

Refugees in the Digital Age:
Investigating Refugees' Perceptions regarding Digital Privacy on Social
Media Platforms

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, thousands of people prominently coming from Middle East, forced to leave their home countries and move to Europe in order to escape from the ongoing violence and conflicts in their region, and at the same time to protect themselves and their families. It is quite well known nowadays that this refugee crisis that Europe witnesses is considered to be the biggest refugee crisis after the World War II. According to migration literature, digital technologies are an essential tool for refugees not only to overcome numerous obstacles they might face during their resettlement, but also to maintain ties with their country of origin. In this context, this research explores refugees' perceptions on digital privacy when using these technologies in the Netherlands. The censorship and the violations of personal privacy that these people have experienced or witnessed by the local authorities in their home states, raise questions regarding their present digital behaviour; how they use these technologies, if, and how, they manage to protect their personal privacy. Great attention was given by the academia to the relationship between the digital technologies and refugees in a more practical way. The current literature focuses on how new technologies facilitate refugees' resettlement and integration into the host society. Less emphasis has been placed on refugees' notions regarding their digital privacy when using them. Therefore, this thesis examines refugees' perceptions and experiences through interviews referring to the digital privacy.

A total amount of ten in-depth interviews were conducted with refugees who are currently residing in the Netherlands. The qualitative content analysis by in-depth face-to-face interviews was considered to be the most suitable method of answering the research question of this thesis as it examines individual's experiences, feelings, notions and behaviours. The thematic analysis revealed five themes which explain refugees' digital behaviour and perceptions regarding privacy: (1) the use of digital technologies, (2) refugees' perceptions of integration, (3) datafication, (4) digital privacy and trust, and (5) privacy management and protection. These themes depict the way refugees use new technologies in their everyday life and how it has been influenced by the various privacy protection strategies that individuals have adapted in order to protect their privacy. Furthermore, this thesis provides a critical evaluation of its limitations and offers few suggestions for further research in order to gain a better understanding of the issue.

Keywords: Refugee crisis, Integration, Privacy and trust, Digital technologies, Social media, Datafication, Privacy protection

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years Europe has faced one of the biggest refugee crisis after World War II. Thousands of people from the Middle East left their home countries and started heading to Europe in order to elude from the complicated political situation and the growing violence in their region as the result of the continuing conflicts in the Gulf area and Middle East (Kingsley, 2015). The total number of refugees who arrived in Europe still remains high, even though it had dropped from 1,046,599 to 387,739 according to statistics in 2016. This year 1,216 refugees have been relocated from Greece and Italy to the Netherlands (IOM, 2016). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) the overall population of refugees in the Netherlands increased from 82,494 to 101,702 people in 2016. As a consequence, this massive migration flow has generated a hot debate amongst politicians, citizens and media regarding the refugee's integration in Dutch society.

The refugee crisis which Europe faces nowadays has highlighted the importance of the digital technologies in communication and integration of the refugees. Smartphones have become an irreplaceable tool for refugees, as they provide them with access to specific mobile apps, sites and social media; the use of which allow them to obtain crucial information which are vital, not only to organize their journey but also, to avoid any potential perils (GSMA, 2017). In general, social media networks are mainly a public space in which useful information can be shared rapidly without any limitations and can be accessed by everyone (Held et al., 1999). Another aspect is that social media platforms enhance other people's desire to immigrate by becoming their inspiration (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

Furthermore, these new technologies and social media platforms facilitate the integrating procedure, as they allow through translation applications and the messaging platforms the communication with the local services and their families and friends (UNHCR, 2016). According to Cogan (2016) mobile technologies aid refugees to communicate, record their experiences and risks they meet during this journey and share their first-hand knowledge either with their families and friends or with other refugees in order to inform them what to anticipate. Needless to say, this is a very significant factor when it comes to their safety and protection.

But despite the bright side of the digital technologies, refugees face a paradoxical phenomenon. As Weinberg (2008) claims, Arab press and societies have to deal with censorship and violation of personal privacy by the local authorities. Consequently, refugees

from Arab countries are concerned and cautious because they believe that they are exposed to surveillance and other risks by using these digital technologies in Europe as well as in Arab countries. Living in surveillance society where personal data are collected consciously or not, in order to influence and control those people whose the data belong to, has made the online users suspicious and cautious regarding their personal data (Lyon, 2001). On top of that, the media tends to take advantage of the vulnerable situation that refugees are in and construct negative portrays of them which not only promotes the dehumanization of this group, but increases also their unease (Esses, Medianu & Lawson 2013). Overrepresentation of violent and/or disturbing incidents involving refugees by the main media, cultivates fear in both the refugees and the local communities, which as a consequence arise suspicions for excessive state surveillance. Due to incorrect or fake information which sometimes are published on the social media platforms, trust and privacy concerns arise among the refugees while they are using them (Dekker, Engbersen & Faber, 2015). From a socio-political and psychological stand point of view, marginalized populations tend to impose self-censorship and withhold personal information from others without any formal censorship being active. They believe that there are perils by sharing their personal information and therefore, they decide to hide these information (Bar-Tal, 2017).

According to Dinev, Hart and Mullen (2008), digital privacy and trust relates to users' intention to reveal personal information on the Internet. The degree of willingness of disclosing personal data is the major factor that influences the use of Internet (Smith, Dinev & Xu, 2011). The violation of privacy happens when users are obliged to share their personal information online in order to be able to use certain social media platforms (Dinev, Hart & Mullen, 2008).

It is essential to examine refugees' perception on their preferred social media in the Netherlands and whether they started to trust them more or still impose forms of self-censorship while they use them. Hence, the main focus of this thesis is refugees' notions of digital privacy, trust and surveillance when using the digital technologies and social media in the Netherlands. It also seeks to examine the degree of trust they have towards the digital platforms and how it influences their usage. More specifically, this thesis aims to answer the following research question and sub-questions:

RQ: What are the perceptions of refugees on privacy when using the digital technologies in the Netherlands?

- What platforms do they trust and distrust and why?
- What do they consider as private and why?

- How do they conceptualize trust? Which institutions/actors do they trust the most in the Netherlands and why?
- How does digital media help in the integration of refugees in the Netherlands?

1.1 Scientific and societal relevance

There is no doubt that the ongoing refugee crisis that Europe faces since to 2015, has created a plethora of research relating to the topic, not only by the academia, but also by the media. Numerous of news reports focuses focus on refugee losses and tragic experiences on a daily basis (Bradley & Duthie, 2014; Cogan, 2016). In addition to that, many scholars have tended to focus mainly on the causes and the effects of this massive influx of refugees (Sambaraju & McVittie, 2017), and on the role that European governments and NGOs play in order to manage this humanitarian crisis and integrate refugee populations in the host society (Frangonikolopoulos, 2014; Alencar, 2017). With regards to the social relevance, the main goal of this thesis is to examine refugees' motivations on digital privacy when using online social media platforms. This research provides a better comprehension of refugees' digital behaviour which is essential not only for the academia, but also for the society as the digital behaviour is closely related to the social behaviour (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

On the other hand, and particularly when it comes to the academic perspective, most of the conducted researches have a quantitative approach which is not an appropriate research method to measure adequately people's sentiments, behaviour and motivation (Bryman, 2006). Consequently, a qualitative approach is needed in order to deepen into personal experiences, as the main objective of this thesis is to investigate in depth privacy concepts and understand refugees' practices and perceptions (Kvale, 2007).

1.2 Thesis Structure

As presented in the introduction, the main objective of this thesis is to examine the notions of refugees regarding digital privacy when using new technologies. This study answers the aforementioned research question through semi-structured interviews with refugees from various countries such as Syria, Iraq, Iran and Jamaica, and currently live in the Netherlands. This research method is considered to be the most appropriate and effective way to explore in-depth refugees' perceptions when referring to the topic of this thesis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The flexibility of the qualitative semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to ask additional questions, not only to answer the themes that have already emerged from the theoretical framework, but also investigate new themes which can emerge

throughout the interviews. Ten participants were selected through a combination of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling; the interviews were conducted in Den Haag, Rotterdam and Amsterdam in April 2018. This thesis consists of five chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter introduces the refugee crisis that Europe faces the last years and the pivotal role of the new technologies in refugees' settlement in the Netherlands. Afterwards, it addresses previous researches with an emphasis on the gaps of the current literature and later on it continues with the main topic of this thesis which is the privacy and digital usage by marginalized populations (e.g. refugees). Furthermore, throughout this chapter scientific and societal relevance of the research are discussed as well. Finally, the proposed research question and sub-questions are being posed and further examined.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents a review and analysis of the necessary theories and concepts that are relevant to the main topic which assist to develop the research and analyse in depth the data. The theoretical framework consists of several subchapters. More precisely, it introduces firstly the European integration theory and the conceptualization of integration in the digital age. It continues with an overview of the European migration policy and also displays the refugee migration in the Netherlands. In the following sub-chapters. Definitions of refugees and migrants were provided in order to clarify and comprehend better some concepts. The next subchapter addresses the digital technologies and the provided services by them, followed by the seventh subchapter where the Uses and Gratifications Theory is detailed in order to explain peoples' digital behaviour. Finally, in the last subchapters the conceptualization of the digital privacy, self-presentation, self-disclosure and previous research are discussed.

Chapter 3: Method

In this section, a detailed description of the methodology that is opted to examine refugees' notions regarding privacy in the digital age is spotlighted, as well as the rationale on why qualitative approach was preferred. Moreover, further details are provided when it comes to the research design, data collection, operationalization and the entire research process. Likewise, the chosen method is justified linked to the objective of the research. Lastly, there is an analysis of the themes and codes generated throughout the research.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, the results and outcomes are presented and examined after a thematic content analysis of the in-depth interviews.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The last chapter of this thesis includes the interpretation and discussion of the findings and it concludes with the limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The notions of refugees regarding the digital privacy, trust and surveillance when using the digital technologies and social media channels could be fully comprehended and evaluated solely in the certain theoretical framework. As it was remarked previously, scholars tended to focus on the causes of the migration crisis and on the refugees' societal integration, and little attention was paid regarding the perceptions on issues of privacy and liberty when utilizing social media and smartphones. Based on previous studies, this chapter presents the Dutch context of refugee crisis and conceptualize the term of "refugee" and "migrant". In addition, European migration theory and policy are discussed here intersected with the EU's new General Data Protection Regulation. Furthermore, an overview of the usage of social networks and new technologies is addressed throughout this section. Lastly, an in-depth discussion of the Uses and Gratifications Theory will be delivered as well as an analysis of digital privacy and previous studies.

2.1 Refugees in the Netherlands

The recent refugee crisis that Europe faces has spotlighted the challenges of refugee integration in the host societies. Over the last years, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden are the countries which received the highest numbers of asylum applications (Alencar, 2017). In 2016, according to the Ministry of Security and Justice, the Dutch government received 58,880 asylum applications which is the highest number since 1999; the majority of these applications came from citizens of Arab countries. The Netherlands has a long past of embracing immigrants and refugees. During the decade of 1990s thousands of people applied for asylum, coming mostly from the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. The annual figure of asylum seekers fluctuated between 40,000 and 50,000 (Bakker et al., 2017). In addition to that, since 2007, because of the harsh financial crisis that Southern European countries faced, the Netherlands welcomed a significant number of EU migrants, which represented the 80% of the labour migrants in the country to date (Alencar & Dauze, 2017).

The existence of these diverse groups of people made the Netherlands to adapt cultural assimilatory perceptions of integration, which its main objective is to protect national identity and maintain the cohesion of the Dutch society (Alencar, 2017). At the same time the different groups of refugees and migrants are obliged to learn Dutch language, adapt Dutch values and traditions in order to integrate to the host society and feel part of the new environment (Alencar, 2017). As a consequence, innovative approaches and policies applied

by the Dutch government in order to offer equal access to employment, education, health care system, citizenship towards refugees and in general make them ‘official’ members of the Dutch society (Bakker et al., 2016).

Upon their arrival in the Netherlands refugees are obliged to report at the central reception centre for asylum seekers which is located in Ter Apel where they are provided with essential medical and legal information (Bakker et al., 2016). Furthermore, the first days of their settlement in The Netherlands it is necessary for refugees to pass an integration test which evaluates their educational background, language knowledge, the understanding of their rights as refugees and the history of the host country (Bakker et al., 2016).

To conclude, we can observe that the Netherlands has adopted the two-way integration process which is based on the participation of both refugees and host societies in the integration procedure. This does not only facilitate refugees’ access to education, employment, health care system and housing, but also respects their cultural differences which is essential for their adjustment to the new ambience (Ager & Strang, 2008). Nonetheless, all these integration procedures might cause anxiety and uncertainty which in combination with the exclusion from the social system of the host country could affect refugees’ mental health and create barriers in the integration process to the local society (de Vroome & van Tubergen, 2014). Hence, the Netherlands seems to be interesting case to investigate refugees’ perceptions regarding the role of digital media in their integration to the Dutch society.

2.2 Defining refugees and migrants

The massive flux of refugees who displaced after the World War II within Europe emerged the need in the international law to properly define the term “refugee” in order to protect them from marginalization and guard their human rights (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014). The solution was given in 1950 by the establishment of the UNHCR which not only struggled to provide protection and aid refugees, but also present in the Convention relating to the Status of the Refugees in 1951 some criteria and characteristics in defining a refugee (Goodwin-Gill & McAdam, 2007). According to this Convention a refugee is:

“Any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country;

or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

Article 1, 1951 Refugee Convention

In addition to that, the right of non-refoulement was guaranteed in the Convention which prohibits the repatriation of the refugees back to their home countries.

“No Contracting State shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”

Article 33, 1951 Refugee Convention

On the other hand, the Refugee Convention does not protect people who left their countries because of natural disaster, climate change, sexual orientation or just escaping poverty while they considered as economic migrants and not refugees (Cortes, 2004). Therefore, a migrant is defined as *"any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born and has acquired some significant social ties to this country"* (UNESCO). Consequently, even though these people struggle to escape from hard conditions, they are not protected by the Refugee Convention, and do not have the same privileges and rights with refugees. In addition to that, they face permanent peril of the deportation while they are not covered by the non-refoulement right. In this thesis people with both statuses are examined.

2.3 European Integration Theory and the EU's new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

According to Wiener and Diez (2012) the evolution of the European integration theory could be identified into three phases. The first is the explanatory phase which was started in the 1960s after the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) and lasted until 1970s. Its objective was not only to interpret the phenomenon of integration, but also to explain the conditions and the outcomes of the integration.

In the second phase during the 1980s, European governments were focusing on the structure and legislation of the Community. In order to explain the phenomenon of integration, they turned to the institutions and regulatory procedures.

Since 1990 and onwards, we are in the constructive phase of the European Union, it was imperative to alter the theory in order to adapt the needs and changes of the world. Being a united political entity, EU began to confront the consequences of the integration in a more collective way and less state-centric (Wiener & Diez, 2012).

Having recognised the importance of the Big Data in managing complex social issues such as the ongoing refugee crisis, EU had adopted the new data protection package in May 2016 which applied in May 2018. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a regulation which standardizes the protection of the data and privacy for all individuals across the European Union (European Commission, 2018). The GDPR was created both to empower individuals' fundamental rights in the digital age to control their personal data and simplify the regulation in order to ease companies in the digital market (European Commission, 2018). This is essential while individuals not only have the right to ask for a copy of their collected personal data by the companies, but also to ask them to delete these data under specific conditions (ICO, 2018). It should be highlighted here that companies which are not complying with the regulation will face large fines that can reach 20 million euros or 4 per cent of their profit (Forbes, 2018).

The datafication of citizens and the data protection are issues which concern all of us, especially vulnerable and marginalized populations such as refugees. According to Begault (2018), millions of refugees from the Middle East and Africa have entered Europe during this crisis in the last few years whose personal data were frequently collected by different governments, humanitarian agencies and numerous NGOs during their resettlement. He also points out the fact that this could place refugees into additional risk as these data could be easily hacked by authoritarian regimes and put them and their families in danger. Even though the parties that collect these data are obliged to protect refugees' personal information, they admit that they are not able to guarantee their absolute security because of the datafication of the personal information (Begault, 2018). Hence, the EU's new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) seems to be a great opportunity to increase refugee's privacy and data protection while reducing any potential threats by restricting access to their personal information.

2.4 Conceptualizing integration in the digital age

For long time, the integration has been described as an assimilatory procedure. Due to involvement of different stakeholders it could mean different things to different parts depending on their notions, values and beliefs (Phillimore, 2012). According to Boyd (1989), during the 1980s migration was considered as a one-way process where migrants abandon their home countries and adopt the culture and the values of the host countries. He argues that, in order to foster their national sovereignty, countries had adopted a linear approach and stricter migration policies. While at the same time they were more worried about the consequences of the integration than the actual procedure (Wiener & Diez, 2012). But over the next years, the notion that the integration of migrants is a linear, state-centric process was criticized and characterized problematic (Phillimore, 2012). Da Lomba (2010) argues the linear approach and the acculturation process could separate and marginalize migrants while they are not always willing to abandon their country of origin.

The transformation of the European Union and the emergence of new technological advancements have altered the way that states confront the integration of migrants and refugees into their society. Various studies have acknowledged integration as a non-linear procedure, but as two-way pattern where both migrants and host societies interact in order to establish a common ground by respecting each other's cultural differences (Atfield et al, 2007; Alencar, 2017). From a sociological point of view, integration is defined as two-way process where both sides have the desire to maintain their own culture and at the same time are willing to interact with different cultural groups in order to create new identities (Berry, 1997). However, the issue of integration depends on personal characteristics as well. Cultural and socioeconomic factors such as education level, gender, age and economic status should be taken into consideration in order to comprehend adequately the process of integration (Alencar, 2017).

Ager and Strang (2008) developed a conceptual framework to present the key domains of 'successful' integration. They suggested a multidimensional scaling of integration which includes the following domains categorized by their importance in the integration procedure.

The first indicator is *Means and Markets* which encompass the domains of employment, education, housing and health. Ager and Strang (2008) argued that these are the main areas of social activity and interaction.

The second indicator of *Social Connections* focuses on different forms of relationships of refugees during their settlement in the host society. It includes the domain of social bonds

which focuses on relationships within the society based on the cultural identity of refugees, the domain of social bridges which refers to the interaction with other social groups and the domain of social links which refers to the interaction with different institutions.

Within the third indicator of *Facilitators* authors address two major domains such as the language and cultural knowledge and safety and security. These factors are very important especially when it comes to the facilitation of both integration and acculturation of the refugees.

The last indicator of *Foundation* focuses on the rights and citizenship which examines to what extent refugees have equal access to different social services.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration (Ager & Strang, 2008)



2.5 European migration policy

In the aftermath of World War II, European countries decided to establish the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), considering that by integrating their local economies they would eliminate the threat of a new war. The idea was proposed by Robert Schuman, the Foreign Minister of France in 1950 (European Union, n.d.). The goal of the ECSC was to create common economic approaches focusing mostly on trade among the member-countries. The following years the ECSC enlarged and its common economic policies expanded the cooperation in other fields as well. Over the years, several treaties were signed amongst

European Governments till the formulation of European Union (EU) in 1993 (Alter & Steinberg, 2007).

The objective of the EU is not only to create political and economic collaboration between the state members, but also to develop collective activities such as common foreign and security policies, common labor market regulation and common commercial policy (Bulmer, 1993). According to the Maastricht Treaty, the Treaty on European Union, the EU should also respect the fundamental human rights, emphasize on consistency, solidarity, and respect national identities of its member states. In addition to that, amongst the other provisions the EU members have the right of the free movement of people, capital, goods and services within the bounds of union (Treaty of Maastricht, 1993).

The right of free movement concerns only the legal citizens of the state members as there are strict controls at the borders of the union. All the country members have not only adopted common policy on visa application, but also a common asylum policy (van Houtom & Pijpers, 2007). Migration in European Union is not a national issue, but it concerns evenly all its members. The continuing instability at the external borders of the European Union had shed light on the importance of protection of refugees who enter the Union (Sterckx, 2004).

Even though the world has changed significantly in recent years and humanity has entered in a digital era, the old European migration policies continue to persist. This reflects the difficulties in establishing a common migration policy for Europe while many EU countries have developed anti-migration attitudes different from the core values of the European Union (de Vreese, 2017). In other words, the different opinions and approaches among EU states with regard to the management of the migration crisis that Europe faces in the recent years has enhanced national migration policies.

2.6 The common European Asylum System

In 1999 the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) was established in order to restrict the migratory pressure that some state members were facing. The main objective of the CEAS was to create a new collective approach on asylum issues and policies. The CEAS is comprised of a five-track legislation named Asylum Procedures Directive, Reception Conditions Directive, Qualification Directive, Dublin Regulation and Eurodac Regulation. The Asylum Procedures Directive creates common standards of refugees' protection and warranties their fair access to asylum processes. The Reception Conditions Directive provides to asylum applicants the basic living conditions such as housing, food, employment and health care. The Qualification Directive warranties asylum seekers' international

protection and a series of rights such as residence permits and travel documents. The Dublin Regulation clarifies which country member is responsible for the asylum procedure. Latterly, the Eurodac Regulation pertains the transmission of the asylum seekers' fingerprints to a database (European Commission, n.d.).

The Dublin Regulation is considered to be one of the most contentious regulations as it obliges the first country that asylum seeker entered to start the asylum process. The asylum seekers do not have the right to apply for asylum in another EU country (Sterckx, 2004). According to the CEAS, the objective of this directive is to control adequately the asylum procedure. Even though in 2015 European Commission imposed a quota system regarding refugees' distribution within European Union, this regulation has prompted severe backlash from the southern European countries such as Italy and Greece due to the disproportionate inflow of refugees (Dearden, 2017). The European commission proposed to relocate 120,000 people from Italy, Greece and Hungary over a period of two years, which is not adequate if we consider that only in 2015 and 2016 refugees who applied for asylum in Europe were more than 2.5 million (European Commission, 2015; European Parliament, 2017).

However, the migration crisis that Europe faces the last years is not solely a national issue but it concerns the entire European Union, many member states and do not comply with the policies and directives of the CEAS. They believe that the CEAS failed to manage the massive refugee influx while it mostly focuses on controlling the illegal migration (den Heijer, Rijpma & Spijkerboer, 2016). The migration crisis is treated mostly as a security issue closely connected to crime and terrorism and not as humanitarian issue (Walters, 2006). Apparently, according to den Heijer, Rijpma and Spijkerboer (2016), European Union aims to restrict the access of refugees to its territory and to obstruct the asylum procedure in order to reduce the number of refugees in Europe. Pivotal role in guarding European external borders plays European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX). The agency was established in 2004 and its objective was to provide technical support, expertise and ease the collaboration among border authorities within the Union. But due to unprecedented influx of refugees and migrants the last years, the responsibilities of FRONTEX have enhanced and its main duty is to battle the illegal migration (European Union, n.d). As a consequence, Greece and Italy which are the countries who carry the burden of this crisis, have proceeded to bilateral agreements with Turkey and Libya respectively in order to control the refugee flows (den Heijer, Rijpma & Spijkerboer, 2016).

Although the European countries have signed numerous treaties and agreements in order to manage the current migration crisis, there is still much work to be done.

Unfortunately, many EU members confront the situation as a national issue by giving priority to their national interests. The unwillingness of some Balkan countries to cede partially their national sovereignty over the common good has highlighted the impotence of the Union to adhere what has been agreed regarding the migration crisis (den Heijer, Rijpma & Spijkerboer, 2016). The lack of a collective response to the problem has created serious doubts regarding European Union's effectiveness to develop long term solutions.

Thus, at this point, it is essential to emphasize how each country deals with the refugees' crisis and for the sake of this thesis the case of the Netherlands is investigated. This research emphasizes on refugees' experiences in the Dutch context.

2.7 Digital technologies and services

The extensive usage of the multiple digital technologies has altered essentially people's daily life in various aspects (Cortes, 2004). The constant growing access of the internet has increased the popularity of the social media and social network sites (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) the social media networks are defined as web-based services which provide the possibility to their users to first create an online public or semi-public profile, second to make a list of the other online users with whom they desire to communicate, and third to view and interact with their list of connection within the same network. Due to continuous evolution of the technological advancements over the last years, numerous of social networking sites have changed. Old social networks either disappear or lose their effectiveness, and new ones appeared. Nowadays the most popular social networking sites are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube and Reddit (Moreau, 2018). On the other hand, as Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue there is inconsistency among the academic researchers in the definition of the social media, but most of them agree that social media are closely connected with two concepts. Firstly, the web 2.0 which is the second generation of the World Wide Web and it is characterized by the interaction with users and secondly, the user generated content which is any form of visual or not content created by the users of an online system (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Thus, they define social media as "*a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content*" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Social media is a set of innovative tools and services which facilitate the communication among people when using networking technologies (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

2.8 Datafication, refugees and the state

In recent years the ascendance of internet and Big Data has transformed our society and people's attitude towards privacy and human rights. Specifically, the rise of mass surveillance and interception of communications has raised numerous privacy and trust issues within the society (Nyst & Falchetta, 2017). These matters create discussions and new challenges for policy makers and stakeholders, while people's perceptions on privacy and trust are diverse and unclear. Individual point of view towards privacy and surveillance tend to alter based on various circumstances, such as different financial context, culture and the growing inequality between societies (Wright et al., 2009). The current content of socio-cultural specificities and the degree of fear of abuse of personal data influence the way that people protect their personal privacy, leading in a wide range of behaviours.

The ongoing integration of the digital technologies into people's daily life has transformed our society. Contemporary societies prefer to live in a virtual world instead of physical, the way people communicate, work, inform and entertain themselves has changed (Cukier & Mayer-Schoenberger, 2013). According to them, the transformation of social behaviours and actions such as location, texts and relationships into quantified data is called datafication. This is extremely important as it allows real-time monitoring and predictive data analysis of individual's digital behaviour (Cukier & Mayer-Schoenberger, 2013). A database of digital profiles has been created based on people's daily interactions, purchases and decisions, which were converted into computerised data and put into social use by different organizations (Shilova, 2017).

There is no doubt that the invasion of the digital technologies and datafication into all aspects of life has had a great influence on the way governmental and non-governmental actors behave, while new practices and perceptions have raised (Sambuli & Whitt, 2017).

A major issue that arises from here is that in the contemporary world we live in, people do not comprehend the meaning of privacy and as a consequence the surveillance state has become normalized (Krugman, 2014). According to van Dijck (2014), meta data and data have become a regular currency for people in order to have access to communication services and security. Many people usually accept to disclose their personal information, such as name, birth date, address, marital status, eating habits, interests, favourite music or book through social networking platforms and applications. These networking platforms could share or more specifically sell this data to third parties for customized marketing as a prize for the provided free services (van Dijck, 2014). It should be noted here that companies and

governments in order to monitor and comprehend citizen's behaviour, quantify and analyse the data culled from the existing social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr, iTunes, Skype, and free e-mail services (Cukier & Mayer-Schoenberger, 2013). These communication platforms for the first time did not only manage to code and quantify various aspects of people's social life such as friendships, interests, casual conversations, searched information, expressions and emotions but also, they have persuaded many people to live a virtual life instead of physical communication (van Dijck, 2014). Even though, as Raley (2013) states the modern world we live in is characterized by dataveillance, a constant surveillance through the use of Big Data which elicits trust and privacy issues within the society. Both academics and society expect from governments to regulate today's digital landscape and the unfavourable effects of datafication, but as it was mentioned previously government agencies often seek information from the data companies for, as they call it, general welfare of the society and humanity (van Dijck, 2014).

As it pertains Europe and the current refugee crisis, datafication plays a pivotal role in managing this unprecedented crisis. According to Leurs and Shepherd (2016), the ascendance of Big Data and the massive amount of information that can be collected by the digital technologies have transformed our society and introduced new ways of dealing complex social processes. They support that Big Data due to its routes in military industrial background (with the objective to develop technology and mobilization) discriminates against marginalized populations and increase social inequalities (Leurs & Shephed, 2016). Simply put, plethora of discrimination occurs based on race, social class or gender. These social biases and datafied discrimination occurs due to the automated data-driven decision-making procedures. (Leurs & Shephed, 2016).

This thesis amongst others examines the digital practices of European Union governments towards refugees from the perspective of datafication, datafied discrimination and digital connectivity. Europe has adapted automated practises of selecting refugees at its external borders based on digitization, constant digital surveillance and data-driven decisions (Leurs, 2017). This is the reason why Europe has received a great amount of criticism. European governments manage this refugee crisis mainly to their own benefits. The sorting between desired and undesired refugees at the borders of the Union reminds practices of the colonial era where human classification, measurement and ordering were common practices (Leurs & Shephed, 2016). White highly skilled and educated refugees are more welcome than the vast majority of migrants who face huge obstacles in entering Europe (Leurs, 2017).

In order to manage its borders and control migration, EU provides its border guards and police officers numerous information systems such as the Schengen Information System, the Visa Information System, the European Dactyloscopy (EURODAC) biometric database and the European border surveillance system (EUROSUR). With these information systems European security authorities have access to relevant information on persons which assist them to control the migration flows and fight at the same time against terrorism (European Commission, 2016). The EURODAC and EUROSUR are considered to be the most important control infrastructures against the undesirable migration (Leurs, 2017).

EURODAC is a biometric database which collects fingerprints of asylum seekers and the third country nationals who have passed the borders illegally. Its objective is to serve the Dublin Convention, which requests refugees to return in the first European state that they have entered (European Commission, 2016). EURODAC bases on an algorithmic social sorting, by classifying some biometric characteristics of refugees as undesired which lead to “digital deportability” (Leurs, 2017).

On the other hand, EUROSUR bases its operation on satellites, drones, coastal radars and patrolling to fight the cross-border crime, restrict illegal migration and save refugees’ lives who are struggling to pass the Mediterranean Sea (Leurs, 2017).

These centralized information systems for borders and security have highly being criticized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for violating fundamental human rights and putting refugees’ life in danger. This kind of digital practices not only contravene the human right to privacy, but also stigmatize them by associating this group of people with criminal activities (UNHCR, 2012).

To sum up, according to Leurs and Shepherd (2016), the migration management through datafication in EU is insufficient while it was formed based on racial and cultural stereotypes.

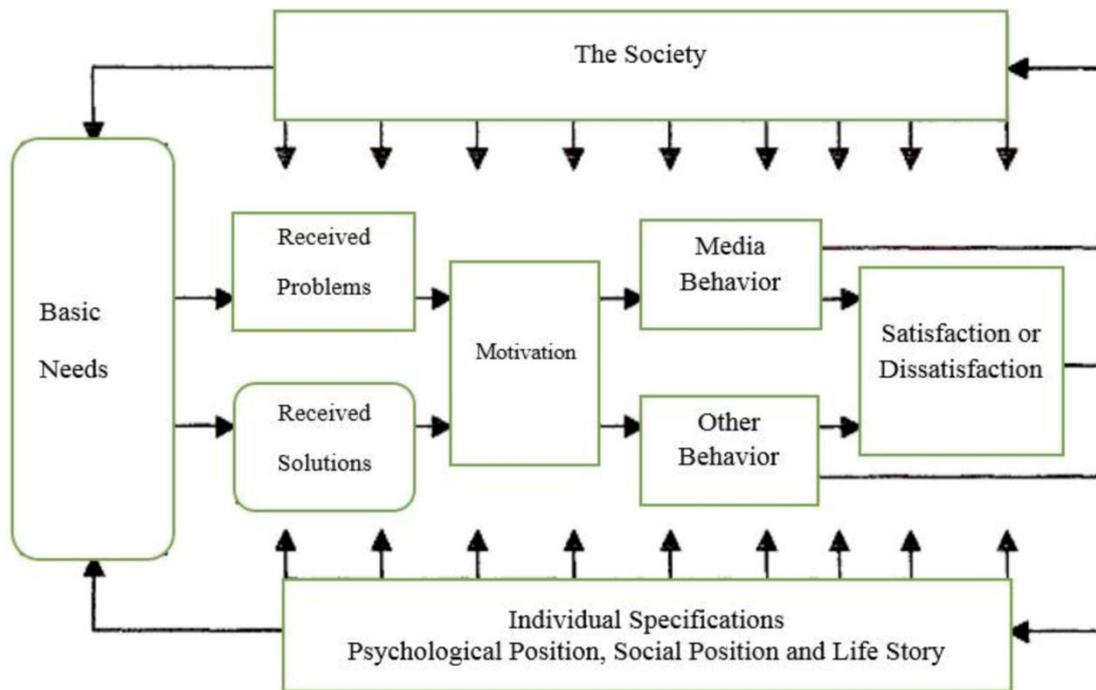
2.9 Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

As it was stated previously the new digital technologies have become an integral part of refugees’ life while a vast variety of information and services is provided to them (Cogan, 2016). Numerous of applications and services appeared since the refugee crisis started. According to Mason, Schwedersky and Alfawakheeri (2017), in their research regarding civic tech innovations which are supporting refugees in Germany refer to these technological tools as “tech for refugees”, “civic tech” and “digital social innovators”. These applications are not only used as communicational tools, but also as information sources which facilitate

refugees' everyday life in the host society (GSMA, 2017). Regardless of the humanitarian significance of these technologies, there are some limitations and restrictions (eg. the requested personal information and data by the applications such as name, GPS location, etc) that affects the refugees' willingness to use them (Cogan, 2016). Nevertheless, not much research has been done on refugees' notions and concerns referring to the usage of these technological advancements.

In order to answer the research question, the Uses and Gratification model appears to be a proper way to examine the connection between refugees' needs and their personal digital behavior (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973). It is a person-oriented theory of comprehending the usage of media. The Uses and Gratifications theory takes into account not only a person's background which is vital in choosing a medium of communication, but also the social and the psychological environment in which this media outlet has used (Papacharissi, 2009). Hence, according to Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1973), refugees' attitudes towards the usage of the new technologies and their provided services depends on refugees' societal background and psychological state. In particular, the Uses and Gratification theory is defined as the personal approach of individuals in selecting the medium they prefer among others in their ambience in order to fulfil their desires and needs (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973). The Gratification of needs plays a pivotal role in choosing the proper medium while it is based on societal, individual and psychological state of mind (Papacharissi, 2009). Moreover, through the gratification of needs people not only acquire knowledge, relaxation or entertainment, but also awareness and escape when using the selected media (Mishra, n.d.). An overview of the Uses and Gratification theory which was used in this thesis is presented below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Uses and gratification model



2.10 Privacy in the digital age

The main goal of this thesis is to examine how refugees in the Netherlands comprehend privacy issues in the digital age. Therefore, it is essential to define and conceptualize digital privacy as it is the main core of this research. One of the first definitions of privacy was given by Warren and Brandeis (1890). According to them, privacy is described as the ‘right to be let alone’, the right to express feeling, emotions and sensations. Traditionally, the definitions of privacy concepts which were proposed by many scholars were focused on legal or social protection of personal property and expression of feelings (DeVries, 2003). Hiranandani (2011) argues that privacy is a fundamental element of human rights while values such as individual dignity, independence and freedom of self-expression are guaranteed by the protection of privacy. The possibility of choosing religion, political ideology, residence, work, people that someone wants to associate with or share personal information are some of the principles of the individual freedom (Lyon, 2002). In other words, privacy is a crucial way to protect individuals’ life in different ways based on freedom and independence as it is considered to be the heart of all the individual liberties (Hiranandani, 2011).

The recent technological advancements have not only changed our society, but also the notion of the privacy in the digital era we live in (Kleve & De Mulder, 2008). This era is characterized by a large amount of personal information which are available online anytime

(Nyst & Falchetta, 2017). Despite the fact that sometimes personal information is provided voluntarily by the people who use social networking sites or participate in other social activities, it still raises privacy and trust issues (Wright et al., 2009). The personal data is used to create ‘digital dossiers’ where the gathered data provides useful information regarding an individual’s online activities and personal habits such as reading and purchasing goods (Solove, 2002).

In order to comprehend adequately the concept of privacy in the digital era, the seven different categories of privacy are defined by Finn et al. (2013) and they should be taken under consideration. The seven types of privacy that Finn et al. (2013) present, are based on Clarke’s (2006) approach of defining privacy. They argue that Clarke’s approach of four types of privacy is not sufficient to identify all the possible privacy issues, so they added three more types of privacy to the existing four as they did not take into account the new technological advancements. Primarily, *Privacy of the person* is connected with body functions and characteristics which should be private. *Privacy of behaviour and action* links to personal information which needs to be private such as sexual preferences, political beliefs and religion. *Privacy of communication* refers to the right of free communication without any surveillance. *Privacy of data and image* aims to protect personal data and assure that individuals’ data will not be available to others. *Privacy of thoughts and feelings* is the right of people to not reveal any expressions of what they feel or think to others. *Privacy of location and space* is concerned with the right of moving in a public or semi-public space without being identified. Finally, *Privacy of association* refers to individuals’ right to associate with someone without being controlled by others (Finn et al., 2013). Privacy plays a pivotal role in democracy and autonomy (Solove, 2008) and any kind of its violation could render people being vulnerable and uncontrollable (Hiranandani, 2011).

2.11 Self-presentation, and self-disclosure

As outlined previously, the objective of this thesis is to identify refugees’ perceptions regarding digital privacy. Thus, the concepts of self-presentation and self-disclosure should be explained in order to comprehend adequately refugees’ digital behaviour. Goffman (1959) was one of the first who studied self-presentation and he describes the self-presentation as people’s capability to shape their personal image when interacting with others by presenting an ideal portray of themselves different from the authentic one. Nowadays, due to the variety of digital tools and platforms that has at his disposal, everyone is able to manipulate and reinforce his personal image and life anytime by performing various self-presentation

strategies in order to maintain and/or reinforce his social image (Rui & Stefanone, 2013). Needless to say, the concept of self-presentation on social media platforms plays an important role to the people who consider migration either positively or negatively (Frouws et al, 2016).

On the other hand, according to Archer (1980), self-disclosure is described as a process where individuals determine the amount of personal information they desire to communicate with others. Likewise, self-disclosure is often connected to a strategic presentation of self and in that case individuals prefer to make selective disclosures and exclusions of personal data without caring if deceiving the public or not (Jones, 1990).

For the better progression of this research, both self-presentation and self-disclosure are crucial in order to identify what kind of personal data refugees share and why when using social media platforms.

2.12 Previous studies on refugees' digital activity

Indubitably, nowadays new technologies facilitate migration in various ways such as communication, transportation and seeking useful information is now much easier. At the same time, such these technologies allow refugees to communicate at the same time with their families and friends back home and with new communities in the host country (Andrade & Doolin, 2016). According to Vertovec (2004), mobile phones and communication channels provided by them are characterized as “the social glue of migrant transnationalism” while they create linkages between different geographical locations.

The research that has been already conducted by numerous scholars mostly focuses on the relationship of the new technologies and refugees in more practical way. A significant part of the current literature examines the ties before, during and after refugees' journey to their home country (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014), while other studies focus on the tools and facilitators provided by the new technologies to refugees such maps, GPS locations, information regarding their settlement and translation applications in order to facilitate their integration into the host society (Frouws et al, 2016; Alencar, 2017). In addition, some scholars laid emphasis on the preparation stage of the journey, how it was planned, the role of the new technologies when avoiding potential perils of the trip (e.g. smugglers) and select the safest routes in order to reach Europe (Schaub, 2012; Frouws et al, 2016). Other studies highlight which digital media refugees prefer to use, as Frouws et al. (2016) argue that the messaging application WhatsApp is the most popular among refugees. On the other side the usage of social media networks such as Facebook and Instagram is restricted while they

create suspicion and the use of aliases is a necessity. Another application which plays a crucial role during refugees' journey is the Google Translate while it provides them the possibility to communicate and translate essential information (Frouws et al, 2016). In addition to that, some studies demonstrate the limitations and restrictions that online users in these countries face due to local culture or government intervention (Zijlstra & Van Liempt, 2017). For instance, Syria has the least developed communicational infrastructure in the Middle East because of the continuing conflicts and the government's attempts to control the media both traditional and new (Freedom House, 2016).

By reviewing the current literature on migration crisis, a notable gap has been identified. The academic interest focuses on usefulness of the new technologies in the aforementioned sectors of refugees' lives and neglects refugees' notions regarding their digital privacy when using them. Therefore, it is important to investigate refugees' perceptions and experiences through interviews referring to the digital privacy.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research approach

As mentioned previously, the goal of this thesis is to examine the role of the new digital technologies and the perspectives of refugees regarding privacy and trust issues which can be arise by using them. While this project focuses on people's social behaviour, the qualitative content analysis and in-depth interviews are considered to be the most suitable and productive in order to identify peoples' motives and personal experiences in detail (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this chapter, it is discussed and explained why in-depth interviews and the selected method are both appropriate in order to answer the research question posed in the preceding chapter. Moreover, the sampling method, operationalization, data collection and analysis are examined in detail, too. Finally, this section addresses the validity and reliability as they are vital elements for the credibility of the project's research.

3.2 Research design and rationale

In order to better comprehend the experiences, feelings, notions and behaviours of the individuals, a qualitative approach has been chosen as it is considered to be the most appropriate for this thesis (Kvale, 2007). Due to the pertinence of the qualitative research to the social relations study, this method was selected as a research method to better understand and discuss the outcomes of this process (Flick, 2003). The main objective of this research is to identify and describe refugees' perceptions and practices regarding privacy on social networking platforms as a social phenomenon. Therefore, qualitative in-depth interviews have been chosen to answer the research question. This provides a better understanding of the meaning of peoples' social behaviour (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The qualitative approach of in-depth interviews assists researcher to categorize different personal experiences, in that case the experiences of refugees both in the Netherlands and their home country (Kvale, 2007). This thesis focuses on the different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of refugees. For example, educational level, social position, occupation, religion and age are some sociocultural traits that might affect refugees' perceptions on privacy when using digital technologies, in contrast to quantitative research method, which is mostly used to measure relations with figures and statistics (Gilbert, 2008). This specific method tends to draw general conclusions without talking into consideration the personal differences of individuals (Bryman, 2006). In addition to that, quantitative method usually focuses on large

amount of data, but this does not mean that some elements such as sampling and coding cannot be used in a qualitative research as well (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Since the aim of this research is to comprehend refugees' perceptions, semi-structured interviews were opted to answer the research question. This method offers flexibility to the interviewer as he can ask the same questions for each of the participants, at a conversational level by posing follow-up questions and probes which is important when it comes to the expansion of the concept. (Kvale, 2007).

3.3 In-depth interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews are considered to be one of the most appropriate research methods for an insightful qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2007; Ritchie & Lewis, 2014). This particular method provides not only the comprehension of a social phenomenon but also allows the participants to express their personal insights regarding the examining topic in a different way (Kvale, 2007). Hence, this thesis should focus on individual face-to-face interviews while its flexible design allows researcher to observe and examine the way interviewees reflect, response and even more to lead the conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). According to DiCocco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), sensitive issues should be examined with Face-to-face in-depth interviews while the presence of strangers could affect the responses of the participant. During the interview, a secure ambience should be created between the interviewer and the interviewee as it is essential to gain trust and make the interviewee feel comfortable while talking and giving truthful and accurate answers (Miller & Glassner, 2004). It should be noted here, that an initial plan and structure of the interview is a necessity (Kvale, 2007). Main questions were prepared in advance following the order of the "responsive interviewing" which was the thematic guide of the interview and aided me to ask further details with the sub-questions and guide the conversation into a specific path (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The "responsive interviewing" approach focuses on participants' interpretations of their personal experiences and their understanding of the world (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Thus, based on the main concepts of this research the question guide had a certain structure. Firstly, some main questions were posed in order to draw the general opinion of the participants and then ask for details. Afterwards, some follow-up questions and probes were used to obtain information in detail and achieve a sufficient comprehension of the responses and guide the interview into specific direction. The interviews started with some introductory background questions of refugees and experiences of their journey to the Netherlands. Having in mind their personal experiences the following questions focused on

the challenges and difficulties they faced and the role of the digital technologies during this journey. The main block of questions includes questions related to the main concepts which were introduced in the theoretical framework chapter. The latter part of the interview aimed to present the general thoughts of the participants on the topic. Even though the respondents were very friendly and eager to share their personal story, the main structure of the interview was transformed in some cases when interviewees were reluctant to answer certain questions because of the sensitivity of the subject or the responses they were giving were inadequate.

Before starting the interview, according to Kvale (2007), some general information regarding to the objectives, procedure and duration of the interview should be provided to the participants. Although, only general information should be disclosed to the participants in order to avoid biases and prepared answers (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Taking into consideration that this thesis investigates a sensitive issue, the participants were reassured about confidentiality and anonymity. Likewise, they were informed in advance that the research will be used for academic purposes, their participation is voluntary, and that they have the right to stop the interview anytime they want. Furthermore, their permission was asked in order to record the interview (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014). Finally, assuming that their knowledge in English is not adequate, simple and clear phrasing was essential. A sample list of questions that was used for the refugees' interviews is followed (appendix A). Moreover, follow-up questions and probes were used in order to ask further details.

3.4 Sample

According to the Master Thesis methodological guide, the proposed number of interviews is 10 to 15. Having in mind that the accessibility of the refugees is quite difficult due to confidentiality, the participants were selected through a combination of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling (Bailey, 2007; Silverman, 2011). Snowball sampling is suitable sampling method for this study as the participants could suggest other respondents when they are not willing or just unable to participate in the research (Silverman, 2011). On the other hand, purposeful sampling allows me to select my sample based on their characteristics and the aim of the research (Bailey, 2007). The final sample consists of 10 interviews of refugees from different countries such as Syria, Iraq, Iran and Jamaica who are residing in the Netherlands. According to Guest et al. (2006), this is considered as an adequate number of interviews not only to achieve data saturation and variety, but also to avoid repetition. But after the first three or four interviews, it was already clear the general attitude of the refugees towards new technologies and social media.

As the objective of my thesis is to investigate refugees' notions regarding privacy when using new technologies, these sampling methods play a pivotal role for my research question while they allow me to select proper participants who are suitable for my research based on my pre-selected criteria. As it was mentioned previously, it would be very possible for me to meet some people with a language barrier being an obstacle in order to communicate better. Therefore, it was crucial for me to determine some criteria according to which I was planning to select my interviewees. Firstly, an adequate knowledge of English is needed in order to conduct the interviews. Secondly, refugees should be familiar with the usage of the new technologies and social media. In addition to that, they should be willing to participate in the research and living in the Netherlands the last few years. Lastly, they should have the refugee status.

3.5 Operationalization

In this section, I justify the emergence of the main concepts and definitions which were presented in the theoretical framework. These concepts were vital in order to conduct the interviews as they have not only assisted me to formulate the proper questions, but also to determine the topics of the discussion. Since the examining question of this thesis is to identify the sentiments, notions, behaviour and knowledge of the refugee population regarding digital privacy, it was a necessity to introduce the definitions of a refugee, new technologies, digital privacy and datafication. This assisted me to create the proper structure of the interviews for a better understanding of the refugees' perceptions regarding privacy in the digital age. In addition, not only the European Integration theory and the conceptualization of the integration in the digital age, but also the European migration policy and the common European Asylum System were explained too in order to understand adequately the European migration management.

Furthermore, as the main core of this thesis is to comprehend to what extent refugees share their personal information when using new technologies and what they consider as private and why. The Uses and Gratifications model was the theory I based my research analysis of the collected data on. As it highlighted in the theoretical framework, the Uses and Gratifications model is a theory which links people's needs and motivations with their personal digital behaviour. Additionally, this theory also assisted me to identify the degree of self-disclosure of the refugees when they are using the social media platforms and the new technologies in general.

3.6 Data collection and analysis

In order to recruit potential interviewees for my research I had contacted the “Unity in Diversity” which is foundation a located in The Hague and its aim is the socio-cultural integration of refugees and expats into the Dutch society through various projects, training, communication and culture sharing (Unity in Diversity, 2018).

Ms. Miracle Uche. C a chairperson of the foundation reassured me that the required interviews could be conducted there. Even though the initial plan was all the interviews to be conducted and recorded in The Hague at the foundation offices, only one of them was conducted there in end. But through the snowball sampling procedure which is considered to be the most appropriate method to gather information from minority groups (Sturgis 2016). I have managed to approach the rest of my participants, starting from the first interviewee at foundation offices. “Unity in Diversity” was the starting point to build my final sample of participants in my research.

Before starting the interviews, all potential interviewees were given a detailed information and consent form which was assuring the confidentiality and anonymity. The face to face interviews were conducted between April 12 and April 24, 2018. The entirety of the interviews was audio recorded through a voice recording application and later transcribed verbatim in order to be able to analyse the data. Knowing that the transcription of an interview is a time-consuming procedure, I was doing the transcriptions at the same time with the interviews.

The interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes on average. Additionally, during the organization of the interviews it was essential to consider about locations that would create a sense of ease and trust among the interviewees (Gill et al., 2008). Hence, in order to ensure the ease of interviewees the face to face interviews conducted in a variety of locations that were mostly in the home cities of the participants and particular in familiar public facilities. The first interview took place at the “Unity in Diversity” offices in The Hague. The second, the sixth, the seventh and the eight took place in public locations such as cafeterias in Rotterdam. The third, the fourth and the fifth interviews were conducted in an Arabic school for Syrian refugees in Binnenhof. The ninth interview took place in Vlaardingen, (a village close to Rotterdam) and the last one in Amsterdam. Both were conducted in public locations too.

After the collection of the data and the transcription of the interviews, the thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews was followed. The generated data from the transcriptions

was the basis of my analysis. The main concept was to identify patterns and draw conclusions from the collected data.

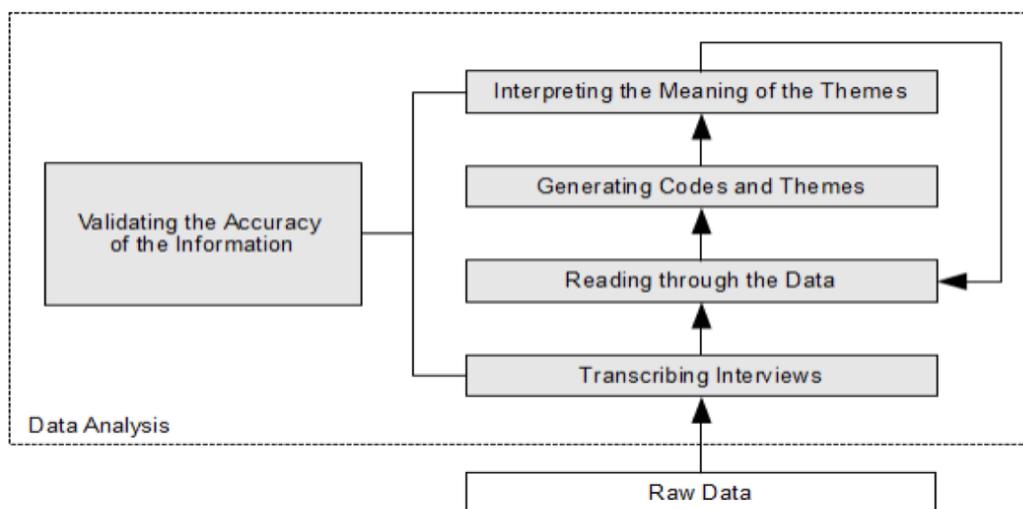
The method of the analysis of the data which was performed is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the most widely preferred approach in a qualitative research while it provides researchers the possibility to identify, analyse and report themes and ideas from the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Moreover, due to its flexible nature, the thematic analysis facilitates the organization of the data while researchers are able to produce the initial codes and patterns, look for themes within the initial codes, organize these themes by name and title, and finally analyse and interpret the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic analysis of the data should be relied on the non-linear six steps analytic procedure in order to produce themes and patterns. Particularly, the indicated process by the authors constitutes of the following six steps: data familiarization, producing initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing of the identified themes, defining and naming themes and lastly reporting the results. The aforementioned steps were carefully followed in every phase as it was the basis of my analysis. Therefore, in the beginning I read and re-read the transcripts of the interviews many times in order to become more familiar with my data. It should be noted here, when I started the realization of the analysis of the data some initial notes and notions were written down. Next, the initial observations and notions were developed into initial codes. The coding was created manually on the transcripts of the sessions which is pivotal in order to get the tone of the conducted interviews and create a thematic tree. The third stage of the analysis after the initial coding was to classify the collected codes into sub-themes and point out the meaningful passages in the data in order to see if it is possible to link them into a potential theme by staying to the theoretical framework of my thesis. In the following stage, since my goal was to focus on elements that resonated with my research question, the initial themes had to be re-examined in order to generate the final themes of the research by distinguishing, clarifying, unifying or neglecting the initial themes. Moreover, once the final themes were completed, definitions of these themes were created based on literature and previous research in order to analyse adequately the data. The final stage of the thematic analysis was to transform the analysed data into interpretable report which answers the research question of the thesis.

Thematic analysis was used not only to identify patterns and insights emerged from the in-depth interviews with refugees, but also to ensure the credibility and transparency of this research along with the established research question and theoretical background.

In addition to the thematic analysis, I also applied in my research the four steps of data analysis for a qualitative research described by Creswell (2007). According to Creswell (2007) after the data are collected all the audio data should be transcribed to a text. Afterwards, through the reading of the data, relevant codes and themes to our research should be generated. Lastly, the interpretation of the meaning of the themes is needed in order to check their compatibility with our theory and literature (Creswell, 2007).

Irrespective of the interviews, few themes and sub-themes have already emerged from the writing of the thesis proposal: (1) refugees' perceptions of social media use, (2) refugees' perceptions of integration, (3) the role of new technologies in the integration procedure, (4) cultural differences in usage of the social media, (5) security risks of digital privacy and (6) strategy of privacy protection. Moreover, the main themes emerged from the analysis of the data are presented in the results section, with each theme and sub-theme being supported and explained by important passages from the findings.

Figure 3: Visual overview of the four steps qualitative analysis



3.7 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are crucial points of qualitative research which any researcher should have in mind while conducting a research in order to achieve credibility and quality for a study (Golafshani, 2003). According to Kvale (2007) validity is the main factor that generates correctness in a research. Therefore, in order to achieve validity and reach the aim of the study, three key elements should be taken into consideration. Firstly, constant check for validity during the research procedure is needed. Secondly, looking for generalizable

information and test the results in order to evaluate the findings (Kvale, 2007). According to Lunt and Livinstone (1996), there are two types of validity: the internal and the external validity. In order to achieve internal validity, the findings should be based on the personal perceptions of the participants in a research and not on the interpretation of the researchers. External validity refers to the fact that the examined sample group is a social representation of larger population which is academically accepted (Lunt & Livinstone, 1996).

On the other hand, it is difficult to address reliability in qualitative research as many researches consider it is not applicable to qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). It is still essential to present a detailed description of the research procedure, the decisions which were taken, the theories and the concepts which were used and the way the research was designed, in order to achieve trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003). In this thesis, the main concepts and the research process were explained in detail in order to increase the reliability of the findings. This achieved through conceptualization of the main concepts in the theoretical section by providing clear definitions which were applied to the transcripts of the conducted interviews. Therefore, validity and reliability are two essential concepts for my research in order to reduce any biases and increase its credibility.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The main objective of this study is to investigate the perceptions of refugees regarding privacy when using the digital technologies and social networking platforms in the Netherlands. To answer this question, this research places great emphasis on the privacy and trust issues that arise from using these technologies in various sectors of refugees' daily life. This chapter presents a synopsis of refugees' notions referring to new digital technologies, integration, acculturation, datafication, privacy, self-presentation and self-censorship. This data intersects with the main concepts established in the theoretical framework section. The upcoming section investigates the series of themes and sub-themes that were extracted during the thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews.

After the thematic analysis of the data, the identified themes and sub-themes were categorized under general common themes. In order to coherently understand refugees' perceptions, the findings of this research which were based on the main themes and patterns, are demonstrated through examples and quotations taken from the transcriptions of the interviews always related to the theories and concepts presented in previous studies on refugees and relevant literature.

4.1 Research population

The table below presents an overview of the respondents who participated in this study. The entire sample consists of male participants due to the cultural and social factors in the Middle East which do not allow women to participate in research when the researcher is a male. Potential female participants were requested but they did not seem willing to take part in the research. Furthermore, when male participants were asked for suggestions in potential female participants there was a negative response. Nine of the interviewees were from the Middle East and one from Jamaica. More specifically, five of them were originally from Syria, three of them from Iraq, one from Iran and the last one from Jamaica. The youngest participant was 25 years old and the oldest one 38 years old. Five of the participants are coming from Syria which reflects the growing violence in Syria after the civil war. The majority left the country in 2014 and 2015 depicting the general tendency in Syria to migrate in Europe. Two of them migrated to Europe illegally by boat coming from Italy and Greece, and the third legally by using a visa. After the agreement between EU and Turkey in March 2016, the eastern Mediterranean route was blocked and the access to Europe decreased effectively (European Commission, 2016). Indeed, the refugees who managed to arrive in the

Netherlands after the EU-Turkey agreement were those who applied for asylum. Five of the participants arrived in the Netherlands having the refugee status after applying for asylum in their home countries and the rest applied for asylum after they arrived in the Netherlands. Three of the ten participants applied for asylum because of their sexual orientation, two of them did not reveal the reason, four of the them due to the war and family reunion, and the last one in order to avoid prison in Iran. Overall, the interviewees decided to leave their home countries as they and their families were in danger and wanted to escape from the violent situations in their countries or because of their sexual orientation. Some of them before fleeing to Europe tried to begin a new a life in nearby countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Egypt, but due to the hostile environment and the limited access to employment in these countries, they were forced to move in Europe.

With regards to education level, all the participants have a high education background. Two out of ten have obtained a master’s degree, seven of them have obtained a bachelor’s degree and one of them is still a bachelor student. Even though, nine out of ten respondents were eager to provide their names, with respect to the last one who expressed his desire to remain anonymous, all the names are replaced with pseudonyms in order to ensure their privacy and avoid confusions during the interpretation of the data. Therefore, the following table of the participants in the research was created:

Figure 4: Overview of respondents

No.	Name	Sex	Age	Education level	Year of arrival	Country of origin
1	Respondent 1	Male	27	Bachelor	2017	Iraq
2	Respondent 2	Male	29	Master	2017	Syria
3	Respondent 3	Male	38	Bachelor	2015	Syria
4	Respondent 4	Male	32	Bachelor	2014	Syria
5	Respondent 5	Male	35	Master student	2014	Syria
6	Respondent 5	Male	29	Bachelor student	2013	Jamaica

7	Respondent 7	Male	25	Bachelor	2016	Iraq
8	Respondent 8	Male	29	Master	2015	Iraq
9	Respondent 9	Male	34	Bachelor	2017	Syria
10	Respondent 10	Male	26	Bachelor	2015	Iran

4.1.2 Thematic presentation

Once the conducted interviews transcribed, I focused on the interpretation of the answers that participants gave during the sessions based on the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The objective of this chapter is to identify and demonstrate refugee's notions on digital privacy and motivations when using online technologies. Practically, I identified within the interviews the similarities and differences which later on I linked them with each other by creating general categories. The content of the interviews was categorized based on the theories and patterns derived from the literature review and previous studies. After the initial stage of identifying the main categories, notable segments of the content were selected and placed within the determined categories. The main categories in this thesis are the following 1) use of digital technologies, 2) integration, 3) digital privacy and trust, 4) big data and datafication, and 5) privacy protection.

Once the main categories were established and all the relevant information from the transcripts of the interviews were coded, the main themes were created on which the results of this study were based. The visualization of the principal themes and sub-themes that emerged from the findings presented below.

Figure 5: Table of themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Use of digital technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past experiences and practices • Organizing the journey • Experiences and practices in the Netherlands
Refugees' perceptions of integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push and pull factors • Integration as two-way process

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media, integration and privacy
Datafication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Companies • Society
Digital privacy and trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees' perceptions of privacy and trust • Refugees' private 'space' • Self-presentation • Key informant
Privacy management and protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-censorship • Self-disclosure • Settings

4.2 General use of digital technologies – refugees' past experiences and practices

As it was spotlighted in the theoretical framework of this thesis over the last decades the internet and technological advancements have become integral part of people's daily life by curtailing the role of the traditional forms of communication. In order to answer the research question, it is essential to address the role of the digital technologies in refugees' lives before their arrival in the Netherlands. Hence, a review of the digital behaviour and habits of the refugees who participated in this research is presented here.

As a result of the purposeful sampling which allows me to select my sample based on their characteristics all the participants in the research were digitally active during the last decade. During their residence in their home country, all the interviewees pointed out that the digital technologies were irreplaceable part of their lives. Most of them mentioned that they used social media for their personal entertainment, communication and escape from reality. For instance, respondent 2 mentioned:

Well, I was already active on social media. Of course, in general I was living in a way the digital life even a bit more than a real life (laughs) because you can meet people from all around the world or people with different ideas because I wasn't [eh...] I wasn't feeling really at home there because my ideas are a bit different, a bit more open. (Respondent 2)

The sense of belonging to a specific group constitutes a basic human need. According to Hall (2014), belonging to an identity group signifies acceptance as part of this group or to

community as a whole. Hall (2014) argues being that a member of a particular group minimizes individual's painful emotions especially loneliness and isolation. For instance, some people fulfil this need by going to church, others by being close to family or friends and a different group of people by spending their time on social media (Hall, 2014). Even though identity groups set their own values and norms, at the same time they empower people's freedom by assisting them to achieve their goals and express their cultural and political points of view (Banks, 2008). People tend to become members of online communities to share their thoughts and needs with other people who possibly have never met before (Johnson, 2014). Johnson (2014) points out that online community members join these groups both to contribute to the community and benefit from them.

The majority of the respondent remarked that the social media they used before leaving their home country was Facebook for spending their free time and WhatsApp for texting and communication while it is considered as the safest application because of the encryption settings.

“I trust WhatsApp more specially since few years now since the messages are now encrypted. So, it's not used in any way to generate ads or anything like that... [...] And all the messages via WhatsApp are encrypted so you can't trace it.” (Respondent 6)

Needless to say, privacy is a fundamental human right. The protection of personal privacy empowers values such as individual dignity, independence and freedom of self-expression (Hiranandani, 2011). Especially for vulnerable populations who live at the margins, by expressing their opinions or their lifestyle could be dangerous for their own life. According to Smith, Dinev and Xu (2011), the use of the social networking platforms and internet in general is affected by the eagerness of sharing personal information.

It should be also noted here that the use of social media is similar in Gulf countries. For instance, all the respondents mentioned that posting comments against the government or religion can get you in prison. But sharing personal information regarding your personality or your sexual preferences could cause only social reaction such verbal or even physical attacks, while the Arabic government does not care about this kind of issues.

“[...] people there rarely post thinks political against the government let's say because it could get you in troubles maybe eh... nothing really serious but maybe

people hate you people judge you and sometimes you can get persecuted because you are expressing something that goes against the mainstream against [...] I saw a lot of profiles eh... just get blocked or get deleted or I've heard about people they got persecuted because they post something controversial especially political.”

(Respondent 2)

Respondent 9 shared his personal experience of getting attacked by his fellow citizens because of his sexual orientation and social activism. He revealed during the interview that when he was in Syria he used to post things on Facebook about homosexuality and religion, not something offensive as he argued, but general information that raise awareness. As a result, he received a huge amount of threatening messages and a physical attack by a car which tried to run over him. This was a key factor to leave Syria and apply for asylum in the Netherlands.

“Q: How does government face this kind of situation in Syria?

A: By absolutely doing nothing.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah, because for them it's... it's something silly they don't take it seriously which is stupid because right now you know like everything eh... 100% related to the social media even the war back in Syria. I'm 100% sure that's it all related to social media...”

(Respondent 9)

On the other hand, respondent 7, 8 and 10 who are originally from Iraq and Iran explained that in their countries it is not allowed even to express a lifestyle which is not in line with Islam and government. As expressed by respondent 7, the unconscious usage of the social media in Iraq can lead to kidnappings or even murders. In addition to that, respondent 10 described his personal experience in Iran where he was accused of being ‘social criminal’ because he was presenting a different lifestyle and culture on his Facebook profile which is in stark contrast to Islamic values. According to Lynch (2002), when it comes to crime and punishment, the late modern political culture focuses on the welfare of the majority of the citizens and demonize those who go against the state of many. Furthermore, she argues that the fear of social change and its consequences towards society makes governments to adapt traditional moral discipline and more punitive social control in order to deal with criminality (Lynch, 2002). Respondent’s 10 digital behaviour was considered by the Iranian government

as an attempt to influence people and create a movement against the regime. As he contended one day after work he was captured by the police and got in prison for a week without informing anyone, not even his family.

“They [parents] were like searching graveyards and hospitals for me. [...] And then when I asked what is this about. He said because you have Facebook, Facebook is like an online magazine that you have on internet, on web and eh... you upload pictures which is not in the same line as Islam. And those pictures were very normal pictures that you are sitting in a park with a group of friends which is mixed between girls and guys or you go to party and you are in a group of people that they are not very well dressed for the Islamic eye or like there is a drink or a bottle of drink somewhere which is again... against Islam and on the other hand I was traveling all around Iran and then I was traveling around it. So, I had lots of connections and I had lots of friends on my Facebook and then I had many likes and I was quite popular and then they were afraid that if I could gather people and make a movement against the government”.

(Respondent 10)

This is a common practice in the Arab Gulf countries in order to control their citizens and disrupt potential demonstrations. Indubitably, as demonstrated by the literature review of this study, social media play pivotal role in shaping ideas and opinions, while they are considered as a channel to different cultures, in this case to the western European and American culture. The Arabic countries struggle to secure social stability and cohesion through religion and cultural homogeneity. Taking into consideration the socioeconomic situation in Gulf states, the absence financial opportunities, the restricted political participation and the violation of basic human rights, it is obvious why the political system in these countries attempts to control social media (Davies, 2015). The provided information on social media can reform the society and reinforce social interaction and engagement, leading to movements against the authoritarian governments. A representative example of this is the series of anti-government protests occurred across the Arab world in 2011, known as ‘Arab Spring’ (Manfreda, 2018). Many researchers acknowledged the importance of the concept of the social capital for the communities in order to achieve their political goals (Teorell, 2003). Social capital is a group of various entities which relates with an individual’s belonging to a specific group (Teorell, 2003). Being member of a group can affect not only one’s behaviour

and perspective regarding political participation but also influences the government performance (Morales & Ramiro, 2011).

From the above insights, we can observe that almost all of the respondents who participated in the research, back in their home state used social media solely for communication, gathering information and leisure activities, following the rules imposed by the governments and society under the fear of punishment and isolation. Furthermore, the given answers differed when it came to the internet accessibility. For instance, respondent 1 pointed out that in his hometown back in Iraq they had constant electricity issues which restricted the access to the internet. But despite the difficult conditions they all had access to the digital technologies.

4.2.1 The role of digital technologies when organizing the journey

With regards to digital technologies as an organizational tool before leaving their home country, the responses provided by refugees varied. By analysing the finding, we can observe that almost half of the respondents did not use digital technologies and social media to organize their trip to Europe. They believe that such a trip is not easy to be organized in advance due to the expected conditions. In addition to that, the Netherlands in most of the cases was not the first choice of the destination country.

When respondent 6 was asked about the role of social media in organizing this journey, the answer he gave was negative: “I don't think it played much role because I didn't know anyone here. So, it's not like I had friends here where I could see their life on social media here to make an informed decision. So, I didn't use it to yeah... It didn't have any role in my decision in coming here”. Respondent 10 had a similar opinion towards the importance of social media in planning such a trip, while he didn't have in mind any specific country, he just wanted to leave Iran and the only country where he could get a visa, and particularly a student visa, was Italy. As a consequence, he applied for the visa Italy where he lived for a year before moving to the Netherlands.

On the other hand, respondents 2, 5 and 9 supported that the digital technologies and social media played an essential role when organizing this harrowing journey to Europe. They gathered useful information regarding Netherlands, visa application, asylum procedures, accommodation or even avoid potential perils and smugglers during the journey.

“...I probably wouldn't be here (without having access to the digital technologies). [...] I had many friends especially on social media, on Facebook, on

Instagram... I was surfing, looking for information about just the life here of getting out of Syria and I had many friends that they were... that they were refugees in different countries like in Canada, in Germany”. (Respondent 2)

However, the findings showed that all the interviewees admitted that they looked for information, even those who did not use social media to plan their journey. In fact, participants 7 and 8 acknowledged the importance of having access to information which crucial for refugees’ resettlement. This indicates that social media and new technologies in general have become a useful tool which not only facilitates the whole procedure of resettlement, but also establishes social bonds within the host society while it assists them to integrate and become part of the society.

The analysis of the data revealed that the information was gathered in two different ways. Some of the respondents recount due to the lack of trust in social media asked for information from other refugees who had already moved to Europe and experienced the whole procedure. According to them, they are able to provide refugees with credible and accurate information.

“[...] when I was in Beirut a friend of my mine who is in Canada is the one who sent me a link for a website of this organization eh... who hooked me up with UNHCR. So, I started to... see how serious they are through you know their Facebook page and eh... multiple accounts. So, yeah, I found that they are serious and they helped me and other guys before me. So, that encouraged me to go for word and seek their help”.
(Respondent 9)

The second way of collecting information was through social media especially from Facebook which has become the main network for exchanging essential information for planning this journey. Facebook became popular among refugees because its groups provide to their members not only information regarding the journey, but also practical information after their resettlement in the host country. As respondent 1 argued refugees can find information about accommodation, Dutch language courses, job and general information which facilitate their life in the Netherlands. The vast majority of the respondents prefer Facebook over the other social network platforms as it provides direct interaction which is very helpful in their situation and solves the problems they face immediately. In addition to that these groups are private and not everyone can be part of them which increases their

reliability. These are the key factors that Facebook became the main platform among refugees who are seeking information.

“[...] There is a group on Facebook for Iraqis in Netherlands actually. So, I did check it out before I came... Yeah. So, that's why it's actually good to a lot of Iraqis living abroad they kind of mobilized and form this communities abroad. So, they are giving people like actual really information. A lot of, it is actually kinda weird they have videos and they have pictures and it kind almost looks like... like a travel agency they're making of...”. (Respondent 1)

This aligns with Frouws et al (2016) and Alencar (2017) assertions explained in the theoretical section that social media ease refugee's resettlement and integration into the host society by providing them various tools and facilitators. Furthermore, it is essential to mention the crucial role of social media in shaping 'imagined communities'. According to Al-Rawi and Fahmy (2018), 'imagined communities' are the communities where its members share common ideas referring to belonging to a new country. As they mention, most probably the members of these communities have never met each other, but yet they express similar images of their new community. 'Imagined communities' are very essential when it comes the psychological and social well-being of their members as they not only enhance the unity of the group, but also shape their identity and redefine individuals' values, norms and attitudes (Al-Rawi & Fahmy, 2018).

4.2.2 General use of digital technologies – refugees' perceptions and practices in the Netherlands

After having discussed the way respondents used digital technologies back in their home states, in this sub-chapter we examine how these experiences influence their digital behaviour in the Netherlands. All the respondents during the interview admitted that in order to avoid the hostile political environment and the growing violence in their countries of origin they used digital technologies and social media, and that social media continue to play a pivotal role in their settlement in the Netherlands. The majority of the refugees pointed out that social media became an irreplaceable part of their life as it is a massive help in order to maintain personal relationships with people back in their country and in the Netherlands at the same time. Facebook continued to be the most popular platform for exchanging

information and WhatsApp for communication. Other applications that refugees use are Instagram, Skype, Viber, Telegram and Google maps, similarly to most Dutch people.

Furthermore, based on the respondents' insights, this sub-chapter spotlights the role of the digital technologies and services in solving refugees' basic needs in the Netherlands such as communication, creation of social relationships, professional networking, integration and entertainment. As presented in theoretical framework, the Uses and Gratification model seems to be the most suitable model to investigate the relation between people's needs and their personal digital behaviour (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973). This person-oriented theory takes into account individual's social background and psychological state in order to examine attitudes and practices towards social media usage.

First, all the respondents reported that even though the usage of the digital technologies was widespread in their home country as well, in the Netherlands they use more these technologies as they are essential for their daily life. This however does not comply with the respondent 7 as he claimed that he is too busy with other activities (e.g. Dutch courses), so he has not time for social media.

“When I was in Bagdad I used it a lot [...] because yeah, I had nothing to do there just talk with friends or do something or studying something like that. But when I came here I don't really use it like a lot, like just maybe one hour... per day. And eh... yeah, I think because of I'm bit busy now with studying and working”. (Respondent 7)

With regards to communication and contact with family and friends, there was a common consensus among interviewees that social media play essential role in maintaining contact with their loved ones back in their home country. For instance, as expressed by respondent 5 “the main reason to use Facebook or social media is to contact with my family”. This statement depicts the fact that social media have become the main way of communication for refugees and yet, as they admitted it is the most direct and cheapest way to communicate with their family, even though they are not completely trustful. When asked which of the social media platforms they trust more for their communication, WhatsApp and Telegram were the most popular answers.

“Telegram because of the encryption [...] And I have read one article that says eh... Telegram has good eh... tools to... for the security they encrypt the data...”. (Respondent 8)

From psychological point of view, findings showed that refugees based on their stages of life at different points in time had different reactions. For example, due to uncertainty respondents 3 and 4 hid from their families their journeys. Respondent 4 mentioned that when left Syria he went first to Lebanon and then to Dubai and Egypt, during this time he explained that he had constant communication with his family but when he left Egypt by boat heading to Italy he didn't tell anything to his family because he did not want to worry them.

“On the way from Egypt to Italy, it was, it was very dangerous. So, I don't... I didn't say anything to my family. It's a... but... for the rest of the journey everything was fine, so I told them when everything was fine and safe”. (Respondent 4)

Besides the importance of the new technologies in communication with family and friends, refugees also use social media in order to socialize and create social relationships. This is essential because in this way refugees lessen the feeling of seclusion, being discriminated or rejected and become part of the Dutch society. When respondents asked whether they use social networking platforms to socialize and how, the responses that were given were totally contradictory. The majority of the respondents six out of ten mentioned that they use social media as a tool to socialize and meet new people. Respondents 3, 4, 5 and 8 pointed out that Facebook is the platform they prefer to use for meeting new people. According to them, they mostly interact with Arabs who have the same experiences and objectives with them. In fact, aside from the psychological support they provide to each other, it is clear that these respondents desire to protect their national identity, culture and religion. For instance, respondent 5 argued that: “Some people think you should forget everything about your own culture and to acquire the new[...] to get to accept the new culture. I think this is wrong, you can preserve your culture and learn about different cultures.” According to Al-Rawi and Fahmy (2018), it is a common phenomenon for people in diaspora to express their desire to become part of the host society but at the same time to adhere to their national culture in order to maintain their original values and identity.

Additionally, respondents 2 and 9 acknowledged the importance of social media and specially of Facebook when it comes to socializing. However, they explained that they prefer to use dating apps to meet people because of their sexuality. They supported that being homosexual in an Arabic community is not possible, hence using Facebook and meet Arabs is not an option for them.

“[...] I met some good people through the dating apps who are really supportive and helpful”. (Respondent 9)

“Yeah because of my sexuality, because I would like to... if I would like to connect with gay people, it would be problematic if people from my own neighbourhood or from my own country or family could see those eh... people on my profile. They would ask questions and I would be judged for it. Like what do you do with gay people on your profile.” (Respondent 2)

Moreover, respondent 2 emphasised on the need to protect his personal privacy as he is not officially come out to his family. He explained in order to feel safe, he created two Facebook accounts and two Instagram accounts, one for his family and his social surrounding, and one for his personal-sexual life. As he implied this is a common phenomenon in Syria for people who desire to hide something or protect their privacy and anonymity. Even though the majority of the Arab countries have criminalized homosexuality, governments themselves do not punish homosexual acts when they occur in the privacy, but by presenting them as an immoral act they trigger societies' anger against homosexuals (Vickerry, 2016). This has generated a great amount of violence and discrimination towards homosexuals while this kind of behaviour does not comply with the norms of the society (Bayramoğlu & Lünenborg, 2018). According to Bayramoğlu and Lünenborg (2018) social media platforms are considered to be safe spaces for these people as they create new intimacies and increase the sense of belonging. On the other hand, respondents 1, 6, 7 and 10 reported that they do not use social media to meet new people because they prefer face to face contact. They prefer going out and meet people in person or from the volunteering activities which they participate in. The fact that they speak English fluently, language is not a barrier for them to communicate with Dutch people as they all said Dutch people are friendly and open to meet new people. Therefore, it is great opportunity to become part of the society admitted respondent 6. The lack of trust towards social media and digital technologies in general has been proven as a significant barrier for individuals to disclosure their personal information online and engage with other users as it makes them suspicious and hesitant, especially marginalized populations such as refugees (Wang & Emurian, 2005).

“[...] You use the social media to do so and from that point you can find people that they have the same mind-set and then you can find friends (talking about Iran). But

in Europe not necessarily I didn't meet any new people through Facebook I met people in real life and we got in touch through Facebook more after yeah.” (Respondent 10)

Some of the interviewees spotlighted the role that social media platforms and technologies play in creating a professional network. This positive aspect of social media on refugees' life was demonstrated in the theoretical framework by the assertions of Ager and Strang (2004). According to them, social networking platforms not only help marginalized populations to integrate into society through interaction with the locals, but also provide access to useful information which allows them to develop a professional network and have more job opportunities. Special notice by the respondents 1, 2 and 8 was given on LinkedIn as they explained, they struggle to be active on this platform in pair with Facebook, while both are considered to be the most significant networking platforms to find a job. From the analysis of the data, we can observe that building professional and social networks is part of refugees' use of the social media in general.

The last sub-theme that emerged from the general use of the digital technologies is entertainment and leisure activities. There was unanimity among interviewees referring to the fact that social media play central role not only in the distraction from the everyday problems that they are facing, but also to deal with the loneliness. Some of the respondents pointed out that in order to avoid boredom and make time go faster they use social media.

“You know eh... you can say that sometimes it's educational entertainment and sometimes just you know, just entertainment for spending time like eh... following many pages eh... talking about science and religion and making discussions on... on these matters [...] and for me like for example Instagram eh... into photography I'm not professional or anything but I'm into it. So, for me yes, it's kinda entertainment to take pictures and post it over there. So, yes”. (Respondent 9)

The described use of the social media illustrates the way that refugees, either consciously or unconsciously, experience integration in the Netherlands. Therefore, in the following chapter, it is essential to examine their perception concerning integration and how it influences their behaviour and actions, in relation with the digital privacy and the collection of their personal data.

4.3 Refugees' perception of integration

Before analysing the perception of refugees concerning integration, it is essential to explain the reasons why they decided to leave their countries and head to Europe. According to Lee (1966) and his migration theory, there two main factors that classify the causes of migration, the push and the pull factors. Usually these factors are connected to each other while the pull factors often follow the push factors when the decision to leave the home country has been already taken.

As Lee (1966) demonstrates, the push factors are the main causes of the internal or external resettlement while these factors force people to leave their country of origin in order to avoid difficult and hostile situations. As it was mentioned in the introduction the due to the unstable political situation in the Middle East and the continuing violence in the area, thousands of people were forced to leave their home countries. Half of the respondents who are originally from Syria pointed out that they decided to leave the country in order to elude from the civil war. For instance, respondents 3 and 4 claimed that they left the country because the wanted to avoid the mandatory military service.

“I have to... to make a decision to... to stay with government and go to military service and [...] Or I have to go with the other side...” (Respondent 3)

On the other hand, the pull factors are associated with the place of destination. Thus, in this case the reason to flee was the desire to live in better or different country than their home state. Respondents 1,6,7,8 and 10 mentioned that they left their home country in order to live in a place where they can express themselves and have a better future. Europe seemed as the best place to find safety and fulfil their dreams. For instance, respondent 10 shared:

It was not eh... one... over one night decision, it was something that eh... when I started getting to know myself I recognized and realized that Iran is not the country that I want to live for the rest of my life. So, that was always that desire that I wanted to leave the country and I need to be somewhere I belong not the where I was born. [...] I wanted to be in a place so I could be myself and eh... without any danger or fear, I could express myself and be based on sexual preferences Netherlands would be the best country. Or at least what I've heard that could give me equal rights to the rest of the citizens base on my sexual preference. (Respondent 10)

These factors are essential to be mentioned as they shape refugees' perceptions regarding integration and influence their motivations and practices. The majority of the interviewees when it came to integration expressed opinions which were in line with the conceptual framework of the key domains of 'successful' integration developed by Ager and Strang (2008). In fact, many refugees highlighted the domains of employment, education, accommodation and the equal access to social services as the main domains of integration into the host society. Respondent 10 introduced another aspect of integration which relies on common respect and understanding of the different cultures.

“Integration is the feeling, is the mutual understanding for me according to my environment. Integration for me is not that I will change myself or what I believe, is that I know, what is the environment that I'm living in, what is about and I get it and I respect it and I want to be part of the environment for me without losing who I am and my principles.” (Respondent 10)

At this point, it is essential to mention that there is a debate taking place in Europe regarding immigration policy which focuses on the controversy between the multiculturalism and assimilation of immigrants. Borooah and Mangan (2009) argue that there is a concern within European countries about the erosion of their national identity, the questions whether immigrants should preserve their national identity and culture or assimilate themselves into the host society are being omnipresent in this discussion (Borooah & Mangan, 2009). As they indicated in their research the notions regarding this issue depends on the national migration policy of each European country and personal characteristics of the immigrants; the northern European countries, among them the Netherlands, are against multiculturalism while they believe minorities should be absorbed in order to maintain the social cohesion of the host society (Borooah & Mangan, 2009).

All respondent recognized the pivotal role that language plays in the integrating procedure. According to them, the knowledge of the Dutch language constitutes the primary requirement in order to communicate with the locals.

“The first word that jump to my mind when you say "integration" is language. [...] I guess it's the most important thing. Ehh... because without the learning the Dutch language you don't feel that you are part of this society. So, for me, I work hard to learn

the Dutch language... and because I need to get the sense of community here. And since I am new here in this country, I'm a newcomer. So, I need to find a community for myself and for my family. And without learning the language, it will not be possible to... to get into this community. Even if I speak English, it's... it will still be difficult for me to, to integrate into this society. So, for me language is the most important thing [...]” (Respondent 5)

In fact, according to Ager and Strang (2008), language and cultural knowledge and refugees’ safety and stability are the two major facilitators of the integrating process. Furthermore, from the above insights of the respondents, it is obvious that they face integration as a two-way process where the objective is to create a common ground between the Dutch society and them by embracing each other’s values and culture. Furthermore, cultural and socioeconomic characteristics such as age and educational level are crucial factors of integration as well. The analysis of the data revealed that the youngest refugees are more eager to integrate into the Dutch society as they are planning to stay in the Netherlands as long as possible. They are attending Dutch language courses and participate in various integrating activities organized either from the government or from different NGOs.

When interviewees asked whether they use digital technologies and social media to integrate into the Dutch society, the responses they gave were similar. All of them recognized the role that digital technologies could play in the integrating process but as they admitted they prefer offline activities and personal interaction. For example, respondent 7 expressed the notion that integration through social media is waste of time.

“The real integration would be face to face to go or volunteer work [I will] it helps a lot ... to go to do some activities. I think it will be more important for them than spending their time on social media”. (Respondent 7)

Furthermore, when details were asked about the reasons they do not prefer social media for their integration into society, they admitted that they do not trust social media and have the feeling that their personal accounts are still under surveillance. Having experienced or seen violations of digital privacy back in their home state, makes them suspicious towards social media and digital technologies in general. For example, respondent 1 mirrored other interviewees opinion by saying: “So, they [Dutch government] probably, I'm pretty sure they

also like spying on you, I don't know for sure but I wouldn't be surprised". Similar feeling was expressed by the respondent 9 as well.

“Because with this technology that we have and with all these brilliant minds that we have in the world anyone can hack your accounts wherever it is and leave you... leak your information so... no you can't trust it”. (Respondent 9)

By analysing the findings, it is clear that refugees perceive social integration as process of an open dialogue between the Dutch community and them. During that process, they struggle both to incorporate into the local society and maintain their national identity. Great emphasis was given to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect. Generally, all refugees who participated in this research showed their strong desire to become part of the Dutch society by participating in various volunteering activities, learning Dutch, getting more education or finding a job. Moreover, as identified by the respondents, social media and digital technologies appear to be an essential part of integration but due to the fear of violation of their personal privacy and data disclosure by governments and other agencies, their use is restricted.

4.4 Big Data and Datafication

The following section focuses on refugees' common concern on violation of their personal privacy by these digital technologies. They are concern not only about how their personal information are collected, assessed or evaluated, but also how these data are used by various agencies, governments and tech companies. In fact, as discussed in the theoretical framework, the ascendance of Big Data introduced a new era where individual's personal data are collected by the digital technologies and social media and provided to the aforementioned institutions. The main fear expressed by the respondents was that the collection of their personal information facilitates surveillance and monitoring of their daily life and activities. For instance, respondent 5 described that governments with the excuse of the national security and safety use social media to control individual's behaviour and activities.

“Now we see in the news that governments are using the... the information from google for example. So, they analyse this information, yeah, I know this the... for political reasons and they say for safety reasons. But since we are depending more and more on social media we have to share a lot of information about personal life [...]and I

think somehow, we feel that we are always watched. [...] So, because of the control on of the social media platforms, if you publish anything, they [Syrian government] might get into your family they might hurt your family there. Even if you don't live in Syria anymore. So, your family will be affected. And that's why actually I avoid publishing political things because I'm afraid that this will affect my family there". (Respondent 5)

Undeniably, refugees' general notion of data collection is related with the violation of their personal privacy while they believe the stored data can be used to influence, control and direct them under the threat of blackmail and data disclosure. According to the respondents, that the main actor who violate their privacy through digital technologies is the government. As respondent 5 and 10 mentioned governments buy this information from the companies which have created databases with personal data collected through social media and digital technologies in general. This corresponds with Solove's (2002) theory of the 'digital dossiers' where individual's personal data and online activities are collected and sold to governments. The respondents 3 and 10 in order to enhance their opinion mentioned Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal.

"Yeah what happened in, what happen in the States recently when the... information 87 million people was being sold to eh... Cambridge Analytica and with all that leaked information or sold information. Facebook feeds of those 87 million got manipulated and those was about the elections that happened in United States. So, if Facebook has all this information which this information is more than just pictures we upload or the messages we send is about what we search in our search engine, what we like, what we dislike, what we look more than one minute and yeah also like turn on the microphone to listen your... Yeah, these are the information Facebook has and Facebook has the power to violate privacy". (Respondent 10)

These statements demonstrate refugee's growing privacy concerns and privacy awareness. Besides governments, all the respondents expressed their concern about various companies as well, which not only provide their personal information to the authorities, but also use these data for advertisement and marketing purposes. The last main factor that expressed by the respondents and can violate their digital privacy is the society they live in. Respondents admitted that back in their home states individuals can interfere into their life by breaching their privacy. As respondent 2 and 9 mentioned this is a common phenomenon in

conservative societies specifically in the societies from the Middle East which have certain cultural and social characteristics closely related to Islam. More specifically, respondent 2, 6 and 9 revealed during the interview that they are homosexuals, placed great emphasis on that as homosexuality is not accepted from the society in their countries of origin. For instance, respondent 6 was asked if he ever posted on his social media something related to homosexuality as he explained: “No, I've never... never did that, because yeah it would be dangerous [...] I came here because I'm gay and in Jamaica it's illegal to... not be gay but intercourse, sexual intercourse is illegal, and you could be thrown in prison for 10 years”.

Respondent 9 admitted that sharing his opinions and thoughts on social media cost him his freedom.

“Because I am an atheist and I used to share things on my wall, on Facebook ... not offensive stuff but just you know, things that raise awareness about religion, this kind of things. But people they took it as I'm trying to offense eh... their god or prophet or whatever. So, I got many threats and... through you know messages and stuff like that. After that... the car thing happened. So, I couldn't after that go out of my house for a month... So, after that month I decided to... to go to Beirut because I... you know I can't be a prisoner in my own place”. (Respondent 9)

From the above insights, it is clear that the collection and disclosure of personal data by governments, companies and societies breach fundamental human rights such as independence and freedom of self-expression which raise privacy and trust issues among the participants in the research. According to Hiranandani (2011), privacy protection which is discussed in the following chapters, is the main core of individual's liberties.

4.5 Digital privacy and trust

As already pointed out in the introduction and theoretical framework, numerous definitions of privacy were proposed by the academia. According to Lyon (2002), the conceptualization of privacy has puzzled the academia while it is closely related to different internal and external factors. However, the common ground of these definitions is the respect of individual's freedom and independence. Throughout the discussion with the refugees, various opinions regarding digital privacy and trust were demonstrated. Great emphasis was placed on transparency and the right to be in control of their personal data. As respondent 1 claimed transparency on social media is the key to build trust and reliability with the users.

The declaration by respondent 6 that says: “Yeah to me it means being controllable over my data or sensitive data or at least being aware on how my data is being used and by whom” confirms one of the six concepts of privacy presented by Solove (2002) and named ‘control over personal information’.

All respondents admitted that the digital privacy influences their digital behaviour and practices. For instance, respondent 9 confessed that the lack of control of his digital privacy forced him to leave Syria.

“My situation as a homosexual guy and atheist guy. I left this country because my privacy, privacy was hacked actually. So, I even like a month ago someone tried to... to hack my Facebook account but thankfully he or she most probably it's a he [...] it didn't work out so... that was... I was freaking out actually, I was freaking out and I was getting some threat messages on one of the dating app...” (Respondent 9)

The rise of the digital technologies has brought issues such as digital privacy to the front line. As it was discussed in the theoretical framework, digital privacy is strongly related to the way that the gathered personal data are used either by governments and different agencies or the society itself. The lack of transparency and the various examples of the privacy violations within society raised concerns referring to personal privacy among the respondents. Respondent 10 expresses his feelings of uncertainty and helplessness:

We are involved with some platforms that we trust them and we because are using their platforms, they have many, many, many data, information from us. So, in this sense we have semi-privacy because we think what we only share is being published. So, we think you are in control on privacy and the pictures we upload is on... is there. So, [...] what I believe is like digital privacy it's just fantasy, doesn't exist because whatever they have, they just have it and if... if they want to use it or if they want to sell it or... they want to do... what they want to with it they can. So, it's digital privacy it's... I don't think yeah digital and privacy can go in the same phrase.
(Respondent 10)

From the above insight, we can observe the privacy paradox that young people experience when using social media. Even though they claim that they are concerned about their digital privacy and aware of the potential risks that they could encounter by disclosing

their personal information online, they still share a great amount of personal data on social media platforms (Hargittai & Marwick, 2016). In fact, a decreasing negative correlation between privacy concerns and self-disclosure is observed among the young online users, their behaviour is characterized by apathy as they believe the breach of their privacy is unavoidable (Hargittai & Marwick, 2016; Tsay-Vogel, Shanahan & Signorielli, 2016).

Similar statements were expressed by the majority of the respondents regarding digital privacy and trust. They admitted that because of the fear that the personal information they have entrusted in social media can leak, they have decided to restrict their usage. From the analysis of the interviews, it is clear that this feeling is bigger among the older participants and those who have experienced violations of their privacy in the past such as respondents 9 and 10.

When they were questioned about what information they usually share on their social media and what is 'too private' for them, the dominant responses were issues related to their family and their sexual identity. All the respondents use their real names except respondent 2 who has two Facebook and Instagram accounts where he prefers to use a nickname. An additional information that they do not share is their location as respondents 3, 4, and 5 mentioned it could be dangerous for them and their families back in Syria. This will happen in the case that they will post something online that is not acceptable by the Syrian government even though they are currently living in the Netherlands. With regard to the pictures they upload, 8 out of 10 respondents mentioned that they barely post any pictures. On the other hand, one interviewee, (respondent 10) stated that he uses social media as his Dutch friends do, he posts pictures of himself in order to express his pointed of view while he believes his social media are his 'personal public diary'. He additionally mentioned his predominant preference on Instagram while after the recent Facebook data scandal he lost his trust and faith in this specific platform. Similar use of social media was described by respondent 2 but only on his secret accounts as he detailed the lifestyle he presents on his secret accounts opposed to the conservative Syrian lifestyle which could be harmful for his family who lives in Syria. Needless to say, the notions and digital behaviour of the respondents depend on their education and societal background too.

Furthermore, another sub-themed that emerged from the interviews was the self-presentation. According to Krämer and Haferkamp (2011), self-presentation is the capacity of individuals to shape and manage their image when interacting with their audience in order to create a positive impression of themselves. Self-presentation strategies are part of the impression management which is considered as process of conscious or unconscious

impersonal behaviours of influencing people's notions concerning other people (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). About half of the respondents mentioned that they use social media and new technologies to present their current lives in the Netherlands. As respondent 7 and 8 pointed out it crucial when sending an encouraging message to their families and friends who stress about them. Moreover, respondents 2, 9 and 10 admitted that they struggle to construct a different impression of themselves by posting on social media pictures of their everyday activities or cultural and educational stuff in order to present a different side of their personality or to be part of the society. In particular, respondent 10 said: "[...] And my personal life sometimes it adds pressure because I think... sometimes ... is like an invisible pressure pushes you maybe to do something or be part of something or think of certain way because the rest of the people are doing it". From the analysis of the interviews, it was clear that the majority respondents due to the fear of violation of their digital privacy, avoid publishing controversial and offensive posts.

“No nudity, nothing very controversial, let's say something that touches upon others religion in a direct way or [...] racial or any kind of that... I try to keep it something that is a bit more friendly, a bit more safe for everybody and for me.”
(Respondent 2)

Uski and Lampinen (2014) point out that social norms and values not only influence users' online behaviour, but also guide the content that they share on the social media platforms. Simultaneously, individuals struggle to follow these norms and try to give as true as possible representation of themselves in order to keep up with the social reality (Uski & Lampinen, 2014).

Self-presentation closely related to the following sub-theme which is the key informant. According to McKenna and Main (2013), from ethnographic standpoint, key informants are individuals who provide access to people and information regarding a community to an outsider. As insiders, they provide their own perspectives and knowledge about particular topics which are essential to outsiders while they can influence their decisions (McKenna & Main, 2013). Throughout the analysis of the data, favourable opinion towards the role of key informants has been observed. The majority of the interviewees explained that this has occurred due to the lack of trust in social media and digital technologies, and key informants were actually the main and most reliable source of receiving information regarding the entire journey; from the pre-departure planning to their settlement in the Netherlands. Respondent 1

mirrors interviewees' opinion by saying: "I did check some information but it's..., it's really difficult to check out its authenticity you know [...] because it might be fake". Similarly, respondent 9 pointed out: "Yeah, I had... I have a friend who lives in Amsterdam and I was in touch with him when I knew that I'm coming here. So, he gave me many good... good information about life over here and what to do next and all this kind of things. So, yeah, tracking them to the journey of other people through social media and seeing how their lives are changing through the things they are posting even if it's like minor things but it helped me to... believe more and gonna fight for it and get to it".

In addition to that, respondents 1 and 5 highlighted that being in the Netherlands couple of years turned them to key informants. As they explained people from their home countries often contact them through social media in order to get information regarding the process of moving to Europe. The paradoxical phenomenon here is the that despite the fact that refugees do not trust these media, they acknowledged the pivotal role of the social in accessing key informants and getting useful information.

4.6 Privacy management and protection

The last theme that surfaced from the analysis of data was the concept of privacy management. As it was demonstrated by the literature review of this thesis, the management of the digital privacy is a difficult activity which usually goes beyond individuals' control. However, it is an essential pattern to comprehend refugees' digital behaviour and practices based on privacy. From the discussions conducted with the refugees, it was clear that due to the concern of violation of their digital privacy they have decided to implement several privacy protection tactics. In terms of refugees' privacy protection strategies three sub-themes were identified; the concept of self-censorship, self-disclosure and management of digital platforms' privacy settings.

As it was discussed in the introduction of this thesis, the fear of violation of personal privacy and sanction by the authorities, force people and especially marginalized populations such as refugees, to withhold personal information and impose self-censorship without any kind of official censorship being active. It has been discovered that two central principles influence individuals' decision to self-censor on social media. First, online users tend to impose self-censorship when the audience is vague and undefined or when the audience is defined and the posts target specific groups of people (Das & Kramer, 2013). Indeed, from the analysis of the interviews, it is clear that self-censorship is the main practise of privacy protection. As respondent 2 said: "[...]it's not really something in the government or

something in the general policy, it's not so... But I never had any problem with it. But that's the thing you just want to be on the safe side so you just don't do it. Maybe it's the fear of the unknown. But you don't feel safe enough or relaxed enough to... to just do it like here". He also added that in Syria there are some red lines on social media such as sexuality, religion and political opinions. As he explained it always about the fear of the unknown "we weren't raised like that, we were raised to watch out what we say and there are many things that are not natural to say or to express, keep it to yourself". What respondent 2 illustrates here is that if someone's digital behaviour is not aligned with the cultural traits of a society, it could cause unpleasant conditions to himself or to his loved ones. When they asked if they still impose any kind of self-censorship, the majority of the respondents gave a positive answer. Respondent 7 pointed out that even though he feels secure in the Netherlands, he still has a family back in Iraq which he should protect and keep out of danger. On the other hand, respondents 6, 9 and 10 argued that they impose self-censorship not to protect their families but because they want to guarantee their personal privacy and their personal data. For instance, respondent 9 in order to explain his opinion he said that his family is conservative and religious so there is no danger for them. Similar opinion was expressed by respondent 10, he seemed concern about his personal data how they could be used in the future which as he admitted affects his digital behaviour while it makes him suspicious and sometimes paranoid.

"...most of the time I don't even think of the audience if you want to upload a picture, just upload a picture [...] I'm not afraid because I'm doing anything wrong anymore but sometimes I think I don't know what will happen in couple of years in humanity, technology, social media that all this information and all these pictures or statuses or messages that I share through internet and through social media what will happen later on". (Respondent 10)

The second sub-theme emerged from the discussion with the refugees and it was the concept of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is a privacy protection strategy which is related to the amount of personal information individuals decide to share on social media. In other words, as it was stated in the theoretical framework, it is about selective disclosures and exclusions of personal information made by the online users. It appears to be also a purposeful disclosure of personal information which pertains not only to personal data such as name, age, educational level personal and cultural background in general, but also to opinions, feelings and sentiments. All refugees who participated in the research stated that

they use their real name on their social networking accounts. Respondent 2 and 10 explained that they started using their real names after their settlement in the Netherlands as they feel safer here. Additionally, respondent 4 said that he does not feel comfortable by using his real name but in order to create or maintain his professional network he is obliged to use it. With regards to location, all respondents pointed out that share their general location such the city they live or check-in in a social event they attend. This was not the case for respondent 8 as he decided not to share his location at all. Similar behaviour was observed in terms of photo sharing as well. All of them explained that they share their pictures because they do not want to have a faceless account. Respondents 3,4 and 5 who are married exemplified that they would never share pictures of their family because it is dangerous.

Furthermore, respondents 2 and 6 decided to exclude from their social media any information or comments regarding their sexuality. Similar opinion expressed respondent 9 and 10 who said that even though they are openly homosexuals, they decided not to share any information concerning homosexuality as they underlined some people in their ambience are not comfortable with it.

“...even if came out of the closet and told everybody about my sexuality I'm not gonna just put it out there and wave it as a flag. It's something personal, you know straight people they don't say hey I'm straight, it's just something personal for everyone...” (Respondent 9)

Needless to say, the majority of the respondents stated that they do not disclose their opinion and feelings towards controversial issues such as religion and politics as it could be dangerous both for them and their families.

The last emergence from the analysis of the data was the management of privacy settings offered by the social networking platforms. As few of the respondents explained after the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica data scandal the necessity of controlling their online life has increased dramatically. This strategy of data protection seems to be very important specially after the new EU's GDPR on privacy rules which not only creates a private space for individuals in the digital world, but also increases transparency while online users have the possibility to check where and how their personal information are used.

The findings revealed that the majority of the refugees who participated in this research are not aware of these privacy-security security settings provided by the digital platforms. As respondent 6 mentioned it is quite difficult to find them. Three out of ten respondents

underlined the significance of these setting in their personal data protection. For instance, respondent 9 explained that he updates regularly the privacy settings of the platforms he uses in order to protect his personal data as good as possible.

“I keep updating my Facebook privacy setting whenever they have something new and creating very complicated passwords between one and other”. (Respondent 9)

Similar opinions where expressed by respondent 1 and 6 who were focusing on the visibility of the information they share. More specifically, respondent 1 said that the digital content he posts is not publicly available as only his close friends can see these posts. In fact, the tactic of the limitation of the audience who can see the publishing posts is the most common among the interviewees either by limiting the audience through the privacy settings of the platforms or just adding people they really know on their social media accounts.

5. CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis was to investigate the notions of refugees regarding digital privacy, trust and surveillance when using different social networking platforms and new technologies in general. In order to comprehend adequately refugees' digital behaviour, this research focused on the degree of trust they had towards these digital technologies and platforms. This the concepts of privacy and trust are closely related to their digital behaviour and the privacy protection strategies they adapt. By interviewing refugees, I was able to better understand the identified patterns emerged from literature through refugees' motivations and practices. Participants placed great emphasis on digital privacy and trust, on the datafication of their personal information and on their personal privacy management and protection. Based on the Uses and Gratifications model the social and psychological background was taken into consideration in order to investigate refugees' digital usage and behaviour related to their current needs. In order to answer the main research question, a qualitative approach was preferred while it the most appropriate research method to comprehend individuals' sentiments, notions and social behaviour based on their personal experiences (Kvale, 2007). For this thesis, 10 in-depth interviews with refugees where conducted and examined through thematic analysis.

This study has shown that social media and digital technologies play pivotal role in refugees' life as they have influenced them from the beginning of this journey till their resettlement in the Netherlands. Even though there were some contradictions among the answers, the majority of the refugees recognized the importance of the digital technologies besides their privacy concerns. Based on the results, respondents emphasised on the crucial role that social media played in various stages of their life. Firstly, they focused on the usage of social media during their residence in their home state which was characterised by the majority of the interviewees passive due to the governmental control. During this phase of their life they used social media mostly for communication and entertainment. Afterwards, they focused on the role of social media during the preparation phase in which they gathered useful information regarding the journey. The findings showed that due to the lack of trust towards social media, the information emanated mostly from other refugees who had already moved to Europe. The last phase that was identified was the usage of social media during their settlement in the Netherlands. Participants underlined the role of these digital tools in finding accommodation, socialisation, professional networking, entertainment and integration into the Dutch society.

According to the respondents, integration is a two-way process between the Dutch society and them. Great emphasis was placed on learning Dutch, getting further education and, creating social and professional network within the Dutch society. Simultaneously, the majority of refugees explained the importance of maintaining their national identity. Furthermore, the results indicated that the youngest refugees are more willing to integrate into the host society by participating actively in various volunteering and integrating activities. However, even though refugees acknowledged the crucial role of the digital technologies in the integrating process, they explained that the usage of these technologies is restricted due to the fear of violation of their personal privacy.

With regard to datafication, all respondents expressed their concerns referring to the way their personal data are collected, evaluated and used by different tech companies, governments and other agencies. The fear of surveillance and monitoring of their everyday life by the authorities has made refugees self-conscious about their digital behaviour. In addition, respondents described governments, companies and societies are the main actors that breach their digital privacy and disrespect individual's fundamental human right of freedom of self-expression. This raised their concern regarding their personal privacy and trust in digital technologies.

The findings showed that the violation of personal privacy from the aforementioned parties and the lack of transparency have a negative effect on refugees' digital behaviour. Refugees in order to be as much as they can in control of their personal data, they are carefully selecting what to publish on their social media accounts. They admitted that they do not post anything about their families, their sexuality, religion and politics while it could be dangerous both for them and their families. The majority of them explained that they share only some basic personal information such as names and few pictures of themselves as they do not want to have an anonymous profile. They argued that even though they do not trust social media and digital technologies, they have become an integral part of their daily life in the Netherlands as they are necessary means for communication, socializing, entertainment and professional reasons.

Furthermore, in order to protect their personal privacy, refugees practice three privacy protection strategies. Firstly, they impose self-censorship which as the findings indicated is the most common tactic of privacy management and protection. Secondly, they perform self-disclosure and thirdly, few of them pay great attention to the management of privacy settings offered by the social media platforms.

Overall, this research demonstrates a clear linkage between refugees' past experiences and their digital behaviour. It has been found that social media and digital technologies in general are perceived as essential tool for refugees as they facilitate their communication, information, socialization and integration into the Dutch society. Participants placed great emphasis on their digital privacy when using these technologies and the perils of its potential violation. As they all pointed out this has a negative effect on the use of digital technologies. The most important element here is the privacy protection strategies they implement which reflect refugees' concerns and suspiciousness towards social media and, shape their digital behaviour.

In the following sub-chapter a critical evaluation of the research is illustrated by emphasizing on the theoretical, methodological and practical limitations that I have faced throughout the research. Moreover, suggestions and recommendations for further research are proposed.

5.1 Limitations

Even though this research provided valuable information regarding refugees' digital behaviour throughout the whole journey, there were some limitations that I faced which are essential to critically address as they have affected the results of this research.

To begin with, the first limitation of this study relates to the demographic characteristics of the research sample. The initial intention was to interview refugees from different social backgrounds, educational level, age and gender. But due to the difficulties in accessing refugees, the initial plan failed. The sample of the research was researched via snowball sampling. All the respondents were males, highly educated and their age ranged between 25 and 38. The diversity of the sample could give us a better understanding of refugees' digital behaviour.

Aside from the research sample, the inadequate knowledge of English in some cases caused some difficulties as few of the participants were not able to express in a more precise way how they think or feel and this had a negative impact on the flow of the discussion.

Additionally, certain limitations emerged during the analysis of the collected data. Despite the fact that the qualitative content analysis is considered as the most suitable approach in attain a deeper understanding of individuals' behaviour, restrictions arose regarding the coding and categorization of the responses. Hence, it was essential to pay special attention when it comes to the correct interpretation of the data. This was established

in order to prevent any biases or prejudices, and achieve as much as possible an objective interpretation regarding the responses given by the refugees.

5.2 Future research

As addressed in the theoretical framework of this thesis the current literature on migration crisis mostly focuses on how social media and digital technologies are used by refugees in order to facilitate their resettlement and integration into the host society without paying attention on refugees' right to digital privacy. This research explored refugees' perceptions and experiences through qualitative in-depth interviews referring to the digital privacy, and struggled to fill this gap in literature and contribute to its expansion.

Furthermore, in response to the aforementioned limitations of this study, few suggestions for further research are presented in this sub-chapter. It would be interesting to examine refugees' perceptions regarding digital privacy by combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. Questionnaires, focus groups, experiments or content analysis could be used in order to achieve credibility and deeper understanding of the investigating topic. In addition to that, by using both methods we cannot only reach a broader sample, but also increase the objectiveness of the research by providing additional insights.

Moreover, future research could also investigate in greater detail various demographic groups, since in this research some limitations regarding refugees' social backgrounds, educational level, age and gender were raised.

Finally, due to the continuing conflicts in the Gulf area and Middle East, future research should focus on refugees' digital behaviour and perceptions referring to the digital privacy over time.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. *Introductory/personal questions*

- *Could you please tell me few things about yourself?*
- *Where are you coming from?*
- *What is your age?*
- *What did you do back in your home country? (level of education, work)*
- *When did you come to the Netherlands and why?*
- *Could you tell more about this journey? (experiences, challenges and difficulties they faced)*

2. *Use of digital technologies during the journey*

- *Can you tell me about the role of the social media in organizing this journey to the Netherlands?*
- *Based on your experience can you describe us the importance of digital technologies in this journey?*

3. *General use of digital technologies in the Netherlands*

- *How often do you use social media?*
- *Which are your favourite social media platforms? Can you give me a top 5?*
- *Which one do you use the most and why?*
- *Which is the most common reason of using these technologies? (communication, gather information, socialize, entertainment)*
- *Are you member of any online groups? For example, on Facebook or Instagram? Why yes/why not?*
- *How do you think these social media platforms influence your life both social and personal?*
- *Is the way you use these technologies the same before your arrival here in the Netherlands or it changed? Why? How? What are the differences?*

4. *Integration*

- *What did you expect to meet in the Netherlands?*
- *What is integration for you?*

- *After your arrival in the Netherlands in which integrating activities did you participate?*
- *Do you use social media platforms in order to integrate into the Dutch society?*
- *Do you use specific apps and platforms for that? Which ones and why?*
- *Can you describe the role of social media in the integrating procedure and your expectations?*

5. *Digital Privacy*

- *What does privacy mean to you?*
- *Do you trust more the social media here in the Netherlands? Why yes/why not?*
- *What is trust for you?*
- *Are you wary of sharing your personal information on social networking platforms?*
- *What do you consider as too private?*
- *What information do you share more?*
- *Do you post your pictures/ your location/ your real name?*
- *Do you think that social media violate your personal privacy? Why?*
- *Is there any social media you trust more? Why?*
- *How do you think your provided personal data can be used by these platforms?*
- *How do you manage to protect your privacy?*
- *Do you impose any forms of self-censorship while using social media? (ask for details)*
- *Did you experience any violations of your privacy during the past? (ask for details)*
- *Have you ever thought how your journey would be if you had no access to these technologies during your journey?*

Appendix B: Interview consent form

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Ilias Athanasiadis

Schiekade 442, 3032AX, Rotterdam

Athanasiadis.ilias1@gmail.com

0684332625

DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in a research study about refugees in the Netherlands, and their use of digital technologies and social media. The purpose of the study is to investigate the perceptions of refugees on privacy when using the digital technologies in the Netherlands.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed. In general terms,

- the questions of the interview will be related to participant's general utilization of social media and digital technologies.

Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will use a voice recorder for the interview.

You are always free not to answer any particular question, and/or stop participating at any point.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research. Yet, you are free to decide whether I should use your name or other identifying information or not in the study. If you prefer, I will make sure that you cannot be identified, by using pseudonym, general identification only mentioning age and gender, etc.

I will use the material from the interviews exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

TIME INVOLVEMENT

Your participation in this study will take between 40 minutes and one hour. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

PAYMENTS

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish — Dr. Payal Arora - Erasmus School of History, Culture & Communication, email: arora@eshcc.eur.nl

SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you **DO NOT NEED** to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, you may prefer to consent orally. Your oral consent is sufficient.

I give consent to be audiotaped during this study:

Name

Signature

Date

I prefer my identity to be revealed in all written data resulting from this study

Name

Signature

Date

This copy of the consent form is for you to keep.