Composing a Home Away from Home:
A study of the role of music in the identity process of Afghan refugees in the Netherlands

Despite various efforts, there are no standardized, European-wide policies concerning an equal spread of refugees, resulting in imbalanced migratory flows throughout the continent. Consequent prolonged asylum procedures faced by individuals amplify the social stress that a loss or mismatch of (cultural) identity can cause, which – besides post-traumatic stress and economic instability – is a major stress-source experienced by refugees. One coping mechanism utilized by many involves listening to music, and while its relation to stress has been well-documented, further implications for identity and place have been scarcely studied. This research, then, aims to understand how Afghan refugees in the Netherlands use music to cope with the stress of seeking asylum, studying the role of music in the formation of an identity displaced from individuals' home countries, and whether this may differ over the course of their asylum procedures. Research was conducted through a series of 15 unstructured interviews with Afghan Refugees – between the ages of 19 and 27 – based in Arnhem, the Netherlands. Through the consideration of four different levels – the *social*; the *cultural*; the *political*, and; the *individual* – this research paints a picture of the process of identity formation that the studied group go through as a result of their migration, focusing on a non-invasive topic (i.e. music). The primary stress experienced by participants stems from their prolonged asylum procedures, as well as their adaption to the Dutch language and culture more generally. Music, then, provides individuals with an avenue through which to distract themselves and do emotional work, and contributes to their integration. Musical consumption works as a supporting mechanism which assists in the adaption to a new culture and people – as well as maintaining a connection with those of their home-country – providing a framework which fosters an appropriative form of integration. The centrality of music to these processes diminishes over the course of individuals' asylum procedures, with focus shifting from maintaining an Afghan social and cultural identity to incorporating an appropriated Dutch one into it. All in all, this study provides contextualized insights into the various factors involved in a complex and reflexive process that brings together social phenomena which have remained largely unrelated in previous research.

Key words: *Music; Identity; Acculturation; Migration; Integration.*

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Introduction

Though refugees have been continuously making their way to Europe – and the Netherlands, more specifically – since as early as the end of World War II, the past years have seen an immense increase in the number of individuals seeking asylum, with numbers of those moving through and to the continent in recent years more than doubling, as compared to just as far back as 2012 (van Houtum & Lucassen, 2016; Bakker, Dagevos & Engbersen, 2017; Polman, 2019). The stress that such an influx may have on the Dutch economy and society more generally (van Houtum & Lucassen, 2016; Polman, 2019), then, makes it pertinent to understand how individuals in this new demographic may successfully cope with their situation, and thereby become stable and contributing members of the Dutch population. This can be a slow process due to prolonged procedure times (see: Wilkinson, Blom, Jongebreur-Telgen & Karssen, 2006; VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, 2020), during which period individuals have little prospects of rebuilding their lives, and are in constant fear of returning to the conflicted areas from which they have fled (Phillimore , 2011; Bakker, Dagevos & Engbersen, 2014). Among the many coping mechanisms employed by refugees to deal with the stress that this entails (see e.g. Khawaja, White, Schweitzer & Greenslade, 2008; Yakushko, Watson & Thompson 2008; Yukushko, 2010) music can play a vital role, and provides a neutral angle from which to study the phenomenon. The research question thus reads:

> *How do young, male Afghan refugees in the Netherlands use music in order to cope with the stress of seeking asylum in a new country?*

While there is ample research concerning how individuals cope with stress derived from (i.a.) acculturation on a personal level, surprisingly little of it takes the extra step to understand the place of this process in a broader social context, and particularly in relation to music. Burke's (1991a; 1991b) *identity process* theory, for example, outlines the process of identity formation as a control system that regulates a set of "meanings" applied to oneself in a social role or situation (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Burke & Tully, 1977), but leaves little room for individuals' reflexivity. Combining said theory, then, with that of Lamont & Molnár's (2002) *symbolic boundaries*, allows for the wider contextualization of the inputs involved in the identity process, as well as individuals' understanding of said process, and its broader, social implications. This is achieved by approaching this process through the medium of music, which allows for the typological study of the various levels on which this process may take place, as previously outlined by Kasinitz and Martiniello (2019), namely: the *cultural level*, which concerns the broader cultural impact that music can have on society; the *social level*, which concerns the social encounters between people of varying backgrounds that music can facilitate, and; the *political level*, which concerns the role music can play in political mobilization. Additionally, in order to retain the reflexive nature of the studied process, an additional typological level is taken into consideration,

namely: the *individual level*, which concerns individual's personal connection to music, and its inherent potential for affording emotional work.

We focus on male, Afghan refugees – and youth, specifically – as they provide a large, accessible demographic whose numbers in the Netherlands have spiked in recent years, but have also been present for a longer period of time (Muller, 2008; van Wieringen & Roelants, 2016; European Asylum Support Office, 2019). Moreover, of the largest three groups of refugees within the Netherlands (Syrians, Eritreans and Afghans), Afghans' asylum procedures take, on average, the longest, as Afghanistan is not officially recognized by the Netherlands as a "dangerous" country, meaning every Afghan refugee must prove their personal situation warrants asylum (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2014; 2015; 2020). Primarily male, Afghan refugees, then, experience this procedure, as women typically only follow male members of their family after they have successfully finished said procedure (van Wieringen & Roelants, 2016; Saeys, Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2018). Open-ended interviews were thus held with a stratified sample of respondents from this demographic at different points within their asylum procedure, and were examined through thematic analysis. Following, respectively, is: an in-depth discussion of relevant literature; a detailed outline of the methods applied; an examination and analysis of relevant findings, and; a summarizing conclusion, accompanied by a reflection and discussion of the broader relevance of the research findings.

Theoretical Approach / Framework

Music, Identity and Place

An approach to understanding the relation(s) between identity, music and place benefits from work stemming from Bourdieu's (1984) *Distinction Theory*, which proposes that systems of class differences coincide with those of lifestyle differences: one's *habitus* – the sum of one's upbringing, skills and dispositions – then, works to signal one's social class through a combination of one's taste, consumption and cultural participation, as patterns remain consistent within social classes (Bourdieu, 1984). Based on this, Lamont and Molnár (2002) proposed their theory of *symbolic boundaries*, which they define as socially constructed conceptual distinctions that work to separate people into groups, promoting feelings of in-group membership in the process. Whether they take the form of consumption patterns, shared practices, symbols or ideas, *symbolic boundaries* work to include – or exclude – individuals in- and from groups, promoting social cohesion between in-group members, while distinguishing them from outsiders. As a result, *symbolic boundaries* are able to shape and reify *social boundaries*, as individuals' (group) identities tend to structure how they evaluate others – as well as social problems more generally – which contributes directly to social stratification (Bourdieu, 1984; Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Edgell, Stewart, Billups & Larson, 2020). Though this approach to (collective) identity formation

through (perceived) group-membership does not depend inherently on place nor music, it provides an ideal framework through which to study the relations between the three concepts.

Furthermore, this approach aligns with previous work concerning the social stress that a loss or mismatch of (cultural) identity can cause in individuals: besides post-traumatic stress and economic instability (see: Huijts, Kleijn, van Emmerik, Noordhof & Smith, 2012; Bakker et al., 2014; 2017), acculturation represents one of the major stress sources experienced by refugees more generally, and Afghan refugees specifically (Muller, 2008; Yakushko et al., 2008; Phillimore, 2011). The process of identity formation, then, can be seen as a control system that regulates a set of "meanings" that one applies to oneself in a social role or situation (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Burke & Tully, 1977; Burke, 1991a; 1991b). Here, a feedback loop consisting of four components is established – (1) a *standard* set of self-meanings, (2) an *input* from an environment or social situation, (3) a *process that compares* said input with said standard, and (4) an *output* to the environment – which works by modifying the output to a social situation so as to impact the input in such a way that it matches the internal standard. Put differently, this feedback loop works to identify the various *symbolic boundaries* one encounters on a daily basis, attempting to match them to those held closely by an individual, and it is in this way that *symbolic boundaries* may be reproduced. Interruption of these feedback loops, and thereby the identity process, however, may cause severe social stress to individuals, and according to Burke (1991b), four conditions can lead to this outcome – *broken identity loops*; *Interference between identity systems*; *over-controlled identity systems*; and *invocation of episodic identities*.

In the first, the identity loop can be broken in two ways – (1) an individual may be unable to influence their environment through their own behavior, which may lead to feelings of alienation and estrangement, and is often associated with the loss of identity itself (Stein, Vidich & White, 1960; Bhugra, 2004; Nelson & O'Donohue, 2006), and (2) an individual may be unable to perceive the meanings of a given situation – in both of which cases the identity process is unable to match the input of a situation to the individual's standard, causing distress (Burke, 1991b). In both cases the individual is encountering *symbolic boundaries* upheld by another group, and unable to cross them. Both processes are typically encountered when an individual enters a new (sub)culture, as is the case for refugees seeking asylum in a new country, and is also well documented among Afghan refugees in the Netherlands, specifically (Burke, 1991b; Muller, 2008; Phillimore, 2011). In the second, an individual may (attempt to) harbor multiple identities that correlate negatively (Burke, 1991b; Bhugra, 2004). As congruence with respect to one of these identities increases, that with respect to the other may decrease, inducing distress: a process also referred to as role conflict or role strain (Marks 1977; Burke, 1991b; Creary & Gordon, 2016). Here, an individual may feel distressed in aligning with two opposing sets of *symbolic boundaries*, something refugees experience frequently in the form of acculturation

(Muller, 2008). In the third, acculturation may also prove stressful to individuals with an *over-controlled identity system*, where inputs from a situation are attempted to be matched exactly with their standard set of self-meanings. Such a rigid system may induce stress as individuals experience *symbolic boundaries* more severely than they would through flexible identity systems that cater to a more appropriative understanding of said encountered *boundaries* (Burke, 1991b). Finally, the *episodic performance of a role* may cause distress when individuals receive insufficient feedback to alter their self-meanings so as to align with their identity standards (Burke, 1991b). In having limited and inconsistent interaction with locals, refugees may not receive enough reactions to their processing of encountered *symbolic boundaries* – as well as attempts to incorporate or appropriate them into their own identity roles – to confidently express themselves.

In sum, besides stress stemming from trauma and economic instability (Huijts, Kleijn, van Emmerik, Noordhof & Smith, 2012; Bakker et al., 2014; 2017), refugees' immigration into a new society and/or culture may also damage their sense(s) of identity. Moreover, experiencing such acculturation makes it difficult for them to integrate into societies of the countries in which they seek asylum (Muller, 2008), something in which music may be of assistance.

Music, Migration and Refugees

As scholars like DeNora (2000; 2004) have shown, music provides individuals with material to engage with in emotional work, and in work on the self in the form of self-regulation and self-ordering. From reinforcing to adjusting emotional states, music supports people in enhancing and altering aspects of their self concepts, and can thus also play an important role in identity formation (DeNora, 2004; Lonsdale & North, 2011; Willis, 2014). Moreover, modern technologies have allowed music to assist in the formation of *virtual* (online) scenes, from which individuals may draw their senses of identity, with no necessary link to a particular place (Bennett & Peterson, 2004). It stands to argue, then, that – through modern communication technologies – music may assist Afghan refugees in the Netherlands in extending the *symbolic boundaries* typically drawn and upheld within their own country across its borders, providing them with a stronger sense of identity and self away from home.

Indeed, much of the aforementioned theory has been further corroborated – and expanded upon – by more specific research concerning the musical practices of migrants and refugees. Though much of this research focusses on musical expression, rather than consumption, it nonetheless holds relevant implications for the latter. After all, artistic production represents an arena where ethnic and cultural – and thereby *symbolic* – boundaries may be subjected to reimagination, whether through inclusion/exclusion, hybridity, or blurring (Kasinitz, 2014; Kasinitz & Martiniello, 2019). Moreover, music may be the most effective form of artistic production for reimagining such boundaries – especially in the context of migration – as Sardinha and Campos (2016) have pointed out that migrants and locals

often become familiar with each other's music long before they start to recognize and/or acknowledge other cultural norms and practices, including language. That being said, though much of the aforementioned theory focusses primarily on the personal experience(s) of individuals, authors like Kasinitz and Martiniello (2019) argue that a number of social phenomena and categories related to identity and migration may be better understood as lived experiences – thereby more pronouncedly linking such personal experiences to wider cultural and social phenomena – through the study of music at three levels: the *cultural level*; the *social level*, and; the *political level*.

The Cultural Level

At the cultural level, one finds that the music of different ethnic and cultural minorities has the power to enrich local cultures, providing majorities with a means of exploring connections with newcomers, thereby forming a base from which said newcomers may discover routes of inclusion, rather than exclusion (Kasinitz & Martiniello, 2019). While this especially holds for migrant musicians performing for diverse audiences in the cities or countries they have migrated to (Martiniello & Rea, 2014; Kasinitz & Martiniello, 2019; Sechehaye & Martiniello, 2019), non-performers may still reap the benefits, as the formation of a shared cultural taste within a cultural setting can form a bond between its insiders and outsiders (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Bennett, 1999; 2011; Willis, 2014). It may be noted that the spatial and/or cultural proximity of migrants' countries of origin to that of their host country may play an important role here: considering there are likely divisions within migrant communities (along e.g. ethnicity, social class, educational level, religion, dialect, language and more), those sections of a migrant community whose cultural norms are more closely aligned with those of their host culture, likely have less trouble connecting with them on a cultural level (Baily & Collyer, 2006), contributing to a version of *diaspora* – a space where "*new forms of belonging and otherness are appropriated and contested*" (Brah, 1996, p. 243) – working in the favor of both a countries' locals and its immigrants. In any case, the study of music at a cultural level helps to pinpoint how migrants' or refugees' identity loops may be broken, and thereby facilitates an understanding of the various symbolic boundaries drawn to include or exclude them on the basis of culture. As such, the cultural level provides not only a basis for understanding one of the possible sources of identity-related stress experienced by refugees, but also how music may help them resolve or deal with stress on that level, as well as their stance towards a place-dependent identity. One may, then, expect individuals to use music both as a means through which to reify their own cultural identities and values, and as an instrument through which to contest any *symbolic boundaries* encountered on the cultural level, so as to construct an appropriated Dutch identity.

The Social Level

In that sense, the cultural level is closely related to the social level, which concerns the social encounters between people of different origins within the same city or country (Vetrovec, 2007; Kasinitz & Martiniello, 2019). Here, again, music can play a crucial role in building bridges that facilitate such encounters, and can become a form of communication through which differing populations may become acquainted, and even begin to build a shared citizenship, based on partially overlapping identities (see Bennett, 1999; 2011). This is because – though fraught with diversity – music is a medium experienced by everyone in everyday life, often in a positive context (Vertovec, 2007; Willis, 2014; Kasinitz & Martiniello, 2019). While migrant communities may use music to maintain their cultural identity in a foreign environment (focusing inward), they may also use it to establish their group's identity within a new social setting, focusing outward (Baily & Collyer, 2006). Here, music takes on a role beyond its intrinsic cultural value to communicate this identity on a more social level. Music is, after all, a social medium: not only may it spark social encounters between migrants and locals, but it can bring together migrants of different origins within a new environment. De Martini Ugolotti (2020), for example, outlines how making music together provides (forced) immigrants of differing backgrounds with a social opportunity in which categories of national, religious, and cultural identification lose their centrality, revealing the more general, social circumstances of resettlement faced by immigrants and refugees, free of the cultural entanglements and connotations often studied in such contexts (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016; De Martini Ugolotti, 2020). Though this study focusses on the act of making music, listening may have similar outcomes for different groups of migrants and locals alike, considering the strong emotional connotations it may have for both its producers and listeners, which can be used to negotiate identity and sociality in various ways (Baily, 1994; DeNora, 2000; 2004; Baily & Collyer, 2006; Willis, 2014). Just as the cultural level, then, the social level helps to identify another way in which refugees' identity loops may be broken, the symbolic boundaries involved in this process, and other ways in which music may be used by individuals to resolve identity-related stress. Introducing their own culture to that of the Netherlands, then, may assist refugees in establishing an identity on the social level, providing them with a starting point from which to socialize amongst themselves, and with other migrant- and local communities, further contributing to an appropriated identity in the Netherlands.

The Political Level

Finally, in assisting in the formation of collective identities on the cultural and social levels, music can also play an important role in political mobilization on the political level (Kasinitz & Martiniello, 2019). It should be noted that (formal) immigrant political participation depends significantly on the political structure in place in a given society at a specific point in time, the consequences of which may lead to

a number of different ways in which immigrants may use music as a form of political expression (Martiniello, 2006). Music, then provides an avenue for both implicit and explicit political participation, as it can act as both a substitute for, and complementary to, conventional forms for political expression (Martiniello & Lafleur, 2008). Mattern (1998) outlines three types of political action in popular music, which Martiniello and Lafleur (2008) argue may also be adopted by immigrants in their own political expression: *confrontational political action*; *deliberative political action*, and; *pragmatic political action*. Confrontational political action is that which uses music as a practice of resistance, which may result in various positive outcomes – e.g. placing an issue on the political agenda, attracting minority members to political participation, and accelerating policy outcomes – as well as various negative outcomes, such as: the rigidification of the positions of those in power, the framing of politics as two opposing forces which may eradicate intra-group differences and homogenize both oppressors and the oppressed, and the dismissal of fluidity between groups which makes negotiation impossible (Mattern, 1998; Martiniello & Lafleur, 2008; Martiniello, 2019). Deliberative political action, then, stems from the recognition of both intra-group differences and inter-group similarities, and takes place in the form of minority groups using music to deliberate collective identities or negotiate mutual relations with other groups (Mattern, 1998; Martiniello & Lafleur, 2008; Martiniello, 2019). Lastly, pragmatic political action stems from shared political interests: here, groups may promote their awareness of shared political interests through music, hoping to stimulate collaborative efforts in pursuit of those interests (Mattern, 1998; Martiniello & Lafleur, 2008; Martiniello, 2019). Just as the cultural- and social levels, the political level may, then, represent another source of identity-stress experienced by refugees, as well as how music may assist individuals in resolving it. As the identity work outlined above progresses, individuals may become more acquainted with political affairs, both in the Netherlands and in their home-countries, and adopt music as a tool to participate in that arena, though it remains uncertain in what form this may be.

The Individual Level

In addition to these three levels, I propose that a fourth may also benefit the study of various social phenomena and categories concerning identity and migration in relation to music: the *individual level*. The strong emotional connotations that people experience in music do not only assist in negotiating identity, but hold the potential for therapeutic possibilities (Baily, 1994; DeNora, 2000; 2004; Baily & Collyer, 2006). De Martini Ugolotti (2020), for example, outlines how music sessions held with migrants from differing ethnic backgrounds – besides acting as a social distraction – also work to interrupt the affective politics of asylum: making music together, then, provides (forced) migrants with an opportunity to step out of the isolation, boredom, suspense and fear which they regularly are faced with throughout their asylum procedure, giving them a space to "play" (De Martini Ugolotti, 2020). As

such, this practice enables them to negotiate said feelings, distracting them from the materialization of the hierarchies of human worth they are systematically subjected to, i.e. the asylum procedures that keep them safe and alive, but in no state to pursue any other common activities of self-maintenance or pleasure (Mayblin, 2017; Mayblin, Wake & Kazemi, 2020). Though, again, this concerns the act of making music, rather than listening to it, the latter can certainly result in similar outcomes. Not only does listening to music provide individuals with an opportunity to tune out their everyday lives – however briefly – but it also assists in working through emotional setbacks or experiences and regulating one's mood (Dokter, 1998; DeNora, 2000; 2004; Lonsdale & North, 2011; Baily & Collyer, 2006). Especially amongst refugees – often having suffered through severe traumatic experiences – the Western phenomenon of music therapy, which utilizes music as an emotional crutch to help patients work through such traumas, demonstrates its therapeutic potential (Dokter, 1998; Baily & Collyer, 2006). This is important, as such traumas can have serious implications for individuals' identity formation, or otherwise add to the stress experienced during an interruption of their identity process (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Burke & Tully, 1977; Burke, 1991a; 1991b; Muldoon, Haslam, Haslam, Cruwys, Kearns & Jetten, 2019). Emotional work done on the individual level, then, may assist not only in recovery from past traumas, but in relieving more personal identity-related stress, allowing for more focus on that which is experienced in relation to larger groups, as in the processes outlined under the previous three levels.

These four levels, then, present four different sources of identity-stress that refugees may encounter throughout their asylum procedure, and how music may contribute to altering or regulating said stress. A typology thus emerges in which the former three levels confront individuals with various symbolic boundaries to overcome, as well as a number of music-related social processes that may assist in this, some of which are shared among the three levels. The latter, then, focusses more on internal stress, and thereby entails individual processes which may directly or indirectly influence the social processes on the former three levels. This typological structure, then, formed the starting point for this research.

Research Design

Focusing on *how* certain social processes take place – i.e. how young Afghan refugees in the Netherlands may listen to music in order to reify an identity, and thereby feel more at home in the Netherlands – the questions posed in this study take the form of process questions, which the open-ended, inductive approach provided by qualitative methods are best suited to answer (Maxwell, 2005). Rather than inspecting direct relations between the concepts of identity, music and place, this study is concerned with the cultural and social processes involved in said relations, which are best analyzed – and whose inherent complexities are best retained – through qualitative research methods (Maxwell,

2005; O-Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). The perceptions concerning these processes held by individuals involved in them, then, provided valuable insight in understanding the studied phenomenon. As such, the theories and perceptions held by the participants themselves in this study were considered as being of utmost importance: not only did those being studied have far more experience with – and knowledge of – the topic of study than the researcher, providing essential insights into the processes taking place, but their perceptions also inform their very actions, and thereby the expression of said cultural and social processes (Blumer, 1969; Menzel, 1978; Maxwell, 2005). Accordingly, the methods applied in this research took the form of interviews, based on participants' favourite music.

These were applied to perform a case study of how young, male Afghan refugees in the Netherlands may consume music to feel at home, and either reify their Afghan identity, or construct an (appropriated) Dutch one. The study of one specific case implies results are not generalisable, but they will be able to inform future research with similar focus (Geertz, 1973; O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). Moreover, the examination of one specific case allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the studied processes and, thereby, the complex meanings that participants attributed to relevant phenomena (Maxwell, 2005; O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). Interviews were held over the course of 3 weeks with 15 male Afghan refugees living either in Arnhem or Nijmegen, ranging in age from 18 to 27. An anonymized overview of each participant can be found under *Appendix I*. Each interview was held in Dutch, and lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour. Interviewees were asked to share their favourite music, which formed the starting point for the interview itself: each song was played and followed up by a number of questions aiming to ascertain whether interviewees' fondness for said songs could be linked to any of the four levels outlined above – i.e. the *cultural-*, *social-*, *political-* or *individual level* – thereby also investigating how said songs may help them manoeuvre any symbolic boundaries faced in the Netherlands, or how they may be involved in their identity process more generally. Additionally, interviewees were asked about music they had heard since arriving in the Netherlands which they do not enjoy, and asked similar questions to ascertain what levels may or may not further assist in their settling in the Netherlands. All questions were formulated with care, so as to avoid any misunderstandings. Not only did the topic of music form the basis of this study, but – as I was informed by two personal contacts (both Afghan refugees) – it is a passion of many Afghan refugees, which made it a non-invasive topic they were delighted to share with an interested 'outsider', resulting in a more comfortable interview environment for both interviewer and interviewee.

Participants were reached through said personal (Afghan) contacts and two personal contacts within the staff of the Arnhem branch of *VluchtelingenWerk Nederland*, where many Afghan refugees are placed upon entering the Netherlands (Hessels & Wassie, 2004). As suggested by the researcher's Afghan contacts, participants were offered a 'music swap' with the researcher, who brought some of

their own favourite music to the interview to share with them as a cultural exchange. A stratified sample of participants were selected based on their point within the asylum procedure – with six participants who had not yet received their asylum, and the remaining being in possession of their asylum for varying lengths of time, so as to ascertain how this may have an influence on the relevant phenomena – and on age: all participants interviewed were between the ages of 19 and 27, as the Netherlands has seen a spike in the influx of refugees within this age category in recent years (van Wieringen & Roelants, 2016), and individuals from this age category may be especially predisposed to identity- and acculturation-induced stress (Liebkind, 1993; 1996; Hyman & Beiser, 2000). Participants were permitted to withdraw from the research at any time (including after the interviews had taken place). Audio recordings and notes documented the interviews, which were held at a location chosen by interviewees so as to ensure their comfort, and took the form of unstructured conversations, with open-ended questions, thereby reducing the superficial setting that classic interviews may impose on participants (Maxwell, 2005; Cerwonka & Malkki, 2008). Finally, interviews were transcribed, anonymized and — together with notes taken during the interviews — examined through thematic analysis, which facilitates the recognition of patterns and the development of themes that may form the basis of subsequent findings and results (Aronson, 1995). The coding tree used to examine said findings can be found under *Appendix II*.

Findings

The following overview of the main research findings and their discussion will be tackled thematically, reviewing a number of discussed topics relevant to the research questions, and outlining the various perspectives shared by the participants. First, the main sources of stress experienced by participants as a result of their immigration will be outlined. Next, the role that music can play in relieving this stress will be briefly examined, followed by a more in-depth discussion that also considers the process in relation to participants' perceived cultural and social identities, through the four levels outlined earlier: *the individual level*; *the social level*; *the cultural level*, and; *the political level*. Finally, a section discussing some varying perceptions expressed by participants will describe how the role of music in relieving stress may differ throughout the course of refugees' asylum procedures.

Stress Sources

Procedure

The vast majority of the stress experienced by participants as a result of their immigration stems directly from the long procedure-times they face upon entering the Netherlands. Even participants who acquired their asylum several years prior recollected the stress induced by waiting to hear whether

they would be allowed to stay, and the helplessness that accompanied those circumstances. As Participant M described:

> "[…] *It's more because of the time that you have to wait, there's no end in sight. You have to wait, and you just hear, 'hey, you have to wait, still', '6 more months', '1 more year', '2 more years.'*"

A large part of this stress is related not only to not knowing whether they will actually receive their asylum in the Netherlands, but also with the fact that they cannot see their family until they have, as they otherwise risk the immediate rejection of their appeal altogether. Participant N expressed the importance of family to his culture, further demonstrating the stress this separation can cause:

> "*That bond that we [Afghan families] have… you may not have it. And I found that myself here, I interacted with the Dutch people* […] *and this is difficult, because, yes, for me it is now* […] *almost 6 years that I left home* [...] *and now I don't know how long I have to wait... and that, the stress... you have that anyway... and it can't go away with anything*."

This helplessness experienced by participants suggests the presence of Burke's (1991a; 1991b) first *broken identity loop* type, in which individuals feel unable to influence their environment. Though perhaps not described as a matter of identity, participants' comparison of family life in Afghanistan to that in the Netherlands illustrates how their helplessness in that matter may alienate them, an experience typically associated with the loss of identity (Burke & Tully, 1977; Stein, Vidich & White, 1960). It may be noted, however, that, in this particular case, the boundaries experienced by participants are far from symbolic, but are formed by the distance between them, and the laws set in place by the Dutch government.

Culture

Though it was often downplayed by participants, adapting to the Dutch culture remains a major of stress, which starts primarily with learning the language. Needless to say, until the language is grasped, thorough integration into the Dutch culture is significantly more difficult, and participants well versed in Dutch noted how speaking the language helped them understand other aspects of the culture, such as how people interact beyond speech. Participant C explained:

> "[…] *Actually, if you can't speak Dutch well, then you really can't do anything. The culture, everything! Everything you could otherwise normally say, or give an opinion on, you can't understand. That's why a lot of Afghan people have a problem with the language, not with the* [Dutch] *people* […]."

Indeed, those more acquainted with the Dutch language expressed a strong appreciation for the culture more generally, even for those aspects which may be incommensurable with their own culture, demonstrating rather *flexible* identity systems (Burke, 1991b). Participant M, for example, proclaimed:

> "*I like this better. I like what you* [Dutch people] *do, I really like that better.* [It's] *a better way to live together* […] *than in Afghanistan. I like when someone just tells me* […] *directly, 'hey, you made a mistake here* […]*, you can do better.' Do you understand? I think that's better than people who won't say anything to me because they want to be respectful.*"

While similar ideas were expressed by participants less confident about their Dutch as well, just as many conceded to having difficulties with some aspects of the Dutch culture. In some cases, this was related to religion – though few respondents remained deeply religious after migrating – but most prevalent was participants' difficulty adjusting to the assertive mindset they felt was required of individuals in the Netherlands. Participant E admitted:

> "*Oh yes, I find that* [standing up for yourself*] difficult. That's also because of the language, but it is difficult, yes.*"

Despite participants' openness to Dutch culture and willingness to integrate, then, Burke's (1991b) second type of *broken identity loop* persists: both in terms of language and norms/mores, the culture participants face in the Netherlands confronts them with meanings and situations they are at times unable to perceive or understand, which can cause severe distress (Burke & Tully, 1977; Burke, 1991b). Especially language, then, constitutes a shared practice which works strongly to include or exclude groups of people, whether or not those speaking it intend for it to as such, and is therefore an effective form of Lamont and Molnár's (2002) *symbolic boundaries*. Similarly, norms and mores may act as either shared practices or ideas, with a comparably effective – though subtle – result of either inclusion or exclusion. These effects are likely further amplified by individuals' limited opportunities to practice incorporating said practices into their own daily rituals, rendering their performance of perceived and adopted or appropriated Dutch behavior and language *episodic* in nature (Burke, 1991b).

Though less pervasive, some participants also experienced what Burke (1991b) refers to as *interference between identity systems*, in attempting to reconcile their own cultural norms with those of the Netherlands. While in some cases – as demonstrated by Participant M's proclamation above – this may not have resulted in any interference, examples related especially to religion demonstrated how two different sets of *symbolic boundaries* may clash, even long after an individual has settled in the Netherlands. As Participant D explained:

"*To be honest, if you want to be friends with Dutch people, you have to drink beer, or smoke a joint, or go out* [laughs]. [As a Muslim] *I don't do these things, so they automatically distance themselves from me, or I distance myself, do you understand?*"

The Role of Music

In general, then, participants saw music as a tool which can help to deal with the stress they experienced in relation to these inconsistencies between their own culture and that of the Netherlands, and especially in relation to their procedure, though there was some disagreement as to how large a part music played. In casting music in this role, however, participants tended towards music in their own mother-tongue – i.e. mostly Afghan or Iranian music, Dari (Afghan) being a dialect of Farsi (Iranian) – with a handful of participants more versed in Dutch or English also utilizing music in those languages in a similar manner, though to a lesser extent. As Participant C plainly put it:

"*If you can understand Dutch* […] *then you can also listen to Dutch music, or English. It doesn't matter.* […] *And I've listened to it once or twice, but mostly to music of my own culture, because if you have stress or something that you want to get rid of, then you want it gone right away.*"

Understandably, when faced with a stressful situation, individuals preferred to relieve that stress through as little effort as possible. Indeed, music which is easily understood, then, may provide them with something of which the meanings are clear to them – and, thereby, a plausible means through which to influence their environment – affording them the experience of a set of symbols and ideas they cannot be excluded from, which temporarily work to reboot the *broken identity loop* types they may otherwise encounter.

As Participant C's previous quote demonstrates, music is considered as an important tool through which to relieve stress, and this is an opinion shared by many participants, though some also noted how it does not provide them with a practical solution to their situation, and therefore their experienced stress. Participant B, for example, explained:

"*Everyone does* [listen to music] *to just relieve stress, or to get it out of your head. Yes, sometimes it works, but usually not. For myself,* […] *I don't think listening to music or watching TV will help me completely, because that* [stress] *stays in your head, and you have to do something practical, or something fun.*"

The exact applications of music as a stress reliever, therefore, vary, in terms of individuals' goals and whether it takes a central or peripheral role. Participant A for example, notes its emotional and relaxing qualities:

> "*I just listen to music to work through my emotions, yes, and also to relax. And sometimes I just want to unwind.*"

Whereas Participant L focusses more on its ability to energize or distract him:

> "*When I'm happy I listen to music, but also when I'm sad. Then some music can give you energy.* […] *But it also stops your brain, so you forget what's in the back of your mind.*"

All functional elements of music in relation to its role as a stress-reliever, as indicated by the participants, have previously been discussed in detail by DeNora (2000; 2004), as well as other scholarly work on "Uses and Gratifications" theory (e.g. Roberts & Christenson, 1998; Lonsdale & North, 2011). While, as outlined previously, the mentioned applications – i.e. emotional work, relaxation, energizing, and distraction – all may assist in temporarily rebooting Burke's (1991a; 1991b; Burke & Tully, 1977) *broken identity loops* by providing individuals with a set of symbols and ideas to apply to these applications, it remains unclear in how far music may assist in reconciling the *interference between identity systems* occasionally experienced.

The Four Levels

The Individual Level

With very few exceptions, almost every participant had a personal connection to music, meaning it not only plays a role in their social lives, but when they are alone. Generally, then, participants outlined two modes of solitary musical consumption: *active*, whereby individuals listen to music intently to work through emotions or relax, and; *passive*, whereby individuals listened to music without focus – often while engaging in other activities – in order to relax or distract them. As previously mentioned, language continues to play an important role here as well, as participants expressed a strong preference for understanding what is being said, and not wanting to invest too much effort in order to do so. As Participant N explained:

> "*I also listen to Pashto music, Dari, because I speak Dari, Farsi, Pashto… Urdu Music, because I understand this. And Dutch music…* […] *Sometimes Andre Hazes, like that old music. But not new music… not rap.* […] *I like rap! But if you don't understand it, then it makes no sense.*"

The topics covered in the lyrics of said music, then, was important to participants, and while they varied significantly, the most frequently named themes included *love*, *loss, life* (more generally), *motivation*, and *war*, the latter of which will be discussed further under the *political level*. Participant I elaborated on this:

> "*I think that* [the subject matter of the music] *has to do with my mood, you know? What mood I'm in. Now and then, for example, when I think about my mother, then I listen to that kind of music, you know?* […] *Or, for example, heartbreak, or I lose a friend* […] *then I listen to that. But there are also songs that I listen to that* […] *are about that you have to be strong in your life, what you have to do, you shouldn't be weak.*"

This provides some insight into the reflexive nature of the previously outlined mechanism through which individuals may temporarily reboot or override Burke's (1991a; 1991b; Burke & Tully, 1977) *broken identity loops*. Not only may music provide individuals with more inclusive shared symbols and ideas through which to understand their (social and cultural) surroundings, but the specific topics discussed within said music has the potential to prolong the relief that engagement with said symbols and ideas offers. In personally identifying with topics like *love* and *loss* – thereby engaging in emotional work – or actively seeking out music discussing certain outlooks on life or offering motivational stimulation, individuals may enhance and alter aspects of their self concepts through self-regulation and self-ordering (DeNora, 200; 2004), which could have a long-lasting impact on the way they view their situation(s) as refugees in the Netherlands, and thereby the stress said situation(s) entail.

The Social Level

In general, participants tended to downplay the importance of music in their social lives, primarily due to their musical tastes rarely overlapping exactly with those of their social contacts. As a result, the picture painted mirrors work by e.g. Bull (2005), where music becomes more of a background accompaniment to social gatherings, complementing other activities aiming at distracting participants from the stress they experience, thereby assisting in: group relaxation, and; the enhancement of the group's mood as suited to the situation. Participant M provided the example:

> "*Yes, music does help* [as distraction]*, it does create a good atmosphere* […] [We] *just sit, play cards, yes.* […] *Just for a moment, just to have fun.*"

The role that music takes on in a social setting, then, closely resembles that which it takes on an *individual* level, though it takes a far less central position. Whereas the solitary consumption of music may allow individuals to make use of the shared symbols and ideas provided to them by said music in order to work on their self concepts (DeNora; 2000; 2004), in a social setting its role is generally limited to individuals sharing specific meanings (through i.e. a shared language or musical taste), which assist in temporarily 'fixing' a *broken identity loop* so as to allow all those present to engage in other stress-relieving activities.

While this view was shared by the majority of participants, in some cases music was described as enhancing certain important friendships, where a group of friends became closer due to a shared

musical taste, though music only took this role after a strong friendship had already formed. As Participant A explained:

> "*Yes, that* [music] *can strengthen* [our friendship]*, because if we like some music, then we sing together, me, for example, with another boy, we always sing together.* […] *Yeah, that makes our friendship better, yes.*"

In such cases, individuals' reflexivity in their identity-process can be seen in their use of music as a means through which to alter said identity process, rather than letting their musical taste be a factor that determines its nature. Participant A's use of music to strengthen one of his friendships, for example, illustrates how music may assist individuals in establishing their social identity in a new social setting (Baily, 1994; Baily & Collyer, 2006): in participating in the activity of singing together, a new shared practice is constructed, enabling those involved to create an environment in which they both understand and have an influence over the meanings relevant to their situation (Burke & Tully, 1977; Burke, 1991a; 1991b; Lamont & Molnár, 2002).

The Cultural Level

Despite the fact that music tends to play a more peripheral role in social settings, it is on the *cultural level* that the importance of this social role becomes clear. Though participants persistently claimed that their preference for understanding lyrics in music was their main reason for listening primarily to music in their mother-tongue, in social situations this resulted in reconciliation with their own culture. As Participant M put it:

> "*But every now and then, when I'm with the* [Afghan] *boys, or something, we all sit down and listen* [Afghan music]. […] *When I am with them, then I immediately feel like I am with my own people again.*"

Here, these *episodic* (Burke, 1991b) interactions with others from their own country provides individuals with a space in which to sufficiently reconnect with their own culture, where music takes on a shared meaning it is unable to take on outside of that specific social group. As such, music can be used to focus inwards on groups of individuals' cultural identity (Baily & Collyer, 2006), providing them with a space void of the social distinctions and the symbolic boundaries they may encounter on a daily basis in the Netherlands (Bourdieu, 1984; Lamont & Molnár, 2002;).

In contrast, participants who also listened to Dutch or Western music could not describe a similar identification to the corresponding culture(s) more generally, but rather framed their consumption of the music as providing them with another means to understanding the culture on its most basic level: through its language. Participant N, for example, expressed his fondness for Andre Hazes:

> "*Because Andre Hazes, what he says, he uses those words very well. I can understand them very well, and also learn from him! But a lot of Dutch singers* […], *it's hard for me to understand all the lyrics, what they mean.* […] *But form Andre Hazes, I can read all the text. I can understand what he is saying.*"

As has been made clear, participants considered the Dutch language to be one of the major obstacles in their process of integration, and though general consensus does not indicate a deep connection with the local culture, their use of music to attempt to overcome this obstacle demonstrates a dedication to changing that. Listening to Dutch music to better understand the Dutch language, then, provides individuals with a means through which to overcome a symbolic boundary on two levels, fixing a *broken identity* loop not only through attaining insight into meanings previously unclear to them, but through understanding the use of said meanings in a more concrete form of culture, thereby gaining access to a wider array of shared practices and ideas (Burke, 1991a; 1991b; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Indeed, this is something participants were acutely aware of, and it is therefore no surprise that even those less well versed in Dutch, such as Participant L, actively sought out Dutch music:

> "*I also listen to music in Dutch, because, for example, I may not understand everything, but I do understand 20% of what is said.* […] *I also have to feel more and more Dutch, and, also, now I actually always say that the Netherlands is my first country, because Afghanistan… yeah, I was only born there.*"

This perceived language barrier, then, does not only go one way, as many participants acknowledged the challenges Dutch people may, alternatively, face in acquiring a taste for Afghan music, though the majority, like Participant A, were convinced these could be overcome without learning the language:

> "*Yes, Of course* [Dutch people can enjoy Afghan Music]. […] *Without understanding, yes, it's a bit difficult. For example, If I don't understand the music of another country, I can join in with the rhythm or something, but not with what is sung. If you don't understand that, yes, that's annoying, but if you have a good rhythm or something, that's also nice!*"

Furthermore, many participants expressed glee with the thought of hearing Afghan music on Dutch radio, endorsing Brah's (1996) notion of *diaspora* in which migrant communities may appropriate and contest new forms of belonging. Individuals' willingness to adopt the Dutch language – and, with it, a number of other shared practices and ideas – then, does not merely suggest their willingness to assimilate into the Dutch culture. Rather, it complements an openness to *appropriating* the symbolic boundaries set in place, as is further demonstrated by their inclination to introduce their own culture (i.e. music) into that of the Netherlands, which may work to construct new shared meanings and ideas they would not struggle to understand (Burke, 1991a; 1991b; Lamont & Molnár, 2002).

The Political Level

The vast majority of participants dismissed politics as an important aspect contributing to their musical taste. Though some, like Participant F admitted some of the music they enjoy includes political messages, it serves them more as a means of grieving or reliving their past, thereby engaging in emotional work:

> "*Some singers also sing about how everyone has destroyed our country* [Afghanistan]*, and that everyone has moved away.* […] *Some also sing about refugees, and I can really understand that music.* […] [It helps to] *unwind… it makes me sad, but also a little relaxed.*"

A select few went so far as to say that they find political messages in music important in that they voice the 'truth', though none of these are politically active themselves, nor do they actively try to reinforce their own political views through such music. Participant O for example, explained:

> "*I listen carefully to the ideas of the singer, how they view Afghanistan.* […] [Growing up] *in Afghanistan, you learn to search* […]*: 'who did this? How? Why has there been a war for so long? Who is helping and who isn't?*"

The absence of a clear political functionality of music to participants – which stands in contrast to more general theory concerning music and migration (e.g. Martiniello, 2006; Martiniello & Lafleur, 2008; Kasinitz & Martiniello, 2019) – perhaps stems from other traumas, as many participants in fact expressed a dislike towards politics in general. Additionally, politics may represent to them another type of symbolic boundary more difficult to overcome, further contributing to the first type of *broken identity loop* which suppresses individuals' perceived ability to influence their surroundings (Burke, 1991a; 1991b; Lamont & Molnár, 2002): Indeed, in justifying their political inactivity, many participants also expressed an inability to change anything in the political sphere anyhow. Besides this, many participants viewed the Netherlands as a very free country, with – in comparison to Afghanistan, whose political landscape is far more difficult to influence, especially from afar – far less in need of change in political terms, besides, perhaps, the long procedure times they all face(d).

Variation over Time

Origin of Music

From the fifteen interviews held with individuals at different stages of their asylum procedure, the beginnings of several patterns in musical consumption can be seen, the most prominent of which entails the origin of the music listened to. Participants who had not been in the Netherlands for too long, and therefore also had more trouble with the language, tended to stick to music in their own mother-tongue, for reasons already discussed. The more acquainted participants became with the language, then, the more comfortable they became listening to Dutch music, as well as English, for

those who learned to speak it as well. The three participants who had received their asylum and had been living in the Netherlands for over seven years, however, recollected going through this same process, but had lately turned back to listening primarily to music from their own culture.

It stands to argue, then, that, in the course of their procedure, individuals are able to overcome various symbolic boundaries they face upon entering the Netherlands: in this process, learning the Dutch language – and consuming the music that this makes accessible to them – assists in 'fixing' or altering their *identity loops* (Burke & Tully, 1977; Burke, 1991a; 1991b). However, once they become more acquainted with the Dutch culture more generally, and the stress from their procedures decline, their *habitus*' (Bourdieu, 1984) may persevere without inducing the role conflict or -strain that characterize an *interference between identity systems* (Marks 1977; Burke, 1991b; Creary & Gordon, 2016), allowing them to return to the music they have long-since identified with.

Lyrical Subject

The lyrical content that participants appreciated also tended to change over the course of their procedure. Individuals recalled listening more to music that addressed Afghanistan and its state of war when first arriving in the Netherlands, though the longer they were here, the more these subjects tended to upset them. The more they adjusted to life in the Netherlands, then, the more they tried to shut out (only) those aspects of their past that caused them discomfort. As Participant I explained:

> "[…] *At the beginning I listened to a lot of those kind of songs, about being sad, music for when you're lonely, or about how you're an immigrant, and your home country has been destroyed.* […] *But now, for example, I'm not there anymore. Now, when I check my playlist, there is all kinds of music… from sad to happy songs, I really listen to everything.*"

When first moving to the Netherlands, then, individuals' identities remain entangled with the war, but as they begin to settle, they are confronted with the *broken identity loops* or the *interference between identity systems* that adjusting to the new culture inflicts (Burke & Tully, 1977; Burke, 1991a; 1991b). As they focus on stabilizing these, they turn their attention to other topics that assist in reaffirming their Afghan identities and/or constructing an appropriated Dutch identity, as discussion concerning the *individual*- and *cultural levels* has demonstrated. Though music may play a limited part in this for some individuals, perhaps this focus is reflected in their preferred lyrical subjects.

Active vs. Passive Listening

Besides the origin and topic of music, individuals' listening modes also shifted over the course of their procedure, in that they gradually started favoring passive listening. Especially upon arrival individuals listened primarily actively, as music provided them with an immediate and familiar distraction, but as

they became more acquainted with the culture, and started building their lives after receiving asylum, many, like Participant O, expressed a scarcity in time for such activities, especially in a social context:

> "[…] *During my first few years [in the Netherlands], then I had more contact with friends, with Afghan friends,* […] *and we listened to lots of Afghan music, and Dutch music, too.* […] *But since 2 or 3 years I don't have that much contact with people anymore, because we're all too busy.*"

Perhaps this also signifies individuals' gradual adjustment to their lives in the Netherlands: the more their newly appropriated identities assist them in maneuvering the various symbolic boundaries encountered, obsolescing constant maintenance of their *identity systems*, the less actively they turn back to music to play this part (Burke & Tully, 1977; Burke, 1991a; 1991b; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). While music may have provided them with a means for emotional work and exploring or communicating their cultural and social identities at first (DeNora, 2000; 2004; Willis, 2014), acceptance of and commitment to their lives as fully integrated citizens may see it playing a less significant role.

It should be noted, here, that this process tends to occur less consistently than the previous two, as certain individuals – especially those who did not find music to provide them with a concrete enough solution to their procedure- and culture-related stress – rarely listened to music actively to begin with. On the other hand, for those considering themselves music 'buffs', music played a constantly important role, both actively and passively, throughout their procedure.

Conclusion and Discussion

Participants, thus, use music as a means through which to navigate the various symbolic boundaries encountered upon entering a new country, and ease the identity-related stress these entail. While music provides them with a tool through which to construct an appropriated Dutch Identity, it also works to reify their initial Afghan identities at different points throughout their asylum procedure. The stress experienced by Afghan refugees in the Netherlands stems primarily from two sources: the asylum procedures they go through in which they have no agency themselves, and which simultaneously keep them from seeing their family abroad, and; adapting to the Dutch language and culture more generally. To some, then, music provides an avenue through which to distract themselves and do emotional work, and in some cases even contributes directly to their integration. Though few respondents acknowledged music as playing a direct role in constructing or maintaining their social and cultural identities (anew) in the Netherlands, and it indeed may not be central to this process, it certainly works as a supporting mechanism: in providing individuals with a space which encourages them to decipher meanings unclear to them – or one where this is altogether unnecessary – listening to music gives individuals a sense of agency which assists in the adaption to a new culture and people, as well as

maintaining a connection with those of their home-country. As such, it also provides a framework through which to contest meanings and symbols as seen fit, fostering an appropriative form of integration, rather than hard assimilation. The centrality of music to these processes – though never experienced as such – diminishes over the course of individuals' asylum procedures as their integration furthers. Focus, then, firsts shifts from maintaining an Afghan social and cultural identity to incorporating an appropriated Dutch one into it – which is reflected in both the lyrical subject of music listened to, as well as the origin of said music, over time – ending with a passive listening mode directed at Afghan music, following the largest part of their integration process.

Approaching the studied phenomena through the symbolic boundaries experienced by individuals has allowed for a more nuanced recontextualization of Burke's (1991a; 1991b; Burke & Tully, 1977) *Identity Process* in which individuals are accredited with more agency, thereby acknowledging its social and cultural dimensions. The study of said process in the context of migration has clarified the centrality of language to identity work more generally, and demonstrated the value of Kasinitz and Martiniello's (2019) framework as a typological starting point from which to study not just the production, but the consumption of music among migrant communities. The only level of said framework whose examination's contribution fell short of its theoretical potential was the *political level*: though the apparent absence of its importance to participants suggested politics to represent a symbolic boundary in and of itself more difficult to overcome, a wider participant sample – including individuals even farther in their asylum and integration processes – may have generated a more thorough understanding of the level's place in the studied phenomena. Additionally, the focus on male refugees implies all findings are gender-specific, and though the majority of refugees put through the long procedure times examined are typically male (van Wieringen & Roelants, 2016; Saeys et al., 2018), the inclusion of female experiences may highlight other dimensions of the studied process(es). The integration into a culture more supporting of women's rights, for example, may induce gender-related stress in females not experienced by males, stemming from not only the adjustment to new gender roles, but also repeated confrontation with said adjustment in socialization with fellow (male) refugees. It remains unclear, then, the role that music may play in this, but research may also compare how these processes differ between females experiencing the long procedure times focused on in the present study, and the shorter procedures faced when following male partners or family members having previously already completed said long procedures. Besides this, the combination of qualitative methods and – in hindsight – limited width in participant sample proved less suited to uncovering how individuals' relation to their identities may differ over the course of their asylum procedure. Future research, thus, could explore these limitations not only by expanding the participant sample, but by studying the phenomenon through quantitative methods, which would be more suited to uncovering

the variation of said phenomenon over time, as well as more accurately corroborating the overall findings of this research. Alternatively, focusing more directly on the role that language plays in immigrants' integration processes – exploring its place in identity work as opposed to its more obvious communicative function – may further contribute to studies concerning e.g. Brah's (1996) conceptualization of *diaspora*. Nonetheless, the present research paints a picture of the value of music to migrant communities in their integration processes – especially in Europe, where refugee numbers have been constantly rising for the past years (van Houtum & Lucassen, 2016; Bakker, Dagevos & Engbersen, 2017; Polman, 2019) – and may thus inform policy and funding procedures aimed at accommodating and socializing said communities.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Participant Overview

Participant	Age	Time in the Netherlands	Asylum
A	21	4,5 years	No
B	22	4,5 years	No
C	27	7,5 Years	Yes
D	27	20 Years	Yes
E	22	5 Years	Yes
F	21	5 Years	Yes
G	19	4 Years	No
H	21	5 Years	Yes
I	21	11 Years	Yes
J	21	5 Years	No
K	21	4 Years	Yes
L	21	5 Years	Yes
M	20	5 Years	No
N	21	5 Years	No
O	27	10 Years	Yes

Appendix II: Coding Tree