

# **It does not matter who you are, but it does matter where you come from**

*place identification for migrants in the Netherlands*

A comparative case study on student migrants and highly  
educated refugees and their process of place identification in the  
Netherlands



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## I. SUMMARY

The complex notion of international migration and the effects it has on people, livelihoods, economic systems, and the world order is an intriguing topic to dive into. In this thesis, voluntary and involuntary migrants are studied in relation to the process of place identification. Involuntary migrants are forced by circumstances to migrate. Reasons to move can be push factors such as war, famine, and life-threatening environmental disaster (Knox & Marston, 2013; Madrell, 2015). Voluntary migrants choose to move to another country. The difference in whether the move abroad is forced or not is what makes the two researched groups different. The first group consists of student migrants coming to The Hague to study at the Institute for Social Sciences, and the second studied group consists of young, highly educated refugees who have fled Syria. The voluntary student migrants are considered to be a part of the global elite. This group operates in new globalizing micro spaces, that takes class advantages beyond the boundaries of nation states (Ball & Nikita, 2014, p. 83). On the other hand, the highly educated refugees are forced to leave Syria due to conflict and violence. This group is negatively influenced by boundaries set by nation states, as they often have to cross the border irregularly and they are subject to politically influenced immigration policies. Sixteen respondents participated in semi-structured in-depth interviews and filled in questionnaires. Furthermore, one student mobility professional was interviewed.

Twigger-Ross & Uzzell (1996) explain that there is little theorizing about the role of place in identity and identity formation. While using social identity theory and environmental psychology based on the work of Prohansky (1983), one can find that the process of place identification consists of the ways in which characteristics of a place and the symbolic meaning of certain locations contribute to an individual's identity. In this thesis, social capital, place attachment and categorization are identified as the contributing factors to the process of place identification. The concept of social capital focusses on the actual or potential resources of membership of a group and the relations between people in space (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 250; Lippuner & Werlen, 2009). Social capital depends on the different opportunities people have to access and participate in certain networks (Ryan et al., 2008). Social capital can create a network for the migrant which can contribute to the process of place identification. When one has social capital to use and to create ties in their new space of living and working, it develops the sense of being a part of this new environment. Social capital is set out in the actors' friends, family, neighbours and professionals.

Place attachment is a component of identity. In the formation of place attachment, emotional connections towards a place are created. Social categorization serves as the basis of the social identity theory (Hogg & Reid, 2006). The process of identification and categorization consists of what people think about us, and equally important, what we think about ourselves. Identification

then becomes a two-way process: the internally oriented self- or group identification and categorization, and the process of categorization of others which is externally oriented.

In this thesis, the cognitive component of self-categorization is researched because this focusses on the ability to distinguish between members of different social groups. Besides self-categorization, externally oriented categorization influences the process of place identification. The external identification is the process in which a person or a group define others in a certain way. (Jenkins, 1994).

The categorization by others is also performed in the field of policy. Dutch migration policy creates a strong dichotomy between asylum seekers and student migrants. When comparing the differences in policy and practices between the two researched groups, it becomes clear that the student policy is much friendlier than the refugee/asylum policy. The differences are understandable since both groups differ greatly and enter the Netherlands under vastly different circumstances. However, these distinctions in policy combined with a societal narrative are the biggest influence in the categorization by others process of migrants, and especially refugees. Being part of the ISS bubble does indeed create a strong sense of belonging to the ISS community whereas the belonging to The Hague is evidently lower. The processes of self-identification and self-categorization for the student migrants are mainly based on the social ties. Respondents indicated that their sense of belonging was created through relationships in the ISS community more than through being in The Hague and the Netherlands.

Looking into the process of categorization for the highly educated refugees versus the experiences of this process of the student migrants, one can conclude that the refugees feel more attached to the new place and that their identity is influenced by this place. For the refugees, the new place is the manifestation of the many changes that occurred during their odyssey to freedom, peace, and security. The empirical data indicate that the process of place identification differs on multiple aspects between the two researched groups. Gaining access to valuable bridging social capital appears to be challenging for both student migrants and highly educated refugees. The interviews indicate that whereas the student migrant experience little trouble with finding bonding social capital within the ISS group, refugees struggle with finding access to beneficial social capital. However, both groups experience difficulties in accessing valuable social capital in Dutch societal groups.

Furthermore, it is argued that place attachment consists of multiple factors that operate on micro and macro levels and therefore intertwines. Both groups indicated that they feel part of place on micro level but not on macro, societal level. This caused by a lack of exposure on the one side and difficulties accessing Dutch society on the other side. The Netherlands is experienced positively by the student migrants, but the nature of their stay creates a situation in which putting energy into becoming part of Dutch society and learning the language is not worth the investment, unless a

student migrant stays in the Netherlands due to external factors. The questionnaire indicates that on the micro level, respondents feel at ease with their new surroundings. As with the student migrants, feeling part of the macro level of Dutch society is a bigger challenge. All respondents explained they wanted to stay in the Netherlands in the future.

## II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The book *Prisoners of geography* by Tim Marshall (2015) discusses that it is essential to take geography into account when trying to understand and explain world events. He states that *“the land on which we live has always shaped us. It has shaped the wars, the power, politics and social development of the people that now inhabit almost every part of the world”* (Marshall, 2015, ix). So, after six years of studying Human Geography, it is ensuring to read about the importance of the field of human geography. Now, with completing the master Human Geography- Conflict, Territories and Identities, the years of studying in Nijmegen have come to an end. Before you lies the proof of that, the final assignment, the essay of all essays: the master thesis.

Since the land we live on shapes us, I wondered what would happen when one would leave the known land behind and move to a new part of the world. In this research, migrants from all over the world that have come to the Netherlands are researched. It then occurred to me how adapting to the new land might be influenced by the circumstances under which a migrant has to leave his or her home country and under which conditions the entry into the Netherlands takes place. When I got accepted to be an intern at the Society for International Development in The Hague, I gained access to a group of student migrants that could tell me more about this process. I did however not want to focus on just one group, I wanted to understand the differences between different types of migrants that enter the Netherlands. I chose to research refugees from Syria that live in Nijmegen as well, since I then could also incorporate the extra layer of having two different cities with each their own characteristics within this research.

I would like to thank a few people who have helped me greatly during the sometimes-stressful period of writing. First of all, my supervisors Haley Swedlund and Luuk Slooter. Their professional guidance has been priceless and without their discussions and feedback this thesis could not have been completed. Secondly, I owe gratitude to my supervisors at both the Society of International Development and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During my internships Femke de Haan and Carolien Vis both have been extremely supportive, they helped me grow as a professional and as an individual and have given me all the freedom I needed to work on this thesis. Thirdly, finishing this thesis would not be possible without the input of my respondents. Each and every one of them allowed me to ask personal questions and they willingly gave me all the needed information. Without their input I could not have completed this research.

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Marlies Veerbeek, November 2018





## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. PROJECT FRAMEWORK

*“In today’s increasingly interconnected world, international migration has become a reality that touches nearly all corners of the globe. Modern transportation has made it easier, cheaper and faster for people to move in search of jobs, opportunity, education and quality of life. At the same time conflict, poverty, inequality and a lack of sustainable livelihoods compel people to leave their homes to seek a better future for themselves and their families abroad”* (United Nations, 2017, p. 1).

The complex notion of international migration and the effects it has on people, livelihoods, economic systems and the world order is an intriguing topic to dive into. Conflicts, changing systems and new developments around the world and their influences on the inhabitants of the earth cannot be ignored. One only has to open the newspaper or turn on the news channel to see that the world of 2018 is changing and facing new challenges every day. This can also be seen in the field of migration. The international migration report by the United Nations shows that *“the number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly in recent years, reaching 258 million in 2017* (UN, 2017, p. 1).”

Two types of movement can be detected. Firstly, people fleeing their homes and finding a better place to live due to push factors such as conflict, climate change and scarcity. The circumstances force people to leave their home country behind and make them involuntary migrants. In 2015, 1.256.210 refugees fled to the European Union, significantly more than the 562.265 that arrived in the EU in 2014 (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016). These large and sometimes unexpected flows of people on the move have far- going consequences for both the sending and receiving countries (Knox & Marston, 2013).

Secondly, one can detect flows of migrants that are not forced to move abroad due to circumstances in the home country. These people move abroad by choice and are voluntary migrants.

Whether the move to the EU is considered to be voluntary or involuntary, the people that move abroad experience a variety of changes. Besides leaving one’s home, family and loved ones behind, a change in environment takes place. Coming from a space in which one knows its place, where to go and how to act, entering the new environment has more effects than just learning where the nearest by supermarket is located and where to go for leisure. Moving means a change of surroundings, and these surroundings are part of one’s place identity. Since a person is its own center of the world he lives in, the space around one is important to attach a meaning to the sphere a person lives in (Kianicka et al., 2006, p. 55).

On the other hand, meanings can also be shared and create a sense of identity (Creswell, 2009, p. 2).

Starting over in a new country creates a situation in which the migrant needs to adapt to the new space he or she is staying in. This new place will influence who the person is, the surroundings one lives in influence the identity. This is the process of place identification. In this thesis, the process of place identification and its effect on migrants will be researched. A comparison will be made between the voluntary and involuntary migrants.

## 1.2. SCOPE

As stated before, in this research experiences of two different types of migrants who come to the Netherlands are compared. One group consists of student migrants, coming to the Netherlands to study for at least six months. The other group consists of Syrian highly educated youth who have been resettled in the Netherlands following violence in their home country.

At first, the researched groups seem to have little in common. The highly educated refugees have been forced to flee their homes, have experienced conflict, violence and war, have had to put their education on hold to seek safety elsewhere and therefore ended up in the Netherlands. This is highly different to the student migrants, who live in calmer circumstances, planned their move to the Netherlands and came prepared to their new university to pursue further education. The characteristic that these groups do share is being part of the same generation.

The demographic group of people between the age of 18 and 30 is now known as the millennial generation (Wang & Taylor, 2011). This is the period in life where most youngsters pursue higher education, start their first job, travel and start to settle down. Part of higher education is often going abroad for study purposes. One can go on a short (less than six months) exchange, but one can also choose to carry out the whole higher education in another country. The Netherlands is a highly popular destination for students to study, in the school year 2016-2017, over 112.000 international students came to the Netherlands (Nuffic, 2017). 81.000 of these students conduct their whole studies here. Those people, with the age between 18-35 who come from outside the EU and who pursue their higher education in the Netherlands for more than six months are one of the groups researched in this thesis. The respondents are all enrolled in master courses or are conducting a PhD at the Institute for Social Sciences in The Hague. In this thesis, the researched student migrants are mostly from Asia, Africa and South America. The experiences of these international students with the place identification process will be compared to the other researched group, the highly educated refugees.

Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland (2017) states that in 2017 around 10.500 Syrians have been granted refugee status. This thesis focusses on those refugees between the age of 18 and 35 that were enrolled in higher education in their home country but were forced to leave their universities and flee. In this research, the highly educated refugee respondents all live in the Nijmegen area, are

studying at Radboud University or are taking language courses at Radboud In'to Languages. Whereas the international students have had the freedom to choose to move abroad, had been able to plan this ahead and arrange housing and education beforehand, the researched refugees have been forced by circumstances to leave their home behind, often in a hurry and without a clear idea of where to go. Sometimes, the journey to get to Europe has been traumatizing and was not as easy as getting on an airplane. Arrival in the Netherlands and the following months are often hectic, contrary to the international students who usually start studying within a few weeks and start working on their new subjects and adjusting to their new surroundings almost immediately. These differences of how, why and under which circumstances people have come to the Netherlands and the effects these differences have, have inspired the subject of this thesis. The current situation in the world which seems to consist of ongoing changes and new flows of people due to these changing circumstances is what triggered me to do research on this topic. This focus on the world of 2018 will be combined with a theoretical approach of the process of place identification.

### 1.3. RESEARCH QUESTION

The aim of this research is to find out how the process of place identification develops, and whether there are differences in this process between young international students and young highly educated refugees in the Netherlands. The intention is also to use this insight to create recommendations for future policy creation to improve the process of integration. The research will make use of one central question and several hypotheses. Following the research objective, the following central question has been formulated:

**How does the process of place identification develop, and how does this process differ between student migrants and young highly-educated refugees in the Netherlands?**

This research question will be answered based on the outcomes the testing of the following hypotheses:

- 1: International students are expected to have easy access to valuable social capital in Dutch society due to being close to a potential network.
- 2: Highly educated refugees are expected to experience difficulties in establishing strong social capital in Dutch society due to distance to potential beneficial social capital.
- 3: International students are expected to not be strongly attached to the place they live and work in since they know their stay is only temporary.
- 4: It is expected that highly educated refugees are keener on developing strong place attachment since the new place of residence is likely to be their new home for the near future.

#### 1.4. SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

By examining the research question, the study contributes to scientific knowledge in different ways. First of all, the European refugee crisis that started around 2015 has not yet been analyzed to a large extent in academic literature. So far, the literature on this involuntary migration to the European Union mainly consists of fact sheets of calendar years in which a statistic overview on the situation is provided. The lack of strong analysis is understandable because the situation is still unfolding. The implementation of European and national policy is ongoing and does not focus yet on giving a clear insight in the causes and effects of the movements of particular groups (Migration Policy Center, 2012).

It goes without saying that the movements and flows of refugees towards the European Union are not something entirely new. During the 1990s, the conflicts in Eastern Europe created an exodus of Yugoslavs to the European Union. The works of Salt (1993), Schierup (1995) and others on the waves of migration from Yugoslavia towards Western Europe can serve as a data source and provide insights on two levels. First of all, the outcomes can help in understanding the current movements and help to create strong policy. Secondly, the work itself can serve as an inspiration on how to research flows of refugees in a way that the research question can be answered.

Secondly, in this research the environmental psychological approach of (place) identity and a geographical approach which focuses on the space the respondents live in are combined. This creates a unique setting in which the focus lies on finding those factors that are important in the process of the shaping of place identity for both refugees and international students.

Thirdly, the comparison of refugees and international students is what makes this research new. The researched groups are highly different in regions of origin, experiences in life and the way the Netherlands was entered. They now live in different cities, The Hague and Nijmegen, and have different living circumstances. However, the groups do also have similarities. Both the student migrants and the highly educated refugees now live in the same country and are adjusting to life in the Netherlands as newcomers. Presumably, they go through the same process of creating a new status-quo, but this research shows that the process of place identification differs greatly between the two groups. The differences on the one hand, and the similarities on the other hand make comparing these two groups an interesting challenge.

Fourthly, trying to understand how welcome migrants feel and how this might affect their sense of belonging, sense of place and process of place identification is an approach to the concepts that is not used very often. In the work of Bhatia & Wallace (2007) and Korac (2003), the experiences of refugees regarding integration are set out in a qualitative way. This qualitative approach will also be used in this research. Whereas researchers like Hernández et al. (2007), Rollero & De Picolli (2010)

and Drostelis & Vignoles (2010) only use a quantitative approach to research the concepts of place identity and place identification, in this thesis, different types of qualitative data are combined to get a more complete insight to the concepts and phenomenon's discussed. This research can also shed light on the feelings of attachment to place and space for the millennial generation. These insights can be used to understand certain movements and shifts of people over the globe for a new generation. Understanding why people move and prefer certain places can help to either develop hotspots further, or the address issues in the places where people are leaving to make them more attractive.

Lastly, the empirical insights gained from this research can be used to help improve policies on migrants, integration and place identity. These findings can help integration programs in the longer term. When the relevant organizations know how their clients perceive the place they live in, their policies can be adjusted so migrants can feel at home and part of the new society they now live in easier or sooner.

## 1.5. SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

*"Migration can change demographic, economic and social structures, and bring a new cultural diversity, which often brings into question national identity"* (Castles & Miller, 2003, p. 3). The arrival of refugees and migrants in the Netherlands has not gone unnoticed. Great division among citizens exist on whether these groups of people are perceived to be welcome in the Netherlands or not. On the one hand, civil initiatives to help people have been started all around the country, but on the other hand we have seen riots in Geldermalsen and Heesch about the arrival of an asylum seeker center (*in Dutch asielzoekerscentrum, AZC*) (NRC, 2015; Binnenlands Bestuur, 2016). These contradicting opinions can also be found in the field of politics where, during the last election, integration was one of the main topics. The results show that populism is present in the Netherlands, with the PVV (Party for Freedom) as second biggest party at the latest elections (NOS, 2017). The discussion in politics and amongst different groups often focusses on whether the migrants are welcome or whether "the Netherlands belongs to the Dutch."

Since in this research the focus lies on highly educated migrants, this group can have a great benefit to Dutch society. The flow of both groups can help to address the demographic changes in the Netherlands. Shortages in employees in certain fields exist and are likely to expand in the future because of demographic changes (CPB, 2016).

The challenge in this issue is how to create a discourse among the Dutch population that the refugees and international students are highly valuable to the society of 2018 and even more in the future. The rise of populism in the EU does not help to create a positive discourse towards the newcomers. Instead it creates a discourse that can be influenced by the fear of the unknown (Kriesi,

2012). Providing insights why people come to 'the West' can serve to create a broader understanding in society of what is going on. This research can help to make the intentions of migrants clear and show how they can participate in Dutch society in order to help to influence the discourse.

Another field in which this research can contribute to solving problems is on the level of individual migrants. As described by Timotijevic and Breakwell (2000), it can be highly expected that the identity of a person changes because of migration. Leaving the known social context and coming into a new situation can influence one's distinctiveness, self-esteem and self-efficacy. By providing more insights in the process of place identification more attention can be given to this and it can be used to help migrants.

To answer the research question, different research methods were used. Firstly, a literature study on place identification was conducted to provide insights in the process of place identification. This study showed three factors that are perceived to be the pillars of the researched process. The concepts of social capital, categorization and place attachment are used to understand the processes student migrants and highly educated refugees go through once they have entered the Netherlands. Secondly, empirical data was gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews. Eight student migrants and eight highly educated refugees were willing to answer questions on their background, journey to the Netherlands and their experiences as a migrant in their new living area. Furthermore, these sixteen respondents filled in a questionnaire regarding place attachment, social capital and categorization. Lastly, an expert interview with Maureen Bergman was conducted. Before working at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she worked at the University of Applied Sciences Leiden and Nuffic on the topic of student migrants and could therefore provide useful insights on student experiences. During my internship at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs I performed policy analysis on the subject of bona fide travellers who require a visa to come the Netherlands and how the policies aimed at this group can be improved. This allowed me to dive into Dutch visa and immigration policies.

The thesis is structured as follows. First of all, the literature study provides different theoretical insights on the topics of identity and place identity. This is followed by a theoretical framework on both voluntary and involuntary migration and the importance of using the right terminology when discussing these matters. Special attention will be given to the notion of the global elite with a focus on the student elite. Thirdly, a conceptualization of the topics of social capital, place attachment and categorization is set out and operationalized further to gain insight in the process of place identification for international students and highly educated refugees. This section is followed by a set of hypotheses, drawn from the literature review and the conceptual model.

Afterwards, the research methods are discussed and justified. Furthermore, information on the

respondents is provided followed by an analysis of the Dutch immigration policy and practices. The theoretical and empirical insights are then used to test the hypothesis. Lastly, the research question is answered and recommendations are provided.

Throughout this research it is argued that the process of place identification differs on different aspects between the researched groups. Gaining access to valuable bridging social capital appears to be challenging for both student migrants and highly educated refugees. Whereas the student migrant experiences no trouble with bonding social capital, refugees struggle with finding access to any useful social capital. Dutch immigration policy is an important factor that influences categorization for both groups. The incentives of the different policies for the different groups leave their marks on policy practices that both studied groups experience. Due to the base of the policies, these experiences highly differ. Furthermore, it is argued that place attachment consists of multiple factors that operate on micro and macro levels and therefore intertwines. Both groups indicated that they feel part of the place they live in on micro level but not on macro, societal level. This is caused by a combination of lack of exposure on the one side and difficulties accessing Dutch society on the other side. Contrary to the divide created in policies, the researched groups show more similarities than differences in the process of place identification.



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

HRH of the Netherlands Maxima stated in a speech in 2007 that there is no such thing as the Dutch identity. From her own experiences as a migrant exploring Dutch culture, she found that Dutch society, like any other, cannot be captured in stereotypes and prejudices (Koninklijk Huis, 2007). For these statements she received a wide range of criticism, since many people argued that there is a Dutch identity. It appears that when it comes to discussing (national identity), especially when connected to newcomers, saying the right thing is challenging. For me this indicated the importance of the ideas surrounding identity, and how identity can be changed and influenced by the act of migration. To understand these notions, the following theoretical framework has been created in which the concept of place identification and the connected topics will be discussed, set out and operationalized. First, the central concepts of this thesis, identity, place identification, and migration will be discussed. By reviewing existing literature and connecting this academic knowledge to the topic of this research, a clear idea of what the discussed concepts entail will be created. Since place identification and the process behind it is the most important concept of the thesis, the operationalization of this concept is essential in order to execute the rest of the research. In this discussion different approaches to the concepts will be taken into account and definitions will be provided. The understanding of the concepts provides the essential base for the gathering and analyzing of the empirical data. Secondly, theoretical discussion around the concepts will take place. This clears the path to the creation of a conceptual model. From this conceptual model operationalization of the concepts can be created. Lastly, hypotheses will be extracted.

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#### 2.1.1. IDENTITY

Twigger-Ross & Uzzell (1996) explain that there is little theorizing about the role of place in identity and identity formation. Often used approaches in the field of geography focus on identity of a place itself (Nijman, 1999; McDowell, 1993; Leonard & McKnight, 2011), or how people make the space (Tuan, 1977; Holloway & Hubbard, 2001; Skelton & Valentine, 2005; Paasi, 2001, 2003). The approach to identity and place identification as used in this thesis, is mostly operated in the field of environmental psychology (Bell, 1999; Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007; Knez, 2005).

Place identification and the process that it consists of are important concepts of this thesis. However, to understand these, an introduction into the concepts of identity and place identity needs to be provided first. As a starting point, it is important to note that identities are forever changing. People are the agents of their own identity and can therefore be responsible for whether their identity is

changed or not (Timotijevic and Breakwell, 2000).

However, the change of identity cannot be completely controlled by oneself. The different components of identity and their ability to change make that an identity is never set (Bell, 1999). Combining the concepts of identity and migration is performed in the work of Timotijevic and Breakwell (2000). They explain that the act of moving away from the known social context creates a situation in which the identity becomes under pressure and becomes hard to maintain the same. This fluidity of one's identity makes it a highly interesting process to research. If identity can be changed, which factors influence this change? Throughout this thesis, specific factors that can influence the process of place identification of international students and highly educated refugees will be distinguished.

Knox and Marston (2013, p. 6), state that identity is *"the sense you make of yourself through your subjective feelings based on your everyday experiences and social relations."* This definition of identity comes across as vague and makes the concept difficult to measure and compare. In the social identity theory, the self is seen as reflexive. This means that the object, in this case the human being, can categorize, classify or name itself in certain ways in relation to the other present social categories. This process of self-categorization makes it possible that an identity is formed (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 224; Lalli, 1992).

Jenkins (2000, p. 8) states that in the process of identification, what people think about us is as important as what we think about ourselves. Identification then becomes a two-way process: the internally oriented self- or group identification, and the process of categorization of others, which is externally oriented. The combination of deciding to which group you belong, and excluding those who do not belong to you or your group creates a feeling of who we are, and who the other is. Knox and Marston (2013, p. 6) link identity to place, explaining that sometimes the meanings given to place become a central part of the identity of people. Paasi (2001, p. 9) moves away from the psychological approach of identity and takes a geographical stand by saying the following.

*"Identity is not merely an individual or social category, but also – crucially – a spatial category, since the ideas of territory, self and 'us' all require symbolic, socio-cultural and/or physical dividing lines with the Other. At local contexts solidarity may be based on personal contacts and interaction but larger-scale territories are inevitably 'imagined communities' (...) solidarity units that are understood as entities that have more or less fixed boundaries and which are maintained by collective institutions such as legislation, administration and education systems."*

The role of space in creating and maintaining a certain identity is discussed by Neill (1999), who also acknowledges that identity can be a concept that is hard to define. He quotes Hobsbawm (1996, p. 40) on the growing importance of space in identity formation. Hobsbawm states that *"men and women look for those groups to which they can belong, certainly and forever, in a world in which all is*

*moving and shifting, in which nothing else is certain". Neill continues by stating that "a sense of meaning and belonging is found in an identity group" (1999, p. 271).*

Twigger-Ross & Uzzell (1996) state that in the social identity theory, the addition of place identity to the range of identifications is legitimate. Hauge (2007) explains that place identity, like gender and social class, is a substructure of self-identity.

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### 2.1.2. PLACE IDENTITY

Understanding the concept of place identity cannot be done without understanding the relation a person has with its environment is not simply the person as an actor on a stage, performing his piece, but the surrounding environment becomes part of the person and part of one's own idea of the self (Krupat, 1983; Lalli, 1992). Place identity therefore is an important notion that can deeply influence the lives of people. In the field of environmental psychology, place attachment, place identity and place dependence are widely used concepts (Trentelman, 2009).

When discussing the concept of place identity, it is impossible not to start with the work of Harold M. Proshansky. This environmental psychologist widely used the concept since the 1970s and wrote significant books on the topic of place identity. According to Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff (1983, p. 60),

*[place identity] "consists of the cognitions of the physical world in which the individual lives. These cognitions represent memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behaviour and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings that define the day-to-day existence of every human being."*

Although most authors that discuss place identity start with the work of Proshansky, many different definitions are used, depending on the focus and background of the scholar. For this research, I found after extensively reviewing the relevant literature that the definition, inspired by Proshansky, given by Devine-Wright in his critical literature review on NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) and the role place attachment and place identity in explaining place-protective action fits this specific research best (2009, p. 428). This is because it takes both the physical characteristics and the symbolic meaning and value of the place into account. The interplay between environmental assets of a place and the cognitive components a space triggers in individuals creates the important influences on the place identity of people. Other authors take a different approach to the concept of place identification. For example, environmental psychologists Rollero and De Piccoli (2010, p. 198) state that *"place identity is a cognitive structure which contribute to global self-categorization and social identity process"*. Where these authors put emphasis on the cognitive dimension about the self, Devine-Wright (2009, p. 428) pays attention to the location and its physical and symbolic attributes and how these contribute to the sense of identity of an individual. The approach used by

Devine-Wright, although coming from an applied sociology psychology researcher, includes the spatial perspective better and therefore is a better fit for this research.

When conducting a definition of place identity, it is necessary to explain what is not included. The concepts of sense of place and place attachment are often used side to side with place identity, or are perceived to be the same (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). I argue they are not the same and a clear distinction can, and has to be made. Sense of place is the appreciation of place and application of morals to sites and locations (Easthope, 2010; Shamai, 1991, p. 410). This sense of place is connected to place identity, but is not related to the creating or changing of identity and can therefore not considered to be the same. It is for these reasons that place identity is described as **‘the ways in which physical and symbolic attributes of certain locations contribute to an individual’s identity’** within in this research.

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### 2.1.3. PLACE IDENTIFICATION

As stated before, the starting point of most work on place identity includes the work of Proshansky (1983). His work sets out that many factors need to be included when trying to establish the place identity of an individual within the definition of place identity.

Although the theoretical concept of place identity provides a useful insight, the concept does not perfectly fit the work aim of this research. I want to gain insight in the *process* of place identification, since the shaping of one’s (place) identity is a process and is never set (Bell, 1999). This goes further than the work of Proshansky (1983), who considers place identity as a product that can be finished. The perception of place and the connected identity changes throughout one’s life, it is therefore always in motion and is never completed (Bell, 1999; McDowell, 2018). This is why I want to add another concept to this theoretical framework: the process of place identification.

Rollero and De Piccoli (2010) argue that the place can be considered as a social category and therefore is subject to the same rules of social identification. Following this argument, this would mean that place identification is the expressing of membership to a group of people who are defined by their location. This is not the argument I want to follow in this thesis because I think the process of place identification consists of many more factors than belonging to a group that is only spatially connected.

The process of place identification is a complex process that is connected, among other things, to the influences of location, reasons to move and the perception of the individual towards the new surroundings. This understanding of the concept of place identification is influenced by the article of Droseltis and Vignoles (2010) and the work of Rollero & De Piccoli (2010). Realizing the complex nature of identity changes connected to place, created the theoretical focus in this research on the

process of identification of a person with and towards a certain place.

Droseltis and Vignoles (2010) start their article on the integrative model of place identification with the question *what is it that leads people to identify with particular places, even seeing these places as part of themselves?* They try to answer this question by testing various predictors derived from psychological and anthropological literature. They clearly explain that the focus is on predicting the identification *with* places, and not the identification *of* places. Uzzell, Pol and Badenas (2002) use the latter approach and put the identity of the place central in their research on social cohesion, place identification and environmental sustainability. In this approach, they identify place identification as *“the attributes of the place that give a distinctive identity in the minds of residents”* (Uzzell, Pol & Badenas, 2002, p. 27).

Although they do not follow the same social identity approach as Rollero and De Piccoli, the definition they give to place identification is the same and the concept is described as the membership of a group that is defined by location. As stated before, this understanding of the concept does not fit my research and I therefore choose to follow the line of argumentation as designed by Droseltis and Vignoles (2010). A clear definition of the process of place identification is unfortunately not given in the work of Droseltis and Vignoles (2010). The different approaches all highlight different facets of the process of place identification and the authors argue that these dimensions together provide a well-rounded framework. Combining this framework with the place identity definition as given by Devine-Wright allowed me to create the following working definition of the process of place identification: *“the process in which the identity of a person is influenced by physical and symbolic attributes that are present in the space he is in.”*

## 2.2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO MIGRATION

### 2.2.1. SETTING THE ACADEMIC SCENE

A large range of literature on migration to the European Union is available. Besides general work on migration and the EU (Huysmans, 2000; King, 2002; Castles, 2000; Geddes & Scholten, 2016), most researchers focus on a particular aspect of the phenomenon of migration. One can find great amounts of academic work on economic migration (Zaletel, 2006; Koopman, 2002; van Dalen, 2001), family reunion migration (Kofman, 2004; Wiesbrock, 2010), the role of gender in migration (Pedraza, 1991; Boyd & Grieco, 2003; Pessar & Mahler, 2003), the European policy towards migration and Frontex (Leonard, 2010; Neal, 2009), voluntary migration (Lasseter & Callister, 2009; De Haas, 2008) and involuntary migration (Helton & Birchenough, 1996; Black, 2003). The previously written work provides an excellent starting point on which this research can be build.

Massey et al., (1998) explain that when one tries to explain migration, not a single theory is

adequate. Specific theoretical approaches need to be chosen matching to the discussed context. Geographical studies of migration entail more than just looking into where people come from and where they are going to; the focus is much broader. Movements of people through space are connected to their experience of place, with attention for push and pull factors, dislocation and alienation (Aitken & Valentine, 2014, p. 32). Castles and Millar (2003) explain in their book “Age of Migration” that globalization is the most important factor of migration. In the age of globalization, a clear distinction between skilled migration and unskilled migration occurs. The skilled people on the move are often encouraged to migrate and are welcome, whilst unskilled people who move are discouraged to do so (Khoo et al., 2011). The book of Castles and Miller provides a good base for understanding migration processes and the ideas and concepts that are discussed still hold in the world of 2018. However, it does not take into account the technological developments of the last decade and is therefore it is a bit outdated regarding the current situation in the world. The rise of social media makes being in touch with those back home easier (Komito, 2011). This can influence the (social) processes that are connected to migration.

A wide range of literature on definitions of migration, migrants, and refugees is available and this can serve as a basis on which definition, understanding of the concepts and insights in the theories present can be build. Theoretical approaches on migration range from Ravenstein’s deterministic theory created in 1885 to new economic approaches as seen in the work of Massey (1993). There is not one strong theoretical approach used in this thesis, because a blended theoretical approach to capture the complex lives of migrants is needed to create a well-rounded analysis (Samers, 2010). According to King (2012) a geographical standing point provides an excellent base to research migration issues. The literature on the on-going European refugee crisis is, understandingly, limited. A large amount of in-depth papers (Favell & Hansen, 2002; Zimmerman, 1994) focuses on the last refugee crisis of Europe, which took place after the conflicts during the 1990s in Yugoslavia. A lack of research that takes into account the situation of the world today means that the available literature from the past can be used if it is put in the perspective of the current world.

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### 2.2.2. CHOOSING THE CORRECT TERMINOLOGY

The more practical distinctions that need to be made regard applying concepts such as choosing the right terminology. As stated by Nicolaas & Sprangers (2012), terminology used to describe migrants is not always clear and consistent. Words like immigrants, refugees, illegal migrants, asylum seekers, aliens and foreigners are often used without providing clarity about who is actually considered to be this specific group. Although, migration and migrants are a complex subject and a straightforward definition is hard to provide, in this thesis I define international migration to be the process in which

a person or group travels to cross a border to temporarily or permanent change residence (Geddes, 2003; Knox and Marston, 2013). Therefore, a person who moves abroad, for whatever reason, is an international migrant. Although reasons to migrate are often seemingly economic, but migration is frequently a combination of social, political, cultural and environmental factors (Thet, 2014).

The group of international migrants is impressive, in 2017 258 million international migrants have been counted by the United Nations (UN, 2017). This enormous group is not homogeneous, different types of migrants can be distinguished. Therefore, a distinction between different types of migrants has to be made. The strongest way to divide the millions of people that move internationally each day is by determining whether the move was (perceived) forced or voluntary. In the next section, the differences between voluntary and involuntary migrants are set out.

### 2.3. VOLUNTARY MIGRATION

#### 2.3.1. DEFINITION

According to Knox and Marston (2013) a voluntary migrant is someone who migrates based on his or her own choice. To understand this decision of an individual, the factors that caused the migratory move need to be understood. Migration can be seen as *“the result of the interplay of various forces at both ends of the migration axis”* (Kline, 2003, p. 108). This theoretical migration model of push and pull factors is one of the most commonly known approaches to understanding migration (Thielemann, 2006). On one end of the axis, the push factors can be found. Push factors are those events and conditions that cause people to move. The push factors are often negative characteristics of the place of origin and give a reason to not be satisfied with the current place of living and they cause people to be pushed away from the current place (Datta, 2004; Dorigo & Tobler, 1983). Push factors in general can be struggle for livelihood, concerns for personal safety, and environmental change (Ibrahim, 2018).

Specific push factors of voluntary migration can be unemployment and lack of access to skilled jobs, at the country of origin (Kline, 2003; Zhao, 2002).

On the other side of the migration axis, pull factors are found. These factors are the positive characteristics of the destination (Datta, 2004). These factors make distant places appealing (Dorigo & Tobler, 1983). Pull factors can be opportunities abroad that improve the quality of life, higher wages or are inspired by having family links abroad.

The push and pull factors for voluntary migrants are all linked to creating a better quality of life. The researched group of people who migrated to pursue higher education do this on a voluntary basis. However, it is difficult to then decide in what more specific box this researched group fits. At first,

the international students were mentioned as knowledge migrants, and although this sounds logical it is not correct to use this term. Maureen Bergman explained this when we discussed the topic of research and the importance of using the rights terms to indicate certain groups:

*“Because a knowledge migrant is a definition that the Department of Justice and Security uses as a term that is printed on the residence permit, but a master student is not a knowledge migrant! When you are discussing the language policy makers use in migration land, many, many different target audiences exist. You discuss PhD’s, post docs, bachelor students, master students, people who after they graduate stay for a year and find a job, a search year for graduated higher educated people. All those groups are strongly defined by definitions. I would use those definitions! I do think that a master student is a potential knowledge migrant, who is according to the rule of right now not a knowledge migrant. That is just a student, that is what it stated on its residence permit. The goal of the stay is to study, and not knowledge migrant. Because a knowledge migrant works. And he does not study, at least that is not his primary goal”* (personal communication, 2017).

In this thesis, I focus on voluntary migrants that are international students from outside the European Union, between the age of 18 and 35, that are in the Netherlands to do a master degree or PhD. Students must be planning on staying for a period longer than six months. Being a voluntary migrant does not necessarily mean that moving away from what is known is easy, but the group that is able to migrate willingly can be considered lucky. In the following section, the inequality of migration and the notion of a global (student) elite will be discussed.

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### 2.3.2. GLOBAL ELITE

Although migration is, according to Castles (2010), limited and controlled by states and the border is not impermeable. Social inequality reaches beyond borders in a globalized world (Ball & Nikita, 2014, p. 83). The upper class of the developed world moves internationally with ease, whilst those in the developing world still experience the downsides of this class divide (Scott, 2006). Only the designated lucky few feature the so-called business class citizenship. This concept, as described by Sparke (2006), refers to the elite of the world that can travel around freely and have all kinds of privileges making them powerful. Other authors define this group as *“those people who inhabit the highest strata of global power”* (Conti & O’Neill, 2007, p. 63). This group operates in new globalizing micro spaces, that takes class advantages beyond the boundaries of nation states (Ball & Nikita, 2014, p. 83). As stated by Helbing and Teney (2015, p. 446), the cosmopolitan or global elite is *“more open and attentive to the world outside their own community. They have the capacity to mediate between different cultures; they recognize the interconnected-ness of political communities; and they approve of responsibility at the supranational and global level.”*



The cosmopolite group has different names and labels in the wide range of literature. Examples are transnational capitalist class, transnational semi-proletariat, migratory elite and global middle class (Ball & Nikita, 2014). This list indicates that the terminology to define the discussed group is complex and, according to Embong (2000), is overworked.

Besides being overworked, the mentioned definitions all entail a notion of exclusiveness in them, and perceive the migratory group as an elite where only the lucky few can be part of. However, Scott (2006, p. 1105) argues that skilled international migration is becoming a normal middle-class activity that is not only available for the economic elite anymore. Because of the well advanced economic and cultural globalization, international migration for skilled and highly educated people has become easier, especially within in the EU. Although I do agree with Scott (2006) in his notion that skilled migration is becoming more and more normal for the middle class, I do share the view of Ball & Nikita (2014) that the population that moves around the globe freely and possess the needed capital and skills experiences class advantages. This does make the group of people exclusive and therefore an elite.

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### 2.3.3. STUDENT ELITE

When looking into the above-mentioned characteristics of the global elite as described by Helbing and Teney (2014), it can be argued that those people who migrate internationally to pursue higher education can be considered part of the global elite. This creates a niche in the cosmopolitan group of a migratory student elite who are able to mediate between different cultures, recognize the interconnected-ness of the communities and approve of responsibility at the global level.

Student migration has become one of the major forms of international migration and has increased over the decades (Findley et al, 2011). Vandrlick (2011) explains how these students are part of a new global economic and cultural elite. He states that the people that are part of this group have lived and studied in different places throughout the world. They therefore possess a sense of global citizenship. The competition for international students has increased due to the more knowledge-based economies and the globalization of the labor market. Policies in receiving countries are designed to welcome these migrants, which create a brain drain for the low-income sending nations, and brain gains for the high-income receiving countries (Khoo et al., 2011). Pásztor (2015) focuses on the international students and the factors that influence their decision to study abroad. She challenges the current debate on internationally mobile students and perceiving them as part of a migratory elite, and argues that the decision to move is not based on individual motives. She states that moving abroad for doctoral education does not happen spontaneous but is mostly a result of accessibility to funding. She disagrees with Findley et. al (2011), who perceive student mobility as a rational decision-making process that is driven by the supply-demand mechanisms and the economic

push and pull factors. Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2010) agree with Findley et. al (2011), and perceive the increasing global movements as a result of individual choices of the students worldwide. In this research, insights can be gained in why students move and whether the move was based on individual choices or influenced by other factors.

This transnational class of (young) people seems to have a sense of global belonging, are not stopped by borders nor are they tied to a certain physical place (Sparke, 2006). For this group, the world is their home (Vandrick, 2011). For the researched group of ISS students, the move to the Netherlands might just be a starting point for a life lived all around the globe. As Pásztor (2015, p. 840) states *“students who have studied outside their home countries..., create a generation of mobile academic who are not afraid to move countries in order to follow career opportunities”*. Therefore, in this thesis the group of international students that are able to move around the global can be identified as knowledge migratory elite. They are able to live in different parts of the world and move around freely, have had access to universities before because they already have a Master’s degree or are getting one during their stay in the Netherlands after getting an undergraduate degree somewhere else, and are expected to be able to adapt to cultural differences.

Although the international mobility market for students seems to be open for everyone enrolled in universities around the world, students who are mobile are likely to originate from higher social strata. They come mostly from the middle and upper class (Pásztor, 2015, p. 833). This means that non-traditional students continue to be underrepresented in lecture rooms (Guruz, 2011). These youngster of lower social class or ethnic background are not yet making their way to renowned universities, although the overall population of international student at these institutions is rising. As stated by Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2010, p. 31) *“despite higher education’s greater inclusiveness, the privileged classes have retained their relative advantage in nearly all nations.”* This is an important side note to keep in mind when researching the ISS students. It is assumed that those who make it to ISS, were in a privileged situation already (Deville et al., 2014). They could be part of the increasing wealthy upper class from non-Western countries (Vandrick, 2011). This is not necessarily the case because ISS students do receive a scholarship from different funds, which is a possible tool for closing the gap between different classes and allowing more students to take their education to the international level. Pásztor’s (2015) research on international doctoral students shows that funding is the deciding factor in the complex process of individuals and their journey to studying across the borders.

In this thesis, it will be researched whether this group who, according to the discussed theory, sees the world as their playground, feels connected to the Netherlands and identifies with the place where they study and live for several years. As stated before, in this research the distinction between

the researched groups is made on the level of willingness to migrate. Both researched groups are highly educated, so this characteristic they have in common.

## 2.4. INVOLUNTARY MIGRATION

### 2.4.1. DEFINITION

As described by Castles (2010, p. 1567) *“The postmodern utopia of a borderless world of mobility has not yet dawned, so it still seems appropriate to focus on migration as a process based on inequality and discrimination, and controlled and limited by states.”* This quote shows that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where everything seems to be in reach for everyone because of globalisation, borders and status still limit people in their ability to move around the world.

Involuntary migrants are forced by the circumstances to migrate. Reasons of their move can be push factors such as war, famine and life-threatening environmental disaster (Knox and Marston, 2013; Madrell, 2015). Since the push factors force somebody to move away, the question then arises whether somebody is then also a refugee. As will be discussed in chapter 4, the consequences for the future and opportunities to improve the quality of life are highly influenced by the label a migrant gets in the legal system.

As explained by Bakewell (2010, p. 1690) *“in policy terms, there are fundamental differences between the legal status and the treatment of forced migrants who cross international borders. Those who gain refugee status gain rights under international law that (...) are stronger than those offered to voluntary migrants”*. According to the 1951 Geneva convention Article 1A (2), a refugee is someone *“who owing to 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 or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”*

This definition has become difficult to implement in reality since reasons for migration are often intertwined and make it harder to separate the genuine refugees from migrants (Psoinos, 2007).

When someone is granted refugee status in the Netherlands, it means they are granted asylum and can stay. This is different from an asylum seeker who is an individual who moves across borders in search of protection, but who may not fulfil the criteria laid down by the previously mentioned Geneva Convention (UNESCO, 2011).

Refugees can be categorized as involuntary migrants. In this thesis, when the term refugee is used, this describes a person between the age of 18 and 35, who has had higher education in the country of origin, has been forced to flee the home country and is now living in the Netherlands. The respondents in this research are only people who have fled their home country and qualified for

refugee status according to Dutch immigration policy. This refugee status allows them to apply for a residence permit (*verblijfsvergunning*). This permit grants a five year stay in the Netherlands.

## 2.6 CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The second half of the theoretical framework consists of the conceptual model, the operationalization of the involved concepts and the hypothesis that can be drawn from the model. As discussed in 2.1.2, place identification is the process in which the identity of a person is influenced by physical and symbolic attributes that are present in the space he is in.

The literature review indicated that this process consists of multiple factors that together contribute to the process of place identification of individuals. Below, a systematic model of the relations between the actors and factors of place identification is set out. After an extensive review of the literature on migration, place identity, identity, and the influence of place on people, a model is created in which the process of place identification is made visible (figure 1). This model shows the three dimensions, social capital, place attachment and categorization, that all contribute to the process of place identification. These dimensions are split out in different sub-dimensions. The fact that three dimensions are included to explain the process shows the complexity of the place identification process. This conceptual model is designed for this specific research and is not a blueprint from another author that can be applied to every research. The three dimensions are chosen because they focus on those aspects that are considered most important in the complex notion of place identification. In the following operationalisation the sub-dimensions will be set out and explained.

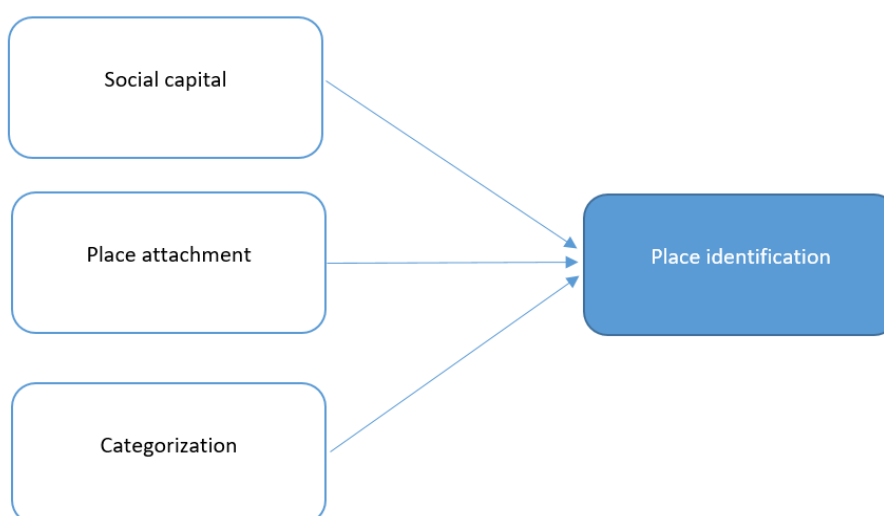


Figure 1: Conceptual model

### 2.6.1. SOCIAL CAPITAL

The first actor that contributes to the process of place identification is social capital. The concept of social capital focusses on the actual or potential resources of the membership of a group and the relations between people in space (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 250; Lippuner & Werlen, 2009). According to Putnam (2000, p. 19), social capital refers to the connections between individuals. These connections create networks of people and community resources (Perez & McDonough, 2008, p. 254). The social networks and the norms of trust and cooperation that arise from the connections are what make that the social capital can be defined as a good of the communities. A strong presence of and access to social capital in a community makes that group more likely to benefit from better health, higher educational achievement and better economic growth. This means that social capital can act as an effective resource for particular groups, but its full potential can only be reached when the bonds of trust and solidarity within a community are strong (Leonard, 2004. p. 928). When social capital is assimilated, other forms of capital can be also accumulated (Palloni et al., 2001, p. 1263). Since social capital provides networks that gain access to connections and improved situations, the importance of social capital for migrants cannot be ignored (Hagan, Macmillan & Wheaton, 1996). The networks that migrants use establish their identities and build their social, cultural and economic capital (Scott, 2006, p. 1109). Ryan et al., (2008, p. 676) state that social ties can be most effective when these ties create access to those who have more knowledge and resources. The importance of having the “right” social capital is explained by Perez & McDonough (2008) who state how exposure to resourceful social capital has long term consequences for students.

Within the networks of social capital, different dimensions of the networks can be distinguished. Szreter and Woolcock (2004) developed the distinction within social capital between bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital consists of those aspects that are looking into the social networks, whereas bridging social capital looks outward of the social network. Bonding social networks consist of homogenous groups and relate to the ties an individual has within what is considered to be the inner circle (Poortinga, 2012; Arezzo, 2017). This inner circle consists of people with whom the individual has strong, trusting connections and who consider each other to be similar (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004).

Bridging capital on the other hand focusses on people outside the closest circle on a heterogeneous group (Poortinga, 2012; Arezzo, 2017). People in these networks know about each other that they are not alike, in for example age or class. when social networks between people from different groups are create, a bridge between this group that encourages the development of resourceful ties is created.

To understand that social capital is not a one-dimensional concept. social networks are, like identity,

subject to change and are influenced by internal and external forces. Acknowledging and understanding the different nuances within social networks then becomes essential in analyzing the development of social networks and social capital.

Evergetti & Zontini (2006) draw attention to the fact that in the existing literature social capital is often presented as the solution to the problems of a society. They argue that often the positive effects of social capital accumulation are overemphasized and are not the glue that binds people together, as stated by Putnam (Lee, Árnason, Nightingale, & Shucksmith, 2005).

The existence of networks and the accumulation of social capital are indeed not a recipe for immediate successful integration, but in this thesis are perceived to contribute to the process of place identification in a substantial way. Social capital can create a network for the migrant which contributes to the process of place identification. The networks that establish social capital contribute to the process of place identification. When one has social capital to use and to create ties in the new space of living and working, this develops the sense of being part of the new environment. Therefore, social capital is considered to be a factor contributing to the process of place identification.

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### 2.6.2. PLACE ATTACHMENT

Secondly, place attachment is set out as a contributor to the process of place identification. The mostly used concept alongside place identity is place attachment. According to Trentelman (2009, p. 200), place attachment consists of the interconnections between biological, environmental, psychological, and sociocultural processes. Altman and Low (2012, p. 5), further explain how the notion of place focuses on the environmental settings to which people are culturally and emotionally attached, whereas attachment puts emphasis on the effect it has on people. The difference with place identity is explained by Rollero and De Piccoli (2002), by stating that place attachment can be developed quickly and one does not need to be or have been in the space to develop an attachment, whilst the process of place identity becomes stronger over time and being part of the place is essential in developing a place identity. Hernandez et al. (2007) have discovered four perspectives in the academic literature on the relationship between the concepts of place identity and place attachment. They can either (i) be considered to be the same, (ii) place identity can be seen as a component of place attachment, (iii) both concepts are dimensions of supra-ordered notion, or (iv) place attachment can be seen as a component of place identity. Hernandez (2007) then comes to the conclusion that the concepts are two different ways of relating to place and must be evaluated differently.

Rollero and De Piccoli (2010) follow this approach and explain that place attachment is perceived as

the emotional bond towards places, and place identity is considered to be a cognitive dimension related to the cognitions about the self as a member of the physical space. Throughout their research on the residents of Turin, this distinction however is not carried out strongly and the concepts are mixed up.

I choose to not separate place attachment and place identity, but to follow the approach of Lalli (1992), in which place attachment is considered to be a component of identity. Since place attachment develops earlier than place identity (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010), I argue that considering place attachment as one of the components of place identity, is the right approach in which it is clear that the concepts are not the same.

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### 2.6.3. CATEGORIZATION

The third contributor to the process of place identification has been identified as categorization. Social categorization serves as the basis of the social identity theory (Hogg & Reid, 2006). As explained before, in the social identity theory the self is seen as reflexive. This means that the object, in this case the human being, can categorize, classify or name itself in certain ways in relation to the other present social categories. This process of self-categorization makes it possible that an identity is formed (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 224; Lalli, 1992). The process of identification and categorization consists of what people think about us, and as important, what we think about ourselves.

Identification then becomes a two-way process: the internally oriented self- or group identification and categorization, and the process of categorization of others which is externally oriented.

Knox and Marston (2013, p. 6), state that identity is *“the sense you make of yourself through your subjective feelings based on your everyday experiences and social relations*. This process of making sense of who you are is something a person does by itself. Ellemers et al. (1999) argue that one's (social) identity consists of three components. Firstly, the cognitive awareness of being a member of a certain group. This self-or group identification is explained by Hogg and Reid (2006, p.9.), who state that in the social identity theory, *“people derive a part of their self-concept from the social groups and categories they belong to.”* This categorization takes place inside people and causes people to identify themselves and others with groups. Ellemers et al., (1999) claim that besides self-categorization, the social identity exists of an evaluative and emotional component. This evaluative component creates either a positive or negative annotation with a specific group membership. Emotional involvement with a certain group creates affective commitment. In this thesis, most attention will be paid to the cognitive component of self-categorization since this notion refers to being able to distinguish between members of different social groups. This understanding contributes to the ability to determine to which group a person categorizes itself.

The evaluative component of self-categorization, focusing on whether one feels positively or

negatively annotated with the group, is not involved in this research since the focus point is not the group itself and the attitude of the respondents towards this group, but the process of self-categorization towards a group. Affective commitment, the emotional component of self-categorization, is not taken into account in this research because the focus does not lie on emotional involvement but on the fact if one categorizes itself to a certain group.

Besides self-categorization, externally oriented categorization influences the process of place identification. The external identification is the process in which a person or a group defines others in a certain way. These external forces are part of social relationships (Jenkins, 1994).

The categorization by others is also done in the field of policy. As discussed before, it matters greatly whether a migrant is seen as either a refugee, an asylum seeker etc. for the opportunities one has. Therefore, the category one is put into the is expected to highly influence the process of place identification.

Based on the conceptual model, the following definition of the process of place identification can be created:

*The process in which social capital, place attachment and the act of categorization all contribute to the effect of place on the identity of an individual.*

## 2.7. OPERATIONALIZATION

### 2.7.1. Social capital

Social capital, the notion of networks of people and community resources, is set out in four different actors (Yosso, 2005, p. 79). Hawkins and Mauer (2010) follow the conceptualization of Coleman and state that social capital consists of resources that have been developed as a by-product of social networks. The contributors to and facilitators of social capital are friends, family, neighbours and professionals, as can be seen in figure 2.



Figure 2: Actors social capital



Social capital does depend on the different opportunities people have to access and participate in certain networks (Ryan et al., 2008). Migrants are expected to have a different social capital than groups of people who did not leave their home country. Rollero & De Piccoli (2010) found that when one participates in the neighbourhood, the feelings of belonging and being part of a group become stronger. Participation in the neighbourhood and being in touch with neighbours also is a source of social capital (Putnam et al., 1993). This participation in Dutch society can create networks in which the same norms, values and bonds of trust are present which create a stronger attachment to the place where the migrants live.

The social relations that contribute to the social capital are connected to having family or friends live close. According to Hawking and Maurer (2010), social capital serves to understand the relative strength of families and communities. When the family of a refugee lives in another city, country or continent, the social capital related to the direct surroundings in the Netherlands is expected to be lower. Family abroad can provide social networks on an international level; however, these networks are not focussed on Dutch society. Evergetti and Zontini (2006, p. 1026) explain that migrants' attachments to meaning of identity are transformed and produced through participation in family occasions and the continuation of the family relationships. Therefore, the notion of family present in Dutch society is considered to be a dimension of social capital.

Besides family, friends also act as a facilitator in the creation of social capital. Whereas family is 'known', friends can be made in the new place of living. These friends can help access other networks of people and therefore create a network that contributes to the creation of social capital which benefits the individual more and helps shape the place identification process. Because these friends can help individuals in the place identification process, it is important to take this group into account as a contributing factor. Therefore, the category friends is present in the conceptual model of social capital (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

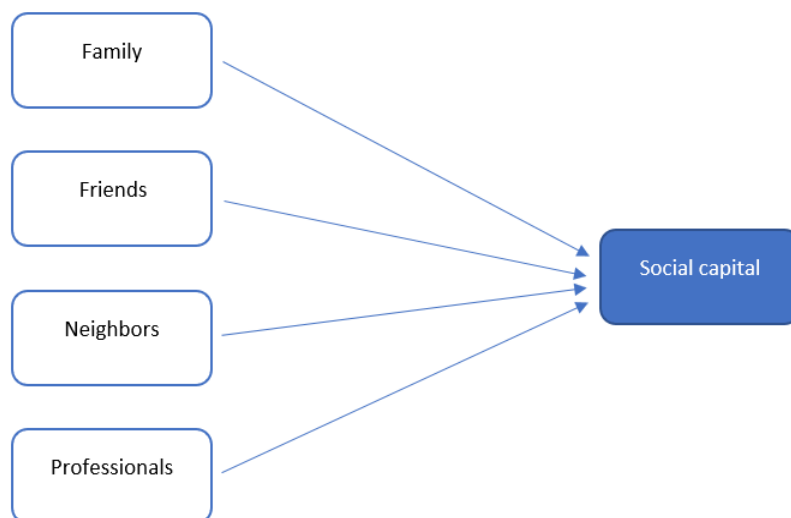
According to Leyden (2003), people with high levels of social capital tend to get together with friends and neighbours more often than those with a lower level of social capital. Neighbourhood design plays an important role in the occurrence of social capital in the living surroundings of people. Areas in which spontaneous meetings on the sidewalk can occur and allow people to connect are considered to be better environments for creating valuable social capital. The casual contacts create a sense of familiarity that people can find comforting. Therefore, neighbours are seen as a social network which develop social capital that contributes to the process of place identification in Dutch society.

On top of friends, family and neighbours, social capital is influenced by the connections one has with professionals in Dutch society. These professionals provide information and guidance for both groups. Refugees for example follow language courses taught by professionals who also teach them

on Dutch norms and values. Furthermore, employees of an AZC and COA, *taalmatjes* (language buddies) all provide social capital to an individual. ISS students have teachers, councillors, student advisors and other staff that can help them get around, understand policies, official letters etc. (Pennings, Lee & Witteloostuijn, 1998).

The group of international students from ISS live(d) in housing provided by ISS and go to school together. This is expected to create strong social relationships. However, because the students all live closely together, they are not expected to participate in the neighbourhood with other neighbours that are not connected to ISS much.

King (2010) argues in the line of Bourdieu's view on social capital, that the students who study in an international environment, are able to accumulate access to networks and connections, which provides a solid social capital source. The conceptual model of social capital is shown in figure 3.



**Figure 3: Conceptual model social capital**

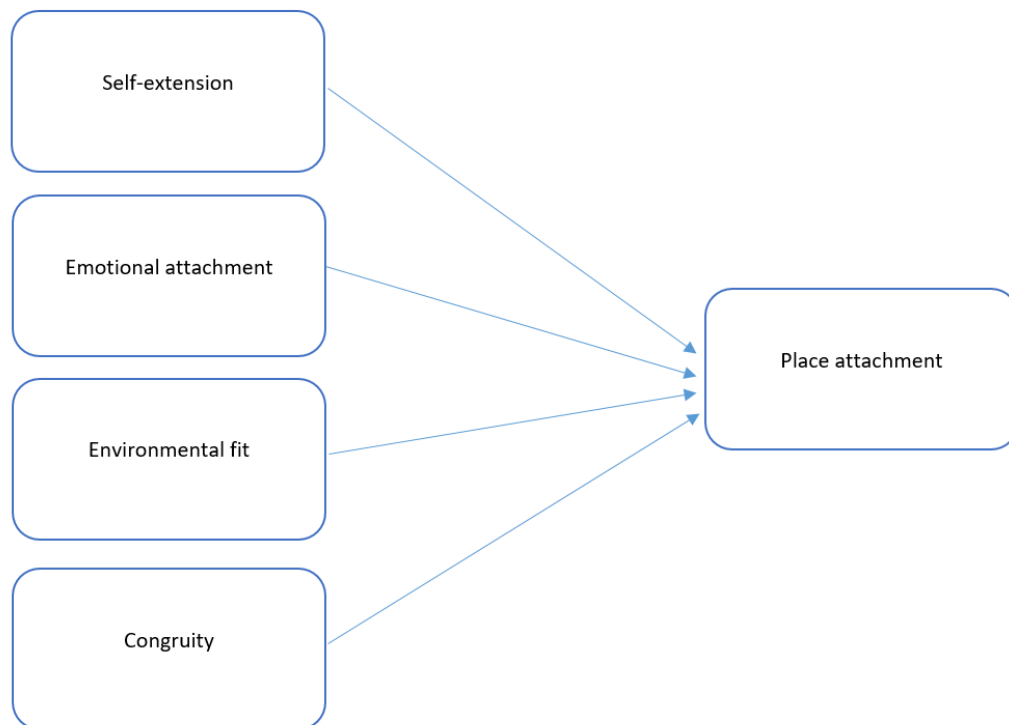
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### 2.7.2. PLACE ATTACHMENT

Since the concept of place identity as described by Proshansky is a multidimensional construct, the operationalisation of place identification consists of multiple dimensions. Place attachment is an important factor of the place identification and therefore needs a thorough operationalization.

After examining the wide range of literature, four useful conceptualisations were found in the work of Droseltis and Vignoles (2010). These four conceptualisation are self-extension, emotional attachment, environmental fit and congruity. They play a role in the model because these factors all contribute to the process of place identification. Furthermore, the way the conceptualisations are designed it makes the process measurable. One can indicate a low or strong congruity for example.

Place attachment is in this conceptual model perceived as the emotional bond towards places. In this approach, the concept is considered to be a sub-factor of place identity, as described by Lalli (1992). The conceptualisations, as described by Drosteltis and Vignoles (2010), all together create the place attachment of an individual in this model and are therefore operationalised as being factors of place attachment. The four conceptualisations have been made visible in figure 4.



**Figure 4: Conceptual model Place attachment**

#### 1. Self-extension

Drosteltis and Vignoles (2010) define the self-extension as the cognitive sense of a place as being part of the extended self. Following this approach, it is argued that places are experienced as part of the self. The self (me) is the big subject of which place is a (small) part. The value of this approach has been empirically found by researching people who have experienced bad situations like rape or burglary that affected them as a person and influenced their social identity. Research has found that their place identification changed (Wirtz & Harrell, 1987). The place does not longer feel safe or fails to provide needed protection. Self-extension deals with statements like I feel this place is part of who I am and if this place no longer existed, I would be sad. The self becomes part of the place and a loss of the place would mean a loss of a part of the self. The makes that when self-extension is high, it contributes to place attachment.

## 2. Environmental fit

In this dimension, the environmental identity influences whether one feels like *I fit into this place*. The individual develops a subjective sense of fitting into or being part of their physical surroundings. The *me* then becomes part of the place. The place is the bigger picture in which the individual fits. This concept has some connections to concepts of rootedness and place attachment, and is in this approach defined as the fitting into or belonging to a place. Environmental fit focusses on questions like does this place allow me to connect with myself, and do I fit into this place? This is described as environmental identity by Clayton and Opatow (2004), who explain that the impact of this identity that connects the natural environment and its personal meaning to an individual, is significant and has great behavioural implications. When discussing the environmental fit, one can ask questions like do the respondents feel part of their surroundings? Whether one feels that he belongs in the space influences the sense of attachment and the ability to participate in the process of place identification (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010).

## 3. Place-self congruity

This dimension reflects the idea that the place is in some way similar to, or matches the values and personality of the individual. This creates a sense of identification with the place. This concept has often been linked to travel destinations or the presence of particular architecture. Working definition of this dimension is, as given by Drostelis and Vignoles (2010, p. 24), *“the sense that the image one has of a place is similar to, or consistent with, the image one has of one’s characteristics as an individual.”* At a low congruity level, the *me* and the *place* do not look alike and the image of the self is not similar to the image of the place. When a high place-self congruity is taking place, the *me* and *place* are (very) similar and a strong connection between the identity of the place and the characteristics of the individual is present.

## 4. Emotional attachment

The fourth dimension follows a humanistic geographical approach and conceptualizes place identity in terms of attachment. As discussed before, the relation between place identity and place attachment has been widely discussed in the literature and different theoretical stands exist alongside each other. In the approach Drostelis and Vignoles (2010) use, place attachment is linked to the anthropological literature that includes the emotional links to places and a definitive aspect of people-place bonds. Therefore, place attachment is transformed to emotional attachment which refers to the strong emotional bonds or positive affect towards places. When there is a low

emotional attachment, the *me* and the place are far away from each other and do not feel linked. When a high emotional attachment takes place, strong links between the *me* and the place can be found. Emotional attachment is related to statements such as *I feel emotionally connected to this place*. This creates a connection with the place on an emotional level. A strong emotional attachment leads to a stronger place attachment which contributes to the process of place identification.

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### 2.7.3. CATEGORIZATION

By defining who one is and who one is not, the process of self-categorization takes place in an individual. The including and excluding of factors helps to develop who you are and where you belong. This then influences the process of place identification, to what extent do you fit into the place you are living and working and does this place influence your identity. The sub-dimension self-identification has not been operationalized further because this ongoing process cannot be limited to specific labels. Hogg and Reid (2006) explain how individuals represent social categories as so-called prototypes. These prototypes are arbitrary, not set checklists of attributes. These attributes define one group from other groups. Through these prototypes, differences between groups are often maximized. Because prototypes are not set, it cannot be defined what makes one feel like he belongs to a certain group or not. This is merely a feeling of fitting in. In the interviews, several opportunities were given in the questions for respondents to explain how they felt part of group and what it takes for an individual to feel like a member of a specific group.

The factor categorization by others includes the perception of others towards the individual in relation to the process of categorization. Categorization by others can, unlike self-identification, be set out in certain factors. Since a migrant is always defined into a certain group by either policy, politics or media, distinctions can be made. Of course, this research itself is highly categorizing individuals into groups. Creating two groups and pointing individuals to be part of one of these groups is this process of categorization by others.

The way the respondent thinks the *other* categorizes him, influences the individual's identity. To illustrate this abstract way of thinking: when respondent X thinks that the general population of society Y perceives him as a person looking for fortune (*gelukszoeker*) who is only in the society to take benefits and is not integrating, it is likely that respondent X takes this perception of others with him in the process of place identification and does not feel welcome or accepted. This can obstruct the process of place identification. It is therefore important to include this process into the operationalization of the place identification process. This also works the other way around, when the respondent defines the other, a distinction between *me* and the other is created which makes *me* feel stronger about who I am and about whom the other is. Relating this to this research means that the external dimensions of the perception of others towards the individual can influence the

process of place identification. The external categorization and categories are set out as highly educated refugees and international students. The international students can then also be further categorized as being part of the global elite.

The factors that constitute the dimension of categorization are shown underneath in figure 5.

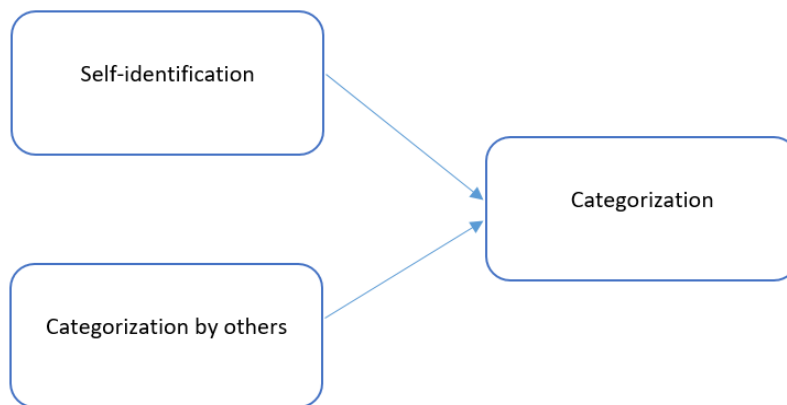


Figure 5: Conceptual model of categorization

In the interviews, it has been asked whether the respondent feels accepted by Dutch society, feels part of Dutch society and feels connected to Dutch society. It is expected that the trajectory of refugees creates a perception of the other towards the refugee that he does not belong here or is not welcome here.

## 2.8 HYPOTHESES

By combining the concepts of social capital, place attachment and identity categorization, an insight in the process of place identification can be provided. The different ways of gathering data, as explained in chapter 3, will provide information on different dimensions and processes.

Based on the theoretical framework and the discussions of the literature, the following hypotheses have been formulated.

- 1: International students are expected to have easy access to valuable social capital in Dutch society due to being close to a potential network.
- 2: Highly educated refugees are expected to experience difficulties in establishing strong social capital in Dutch society due to distance to potential beneficial social capital.
- 3: International students are expected to not be strongly attached to the place they live and work in since they know their stay is only temporary.

4: It is expected that highly educated refugees are keener on developing strong place attachment since the new place of residence is likely to be their new home for the near future.

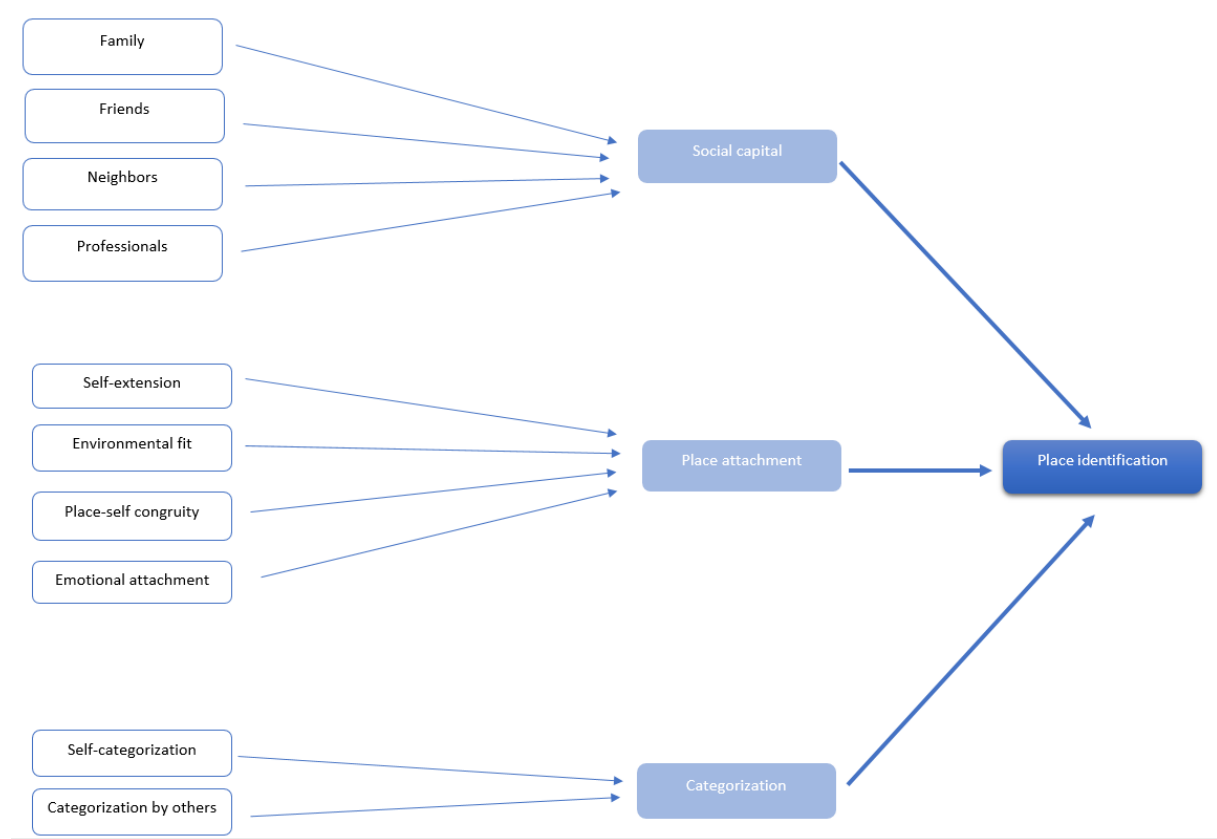


Figure 6: Conceptual model process place identification

### 3. METHODOLOGY

When performing research and writing a master thesis, different methods of data collection are often used. When writing a research from a geographical point of view, research is not limited to the geographical approaches. In the field of geography, the field that is researched is never limited to a small portion of the world. In order to understand the whole picture, a phenomenon always has to be viewed in its context. This geographical imagination allows a researcher to understand the changing patterns, process and relationships among people and places (Knox & Marston, 2013). This broad geographical imagination explains the multidisciplinary nature of the human geography (King, 2012).

When analysing a situation, the socio-economic, political, environmental and historical aspects are taken in to account, creating a well-rounded understanding of the issue (Bridgen, 2009). This multidisciplinary approach is highly valuable when trying to provide a well-rounded answer to a complicated research question. Because of the different approaches, disciplines and points of view used to understand a phenomenon, an integral outcome is created. This integral outcome adds value to researching a topic from a geographical point of view

By combining different approaches to the gathering of different sources data, the liability of the results increases (Creswell, 2013, p. 98). The use of different sources of data creates an in-depth research. The different ways of gathering data, used methods and techniques used to analyze the collected data is will be set out in this chapter.

#### 3.1. SAMPLE GROUP

Qualitative research focuses on the question of why, and aims with this question in mind “*to decipher experiences within sets of social structures and processes*” (Aitken & Valentine, 2012, p.291). A wide range of data collection methods exists in the qualitative research field. In this thesis, multiple methods are used to perform a two-step analysis. The first aim was to understand the Dutch immigration policies and second was to understand how these policies influence the migrants by speaking to them in depth.

The most valuable outcomes emerge when theoretical insights are combined with empirical data. The data that was gathered is the space where the abstract concepts come together.

Performing analysis on the Dutch immigration policies served as a starting point to gain further understanding of the bureaucratic system migrants are subject to. By conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews and carrying out questionnaires a dialogue occurred that has been used to give a deeper insight in the abstract concepts and attach meaning to the theories. Because the concepts of social capital, place attachment and categorization are not easy to measure and can be perceived different by each respondent, it is important that there is space in the data collecting process for



clarification and further explanation of an answer. The use of different methods creates this space. Two different groups of people were interviewed; the knowledge migrants and the highly educated refugees.

Firstly, the knowledge migrants from the Institute of Social Sciences were interviewed.

The students from ISS come to the Netherlands to obtain a master's degree and/or conduct a PhD research in the field of social sciences. During my internship at the Society for International Development I was working in the ISS building. This made contacting the respondents quite easy. I walked around during breaks and asked people whether they wanted to participate. If yes, I gave them my email address so we could set up a meeting. I could interview the respondents in the SID office, which was a fitting quiet space without distractions.

Ten interviews with ISS students have been conducted. Of these ten interviews, eight turned out to be useful. During one interview the recorder stopped working and therefore no transcripts could be produced. Another respondent did not want his data to be recorded.

The second group that has been interviewed consists of highly educated refugees. I have conducted eight interviews. Finding these respondents was a bit more challenging. I first contacted the UAF (Foundation for Refugee Students) but they did not want to help me come in contact with students. Secondly, I posted on social media that I was looking for respondents and asked for either respondents themselves or people who could get me in touch with possible respondents. Around five useful tips or names were given. After being brought in contact with possible respondents via WhatsApp, setting up actual interview appointments failed due to people not responding or not being sufficient enough in either Dutch or English.

This pushed me into the direction to look for possible respondents in my offline social circle, and therefore focus more on students in Nijmegen. This helped creating the setting in which two groups, already different in their characteristics, also were different in their geographical location.

Via master students from Radboud University who were volunteering as buddies for refugees I came in contact with two Syrian respondents. I asked these respondents if they knew anyone who would be willing to participate. This brought me another respondent. However, the above-mentioned people were all male respondents and I wanted a mixed group gender wise. My sister knew a woman from her English bachelor who is a refugee and got me in touch with her. Then I contacted Vluchtelingenwerk Oost Nederland (*Dutch Council for Refugees, Eastern region*), luckily, they were very willing to help me. They could not give me names of possible respondents because of privacy regulation, but they referred me to the Radboud In'to language institute, since that is where many refugees take Dutch courses. Radboud In'to languages allowed me to write an email to the course attendees. In this email I made clear that I was particularly looking for women. This email got me

another four respondents in three days, which was excellent.

The following table portrays the respondents and gives insight in the composition of the group.

	Name	Age	Nationality
1	Marina	27	Afghan
2	Maher	23	Syrian
3	Fazer	20	Syrian
4	Aya	20	Syrian
5	Mohamed	27	Syrian
6	Joud	25	Syrian
7	Bahaa	22	Syrian
8	Yaman	25	Syrian

	Name	Age	Nationality
1	Avagay	33	Jamaican
2	Dhika	30	Indonesian
3	Diana	27	Mexican
4	Elizabeth	34	Venezualan
5	Osman	28	Pakistan
6	Sarah	28	British/South-African
7	Richard	27	Indian
8	Lize	24	South African

Besides these interviews I have done one expert interview with Maureen Bergman. Maureen is currently working for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs but has previously worked for the

internationalization department at the Hogeschool Leiden and Nuffic and therefore has valuable knowledge on the topic of international students.

### 3.2. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

#### 3.2.1. POLICY REVIEW

The first sources of empirical data used in this thesis are the Dutch policies on immigration. By performing policy analysis, different insights are gained. As explained by Dunn (2015), descriptive oriented analysis describes the causes and consequences of policy.

First of all, by researching the historical development of Dutch immigration policy, current policies can be seen in the right perspective. Secondly, by diving into the practical matters established in policy creates an understanding of what the respondents experienced prior and upon arrival in the Netherlands. Furthermore, distinguishing the differences in policy between the researched groups empirically emphasizes the contrasts of the student migrants and the highly educated refugees. Official policy documents on the one side and academic literature on the other side served as the sources for the policy review in chapter 4.

#### 3.2.2. QUESTIONNAIRE

According to Beiske (2002), a questionnaire is a structural technique for collecting primary data in which various people are asked the same set of questions. A questionnaire can have open or closed questions. Besides the policy review, in this research a closed-ended questionnaire combined with open-ended interviews were used to gather empirical data. This type of questionnaire provides the respondent with items and the possible responses from which the participants must select (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). The aim of this questionnaire was to gain insights in which particular parts and dimensions of the process of place identification stand out where both similarities and differences between the two groups exist. Inspired by the work of Droseltis and Vignoles (2009), a questionnaire had been developed in which the respondents can indicate whether they agree or disagree with a list of statements. The Likert-type rating scales are often used to measure attitudes towards certain statements (Jamieson, 2004, p. 1217). The scale used is the 5-point Likert scale, in which the response possibilities are strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree (Vennix, 2011). The statements in the questionnaire are designed as an addition to the in-depth semi structured interviews. By using this method with ordinal data, respondents had to make a strong decision which provides clear insights in their place identification processes. Whereas the interviews allowed for elaboration on the questions and answers, this way of gathering data creates a more distinct outcome which can, or cannot, support the findings from the interviews. As stated by Byrne (2016), *“policy requires evidence, to change policy you need to provide good evidence... And so, we*

*needed to produce quantitative data, because people like statistics. People like stats, they like to see what percentage they can use to measure change.*” By including a questionnaire that produces closed-ended data, the findings can be made stronger by presenting them in stats. These stats can show at a glance what the results of a certain topic or question are.

### **Analysis of the questionnaire data**

Since the sample group does not exist of hundreds of people, it is not possible to execute in-depth statistical analysis. However, it is possible to provide some descriptive data. This data provides insights in small trends that the respondents show. These outcomes are used to understand the results of the interviews and answering the research questions.

The questionnaire functions as an addition to the in-depth semi-structured interviews to clearly distinguish the different dimensions of the researched process and to make these findings easily visible. As with the interview guide, it has been indicated which statements of this questionnaire are connected to certain parts of the conceptual framework. In this way, the results from the questionnaire can be related back to the dimensions that are set out in the conceptual model. The questionnaire can be found in annex II.

The Likert scale is often used in quantitative studies to determine the general tendency of a large group towards certain statements. Statistical analysis uses different methods to test a certain hypothesis and transforms the responses into a mathematical output (Boone & Boone, 2012). Since this research is not quantitative in the sense that it questions hundreds of people and is therefore fitting for statistical analysis, it does not make sense to create a statistical test to research the connection between answers to create a model.

However, the Likert scale can still be used to discover the tendencies of the researched group. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) the use of Likert scales in quantitative questionnaires is widely embedded. The main advantage of the use of the Likert scale in this research is its characteristic of providing easily comparable data (Nemote & Beglar, 2013).

It is important to take into account that, when using a Likert scale, the intervals between the values cannot be presumed equal (Blaikie, 2003). This means that during the analysis of the data the mean of the outcome cannot be taken as the result. Especially the deviation of the answers is what matters in understanding the responses.

The output will be transformed into histograms in the analysis chapter, to visually show the answers given and detect interesting trends. This visualization makes it easier to make a comparison between the two groups because, the bars that represent the outcomes of the two groups are in the same graph, so it will be clear whether there are great differences or not in the answer. The responses are brought together in sub-sections, as categorized in the work of Droseltis and Vignoles (2010),

combined with the topics of the conceptual model. The defined categories are self-categorization, emotional attachment, place self-congruity, environmental fit, self-extension and place attachment.

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### 3.2.3. INTERVIEW

Besides the use of questionnaires, another method to gather data from the respondents has been used: the in-depth semi-structured interview.

In a qualitative study, the most commonly used way to gather data is conducting interviews (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006, p. 314). As described by Weiss (1995, p.1), interviews are carried out because this way the researcher can learn about places that he has not visited, unknown cultures, the nature of social life and people's interior experiences. In this research, the goal is to gain insight in personal processes of people and their relation to the new place they live in. Because this process consists of multiple dimensions, it was important during the gathering of the data that all these dimensions could be discussed. This can be done via interviews. According to Clifford et al., (2016, p. 143) an interview is *"a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions."*

Seale et al., (2004, p. 16) state that *"qualitative interviewing is, in some senses, both 'simple and self-evident'. It draws on the everyday practices of asking and answering questions and the everyday identities of questioner/answerer and interviewer/interviewee."* It is exactly this kind of everyday life of the respondents that I wanted to discover in the interviews. The needed insights in the processes people went through and are still going through can best be established by letting people talk about their experiences.

The general interview approach has different types of gathering data (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006). The main distinction can be seen in the structure of the interview. Unstructured interviews are often started with a broad question from which the conversation evolves. No framework that leads the questions is used (Moyle, 2002). Conducting unstructured interviews does not fit this research since certain insights from the interviews are needed. If an interview would not be structured it would not be guaranteed that the needed data will be collected.

On the other side of the interview spectrum is the structured interview. During a structured interview, the wording and order of questions is exactly the same each individual interview. This standardized and scheduled approach to the interview creates a situation where different responses to the questions can be entirely contributed to the respondent and are not influenced by the wording and order used by the interviewer (Seale, 2004). In this research it is important that the interviews feel like a natural conversation and questions are therefore asked in an order that fits the specific interview. Therefore, conducting a structured interview is not the preferred approach for collecting the data in this thesis.

Another way of conducting interviews is via a focus group. In a focus group, multiple respondents are brought together to better understand how people think or feel about an issue, product or service (Krueger & Casey, 2014). A focus group is not ideal for this research since the individual stories and experiences are the most valuable outcome of the interviews. A focus group is not designed for sharing individual narratives. Although the group interview allows for a wider range of experiences to be shared, the public nature prevents participants to delve deep into their story (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006).

### IN-DEPTH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

In between the structured and the unstructured interview lies the semi-structured interview. The use of the in-depth semi structured approach fits the research the best. In depth interviews allow the interviewer to ask a wide range of research questions and to go deep into a certain topic during the conversation (DiCicco & Crabtree, 2006). Clifford et al., (2016, p. 143) explain that semi-structured interviews means that the researcher *“prepares a list of predetermined questions which creates a conversational manner that offers participants the chance to explore issues feel are important.”* Because the interviewer prepares a list of questions, the interview guide, beforehand, the answers of the respondent remain within a defined framework (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996, p. 210). Timotijeciv and Breakwell (2000, p. 360) used this interview approach in their research on Yugoslavian refugees. They justify their method of choice by stating *“we wanted to understand in considerable depth what people were feeling and doing about the changes in their identity brought about by very dramatic transformations in their life circumstances”*. I feel this justification perfectly matches this research and therefore feel that using the in-depth semi-structured interview approach is the best available method to gather most of my data. The ability to go in-depth about the key topics of the research is what makes these interviews crucial for the research.

### Triangulation

The differences and similarities in responses of the questionnaire can be explained by the data gained during the interviews. Combining different methods of gathering data, also known as the inter-method mixing, *“will result in most accurate and complete depiction of the phenomenon under investigation”* (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 300). The use of multiple methods of collecting data next to each other creates triangulation. This triangulation is an instrument to perform cross validation when multiple methods to gather data are used (Jick, 1979). Integrating different approaches to gathering data has become increasingly common (Bryman, 2006). The policy review served as a starting point to understand the situations the respondents had been in and created insights that were used to narrow down the interview questions. The data gathering process of the

interviews and questionnaires took place at the same time, and can therefore also be identified as the concurrent mixed method data collection (Creswell et al., 2003). Because the data comes from the same individual, it is easier to compare the two (Driscoll et al., 2007).

## INTERVIEWGUIDE

The interview guide is prepared beforehand and serves as a tool to guide the interviewer so that the right questions are asked and the needed data is gathered. However, the list of questions does not limit the conversation. The interviewer has the space to ask more questions than that are on the interview guide, to get a better understanding of the story that is being told.

Because it was not known beforehand whether the interviewees were sufficient enough in Dutch to express their feelings the interview guide was prepared in both English and Dutch. As explained by Timotijevic and Breakwell (2000), the language in which interviews are being held can influence the extent to which the interviewee feels safe enough to discuss sensitive matter. I therefore let the participants make the choice whether they want to express themselves in Dutch or English. It turned out all the ISS respondents preferred to do the interview in English. For the refugees, they often wanted to practice their Dutch, but were not always sufficient and therefore a mix of English and Dutch was often used during the interviews. Before the interview started, the respondents were asked whether they wanted to be anonymous and if they agreed with the recording of the interview. Creswell (2013, p. 163) describes the different stages that together conduct the act of interviewing. These steps go from thermalizing the research to the design of the study. This is then followed by the actual conducting of the interview, which then has to be transcribed. These transcriptions are used to analyze the data, so the validity, reliability and generalizability of the findings can be set out. The process of interviewing is closed by the reporting of the study.

The interview guide that contains the starting questions that serve as a framework to guide the conversation can be found in annex I. The starting point is given, but it is created with the needed space for follow-up questions. In brackets, the reason I asked this question is given. Furthermore, it is indicated which questions relate back to which part of the conceptual model.

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### 3.2.4. ANALYZING THE INTERVIEW DATA

As with collecting data, analyzing interview data can be done in different ways. As stated by Burnard (1991, p. 461) *“not one method of analysis can be used for all types of interview data”*.

A general methodology to analyze data with systematic guidelines is grounded theory. Developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), it encourages the researcher to develop theory from analyses of empirical data (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007). In this thesis, the aim is not to develop theory but to gain insight in the place identification process. Although grounded theory itself is not a perfect match to analyze

the data, the academic work inspired by the approach can fit this thesis. Burnand (1991) describes how thematic content analysis can be used to analyze interview transcripts. This approach has been created by combining methods from the grounded theory approach and content analysis. In this thesis the thematic content analysis by Burnand (1991) is used to analyze the transcripts and questionnaire data. Fourteen stages of categorizing and codifying the interview transcripts are set out. Out of these fourteen stages seven are useful for this particular research. Burnand's work is designed for nurse education purposes and therefore not all stages apply to this thesis.

The following steps are also part of the discussed seven steps of interviewing by Cresswell (2013). The first step, according to Burnand, is to write memos shortly after the interview to record ideas, thoughts and remember particularities of the interview. The interviews have been transcribed. Then it is time for stage two in which the transcripts are read through and notes on general themes within the transcripts are made. This way, the researcher becomes more aware of the world of the respondent. Stage three exists of open coding, in which the unusable parts of the interviews are identified and the useful answers are coded. This coding is done in AtlasTi. Labelling the transcripts with codes is an important step in making large amounts of transcripts suitable for analysis. This stage is followed by stage four in which the codes are brought together in broader categories, also known as families, to show the overlap that might exist between different codes. These codes and families and their relation to each other can be made visible in a field. These fields help to see the bigger picture of the analyzed data. During stage five the list of codes and families are worked through to delete any overlap and create a final list of codes. In stage six, the data from different interviews that have been assigned the same code are brought together to compare the answers and deduct trends. This is followed by the last analyzing stage, stage seven in which the writing process begins. A sample of citations is used as examples to illustrate the findings. Just like the interview guide, the codes used are influenced by the theoretical framework and conceptual model (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). To make analysis more effective, it is useful to predetermine a list of codes that can be applied to the responses. These codes can be the dimensions and indicators that are part of the conceptual model. This way the codes are also connected to interview questions since the interview guide is partly inspired by the conceptual model. This thematic analysis method makes that analysis can be performed clearly, and answers that do not relate to a predetermined code stand out more (Banistar et al., 1994, p. 57). The list of codes can be found together with the transcriptions in annex III.



### 3.3. LIMITATIONS

Although the used methods and collected data were sufficient in providing the information needed for this research, it does not mean that the methods and data outcome are perfect. To understand what can and cannot be expected from the research outcomes, it is important to pay attention to the limitations of both the approach to data collection and the value of the collected data.

The way possible respondents for the highly educated refugees group were approached proved to be highly time consuming. Plenty people were initially willing to either participate or help look for respondent but were not useful in reality. This slowed down the process of finding the correct respondents that fitted the requirements and were willing to participate. In total, it took over one year to conduct all the interviews. This is partly due to the fact I lived in The Hague for six months and was not focusing on finishing the interviews in Nijmegen. This is a point for myself to keep in mind in the future that it is better to conduct all interviews in a short period of time. In one year, policy and societal changes can be baffling and can therefore change the way the respondents perceived the Netherlands and are therefore influenced in their process of place identification. Besides the long time it took to conduct the interviews with the highly educated refugees, this particular group provided other issues. First of all, the gender balance is off. Three of the eight respondents are girls. I tried to get a 50/50 division and, like stated before, specifically asked for girls in my email to the language course participants. However, since the respondents have Arabic names it was difficult for me to determine whether the person who emailed me was male or female. I now realize I should have asked the person who emailed me about their gender and depending on their answer agree to do an interview or not.

Another issue that arose during the interviews with the highly educated refugees was the language barrier. Although I expected a language barrier beforehand and was prepared for this, it turned out that the level of English of the respondents was sometimes low. This created issues when filling out the questionnaire that contained difficult phrases. Although I was more than willing to explain the statements to them, this also created a situation in which it was easy for me to steer the respondents into a certain answer that I thought would fit them. I was very aware of this and tried to limit this as much as possible.

Furthermore, it has to be noted that the sample group is of a limited size. This has to be taken into account when analyzing the data. Due to the small size of the respondents group, the empirical outcomes can be suggestive and hard to test. The respondents cannot be seen as an accurate representation of the larger demographic. The research design focusses on gathering in-depth data, due to the limited available time it was not possible to create a larger group of respondents. I argue that the small number of respondents provided such in-depth data that a strong analysis on this

limited group can be performed. The outcomes of the research cannot be applied to larger groups, but do show detailed insights in the researched processes.

During the filling out of the questionnaire, the recorder was left running in case respondent want to explain their answer or have questions about the statements. This way, if necessary, it is possible to listen back to the interviews if the questionnaire data do not match the interview outcomes or indicate other unexpected results.

The interviews with the knowledge migrants were easier on different levels. First of all, I had to conduct all the interviews in a short period of time because of my ending contract, and therefore access to the building at ISS. This created a situation in which seven of the eight interviews were conducted within one month. Furthermore, the level of English was high in this group of respondents. This made conducting the interviews smoother.

The limited amount of collected data (seventeen interviews and sixteen questionnaires) calls for caution when performing analysis. The internal reliability has been ensured by using mixed methods and creating triangulation (van Zwieten & Willems, 2004). It should however be noted that for the different methods the same group of respondents was used. The data therefore complement each other, and should not be interpreted autonomous.

The external reliability is up for discussion. Whether the same outcomes can be reproduced over time is questionable since the researched process of place identification is assumed to change over the years.

The validity of the research can be influenced by the language barrier. Because of misunderstandings, the interpretations of the researcher can influence the outcomes of the interviews stronger than when there is no language barrier (Golafshani, 2003).

## 4. DUTCH IMMIGRATION POLICY AND PROCESSES

In this section the Dutch immigration system and policy on refugees and international students will be set out. The aim of this chapter is to gain insight in how authorities approach different groups in the policy and practices around immigration. This is the first part of the empiric section of the research. The unique characteristic of this research is the comparison of refugees and student migrants in their process of place identification. Important contributing factors to this process are the Dutch immigration policies. The researched groups are treated different in Dutch immigration policy. Comparing the two policy approaches provides useful insides to research the effect of these policies. The effect of the policies can be found in the field of categorization. How one is categorized by others, in terms of policy, is expected to influence the categorization dimension and therefore the process of place identification. The gained understanding from this policy review is used in chapter 5 to connect the outcomes from the interview and questionnaire data. Distinctions between policy and its expected influences and reality can then be provided.

First of all, a general overview of the Dutch immigration policy and its involved actors will be provided. Secondly, the immigration policy and process for the international students will be set out. This is followed by an overview and discussion of the immigration policy and process for the refugees.

### 4.1. DUTCH IMMIGRATION POLICY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

Policies that seek to regulate entry to the territory of a nation-state are based on events of the past (Geddes & Scholten, 2016). To understand the current immigration policy, it is important to understand the development of the Dutch policy throughout the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. As described by Poppelaars and Scholten (2008, p. 340) *“the evolution of national integration policies during the past decades has been marked by discontinuity. Different policy frames have succeeded each other during the past 30 years.”* Different phases can indeed be detected in the historical overview of the Dutch immigration policy, all contributing to the current policy. After the Second World War, the Netherlands dealt with a large influx of immigrants. The migration flow consisted of different groups (Penninx, 2006). First of all, people from the former colonies as Indonesia and Suriname came to the Netherlands (Geddes & Scholten, 2016).

Secondly, asylum seekers sought refuge in the Netherlands. In order to regulate the admission of these groups, the Alien act (*vreemdelingenwet*) from 1849 was revised in 1965. Legislation created a stronger juridical position for refugees since it was now possible to apply for asylum and get a residence permit (EMN, 2012).

Thirdly, starting in the 1960s, workers from around the Mediterranean were selected as cheap workforce to contribute to the economic growth and to ease the shortages at the lower end of the labour market of the Netherlands (Prins, 1996; EMN, 2012). These migrants, called *gast arbeiders* (guest workers), were considered to only stay temporarily in the Netherlands. However, during the beginning of the 1980s, it daunted both on society and the policy makers that most labour immigrants were here to stay, were letting their families from Turkey and Morocco move to the Netherlands, and were becoming part of Dutch society (EMN, 2012; Scholten & Geddes, 2016). This called for a change in policy, and the new centrally coordinated Minorities Policy was conducted (Penninx, 2006). This multicultural policy focused on immigrants both as individuals as groups. The aim of the policy was to tackle discrimination, ensure equity for all groups, improve the social-economic situation and support the social-cultural emancipation of minority groups (Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008). Inclusion and participation of the minority groups became one of the main aims in the political and legal domain (Penninx, 2006).

Whereas during the 1980s the term ethnic minorities was the buzzword in immigration policy, integration policy became the word during the 1990s (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007). The Ethnic Minorities Policy turned out not to be efficient enough in the field of labour market and education. Too much attention was paid on the multicultural aspects, which slowed the integration process down (Penninx, 2006). No longer focusing on multiculturalism, a shift in policy was made to citizenship. In the *Integration Policy New Style*, the focus was put on both the social-economic and the social-cultural dimension of integration. Pointing out what the Dutch citizens all had in common instead of focusing on their difference became the new policy approach in the field of immigration (Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008). Equal participation of immigrants in all fields of society was the goal of this renewed Integration Policy (Penninx, 2006). Due to the increase of asylum seekers during the 1990s because of the Yugoslavian war, the fall of communism and the Kosovo crisis, the Aliens Act was once revised again in 1994 to make procedures easier (EMN, 2012).

During the beginning of the 2000s, the Dutch integration policy took another turn. Immigration policy became more and more politicized. Events like 9/11, the murders of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh caused a public opinion stating that the integration of minorities in the Netherlands had failed and a clash of civilizations had occurred (Penninx, 2006; Snel, 2003). As explained by Poppelaar and Scholten (2006, p. 345) *“the rise of Fortuyn, in spite of his tragic death, marked a fundamental breakthrough in Dutch political culture. A more polarized and confrontational political culture now replaced the traditional politics of accommodation”*. Since 2004, the immigration and integration policy has become more and more subject to a larger debate on the Dutch national identity in an era of globalization and uncertainty. Influenced by anti-immigration politicians, the Dutch discourse continued to change from multiculturalism to assimilation in which the refugees and migrants are

perceived as problems (Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016). In 2006 the civic integration abroad policy was introduced which involves a pre-entry test for possible migrants on the Dutch language, history and culture. This test does not apply to asylum seekers, temporary migrants and EU citizens (Geddes & Scholten, 2016). This policy aimed for well-prepared migrants that fit in Dutch society on the one hand, and reinforced efforts to control immigration on the other hand.

Starting from the summer of 2015, uncertainty grew due to the large influx of refugees to European states. The Dutch asylum system and its involved actors were not prepared for such a large flow of incoming people, leading to emergency shelters in locations such as old prisons, holidays parks and conference centers (Schmidt, 2018). The Rutte III administration aims to tackle the unpreparedness of the system. In the *Regeerakkoord* (coalition agreement) plans were presented to transform the asylum system into an adaptive and flexible organization that is effective. Furthermore, the new system has to be socially and financially effective and should therefore perceive stronger public support (Dutch government, 2017).

To understand the policies and practices of the current immigration system, the involved actors are set out in the following section.

## 4.2. INVOLVED INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR PLACE IN THE DUTCH IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

### IND

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (*Immigratie en Naturalisatie Dienst*) was founded in 1994 in order to rightly process the high influx of asylum seekers. The IND is responsible immigration for the implementation of Dutch policy. The IND assesses all applications of third nationals wishing to stay in the Netherlands. These third nationals can either be refugees or people who want to work and live in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the IND is responsible for the naturalization processes of those who wish to become Dutch citizens (EMN, 2012).

### Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland

The Dutch Council for Refugees is an independent human rights organization whose aim is to stand up for the rights of asylum seekers. They give asylum seekers information and explain the asylum procedure and provide support in person throughout the whole asylum procedure. The Dutch Council for Refugees does not take part in the legal decision on asylum applications, it merely provides council and (legal) support (IND, 2018).

### COA

The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Centraal Orgaan opvang Asielzoekers*) is responsible for the reception of asylum seekers and provides safe accommodation to asylum seekers

who are in a vulnerable position, and assists them in preparing for their future, in the Netherlands or elsewhere (EMN, 2012).

### **AZC**

AZC stands for *Asiel Zoekers Centrum*, asylum seekers center. As stated by Robinson et al. (2003), the Dutch policy when it comes to locating the asylum seekers is to spread the burden. This means that throughout the country, AZC's are present. In these locations both asylum seekers awaiting their residence permit and people who already have a permit but are awaiting appropriate housing live together (COA, 2018). According to Larruina & Ghorashi (2016) the AZC is a separate world with very limited interaction between the individual and the neighboring community and the outside world. Although people living in the AZC are free to come and go, they tend to remain within the center. This is mostly due to the fact that they have limited resources to leave the AZC.

### **DT&V**

Founded in 2007, the Repatriation and Departure Service (Dienst Terugkeer en Vertrek, DT&V) directs the departure of aliens that are no longer allowed to stay in the Netherlands. Goal of the policy of DT&V is to let aliens depart on their own initiative back to the country of origin. If they fail to do so, DT&V arranges their departure in a careful and timely matter (Toebosch, 2018). Working together with partners, non-governmental organizations, municipalities and international organizations, 2.700 people were forcefully departed in 2017 (DT&V, 2017).

## **4.3. LOCAL, NATIONAL AND SUPRANATIONAL APPROACHES TO MIGRATION**

The Dutch policy towards (im)migration is characterized by the different actors involved. The above discussed institutions are all part of the national policy. However, the local and supranational levels of influence and the interactions between these levels are important to include whilst trying to gain insight in the Dutch migration policy and practices.

### *Supranational*

Starting from the supranational level, the influence of the European Union has been subject to change over the last few years. Law and policy regarding migration are often a national competence, although the role of the EU is increasing. EU member states have become more and more open to the free movement of goods and capital, but the free movement of people becomes more restricted (Geddes & Scholten, 2016). According to Bromberg, Peterson and Colbert (2012, p. 198) *“irregular migration is clearly a shared European problem.”* To try to tackle this shared problem, Frontex was launched. The program has to ensure that the external borders of the EU are tight and secure (Neal, 2009). Although Frontex is an EU widely used force, there is not a shared EU legislation on the

migration issue. The member states all have a tendency to limit supranational legislation on this topic (Bromberg, Peterson & Colbert, 2012).

The refugee crisis demonstrated how the external borders were not as impenetrable as perceived by some. The EU member states agreed in September 2015 to relocate up to 160.000 refugees from Greece, Italy and Hungary to spread the so-called burden and relieve the perceiving countries somewhat from their economic and social challenges (Geddes & Scholten, 2016). Further measures to protect fortress Europe were taken on the 16<sup>TH</sup> of March 2016 when the EU and Turkey signed an agreement in which they agreed that all irregular migrants arriving on the Greek islands were going to be send back to Turkey (Rygiel, Baban & Ilcan, 2016). Part of this deal is that for every irregular migrant that is brought (back) to Turkey, the EU has to take one Syrian refugee.

In Turkey, refugees are selected by the UNHCR if they are applicable for (Dutch) asylum (European Commission, 2016). After checks from the IND, the police and COA regarding the person being a danger to society, has committed war crimes and whether he is willing to adjust to the way of life in the Netherlands (NOS, 2018).

The Turkey agreement has proven to be effective in the sense of cutting the influx of migrants, but is highly criticized by human rights organizations (Amnesty International, 2016; Spijkerboer, 2016). The deal allowed European governments to bypass international agreements on refugee protection (Rygiel et al., 2016). Besides the Turkey agreement, the supranational EU level influences policy practices in more ways; for example, the Dublin procedure which is based on the trust between EU member states that asylum procedures in all of the member states are fair (Bruin, Kok & Terlouw, 2015). The Dublin system in the asylum procedure means that the first state through which an asylum seeker has first entered EU territory, is the state responsible for examining the asylum claim of the refugee (Carrere & Guild, 2010).

### *National*

The cases of the Turkey Agreement and the Dublin procedure show that when the EU takes measures on a supranational level, actors involved on a national level are influenced by these decisions. On the national level, the Ministry of Justice and Security is responsible for carrying out the policies. Therefore, IND and DT&V are part of the ministry of Justice and Security (ENM, 2012). According to Poppelaars and Scholten (2008), the Dutch national integration policies are the result from a strong belief in tight central policy coordination. Over time, national policies have taken a turn from depoliticization to politicization. In this new political migration arena, the focus on events and the response to these events like terror attacks caused mood swings in policies during the past decades. Consequence of the mood swings is the fact that the national competencies on the

migration policy and practices have strongly decreased. Decentralization of the immigrant policies causes for a larger role of municipalities on the subject (Geddes & Scholten, 2016).

#### *Local*

Dutch municipalities are responsible for housing the holders of asylum residence permits (EMN, 2012). It is also the task of the municipalities to ensure the integration and participation of non-native Dutch population groups, and to implement national asylum policy at the local level (Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008). As indicated by Geddes and Scholten (2016), the local actors have more and more freedom to develop their own policies towards immigration. These approaches are often more accommodating towards migrants than the national policies. Focusing on integration and working together with migrant organization creates a different, more pragmatic narrative in the municipalities (Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008). Result of these differences in framing and decentralization is found in shifting immigration policies, that have become more and more fragmented between different levels of government (Geddes & Scholten, 2016).

### 4.4. STUDENT IMMIGRATION POLICY AND PRACTICES

Per year, over 90.000 students come to the Netherlands to complete a course at universities and universities of applied sciences. Reasons to choose for the Netherlands are in general based on the high level of English-taught academic programs, the open-minded culture and the geographical location in Europe (Nuffic, 2018). The Dutch authorities and educational institutes are keen to attract international students (Altbach & Teichler, 2001). Several scholarships to help pay tuition and living expenses exist to make coming to the Netherlands financially easier (ISS, 2018).

When a student has the plan to pursue a higher education in the Netherlands, several steps need to be taken to be able to do so. Depending on one's nationality, two different procedures to obtain a residence permit can be followed. Students that have the nationality of the EU/EEA countries or are a Swiss national are part of one category. The other category consists of those with who do not have the nationality of an EU/EEA country or are from Switzerland. This category needs to apply for a residence period, valid for the period of the education plus three months. This residence permit can be issued for a maximum of five years (IND, 2018).

First of all, the general conditions that exist for all those obliged to a residence permit, also apply for prospective students. These general conditions are:

- Possession of a valid passport
- Signed antecedents record that provides information on the individuals criminal record
- Undergoing a medical test for tuberculosis, if not exempted from this obligation



Besides these general conditions, additional conditions for students apply. First of all, the institution where one wants to study has to have accepted the student into a full-time accredited day program (IND, 2018). Universities can demand further requirements from students to accept them into the academic course. For example, for the Human Geography master at Radboud University, one has to completed a bachelor degree from a geography-related discipline and have a background in research methodology (RU, 2018). When one is enrolled in an English-taught course, the IND demands a level of English scored at minimum of 6.0 IELTS.

Lastly, one has to prove to have a long-term and independent sufficient source of income. For a student attending university, the required income is €870,46 per month excluding school and tuition fees. To keep the granted residence permit for the duration of the academic course, the student has to obtain at least 50% of the required credits for each academic year. If one fails to meet these requirements, the residence permit might be lost (IND, 2018).

Based on the Council Directive of the European Union from 2005 (2005/71/EC) the university needs to be registered as a recognized sponsor, meaning that the organization has interest in the arrival of the foreign national in the Netherlands (EU, 2005; IND, 2018). The role of a sponsor entails that the university has legal duties regarding providing information, care and keeping records.

Some students, depending on nationality, need a provisional residence permit (Machtiging tot Voorlopig Verblijf, MVV) to travel to and entering in the Netherlands. This entry visa is obligatory when one wishes to stay longer in the Netherlands than 90 days. The MVV allows the student to travel within the Schengen area. When needed, the university arranges the MVV and the residence permit at the same time (IND, 2018). The university, as a sponsor and recognized educational institution, has an agreement with the IND to submit the application for the needed visa and/or residence permit (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018; ISS, 2018).

Once the IND has received the application for the (MVV and) residence permit from the education institution a decision needs to be made. Within 60 days, the IND has to decide whether the educational institution and the prospective student meet the requirements for the residence permit. When these conditions are indeed met and a positive decision has been made, the MVV and residence permit will be granted and can be collected at the Dutch representation in the concerned country. If the conditions are not met, the IND decides negatively on the request and no MVV or residence permit will be given. Either the student or the university can register an objection. Once the MVV has been collected from the Dutch representation and biometric information has been provided, the journey to the Netherlands can begin. Upon arrival in the Netherlands, the student must register locally in the Municipal Personal Records Database (BRP) (IND, 2018). These administrative tasks are often guided by people from the university to make sure that administration goes well (RU, 2018). After being correctly registered at municipality the student is ready to start the

studies with the right documents. After the studies are completed, immigration policies have created a way for students to stay in the Netherlands, if desired by the student. Graduates can apply for a search year visa (*zoekjaar*) that permits them to spend 12 months in the Netherlands looking for a job (IND, 2018).

#### 4.5. ASYLUM PROCEDURES

As described by the European Migration Network (2012, p. 13), the Dutch institutions consider asylum requests to be those “*applications from third-country nationals who request the Dutch government to protect them, for instance, against prosecution in their country of origin.*”

The Alien law (Vreemdelingenwet) considers people to be refugees when they fear prosecution in the country of origin and therefore meets the criteria as set out in previously discussed 1951 UN Refugee Convention (Bagga, 2016). When a person wants to apply for asylum, he needs to go through the following extensive procedures. These procedures are illustrated in figure 7.

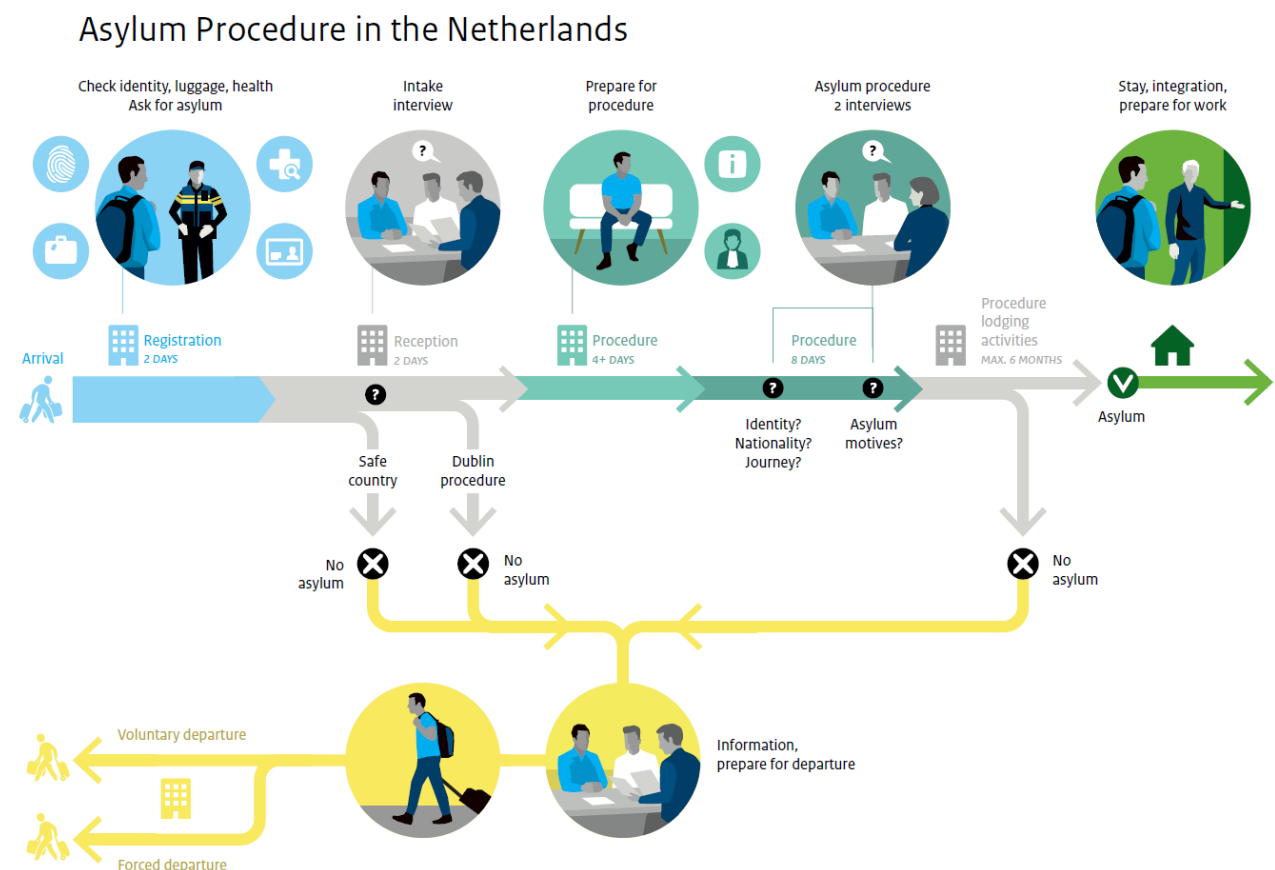


Figure 7: Dutch Asylum Procedure (IND, 2018).

Although not indicated in the infographic, the first step in seeking asylum depends on the way the

Netherlands is entered. When a person comes in via airplane or boat, he can turn to the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee (Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary) at Schiphol airport. After the registration of personal details, an examination of the luggage, making photos and recording fingerprints, the asylum seeker will be brought to the Registration Center at Schiphol (EMN, 2012). At this application center (AC) an application for asylum is signed and information on the rest of the procedures is given. Before starting the procedure, a period of rest and preparation is granted to allow the individual from the journey and to prepare for the procedure. The rest of the procedure is similar to the procedure for those who enter the Netherlands differently, it only takes place in a different location (IND, 2018).

When the Netherlands is entered in a different way, the procedure starts at the AC in Ter Apel. The official start of the asylum procedure is at the first day of the general asylum procedure, which is the registration in the AC Ter Apel (EMN, 2012). At this point, personal information will be registered, luggage will be checked and biometrical data will be recorded. When someone has identification documents, these documents will be researched by experts from the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee to ensure their authenticity. Furthermore, the journey of coming to the Netherlands is reported (Bagga, 2017). The initial registration for seeking asylum provides legal basis to stay in the Netherlands for the duration of the asylum procedure (Böcker, Grutters, Laemers, Strik, Terlouw & Zwaan, 2014).

After registration, and an optional tuberculosis test for people from specific countries, shelter, meals and medical care are provided. On the third day of the asylum procedure, the first interview takes place. This reporting interview aims to gain insight about one's identity, origin, family and journey. It is the ministry's policy to ask additional questions to applicants that come from Syria, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq or Afghanistan. There is no public information available on what these questions are. This suggests additional questions are asked to those applicants from Syria, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran or Afghanistan.

This first interview has three multiple outcomes. First of all, when there is no reason to stop the asylum procedure, the asylum seeker is brought to another reception center. This center is part of the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum seekers (Centraal Orgaan opvang Asielzoekers, COA). Like those who seek asylum at Schiphol, a resting period to prepare for the coming interviews is granted (Böcker et al., 2014). During this period, free help is provided to help prepare for the general asylum procedure. The Dutch Council for Refugees (VWN) and the Council for Legal Aid give advice and assistance in conducting the asylum story that the asylum seeker tells the IND (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2018). In this first, initial interview the information on the identity and the travel route of the applicant from the reporting interview will be checked. Like during the reporting interview, no questions are asked on the reason one seeks asylum.

After the interview, the applicant checks the report from this interview together with a lawyer and the second interview is prepared. In this detailed interview, an employee from the IND will question the individual on the reasons of the asylum request. This interview is crucial in the process of deciding whether an asylum residence permit is granted.

From this interview a report will also be produced and that is checked with a lawyer. It is important for the chances of getting asylum that the correct story is written down in this report since an employee from the IND will read the reports of the interviews and will decide, based on these reports, whether a permit to stay is granted or not.

The decision-making process starts with the question whether the story seems plausible. This is based on whether the story is perceived coherent and truthful. During the interviews, questions can be asked multiple times to check whether the same story is told time and again.

When the story is indeed perceived truthful, the following questions are asked to reach a decision.

- In the country of origin, the applicant has real reasons to fear persecution because of race, religion, nationality, political convictions or because he belongs to a particular social group.
- The applicant has real reasons to fear the death penalty or execution, torture or other inhuman or humiliating treatment in the country of origin.
- The applicant has real reasons to fear that he will be a victim of random violence due to an armed conflict in the country of origin.
- The husband/wife, partner, father, mother or minor child has recently received an asylum residence permit in the Netherlands. (family reunification)

When one or more of the questions is answered with yes, asylum is granted (IND, 2018).

Depending on the decision, different outcomes are possible. The total procedure can take up to six months (Bagga, 2017). However, Dutch newspaper Volkskrant reported in November 2018 that the IND exceeded this legal term of six months and asylum seekers now have to wait for almost a year for a decision to be made on their case (Volkskrant, 2018). Asylum seekers who have to wait longer than six months for a decision have the right to receive financial compensation up to 1.260,- euros. IND responded that a lack of staff that can make a decision caused the backlog. The longer an asylum seeker has to wait on certainty on its case, the longer it takes before integration can start. The discrepancy between policy and actual practices has to be taken into account when trying to understand what asylum seekers experience.

### **Permit granted**

A temporary asylum residence permit is granted when the reasons for asylum are perceived legitimate. This permit allows an individual to stay for five years. Furthermore, permission to bring

family members can also be arranged with this permit, although it does depend on the situation.

After the decision is granted, a residence permit can be issued within a couple of weeks. This permit, like identification, should always be carried and shown upon request (IND, 2018).

COA helps the asylum seeker to try find housing. The municipality one wants to live in will be consulted and suitable housing will be arranged as soon as possible (COA, 2018). Numbers show that when the residence permit is granted, 45% of the asylum seekers live alone. However, when they leave the COA center and are being housed only 38% of the permit holders are living alone. This decline is caused by the family reunification (Huisman & Verschuren, 2017).

Family reunification policy gives the asylum seeker the opportunity to let family travel to the Netherlands. The request for unification has to be issued within three months after the residence permit is granted (Bagga, 2017).

A long list of further conditions is issued by the IND, all focusing on the family ties and the proving of one's identity. The application for family reunification has to be accompanied by documentary evidence that proves the family relation (Groenendijk et al., 2007).

In the Dutch policy, young adult children up to 25 years old can enter the Netherlands on family reunification reasons (IND, 2018). This is different to other European states like Norway and Germany where the age of family reunification of children is limited to the age of 18 (Gronningsaeter & Brekke, 2017; Grote, 2017).

One of the respondents, Mohamed from Syria, answered when asked about why he chose to go the Netherlands:

*"It is about a new start. The Netherlands was the best option to get your wife and children the soonest, and you get a residence permit sooner here. Because in Germany it takes long to bring family and children."*

It is usual to send the oldest (adolescent) son of a refugee family to Europe so family reunification could be applied. (Schipper & van der Velden, 2016). During the interviews, one of the male respondents, Bahaa from Syria, indicated that he was the first one to flee and therefore made it possible for the rest of the family to come to the Netherlands once asylum was granted.

*"Q: Did you apply for family reunification or did they flee by themselves?"*

*A: No, I came here first and my father brought my mother and sister here. We did that because I was above 18 and could therefore bring my father here."*

### **Permit denied**

When no asylum residence permit is granted, the applicant meets up with a lawyer and can make a viewpoint. This viewpoint can lead to either a change in the decision, which gives the applicant the

permit to stay in the Netherlands. The second option occurs when the IND needs more time to make a strong decision on the case. Lastly, the viewpoint does not help, the decision does not change and no permit is given (IND, 2018). An asylum request can be denied when the individual is considered to be a danger to national security, has been in another country where an asylum request could have been issued, or when the faulty information has been provided regarding one's identity, nationality or travel route or when the applicant comes from a safe country (Bagga, 2017; IND, 2018). The individual will be transferred by COA to another AZC where he has 28 days to prepare the return to the country of origin. If the person is not voluntarily returned after this time period, the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V) will arrange a forced return (IND, 2018). Within the mentioned reasons of denial of the permit, the infographic (figure 7) shows the Dublin procedure and safe country as alternative options leading to (forced) departure.

The Dublin procedure refers to the Dublin agreement, which was signed in 1990 and is based on the trust between EU member states that asylum procedures in all of the member states are fair (Bruin, Kok & Terlouw, 2015). The Dublin system in the asylum procedure means that the first state through which an asylum seeker has entered EU territory, is the state responsible for examining the asylum claim of the refugee (Carrere & Guild, 2010). Therefore, if somebody applies for asylum in the Netherlands, but has entered the EU in another state and did not apply for protection there, he has to depart to that first country and go through the asylum procedure there (Maiani, 2016).

When the applicant aims to seek asylum in the Netherlands, but is a national from what is considered to be a safe country<sup>1</sup>, no asylum can be granted and the person therefore has to leave the Netherlands (IND, 2018). To put as little as possible pressure on the tight asylum system, asylum requests from safe countries are dealt with in a quick manner. Furthermore, the applicant has very little chance of being granted a residence permit. When an individual cannot prove he is in need of international protection, he has to leave the country immediately and cannot enter the EU for the next two years (Rijksoverheid, 2018).

#### 4.6. IMMIGRATION POLICY AND PLACE IDENTIFICATION

What does this overview of immigration policies and practices tell us regarding place identification? As stated in chapter 2, categorization is perceived as an important element of the process of place identification. It is expected that categorization by others also consists of the experiences of migrants influenced by the policy and the practical events. As researched by van der Wal, de Munnik and

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of the safe countries: <https://www.government.nl/topics/asylum-policy/question-and-answer/list-safe-countries-of-origin>

Andriessen (2008), immigration policy influences the migratory movements of people.

When comparing the differences in policy and practices between the researched groups, it becomes clear that the student policy is much friendlier than the refugee/asylum policy. The differences are understandable since the groups differ greatly and enter the Netherlands under strongly different circumstances. However, these distinctions in policy combined with a societal narrative are expected to influence the categorization process of a refugee. The historical overview of Dutch immigration policy showed the change in Dutch narrative from multicultural to a perception in which migrants are seen as problematic and the integration policies as failed.

Only when asylum is granted, refugees can start to focus on learning the language and adjusting to new life. All these factors combined make the influence of asylum policy a factor that cannot be ignored in the categorization component of the process of place identification. Place identification is formed, shaped and adjusted over time. It takes a period of time to develop a certain feeling of attachment to new surroundings. In the asylum procedures, refugees can be moved from AZC to AZC often. As one respondent summed up:

*"... from there I went to Ter Apel in the AZC. Then I was first in Ter Apel, and from Ter Apel I went to Veenhuizen. Went from Veenhuizen to Zwolle. And from Zwolle to Zaandam, and from Zaandam to Arnhem, from Arnhem to Nijmegen, from Nijmegen eventually to Malden and I have my own space there now."*

This constant moving around makes it challenging for a refugee to gain a feeling of being able to settle down. Only when appropriate housing is found, a more stable situation is created.

The policy and practices for students on the other side have different influences on categorization and the process of place identification. The policy overview showed how the university arranges visa applications for the students. Although a student does of course need the required documents, entering the Netherlands becomes more uncomplicated when a sponsor, such as the university, acts on the student's behalf and arranges the permit to stay. Furthermore, the opportunity of a search year appears as a more welcome attitude towards students and trying to make them stay after they graduated. Regarding categorization and students, it is expected that student is less influenced by the policies and practices since these are more accommodating. Furthermore, the housing issue is highly different for students than for the refugees. The ISS students can all apply for housing that is arranged by the university. Housing is located closely to the ISS building in the middle of The Hague. Living in the center of the city with easy access to all facilities makes exploring the new living surroundings much easier and speeds the process of place identification. The arranged housing allows students to create a sense of place identity from the first day they arrive in the Netherlands. How these implementations of policy influence the categorization process of the respondents

themselves and other factors that influence the categorization process will be discussed during the analysis in chapter 5.

#### 4.7. GEOGRAPHIES THE HAGUE AND NIJMEGEN

It goes without saying that place identification and the process in which it develops is influenced by the place a person lives and works in. In this research, interviewees lived and/or worked/studied in either The Hague or Nijmegen. To understand place identification, it is key to have insight in the surroundings of the interviewees.

Firstly, The Hague is located in the west of the Netherlands alongside the North Sea with a population of 524.000 (CBS, 2017). The city is considered to be the political capital of the Netherlands because parliament is located here. Internationally, The Hague is known as the city of peace and justice due to the presence of the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (Meijers et al., 2014). Besides this presence of legal bodies, a large range of international organizations and the diplomatic corps can be found in The Hague. These factors all contribute to The Hague being a city with a relatively large expat community (Ghazzi, 2011). This community is estimated to make up for 5-8% of the population of the city (Gemeente Den Haag, 2010).

The group might seem small in numbers but local policy has plenty of attention for these inhabitants. At city hall, a The Hague Hospitality Center is present with a so-called Xpat desk. At this desk, information on municipality services regarding practical things like parking permits and garbage collection can be collocated. Furthermore, newly arrived expats receive an information package on leisure, health care and education. These services from the Expat Center aim to let the expat become more than just an economic benefit to the city, but also let them become citizens of the city (Muileboom, 2011).

In the study of Bochove, Rusinovic and Engbersen (2011) in which Rotterdam and The Hague were compared regarding their services offered to the expat community it was found that The Hague offers multiple services to reduce bureaucracy and make expats walk on an imaginal red carpet to make them feel welcome. They conclude that although expats are considered to be a continuously moving group without strong local ties, local policies often try to make them feel as much welcome as possible and make the expats stay. This contradiction between (presumed) characteristics of the group and the aims of the policy is striking.

Secondly, on the other side of the Netherlands lies Nijmegen. One of the oldest cities of the Netherlands with 173.000 inhabitants (CBS, 2018). This left-oriented student city has a different geography than The Hague. Compared to The Hague, Nijmegen is a small(er) city without the strong international branding. The presence of multiple AZCs in the municipality and the temporary



emergency shelter Heumensoord do make this city interesting for this research (Matting, 2018). During the refugee crisis, a shortage of shelters for asylum seekers occurred in the Netherlands. To battle this shortage, temporary emergency shelters were created. The biggest facility arose in the nature reserve Heumensoord, sheltering around 3.000 asylum seekers. Until the 1st of June 2016 people lived here in tents awaiting their asylum procedures. COA employees and volunteers tried their best to make Heumensoord a pleasant place to stay by providing goods, information and activities (Smets et al., 2017). When the crisis reached its peak and the situation became more manageable for the Dutch system again, the people of Heumensoord were located elsewhere. The restrictive versus enabling environments created by policies can be found in the geographies as well. The Hague creates a welcoming, red-carpet arrival for its expats and international students, whilst refugees in Nijmegen are subject to immigration policies and receive a highly different welcome. These geographies, like policies, show the different surroundings and circumstances the different groups are influenced by in their process of place identification. In the following chapter, analysis will be performed in which the insights from the interviews, questionnaires and the Dutch policies and procedures in their relation to the process of place identification will be discussed.

## 5. ANALYSIS

In the following chapter, analysis will be performed on the data from the interviews, questionnaires and the Dutch policies and procedures. Their relation to the process of place identification will be identified/discussed. In this section of the research, the theoretical insights will be combined to answer the following research questions. The analysis is shaped along the mentioned hypotheses.

- 1: International students are expected to have easy access to valuable social capital in Dutch society due to being close to a potential network.
- 2: Highly educated refugees are expected to experience difficulties in establishing strong social capital in Dutch society due to distance to potential beneficial social capital.
- 3: International students are expected to not be strongly attached to the place they live and work in since they know their stay is only temporary.
- 4: It is expected that highly educated refugees are keener on developing strong place attachment since the new place of residence is likely to be their new home for the near future.

### 5.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL

First of all, the influence of social capital on the process of place identification of the respondents will be discussed. In the theoretical framework the following hypotheses have been developed on the notion of social capital.

- 1: International students are expected to have easy access to valuable social capital in Dutch society due to being close to a potential network.
- 2: Highly educated refugees are expected to experience difficulties in establishing strong social capital in Dutch society due to distance to potential beneficial social capital.

In the literature (Leonard, 2004; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Evergetti & Zontini, 2006) it was stated that family and friends are considered to be the most influential contributors to an individual's social capital. King (2010) argues in the line of Bourdieu's view on social capital, that the students who study in an international environment, are able to accumulate access to networks and connections, which provides a solid social capital source. This solid source then provides a base for the development of ties to the new environment. When an individual is able to use new social ties to its own benefit, the connection with the new place becomes stronger. During the interviews, respondents who felt like they had gained access to valuable social capital, showed a stronger development of place identification than those who claimed to be struggling with finding resourceful new social ties. The literature and empirical data together indicate that social capital is a contributing

factor to the process of place identification. However, the empirical data shows that it is not as straightforward as portrayed in the literature. Newly found social capital can be fragile and can be experienced in various ways. Differences between and in the researched groups exist. In the following paragraphs, these findings will be elaborated. The conceptual model defining social capital distinguished family, neighbors, professionals and friends to be the benefitting actors in the process of accumulating valuable social capital.

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#### 5.1.1. SOCIAL CAPITAL FOR STUDENT MIGRANTS IN DUTCH SOCIETY

##### *Family*

Hypothesis 1 discusses the experiences of the international student migrants in particular. Family members of the student respondents all live either in the home country or in other countries and are not present in Dutch society. The influence of family on the migrants' social capital is explained by Evergetti and Zontini (2006, p. 1026) whom state that migrants' attachments to meaning of identity are transformed and produced through participation in family occasions and the continuation of the family relationships. Physical participation in family events is not possible due to the distance, but respondents do indicate that the use of social media allows them to stay in touch with family and friends.

*"In the past few years I've experienced that friendship is in the smartphone, WhatsApp or Skype or all that. Yeah then my mother, my dad passed away, my mother and the rest of my family there back home as well. We don't have any relatives or friends here in the Netherlands (Elisabeth)."*

This form of contact with previously known people in other countries is not considered to be contributing to accessing new social networks in Dutch society that can lead to the creation of social capital in The Hague and the Netherlands. There is no doubt that the respondent is able to benefit from the social capital that comes with being part of a certain family in the home country. This social capital is however not considered to be contributing to the accumulation of social capital in the Netherlands. Consequently, the family of student migrants is not considered to be a significant factor for the notion of social capital.

##### *Neighbors*

As stated in the literature by Leyden (2003), being in contact with neighbors creates a sense of familiarity that contributes to the creation of beneficial social capital. The interview data indicate that ISS students have different experiences with knowing their neighbors. As one of the respondents indicated:

*"Yeah I mean in the student housing I knew my neighbors. Just to say hi and stuff like that, not like friends or anything. And the place where I live now, I know them from just seeing each other. But I do not have a relationship with them or anything." (Diana)* As long as the students live in the student

housing, they know their neighbors since they are also their peers. However, when students go live in other houses, they tend to not be familiar with their neighbors

The students appear to not experience close ties to the neighborhoods they live in. This is in line with the overall reality of these student migrants and their lack of attachment to Dutch society. One of the respondents made a proper and valuable remark by stating that *"It's hard to classify, it is probably like in most or many like modern cities. I don't say I know my neighbors particularly but there's like a few faces that I know so when we are it coming out of the door at the same time, we say hi."* (Sarah)

It is not justifiable to state that only because the students are not part of Dutch society they therefore are not in contact with their neighbors. Most people are not that familiar with their neighbors in (big) cities.

The lack of interaction with neighbors illustrates the bigger phenomenon that is found in the empirical data regarding the access and interaction with Dutch society. Although the respondents did not feel discriminated or not welcome in Dutch society, language barriers, cultural differences and access issues caused the ISS students to barely feel part of Dutch society. When asked whether they felt part of Dutch society, all respondents indicated they did not feel like a full member of Dutch society. This was sometimes caused by language problems. Although in The Hague people can get through their daily life with English, i.e. in stores and bars, not understanding or speaking Dutch limits their ability to participate fully in Dutch society. One of the respondents illustrated the relevance of knowing the language, besides the practical matters.

*"The fact that you speak the language means you have something in common, I mean I don't know, it kind of says I respect the culture and you know I enjoy being here and I want to be here. Apart of what you do or whatever and your, your history, your culture hence I'm speaking your language as well."* (Elisabeth)

Besides language barriers, exposure to Dutch society is limited to the ISS bubble the respondents are part of. Barely any Dutch students can be found in the ISS classrooms. Only 15% of the master students are from Europe, whereas 54% of the students come from Asia and 34% originate from Africa (ISS, 2018). As several responses show, studying at ISS in The Hague does not mean studying in a Dutch social environment. *So, my exposure to any kind of circle in here is limited to the ISS circle. Nothing beyond that."* (Richard)

And; *"we kind of are all internationals. There are no Dutch people studying with us. We can become a big family and we live in a bubble definitely. We are not experiencing the whole Dutch experience."* (Diana)

Others indicated that being part of the ISS bubble created a situation in which it was not necessary to look outside the bubble and actively try to participate in Dutch society since the ISS group provided the needed and desired social ties. Linking this to the notion of resourceful social capital, it can be stated that local, bridging social capital is hard to accumulate for the student migrants. The following respondents summarized perfectly the different aspects that create a barrier for these respondents to feel part and to take part in Dutch society:

*"I think that one is, obviously, my **cultural upbringing** is completely different from this society. One thing, that's why I feel like I am not connected or part of this society. Secondly, until now my observation is that this Dutch society is **very closed**. I mean, closed for outsiders. Kind of penetrating into that society is pretty difficult. And obviously, this attempt is also influenced by the fact that I am here for **one year**, so I don't feel like making a lot of effort. And **language** is one thing, if you know language you have more chance of integrating into the society. But learning a language with your studies is simply not possible. So that is why you feel distant. And then obviously, unfortunate for us for student in ISS, that we have like 40 nationalities in our master's program, but there **is only one Dutch student**. So, we do not have any interaction, any interaction, and we are not exposed to them. I mean, obviously you go outside but it is not that kind of, you don't feel connected."* (Osman)

#### *Professionals*

Professionals, such as Dutch teachers, deans and supporting staff, can act for the student migrants as a useful actor when establishing social capital in Dutch society. During my internship in the ISS building, it stood out to me how the teachers can help students getting in touch with useful colleagues or important people in the field the students were researching. Furthermore, ISS as an institution, and its professionals, did organize activities to get to know each other and/or the Netherlands better such as game nights, karaoke, excursions to Maastricht or Amsterdam. In this way, students could receive useful information about Dutch society, norms and values which could be beneficial in gaining access to Dutch society. One of the respondents explained that she did feel like the professionals at ISS could provide her with both personal and professional help and guidance which made her feel part of the community. This is again a type of bonding social capital in which the focus lies on the group within and is not aimed to the outside world. The empirical data did not show that professionals were highly contributing to external social capital. Within the ISS world, the different professionals are part of the bubble and have close ties with their students, but this does not appear to be bridging outside the ISS bubble. Supporting staff like janitors, security or receptionists seemed to know the students on a personal level and were willing to help with small issues, but these relations did not transform to friendships outside ISS. I therefore argue that

professionals are not to be considered a highly influential force in the notion of social capital for the international students.

### *Friends*

The student migrants explained in the interviews that making new connections with peers on the one hand was easy due to the facilitating factors of shared classes and shared living spaces. Studying, working and living together creates a bubble of ISS people. *“I mean, you always feel connected and obviously you develop, you know, a good friendship with some people, but you never feel like you are separated from the whole community (Osman).”*

On the other hand, the made connections are not considered to be strong. Everybody knows that everybody will leave ISS and mostly the Netherlands once the master or PhD is completed and therefore the social ties are perceived to be superficial and short lasting. As one respondent explained: *“Every year, they are here for just 15 months. It’s also a kind of an effort to have to make friends with new people and then they leave again. So, the consistency is not there. But it’s the same with the PhD community because people go on fieldwork and they graduate and they leave as well. So, there is a community but it is kind of temporary (Lize).”*

Although temporary, the social ties are considered important by the respondents. Knowing fellow students and taking part in both classes and leisure together creates a group feeling. In this group, people feel secure and free enough to ask for assistance or help when needed which is an important factor of building social capital. This social capital can be considered as bonding, as stated by Szreter and Woolcock (2004).

Within a group, people feel connected and are able to help each other get by. However, this bonding social capital is not pointed outwards towards the heterogeneous society and outside the known group (Poortinga, 2012). This inside focus of the group one belongs to creates a sense of exclusiveness. As mentioned in chapter 2, the student migrants are part of the group of voluntary migrants. Within this group, the global and student elite have been identified. The inbound characteristic of the ISS group links to these notions.

The ISS students are seen as part of the student elite since they were able to study abroad and develop a sense of global citizenship. Although the word elite appears to indicate a group in which the members are not experiencing troubles that the non-elite do have to cope with, the mentioned interview data show that this “eliteness” is not contributing in a positive way to the creation of resourceful social capital in the Netherlands to become (more) part of Dutch society. Being part of the student elite means being part of global elite. The literature showed that this global elite has limited ties to the country a member of the elite is staying in since they are only here for a limited time and are find their social connections in expat groups. The social capital can be highly

resourceful, but is limited within the group. The bonding capital is weak, but present in the ISS group. The temporary nature of the created social ties provides social capital that is only valuable for a limited time. The more long-lasting, outbound bridging capital is hardly found with the student migrants.

The interviews suggest that those few respondents who have been able to accumulate bridging social capital, have been able to do so due to a catalyst. Not because of being part of ISS, but other mechanisms in place create social ties to Dutch society. One of the respondents had a Dutch boyfriend, and therefore felt more part of Dutch society since in this way she also gained Dutch friends. The boyfriend provided her access to already established friend groups in which she could enter. When asked whether she now felt more part of Dutch society, she answered: *“Well recently it has helped a lot. Because I have met his family and his friends and I have started to learn to Dutch now after not trying at all before haha.”* (Diana) Meeting more Dutch people also created a reason for her to start learning Dutch, something that was not necessary before.

Another respondent had a young daughter who was going to a Dutch school and a spouse working for a Dutch company. The school, children playgroups and her husband’s colleagues provided her with both access to Dutch groups and reasons to learn Dutch. As she indicated:

*“Because I have a daughter, we do meet up with parents from her school so that's the other thing and then we have his job and then my job. So, we ended up you know making friends there.”* (Elizabeth)

#### *Conclusion on the hypothesis*

The empirical data indicate that hypothesis 1 *international students are expected to have easy access to valuable social capital in Dutch society due to being close to a potential network* is incorrect. Four actors have been identified from the data that show that student migrants are experiencing difficulties when accessing Dutch social capital.

First of all, the language barrier limits students in getting to know Dutch people. Students indicate that they on the one hand find learning Dutch difficult and time consuming and on the other hand do not experience pressure to learn Dutch since they can get around in English. Furthermore, they are often in the Netherlands for a limited time period and therefore do not feel a need to invest the time and energy into learning a new language alongside a demanding academic course. Knowing that one’s stay is only temporary creates a situation in which people do make social connections, but are always aware of the fact that these social ties are temporary.

Thirdly, studying and living at the ISS means studying in an international environment with barely any Dutch students. This leads to an ISS bubble in which the students create their short-term social ties. These ties lead to bonding social capital which is focused on the group itself and not to the outside world, limiting the exposure of the students to Dutch society

Lastly, cultural differences make it difficult for students to feel part of Dutch society since norms and values might be difficult to understand. Respondents indicated that Dutch society seems closed off to outsiders and hard to get in. Once somebody is in the group, they feel welcome, but gaining access as a student migrant is problematic.

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### 5.1.2. SOCIAL CAPITAL FOR REFUGEES IN DUTCH SOCIETY

*2: Highly educated refugees are expected to experience difficulties in establishing strong social capital in Dutch society due to distance to potential beneficial social capital.*

#### *Family*

The notion of family is highly different for refugees than for student migrants when it comes to social capital. Most of the respondents fled to the Netherlands with their family or participated in family reunification. Family then becomes the only familiar given in a new, unknown environment. When assigned a home after the AZC procedures, families move together to a new home and environment where the process of integration continues. Although family is close, this does not automatically mean that the family can provide access to social capital in Dutch society. According to my respondents, parents often struggle more with integration and learning Dutch than their children who appear to be more adaptive. Most of the respondents were living with their family in the same home, which on the one hand created a sense of belonging. But on the other hand, the interviews indicate that living with family for the respondents often means speaking in the native language at home since their parents are experiencing difficulties speaking Dutch, watching non-Dutch television and not experiencing stimuli at home to talk Dutch or to watch Dutch television. This slows down the process of accessing social capital and integration. One respondent illustrated the potential of social networks and social capital. In the interviews he explained that his father had lived and worked in the Netherlands during the 1990s and therefore had some connections that allowed them to participate sooner in a social network.

#### *Professionals*

Refugees experience a wide range of contact with professionals upon entering the Netherlands. Mostly during the asylum procedures, professionals from various organizations are available to support their legal cases and provide guidance. Once the refugee has been granted asylum status and a residence permit, attention shifts to integration and language courses. These institutionalized contact moments with professionals provide plenty of exposure to Dutch nationals and could serve as a starting point for developing resourceful social capital.

However, the question arises whether this exposure is a valuable asset when trying to establish social capital as a refugee in Dutch society? The interview data indicate that refugees appreciate



professionals and volunteers that help them with daily life tasks such as translating received letters, answering “simple” questions such as where to buy a scarf for the winter and participate in activities such as drinking coffee together. However, the relation between the professionals and refugees appears to be one sided. The refugees benefit from the given support, but this is not mutual. Furthermore, professionals are limited in their work to which extend they can help the refugees. During a language course the professional can be highly valuable regarding learning Dutch, but the same person cannot become close friends with all the students and help them with other issues. From the interviews I got the general observation that professionals can provide help and do support refugees, but they do not necessarily provide access to social networks that can serve as a source of social capital. Volunteers hardly become friends due to age differences and the nature of the interactions.

*“Actually, we are only in touch with older Dutch people, they usually visit us.” (Joud)*

Although they experience wide range of contact with Dutch people, the refugees do not appear to become part of a resourceful Dutch network through courses and meetings with volunteers.

### *Neighbors*

As with the student migrants, refugees are barely in close contact with their neighbors. One respondent explained: *“yes I try to make contact with my neighbors but they are young people that are busy with life. So, they do not have a lot of time so we only greet each other.” (Joud)*

Here the combination of language barriers and the nature of modern neighbor relations contribute to low interactions of the refugees with their neighbors. This eliminates a possible source for useful social capital.

### *Friends*

The interview data show that respondents struggle with finding new friends in the Netherlands. The refugees are able to make friendly connections in, for example, the AZCs. People however do not spend long here and made connections are therefore fragile. Throughout the asylum process refugees are forced to move around the Netherlands. Maintaining fresh friendships when moving around is difficult and appear to fade easily. Once settled down in a new house, respondents indicate making new connections and becoming part of social networks is difficult. When asked if she had a friends group, one respondent explained: *“no not really. I am not in a lot of contact with those (Dutch) people (Joud)*

This is on the one hand because of the language difficulties, but also because of cultural differences. Dutch culture perceived to be closed and hard to become part of, no matter how flawless one’s

Dutch is. As one of the respondents stated: *"I am flexible with culture and such, but I will always remain a foreigner here. So, I do feel I am part of Dutch society, but not completely."* (Yaman)

*Taalmaatjes* (language buddies) can provide more one on one contact that appears more like a friendship. The respondents indicated that the *taalmaatjes* did help them with learning the language and integrating since the *taalmaatjes* for example brought them along to a Dutch friends gathering. However, as with the professional and volunteer relations, the *taalmaatjes* relation barely shifts to long lasting friendship that provides durable access to valuable bridging social capital. When asked whether she was in a lot of contact with Dutch people, besides *taalmaatjes*, Mohamed answered:

*"With Dutch people, no not really. Only at school. And the taalmaatje, and we have a woman from an organization Homestar who reads to children and stuff."* (Mohamed)

As with the student migrants, becoming part of Dutch society and gaining access to social capital is accelerated when children of the refugees go to Dutch schools. Some refugees were attending Dutch university courses, but were experiencing difficulties connecting with peers due to language barriers and cultural differences.

#### *Conclusion on hypothesis 2*

*Highly educated refugees are expected to experience difficulties in establishing strong social capital in Dutch society due to distance to potential beneficial social capital.*

In their social relations in the Netherlands, the interviews indicate refugees are more tied to family. Besides family, they are more in contact with professionals through courses. As stated in the hypothesis, refugees find it hard to gain access to useful social capital. Language courses and university/school provide a starting point, but creating lasting ties for capital gain appears to be difficult due to language barriers and cultural differences. Refugees might appear to have more institutionalized access to social capital due to language courses, *schakeljaren* (switch years), university courses and *inburgeringsexamens* (civic integration exams). These organized moments allow the refugees to interact with Dutch nationals who teach them the language and educate them on Dutch cultural norms and values. These moments with professionals can serve as a starting point for more bridging social capital. This capital helps refugees gain access to Dutch society.

However, the data suggest that cultural differences and language difficulties appear to be barriers for most of the respondents to transform the bonding social capital to bridging capital which looks outwards towards society instead of inwards in the known group. This group of people that is willing to become part of Dutch society and start a new social life in a new country have serious trouble in finding access to this new society.

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### 5.1.3. CONCLUSION ON SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COMPARISON BETWEEN THE GROUPS

Regarding social capital it can be concluded that both groups experience difficulties in creating valuable ties that allow them to benefit from social capital in Dutch society. In this sense, the groups are not that different. The causes and consequences of the difficulties are however different.

Refugees are here for the long term and can highly benefit from (potentially) strong social capital in their process of becoming part of Dutch society. For the international student migrants, the urge to accumulate social capital in the Netherlands is much lower. They know beforehand that it is likely that they only spend two years maximum in the Netherlands. Therefore, there is no stimulus to put energy into creating a Dutch network and learning the language. Exceptions can be found when a student migrant has a Dutch spouse or is raising children in the Netherlands. This creates both opportunities and obligations to learn Dutch and invest in a Dutch network. This catalyst factor can also be seen in the refugee respondents' group. The refugee that had a young daughter who was attending a Dutch primary school considered himself more exposed to potential friends.

Furthermore, his daughter was visited by volunteers who read Dutch books to her and who also helped the parents with their Dutch. Refugees without young children experienced less of this institutionalized one-on-one exposure to Dutch society and were limited to their integration and language courses. As stated before, these courses did not provide them with lasting resourceful access to social capital. As with the student migrants, the factor professionals cannot be considered to be highly contributing to social capital.

Refugees and student migrants differ in the role family plays in social capital accumulation. Student migrants often do not have immediate family in the Netherlands and use social media to stay in touch with family and friends in other countries. These forms of contact are not considered to be contributing to the accumulation of social capital in Dutch society. The refugee on the other hand often came to the Netherlands with family or participated in the family reunification programme. Since the newcomers experience troubles in accessing Dutch society, having family in the Netherlands does not create bridging capital for refugees. Going through the same experiences together and being in the same surroundings can strengthen the bonding social capital for refugees and their families.

## 5.2. PLACE ATTACHMENT

As discussed in chapter 2, place attachment is understood to be a complex phenomenon that includes different aspects of people-place bonding. According to Altman and Low (2012, p. 5), place focusses on the environmental settings to which people are culturally and emotionally attached, whereas attachment puts emphasis on the effect it has on people. The questionnaire is based on the four conceptualisations, as provided by Droseltis and Vignoles (2010). The empirical data outcomes allow for the testing of the developed hypotheses

- 3: International students are expected to not be strongly attached to the place they live and work in since they know their stay is only temporary.
- 4: It is expected that highly educated refugees are keener on developing strong place attachment since the new place of residence is likely to be their new home for the near future.

In general, the questionnaire data did not indicate dramatic differences between the two groups. Whereas before it was expected that refugees and student migrants experience place attachment in very different ways, the data do not indicate these strong differences. It turns out that both groups experience difficulties in feeling connected to the new place they live and do not strong bonding with the place. Although the respondents are in general contented with their new surroundings in the Netherlands and feel welcome, there is a lack of strong bonding experiences with the new place. When diving into the different dimensions of place attachment differences in the development of the people-place bonding process occur.

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### 5.2.1. SELF-EXTENSION

First of all, the notion of self-extension arose in the questionnaire. The statements *I feel this place is part of who I am* and *if the place no longer existed, I would feel like I have lost of part of myself* addressed the cognitive sense of a place as being part of the extended self. Following this approach, it is argued that places are experienced as part of the self. The answers to the statements have been combined and are shown in graph 8. The questionnaire data indicate no relevant differences between the two groups. Both student migrants and refugees mainly consider themselves to be part of the place. The place is becoming part of the self. This outcome collides with the interview data, in which respondents indicated to be happy with their new place of living. Although the place is considered to be part of the self, respondents explained that they themselves did not feel part of the new place and society. This connects to the concept of environmental fit.

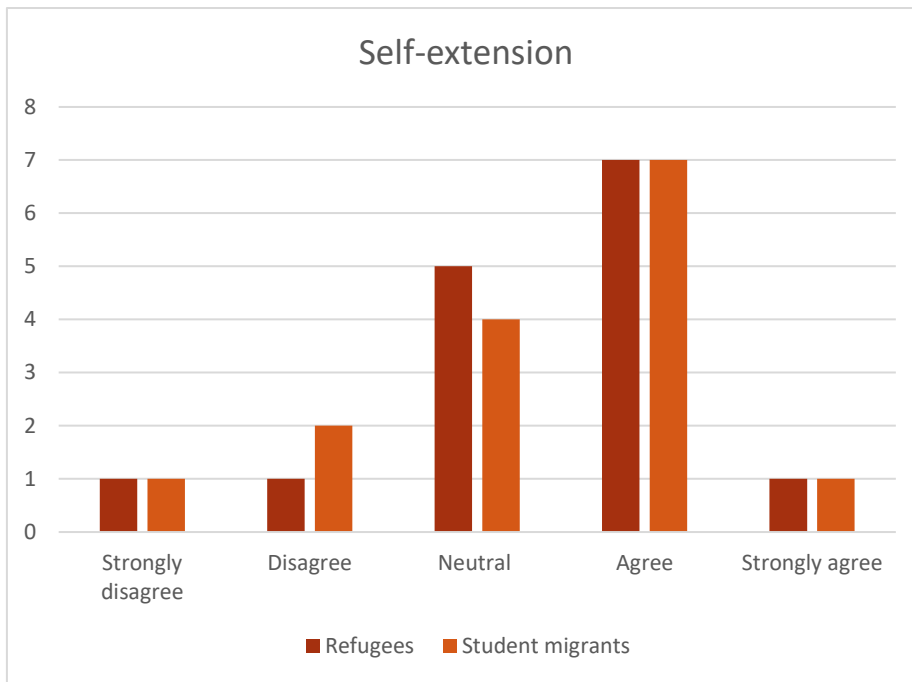


Figure 8: Self extension data output

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### 5.2.2. ENVIRONMENTAL FIT

The concept of environmental identity is discussed by Clayton and Opatow (2004), who explain that the impact of this identity that connects the natural environment and its personal meaning to an individual, is significant and has great behavioural implications. The environmental identity influences whether one feels like he fits into the place. During the establishment of this fit, the individual develops a subjective sense of fitting into or being part of their physical surroundings. In the questionnaire, the environmental fit statements were as follows:

- I feel this is place is where I fit
- This place allows me to connect with myself

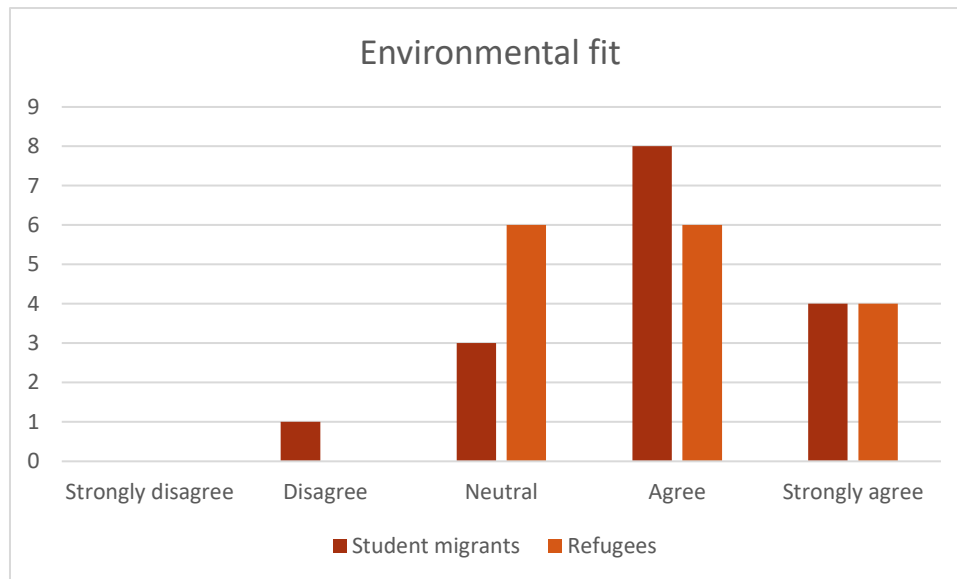


Figure 9: Environmental fit-data output

The questionnaire data, of which the responses to the two statements on environmental fit are combined and displayed in graph 9, indicate that most respondents feel either neutral or (strongly) fitting into the place and feel like the place allows them to connect with themselves. The self is considered to be part of place. This is surprising, since both groups indicated in the interviews to experience cultural differences and struggle to feel part of Dutch society. It is however a positive outcome that, despite the difficulties, respondents do feel that they fit into the place in the new neighbourhood. A possible explanation for the discrepancy between the interview and questionnaire data is the difference between the feeling of fitting into the place and fitting into society. Whereas respondents from both groups explained in the interviews to not (yet) feel part of Dutch society, they did state that they felt comfortable in their new neighbourhoods. Refugees explained that although fitting into and feeling part of Dutch society is hard, the overall sense of freedom allows them to feel part of the new place. Marina explained her reason to move as a quest for freedom: *“I had a good salary and a good reputation and was in contact with a lot of famous people among the politics. But I had to leave everything because to have the freedom.”*

When asked about cultural differences, Aya answered: *“you can do what you want here, as long as you don’t insult or harm anyone you can do anything here. (...) We did not have freedom, we had to do everything in a secretive way. We could not express ourselves.”*. Furthermore, Yaman stated that *“besides social freedom I also gained political freedom here. (...) So, I have gained total freedom here. But on the other hand, I will always remain a foreigner here.”*

Although most student migrants came from relative safe countries, especially when compared to the refugees who fled war zones, some respondents stated that moving to the Netherlands improved their safety situation. When asked about cultural differences, Lize stated

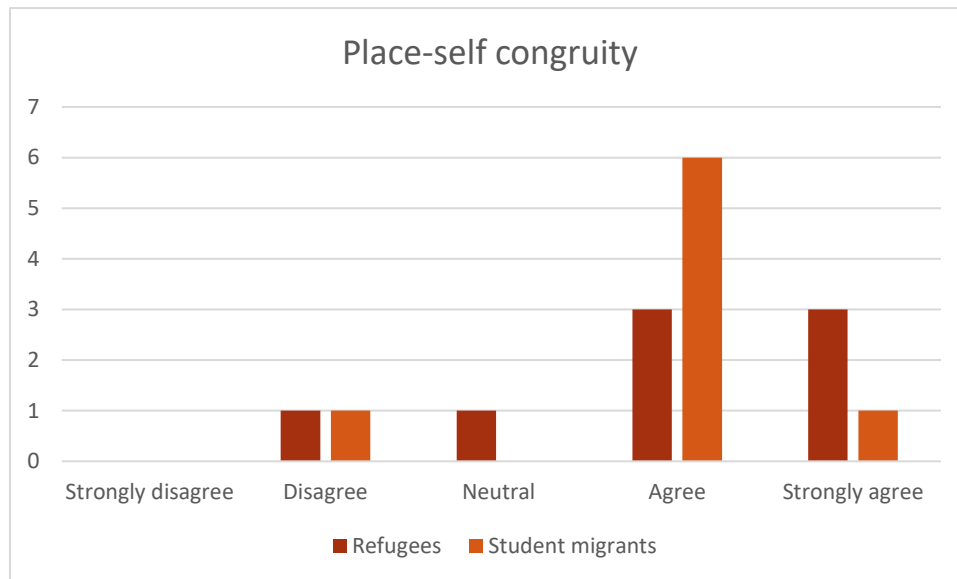
*“Dutch society is a lot more liberal than mine. There is much less racism and things like that than in my home country. What is also very different is also the degree of safety and freedom of movement which is very high here compared to my own country. It has very high criminality so I can't move freely in public and things like that.”*

The environmental fit of the student migrants is considered to be influenced by the fact that most students live together in ISS housing and therefore a space is created in which multiple nationalities live together and not one cultural norm is the standard. Adjusting to a new place without strong set out social norms allows individuals to shape their own environment more than refugees who have to blend into a set society. The interview responses explain the data outcomes from the questionnaire. Respondents feel like the place is where they fit because the place allows them to be whom they want to be, experience freedom on different levels, and therefore is flexible. On a micro-level the respondents feel part of their environment. When shifting to the macro level, cultural differences and language barriers provide obstacles for both refugees and student migrants to feel as being part of Dutch society. These cultural differences link to the notion of place-self congruity.

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### 5.2.3. Place-self congruity

This dimension reflects the idea that the place is in some way similar to, or matches, the values and personality of the individual. This creates a sense of identification with the place. According to Drostelis and Vignoles (2010), place-self congruity is a process in which it is possible that individuals shift from a low to a high place-self congruity and vice versa. When a low congruity level is found within a person, the image of the self and the image of the place are not similar. When a strong connection is found between the image of the self and the image of the place, high place-self congruity is established. During the questionnaire, congruity was represented in the following statement: *this place represents my personal values.*



**Figure 10: Place-self congruity-data output**

The questionnaire data output, displayed in graph 10, indicate that the responses from the refugees are more scattered than the responses of the student migrant where six out of the eight respondents agreed that the place represents their personal values. This difference is understandable, given the difference in ability to choose a new place to live that would represent the personal values of the respondents. The student migrants had the opportunity to decide where they were moving and were able to include potential cultural differences, and whether this bothered them, in their decision process. This is contrary to the refugees who were limited in their freedom to choose the new country to live in. During the interviews it was asked why the refugees choose the Netherlands over other European nations, and most respondents indicated ending up in the Netherlands was planned during the flee and not beforehand. Besides the fact that ending up in the Netherlands was mostly arbitrary and therefore refugees do not feel as strongly that the place they now live in matches their own personal values, another explanation can be found for the outcome of the questionnaire.

Whereas the student migrants are considered to be part of the global elite, the refugees are not in this fortunate position. The global elite is more aware of and exposed to different cultures and experience less of the Dutch culture due to the international environment they work and live in. This international environment with a global elite cultural characteristic fits the student migrants.

Therefore, the outcome of the questionnaire displaying high place-self congruity among the student migrants is understandable.

Contrary to the student migrants, the refugees often do not have many other cultural experiences than of the Arab world. During the interviews, the refugees provided more examples of cultural differences than the student migrants. The fact that the student migrants did not experience plenty of cultural differences can be explained by the ISS bubble in which the student migrants are present



and which limits their exposure to Dutch society. Refugees learn more about Dutch culture during their language and integration courses and therefore, ironically, may become more aware of the differences. The interviews did indicate that although refugees find some of the Dutch traditions remarkable, they want to understand the new society and culture they live in in order to become part of this society. This willingness to learn and adjust oneself is different to the attitude of the student migrants who might only notice the cultural differences if they find Dutch friends or partners or decide to stay in the Netherlands for career opportunities. Beside the level to which a person feels like the place they live in represents their personal values, they fit in the place and the place is part of them, a fourth component of place attachment will be discussed.

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#### 5.2.4. EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

Emotional attachment is the dimension of place attachment that focusses on the strong emotional bonds or positive affect towards places individuals experience. The concept is twofold, on the one hand the focus lies on whether the place makes a person feel positive about themselves and on the other hand attention is paid to whether individuals feel emotionally attached to the place they live in. In the questionnaire, the following statements addressed emotional attachment:

- I feel a sense of emotional attachment to this place
- This place has spiritual significance to me
- This place makes me feel positively about myself
- This place gives me a sense of meaning in my life

Graph 10 shows the combined responses to these statements.

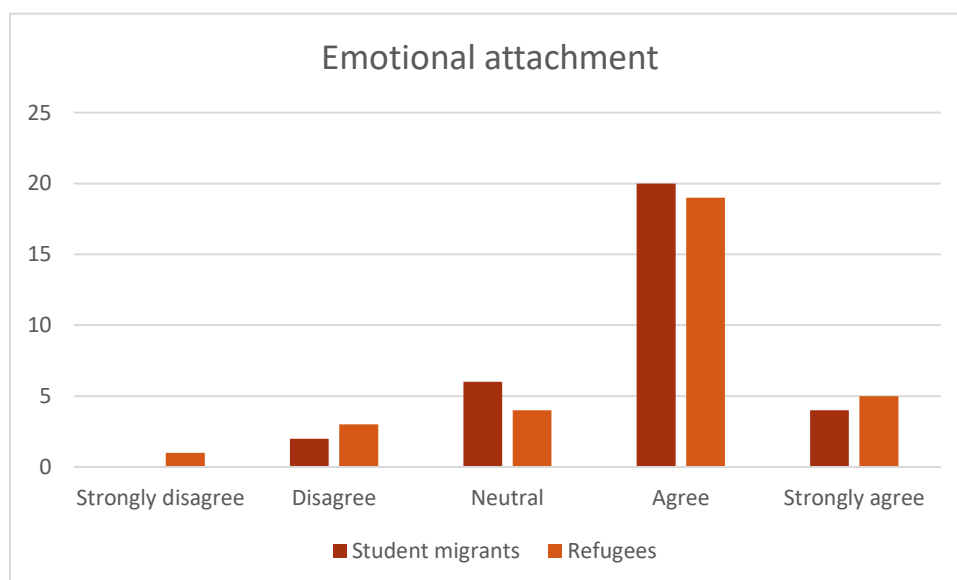


Figure 11: Emotional attachment

Once again, the data do not indicate dramatic differences between the two groups. They both appear to, in general, experience positive emotional attachment. The new place they reside in affects them positively and the place itself is valued in a positive manner. During the interviews it stood out that both groups experience their stay in the Netherlands to be part of a positive change in their lives. For the refugees, this is moving away from war and conflict and the opportunity to start a new, safe life. This does however mean that they had to leave their country of origin, family and friends, and life as they knew it behind. It was therefore expected that the refugees would not necessarily feel positive about the new place, since it meant leaving the known behind. When diving into the different statements of the questionnaire, the statement of *I feel a sense of emotional attachment to this place*, stands out. Responses to this statement are displayed in figure 12. It was expected that the refugees would not feel strongly emotionally attached to the Netherlands, since the country of origin was left by force. The interview data indicate that refugees are sad about leaving the known life behind, but also are joyful with the new start they have been able to make, the new opportunities given and the chance to live a life in peace, freedom and security.

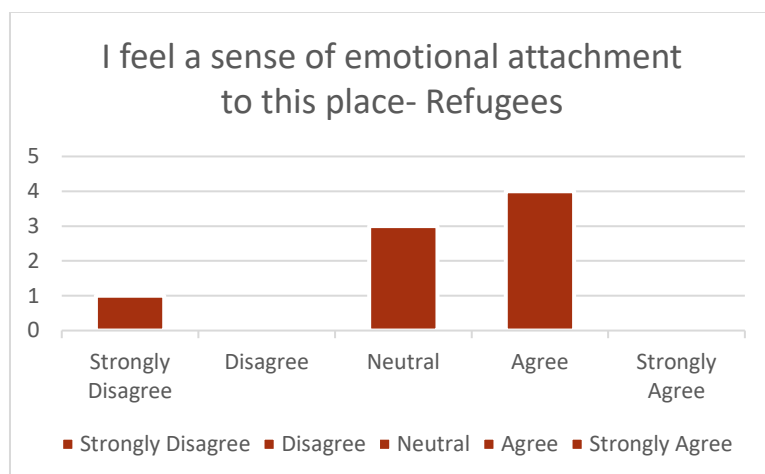


Figure 12: I feel a sense of emotional attachment to this place - refugees data output

The student migrants consider moving to the Netherlands as a valuable step in their professional lives. The questionnaire output on the statement *I feel a sense of emotional attachment to this place* is displayed in graph 13.

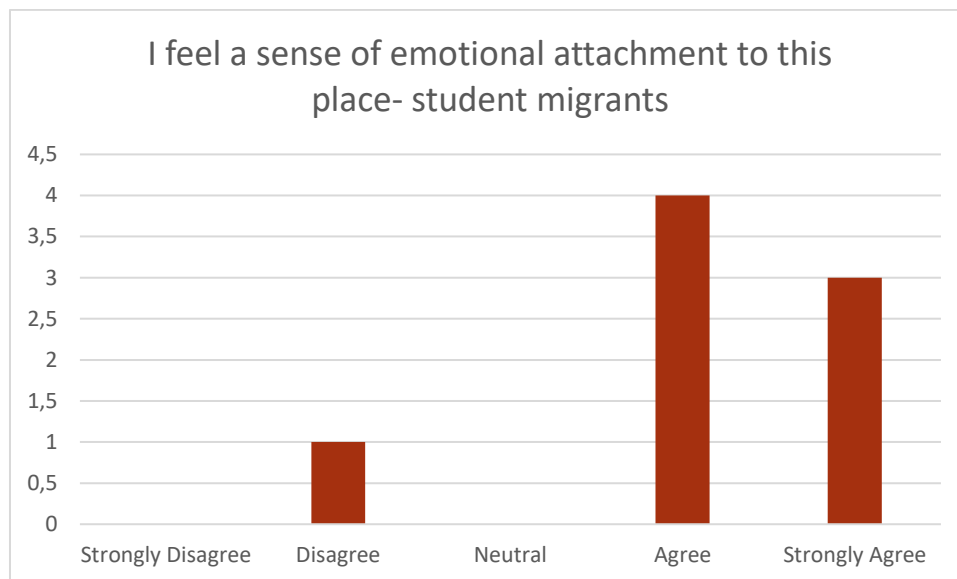


Figure 13: I feel a sense of emotional attachment to this place-student migrants- data output

As with the refugees, the data indicate that most respondents experience a positive sense of place attachment. This is as expected since the student migrants have the opportunity to choose whether and where they want go abroad. They are in the Netherlands for a shorter time period than the refugees. Although they are positive about their stay in the Netherlands, several respondents indicated to be moving back home in the future. This is mainly because of the topics of (rural) development they are working on in the research which is located in the country of origin. Those who want to stay in the Netherlands do so because of other factors like spouses and jobs.

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#### 5.2.5. PLACE ATTACHMENT CONCLUSION

3: international students are expected to not be strongly attached to the place they live and work in since they know their stay is only temporary.

The empirical data suggest that this hypothesis is correct. The Netherlands is experienced positively by the student migrants, but the nature of their stay creates a situation in which putting energy into becoming part of Dutch society and learning the language is not worth the investment, unless a student migrant stays in the Netherlands due to external factors. Self-extension is a valuable contributor to place attachment on the micro level. Respondents feel that the place they live and work is in a part of themselves. However, on the macro level of society they do not feel this fit. Due

to the international environment in the ISS courses a vicious circle is created. At university and in the university housing there is a lack of exposure to Dutch society. Therefore, no stimuli are found to learn Dutch or to understand the Dutch society and its characteristics. This then creates a distance between the student migrants and Dutch society which widens the gap further and limits exposure and so forth.

The place-self congruity is high for the student migrants due to their ability to choose their international move, a benefit that comes with being part of a student elite.

The combination of the intended short stay, international environment and lack of stimuli creates a situation in which the macro development of place attachment for student migrants is limited.

This vicious cycle is not found in the place attachment process of the highly educated refugees.

Hypothesis 4 states *it is expected that highly educated refugees are keener on developing strong place attachment since the new place of residence is likely to be their new home for the near future.*

The empirical data indicate that this hypothesis is correct. Refugees indicated that they are willing to invest the time and energy to become part of Dutch society. The questionnaire indicates that on the micro level, respondents feel at ease with their new surroundings. As with the student migrants, feeling part of the macro level is of Dutch society is a bigger challenge. All respondents explained they wanted to stay in the Netherlands in the future. This is partly because of the situation in Syria that does not seem to improve. The other part is the educational opportunities they see lying ahead. After finishing their language courses and *schakeljaren*, respondents are keen on finishing a valuable university course that will help them develop a bright future. This positive outlook on the future creates a strong sense of emotional attachment to the new place. Because of the limited influence in choosing the country to flee to, the place-self congruity turns up in the empirical data lower for refugees than for the student migrants. The sense of freedom and security creates a strong sense of environmental fit since the place allows the refugees to be who they want to be. This helps develop the place attachment, which then contributes to the process of place identification.

### 5.3. Categorization

#### 5.3.1. Categorization by others

As discussed in chapter 4, categorization is a substantial factor contributing to the process of place identification. The literature (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Ellemers et al., 1999) indicates that the process of identification and categorization consists of what people think about us, and as important, what we think about ourselves. Identification then becomes a two-way process: the internally oriented self- or group identification and categorization, and the process of categorization of others which is externally oriented. The process of self-categorization makes it possible that an identity is formed (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 224; Lalli, 1992). This categorization takes place inside people and causes people to identify themselves and others with groups. The external identification is the process in which a person or a group define others in a certain way. These external forces are part of social relationships (Jenkins, 1994). In chapter 4 it has been established that immigration policy creates highly different categorization processes for the researched groups. This can be seen as the largest contributor for categorization by others. Human beings are always subject to categorization, it is what makes identification to a certain group by either ourselves or others possible.

The empirical data indicate that although both groups feel welcome in Dutch society, they do feel that Dutch society in general considers them as a separate group and not as an inclusive entity of the society in the Netherlands. The role immigration policies play in this belief is difficult to establish on the personal level of the respondents since most of them did not question the policies when asked about them during the interviews. Refugees understood that, especially during the peak of European refugee crisis, immigration policies had to be strict and that facilities were not always the best. For student migrants, immigration policies were less of a hurdle when arranging the move to the Netherlands. None of the student migrants respondents made notes on policy being a factor that determined for them whether they felt part of Dutch society or not. The student migrants did however indicate that, due to their lack of exposure to Dutch society, it was hard to judge whether they felt categorized as outsiders by Dutch society. It appears that the distance felt between their own environment and Dutch society can be attributed more due to the own vicious cycle they are in, caused by the ISS bubble.

#### 5.3.2. SELF-CATEGORIZATION

Before discussing the notion of self-categorization it is important to note that in the questionnaire, most statements focussed on the process of self-categorization since this is the factor that respondents can say something about themselves. However, throughout the process of collecting the

empirical data it became clear that the two contributors to categorization are highly intertwined and therefore it is a challenge to separate them. Furthermore, creating barriers between what the respondents thought themselves and the categorization from the researcher herself are hard to separate.

Self-categorization focusses on the action within the self which allows them to identify with a certain group. Hogg and Reid (2006, p .9.) explain that *“people derive a part of their self-concept from the social groups and categories they belong to.”*

In the questionnaire, the following statements addressed self-categorization. These statements focus on the individual and how he perceives the space around himself. In this way, a distinction between the intertwined concepts of categorization by others and self-categorization is created. The statement *being linked to this place distinguishes me from other people* contains the essence of self-categorization. The other statements are subject to more specific feelings the place might evoke.

- This place gives me a sense of continuity between past, present and future in my life
- This place makes me feel competent and effective
- Being linked to this place distinguishes me from other people
- This place make feel in control
- This place makes me feel close to other people
- This place makes me accepted by other people
- This place gives me a sense of security
- I find this place beautiful

On each of these statements respondents were asked to indicate on an ordinal scale to what extent they agreed with the statements. These responses all combined are shown in figure 14.

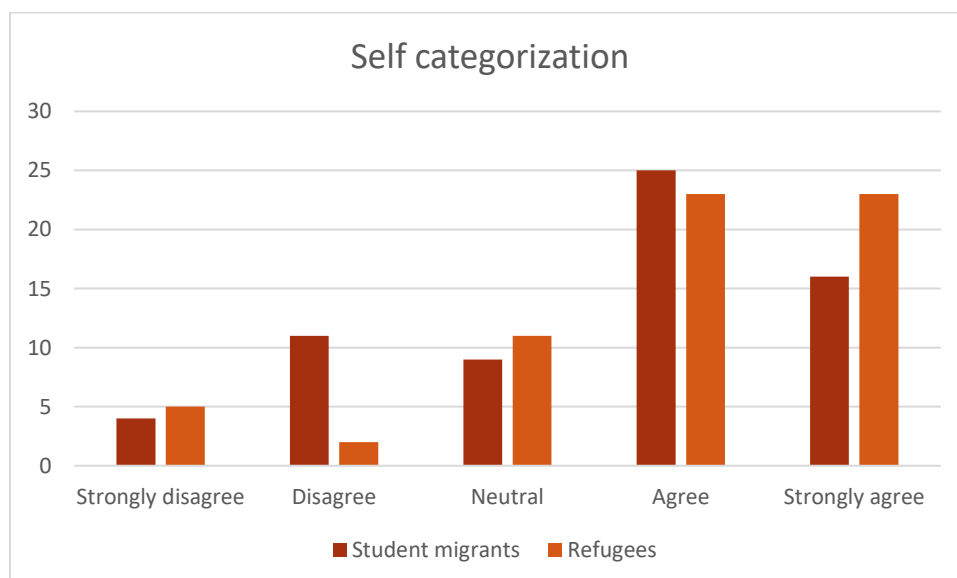


Figure 14: Self-categorization: data output

During the interviews, it became clear that the respondents did as not feel strongly connected or identified with the place they were living as they did with the people around them. For the ISS students who live in the assigned housing close to the university this is evident. One of the respondents explained how she felt more connected to the city since she lived somewhere else and was exposed to The Hague outside the university block:

*"They have two housing places. One is directly next to ISS and the other one that is next to Scheveningen and I lived in that one. Which was nice because I at least biked every day from the house to the school and made me look at the city more. You know some people who live at ISS housing they move from like (back and forth), they do not move around that area and the city."*  
(Diana)

This quote indicates how a simple act of daily biking around the city can help in the process of feeling part of the place one lives in. However, the interview and questionnaire data show that the notion of categorization to space tends to overlap with other (social) forces that contribute to self-categorization. Becoming and being part of a social group appears to be a stronger contributor to identity formation and development than physical spheres. The group one feels connected to is not necessarily connected to certain places.

Whereas the interviews clearly showed that the respondents felt more connected to people than places, the questionnaire data regarding self-categorization are not that clear. The data do not suggest strong tendencies within and between the groups. A slight preference to the agree and strongly agree categories can be identified. To understand this outcome in depth, three of the statements will be analyzed further.

The responses to main statement in which self-categorization was addressed *Being linked to this place distinguishes me from other people* are as displayed in figure 15.

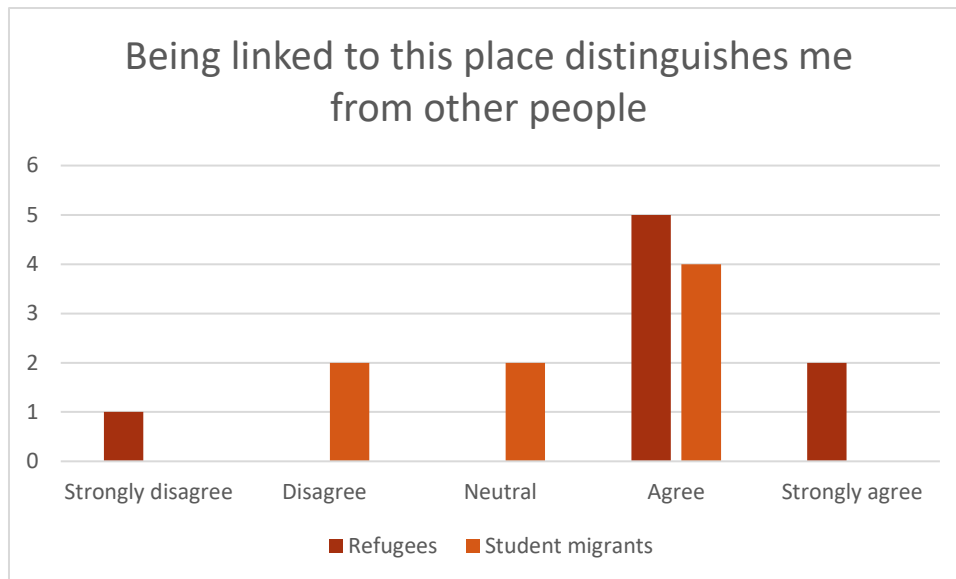


Figure 15: Being linked to this place distinguishes me from other people - data output

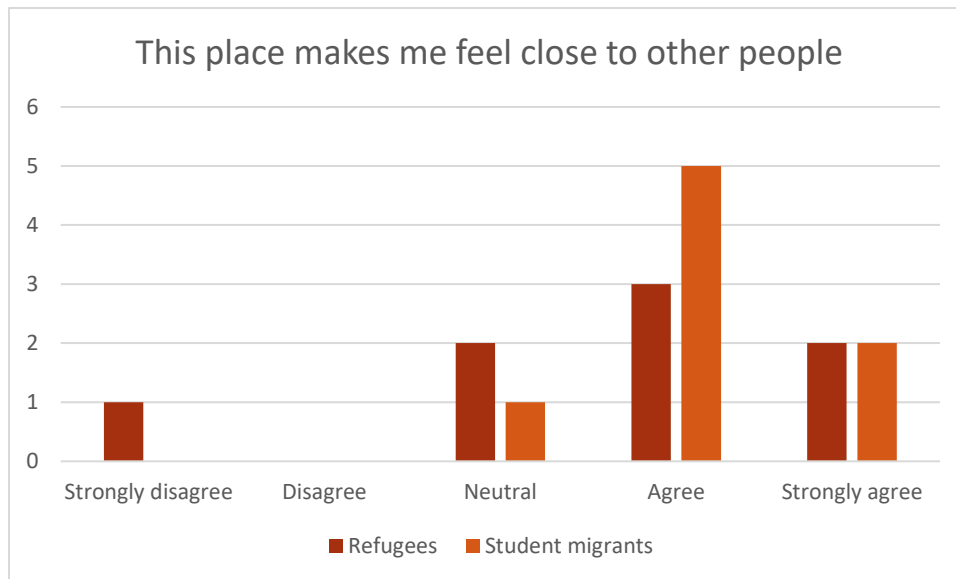
The data suggest that refugees feel that the place they live in does indeed set them apart from people who do not live here since seven out of the eight respondents indicate to (strongly) agree with the statement. This makes them then part of a group that has the binding factor of the same living environment. Being part of such an entity creates an us and them situation, in which one's own identity is created by determining who is in and who is out of the certain group. In the lives of the refugees, living in Nijmegen means a new start and a new life. This creates a difference between them and for example family and friends that are still in Syria.

The student migrants are more divided in their responses to this statement. A possible explanation for this outcome is the fact that this group belongs to the global elite. As stated before, this is one of the characteristics of the global elite. Their identity is less drawn from the place they live, since this group does not tend to stay long in places and identify more with a cosmopolitan group.

Identifying is (self) categorizing, and feeling connected to the certain group does then distinguish one from others. The role of place in this self-categorization process appears to be limited for the global elite. Therefore, their more scattered answers in the questionnaire can be explained.

Such scattered response is also seen in the statement *this place makes me feel close to other people*, but this time the refugees are more divided in their answers, as can be seen in graph 16.





**Figure 16: This place makes me feel close to other people**

Whereas the seven out of the eight student migrants (strongly) agree to feel close to other people, the refugee respondents do not show such a strong response. The difference between the groups can be explained due to the ISS bubble that the student migrants are part of. This group of people allows them to feel part of a bonding crowd in which friendships can be developed. As concluded in the social capital discussion earlier in this chapter, the social ties within the ISS community are not considered to be long lasting. However, they seem to be sufficient for the time being and are appreciated by the respondents. Considering yourself to be part of the ISS community is the biggest manifestation of self-categorization that connects to the local area.

The refugees experience more trouble in finding these social connections that help create new bonds between people. They are in contact with people due to language courses and volunteers, but these contacts do not serve as a base for strong social connections. Due to all the changes a refugee goes through, it is not surprising that feeling close to people in a whole new place is challenging. Five out of the eight refugee respondents indicated to feel (strongly) close to other people in the new place. Several of the respondents were living together with family, this is understandably beneficial for feeling close to people. This then helps to identify with a certain group and self-categorize oneself into a certain sphere.

The last statement *This place makes me accepted by other people* contributing to the explanation of the general outcomes on self-categorization focusses on the role of the place in whether people feel accepted. The data, shown in graph 17, clearly state an overall agreement within and between the groups. Both the student migrants and the highly educated refugees feel accepted by others in the

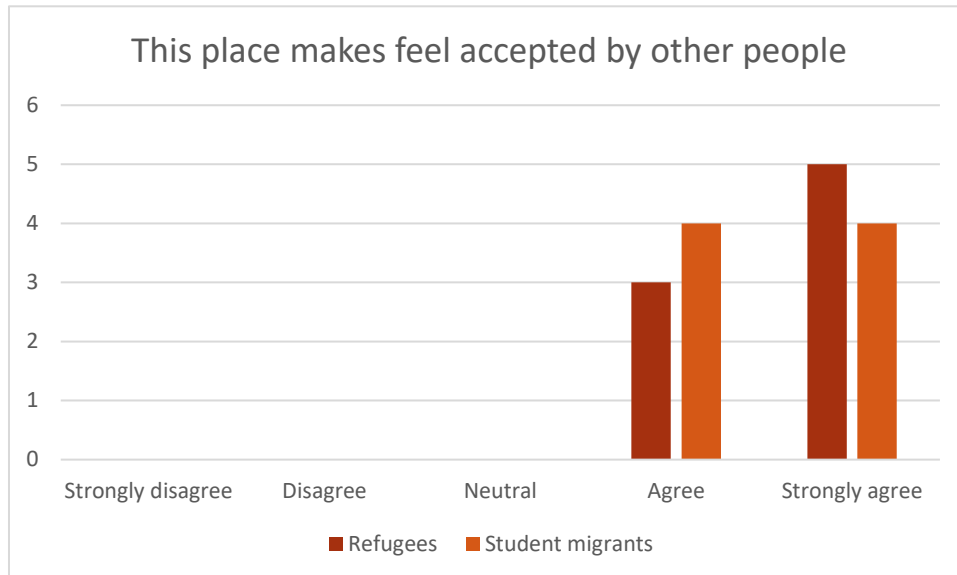


Figure 17: This place makes feel accepted by other people

place they live in. This unanimous response reflects what stood out in the interviews in which several respondents indicated to feel easily accepted by other people in Dutch society. Sometimes contrary to their home countries, they can speak freely and express themselves in every way in the Netherlands. When asked if they ever felt discriminated, a few respondents illustrated small incidents in which they felt that being a migrant in general was a cause for negative behavior of other people towards them. This did however not cause the respondents to feel unwelcome in the Netherlands.. This is perhaps contrary to what one might assume, but in the interviews, it was explained that contrary to their home countries, respondents feel strongly that they can express themselves in Dutch society.

The difference between the data showing on one side that the respondents do not feel part of Dutch society but the feeling that they are accepted by other people on the other hand is interesting. An explanation can be found in the different scale levels. On the micro level of neighborhoods, work and study respondents are pleased with their surroundings and feel accepted by those around them. However, when we zoom out and look at society as a whole, respondents from both groups feel left out and not (to be considered) an active member of Dutch society. On a local scale, respondents might self-categorize themselves as accepted and welcomed, but on a larger, more abstract scale of societal relations they consider themselves as an outsider.

Being part of the ISS bubble does indeed create a strong sense of belonging to the ISS community

whereas the belonging to the place is evidently lower. The processes of self-identification and self-categorization for the student migrants are mainly based on the social ties. Respondents indicated that their sense of belonging was created through relationships in the ISS community more than through being in The Hague.

Looking into the process of categorization for the highly educated refugees versus the experiences of the student migrants, it can be concluded that the refugees feel more attached to the new place and their identity is influenced by the place. For the refugees, the new place is the manifestation of the many changes that occurred during their odyssey to freedom, peace and security. Respondents indicate that indeed they find this peace and freedom in the Netherlands. They feel welcome and able to be who they want to be. In general, they do not feel discriminated or unwanted by Dutch society. Although Dutch immigration policy does not criminalize anyone that wants to enter the Netherlands and treats immigrants in a bad way, the differences between the immigration policies for refugees versus the policies for student migrants are undeniable. These differences in policies were expected to influence the way refugees felt categorized by others. However, when asked, the respondents did not feel that Dutch society has a negative attitude towards them. This could be explained by the fact that most respondents did not read or watch Dutch media and therefore do not have a strong sense of what the political and societal arena looks like on this sensitive topic. As Yaman explained *"I do not have any knowledge about the Dutch political parties. I only know that GroenLinks (the Green Party) and those green parties like me more than for example the PVV, (Party for Freedom) the party from Wilders."* The categorization by others process by the immigration policies does put this group in a specific corner, but the respondents themselves do not make this part of their own self-categorization process.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, an answer to the research question *how does the process of place identification develop, and how does this process differ between student migrants and young highly-educated refugees in the Netherlands* will be given. The question (and answer) is twofold. First, how does the process of place identification develop. Secondly, how does this process differ between student migrants and highly educated refugees. Furthermore, recommendations on immigration policy and further research are provided.

### 6.1. DEVELOPMENT OF PLACE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

This study examined highly educated refugees from Syria living in Nijmegen and student migrants from outside the EU living in The Hague. As described by Timotijevic and Breakwell (2000), it can be highly expected that the identity of a person is influenced by international migration. Since all sixteen respondents migrated internationally, both groups are likely to experience changes in their identities. The journey to the Netherlands of the student migrants highly differs from some of the refugees who crossed the Mediterranean Sea in small boats and traveled on foot throughout Europe to eventually end up in the Netherlands. The different characteristics of the groups has been set on whether they are perceived as voluntary or involuntary migrants in Dutch immigration policies.

According to prior literature the process of place identification consists of the ways in which characteristics of a place and the symbolic meaning of certain locations contribute to an individual's identity. In this thesis, social capital, place attachment and categorization are identified as the contributing factors to the process of place identification (Drosetlis & Vignoles, 2010; Rollero & Picolli, 2010; Devine-Wright). After conducting a policy review on Dutch immigration policies and gathering empirical data through in-depth semi-structured interviews, it is argued that although the two respondent groups have different characteristics, they both experience difficulties in their process of place identification, feeling part and becoming part of Dutch society.

Through the analysis of the empirical data it was found that gaining access to valuable bridging social capital appears to be challenging for both student migrants and highly educated refugees. Whereas the student migrant experience no trouble with bonding social capital, refugees struggle with finding access to any social capital.

Dutch immigration policy is an important factor that influences categorization for both groups. The incentives of the different policies for the different groups leave their marks on policy practices that both studied groups experience. Due to the base of the policies, these experiences highly differ.

Furthermore, it is argued that place attachment consists of multiple factors that operate on micro and macro levels and therefore intertwine. Both researched groups indicated that they feel part of place on micro level but not on macro, societal level. This caused by a lack of exposure on the one

side and difficulties accessing Dutch society on the other side. Main finding of this research. Zooming into the different components of the process of place identification provides explanations for these outcomes.

## 6.2. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RESEARCHED GROUPS

### **Social capital**

Contrary to what was expected beforehand, the empirical data indicate that both researched groups experience difficulties in establishing lasting social capital. Social capital can act as an effective resource for particular groups, but its full potential can only be reached when the bonds of trust and solidarity within a community are strong (Leonard, 2004. p. 928). Within the student migrant group, this bond of solidarity is strong and therefore bonding social capital is present which helps the students to feel part of a group that supports them and can be of benefit to them. The nature of the bonding group of students does however results in an “ISS bubble” in which the respondents find most of their social networks within the ISS community. This does not stimulate them to enter other, Dutch social networks. The development of bridging social capital is therefore barely found within the student respondent group. The empirical data suggest that bridging capital is only developed through a catalyst factor like a Dutch partner.

For refugees, the data suggest that social capital whether it is bridging or bonding is hard to establish organically for refugees. Exposure to Dutch social networks is often institutionalized and limits the ability to enter the networks spontaneously. Furthermore, the data indicate that cultural differences and language difficulties appear to be barriers for most of the respondents to transform the bonding social capital to bridging capital. This group of people that is willing to become part of Dutch society and start a new social life in a new country have serious trouble in finding access to this new society. This has specific strong consequences for the chances of obtaining bridging social capital into Dutch society whilst this can be a strong contributor to the integration process which benefits the process of place identification.

It is important to note that social capital should not be considered to be the magic fix to societal integration problems. However, in the process of place identification it is argued that being part of both resourceful bridging and bonding social networks will benefit the process.

### **Place attachment**

Place attachment is understood to be a complex phenomenon that includes different aspects of people-place bonding. According to Altman and Low (2012, p. 5), place focusses on the environmental settings to which people are culturally and emotionally attached, whereas attachment

puts emphasis on the effect it has on people. The self-extension process in which place is perceived as part of the self, best shows the development of place attachment of the respondents. Both student migrants and refugees mainly consider themselves to be part of the place. As a consequence, as stated in theory (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010), the place is then becoming part of the self. The environment the respondents live in is becoming part of their identity. This outcome collides with the interview data, in which respondents indicated to be happy with their new place of living and feel welcome in the space of either Nijmegen or The Hague.

Although the place is considered to be part of the self, respondents explained that they themselves did not feel part of the new place and society. It is striking that respondents from both groups feel at ease with and at the place, but when we zoom at to a higher level, this sense of belonging decreases. These micro versus macro differences are explained by Paasi (2001, p. 9) who states that *at local contexts solidarity may be based on personal contacts and interaction but larger-scale territories are inevitably 'imagined communities'*. The combination of the intended short stay, international environment and lack of stimuli creates a situation in which the macro development of place attachment for student migrants is limited.

Highly educated refugees indicated in the interviews and questionnaires that they are willing to invest the time and energy to become part of Dutch society. The empirical data indicates that on the micro level, respondents feel at ease with their new surroundings. As with the student migrants, feeling part of the macro level is of Dutch society is a bigger challenge for the highly educated refugees. Respondents from both groups explained that the sense of freedom and security creates a strong sense of environmental fit since the place allows the refugees to be who they want to be. This helps develop the place attachment, which then contributes to the process of place identification.

### **Categorization**

The literature (Hogg & Reid, 2006; Ellemers et al., 1999) indicates that the process of identification and categorization is a two-way process: the internally oriented self- or group identification and categorization, and the process of categorization of others which is externally oriented.

Although both researched groups feel welcome in Dutch society, the respondents do feel that Dutch society in general considers them as a separate group and not as an inclusive entity of the society in the Netherlands. The role immigration policies play in this belief is difficult to establish on the personal level of the respondents since most of them did not question the policies when asked about them during the interviews.

The processes of self-identification and self-categorization for the student migrants are mainly based on the social ties. Respondents indicated that their sense of belonging was created through relationships in the ISS community more than through being in The Hague.

For the refugees, being part of an entity, like being someone who lives in Nijmegen, creates an +us and them situation, in which one's own identity is created by determining who is in and who is out of the certain group. In the lives of the refugees, living in Nijmegen means a new start and a new life. This creates a difference between them and for example family and friends that are still in Syria. Looking into the process of categorization for the highly educated refugees versus the experiences of the student migrants, it can be concluded that the refugees feel more attached to the new place and their identity is influenced by the place. For the refugees, the new place is the manifestation of the many changes that occurred during their odyssey to freedom, peace and security. The student migrants, as part of global elite, perceive their stay in the Netherlands as part of their career path and do not feel strongly attached to Dutch society. They also know beforehand their stay is temporary and therefore do not feel the need nor pressure to become part of the Dutch society. Their process of place identification is not focussed on becoming part of the place for a long term.

### 6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### 6.3.1. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

First of all, recommendations towards the Dutch immigration policies are provided. As stated previously, Dutch immigration policies create a strong distinction between the highly educated refugees and student migrants, particularly in the practices when the migrants enter the Netherlands. Policies create large differences between the groups, but the research indicates that in the process of place identification they are more alike than they seem. The dichotomy in policy is understandable, since the necessary checks have to be carried out upon arrival to the Netherlands, can be performed beforehand for the student migrants but have to be carried out later for the refugees. However, when it comes to integration and becoming part of the new society and community, both groups could be brought together more in policy. This would have to be carried out on the local scale, since the municipalities have better insights in how to bring which groups together. Creating situations that allow both groups to interact could then lead to new accesses to social capital. These initiatives should have the (financial) support from the national government, since Dutch society as a whole will contribute from stronger social capital.

The research indicates that the student migrants experienced unexpected difficulties in feeling and becoming part of Dutch society. If it is the national and local goal to bind student migrants, it is necessary that the student migrants are given more exposure to Dutch society and local communities. This can then create more social ties to the city and the Netherlands. As the research indicates, the student migrants are part of the global elite that can go live anywhere. If the Dutch government wants to keep the human and social capital and knowledge that the student migrants

obtain after graduation and not lose its investments, it is essential that this group feels connected to the place and country they live in. The city of The Hague is highly facilitating for expats and supports them in becoming part of the society, but seems to be missing the students in their approach.

On the national level, policies facilitate graduated student migrants by offering them a search year. However, the research indicates that when there has not been made a social connection, the student migrants leave the Netherlands after finishing their master or PhD. The researched group has the world as their home and without social ties or strong job opportunities, do not tend to stay. Although Dutch policy suggests that the government wants them to stay by offering a search year, only one out of the eight student migrants indicated to use the search year opportunity.

For the refugees, the following policy recommendations are made. First of all, the group of highly educated refugees that has now been in the Netherlands for several years is benefitting from organizations that will help the refugees with learning the language and integrating into Dutch society. Since the numbers of asylum seekers are once again rising, the national government has to stimulate and support these initiatives. The sooner the highly educated refugees become a substantial part of Dutch society, the better they can also contribute to this society. With their skills and knowledge, they are a welcome addition to the shrinking workforce in times of economic growth.

Since the refugees are building a new life in the Netherlands, it is essential that they feel able to establish themselves and are perceived as a part of Dutch society. They have to be granted the time to establish organic social ties, but also have to be assisted in gaining access to potential social capital.

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#### 6.3.2. FURTHER RESEARCH

Moreover, recommendations for further research can be given. Especially in an ever-globalizing world, understanding what makes people stick to a certain place and how newcomers can adapt to a new place in the best manner can prove to be highly beneficial for societies on both micro and macro level. As mentioned in 6.1, discrepancies between the literature, expectations and the outcomes of this research arose on social capital, place attachment, categorization, and immigration policies. Further research on these topics is highly recommended.

First of all, the theoretical understanding of identity and place identification can be updated in future research. The influences of technology, social media and changes in society on the development of identity can be explored in the course of time. Although the base of the theoretical understanding is not expected to shift greatly, it will be advantageous to take technological influences and the power of social media into account when researching the shifting identities of migrants. Policy changes can be encouraged and influenced by research outcomes. Results from research can then serve societal



purposes.

Secondly, understanding more in depth how the studied groups are influenced by immigration policy can help create more effective supranational, national and local policies in the future. Migration movements are likely to increase in the future, both researchers and policy advisors have to be ready.

Furthermore, the interplay between categorization by others and self-categorization needs more theoretical and empirical research to be properly understood. A large-scale qualitative research in which migrants are observed and questioned over a period of multiple years can create insights in how the complex process of categorization develops. Understanding the influences of others and oneself on how the place we live in is perceived, how people are a part of it and how it is a part of one's identity creates useful insights for social initiatives related to integration and social cohesion. Fourthly, a more to research component of self-identification is the emotional attachment an individual has with the social network he is part of. In future research, the development of this affective commitment throughout time and the influence it can have of feeling of belonging and place attachment could be researched. The insights on how an individual develops the feeling of being part of a group can be used to understand bonding social capital and its potential for the process of place identification.

Fifthly, it is recommended that further research explores the concepts of bonding and bridging social capital. Specific attention could be paid on what happens when groups reside together for a period, like refugees in an AZC, and it becomes clear that beneficial social networks do not arise within the group (bonding capital), let alone outside the group (bridging capital). Research can be done into understanding how strong social networks with bonding capital develop, and what the characteristics of groups are that are able to develop the beneficial networks, and what are the components of a group that is not able to do so. By conducting a comparative research these characteristics can be defined. These insights can then be used in the development of policies on the situation in the AZCs. Finally, the influence of language and integration courses have to be empirically researched in depth in the future to gain insight in the social value and potential of these courses. This thesis did not allow for an in-depth analysis of language and integration courses, their purpose and content. The empirical data did however indicate how the perceived potential of language courses in creating social networks has not (yet) been optimized. By comparing two groups that are subject to different approaches in the language and integration courses, the best practices can be extracted and implemented in future policy.

#### 6.4. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

In this research on the process of place identification of highly educated refugees and student migrants, several limitations should be addressed.

The field of civil society connected to migration is ever changing. It is beyond the scope of this research to include the broad spectrum of organizations and influences cannot be included but have to be considered as an influential factor. This research is unable to encompass the entire field of civil society and its influences on micro and macro level but has however aimed to incorporate those factors that influenced the highly educated refugees and the student migrants.

Furthermore, the reader should bear in mind that the two years which were needed to complete this thesis were filled with (unforeseen) job opportunities. After finishing the internship at the Society for International Development, I carried out an internship at the Consular and Visa Division at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Working forty hours a week left little time to properly work on the thesis. At the end of the internship I was approached for a job at the MFA to work on the subject of forced (child) marriages. Working part-time created more space in my schedule to carry on with the research. In October 2018 I was finally able to work on the thesis fulltime for 6 weeks, before starting a new job at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Although I am delighted with these career developments, it does mean that writing the thesis became a lengthy process.

Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that due to the lengthy process of the research the societal conditions the respondents were interviewed in were not the exact same. Changing policies and shifting narratives through time have possibly influenced the respondents and their perception of the place and Dutch society.

Lastly, since this thesis had a small respondents group, caution has to be taken when using the results for future research or policy implementations. A larger scale research would lead to more reliable outcomes that can be generalized. Testing on a greater sample is important and can improve the reliability of the outcomes. These outcomes can serve as a starting point for developing both more theory and altered policies in the future.

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## 8. APPENDIX

### ANNEX I INTERVIEWGUIDE

#### **General questions**

- Name, age, gender
- Nationality (How does the respondent define his nationality, does he identify as Dutch or something else)
- What level of education do you have? (Is the respondent indeed highly educated)
- Current occupation (student or not able to study or work)
- Where were you born? (Is the place of birth also considered to be the home country)
- Where have you lived? (Has the person been travelling the world or is this the first time to leave the home country behind?)
- How was the journey to the Netherlands? (Easily getting on a plane or a long, dangerous journey)

#### **Reason to move**

- Why did you come to the Netherlands? (Was it a voluntary choice or was the respondent forced to move?)

#### **Social capital**

- Where are you living now? (Define the location and type of housing, Is it an AZC, ISS housing or general housing)
- Do you feel part of a certain group around you that supports you (in different ways)? (Does the respondent have a social group that he can rely on when it is needed)
- Where do your closest friends and family live? (Is family close by or far away, and how does this influence the ability to create a strong social capital)
- Do you participate in your neighborhood? (Does someone who is involved in the neighborhood have a stronger social capital)

#### **Place attachment**

- What and where do you consider to be your home? (Does the respondent consider the home country as home, or the Netherlands)
- Do you participate in your neighborhood? (Does participating in the neighborhood help to get attached to a place?)

- Where do your closest friends and family live? (Does this influence how attached the respondent is to the place, whether loved ones are close by or not)

### **Categorization**

- Do you feel part of Dutch society? (Do people self-categorize as being part of Dutch society, and why (not))
- Do you feel welcome in the Netherlands? (Do people feel externally categorized by Dutch society and does this influence their process of place identification)

Where do you want to live in the future? (Does the respondent see the Netherlands as a place to live in the future, or is it a stop on a longer journey)

## **ANNEX II QUESTIONNAIRE**

### ***Self-extension***

#### **I feel this place is part of who I am**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

#### **If the place no longer existed, I would feel I had lost a part of myself**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

### ***Environmental fit***

#### **I feel this place is where I fit**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

#### **This place allows me to connect with myself**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

### ***Place-self congruity***

#### **This place reflects my personal values**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

***Emotional attachment***

**I feel a sense of emotional attachment to this place**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**This place has spiritual significance to me**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**This place makes me feel positively about myself**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**This place gives me a sense of meaning in my life**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

***Self-categorization***

**This place gives me a sense of continuity between past, present and future in my life**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**This place makes me feel competent and effective**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0



**Being linked to this place distinguishes me from other people**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**This place make feel in control**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**This place makes me feel close to other people**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**This place makes me accepted by other people**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**This place gives me a sense of security**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**I find this place beautiful**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

***Place attachment***

**My origins are in this place**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**This place has financial importance to me**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**I know a lot of stories about this place**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

**There is a sense of loss when I think of this place**

Strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

0 0 0 0 0

## ANNEX III ATLAS TI CODES

### List of codes used in Atlas TI

Adapting

Age

Arrival in NL

AZC and housing

Back to Syria

Belonging

Buddy

Categorization

connected

Cultural differences

Current occupation

Discrimination

Dutch holidays

Earlier education

Education

Family  
Feeling at home  
Feeling welcome  
Finances  
Freedom  
Friends  
Future plans  
Global elite  
Homeland  
Housing  
Integration  
International bubble  
ISS  
Journey to NL  
Language  
Making an effort  
Meeting locals  
Name  
Nationality  
Neighborhood  
Network  
Opportunities  
Part of Dutch society  
Participation  
Personal history  
QUOTE  
Reason to flee  
Reason to move  
Reunited  
Safety  
Social capital  
Specific choice NL  
Staying in NL  
Time spend in homeland  
Visa  
War

