moved with her family to the Emirates when she was very young. She spent her childhood in the Emirates and lived there for nine years. In 1988 the government wanted to deport her and her family. Going back to Somaliland was no option, because of the bombardments and the imminent civil war. She fled with her mother and five brothers to the Netherlands in 1989. At that time she was 14 years old. Later on, her father also came here. Fatma finished her secondary school in the Netherlands, studied journalism for a while, took courses Languages and Cultures of the Middle East at the university and at the Academy for Interpreting and Translating and did a Somali writing and grammar course in the UK. Now she runs her own business in interpreting and intercultural communication. She is living on her own in Nijmegen, most of her relatives are living in the West of the Netherlands.

Ade was born in London. His parents are Nigerian and when he was three years old, he moved with his parents back to Nigeria. A large part of his childhood he spent in this African country. He also attained his Bachelor degree in electrical and electronic engineering. When he was about 20 years old, he returned to London by himself. He studied and worked there until in 1999 Philips offered him a job in the Netherlands. He accepted the job and moved to Nijmegen. He lives on his own in Nijmegen and has a girlfriend. He has some family members in Nigeria, but most of his family lives in England. So for him, 'home' is England.

Bisi lives in Tilburg with her Dutch husband and son. She was born and bred in Nigeria and there she obtained a university degree in agriculture. In 2003 she moved to the Netherlands to study agriculture in Den Bosch, because she was curious how people deal with this subject in another part of the world. Then she met her Dutch husband and decided to stay here with him and build a life in the Netherlands. Her family members all live in Africa and from time to time they come to visit her. Bisi had problems finding a suitable job on her level. She was told to be over-qualified, so she decided it would be better to do another degree here. For quite some time Bisi was working in a factory to save money to pay for the study. Now, she is doing a masters in Human Geographies at the university in Nijmegen. Her dream is finding a job in which she is able to use her brainpower and in which she can make a connection to the development of her home country.

Alphonse was born in Congo and migrated to the Netherlands in 1994. In Congo he was in the middle of his Business Studies at the university when he was forced to leave the country. In the Netherlands he successfully accomplished his secondary teacher training to become a mathematics teacher and next to that, he studied journalism. In his work as opinion maker he is engaged in issues that have to do with globalisation, Africa, democratisation and development cooperation. In 2006 he went to Congo as an election observer on behalf of the Netherlands. In his book *You can't eat democracy* he discusses the failed elections of that year. Alphonse is married and father of two daughters. Together they live in The Hague.

Joseph has his roots in Cameroon. There he studied Urban Sociology and did his Masters in Sustainable Forest Management. In that time he was working for an international organisation, a cooperation between the Cameroonian and the Dutch government on sustainable forest management. He fell in love with his Dutch colleague and they decided to build a future in the

Netherlands. He came to live here in 2002 and did the Advanced Master programme in International Development (AMID) at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, worked for Cordaid and now he is working as coordinator migrants and development cooperation an association of almost 60 Dutch development organisations that focuses on capacity building of civil-society organisations in development countries.

Max was born in Togo and raised in Guinea until he was 12 years old. At that time there was a revolution going on in Guinea which made a good education impossible and his parents sent him to his sister in Congo-Brazzaville. There he went to school and studied medicine for a few years. He found out that this was not the right study for him and moved out of Africa to be able to do more for the development of the continent from another location. He lived and worked in Italy and France. In France, he studied social psychology. Eventually he ended up in the Netherlands with his Dutch girlfriend. He has lived here for almost 15 years now. Thanks to his variety of places of residence, he knows exactly what it is to integrate in a country with a totally different culture. Now he has his own business as intercultural trainer and coach and is occupied with issues concerning integration, migration and development. Max lives with his girlfriend and two sons near Nijmegen.

Antony came to the Netherlands in 2006, but already left Kenya around 2000. Antony has an Africa-sided and a (non-biological) Dutch-sided family, which makes that he has a personal relationship with the Netherlands and knew the country from some previous visits. He had his primary and secondary education in Kenya and studied Human Resources Management. He worked in projects with street children and addicted people. At the time he was 28 he moved to Sweden for another post-graduate study for one year. After finishing that, he was offered the possibility to study at another university in the country. Antony studied Political Science and Politics and Development and when he had finished his master, he decided to come for an internship to the Netherlands. Now he is living in Amsterdam and works at Utrecht University as a Ph-D candidate on migration-development issues. Next to that, he works as a researcher for the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). There he is occupied with policy analysis on development issues in Africa.

Charles came to the Netherlands in the winter of 1992 as a refugee. He had built his life in Liberia and was studying economics when he had to escape his country because of the war. His plan was to move to the United States, but he got caught up in the Netherlands and got a residence permit. He got a job in a factory and worked 80 hours a week for some years. After five years he started studying again. First he studied Social Work in Arnhem, then he did Cultural Social Education in Nijmegen and after that he started Communication Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Now he lives in Apeldoorn with his girlfriend and two children. During his stay in the Netherlands, he noticed how hard it was for people to get in touch with people that have different cultural and social backgrounds. Hence, in 1996 he started his own foundation that focuses on connecting people especially by means of music, dance and theatre. Nowadays, it has grown into an extensive professional organisation. Charles is the only one of his family living in the Netherlands. He loves travelling and when his children are older, it is his dream to live abroad.

Finally, **Fridah** was born in Kenya. She finished the hair-dressing school and studied Commercial Business. She worked for The Nation, a Kenyan newspaper. Then she met her lover, an Italian working for the United Nations in Kenya, quit her job and started her own barbershop. In 1998 she left Kenya with him and moved to his home country, Italy. After this relationship ended she came to the Netherlands for a holiday. Here she met her new boyfriend and now she is married with him and lives with him and her daughter in Apeldoorn. Since the beginning of 2004 Fridah has her residence

permit. For four years she had worked at a wholesaler, until in September 2010 they had no work for her anymore. Now she is looking for a job and thinking about studying again.

4. African migrants and the Dutch society - a happy marriage?

I think I truly have to try to fit in with this culture. But I also want to ask the other side, the people living here, to understand me, to help me [find my way]. That's a good thing. It's a two-sided process. You can compare it to a marriage. You meet a man you don't know, but you have to live together in one house. So, you both have to adjust to each other and try to live together. If that doesn't match, it won't work. For me, it's the same with integration. [Fridah]

More or less, respondents in this study all went through the same process. They have left the environment in which they acquired their culture of origin (i.e. their 'enculturation process'), their roots were severed and they ended up in the Netherlands, planned or not, where they encountered a new culture. They had to adapt to their new context and try to obtain a position in society.

Before anything else can be discussed, light is thrown on the social position of the highly-skilled sub-Saharan African migrants in their country of destination; the Netherlands. The Analytical Framework presented in section 2.3 showed that many factors are of influence on outcomes of the acculturation process and hence on the social position of the particular migrant. The respondent above compares her attempts to obtain a position here to a marriage. It is an interplay between the individual and the larger society. The question is: is it a love match or is it a forced marriage?

This chapter aims to formulate an answer to the first sub-question: *what does the social position of highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants in the Dutch society look like?* The adapted acculturation framework (see Figure 2.2) was used as a guideline to bring all information together. Section 4.1 deals with factors relating to the period *before* the acculturation process in the Netherlands started, while factors that arise *during* this process are discussed in section 4.2.

4.1 Factors prior to acculturation

In this section factors prior to the acculturation process of the twelve migrants are central. Their position in their country of origin cannot be ignored when looking to their current social position here. I respectively consider their education, position at the formal labour market, departure status, migration motivation and the expectations they had from their migration in advance. In general, this section paints a picture of the position of the respondents in their country of origin. However, not all migrants directly came to the Netherlands after leaving their former home country. Some lived in other countries for a while where they had an education, jobs and a status as well.

4.1.1 Education

A common characteristic of the migrants in this study is that they are all highly educated. This could make them promising agents for development. Table 1.1 gives an overview of the respondents' higher education before their migration to the Netherlands. The last column of the table shows the country where the respondents had this education. In general, this is their country of origin. But as said, in some cases respondents lived in another country before moving to the Netherlands or went abroad some time to study.

Table 4.1: Higher education prior to migration to the Netherlands ²⁵

Name	Higher education	Country
Amadou	University degree in Law	Mauritania
Hmed	University degree in Geology	Libya
Julie	Propadeutics in Classics	Congo
	Degree* in Social Work	Belgium
	University degree in Sociology	Belgium
Fatma	-	-
Ade	Degree* in Electrical Electronic Engineering	Nigeria
	PhD in Electrical Electronic Engineering	United Kingdom
Bisi	University degree in Agriculture	Nigeria
Alphonse	Business studies (not finished)	Congo
Joseph	University degree in Urban Sociology	Cameroon
	University degree in Sustainable Forest Management	Cameroon
Max	Medicine (not finished)	Congo
	University degree in Social Psychology	France
Antony	University degree in Human Resource Management	Kenya
	University degree in Political Science	Sweden
	University degree in Politics and Development	Sweden
Charles	Economics (not finished)	United Kingdom
Fridah	Degree* in Commercial Business	Kenya

* 'Degree' is used in case it was not clear if the respondent obtained either a Masters or a Bachelors degree

The table shows that before the respondents came to the Netherlands, they almost all had an academic degree, except for three respondents. Fatma was only a child when she came to the Netherlands and refugees Alphonse and Charles had to escape their country of origin while they were in the middle of their education and therefore could not finish it.

4.1.2 Position at the formal labour market

Table 4.2. shows the respondents' position at the formal labour market before migration to the Netherlands. For all migrants this is the position at the labour market in their country of origin, except for Ade, Max and Antony, who were studying abroad.

Table 4.2: Formal labour market position prior to migration to the Netherlands

Name	Position at the labour market	Country
Amadou	Lecturer at the Law Faculty of the university	Mauritania
Hmed	Teacher Geography at a secondary school	Sudan
Julie	Delegate Great Lake District at an international organisation	Congo
Fatma	-	-
Ade	Student	Nigeria; United Kingdom
Bisi	Employer in World Bank project on rural areas and farming	Nigeria
	Employer at an environmental organisation	

²⁵ Respondents' primary and secondary education are not included in this table. Most respondents had this basic education in their country of origin. One exception is Fatma, who fled her home country Somalia when she was very young.

Name	Position at the labour market	Country
Alphonse	Student	Congo
Joseph	Employer at an international organisation on sustainable forest management (a cooperation between the Cameroonian and Dutch government)	Cameroon
Max	Student	Congo; France
Antony	Student Volunteer in projects with street children and addicted people	Kenya; Sweden Kenya
Charles	Student	Liberia
Fridah	Employer at The Nation Newspaper Owner of a hairdresser's saloon	Kenya

Not every respondent had entered the formal labour market yet. Some were still studying and Fatma was too young to be formally employed. For those respondents who were active at the labour market, it can be said that they had good positions, as they were for instance teaching at a secondary school, employed at the university or involved in international organisations.

4.1.3 Social status: Departure status

In the theoretical chapter the risk of status loss for migrants was mentioned. To see if this is the case, the social status that respondents used to have in their home country (*departure status*) should be compared to the social status they currently have in their host country (*entry status*). This section discusses the way respondents perceived their *departure status* to be, when looking back now.

The respondents in this research have ingredients for having a high departure status. They are highly-educated and most of them had good positions at the labour market. Moreover, the migrants were all people who could afford to leave their country of origin. It is often forgotten that migration or fleeing is a costly affair that is not a possibility for everyone (Castles & Miller, 2009). A certain position and capital is needed to be able to leave your country of origin and go to Europe. Table 4.3 gives an overview of how the respondents describe their departure status.

Table 4.3: Respondents' perception of their departure status

Name	Quote
Amadou	Very high. The reason I got into trouble, was exactly because of my high status. Because of my education, because of the fact that I was teaching at the university and because of my role as spokesman of an organisation.
Hmed	In my village you either take up farming, or you help your father with the cows. There is no school, so you need the right connections to be able to go to school. I was a role model, because I was one of the few who were able to study.
Julie	In Congo I was a respected woman. I had a high position. I was a representative of an international organisation.
Fatma	We were very well-off in the Emirates. There are three ranks in society. At the absolute top you find the locals. Then there are all other Arabs, including us, because Somalia is part of the Arab League. We have decent jobs, like teachers, health care workers, et cetera. At the bottom you'll find people from India, Philippines, Pakistan, they are treated like they are nothing. So, we were well-off.
Ade	I suppose to say that my family in Nigeria belonged to the middle class. Somewhere in the middle. Not at the top and I think not at the bottom either.

Name	Quote
Bisi	I was a highly educated woman, since I was living in the city that was not an exception. If I had lived in the village, then it would be different. Normally, there is no money stimulating personal development and as a girl you are supposed to marry at a particular age.
Alphonse	My societal position in Congo was just normal. Everybody in my surroundings was active. People were busy either with studying, trading, working... I am not so much occupied with that status issue.
Joseph	-
Max	I studied medicine for 4.5 years. [...] That gives you really a high status.
Antony	But this one, the social one... [status, AS]. I don't know. If you go there [Kenya, AS], you could ask them for me. Then you can verify what people think about me. [...] I don't want to praise myself, I have difficulty with this.
Charles	I was well-off. I had everything I wished for in my life. My family had huge plots of lands with plantations. We were doing business and were engaged in export. [...] And now I am here, because I was able to fly and pay for it.
Fridah	-

Answers of the respondents on the question what status they ascribe to themselves when they were living in their home countries, vary from 'just normal' to 'very high'. Not for every respondent status is an issue they are aware of, this probably also has to do with a certain amount of modesty. Like Antony says: '*I don't want to praise myself*'. However, it seems that most respondents are conscious of the relatively high status they occupied in their home country.

4.1.4 Migration motivation

Research confirms that it is important to distinguish pro-active (voluntary) from reactive (involuntary) migration (see for example Richmond, 1993). In case of the twelve respondents, some chose to leave their country voluntary, while others were forced to leave. One can understand that the reason why they left their home country has serious consequences for their lives in the country of destination.

Table 4.4: Migration motivation

Name	Country of origin	Migration motive
Amadou	Mauritania	Refugee
Hmed	Sudan	Refugee
Julie	Congo	Love
Fatma	Somalia	Refugee
Ade	Nigeria	Work
Bisi	Nigeria	Study
Alphonse	Congo	Refugee
Joseph	Cameroon	Love
Max	Togo	Love / Ambitions
Antony	Kenya	Study
Charles	Liberia	Refugee
Fridah	Kenya	Love

Table 4.4 lists the migration motives of the respondents. They are quite diverse. Motives vary from respondents coming to the Netherlands for the love of their lives to respondents fleeing persecution. Five respondents are political refugees, four came to the Netherlands because of love or marriage, two came primarily here for study reasons and one came here as a skilled migrant; he was offered a job, because of his skills.²⁶

Especially the refugees themselves emphasise the distinction between migrants and refugees. Since it is not possible to generalise their stories, an overview is given of commonalities in what they see as important consequences of their forced movement for their position in the Dutch society. First, respondents who came here as refugees experience a kind of 'split', which makes acceptance of living their lives here and not in their country of origin harder. Refugees are living in two worlds; they are here in the Netherlands, but at the same time they want to be somewhere else and their thoughts are always with their home country. Amadou tells:

We refugees have a lot of problems. Look, unlike migrants, who chose to come to the Netherlands, we were forced to leave. We are always in two worlds. It is a feeling, you hope to return one day. Even when you know you won't, you still hope that it will happen and do everything to make that possible. Every refugee is in such a dilemma. [...] If we weren't *forced* to leave, we would have a better life here. We would accept this society as it is and we wouldn't be focused at those two worlds: what can I mean for the people there? How can I help? How can I integrate here? What can I contribute to this society? Always you experience this split.

A consequence of these two worlds is that there is always this feeling of letting people down. You cannot be at two places at the same time, while both sides have needs and have expectations from you. Despite that the refugee respondents can rationally reason that there was no other option for them to leave their country, this feeling is omnipresent.

A second consequence of the flight is that refugees often have to deal with psychosocial issues. The risk of psychosocial problems is much larger in the case of forced movement, than in the case of voluntary movement (Berry, 1997b). After all, there is the stressful situation of the migration itself and the circumstances in the country of origin that made these people flee. This can be traumatic. The nights of a refugee cannot be compared to these of a migrant, let alone those of an ordinary Dutch person. They are mentally travelling 24/7 between here and the places and people they have left behind:

It's very complicated. A part of me is here, the other part of me is still there. That's very complicated. Sometimes these are conflicting elements. Here you have your daily obligations – I have to work, the kids are with me all week. So, I have to work, at 5am I cycle home like a maniac to prepare dinner and they have to go to bed on time. Well, next day you're going to work again. And in the meanwhile you have to live. I want to keep writing, researching. I am trying to start projects for Mauritania as well. Well, that is very complicated. And you have to be able to combine all these things. (Amadou)

Third, the difference between migrants and refugees comes down to the difference between anticipatory and acute movement. The refugee respondents had no idea where they would end up. I asked them if they left their country with the idea in mind that the Netherlands would be their destination. Two examples:

²⁶ A skilled migrant is a migrant worker who, because of his or her skills or acquired professional experience, is usually granted preferential treatment regarding admission to a host country (and is therefore subject to fewer restrictions regarding length of stay, change of employment and family reunification). Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM) www.iom.int. Accessed 10 June 2011.

No, it was not my intention; it was faith that brought me here. Saudi-Arabia was an option, but I did not succeed in arranging it. [...] Most preparations were done by people I did not know and I also did not know anything about the things they were arranging for me. [Hmed]

It was absolutely not my design to stay in the Netherlands. I was on my way to America. That is what I wanted. I had family there. But I got caught up in the Netherlands. I always thought: okay, I'll leave one day, but nothing has come of it. [Charles]

As a consequence, in most cases they made no preparations for their journey at all. Moreover, the fact that the migration is unprepared means that the refugees were engaged in jobs, a study, family matters, relationships, a network of friends and acquaintances, et cetera at the time of movement. They all were 'in the middle of something' when they had to leave. All these ties were severed immediately.

Hence, the entry points for the migrant and refugee respondents are totally different. Section 4.2 will show that these different entry points create different opportunity structures once being in the Netherlands. In the continuation of this thesis, I will use the word 'migrant' to refer to the respondents in this study in general. When the distinction between migrants and refugees turns out to be relevant I will explicitly mention this.

4.1.5 Expectations from the migration

One of the things that is effected by the difference in migration motivation, are the expectations that the respondents have of their migration. They came to the Netherlands with certain expectations in mind. They had hopes, dreams and fears. It was found that respondents had a quite high departure status. This can be a predictor of very high expectations and hence disillusion when these are not met (Berry 1997a). Did respondents indeed had high hopes for their journey? With which expectations did they cross the Dutch border?

The acute movement of refugees and their uncertainty about their destination makes that their expectations differ from those of the migrants. There was no time to make preparations for their migration. In some cases, they were not even able to take belongings, such as credentials or passports, with them. What is the effect on their expectations?

The first thing that can be said is that a number of refugee respondents says to have no expectations at all. On the one hand because they had really no idea what to expect. Charles says: *'I had not a clue what to expect. I had absolutely nothing. I wanted to go to America. I was only thinking: what the hell am I doing here?'* On the other hand, because of the presumption that whatever they want to reach, they have to do it themselves: *'Expectations? I don't have them. I live my life and have no expectations of anybody. [...] I expect nothing from nobody'* [Alphonse].

Second, the expectations of the refugees who did express the prospects they had in mind of their migration, were very basic. Essentially, they have come here with the hope to save their lives. As the reason that they are here is that they risked persecution or feared for their lives, prior concern is to survive. Amadou tells: *'My only aim was to save my life. I wasn't thinking: I want to work for this organisation or at that office, or I am going to be rich. No, not at all'*.

Once being here, in first instance all attention goes to surviving and receiving a legal status. That is what their expectations from living in the Netherlands are mainly focused on. Especially in this first period in the Netherlands, it is living life day by day. The refugee respondents are not occupied with planning their lives in the Netherlands far ahead:

I didn't have high expectations, because I did not know where we were going to. Once here, I wasn't thinking about expectations either, I was thinking of how to get my residence permit and when I received that, I was glad I could work and study. [Fatma]

Next to these basic expectations, there is the hope to continue the fight for their ideals here, which is in most cases the root cause of the fact that they could not stay in their country of origin any longer:

My hope was that this country would fight against the violation of human rights in my country. That was my hope. Just at least continue my battle. And I hoped that I could do that with a little help from the government. Or from the people. [Amadou]

What is remarkable is that the expectations are not sky-high. Do the stories of the 'regular' migrants differ in this respect? In some cases they came along with a partner or came to work or study here, so they had spent time to, for example, choose a place to live or a university to study and matters like residence permits and accommodation were arranged on forehand. Hence, their point of departure is totally different from that of the refugees. As a result, the migrants who were able to plan their movement in advance, had more concrete expectations of a life in Holland. A difference can be made between personal and professional expectations.

Concerning their private lives, expectations are focused on, for example, finishing a study or building a future with a (new) partner. This is contrary to the existing image of African migrants coming to Europe in search of a better life. What is overlooked is that these people also come here simply because of curiosity. Just like European students go studying abroad for a while or like adults who decide to emigrate, because they want another environment to live in: *'I wanted to study, I just wanted to see how it's done, I mean agriculture. I had never been outside of Africa before, so what is it like?'* [Bisi].

Four of the respondents had lived in Europe before, which influenced their expectations as well. For example Fridah, who lived for eight years in Italy, says she knew it is not easy to gain a place in society and that she had to do her very best to adjust herself to the Dutch society. And Julie puts it this way:

Because I studied in Belgium, I knew the mentality in Europe. Hence, I came here with no expectations at all. If I want to reach something, I will have to do it myself. Because of my experiences in Belgium and the way I was raised my expectation was: expect nothing from nobody' [Julie]

Next to these personal expectations, there are also expectations about the professional life of the migrants, especially with regard to development cooperation. These expectations vary widely. Max, for example, left Africa to be able to do more for 'his' continent. Joseph says that he knew one thing for sure about his stay in the Netherlands, and that is that he wanted to work in the development sector. He says:

"I am in paradise; in the Netherlands, that's where it's at! Now I am in contact with the architects of development in Africa, the source of all knowledge!" [...] My expectation was, okay, I will finally end up in the right place, where decisions are made, where I can get the space to increase my knowledge and where I can get more influence in changes of my country of origin. [Joseph]

However, not all migrants have such high hopes. Alphonse says: *'I don't have many expectations from the Dutch development sector. [...] It is politics. It is the development policy of the Netherlands concerning their partner countries. It is not my policy regarding my country of origin.'* The question is of course what has become true of these expectations when looking back. This is dealt with further

on as part of section 4.2, which is about factors *during* the acculturation process that influence the social position of the migrants.

4.2 Factors during acculturation

The Analytical Framework (see Figure 2.2 on page 15) highlighted a number of factors that arise *during* the acculturation process of the migrants in the Netherlands and that are of influence on their social position in the Dutch society. This chapter will discuss these factors, namely the education respondents have had here, their position at the Dutch labour market, their perceived entry status, a retrospect of the expectations they had prior to their migration, the expectations that are imposed on the migrants by others, the (trans)national contacts they maintain, the cultural distance they experience between their ethnic culture and the mainstream Dutch culture, their identity formation and finally the perceived image forming in society.

4.2.1 Education

Almost all respondents had a university degree when they came here. Table 4.5 presents the attended higher education of the respondents after they moved to the Netherlands. It was found that almost all finished a higher education during their stay in the Netherlands as well. Exception is Fridah, who did not obtain any credentials yet, but is making plans to start a study soon.

Their higher education, attended both in home and host countries, is expected to be beneficial to obtaining a social position here, since in the theoretical chapter it was said that a higher education serves as a predictor of greater opportunities and lower stress in the country of destination (Beiser et al, 1988). What advantages are attached to a high education in the respondents' perception? And did they face any obstacles as well?

In literature it was found that a high education adjusts migrants to features of their new society. It serves as a kind of pre-acculturation to the language, history, values and norms of the new culture (Berry, 1997a). The migrants themselves say that being highly educated indeed brings advantages in this sense. It makes that you are open to new people and new circumstances and helps to understand the society around you much better, so you can more easily find your way through it: *'Education opens your eyes, because you can view situations in the context and compare them. Moreover, I am a more open person thanks to my education'* [Amadou]. Or as Alphonse puts it: *'An education helps you to better understand the society around you. Especially in the Dutch society. Everything starts with reading and writing. If you're not good in that, it is very hard to gain a place in the Netherlands'*.

For one of the migrants, being highly educated has a financial advantage as well, because he is officially recognised to be a skilled migrant. As a skilled migrant he can lay claim to a tax relief. This advantage does not apply to the other highly-educated respondents, since they are not attracted to the Netherlands because of their skills.

The example of the skilled migrant shows that education can serve as a correlate of other resources as well. Having a high education can result in a better occupational status and a higher income for example. These are protective factors in the acculturation process (Berry, 1997a). This sounds quite logic, but the migrants experiences show that this is more complicated than it seems. There is a reverse as well. Therefore, it is important to show the obstacles respondents face despite or because of their high education.

Table 4.5: Respondents' higher education after migration to the Netherlands²⁷

Name	Higher education in the Netherlands	Institution
Amadou	PhD in Law	Radboud University Nijmegen
Hmed	Social Work	Hogeschool Arnhem Nijmegen (HAN), University of applied sciences
Julie	Development Problems PhD in Anthropology	Leiden University Erasmus University; African Study Centre
Fatma	Journalism (not finished) Courses Languages and Cultures of the Middle East Courses interpreting and translation Courses Somali writing and grammar	Fontys, University of applied sciences Radboud University Nijmegen Hogeschool voor Tolken en Vertalen (HTV) Attended in the United Kingdom (UK)
Ade	Master of Business Administration (MBA)	Attended by means of distance learning at a university in the UK
Bisi	Agriculture	Hogere Agrarische School (HAS), University of applied sciences
Alphonse	Teacher training Mathematics Journalism	Fontys, University of applied sciences
Joseph	Advanced Master in International Development	Radboud University Nijmegen
Max	-	-
Antony	International Development Studies PhD candidate International Development Studies	Utrecht University Utrecht University
Charles	Social Work Cultural Social Education Communication Science (not finished yet)	HAN, University of applied sciences HAN, University of applied sciences University of Amsterdam
Fridah	-	-

The first major problem that occurs is the devaluation, non recognition or absence of diploma's that migrants obtained in Africa: *'I was a graduated lawyer, but here I had to start all over again. My Mauritanian degree is not recognised here'* [Amadou]. In case of refugee respondents, credentials are often absent, since they were not in the position to take their belongings with them. They come here without any documents, not able to officially show what education they have had and what they are capable of. As a consequence, in the Netherlands they have to start all over with their education. This makes working (far) below your level a common experience for respondents:

I passed the state examination the first time. Then I went to 'Bureau Nieuwkomers' and said: I have this geology diploma, I want to study geology here, so I want to get a diploma that is recognised here or I want a job in this direction. They said to help me, but in the end they only translated my diploma to Dutch standards and there was no valuation of my study or work experience at all. They simply told me: in your field of expertise there is no work, go find something else. Then I decided to do factory work. [Hmed]

Besides, to be able to study, the migrants have to learn the Dutch language very quickly. This, plus the feeling of no appreciation for what you have reached in the past causes a lot of stress. Amadou tells: *'I was accepted by UAF as refugee student and was allowed to study at the university, but I had only six months to learn the Dutch language. This was really a very stressful period.'*²⁸

²⁷ Unless stated otherwise, respondents finished the studies mentioned and obtained a diploma. Regarding the institute at which the education was attended, 'university of applied sciences' refers to the Dutch term 'Hoger-Beroepsopleiding' (HBO).

When migration to the Netherlands is properly planned on forehand, in the case of a job offer or scholarship for example, this diploma problem is absent. But next to the formal issue of devaluation of credentials there is a more informal problem that has to do with image formation and stereotyping. Asking a respondent to mention (dis)advantages of a high education she says:

Whether you are educated or not is not the first thing people think about. Maybe an advantage is that it gives you an edge, because everybody is expecting you to come out stupid, to don't know anything and most of the time okay, I play along, but I'm not stupid. So I think, to that extent, yes, it is an advantage, but it really makes me feel 'why am I here'? Why can't people take you serious? [Bisi]

A high education certainly has advantages for the respondents. It makes them more open minded and shapes their frames of reference in a way that makes it easier for them to find their way in the Dutch society. This benefits their acculturation process. Despite the fact that most respondents were highly-educated by their arrival, almost all chose to start another study in the Netherlands. Why they did so can partly be explained by a shared experience: in Africa choosing a study is not per definition a choice you make yourself. Being in the Netherlands, they had the chance to study what they really want to:

I studied economics. My father chose it for me, because it would make me capable to run our family business. In Africa it is customary that your father chooses your study. So now I had the chance to make a choice myself. [Charles]

However, more important is the discouraging finding that most respondents started a study out of necessity, because of the devaluation of their African credentials. It turns out that being highly educated is by no means a guarantee for more possibilities, a good occupational status and less stress in the host country. In the experience of the respondents, having a Dutch diploma is an essential condition to obtain a position in the Dutch society.

4.2.2 Position at the formal labour market

An important element of acculturation process of migrants is their position on the Dutch labour market. Having a job gives people the possibility to build a life here, to save money and to obtain a position in society. This section discusses the respondents' position at the formal labour market after their migration to the Netherlands (see Table 4.6 for an overview). Since the way to obtain this position was for most respondents not that straightforward, attention is paid to the obstacles they faced.

Although two of the respondents are (involuntary) unemployed in the Netherlands, a general conclusion is that they are doing well at the Dutch labour market at the moment. Respondents' current positions seems promising. They run their own businesses, are employed in the development sector or work as scientific researcher, for instance. Regarding the unemployed respondents, Friday got fired because of the economic crisis and after Julie finished her PhD, she did not succeed in finding a job yet.

²⁸ *Universitair Asiel Fonds* (UAF) is a foundation that supports highly skilled refugees to realise their study plans and to find a place at the labour market conform their education and capacities. For more information, view www.uaf.nl.

Table 4.6: Formal labour market position after migration to the Netherlands

Name	Current position
Amadou	Policy Officer at a migrant organisation Location Coordinator at a Dutch welfare organisation
Hmed	Employer at a welfare organisation
Julie	In search of employment in the Netherlands Freelance lecturer at universities in Congo
Fatma	Owens a business in translating and interpreting
Ade	Business engineer
Bisi	Student Human Geographies
Alphonse	Writer / independent publicist Owens a business in translating and interpreting
Joseph	Program officer Migration and Development at a Dutch organisation focused on international cooperation
Max	Owens a business as professional trainer/coach Intercultural Communication
Antony	PhD Researcher International Development Studies at Utrecht University Research fellow
Charles	Owner of a Dutch foundation that aims to bring people with different backgrounds together by means of dance, music and theatre.
Fridah	In search of employment

Tables 4.2 and 4.6 might imply that respondents straightforwardly passed on from the labour market of their country of origin to the Dutch labour market. However, in most cases this transition did not go as smoothly as it may seem. At the one hand, respondents did not always immediately move to the Netherlands, but ended up here after living in other countries. At these ‘transit stations’ most of them were either active at the local labour market or studying. For instance, Antony studied in Sweden, Max worked in Italy and studied in France and Ade studied and worked in the UK. At the other hand, once being in the Netherlands respondents went through a whole preliminary process before obtaining the position as listed in the table. Exception is Ade who came here because he was offered a job. His position at the Dutch labour market was secured before he even arrived.

Every respondent has travelled its own route, but there are some similar obstacles they faced in the process to obtain a position at the Dutch labour market. Two obstacles leading to jobs below their level were already discussed in the previous section: problems with the Dutch language and the defective recognition of credentials:

On the outbreak of the war, I wasn’t graduated yet. So I fled without any documents, nothing. [...] Here I got a job immediately, as a factory worker. I was wrapping up parcels there for five years. The first three years I worked 80 hours a week. All three years, every week. [Charles]

A third obstacle is the lack of (informal) networks which can support the migrants in finding a job. According to the respondents these networks can help to make oneself visible to possible employers and to get a notion of the supply side. However, especially in the beginning of their stay in the Netherlands, networks are limited or, mainly in case of refugees, absent. Julie obtained her doctorate at the Africa Studies Centre (ASC) in Leiden in 2008. she is looking for a job appointment ever since:

I have highly educated colleagues who still have no job either. But they have other advantages which I haven’t: they have a network here. You know how it works: friends tell each other ‘Come to me, I have a job for you’. That’s an advantage I haven’t got. Your network is very important. [Julie]

Among the respondents the awareness that having a network is essential, is clearly present. As a trainer in intercultural communication and career development, Max trains other migrants. He tells them to start doing voluntary work: *'It doesn't matter what you do, as you will get in touch with Dutch people and they have a network. If you make one person happy in the Netherlands, at least twenty people will get to know that'*.

Interviews with the respondents show again the importance for a differentiation in migration motives. In its Integration Barometer 2009 the Dutch Council for Refugees states that migration of refugees is not work-related (Klaver & Van der Welle, 2009). They do not come here with the intention to work and that makes their entry point different. Family-based immigrants faster succeed in obtaining a position at the labour market than refugees (Nicolaas et al., 2005). This could be due to a number of obstacles that refugees face in addition to those discussed above.

First, the refugees in this study face a large interruption in their employment history. They were in the middle of something when they had to leave their home country. For instance, Charles and Alphonse were studying when they were suddenly forced to leave and their study was interrupted. This also goes for refugee respondents who were engaged in employment. In addition to this sudden stop of their activities, they were not allowed to enter the Dutch labour market while they were waiting for their permission to stay. So, being able and being allowed to enter the labour market is a time-consuming process. As a consequence, they miss work experience and when they are finally allowed to enter the Dutch labour market, they have gaps in their curriculum.

Moreover, as pointed out by the Integration Barometer 2009, the pressure to earn money is much higher in case of refugees (Klaver & Van der Welle, 2009). For instance, if they want to be able to let their family come to the Netherlands as well, they need to have a certain amount of money at their bank accounts. Besides, respondents say that there is the pressure of sending remittances to the people who have stayed behind to make their lives more bearable.

Finally, some of the refugees indicate that they have suffered from depressions, due to traumatic experiences of their flight. All these factors together make that refugees, more than regular migrants, have to deal with complex and multiple problems at the same time, which is not beneficial to the process of finding a job.

There are two notable consequences for both the migrants and the refugees of the fact that obtaining a position at the Dutch labour market is a complex process. The first was discussed in the previous section: almost all respondents started studying in the Netherlands. Having had an education in the Netherlands and hence possessing a Dutch diploma substantially increases chances at the labour market (De Koning et al., 2008). Second, respondents are actively engaged in voluntary work. Volunteering serves as an alternative that is favourable to doing nothing. Moreover, respondents see it as beneficiary to their integration in the Dutch society:

I had my kids and I was in a country I did not know, so I invested in know-how of this country where I would raise my children. I did a lot of volunteering. For example, I was reading mother, handcraft mother, library mother, swimming mother all those things I did. Look, if you come here and you don't even know which books are good for your children, you don't know the language ... By being involved at school, I could see what's happening. I talked to other mothers and heard in what kind of world my children are living. [...] Despite my credentials and my work experience in Congo, the first ten years of my stay here I only did voluntary work at their school. [...] Now I am not volunteering anymore, because I can't pay the school of my children from that. [Julie]

To sum up, most respondents had to go to a complex and time-consuming process to reach the position they currently have. This is mainly due to the non recognition of their African credentials,

defective knowledge of the Dutch language and the lack of networks. For the refugee respondents this was even more complicated. Interruption in their formal employment, the pressure to earn money and a combination of physical and mental problems as a consequence of their flight are additional obstacles. As a consequence of this slow process, respondents are engaged in either voluntary work or studying here, which turned out to be beneficial to finding their way in the Dutch society.

4.2.3 Social status: Entry status

Section 4.1.3 showed respondents' perception on their departure status was. This section discusses the social status they occupied in the Netherlands: their *entry status*. Judging on their current educational and occupational position (see Tables 4.5 and 4.6) it is to be expected that the respondents have a good status in the Dutch society. However, a common feature that migrants have to deal with is a loss in social status (Berry, 1997a). Do the respondents indeed experience differences between their departure and entry status? If yes, what are consequences of this status loss for them? Quotes in Table 4.7 show how the respondents perceive their entry status and whether they experience a status difference or not.

Table 4.7: Respondents' perception of their Entry Status

Name	Quote
Amadou	I left as a man with a high status and arrived here as a refugee. So, status difference? Yes, I suffered a lot from it. People did not understand what I was talking about, while I was thinking: why can't I participate without having to start all over again?
Hmed	If I compare my situation with that of Ethiopian refugees coming to Sudan in the 70s and 80s, it's better to be a refugee in the Netherlands. The association in Sudan was: you're a refugee so you're nothing. People here look in a different way to refugees. At least I have that feeling.
Julie	In Congo I was in a totally different position than when I came here. Even although it was a conscious choice to migrate to the Netherlands. Here you are nothing and that is hard. That is the most difficult part. You traversed a whole path in your country of origin and you arrive here and you are nothing.
Fatma	We were well-off [in the Emirates, AS]. And then you come to the Netherlands and then you notice, okay, people are all more equal here, but this is equality <i>on paper</i> . I see that the mentality of people is changing. People stop and stare at you. That's cruel, it's hard.
Ade	Coming to the Netherlands...it's a bit different, because I didn't have to look for a job. First of all, I had a place to live, because part of the relocation package was that they find me a place to live. So, that was no problem either. I suppose it's also different, because I have a British passport, compared to if you have a non-European passport. So, I can't tell you what it would be like if I had to look for a job, if I didn't have a British passport... When I came here, I already had a job, so I had a salary if you like. All I had to do was to go to the bank and say: 'I want to open a bank account'. And they say: 'Where do you work?' 'These are my details.' 'We want a copy of your passport.' 'Here it is.' So that wasn't any problem, from that point of view. So, no, I didn't really experience status differences. No, no.
Bisi	-
Alphonse	My first impressions of the Netherlands were not so much about my position, like: I used to live there in my own country and here I am a guest. No, that thought did not occupy my mind.

Name	Quote
Joseph	In Cameroon I belonged to the majority and I worked for the participation of minorities, especially the Pygmies. And when I came to the Netherlands, I thought: oh, now the Africans in the Netherlands are the same as the Pygmies in Cameroon. My situation changed from being part of the majority to belonging to the minority.
Max	-
Antony	Reasons why people came here are different. So for me, it was not a fight, escaping from something. I came here out of choice. I chose for Holland and I have no problem with it. What I can do, hasn't changed. So I don't feel that things have changed for me in a way that I experienced a real status difference.
Charles	I noticed that I was different. For me it was a tough situation to get used to. When I lived in Liberia, I travelled to Italy once, for business. That was totally different from coming back now as a refugee. I had nothing and it was a great shock to queue up for a meal, while I always took care of my own food. I faced a side of life that I did not know until then. That was very hard.
Fridah	No, I can't say I experienced a status difference. It was my own choice to live here. [...] If you sit down and say: I'm from Africa, nothing will happen. I am in the Netherlands here, in a different culture, so I have to adapt. Nobody obliged me to come to the Netherlands.

Once here, respondents discover that education, titles, prior occupations or the status or money their family had in their home country, do not count here. They realise that they have to start at the bottom and that is not easy. Table 4.7 shows that although not every respondent paid attention to a possible difference in status, most were conscious that their new position as migrant in the Netherlands differed from that of a local in their home country. This sense of a loss in status is in particular present among the refugee respondents. Evidently, it is hard when you are forced to leave your home country as a respected, highly educated person with a good job or promising study and then arrive here as a refugee having to survive. A general impression among refugee migrants is that this status loss is stressful, especially because it is caused by factors that are out of their own control.

In the way respondents deal with this status difference, their migration motive plays a role as well. When their migration was a conscious choice, dealing with possible differences between departure and entry status seems easier. The most important reason for this is that necessary preconditions for them are set (see for instance the quote of Ade). Next, they have a 'mental advantage'. It was their own choice to migrate to the Netherlands, so they have to make the most of it themselves. For refugees goes that the journey to the Netherlands was absolutely not their design. So, again the entry point that a migrant has when he or she comes to the Netherlands is essential. This is confirmed by 'regular' migrant Antony:

The entry point decides the rules of what you can do and what you cannot do. I call them opportunity structures. Some people can fit in them and then it becomes an opportunity and for others it is a constraint. So, in my case there was no constraint. [Antony]

However, it is not to say that regular migrants do not encounter any problems at all. A person can achieve a certain status based on merit, but status is also the position that others ascribe to you. The entry status of the respondents is strongly influenced by the way the Dutch society views them. As a consequence, both refugees and migrants have to deal with image formation in our society. Section 4.2.9 elaborates on this topic, but I will already give an example that shows how prevailing views in our society can influence the social status of the respondents: *'When I came here, being black was immediately associated with being poor and stupid. You are visibly different and it's annoying that these differences are immediately associated with the stereotypes behind it'* [Julie]. Finally, as

previously discussed, the absence of networks and contacts and not speaking Dutch constrain their participation in society and limit the possibilities for obtaining a higher social status.

Some respondents are not so much occupied with this status issue, but most respondents are conscious of their entry status being lower than the status they had in their country of origin. At least, in their perception. What should be mentioned in this respect is the positive attitude of the respondents that keeps popping up in their stories. Despite of the obstacles that respondents face in obtaining a position or status here, they do not give up. Instead they count their blessings and are positive about the position they have obtained in the course of time: *'I think I can say I have a good position. At least, I think I participate and I work on the empowerment of my group, the refugees. I think I am integrated quite well'* [Amadou]. Hmed says: *'I feel accepted here. Looking back, I am annoyed about the time I spent in the centre for asylum seekers, when I had to sit and wait. That time is lost. Further, I am positive'*.

4.2.4 Expectations of the migration

Section 4.1.5 dealt with the expectations that respondents had of their migration to the Netherlands. It was discussed in the theoretical chapter that not meeting these expectations can be a disillusion and can cause stress. In this way it could negatively influence a migrant's acculturation process. Looking back now, does their life in Holland live up to their expectations? Were they in line with reality or did the respondents need to adjust them, because reality turned out to be different?

Respondents that said to have no expectations also did not have to adjust them. For these respondents, having no expectations from nobody at all, assuming that they have to do it all on their own, mainly functions as a kind of self preservation: *'In terms of the Dutch society – no, I don't have that much expectations. If you have expectations then ... if you do not make them, then you have a problem'* [Antony]. In contrast, respondents who had considerably higher expectations had to deal with disappointment in many cases. Especially expectations that had to do with development cooperation and their role in it had to be adjusted severely. Although fighting for a better situation in their home country is their own priority, respondents come to the conclusion that people in the Netherlands are not occupied with it at all. Amadou:

You have to readjust them completely. You discover that the government has its own interests and that the people here don't even know of the existence of Mauritania. You have to start at the bottom. In Mauritania, I was thinking: everyone in the world knows what happened to our people, but once here, you realise that people don't know anything about it. That is what you realise.

So, while for migrants themselves the situation in their home country is the order of the day, many Dutch people do not give it a moment's thought. The idealised picture of the Dutch people and the Dutch society as 'agents of development' had to be corrected. Besides, their own role within this development sector has to be adjusted as well. Max, who left Africa to improve the continent, says:

My ambition is the same, but I adjusted my own role. It has become less personal. When I left, I thought: when I come back, I will become president and change things for the good. Now I am satisfied with influencing small things and processes.

Another issue which is difficult for respondents is that every little thing that has to be arranged takes so much time. Thinking back on his expectations, Hmed tells: *'I expected respect and I received it, but the opportunities I expected for me, I had to reconsider'*. An important reason for this is the bureaucratic system that respondents cannot avoid. Every application demands a great deal of

paperwork. And while they want to study, work or find a place to live, rules and regulations force them to stand still and do nothing.

There are positive sounds as well. Respondents recognise that they experience opportunities here which they would not have had in Africa:

This is a country that has offered me a lot. I can cycle among cows at good cycle paths. I had the opportunity to finish my dissertation, because there are such good libraries here. I would not have been able to do that in Congo. [Julie]

Especially refugees are glad with the way they were welcomed here. Despite this feeling, all respondents have to deal with a smaller group in society which does not receive them with open arms. This has become more obvious after 9/11 (see section 2.2.9 on image formation). Hence, the biggest disappointment is the experience of not being welcome here. Although they are living according to the rules, there is still that feeling of not being accepted by society:

What I think that is really very sad, is that... I live according to the rules. Officially, I am no Liberian anymore, I am Dutch. I only have one nationality and that is the Dutch nationality. If I go to Liberia now, I have to apply for a visa. My children only speak Dutch. I did not even teach them English, because I have the opinion that the Netherlands comes first. And I am crazy about this country, I am in love. But what I think is too bad, is that there still is that feeling that I am not home. And it's not good to have that feeling of 'hey, I live in Holland, but maybe this country doesn't want me here'. [Charles]

In conclusion, expectations and reality clearly not always correspond with each other. In particular someone's reference frame is of major importance. For example, Joseph's expectations of the Dutch society were based on a couple of Dutch colleagues in Cameroon who were experts in and very sympathetic towards development cooperation. Here he discovered that that image was not applicable to every Dutchman. And for Charles, who knew Europe from visiting in a summer holiday, the confrontation with the reality of living in Holland was totally different than for Julie, who had lived and studied in Belgium for some time and was prepared for the European mentality. When expectations do not live up to reality, this results in disappointment and can be a threat to the respondents' social position here. Especially rejection of the Dutch society, because of not feeling welcome here, is a danger. It would be a logical reaction to turn away from society when you feel not appreciated. Again, the mentality of the respondents which is sometimes remarkably positive, is noteworthy.

4.2.5 Expectations imposed on the migrants

Just as the respondents have expectations for their stay here, the host and home country have expectations regarding the migrants as well. For instance, the Dutch society expects them to integrate, speak the Dutch language, find a job, and hence participate in society. Previous sections showed that the respondents in this study participate well in the Dutch society, but it was not always easy to reach the position they have now. It is energy consuming to meet all expectations that this society imposes on them. Next to the expectations of the Dutch society, there are expectations coming from the country of origin. What do these expectations look like and how do the respondents deal with them?

To most respondents the issue of expectations arising from people in their home country sounds familiar. Three kinds of expectations can be distinguished in this sense. First, there are expectations from family or close friends. This is about helping without asking. Required needs mostly relate to direct help, for instance medicines or school fees. Fulfilling these implicit expectations is self-evident

to them. Not surprising, since it is about people who are very close to the respondents. Moreover, the migrants here are indispensable for the social security for their family in Africa. Because a social security system is often lacking, for most African families their children are their insurance: *'so that means that anyone who is there, has to take care of them'* [Antony].

Second, next to these implicit expectations there are explicit expectations, asked for by people in the networks of the migrants in their home country. These networks turn out to be very extensive: *'they don't know me personally, but they have once been a classmate of my father. Or the cook of my grandfather. Or the neighbour of the cousin of... Suddenly everybody knows you'* [Fatma]. Requests concern material goods, such as money or medicines, as well as the immaterial. Respondents are asked for their moral support, to mediate in conflicts or to be their confidential adviser:

People there listen to me. My brothers and sisters, when one gets married, when they want to buy a chicken or a donkey, always they ask for my advice. [...] Even when I say: you are there, I am here, I don't know! They keep asking me. If you want it or not you take part in life over there. [Amadou]

The reason why these people come to the respondents for help is mainly based on the belief that they are rich and prominent people, because they live in Europe now. Alphonse says: *'People in Congo expect people from the diaspora to do a lot for Congo, politically and socially.'* Migrants are seen as omniscient persons who can help in case of need. After all, they are the ones who succeeded in leaving their country of origin and start a life in Europe.

Finally there are expectations that are imposed by the migrants themselves. They arise from a sense of responsibility for the situation in their home country. This feeling is amplified by actual visits to their country of origin, by things they see when walking around. Fatma tells: *'You see people starving. Literally dying of hunger. [...] So, these expectations arise from myself. If that doesn't touch you, you're an unscrupulous person'*. The feeling comes up that they need to take action. Bisi tells:

Of course, sometimes I do send things, but that's out of my own choice to do. Nobody is waiting for me. But in the general sense of being a part in the development in Nigeria, yes. I feel that is something that I should do as a Nigerian. That's a feeling inside of me.

How the respondents deal with these expectations is very personal. For some, these expectations are a great pressure. This can be illustrated by quoting Hmed:

People call and they need something what I can't arrange for them. Then I feel bad. If someone is ill and they ask for money and I haven't got it, I don't feel good. I know they think: 'he is well-off, but he doesn't want to help us'. [...] For them I am a person that can help in cases of emergency. If I don't live up to their expectations they have no excuse for me: 'he can help, but he didn't'. You understand? [...] Everything I say, that I have a hard time here and that I have to help everybody, so I can't....they don't understand.

It is hard to deal with the fact that expectations can rise very high, while their (financial) possibilities do not always live up to that. Not being able to fulfill expectations causes stress. As a consequence, respondents put aside their own interests and put the needs of their family or friends first. This means they deny themselves things *here* in order to help *there*. For the ones who succeed in distancing themselves from this pressure, it is easier to deal with the expectations that others have from them. They clearly see the dangers of not being able to step back from time to time:

Look, you arrive here and it is difficult enough to build a life. If you also surrender to this pressure, you will fall into pieces. I know migrants who kept experiencing this pressure and I noticed that their family and children... this comes at the expense of the people close to you. [...] I am here as Julie, but I am a mother and a wife as well. These things are priority for me. It's true that people in Congo have these expectations,

but I won't join in. I do whatever I can. Through education, I love to do that. And of course, I support my mother if she needs me. But I don't feel responsible for everyone, I won't. [Julie]

For instance, Amadou approaches the expectations as something that is human. Obviously, people have expectations:

For me it's a positive thing. I mean, I have to fulfill expectations, so do my friends. My Dutch friends show willingness to be active for Mauritania as well, while I met them here. You would expect that they have nothing to do with Mauritania, but a lot of them came along with me to my village. [...] Give and take. That's how it works.

Expectations are there, but it strongly depends on the individual how he or she deals with these expectations and if they are experienced as something 'natural' or as a heavy load.

4.2.6 (Trans)national contacts

Another aspect of influence on the acculturation process of migrants and hence on their social position in their destination country are the contacts they maintain. In the theoretical chapter (see Section 2.2) it was outlined that maintaining relationships with both the new culture and the heritage culture is a predictor of successful integration and hence preferable to focusing purely on contacts in the destination country (Berry, 2006). An important element of maintaining these relationships are the contacts that migrants have in their country of origin and in their new country. This section reviews these contacts; first the contacts in the host society, followed by the transnational contacts they maintain. These are mainly concentrated in the country of origin.

With regard to contacts in the Netherlands, two kinds of contacts can be distinguished: contacts with natives and contacts with other migrants. By means of contacts with natives respondents get engaged in a growing network in their destination country. These contacts make them feel at home and make it easier to settle down. They increase participation in society:

I know a lot of Dutch people, too. Mainly due to my work, but also in the private sphere. I keep in touch with a man who comes from the district next to mine [in Sudan, AS]. He is married to a Dutch woman and through them I know a lot of Dutch people as well. I participate here, I go to birthdays, weddings ceremonies, funerals, and so on... [Hmed]

Besides, as discussed, in the Dutch society networks are not only important to make you feel at ease, they are essential for success in society as well:

'Via via' is important. This via via arises for instance from being a soccer trainer. In Nijmegen, I work as a trainer for five or six years now. At this club, you find the elite of Nijmegen. The children of the richest people in the city play soccer here. And this is how I got my job. I was training at the soccer pitch and the owner of the company came to me and asked: 'Max, I have a problem. I know French is your mother tongue. I cannot find anybody suitable for the job, so can you help us?' If I would have applied for the job via an application letter... You have to make yourself visible. [Max]

Next to contacts with autochthonous, contacts with other migrants in the Netherlands turn out to be important connections. It seems evident that people in their 'new' country look for contacts with people that share the same roots. Hmed, for example, is a member of the Sudanese Association in Nijmegen. He describes contacts like these as being very important, because it brings people together, looks after the interests of Sudanese migrants in the Dutch society and it can also be constructive for their integration, since it functions as a bridge between them and Dutch people.

However, in none of the twelve respondents' networks these contacts are restricted to contacts with compatriots. The number of nationalities that migrants keep in touch with, is remarkable.

Amadou: *'I have friends here, Dutch people, Mauritians... but for the greater part they are no compatriots. I have contact with people from almost 66 different nationalities'*. Two explanations can be found for these multicultural networks. First, besides identifying themselves as being a member of their home country, as Sudanese or Congolese for instance, respondents identify themselves also, or in some cases primarily, as being 'African'. Due to contacts with other African migrants, respondents can experience an atmosphere they cannot find in a setting with Dutch people. Bisi explains why these contacts with other African migrants are so important to her:

Oh, yes, it is very important to me. Because, it's also for me a way to keep my feet on the ground, so to speak. You know, sometimes everything around you is so Dutch, which is not a bad thing, but you need to make very conscious efforts to stay in touch with other things that are not Dutch, with other people that are not Dutch. And for me, sometimes I need to be able to speak or do things, that are traditional, that are...for me. And for that, I need to also keep in touch with other Africans, yes. Because, I think it's what completes anybody. I say that to my husband from time to time; if I don't keep in touch with that part of my life, than I'm not going to be a complete person.

A second explanation especially applies to the refugee respondents. It was said before that refugees maintain contacts with other refugees regardless of national borders. The common experience of being forced to leave your home country creates a relation between people, despite of someone's roots.

So, the contacts that migrants maintain with Dutch people are an important aspect of the migrants acculturation process. They are beneficial for their participation, but they are also necessary, in for instance their search for a job. Also the inclination to maintain contacts with other migrants is clearly present among the respondents, though not at every respondent to the same extent:

I don't know if there is any coherent Nigerian community. I haven't bothered to look for any... In today's world of emailing and phoning it is not difficult for me to e-mail people in the UK or to call or to... So from that point of view, I don't really feel isolated. [Ade]

Transnational contacts

Next to contacts in the Netherlands, the transnational contacts that the respondents maintain were considered. Since they have family and friends living all over the world, these contacts are in some cases based outside the home country. First and foremost, transnational contacts are about contacts with their families. For most respondents goes that their family lives in their country of origin. In fact, Fatma is the only respondent who moved to the Netherlands in the company of her parents and siblings. Five respondents came here with their husband or wife and six respondents came all by themselves. They were the only member of their family that moved away, which means that at the beginning of their stay in the Netherlands all their contacts were based outside the Netherlands.

Next to family relations, respondents also have friends in their country of origin with whom they keep in touch. The size of this network of friends strongly depends on the moment at which they left their home country. For example, Fatma was only two years old when she left Somaliland. She has connections through family, but she did not have a real network when she left her country. Finally, in many cases respondents maintain business relations outside the Netherlands. These relations are based on their work environment or on possible (small-scale) development projects they started.

The most common ways to maintain all these transnational contacts are through phone calls, e-mailing and Skype. Modern communication technologies makes staying in touch quite easy. The frequency of getting in touch with these contacts depends on the personal need of every respondent. However, contact on a daily basis is no exception:

There's daily contact. We have websites with à-la-minute information about Mauritania. We make use of every possible way to share information. Very intense. Every night, even when I come home at 1 AM, I e-mail for at least half an hour to be up to date. I check websites or make calls when necessary. That's the way it goes. [Amadou]

Concerning actual visits as a way to maintain contacts, the situation is different. Most of the respondents have visited their country of origin since they have left, but the frequency of these visits strongly vary. Some visit Africa every year, for others it has been years ago that they have been there. The costs involved and, in case of refugees, the safety situation of the country of origin are important obstacles to travel to their home country. So, a common feeling among the respondents is that they do not have the possibility to visit the home country as much as they want to.

What do these transnational contacts mean to the respondents? In the interviews it became evident that keeping in touch with the people that stayed behind contain a vital part of the lives of most respondents. Antony uses the word 'lifeline' to describe what these contacts mean to him. Hmed says: *'It's a kind of connection. It makes me feel like I live there, too. I am there. [...] Very important.'* An explanation why these contacts are so important can be found in the shared history. Bisi tells: *'There is something about people you grew up with, the environment you grew up in, there is a way...they understand me.'* Alphonse talks in this respect about a *'social network of the past, a network of nostalgia that I can share with nobody here. At least, not with Dutch people.'* These contacts form a connection to their roots.

These transnational contacts have consequences for the life of the respondents here. First, it was said that they are vital to their sense of belonging, defined as a 'sense of personal involvement in a social system, so that persons feel themselves to be an indispensable and integral part of the system' (Anant, 1966). For the respondents, these transnational contacts make that they feel they are still participating to a certain extent in the life of their family and friends abroad. But being far away from people you care about is not always easy. Especially in case of special events or complex situations, this feeling occurs: *'If I make a call and I hear that my mother is ill, I think: O my God, I am so far away from her, I can't do anything. You wish you were able to do something, but you aren't'* [Fridah]. A consequence is that respondents experience stress.

Second, events in the community respondents grew up with do not pass unnoticed. Sometimes they are even ascribed an active role. An example:

A month ago a boy from my village killed someone. They had a fight and he stabbed the other person. We have never experienced this in our whole history. So you can imagine the commotion in the village. I tried to sooth the conflicts between the families, so I was calling with the families day and night for the whole week. [Amadou]

Finally, respondents' frames of reference are strongly influenced by the transnational contacts. Reference frames are the starting point from which a person defines his or her norms, values, tastes, likes, dislikes and so on. Hence, these frames of reference again influence the decision making processes that take place here. Bisi says:

I didn't ever really suffered hunger or any of these things, but I saw a lot of it, I saw poverty... So, sometimes when I am doing things, I remember that there are people somewhere that are in this

situation. Sometimes it makes me stop. For a moment... not wanting to do something, not wanting to spend at some things.

Evidently, both contacts within the Netherlands as well as contacts across borders are very important to the respondents. In none of the cases a one-sided focus on the home or host country was found. Respondents stress that both forms of contact are complimentary to each other and necessary by itself. Concerning the transnational contacts, with their departure from their home country, the focus on their country of origin is not gone. Respondents several times emphasise that without these contacts they cannot live; they would be incomplete and blocked in their development. This implies that, in contrast to the prevailing view that a migrant's focus on the culture of origin distorts the acculturation process, it would not benefit their social position here at all to discourage a focus on the country of origin.

4.2.7 Cultural distance

In the famous cultural dimensions of Hofstede, he compared nations according to five dimensions of national cultures. Based on the scores on these dimensions the cultural distance between countries could be deducted.²⁹ In this research, the point of departure in discussing cultural distance is different. Central are respondents' perceptions about the way their heritage culture differs from the Dutch culture and the possible obstacles this brings along.

Respondents note that in the West, people are used to think of Africa as one large country, representing one 'African' culture. However, cultural differences between countries and even within countries are so large, that they cannot be compared. Hence, they are not very keen about the idea of fixed boxes of cultures. Respondents argue that it is not that black and white. Joseph:

I don't believe in a fixed culture, like: you are Cameroonian or you are a Dutchman. Even within the Netherlands there are hundreds of different cultures. Culture is dynamic and it can provide me a solution for a certain problem at a certain moment. When you're dealing with a problem, you use what you've heard. What's culture more than what you've heard, what you've tasted, what you (...) to bring forward a concrete solution to a problem? It's not fixed.

Moreover, respondents view culture not as attached to a specific nation, but to a certain locality:

Congo has a clash of hundreds of cultures, so this clash I already know. The difference is not so much between Africa and Europe, but between certain areas in Congo I lived in, the areas where I came from, and the area I live in here. If you meet someone who knows the life at the beach in Africa, he has the same mentality as a Dutch person who lives at the beach in Holland, but a different mentality than I, not familiar with life at the beach. [Alphonse]

There are some elements in the Dutch culture, as far as it exists, that differ from what the migrants are used to and which can cause a struggle in the acculturation process. A first difference can be found in ways of communicating between people. People in the Netherlands communicate in a quite direct way, while most respondents are used to a more indirect way of communication. Hmed says: *'I like the concreteness here. You can speak about things straight out. In Sudan everything is discussed indirectly. You first ask: 'how are your cows doing?' while your reason for visiting is something completely different'*. Also Antony describes how the way people talk to each other in his home country and in the Netherlands differs:

²⁹ These five dimensions are: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity and long term orientation. For an elaboration on this, view for instance Hofstede (2001).

Discussing things, that's a big difference. It's more direct here, in our place you have to listen to words people use. Confrontation is not immediately solving things in our place. It's softer. People are very busy with not paying attention. You have to work it in your head yourself. [...] I think it is very good. It makes you remember things and think about things.

In line with this are ways of interacting with people. The direct Dutch way of approaching each other does not always feel comfortable to respondents who are not used to that. Alphonse: *'I really had to get used to the personal way of approaching people. If you get into contact with someone, you're asked immediately about your personal situation to get to know each other. I had difficulty with that.'* Moreover, manners and morals can differ from each other, which becomes clear in interactions. This can create uncomfortable situations. Max gives an example:

I was working with colleagues, it was very busy and we didn't finish our work. So I suggested to finish it in the evening at my place. That can totally be misinterpreted by the other person. And vice versa, because I was told: 'no, that's not possible'. And I thought: 'lord, you are so lazy! Come on, it's not finished, we meet at eight and we finish it, so we're done with it'. Afterwards I was told that such a meeting it's not conventional, since we didn't know each other well enough for that...

Second, there is this classical opposition between Western individual life and African communal life. Fridah: *'In our culture, people are lively and open and we do everything within our families; everything we do together. When I came here... everybody is living on his own, very individual.'* Some respondents give a nuance to this individual-collective contrast, because it is not that clear-cut:

It's not true that all Africans are so engaged with family and stuff. I don't get that. Here in the Netherlands I see...ow man! You're families are stifling! You have to do so much for your family. You have to celebrate this and that together, birthdays, St. Nicholas... you name it. I think that's overwhelming! [Julie]

Third, in general the way of life here is different from 'the African way of life'. There is another rhythm here. Alphonse makes a comparison:

If you live here, you become like a machine: you go out of bed, go to work until 7 o'clock and then there's no time left. Day in, day out. Being an African in the Netherlands, you're absorbed in this mill automatically. In other European countries Africans have more time, are more relax, more flexible in dealing with time than Dutch people. Anyhow, you don't live in the Netherlands. There is no life. I'm sorry to tell you.

Conversations with the respondents showed that cultural distance is not only about major things, like your way of living or a clash of cultures. Experience of cultural differences is especially found in little, daily things. Max says: *'It's not per definition about big things, like discrimination. It's mostly about little things. When I had a warm meal for breakfast early in the morning, my girlfriend entered the room and was in shock: what's this? Things like that.'*

It is of course much easier to mention differences than to find similarities. To refer to Hofstede once more, he stated that *'culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster'*.³⁰ This statement is not very promising. However, respondents stress that looking to similarities makes dealing with differences such as mentioned above, easier. Antony says:

I always start with the similarities. That's my strategy of solving problems. When you find similarities, you'll find less problems. I try to find things in common, in ways of doing things. [...] And that's when you have an entry point, it removes so many problem's, because there's something in common.

³⁰ Retrieved from www.geert-hofstede.com (accessed 12 March 2011).

In general, respondents have the feeling that they can express elements of their heritage culture in this society. They create this 'room to manoeuvre' themselves and do not experience major restrictions in this:

If I'm at home and want to listen to Cameroonian music, no person, not even the mayor, can stop me from doing that. This space you create yourself and I have that space. No matter if it is about clothes, about music, about food, about language...this freedom of movement you create yourself. [Joseph]

Respondents are also conscious that unknown often means unloved and try to change it by showing others their cultural background. Antony says: 'When I meet a Dutch person, I let him know about my African heritage and I am also interested in the Dutch heritage'. The two-way process is essential again. Fridah:

I have to be tolerant to the way people do things here, but I also have to try to show people what my culture looks like. By trying to give that a chance I feel accepted by society. I am glad we have the opportunity to show what our cultures look like. It's not always easy, but if I sit and wait nothing will happen.

Taken all together, respondents differentiate the notion of culture. It is not that black and white in the sense of the collective African culture versus the individual Dutch culture. Boxes of culture do not exist and differences between a migrant and a Dutch person are not per definition cultural. They can also have to do with upbringing or personal attitude. Berry (1997a) stated that the greater the cultural differences, the less positive are outcomes of the acculturation process that migrants go through. This section showed that cultural differences, mainly expressed in simple daily actions, indeed can be a struggle. In this sense, the room that respondents allow themselves to express their heritage culture is crucial. However, it seems that the predicted negative impact on their position here remains absent. This is especially due to the conscious efforts of the respondents themselves to show their culture to people around them. They explain differences and show similarities, which results in bridging of possible differences.

4.2.8 Identity formation

This thesis started with a quote of the famous Dutch-Iranian author Kader Abdollah (2011). In his book 'De Kraai' he writes: '*Who leaves hearth and home will never be the same*'.³¹ This phrase is characteristic for the respondents' perception of their identities and goes down to the essence of who they are. A migrant not included in this study compared the migration from his home country to the Netherlands with a tree whose roots are cut through. Once you return to your native ground, you will see that the tree has got new shoots and sprouts and that the two old parts do not match anymore. They both have changed. Migration is more than a physical movement from one place to another. It gets to the hearts of the migrants' existence and touches and changes their identities.

Self-identity versus social identity

The central question in the notion of identity is: how do we view ourselves (self identity) and how do others view us (social identity)? Looking to *self identity*, in the perception of all respondents their identity cannot be nailed down to a nationality, to being Dutch or Kenyan, for instance. Wittingly or unwittingly they developed a bi-cultural identity, which is defined as 'integrating two cultural orientations' (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos 2005). However, this does *not* mean that one's identity

³¹ Translated by the author [AS] from: 'Wie huis en haard verlaat, is niet meer dezelfde'.

can be separated into independent parts. They are confounded to each other: *'You call it a dual identity, these are your words. For me, it's just a part of my life... I can't get rid of one of those parts. That's what makes me, in fact'* [Amadou]. Moreover, 'bi-cultural' implies that it only two cultural orientations could be united in one's identity, but this is too narrowly formulated. Some respondents have lived in more countries and their identity formation is not limited to their countries of origin and destination. For example, Ade was born in the UK, spent his childhood in Nigeria, went back to the UK for studying and now lives in Holland. All three are, in different ways, part of his identity.

How these bi-cultural identities are shaped, differs per respondent. For every respondents their culture of origin plays an important role in their identity formation. To a lesser extent this goes for the mainstream Dutch culture. The majority of the respondents feels at home and claims the Dutch identity, but not every migrant feels as 'Dutch'. For instance, Bisi says: *'I have to live here, I have to learn the Dutch way of doing things. Whether I would describe myself as being Dutch, I don't know'*. Although some are more attached to the Dutch culture, none of them completely rejects it. Hence, all respondents identify with both ethnic and mainstream cultures, be it in a different sense.

In defining and confirming the non-Dutch part of their identities, two elements seem to be important. The first one is to keep in touch with other migrants in the Netherlands. Community space for migrant groups in defining their own identities is important to give them the security to feel they belong to the nation (Sporton & Valentine, 2007). Section 4.2.6 showed that not every respondent feels the same need to have close contact with their own group in the Netherlands, but for those who do, this contact is important to define their own identities. Second, among respondents there is the general desire to return to where they come from. This might be permanently or temporarily for incidental visits. For most of the respondents, these visits are vital to stay in touch with that part of their identity and to have the idea that they still belong there. For refugees returning to their home country is not always an option, which makes it harder for them connect to that part of their identity. This has consequences for their functioning here. Amadou tells: *'You hope to return one day, even when you know you won't, but you still hope so and you do everything to make that possible. [...] If we wouldn't have been forced to leave, we would live a better life here.'*

Besides respondents' own perception of their identity, their *social identity* is crucial for identity formation as well. Identity is formed in facing others and cannot be claimed only by an individual. Rather, it is partly dependent on the recognition or acceptance as such by a wider community. Here, the issue of belonging comes in, since for belonging claiming a self-identity is not sufficient. Belongingness implies recognition and acceptance of a member by other members in a group; recognition of an identity by others is essential (Anant, 1966).

I have quoted Charles before stating that he cannot deny the feeling of being unwanted or not welcome in the Netherlands. Although he feels totally Dutch himself other people around him make him doubt this. This gives rise to a feeling of not totally fitting in with the Dutch identity. The same process can be found in respect to the context of the home country. Ade tells: *'Some people don't see me as being a Nigerian. I am accused of speaking Yoruba with an accent, what I don't understand, and to some people that is not being Nigerian enough'*. So, although respondents state that they belong to multiple contexts, they also experience a feeling of being out of place:

You have to settle down, you have to be rooted somewhere. Because, if I go to Sudan, I feel a stranger as well. That's not only a feeling within me, it is the way people treat you. I am not welcome there either. Not really, you don't belong. You are somewhere in between. [Hmed]

The quote perfectly shows this search to belonging somewhere. In describing their identity respondents feel to belong to both contexts (of the home country and the country of destination), but at the same time certain events or circumstances make them feel excluded from both as well. This is a threat to belonging and results in a feeling of 'being in between'.

Rootless identities

The context somebody is in, strongly influences which part of their identity comes to the fore. It makes certain parts of one's identity prominent or suppressed: identity is negotiated. Respondents confirm that *where they are* strongly influences their identity formation:

When I am in Congo, people say I am a Dutchman. That means that I don't give money to people just like that, what's normal in that country. That means that I ask people many personal questions, what I basically should not do. That means that I start walking too fast, when that's not necessary. That means that I strictly stick to appointments and that I get frustrated when things go a little different than planned. It's a mirror for me to see: so that's being Dutch. And there's more. The simplicity you can find everywhere in the Netherlands, a boss who's no boss, everybody is equal, that kind of things I notice I express it there [*in Congo, AS*] as well. [...] In Congo these things become more obvious. Some things I do unnoticed, but I am really Dutch in my behaviour. Here [*in the Netherlands, AS*] it is less prominent, because it's just normal. [Alphonse]

Although context matters for the awareness and expression of identity, paradoxically, their feeling of being home is often not attached to place at all. The following quotes illustrate this feeling:

The idea of feeling at home, let's philosophise, I create my home wherever I am. If I am in Congo, there is a certain atmosphere that I know and which makes me feel comfortable. But I can also feel that way in the Netherlands. I often create my own home. [Julie]

Because of migration at an early age I don't have a link to where I am. So it doesn't matter to me where I am, if I am in the Netherlands or in Canada or ... I left home too early. So I don't have that feeling of 'this is home'. [Max]

In this respect we can speak of a 'rootless identity', since a common experience is a loss of attachment to place. In attempts to describe their identity, the word 'world citizen' is important. Six of them explicitly mentioned to feel 'world citizens' and one respondent uses the word 'transnational identity'. They want to make clear that their identity is not defined by borders. For instance, Hmed says: *'I see myself as a world citizen. I see an person not restricted by any border'* and Julie: *'It sounds like a cliché, but I consider myself a world citizen. [...] I have a certain adaptability. My home is where my husband and children are. It doesn't matter whether that's here or somewhere else'*. The power of accommodation is an important element of this world citizenship identity and is experienced as a great advantage by the respondents:

The secret of persons with a transnational identity is that they are able to change and to understand people very quickly. After two months in Cameroon, you wouldn't think I am Dutch if you meet me. [...] And when I am Holland, I am just like other Dutch people. [Joseph]

In the eyes of the respondents another advantage is that this world citizenship results in an open attitude to other people and enriches their world view:

Well, I think it makes me more open minded, I suppose. More tolerant, more... I think I understand the world from a different perspective, rather than from one. I've seen things from different sides, so I know how different life can be from what I have. [Ade]

Loyalty

Regarding the bi-cultural identity of migrants, heated debates are going on in society. Terms of national belonging are often a source of conflict. Civil society actors in both departure and destination countries raise questions regarding the loyalty of persons whose identities are largely framed by their connections to two states (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2003). An example is the discussion on dual citizenship in the Netherlands. Having two passports is perceived to decrease loyalty to the Dutch nation state. The underlying idea is that a too strong focus on the country of origin decreases chances for successful integration in the country of destination. Contrary to the sentiment in society, respondents argue that the feeling of belonging to two or more nations and loyalty to more than one nation can go hand in hand:

Dual loyalty, that's a good thing. I have that. I have to wait until the Netherlands is at war with Congo to know which side I would pick. When Holland and Congo play soccer, I support Congo. Guus Hiddink is my example of loyalty. That guy played with his team against Holland. He was cheering for Russia. That's my example of loyalty. What do you want? You want Guus Hiddink to quit his job and support Holland? That's my best example of loyalty. So, it's not necessary to choose. No, you have to be consistent. I can be loyal to the Netherlands in a way... Being consistent, like Guus Hiddink, you're in charge of a team, you support this team and you stand behind the team, you don't look at the flag of that team... That's loyalty and I can have that for both the Netherlands and Congo. [Alphonse]

When loyalty is concerned it is not a matter of choice. Denying a part of their identity simply is no option:

I have lived here for quite a while. I think, in my core, in my being, I am 47 years old now, and the first 40 years of my life I lived and I was brought up... everything I did was Nigerian. So to say that that is not a core for me, I think would be dishonest. [Bisi]

Taken all together, having a bi-cultural identity brings the respondents advantages and is something they are proud of. They have an open and tolerant attitude and can accommodate very quickly to different circumstances, people and localities. For not losing connection with that part of their identity that is connected to their culture of origin, contact with other migrants in the Netherlands and (physical) contacts with their home country are important. However, in contacts with people in their home country and during return visits respondents discover that things have changed. They do not fit in with where their roots are as smoothly as before. Their identity has become a different one, not definable in terms of their country of origin, nor in terms of being Dutch. It is something in between:

I say 'we' all the time and then I think: which 'we' do I mean? We women? We Somali community? We people from Somaliland? We Dutchmen? Yeah, then I have to think twice. [...] I become a bit schizophrenic actually. I always thought, I am who I am, wherever I am, I feel at home anywhere. And I thought, this is good. I always loved the Arabic culture. I love to go to Morocco, Egypt and the Emirates as well. So I have something with the Arabic world, I speak the language, I understand the culture. And Africa, yes...Kenya, that's more African than Morocco and Egypt, but I feel at home there as well, and in my country, Somaliland. So everywhere I go, I think: this is it, I am home. It's hard to choose. [Fatma]

So, besides advantages having a bi-cultural identity causes confusion and intern struggles: who are they? Where do they belong? How they deal with this and if this results in barriers to their functioning in society strongly depends on their *social identity*. When their feeling of belonging is not confirmed by others, confusion and intern struggle are ahead. Their identity is constantly negotiated.

So, not so much commitment to a particular place, but a sense of belonging is important for the perception of identity.

4.2.9 Image formation

In contrast to other factors discussed, this last factor of importance in the acculturation process of the migrants, image formation, is out of the control of the respondents. This section considers how migrants perceive that the Dutch society is reacting on them: what is the image they face and are they confronted with prejudice or discrimination? This is important to consider, since perceived discrimination is negatively related to integration (Berry, 2006) and might cause that migrants turn their back to the society instead of being actively involved in it. This is of course negative for their acculturation and position in society.

In general, respondents indicate that they do not suffer from any structural discrimination. Antony says: *'I never experienced any form of discrimination. Also in Sweden, I didn't. But also here, I just walk in a normal way; I am not thinking twice about...my skin colour is different, no'*. However, most of the respondents can mention incidents which made them doubt about the way they were judged by Dutch people. An example:

You know, my husband is Dutch and there are times when I go in an office, in an institution to ask for something, to do something and that I get such a negative reaction. And then I go again with him and the response is so different. In the beginning I used to say that to him and he didn't believe me. And I said: okay, let's try it a few times. So, it's things like that. [...] I get the impression that it's difficult for me to explain this to somebody that didn't experience it. Because when I talk to other Africans they immediately understand what I'm talking about. It's something that is under the skin. Implicit. [Bisi]

A shared feeling of the respondents is that it is not so much about explicit discrimination, but about a feeling underneath the skin which is hard to nail down. When image-forming in society is concerned, respondents agree that the social climate in the Netherlands has become harsher. In their perception negative image formation about foreigners or allochthonous has become much more visible last years. The situation has particularly worsened after the terroristic attacks of 2001. Charles tells about his experiences with this negative attitudes in society:

It has become stronger. There is this group of people, wearing these clothes with the Dutch flag on it and stuff, I see them a lot. It's more openly expressed than in the past. And sometimes, a few times a month, they say to me 'go away!' or ... but I don't reply. Or they make certain comments. I didn't notice this before. Or somebody drives by in his car, honks and makes this nasty sound and you know that it is aimed at you. [...] It is very difficult.

Another way respondents face this hardening atmosphere are prevailing stereotypes and prejudices. It is not to say that they did not have to deal with them before, but the intensity they are confronted with them has increased. Respondents mentioned a number of stereotypes they face in daily life. For instance, the idea exists that Africans are lazy people, not willing to work and that they are approached with suspicion. Max says: *'People think: somebody from Africa, his story must be wrong.'* Moreover, there is often no attention for the range of different migration motives that African migrants can have to move to the Netherlands. In the eyes of the Dutch society, Africans are refugees or asylum seekers:

After my study and then living in the real world, the real society, it's a whole lot of different experiences. The impression I get, I may be wrong, the average, I know very few Dutch people, so I can't generalise, but my impression is that the average Dutch person that you see assumes that Africans are asylum seekers and stuff, so the average person assumes you are illiterate and you are an asylum seeker. [Bisi]

This quote also touches upon the idea that Africans are uneducated people that should not be taken too seriously. This is a shared feeling among respondents: *'It is often said that we're not professional enough. You're not professional, you're not educated, you don't know what you're talking about, you don't have an eye for this and you don't have an eye for that...'* [Amadou].

There are two major explanations in the eyes of the respondents for this image-forming and the prejudices and stereotyping that are attached with it. The first one is that as Africans they are visibly different from the majority of Dutch persons. People react different, because of their appearance:

You see, if I came from Germany or Belgium, then there was no problem, then I could 'melt', the colour is the same. Often people are judged based on their skin colour. And that's a pity. I'm different and I'm held accountable because of my 'being different', you can't change that. [Hmed]

Second, the media plays an important role in this respect. Respondents have a critical stance towards the way the media reports about our multicultural society:

There is an atmosphere... how do you call it? The presence of foreigners in the media. That's not necessary. In the UK there are far more foreigners than here. More than the total Dutch population. And you don't see these things occur there, that's what I don't understand. There are max 1.5 million foreigners here and all media is filled with items about foreigners. That's too bad. Media feed. People read newspapers, watch the news and the day after they talk about it at the coffee-machine and I am the one who is held accountable. [Hmed]

I know so many foreigners who do well. They work so hard, do everything as it should. And still the newspapers tell that we belong to all those foreigners who don't do well. [...] People please, make distinctions here! Why should I belong to this image every time again? [Charles]

Also media coverage on Africa and African migrants leaves a lot to be desired. Respondents are annoyed with the way the media report about the big continent of Africa:

They always talk about 'Africa'. They don't use the word African very much; either the word foreign or the continent and then they separate between Morocco and somewhere else. My perception of this is that Africa is too big to describe in this way, you should use the nations where people come from. Not generalising, because then when you do that, you miss a lot of things. [Antony]

It can be said that respondents do not have experiences of structural discrimination; it is restricted to incidental experiences. Incidents that are rude and annoying, but which are no real burden to their functioning in society. What is troubling them more is the negative image formation that they observe in the Dutch society. This image-forming is not pointed to their individual persons, but to the fact that they are visibly different.

Although respondents stress that it is not easy for them to be confronted with these negative attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices, they show a certain elasticity to deal with them. Charles tells: *'It's good to know that not everybody is that way. I would worry if... Look, now only 1.5 million people voted for Wilders. If 8 million people would do so, I will surely pack my bags'*. So, contrary to suggestions in literature, the migrants in this study do not show a clear reaction against society. They dispose a surprising empathy to understand where these attitudes come from and able to disconnect the harassments from their individual persons:

I don't think that people are bad or deliberate to hurt you. I think that's something [...] that develops from what people see and hear and what people are told about how Africans are, how these people are. So, it is this attitude that you just assume and that is how you deal with it. The point is that people don't even think about what they do or what they say. [...] And so it is really difficult to deal with, because people don't think about it, they just do it. [Bisi]

It raises a feeling among them of proving that these images are wrong. However, a succession of confrontations with this negative image-forming obviously is a discouraging factor that makes migrants losing confidence in society.

4.3 Conclusions

This final section presents the most important conclusions of this chapter in order to formulate an answer on the first sub-question: *What does the social position of highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants in the Dutch society look like?* Social position considers the functioning of the respondents in the Dutch society. Respondents in this study left their home country one day and ended up in the Netherlands. Elements of their culture of origin met the dominant Dutch culture which resulted in an acculturation process. To draw a picture of their social position, factors *prior to* as well as *during* their stay in the Netherlands had to be taken into account (see the Analytical Framework in section 2.3) in order to answer the question at the beginning of this chapter: is the interplay between the migrant and the Dutch society a happy marriage or not?

Concerning the factors *prior to* acculturation, it can be said that before the respondents came to the Netherlands they had a good position in their country of origin. With regard to their education, almost all respondents had obtained a university degree before they came to the Netherlands and in case they were formally employed, they had good positions at the local labour market. These are two important elements contributing to the perception of most respondents that their departure status was quite high.

In public discourse African migrants are often equated with refugees, but the twelve cases in this study showed that migration motives can strongly vary. In fact, migration motive turns out to be a highly important factor leading to differences *during* the acculturation process. The way refugees experience this process and the obstacles they face in obtaining a position here are different. Being a refugee, forced to leave your home country, or being a regular migrant that chose to move to the Netherlands well-prepared, creates different entry points.

There are a number of obstacles that all respondents face in obtaining a position here. The most important barriers to functioning in society are not having a thorough command of the Dutch language, the devaluation or non-recognition of African credentials, the absence of (informal) networks and the prevailing image formation and stereotypes in the Dutch society.

In general, respondents have the idea to deal with status inconsistency. Their educational and occupational position they had before their migration to the Netherlands suggests a quite high status. Although they certainly experience advantages of being highly educated in finding their way through the Dutch society, by arrival their credentials turn out to be of no value and a position at the labour market is hard to obtain. Especially in case of refugees, which often had no diplomas to submit, since their education was interrupted before they could finish it or they were not able to take their diplomas with them. The underestimation, non recognition or non valuation of the intellectual capital they possess is hard to deal with. This raises the question: what do I have to contribute here?

Besides, expectations are imposed on the respondents by their close family and friends and other people within their network back home. Moreover, they impose expectations on themselves to

help their home country and the Dutch society expects them to integrate here as well. Meeting all expectations can be a struggle, since their own resources are limited. If they do not succeed in putting these demands into perspective, respondents' functioning in society can be blocked. It strongly depends on the individual how he or she deals with these expectations.

Another threat to their position in the Dutch society is the disappointing experience of not being welcome here, of being unwanted. This runs counter to their expectations of the Dutch society they had in advance and is strongly influenced by current image formation, stereotyping and prejudices in society.

As said, the difference between refugees and migrants is important. This difference is strongly emphasised by refugees themselves and especially becomes evident in the 'split' they experience between the need of building a position in their destination country and the wish to return one day to their country of origin. They did not choose to move. Here it becomes clear that frames of reference of migrants and refugees differ. Refugees do not always have the possibility to return to where they come from, maintaining contact with people in their country of origin is harder and sometimes they do not even know how people 'close' to them are doing. This makes the amount of stress experienced by them different. As described above, for all respondents the acculturation process brings along difficulties and obstacles. Referring to the distinction in levels of difficulty made by Berry (1997b), refugees indicate to suffer from serious conflicts ('acculturative stress') and psychological problems, such as depressions ('psychopathology'), while this is not explicitly mentioned by 'regular migrants'.

Despite the experience of stress as result of their acculturation process, the overall tone of this chapter is rather positive. The personality of the respondents has an important role here. Several times the positive attitude of the respondents came to the surface, which makes it easier to deal with the obstacles as mentioned above. The fragment below serves as an illustration:

I like to think of life as an apple tree with a lot of fruit, from bottom to top. Imagine that you have one stone to throw upwards into the tree. All the fruit that falls down is yours. I can choose to throw the stone easily in the lower part of the tree, but if the stone doesn't hit the mark, it will fall down and that's it. If I can throw my stone in the middle of the top of the tree, it will rise up through many apples and if it doesn't hit any apples in the top, it falls down through all these apples again. So, the chance that I'll get the most out of my one shot is much bigger when I try to reach the top. And if I would really get nothing out of my throw, I can live with it, because I can say that I did my very best. [Charles]

Another issue that was discussed extensively, is the identity formation of the respondents. Their migration and experience of acculturation, touches upon the core of their being and influences their identity. The word *bicultural identity* is used, which is somewhat confusing. It implies that migrants have more than one identity, while in the perception of the migrants they have just one identity; they are who they are. However, their identity is multi-layered and formed by their feeling of belonging to multiple contexts at the same time.

Identity formation is an important part when looking which acculturation strategy is put forward. The theoretical framework shortly touched upon the different acculturation strategies of acculturation, integration, marginalisation and separation. Which strategy is put forward by the respondents? Two things that are remarkable. First, the level of participation of the respondents in Dutch society is high and they are strong-willed to take part in this society; almost all migrants have completed a Dutch study, are active at the formal labour market, are engaged in volunteering and the contacts that migrants maintain in the Netherlands are an important aspect of the migrants'

position here. Second, maintaining transnational contacts functions as a life-line for the respondents. Without these contacts they would not be able to function in the Dutch society.

So, despite the prevailing view that a focus on the home country distorts participation in the host country, the respondents functioning in society benefits of the *integration strategy* they apply: they both participate in the larger society of settlement *and* hold on to where they came from. They indicate that the contacts they maintain with people from *there* and expressing part of their identity that are based on where they came from are necessary for their functioning *here*. Feelings of not belonging or not taking part negatively influence their 'being at ease' here, their (mental) wellbeing and hence their position in the Dutch society.

It is time to look at the question posed at the opening of this chapter: can the relation between the respondents and the Dutch society best be characterised as a love match or a forced marriage? It is important to consider the way to obtaining a position as a two-way process. The migrants' efforts to make the most of it are of course highly important, but at the same time their position is influenced by the Dutch society around them. Although the general image is that their social position in the Dutch society is quite positive and this rejects the idea of a forced marriage, the love match is not achieved yet. It is evident that obtaining a position here is not an easy way. We have seen that the acculturation process brings along difficulties and obstacles. One of the things that distinguishes this group of highly-educated migrants from others, is the capacity to reflect on themselves and the context around them and the ability to nuance and consider situations from different points of view. Together with their positive attitude this might suggest that they can easily deal with these obstacles. However, it should not be underestimated, because the danger of the forced marriage lies in wait.

The next chapter zooms in on the sector of development cooperation and deals with the involvement of respondents in the sector of development cooperation and their possibilities to apply their intellectual capital for the development practice.

5. African migrants as actor in the development sector

The previous chapter discussed the respondents' position in the Dutch society. One thing that was brought forward, was that the respondents in this study possess intellectual capital that they took with them from Africa to the Netherlands and which they wished to develop further in their country of destination. This chapter zooms in on the sector of development cooperation in order to formulate an answer to the second sub-question: *In what way are highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants involved in development cooperation and what are their possibilities to apply their intellectual capital for the development practice?* It successively deals with the development activities the migrants are engaged in (section 5.1), the capacities that they think they have to offer to the sector (section 5.2) and the way they view their possibilities to apply these capacities in the development practice (section 5.3). In these last two sections the visions of representatives of four Dutch development organisations, Cordaid, ICCO/Kerk in Actie, Oxfam Novib and Wilde Ganzen, are incorporated to place the respondents' stories in a broader perspective. Section 5.4. presents the most important conclusions.

5.1 Migrants' development activities

This first section discusses in what kind of development activities respondents are engaged at the moment, where these activities take place and what their motivation is for carrying out these activities. Concerning the development activities of the migrants a distinction can be made between activities developed as part of their private lives and activities developed as part of their profession. With regard to their private activities, remittances are at the top of the list. In general, no matter where they live, which education they have had or why they have left their country of origin; Africans abroad send money home to their families. Remittance flows to Africa in 2007 totalled US\$10.8 billion (Ratha & Zhimei, 2008). Respondents in this study are no exception; they all send remittances home. Most of them transfer money or goods on a regular basis. In the introductory chapter it was said that besides financial remittances, migrants can transfer social remittances as well. These are transferred during (temporary) return visits, phone calls, e-mails, letters, Skype conversations, et cetera. For instance, Julie returns to Congo frequently to lecture at the university: *'As an African scientist I think I can contribute on knowledge in Congo. I have lectured in Congo at the university for three months this year. I have access to knowledge here that they can't have in Congo.'*

Next to these remittances, respondents are involved in development projects through PIs or through (international) non-governmental organisations (NGOs).³² Examples are abundant: Amadou started an agricultural project that provided a tractor for his village in Mauritania and started his own human rights NGO; Fatma initiated the Somaliland Development Organisation (SDO) that serves as an umbrella organisation for smaller projects in Somaliland, for instance providing school fees for children who cannot afford to pay for their education or exploring possibilities for alternative energy sources; Alphonse is chairman of a foundation that initiates educational projects and supports schools in Congo; Max initiated a network of students, coming from universities all over Africa that should result in a new structure that can give direction to the development of Africa; Antony is exploring possibilities for introducing a kind of regional training centre-system in Kenya by starting and improving technical schools and is part of the staff of an NGO which works for the recovery and well-being of drug addicts in Kenya; and Fridah is planning to start her own project and already raises

³² A non-governmental organisation (NGO) is an organisation that 1) represents a certain objective or group of people, 2) is a non-commercial organisation (without a profit motive) and 3) is not part of the government (Schulpen & Klem, 2005).

funds in the Netherlands to support a school in Kenya. Finally, Charles runs a business to stimulate the distribution of sustainable solar energy sources in West Africa. When respondents were telling about their development activities, it became clear that these go far beyond the level of building another school or well in Africa. They are based on a clear vision with attention for long-term effects. By means of illustration, the solar energy project of Charles is elaborated on in Box 5.1.

Box 5.1 Example - 'Solarcom Network'

In 2010 Charles started his one-man business *Solarcom Network*. This company focuses on the distribution and the use of sustainable solar-energy sources among small entrepreneurs and (rural) households in West-Africa. Access to energy makes the day lasts longer, communication toward the outer world improves and possibilities to new income-generating activities increase. However, access to electricity is scarce. One obvious example is the mobile phone. In Africa, the mobile phone serves as a lifeline; it is used to maintain family contacts, to make business deals, to do banking, to keep yourself posted of the latest news, et cetera. Almost everybody has one, but charging your mobile phone is problematic and an expensive activity, since energy sources are rare and prices for charging rise high. Small solar energy sources can provide a simple solution for this problem.

Therefore, *Solarcom Network* aims at bringing solar energy within reach of these households and entrepreneurs and in this way tries to increase the quality of life in West-African rural households. In preparation of his business activities, Charles conducted a market research in West Africa. He made visits himself and worked together with local students. He investigated the need for solar energy and what people are willing to pay for it. Outcomes were supportive for his idea that solar energy is an undiscovered, but relatively simple, affordable and promising solution. At the moment activities are mainly concentrated in Nigeria, but contacts are made to extend activities to other west-African countries, such as Benin, Cameroon, Ghana and Togo.

The rise of *Solarcom Network* is in line with Charles' vision on development cooperation that it should be approached as a win-win situation. We should abandon the idea that development cooperation is a one-way process of bringing 'them' what ('we' think) 'they' need, without a reciprocal effect. A relation of equality should be central, not one of dependency. This is an important element of the vision of *Solarcom Network*. It makes solar energy accessible for people in Africa and at the same time it creates employment here and realises a new market area in West-Africa for European companies. Of course, *Solarcom Network* aims at making profit, but part of the profit is returned in local communities by return investments. Besides, *Solarcom Network* tries to link up with existing development projects in supporting that they make solar energy to the core of their policy.

For more information, view www.solarcomnetwork.nl

Besides the actual implementation of the projects in Africa, the development activities of the respondents ask for a lot of work in the Netherlands as well. Think of writing project proposals, raising funds, monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes, etcetera.

The development activities that the respondents maintain through remittances, PIs, NGOs and small businesses are mainly focused on Africa. Besides these activities in the South, respondents are engaged in organisations with a focus on the Netherlands. For instance, Hmed is an active member and ex-chair of the Sudanese Organisation in his place of residence. This organisation looks after the interests of Sudanese migrants in the Netherlands and functions as a bridge between Sudanese and Dutch people living in his city. In this way, it contributes to the integration of the Sudanese in the Netherlands. Another example is Joseph, who started his own foundation that provides migrant

organisations in the Netherlands with advice on how to make project proposals and project plans, for instance. The aim of this organisation is to empower migrant organisations and to bring about capacity building in the Netherlands. Finally, Max is trying to start a foundation in cooperation with Wilde Ganzen where migrants can apply for financial support for their development activities.

The activities mentioned above are part of the private lives of the respondents. This means that they are carried out next to their daily (work) activities. For some of the respondents activities concerning development cooperation are part of their profession. They work or have worked at Dutch NGOs or foundations concerned with development cooperation, such as Cordaid, Mama Cash, the Dutch Institute for Southern-Africa (NiZA) and the Association for Staff Cooperation with Developing Countries (PSO).³³ Other respondents work as professional trainer or coach, researcher or opinion maker.

The overview above shows that respondents are engaged in all kind of activities in the development sector. Their stories illustrate that they spend a lot of time on these activities, especially since the largest part of all activities are carried out in their spare time. It is a common thought among the respondents that they in fact need more than 24 hours a day to be able to carry out all development activities they wish to. On the contrary, there is also one respondent saying not to be involved in development activities at all and at this moment he does not have any plans in this direction. This instantly shows that the assumption that migrants are active in the domain of development cooperation, *because they are migrants*, does not always hold good.

Location and motivation

Where do the development activities of the respondents take place? Most of the activities mentioned above are carried out in Africa. However, the scope of the activities differs among the respondents. The activities of Fridah, for instance, focus on the village where she used to live: *'I am busy collecting money for toilets for a school. [...] In this way I try to do something for the people over there, for my village'*. Since most respondents maintain a strong connection to their village or area of origin and want to contribute to the life of people living there, this is a reasonable point of departure. However, the development activities of most respondents do not stop at the borders of their village. Antony and Amadou tell:

Most of the things I do is in the West of Kenya, but I told you I do projects in all parts of Africa and different parts of Kenya. I also try to fight the problems of economic or political migrants through what I am doing. So when I know something that can help a school it is not only the school in my area, no. I am trying to get something to that corner, that corner and that corner. [Antony]

At the national level I try to do something on good governance in Mauritania. But also in other countries. I just got back from Sierra Leone. I met a lot of refugees and I saw what their needs are, that they have traumas and that they need development projects. [...] We all know what happened there, we have to be engaged. So, I don't want to be active for my own country, but broad. [Amadou]

It is quite remarkable that the scope of the activities of most respondents extends their own community or village, since a much heard critique on migrants as actors in development is that they would only look for their own interests, focused on the area they come from themselves. In contrast, the stories of the respondents show that they act from the broader perspective of the development of the continent of Africa. Alphonse: *'In particular I want to devote myself to the democratisation of*

³³ Translated by the author [AS]: NiZA is the Dutch abbreviation for 'Nederlands Instituut voor Zuidelijk Afrika' and PSO stands for 'Vereniging voor Personele Samenwerking met Ontwikkelingslanden'.

Africa, not of Congo, but of Africa'. So, in general, the reach of the development activities of the respondents widely exceeds the borders of their home communities and even these of their home countries. Hence, a restriction of activities to their 'own people' is not the case.

A next question is *why* do respondents carry out these activities? A first motivation is to improve living standards of close family and friends in the country of origin by, for instance, remittances or small-scale development projects. This goes without saying: *'There's no way you can't do it. Because if you don't do it, your father and mother is not there'* [Antony]. Second, respondents carry out their development activities because they experience a kind of obligation to do so. This is a natural obligation; it feels like their responsibility. This responsibility rises from the common feeling to help people in need: *'It's a general obligation, towards all people in need. [...] For people who need it, I have to stand up'* [Amadou]. Next, it develops from appreciation of what their home country has offered them:

I think that the place where I can and should contribute is Nigeria. And, yeah, maybe that's an obligation. Because I got a lot out of that country. I really did. From my family, from the country itself. Everything I ever had there, contributed that much to my life. And I would like to, if I can, in anyway do something. [Bisi]

Furthermore, this feeling of compulsion to carry out development activities is based on a sense of guilt. In particular among refugees this feeling is present. People close to them often could not afford to leave their country and build a life elsewhere like they did. They feel like they left them and their country down.

A third and last motivation also applies to the refugee respondents. Their activities especially follow from a feeling of compassion towards refugees in other parts of the world; people who find themselves in the same situation as they once were. Amadou expresses this feeling as follows:

When a refugee from Afghanistan knows that a refugee in Abkhazia is executed, this immediately rings a bell: 'this could have been me'. When somebody is killed in Chile, I think: 'it could have been me'. And then I devote myself to the cause of Chile. Even though I don't even know where this country is situated. That's compassion in fact. And I notice that that's very strong among us. [...] Your age, your health; you don't give it a moment's thought. We take it for granted when we're ill. What's fever, while lots of people are dying? Just get up and do what you have to do!

Overall, respondents do not dedicate many thoughts to the reason why they carry out these activities. It goes without saying that you make an effort for people who are in need. Although this seems evident, respondents are also aware of the fact that it can actually be a pressure and they have to deal with this 'obligation' in a way that it does not come at the expense of themselves and the people close to them.

5.2 Strengths and weaknesses of migrants as development actor

Before we turn to the possibilities respondents see to apply their capacities for development cooperation, it is important to first consider what these capacities are in their view. What do they have to offer to the sector of development cooperation and what are possible hazards for them? Next to the respondents, the visions of the representatives of the Dutch development organisations Cordaid, ICCO/Kerk in Actie, Oxfam Novib and Wilde Ganzen are considered. Do their visions on the added value and possible weak points of migrants as actor in the development sector correspond with these of the migrants?

Strengths

In what way do the respondents, as being migrants, distinguish themselves from other Dutch development actors? What are their strengths? First of all, respondents indicate that migrants have a very strong intrinsic drive to beat development problems, because they experienced them themselves or because they have family or friends who are still suffering from these problems. As a result, they have a strong sense of persistence. Amadou tells: *'It makes that I wake up every day and think: you don't have a boring life, you can go on for years, maybe for 200 years... And that's why I constantly develop my drive to do all this'*. Migrants do not give up easily when troubles occur. Second, this strong drive goes hand in hand with the passion and enthusiasm to dedicate themselves to the cause of development cooperation. Their involvement not only can have a positive contribution to development initiatives in the South, but also to the public support for development cooperation in the Netherlands. By bringing under discussion the problems people in the South have to deal with every day, they can bring about awareness raising in our society.

A third capacity of migrants is that they are able to map and prioritise needs. Because most respondents have experienced these problems at first hand, they know what they are talking about. In the eyes of the respondents, migrants are able to detect needs of people very quickly. Migrants can tell where people are in need and where development assistance is needed. Joseph says:

The fact that you have a migrant background makes that you are able to understand development problems easily and very quickly. I use to say: there just is no education to get hungry. If you didn't experience hunger in your life, you can write all books about hunger, but it's all about the experience. If you don't have this experience you can't understand people who are starving. If you didn't experience war, you can read all books, watch all movies about war, but the experience, the fear of war, the fear of fleeing your country, you can't imagine it at all.

Fourth, a strength that is mentioned by almost every respondent is that migrants have knowledge of their former locality. Knowledge that Dutch development actors have not:

I visited Sierra Leone. Organisations that work there got tons of subsidies from the UN, have project plans of 500 pages and they get there and they didn't think of the fact that you can't reach place X by car. And if you go from place X to place Y you have to go by a small boat and it is impossible to transfer cement with that tiny little boat. They did **not** think of that, while they have been preparing this project for six months! If you'd have only talked to one refugee here coming from that area, you would at least know of the existence of that boat. This person would have told you that you can either walk or go by boat, but by no means by car. These kind of mistakes are made. [Amadou]

The fact that they know their way about in their country or area of origin, that they speak the language, have local contacts and are involved in local structures and social networks makes that they can have access that other Dutch development actors do not have:

We know what the country looks like, we know the way. You have to find somebody first. When we go together we can start working immediately. I know where I can live, I know who I have to talk to, I know where the office is, I know what the people need. You, you have to search first: who can help me, which office should I go to, where, for god sake...where should I start? [Fridah]

Or as Bisi puts it: *'I have access that you can't have officially'*. Because of their knowledge of local structures, culture, manners and morals, migrants know what to take into account when starting a project. As a consequence, they are able to recognise possible hazards at an early stage.

Finally, respondents stress that migrants can serve as a facilitator between Dutch development actors and the local community at which their projects are targeted. Because they have an

understanding of both the society of origin and country of destination, they can bridge possible knowledge gaps from both sides. Moreover, migrants can radiate a sense of trust towards the local people. Their presence makes that locals are more likely to trust the development activities and show willingness to cooperate. Amadou tells: *'When I visit my village, I am welcomed much better than the president of the country. That's how it is. When minister van Ardenne or minister Koenders would visit my village, they won't even be recognised.'*

In the interviews with employers of the four Dutch development organisations, strengths of migrants as actor in development were discussed as well. They mainly reason from the perspective of migrants as executors of Private Initiatives. Point of departure for them is that every Dutch PI that wants to contribute to development cooperation and lives up to the criteria of the particular development organisation is welcome, and so are migrants and migrant organisations. However, there is a common sense that migrants possess certain capacities that can serve as added value to 'Dutch' actors.

The strong points that the representatives of the four organisations come up with for a large part correspond to those mentioned by the respondents. Again it is said that the motivation of migrants is enormous. There is a strong drive to bring about changes in the situation in their countries of origin that they escaped or left behind. Next, their knowledge of the local situation and culture gives migrants an edge over 'Dutch' actors; they speak the language, dispose of networks due to which they can easily make contacts with local people and authorities, have easy access to information and can find out if a project keeps on track or not. And often local people put confidence in migrants rather than in 'outsiders'.

So, their local knowledge and experience contribute to the success of development activities in the South. At the same time this knowledge can be useful for the organisations in the Netherlands with regard to other project applications in the same country of origin. Finally, the interviewees stress that, better than 'native' PIs, migrants can allocate priorities and preferences. Because of their own experiences, they have insight in coping strategies for poverty reduction. They recognise and identify situations out of their own experiences with development problems. As a consequence, they succeed in connecting with direct needs of local people: things that are hard to learn out of books.

Weaknesses

Next to strengths and advantages, I asked both the migrants and the representatives of the four organisations what they view as possible weaknesses of migrants as actors in development. To start with the respondents, they have some critical notes to the role of migrants in the development sector. First, there is a reverse side to the strong emotional involvement, passion and enthusiasm with which migrants are active for development cooperation. More than other actors, they run the risk of being involved too much. As a consequence, they can be concerned with more activities than they can cope with and lose sight of reality:

We want to work everywhere and that eats up energy. This is what makes us very strong, but at the same time very weak. [...] You want to do too much, because you've allies all over the world. We're dreamers. You dream to help people in Afghanistan, China, Mauritania,... But, you know, you're only one person, not a government. How can you make it? [Amadou]

In addition, a disadvantage of this intrinsic drive to 'help' is that sometimes to stop a development project or activity is preferable to holding on to it. It demands a great deal of self-reflection to admit that a project has failed. This is the hard part of the job of any development actor, let alone for a

migrant whose project is targeted at his own village where people know him and hold him accountable.

It was discussed that most respondents do not nail down their activities to one area or one country. They want to work on a larger scale. A possible negative consequence in the eyes of the respondents is that this can lead to fragmentation of activities which can harm the efficiency: *'You don't work micro, but macro. And with that, you accomplish nothing. You don't have a focus. You're active on different fronts, which I see as one of the big problems of us refugees'* [Amadou]. On the contrary, there is the risk of being too much focused on a local context without having an eye for broader developments as well, since for many migrants a first incentive to carry out development activities is to comply with direct needs of people close to them.

By stating *'don't think all migrants know things about what's happening in their locality'*, Antony draws attention to another very important weakness of migrants as development actors. Although disposure of local-specific knowledge was mentioned as a strength of migrants, the idea to know all about the local context is a pitfall as well. Bisi says:

Some of us go back home with this attitude of 'I know everything' and that can also be a disadvantage, because you really don't! You still have been... Sometimes you are probably a stranger, to an extent. You should put in your consciousness that you want to participate, but you're not just going to tell them: 'you have to do it this way'.

Some migrants only know their immediate family and are not busy with the rest of the community at all. Respondents stress it is important to find out what migrants you are talking about: Do they visit home regularly? What experiences with development projects did they have before? How do they get their information, from whom? What contacts do they maintain? What do they do when they go there? Being a migrant is in no case a guarantee to carry out successful development activities.

Finally, some weaknesses are mentioned that apply to migrant organisations in the Netherlands in general. Migrant organisations are often introvert. They function as isolated islands, without cooperation with other actors in the field. Fatma: *'They have a strong internal focus. They raise funds only within their own communities, for instance. I think that should be different'*. In addition, migrants are too often unorganised. They do not succeed yet in speaking with one voice. A last critique is that migrant organisation are often too much dependent on subsidies.

The representatives of the four development organisations agree with the migrant respondents that the strengths as mentioned above *can* benefit the efficiency and effectiveness of development cooperation, but there is no guarantee for it at all. Not every migrant is a good development worker and being a migrant can even hinder the success of development activities. Sometimes, being too much involved obstructs the effectiveness of development activities. This is called the 'paradox of proximity': it can be an advantage to be at a distance, to be no part of a culture and accompanying ranks and classes issues, because this can restrict your room for manoeuvre. You can create expectations which you cannot live up to or which block your functioning. Then it might be an advantage when you can say: 'I'm sorry, I don't know how it works here'.

Like the respondents, the representatives of the organisations emphasise that the situation in migrants' home countries is subject to change. If they do not keep up with current developments, their reference frame is not up to date and no good starting point for development activities:

A person who moved to Canada 25 years ago is not per definition well-informed about what happens in the Netherlands at this moment. This of course also goes for a migrant who left Ethiopia 25 years ago. That country did not stand still and the situation at the time of movement, which often still is the reference frame of many migrants, can be totally different now. [WS/ON]

There is a resistance among the representatives of the development organisations to the idea: 'I'm from that area, so I know what people there need'. Moreover, the connection to a specific locality and culture of course vanishes when activities extend borders of the home community or country of the migrant.

These are weaknesses that apply to the individual migrant. The development organisations in particular get in touch with migrants as part of a Private Initiative that hand in project proposals. Here, they notice two important differences between 'native' organisations and 'migrant' organisations. First, migrant organisations have a different point of departure: they want to establish a project, because of the project and have less attention for the sustainability and continuity of the development initiative:

When a village has no school, a Dutch organisation says: we have to build a school there, because education will increase chances at the labour market, which gives you more chances to develop yourself, you are able to consider hygiene and such, and as a consequence education provides you with an entrance into the general development of a village. Many migrant organisations reason this way: there is a village without a school and a village needs a school, so we build one. To have one. That you need qualified people that can teach and that this school can play a part in the development of the village in general, that doesn't matter that much in first instance. [...] You want to say about the village that you come from; we have a school, we have a church, a mosque, a market place... that are things that are present in a civilised village. If these things lack, you have to make sure they come into being. [WS/ON]

Hence, migrant organisations focus more on the fact if it is there or not than on the sustainability and the functioning of a project. Second, the role that the Northern actor has within the project is different. According to the representative of Wilde Ganzen, Dutch organisations are mainly active as fundraisers in the Netherlands to realise 'their' development projects in the South, while migrant organisations are much more involved in the actual implementation of these projects. This does not conform to the notion of ownership, which is high up on the agenda of development organisations.

Overall, the representatives of the development organisations recognise the added value of migrant actors. They agree with the migrants that matters as local knowledge, access and the capability to identify needs of people in the South and pitfalls of development projects at an early stage definitely can benefit effectiveness and efficiency of aid. Both the representatives of the four development organisations and the respondents agree that migrants certainly have strong points, but not per definition dispose of all capacities that agents of development need. It is noteworthy that the respondents in this study have a sound grasp of the possible weaknesses of migrants as development actors as well. By no means they pretend that every migrant possess these strengths as pointed out above *because* they are migrants. By mentioning their strong points, they do not imply that these make all migrants good development actors without any doubt.

5.3 Possibilities to realise development ambitions

Section 5.1 discussed the respondents' widespread development activities they are currently engaged in. This section starts with an overview of the ambitions that these migrants have for the future: what are their aspirations with regard to the development sector? Chapter four showed that it is not always easy for the respondents to apply their intellectual capital and hence the question that follows from this overview is: what are the possibilities that respondents have to realise these ambitions (section 5.3.1)? Section 5.3.2 will give an overview of obstacles that respondents face in their search for influence in the development sector. In addition, section 5.3.3 highlights one of the

biggest obstacles in the eyes of the respondents: the access that migrants have to Dutch development organisations, as customers as well as employers. Both the perception of the respondents and of the representatives of Cordaid, ICCO/Kerk in Actie, Oxfam Novib and Wilde Ganzen are included.

5.3.1 Ambitions for the future

Asking respondents about the contribution of their development activities, they are mainly positive about the effects of their efforts. Amadou:

Yes, I see big changes. In case of Mauritania, for example, Mauritania isn't on the list of CFO's [Co-financing Organisations, AS] here, so I lobbied a lot to get funding from the NCDO.³⁴ I lobbied a lot and it was successful. And in my village, the tractor produces within 30 minutes the work that 20 people do within 30 days.

Although respondents see the benefits of their activities, there is the wish to do more. In general, their ambitions reach far beyond what they are doing at the moment. They want to make a more sustainable and longer lasting contribution at a larger scale:

The contribution that I make there is small scale. [...] I see changes here. Yes, if I look to my home country there are changes. There are changes, but not to my satisfaction. [...] I have high points for Kenya. I know they can achieve it, otherwise I was not doing this. But I really have a high bar for them. Not in a wrong way, they should need a high bar, because there is no excuse for doing wrong things there. [Antony]

The other respondents also commented on their development aspirations. Table 5.1 gives an overview of these ambitions that the respondents have for the future.

Table 5.1 Ambitions concerning development cooperation

Name	Ambition
Amadou	I think it would be done when migrants, refugees in particular, would be active for the development of home countries.
Hmed	I'm satisfied about what I'm doing, but in the future I want to be active... image formation, people who are different... show that we can be useful for the society here as well, for Nijmegen, that we have a value here as well.
Julie	My wish is to go to Congo every three months to teach, to lecture.
Fatma	The older I get, the more I want to do. Because it's hard to shut my eyes to the things that are happening there.
Ade	Things I wish to do? I don't know, to be honest. Not at this moment, no.
Bisi	Up to now, I don't have been able to really do anything beyond talking. [...] I would like to, if I can, in anyway, do something. Because, look, money that you send is just a gift and it goes like that. But if you set up a work with an organisation and you are able to help one, two, three, four women do their business better, establish a business, connect them to somebody who...you know, and then imagine the number of people you can help in that way. And that is what I see as a much more lasting contribution than just sending a few hundred Euros. It should be more sustainable.

³⁴ The National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (NCDO) is a Dutch expertise and advisory centre for citizenship and international cooperation. For more information, view www.ncdo.nl.

Name	Ambition
Alphonse	In any case, I want to influence that people in Congo, not only in Congo, but in Africa, assume a critical attitude. I am particularly active for the democratisation of Africa, not of Congo, but of Africa. I think the way that's...is very deceptive and chaotic. That's the domain I want to exert an influence.
Joseph	Problems that are dealt with in developing countries can also occur in the Netherlands in a way. Goal of development cooperation is to empower people. Nevertheless, there are minorities. Here in the Netherlands, there are so many people who feel minorities, but who are not able to work within the large organisations. [...] So, migrant organisations and their capacities, and cultural diversity in the development sector: that's where my ambitions are.
Max	There are different levels of ambitions, you can think up to political power. And that's my motive. [...] There should come a government, that says: we're done, exploitation of Africa is done and we have to start real development! With that ambition in mind I left Africa. So, my work is very broad, somebody who listens to it, would say: 'but that's too much!' But for me, I know exactly what I'm doing.
Antony	I have the project where I am dealing with 'verslaafde mensen'. That I have been working on since many years now. We are trying to build a house now, but it's not complete. There is one wing for women, very young addicted women, to learn to make things. They recover there, do 'afkick' there and then they learn skills. And then we help them with the machines and they can start their own... So this is one of my very private, very personal ambitions. Besides, I want to challenge or rethink the notion of migration and development. We have to question it, or stop it [development cooperation, AS].
Charles	In Africa there are so many different cultures that never get in touch with each other. They do come into contact, but that always means war. That's why we're exploring the possibilities for a kind of Mudanthe [Charles' Dutch foundation, AS] in Africa. Mudanthe in Kenya is almost finished, there will be one in Curacao and Mudanthe Istanbul is in preparation.
Fridah	-

This overview shows that there is clearly no lack of ambitions. The next section will consider the question how respondents view their possibilities to realise these ambitions and what obstacles they face in doing so.

5.3.2 Obstacles

As said, it is not always easy for the respondents to find or create space to express their intellectual capital. What is the state of affairs when the sector of development cooperation in particular is concerned? Above, strengths of migrants as actor in development cooperation were discussed. Do respondents succeed in applying these capacities? This section highlights the obstacles that migrants face in realising their ambitions.

A difference can be made between obstacles that lie with the migrants themselves and these that lie with other actors in development cooperation. Starting with the migrants themselves, a first difficulty is a lack of time to carry out all the activities in which respondents are engaged. We have seen the wide range of development activities that respondents carry out and it was also said that most of these activities are part of their private lives and take place in their spare time:

The daily life, you have a wife and kids, you have to do that as well, you have to deal with these expectations as being a dad, a husband, a student, an employee. Only little time is left to be active for what you could do there [*in Africa, AS*]. The most ideal situation would be that you are in celibacy, that you have loads of money and that you fully dedicate yourself to your country of origin. Otherwise you have to...you have to live here with the day-to-day worries. [Alphonse]

Respondents have to deal with an everlasting lack of time to carry out all development activities that they wish to do. Hence, it demands a great deal of energy to balance all private and professional activities. Another very important thing that often lacks is money. Antony says: *'I have the knowledge now to address the problem, but I now need the capital'*. Respondents have to be very inventive to collect resources to be able to carry out their plans:

As a self-employed you're never sure about your income. That keeps me awake at night. If you have a few bad months and you don't have enough buffer to make it through these months, I think: okay, if the worst come to the worst, I can have an arrears of rent for one month, that's how you start calculating, I can resign this and this and I can discontinue the paper...that's all possible, but the people there have to eat. [Fatma]

Furthermore, inadequate knowledge of the Dutch language is an obstacle that keeps showing up in the stories of the respondents. Three interviews were done in English for example, because these respondents did not master the Dutch language or were not confident enough to do the interview in Dutch. Language is also a barrier for the respondents who do speak and write Dutch, since expressing one's ideas and plans to a third party in a language that is not your mother tongue demands extra efforts. For instance, Hmed tells how his thoughts are in Arabic, which have to be translated to Dutch in his head before expressing them to the person he is speaking to and in the meantime he wants to keep the conversation going, without awkward silences. In this, you depend on the counterpart: does he or she help you to find the right words or not? One can imagine that writing down your plans on application forms to receive subsidy for instance can be a difficult task. Finally, migrants can be hindered by a lack of networks in the Netherlands. Not succeeding in building a network and applying networks in a right way, can result in invisibility of migrants as actor in development cooperation.

The above mentioned obstacles apply to migrants themselves. Next to this, they encounter problems in realising their development ambitions that lie with other development actors. One of these other actors are the local partners that respondents have to work with in carrying out their activities. In dealing with local authorities it is no exception that respondents face corruption and unreliable systems and agreements. For some respondents this makes it hard to hold on to their ambitions. Especially when activities are carried out in the area where the respondent comes from, his or her image is at stake. Here, the migrant is no neutral actor, there are different interests at stake and expectations from local people can run high:

I have to arrange all kind of things in Sudan, but I'm not going to do that. I can't. [...] I won't taint myself. It's dangerous. You receive papers from the local authority, saying 'we need a school and you have our permission to build it', but at the same time this declaration means that this school *has to* come into being. If it doesn't succeed, while you did receive the money, you took it yourselves. There's a risk attached to it and I say: I won't do it. That's safer for me, better. Look, it's about my integrity here. Whenever you lose your integrity, you will never be able to get it back. Especially when it concerns your own family and your own area. It's seen as self-enrichment. The price you pay is too high. The risk is too high that you get all the papers and the permission to do it and then you hand it in at a Dutch organisation that says: no, not possible, rejection. [Hmed]

An additional problem is that in the communication with partners in the South, all kind of things can go wrong. Local partners are expected to communicate in a Dutch way, but they are not used to that. This demands a great deal of effort from the migrants to make it work. This again causes frustration among some respondents having experience with these mistakes:

It would be good to consider the help migrants need to make this bridge from here to there. You have to do things with your local partners. That part can be soooo frustrating. It can go wrong in e-mail contact, technical details, formulation, language.... I get tired of it. And I already start worrying about the responsibility. It means that somebody, I guess it will be me, have to invent a format and together with our partners look through every page, every sentence asking: is it filled in correctly? That takes a lot of time and energy. [...] And our partners get frustrated as well, they think: "we already do that! What more do you want from us? This is more than we have ever written in Somaliland. Let us do our work!" And people here think: "just give an adequate response to our questions, we have to be accountable to Novib and NCDO". [Fatma]

Another development actor is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2011 the government invests €4.6 milliard in development cooperation. Half of this budget directly goes to developing countries, the other half goes in form of subsidies to companies and civil society organisations.³⁵ Alphonse says:

You can have all ambitions in the world to help your country of origin, [...] but there is a policy at stake here which decides with regard to these countries and that is the course to be pursued, if you want it or not. [...] You can't go to the Ministry and say: this is my vision on development, so let's do it! No, they have their own interests attached to their vision. And that makes sense. They won't adapt to the vision of one or another Alphonse from Congo.

In this quote Alphonse points to the fact that there are existing structures in the Netherlands in which migrants have to try to fit in their development ambitions if they want to be able to claim any subsidy for their activities. Hence, migrants are committed to rules and regulations which they cannot change. Besides, despite the intension to let them become equal partners, there is no true partnership at all in the eyes of the respondents. An example of this is the coming about of Co-financing System (MFS 2.0). It looked promising, since for the first time migrants were involved in the preliminary debates. However, in the end the word 'migrant' was only mentioned once or twice in the whole paper. Max:

In 1996, we put pressure from the 'Derde Kamer' [*a shadow cabinet on international cooperation, an initiative of the NCDO, AS*]: "this is what has to happen, we are important for the Netherlands and for countries of origin". For the first time, under Minister Van Ardenne, migration & development was entered in the policy document. Migrant organisations have something to tell, we have to take that seriously. This developed into the acknowledgement of the role of migrants within development cooperation. The idea was to create room for initiatives of migrant organisations, but in practice this never happened. I openly had fights at meetings with the Minister, I openly cursed and swore. It's the same old story again, we have been debating for six months, we have written policy documents and now the policy is presented and they don't give a penny for the purpose of migrants! And then, one sentence was added: 'they can appeal for the support of other organisations bla-bla-bla'. And now in MFS 2.0, they have been totally left out.'

A third actor are Dutch development organisations. The next section is dedicated to these organisations, since in the eyes of the respondents the biggest obstacle to realise their ambitions and

³⁵ Source: National Government. Retrieved from www.rijksoverheid.nl (accessed 08-04-2011).

apply their intellectual capital for development cooperation relates to the question 'how to get access to Dutch development organisations?'

5.3.3 Accessibility and cultural diversity of Dutch development organisations

A wish that is strongly present among the respondents is to offer their capacities to Dutch development organisations, so that these can be applied to the development practice in countries of origin. At this point, respondents often are disappointed. In their view the organisations are not easy accessible and not open enough to their possible contribution:

If migrants truly would be important for the development of their countries, you would see many more of them within development organisations. That's not the case now. I notice that migrants are used as 'ressource personeel', but not truly... when I do consultancy, I make recommendations, but you don't have the power to implement them. As a migrant you're used as what they call 'ressource personeel', or as decoration at meetings, to show 'look, we've got a migrant as well'. [Julie]

This section shows respondents' views on the accessibility of Dutch development organisations. Besides, the visions of the representatives of Cordaid, ICCO/Kerk in Actie, Oxfam Novib and Wilde Ganzen on possibilities for migrants to realise their development ambitions are considered. On the one hand the possibilities of migrants as customers of their organisations (by means of handing in subsidy requests for their projects, for example), on the other as employees or advisors within the organisation itself. In this way, respondents' remarks can be placed in a broader context.

As 'customers' or 'clients' of Dutch development organisations, migrants can appeal to these organisations for (financial) support to carry out their small-scale development projects. When they wish to do a project in a development country, they are referred to the front offices of Linkis.³⁶ These front offices are occupied with Dutch citizens, migrant or not, who want to be active for development cooperation. Access is equal to everybody:

I can say in all honesty that it doesn't make a difference at all if someone comes from Africa, or from Latin America, or from Asia or from the Netherlands, as long as it's someone who wants to work with one of our themes and in one of the countries in which we're active. [WS/ON].

Here, a problem arises. Migrants (as well as natives) have to fit in with the existing structures and regulations of the development organisations. Their plans have to be in line with the field and place of activity of the particular development organisation. Hence, several respondents have the experience that their ideas are met with no response. Fatma: *'Cordaid says: "we are not active in Somalia or Somaliland, so don't turn to us"*. Development organisations acknowledge that this is a problem. Because of the cutbacks in development cooperation, which also affect the development organisations, radical choices had to be made. For example, for Oxfam Novib this means that they have to reduce the number of countries they work in drastically. As a consequence, many people will be told 'no' in reply to only their first telephone call:

I can imagine that there are groups who say: "it's impossible to get access". That's true, but not because he is an African or a Latino, but because he comes from a country in which we have no program. And indeed, that's very tedious, because if you want to start a project at the one side of the border, it's possible, but at the other side it's not. Unfortunately. This is the way it is. [WS/ON]

³⁶ Linkis means *Laagdrempelige Initiatieven en Kenniscentrum voor Internationale Samenwerking*, translated as *Approachable Initiatives and Knowledge Centre for International Cooperation* [AS]. Advisory and funding organisations work together to support development initiatives in order to make international cooperation accessible for every citizen. Advice is given by regional COSsen (Centres for International Cooperation); financial support is given by Cordaid, Impulsis (a cooperation of Icco, Kerk in Actie and Edukans.), Oxfam Novib and Wilde Ganzen. For more information, view www.linkis.nl.

Then, among some of the respondents the idea prevails that you have to know people within these organisations to get access to financing. In their eyes, it is a 'who knows who' situation:

The point is just getting access to these organisations. Despite of being on the website. You need to know some people inside, otherwise it is very difficult to receive funding. So you have to be here for a while, to get into the circles. [Antony]

The organisations can only partially place this critique. Of course networks can be useful. There are examples of subsidy requests that are handed in via a board member of the particular development organisation, for instance. However, having contacts within the organisation is certainly of no account in decision-making concerning the reward of subsidies. In case a subsidy request is open to any doubt with regard to the quality of the request or if it does not meet requirements of the organisation, it will not be rewarded, no matter how or via whom the request came in.

Besides fitting in with the place and field of activity, it takes a lot of energy to meet all demands that these development organisations make on subsidy requests and the procedure to hand in such a request. Antony: *'We wrote an application, it took much hours, a 22-pages application for Wilde Ganzen for €70.000. [...] It's very difficult, so I try to work with their processes. All procedures you have to follow, it takes a lot of time'*. Moreover, respondents miss clarity about all these conditions. Amadou:

We need more information from the organisations: what can we mean for them? This alone is not enough, I also need to know what the conditions are. That's often a stumbling block for us. You have a feasible project, but the conditions you have to meet are drastic: it's either this, or nothing. If your idea only differs a little bit, you can forget about it. This has to do with bureaucracy and a one-sided worldview.

Among the representatives of the organisations, there is agreement on the bureaucracy of the development sector in general. The sector is not searching for alternative ways in which capacities and knowledge of migrants can be used more effectively or efficiently:

At least you can state that we live in a bureaucratic society and that doors open far more easily when you're familiar with all these rules and regulations and also that the Dutch citizens who are part of the boards better know these ways... And as far as that goes, little is learnt from the knowledge of migrants, like: "hey, do we need to be that ethnocentric that we have to maintain all this bureaucracy, forced on us by the government?" Or do we have to figure out another way, of which we can say: "hey, that's more equal, your systems are different, we can think of other ways as well". That's not the case right now. [GW/IC]

Next to 'customers' coming from outside the development organisations, migrants can be involved as employers within these organisations. Here we are talking about the cultural diversity of the particular organisations. By way of illustration, the *Seven Stages of Interculturalisation* are presented in Box 5.2 (Hoogsteder, 1996). They give an overview of the different stages organisations go through on their way to become an intercultural organisation.

The four interviewees consider their organisations to be 'white' organisations. The representative of Wilde Ganzen cannot think of a migrant-colleague, maybe one Bolivian person as an exception. Moreover, she does not know about any policy to stimulate cultural diversity within the organisation. Also the representative of ICCO/Kerk in Actie cannot think of such a policy, but there are a number of migrants employed at the office in Utrecht. The representatives of Oxfam Novib and Cordaid know that the wish to promote cultural diversity within the organisation is present, but only the

representative of Oxfam Novib has knowledge of a policy that aims at hiring a minimum number of employers with a migrant background.

Box 5.2 The Seven Stages of Interculturalisation

1 Monocultural organisation

In stage one there is one culture within the organisation. The organisation does not have connections with foreign clients and there are no foreign employers. Policy and behaviour are ethnocentric.

2 Services to allochthonous population

In stage two foreign groups start to contact the organisation. These contacts increase the need within the organisation for an intercultural policy.

3 Intercultural management of services

Stage three marks the start of intercultural management: the organisation takes policy measures to improve service provision towards foreign clients.

4 Influx of allochthonous staff

In stage four the organisation pursues a policy aimed at hiring foreign employers. In this way the organisation wants to become a reflection of society and improve service provision towards foreign clients.

5 Intercultural human resource management

In stage five intercultural management is given a start. Communication and intercultural management are emphasised.

6 Integral intercultural management

In stage six the intercultural policy is broadened to diversity management in general.

7 Intercultural organisation

Stage seven is the intercultural organisation: cultural diversity is an added value.

Source: Hoogsteder, 1996 [Translated by the author, AS].

None of the representatives is familiar with rules or regulations that go a step further and that are targeted to the adaptation of the organisation itself to be more open to migrants from the outside. One can think of different ways of having meetings, intercultural communication and intercultural management, for instance. Looking at the seven stages, the information given by the four representatives implies that these organisations have passed stages 1 and 2, but stay put at stages 3 and 4.

Despite the fact that they view their organisations as ‘white organisations’, the representatives of the development organisations do not see any barriers for migrants to enter their organisations. Personal attitude is important here. The representative of Cordaid, an African migrant himself, tells: *‘I applied, just like anybody else. It hasn’t been hard for me. You just have to apply. I did nothing else. I applied at a number of development organisations here in the Netherlands and received a ‘no’ and another ‘no’, but you just keep going.’* They admit that what can be an obstacle for migrants like the respondents in this study, are their qualifications. In spite of all possible strong points that migrants can have in comparison with native applicants, credentials are the basis for hiring someone:

Your education, what you studied at the university, that’s the starting point. Other things, intuitive matters, like the fact that you recognise situations very quickly, situations of poverty, coping strategies to survive, things you almost cannot learn...these are complementary and its added value only pays off afterwards. [GN/CD]

Next to the wish to be employed within these organisations, respondents have the wish to provide these organisations with advice based on their knowledge and experience. Looking at their organisations as a whole, representatives of the development organisations can imagine that they make a quite impassable impression. An explanation for this is that the majority of their activities takes place at the project department, which is focused on countries in the South and not on the Dutch society. Moreover, most of these projects are long lasting and the biggest part of the budget is fixed for several years. As a consequence, despite of all good ideas migrants might come up with, there is very little room to adapt to this in the short run.

Respondents as well as the development organisations agree that two remarks should be made with regard to the ease of access of development organisations for migrants, either as customers or as employers. First, talking about accessibility, migrants should reflect on themselves. Which efforts did they make to confront other development actors with their presence? Did they show themselves to these other actors to become more visible? The attempts they made to do so differ a lot among the respondents. Some of the respondents clearly took control themselves to show others their visions and ideas:

I took part in the 'Idea Challenge', I had conversations with Cordaid, Hivos, NCDO, I was at the Africa Day and stuff, I always go there to talk. Appointments and meetings at the Ministry, at development organisations, if we are allowed, we always go and tell what we're thinking. [Amadou]

However, other respondents admit that they did not use all available means to show their presence yet, such as Bisi and Hmed:

Well, I did try to get into one or two NGOs and so far, nothing yet. But again, maybe it's a question of push. [...] I think you really have to push. You really have to almost fight to get listened to. But you have to try. I have not tried yet that hard, so I have to see. [Bisi]

I only made a kind of inventory via the internet. And looked at a lot of application forms. But the conditions... that's where I gave up. It's quite a fuss and I don't have the time to figure it out. [Hmed]

A second remark is that limited access may also be a matter of the migrants' perception. As professional trainer, Max developed a workshop for migrants to show them that they have to take control themselves:

I let them enter the room, film it and show it to them: look, you enter the room as if you are a loser! How do you walk in Africa when you enter a room? Show it to me! Then they get the point: 'He's right, I behave different here'. Look, they just forgot who they are and then they come here and think: 'Oh, I'm black, access is difficult, there are thresholds and people aren't nice to me'. [...] So think about it: there are a lot of possibilities, but you have to understand yourself that that's possible at every level.

Migrants' own actions are crucial in becoming visible development actors. And since this will not happen effortless, it demands a great deal of perseverance. Hence, one's personal attitude is a decisive factor in what he or she can accomplish.

5.4 Conclusions

After discussing the position of highly-educated African migrants in the Dutch society in general in Chapter Four, this chapter zoomed in on them as actor in the development sector. The overview of the development activities that respondents are engaged in showed that these touch upon every aspect of the domain of development cooperation. Some of the respondents are able to be occupied with these activities within their professional life. However, the larger part of the development

activities are carried out as private activities, in the form of remittances, PIs, projects through (international) NGOs and activities with a focus on the Netherlands. As a consequence, most activities take place in the spare time of the respondents, next to all daily activities.

Looking at the scope and content of their activities, two things are remarkable. First, despite the accusation that migrants should only look after the interests of their 'own' people with their development activities, the activities of the respondents unmistakably have a cross-border perspective. Second, in contrast to the remark of the development organisations that migrant organisations often lack long-term insight, their activities are provided with a clear vision with an eye for sustainability. Here it becomes clear that we have to do with a specific group of migrants, that possesses analytical capacities and knows what they are talking about. Their high-skills would be the most plausible explanation for this.

Considering strengths and weaknesses of migrants as actors in development cooperation, respondents and the representatives of the Dutch development organisations for a large part agree. On the one hand, respondents have the opinion that there are a number of strong points which makes them unique actors and which give them an added value compared to other Dutch development actors. In the South, migrant-actors can benefit the effectiveness and efficiency of development cooperation. At the same time, they can contribute in the North. In times of a crumbling down of public support for development cooperation in the Netherlands, their contribution could be very valuable and should be considered as a serious way to fight the negative image that development cooperation currently has in society. This view is shared by the development organisations, which implies that they recognise the potential that is present among migrants. On the other hand, there is agreement on the fact that being a migrant engaged in development cooperation does not per definition makes you a professional. This awareness that not every migrant is a good development actor and that engagement in development cooperation asks for specific capacities is a sign of clear insight of the respondents in the complexity of the migration and development debate.

In their search for influence in the development sector, respondents face a number of obstacles that hinder them in realising their ambitions. On the one hand these apply to the migrants themselves: problems regarding lack of time and resources, for example. On the other hand, there are obstacles that other development actors are accountable for. Respondents state that they could use some assistance in working effectively with their local partners, for example. Moreover, there are existing structures developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch development organisations, in which their ideas have to fit in.

The biggest obstacle for the respondents is to make their qualities and capacities visible to Dutch development organisations, so they can use them in their activities. Despite of the acknowledgement of migrants' capacities by the development organisations, section 5.3 showed that in the opinion of the respondents, there is too little attention for the knowledge and capacities that *are* present among a group of migrants that indeed *do* have the qualities and vision to positively contribute to development cooperation. Moreover, they are annoyed about the mistakes that are made that could possibly have been avoided by consulting them or other capable migrants. These two points are a source of frustration.

Yet, the attitude the migrants themselves have in this is crucial; the space to allow your capacities to be realised you mainly have to create yourself. To reach this, you have to stand firm, make yourself visible to others and know exactly what you want. Now let us turn to the next chapter that deals with the relation between the migrants' position *here* and their involvement *there*.

6. The relation between *here* and *there*

In order to formulate an answer to the third and last sub question, this chapter brings the issues discussed in chapter four and five together: *what relation can be found between the migrants' social position in their destination country and their involvement in development cooperation regarding home countries?* This is discussed in section 6.1. Section 6.2 dwells on key dilemma's regarding migrants *here* and their wish to be involved *there*, which came to the surface in conversations with development organisations. It turned out that these dilemma's need to be figured out first, before an answer can be given to the question: how can the intellectual capital of the highly-educated migrants be applied for the development sector? Finally, section 6.3 shortly presents the most important conclusions of this chapter.

6.1 The link between migrants' social position *here* and their involvement *there*

In the theoretical framework I questioned the relation between the migrants' position in the Dutch society and their engagement in the development sector. Literature found that the positive contribution that migrants can make to the development of their home country is strongly influenced by the degree of success they enjoy in the country of destination (Koser, 2007). The question was raised if there is also a relation the other way around. It might be that having the possibility to contribute to the development of the country of origin influences the position of the migrants in their society of destination. In the course of the text, the word 'integration' is used to refer to the social position of the migrants in the Dutch society. As explained before, integration is the more common word to use than for example acculturation or social position and .

First and foremost, formulating a clear-cut answer on this question is impossible. That would at least require a much broader and in-depth analysis, which was not the aim of the current study. And even then, one can wonder if an unambiguous answer can be given. Hence, the vision on the integration-development dilemma that is elaborated on in this section is based on the experiences of the migrants and development organisations included in this study: how do they view the relation between the migrants' position in society and their efforts for development cooperation?

In the current political discourse often a negative relationship is suggested: a focus on the country of origin hinders integration or even is an indication of the lack of integration in the country of destination, the Netherlands (De Haas, 2005). According to this line of reasoning, being part of more than one community is impossible and commitment to one country would come at the expense of commitment to the other country (Gowricharn, 2010). This means that respondents' involvement in development activities regarding Africa would be to the detriment of their integration in the Netherlands and having a dual (or even triple) loyalty is anything but desirable.

Despite this popular interpretation of the relation between integration and involvement in development activities, cases of a failed integration or a turn-away from the Dutch society as a consequence of their development activities cannot be found among the respondents. Also for the opposite way of reasoning, namely that a successful integration *prevents* migrants from becoming active for development of their home countries, because their focus would be totally on the host country, no examples can be found among the respondents.

In contrast, point of departure of the representatives of the four development organisations Cordaid, ICCO/Kerk in Actie, Oxfam Novib and Wilde Ganzen is a positive relationship. However, they doubt how this relationship exactly looks like. They see a lot of applications of migrants passing by and they notice big differences in quality. They suppose that a good integration is indeed reflected in

the applications they hand in. It shows for instance language-skills, but it also goes a step further: does the applicant master the jargon of the development sector? The representative of Oxfam Novib gives the example of applications coming from the Moroccan community. He receives relatively many applications from Moroccans who know their way about in the Dutch society, are highly-educated, speak Dutch perfectly, know very well what the Dutch society looks like and have large networks. This implies that a good social position offers possibilities to be engaged in development cooperation. On the other hand, the representatives also know examples of groups who only have limited knowledge of the Dutch language and maintain minimal relationships with the Dutch society, but are involved in development cooperation anyhow. Their first priority is not so much integration in the Dutch society, but their focus is on their home countries and perhaps the possibility to return one day. Although no ambiguous answer can be given to the question in what direction this relation works out the development organisations assume a positive relationship:

I am not sure what this relation looks like. There are two positions. One that says: the fact that migrants are occupied with development cooperation is a sign of better integration. The other says: no, just because they are occupied with development cooperation, migrants' integration in the Dutch society is more successful. Which of these two is the right position, I don't know. [WS/ON]

The migrants in this study agree that a certain level of integration in the Dutch society is necessary to be able to carry out development activities. In any case, migrants face the reality of a bureaucratic system in the development sector. A good integration offers advantages in finding your way through the whole system and in matters as handing in subsidy requests, writing project proposals and so on. In this sense, integration is a prerequisite for migrants to express capacities and realise ambitions:

It's about development of a vision. That migrants integrate, that they realise what the importance is of speaking the Dutch language, of having a job in the Netherlands. That they know how the society works, before they start. [...] I still speak to people who send me project plans in English, while they have lived in the Netherlands for 15 years now. I think: man, are you crazy? If you don't speak the Dutch language, you can do nothing. Believe me, it won't work. [Max]

Besides that it gives you functional tools, like language-skills, integration is important, because you have to know what is going on here. To function as a good development agent it is not enough to know what the situation is in countries of origin and what peoples' needs and views are over there. The representative of Cordaid tells:

It is also very important to know which discussions concerning development cooperation are going on here, in the Netherlands, and what prevailing views are concerning these countries of origin. Therefore, a good integration is necessary, since this means that you're involved in networks here. Maintaining these networks can help to improve your position here, as you get in touch with other people that are occupied with your country of origin, you talk with them and that's an enrichment. You might be asked to give your opinion, for example, regardless of this opinion is respected or not, it doesn't matter.

Despite the importance of a certain level of integration, it cannot be said that integration has finished, before respondents get involved in development cooperation. On the contrary, the stories of the respondents show that their engagement in development activities regarding their home countries is present from the very beginning of their stay in the Netherlands. The process of obtaining a social position here is running in parallel.

Hence, integration is an indispensable condition for the success of their development projects, but not a completed stage. In fact, it can be said that integration of the respondents is strengthened by their development activities. It urges them to learn the language, make contacts and develop

networks. July says *'Active migrants might participate more in the society here. They participate more, because they make contacts here and are occupied with their home countries'*.

What is even more important is that having the possibility to contribute to development cooperation gives respondents peace of mind. This is not so much brought forward by the development organisations, but stressed by the migrant themselves. There is a reciprocal effect: when they succeed in implementing concrete development activities they feel useful *here* for the sake of people *there*. Their engagement in countries in the South makes them feel at ease in their destination country. This shows that the positive relation between integration and involvement in development cooperation can also be considered the other way around: the possibility to be engaged in the development of the country or continent that you come from, benefits the position of the respondents in the Netherlands.

Consequently, when respondents are *not* being able to do this, this will not benefit their position here at all. When (people in) the country of origin think that the migrant contributes nothing and the country of destination impedes converting their ambitions into deeds, they risk falling between two stools. Respondents describe how this leads to anger and frustrations. An example:

I want to, but all I see are vague images. I spent hours and hours in figuring out all rules and regulations, but I got stuck. [...] It's so frustrating. There is an effect, yes. Look, I know how people live there. And I am just powerless. I have nice ideas. My wish is just other than the situation I am in at the moment, but it's hard to realise. Basic needs lack: clean water, education, that lacks. [...] I know what the problems are, I know what possible solutions are, but I don't succeed. It makes me angry. I have kids myself, it could have happen to me. I had to deal with it myself in the past. So this is quite something and I feel powerless. [...] It bothers me and hinders my life here. When I am at home and I hear news from Sudan...I follow everything very closely, in fact, I am there. I would be satisfied, if I could contribute only a little in providing basic needs for the people there. It would give me peace of mind here. [Hmed]

It goes too far to state that an impediment of their development aspirations will lead to a failed integration or a turn against the Dutch society. Respondents acknowledge that they have to make it work themselves. Again, their own attitude in this is crucial. Of course they depend on other actors within the sector, but in the vision of the respondents, one should never pass by the fact that you are responsible for your own actions and the space they create for yourself to realise your ambitions. Max says: *'Migrants, and that's what I tell them, everything is in our own hands. Always'*. Joseph:

Everyone has the space to realise their ambitions in one way or another. As I said, it depends on the individual. A lot of migrant organisations don't wait for the migration and development policy of the government of a World Bank report to support their countries of origin. [...] They don't need money to do that, they just took the space to do it.

Here, we should give a moment's thought to the specific group of migrants that is studied. They are well-educated and (almost) all employed. Some even have the possibility to be active for development cooperation in their profession. As said before, their 'opportunity structures' are favourable. Although they point out that it is not easy to combine their day-to-day activities with their development ambitions, they seem to manage it quite well. For migrants who have less promising points of departure, this could turn out otherwise. Fatma illustrates this:

I think everyone can confirm this, that as a child you were always told: "you have to do your best at school and get a good job, because only then you can mean something for your home country". That's how we were raised. "You have to do your very best, because we didn't come here for nothing. Here is where your future is, you have to build it here and then you can mean something for your family over there, for your country of origin". That's the way it goes. [...] if you can choose between earning less

money, investing in your education and having no money to send to your family, or find a job right now, you park your personal development for a while and go for the money, which is at that moment necessary to be able take care of people in your country, then that's what you choose to do. [...] That's a pressure.

In case of the group of migrants studied here, it seems that their integration and the possibility to be engaged in development cooperation reinforce each other. It is a vicious circle, or, as the representative of Cordaid puts it: *'It's a relation of synergy'*. In general, integration is needed to function as an agent within development cooperation. A good integration in the Dutch society, helps migrants to get to know the Dutch institutes and to function within these structures. At the same time, migrants that are actively involved in development cooperation are more likely to find their way through the Dutch society, develop and expand networks and in some of the cases they even influenced the debate concerning migration & development. But what is most important, is that involvement in development cooperation turned out to be very important for the functioning and well-being of the respondents in the Dutch society.

6.2 Migrants and development cooperation: dilemma's

Before turning to the conclusions of this thesis, attention should be paid to a number of serious dilemma's concerning 'migrants & development' that development organisations struggle with. When the state of affairs so far is considered, the general picture of the twelve cases in this study is that of 'high-potentials' for development cooperation: persons who are highly-educated; who have ambitions and demonstrated affinity with development cooperation; who have proper experience and useful networks in this respect; and who are able to reflect upon themselves and are open to their possible weaknesses and hazards. In addition, findings in the previous section suggest that applying the intellectual capital of these people for the development sector leads to a win-win situation: it can benefit the individual migrant in obtaining a position in the Dutch society, it brings advantages for the host society (being actively involved stimulates their participation) and last but not least, their involvement can benefit development initiatives in the South. If this is the case, why are they not accepted with open arms?

A first issue is that development organisations are no integration organisations. They are development organisations and hence their core business is to fight poverty and bring about 'development' in the South. Point of departure for their activities are the effects in the countries of origin and not the (side-)effects these activities can have in the Netherlands:

At least it is not our basic motivation to say: because we offer migrants the possibility to be involved in development cooperation, we contribute in any way to the increase of, or strengthening of the integration of migrants in the Netherlands. [WS/ON]

Considering their activities on the terrain of migration and development, Oxfam Novib has for instance a programme regarding remittances and ICCO/Kerk in Actie has special attention for migration and development issues in Nepal, India and Bangladesh. Starting point to invest in this domain is the added value for the countries of origin and should not be found in the idea that creating opportunities for migrants to be engaged in development cooperation contributes to an increasing integration of migrants in the Netherlands.

However, since development organisations do recognise the added value of migrants for development cooperation, they facilitate migrants to play a role in the development sector. Besides the possibility to apply for (financial) support for the implementation of their development activities,

there is special attention for service provision to migrant organisations by means of information provision, trainings and capacity building programmes. The reason to support migrants in this are the positive effects their contribution can have to the success of projects in the South. It is all the better if it improves their position in the Dutch society, but that is not the core motivation. This means that the development organisations view taking care of the intellectual capital of migrants in the North not as their responsibility; their primary responsibility lies with people and projects in the South.

Second, a frustration of the respondents is that there are so many skilled migrants living here, why do the development organisations refuse to ask them to help with their projects in the South? From the point of view of the development organisations two notions have an important share in this: decentralisation of activities and ownership of the receivers of development assistance.

Decentralisation is the delegation of tasks and authority from the Netherlands to the local level in the South to bring decision-making processes concerning the development of a country or locality closer to the people at stake. ICCO/Kerk in Actie recently has gone through this process of decentralisation. The voice of the people in the South should become stronger and as a consequence, activities focused on the South gradually shifted from the headquarters in Utrecht to regional ICCO-offices in the South.³⁷ Oxfam Novib has started developments in this direction as well and is at the moment in the middle of a decentralisation process. The implementation of policy regarding their partner-countries will no longer take place from The Hague, but from country offices in the particular countries Oxfam Novib is active in. The headquarter in The Hague will decrease, while their presence in the field will increase.³⁸

Part of this decentralisation is that expertise is recruited locally as much as possible and is not sent from the Netherlands to the South. This makes application of expertise of the migrants in the North for the development practice in the South problematic. Dutch development organisations are not in favour of sending people from the North to work in the South, because in the end, the countries and local people themselves have to carry out the projects. Only by exception people from the Netherlands are posted abroad and then it is about their qualities, not about their roots:

Only by way of exception specific expertise is needed for the implementation of a project which is not present on site. In that case it could be that someone from the Netherlands is sent to the particular country. It's not necessary that this person originates from that country. It does not matter if this is an Afghan going to Afghanistan or to Pakistan, or if it is a Dutch person, as long as he or she has the capacities that are needed. [WS/ON]

The trend to restrict dispatching of Dutch experts, because there is enough capacity present in the South, is hard to reconcile with the wish of the migrants here to apply their expertise for implementation of development projects via Dutch development organisations.

Key word in this discussion is ownership. Ownership refers to a situation in which the recipient of aid, a country, village or group of people for instance, is participating in decision-making; they decide on the objective and implementation of the aid (IOB, 2008). The notion of ownership developed in the 90s from the insight that external imposed policy advices and development interventions failed to work (Schulpen & Klem, 2005). By introducing 'ownership' donors gradually abandoned the idea of a top-down approach of development cooperation. Instead, projects have to be demand driven.

For the Dutch development organisations included in this study this means that their guiding principle are the demands, needs and ideas of the people in the South, expressed via their local

³⁷ See <http://www.icco.nl/nl/over-icco/organisatie/vernieuwing>

³⁸ See <http://www.oxfamnovib.nl/de-nieuwe-koers-van-Oxfam-Novib.html>

partners.³⁹ So, besides that expertise should be recruited locally, decisions about what kind of aid is needed and how this should be implemented should be made by the partners in the South and not by people in the North. This has severe consequences for the role migrants in the North can play via Dutch development organisations.

Of course, every migrant still can hand in a project proposal at one of the front offices of Linkis and apply for subsidy in this way. However, in Chapter Five respondents expressed their wish to get their advice and visions incorporated in the activities of the development organisations. The organisations do not have a clear answer on how to deal with this:

It becomes very complicated if you get partners in the North wanting to decide. [...] Development organisations did not figure out what their view is on the fact that people who left Congo wish to change Congo from the North. Because that's what's going on. What do we think of Somali who left their country and want to influence Somalia from the North? No vision is developed on this, no position is taken. [...] It is very illogical that, if you have partners in the South and say that that's your leading principle, that you search for partners in the North. Those two things clash. [GW/IC]

Is it possible to have partners in the South (local people) and in the North (migrants)? For the development organisations in this study it is incompatible to say: we ask Africans *here* what we should do *there*. In fact, it would be a step backwards to let partners in the North again decide about the needs of people in the South.

The discussions proposed here have a strong ethical component. The problem is that they have not been elaborated extensively enough within the Dutch development organisations. There are no answers formulated to essential questions that arise from these discussions. Is it the responsibility of development organisations to involve migrants with intellectual capital within their organisations? Or can this responsibility be fully shifted towards migrants themselves, because in the end, they are 'development organisations' and no 'integration organisations'? And what should these organisations do with the migrants in the North wishing to influence what happens in the South when point of departure is ownership of the aid recipients? Instead of facing these discussion, capacity building becomes the solution:

The importance of migrants is not specified. As a result, they have to 'build their capacity'. Everywhere money for capacity building pops up. That's where the money is... Bu you can build capacity for ages, because the partners who decide what to do are situated in the South and not in the North. This issue is not discussed; it is not fought out by development organisations. [...] Consequently, hardly any form of equality arises. And in fact, that is impossible, since this equality is with partners in the South. [...] What happens now is just an occasional solution. We just call it capacity building and then we are done for the time being. [GW/IC]

6.3 Conclusions

Section 6.1 showed that the social position of the migrants *here* and their involvement *there* are interlinked by a positive relation: they strengthen each other. A certain level of integration and participation, expressed in for instance speaking the language and being involved in networks, is needed to find your way through the system in the development sector and helps to carry out

³⁹ In case of Wilde Ganzen this is different, since they have no local partners themselves, but they support projects for which Dutch Private Initiatives (PIs) raise funds in the Netherlands. These PIs works together with a project partner, a local organisation in a developing country, that has to see to it that the project is implemented in the right way.

activities in an effective way. So, being active *here*, helps being involved *there*. However, most important is that the relation also works the other way around: involvement in development initiatives in their country of origin (or broader) benefits the well-being of the respondents in their society of destination.

This means that recognition of their capacities by the society enlarge, but in particular by the development sector, is a basic need for their feeling at ease here. However, despite that development organisations acknowledge the potential of migrants for development cooperation (as showed in Chapter Five) the efforts they make to express this importance mainly come down to capacity building programs. A clear vision of what should be the follow-up of this capacity building lacks.

This has not so much to do with bad intentions or a lack of interest, but is primarily due to a number of dilemma's that are not worked out within the internal organisations. A clear specification of the role migrants can play within or for their organisations remains absent. As a consequence, migrants do not get a realistic view of what other actors expect from them: what can they offer to them and what not? Right now, expectations do not match: *'I thought that if NGOs are looking for cooperation they would come to me, because of my local knowledge and access to locals, but the answer I got was: "no, no, no", while I expected: "Yes, great!"*.⁴⁰

Of course, actions from the side of the migrants themselves are necessary as well. However, these essential dilemma's concerning the role of migrants in development cooperation, needs to be figured out by development organisations in order to give migrants a realistic view of what they can expect from them. Now it is time to turn to the concluding chapter of this thesis which brings together all information discussed and reflects on the central research question.

⁴⁰ Source: lecture of Kon Kelei at the symposium 'So you think you can help?' Attended at 16 March 2011.

7. From involvement to influence

Recently the Dutch Minister of Immigration and Asylum, Gerd Leers, stated that ‘migration is an enrichment for our society’. Immigrants bring new insights and innovative ideas and a society that ‘tries to discourage or prevent migration is on the wrong track’.⁴¹ This research investigated a group of migrants that showed to be pre-eminently promising when it comes to new insights, impulses and ideas. By means of studying twelve cases of highly-educated sub-Saharan African migrants, this research aimed to shed light on the social position of this underexposed group of migrants in their country of destination, the Netherlands, and considered how their intellectual capital is applied for development cooperation regarding countries of origin. In this final chapter the most important conclusions of this research are presented.

In the introduction the finding was brought forward that the contribution migrants can make to countries of origin is strongly influenced by their position in the country of destination. As a consequence, starting point for this research was an investigation of the social position of the target group in the Dutch society. Based on the adapted acculturation framework of Berry (see page 15) their acculturation process, what happens to individuals who have developed in one cultural context when they try to re-establish their lives in another one, was looked at in detail.

What all respondents had in common is that they left the soil they were rooted one day and ended up in the Netherlands. Once being here, they tried to re-embed their roots in Dutch ground and settle down. The way this acculturation process is experienced, differed for every individual. Though, the factor *migration motivation* turned out to be an important distinctive factor within the group of respondents. Especially the refugee respondents themselves attached value to the difference between migrants and refugees. The common understanding of what it means to be forced to leave your home, your roots, creates a very strong feeling of alliance with other refugees. They share the experience of travelling an unknown path full of uncertainty, fear and danger and they all had to deal with the pain of loss and loneliness. Once arrived here, their thoughts are 24/7 with the people they left behind, literally having no space to dream.

The way refugees experience their acculturation process differed from that of the other migrants in this study, since their entry points are dissimilar. In case of refugees, their roots were disrupted rudely, their departure was unprepared and since the destination of their journey often was unknown, no preparations for their lives in their new country were made either. The other migrants also faced obstacles on their way, but they experienced a more gradual transition from their country of origin to their destination country. The notion of ‘destination country’ should not be interpreted to literally here, since none of the respondents could say for sure that the Netherlands is the country in which they will grow old.

For the group as a whole, especially the factors *status* and *identity* turned out to be of important influence on the social position of this specific group of migrants. A high departure status is characteristic for these highly-educated migrants, but involves the risk of status loss in the country of destination, which indeed was a common experience among respondents. The absence or non-recognition of credentials is an important cause for this status loss and has as a consequence that they feel like their capacities are not taken seriously by the Dutch society.

Concerning their identity heated discussions are going on in society stressing that migrants’ focus should be on the Netherlands and that holding on to cultures of origin is undesirable. However, the

⁴¹ For the whole article, view the 2011 autumn-edition of ‘*Christen Democratische Verkenningen*’, the scientific journal of the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), published at 7 October 2011.

respondents themselves did not experience mainstream and ethnic identities as being mutually exclusive, oppositional or conflicting at all. All these different parts form vital layers of their identity. In literature, this is referred to as the 'bi-cultural identity' of migrants. However, the word 'bi-cultural' should not be taken too strict in the sense of integrating only two cultures. It can be concluded that the acculturation process of the respondents goes beyond the integration of a migrant with a particular African background as a Dutch citizen. In fact, their acculturation process transcends their country of destination; the migrants develop an identity as a world citizen.

Clearly, the uprooting of the respondents had its repercussions on their position here. Obtaining a social position is certainly no easy task and by times a huge struggle that involves stress and frustration. However, the overall picture is that of a group of people fully participating in the Dutch society. The migrants both participate in the larger society of settlement *and* hold on to where they come from. It is exactly this what makes the target group of this research so unique: they have been able to maintain social capital in their countries of origin and build new networks in their country of destination. Moreover, they were very well able to reflect on their own position. Together with their positive attitude and persistent personalities, this enables them to take their faith in their own hands.

The picture of a special group of migrants can be prolonged when looking at the way the target group is involved in development cooperation. The general picture that came forward is that of skilled professionals, possessing intellectual capital and with a thorough knowledge of the needs of local people, years of experience in the sector, knowledge of both the Dutch society and countries of origin and involvement in extensive transnational networks providing access Dutch actors have not. All this give them a unique position within the sector of development cooperation.

With the exception of one of the twelve cases, the wish to be involved in development cooperation is present without any doubt. The activities the migrants are involved in touch upon all aspects of development cooperation; from remittances to PIs, NGOs, businesses and networks and some are even professionally employed within the sector. The reach of their activities extends the own home country and therefore, the notion of 'countries of origin' as included in the central research question should be stretched. Furthermore, their development activities exceed the image of building schools and sending money. Their activities are of a higher level, having attention for sustainability and stemming from a well-founded vision on development cooperation.

Although their activities are focused on the South, making a contribution to the Netherlands is an important target of these migrants as well. With their specific backgrounds and their insight in their strengths, but certainly also in the weaknesses and limitations their unique position brings along, these people are pre-eminently able to fulfill the bridging-function between *here* and *there* and in this way create win-win situations. The question then was, what is done with their promising characteristics and capacities?

Translating their capacities in actual influence and obtaining access to development organisations was hard for the migrants. Development organisations recognise their possible added value, but mainly from the perspective of migrants as part of Private Initiatives; as being *clients* of their organisations. When it comes to migrants as possible *advisors* for their organisation they do not know how to cope with some essential discussions concerning migration and development, the most essential one being the discussion surrounding 'ownership'. It strikes to notice the lack of contemplative elaboration of these discussions and the possible consequences outcomes might have for the organisations. As a result, the solution on how to deal with these people sticks at capacity building sessions. But what capacity should be built exactly? In this way, promising capital of

migrants like that of the respondents in this study remains unused. If the potential of this group of highly-educated migrants is truly acknowledged, a follow-up should be given. However, what this should be or how this should be done, remains unclear.

Now the subject of the social position of the respondents in the Netherlands and the possibility to apply their capacities for development cooperation can be brought together. The prevailing idea in society is that the orientation of migrants on countries of origin is an indication of the lack of integration in receiving countries (De Haas, 2005). If one thing has become clear, it is that this debate surrounding migrants' loyalty to the country of origin and the country of destination should certainly not be interpreted as a zero-sum game. Instead, it should be approached as a win-win situation. Negative consequences of involvement in home countries, like that it would hinder their functioning here, remained absent in stories of the twelve respondents. In contrast, being involved *there* and having a good position *here* strengthen each other. In contrast, since the motivation of these migrants is twice as strong as that of 'ordinary' development actors, so are disappointments. Not being able to apply their intellectual capital for the development of home countries affects their well-being here in a negative way. For the migrants in this study, ignoring their roots is no option. They are involved in transnational networks at a large scale, keeping in touch with family back home and friends and relatives all over the world. This serves for them as a way to watch over their roots and contributes to a more effective involvement in development cooperation, be it in their country of origin or broader.

Hence, it is worrisome that a clear answer to the question how to apply this unique position of promising migrants is not present, yet. It is remarkable that it are especially the migrants themselves who see the importance of their position *here* in relation to their activities *there* (and vice versa). Migrants' involvement in their home countries will always be there, denying this or discourage it makes no sense. Attempts to counteract this transnationalisation of migrants' orientation seems ineffective and harmful to their acculturation process.

Recommendations

The above stated conclusions lead to four recommendations. First, to prevent the interplay between the skilled African migrants and the Dutch society ending in a forced and unhappy marriage, we should bear in mind that obtaining a position in the Dutch society is a two-way process: the receiving Dutch society has a role in the acculturation process of the migrants as well. However, in society the focus is on the final result of the migrant as a well-integrated Dutch citizen and responsibility to reach this result is largely shifted towards the migrant. What is forgotten, is to work on a sense of belonging. The twelve cases in this study showed that it is essential to feel welcome, to feel at home, in order to function as a good citizen. This sense of belonging, defined as 'a sense of personal involvement in a social system so that persons feel themselves to be an indispensable and integral part of the system' (Anant, 1966) turned out to be a basic need for the migrants. A very important element of this belonging is what can be described as '*valued involvement*' (Hagerty et al., 1992). The experience of feeling valued, needed and accepted, is essential for their social position here.

Second, zooming in on this valued involvement of the migrants in development cooperation, expectations of development organisations and migrants do not match. Development organisations should run an internal dialogue to figure out how they relate themselves to the wish of Northern migrants to be active in Southern countries. The role migrants can play for or within their organisations remains unclear now and a specification of this is necessary in order for migrants to get a realistic view of what can they offer to them and what not? Since it was found that the migration-

development link exists on paper, but is not elaborated on in conspiracy with migrants, an external dialogue is needed as well. Development organisations should in consultation with migrants elaborate on where they can find and strengthen each other.

Third, migrants should reflect on themselves as well. They should reconsider the role they can play and adjust their expectations to reality. In the current political context chances for development organisations to stand up for migrant(organisation)s will not increase. Respondents realise that point of departure should be their own strength and own responsibility. It is time that they ask themselves where they can get the most out of their efforts. This might mean that they should focus on another role than incorporation of their talents in existing traditional development organisations. Further research could investigate their role in public-private networks for example.

Another domain that is undiscovered, is that of lobbying. Development organisations might need migrants for their lobby-campaigns, especially in this climate of cutbacks. It was found that migrants can very well signal problems in countries in the South, because they have relatives or friends suffering from these problems. They know exactly what's going on and can apply their intellectual capital to uncover false arguments of the North, with regard to, for instance, the negative image formation surrounding the continent or the massive land robbery of African soil by China and Western countries. For successful lobbying cooperation is highly important. You do not lobby for yourself or your own organisation, but on behalf of your whole grassroots support. So, what are chances to strengthen each other and hence strengthen the effect of your activities? Since it is impossible for development organisations or the government to serve all individual migrant(organisation)s, it is necessary to collaborate in order to extend their influence and ensure their voice is heard.

Finally, a topic that clearly needs to be elaborated on in further research is the design of diversity management within the sector of development cooperation. The overall picture of development organisations coming forward here, is that they are still very 'white'. At the moment diversity management does not go far beyond facts and figures of the number of employers with a migrant background. In the module on 'Identity and Loyalty' of the Academy of Colourful Leadership, Farah Karimi, director of Oxfam Novib, expounded her view on diversity of her organisation.⁴² First matters of importance always are quality and professionalism, no matter what. However, the question is then how do you define 'quality' and 'professionalism'? What do you *want* to see as added value? Which role do you assign to the background of people in your organisation? An added value of migrants undoubtedly is the extensive transnational networks they bring in. But how to incorporate this within an existing development organisation? This demands another way of working, perhaps adapting existing structures. To retain that what is so unique of the migrants under study here and to let flourish their intellectual capital, organisations themselves should change the existing organisation culture and adapt their instruments as well. It seems that the idea still has to sink in that migrants can bring in new networks and new impulses, but to make the most of these, this might mean another way of working together on a better world.

Outcomes in a broader perspective

Bearing in mind the quote at the opening of this thesis, *'Who leaves hearth and home, will never be the same'*, it has become evident that migration challenges and changes the identity of the migrant. But looking at the acculturation process of migrants as a two-way process, one will notice that the

⁴² Source: Module 3 of the Academy of Colourful Leadership 'Identity & Loyalty' provided by Farah Karimi. Attended at 10 October 2011.

identity of the receiving society is affected as well. For years the Netherlands has been hostess to many migrants who came here to work, study or who had to fled the desperate circumstances in their home countries. The question is, how do we go beyond just tolerating them and offering them space to live? We should look at the capacities and talents they bring and incorporate these in our society.

Unfortunately, despite the promising words of Minister Leers, point of departure in migration and integration discussions is deficiency: what are *problems* and what can we do to solve or prevent them? In June, the government presented the new emphasis of their migration and development policy. Compared to the policy memoranda of 2008, the focus on return migration is sharpened and development cooperation is approached as a way to channel flows of refugees and resettle them (MoFA, 2011).⁴³ The overall tendency of this paper seems to be the way development cooperation can be applied to restrict migration.

The other side, that of migration as a benefit for development of both the Netherlands and countries of origin remains underexposed. Attention for migrants with actual capacities and skills, as the migrants under study here, is absent. This is a missed opportunity. Attention for the people that are doing well en *why* they are they are doing well, lacks. The notion that with the benefits of this migration we could influence countries in the South from its higher-educated people living here, should be point of departure. What we need is policy that is designed not because migrants represent a security problem, but because of their potential for both host country and country of origin. Especially in these times of cutbacks, development cooperation is under pressure and money spent on it by the government will decrease rather than increase. At the same time, we face the fact of a changing composition of the population and the number of migrants in our society is increasing. Making use of the intellectual capital and the growing transnational networks of promising migrants like these in this study, not only seems reasonable, but also a necessary step to take.

⁴³ For the Policy Memorandum 'International Migration and Development' (2008), view Appendix 1.

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Appendix 1: Policy priorities stemming from the Policy Memorandum ‘International Migration and Development’ (MoFA, 2008)

1. Focusing more on migration in the development dialogue and on development in the migration dialogue

Just as gender and human rights are treated as cross-cutting themes in development policy, migration too must, where relevant, play a role in Dutch foreign policy. Including a migration perspective in poverty analyses and/or Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), as well as in Dutch embassies’ Multi-Annual Strategic Plans (MJSPs) in partner countries, is just one example. At the same time, wherever possible and applicable, the interests of developing countries will play a role in Dutch and European migration policy. This can already be seen, for example, in Dutch efforts at EU level to establish a code of conduct for the ethical recruitment of health workers.

2. Fostering institutional development in migration management

In order to realise the development potential of migration and mitigate the negative effects, governments in developing countries must have the necessary insight, capacity and opportunity to operate an effective migration policy. In many developing countries whose experience is limited mainly to South-South migration and transit migration, an adequate migration system simply does not exist. The mixed nature of migration flows is a complicating factor in managing them effectively: refugees use the same routes and resources as migrants. Depending on the needs of the land of origin or transit, efforts can be made to improve data collection, combat illegal immigration (e.g. by improving border controls), facilitate legal migration (in part via information services), combat human trafficking and people smuggling, and provide adequate protection to refugees and asylum seekers.

3. Promoting circular migration/brain gain

Circular migration means migration in which the migrant successively spends a relatively long time in various countries, including his or her country of origin. For the purposes of this memorandum, the pursuit of a ‘triple-win’ scenario is implicit in the concept of circular migration. This means that the migrant, the country of origin and the destination country all benefit from the migration process. In the context of circular migration, the Netherlands will continue its policy of encouraging temporary assignment to the country of origin, whereby migrants who live permanently in the Netherlands serve temporarily as experts, contributing to development and/or reconstruction efforts in the developing country of origin. The governing principle is that such assignments be demand-driven and take place in consultation with the country in question. The process of temporary migration from developing countries to the Netherlands is also included within the term ‘circular migration’. There are still many questions, however, as to how this process works in practice and whether it is effective. A pilot project will provide greater insight into the risks, opportunities and limitations. To this end, agreements will be made with a country of origin (including joint arrangements for return) and with a group of businesses that will be involved in the pilot. The project will be aimed at people who have completed basic professional education. After two years, the migrants will return to the country of origin to apply the knowledge and experience they have gained in the Netherlands. The companies involved in the scheme will provide the participants with a minimum wage, housing and health insurance. There will be two pilots, each involving a maximum of 100 circular migrants per country.

4. Strengthening the involvement of migrant organisations

Thanks to their remittances, networks and local knowledge, migrants and therefore migrant organisations can play a meaningful role in reducing poverty. Many migrant organisations are therefore active in development cooperation activities. The government has commissioned a study of how the added value offered by migrants can be utilised most effectively. Further research will consider whether migrant organisations have sufficient access to funding. If this is not the case, the government will consider raising the amounts available to existing sources of funding and/or increasing migrants’ access to those sources. In implementing this policy memorandum, efforts will be made to involve migrant organisations more closely when discussing and carrying out policy related to development cooperation. In this connection the government will remain alert to potentially controversial political activities of migrant organisations. The goal is to make use of migrants’ thematic and/or country-specific knowledge and expertise. To this end it would be useful if migrant groups were to form an umbrella group, but this would be the responsibility of the organisations themselves. The government could offer assistance if necessary, possibly in the form of an initial grant. Equally, funds may be

made available for targeted support to organisations that meet relevant criteria. The aim is for a number of migrant organisations to grow into fully fledged, valuable partners in development cooperation.

5. Strengthening the link between remittances and development

The Netherlands works on the assumption that remittances relate purely to private finance, and therefore it is not the government's place to interfere in how they are spent. The government can, however, facilitate in the creation of favourable conditions. It will work, for example, on improving transparency in the Dutch remittance market and on increasing the poverty-reduction impact of remittances by stimulating migrant initiatives. In addition, in 2008 a memorandum on financial sector development will be presented to the House of Representatives, setting out Dutch policy on the financial sector in developing countries.

6. Encouraging sustainable return and reintegration

In order to manage and maintain support for Dutch asylum and immigration policy, it is important that migrants who are not (or who are no longer) entitled to remain lawfully in the Netherlands leave the country, preferably voluntarily. In recent years the Netherlands has gained some experience of financial reintegration assistance on the one hand, which could serve to encourage independent return, and reintegration assistance in kind on the other, in the form of education and job placement, among other kinds of assistance. With due consideration for the results of evaluations of this scheme, we will continue financial reintegration assistance over the next few years (for all countries of origin) and expand assistance in kind (for the 40 + 3 partner countries only), especially for vulnerable groups such as victims of human trafficking and minor asylum seekers.

Appendix 2: Overview of characteristics of the twelve cases ⁴⁴

Name	Age	Country of origin	Sex	In NL since...	Place of residence	Migration motive
Amadou	54	Mauritania	M	1989	Nijmegen	Refugee
Hmed	42	Sudan	M	1995	Nijmegen	Refugee
Julie	*	Congo	F	1988	Ter Aar	Love
Fatma	35	Somalia	F	1989	Nijmegen	Refugee
Ade	*	Nigeria	M	1999	Nijmegen	Work
Bisi	47	Nigeria	F	2003	Tilburg	Study
Alphonse	42	Congo	M	1994	The Hague	Refugee
Joseph	42	Cameroon	M	2002	The Hague area	Love
Max	42	Togo	M	1995	Molenhoek	Ambitions / love
Antony	*	Kenya	M	2006	Amsterdam	Study
Charles	48	Liberia	M	1992	Apeldoorn	Refugee
Fridah	42	Kenya	F	2003	Apeldoorn	Love

* data unknown

⁴⁴ Characteristics as they were at the time of the interview

Appendix 3: Overview of the interviews

Interviews with migrant respondents: the twelve cases

Respondent ⁴⁵	Date	Location
Amadou	10-06-2010	Nijmegen
Hmed	14-06-2010	Nijmegen
	23 -06-2010	Nijmegen
Hmed	23-06-2010	Nijmegen
Julie	02-08-2010	Ter Aar
Fatma	04-08-2010	Nijmegen
Ade	10-08-2010	Nijmegen
Bisi	11-08-2010	Tilburg
Alphonse	17-08-2010	The Hague
Joseph	24-08-2010	The Hague
Max	27-08-2010	Molenhoek
Antony	13-09-2010	Utrecht
Charles	13-10-2010	Apeldoorn
Fridah	30-11-2010	Apeldoorn

Interviews with development organisations

Organisation	Representative	Function	Date	Location	Reference to the interview in text
Oxfam Novib	W. Stoffers	Coordinator Linkis-program	27-09-2010	The Hague	[WS/ON]
Cordaid	G. Nimbona	Program employer	22-10-2010	The Hague	[GN/CD]
Wilde Ganzen ⁴⁶	J. van Dijk	Senior employer Projects	10-11-2010	-	[JD/WG]
ICCO / Kerk in Actie	G. Werkman	Project Manager Kerk in Actie	24-11-2011	Utrecht	[GW/IC]

⁴⁵ The names of the respondents are their real names. They gave me the permission to use them; it was my own choice not to mention migrants' surnames, with regard to their privacy. When they are quoted in the text, I mentioned their first name to refer to the particular respondent.

⁴⁶ The interview with Mrs. Van Dijk was a telephonic interview, that is why no location is added in the scheme.

Appendix 4: Overview of attended meetings

What	Organisation	When	Where
Conference 'The changing role of migrants in development cooperation'	Migration and Development Programme by Oikos Foundaiton, SMS and Cordaid	18-12-2009	The Hague
Debate 'Politics without borders: migrants inspire the new politics'	SMS; Oikos Foundation; Cordaid	27-05-2010	Amsterdam
Conference 'International cooperation and Participation'	COS Zuid-Holland	22-06-2010	Rotterdam
Debate 'Undesired, but yet here'	Gast Foundation	08-10-2010	Nijmegen
Workshop 'Follow the Leader'	COS Gelderland & ELAN Expertisecentrum	09-10-2010	Beek-Ubbergen
Expertmeeting 'Quality in Diversity I'	VWZOG	18-11-2010	Arnhem
Presentation Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) III	British Council Forum	02-03-2011	The Hague
Lecture by Kon Kelei at the symposium: 'So you think you can help? The future of western development aid'	Soeterbeeck Program (Radboud University Nijmegen)	16-03-2011	Radboud University Nijmegen
Expertmeeting 'Quality in Diversity II'	VWZOG	30-06-2011	Elst
Module 3 'Identity & Loyalty' of the Academy of Colourful Leadership	COS Gelderland	10-10-2011	Berg en Dal

NB. Not every of the above mentioned meeting is explicitly referred to in the text. However, they all contributed to gain better insight in the topic of migration and development and therefore, they are included in the table.

Appendix 5: Topic list used for the interviews with the twelve migrants (in English)

1. Acculturation

Factors prior to acculturation

- Age
 - Age
 - Age by arrival in the Netherlands
- Migration motive
 - Where do you come from? *Kenya*
 - When did you leave your country of origin?
 - Why did you leave?
 - How did you end up in the Netherlands?
 - What does your family composition in the Netherlands look like?
- Education
 - What does your education level look like?
 - Which education did you have in your country of origin?
 - Which education did you have in the Netherlands?
 - What about the diploma's you received, where they valid in the NL?
 - Which advantages of having a high education did you experience in NL?
 - Can you mention disadvantages, too?
 - Work experience in your country of origin?
 - Work experience in the NL?
- Status
 - How would you describe the position you had in Kenya?
 - How would you describe the position you had by arrival in the NL?
 - How would you describe the position you have right now?
 - How do you deal with this difference in status?
- Cultural distance
 - What are important differences between the culture of your country of origin and the Dutch culture?
 - How do you deal with these differences?
- Expectations
 - Which expectations did you have of the Dutch society?
 - Which goals did you set yourself by arrival in NL?
 - Did you reach them?
 - What do you expectation look like now? Have they changed?

Factors during acculturation

- Length of residence
 - For how long have you been in the Netherlands?
 - What can you tell about your future?
 - Do you want to stay permanently in NL?
 - Is there a change that you go back to Kenya?
 - Are you focused on your life *here* (in the Netherlands) or on a future *there* (in your country of origin)? How do you deal with this 'split'?
- Perceived discrimination and image formation
 - What image have others got from you?
 - Often they talk about 'Africa' or 'the African', what is your perception of this?
 - In my perception Africans are a marginal migrant group in NL (compared to other migrant groups, like Moroccans or Turks). What is your view on this?
 - Have you experiences of being discriminated against or treated unfairly?
 - How does this image formation influences you?
- Transnational contacts
 - Can you tell about the contacts you have with people in Kenya?
 - How do you stay in touch with them?
 - How often?
 - What do these contacts mean to you?
 - In which way does what happens *there* influences you *here*?
- Contacts in the Netherlands
 - Can you tell about the contacts you have with people in NL?
 - Many contacts within your own ethnic group?
 - What do these contacts mean to you?
- Dual / bi-cultural identity
 - How would you describe your identity?
 - Do you feel Dutch?
 - Do you feel Kenyan?
 - What does this dual identity means to you?
 - Which **expectations** do people in your home country have from you?
 - Which expectations does the Dutch society have from you?
 - How do you deal with this **dual loyalty**?
 - Because of their dual identity, migrants are often seen as building bridges between different cultures and different people. How do you view this role as a bridge builder?

2. Ambitions regarding development cooperation (DC)

WHISH to contribute to DC

- Are you at the moment involved in activities concerning DC?
- If yes, what exactly do you do?
 - Remittances?
 - Projects?
 - Migrant organisation?
 - ...other?
- Where are these activities located?
- Motivation: why are you explicitly involved in these activities? What is your motivation?
- Do you see this as an obligation toward your home country?
- What do you see as your possible added value (as being a Kenyan migrant) as actor in the sector of DC?
- What do you see as possible weaknesses as actor in the sector of DC?
- Which contribution do you think your efforts here make to Kenya?
 - Do you notice changes in the development of your home country?
- What are your ambitions concerning development cooperation for the future?
- Is there a difference between migrants and refugees?

POSSIBILITIES to contribute to DC

- What are constraints for you to be involved in DC?
- What kind of problems/obstacles do you come across in realising your ambitions?
 - Language?
 - Diploma's / qualifications?
 - ...other?
- Which actions did you undertake to make yourself visible at other actors in DC?
- Do you have the idea that your capacities are seen and used by DC-organisations?
- How do you view the willingness of other DC-actors to use your (/migrants') capital within their organisations?
- Talking about Dutch development organisations and migrants, can we speak of 'equal partners'?
- What could be the added value of your capacities and knowledge?
- What should be different? How?
- How do you view the participation of migrants in the sector of DC?
- How do you view this for Africans in particular?
- Do you see a relation between the position of migrants in NL (integration) and their possibilities to be involved in activities in their countries of origin?

COS

- Are you familiar with the organisation COS?
- What are your experiences with this organisation?
- Do you feel that you can get the most out of your capacities here in the NL?
- What would you need to reach this?

In conclusion

- Do you have any questions? Or do you want to add anything?
- Do you know people I should talk with about these subjects?

Appendix 6: Topic list used for the interviews with development organisations (in Dutch)

VISIE ORGANISATIE

- Wat is de visie van de organisatie op het thema 'migratie en ontwikkeling'?
- In relatie tot het migratie-ontwikkelingsdenken zegt men vaak dat er sprake is van een win-win-win situatie: niet alleen de migrant en het land van herkomst profiteren, maar ook het ontvangende land, Nederland dus in dit geval. Wat is jullie visie daarop?
- Wat voor plek heeft dit thema in het beleid van de organisatie?
- Veel organisaties streven naar een multiculturele organisatie en praten over de meerwaarde van een cultureel diverse organisatie. Wat is de visie van deze organisatie op culturele diversiteit?
- Hoe zijn migranten vertegenwoordigd in deze organisatie?
 - Hoe zit dat specifiek gelet op Afrikanen? (concreet: hoeveel?)
- Wat kan de toegevoegde waarde zijn van migranten binnen OS?
- Wat kunnen zwaktepunten zijn van migranten binnen OS?
- Hoe zie jij het verband tussen de positie van migranten in de NLse samenleving en hun betrokkenheid bij ontwikkelingssamenwerking?
- Niet iedere migrant is per definitie een goede ontwikkelingswerker. Over welke capaciteiten of kwaliteiten moet je beschikken om dit te kunnen doen?
- Een vaak gehoord geluid van migranten: er zijn zoveel migranten hier in NL met lokale kennis en een hoge opleiding. Hun capaciteiten zouden ingezet moeten worden door organisaties zoals deze bij de (her)opbouw van hun land. Simpeler: bij een landbouw project in Afghanistan zouden landbouwkundige Afghanen in Nederland ingezet moeten worden.
 - Gebeurt dit?
 - Hoe kan het dat er toch veel capaciteiten onbenut blijven? Waar gaat het fout? Waar zitten obstakels?
- Hoe kunnen migranten in jullie visie het best hun betrokkenheid omzetten in invloed?
 - Welke acties moeten migranten zelf ondernemen? Hoe zouden migranten zich zichtbaarder kunnen of moeten maken?
 - Welke acties zouden OS-organisaties moeten ondernemen. Hoe zouden OS-organisaties beter toegankelijk kunnen worden?

PRAKTIJK

- Wat voor ruimte is er binnen deze organisatie voor initiatieven van migranten?
- Het lijkt een paradox: op papier wordt er veelvuldig naar de mogelijke meerwaarde van migranten gerefereerd, maar kijkend naar de MFS 2.0 vallen ze volledig buiten de boot. Hoe kan dat?
- Wat ik in interviews vaak tegen kom: het probleem om toegang te krijgen tot dit soort organisaties. Verder komen dan de website. Migranten geven aan dat je mensen moet kennen binnen deze organisaties als je subsidie wil krijgen. Hoe kijkt u daar tegen aan?
- Wat is de inbreng van migranten? Bepalen zij daadwerkelijk het beleid mee?
- Het feit dat de OS sector nu aandacht geeft aan minderheden in bepaalde structuur, is een vorm van erkenning van mogelijke kwaliteiten van migranten. De vraag is, hoe zijn deze organisaties aangepast, zodat deze minderheden ook daadwerkelijk binnenkomen?
 - Op welke manier is deze organisatie aangepast? Welke verandering van de organisatie cultuur? Welke aanpassing van de instrumenten? → Hoe voert deze organisatie culturele diversiteit door in het beleid en in de praktijk?
- Waar is er naar jullie mening behoefte aan bij migranten om hun kwaliteiten beter te uiten?
- Waarin kunnen jullie migranten ondersteunen?