TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES IN A LOCAL LABOUR MARKET

**An intersectional research on the transnational positions of
female status holders in their Dutch labour market integration process.**

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I. Preface

Dear reader,

In front of you lies my master thesis 'Transnational Identities in a Local Labour Market'. The master thesis is the final requirement to be fulfilled to graduate from my master's specialisation 'Globalisation, Migration and Development' at the Radboud University.

Because the concepts after which my master specialisation is named are strongly related, I wanted to focus on migrants and the role they play in globalisation and development processes. Because my origin is partly Dutch and partly Indonesian, I grew up with elements from both places and the associated cultures. The interrelation of people and places have always been an interest and this has been strengthened by my study programme. Because I have a strong relation with the Netherlands, the country where I grew up and live in, and I also related to my birth country Indonesia, I could say I have a transnational identity where I am engaged in multiple international spaces. I was therefore interested in researching transnational identities and getting a deeper understanding of the influences multiple spaces have on an individual. While reading news about the disadvantaged position of female status holders in the Dutch labour market, I wanted to combine my interest in transnationalism and that in inequality issues. I therefore wanted to focus on the transnational dimension in the economic integration of female status holders. With this research I hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of how transnational relations influence labour market participation.

The writing of this master thesis was a very educative process in terms of learning more about my research subject and in terms of conducting research. Besides the literature study, interviews and observations, I conducted an internship and did voluntary work at VluchtelingenWerk. During the research and writing process I encountered several challenges like narrowing my subject down and doing research during a pandemic. Nevertheless, all these challenges have helped me learn to deal with sudden turns and also improved my skills in writing a thesis and doing research.

Hopefully you will enjoy reading this master thesis.

Lela Heerkens

Nijmegen

November, 2020

II. Summary

The share of labour market participation of female status holders in the Netherlands is extremely low. The total share of status holders who find a job is only 25 percent, of which the great majority is male (SER, 2019; Razenberg et al., 2018). While female status holders may experience labour market barriers due to allochthonous-related issues, they also have to deal with obstacles that arise because of their sex (de Gruijter et al., 2019; Ridgeway, 2011). While research around the labour market integration of female status holders in the Netherlands focus mainly on the local context, this thesis includes the role of the global context.

In 2021, a new integration system will launch and for this purpose several pilot programmes have been set up to look at improvement and success points of the integration system. One pilot programme focuses specifically on female status holders. This qualitative study focuses on these different projects spread across the Netherlands and their participants. With an intersectional approach, where multiple influencers of one's social identity are seen as related, this research focuses on the experiences of the integration process of female status holders with the Dutch labour market. For a more complete understanding of the barriers female status holders encounter, this research wants to gain more insight in the institutional spaces and sociocultural background of these women. The relations female status holders have with people and places outside of the Netherlands must also be taken into account, because migrants often maintain several cross border linkages with their home country (Vertovec, 2003). These transnational connections are part of a female status holder's identity and can therefore have an influence on their labour market integration process. The main research question of this thesis is therefore:

How is the transnational position of female status holders recognised in current policies in the Dutch labour market integration?

The transnational identity of female status holders is visible through the several cross-border relations they maintain on a social, economic, political, religious and cultural level. The cultural and social transnational linkages are the most important relations of the women. Due to their migration to the Netherlands, female status holders miss their friends and family who are living abroad. The social connection through staying in touch with family and friends is therefore the most important relation for female status holders with countries abroad. In terms of the cultural dimension, the women experience the phenomena of transculturation as the cultures of both countries merge together. One cultural norm from home country has a significant impact on their labour market integration process, namely preserved gender roles. These women grew up in a patriarchal society were women are in general assigned the caretaking role of the household and children (de Gruijter & Razenberg, 2019). Being the caretaker of the family can result in multiple obstacles in the labour market. The women have to take care of the children and domestic tasks, while the male is the one working outdoors. Since the male has in general the upper hand in a patriarchal society, his opinion as to whether a woman should work or not is very important. If a husband does not help in the domestic tasks, and a woman also lost her social networks due to her migration, she must take care of the domestic tasks in addition to her job or study. Due to these preserved gender roles it is not always self-evident for women to have some former work experiences or to have a clear idea what their career goals are. If the position of women is mainly indoors, their social network and amount of human capital may become smaller in comparison to the social and human capital of men. Because men have in this sense a head start on the labour market, the Dutch labour market support system developed a structural preference for men. These preserved gender roles from country of origin

therefore still have a strong influence on the social position of women here in the Netherlands. The sex division in turn also influences the social and human capital of women.

These gender roles determine the position of female status holders in multiple contexts. The roles these women play in these contexts are interrelated. Because of the international linkages with people and places in other countries than the Netherlands, the female status holders are positioned in a transnational context. The women also take position in a local context. In the domestic sphere the caretaking role, but the women take also a certain socio-economic position in the Dutch labour market on a local level. The women encounter a disadvantaged position due to the preserved sex divisions from country of origin that still influence their decision making in participating in the Dutch labour market. The women can face difficulties in combining the caretaking responsibilities while working or studying at the same time. In addition, female status holders can experience barriers due to their refugee background. Besides worries about home country, negative preconceptions around refugees, loss of social network, a language barrier and not acknowledging women's skills or former work experience by employers, make it difficult to find a job. As a result, these women experience both refugee-related and gender-related barriers.

All of the barriers these women experience must be seen together, whether it be refugee-related barriers, gender-related barriers, external-barriers or due to their positioning in multiple contexts. While these women are physically located in the Dutch context, their mind might still be in their country of origin. These factors are all part of a woman's sense of identity and feeling of belonging. Their globally oriented identity must be taken into account to fully understand the obstacles female status holders encounter in their labour market integration process in the Netherlands and the underlying structures or processes that ensure this. Because the projects focus on the empowerment of these women, they already have a better recognition of all the barriers these women encounter and the importance of paying attention to those preserved gender roles. Nevertheless, the current Dutch policies around the labour market integration processes of female status holders could do better in terms of recognising the complexity of this issue and the transnational identity of female status holders. This research would argue that taking an intersectional approach which recognises the multiple positions and responsibilities these female status holders have, could improve labour market integration policies regarding female status holders.

III. Acknowledgment

Many people made it possible for me to carry out my thesis. I would therefore like to express my sincere gratitude to the people who have helped me in my research process.

First of all, I am very grateful for my thesis supervisor Lothar Smith. I admire his broad knowledge and his own research experiences, with which he shared the most interesting metaphors and examples about social geographical phenomena with me. Not only do I want to express my thanks for the useful expert advice he gave me to improve my research, but I would also like to thank him in supporting me with the whole master thesis trajectory. He really encouraged me in the process and gave me confidence in the times when I really needed it.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to all of the respondents I spoke to. All of the women that opened up to me about their personal life, their experiences, feelings and perspectives, I want to say I am deeply grateful for your stories and the time and effort you made to talk to me. We have talked about their relationships with their country of origin and the multiple barriers they encountered during their labour market integration process, and your persistence came really forward. In addition, the expert-interview respondents really gave me a good overview of the labour market integration process of female statusholders from multiple perspectives. I was able to get an insight in the projects that are very valuable in improving a whole society. Your expertise and all of the effort you made to support this thesis, like searching for other respondents and enabling observation moments, were very useful. That is why I want to thank the people who also helped me, but with whom I have did not have an interview. These people include workshop coaches, translators and other projects members. I had the nicest and most interesting conversations with all of my respondents, so thank you all for your enthusiasm.

VluchtelingenWerk in 's-Hertogenbosch was my internship (and voluntary work) organisation and I would thank you for your support. Due to the corona virus I could unfortunately not perform the internship optimally, but all of my colleagues gave me a better understanding of the target group and supported me in searching for respondents for my thesis. A special thanks to the support of my internship supervisor Mirjam Klasen. I had a great pleasure working at VluchtelingenWerk.

Also my family and friends deserve some gratitude. A special thanks to my college friends that were not only supporting me mentally, but who also helped me with the thesis process and obstacles in the research process I encountered. All of our endless discussions on how to improve our theses and exchanges of ideas helped me a lot. And lastly, I am of course grateful for the support of my parents, Henk and Lusia, and my brother Indra. My main work place was at my parent's house and I could not wish for a better working environment. Thank you for dealing with all my ups and downs and the endless support and encouragements, not only during my master thesis, but through all of my years of studying and more.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Framework

"The mother is a school;

if you prepare her, you prepare a nation with a strong foundation."

- *Hafiz Ibrahim[1]*

It is the first line from a poem by Hafiz Ibrahim, a famous Egyptian poet, who paid a homage to the crucial role of mothers in educating and raising the future generation. Parents are the most important role models for their children (Ceka & Murati, 2016). Because the mother is often closer to the child than the father, as women are often seen as the carers of the family, she plays a very important role. It is therefore already one of the important reasons why women should have the possibility to use their potentials and have access to education and labour. Empowerment of women not only benefits the family, but it also contributes to the economy and society as a whole (UN, 2016). A woman's influence goes much further than just personal development, her influence can be seen in all kinds of aspects or dimensions on both a local and a global scale.

Despite the fact that it is valuable to educate and empower women, women in the world today do not always get the same opportunities. They still experience inequalities in relation to comparable men (Lorber, 2010). The embedded cultural gender role beliefs where men are assumed having a higher status than women are the explanation of a gender based hierarchy in societies (Ridgeway 1997; Ridgeway 2011; Lorber, 2010). This gender inequality occurs in multiple aspects and dimensions (UN, n.d.; Lorber, 2019). Women and girls have less access to education or health care, they experience violence or sexual exploitation more often and have a harder time working their way up the socio-economic ladder. Not only are they underrepresented in higher employment positions, they also suffer from a wage gap. Disadvantages in education or trainings result in limited opportunities and skills in the labour market, while the contribution of women to the labour market is crucial for promoting economic growth and social development according to the UN (n.d.). The patriarchal ideologies and divisions by gender create unequal opportunities for women in the labour market, especially for migrant women who are often less experienced or educated and therefore more vulnerable (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005).

Also in the Netherlands, especially female migrants experience a disadvantaged position when it comes to the integration into the labour market. According to the SER (2019), only an average of 25 per cent of the adult status holders manages to find a job, but the share of female status holders who participate in the Dutch labour market is substantially lower than male status holders. While immigrants often struggle with issues such as discrimination, language barriers and the lack of having a social network, the unfavourable labour market position of female status holders is also partially caused by the background characteristics of migrant women themselves (de Gruijter et al., 2019; Ridgeway, 2011). Women are often designated to be the carer of the family and will therefore focus more on the caretaking of children and domestic work. On the other hand, the policies of job guidance to get status holders out of the social assistance is also less favourable for female status

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[1] Ibrahim, H. (1910). The Girls' School in Port Said. Retrieved from: https://ijrar.com/upload_issue/ijrar_issue_1985.pdf

holders and more directed to male status holders. Female status holders have a greater distance from the labour market but benefit less from support of labour market integration policies (de Gruijter et al., 2019).

Female status holders therefore experience some sort of 'double discrimination'. They can experience several obstacles in their economic integration because of being a woman as well as being a migrant. This thesis therefore focuses on female status holders in the Netherlands and their disadvantaged position in the Dutch labour market. While traditional gender roles in the Netherlands are currently in lesser extent involved, female status holders often come from countries where preserved gender roles and gender stereotypes play a significant role in the culture of their homeland (de Gruijter & Razenberg, 2019). This makes it less self-evident for female status holders to work. Migrants carry norms and values of their home country and take in the norms and values of the country of destination (Van Hear, 2014). While people migrate, they often maintain several forms of linkages with their country of origin (Vertovec, 2001). This causes migrants to have a connection with home and host country as migrants are linked to multiple places. According to Van Hear (2014), the values and socio-economic characteristics which include an individual's ethnicity, class, gender or age, shape their inclination, capacity and disposition to influence the home country. Refugees are therefore important players in the creation of transnational communities and diasporas (Cheran, 2006). The life of an immigrant, as Lusis and Bauder (2010) argue, is not only found in the host country, but is also grounded in places and communities in their home country. These international relations then influence both home and host country. For that reason, the unfavourable position of migrant workers, are mechanism of processes that also operate beyond the geographical borders of the country of destination (Lusis & Bauder, 2010). Hence, labour market segmentation of female refugees as a disadvantaged group should not only be analysed on national or local scale. To get a full understanding of the labour market integration barriers of female status holders, it is necessary to include a transnational perspective where the interaction between home and host country is also considered. In this research, female statusholders are therefore seen as global characters who do not only operate on local level in the country they have settled, but who are also embedded in their country of origin. Supporting women with their labour market integration allows these women to gain more skills and to develop personally. The embeddedness of female status holders in multiple contexts on both global and local scale are researched and to what extent this is recognised by Dutch labour market integration policies. With the prospect of a New Integration law in 2021, pilot projects have been set up to investigate the issues in the current integration law. The projects investigated in this research are centred on the empowerment of female post-migrants and family migrants. To illustrate the barriers that female status holders experience and what kind of transnational linkages these women have, there is focused at the pilot projects and their participants. With an intersectional approach, where gender, ethnicity and other labour market integration influences are considered, this research focuses on how the transnational position of female status holders with a refugee background can be better recognised in the Dutch labour market integration process in order to contribute to the socio-economic position of these women globally.

1.2 Relevance

The following sections refer to the social and scientific relevance of this master thesis. The societal relevance includes the importance of this research regarding the underlying societal issue. The scientific relevance focuses on the importance of the research in terms of the lack of knowledge in this research topic.

1.2.1 Societal Relevance

Integration of immigrants in the Dutch society has been an important topic on the political agenda for many years (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016). As stated in the introduction, integration has an important influence on the social cohesion. Paying more attention to the improvement of the integration of refugees into the labour market can have a lot of benefits (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2018). Labour market integration does not only have an influence on a social level, it can have benefits for the Dutch economy as well. There can be advantages for companies like economic growth, decrease in certain labour shortages or an increase in innovation. In addition, the well-being and welfare of ethnic minorities can be improved and will in turn decrease the social costs of the state regarding ethnic minorities. In the past year, the Netherlands have seen an increase in the number of asylum seekers and family migrants due to family reunification (CBS, 2019). Because of the growing number of female refugees, it is interesting to see how the skills of these women can be of value in the Dutch economy.

More important are the beneficiary outcomes for these migrant women themselves. Migrants often maintain several transnational ties with their home country (Vertovec, 2001). These linkages with other places, institutions and people across borders can have a considerable impact on female status holders themselves as well as their home country according to Vertovec (2001). Families, communities or localities of migrants in both home and host country can be affected on many levels. The connections between individuals or societies bring change or developments in economic, political, social and cultural landscapes (IOM, 2010; Vertovec, 2001). For example, economic flows of migrants like remittances can contribute to economies in country of origin. Also, other types of mobility of capital like sharing knowledge or abilities are border crossing linkages. The influence of a transnational identity goes beyond just the influence on migrants themselves or their local area. In addition, it is valuable if the integration into the Dutch economy has a sustainable approach so these women can use their gained capital in other countries or places as well. It is not always clear where refugees see their future because some might want to return to their country of origin or are forced to move if their residence permit is not extended. It would be worthless if they would have to start over again or could not use their obtained skills. A growth in an individual's knowledge and expertise can improve their socio-economic position globally.

This research also pays attention to the relevance of gender issues. The disadvantages caused by gender go much deeper. For example, also native Dutch women can experience barriers in the labour market (Merens et al., 2017). Non-western female migrants have a lower labour market participation than male migrants, and research in addition shows that the participation of female refugees is still strongly under-represented within the working refugee group after a longer period of stay in the Netherlands (Razenberg et al., 2018). Female status holders do not have the same opportunities as male status holders. In order to create equal opportunities for migrant men and women it is important to look for ways to support female refugees in their participation in the Dutch society and labour market (Razenberg et al., 2018).

The social relevance of this research will therefore lay in narrowing down the gender gap within labour market opportunities of refugees and will also be relevant because of the possible positive outcomes in the social, economic and financial field of migrant women and the Netherlands as a whole.

1.2.2 Scientific Relevance

Until today, women and girls still experience gender inequalities (UN, n.d.) According to the European Court of Auditors there is a lack of policies that focus specifically on migrant women (Li,

2018). There has been a minimum effort in the identification of problems that are related to the integration of female migrants in the society (Li, 2018; Riaño, 2005). Policies are – not always intentional – more directed towards male migrants, and often policy documents do not make the distinction between men and women. This is despite the fact that gender roles influence women's economic integration in all aspects (Tastsoglou & Preston, 2005). Tastsoglou and Preston (2005) discuss in their article the need for research and literature on the economic integration processes of immigrants, but from the viewpoints of immigrant men and women themselves. Speaking to immigrant women themselves, will give an insight in what they identify as important and what they think is necessary to achieve this.

This lack of research on female migrants also applies to the inclusion of female refugees in the Dutch labour market. Research about refugees often include mainly male migrants. For example, the final report of the project 'Syrische vluchtelingen aan het werk' (Syrian refugees working) argue their under-representation of females in their conducted case studies (de Jong et al., 2019). The main focus on men is partly because there is no attention given to gender related issues, but also because economic integration of refugees is already more focused on male migrants and female respondents are sometimes hard to find. Some organisations like 'Kennisplatform Integratie en Samenleving' (KIS) or 'Movisie' have set up several approaches or recommendations to improve the integration of female migrants in the labour market. KIS set up a report on the labour market integration opportunities and barriers of female status holders in the Netherlands (de Gruijter et al., 2019). In addition, they have set up a guide for municipalities on how to facilitate a sustainable outflow of female status holders and how to offer these women a suitable labour market integration trajectory (Verloove & de Vries, 2020). Nevertheless, research on the needs and wishes of female status holders and the effectiveness of solution directions is very small according to de Gruijter and Razenberg (2019). While these studies focus on how to improve the position of female status holders in the Dutch labour market, they do not include the interconnectedness of these women with multiple countries. Research about the adaptation of forced migrants in the country of destination does often not include a transnational perspective and the relations these people have with various countries, even though transnational relationships also shape the lives of an immigrant (Xiong, 2019). This research wants to contribute to the literature around refugees and the labour market by including a transnational dimension. Also, being a refugee brings certain obstacles in containing transnational relationships. Bakker, Engbersen and Dagevos (2014) argue that refugees could limit transnational practices due to their migration history and migration motive. Sending remittances or possibilities to keep contact with home country are, for example, not always self-evident. The idea of identifying with one's country of origin might also be complicated as some prefer to avoid contact with their homeland because of certain ruling regimes or unpleasant experiences.

With this thesis I want to contribute to the scientific lack of knowledge about female migrants in general. Especially in the field of adding more knowledge in gender related issues in the labour market integration process, while additionally using an intersectional approach to understand the importance of including multiple actors. This thesis lays a focus on the migrant women as global citizens and how their transnational identity has an impact on their economic integration.

1.3 Research Objective

This thesis focuses on the transnational dimension of female status holders in their labour market integration process in the Netherlands. The structures and agencies of female status holders' economic integration are determined and which positions these women take in a global and local context. The goal is to gain a better understanding of the influencers of having a transnational

identity in their labour market integration process and to what extent this is recognised by Dutch policies. By taking in the importance of intersectionality, this research focuses on the barriers that female status holders experience in their labour market integration and participation because of being a woman as well as a being a refugee. This research could contribute to possible insights in decreasing the gender gap and refugee gap in the Dutch labour market by getting a better understanding of the labour market integration issues that need to be taken into account all together. By understanding the influence of a transnational identity in the labour market trajectory of female status holders, a more sustainable economic integration approach could be set up that contributes to the personal development of female status holders as well as the Dutch economy. The main research question is as follows:

How is the transnational position of female status holders recognised in current policies in the Dutch labour market integration?

In order to answer my main research question, my sub-questions will be as follows:

- How do female status holders experience their integration process into the Dutch labour market?
- What kind of transnational relations do female status holders have?
- How are the global and local contexts in which female status holders are embedded interrelated?

These sub-questions all contribute to the main research question. First, I explore the experiences, feelings and perspectives of female status holders with the Dutch labour market in order to gain insight in the labour market barriers. In addition, I focus on the transnational relation female status holders have with other people and places outside the Netherlands. Understanding the women's' positioning and transnational relations gives an insight in the underlying influences or motivations of female status holders in their search for employment and personal development.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The chapters of this thesis are structured. The first chapter introduces the subject and the research goal. In the following chapter, the theoretical framework will discuss the theories and relevant concepts of this thesis which are then presented in a conceptual framework. In the third chapter the research strategy and research methods are presented, including an overview of the background characteristics of the female status holders. The subsequent chapters represent the analysis. Chapter 4 shows the experiences of female status holders with Dutch labour market integration process. The fifth chapter focuses on the transnational dimension in this research and the multiple contexts female status holders are embedded. Chapter 6 is a discussion of Chapter 4 and 5, connecting those chapters, and analyses the positioning of female status holders in the labour market. These analysis chapters are related to the sub-questions in order to be able to give an answer on the main research question in the conclusion. The conclusion chapter finishes with research and policy recommendations.

2. Social Identities in a Transnational Context

This chapter discusses the existing literature and theories on the research topic. First, the concepts of transnationalism and global citizenship are discussed to illustrate the transnational identity characteristic of female status holders. In addition, the importance of intersectionality and what factors play a role in a person's integration process are analysed. There is a deeper discussion on the labour market integration influencers gender, human capital and social capital. The theoretical concepts are illustrated in a conceptual framework which shows how these concepts are related to each other.

2.1 Global Identity

In the globalised world we live in, we observe an increased interconnection of economic, political, cultural and environmental processes (Knox & Marston, 2014). People and places all over the world are getting more connected with each other. Time and space are no longer the major obstacles they used to be. Transport and communication technology caused a rapid increase in international flows, expanding peoples' mobility and strengthening international ties and migrant networks (Czaika & de Haas, 2013). Within this context, the concepts of 'identity' and 'sense of belonging' are often discussed (Delanty et al., 2008). A sense of belonging can refer to the feeling of 'home' as Delanty, Wolak and Jones (2008) explain. However, identity or the sense of belonging can be complex concepts. What does somebody mean by 'home' and how does mobility have an influence on the identity or belongingness of a person? As Munck (2010, p. 1234) states in his article, "*shifting places can lead to shifting identities and new, complex forms of gender, race/ethnicity and communal belongings, forms of identity and repertoires of struggle*". A person can, for example, have a sense of belonging to multiple places or people, where 'home' is the construction of a person's belongingness. A migrant can for example have a sense of belonging with their home country and host country, or even with a transit country. A migrant can, in addition, also identify himself with the people or culture from their home host country. International travel, relationships with people living abroad and dual citizenships are influential pathways in creating a global identity (Amponsah et al., 2016). A global identity can therefore be conceptualised by the consciousness of a global or international community which surpasses national borders, but without necessarily neglecting the interest of the domestic society or nation-state (Amponsah et al., 2016). A globally-oriented person identifies herself with the universal community and shares cosmopolitan beliefs and values. Cosmopolitanism is in this sense considered as the individual's openness towards other cultures and refers to a global identification to the degree of investing emotionally or psychologically in a global community.

2.1.1 Global Citizenship

Citizenship focuses on the membership and the participation in a certain political community (Falk, 1993). People are living within a certain political community and are linked to this community and its citizens (Parekh, 2003). They often have a communal interest in the preservation of the territory, including the stability of their society with their shared rules and rights. As people tend to see the community as their own, they feel a sense of belonging and responsibility for this community (Parekh, 2003). However, in the case of migration, people settle in a different places which can include a different type of citizenship. Migrants often maintain several forms of relations with the country of origin (Vertovec, 2001). These transnational relations are further discussed in the next section. Transnational ties of migrants can produce multiple senses of belonging to other places or peoples (IOM, 2010). Migration can therefore lead to a more globally oriented citizenship. Global

citizenship is concerned with the "*individual moral requirements in the global frame*" (Cabrera, 2008, p. 85). It refers to the cosmopolitan identity of an individual. According to Amponsah, Ahmed, Othman, Harran and Al Khamiah (2016, p. 18) global citizenship can be defined as "*a tension between both a moral thinking and an ethical character that guides individuals or group's ways of understanding local and global contexts and their responsibilities within different communities*". Global citizens therefore focus on (the) global equality with the belief of the caring of others and society as a whole. Cabrera (2008) set up three important elements of a global citizen. First, individuals act like global citizens as they are reaching out to others while crossing international borders and practices, or to internal borders of 'differential citizenship'. Second, global citizens reach out to help the protection of fundamental rights that would be more secured if there is a 'just system' of international institutions. Lastly, the global citizen would help to set such a 'just system' in place. Parekh (2003) explains these globally oriented citizenship elements as the inclusion of examining the nation's policies, the interest in the relation of other nations, and the creation of Carbrera's 'just system' where different countries work together.

2.1.2 Transnationalism

The perspectives on migration processes have changed over time in migration studies. Most academics now recognize that "*migrants, to varying degrees, are simultaneously embedded in the multiple sites and layers of the transnational social fields in which they live*" (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007, p. 130). The idea that migration is a one-way practice where migrants only engage in the country or place where they are settled is withdrawn. In the past two decades, a rise in the development of transnational studies emerged and analyses are focused on a network-based approach. Vertovec (2003) explains transnationalism as the "*variety of economic, social and political linkages that cross borders and span the world*" (p. 641). The literature concerning transnationalism and the ways in which a migrant's life is influenced by the connection with places, institutions and people in the place of origin or by diasporas, is growing. The increased mobility and developments in transport or communication have an influence in cross-border relationships (UNESCO, n.d.). These international relationships create transnational spaces in several fields. As Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) state, transnational practices can be found in cultural, economic, social, religious and political dimensions. Remittances, religious practices, social media, marriage patterns, family obligation, political engagement in host and home country or regularly visits are all practices of transnationalism which link multiple nation states together (Vertovec, 2003). These transnational practices can all be classified under a certain dimension but in reality these dimensions overlap (Mügge, 2016). Transnational practices can take place in both home and host country and the durability or frequency of these activities can vary. When a transnational practice becomes structured and predictable, the practices can be institutionalised (Mügge, 2016). Transnational activities can take place in different levels and on different scales. Transnational migrants connect different places or contexts which can result to certain changes in both contexts (Vertovec, 2003). Therefore, transnationalism has an effect on both 'here' and 'there'. In addition to transnational practices affecting nation states, it also affects the migrant, their family and the communities in the places the migrant lives (Vertovec, 2001). These practices can impact people and societies economically, politically and socio-culturally.

Organisations and individuals who participate in the international relationships reflect the culture of the local community, region or nation (Clavin, 2005). Therefore, the concept of transnationalism is related to the concept of identity. Vertovec (2001) explains this by the transnational networks of many people which are "*grounded upon the perception that they share some form of common identity, often based upon a place of origin and the cultural and linguistic traits associated with it*" (p. 574). Migrants can live in 'transnational communities', where individuals are able to live a dual or 'multiple' life. The migrant's life in a social world is extended to dual or multiple places and

communities. The experiences migrants gather in their 'multiple habitats' build up their cultural repertoire and have in turn an influence on their identity construction (Vertovec, 2001). A locality shows a set of '*identity-conditioning* factors' as Vertovec (2001) posits in his article. The history, stereotypes of local exclusion and belonging, cultural differences, ethnic segregation, socio-economic hierarchies, nature and access to resources, collective mobilisation, regulations, perceptions and the norm and values of a place are all representing the local identity. The multiple contexts together create a 'transnational social space' or 'translocality'. These identity-conditioning factors reproduce a social identity that position the individuals in their everyday life across and within her attached places (Vertovec, 2001). Transnationalism can also shape the identity of countries and local and international institutions (Clavin, 2005). On political level, the national identity and transnational identity are important discussion points. As migrants can feel connected to multiple places, migrants may want to claim membership in both their country of origin and their country of destination by applying for a dual citizenship (Vertovec, 2001). Dual citizenships or dual identities can result in public debates and the rethinking of regulation and rights on themes like transnationalism, migration and the national identity. A discussed topic in host countries is, for example, the consideration of having transnational ties and a poor integration of immigrants. This is further discussed in the next section. It is clear that transnationalism not only influences the identity of people, but also has an impact on multiple spheres. Clavin (2005) refers to the structure of a honeycomb to explain a transnational community and the shaping of identities. A honeycomb connects, but also consists of hollowed-out spots where ideas, organisations and individuals can fade away and be replaced by a new innovation, group or people. In a dynamic process that changes over time, transnationalism shapes the identity of multiple geographical and social spaces.

Transnationalism and integration
Immigration and the arrival of people with a different culture can put a pressure on the nation state to make efforts in order to bound the civil society and strengthen the national borders as "society is threatened to be disrupted by international migration" (Waldinger & Fitzgerald, 2004). In some nations, this resulted in the belief that 'transnationalism' and 'assimilation' are competing theoretical concepts. Because of the politicization and securitization of migration, transnationalism became the topic of a social debate (Mügge, 2016). In which the influence of having a transnational identity on the integration processes of migrants is discussed. Some argue that the transnational ties are weakening the integration of migrants in the country of destination, while others do not see transnationalism as a contradiction of integration. Erdal and Oeppen (2013) established four main positions that illustrate the relationship between transnationalism and integration. The '*alarmist*' position is the first view, where having transnational ties prevents migrants from integrating. Second is the '*less alarmist but also pessimistic*' view. Migrants engage in their transnational relations, as they cannot always applicate their skills in the country of destination immediately. For migrants, the participation in the transnational practices or transnational community can compete with the host society. In this view, transnationalism weakens over time as the value of being a survival method is diminishing (Mügge, 2016). The third perspective is the '*positive position*' where transnationalism and integration processes can be supportive for both (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013). As Erdal and Oeppen (2013) argue in their article, a successful integration of migrants in for example the host country's economy can increase transnational practices. It might lead to an increase in remittances or visits to the home country. The last and most dominant position is the *'pragmatic approach'*. This more nuanced position does not choose between either assimilation or transnationalism (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013). Migrants engage simultaneously in several countries and can therefore be integrated in the host country and still have transnational linkages with their home country or even transit countries. The research on transnational identities and transnational activities that was conducted by Snel,

Engbersen and Leerkens (2006) showed for example that migrant groups who were integrated poorly into the Dutch society do not necessarily engage more with the country of origin than other groups that are integrated well. Identifying with the country of origin or being involved in transnational activities does not have to impede integration. How well a person is integrated could, however, be of importance on the migrant's transnational activities. Engaging in transnational activities can be expensive (Mügge, 2016). Transnationalism requires capital. Not only financial capital, but also social or political capital in terms of skills and knowledge. Migrants who have low socio-cultural, political or economic resources, will likely engage less in transnational activities in some cases. The example Mügge (2016) gives, is that migrants will benefit if they are well integrated in the labour market. The more they earn, the more immigrants are able to invest in the country of origin or send higher remittances. Therefore, integration and transnationalism do not have to be opposing concepts and are even able to strengthen one another. As Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) indicate, the patterns of integration, acculturation and assimilation vary depending on the migrant's context. This means that background characteristics of a migrant, the reason for migration and the political, social and economic context of the receiving and sending communities are all of influence.

2.2 The Economic Integration of Women

This section goes deeper into the literature of some main economic integration influencers. Before I discuss the importance of an intersectional approach in this research, I start with explaining the concepts of 'Sex, Gender and Gender Roles', 'Human Capital' and 'Social Capital'.

2.2.1 Sex, Gender and Gender Roles

Often, the concepts of 'gender' and 'sex' are used interchangeably (Kimmel & Gordon, 2018). However, these concepts have a different meaning and scientists plea for an adequate use of the two terms. As Lips (2017) explains *"sex was used to refer to a person's biological maleness or femaleness and gender to the nonphysiological aspects of being female or male – the cultural expectations for femininity and masculinity"* (p. 5). The misconception of gender is the idea that gender only refers to men and women, and in addition gender is often only used to refer to the category of women (Davids & van Driel, 2015). In fact, gender could also refer to class, sexual preference, religion or ethnicity (Davids & van Driel, 2001).

Gender is a social construct and can therefore be seen as something 'fluid' instead of fixed (Kimmel & Gordon, 2018). There is not a general answer to why men and women behave differently or similarly in various circumstances (Eagly & Wood, 2016). Eagly and Wood (2016) state that gender stereotypes have a central role in society. The behavioural similarities or differences of sexes reflect the beliefs of gender roles. These gender role notions will in turn create people's perceptions of the social roles of men and women in the society they live in. Gender roles are developed through differences in physical sex characteristics, where, for example, men have more physical strength and women carry and nourish children (Eagly & Wood, 2016). Due to these biological and physical differences, certain activities can sometimes be accomplished more efficiently by a specific sex. This can lead to a distribution of tasks that is divided between men and women. As a result, people will assume that certain tasks are mainly reserved for a particular sex. Gender can be acknowledged as a combination of behaviours and meanings (Kimmel & Gordon, 2018). It can therefore have a different meaning to different people or groups in different times and places.

Gender roles can thus be described as the standards or social norms that impose the behaviours, opportunities, responsibilities for women and men (Johnson & Repta, 2012). Women, as Eagly and Wood (2016) use as an example, are often characterised as caring and communal individuals who take up the caretaking of the children and household. Men, on the contrary, are often linked to assertive behaviour and are assigned to the employer role. These in childhood instilled stereotypes and gender roles are reinforced by confirmation processes of expectations during adulthood (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). The family role of women is becoming more important, as well as the working role of men throughout life. Based on these implemented gender roles, men and women make decisions on how much energy they will spend on family and working roles. This 'social role theory' explains the confirmation of gender stereotypes. Men and women reinforce certain gender roles because they act according to the social roles that are divided through gender (Vogel et al., 2003). Social demands are put on different roles that men and women perform. In Figure 1, social role theory is illustrated by Eagly and Wood (2016, p. 465). Above the labour division are the more distal causes like physical characteristics of sexes and also the local economic and social environments. These labour divisions result in beliefs of specific gender roles which are then facilitated by socialisation processes as Figure 1 presents. People's behaviour

Figure 1. Social Role Theory Model (Eagly & Wood, 2016, p. 465)

is then in turn influenced by these gender role assumptions. However, Giddens (1984) structuration theory illustrates the complexity of social phenomena. He posits that *"the constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality"* (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Where social phenomena, also in terms of gender norms, are products by both agency and structures. So, while human agents base their actions on social structures, these actions also serve as producers and reproducers of social structures. Gender norms are therefore dynamic and can differ in various societies.

Assigned gender roles can have an important influence on the labour segregation of men and women. Even though divisions in labour by sex have decreased in multiple societies, some sex differences in labour remain (Eagly and Wood, 2016; Pearse & Connell, 2016). It is not always self-evident for women to be paid equally as men and can it be more difficult for women to acquire higher employment positions. Through unequal treatment and segregated integration, women are disadvantaged in their labour participation. The embeddedness of gender roles in a society can(,) in addition(,) play a role in the discrimination of certain individuals who do not adjust to the prescribed gender roles (Johnson & Repta, 2012). As Pearse and Connell (2016) state, gender norms are not the underlying basis of a gendered economy, but are also not structures that can be seen separately.
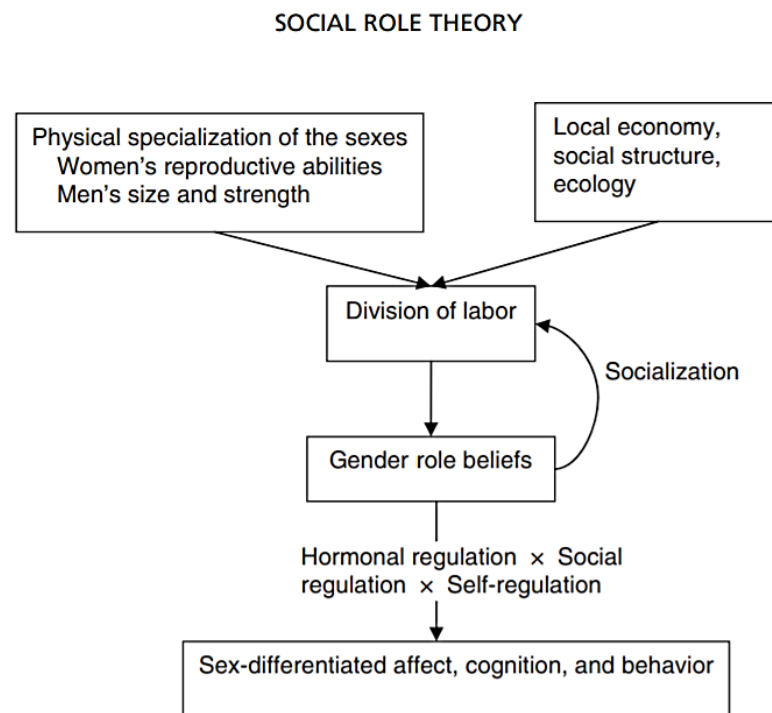
Gender norms are present in social life, social practices and institutions, but (they) vary across societies. However, gender norms can be shown "*not just as attitudes in individuals' heads, but also as embedded in organizational structures and practices, discursive systems, commercial transactions, and collective identities*" according to Pearse and Connell (2016, p. 46). Since gender roles and norms are intertwined in multiple dimensions, it can be complicated or take some time to change gender inequalities in the labour market (Pearse & Connell, 2016; Kreimer, 2004).

2.2.2 Human Capital

The individual qualities of a migrant play a significant role in the process of labour market integration. As de Vroome and Tubergen (2010) state in their article, 'human capital' can explain the refugee's performance in a certain labour market. Human capital refers to all the skills, knowledge, aptitudes, attitudes and other traits that are acquired, in order to contribute to production according to Fleischhauer (2007) and represents a person's capacities. Blundell, Dearden, Meghir and Sianesi (1999) identify three central components of Human capital. First of all, there is the 'early ability', which refers to the skills and knowledges that are innate or acquired. A second component refers to the knowledge and qualifications that are obtained by formal education. The expertise, competencies and skills that are acquired in job trainings are the third identification. Human capital can be important for an individual, a firm and for economic growth (Blundell et al., 1999). A person can grow personally through education or training, which can result in higher wages or better employment. Investing in human capital can have positive outcomes for the company where the individual works for since the qualities of the employers can improve the competitiveness, productivity and innovations of the company. Even the national economy can be improved, as high education is an explanatory variable for the fact that some countries are more developed'

When looking at human capital theory, the relation of human capital and the labour market integration of refugees can explain an individual's success in the labour market by her level of individual skills (de Vroome & Tubergen, 2010). Education, command of the host country language and labour market experience are influential indicators for a refugee's economic integration. Education is therefore an important element of human capital. An investment in education is an investment of foregone earnings and time, in order to achieve higher rates in the future (Fleischhauer, 2007).

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2.2.3 Social Capital

Besides human capital, also social capital must be taken into account. Social capital can be referred to as one's social resources and network structures (Seibert et al., 2001; Putnam, 1993; Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). It focuses on the networking and interacting of people, which can create mutual profits and benefits. Lin (1999) even refers to social capital as the "*investment in social relations with expected returns*" (p. 30). In a broad way, social capital can be seen as a '*collective asset*' that consists out of shared beliefs, values, norms, trust, social relationships, institutions and networks that facilitate a collective collaboration for mutual profits (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009). The whole social capital notion is focused on 'social relationship', of which the most important features are generalised trust, civic engagement, norms of reciprocity and social networks. Norms of reciprocity

refer to the common behaviours, norms and values. These features are cumulative and self-reinforcing (Putnam, 1993). The social networks can for example consist of friends, communities or families, and the trust within these networks is important. A positive collaboration increases trust and strengthens the relationship. This can contribute to future collaborations. In addition, social capital enhances benefits of investments in human capital and physical capital (Putnam, 1993).

The 'collectively-owned' capital that is developed through individuals, has a positive effect on economic development (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Putnam, 1993). Generally, there can be three explanations offered to clarify why embedded social network resources can improve outcomes of certain actions (Lin, 1999). First, there is the facilitation of information flows. As Lin (1999) explains, social relations can provide useful information for an individual to be aware of the current opportunities or choices which would otherwise not be at one's disposal. On the other hand, social relations provide information for organisations about the interest and availability of an individual that would otherwise be unrecognised. The transaction costs will be reduced, since both players will be better informed on the demands and needs of the market. The second explanation is the possible influence of social relations on agents who play a role in the decision-making. Third, the social capital of an individual can be useful for the organisation and the individual can therefore provide or add resources. Social capital can thus be good for lowering transaction costs, fostering trust and accelerating innovation and information (Putnam, 1993). This explains why 'networking' is an often-used strategy of people and organisations. However, there is a difference in types of social networks that must be comprehended. Granovetter (1983) argues the different roles that strong and weak ties play in the search of employment. Having strong or weak ties refers to the level of strength or connection between personal contacts. *"The strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie"* as Granovetter (1973, p. 1361) posits. He argues that weak ties like acquaintances are more useful in finding a job as those weak ties provide more new information and can serve as a bridge to other social contacts. The social network that exist of strong ties like close friends are densely knit as Granovetter (1983) states. Because of this, an individual mainly surrounds himself with knowledge and resources within his own circle. Despite the stand that weak ties are more likely to offer new employment opportunities, there are also benefits of strong ties in the economic integration process. Strong ties provide motivation and assistance and are often better available. The notion of strong and weak ties is relevant in this research. Female status holders' strong ties might be spread across borders and they have to start building a new network, both on a personal and a professional level. The possession of a social capital in the Netherlands is less straightforward for female status holders, but investing in a person's social capital can have beneficial outcomes in the economic integration process.

2.3 Intersectionality
In this research it is important to look at the Dutch labour market integration process from a perspective of refugee women. In the previous sections the concepts of global identity, sex, gender, gender roles, human capital and social capital have been elaborated. Because multiple factors apply to a female status holder's personal identity, it is important to understand the interconnectedness of these concepts in an economic integration process. Recognising the perspective of female status holders can be achieved through a lens of intersectionality.

Gopaldas (2013) explains the concept of intersectionality as *"the interactivity of social identity structures such as race, class, and gender in fostering life experiences, especially experiences of*

privilege and oppression" (p. 90). This means that the social, biological or cultural characteristics of a person intersect with each other and have an influence on the life, experiences and treatment of a certain person or group. The theory of intersectionality was introduced by women of colour in the 1960s and 1970s (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008; Shields, 2008). Black women have been, and still are, victims of social inequalities. Black feminism advocates noted that the interests of black women were not fully included in the women's movements or black movements in the United States (Gopaldas, 2013). These women had to overcome not only racism or sexism, but both. Black women were, for example, limited in the anti-discrimination law when they had to choose between asserting race- or gender-based claims in court (Alberti et al., 2013). These women often had to choose between either race or gender, while they are actually marginalised in both. The women saw a similarity between other social groups that were disadvantaged by multiple elements of their identities in their life experiences (Gopaldas, 2013). Every way of how human populations are categorised is of influence in an individual's life experience. Social class, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, mental health, education, socio-economic status, nationality, history, migration status, family status, age, physical appearance or ability must all be taken into account (Gopaldas, 2013; Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). A 'Mexican immigrant' or a 'disabled elderly person' can face injustices because of the multiple categories they relate to which are disadvantaged. Academics were encouraged to pay more attention to the inclusion of a broader group of women in their analyses (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). 'Womanhood' can be experienced differently by women, because some can thus face different types of oppression based on, for example, migration status or age. Intersectionality explains the importance of the interconnection of gender with other categories of different indicators and identity markers (Davids et al., 2015; Shields, 2008). Seeing gender as a collective analytic frame ensures limitations in a research analysis, because the other factors of a particular group should also be included (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). It is easy to tend to a certain category, which can result to the neglection of other individual aspects that have an impact (Alberti et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to take the less visible dimensions of discriminating factors into account and to understand the complexity of different social identities which pose distinct limitations and problems. It is also important to include an intersectional perspective in multiple levels (Tapia & Alberti, 2019). For example, when focusing on the employment of migrants, it is necessary to look at the labour inequalities from an intersectional perspective. Having a migrant status relates to discrimination, it intersects with the common categories of gender, race and class (Tapia & Alberti, 2019). Policy often fail to acknowledge multiple levels of discrimination. For example, Asian women who migrated to another country can experience discrimination because of their ethnicity or gender. In addition, they can experience a degrade in their socio-economic position because of moving to another country where their knowledge and skills are misrecognised. As policies ignore the misrecognition of their skills, discrimination of these women arises in multiple levels.

Intersectionality has become a central principle in feminist thinking and contributes to the understanding and analysing of gender (Shields, 2008). As Shields (2008) argues, it is important to include intersectionality in research to get a better understanding of other people's worldview and social structures. It can inform policymakers so that they are able to create policies that will not exclude or limit certain marginalised groups.

It has become clear how important it is to include multiple factors of a person's social identity and to understand how these factors intersect. A crucial part in this research is the recognition of intersectionality to become more aware of the position of female status holders in the Dutch labour market.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows the relation between the main concepts in this research and can be seen in Figure 2.
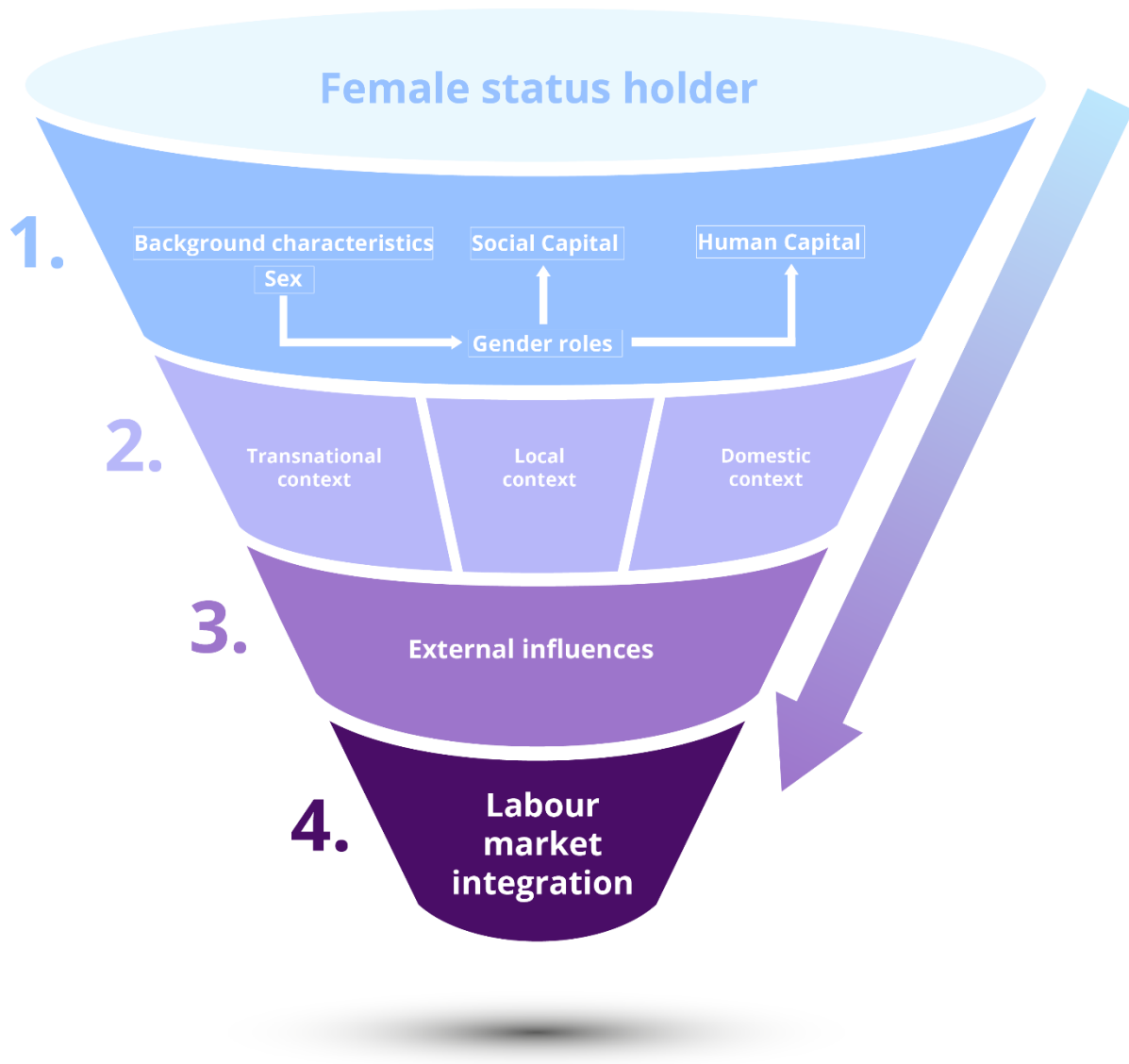
Figure 2. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model can be explained as followed: the model is illustrated as a funnel which is divided into four layers that show the influencing factors in a migrant's labour market integration process. In this case, the female status holder is going "through the funnel" and goes through the next three layers which are referred to as boxes. The fourth and final box represents the actual success the individual achieves in the labour market.

Box 1 shows the personal characteristics of the migrant and therefore the personal influence on its labour market integration process. The background characteristics include the individual's basic characteristics like age, class, marital status, sex or the number of children they have. In addition, there are the social and human capital of the individual which refer to, respectively, the social network and amount of skills, and the person's level of education, work experience or command of

language. The background characteristic 'sex' is highlighted as this is related to gender stereotypes and gender roles. Because gender roles have an impact on social and human capital these concepts are linked. If, for example, a woman is assigned to the care-taking role in the household and therefore misses out on education or work experiences, her human capital will be smaller than her brother who was able to follow education. If one's position in the household in mainly situated at home instead of going out or meeting new people while working, your social network will in addition also be modest.

Box 2 is divided in three parts which refer to the transnational, local and domestic contexts. Female status holders are embedded in multiple spaces, and therefore take position in these different contexts. All of these contexts have an influence on the labour market position of a female status holder as they are related to each other. The global or transnational identity is represented as migrants maintain international linkages with home and host country. Also the local context, the position they obtain in the Dutch society or labour market, determines the socio-economic status according to societal standards. The position the individual fulfils in the domestic sphere refers for example to the position of women as caretaker.

Regardless of the personal characteristics in box one and the multiple contexts in box 2, box 3 refers to external influences which are labour market integration indicators that an individual has no control over. Examples are high unemployment rates, restrictive refugee policies, insufficient access to schooling, public perceptions or a pandemic.

All these boxes are interrelated and must therefore be taken into account together. To make this interrelation more clear, having a transnational identity also affects social capital as migrants will develop networks on a global scale. Human capital is therefore also affected by a transnational identity, because the person obtains knowledge from both home and host country. Having a transnational identity is for this reason also embedded in the labour market integration process. Also the amount of human or social capital may determine the social position of an individual in the local labour market. Preserved gender stereotypes in homeland too can influence the position of an individual in the domestic sphere.

From an intersectional point of view, all four boxes must be considered to understand the barriers or advantages in a migrant's labour market integration process.

3. Methodology

The aim and theory behind this thesis are determined in the previous chapters, the following chapter focuses on the methodology of this research. The methodology is the 'theory behind the methods' and focuses on explaining the methods which are chosen to shape the research, determine the research process and how the collected data is analysed (Vennix, 2011). It is therefore about the 'logic of inquiry' as the methodology goes deeper into the 'why' and 'how' of this research. Firstly, the research approach is explained including the interpretive framework. Then the research strategy is discussed and which research methods are used to conduct this research.

3.1 Research Approach

In order to answer the research question '*How is the transnational position of female status holders recognised in current policies in the Dutch labour market integration?',* a qualitative approach is adapted. A qualitative research approach elaborates the understanding of motivations, relations, and experiences of who and what is being researched. This thesis focuses on female status holders in the Netherlands. To fully comprehend their experiences it was imperative to interview female status holders personally. What their perspective is on the labour market integration process in the Netherlands and to get an insight in their transnational identity. This research wanted to gain more insight in their personal life, their feelings or perspectives on certain things like their feeling of identity or their experiences with the Dutch culture. Additionally, this study argues the importance of understanding the women's view on the labour market integration process as they are the ones following the labour market trajectories. In this case there would be a focus on the experiences and perspectives of female status holders in the Netherlands that would not be sufficiently investigated via currently used surveys. A quantitative research approach where data is captured in categories and numbers would not go into the deeper meanings and motives properly. An in-depth analysis is necessary to understand the influences of gender roles and the transnational identity of female status holders in their Dutch labour market integration process. An inductive approach is used in order to be able to generalize the findings. An inductive approach means seeing a pattern from a number of observations in order to develop a theory (Vennix, 2011). It is the opposite of a deductive approach where a particular theory is tested and the hypothesis is then rejected or confirmed. Because the extent to which the transnational positioning is recognized in the Dutch labour market is examined, statements of participants are studied in aforementioned manner. The patterns of the primary data will try to answer the research question and is therefore executed inductively.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy is important to understand the underlying philosophical assumptions or the 'reality' in which the researcher sees her research (Creswell, 2013). Distinction is made between the ontological assumption, the epistemological assumption and the axiological assumption. Ontology refers to the 'nature of reality' (Creswell, 2013; Saunders et al., 2009). It refers to the lens through which the researcher sees her study and thus what she perceives as reality. The researcher can have a realist believe and think there is only one truth that can be discovered (Killam, 2013). It is free from context and includes objective measurements. However, in this research I take on a relativist approach. The researcher believes in multiple realities which are bound to context (Killam, 2013; Creswell, 2013). The studied individuals and the researchers themselves as well, embrace realities

that may differ from each other. As Creswell (2013) explains, qualitative research often embraces the view of multiple truths as it studies the different perspectives of how individuals see or experience something. When the researcher finds similar contexts of these individuals, she can try to develop these similarities into findings. Ontological assumptions drive the epistemological assumption. Epistemology refers to the 'nature of knowledge' and the relation between the researcher and the researched (Killam, 2013). What knowledge is counted as knowledge and how can this knowledge be acquired. The researcher can view the relationship she has with what is being researched as either objective or subjective. A subjective epistemology fits this research, because the study pays attention to the individual perspectives of female status holders. The researcher tries to acquire subjective evidence from the target group and tries to decrease the distance between herself and the studied participants (Creswell, 2013). This results in personal interaction with and observation of the female status holders to get a better understanding of their views. Then there is also the axiological paradigm and this is directed to the values of the research (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2013; Killam, 2013). As a researcher, one is dealing with her own ethics but also with the ethics of the people being studied. One's values play an important role, because they play a role in one's decision making of the process. In this research is tried to get a better understanding of transnational relations and in addition how a transnational identity influences the labour market integration process of female status holders. With a better understanding if this, can be seen if there are any improvements that can be made in the labour market integration process for these women. So in this case, this research gives value to a more equal economic integration.

These philosophical beliefs are embedded in an interpretive framework (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013, p. 23) makes the distinction between '*social science theories'* and '*social justice theories*' in which philosophical assumptions are generally categorised in qualitive studies. In social science theories, the researcher frames their study through a lens that focuses on social science disciplines. For example, theories about political influences or leadership. The social justice theories are more focused on addressing social injustices and how to change them. The 'social constructivism' framework and the 'feminist' research approach both apply to this research and are explained in greater detail. Because social constructivism is positioned under social science theories and feminist theory under social justice theories, this research takes on two interpretive frameworks. First of all, the social constructivism view falls under the social science theory. Social constructivism is characterised by recognising multiple realities and the interaction with other individuals (Creswell, 2013). For example, cultural and historical norms can influence the lives of individuals (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2013). People have different backgrounds and grow up with different kinds of cultures or under circumstances. This results in people experiencing and developing social realities that differ from each other. Female status holders grew up with a different kind of culture than the women in the Netherlands. With an inductive approach, where interviews, observations and a literature study are used as a method, this research tried to make an interpretation of how these female statusholders see their social reality. How the perspective of these women is shaped by their background and experiences. This study wanted to gain a better insight in the values these women have and what they think is important to understand their needs. The interest lies in the experience female status holders have with their labour market integration process in the Netherlands and how culture or background characteristics influences this process. However, this research also takes on a feminist approach because there is focused specifically on women and the difficulties they can face in their labour market integration process because of being a women. "*Feminist research approaches center on and make problematic women's diverse situations and the institutions that frame those situations*" as Creswell (2013, p. 29) explains in his book. How gender roles are presented in a society can differ. Gender roles in the countries of origin from female status holders can be more traditional

than how gender roles emerge in the Netherlands. This research focuses on the possible patriarchal society of home country in which female status holders grew up and how this influences their economic integration in the Netherlands. Additionally is looked at institutions in the Netherlands that reinforce gender related issues these female status holders face. In this research gender is centred as a main principle that shapes and influences the lives of female migrants. Because values can differ between communities or between women, it is important to understand the values of the women themselves. Growing up in a patriarchal society does not necessarily have to be something negative or 'wrong'. While this research values less inequality between women and men in their labour market integration and a more modern division of sexes, this does not mean that the respondents have the same values. It is therefore important for the researcher to focus on the values of the target group that is analysed. A feminist research paradigm is related to a social justice theory. This also means that this research wants to address the issue of gender inequality in economic integration and make suggestions on how to improve the labour market integration process that better fit the women's needs.

3.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy illustrates the plan to realise the research goal. In this thesis, a case study is chosen as its research strategy. In this section the case study, research sample and the profile of the respondents are elaborated.

3.3.1 Case Study

From a qualitative and inductive perspective, this thesis uses a case study approach as a strategy to conduct the research. A case study can be presented as the examination of a "*contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context*" according to Yin (1981, p. 98). The case study approach is relevant when a certain phenomenon is investigated in order to get a multidimensional and in-depth understanding (Yin, 1981; Creswell, 2013; Vennix, 2011). Questions therefore mainly focus on the 'why' and 'how' in order to get that understanding. Because this research tries to get an in-depth understanding of the labour market integration process of female status holders through an intersectional approach, it is a suitable research strategy. There are different types of case studies. First of all, there is the distinction between an intrinsic and instrumental case in which the difference lies in the intention of the research (Creswell, 2013; Crowe et al., 2011). An intrinsic case illustrates an unique case while an instrumental case study tries to get an insight in a certain issue. Because this research is focused on the multi-faceted issue of labour market integration of female status holders, this research is an instrumental case. This research is about female status holders in the Netherlands who fall in a potential labour force category, however this group is too large to investigate fully for this master thesis. Therefore an embedded collective case study design was used. Thereby the researcher selects a number of case studies to investigate the issue or phenomenon, a collective case study (Creswell, 2013). In addition, the research also analyses several units within these multiple cases. This research focuses on five projects in the Netherlands that specifically focus on the empowerment of female status holders. On the first of July 2021 the New Integration Law will launch. Due to this New Integration Law, various pilot programmes have been set up to gain more knowledge into the effective elements and the opportunities for improvement (Maas et al., 2020). One of the pilot programmes is centred around 'Female family migrants and post-migrants'. In these six pilot projects the goal is to encourage female status holders to participate actively in society. Also, attention is paid to support them in finding a suitable internship or work place. The parties implementing these projects as well as female participants are examined referring to an embedded case study design. The stakeholders of the pilot projects already have a good view on the barriers

female status holders can experience during their labour market integration process. In addition, female participants are stimulated to think about and working on their Dutch labour market integration process. Therefore, the case study is focused on the female status holders who participate in these pilot projects. Because I did an internship at VluchtelingenWerk in 's-Hertogenbosch and they would also carry out a similar project for female status holders, stakeholders from this project are also examined including some female status holders. The project itself was unfortunately cancelled during the time I did my internship because of the corona virus.

A case study is characterised by collecting data from multiple sources (Crowe et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013; Yin, 1981). These sources are further elaborated later in the 'Research methods' section.

3.3.2 Research Sample

As Taherdoost (2016) states in his article about sampling methods in research methodology, it is necessary to select a research sample as it is *"doubtful that the researcher should be able to collect data from all cases"* (p.18). Therefore, a smaller group of the target population is analysed to collect data. Because qualitative research is time-consuming it is important to consider a smaller sample size that is still sufficient to lead to results. Mason (2010) posits in his article that most qualitative research uses the saturation concept to determine the sample size. If at a given moment there are no new findings in the collected data, a point of saturation has been reached. In order to get to this saturation point, certain steps had to be followed to develop the research sample. The target group are the female status holders who are working on their labour market integration in the Netherlands. Because this group is too large to investigate, a two-stage sampling approach was used. In a two-stage sampling approach, clusters are selected that include the target population (Chauvet & Vallée, 2018; Taherdoost, 2016). In the second stage, a sample is obtained from the population inside these clusters. The clusters or the projects frames in this research are the projects as indicated in the previous section. Within these projects female status holders were selected who could represent the participants of these projects. Female status holders outside these projects are not included in this research. This is partly done from a pragmatic approach, because focusing on these projects made it easier to find respondents within this target group. One of the reasons why the pilot projects are developed is because female status holders can be quickly overlooked as they are difficult to reach. In addition, the corona virus made it even harder to find female status holders' respondents. So, to find respondents, female statusholders in particular, a snowball sampling method is used. Respondents from the projects were asked if they knew other suitable respondents. The method was chosen so the threshold for female status holders to do an interview would be less high, because the expert-interview respondents know the female status holders more personally than the researcher. The women that were chosen as a sample are a representation of the project participants. The projects selected these women as they thought these women could use extra support in their labour market integration process. These women have often migrated after their husband, almost finished their civic integration exam and are starting their labour market integration in the Netherlands. This research tried to use a sampling strategy that analyses various respondents in order to represent multiple and different perspectives (Creswell, 2013). To be able to generalise the research to all female participants of these projects in the Netherlands as a whole, the research sample was not demarcated to a specific municipality or background characteristic of a female status holder.

So first, to create an independent sample there is focused on five pilot projects from the national pilot programme for the New Integration Law that are spread across the Netherlands. Five of the six projects were investigated because two projects were geographically really close to each other. Expert-interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the projects and as supplementary data stakeholders of the cancelled project where my internship would be a stakeholder of were

interviewed. Experts with various functions and from different kinds of organisations were interviewed in order to see the different perspectives of the labour market integration process of female status holders. There is spoken to at least one participating party of each analysed project.

There is a difference between stages of the female status holder's economic integration, as some women have already found a job and others have only just started and are still looking for a one. This research tried to select a varied sample of the female participants of the projects. In the case of using a snowball method, the respondents chosen by method could however be biased. The person introducing another respondent can be influenced by its own preferences or by certain personality characteristics of the respondent. For example, a project leader can decide to introduce a female status holder based on her good command of the Dutch or English language. It might be easier to explain this research goal to the female participant. In order to not only interview the female participants who are already further in their economic integration trajectory, this research includes female participants who have just taken their first steps to the labour market. All of the female participants contribute to getting a deeper understanding of the researched phenomenon and can thus contribute to the development of the theory and results (Creswell, 2013). Nevertheless, this research is dependent on the willingness of the female status holders themselves to participate in an interview. For every project there was a minimum of two female participants make inference of its context. Unfortunately, getting number of female status holder respondents was not possible in every situation. One project was still in its early stages and they just met the participants once. They did not feel comfortable asking for respondents in the group during that stage of the project trajectory. Instead one of the project coaches with a refugee background was interviewed. For another project it was no longer possible to schedule an appointment within predetermined time limit. That is also the reason that additional interviews with women were employed. This allowed for supplementary perspectives and insights from female status holders about their experiences with the Dutch labour market and their transnational relations. In the following section the profiles of the respondents are set out.

3.3.3 Profile Respondents

The respondents consist of female status holders and project stakeholders. Their profiles will be explained further in section. It starts with expert-interviews that have been conducted with various stakeholders of the projects. The pilot projects analysed are named as followed: 'We∞Match', 'Yalla', 'Powervrouwen', 'All Women Aboard' and the pilot project in Midden-Drenthe 'Integratie Vrouwelijke Nareizigers en Gezinsmigranten' (Integration female post-migrants and family migrants). In general, the local municipality, VluchtelingenWerk and other local organisations or companies are part of the pilot projects. As their role or opinion may differ from each other a variety of stakeholders were approached to see multiple perspectives on the labour market integration process of female status holders. Expert-interviews are, for example, held with project managers, municipalities, project coaches and local parties. Eight larger expert-interviews were conducted with nine respondents. The respondents of the expert-interviews are L. Yemane (Yalla), W. Colenbrander (We∞Match), R. Watjer (All Women Aboard), M. Heusinkveld (Powervrouwen), A. Geurts and K. Bruins (Pilot project Midden-Drenthe) and L. de Kruijf (We∞Match). From the project in which my internship would participate, interviews were held with M. Klasen and E. Gardenier. Smaller supplementary interviews with three projects were also conducted as some information about the projects themselves was still missing. An additional telephone interview was held with Heusinkveld, Geurts and Colenbrander, that was focused on the project designs and the project goals that are being pursued. For a more detailed information about the expert-interview respondents and the projects, an overview is added in the appendix.

Projects	Yalla	We∞Match	Powervrouwen	Pilot project Midden-Drenthe	All Women Aboard	VluchtelingenWerk
Expert interviews	L. Yemane	W. Colenbrander	M. Heusinkveld	A. Geurts	R. Watjer	M. Klasen
		L. de Kruijf		K. Bruins		E. Gardenier
Female status holders	Abrihet	Miremba	Farida	Winta	Yasmin	Anoush
		Ani	Zahra	Nura		Joyce
						Aisha

Table 1. Overview projects and associated respondents

This research focuses on status holders instead of refugees. This means the women are granted asylum and received a (temporary) residents permit for the Netherlands. Nevertheless, they all came here on a refugee basis. The female status holders belong to the potential labour force population. Which means they are between the fifteen and seventy-five years old. However, the age of the female respondents varied between the 23 and 55 years old. Eleven women were interviewed. The names of the female status holder respondents have been changed so the women remain anonymous. The names used for the female respondents differ from their real name but are commonly used names in country of origin. The women differ in their background characteristics like origin, age, marital status or time of arrival. The overview of the background characteristics is presented in table two.

Name	Project	Nationality	Age	Time in the Netherlands	Number of children	Marital status
Miremba	We∞Match	Ugandan	36	4 years	3 (young children)	Single
Ani	We∞Match	Armenian	31	10 years	2 (young children)	Married
Abrihet	Yalla	Eritrean	55	4 years	4 (adults)	Married
Nura	Project Municipality Midden-Drenthe	Syrian	31	3 years	1 (young child)	Married
Winta	Project Municipality Midden-Drenthe	Eritrean	26	5 years	1 (young child)	Single
Farida	Powervrouwen	Syrian	35	4 years	1 (young child)	Single
Zahra	Powervrouwen	Syrian	39	4 years	4 (young children)	Married
Yasmin	All Women Aboard (coach)	Syrian	23	5 years	/	Single
Anoush	/	Armenian	42	11 years	2 (young adults)	Single
Joyce	/	Ugandan	25	3 years	/	Single
Aisha	/	Syrian	26	7 months	/	Single

Table 2. Profile Respondents: background characteristics

Most of the women followed an educational programme in their country of origin and have some kind of work experience. Only Joyce and Winta had no educational experience after high school or work experience in their country of origin but are studying and working in the Netherlands. This is partly because they were still fairly young when they left their country of origin. Many women were also still studying or had just graduated in their home country when they had to move to the Netherlands. The years of work experience or level of education of the women is diverse. Most of

these women are now in their initial phase of their work integration process. Some are busy with their civic integration and others are starting a new study. In addition, a number of women is doing voluntary work while others have a paid job.

3.4 Research Methods

A case study approach involves multiple sources of data (Creswell, 2013). Triangulation is used, including a literature review, interviews and observation. This multi-method increases the validity of this research. Multi-methods can offer broader perspective and data about the studied phenomenon compared to only using a single research method (Azorín & Cameron, 2010). This research used a literature study, in-depth interviews and observations as research methods that are merged to increase the reliability and validity of this research.

3.4.1 Literature Study

To enrich the analyses and information on the labour market integration of female refugees and transnational relations, a literature study is conducted. As Snyder (2019) argues, making use of already existing research or knowledge is the constituent of all activities in academic research in all disciplines. The already existing literature can act as basis for the development of knowledge and it can provide guidelines as well as contribute to the outcome of the research. Different kinds of literature sources are used as such a base. Literature sources like scientific journals, books, papers, documentaries, reports or policy papers. In the analysis a link between literature with the acquired knowledge and data from primary research is made. Also, the literature study that is conducted for the theoretical framework provides a better understanding of the context of the research topic and reinforces certain outcomes that have emerged from the fieldwork.

3.4.2 Interviews

The main research method used for this study are in-depth interviews. An "*in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation*" (Boyce & Neale, 2006, p. 3).This research wanted to gain more insight in the issues in the labour market integration process regarding female migrants and transnational relations. This method is suitable for this research because the research focuses on gaining a better understanding of different issues, relations and perspectives. An in-depth interview gives the possibility to get detailed data about the behaviour and thoughts of a respondent. A disadvantage of doing in-depth interviews is that it is time consuming (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Conducting interviews, transcribing and analysing the results take some time. Semi-structured interviews were held, since it is an open way to let respondents answer and tell their story. It gives the researcher the opportunity to identify other important things that were not integrated in the interview guide beforehand (Longhurst, 2003). In addition, the researcher is able to shift between questions and can therefore follow the story of the respondent. Because the interview guide is partly structured, the researcher is still able to guide the respondent's information in a certain direction so it will remain relevant to the research. The interview guide started with an introduction of the research and was followed up by some introductory questions. Based on the theories discussed in the theoretical framework, an interview guide has been created with questions that fall under certain themes. The questions were divided in the following themes: gender and gender roles, global and transnational identity, social and human capital and labour market integration. The interview guides can be found in the appendix.

Trust is important during interviews as it allows the respondents to be open about their perspectives or feelings (Salmons, 2011). Before the interview started a statement was made stating that the collected data is treated strictly confidential and is used for research purposes only. To develop more trust, a gatekeeper was used as stated before and it was indicated to the female status holders that it was no problem if they did not want to answer a certain question. In addition, to build a better connection with the female status holders personal experiences of the transnational relations of the interviewer were shared.

The interviews lasted approximately an hour. Due to the corona virus the interviews were mainly online. Resources such as Zoom, Skype and WhatsApp (video)calls were used, depending on the preference of the respondent. Face-to-face interviews were preferred, if it was option, as this method is identified by 'synchronous communication' in place and time and because it is possible to take up 'social cues' (Opdenakker, 2006). It is better to notice the respondent's body language or intonations. In addition, an interview in person could have avoided some technical issues during the online interviews. For example, issues with the computer camera during a video call. Despite the preference of conducting more personal face-to-face interviews, interviews through video calls did not disappoint in providing the benefits of still seeing each other. Taking up most of the respondent's social cues was still possible as the questions the respondent liked and which question they thought were difficult to answer could be noticed. This way adaptation and improvement of the interview guide was possible. One audio interview with a female respondent was executed and it was difficult to interpret the respondent's thoughts. Online interviews did have certain advantages. They were not difficult to schedule and it saved a lot of time. Travel was not needed and mothers did not have to arrange child care in order to do an interview. It was also pleasant that the respondents did not have a problem with conducting an online interview or with recording the interview.

3.4.3 Observations

An important tool for collecting data are observations (Creswell, 2013). With this tool a researcher is able to observe the phenomenon or focus group in the field. Data which can, for example, be collected through joining activities, observing interactions or listen to conversation. Nevertheless, due to the corona virus the intended observation plans were unfortunately unable to be implemented. The internship at VluchtelingenWerk at the location 's-Hertogenbosch started in March. Together with other stakeholders like the municipality of 's-Hertogenbosch and work and development company Weener XL, VluchtelingenWerk would start a project for female status holders. A project like the projects from the pilot programme. Because the project would have been very relevant to this research, I was allowed to join the project. I would then be closely involved in the whole process of the project and I would have been able to observe the female status holders during the workshops or other activities. Unfortunately, the corona virus put a temporary stop to this project, making it unable to implement this predetermined observation plan. So, observations had to be carried out in another way than the actual idea. We∞Match allowed participation in an intercultural communication session. A training for the We∞Match buddies through Zoom. This training presented information about cultural differences and the influence culture has on people's behaviour. The training tries to give a better understanding of the lenses through which people see their reality in order improve comprehension into each other. The speaker dealt with several topics and explained how certain friction between people from different backgrounds could be approached. The general reason for differences in behaviour or thinking is because of the difference in growing up with a so called 'we-culture' or 'me-culture'. Where one is more related to a family-, group-, rural or preserved culture and the other one is focused on the city, modernity or individual. During this session the researcher could be distinguished as a 'complete participant' (Creswell, 2013). Like the other buddies included in the Zoom session it was possible to be part of the discussions during the

training. It must be considered that an online training could be experienced differently if this training was in person. For example, discussion or asking question are easier to carry out in real life. After the training PowerPoint slides and a reader about cultural diversity were received. During the session notes were made.

Furthermore, it was possible to perform another observation moment at the Yalla project during a workshop for the Middle-Eastern group of women. Every two weeks they have a three-hour workshop with a small group of women. There were four Arab speaking women and one woman speak Kurdish. Besides the Yalla coach there was also a translator. During the observation the role of participant observer was played, because of participation at the site of the workshop. During the first hour the women had to make an assignment about their qualities and achievements. The women had to think about what they are good at, where their qualities lie and what the moments were when those qualities came forward. This was intended as an exercise for their labour market integration as it would be useful when writing their Curriculum Vitae or during a job interview. The second exercise was to go outside and to start a conversation with Dutch people. The women had to ask what the Dutch people like the most about the Netherlands and they had to explain that they are new residents and what they would need to know if you are living in the Netherlands. The participant with the highest number of Dutch people talked to, could win a small price. The observation was very helpful to get a better insight in the project design and what kind of assignments the participants had to do. During the workshop notes of the women and the training were made. These notes, together with the notes from the We∞Match observation, are included in the appendix.

3.5 Analysis

After collecting the data of the interviews, observations and literature study, the data was analysed. All of the interviews, after permission was granted by the respondent, are recorded and transcribed afterwards. The following step, as Creswell (2013, p.184) states, is moving to the phase of *"describing, classifying, and interpreting the data".* This research used coding to analyse its collected data. The coding process divides the transcript data into smaller categories, by labelling certain codes to a sentence or specific part of the text (Creswell, 2013). This allows the researcher to bring order in the data and identify possible connections, patterns or exceptions. The coding of the transcript is conducted in the following order: 'open coding', 'axial coding' and 'selective coding' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This order was chosen since open coding starts with a broad analysis of the collected data, followed up by an increased specification in the analysing process with axial coding and selective coding. Coding therefore ensures that data which is abstract first, becomes more concrete. Started with open coding, because open coding analyses the dimensions and properties in the collected data and identifies concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding starts with discovering the main concepts, categories, dimensions and phenomena in the data. Axial coding is the following step in coding the transcripts. Axial coding focuses on the relation between codes where categories are connected to their subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This type of coding forms a more complete and precise explanation of the found phenomenon. For the transcript the same categories were used so it was clear to see the different perspectives on the same subject. The codes were divided in categories that referred to the transnational relations of female status holders and others were referred to the categories labour market integration in the Netherlands. In the appendix these codes and code groups are added. The last step in the coding process is selective coding and focuses on "*integrating and refining the theory*" as Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 124) state in their book. Selective coding searches for the 'core category' which is the explanatory concept or theory that emerges from the analysed data. The computer-based programme 'AtlasTi' was used for this coding process. After this process of coding and making code groups understanding of certain motives,

relations or phenomena was improved. It was possible to see the relations between certain codes and categories and it gave a clear overview of the factors that were important and those who are less important. For example, it was clear which indirect factors influenced the labour market integration of female status holders or their feeling of identity. Figure 3 illustrates the model of analysis, during the coding process the main focus was on labour market experiences and transnational relations. After this relations between the local and global contexts became visible.
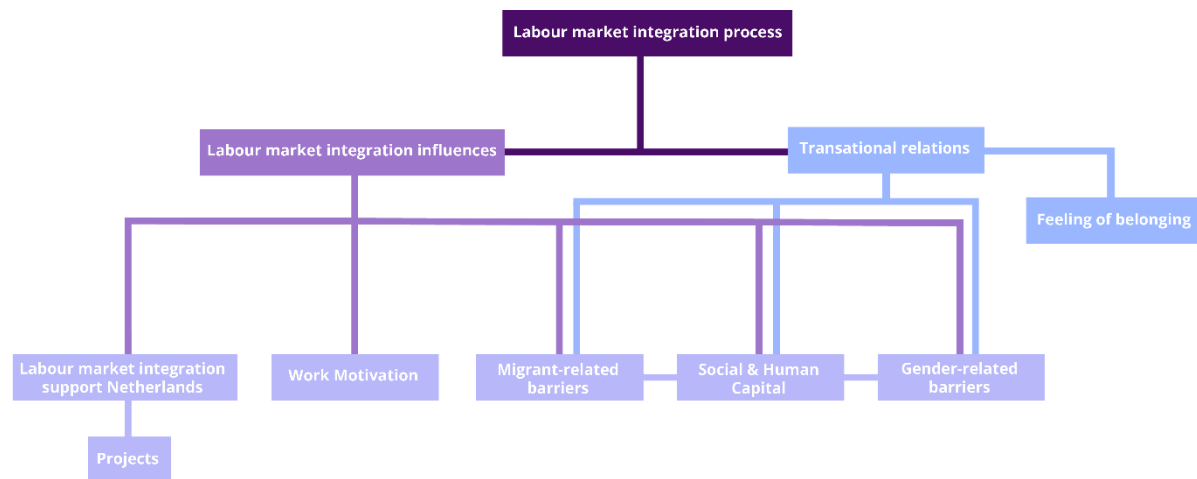

Figure 3. Model of Analysis

3.6 Research Limitations

There are some possible biases that must be considered in this research. These biases could have had an impact on the collected data results. First of all, the research sample is small regarding the target population group that is investigated. It was preferred to interview more female status holders and have more observation moments. The data collection would have been larger which would have been better for the reliability and validity of this research. Furthermore, the sampling method could have some biases. Because the focus was on project participants, female status holders who are left out by the projects themselves are not included in this research. Those are women who, for example, struggle with serious psychological issues or trauma's, who are not able to do some kind of working activity. Because of this, the overview of female status holders who are a potential labour force in the Netherlands might not be complete. However, the projects did not exclude their participants on personal characteristics, so almost all female status holders are able to participate. Another limitation is bias due to a snowball method which could have an influence on this research. The assumption is still that the snowball method was the right approach because of the bridging role of the experts. Female status holders felt more comfortable being asked to do an interview by a person who also did an interview with the researcher and who they already know. However, there may be a bias as some experts indicated it was easier to find female status holders' respondents whom are already further in their economic integration process or who had a better command of the Dutch or English language. Nevertheless, the group of women interviewed was still diverse in their labour market integration trajectory. Despite the biases in this research sample and the dependence on the projects and project participants, it was possible to a varied group of women and get an insight in their transnational relations and labour market barriers. Another bias that must be considered is the possibility of respondents to give socially acceptable answer or if they want to 'prove' something (Boyce & Neale, 2006). The female status holders could have felt the need to give a socially

acceptable answer. Especially with questions about their experiences with the Dutch culture or improvement points for the projects. This may also arise from cultural habits where a contradictory answer is not tolerated. Another option is that they might want to prove or show that they are happy with being in the Netherlands and do not want to complain. Language was experienced as a barrier during some interviews. Interviews were mainly held in Dutch, some in English and a few interviews included a translator. The language barrier was sometimes visible during the interviews with female status holders as some questions or answers were difficult for both parties to understand. Therefore, questions were asked in a simple manner and some concepts were explained beforehand. The setting of the interview could sometimes be difficult. Many of the female status holders are mothers with very young children. During the interviews they had to look after their children as well. This might have been a bit distracting for them. However, doing the interview from their home also contributed to the research observations as it was possible to see their family and to a small extent their role in the household.

In addition to these biases, the influence of the coronavirus must also be taken into account. What no one could have foreseen in advance is the outbreak of the corona virus. The corona virus and the lockdown have had an impact on this research in several ways. Many activities or processes have been put on hold because of the virus. First of all, the internship at VluchtelingenWerk was mostly at home as it started a week before the implementation of the lockdown in March. Also, the initial plan to make observations during the project from VluchtelingenWerk did not go ahead as already indicated in the 'Observations' section. In addition, many projects of the national pilot programme for the New Integration Law were put on hold. As a result, some pilot projects did not start or had only just begun. This had an impact on the female project participants' job search process. Their labour market participation or integration process was also slowed down. Internships, study or work experience positions were temporarily suspended or cancelled. As a result, some women were less advanced in their search for work to have enough experience with the Dutch labour market integration process.

4. Experiencing the Dutch Labour Market

THE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION PROCESS OF FEMALE STATS HOLDERS IN THE NETHERLANDS

"Then I met a woman in the library, there was a language café with a volunteer and they were practising her language. The woman went home and I had a conversation with the volunteer. I thought the woman had been in the Netherlands for around half a year or maybe a year. The volunteer told me she lived here since the nineties. The reasons why she is learning the Dutch language now is because her children can speak better Dutch than Arabic and otherwise she cannot talk to her children. So, it is just the experience with former migration flows that it does not work out if women only stay at home. It is also some sort of moral question, you can see that some women are really socially isolated. You can say this is partly their task to do something about this, however, I think it is partly also the responsibility of the municipality."
(Heusinkveld, personal communication, June 25, 2020).[2]

Basically, everyone in the Netherlands who received a (temporary) residence permit is obligated to integrate into the Dutch society (VluchtelingenWerk, n.d.). In the integration process new residents are introduced to the Dutch culture. This includes learning the Dutch language, norms, values, and other written or unwritten rules of the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the case above shows that integration is not always successful and female status holders are at risk to become socially isolated. To encourage women to participate actively in the Dutch society and put their personal skills and qualities to use, projects focused on female status holders have been set up as introduced in the previous chapters. While Yalla, We∞Match, All Women Aboard, Powervrouwen and the project in Midden-Drenthe slightly differ from each other in project design, the main goal of these projects is to empower their female participants. The project goals are aimed at raising self-awareness amongst participants on their personal skills and guiding them in a more sustainable labour market participation. The projects want female status holders to get acquainted with Dutch culture and the Dutch labour market, in which it is normal for women to participate. The projects is aimed more on improving personal development of the participants and less on decreasing the number of people who receive social assistance. Notwithstanding that this is also an ambition of the project, it is not the main goal as the project will not be seen as a failure if decreasing the number of people in social assistance does not work out. The intention of these pilot projects was in particular to gain insight into the effective elements and points of improvement for this disadvantaged target group in the execution of the new integration system. Before exploring the experiences of female status holders within the Dutch labour market and the role these projects play in this trajectory, this chapter will first illustrate the policies around integration and labour market participation of status holders in the Netherlands.

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[2] Original quote: *"toen trof ik een vrouw in een eh, in de bibliotheek, dat was een taalcafé met vrijwilliger en die was daar ook haar taal aan het oefenen. En eh nou die mevrouw ging weer naar huis en ik had met die vrijwilliger een gesprek. En ik dacht dat die mevrouw een half jaar, misschien een jaar in Nederlands was. En zij woont hier al sinds de jaren 90. Omdat zij, omdat haar kinderen beter Nederland kunnen dan Arabisch ehm… eh ja Arabisch… daarom is zij nu, moet zij nu Nederlands leren, omdat zij anders niet met haar kinderen kan spreken. Dus het is dus gewoon ervaringen van eerdere migratiestromen dat het gewoon niet werkt als die vrouwen alleen maar thuis zitten. Het is ook gewoon een beetje een soort morele vraag hè van, je ziet toch ook wel echt dat sociale isolement bij sommige vrouwen. Dan kun je zeggen dat is ook een beetje eigen eh taak om daar iets aan te doen. Maar ehm… maar deels ook vanuit de gemeente denk ik"* (Heusinkveld, personal communication, June 25, 2020).

4.1 Labour Market Integration Policies.

Status holders are obligated to follow an integration trajectory and pass the civic integration examination. The integration obligation is necessary for obtaining a permanent residence permit and for naturalisation (VluchtelingenWerk, n.d.). Integration is currently being regulated on national level by Dienst Uitvoerig Onderwijs, the education executive agency of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The government considers basic knowledge of the Dutch society and core values such as: freedom, equality, solidarity and participation necessary to participate as a citizen in the Dutch society (VluchtelingenWerk, 2019)[3]. A newcomer who comes to the Netherlands has to figure out for herself how she will arrange her integration. Nevertheless, the integration system does not work well in practice and the number of people that are "successfully" integrated has decreased (Gardenier, personal communication, June 19, 2020). Because the current system is ineffective, the integration system will change significantly. Starting the first of July 2021, a new integration system will be implemented in the Netherlands (Rijksoverheid, 2019). The integration regulation will shift from national level to municipal level and status holders will follow an integration plan which is more tuneable to their individual situation. Starting with an encompassing interview between the municipality and the immigrant will define which route is best fitting. There will be three different learning routes (Gardenier, personal communication, June 19, 2020; Klasen, personal communication, June 17, 2020). There is an 'educational route' which is directed to the needs of younger people and its main goal is to integrate in mainstream education. The second route is called the 'B-route'. The required language level is currently A2, but this will change to a requirement of a B1 language level. The third option is the 'Z-route'. This route focuses on people for whom B1-level is too ambitious. In this route status holders are offered a 'self-reliance route', focused on developing self-reliance. Often, these people have multiple obstacles such as illiteracy, and it is therefore not considered realistic that someone could fully participate in the labour market. So, this trajectory focuses on other goals and smaller steps will be taken to achieve more self-reliance.

The integration trajectory for refugees includes the integration into the Dutch labour market which is related to the participation act in the Netherlands. As Heusinkveld (personal communication, June 25, 2020) explains, the labour market participation policy is closely connected to the participation law. Generally speaking, people who make use of social assistance are guided to work. The principle of the participation law is that everybody who makes use of social assistance must in some way participate in the Dutch society. As stipulated by this law refugees have to participate to the best of their abilities. This also applies to native Dutch people with a distance to the labour market. The municipality assists these people so they can still participate in the labour market. From a legal point of view, there cannot be made distinctions between people in the social assistance as Gardenier (personal communication, June 19, 2020) argues. Even though female status holders are often seen as a subgroup, a work consultant may not treat a female status holder differently than a person who was born and raised in the Netherlands. It would in this sense for example be unfair to give female status holders more space and diminish the obligations to participate, while a Dutch man would be put to a test by finding a job as soon as possible (Gardenier, personal communication, June 19, 2020). However, in the case of refugees, aspects like difference in language or culture must also be taken into account (Geurts & Bruins, personal communication, June 24, 2020). Some municipalities therefore have a special programme or team that specifically focuses on the labour market participation for refugees. For example, the municipality of Midden-Drenthe set up an action plan to strengthen the integration and participation of status holders (Geurts & Bruins, personal communication, June 24, 2020). As for the municipality of Berkelland, they have a social service

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[3] Source from intranet (may not be publicly accessible) from VluchtelingenWerk

employee who is appointed as 'director status holders'. This person does not guide people to work, but keeps an eye on the group of status holders as a whole and steps in when extra attention is needed (Heusinkveld, personal communication, June 25, 2020). There is no special policy aimed at refugees, but sometimes attention is given to the needs of this group in other ways.

The participation law, in its current state, puts pressure on people to work as quickly as possible so that their household stops needing social assisastance (Heusinkveld, personal communication, June 25, 2020). When either one of the two partners or parents in a household finds a job, the file from the entire household will be closed, even if there is still a lack of knowledge about the Dutch labour market. Often, the social services will focus on the male partner in the household to find employment as they tend to have more work experience and will find a job more quickly. So, the percentage of female status holders who leave social assistance is already very low. In addition, when the household is able to go out of social welfare, this is often because the male partner has found a job that provides for both (Gardenier, personal communication, June 19, 2020). As soon as the male partner loses his job, the household must apply for social benefit again. Within the rules of the participation law, both men and women are obligated to make an effort to provide for their own income as Gardenier (personal communication, June 19, 2020) explains. This can cause issues. For example, when suddenly both parents must gain work experience and both need to get out of the house, it can cause organisational problems in the household when there is no one who can take care of the children. Another issue that occurs is the deteriorated use of the Dutch language as women have not actively used Dutch language after finishing their integration trajectory. So, when a household gets out of the social welfare, the purpose of the participation law is achieved. Nevertheless, this does not result in a sustainable outflow of status holders, neither does it benefit the personal development of these status holders.

Female status holders often fall behind because their needs are often unnoticed by the municipality, or the municipality will mainly focus on the male to get a household out of social assistance. In addition to the inequality created by the participation act, these women can experience multiple other obstacles in their labour market integration that are a result of other factors. The following of the chapter focuses on the female status holders' experiences with the Dutch labour market and the role of aforementioned projects in their labour market integration trajectory.

4.2 Labour Market Integration Experiences of Female Status Holders.

Most of the female respondents indicated that it was difficult to integrate into the Dutch labour market. While the women varied in phase of labour market participation, the experiences with the Dutch labour market were in general quite the same. This section explores the Dutch labour market experiences of female status holders.

4.2.1 Obstacles Womanhood Entails

Being a woman can affect a person's labour market integration process in a negative sense. Gender stereotypes could assign women to the role of the children's caretaker. This causes issues when one has to be somewhere like work or a training, while you also have to take care of your children. Especially because female status holders do not have a social network where they could rely on, which they did in their country of origin. Another issue is that a relatively large number of female respondents is single. They got a divorce in the Netherlands or the father was not in the picture. In their country of origin, they often had a partner or family members who helped them with taking care of the children or they did not have a child yet. For these single mothers it means that they suddenly have to take care of their children and provide for an income by themselves. When

Miremba got more responsibilities, besides working she must take on the role of both mother and father:

> *"Yes, I play both. But if you have two parents, I cannot speak for others, but from my own experiences, if you have a partner or someone else you live with it is a little bit easier. Because if you have to do something, the other person can help with the caretaking of the children. If a child does something, you can play 'bad cop/good cop' you know? But here, I have to play both, it can be difficult sometimes." (Miremba, personal communication, June 25, 2020).[4]*

The female respondents indicated that having children was sometimes difficult to combine with their labour market integration or life in general. Miremba (personal communication, June 25, 2020) pointed out the dilemmas you can experience as children will always have top priority. For example, if a child is sick, a mother would like to take a day off. However, it is not possible to keep calling in sick or take a day off from your work every time it is needed. Because Winta (personal communication, July 23, 2020) has a three-year-old child and she cannot leave him with somebody else, she has to take him everywhere. The age of children certainly plays an important role as female respondents with slightly older children indicated that it was easier to focus on work. They can work more or even start a new study like Ani did. Ani (personal communication, June 25, 2020) however, did indicate she experienced some criticism from her eight-year-old daughter:

> *"She said mama, you have become a bit unkind because of your work.*
>
> *You can never be 100 per cent a mother or give 100 per cent for your work. If you do it at the same time. Everything has it's negative and positive sides. So, the past time I have been incredibly busy with my work. So, I am 100 per cent committed to my job, or like 90 per cent with my study. And then, I am not really much of a mother or wife for my husband and children. They notice this too.*
>
> *Because I am reading a lot, I have to take time for my stuff. For example, I get home late from work and I have to prepare something quickly for dinner. So it changed.*
>
> *That is the reason why my daughter said this to me, but I think it is temporary. Right now, I want to show 100 per cent that I am doing great." (Ani, personal communication, June 25, 2020).[5]*

Ani illustrated the influence of changing gender roles on her family. The amount of time she had to do nice things with her children or the time she had for domestic tasks like cleaning and doing groceries, is reduced now that she is studying and working. Because children can be a barrier, the

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[4] Original quote: *"Ja ik speel allebei. Maar las jij, als jij in een twee ouder, ik kan niet voor de andere spreken, maar ik heb alleen een beetje ervaring als ik zeg, als je, je hebt een partner of iemand anders met wie met wie je blijft is het ook makk, is het een beetje makkelijker. Want als jij iets doet, de ander kan ook helpen met de o, o, opvoeding van kinderen. Als eh een kind iets doet, iemand anders... Je kan ook spelen bad cop good cop. Ja you know? Maar hier ik moet allebei spelen. ... Ja is het, ja is beetje lastig."* (Miremba, personal communication, June 25, 2020).

[5] Original quote: *"Ze zei mama je bent een beetje eh onaardig geworden omdat je werkt haha.*
.... Haha [...] dat gehoord. Jij kan nooit 100 procent moeder zijn of eh een vrouw of eh eh 100 procent in je werk geven. Als je dat tegelijk doet, ja iedereen heeft min- en pluspunten. Dus de laatste tijd ben ik ontzettend druk met mijn werk. Dus ik doe echt 100 procent hier. Of ja 90 procent en met mijn studie. En dan ben ik niet zo echt eh echt niet zo echt een moeder of vrouw voor mijn man of de kinderen. Dus dat merken ze ook wel.
Want dan, ik ben veel lezen, dan moet ik meer tijd voor mijn dingen doorbrengen. Ben ik eh ja ik te laat uit mijn werk en dan kom ik heel snel moet ik iets eh eh voorbereiden voor eten enzo. Het is wel veranderd.
En daardoor heb nik zo'n eh w, w, woahwa haha, gehoord van mijn dochter. Maar dat is wel tijdelijk denk ik. Omdat ik nu ben, wil ik echt denk ik 100 procent laten zien dat ik het goed doe." (Ani, personal communication, June 25, 2020).

projects are committed to informing women about the possibilities here in the Netherlands to combine work with children. For example, working part-time or the possibilities of child care. Although childcare is a solution, it is often also causing issues. It could be financially problematic or women do not like to leave their children at childcare out of fear. In homeland it is more custom to leave children with other family members instead of trusting your children to an organisation. To solve this financial issue, the Powervrouwen project for example, provides day care so the women do not have to worry about their children during a training (Heusinkveld, personal communication, June 25, 2020).

Children can also have a positive influence on the labour market integration of female status holders. Women were asked what their motivation was to start a study or work. Besides becoming more independent, being active, personal development or getting out of social assistance, setting a good example for their children was also an important work motivation. As Anoush (personal communication, July 9, 2020) states, 'when my children look at me and see me working and paying my taxes, they are proud. If my children think that I am able to do this, they will be motivated to do the same'. Ani (personal communication, June 23, 2020) indicated that her most important motivation was to become a good role model for her daughter and to show her child that she should become independent and have ambitions regardless one's gender.

In addition, the high dependence on the male that female status holders may have developed in their home country can become an issue. Everyday tasks become more difficult to execute due to growing up in a patriarchal system. Some women may not have a personal bank account and know nothing about the Dutch system as Yemane (personal communication, June 26, 2020) pointed out. Before they can run some errands, the women must first ask her husband for some money. Everything they earn themselves goes directly into their husband's bank account. The male-dominated mentality was recognised by aforementioned projects. Some projects faced some opposition from the male partner or male relatives when a woman participated in a project (Colenbrander, personal communication, June 11, 2020; Heusinkveld, personal communication, June 25, 2020). For example, some men think that a project stimulates women to get a divorce. While the projects are only for women, Yemane (personal communication, June 26, 2020) says it is important to maintain a pleasant atmosphere in the house. It should not be the case that when women who go to these workshops the husband gets the feeling his wife has completely changed all at once. So, to avoid deterrence, Yemane tries to include the male as well if she visits women at their homes. She evaluates the workshop, so the husband will know what is learned during the project. In this way, he can also learn and adapt to the development of changing gender roles within a household. The husband's role in the labour market integration of female status holders is clearly visible in Ani's case. Ani was granted a scholarship in Armenia to do her master's degree. She did not finish it because her husband, who was already in the Netherlands, wanted her to come to the Netherlands. Ani regretted that she did not finish her master. When they got a child, they both decided that she would stay at home as caretaker. At a certain point she thought that her children were old enough, so she could work as this was always been a desire of her. She participates in the We∞Match project and she is now studying and working. Ani's husband was hesitant at first. Nevertheless, Ani insisted on doing it now as it would otherwise be postponed over and over again. Her husband had to get used to the fact that he now has to do household chores or pick the children up from school. However, while Ani's husband used to be against Ani studying and working first, he is now very happy and proud of her. Growing up in a family culture can therefore have an important impact on the labour market integration of women. When Aisha (personal communication, July 12, 2020) was asked in what way her family has an influence on her labour market integration or decision making, she indicated that in the Netherlands

her family did not have an influence, however they might have had an influence if she was still in Syria.

Although the women themselves indicated that they did not really encounter any barriers because of being a woman, they do have to deal with certain labour market integration barriers that arise from preserved gender roles. The pilot projects therefore try to introduce women with another structure of gender roles.

4.2.2 Social Capital

Because the women migrated, they lost their social network in their homeland. This means that they have to start a new life in host country and rebuild a social network which takes time. Because men often arrive in the host country first, they have a head start with building new social networks. Female status holders tend to have a smaller social circle and it is a group in which they only speak their own language (Gardenier, personal communication, June 19, 2020). As a result, they do not get to know new people, but they also do not get in touch with the Dutch culture and the Dutch language. In addition, the only Dutch people they know are often from organisations such as VluchtelingenWerk or the municipality. The female respondents who have been in the Netherlands for a longer period of time do have a larger social capital than the women who have only been in the Netherlands for a few years. Regardless of the number of years these women have been in the Netherlands, having a social network has had a positive influence during their labour market integration. Yasmin (personal communication, June 24, 2020) indicated that all the jobs she found was through her social network. On the other hand, Yasmin also explained that her work built her social network in the Netherlands. So, having a social network has a positive influence when searching for employment, but it has also a strengthening effect when a person expands her social network by working. The pilot projects therefore also focus on increasing the social capital of female status holders, both personally and professionally. Professional networks are very helpful in the economic integration of the women. These projects organise excursions to possible work or internship places. Having personal contacts such as making friends or getting to know one's neighbours is important to feel more at home. By expanding the Dutch social network, the women are able to get a better connection with the Netherlands and with Dutch people. This also applies the other way around, because when Dutch people will get to know the female status holders better, it can change certain prejudices. In some projects the female participants are assigned a buddy or volunteer. This volunteer can support female status holders in getting to know the neighbourhood, learning the Dutch language or inform them where they could go for help or to meet new people. In the Yalla project, an assignment during the workshop was to get in contact with other residents of the city. The women had to go outside and ask Dutch people two questions (Figure 4 & 5). Firstly, what do Dutch people love the most of the Netherlands. Second, the female status holders had to explain they are new in the Netherlands and that they were wondering what they must know when one is living in the Netherlands. It was interesting to see that the women were not shy or afraid to speak in a language they still needed to learn. All women were enthusiastic and they also liked that the Dutch citizens encouraged them to speak Dutch by asking questions back.

Figure 4. Language and social network assignment project workshop 1

Figure 5. Language and social network assignment project workshop 2

Another way these women can get in touch with Dutch people more is through their children. Although children are sometimes seen as an obstacle in the labour market integration process as is mentioned before, children do have a positive effect on the social network of female status holders. Winta (personal communication, July 23, 2020) indicated that she was struggling to make new social contacts. Now that she has a son, she is going out and she takes him to multiple places where she meets new people. For example, she meets other parents through her child's school or at playgrounds. Building a social network on a local level benefits the labour market integration as well as their general integration in the Netherlands.

4.2.3 Human Capital

Human capital aspects came forward as the main reason for difficulties on the labour market according the female status holders. The idea that women mainly stay at home and the man provides the income means that women often have little or no work experience. Also, some women may not have followed education or only finished primary school. As is it not self-evident for female status holders to have work experience, it can be difficult to talk about one's qualities or future perspectives on personal development. As Klasen (personal communication, June 17, 2020) explains: "In the Netherlands we very much assume that you know what you want. You have talked about your future perspective like you education or where you want to work. Your education has a certain purpose as it is a step towards your career goal. However, in a lot of societies those first questions have not been asked to women. Questions like what do you do, what do you want, and what can you do, in order to make it clear for yourself what kind of pathway you want to follow". For example, a country like Eritrea with a totalitarian regime have limited possibilities for a personal development orientation (Yemane, personal communication, June 26, 2020; de Kruijf, personal communication, July 2, 2020). The Eritrean government decides for their citizens. So, it can be difficult for Eritrean women to understand a question about their ambitions or talents as they have never received such a question. The pilot projects therefore focus all on giving the women insight in their own abilities and invest in building these women's self-confidence (Figure 6, 7 & 8). The All Women Aboard project wants women to feel empowered as Watjer (personal communication, June 18, 2020) states. They help women to get to know themselves, so they have a better understanding about what they want and need. Women are guided in the steps they have to take to get to their dream job or how they would even get in touch with the labour market as Colenbrander (personal communication, August 27, 2020) explained. Searching for a job in the Netherlands can differ from how a person should search in another country. Aisha (personal communication, July 12, 2020) indicated that it is

necessary for these women to be more confident about their skills and abilities. Aisha explained that women are often afraid to make some mistakes or they think that women are supposed stay at home. The first thing would be to correct this notion in which women could not do the same as men or are not allowed to work.

WSD Prestation

- Prestation

  Forceful

- This is what I did

  I removed the wall papers and the doors and windows of my house are painted.

- I am proud of this because:

  I thought this was only for men.

- This represents the following qualities:

  Determination, forceful and Practical

Figure 6. Prestation assignment project workshop 1

WSD Prestation

- Prestation

  Determined

- This is what I did

  Even though my children were young, I went to University and followed the major that I liked and I was very good at it.

- I am proud of this because:

  I could continue my study programme and raise my children

- This represents the following qualities:

  Eager to learn, determined, responsible, assertive.

Figure 7. Prestation assignment projects workshop 2

The respondents developed a step-by-step plan for their dream job or future goal. The women lit up when they were asked to talk about their dream job. Women who were already following the direction to their dream job in their homeland, continued their trajectory in the Netherlands to achieve their future goal. They started a study in that direction or they searched for a job in that field of work. Other women developed an idea of what they would like to do, which they did not before because of their forced flight and experiences as a refugee. Many women wanted to do social work and give something back to the community by supporting others. Yasmin's (personal communication, June 24, 2020) dream job is to become a human rights lawyer in order to make a change in the world. Miremba (personal communication, June 25, 2020) indicated that she wanted to work in project management so she can contribute to different communities in the Netherlands and globally. She wants to make a difference these communities to improve not only her life, but also other people's lives or places. According to her, there are a lot of people who are the same as her and who would like to get some help do not know how to get such support in the Netherlands. Several respondents indicated that they would like to help others because they know what difficulties refugees may encounter.

The difficulties on the labour market regarding human capital, are migrant related barriers. Language was the largest obstacle for the women to find a suitable job. It was the main barrier in achieving their dream job and the reason why they did not start searching for a job or education. Besides language there are also other barriers due to cultural differences. For example, in Eritrea it is not

customary to look each other in the eyes as Winta (personal communication, July 23, 2020) indicated. It felt strange for her to make eye contact with people in the Netherlands. Another migrant related obstacle is the issue of certificates and diplomas. Nura (personal communication, July 6, 2020) indicated that not having a Dutch diploma was the main obstacle for her not finding a job. She said it was difficult that in the Netherlands you are required to have a certain diploma or specification. Nura studied English literature at a University in

Figure 8. Project participants working together on an assignment

Syria and would like to become an English teacher. She applied for a couple of jobs regarding teaching English, but she received the answer that they are not able to offer her a real contract as she did not have a Dutch diploma or a teacher's diploma. Nura did some voluntary work so she could gain work experience and she now knows that finding a job in the Netherlands is different than in her home country. In Damascus employers would let you teach with an English diploma, and you can prove yourself through work and experience. The recognition of certificates or work experience of female status holders is therefore an issue. It depends very much on the fact that the Netherlands is degree-oriented and a home countries certificate may not qualify as such. In addition, work experience cannot always be translated to concrete jobs in the Netherlands (Gardenier, personal communication, June 19, 2020). Several expert-interviews indicated that there is also not enough recognition of the skills and qualities of female status holders in the Dutch labour market. Even though these women have disadvantages when it comes to entering the labour market, a relatively small amount of support could have great beneficial impact and resolve these disadvantages as Colenbrander (personal communication, June 11, 2020) indicates. She explains that in the Netherlands we want to give people an opportunity, but it should not take too much time or effort. Not every company sees the benefits of hiring someone with a refugee background. Colenbrander gave the example of women who run their own business, but whose entrepreneurship is not recognised. The respondents plead for more flexibility to prove their abilities. If a person has only one degree for example, but also has a lot of work experience in that domain, that they would be given a chance to show their skills instead of being rejected right away (Nura, personal communication, July 6, 2020). Ani (personal communication, June 25, 2020) also received negative responses when applying for a job application. In one case she was not hired because she was not in possession of a driver's license. She was determined to get her driver's license so she would be suitable for the job. However, after getting her driver's licence she was still not accepted for the job. Ani wondered how she could gain work experience if she has just finished college, moved to another country and does not even get the opportunity to work. She says it would be more helpful if employers keep an open mind and look at the personal qualities instead of where a person is born.

4.2.4 External Influences and Other Barriers

Other barriers also emerged during the interviews. Factors over which female status holders have no control. Someone's surname could be of influence while looking for a job (Gardenier, personal communication, June 19, 2020). Applicants with a foreign-sounding surname can experience discrimination because of it. Prejudices towards refugees or even discrimination make it harder for female status holders to find employment. Female status holders can also lose their confidence or feel uncomfortable in a work environment. Most of respondents indicated they did not experience any discrimination, but they did indicate several misconceptions some people have about immigrants. It can be difficult to deal with certain prejudices that are not true or do not apply. In the interviews, preconceptions came up about migrants always being late, migrants being in the Netherlands only for the money, or people always assume that you have less abilities. In addition, wearing a hijab can also be a reason for certain prejudices. In the Yalla project, the participants started a discussion about finding work in the Netherlands while wearing a hijab. Some women heard from others that it is not possible to find work when someone is wearing a hijab, because they will not accept it. The Yalla coach tried to explain that in most work places it is allowed to wear a hijab and people have no problem with this, but there are always some people who have negative preconceptions about this (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Workshop discussion between coach and participants

There are other external influential factors on the labour market integration for female status holders. One of these factors is the low supply of organisations or businesses who are willing to hire status holders. As Colenbrander (personal communication, June 11, 2020) pointed out, We∞Match is looking intensively for companies that are open or curious about newcomers and want to give these people an opportunity. It can be difficult for employee and employer alike if they do not understand each other's culture. Intercultural communication trainings could be helpful.

Another current important external influence on the labour market integration is the impact of the coronavirus. The coronavirus has thrown a spanner in the works for the projects and economic participation of the women was not stimulated as work experience places were cancelled or postponed. Colenbrander (personal communication, August 27, 2020) pointed out that the economic crisis is developing rapidly and the female status holders are a vulnerable target group.

4.3 Summary

This chapter illustrates the obstacles female status holders experienced in their Dutch labour market integration process. An obstacle female status holders experienced was the difficulty of combining caretaking of the household and children with their labour market integration. These caretaking tasks are, because of pervasive gender roles, assigned to the woman in the household. In addition, the

migration to another country resulted in not being able to make full use of their social and human capital. Their social network is much smaller in the Netherlands and women often deal with struggles in their search for employment because of not possessing a European diploma. While these barriers can be partly resolved by the women themselves, they also face disadvantages that is beyond their control like negative biases or not getting opportunities by Dutch employers to be hired for a job. This chapter therefore showed the multiple barriers the respondent's experienced in their labour market integration process. However, to better understand the backlog of female status holders in the Dutch labour market, it is necessary to include the transnational context which I will explore in the following chapter. Chapter 5 discusses the important influencing factors on the position of female status holders in the Dutch labour market. A better understanding of these influences provides a more complete insight into where Dutch policy does or does not fit well to the labour market integration process of female status holders.

5. Transnational Identities

"Yes, your family and the connection you have there, you will never lose it. I would not want that, it is actually not possible. It is a part of me, it will stay. And, I think that we, if you are raised bilingual or trilingual, or if you are raised with two cultures that is actually a lot of fun!" (Ani, personal communication, June 25, 2020).[6]

The statement above shows that female status holders are embedded in multiple places and spaces. The relationship with country of origin is highly valued and is therefore attempted to be preserved. As came forward in the theoretical framework, the idea of migrants maintaining linkages with their country of origin may result in a debate whether those transnational linkages influence the integration process in a negative way. However, as Ani indicates, the transnational relations she has with her country of origin are part of her identity, a part that will stay.

This chapter dives deeper into the multiple spheres where female status holders are embedded. Female status holders are not only part of the context 'here', but are also part of the context 'there'. Therefore, this chapter will analyse the global context in which these women play a role by presenting the transnational relationships these women maintain. Then the position of female status holders in a local context is discussed by examining their role in the domestic sphere. Chapter 5 goes deeper into the sociocultural background of female status holders to illustrate the role female status holders play in different spaces. By getting a better understanding of their sociocultural background it enlightens the most important influences on the labour market position of female status holders.

5.1 Transnational Relations

Female status holders are part of a larger whole because of their international linkages. In this section the transnational practices of female status holders are discussed. Transnational practices or relations can be found in many dimensions. The political, cultural, social, economic and religious transnational dimensions of migrants are discussed.

To start with the political dimension, the female status holders indicated that they had no political engagements in country of origin. However, de Kruijf (personal communication, July 2, 2020) indicate that this target group has indeed political relations with their country of origin. Especially when it comes to the political influence of the government from the country of origin on the refugees here. The long arm of home country plays a serious role. Those who fled are forced to return as their home country's government threatens to hurt their family (de Kruijf, personal communication, July 2, 2020). Political power from the country of birth can therefore still influence female status holders who are currently in the Netherlands.

When looking at the economic domain, sending remittances is the most common economic transnational connection of migrants. The expert interviews indicated that many status holders send money to their families in homeland. As Gardenier (personal communication, June 19, 2020) indicated, it can sometimes evolve to the point that status holders themselves get in financial trouble

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[6] Original quote: *"Ja je familie en je verbinding wat je hebt daar, je kan het nooit eh… verloren hebben. Dat zou ik ook nooit willen en dat kan ook niet eigenlijk. Dat is een deel van mij, en dat blijft wel. En ik denk dat wij, als je tweetalig of drietalig of eh gewoon eh met twee culturen opgegroeid bent dat is juist enorm leuk!"* (Ani, personal communication, June 25, 2020).

here. They for example send money to their families even though they can hardly make ends meet in the Netherlands, causing them not being able to pay their rent. This stems from a 'we-feeling' (Yemane, personal communication, June 26, 2020; Gardenier, personal communication, June 19, 2020). As Yemane (personal communication, June 26, 2020) explains, female status holders do not live only for ourselves, they grew up in a 'we-culture' in which it is normal to take care of each other. This translates into giving financial support. Despite the fact that the role of remittances came forward during the expert interviews, the female status holders indicated that they did not send money to their families in other countries. The reason was often because they did not have the money to send home to their family even if they would want to. Farida (personal communication, July 15, 2020) for example, does not send money to her mother in Syria, but she said this might change if she has a job. The Armenian respondents, said that they did not send remittances because their families are not in need of any financial help. With the new government in Armenia, they are doing well and they therefore do not need financial support. Ani (personal communication, June 25, 2020) did indicate that she tries to give something to her family in another way. For example, by bringing presents to her family when she visits Armenia. Miremba (personal communication, June 25, 2020) indicated that she still supports her family in some kind of way when there is a certain special occasion like wedding or a funeral. While the general tendency may assume that status holders send a large amount of their money to their families elsewhere, this contradicts with the respondents in this research. Sending remittances does not have to apply to all status holders and it is not only limited to financial flows.

Yemane (personal communication, June 26, 2020) stated that there are also religious transnational practices. Besides status holders sending remittances to their families, they can also send remittances to religious institutions in country of origin. Transnational religious practices can occur, but the respondents indicated that they did not engage in religious practices. Nura (personal communication, July 6, 2020) did mention that religion can play a role as linkage between countries. She gave the example of Middle-Eastern countries, who can feel a strong connection because religion or cultures are very similar to each other. She doubted whether this also applied to the Netherlands and Middle-Eastern countries. However, religion can link migrants to country of origin and country of destination as Levitt & Jaworsky (2007) posit. Fellow believers in a host country can unite people as well. This was also what came up during the interview with Zahra and her translator. At the time of the interview, Eid Mubarak was coming up and this is usually celebrated with family and friends.

> *"Because look, in the street I am the only Kurdish women, the only Muslim women here. For example, if it is Ramadan, I fast. If the Eid Mubarak is coming up, I celebrate Eid Mubarak. However, none of the Dutch people are coming to me for coffee for example. Maybe they are not aware of the time, or maybe they do not have the time to come to me. In Syria, we would all fast together, celebrate together with family and friends. Yes, that is all going to chance." (Translator interview Zahra, personal communication, personal communication, July 27, 2020).* [7]

Zahra's translator, who also fled Syria, indicated that she missed this connection which she might have had if other people from her street were also religious.

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[7] Original quote: *"Want kijk, ik ben hier in de straat bijvoorbeeld. En ik ben alleen Koerdische vrouw hier, moslimvrouw. Bijvoorbeeld. Als je komt vast van Ramadan. Ik ga vasten. Als komt Suikerfeesten, Suikerfeesten. En niemand van Nederlandse mensen komt naar mij voor kopje koffie bijvoorbeeld of beetje eh… Ja want hun weten misschien de tijd niet. Misschien hebben hun geen tijd om naar mij te komen. Maar in Syrië wij zijn allemaal samen vasten, samen feesten. Met de familie met vrienden. Met ja, dat was bij ons allemaal dat gaat veranderen."* (Translator interview Zahra, personal communication, July 27, 2020)

While political, economic or religious transnational practices did not really emerge in the lives of female status holders, cultural and social transnational engagements do. When it comes to cultural transnational relations, aspects from both home and host country merge together and therefore result in a transculturation. When different cultures come together, old categories or habits break down and new ones will be created (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Not only will female status holders mix their own culture with the Dutch culture, but Dutch citizens will also meet other cultures. As Colenbrander (personal communication, June 11, 2020) indicates, many female status holders often have the feeling they have to adapt and only learn from the Netherlands, but it should be much more of an interaction. Dutch people can also learn a lot from female status holders and their culture. She noticed the love for being together or the love for cooking is much stronger among the non-Western women. The food culture, that is more important in the cultures of these women, also has a transnational dimension. Anoush (personal communication, July 9, 2020) for example, exchanges traditional recipes with her colleagues. Cultures are introduced to each other and mixed together through food. On the other hand, mixing cultures or the adaptations to the Dutch culture can also cause tensions. In addition to a long political arm from homeland, there can also be a long cultural arm, in a negative sense. Klasen (personal communication, June 17, 2020) gave the example of Turkish refugees she knows, who fled because of their religious preference. They were granted asylum, but they did not feel comfortable. They were sometimes fearful, because they were checked by the Turkish community in the Netherlands on their behaviour. Anoush (personal communication, July 9, 2020) gave an example about tensions caused by the influence of the Armenian community and Armenian culture. Anoush use to have an unhealthy marriage. She wanted a divorce, but it is not socially acceptable in Armenia for the wife to divorce her husband. When Anoush came to the Netherlands she indicated that she realised it is socially more acceptable to get a divorce. Her ex-husband, however, did not accept the divorce and this had a large impact on their son. For boys it is different, explains Anoush: "You cannot say that you no longer want to be in contact with your father. It is not acceptable and other Armenians will not accept this". Her son was therefore always under great pressure of his father, which caused him a lot of stress. It shows how cultural norms and values can have an influence on status holders and might cause tensions. The difference in gender role culture has also an influencing aspect. It is common that marriages of status holders break down in the Netherlands (Colenbrander, personal communication, June 11, 2020; Yemane, personal communication, June 26, 2020; Gardenier, personal communication, June 19, 2020). How gender roles play out in the Netherlands can differ from the gender roles in the female status holder's countries of origin. In the Netherlands, gender roles are less pervasive and this might affect a household. The role of the women can change. In the country of origin, a woman can be the 'boss' indoors as Yemane (personal communication, June 26, 2020) illustrates. The husband will work outdoors and does not support the women with the domestic tasks. However, in the Netherlands, the roles between man and women are less separated and the responsibility of the household lies with the mother as well as with the father. Which means that the male must also be able to take the children to school, cook or clean the house when the women is for example working or studying. If men are not taught how to do this, it will cause arguments and conflicts at home. Raising children can become harder because of such conflicts.

The Dutch or Western culture may also change the perspectives of female status holders about women or gender roles in general. There are men who are very traditional and who do not agree with a new division within the household (Colenbrander, personal communication, June 11, 2020). They do not want to help out in the household or want their wife to work. While female status holders, now that they are in the Netherlands, may feel they want to work or study and get the chance to do so. The husband might think that the woman is becoming rude or disrespectful

(Yemane, personal communication, June 26, 2020). This is mainly a problem stemming out of ignorance, causing controversies in the household and eventually leading to divorces. For years, roles in the household have been determined in a certain way in which culture plays a significant role. When this interaction in the household suddenly changes due to migration, it can disrupt the entire balance in a household (de Kruijf, personal communication, July 2, 2020). The examples show how cultural aspects from home country and host country can influence status holders both in their behaviour and viewpoints. The domestic sphere of the respondents is further discussed later in this chapter.

Female status holders talk with their families and friends about culture. Anoush for example, shares a lot with her Armenian friend:

> *"So yes, I have a best friend and she lives in Armenia and we talk every night. I tell her everything, about the culture here and she always asks a lot of questions. So she wants to hear the cultural differences from me. What are these things in Dutch for example, they want to know about the Netherlands, so I try to tell them everything. (Anoush, personal communication, July 9, 2020).[8]*

Anoush in addition indicated that she prefers Russian television programmes, films and music. Although she did not necessarily feel personally related to Russia, she still has a cultural connection to Russia through television and music. Transnational relations of female status holders are not limited to home and host country. Preserving the culture of the country of origin of female status holders remains important. Considering the many memories of their time there, Aisha (personal communication, July 12, 2020) stated that is was really important for her to always have that connection with her birth country. Culture therefore remains a constant actor in the life of female status holders. They are confronted daily with the Dutch culture and the corresponding cultural differences. Female status holders pass on their cultural heritage, which can be in terms of raising your children bilingual or even exchanging traditional food recipes. There is a mixing of cultures, but with the condition of retaining the homeland's culture.

Social transnational relations were pointed out as most important. As these migrants flee from their country of origin, they often leave a lot of social contacts behind. While many migrate from a war-zone like Syria, not all people flee. Some decide to stay in their homeland while seeing almost all of their family members, friends, neighbours or other citizens leave (Al-Kateab & Watts, 2019). Besides the fact that female status holders leave loved ones behind in their homeland, other family members and friends are spread over different countries around the world. It is also common that only one member of the family migrates and other family members travel afterwards. People are separated from each other because not everyone's mobility is in the same direction. Yasmine (personal communication, June 24, 2020) even indicated that she has a larger social network in the Netherlands as everyone in Syria left. Aisha's (personal communication, July 12, 2020) family is dispersed. While she stays with her parents and brother in the Netherlands, her other siblings live in Germany and Turkey. Many separated families and households have not seen each other for years and do also not know when they will be able to see each other again as Zahra and her translator pointed out.

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[8] Original quote: *"Dus eh ja, ik heb echt beste vriendin die woont in Armenië en wij praten elke avond. En ik vertel alles aan haar en cultuur van hier en zij heeft altijd veel vragen tegen mij. En eh… Dus zij willen ook verschillen horen van mij. Ja, wat is eh, bijvoorbeeld deze dingen in Nederland en uh ja zij willen ook heel veel horen van mij. Dus ik probeer bijna alles vertellen tegen hun.*
Ja, ja over cultuur, over maatschappij, over mensen, over alles ja. Ja, dus zij weten ook veel via mij." (Anoush, personal communication, July 9, 2020).

"We miss our families, I do, she does. The feelings we have of this makes us cry. It is a little bit difficult for us. We are broken, one piece is here, the other piece is there. I am here, my family is there. I have not seen them in seven years. She has not seen them in four or five years. In our heart we have this feeling…" (Interview Zahra, personal communication, July 27, 2020). [9]

There could be several reasons why status holders have not seen their families or friends in years. One of the reasons that hinder status holders to do so are Dutch regulations. When a refugee has a valid residence permit, however not yet the Dutch nationality, he or she can get a refugee passport to travel to other countries except for their country of origin (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). Since the female status holders cannot actually see their family and friends in person, they use communication resources like WhatsApp, to stay in touch with their families. The frequency of talking with family members and friends varies per person. While some talk almost every day, others call a few times per month. In addition, it makes a difference whether the female status holders have the opportunity to maintain good contact with the people in country of origin. Ani (personal communication, June 25, 2020) has the opportunity to go on a holiday to her home country. Winta (personal communication, July 23, 2020) on the other hand, indicated that it was sometimes difficult to communicate with her parents as they do not always have Wi-Fi in their Eritrean village. She calls them a few times a month so they both know things are going well. Social media is therefore an important source that connects female status holders with other countries.

Female status holders share stories, experiences and knowledge with people across different countries. The women share their experiences on cultural differences, their daily life in the Netherlands or how their search for employment is going. Social media also ensures that information is circulated quickly. Social media has an impact on their thoughts of country of origin. A lot of people are feeling a bit two-faced because some of their family and friends who still live in country of origin and could be in danger (de Kruijf, personal communication, July 7, 2020). As soon as something happens in the country of origin, it can have a major impact on the female status holder (Heusinkveld, personal communication, June 25, 2020). Colenbrander (personal communciation, June 11, 2020) noticed this in the training sessions of We∞Match as well. A while ago there was a conflict between Erdoğan and the Kurds. A lot of women from We∞Match were devastated. These women did not want to come to the training sessions or were constantly focused on their phone. It was experienced as very complicated if one resides in the Netherlands, while relatives are struggling in home country. Colenbrander (personal communication, June 11, 2020) also got the impression that status holders want to show their families they are doing well so family oversees do not have to worry about them. The desire to confirm the perception that people in homeland have about what living in the Netherlands is like and to show their families it was the right decision to flee.

"Yes, like things are going well here, there is nothing to worry about. Look, we have a good life, it was the right choice that I fled. All of the remorse and regret about this is kept for themselves. This is very common, the shame culture can be strongly present. People feel ashamed and they also do not want their families to worry. I had this boy, he has had his coming out here in the Netherlands. It was insanely though for him. Nevertheless he said: 'I would rather bite my tongue off than tell my mother. Because my mother who… you know…'

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[9] Original quote: *"Wij missen onze familie, ik ook, zij ook. En eh onze gevoel is beetje eh wij kunnen niet zonder huilen. Is beetje moeilijk voor ons. Wij zijn stukje gemaakt. Een stukje hier, andere stukje daar. Zij ook, ik ook. Ik ben hier, mijn familie is daar. Ik ben zeven jaar hun niet gezien. Zij vier jaar vijf jaar. Maar wij hebben eigenlijk. Onze hart is… binnenkant is beetje onze hart is gevoel […]."* (Interview Zahra, personal communication, July 27, 2020).

'Because A, that I am gay and second, because she has to know that I am doing fine. So, I have to make sure I pass my study programme. I have to show her my good grades. That is important you know. I have to show that I am successful.' And I think that this is very difficult for many people. It weighs heavily on people's backs." (Colenbrander, personal communication, June 11, 2020).[10]

It is important to keep contact to keep a close eye on everything in country of origin, and if necessary to try to help them out as Abrihet (personal communication, July 27, 2020) says. Female status holders will try to support their families and friends to the extent they are able to. It shows that these women are socially strongly involved with their homeland and will also try to take on a care-taking role for them whilst being in the Netherlands. This is why is very important for female statusholders to be able to communicate and stay in touch with their social contacts. Family and friends are sorely missed and it is crucial for them to know that they are safe and well. Or as Anoush (personal communication, July 7, 2020) indicated, she did not need to be sad that her family is not with her in the Netherlands, because she is able to have good contact with them. The personal relationships female statusholders have are the most important connections with other countries.

5.2 Gender roles in a Local Contexts

The global context, where female status holder are a part of has an influence on the position of female status holders in a local context. Female status holders take position on a local level which is strongly influenced by their sex and position as a refugee. As indicated before, cultural relations with country of origin remain important. As female respondents grew up in a patriarchal society where a male-dominated mentality has the upper hand, this mentality is still present in their domestic position in the Netherlands as well as a more present division between gender roles. Because gender roles in the Netherlands are less divided, more traditional gender roles can cause some issues here (de Kruijf, personal communication, July 2, 2020).

As gender roles may vary in different places, the female respondents indicated that sex divisions are more nuanced. Despite the preserved gender role norms, this does not mean that women always stay at home and only men go to work in homeland. Even though the dominant place for women is indoors, there are also a lot of women working as well (Aisha, personal communication, July 12, 2020; Nura, personal communication, July 6, 2020). As Aisha (personal communication, July 12, 2020) indicated, it is possible that some work places prefer male employees or women are not always paid the same salary. It can also make a difference if you lived in the city where more women work or come from a rural area. The composition of the family also differs per household. For example, women who are happily married here also indicate that gender roles are more or less the same in their household. Household chores or the care taking of the children are also carried out by their husbands. There are also women who do not want to work as they do not think it is necessary if their husbands work as Farida (personal communication, July 7, 2020) indicates. Gardenier (personal

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[10] Original quote: *"Ja, van het gaat hier goed, er is niets aan de hand. Kijk we hebben een mooi leven, het is goed dat ik heb gevlucht. En alle wroeging en alle spijt wat ze erover hebben houden ze voor zichzelf. En dan zie je dus ook vaak dat, dat, dat, de, de, de schaamtecultuur sterk kan zijn. Dat mensen zich soms schamen. Eh als ze niet helemaal. En ook ze willen gewoon hun familie niet bezorgd maken. Ik heb een jongen gehad, die heeft zijn coming out gehad hier in eh, eh, in eh Nederland. En die had het waanzinnig zwaar. Maar die zegt: ik bijt nog liever mijn tong af dan dat ik dit aan mijn moeder vertel. Want mijn moeder die eh… weet je wel. Want A […] dat ik homo ben en twee ze moet weten dat het goed met me gaat. Dus ik moet zorgen dat ik mijn studie haal. Ik moet goede zo, cijfers laten zien. Dat is belangrijk, weet je. Ik moet laten zien dat ik succesvol ben. En ik denk dat dat voor heel veel mensen juist heel zwaar is. Dat dat ook zwaar is op de rug van mensen."* (Colenbrander, personal communication, June 11, 2020)

communication, June 19, 2020) pointed out that it is common that the gender role division in the household comes from women themselves instead of only the male. There are women with the perception that the male has to take care of the income and it is therefore the male's duty to find employment. While some may think preserved gender roles derive from religion, conceptions around gender roles stem mainly from cultural norms. The perception of gender roles also varies, gender roles in Uganda and Syria were already less strict than in Eritrea and Armenia. Yemane illustrated the role of the male in the house:

"In any case, in the Eritrean culture the male has the upper hand. If your father is at home, you have to be quit as a child. He will have a special chair that is only designated to the father. The father will sit there and the mother will make him Eritrean coffee around the corner. The children must behave as much as possible. So yes, we have a completely different view about our fathers which does not fit here at all. However, it still happens here." (Yemane, personal communication, June 26, 2020).[11]

The respondents were assigned the caretaking role in the household in home country. For some women, the caretaking role was slightly less because they were still children themselves or were still studying in their home country. Despite the fact that many female respondents indicate that few women worked in their country of origin, it was noticeable that the respondents did have a job in their homeland. Nevertheless, this meant that women still had to carry out their household and caretaking duties in addition to their job. Abrihet (personal communication, June 26, 2020) worked full-time in the care-sector in Eritrea. Whenever she got home, she still had a lot of responsibilities like cooking dinner, cleaning and everything else that had to be done. As she said, she had two roles in Eritrea. Besides having the role as a care-taker in the house, she also had to work and provide for an income. Zahra (personal communication, July 27, 2020) indicated that she quit her job as soon as she got married. So, preserved gender roles are certainly present, but they are more of an indicator instead of a fixed point.

Migration to the Netherlands brought changes to the composition of gender roles in the household. The respondents had a less male-dominated household and they were given more freedom. Nevertheless, it differs per woman in which way the composition of the household changed. For some women it became easier as the household tasks or the care-taking of the children were more divided between mother and father. Some women took the opportunity to work or start a study here. Partly because it is an obligation by the Participation law. Most women indicated that they cherished being in the Netherlands because they felt less restricted and they have the feeling everybody is equal here. In addition, the Dutch lifestyle can also be a bit easier in practical terms (Abrihet, personal communication, July 27, 2020). The lifestyle here is easier as one can go to the supermarket and does not have to prepare everything themselves. For others, the move to the Netherlands meant more responsibilities or obligations. Yasmin (personal communication, June 24, 2020) for example, explained that her mother used to be the responsible one in the household, but these roles were turned around when they came to the Netherlands. Because her mother did not have a good command of the Dutch language yet, Yasmin was responsible for translating all kinds of documents and the asylum procedure. After her mother learned the language she became more independent and Yasmin moved out. Another part of the female respondents had to deal with more

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[11] Original quote: *"Sowieso man is in Eritrea cultuur de baas. Als jouw vader thuis is dan moet iedere kind stil. En hij krijgt een speciale stoel alleen voor je vader, daar gaat vader zitten en de moeder gaat om de hoek Eritrese koffie maken. En de kinderen moeten zo braaf mogelijk zijn. Dus ja, wij hebben een hele andere beeld over onze vaders en die past totaal niet hier. Maar het gebeurd nog steeds."* (Yemane, personal communication, June 26, 2020)

responsibilities in terms of taking care of their children while missing the support of their social network.

Even though the composition of gender roles in the domestic sphere has changed, the female status holders still attend to the care taking role of the household. Not only the responsibility towards their children plays a role in their labour market integration process, but also the influence of the male is still visible in the decision-making of their labour market participation. The changing environment in which female status holders operate caused some issues in the balance of the household as Ani's case showed in Chapter 4.

The role female status holders fulfil in the domestic context also affects their role in the Dutch labour market. Because of these gender role divisions, female status holders are less present in the Dutch labour market as they stay mainly indoors. In addition, there are also the obstacles due to migrating to the Netherlands such as losing their social network or not having a command of Dutch language. As came forward in the previous chapter, the skills or qualities of female status holders are often undermined. In addition, negative prejudices about refugees, other cultures or religious expressions cause that female status holders have a harder time finding employment despite their level of education or work experience. Female status holders are therefore judged both on their status as a woman and their status as a refugee which results in a lower social position of female status holders in a local context. The role of female status holders in the local context as well as the global relationships they sustain, contributes to their sense of identity which is discussed in the following section.

5.3 Sense of Identity

The concepts of feeling of belonging or sense of identity are related to transnationalism (Antonsich, 2010). People feel at home in a certain place or certain group of people. Migrating to another country can bring change in the sense of identity of a migrant and in the place where a person feels at home.

Most of the female status holders indicated that they feel connected to both their country of origin and the Netherlands. As emerged in the previous sections, the cultural and social dimensions play an important role in the respondent's connection with their homeland. Personal relationships are the most important thing that contribute to their feeling of belonging to a certain place. In addition, women grew up there and this was perhaps their only 'home' or place they felt connected to before they fled to the Netherlands. Fleeing their home country, they might have lost things important to their way of living. Things like their belongings, their home, work, the language and the culture they grew up with. This was the reason why Winta (personal communication, July 23, 2020) did not feel personally connected to the Netherlands.

Although most women still feel a strong connection with their country of origin, most of the women would not want to return to their country of origin. They would like to visit and see their relatives, but their future lies in the Netherlands. Their children are the main reason for this as many of their children are very young and will grow up here. They are going to school, they will find a job and they have a good command of the Dutch language. The Netherlands is a perfect country to build a future according to Ani (personal communication, June 25, 2020), especially for your children. What must be taken into account, is that country of origin can be totally destroyed or all of the female statusholders belonging are 'gone' (Watjer, personal communication, June 18, 2020). Zahra (personal communication, July 27, 2020) raised the question: 'What are we going to do there while our

children stay here? We sold our houses, our shops are gone and are out of money, what do we have to do there'. So, sometimes there may be nothing to return to. Some women have been in the Netherlands for several years busy building a future. Anoush (personal communication, July 9, 2020) indicated that if she tries to imagine what it would be like to return to her home country, it would mean starting from scratch again.

5.4 Summary

Female statusholders play a role in multiple contexts both locally and globally. The role these women play in these various spaces have an influence on the social position of female status holders and their labour market integration process. In the domestic sphere the women obtain the care taking role. They have to fulfil these responsibilities in addition to their work or study. Besides the role they take up in the domestic sphere, they also stand on a certain 'lower' social position within the Dutch labour market because of their sex. In addition, they experience labour market integration barriers because of being a refugee. This chapter clarified how female status maintain multiple transnational ties and what role that plays in a global context as well as local context. These transnational relations are part of their identity and give a more complete overview of their sociocultural background. By better understanding their sociocultural background and their situation it is more clear what important influencing factors are on their labour market integration process. In the following chapter, I discuss the impact of their sociocultural background and their labour market situation and how this impacts their social positioning in the society.

6. The Positioning of Female Status Holders in the Dutch Labour Market.

"I would like to continue studying. Because, as I see it now, I would like to return to Eritrea and live there in the future. However, I am not certain what will happen in the future. Even if it is for a certain period of time, it is not like I would not give my full attention here. No, I want to do what is best for me and my child and his future. I will not give less attention because this might be temporary. No, I will not do that. Because, I am not certain when I will return to Eritrea. Or if I would ever return at all." (Winta, personal communication, July 23, 2020). [12]

Even though Winta would like to return to Eritrea one day, this does not mean that she would not pay full attention to her integration and participation trajectory in the Netherlands. The belief that the relationship with the country of origin can hold status holders back in their Dutch integration or participation is contradicted by the female respondents. Transnational relations with homeland are part of their identity and will therefore not disappear because they are living in the Netherlands. In addition, most women see their future in the Netherlands which includes integrating in the Dutch labour market. The feeling of belonging is therefore complex. Many migrants experienced the phenomenon of deculturation and acculturation. Each interplay with this phenomenon, causes an inner conflict about the old and new culture as Kim (2008) posits. These conflicts will eventually lead to a more balanced sense of identity as it is a dynamic process and changes over time. In the previous chapter female status holders indicated that they felt related to both their home and host countries. However, if they would have to make a choice to which country they feel connected the most, it was not a given which country took the upper hand. Several aspects must be taken into account in their decision making. Many women indicated that they were happy with their lives in homeland. They were surrounded with their family, friends, their job, their own culture and all of the familiarities. However, the Netherlands brings them safety and tranquillity. By having to miss the familiar over there, and coming into contact with the unknown here, many feel like they are in the middle of multiple countries or even not related to a place at all like Yasmin (personal communication, June 24, 2020). Nevertheless, the stories of the women showed how their displacement weakened over time as they got to know the Dutch language, the people in the neighbourhood and the Dutch system. This evolution towards a more balanced sense of identity is a result of a more active participation in the local society or labour market. Their participation resulted in a better balanced sense of identity and is one of the reasons why it is important to invest in the supporting of female status holders.

The opening of this chapter illustrated the complexity that female status holders struggle with because of being part of multiple spaces. In addition it shows how certain investments in participation can ensure a better balance over time. This complexity can also be found in other aspects of the positioning of female status holders. The dynamics of existing conditions and the multiple environments in which these women play a role are further elaborated. While the previous

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[12] Original quote: *"Ik wil wel graag verder gaan studeren. Want ik, als ik nu zie, wil ik wel graag in de toekomst in Eritrea gaan wonen. Maar ik weet ook niet zeker wat er in de toekomst gebeurd. Ik zou niet willen van dit is voor bepaalde tijd en laat ik gewoon niet voor volle attentie geven. Nee, ik wil wel gewoon mijn best doen voor mij en mijn kind en zijn toekomst. Maar ik ga niet zeg maar minder attentie geven van oh dit is voor bepaalde tijd. Nee dat ga ik niet doen. Want ik weet niet zeker wanneer ik terug naar Eritrea ga. Of ik zou ook misschien nooit meer gaan."* (Winta, personal communication, July 23, 2020).

chapters analysed the experiences with the Dutch labour market of female status holders and the institutional spaces, this chapter discusses what this does for the social positioning of female status holders in the labour market. It is important to look from an intersectional perspective that illustrates the interrelation of certain developments, processes or barriers in the labour market integration process of female status holders. The most important criteria in the decision making of these women in the labour market and how their social position could be improved are discussed.

6.1 An Intersectional Perspective

In order to better understand the position of female status holders on the labour market, it is necessary to also understand the position they hold in other environments as these multiple spaces interrelate.

The relationships female status holders have with other places or people are of influence on their labour market integration process. Concerns about family and friends in the country of origin can be an important barrier to the labour market integration of female status holders. As Watjer (personal communication, June 18, 2020) is saying, women are emotionally involved with their homeland and they have a lot of concerns and thoughts about the past or about their families. Watjer was often told by women that their heads were full of worries. These worries have a negative impact on mental health and make it more difficult to concentrate on building a new life in the Netherlands or learning new things. When Farida (personal communication, July 15, 2020) came to the Netherlands, the war in Syria was very severe. Farida's family and friends were still in Syria. Farida indicated that she needed to take some rest to get her mind off the war in Syria and her anxieties. She feared that her mother's apartment would collapse because of bombs and missiles. After her flight to the Netherlands, she lived in the asylum centre which she did not like, and she was ought to learn the Dutch language and pass the civic integration exam. She also had to apply for social assistance which put her under the participation act. It was hard to focus on her integration and education when her mind was in Syria. Farida indicated that it was impossible for her to move on without having recovered from her stress. Being able to have a good connection with one's country of origin or places where loved ones live, is necessary for female status holders to ease their concerns. In addition, family and friends abroad can also encourage the intrinsic motivation of female status holders. Family also supported the women in their labour market integration process in terms of motivational messages or helping her out with payments. Financial support therefore also goes the other way around. Miremba (personal communication, June 25, 2020) indicated that having social contacts abroad might be useful if an employer asks for a reference from a former employer in homeland. In addition, Watjer (personal communication, June 18, 2020) indicated that the female status holders could ask a friend about their qualities to become more aware of their own abilities. Nevertheless, social contacts that are located abroad have less influence in finding employment than social contacts in the same country, so building a social network in the Netherlands remains useful.

The transnational relations also provide a mobility of capital on a global scale, as many women share their experiences and knowledge with family and friends abroad. The mobility of capital is especially visible in cultural field as elements from both cultures are integrated in a person's life. What female status holders will learn in the Netherlands about skills, knowledge or cultural differences affects so much more than just themselves or their families. Perspectives or ideas about certain habits or structures can change. The female status holders will remain loyal to their own culture, but they will also try to add the Dutch culture into their lives. As a result, they are constantly looking at how they can use their knowledge and qualities of both cultures and countries in their new life. On the other

hand, the people in country of origin may also use this knowledge to apply it in their homeland. Yemane tries to pass on the importance of this to the female status holders during the workshop:

"I always say: 'if you think you will get rich in the Netherlands, I can already tell you that is not going to happen easily'. There is not that much money here, but what you can do here is learn a lot. So invest in educating yourself so you will be good at something, gain knowledge and you can use this wherever you go. If we return to Eritrea, they can take this knowledge with them and use it there. If we are in the Netherlands, we can use it here." (Yemane, personal communication, June 26, 2020).[13]

Ani (personal communication, June 25, 2020) already had some ideas about how her mobility of capital could add something to the economy of both places. Ani would like to start a new business in Armenia with a new product that she developed with the knowledge she gained here in the Netherlands. She has for example this idea of bringing a building material from the Netherlands to Armenia. As she posits, the Netherlands are more developed in this area and she would like to take this knowledge to her home country. It would be possible to modernise Armenian products if this material is produced there. On the other hand, she indicated that Armenia has really good wine and it could be a good idea to import this wine to the Netherlands. Ani therefore thinks it would be positive if a global perspective will be kept in mind and the relation between her home country and host country would be stronger. These women with a transnational identity therefore bring different spaces and places closer together.

To further elaborate on the cultural elements that are transferred, the position women take in their home country is an important influencer for the socioeconomic position of the female status holders in the Netherlands as indicated in Chapter 5. These respondents grew up in a culture where women in general take up the caretaking role. Even though a number of shifts are taking place in the domestic domain and gender roles become less divided, the women remain the main caretakers of the family that resulted from homeland's cultural norms. Both male and female contribute to the distribution in the household as women also partly allow themselves to be pushed away in that particular position. Especially in a household with children, it is often assumed or collectively decided that the woman will take on most of the caretakes tasks which will be at the expense of their labour participation. In addition, this decision is also evident in the Dutch society as Dutch households assign the responsibilities of the children to the mother. Klasen (personal communication, June 17, 2020) indicated that when a child is sick at a day-care the mother is often contacted first. Because of this assumption that the woman is the caretaker, the day-care may unknowingly fortify these gender roles. It causes women to be hindered during work as they have to pause their work to provide caretaking of their children. If women at all are able to work aside from their domestic duties. Given that it female status holders have more barriers to work as it is, the assignment of continuous childcare makes it even harder. Additionally, it is not always self-evident that these women are aware of the possibilities of child care. Usually they are not in the position to get external help. This is because female status holders often lack a social safety net due to their migration. Family members who would take care of children in their home country now cannot do so. While some female status holders may fear leaving their child at an organisation instead of their family, the respondents were actually pleased with the opportunity of day care as they were able to focus on their labour market

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[13] Original quote: *"Ik zeg ook altijd: hier als jij denkt dat jij in Nederland rijk wil worden, kan ik jou nu al vertellen dat gaat niet zo makkelijk gebeuren. Hier is er niet zo veel geld, maar jij kunt wel heel veel leren. Dus investeren om iets goed te leren, kennis te maken en dit voor altijd te gaan gebruiken waar jij ook naar toe gaat. Als wij terug gaan naar Eritrea dan kunnen zij die kennis ook meenemen en gebruiken daar, en als wij in Nederland zitten dan kunnen wij ook gebruiken."* (Yemane, personal communication, June 26, 2020).

integration. Nevertheless, the issues raised were often financial. The question also remains whether female status holders are aware of all means of assistance due to their language deficiency. What came forward during the internship at VluchtelingenWerk is that many female status holders have difficulties with understanding the letters they receive concerning taxes, day care, social assistance or obligations. Because female status holders have difficulty understanding this information, they may lack information such as entitlements of child benefits. This in turn influences their decisions in their labour market participation.

The people surrounding female status holders in the household and family spheres are important. The role of children and the male in the household play an important role in the labour market integration trajectory as came forward in Chapter 4. The age of children and the level of contribution made by the male in the domestic tasks are important indicators as they could for example decide how many days a week a woman can go to work. In addition, the opinion of the male about a woman studying or working also affects the labour market trajectory. Not only the male or husband, but also family members are a significant influencer in the decision making of female status holders. The family culture becomes more prominent in the decision making in the labour market participation of female status holders. A woman will ask herself how her family will be affected if she makes a certain decision. She might even include religion into this. She will think about how this will affect her own family. If I make these decisions will my sister still be able to get married or will my father be judged or addressed in the prayer hall? She will not only take into account her own wishes, but the wishes or the expectations of her family will be of great influence.

Then there is also the position female status holders occupy in the Dutch labour market. Human capital of female status holders is often not recognised in the Dutch labour market as they are not seen as expats whereby employees are less open to their skills from homeland (Beckers et al., 2014). Where the qualities of expats are recognized, status holders gain fewer opportunities because of the negative prejudices native Dutch people have. In addition, work consultants put female status holders into a certain position in which women are, according to them, available to participate in the labour market. Female status holders are often expected to volunteer first, which is good for gaining experience. However, it sometimes leads to frustrations as they themselves would like to have a paid job in order to get out of social assistance and to provide for their own income.

Cultural sensitivity is sometimes also hard to find. Yemane (personal communication, June 26, 2020) stated that we are not aware with what kind of target group we are dealing: "We have no idea who these people are, where they come from, why they came to the Netherlands and what they all left behind". As Yemane explains, it is often forgotten that refugees have to go to the IND after their flight. If the refugees obtain a residence permit, they must quickly learn the Dutch language, integrate in society and integrate into the Dutch labour market, but there is no attention paid to their health or well-being. While refugees might want to give the impression they are doing fine, these people are full of trauma. Traumas they experienced in homeland, but also on their journey to the Netherlands. It is hard to tell how someone feels inside or how or what the state of their mental health is. A healthy mental state is however very important in order to focus properly on a labour market integration trajectory as the case of Farida illustrated. So, Yemane indicated that we should pay more attention to the mental health of refugees and have a better understanding of the target group we deal with. In addition to obvious cultural barriers such as language, less obvious obstacles also play a role. As Winta pointed out in Chapter 4 that in her culture it is not polite to look at someone when they talk. The barriers female status holders would already encounter for being a refugee, whether it is external influences like prejudgements or cultural barriers, gender-related barriers are placed on top of that. When it comes to gender equality, the Netherlands scores worse

on a number of points than other wealthy countries (College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2020). There are for example relatively few women in management positions and a large part of women work part time. A lower social status of women in the Dutch labour market in general, makes it even harder for female status holders to break through these issues.

Policy is operated with different speeds of ratio and stability. As has been stated earlier, in the Netherlands it is assumed that you thought about your career path. If this is not always self-evident or if someone is struggling with mental-health, he is expected to learn much faster than he is capable of. The Netherlands also invests in these migrants, but on the other hand, it is also encouraged that refugees return to homeland if possible. Often a local perspective is taken into account in terms of investment and the expected return. The idea is to support a status holder, and it is expected that they in return participate in the local labour market for example. However, there are different ways or scales where status holders can make a return of investment. Through transnational connections can investments also be made on a global scale. Or, when moving to another city in the Netherlands or Europe, a return in investment could be seen from a national or European level. Investing in social or human capital is in this way less focused on a local scale or from a Dutch perspective, but as an investment in a personal development.

Female status holders have to deal with different influences in their labour market integration process that all interact with each other. All these influences and different contexts influence their decision model of labour participation. That is why it is so important that all obstacles are viewed together and not separated from each other. To give an example, Figure 10 illustrates an interpretation of a women with multiple barriers that must not be seen separate.
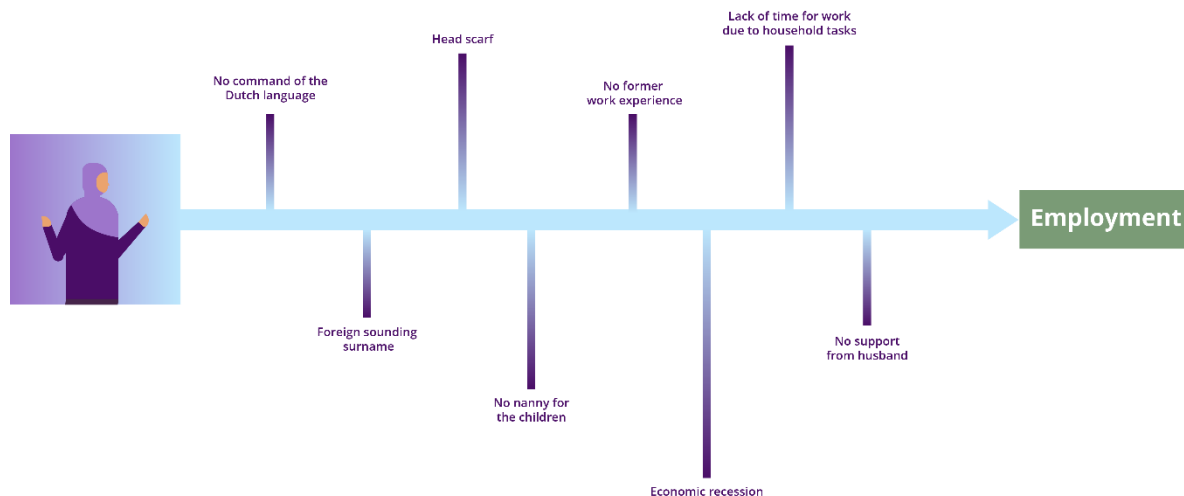

Figure 10. Example labour market integration barriers female status holder

If female status holders are not given opportunities, it will be difficult for them to participate in the labour market. As it is more difficult to have grip on the external influences, support focused on personal barriers would be better achievable. Female status holders may have a view of the barriers from their allochthonous state, but less on the barriers formed indirectly by preserved gender roles. Because they themselves have no total insight into the causes of the barriers caused by this, they are less able to make a decision based on all influences. In the field of personal migrant-related barriers, it is perhaps more a matter of practice and getting to know the Dutch culture. Barriers can be reduced through education, support and will also become less over time. In terms of gender-related

barriers, female status holders deal with a larger debate around female emancipation. Because the caretaking role is sometimes very much ingrained in the households, it takes time to change the view on gender roles. Cultural norms around gender roles or a social systems in which these female statusholders grew up, cannot be suddenly turned around completely. In addition, her image may change, but in order to prevent problems in the household, other family members will also have to adapt to the changing gender roles and the different tasks that accompany them. Changing a whole mindset on the importance of being independent and the benefits of working takes time and effort. It involves multiple people within their circle to change this perspective on gender divisions.

6.2 Summary

This chapter discussed the positioning of female status holders and how the global and the local are related. As this chapter illustrated is that female status holders deal with multiple processes that exist in various scales and with different speeds of ratio. All of these processes are of influence on the ability of these women to make a certain decision. It is important that policy combines all of the barriers and influencers of the labour market integration process of female status holders. For this, it is important to recognise the sociocultural background, mental state and obstacles like language barriers or gender roles. In addition, less obvious obstacles must also be taken into account. For example, not being aware of child benefits due to the language barrier or deeply rooted cultural norms and judgements of family members that could determine a women's career direction.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Summary of Findings

Female status holders are embedded in global and local environments and maintain cross-border relationships through different domains. The cultural and social transnational connections are seen as the most valuable by these women. The transnational relationships that take place and are preserved are part of these women's identities and have an influence on their positioning in multiple contexts on both local and global level. The multiple positions these female status holders take have an influence on their labour market participation in the Netherlands.

This research took on an intersectional approach to better understand the position of female status holders in their ability to access the Dutch labour market. At this moment the local participation is considered to be below the expectation of the Dutch government given the resources injected into the labour market integration process. (SER, 2019; Razenberg et al., 2018). The reason for taking an intersectional approach that also combinates a transnational perspective is because this helps to unravel how these women are able or unable to sufficiently integrate into the Dutch labour market. This is based on the research of scholars like Gopaldas (2013), Shields (2008) and Samuels and Ross-Shyeriff (2008). See section 2.3 in the theory chapter for further elaboration.

Anticipating the new integration law in 2021, pilot projects have been set up that examine the obstacles in the current integration process of newcomers. Several projects focused specifically on female status holders and were committed to the emancipation of these women and supporting them in their labour market integration. To analyse the labour market integration process and the position of female status holders in multiple environments, in-depth interviews were conducted with various project stakeholders as well as the participants to include the perspective of female status holders themselves. In order to explore the complexity of the interaction between the global and local context, I started by looking at the experiences of female status holders with the Dutch labour market in Chapter 4 and analysed the transnational relationships and the positioning in multiple contexts of these women in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 discussed the relation of the previous analysis chapters and how having a transnational identity affect the labour market integration process. In the previous chapters I tried to give an insight in the transnational identity of female status holders and in addition the way in which they integrate globally locally in their perspective. With the findings of this research and the guidance of my sub questions, I substantiate the answer to my main research question:

How is the transnational position of female status holders recognised in current policies in the Dutch labour market integration?

7.1.1 The Dutch Labour Market Experiences

The integration process into the Dutch labour market was generally experienced as difficult by the female status holders. What emerged as the biggest obstacle for these women was the language barrier. According to them, this was the most important factor hindering the achievement of their career goals. In addition, female status holders found it difficult that they were not given many opportunities on the Dutch labour market to show their qualities or experiences. Sometimes it is complicated to translate work experiences women obtained in their country of origin into jobs here, or former work or educational experiences is not recognised at all. Diplomas are often not accepted as they are not seen as equivalent to European diplomas. General stigmas and discrimination

towards refugees contribute to the reduced opportunities for female status holders to grow in their work or find a paid job at all.

While the women mainly saw the language and diploma issues as obstacles, they were less aware of the barriers related to their sex. This position of caretaker in the household brings a number of issues in terms of economic participation. Issues women faced in the labour market in their homeland, remain in their labour market integration barriers in the Netherlands. The position of women in their home countries' culture or society and the associated conventional gender roles affects the amount of social and human capital. Women are more focused on the work indoors like managing the task concerning the household chores and the caretaking of the children and other family members. Divisions in the position of men and women in societies and the domestic sphere often result in women possessing a lesser extent of social capital and human capital than men. This leads to a disadvantaging for female status holders by the Dutch labour market integration system itself as they often get out of sight from public authorities. The migration to the Netherlands caused a loss of women's social and human capital. The conception around pervasive gender roles has a significant impact on the economic participation of female status holders. In the homeland of the respondents, a patriarchal society is present where men in general have the upper hand and therefore also within the family. The opinion of the male, whether he supports his wife in finding a job or not, weighs heavily in the labour market participation of female status holders as came forward in multiple cases of the respondents. Domestic responsibilities do not diminish if women find a job or follow education, work and study are added to the domestic duties. Having young children and the loss of a social safety network resulted in practical burdens in multiple occasions as they were compelled to be with their child all the time.

Despite these obstacles in the labour market integration process, the female status holders have not lost their motivations to achieve their career goals. Although most women found the economic integration process difficult, they had positive experiences with the Dutch labour market and the assistances they received from the projects. The goodwill of female status holders and personal progress with support from the projects are certainly there, however it can sometimes be difficult to overcome all of the obstacles and keep the motivation while facing repeated disappointments in the search of employment.

7.1.2 The Interrelation between the Global and the Local

While the number of transnational practices in the economic, political and religious domain were less prominent among the respondents, the cultural and social connections were. Relationships with family and friends in the homeland or elsewhere are the most important linkages for female status holders. Because of the situation in the home country, it is desired to be able to have a good connection to know if everything is going well with family or friends. The respondents had family and friends located all over the world as they were often separated from their loved ones due to their migration. In terms of cultural transnational practices, the women try to preserve their homeland's culture while at the same time adapting to the Dutch culture. One can speak of transculturation in which different elements of both home country and the Netherlands are being merged may it not always be on purpose. By keeping in touch family and friends abroad, experiences, stories, perspectives are shared and a mobility of capital is created. All of these transnational relations are influencers of one's sense of identity and feeling of belonging. Now that the women are living in the Netherlands it does not mean they only feel related to the Netherlands, their sense of belonging also extends to other people and places across borders.

Transnational relations connect the global and the local. The role female status holders play in these various contexts, determines the social positioning of these women which also affects their labour market integration process. Cultural norms such as a woman's social status and conventional gender roles ensure that these women fulfil the caretaking role. Not only in the domestic sphere, but also in terms of taking care of family elsewhere to an extent of what they are capable of. The feeling of togetherness and caring for each other stem from a 'we-culture'. These pervasive views on the division of gender roles pose various barriers in the economic integration of female status holders which result in a backlog of these women on the Dutch labour market. This in turn also results in a lower social status of these women on the Dutch labour market and make it more difficult for women to find a job and get stuck in their caretaking role. These processes are continued and reinforced. The pilot projects try to get female status holders out of this vicious circle by introducing women to a different perspective on gender roles. Another project goal is to give the participants insight into their own abilities. The perception on the position of women in the domestic sphere and also the position of women in society as a whole can be changed. However, it does require investments in time and effort. Not only in the support and development of female status holders to change their point of view, but it also requires a development in the perception of gender roles from their relatives.

7.1.3 Recognition of Female Status Holder's Transnational Position?

How is the transnational position of female status holders then recognised in the Dutch labour market to answer the research question? The recognition of the transnational position of female status holders could do better. Despite the fact that the participation law may not distinguish in the assistance between people who receive social assistance, female status holders are in need of extra support as they deal with multiple additional barriers. Guidance of people to work should be equal to anyone needing it. However, this principle may seem fair, but may very well be an unequal system for female status holders who have a disadvantageous position in terms of searching for work. In addition, there is the structural preference for male status holders due to the notion that they find a job more quickly so a household would leave the social welfare benefits earlier. The participation act requires female status holders in social assistance to actively participate in the Dutch labour market, however women are at the same time negatively affected by the same participation act. Female status holders are disadvantaged by the current participation law, because there is quite a lot of pressure to get a household out of social assistance as fast as possible (Heusinkveld, personal communication, June 25, 2020). Because of the idea that men find a job more quickly, support in finding employment is often more focused on the male partner and women tend to get out of sight from the municipality. The experiences of female status holders with the Dutch labour market also show that they missed flexibility and a lack of opportunities to prove their abilities. For example, the university degrees of many highly educated women were not always recognised by employers as it is not a European certificate. The human and social capital of female status holders is therefore often not appreciated as it should be. Even though not all former work experiences from home country can always be translated into work here, this does not mean that these women lack useful qualities or skills. It would be better to look at how the qualities and skills can be valuable or how these women can find work by means of entrepreneurship.

In this sense, the human capital of female status holders is not completely recognised in terms of their knowledge and work experiences they obtained in country of origin. However, no attention is given to the transnational connections they have either. While understanding the interrelation between the global and the local is important to better comprehend the processes, structures, spaces and identities of female status holders. Physically they are here, but mentally they are there. The situation elsewhere has an impact on their mental state and to what extent you are able to focus

on your labour market integration. Policy is also not fully aware of the extent to which cultural transnational relations have an impact on the obstacles female status holders have to encounter. People are of course aware of the barriers that are migrant or gender related, but they may be not aware of the total entanglements. Perhaps the Dutch labour market is aware of the fact that female status holders have grown up with more preserved gender roles. It might then be understandable that children can cause a barrier in finding a job for example. However, are they also aware that the family member's opinion on labour market participation comes first? Women make their decisions not for themselves but based on the standpoint of how this can benefit the rest of the family.

One may think that maintaining connections with the country of origin hinder status holders in their integration processes. Anxiety or stress about situations in homeland can make it more difficult to focus properly on participation or integration trajectories in the Netherlands. However, those cross border relationships are part of an individual's identity and it could be beneficial to pay attention to their transnational identity. Global relationships also have advantages in terms of an international oriented mobility of capital and the best elements of knowledge from both places can be used.

The new integration law is already making progress when it comes to customization. The projects already includes a more intersectional perspective as they are better aware of the multiple barriers female status holders face in their labour market integration process. The different positions that female status holders take on and the obstacles that may seem independent are actually interconnected and must therefore be seen all together. It is necessary to understand the complexity of this issue in order to develop policies in which female status holders are not overlooked. When proper investments are made in female emancipation, women then are able to prepare a nation with a strong foundation.

7.2 Discussion

Female status holders have a more globally oriented citizenship. Parekh (2003) posits citizenship as the sense of belonging and responsibilities people tend to feel for a community. Female status holders are associated with this globally oriented citizenship due to their transnational ties. Erdal and Oeppen (2013) distinguished four main perspectives on the relationship between transnationalism and integration. While the beliefs of transnationalism and assimilation are sometimes seen as contradicting, others took on a more pragmatic approach, namely a more nuanced position which does not choose between either assimilation or transnationalism. Many female status holders indicate that they have relatively few relationships with their country of origin. One may think female status holders try to maintain strong connections with their country of origin as they were forced to flee and leave their familiar surroundings and loved ones behind. This could strengthen the urge to stay attached to country of origin and own norms and values. The female status holders on the other hand posit a different perspective, as transnational practices emerged less prominently than one would have thought. For example, on economic level, the notion of status holders sending most of their money to their families in home country contradicts with these respondents. The women indicated that they are mainly focusing on their future in the Netherlands, most of them did not want to return to their home country as they lost everything there.

Labour market integration policy, but also female status holders, did often not see how transnationalism and integration processes could be supportive for both as the local context and the global context are often seen as separate. Also, the idea that transnational relations weaken over time as Mügge (2016) stated, did not fully apply to the respondent's social transnational connections. Mügge (2016) argued that migrants engage in transnational practices because they are not always

able to apply their skills in host country immediately and the connection with homeland can make up for this issue. Transnational practices would weaken over time as the value of this survival method is less needed. This 'survival method' of maintaining transnational relationships may be in effect at the beginning of the women's stay in the Netherlands due to a lack of a social network. However, the women indicated that staying in touch with family and friends abroad was very valuable. The women who lived in the Netherlands for a longer period of time did not necessarily have fewer contact moments compared to the women who arrived later. Sometimes the number of transnational activities actually increased. Perhaps they were less busy with their civic integration exam or getting to know the Netherlands in general and they would therefore have more time to focus on their relationships with family abroad.

The argument about the weakening of transnational connections made by Mügge (2016) partly applies to the cultural domain. Female status holders want to preserve their cultural habits, but also adapt to the Dutch culture. The introduction to the Dutch culture led to another way of thinking about certain cultural norms and values as applies to the research of Munck (2010) where he indicates that shifting places can lead to a shift in identity as migrants are related to multiple places and people. The inner identity conflict as Kim (2008) posits was therefore visible as female status holders sometimes struggled with new ways of living in terms of combining work with caretaking tasks and adapting to the Dutch culture. Over time, these struggles were more balanced. While the maintenance of cultural habits may be some kind of survival mechanism at first, due to the lack of human capital and social network in the Netherlands, a more balanced feeling of identity was visible for the women who stayed here for a longer period of time without losing all of their home countries' cultural identity.

Transnational relations or practices are therefore part of a women's identity and can sometimes be an expression of an identity struggle between the old and new culture. For example, cultural customs can, either consciously or unconsciously, affect the lives of female status holders or their decision making in terms of labour market participation. Transnational practices take place because of a lack of human or social capital in host country, for other transnational relations it takes some time to find the right balance, and yet other transnational connections are the ones that women themselves found valuable to keep. The transnational identities of female status holders therefore play a role in their labour market integration process.

It was necessary to take on an intersectional perspective in order to better understand the sociocultural background of female status holders and their decision making process in their economic integration. It was fundamental to understand how the elements, in terms of transnationalism, labour market barriers and the positions of women in multiple contexts, all intervene. As Shields (2008) stated, it is important to include intersectionality in research to get a better understanding of other people's worldview and social structures. An intersectional approach in policymaking or integration programmes could illustrate another perspective on "successful labour market integration". Nevertheless, intersectionality can be an abstract term as it is an intertwined concept that is depending on other factors. Gopaldas (2013) refers intersectionality to the interactivity of social identity structures like sex, ethnicity or family status to name a few. These could be different for each individual or each group of women for example. Nevertheless, "successful integration" into the labour market could also be seen from different perspectives. For example, one may see 'successful integration' into the labour market if a woman is working fulltime, whatever this work may be, and she does not have to apply for social assistance. However, she may neglect her family as she is too busy with working and finishing her domestic tasks when she gets home. If a woman would work parttime, where she can work as well as pay attention to her family and for

example still be a good role model for her children, this would fit better into the situation of this woman. Whether this is or is not the right distribution from a feminist perspective, recognising the other responsibilities of female status holders could support these women in their career path. The labour market integration perspective is therefore important, as successful integration can be interpreted differently. Due to the fact that female status holders want and take several positions in multiple contexts, the position female status holders take in the Dutch labour market cannot be seen separately from the domestic or transnational contexts as these contexts are strongly interrelated. In an intersectional approach the interconnection of gender with other identity markers or influencing categories is recognised (Davids et al., 2015; Shields, 2008). So, acknowledging structural labour market barriers, social identity structures as well as other influences in the decision making of female status holders, could improve their labour market integration process. A success in labour market integration could then be seen more from a perspective where labour market integration is successful where this relates more to the personal needs and wishes from female status holders. An intersectional approach is therefore of added value in policy making as it includes a more complete image of the labour market integration process of female status holders. As Shields (2008) states, policymakers are then better informed which could create policies or integration programmes in which marginalised groups are less limited.

7.3 Recommendations

Doing research also yields new study interests and with the new integration law in sight, I would like to make a number of recommendations for further research and policy development. With regard to research I would like to make the following recommendations. Most projects in this research were set up as a pilot for the new integration law. To be allowed to execute the pilot project an application had to be submitted. This means that the municipalities who applied for these pilots already pay attention to the labour market barriers of female status holders. Conducting a comparative study by focusing on municipalities who do not own a similar project could examine the value of these pilot projects in the labour market integration process of female status holders. In addition, as the research limitations indicated is that female status holders who are left out by the project themselves are not included in this research. Research focusing on the labour market participation of the women who are left out must still be conducted.

Because this research was quite broad given the differences in respondent's background, future research could carry out a more in-depth research that focus on a certain element of this research. A similar research which adds the transnational dimension to the work integration process of female status holders but who only focuses on youth, a particular ethnicity or a specific transnational domain for example.

Future research could also focus on the influence of growing up in a rural or urban area and what this does for the conception of gender roles. As indicated in the analysis, the notion of gender roles could differ if you lived in a city where more women work instead of a rural area. It might be interesting to investigate to what extent female status holder's coming from a rural or urban area plays a role.

Turning to policy development I would focus on four recommendations that could be relevant for policymakers or stakeholders involved. Because most of the projects in this research have been specifically set up as a pilot for the new integration law, it is not certain whether they will continue once this law comes into force. However, I would strongly recommend that projects like this are very valuable. Within the Participation Act there must be no arbitrariness among the citizens who fall under this law. However, as indicated before, female status holders are not equal to other people

who fall within this regulation as they face multiple additional obstacles. I certainly do not want to assume that other people need less attention, and I am also aware of the financial obstacles, but the projects play an important role in improving the socioeconomic position of these women.

In addition, I would like to indicate that it is important to be more aware of the target group we cope with. Trauma's or concerns about events in other countries are significant influencers on mental health. Perhaps too little time has now been made available to pay attention to these issues while this has consequences for how well status holders are able to do your job or study. Because certain organisations may have more insight into the welfare of female status holders, it is beneficial when multiple parties work closely together. VluchtelingenWerk or a project coach might be more aware of the mental state of a female status holders as these conversations might be less formal than conversations with work consultants to give an example.

An intersectional perspective in the Dutch support for female status holders is very valuable. This is partly already being done, but the transnational context and the role female status holders play in multiple environments is not taken fully into account here. Policy or labour market integration support should be aware of these structures and institutional spaces in the labour market integration process of these women in order to better understand the issues and barriers. Now, because priority is given to the costs and benefits on a local level, less attention is paid to the positive outcomes in personal development, the household, or even on global level. Investments in these women also contribute to female emancipation in the Netherlands and the rest of the world.

In addition, I would recommend shifting attention in migration theory to looking at households as unitive analysis such as in terms of labour market integration processes. When looking at integration processes, we need to include not only the individuals whom we are targeting with labour market integration processes but also those in their immediate surroundings. Given the fact that they have a major impact on the actual ability of these female status holders to participate in the labour market because of all sorts of intermeshing obligations, connections and identities. This can be done, for example, by inviting the husband to certain workshop presentations or including the husband in evaluations of the workshops. Also including family members, whether it be family members who live in the Netherlands or family members abroad, in discussions about career paths or perceptions on gender divisions could be helpful. Changing the perception of sex divisions requires reformations from multiple people and not only the women.

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