

# The Integration of Syrian Refugees into Dutch Society

Investigating the intercultural communication strategies of NGOs in this digital era

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## ABSTRACT

From 2015 onwards, the Netherlands has experienced a large influx of refugees. This new wave of immigrants has contributed significantly to the Dutch population growth, predominantly receiving refugees coming from Syria. Once these refugees arrive in the Netherlands, the process of acculturation starts; in order to achieve a successful integration refugees are required to learn the language and cultural practices of the host society. NGOs are organisations that help newcomers by offering them support. One main aspect that concerns NGOs is providing support that increases job employment amongst refugees, since it is seen as the most fundamental factor for a successful integration. However, despite the help and support offered by NGOs, the majority of refugees remain unemployed.

Coming from recent studies and integration literature, social media is understood to serve as an important tool in the integration process, particularly when it comes to job employment. Refugees are digitally connected and have access to online sources in order to seek information about job employment. In this regard, websites and platforms such as Facebook play a fundamental factor in NGOs' communication strategies. Differences and similarities in NGOs' and refugees' their social media usage have been observed and elaborated on.

This study aims to ascertain how NGOs could improve their communication strategies in order to reach newcomers and increase job employment amongst refugees. This research makes use of qualitative content analysis and in-depth interviews. These interviews have been conducted with four NGOs and seven Syrian refugees. The findings reveal that the social media networking sites are relevant for the NGOs' existence, but less advantageous for refugees. Social media usage amongst refugees has other motives, such as social bonding with the host society and keeping in touch with family and friends in the country of origin. In addition, it appeared that offline communication has proven more effective to those interviewed. Surprisingly, the greatest similarity between the interviews with NGOs and refugees was that offline communication, and particularly personal communication, is regarded in the same way as being more advantageous than online communication.

Another important finding concludes that the majority of jobs offered in the Netherlands are below the level of the highly educated refugees, which also leads to non-participation in the Dutch labour market. This study suggests recommendations on two-way communication strategies of NGOs and argues that a more flexible system of recognising the qualifications of Syrian refugees could be beneficial in a two-way integration process.

**KEYWORDS:** *NGO, Online Communication, Intercultural Communication, Integration, Refugees*

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Contextual background

Social media play an essential role in this digital era. Websites and platforms such as Facebook enable users to communicate, share content and seek for specific information. For refugees, social media platforms can serve as information providers that could ease the integration process, particularly when it comes to job employment, being one of the most fundamental factors for a successful integration (Ager & Strang, 2008).

This study concerns the integration process of Syrian refugees into Dutch society. Refugees can be seen as a specific immigrant group. They differ from other migrant groups because of their motives and their history (Feller 2005, Phillimore 2011). Their specific background stories could affect their integration due to cultural differences, which makes the integration process a complex one (Feller, 2005). Integration can be described as a two-way process which starts at the arrival of refugees in their host country. Integrating in the host country brings with it several requirements (Ager & Strang, 2008, Beiser, 2006, Laban et al., 2004, Phillimore, 2011). It is necessary that refugees are willing to change their lifestyle and adjust to the habits of the host country. As Ager & Strang (2008) argue, it is of importance to understand that society consists out of different ‘domains’. Every ‘domain’ requires an adjustment. For refugees, this means that the shift to a host country means that they have to change their conditions in order to fit into the host society. It is also asked of the host country that it is willing to accept the arrival of the refugees and to give access to certain services and jobs (Castles et al., 2002). NGOs are organisations that are willing to provide these services and assist people that are in need of help (Yaziji & Doh, 2009).

The role of NGOs has increased the last couple of years due to the new wave of immigrants. In 2015, the number of newcomers was the largest since 1985, contributing notably to Dutch population growth (CBS, 2016). NGOs offer support in order to help refugees in a successful integration (Yaziji & Doh, 2009). But despite the help offered, increasing job employment amongst refugees seems a hard task. The majority of refugees in the Netherlands are unemployed. Statistics on the careers of refugees in the Netherlands show that the position of refugees in the Dutch labour market is extremely high (CBS, 2004, Dagevos et al., 2018). However, integration on the level of employment is crucial in order to adjust successfully into host society (Ager & Strang, 2008). Surprisingly, according to previous research, 78% of newcomers in 2016 have received the right to participate in Dutch society, but did not take a place in the Dutch labour market (Dagevos et al., 2018). Approximately 47% of this group mentions that the offered work is below their level of education (Dagevos et al., 2018). IMISCOE has argued how the integration process has led to non-participation, since it is too individualised; integrating comes along with more than learning the language of the host society and the support that is offered by NGOs (2017).

Ager & Strang (2008) provide a multidimensional approach when conducting research on the

integration process. The approach consists of: (1) Means and Markers, (2) Social connection, (3) Facilitators and (4) Foundation (citizenship and rights). This study focuses on the first two areas, because the area of Means and Markers include employment, education, housing and health which are crucial to accomplish a successful integration (Ager & Strang, 2008). In this area, employment can be seen as the key to a successful integration outcome; employment could lead to economic and social independence, and therefore progress in the integration process (Ager & Strang, 2008, Da Lomba, 2010). The second dimension of social connection is considered to be in the 'private sphere' of the integration (Ager & Strang, 2008). Social bonds and bridges could lead to connecting with the locals as well as with the other refugees, adjusting itself to the host society. In addition to this, social links with institutions such as NGOs or governmental services could boost a successful integration because of the help they offer (Ager & Strang, 2008).

## 1.2 Academic relevance

NGOs and their strategic and intercultural communication processes have drawn little attention in research, even though they have become a prominent feature in society (Lewis, 2010). With the new wave of immigrants (CBS, 2016), NGOs, as well as other organisations that are responsible of this group of newcomers, need to critically consider their intercultural communication in order to help refugees achieve successful integration (Wiggill, 2011). The results could provide a contribution to the process of creating effective intercultural communication strategies.

When investigating NGOs' communication strategies it is important to elaborate on research on integration as well. This is because most NGOs only exist in order to help refugees communicate, connect and ultimately to integrate. Moreover, successful integration is key to job employment and a place in society. Most of the researchers focus on cultural differences that could negatively affect the integration process (Feller, 2003, Phillimore, 2011), this study focuses on the advantages of a two-way integration process, in which job employment plays the essential role. Employment has been researched frequently (Castles et al., 2001, Brink et al., 1996) since as mentioned before it is the most crucial factor of a successful integration (Strang & Ager, 2008). Employment could indirectly lead to progress in other relevant issues, such as economic independence and developing language skills that are of importance in adjusting to the host society (Bloch, 1999, Tomlinson & Egan, 2002).

The majority of research focuses on a social phenomenon from one side. By looking at it from other angles a pattern might be seen, namely the differences and similarities rather as they are voiced in interviews or where an anomaly occurs in, for example, the use of online rather than offline communication to find a job. This study focuses on job employment amongst refugees from two perspectives. Firstly, the intercultural and strategic communication of the NGOs and organisations that concern refugee integration will be discussed. Secondly, the perspective of refugees will be explored and discussed to gain an understanding of whether the ideas and motives of these

organisations and refugees converge. In order to understand the two-way process of integration, research provides several descriptions of certain 'dimensions' that play a role in integration. For this research, the distinction between socio-economic integration and socio-cultural integration has been used (Engbersen, 2003). The first dimension explains to what extent the refugees participate in the public sphere; the labour market, the housing market, the educational system. The second dimension will be used to explain in what way refugees can adapt to the cultural habits of the host society and to what extent they are seen as a minority group (Dagevos, 2001). Both dimensions will be taken into consideration when researching the integration process of refugees when it comes to job employment. The theoretical framework of Ager & Strang (2008) will be used as well to re-order the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimension.

In addition to the above, this study suggests to include another dimension; the digital dimension. This dimension concerns the role of social media in integration and particularly job employment. It is in this digital time and era that social media use and refugee integration seems to be an even more complex process (McGregor & Siegel, 2013). With the rise of social media, it could be harder for refugees to adapt to the host society when it comes to job employment, but also education, cultural belonging and social acceptance (Amanda, 2017). Theory on finding jobs via social media is beyond the focus of this study other than in the sense that is it the tool NGOs currently use. In this regard, this study aims to gain understanding of how NGOs make use of social media in order to ease the integration process. Part of that integration process is to help refugees find employment.

### 1.3 Research questions

Based on the premises above the research question of this study has been formed: "In this digital era, how could NGOs improve the strategic and intercultural communication towards refugees in order to improve their integration process into the host society?" In order to answer the research question a number of sub questions are formed to investigate the different aspects that play an important factor in job employment amongst refugees: (1) How are the social media and networking sites of NGOs built in order to improve the integration process of refugees into the host society?, (2) To what extent do social media and networking sites improve the ease of integration into the host society?

### 1.4 Chapter outline

This subsection functions as a reading guide for the reader. The previous introductory sections concern the importance and challenges that come along within the integration process and why investigating this has a social, as well as scientific relevance. Moreover, the research question and sub questions that this study attempts to answer have been stated. Consequently, the theoretical framework will be presented after the chapter outline. The theoretical framework includes an in-depth overview of the concepts and relevant literature that are being used to answer the research and sub

questions. By doing this, the framework provides an indication of common knowledge within the academic field. This section will be followed up by elaborating on the methodology; including the research design, chosen method, gathered data and sample. In addition, the validity and reliability of this study will be discussed. Logically, the results section will be presented. In this section, the most important findings will be argued upon by making use of the theoretical framework. Lastly, the conclusion and discussion will be presented, answering the research and sub questions. In addition, the limitations of this study will be discussed and a suggestion for future research will be presented.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

This chapter will discuss concepts and relevant literature that concern NGOs' communication strategies and refugee integration. To provide an answer to the research and sub questions, in the first section of this chapter NGOs and intercultural communication will be discussed. In addition to this, NGOs' online communication will be elaborated on by explaining how their websites and Facebook will be analysed based on the concepts of interactivity, engagement, relationship building and cultural identity. These concepts are fundamental in order to gain an understanding of how and why NGOs try to reach their target group with the goal of increasing job employment amongst refugees. The second section of this chapter includes an elaboration of refugee integration. This part will present arguments why integration is a two-way process, that requires refugees as well as host society to adjust. In addition, the role of social media in integration and particularly in the Dutch labour market will be discussed.

### **2.1 NGOs and Intercultural Communication**

NGOs are non-governmental organisations that assist people who are in need of help in order to improve the well-being of human kind (Witteborn, 2010). As argued, social connection is a key factor in a successful integration. NGOs could fill this gap that of cultural differences between the refugees and the host society. They act as mediators and build a bridge between these two; they might have the ability to help integrating in the socio- economic dimension, as well in the socio cultural dimension. To reach the goals that are set up from out of the NGO, a clear communication is crucial (Wiggill, 2011). The vision, mission and activities should be clear to the internal, as well as the external stakeholders, in order to create an effective management (Bowers, 2000). According to Bowers (2000) and Selnick (2005) NGOs are not capable of reaching the right targeted people without a specific communication strategy. It seems that external stakeholders are in need of NGOs being familiar with their issues and needs; not the other way round (Wiggill, 2011). In this, it could be implied that NGOs must know their external stakeholders by engaging them into a two-way communication process (Wiggill, 2011). According to several researches social engagement can lead to a boost of the social media presence and influence of the NGO (Himmelboim et al., 2014). In this, it is crucial to realise that only organisational activity alone is not the key to successful engagement; it requires action of the organisation as well of the stakeholders (Yang & Saffer, 2018). Organisation-initiated engagement can be described as the interaction between the organisation and the individuals that are impacted, or influenced by, the organisation (Bruce & Shelley, 2010). This entails a communication that is directly focused on specific stakeholders, which leads to an increase of stakeholder trust and loyalty (Yang & Saffer, 2018). Digital engagement on NGOs social media consists out of the interacting or exchanging of messages between the organisation and the stakeholders at an online level (Saxton & Waters, 2014). It could range from passive activities, such

as taking a look at the website or following the social media to reacting on the social media, as well as starting to communicate (Yang & Saffer, 2018). However, it seems that due to financial lack and not enough knowledge of intercultural communication it seems that the majority of NGOs make use of 'just getting the word out' instead of focussing on a two-sided communication process (Dyer et al., 2002, Naude, 2011, Wiggill, 2011).

Studying the communication strategies is essential for the organisations' existence (Wiggill, 2011). The communication processes are mostly unplanned and unclear, which might lead to dissatisfaction amongst the external stakeholders and not reaching its target groups (Bowers, 2000, Wiggill, 2011). However, when trying to create an effective strategic communication it is crucial to keep stakeholders and their issues in mind. Moreover, because of the fact that NGOs are non-profit organisations, they have limited financial sources (Yaziji & Doh, 2009). Therefore it could be difficult to gather enough donations in order to achieve their goals which makes achieving their goals difficult. Communicating strategically and creating strong relationships could also be beneficial for NGOs to increase the amount of donations (Sargeant, 2001, Werker & Ahmed, 2008). In case NGOs have the ability to keep a stable amount of financial sources, the chance is more likely to achieve their mission and goals (Wiggill, 2011). According to Wiggill there are two main factors that contribute to the difficult situation that NGOs find themselves in: (1) due to lack of financial sources, NGOs can not allow themselves to set up a specified communication department. In the majority of NGOs one of the internal stakeholders has the responsibility over several communication practices, what might lead to a dissatisfying communication management; (2) Due to lack of professional communication training the internal stakeholder(s) that is responsible for the communication has not an appropriate amount of knowledge to create an effective communication strategy (2011). Consequently, it might be crucial for NGOs to set certain priorities and consider their strategies when making an attempt to reach refugees; the results of this study could make a contribution.

## 2.2 NGOs and Online Communication

This subsection will provide relevant literature that concerns the social media usage of NGOs and social media usage amongst refugees. The digital era in which we live is such that society as a whole is dependent upon social media for communication and connection. Individuals and organisations use websites and Facebook as primary tool towards integration and intercultural dialogue. This is no different for NGOs and refugees except perhaps in the extent to which it is effective.

The concepts of interactivity, engagement and relationship building will be elaborated on since they are fundamental factors in creating an effective online communication strategy. As mentioned, having a clear online communication strategy is important for NGOs' existence. However, it is as well important for refugees since they might feel the need to find sources and organisations that promote a two-way communication in order to be included in conversations; it might serve as an indicator of

inclusion. In addition, it can not be denied that social media has permeated many aspects of daily lives. Therefore it is essential to keep in mind that social media should be involved when creating communication strategies (Kelleher & Miller, 2006). Social media has been described as the most influential marketing tool when trying to reach a certain target group (Sanders et al., 2019).

Social media have become ubiquitous and the wide use of their platforms has generated massive user generated content (UGCs) (He, 2016). As a consequence of this, the study of social media analytics has become important when investigating the communication strategies of organisations (He, 2016, Fan & Gordon, 2014). Social media analytics can be described as the way of investigating the different levels of providing information by using certain informatics tools and frameworks to collect and, summarize and visualize data (Fan & Gordon, 2014, Zeng et al., 2010). In addition to this, social media analytics concern the way in which websites and social media platforms allow users to facilitate conversations and interactions (Fan & Gordon, 2014). In the industry of recruitment, social media particularly plays a key role (Landers & Schmidt, 2016). When offering jobs, organisations make use of job advertising via social media; in addition to this, background information of the organisation can be gathered via social media, but also information about the people that are part of the target group. When trying to reach certain people it could be important to take into consideration several factors, such as language use, visual content and images. Therefore this research focuses on these aspects. In analysing the online communication, the following parts have been taken into consideration: (1) Language use (English, Dutch, Arabic), (2) Content (visual content, colour use, information, lay-out) and (3) Buttons (translation tools, interactive features). According to Agar (1994) language and culture are interwoven and co-institute each other, which is being referred to as 'languaculture'. In this process, language is seen as the primary symbolic medium that is used to communicate cultural knowledge, as well as reproduce and transform cultural knowledge (Garret & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002).

In addition to the above, two concepts play a fundamental factor in social media. These are interactivity and engagement; two terms that can not be seen separately since they are both influential on each other (Sander et al., 2019). Engagement can be described as the process of a psychological state that occurs to a user by virtue of interactive and co-creative customer experiences (Brodie et al., 2011). It brings with it certain emotional and behavioural aspects, such as the likeliness to undertake action, based on what is being offered by the website or social media. It also entails sharing its content (Hollebeek, 2011, Labrecque, 2014). Social media platforms and websites of organisations share the ability to connect with the public and increase the engagement. This could be in the form of interactive features, such as chat rooms, blogs, retweets and likes (Sander et al., 2019). When an organisation provides a two-way communication process in which it responds to users, the organisation engages in a form of interpersonal communication. This could be mass-personal communication or interpersonal communication. The differences between these two is the fact that by providing mass-personal communication the messages are highly personalised, but also publicly

accessible, in contrast to interpersonal communication. This last one requires a high level of personalisation, but comes along with a low accessibility (Sander et al., 2019). Previous research has shown that interacting with users leads to a higher chance of purchasing intentions; the idea of a conversational tone increases the level of personalisation. In addition to this, the speed of communication increases as well. This encourages interaction and could lead to a giant word-of-mouth machine, spreading messages more easily (Dellarocas, 2003). This results into the fact that the messages could be more visible, as well as more accessible, to the target group.

Interactivity and engagement can be linked to the concept of relationship building. Relationship building via social media comes together with the amount of interactivity on a platform (Rowley, 2004). When being actively involved on social media platforms, via blogs or chat rooms for example, users seem to develop a relationship with the organisation as well as with other users (Stroud, 2008). It has been stated how using blogs on websites or other social media platforms serves as a stimulator for building trust and leads to satisfaction amongst users (Kelleher & Miller, 2006). By using functional tools such as blogs or chat rooms, the level of engagement amongst users increases; they can be used for cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement and lead to a sustained and trustworthy relationship with the organisation (Verma & Tripathi, 2017). Organisations can use social networking sites for promotion, advertising, which might lead to relationship building (Verma & Tripathi, 2017). Social media have the ability to strengthen these personal relationships by increasing the amount of exchanging messages with the community on different kind of platforms (Rowley, 2004). However, certain function tools are required to create such interactivity. Several aspects could improve the relationship: useful content that is desired by the user, new content, the frequency of new posts and information on websites, return visits of users and the ease of use for navigation (Taylor & Kent, 1998).

For NGOs relationship building plays a role as well because of their need for donations; they need to create brand awareness and loyalty to strengthen relationships with supporters (Verma & Tripathi, 2017). As mentioned by Verma and Tripathi, websites and social media platforms can be used to encourage social action, such as volunteerism, which is needed for the NGOs existence (2017). Communicating strategically therefore is crucial, since strong relationships could higher the chance of receiving donations and keep on receiving donations (Polonsky & Sargeant, 2007). Also, because NGOs operate in an environment in which the competition is highly competitive, the likeliness that donors will continue donating is relatively small (MacMillan et al., 2005). Therefore it is not surprising that recruiting and maintaining donors is one of the biggest challenges that NGOs face (MacMillan et al., 2005, Wiggill, 2011).

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, social media helps in creating personal ties between an organisation and users. The spatial flexibility of online communication provides freedom in communicating with the target group (Dholakia & Zhang, 2004). It has appeared that users find online information more trustworthy via social media platforms than via other medium of communications

that are used by an organisation (Foux, 2006). This is mostly due to the increasing acceptability of technology (Rowley, 2004). And as mentioned in the previous paragraphs, social media have the ability to shape what individuals and how they act and operate, which is referred to as the theory of 'technological determinism' (Amanda, 2017, Adler, 2008). The confidence of users in online communication and online interaction is increasing because the acceptability of the use of technology is increasing as well (Rowley, 2004). This makes the process of relationship building more accessible and social media an indispensable element of NGOs' existence.

## 2.3 Cultural Identity

Another concept that will be analysed is cultural identity. This concept concerns the representation of refugees in online as well as offline communication and is important when discussing the reach towards refugees (Bhugra & Becker, 2005, Groen et al., 2018). As a two-way communication process, refugees need to adjust to the host country and live with new norms and values that could differ from their country of origin. The description of what cultural identity might be for refugees could therefore lead to confusion and misinterpretations. Cultural identity could be defined as the image that individuals hold of themselves, looking at certain norms and values and what can be seen as right and wrong (Groen et al., 2018). These norms and values are linked to the ethnic group to which they belong. According to a study by Mezzich et al. (2009) cultural identity is relevant in order to understand an individual and to understand their social functioning in a culturally diverse population.

When trying to reach refugees, it is important that they can identify themselves with the chosen target group of the organisation (Mezzich et al., 2009). Especially when looking at job employment, it seems hard to define cultural identity, as refugees need to adjust to the host country in order to fit in the job environment, but by cherish their previous cultural identity as well (Mezzich et al., 2009). In short, as Bhugra (2004) has argued, with migration, cultural identity makes a transformation as well and therefore needs to be taken carefully into consideration. This study focuses on how cultural identity is being represented on the websites and social media of organisations and in what way this seems representative from out the perspective of refugees. When looking at cultural diversity, it is necessary to include the visual and textual content of the websites and social media platforms of organizations. Therefore the visual, as well as the textual content has been analysed and how this information has been provided. As for the visual content, there has been analysed in what way it makes use of storytelling. Storytelling could be seen as the way of writing or telling a story, or sharing a certain experience, in order to reach a person (Fog et al., 2010). In storytelling, several spokespersons can be used; people of different nationalities could lead to different perceptions of the message. Storytelling is a means by which a background can be drawn, a dialogue started and a conversation begun. It offers context and connection and thus intercultural communication.

## 2.4 Studying the strategic communication: a model

As mentioned in the previous sections, the communication strategies of NGOs are important for their existence and relationship building with their target group and external stakeholders. However, the majority of NGOs seem to not realise the importance of a strategic communication and the necessity of building relationships with its internal as well as its external stakeholders (Bowers, 2000, Kelleher & Miller, 2006, Wiggill, 2011). But in contrast, as mentioned in the section on intercultural communication, when it comes to achieving certain missions and goals, a clear and planned communication management should be created (McMillan et al., 2005, Wiggill, 2011).

A model for strategic communication management has been developed by Steyn and Puth (2000) in a study that investigated the strategic communication practices and needs of five NGOs in South Africa. According to Steyn and Puth, there are three communication practitioner roles, of which the first role is the strategist and the second role the manager. The role of the strategist consists of scanning the environment that the NGO is in; the economical as well as new developments, such as a change of media use in society (Wiggill, 2011). In scanning this, it is important to take into consideration what kind of influence the development might have on the organisation and its practices. The second role is the manager, who is responsible for the overall communication strategy; what does it entail and how do they achieve the creation of clear communication with their stakeholders. Lastly, the third role is the one of the technician, that is the final person responsible for the physical implementation of the communication strategy. This model builds upon the key principles of communication management that has been identified by several researchers (Grunig et al., 1992, Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). It includes a two-way model, in which the environment of the NGO is being scanned and continuously the information is being forward into the strategy (Wiggill, 2011). In this model it can be seen that the needs and expectation of the external stakeholders receive the highest level of attention, since they are the priority. Besides this, a reduction of risks is being reached (Wiggill, 2011). NGOs need to constantly adjust to the developments that occur in society that could have an influence on the target group.

## 2.5 Integration as a two-way process

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, NGOs should consider a two-way communication process in order to reach refugees and higher the chance of increasing job employment amongst newcomers. This two-way communication process is parallel to the view of integration being a two-way process. This study dovetails with the idea that the process of fitting into a new field can be seen as a two-way process (Amanda, 2017, Da Lomba 2010, Ager & Strang, 2008, Phillimore, 2011). However, a few researches have a common view in which they conceptualise this integration process as a one-way process, in which refugees are the ones who need to adapt into the host society, without the host society having any responsibility (Da Lomba, 2010). In this view, refugees themselves need to

abandon their own cultural habits in order to fit into society and therefore adapt in such a way that they can be employed. This research will focus on a two-way process of integration, since it argues that it is necessary to adjust to each other in order to have both parties benefiting from the integration of the refugees. As Lewis (2005) argues, social support from the host country is crucial in order to increase the job employment among refugees. Social support can influence to what extent refugees have a feeling of belonging in their host society (Kellaher et al., 2001). Problems or lack of social support could negatively influence the process of integration and therefore the chance of increasing the job employment among refugees.

In order to study the different dimensions, this study makes use of concepts that comes out of existing research on refugee integration. Ager & Strang mention integration in a common way by defining society as a system that consists of several 'dimensions'. The areas of (1) *Means and markers* and (2) *Social connection* will be taken into consideration when investigating the integration process. The integration process strongly depends on the current economic, social and cultural dimensions of society. As an example, refugees have to change their usual habits in order to adapt into the dimension of the host society (Glastra & Vedder, 2010). According to Ager & Strang (2008), the dimension of marker and means, which consists of employment, housing, education and health, are crucial in order to integrate into the host country. As mentioned in the introduction, employment is seen as the headstarter of a successful integration, since it could lead to progress in the other areas (Ager & Strang, 2008, Amanda, 2017). This dimension can be seen as the 'public area' in which the 'public outcomes' are tried to be achieved (Ager et al., 2002). The second dimension that occurs more in the 'private sphere' is the one of social connection. In their research, Ager & Strang argue that social connection plays a fundamental role in the integration process as it is 'for them the defining feature of an integrated community' (2008, p.177). Categorized under this area, the authors mention three domains of refugee integration: social bridges, social links, and social bonds. Social connection has implications for both newcomers and local residents and stress the fact that integration is a two-way process. In their research, Ager & Strang mention how refugees feel more 'settled' when they are enabled to share cultural practices with friends and family. The connection with 'like-ethnic' groups comes along with various advantages and seems to have led to effectiveness in the integration (Hale, 2000). However, social connection with the host society as well leads to progress, since social inclusion/exclusion could lead to avoiding certain barriers and feel 'supported' in the integration process (Ager & Strang, 2008). A clear explanation of the concept of integration is necessary in order to answer the research question. As explained, integration is a complex process which takes place on different levels in society. The most important factors should be included when investigating it, as should the difficulties that occur when it comes to integrating.

## 2.6 Social Media and Integration

As mentioned in the introduction, this study also focuses on how one certain field in society constantly changes; the rise and change of social media use will also demand a change of certain skills. In this it can be seen that there the integration process of refugees is a complex one, with not only need for adaptation by the 'new' society they come into, but also the change of personal skills that are needed in the host society (Amanda, 2017, McGregor & Siegel, 2013). Therefore this study has also focused on another dimension as well; the digital one.

In the recent decades, the transformation of digital and social media has influenced the integration process (McGregor & Siegel, 2013). Media do not only have the ability to provide refugees with information about certain rights and services, but is also a key player in communication (Amanda, 2017). The majority of research focuses on how refugees make use of social media in order to keep contact with their family members in their home countries (Komito, 2011, Amanda, 2017). Besides this, research argues how technology can lead to a better integration process by informing refugees about the rights and support that the host country offers (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). It also allows refugees to participate in online language programs in order to promote inclusion (McGregor & Siegel, 2013). Most of the studies have focussed on the relation between social media and the social connection dimension, in the way that Ager & Strang (2008) have mentioned it (Elias & Lemish, 2009, Sawyer & Chen, 2012). Since social media has the purpose of connecting people it makes sense to investigate this specific relation. However, as has been argued, employment is one of the key factors of a successful integration which could be improved by the use of digital technology. Therefore, and because there seems to be a lack of knowledge of how social media can positively influence the integration process in the host society, this study will focus on media use when investigating job employment amongst refugees. In this digital time and age, it is an unavoidable factor for communication within a society.

The new wave of immigrants has clearly shown that there exists an importance of new digital technologies in the process of successful immigration (Amanda, 2017). Media can play various roles in achieving a successful integration, contributing to integrating in the social, economic and cultural areas (McGregor & Siegel, 2013). One view that can be linked to this is the theory of McLuhan's technological determinism. This theory argues that new technologies have such an influence on society that they shape how individuals think, act and operate (Amanda, 2017, Adler, 2008). Few theorists mention that the effects of new technologies depend on how it is used and how it is socially used, as well as the other way round; 'it depends on how it is implemented which is in turn socially determined' (Adler, 2008, p. 4.). In addition to this, the majority of studies there has been argued that social media indeed has an impact on the social processes in society, but that the change of society requires a change of media (Mosemghvdlishvili & Jansz, 2013, Williams, 1997). These views could be relevant for this study due to the fact that they take into account the various dimensions in which refugees' perceptions and practices of integration could be influenced and shaped by social media. Since social media channels are increasingly popular communication tools, the extent to which

immigrants could experience a successful immigration could be depended on their use of it (Dekker et al., 2017). Since media is constantly changing, it is crucial to keep in mind what might influence the integration process. Whereas the majority of research focuses on how media is connected to the area of social connection, this study will take several areas into account; it has been stated that social media platforms not only influence the process of integration in the host country, but are widely used among immigrants to keep in touch with their friends and family within their home country (Elias & Lemish, 2009). It has been argued in many studies how maintaining contact with family in the country of origin leads to emotional support, which is as well a crucial factor in order to achieve a successful integration (Komito, 2011).

### **3. Methodology**

This study aims to find out how NGOs can improve their communication strategies in order to ease the refugee integration process and particularly increase job employment amongst newcomers. This research makes use of triangulation, a qualitative content analysis combined with in-depth interviews. Qualitative research was deemed the right choice because one of its main advantages is to study organisational and social phenomena such as refugee integration (Silverman, 2011). Five interviews have been conducted with members of different NGOs. Seven interviews have been executed with refugees with a Syrian nationality, since they have appeared to have contributed most significantly to Dutch population. In-depth interviews were used as an appropriate way to gain a deeper understanding and enable the researcher to interact directly (Boeije, 2010). This chapter will elaborate further upon this and discuss the operationalisation of this study.

#### **3.1 Data and methodology**

This study is conducted through the methodology of triangulation. This method is mostly described as a multimethod, which is common for social science researchers (Campbell & Fiske, 1959, Yin, 2013). Triangulation of data can be seen as a combination of multiple methods to examine the same object or dimension (Jick, 2013). It includes data that is drawn from various sources at different points in time and in diverse locations or from unlike people (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, p. 178). By doing this, the gathered data could lead to a broader picture of the phenomenon that is being investigated (Thurmond, 2001). Triangulation in social sciences describes the process of using two or more methods within a research design, with the aim to make sense of the results (Thurmond, 2001). In case study approaches, Yin (2013) finds that using multiple sources of allows for deeper and balanced description of the topic. Besides triangulation of data sources, present study also makes use of methodological triangulation: by combining qualitative content analysis and in-depth interviews the researcher aims to provide a more holistic description of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). According to Campbell and Fiske (1959) combining several methods increases the validation process. Therefore making use of triangulation might increase the validity of this research. The research consists out a combination of qualitative content and in-depth interviews, by which both primary and secondary data have been gathered. The content analysis will provide an answer on how the social media is created and the interviews will provide answers to why NGOs and refugees make use of social media.

The primary data include semi-structured, in-depth interviews and the secondary data has been obtained from literature, policies and reports and social media platforms of NGOs. The main source of primary data are the qualitative interviews. By conducting in-depth interviews, this study makes an attempt to provide a more holistic description of the integration process (Patton, 2002). Through these interviews, very detailed and original narratives of refugees and organisations could be gathered. Using primary data as a source enables this research to analyse independent and current data

that is specifically addressed to the purpose of this study (Boeije, 2005). From the perspective of the NGOs there will be made an attempt to investigate their communication strategies and their intercultural strategies. It is also necessary to research what kind of problems NGOs are facing and what kind of problems refugees are facing; do these views converge? By conducting in-depth interviews the underlying reasons for this could be researched (Babbie, 2011). In addition, the reasons and motives for certain decisions could be underlined. The interviews included open ended questions in order to gather a suitable amount of information (Opdenakker, 2016). The in-depth interviews have been conducted face-to-face, since it has many advantages. For example, when questions are unclear, questions can be further explained (Babbie, 2011).

The secondary data contains a qualitative content analysis and has mainly focussed on analysing the NGOs' intercultural (online) communication practices. The content analysis answers how NGOs use social media. By conducting interviews, the question of why the NGOs and new social initiatives use new media will be answered. The webpages and social media platforms of the NGOs have been analysed and data such as literatures and policies have been used in developing the theoretical framework. The literary explanations that have been discussed in the theoretical framework have enabled this research to reflect on and analyse the results.

## 3.2 Organisations

Five members of four different NGOs have been interviewed for this study and were contacted via email. The NGOs have been selected based on their similarities and differences. In similarities, one of the criteria was that the NGO is set in a large city, due to the increasing amount of refugees. In addition, they should all represent refugees, as this study focuses on this specific group. Furthermore, the NGOs interviewed were chosen for their differences in size and areas of expertise. This gave rise to less bias and more variety of perspectives. The interviews were conducted in Amsterdam, based on their preference. However, several have more locations spread throughout the Netherlands, as can be read in the descriptions that can be seen in the next paragraph.

### 3.2.1 Organisations: Vluchtelingenwerk

Vluchtelingenwerk was founded in 1979 and is a Dutch NGO that is responsible for the asylum. Asylum can be seen as a form of protection for refugees who are threatened by inhuman treatment in their home country and therefore have fled to the Netherlands. Any person has the right to ask for asylum. Vluchtelingenwerk is an organisation that helps in the process of integrating from the beginning of the arrival of refugees. It offers mentoring in the asylum procedure, as well as providing several kinds of workshops in order to improve Dutch language and knowledge of Dutch society. In order to fit into Dutch society as soon as possible, Vluchtelingenwerk offers several projects that accelerate this process. One of their main projects is called Project VIP and is specialised in preparing

refugees for the Dutch labour market. The NGO has approximately 9000 volunteers and 600 employers and is divided over five regions. From this organisation, one of the project managers was interviewed.

### 3.2.2 Organisations: Boost Amsterdam

Boost Amsterdam is a NGO that is settled in the city centre of Amsterdam and was founded in 2016. It is a component of the Stichting Boost voor Vluchtelingen, which has as main goal to bring newcomers and local inhabitants together in order to create an inclusive society. The organisation is a meeting place and community for newcomers, locals and other organisations that try to improve the integration process of refugees. By offering several kinds of workshops and events, Boost Amsterdam forms an active community in which newcomers create new skills and blend with the locals. The organisation consists out of two groups; an amount of approximately 200 refugees that frequently meet at the organisation and around 150 volunteers, divided into locals as well as newcomers. Boost Amsterdam works together intensively with several partners in order to bring about progress in the integration process. From this organisation, the floor manager and marketing manager were interviewed.

### 3.2.3 Organisations: NewBees

NewBees is a NGO that is settled in the cities of Amsterdam, Zaandam and Amersfoort and was founded in 2016. The organisation helps newcomers in the process of applying for a job. NewBees consists of several team members who match newcomers to traineeships with local entrepreneurs and organisations. At this organisation, the focus is mainly on how refugees can be put in to an appropriate place in society; they investigate what kind of skills are required in society and which skills of the newcomers can be beneficial for the host society. The team members are being seen as matchmakers and are the link between newcomers and local organisations. Consequently NewBees works together with organisations and companies that are in need of new employers. The organisation started in 2016 and has established about 600 successful matches, offering internships, traineeships and jobs. From this organisation, one of the matchmakers was interviewed.

### 3.2.4 Organisations: Road of Hope

Road of Hope is a NGO, based in Amsterdam and was founded in 2016. The organisation supports refugees in their process of integration. Road of Hope divides its work through five main actions: welcoming, bonding, empowering, supporting and facilitating. Every main action requires different programmes that are designed to assist refugees in the process of integration. By doing this, refugees are being informed about Dutch society, but at the same time Road of Hope does an attempt to rebuild their sense of acceptance and self-esteem. Therefore Road of Hope focuses on each refugee

individually, looking at their individual, family and social needs. Road of Hope has a view in which they believe that understanding how refugees could integrate in the Netherlands requires an understanding of their culture, history and personal backgrounds. From this organisation, the director was interviewed.

### 3.3 Sample refugees

For this research, snowball sampling has been employed after coming in contact with the first Syrian refugee. This established a view point. Subsequent interviews made similarities and differences apparent. Consequently, after seven interviews patterns began to appear. This gave sufficient data to satisfy the requirements of the methodology. After conducting the interviews it became apparent that sufficient perspectives were available to gain an understanding of their views on NGOs' communication strategies and the use of social media. As qualitative samples are mostly small because of the nature of in-depth interviews, this sample has led to a deeper understanding of the subject.

The participants were approached personally and not via a contact at one of the NGOs. All of the interviewed refugees have no connection with the organisations that have been included in this study. This was one of the criteria in order to avoid prejudiced answers. The refugees interviewed are all highly educated and this was a conscious decision to avoid bias and to ease the language barrier. The participants needed to be Syrian and currently looking for a job. The respondents were all between 30 and 40 years old. In addition, they needed to be active social media users and be familiar with using websites and social media platforms such as Facebook. This was relevant in order to find connections between social media usage and job employment amongst refugees. Furthermore, the interviewees should be living in the Netherlands, preferably in the largest cities Amsterdam and Rotterdam. These cities have been chosen since these cities contain the highest increase of Syrian immigration with an integration rate over 1000 refugees, in the time period 2014 to 2016 (CBS, 2016). Priority was given to conducting the interviews in the preferred language of the participant, since this has led to ensuring a common understanding of the topic (Kvale, 2011). Both English and Dutch were used during the interviews, depending on the participants' choice. As mentioned by Kunz, language plays an important role in self-expression and leads to the participants' comfort and the ability to express themselves (1981, p. 47). Lastly, due to less accessible female respondents, the focus of this research is on male respondents. This was, however, not intended in the established criteria.

The seven interviews that have been conducted with Syrian refugees are newcomers who have received a residence status in the period of 2015-2019. During the refugee crisis in Europe, Syrian refugees constituted the largest group of asylum requests in the Netherlands with an amount of 47% (IND; IND, 2015, p. 4.). In 2015 the applications of first-time asylum was a total of 18,670 and

approximately 8,980 follow-up applications (Netherlands Statistics, 2016). Continuously, an amount of 98% of the Syrian migrants were granted a permit in 2015 (Eurostat, 2016). As mentioned, the majority of refugees in the Netherlands are of Syrian nationality, forming an amount of 2.956 in 2018 (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2018). Therefore this study has focused on a sample of seven refugees in order to investigate the integration process of the largest refugee groups in the Netherlands.

The chosen time period of this study is 2015-2018; this period has experienced the most influential developments when it comes to job employment under refugees (CBS, 2018). There has been a new wave of immigrants, with even a new record of incoming refugees that has been reached in 2016, forming the largest group of migrants since the Second World War (Dekker et al., 2017). In addition to this, refugees got permission to stay and work for five years in 2016 (Dekker et al., 2017), which underlines the idea that employment has been playing a crucial role since then when it comes to integration.

### 3.4 Procedure

This section will explain the interview guide that was created for this study and the procedure of the conducted interviews. Close ended questions were included to gather information about name, age and function within the organisation. For the Syrian refugees, name, age, the year of arrival and country of origin were included. The open ended questions considered the topics of the strategic and intercultural communication practices and needs of NGOs and Syrian refugees. The interviews with professionals have been conducted with specific people who are responsible for the strategic communication and the (online) intercultural communication processes. To gain an understanding of what the reasons and motives could be behind the strategies, several topics were included in the questions. The topics were based on former literature that has been discussed in the theoretical framework. The topic list includes issues concerning communication strategies, social media usage, the influence of online communication to increase job employment, social connections and integration. As an example, NGOs have been asked about certain decisions that have been made considering their communication strategies. In addition to this, the choice of language and cultural differences have been taken into account. For the refugees, the open ended questions enabled them to share their opinion on previous topics. The interviews have aimed to (1) determine the specific communication practices of the NGOs and (2) Compare them with the needs and expectations of refugees.

### 3.5 Interview Design

As Kvale (2007) argues, the design of the interview is crucial in order to receive usable data. The respondent is not so likely to participate in the interview if it would contain too many personal questions. This has also to do with social reliability that concerns the likeliness of participants to

answer in an honest manner (Babbie, 2011). Therefore it is crucial to gain a good understanding in how many information can be asked in order to receive information. The interviews with the professionals took place at the organisations. For the refugees, the interviews took place at most favourable location for the refugee.

The interviews' structure was held the same with every participant to ensure a reliable and replicable research. Each meeting with the participants began with explaining the aim of the study and introducing the upcoming topics. The interviews were all in the same structure. However, there appeared to be flexibility in this in order to create a comfortable environment and take upon the flow of the participants' responses. In addition, each participant responded differently to questions, sharing more or less personal information. During the interview, several websites and Facebook accounts of NGOs were shown in order to gain an understanding of their opinion on online communication. For the refugees, due to language barriers, few needed extra assistance or explanation.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

Conducting the interviews in the way described has ensured integrity of the results and has been guided by ethical considerations. Because of sensitive topics and sharing personal experiences the interview was based on ethical guidelines and ensured anonymity amongst the participants. Every interview began with asking the participant for their consent to take a record of the conversation. In addition, all of the participants were informed with their rights and guaranteed with their anonymity. By doing so, the participants' safety and comfort was ensured (BenEzer & Zetter, 2014).

The in-depth interviews have been conducted with respect and the research ethics have constantly been taken in consideration. The interviewer was aware of insecurities and negative feelings that might come up whilst discussing job employment and the integration process (Kvale, 2011). Consequently, the participants were free to share as many details as preferred and pause the interview in any circumstances. However, few experienced uncomfortable situations in which pausing the interview was necessary. When noticing that questions were unclear due to language barriers, further explanation was provided. In addition, few interviews required translating parts from Dutch to English and vice versa. In this, the needed time was taken to ensure that there existed a common understanding of the topic and to avoid stress to the interviewee.

Concluding the methodology of this study and leading to the results, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of NGOs' communication strategies and investigate whether their views upon this converge with refugees' view on the use of social media in order to find jobs.

## 4. Results

To investigate how NGOs can improve their communication strategies, this study has made use of triangulation. First, the websites and Facebook accounts of the NGOs have been observed. This is included in the first part of this chapter, divided in three sections: interactivity, visual content and textual content. These sections are based on the fact that websites and social media platforms comprise these components. By observing those components, the content to which to apply the qualitative analysis is gleaned. In addition, the interviews with the NGOs are discussed in the context of the observed motivation. Lastly, this has been looked at from the perspectives of the refugees interviewed in order to see where the patterns converge.

### 4.1 Physical Appearance NGOs' Online Communication

This section includes an analysis of the websites and social media usage of the NGOs that have been involved in this study: Vluchtelingenwerk, NewBees, Boost Amsterdam and Road of Hope. The organisations seem to be most active on their website and Facebook account. Therefore this section has mainly focused on these platforms. Whilst observing the level of interactivity, it has been investigated whether these platforms lead to a two-way communication between the user and the organisation. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, engagement, personalisation and cultural identity play a fundamental factor in achieving this.

#### 4.1.1 Interactivity

Vluchtelingenwerk provides few means in which they try to enlarge interactivity. The website offers functional tools for one-way communication, such as boxes in which you can fill in your personal information to get in contact. The website does not offer tools to create a two-way communication. The website does not include functions such as chat rooms or blogs, in which the website offers the ability to create an interpersonal communication. As a part of interactivity, a user should have the ability to send a message that can be read and replied to by Vluchtelingenwerk, as well as by other users (Sander et al., 2019). However, the websites does provide two links to their social media platforms Facebook and Twitter, by encouraging the user to follow Vluchtelingenwerk. Owning a Facebook as well as a Twitter account gives the user the opportunity to contribute to its content; it allows a user to place comments, tweets, or likes. By communicating via these public platforms, Vluchtelingenwerk creates more visibility and greater openness (Sander et al., 2019). The Facebook page of Vluchtelingenwerk tries to enlarge interactivity with the user in several ways. One example of this is that they have included Q&A videos, in which the user has the opportunity to ask certain questions which will be answered in the upcoming videos. An example can be seen in figure 1.



Figure 1. Vluchtelingenwerk Facebook page

The Twitter account of Vluchtelingenwerk enables individuals to follow the organisation and receive updated information and announcements on developments in Dutch society; their messages mostly involve updates of politics and the Dutch news. A user can comment to the Tweet which, just as on the Facebook page, can be responded to by the organisation. By doing this, Vluchtelingenwerk creates a two-way communication process via their Facebook and Twitter. The chosen language of these two platforms is Dutch.

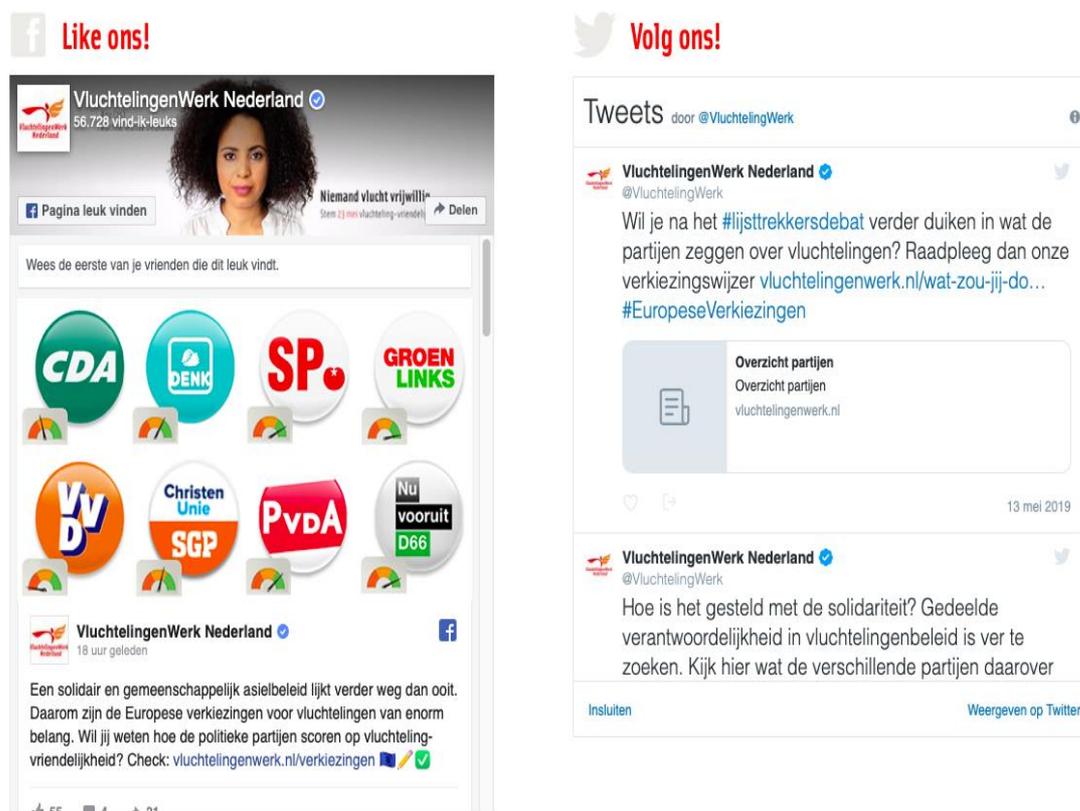


Figure 2. Vluchtelingenwerk Facebook page and Twitter account

The website of Vluchtelingenwerk is one of few that enables a user to make use of personalisation in quite many ways. By doing this, it makes the process of searching detailed information easier for the user (Taylor & Kent, 1998). One example of this is the button that asks for a postal code, by which a user can read specific information of Vluchtelingenwerk that is focused on the place they are living in. Since Vluchtelingenwerk is divided over multiple departments throughout the Netherlands, it might be necessary to enable a user with the option of personalisation. In addition to this, the website provides a button ‘For Refugees’ that forwards a user to a webpage that has specific information for newcomers who are in need of advice when it comes to formal documents, family reunification, housing, healthcare, house and income, education and the return. In contrast to the mainpage, this information can be translated into seven different languages, depending on the cultural background of the user. This can be seen in figure 3.



Figure 3. Vluchtelingenwerk website

The other organisations' websites seem to make less use of personalised communication, since they have few options of mass-personal or interpersonal communication. A few, however, do offer certain options that create personalised information. All of the websites have a contact box in which a user can fill in their name and address to get in touch. For example, NewBees has a contact page on their website on which a user can fill in their personal information to get in touch with the right department of NewBees. Also, NewBees their main page shows two options to provide the user with personalised information: a button for companies and a button for newcomers who want to join the organisation. This can be seen in figure 4.



Figure 4. NewBees website

One other example of creating more engagement with the user is creating events on Facebook page, by which users can press on the event and choose whether they are ‘attending’ or not. Boost Amsterdam is one of few that creates these kind of events on their Facebook page. By pressing on ‘attending’ or ‘interested’, a user has the ability to follow updates upon the event and see the amount of other users that are attending. Also, the organisation can provide the users with information and updates about the event and answer to certain questions and comments that are placed by users; it requires engagement of the user and creates a two-way communication. Road of Hope creates events as well on their Facebook page, but as a ‘post’ instead of an ‘event’. Providing a user with a post requires less engagement, since it is not asked of a user to undertake action. This fits more to the idea of a one-way communication process and ‘getting the word out’. An example of these events can be seen in figure 5.



Figure 5. Boost Amsterdam Facebook page and Road of Hope Facebook page

None of the organisations has included blogs in their online communication. Blogs can be created by the organisations themselves to create a community that has the ability to exchange ideas and promote discussion between an organisation and individuals (Tripathi & Verma, 2017). However, the websites and social media platforms of the organisations do not include such a feature.

#### 4.1.2 Visual content

This section provides an analysis of the visual content of the NGOs' websites and Facebook accounts. Visual content concerns the use of images and videos and looking at the use of colour. In depth theories on graphic design and web-building are beyond the scope of this study but it can be assumed that images should be relevant, videos appropriate and colour such as to enhance the message rather than detract from it. Thus when looking at the above examples the following criteria have been considered: colour, images and storytelling.

In contrast to all the other organisational websites, Boost Amsterdam shows photos in black and white. The other boxes are yellow. The organisation has a website that consists of nine boxes that show the different aspects of the organisation, such as language, employment and workshops. By pressing on the images the website forwards you to a page that provides more information about the specific aspect. Studies on images show that images in black and white lead to less remembrance of it and comes along with an emotional state of sadness (Wallis & Praggiamore, 2014). The websites of the other organisations contain only coloured images, which according to research is more effective (Leung et al., 2017). This idea is supported by the advertising memory theory, that argues that visual content is more memorable and easier to recall than textual content (Leung et al., 2017, Lutz & Lutz, 1978). The main page of Boost Amsterdam can be seen in figure 6.



Figure 6. Boost Amsterdam website

The images on all organisations' websites and social media show different ranges of nationalities, which could refer to social connection and integration and, which as explained in the theoretical framework plays a crucial role in integration (Groen et al., 2018). At the same time, it is important for organisations to avoid misinterpretations when it comes to cultural identity. Newcomers should feel understood in order to feel that they belong (Mezzich et al., 2009). The majority of photos seem to fit this idea. All of the photos and videos that are provided on the websites and Facebook and Twitter accounts show different ways of how different nationalities mix up and how social connection is being shown.

One striking aspect that occurs when visiting the websites of NewBees and Road of Hope is that they make use of storytelling by providing videos of several refugees that have found their place in Dutch society. NewBees shares stories of refugees who have fitted into Dutch society by being matched to companies via the organisation. Road of Hope seems to use storytelling as a strategy as well, but focuses more on the integrating on a social level, by explaining what kind of workshops the organisation offers in order to prepare refugees for the Dutch society. By using storytelling as a tactic, newcomers with different cultural background can identify themselves (Pulizzi, 2012). By sharing their background stories, the organisations show that when it comes to cultural identity, the previous cultural identity has been taken into consideration, as well as what is needed to become a Dutch citizen (Bhugra, 2005). Vluchtelingenwerk seems to make use of storytelling on their Facebook page

as well, such as the Q&A video that has been mentioned in previous paragraphs. Via their website, Facebook provides the user with storytelling as well, but in a textual manner.

### 4.1.3 Textual content

In addition to the visual content, an analysis of textual content is included to investigate how the NGOs try to reach their target group by providing textual information. The kind of information, amount of information and language choice and usage have been taken into consideration.

Via their website and social media, Vluchtelingenwerk mostly provides information that concerns the asylum procedure. Their homepage shows information that is useful when a newcomer has settled in the Netherlands and knows about Dutch society; it includes updates of Dutch news and political developments, such as the elections. The chosen language for the website, as well as their social media, is Dutch. One requirement of successfully fitting into Dutch society and additionally the Dutch labour market is speaking the Dutch language (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

Vluchtelingenwerk is an organisation that has been formed in order to achieve Dutch integration. As managing the language takes some time, it seems that their platforms are focused on refugees who have been in the Netherlands for a longer period. In addition, the website and Facebook account provide general information about Vluchtelingenwerk to a large extent, which might be due to the fact that their target group seems to also be external parties; it appears to be aimed at external parties, perhaps because their need for volunteers and donations, as was mentioned previously in the theoretical framework (Wiggill, 2011).

Similar to Vluchtelingenwerk, the chosen language of the website and social media of Boost Amsterdam is Dutch. The website and social media platforms share no possibilities for translation. The information that is offered is mostly general information about the organisation; its missions and beliefs when it comes to integration. However, the website also provides a high number of information on the different kinds of workshops that are given in order to create social connection. Social connection can be seen as a key factor in communicating which could lead to more satisfaction in the integration process (Ager & Strang, 2008). However, the website also contains a section of 'leren en werken' in which they provide information on what kind of steps are necessary in order to get a job in Dutch society.

The chosen language of NewBees' website is English. The website does allow a translation to Dutch. The main page immediately shows NewBees' two target groups: companies and newcomers. By doing so, NewBees shows its mission at a glance. It functions as a matchmaker between newcomers and companies, in order to give them a place into society. NewBees has a Facebook account that is not referred to via their website. The account includes mostly posts on vacancies that are being offered by NewBees and their partners, which seems to be in contrast with Boost Amsterdam. NewBees offers more information on the integrating process by sharing information on

job employment. The images that are provided fit to the textual content; NewBees show that a great amount of newcomers has been matched with companies. By doing this, they show their contribution to a successful integration.

The chosen language of Road of Hope its social media platforms and website is English without an option for translation. Majority of the information that is offered on their website contains of general information of ‘what we do’, ‘how we do’ and ‘why we do’. Their main page shows a large photo of a newcomer, sharing a quote in English. This can be seen in figure 7.

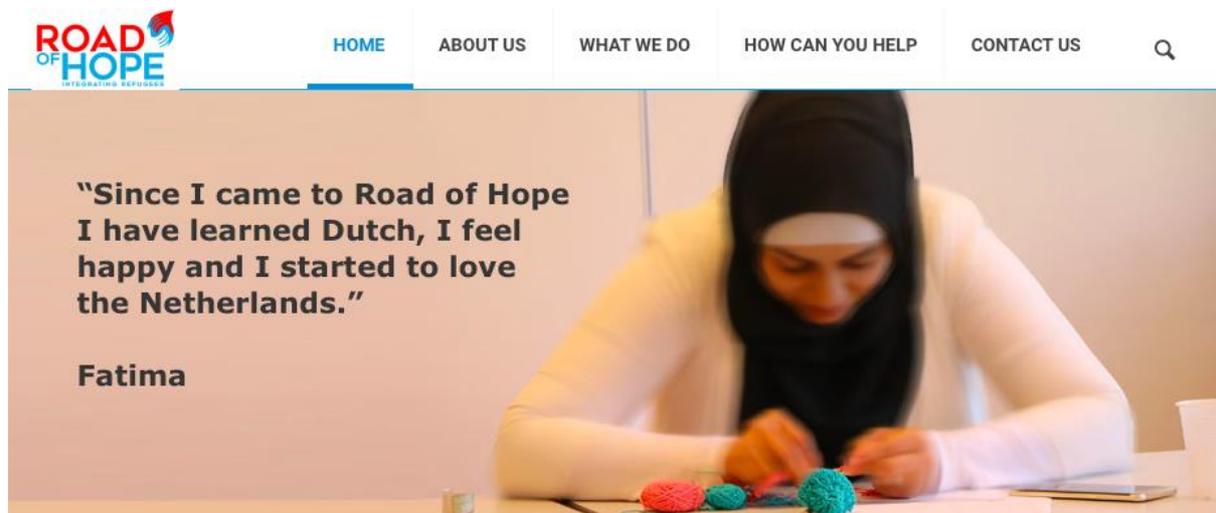


Figure 7. Road of Hope website

#### 4.1.4. Conclusion website and Facebook NGOs

In conclusion, it has appeared that most of the information concern what kind of support the organisations offer in order to achieve a successful integration and particularly increasing job employment amongst refugees. However, the level of interactivity seems to be relatively low, since there are few options to create interpersonal communication. The majority of the websites shows a lack of engagement; none of the websites contains communication tools, such as chat rooms or blogs. However, few show that they also own a Twitter account in which the user has the ability to share, or reply to, content.

Cultural identity seems to be taken into consideration on every platform by showing different types of cultural backgrounds. When it comes to cultural identity and job employment it seems that the organisations show a great amount of manual jobs, showing images of practical professions and sharing stories and applications on this. The platforms are set in Dutch and English and include a high percentage of colourful visual content.

As mentioned in the introduction, integration takes place in the ‘public sphere’ as well in the ‘private sphere’. In the public sphere, achieving successful public outcomes is important, such as job employment (Ager & Strang, 2008, Amanda, 2017). In the private sphere the main concern is social

bonding and social connection. These social links are between refugees and locals as well as refugees and like-ethnic groups (Hale, 2000). What seem to be the most striking differences are the different dimensions that the NGOs take into account; whereas Vluchtelingenwerk mainly focuses on the ‘public sphere’, Boost Amsterdam and Road of Hope offers a large amount of workshops to increase the feeling of settlement into the ‘private sphere’. The platforms of Vluchtelingenwerk seem to fit to focusing on the dimension of the ‘public sphere’, since it is mostly concerned about the integration process of the refugees; they offer information on the Dutch system, housing market and educational system (Dagevos, 2001). This comes together with Ager & Strang their dimension of Means and Markers (2008). Even though this knowledge is crucial in order to fit into host society, this field is only a headstarter of a successful integration (Ager & Strang, 2008, Amanda, 2017). Focusing on the ‘private sphere’ as well is required to achieve a complete integration process. Focusing on the different aspects of integration, they show an understanding of what is needed to fit into the host society by focusing on the ‘private sphere’; language, social bonding and a culturally diverse population is being taken into consideration. The websites and social media of Boost Amsterdam and Road of Hope seem to be share mostly information that concerns the ‘private sphere’. The organisation NewBees seems to focus on the ‘private sphere’, as well as the ‘public sphere’, when considering online communication strategies.

## 4.2 Interviews Organisations

To complement the observation of the social media usage of the NGOs, five members of four organisations have been interviewed to make an understanding of their motivation behind their choices. This section has been divided into the same three subsections; interactivity, visual content and textual content to make clear what the motives behind their online communication are. In the last paragraph, a short conclusion is provided.

### 4.2.1 Interactivity

As mentioned in the previous section, Vluchtelingenwerk has an online communication that does not require a lot of engagement. It mostly supplies the user with information about the Dutch asylum procedure. When having arranged formal documents and the first formal steps for the newcomers, Vluchtelingenwerk does not have priority to arrange the further steps; they must find jobs and educational support themselves, for example via information on the website and social media (ICMC, 2013). Therefore their website and social media include mostly content that provides the user with information on this. As been underlined by Lotte, project director of Vluchtelingenwerk, who mentioned that it is their own responsibility to achieve a successful integration after having received support during the first period of their stay.

As a part of an online communication strategy, it is necessary to specify the target group (Wiggill, 2009). It appeared that all of the organisations are focused on newcomers, despite their cultural and ethnic backgrounds. However, when looking at age it seems that a certain part of this target group is harder to reach. Research shows that social networking sites that provide teenage refugees with interactive functions, such as blogs and chat rooms, could lead to more social connection between refugees and host society (Komito, 2011). As mentioned in the previous section on websites and social media platforms, Vluchtelingenwerk shares Q&A videos. One example of this is a Syrian teenage girl that has to do her final exams during the Ramadan. This age category is part of the target group. However, teenage children seem to be more difficult to engage with the organisation. This might be due to their priorities in life; after having experienced what it is like to leave your home country, adjusting to the host society is a hard task when you are still young (McGregor & Siegel, 2013). This has also become clear in the data, Lotte for example said that ‘‘Smoking and using drugs is way more fun. It often goes wrong. And the help comes way too late often.’’ (Lotte, Vluchtelingenwerk)

There consisted an overall concern that the organisations question themselves if refugees frequently look at their websites and social media platforms. As Peeters and D’Haenens, as well as Amanda mention, social media is mostly used by refugees in order to build social bridges and create social connections (2005, 2018). In addition to this, many NGOs struggle with the environmental scanning, as mentioned in section on the strategic communication model. In this environmental scanning, it is essential to consider what the exact needs and expectations of the target group are (Wiggill, 2011). When these expectations remain unclear, focussing on the target group is hard, which might lead to less engagement. In short, it seems that interactivity and personal engagement takes mostly place on platforms that are meant to create social connection on a personal level and not from out the organisational perspective. In addition, it seems that the websites and social media platforms are mostly used and seen by external parties, such as companies and volunteers, as illustrated in the following quote:

*‘‘Volunteers do, but not sure about refugees. Yes but.. we are really searching for good strategies to communicate. Because we do a lot, but I actually do not even know who reads our posts.. We use Facebook, e-mail, Whats-App, flyers we spread through the building.. But nothing is uhm.. We still hear that people have not heard of certain things..’’* (Leontine, Boost Amsterdam).

Despite the fact that social media usage of organisations is inescapable for its existence, the findings gave away that personal offline communication has remained more effective than online communication. The online communication strategies seem to correspond more to a one-way communication process than a two-way communication, as being argued in the previous subsection

on the website and social media platforms. Organisations agreed on the idea that newcomers do not send or share messages a lot. One reason for this seemed to be that personal and preferably offline communication remains to be more effective to reach the target group. When discussing the topic of creating ‘events’ on Facebook in order to reach more engagement, it appeared that newcomers still do not see, nor share, the ‘event’. It is still required to send a personal text to be certain of reaching the target group. Due to this, the way of approaching volunteers also differs from how they try to reach refugees, as mentioned by Karin: ‘‘Yes, we do have a certain strategy in which volunteers.. we contact them via e-mail, but the newcomers we contact via WhatsApp. Because it is more personal. But preferably face-to-face.’’ (Karin, Boost Amsterdam)

When discussing interactivity and what kind of information should be offered on the website, the overall opinion was that general information about the organisation is priority: sharing the beliefs, motives and mission of the organisation in order to show what they stand for and have to offer. However, it seemed that there is few interactivity and engagement, but that it certainly is desired: ‘‘we are trying to improve [...] we want to communicate more, not just about Road of Hope [...] talk about how to make a new future’’ (Patricia, Road of Hope). Functional tools such as blogs were frequently mentioned to be appropriate to create certain communities and discussions. However, all organisations mentioned to have a lack of knowledge on how to create such.

#### 4.2.2 Visual content

The motivation behind the visual content seemed to be more obvious. The majority of chosen images represent a mix of nationalities, as well as workshops that show the blending of different cultures. These images are in line with previous studies that share the view that a successful integration is a two-way process, in which the previous cultural identity is being treasured while adjusting to the Dutch society (Groen et al., 2018). The visual content contains a great amount of individuals that have taken their own responsibility to integrate. As Akhtar & Choi mention, an individual and host society should both be involved when trying to reach a successful adaptation to host society (2004). The visuals within the websites and social media are in line with these views: ‘‘Yes, so why exactly these photos, [...] what we have in our archive, this is a logical mix of people.’’ (Leontine, Boost Amsterdam)

With exception of one organisation, the overall visual content is shown in colour. As argued in research, colourful images come along with positive emotional attitudes in contrast to black and white images (Praggiomore & Wallis, 2014). However, as mentioned, Boost Amsterdam provides black and white photos on their website. The reason for this is that the colours represent the colours of their logo, which might lead to more recognition: ‘‘It looks good with the yellow, because these are our colours.’’ (Karin, Boost Amsterdam)

When interviewing on the topic of job employment, the choice of visual content became clear. The majority of the organisations mentioned that all the jobs that are being offered in the Netherlands are practical jobs:

*“Yes, practical work. Such as hairdressers and clothes reparation. But most of the things are being done by machines, so mostly technical work. They need a lot of men for that, construction companies etc. But if you for example were a teacher in primary school, the chance you will become one here without speaking Dutch is quite small.”* (Lotte, Vluchtelingenwerk).

All organisations argued that this is due to the fact that the certificates of the newcomers that they have obtained in their country of origin are not equivalent to Dutch certificates. Therefore the jobs that are offered in the Netherlands can not be the same level of refugees’ previous jobs.

#### 4.2.3 Textual content

Besides showing visual content of practical jobs, as mentioned in research, fitting into the Dutch labour market requires speaking the Dutch language (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). The fact that Vluchtelingenwerk has chosen Dutch as main language for all their social media platforms might be due to the fact that, in their perspective and in line with previous studies, speaking and reading Dutch is a part of the Dutch integration process, especially when it comes to job employment: ‘[...] Maybe an assistant, or in child care.. but even then you need to speak Dutch.’ (Lotte, Vluchtelingenwerk)

When asking about the importance of online communication strategies, there was a sense of agreement amongst the respondents that because of lack of time and lack of knowledge, it is a challenge to create an effective online communication strategy. NGOs do realise that a strategic communication and relationship management is essential for the organisations’ existence (Bowers, 2000, Wiggill 2011). However, it has appeared that communication mostly happens unplanned by which makes planning ahead a hard task (Wiggill, 2011). Majority of the NGOs admitted that they have the notion that there should be one person in the management team that conducts a strategic communication, but that it is a time consuming task (Wiggill, 2009). Especially when it comes to language. Translating textual content into several languages costs too much time consuming energy. Therefore they do not have the ability to offer all online information in multiple languages.

Besides costing too much time and effort, because of lack of financial sources it seemed to be a challenge to appoint a specified communication manager. There are other priorities when it comes to creating online communication strategies and reaching the target group (Wiggill, 2009). Even though other aspects have priority, organisations do are aware that providing information in these

languages would lead to more interactivity and engagement. :

*“We do everything in Dutch. Everything we communicate. Uhm, and uhm, why not in English and Arabic.. that has mostly to do with time. Would be great if it was possible. English especially.”* (Leontine, Boost Amsterdam).

Also, certain social media platforms seem to require more time and effort than others. As mentioned, this study mainly focuses on the website and Facebook account of the organisations, since they are most active on these platforms. As Patricia, director of Road of Hope mentioned, if they include a Twitter account they will have to be writing all the time, for which they simply have no time. Besides lack of time it appeared that there is also a lack of communication knowledge. Organisations question themselves what the best communication strategies are. It is often the case that there is no organisational member that fills in the position of communication manager. None of the members have a communicational background by which they can offer knowledge on this.

#### 4.2.4 Conclusion interviews organisations

Overall, as previous research argues, social engagement via social media could lead to a higher level of visibility of an organisation (Himmelboim et al., 2014). However, organisations seem to struggle with creating such engagement. There consists a lack of interacting and exchanging messages between individuals and the organisations, which is needed to increase brand loyalty (Yang & Staffer, 2018). Due to lack of time, financial lack and not enough knowledge on online communication, it appears that the NGOs fit more to the idea of ‘getting the word out’ than achieving a two-way communication (Wiggill, 2011, Dyer et al., 2002). The organisations mentioned that they have other priorities, whereupon considering certain online communication strategies seems not be prioritised. Besides this, all organisations mentioned that personal, online as well as offline, communication remains the most crucial factor in communication. Therefore they question themselves to what extent online communication plays a key role in their communication strategies. Secondly, despite the fact that the organisations use a high level of social media and internet usage, the findings revealed that due to a lack of knowledge, creating websites and accounts on social media platforms that reach the target group seems difficult to implement.

In addition, it can be stated that the NGOs have different aims and goals when it comes to a successful integration and therefore they differ in their online communication. In order to increase job employment amongst refugees, NGOs offer their help. As soon as refugees have become status holders, they also receive the right to participation. NGOs fulfill the task of giving support that makes the process of participation easier. However, approximately 78% of newcomers who have the right of participation, remained unemployed in 2016 (Dagevos et al., 2016). Some organisations mentioned

that this is not the primary aim of the organisation: that the organization is there to help the refugees in the initial process of integration but that actual finding employment is the responsibility of the refugees themselves:

*“Yes and there are so many factors that are important for people.. And we are not, uhm, an employment agency.. We know a lot of people who came to Boost and do have a job now.. but that is not necessary due to us. We try to help with the first few steps. Learn the language and learn other people.. They are people who then via other organisations get a job.”* (Leontine, Boost Amsterdam).

NGOs such as Boost Amsterdam and Road of Hope consider themselves as organisations that help refugees mostly in the ‘private sphere’, the area of social bonding and social connection (Ager & Strang, 2008). From out their perspective, first accomplishing success in this area leads to a higher chance of achieving success in the ‘public sphere’. Subsequently, as illustrated in the quotation above, helping refugees integrating in the ‘public sphere’, is priority of other organisations.

### 4.3 Interviews refugees

In order to analyse whether the organisations’ view converge with the refugees’ opinions on online communication, seven Syrian refugees have been interviewed. During these interviews, the participants were asked to what extent they feel engaged with the NGOs’ platforms and in what way they try to search for jobs via social media. In addition, their motives behind using social media in general have been questioned. The section is divided in the same three subsections interactivity, visual content and textual content in order to make clear how the patterns have shown themselves.

#### 4.3.1 Interactivity

Based on the interviews that have been conducted, the majority of the refugees use social media to communicate with friends and family. This involves family and friends from the country of origin as well as family and friends in the Netherlands. However, previous research mentions that online information can provide refugees with information about rights, citizenship, support services and improving the integration process (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014, Amanda, 2018). But in contrast, when discussing to what extent the participants feel engaged to the social media platforms and websites of the organisations, there existed an agreement that they do not actively use them. Majority mentioned to have never visited the platforms. Social media seems to be mostly used for other purposes, such as following the news and connecting with friends and family.

In addition to the above, the participants agreed on that Facebook is the most appropriate social media platform to create engagement and relationship building since it has the easiest

functional tools. Logically, Facebook with its high amount of interactive features, has a high level of activity when it come to ‘sharing’, ‘liking’ and ‘commenting’ (Sander et al., 2019):

In contrast, other social media platforms and websites seem to have a less accessible design. The ease of content and the flexibility of the design is essential in order to increase engagement (Tripathi & Verma, 2017):

*“Actually, for newcomers, this interface is not suitable, because for newcomers.. these tools also.. They don’t know their ways to take that information [...] a lot of people suffer because of this.”.*

A frequently used argument was that Facebook seemed to be most appropriate since it can be updated daily without having to remove the previous posts (Popp et al., 2016). When discussing job employment, majority of the participants mention that they do use Facebook when seeking for vacancies. However, when using social media in order to finds jobs, they prefer to find information via companies’ Facebook accounts directly instead of via NGOs.

#### 4.3.2 Visual content

When discussing the visual content, different views on what is appropriate occurred. As mentioned by majority of the organisations, manual work is often being offered to refugees. However, showing images of this field of work leads to avoiding the previous cultural identity of newcomers (Bhugra, 2005). Even though a great amount of refugees are highly educated (CBS, 2018), the images that represent them are suggesting the opposite. As mentioned by one participant:

*“Yes that is the problem. Because these organisations or a lot of them are trying to limit the possibilities for the refugees and they consider them as like they should be workers and not more. So only few organisation put pictures of refugees who are docs..”*

As argued before, visual content seems to be more effective when including colourful images. It leads to a positive emotional state, which is in contrast with black and white photos that could lead to negative feelings (Wallis & Praggiomore, 2014). This appeared to be in line with the refugees’ view on visual content. The majority mentioned that black and white photos seems to caught less attention than colourful images. Beside this, one other aspect that occurred during the interviews was that nationalities seemed to be less recognisable in black and white, which might lead to a misunderstanding. As mentioned by one participant: “Uhm, because it is black and white I can not really see. Are they Eritrean?”

Forming a popular marketing strategy, the use of storytelling seems an appropriate way to share refugees' experiences. Sharing stories about newcomers that are working together with locals increases the positive attitude towards the host society. Receiving support from locals leads to a sense of belonging (Akhtar & Choi, 2004). Besides this, it makes it easier and more accessible to gather information about an organisation. As mentioned by one participant: "Uhm for me I like storytelling technique. When you read stories when you have an idea what the organization is doing and what can be achieved." In addition, the majority mentioned that it is more memorable when using storytelling. The message of the organisation was considered to be more clear. The majority of respondents mentioned that they prefer successful stories over visual content in which they are being represented as victims. They agreed on the idea that social media should play a crucial role avoiding stereotypical representations, since they have a great amount of power in representing refugees.

In addition to the above, providing images and videos of examples from your own country or history could lead to more understanding. This has to do with cultural identity. It is more likely that a person will identify with an image that looks like the image that an individual has of themselves (Groen et al., 2018). Showing cultural norms and values that are characteristic for a specific group could lead to a sense of belonging and understanding (Mezzich et al., 2009). As an example, Vluchtelingenwerk provides stories on their website of several people with different ethnic backgrounds who have fled their country of origin. In line with previous research, the participants agreed that cultural identity plays a role in the representation of refugees; they will engage with the visual content when that content is recognisable to them.

### 4.3.3 Textual content

When it comes to language choices, the opinions on which language is most appropriate to use seemed to be divided. Whereas few argue that providing textual content in Dutch leads to difficulties, some mentioned that it increases their motivation to learn Dutch. In line with previous studies, using Dutch as a language could contribute to their integration process, since it is beneficial for their adaptation in terms of native language and cultural learning (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). As mentioned by one participant: "I am already learning Dutch and it could be interesting for me to practice my Dutch language and to get information." However, majority of refugees that have just arrived in the Netherlands are not familiar with the Dutch language. Therefore trying to gather information from certain organisations seems to be impossible. A frequently suggested solution is the option to provide a user with tools to translate the textual content into different languages: "Uhm.. yes well If I was new my Dutch would not be good enough, so I would look for maybe another language so I can understand, I do that now if they have that." In short, the preference of language choices varies greatly.

As been argued in previous research, refugees are often being represented either as 'a threat'

or as ‘illegal’, or as ‘victims’ (Quassoli, 2013, Colombo, 2018). This also has become clear from the data. One participant mentioned the following:

*“I feel like a bit sensitive about the word refugees [...] I don't want to be called refugee, because.. I'm as any expat as from Italy or Spain or from like every country [...] I am like all European citizens who come here..”*

Refugees are often linked to a specific category of people; a group of Middle Eastern citizens who have escaped war and are different than other migrant groups. However, the respondents agreed on that this kind of content does not give a realistic image of who they truly are.

#### 4.3.4 Conclusion interviews refugees

Overall, the findings revealed that all of the newcomers seemed to be familiar with the use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Similar, the respondents mentioned that they make daily use of social media. All of the respondents have the ability to access the internet and own a mobile smartphone, providing them opportunities to easily connect to other users and check their social media accounts multiple times a day. However, it appeared that visiting websites of organisations does not happen occasionally. Their motives for social media usage are mostly social connection and social bonding. The platforms that aim to create social connection are therefore the platforms on which they engaged most.

When discussing the topic of job employment, the majority mentioned that they rarely seek for jobs via organisations’ social media. When searching for vacancies, the refugees mentioned that they look at companies’ their social media. Moreover, a shared opinion consisted that personal offline communication was presumed to be more effective when looking for a job.

### 4.4 Online Communication versus Offline Communication

In the course of this research an observation was made that offline communication plays a prominent role in the integration process, particularly when it comes to job employment. Based on the results above it appears that offline communication has proven more effective to those interviewed.

Surprisingly, the greatest similarity between the interviews with NGOs and refugees was that offline communication, and particularly personal communication, is regarded in the same way as being advantageous. Offline communication was described by the participants as face-to-face contact.

NGOs and refugees interviewed mentioned that online communication is less effective due to cultural differences: refugees do not have enough knowledge to seek for help and specifically for jobs online; based on the interviews language barriers and inaccessible platforms lead to too much uncertainty. In addition, their purpose for using social media is social bonding.

It appeared that the organisations and refugees share the same belief that offline personal communication is the most effective way to reach the target group. As mentioned by Leontine of Boost Amsterdam: “Because a lot happens via-via [...] face-to-face. Then we told people and they told people etc.” This could be linked to the concept of relationship building. Besides creating strong personal ties via social media, it appeared that offline personal communication has led to stronger relationships, mentioned to be even more effective than online communication. In previous research this has often been linked to the impact that post-migration has on refugees (Bakker et al., 2013). NGOs could take in the role of protecting the newcomers and improving their integration process (Bakker et al., 2013). The overall opinion of the participants included that face-to-face and one-on-one conversations with organisations lead to a feeling of trust and a sense of belonging: “We want to establish a relationship of trust with them. That they see all the volunteers and everybody and it feels like family” (Patricia, Road of Hope). When having gained trust of their target group, the process of integration seems to improve. This is mostly due to the fact that newcomers do not want to share all their problems with organisations that offer less personal communication: “They tell me a lot of things but not the Gemeente or Vluchtelingenwerk [...] so personal is good, but it takes a lot of effort.” (Patricia, Road of Hope). Following on from what has been discussed, it can be stated that looking from the organisations’ perspective relationship building plays an important role in their online communication strategy as well in their offline communication. In contrast, it appeared that the refugees did not value relationship building with the NGOs. They seem not to cherish a relationship with members of organisations to a great extent. To them, their personal connections with family and friends appeared to be more important. Especially when it comes to job employment, the majority agreed that they prefer seeking jobs through own contacts rather than via organisations.

Continuing on from what was previously discussed, the main reason for preferring offline communication over online communication appeared to be due to cultural differences. As mentioned, all respondents agreed that cultural differences are unavoidable. However, the majority of the newcomers agreed that in offline communication, cultural differences also appear. Cultural identity comes along with different norms and values, such as greeting men with three kisses, and certain cultural habits that refer to which ethnic group someone belongs. Even though they could be different from other cultural habits, they are important in order to understand the social and cultural background of a refugee (Mezzich et al., 2009). As mentioned in the interviews, it often leads to misunderstandings. One topic that was frequently discussed was the way of greeting each other. One participant mentioned: “Yes, but here it is understood differently as if they are homos.” In the Netherlands refugees’ way of greeting seems to be often misinterpreted. In simple term this means that cultural differences influences the ease of integration in all facets of communication.

In addition, the newcomers mentioned that Dutch citizens have a misunderstood image of the newcomers’ backgrounds. The use of the word ‘stereotypes’ was often mentioned during the interviews. Stereotypes are mostly cognitive links of a human that links a certain person to their

cultural background. They are mostly socially shared by people (Cox et al., 2012). These stereotypes come along with particular characteristics that can be negative, neutral or positive (Cox et al., 2012). As explained in the previous results sections, stereotypes should be avoided online. However it appeared that in offline communication, they experience stereotyping as well, but in a less negative way than in online communication. The stereotypes mostly concern cultural norms and beliefs, as explained by one of the participants who is a Christian but who said he is always assumed to be a Muslim: ‘We are quite diverse and Syria get a lot of refugees from all over the world, we still have Armenian minority, Syrian... and I am not Muslim.’ Some stereotypes can correlate to features in the world, but they are often inaccurate and oversimplified (Cox et al., 2012). Based on the interviews, it appeared that Dutch citizens often have an image of Syria being a strict, closed country. However, despite the monarchic governmental system the respondents mention that their country of origin has its charm as well. As an example, one participant mentioned:

*“And it's kind of similar to Greece, Greece islands as well, because we have similar foods similar music. They like music, they like party, spending the late night drinking, singing, listening to songs and dancing stuff like this.”*

Organisations such as Road of Hope offer different kind of workshops to improve the intercultural communication between refugees and the host society and to learn from cultural differences. It has been argued in previous studies that promoting language courses leads to higher inclusion of young immigrants (McGregor & Siegel, 2013). However, as mentioned in the online communication section, reaching every age group seems hard. The overall view is that the younger newcomers are, the easier it seems to teach them the Dutch language (McGregor & Siegel, 2013, Amanda, 2018). But on the contrary, certain age groups seem to be less open to new cultural practices and are hard to communicate with. In this it can be seen that more problems are characteristic for online as well as offline communication:

*“Yes, but on the other hand, they are young and you can easily teach them stuff. Such as the language. But they also easily do stuff that you can not turn back.. They have a lot of debts. They do not have parents. But if you are in an organization there is a lot of help of course, but if you are between 18-20, like that..”* (Lotte, Vluchtelingenwerk)

Language is often referred to as the most essential element of maintaining social relationships (Liddicoat, 2009, Ager & Strang, 2008). Besides understanding verbally what the other person says, speakers are constantly interpreting, invoking and confirming social relationships throughout language (Liddicoat, 2009). Above this, people sharing the same language leads to an understanding of the social activity in which they are engaged (Liddicoat, 2009). At the same time, when refugees

have different cultural assumptions, it could still be that communicative breakdowns appear or misinterpretations (Scollon & Scollon, 2001). As discussed in the previous sections, language barriers are one of the cultural differences that make online communication less effective. However, whereas there consists a lack of time and knowledge when it comes to online communication, based on the interviews with the NGOs and refugees it appeared that there exists a lack of knowledge when it comes to offline communication as well. It appears therefore that these different cultural assumptions actually do lead to some communicative misunderstanding.

In addition to the above, there appeared to be a consensus on the idea that the place of settlement plays a role as well when it comes to communication, integration and job employment. Overall, there were few main reasons for this: (1) language use, (2) international allure and (3) amount of jobs offered. When it comes to language use, majority of NGOs mentioned that the city has more places where the Dutch language can be learned. In contrast, smaller villages do not always have this ability:

*“There are so many places in Amsterdam where you can learn Dutch and.. for people in villages that is harder.. And when there is something it could be that they have to travel for a long time by bus.”* (Karin, Boost Amsterdam).

In addition the previous, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, being the cities with the highest percentage of Syrian immigrants, seem to have the ability to offer more support to newcomers than Dutch villages. Because these cities are bigger they are more capable of placing different kind of organisations that offer different kind of support. In addition, it was frequently mentioned that larger cities have more job vacancies, which makes it easier to find jobs online, as well as offline.

When it comes to language use, few of the participants preferred speaking Dutch over English. Managing the Dutch language is one of the requirements for becoming a status holder; the ability to fit into Dutch society. As mentioned before, language plays an essential role in integration on many levels (McGregor & Siegel, 2013). Speaking Dutch fluently increases the chances of creating social connections with the host society and highers the chance of getting a job (Bakker & Dagevos, 2017). In 2018, more than 90% of Syrian refugees mentioned to struggle with the Dutch language (Dagevos & Miltenburg, 2018). Few participants speak fluently Dutch, even though they mentioned that they would want to achieve this. When it came to language, one striking aspect stood out; namely that, from the refugees’ perspective, living in the big city and managing the English language seems enough to achieve a successful integration. And as one participant mentioned concerning the Dutch labour market: “They find that my Dutch is not quite good enough, but they say if you go to Amsterdam you can work there. [...] I know Amsterdam is more international.”

However, language usage differs based on the place of settlement in the Netherlands. Based on all interviews, living in the city does not require speaking Dutch that much. The majority of the

refugees have travelled throughout the Netherlands, living in smaller villages as well as in bigger cities. As illustrated by the previous quotation, they have noticed that when it comes to language use, living in Amsterdam and Rotterdam is easier, as mentioned by one newcomer: “So yeah in a village I guess you are forced to learn Dutch.” Based on this, it can be said that refugees find big cities, such as Amsterdam, more accessible when it comes to integrating in the ‘public’, as well as in the ‘private sphere’ in which social bonding is important (Ager & Strang, 2008). One of the reasons seemed to be that the bigger cities have a higher percentage of international inhabitants. As one refugee mentioned: “Yes, Amsterdam is multicultural city. More than 140 cultures are here.” Also, the respondents, with the exception of one, mentioned that integration is a less complex process in Amsterdam and Rotterdam since the people there are more welcoming and open towards refugees.

Due to the international allure of the bigger cities, fitting into Dutch labour market seems easier as well. Overall, the respondents mentioned to have experiences with applying for jobs in English. However, increasing job employment amongst refugees should not be underestimated. Due to cultural differences it remains a difficult process. As one of the participants mentioned: “You need to be strong and need to be confident of yourself. This is the most important thing for refugees [...] confidence, because most of them they lost this confidence due to the circumstances.” Even though adjusting to host society seems to be easier in a big city, it still remains a complex process that brings with it several obstacles. Besides the fact that previous educational certificates are not equivalent to Dutch ones, there seemed to be more problems that occur when applying for jobs. One striking aspect that was mentioned frequently was that there consists a misunderstanding of the cultural and educational backgrounds of refugees. As mentioned by one participant: “Yes it was hard, because when recruiters read your CV, they see you have a gap in which you did not do anything.” In addition, the refugees interviewed mentioned that they have a lack of knowledge when it comes to writing a new CV for the Netherlands.

## 5. Conclusion

This study hopes to provide a better understanding of how NGOs can improve their communication strategies in order to ease the integration process of Syrian refugees in Dutch society with a focus on job employment. In order to answer the research question, two sub-questions were formed: (1) How are the social media and networking sites of NGOs built in order to improve the integration process of refugees into the host society? (2) To what extent do social media and networking sites improve the ease of integration into the host society? This chapter will provide answers to these sub-questions. Before conducting the interviews, the websites and Facebook accounts of the NGOs have been analysed, looking at their (1) level of interactivity, (2) their visual content and (3) their textual content. The following paragraphs include conclusions on the physical appearance of organisations' websites and Facebook accounts. Thereafter, the following paragraphs will provide conclusions on organisations' and refugees' perspectives on online and offline communication.

Overall, the findings revealed that there exists a lack of engagement on the social media platforms and websites of the organisations. Whereas it has been argued how engagement could improve relations between organisations and refugees, the websites especially show a shortage of functional tools that provide interaction. The websites seem to be in line with the view of a one-way communication process, in which the organisations simply 'get the word out' instead of encouraging the user to communicate back or deliver input to the website (Tripathi & Verma, 2017). The websites do not contain any communicative tools such as a blog or a chat room. However, the websites do encourage personalisation in few ways. For example, majority of the websites have included boxes in which a user can fill in their personal data to receive personalised information. All the organisations have included this to make it easier for the user to get in contact with the organisation. The website of Vluchtelingenwerk remains the only one that has other purposes as well: by filling in personal information on their website, a user can receive information that is relevant for them based on age, gender and place of settlement. Every organisation has their own website; Vluchtelingenwerk seems the only one to update it few times a week.

Slightly contrasting with the above, the social media platforms of the organisations do encourage engagement. The most appropriate social media account seemed to be Facebook, since it has most functional features that provide interactivity. Examples of these are the ability to 'share', 'comment', 'follow' and react on 'events' by pressing buttons that explain if you attend or not. Facebook seems to be appropriate to update daily since it can update daily without having to remove the previous posts (Popp et al., 2016). This makes it accessible for a user to keep following posts, interact with other users and the organisation. Above this, every Facebook account shows a chatbox which can be pressed on by a user to get in contact with the organisation. Also, Facebook has the ability to spread brand visibility without the input of the user (Kelleher & Miller, 2006). Simply by creating and updating posts, a user that follows the account sees the new post in their timeline (Popp

et al., 2016). It allows the organisation to share videos, photos, stories and links to other platforms in an easy manner. All four of the organisations have an own Facebook account which is weekly updated.

When it comes to visual content, the majority of the images and videos are colourful. With the exception of the organisation Boost Amsterdam, that provides black and white images on their website. The majority of the visual content illustrates different aspects of the integration process: fitting into the Dutch labour market, social connection amongst like-ethnic groups, social bonding between newcomers and Dutch citizens, language courses and workshops. One other striking aspect within the visual content is the use of the storytelling technique. Especially Vluchtelingenwerk provides videos in which storytelling is used on their website, as well on their Facebook. Stories of newcomers who struggled with the integration process, or who have successfully integrated, are shared. The other organisations seem to make less use of the storytelling technique and are mainly focused on sharing visual content that concerns the activities organised by the organisation and the mission and goals of the organisation.

Based on the textual content of the websites and social media platforms, different languages are used. Two of the four organisations have chosen Dutch as main language on their website. One of the four organisations does not have the option for translating into other languages. Vluchtelingenwerk remains the only website that offers the user translations in English and different varieties on Arabic. The others allow the user to translate in English. The main language that is used on the social media platforms differs; Vluchtelingenwerk uses Dutch as primary language, Boost Amsterdam uses Dutch as the language, NewBees uses English and Road of Hope uses English. Whereas Vluchtelingenwerk provides mostly information about the formal requirements of integration, the other organisations focus on the 'private sphere' as well; promoting events and workshops and explain in which way social connection plays a role for them as organisation. NewBees provides information on the 'private sphere' as well on the 'public sphere'; majority of their textual content involves cultural workshops, vacancies for jobs, internships, traineeships and volunteerism.

The explanation for the physical appearance of the websites and social media platforms flows out the interviews that have been conducted with five members of four organisations. It can be stated that few main statements appeared: (1) Organisations desire a clear online communication strategy. However, due to lack of time and lack of knowledge it remains a challenge, (2) Providing general information about the organisation has priority over concerning engagement and interaction via websites and social media and (3) It seemed to be slightly unclear who exactly is part of the target group; there existed an overall concern on questioning if newcomers even visit the website and social media channels. Therefore focusing on information that is useful for external parties is also essential. In line with the above, the organisations mention that the visual content illustrates the information that is being provided; the images and videos represent the organisations' activities, workshops and the

jobs that are being offered. As mentioned by the organisations; they are logical choices. When it comes to language usage, the motives seemed less obvious. Overall, there existed uncertainty about which language is most appropriate. The solution for this seemed clear; the option to translate the website and social media channels into different languages, preferably Dutch, English and Arabic. However, the majority of the organisations do not have a communication member in their team that could take responsibility for this. Vluchtelingenwerk remains the only one with such a team member and therefore might be the only organisation that can offer these translations.

From the perspective of refugees one main statement was clear: (1) Social media usage is particularly relevant for personal purposes, which is mainly social connection with friends and family. Due to personal reasons for social media usage, engaging with the websites and social media platforms of organisations seemed not to appear frequently. Moreover, all of the respondents mentioned that they rarely visit organisations' websites and social media. Few mention to 'follow' certain accounts, but that they barely interact.

When discussing the visual content of the NGOs' website and Facebook accounts, three main opinions consisted: (1) Colourful content is more effective, (2) Cultural identity should be taken into consideration and (3) Negative representations should be avoided. It appeared that black and white photos are less memorable and that colourful content leads to positive emotional behaviour. As mentioned, the visual content includes different kind of nationalities that connect. This seemed to be important to the participants since social connection leads to a sense of belonging. However, they could not identify themselves with images of practical jobs; in this there consisted a sense of feeling misunderstood. Lastly, as being argued in previous research, refugees are often being represented as 'victims' or 'illegal'. According to the respondents, this should be avoided since they are too stereotypical. The opinion on which language choices are most appropriate were divided; few mention that using Dutch improves their own Dutch and others mention how English is better since they are more fluent in it. Based on the results of this study, one fundamental finding can be identified: personal offline communication is more effective than online communication. In personal offline communication, three statements were supported by both groups interviewed: (1) Cultural differences are unavoidable, (2) Language and job employment are essential aspects of a two-way integration process and (3) The place of settlement has an influence on the ease of integration.

As explained in previous sections, offline communication brings with it cultural differences. They are inevitable; during work and in daily life Dutch citizens and refugees notice cultural misunderstandings. From the organisational perspective, these were mostly referred to as communicative barriers. From the perspective of refugees it appeared that they often lead to misinterpret and misrepresented images of themselves. However, there is an indication that cultural differences are easier to solve in offline communication than online communication, because by having direct contact a two way dialogue is more quickly realized and less open to misinterpretation. In addition, both groups interviewed also share the view that language and job employment are crucial

elements of a successful integration. However, in what way and to what extent seems slightly unclear; applying for jobs is a challenge, since previous achieved certificates are not equivalent to Dutch certificates. Besides this, managing the Dutch language requires a lot of time and patience.

The last point leading on from this is; a difference in integrating in large cities versus integrating in small villages is evident. Due to the international allure of the biggest cities, managing the Dutch language seems less urgent. In contrast, living in smaller villages requires speaking the Dutch language fluently in order to build social bridges. In addition, the chances of finding a job are higher in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, due to the use of different languages and the amount of companies that are established there. One other aspect that fluctuates in cities and villages that was frequently mentioned when discussing intercultural communication was ‘stereotypes’. According to the refugee participants Dutch citizens often have a misunderstood image of their cultural backgrounds, which leads to frustration amongst the newcomers.

## **6. Discussion**

This final chapter provides a discussion on the following topics. Firstly, the topic of intercultural communication strategies of NGOs and the role of increasing job employment amongst refugees will be explained. Secondly, a number of recommendations for NGOs’ communication strategies will be made. Thirdly and finally, the relevance of this study and proposals for future research will be presented.

This study has focused on NGOs’ communication strategies. The findings have a societal relevance, since (highly educated) refugees are a sizeable workforce that could contribute positively to the Dutch labour market. The majority of the interviewed newcomers are highly skilled and could easily thrive in Dutch society; the majority of the respondents mentioned to have been active in previous jobs such as English and French professors at university. Despite the help and support offered by NGOs, there seems to be a lack of work for refugees in the Netherlands, especially when it comes to work that is suitable for highly educated newcomers. This has mostly to do with the fact that previous educational attainment is not usable in Dutch society; their qualifications and their skills are not recognisable in the Netherlands, which leads to frustration amongst the highly educated refugees. Consequently, the jobs and help that is offered by NGOs are not that attractive for (highly educated) refugees; they do not feel called upon.

Besides the educational background, it seems that language and cultural practices play a crucial role when it comes to job employment. As mentioned before, refugees struggle with writing a correct CV. In addition, even though majority of the newcomers mentioned that they do not experience discrimination, they argued that the Dutch labour market is highly competitive; employers seem to prefer native speakers over newcomers with a foreign accent. This is in line with previous research that shows that the unemployment rates amongst refugees are often higher than the those of

the native-speakers (Bauböck & Tripkovic, 2017). Overall, this study is in line with the idea that a more flexible system of recognising the qualifications of newcomers could be beneficial in the two-way integration process; it could be beneficial for host society to make use of refugees' skills and avoid a waste of time, money and energy (Hawthorne, 2013, Sumption, 2013). Consequently, NGOs can create communication strategies that would attract refugees more. However, this goes way beyond the NGOs who try to help them integrate, they could still play a role in easing the integration process, but maybe more on different levels than job employment. In terms of job employment it is not entirely the fault of online communication strategy or the help of NGOs but simply the fact that Dutch legislation does not ease the transfer of skills and qualifications for refugees integrating into Dutch society.

This study has demonstrated that in line with previous research, social media function as personal communication tools, but they have also been described as one of the most important information distributors (Dekker & Engbersen, 2013). The use of social media was particularly important for refugees in the dimension of social connection (McGregor & Siegel, 2013). Based on the results it can be stated that the relevance of social media has mostly to do with contacting family and friends in their country of origin as well, which leads to emotional support and an increase of the well being, as mentioned in previous studies (Amanda, 2017, McGregor & Siegel, 2013). Therefore it can be argued that social media plays the most essential role in the 'private sphere': the area of social connection and social bonding (Ager & Strang, 2008). Previous studies have argued how technology can encourage refugees to participate in language courses and workshops by providing them with information (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014, McGregor & Siegel, 2013). However, the findings of this study reveal that this kind of information is rarely sought via social media of NGOs. Whereas studies argue how media influences the integration process on a social, economic and cultural level, this study shows that the social and cultural area are mostly influenced by social media usage, particularly in the 'private sphere' (McGregor & Siegel, 2013). When concerning the 'public sphere', offline communication instead of online communication seems to play a more essential role in integrating in the economic dimension. In addition, it has been mentioned how local organisations are considered to be more trustworthy via offline communication than via online communication (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). The findings of this study complement those of previous studies; the majority of the refugees interviewed and all organisational members highlighted the importance of personal offline communication when it comes to integration.

## 6.2 Recommendations on NGOs' online communication strategies

For this study, the following research question was formed: "In this digital era, how could NGOs improve the strategic and intercultural communication towards refugees in order to improve their integration process into the host society?" This sub section will try to provide an answer by

suggesting several recommendations on communication strategies. In line with previous research, it did appear that having a clear communication strategy and management team is essential in order to reach the target group and create engagement via online platforms (Wiggill, 2011). When there is a shortage of this, it seems to lead to a lower level of interactivity and lower chance to create relationship building. Besides this, offline communication should be taken into consideration, as mentioned in previous sections.

Building on the results of this study, this study provides a number of recommendations when considering effective online communication strategies: (1) NGOs their social media platforms seem to be more influential when they require engagement. This could be achieved by making use of many interactive features. As mentioned, Facebook accounts in which they could comment and directly speak to other users are more popular. Majority of the newcomers mentioned to be more active on Facebook accounts that allow them to interact with other users to discuss applications, internships and other services, (2) It is also of importance to consider the choice of language. When focussing on newcomers that have just arrived in the Netherlands, Dutch seems to be an inappropriate language choice. Consequently, enabling the user with translation options makes it easier to reach the target group and (3) NGOs should carefully consider the representation of refugees in order to avoid misinterpretations and stereotypes.

### 6.3 Future research and limitations

This study has focussed on the integration process from the perspective of NGOs and from the perspective of highly educated refugees. Issues concerning the diversification of the refugee sample was already mentioned in the methodology, but will be addressed once again. This study included a majority of male refugee participants. However, in order to gain an understanding from out diverse perspectives, future research might like to focus on more female respondents. Furthermore, it might be suitable to include a sample of non-educated newcomers in order to investigate their experiences and views on integration. In addition, a more complete and balanced understanding of the current integration process could be achieved by including refugees who are living in smaller villages in the Netherlands. Consequently, it could be analysed whether their views converge with those of refugees living in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Furthermore, future research might like to concentrate on quantitative analysis as a complement to broader the sample of refugees and organisations in order to gain a better understanding of the topic. Questionnaires, focus groups or experiments in combination with content analysis might lead to more credibility and validity.

This study offers deeper understanding of the integration process. The majority of research focuses on either one perspective, which might lead to a too one-sided view on integration. The findings of this research could contribute to a better understanding of whether views converge and where struggles occur. Lastly, this study has included a relatively new dimension regarding previous

research; the digital dimension. Integrating is not achievable when not carefully considering the online as well as the offline communication, in this digital era.

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# Appendix

## Individuals

Main category	Sub category	Quotes
Cultural differences	Main ideas the Netherlands (city vs village)	<p>“Here in Netherlands I myself I can say whatever I want to say.”</p> <p>“Freedom.”</p> <p>“They are more educated in city. Cute and nice person and open-minded.”</p> <p>“So yeah in a village I guess you are forced to learn dutch.”</p> <p>“An open country, which accepts others and English is used almost everywhere.”</p> <p>“I know Amsterdam is more international.”</p> <p>“Yes, well life inside university is different than outside university.”</p> <p>“Yes, Amsterdam is multicultural city. More than 140 cultures are here. This is, uhm, even the Gemeente says; we are proud of that.”</p>

	<p>Main misunderstandings of country of origin</p>	<p>‘‘We are quite diverse and Syria get a lot of refugees from all over the world, we still have Armenian minority, Syrian..’’</p> <p>‘‘And it's kind of similar to Greece, Greece islands as well, because we have similar foods similar music. They like music, they like party, spending the late night drinking, singing, listening to songs and dancing stuff like this.’’</p> <p>‘‘People wear shorts and people like you can swim with bikini.’’</p>
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	Communicative differences	<p>‘I thought that the people in the Netherlands are more communicative than in Germany.’</p> <p>‘Yes, but here it is understood differently as if they are homos.’</p> <p>‘Strange when you visit someone then at a house [...] no appointment.’</p> <p>‘How to greet people, and for example eating [...] can not leave the table.’</p> <p>‘We are all humans. We should have this in our minds and this is how we can build relationships.’</p>
	Governmental differences	<p>‘More democracy.’</p> <p>‘Opinions freely.’</p> <p>‘It is liberal here in the Netherlands.’</p> <p>‘The government election and liberal democracy is like a way I would say the difference between here and Syria.’</p>
Experiences organizations	Which organizations	‘COA, VVN.’

	Communication processes	<p>“Professional.”</p> <p>“Face-to-face.”</p> <p>“No I am not satisfied. At the beginning.. the box under my house burned. Because two men were drunk and.. the fire was to my house. And I lost my electricity. And even in the winter. I even have a child and nobody helped me.”</p>
	Achievements	<p>“Communicating with the government.”</p> <p>“Help with formal documents.”</p>
	Advantages/disadvantages	<p>“I love it, but the more for me I felt like I should do something about it and stop taking advantages of this situation, so I had to find a job.”</p> <p>“There is no way to integrate without them.”</p>

Online communication	Language usage	<p>‘‘If I was new my Dutch would not be good enough.’’</p> <p>‘‘I always pressed translate so I can manage.’’</p> <p>‘‘I feel like a bit sensitive about the word refugees.’’</p> <p>‘‘When I translate it to English I get a clear translation. But when i translate it to arabic.. It is because of the build up of sentences.’’</p>
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	Visual content	<p>‘‘Uhm, well, I don’t like that the images are in black and white [..] non realistic.’’</p> <p>‘‘So only few organisation put pictures of refugees who are docs wearing...’’</p> <p>‘‘I think the description is necessary because sometimes the pics are very general. And you don’t understand what its about.’’</p> <p>‘‘I like storytelling technique.’’</p> <p>‘‘I prefer this over like a.. frightening photo.’’</p> <p>‘‘Maybe more attractive and more expressive if it is not in black and white.’’</p> <p>‘‘Alway like... for me it is like, typical photo.’’</p> <p>‘‘Maybe, uhm, you know if it’s addressed to refugees this platform. It will not be the best choice to put this photo for a man who is like.. for a woman. It is like different in cultures. For example, I would have preferred something neutral..’’</p> <p>‘‘I think that in this this image doesn't belong to.’’</p>
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		<p>‘‘A Syrian. It is like a profile picture. Looks like a prisoner. If we compare this one with this one the difference is big.’’</p> <p>‘‘She has nothing to do with this people and this place. This one is perfect, this one is good because people are working, showing that they are integrating...’’</p> <p>‘‘It is pessimistic, not optimistic. Yeah, they uhm, colours always gives you happiness.’’</p> <p>‘‘I think it is a good video. If we speak here about the content inside the video, it has multiple cultures, a lot of people, uhm, it gives the impression that those people are, they are, the refugees are working.’’</p>
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	Textual content	<p>‘‘Yes I think it good example, because if you can’t understand how others suffer when you haven’t brought an example from your own country.’’</p> <p>‘‘Yes dutch, because for example I am already learning dutch and it could be interesting for me to practice my Dutch language and to get information.’’</p> <p>‘‘Uhm, I see it’s more for women. Haha.’’</p>
	Buttons	<p>‘‘I can’t find their instagram..’’</p> <p>‘‘I do not think is the ideal website of someone who has just arrived.’’</p> <p>‘‘How does this organisation can help you.’’</p>

Job employment	Experiences	<p>‘‘It’s not their choice, they do not have a lot of options, for somebody who is living here for short while and needs to find a job it’s a difficult process. First it needs to have several skills and for example to learn the language and to get certificate and when you have it it needs to be equivalent to equivalent... Dutch system..’’</p> <p>‘‘Some doctors from syria are working in the cleaning.’’</p> <p>‘‘Uhm, actually the process takes time and needs a lot of support.’’</p> <p>‘‘Most important thing for refugees its confidence, because most of them they lost this confidence due to the circumstances.’’</p> <p>‘‘I had to pre master and then I had to do the master even though I already did a Bachelor’s degree in Syria.’’</p> <p>‘‘I use Google for everything.’’</p>
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	Language usage	<p>‘Both actually. I can speak dutch well but not with the accent.. that I could work in customer service.. my last job was here but for English speaking customers.’</p> <p>‘But other who are born here they got.. they are native speakers.’</p> <p>‘You need to focus on learning Dutch before applying.’</p> <p>‘Yes, I need the official paper.’</p> <p>‘Actually, for newcomers, this interface is not suitable, because for newcomers.. this language..’</p>
	Organizations	<p>‘If you have motivation, you find what you want.’</p> <p>‘No actually I am part of a group on facebook.’</p> <p>‘I didn't want to work in a cafe or in a restaurant.’</p>

	Cultural differences	<p>“You need experiences in your CV.”</p> <p>“When recruiters read your CV, they see you have a gap in which you did not do anything and they want to understand this.”</p> <p>“The working culture is very competitive.”</p> <p>“As pharmacist but as an assistant. There was a difference in certificates. It is more practical, I would say. Not easy.”</p> <p>“Very important to have connection to get a job in Netherlands.”</p> <p>“[...] in Syria like about if for example a brother works spend the whole family it's not like we are more dependent on each other..”</p> <p>“I feel like in big cities is like and also you can find job easily in big city, it is easy.”</p>
Social media	Social media use	“Daily.”

	(Personal) motivation	‘‘It’s the language of the time.’’
	Social media and integration	‘‘Facebook is a good option.’’  ‘‘Maybe facebook helped me most.’’
	Social media and job employment	‘‘Uhm, it actually helped me a lot. For example through my education and finding a job.’’  ‘‘Most important LinkedIn.’’  ‘‘Facebook, yes [..] I even looked for jobs on there but for me it’s not helpful because most of the jobs they offer refugees are really basic..’’  ‘‘LinkedIn [..] and I would go to uhm like, for this websites for jobs.. or directly to the website of the organization or the place I want to work.’’

*Organizations*

<b>Main category</b>	<b>Sub category</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
Organization	Function organization	‘‘

	Position(s) in organization	‘‘I am officially the team leader of ‘inburgering.’’’
	Contact with organizations	‘‘Yes. A lot of organisations with the same target group. They want to work together because we do not have knowledge of everything. With language for example.. we are good, but with..’’ (Karin, Boost Amsterdam)
	Experiences	
Intercultural communication	Main factors	<p>‘‘They tell me a lot of things but not the Gemeente or Vluchtelingenwerk [...] so personal is good, but it takes a lot of effort’’ (Patricia, Road of Hope)</p> <p>‘‘We want to establish a relationship of trust with them. That they see all the volunteers and everybody and it feels like family.’’ (Patricia, Road of Hope)</p>
	Language usage	

	Cultural differences Amsterdam - villages	<p>‘‘There are so many places in Amsterdam where you can learn Dutch and.. for people in villages that is harder.. And when there is something it could be that they have to travel for a long time by bus. But we do not have a lot to do with that..’’ (Karin, Boost Amsterdam)</p> <p>‘‘Well I talk sometimes to people outside Amsterdam and they find it quite difficult.. they feel like; ah something like Boost I wish we had that as well here.’’ (Leontine, Boost Amsterdam)</p>
	Perspective refugees	‘‘Blowing and using drugs is way more fun. It often goes wrong. And the help comes late often.’’
	Target group	
Job employment	Available jobs	
	Target group	

	Workshops	<p>“Well we help them by giving workshops and trainings, how does it all go.. and every company should have like a coach.”</p> <p>“We give ‘inburgering’, projects that are called VIP, that is like investing in refugees to participate. They learn where can I go? What can I offer what am I good in? Then afterwards, hopefully you get paid.”</p>
	Cultural differences	<p>“Yes, such as a Syrian does not want to pause during work, but Dutch people want to. So if you know that Eritreans for example prefer to work in groups; then hire a group. A Syrian loves to work alone.”</p>
	Language usage	
Online communication	Language usage	<p>“[...] Maybe an assistant, or in child care.. but even then you need to speak Dutch.” (Lotte, Vluchtelingenwerk)</p>

	Visual content	<p>‘‘Yes, well, it looks good with the yellow, because these are our colours. That’s why. I think.’’</p> <p>‘‘Yes, so why exactly these photos, [...] what we have in our archive, this is a logical mix of people.’’</p> <p>‘‘Yes, practical work. Such as hairdressers and clothes reparation. But most of the things are being done by machines, so mostly technical work. They need a lot of men for that, construction companies etc. But if you for example were a teacher in primary school, the chance you will become one here without speaking Dutch is quite small.’’</p>
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	Textual content	<p>‘‘Yes, but that is impossible.. too much work.’’</p> <p>‘‘Maybe an assistant, or in child care.. but even then you need to speak Dutch.’’</p> <p>‘‘Yes and there are so many factors that are important for people.. And we are not, uhm, an employment agency.. We know a lot of people who came to Boost and do have a job now.. but that is not necessary due to us. We try to help with the first few steps. Learn the language and learn other people.. They are people who then via other organisations get a job.’’</p> <p>‘‘We do everything in Dutch. Everything we communicate. Uhm, and uhm, why not in English and Arabic.. that has mostly to do with time. Would be great if it was possible. English especially.’’</p>
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