

Place attachment: Syrian male refugee experiences in the Northern Netherlands

The opportunities for and obstacles to placemaking in an unfamiliar environment

Master thesis, October 21th 2016

Rik Huizinga
S1646443
r.p.huizinga@student.rug.nl

Supervisor: Bettina van Hoven

Master Cultural Geography
Faculty of Spatial Science
University of Groningen

no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well

your neighbours running faster than you
breath bloody in their throats
the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory
is holding a gun bigger than his body
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay.

Warsan Shire, "Home"

we came here to find refuge
they called us refugees
so we hid ourselves in their language
until we sounded just like them.
changed the way we dressed
to look just like them
made this our home
until we lived just like them.

J.J. Bola, "Refuge"

ABSTRACT

Being a refugee means to turn away from the safety of your home environment. In a new host society the refugee is confronted with an unfamiliar physical and social setting which can make him or her feel out of place. This influences wellbeing, identity and daily routines. Every day a refugee comes across new places that are imbued with existing power structures, traditions and cultural norms and values. A refugee who is not able to read these 'texts' might feel different, excluded or discriminated.

The centre of interest in this research is placemaking behaviour of Syrian male refugees in the Northern part of the Netherlands. Spatial dispersal policy in the Netherlands randomly allocates refugees along municipalities according to their population size. Refugees thus have no choice in the matter as they are given a house. From that moment on they are granted Dutch language courses and are expected to put in effort to integrate in Dutch society.

To stimulate the integration process of a refugee it is important to gain insight in the interaction between people and place. This can be explained by the concept of place attachment. Place attachment is the emotional connection between people and intimate and/or important places. Place attachment can develop in variety of ways which makes the process of placemaking complex. This study focuses on three different dimensions. Who is attached? To what kind of place is a person attached? What is the role of psychological processes such as affect, cognition and behaviour?

In order to understand how Syrian male refugees develop emotional bonds with places, a qualitative, exploratory approach is used to get an insiders perspective on the views, experiences and emotions of the participants. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted to generate in-depth data of how places in an unfamiliar environment become intimate and meaningful places. Furthermore walking interviews were undertaken to provide a rich illustration of the daily routines of the participants in their home neighbourhood. Ten Syrian, male refugees participated in this research, all in possession of a temporary residence permit in the Netherlands and aged between twenty and thirty years old.

The findings in this study demonstrate the disruptive effect of processes of exclusion, discrimination and language barriers in developing place attachment. The data also suggests the essential role of the neighbourhood and the associated opportunities for informal social contact. The participants in this study emphasise the importance of making contact with locals as it enhances their wellbeing. Furthermore, strong community ties provide the refugees with chances to develop social capital and to stimulate a sense of belonging. In this study, participants with more local social contact displayed a greater sense of belonging and appeared to have stronger feelings of emotional attachment towards their home environment.

As a result of spatial dispersal policy, refugees can end up in rural and urban areas. The data illustrates the impact of this forced relocation. Refugees in a rural environment experience more exclusion as they have less opportunities to get into contact with locals. Different time geographies prevent this from happening. All participants display stronger feelings of place attachment towards urban areas.

Finally, homemaking processes were found to be an important aspect of developing place attachment. Coming to the Netherlands as refugees, the participants told they had arrived with little possessions. Without any material culture to remind them of "home", cooking food from "home" is a practice to feel connected to Syria. It evokes emotional reactions as memories from a happy past are being transferred to the present. It provides the participants with a feeling of belonging and therefore encourages the formation of a new identity in an unfamiliar host society. The behavioural routine that results out of these practices and rituals, make places as supermarkets and butchers meaningful and transforms a house into one's home.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	7
1.1	Syrian refugees in the Netherlands.....	7
1.2	Place attachment as an indicator of social integration.....	8
1.3	Scientific relevance.....	9
1.4	Research aim and research question	10
2.	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	12
2.1	Place attachment.....	12
2.2	Conceptual model	13
2.3	Feelings of Home.....	13
2.4	The person dimension of place attachment	14
2.5	The place dimension of place attachment.....	15
2.5.1	The social environment	16
2.5.2	The physical environment	18
2.6	The process dimension of place attachment	19
2.6.1	Emotional component.....	19
2.6.2	Cognitive component	19
2.6.3	Behavioural component.....	20
3.	METHODOLOGY.....	22
3.1	Qualitative approach.....	22
3.2	Method of data collection.....	23
3.2.1	In-depth interviews	23
3.2.2	Walking interviews	24
3.2.3	Recruiting procedure.....	25
3.2.4	Participants.....	26
3.3	Method of data analysis.....	27
3.4	Ethical considerations	28
3.4.1	Informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.....	28
3.4.2	Working with different cultures	29
3.4.3	Positionality of the researcher	30
4.	FINDINGS.....	31
4.1	Introduction.....	31
4.2	Weak ties in the neighbourhood.....	32
4.3	Rural and urban placemaking.....	37
4.4	Taste of home.....	42

5. CONCLUSION	46
6. FURTHER RESEARCH.....	49
REFERENCES	51
APPENDIX I Interview Guide	57
APPENDIX II Recruitment message VluchtelingenWerk and Humanitas Groningen.....	59
APPENDIX III Consent form.....	60
APPENDIX IV Codebook	61

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on Syrian refugees in the Northern part of the Netherlands and the ways in which they make sense of place in a new and unfamiliar environment. It explores the opportunities and limitations that arise during the process of placemaking taken from a Syrian perspective. Understanding where and in what way people interact with the physical and social environment surrounding them can lead to more efficient integration policies (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Nannestad et al., 2008). Platts-Fowler and Robinson (2015) add that often understanding of integration processes remains weak as the relevance of the local context to the social integration experience is overseen. The concept of place attachment can contribute to the understanding of place-based, social integration of refugees (Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Philips & Robinson, 2015). Place attachment can be defined as the emotional bond between people and their intimate places (Altman & Low, 1992; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Kohlbacher, 2015; Lewicka, 2011, Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

The introduction covers four main points that provide context for this study. To justify this research, paragraph 1.1 in this introduction discusses the societal relevance of doing research on Syrian refugees in the Netherlands. Paragraph 1.2 describes the importance of place attachment in the context of refugee integration. This illustrates how place attachment can be linked to different processes before zooming in on the concept itself in the theoretical framework (see chapter 2 Theoretical framework). Paragraph 1.3 elaborates on the contribution of this research to the contemporary body of literature concerning place attachment and the additional value of qualitative research towards existing research methods. Lastly, paragraph 1.4 presents the research questions and research aim that underlie and structure this research.

1.1 Syrian refugees in the Netherlands

Since the uprising of various Syrian militia groups against the authoritarian regime of president Assad in 2011, one third of the Syrian population have left their homes to find refuge and shelter in other parts of the world. Whilst the majority of Syrian refugees seek refuge in neighbouring countries as Libanon, Turkey or Jordan, 10 percent of the refugees have left the Middle-East to find safe haven in Europe (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016). So far 32.162 Syrian refugees have applied for asylum in the Netherlands since 2011 (IND, 2016). This suggests that relatively few Syrian refugees have been offered asylum in the Netherland. To compare, 32.162 is the exact same number of people worldwide that are displaced or forced to leave their homes every day (UNHCR, 2016). Despite the fact that only a small fraction of total Syrian refugees is accommodated in the Netherlands, managing the influx of refugees has been under attention in Dutch politics, newspapers and social media (Engbersen et al., 2015). Early discussions have been mostly about the reception, sheltering and distribution of refugees (Engbersen et al., 2015, Heck & Leijendekker, 2015). Now some politicians, media and Dutch citizens are addressing their concern about the long-term path of integration that needs to be covered (Terphuis, 2016).

This is also acknowledged in the publication “No Time To Lose” written by the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR). They focus on the refugees that have obtained a permit in the Netherlands and how to speed up their process of integration. At the moment one in three refugees with a status have paid jobs, whereas the rest is on social welfare. As a consequence human capital is going to waste and a redundantly high part of tax money is being spend on social welfare (Engbersen et al., 2015; Nannestad et al., 2008). As most of the people who have requested asylum in the Netherlands the last few years originate from Syria (IND, 2016; Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016), my research concentrates on Syrian refugees and male refugees in particular. This is a consequence of the fact that at this moment most Syrian refugees in the Netherlands are males (IND, 2016). This does not imply that Syrian male refugees are more important than female refugees or refugees from Eritrea, Somalia or Afghanistan for example. As different individuals and groups of people integrate in different ways along different trajectories at different speeds (Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015), further research will

be necessary to fully understand ethnic or cultural differences in integration processes (see also chapter 6 Further research).

One of the factors that has prevented ethnic minorities in the Netherlands from being fully integrated has been a lack of relevant social networks (Engbersen et al., 2015). As stated above, social networks and the neighbourhood are related in that sense that important social contacts are often found in the neighbourhood. Refugees are educated in the Dutch language and are also informed of Dutch history and culture by teachers (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016). They are expected to pass exams in both courses to become a Dutch citizen (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016). However, speaking fluent Dutch and being familiar with Dutch customs, norms and values are not learned in a classroom, but require active participation in Dutch society and thus informal social ties or small talk (Kohlbacher et al., 2015). Being surrounded by locals implicitly means that refugees are less dependent on family or strong ties (Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014). This might speed up the social integration process which would benefit Dutch society in the long term as well as the wellbeing of the refugees themselves (Engbersen et al., 2015). According to De Vroome et al. (2014) social integration is an important step towards finding work and participation in community life.

1.2 Place attachment as an indicator of social integration

Refugee integration is grounded and embodied in space and place (Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). The way how different dimensions of place interact generates individual integration outcomes (Philips & Robinson, 2015; Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). As a consequence many contemporary scholars emphasise the importance of bonding with places in relation to social integration in a host society (Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014; Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Philips & Robinson, 2015; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Similar to the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands have a spatial dispersal policy concerning the housing of refugees who have been granted a temporary permit to stay (Anderson, 2003; Larsen, 2011). Although formally these measures have been taken by the government to stimulate integration of refugees (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016), studies suggest this policy measure aims to prevent concentration in urban cores and to share the 'burden' (Anderson, 2003). The statement that quiet, peaceful rural areas are ideal for refugees to acclimatise to Dutch culture, is strongly opposed by other authors and newspapers that claim cities have a more suitable environment for refugees to get used to (van Gent, 2016; Larsen, 2011). They feel the multicultural atmosphere in larger cities in the Netherlands benefits intercultural contact as there is a more heterogeneous population (Klaver et al., 2014; Larsen, 2011).

As a result refugees do not get to choose where they live and are dispersed throughout the country whilst only direct family ties offer possibilities to live together (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016). According to Klaver et al. (2014), this policy should stimulate the integration process of refugees as they are expected to immerse in the host society to get to know the surroundings, culture and social environment (Larsen, 2011). Consequently, the refugee is bound to a particular environment for his or her first years of staying in the Netherlands. They will have to cope with the house and environment that is granted to them. This prevents normal allocation behaviour as we would normally reside in places where we feel safe, comfortable and happy or feel like the place is useful to fulfill one's life goals (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). The different constraints and possibilities that refugees encounter in their living environment, will put some in more privileged positions than others (Powell & Rishbeth, 2012). For example an urban environment might offer more opportunities for a refugee as a rural environment might do (Larsen, 2011). Moreover, the reception of refugees by residents also varies between different urban neighbourhoods or villages (Powell & Rishbeth, 2012). To sum up, the host society is a completely new environment for refugees as new spaces and places are encountered every day representing new experiences, memories and tradition (Ng, 1998).

Besides exploring a new environment, newcomers also run into existing power structures (Ng, 1998). Space is place imbued with meaning (Altman & Low, 1992) and as a result places consist of different values and identities (Tuan, 1974). Place is therefore a reflection of social behaviour and

power relations of people who have ownership of that particular place (Massey, 2005). A physical area turns into a place when people interpret the place as being different than other places, when they get attached to a place or when the place is used to express one's individual or cultural values (Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014). This way place becomes a reflection of society, which often is controversial and plural (Lewicka, 2011). Both for newcomers and locals, place attachment adds to the development and preservation of identities of individuals, groups or cultural groups (Altman & Low, 1992).

Place becomes a location with physical as well as symbolic features (Philips & Robinson, 2015). Community life and community relations are affected by shared social and economic histories, a complex set of social, economic and cultural opportunities and constraints, and social and cultural meanings (Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014; Philips & Robinson, 2015). Newcomers such as refugees can interpret these meanings as both welcoming and inclusionary or alienating and exclusionary. Based on social contact theory (Philips & Robinson, 2015) greater intercultural contact on different spatial scales could encourage social integration and could allow newcomers to give meaning to space in empowering them. The process that turns space into place can be understood as placemaking. Balassiano & Maldonado (2014) elaborate on this concept by using the term "lived placemaking" which refers to "those bottom up processes by which people appropriate space for daily living, through small, individual gestures and social relationships that attach meaning to space" (p. 647).

Next to social integration, place attachment can also be associated with other place related concepts in geography which in turn can function as indicators of social integration (Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Jupp (2008) and Manzo & Perkins (2006) for instance illustrate that emotional attachment can lead to engagement in local affairs. As people get more attached to a particular place, they are more likely to stay in that place and therefore dare to invest in that place. An emotional bond with place can inspire people to take action to protect and preserve a place. This might improve local participation or community participation. Being an active participant in their own neighbourhoods in turn increases people's sense of community, makes them feel more at home and can provide them with a feeling of comfort and safety. In addition, place attachment can also be related to social capital and community development (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Manzo & Perkins (2006) suggest that an understanding of place attachment and meanings of place can explain what mobilises people to express particular behaviour and what place-based feelings and bonds affect the integration and resilience of the community.

Studies about place attachment and its linkages to other place related concepts illustrate the importance of the neighbourhood (Giuliani, 2003; Hernández et al, 2007; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Lewicka, 2010). Next to important places like home and work environments, the neighborhood has a crucial role. Social interactions, daily life and the development of place attachment mostly takes place at this neighbourhood scale (Gardner, 2011, Lewicka, 2011). The importance of the neighbourhood as a place for contact is further acknowledged in refugee integration literature (Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014; Kohlbacher et al., 2015). Depending on social welfare, most refugees are less mobile and strongly depend on relatives or friends who can provide transport (Larsen, 2011). For that reason most of the daily activities and social interactions take place in the vicinity of their homes and thus their neighbourhoods. Repetitive contact with the local surroundings allow emotional connections to develop as they become more rooted in place (Gustafson, 2006; Scannel & Gifford, 2010; Tuan, 1974).

1.3 Scientific relevance

Some authors have suggested shortcomings in integration research in providing an adequate understanding of integration (Engbersen et al., 2015; Favell, 2001). Most data about immigrants is generated via quantitative research methods or simply by studying statistics regarding income, employment and housing (de Vroome et al., 2014; Larsen, 2011). According to Platts-Fowler and Robinson (2015) these tangible determinants are useful to form universal laws for comparing, but miss the rich information of individual experiences and views towards integration that might benefit a better understanding. In the Netherlands, de Vroome et al. (2014) stressed the importance of doing

research on integration as they illustrate that data on income, employment and housing does not answer societal problems. These indicators are often used to study structural integration, a theory that improving one's education and economic position is sufficient enough as it will lead to other forms of integration (Favell, 2001; Van Doorn et al., 2013).. According to structural integration theories, highly skilled and more educated migrants should integrate in a host society more easily as they are more capable of learning the language and finding jobs. So far, integration strategies in the Netherlands have been based on this principle (IND, 2016; Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016). However Dutch researchers have identified a so called "integration paradox" (van Doorn et al., 2013; de Vroome et al., 2014). They claim that educated refugees are more likely to turn away from the host society as they experience more discrimination, exclusion and inappropriate behaviour. These feelings of not belonging are a consequence of a better understanding of the language and a result of actually having a job which leads to more contact with people from the host society.

So perceptions about integration of Dutch policy makers are gradually changing from a structural integration view towards more attention on social integration (van Doorn et al., 2013). This means a focus on social relations, social cohesion and inclusion in society. Studies on place attachment can contribute to a better understanding of how social relations develop. Some researchers have focused on placemaking processes of migrants and stress out the importance of locality in integration research (Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014). Philips & Robinson (2015) emphasise the relation between migration, community and place and how different experiences are encountered in different places. Furthermore, key to many experiences of refugees are the social encounters, connections and relations in place (Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). Kohlbacher et al., (2015) add that most social connections are developed on a neighbourhood scale and stress the crucial role of local, social relationships in feeling integrated in a host society. Insights in neighbourhood mechanisms and community development can lead to more empowerment, local participation and development of social capital, which is essential for newcomers (Manzo & Perkins, 2006).

Finally, most of the research conducted in the Netherlands concerning integration often consider immigrants as an homogenous group of people (IND, 2016). For example, Moroccan and Turkish immigrants have often been researched in a quantitative way whilst neglecting their unique traditions, norms and values. They might be portrayed together as "other" compared to "Dutch" people without taking into account the cultural variation between countries of origin or even within countries themselves. Engbersen et al. (2015) point out the unique opportunity of getting to explore Syrian perceptions of Dutch society. All different individuals and groups of people have different integration paths and some require more attention and facilitation than others. As a relatively new group of immigrants in the Netherlands there is no indication of how these refugees will settle down in the Netherlands and how people, institutions and government should be involved to facilitate this.

1.4 Research aim and research question

As this research tries to explore how Syrian refugees "do" placemaking and how particular places influence the Syrian refugees in their everyday life, the following research questions and sub questions are formulated in order to provide a framework for this research:

What are the obstacles to and opportunities for placemaking in the Northern part of the Netherlands for Syrian refugees?

The main research question is divided by three sub-questions that relate to the three dimensions of respectively person, place and process in the model by Scannel & Gifford (2010):

- 1. What role do the individual and shared group norms and values of Syrian male refugees play in developing place attachment in the Northern Netherlands?*

2. *What is the effect of the social and physical environment of the Northern Netherlands on the emotional bond between Syrian male refugees and place?*
3. *How do emotional, cognitive and behavioural processes influence the connection to place of Syrian male refugees?*

Before presenting the results of the research, first it is important to get an understanding of place attachment and the underlying processes. Chapter two therefore elaborates on different concepts, theories and definitions regarding place attachment and demarcates the research topic. The research methods used in this research are clarified in chapter three. Chapter four presents the findings of the research, which will be discussed and used to answer the research questions in chapter five. In chapter six this research is critically analysed and recommendations will be made for further research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the body of literature in which this research is positioned. Relevant theories and concepts within the current academic debate are introduced and critically analysed. As multiple disciplines study the relations between people and their attachment to place, the theoretical framework will comprise different thoughts and understandings on this topic. First, paragraph 2.1 elaborates on the existing literature on place attachment as this concept is used further in this research to investigate the placemaking limitations and opportunities of Syrian refugees. Paragraph 2.2 presents the conceptual model to give an overview of the theory used in this research. Paragraph 2.3 explains the role of homemaking processes alongside placemaking processes. Paragraph 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 will explore the different dimensions that serve as mechanisms for developing place attachment, respectively: person, place and process.

2.1 Place attachment

The concept of place attachment is used in different fields of science such as spatial planning, social psychology and geography (Lewicka, 2011; Cross, 2015). The study of the concept is relevant to processes such as homemaking, environmental perception and integration and relates to concepts as wellbeing, social capital and social participation (Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Studies of place attachment have been linked to those who have been forced to relocate (Fried, 1963) and has been applied to gain more insights in disaster psychology, immigration, displacement and mobility (Cross, 2015; Giuliani, 2003; Gustafson, 2006; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Although globalization and increases in mobility might suggest otherwise, Lewicka (2011) points out a paradox that emphasises the modern-day relevance of studying place-people relations like place attachment. As some have described places becoming more uniform or even non-places, she describes the growing awareness that places have not lost their meaning and identity in this modern world, but instead shape human behaviour, identity and wellbeing even more (Gustafson, 2006; Kohlbacher, 2015; Relph, 1976; Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

Due to the different scientific fields that study place attachment, a broad range of views on place attachment can be identified (Cross, 2015; Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Hidalgo and Hernández (2001) describe place attachment as a positive, affective bond or link between people and particular places. Other authors define place attachment as a result of an interplay between affection, cognition and behaviour and that this link can be both negative and positive (Altman & Low, 1992). This relates closely to the concept of sense of place as proposed by Jorgensen & Stedman (2001). In their framework, place attachment (affective) is an indicator of sense of place next to place identity (cognitive) and place dependence (behavioural). Place identity, the feeling of belonging to a place and the reflection of this place in identity of the self, and place attachment are thus closely interrelated and are often complementary (Hernández et al., 2007).

Because definitions and concepts of place attachment remain contested in the literature, the theoretical framework of this research is based on the tripartite model of Scannel and Gifford (2010; see figure 1 below). They suggest a three-dimensional framework to organise these different findings and theories within the discourse of place attachment in an effort to get a better understanding of the concept. It is consistent with the existing body of literature on place attachment as it encompasses the important views and theories, but also elaborates on the different theoretical perspectives of other authors (Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Lewicka, 2011; Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014). Moreover with its comprehensive and structured body, the model provides a clear framework for analytical purposes (Lewicka, 2011). The model consists of a person dimension, place dimension and a process dimension. The different dimensions should not be seen as separate from each other, but they have a tendency to overlap and interact with one another. To gain more insight in the model as an analytical framework, the three dimensions and underlying processes will be discussed separately below in paragraphs 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6, preceded by a discussion about homemaking in paragraph 2.3.

2.2 Conceptual model

In line with the body of literature as discussed in this chapter, the conceptual model in this study is the model of place attachment by Scannel & Gifford (2010). As can be seen in Figure 1, place attachment is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by a multiple of factors. Depending on the individual, some dimensions and sub-dimensions will be more crucial to place attachment than others. This model is obviously not exclusively designed for refugees, but as the following paragraphs will show the model and its dimensions lend themselves to narrow down on the displaced. This framework is used throughout this research to preserve continuity, but is enriched with theories and concepts to fully explain placemaking behaviour of Syrian male refugees.

Compared to the initial model, the person, place and process dimension is expanded in the theoretical framework. The concept of natural neighbourhood networks by Gardner (2011) is added to the social aspect of place. This concept describes the necessity of accessible, informal meeting places for residents in a neighbourhood. The informal contacts that arise as a result are further explored by implementing theories on weak ties (Granovetter, 1973; Kohlbacher et al., 2015) and bridging social capital (Putnam, 2007; Nannestad et al., 2008).

As this study focuses on refugees, also homemaking literature is integrated in the model. Different concepts within homemaking are used to explain how newcomers to a particular place, try to make the place more familiar to them. These processes take place in all of the dimensions of the model and will be discussed more broadly in the subsequent paragraphs.

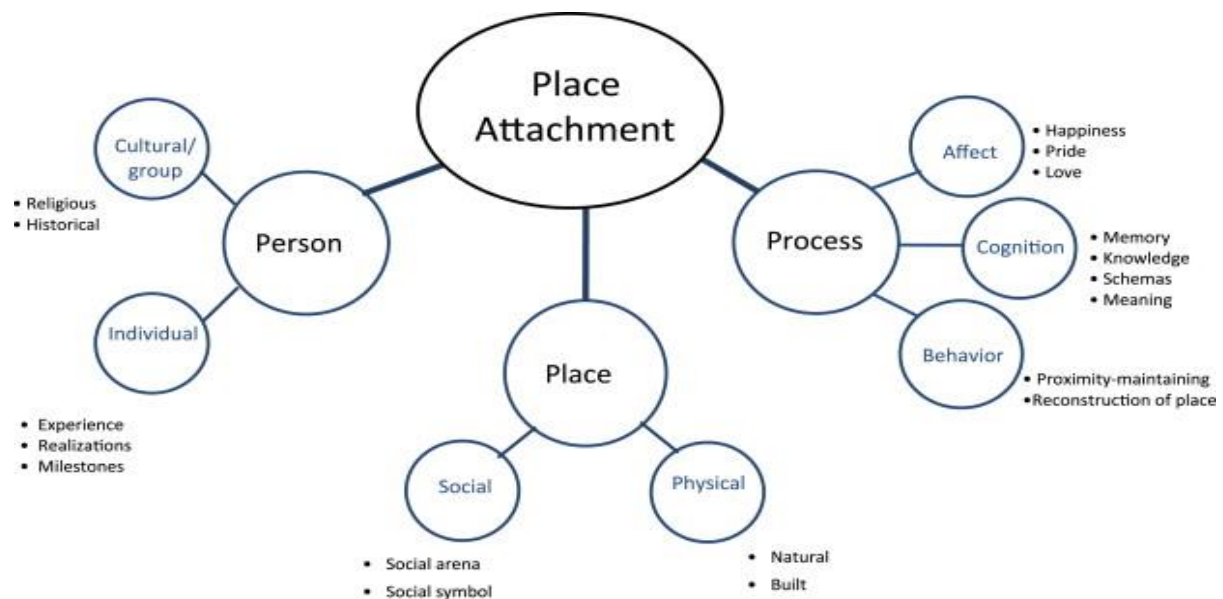


Fig. 1 The model of place attachment used in this research as proposed by Scannel & Gifford (2010)

2.3 Feelings of Home

The archetypical example of people-place relations that is often mentioned, is the attachment towards home (Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Just as space can become a place if imbued with meaning, home is a house that is filled with social relationships, memories, meanings, emotions and experiences (Dowling & Mee, 2007). Home often becomes a place of belonging, safety, comfort and selfhood (Savas, 2014), although homes are not necessarily safe in for example Syria. Moreover, homemaking practices contribute to one's self and construct a sense of identity (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016) and makes one want to return to this place when he or she is away from home (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). However not only the physical structure and symbolism of one's house is important, feelings of home extend to a wider context (Capo, 2015). To maintain feelings of safety,

comfort and belonging the neighbourhood should be included when analysing homemaking processes (Lewicka, 2011). Home is often associated with rootedness and length of residency (Gustafson, 2006; Scannel & Gifford, 2010), but refugee and migrant literature suggests that there are more aspects to homemaking and therefore introduce new concepts as diasporic communities, transnationalism or roots to routes (Gustafson, 2006; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Savas, 2014; Trapp, 2015). These concepts will not be explored any further, but they do offer an illustration of the complexity of homemaking processes and a shifting focus towards the relationship between home and mobility.

As a consequence of this shift, many authors emphasise the importance of homemaking processes related to wellbeing of these refugees in a new environment (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Savas, 2014; Trapp, 2015). Forced displacement often leads to a “root shock”: “a sudden and forced disruption of both ties to geographical place and the social relationships fostered in place” (Fullilove, 2013, cited in Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016, p. 23). Being uprooted from their home environment, refugees have to re-root in a new environment without any possessions. This means they are depending on memories, rituals and experiences relating to their former home environment (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016). Savas (2014) argues that rituals, objects and traditions are not only reminders of pre-migration lives, but also function to build meaningful new lives in a new country whilst still maintaining closeness to one’s former self. This idea is shared by Powell & Rishbeth (2012), who stress that gaining knowledge of the locality is the priority of homemaking. Homemaking is a process that costs a lot of physical and emotional energy (Dowling & Mee, 2007).

Additionally, prior to being granted a house in the Netherlands, refugees have stayed in asylum centres or emergency shelters. Living alongside other refugees packed in small rooms, has constrained these people in their privacy, dignity and identity (findings of this study). Homemaking practices in these contexts are hard or impossible as refugees of different cultures with different norms, values and routines have to make place in the same space. Garvey (2005) points out the relevance of being able to seclude oneself from the public environment. Apart from the opportunity to express oneself in his or her own house without any limitations, the home environment functions as one’s “sacred place” which rules out any of the power structures that exist in the public domain. In this context home environments can be both alienating as embracing depending on efforts one takes to feel at home (Capo, 2015).

Different aspects to homemaking have been identified in the literature. All theories and concepts will be discussed using the place attachment model of Scannel & Gifford (2010; see figure 1) so homemaking processes are directly linked to the theoretical framework used in this research.

2.4 The person dimension of place attachment

Within the person dimension, the development of place attachment can occur on two different levels. A bond or connection can be formed between individuals and place or place attachment can be developed on a group level (Scannel & Gifford, 2010; Tuan, 1974). Personal attachments to place are the result of experiences in and memories of a variety of places and can be both positive and negative (Altman & Low, 1992). These personal, intimate experiences like realizations, milestones or personal growth might make a place become meaningful to a person (Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

Manzo (2005) emphasises the rich and complex structures of an individual’s connection to places at different scales. Participants in her study pointed out a broad range of feelings towards places. Some participants developed place meanings as a consequence of feelings of comfort, safety or threat. Others reported places as being important to withdraw oneself from everyday life for privacy and reflection. Finally, several relationships with places were based on identity formation. Significant places that were host to an important event or happening in one’s personal life can function as a reminder of past experiences and the realization of growth since that moment. For example one’s high school experiences or one’s first bought home can create attachment to these places.

Whereas these relationships are based on one single encounter, evidence also indicates the importance of multiple experiences on one place (Manzo, 2005). Frequently visiting a place during

childhood or during different life stages, adds different experiences to the place. As a result different values can be ascribed to the place during this process. When a place becomes a collection of values and memories, people tend to feel more attached towards the place (Tuan, 1974).

These bonds also form based on shared cultural or group values (Altman & Low, 1992). In this context, groups of people should be seen as people that share the same norms, values or traditions. These shared cultural or group traits can be based on gender, religion, culture, ethnicity or the mere fact that people live close to each other (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). When talking about refugees in the Netherlands, aspects that bind individuals together can be diverse. Places might have significant value to an individual as the place is a symbol for being a Muslim (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016). For Muslim refugees a mosque can be a place where one can find spiritual comfort when far from home and be around people who share a specific part of their identities (Savas, 2010). Feeling part of a specific cultural group can imply that some places become significant such as an Islamic supermarket, whilst these places have no special meaning for other cultural groups (Savas, 2014). Ethnic background might prevent an individual from going to places where he or she feels different or out of place, because his or her ethnic background is not welcome or not represented there. When refugees do not have a legal permit yet to stay in the Netherlands, their illegal status in the country will restrain the individual to roam freely through society (Larsen, 2011).

For example Mazumdar & Mazumdar (2004; 2016) illustrate the importance of religious sites to specific groups of people. Sacred, religious places have special meanings to people who see themselves as a member of this religion, whilst others attach different or no value to these sites. This can lead to inclusion of groups of people who share the same values, norms and traditions, but will exclude those who do not. Developing emotional bonds with place as an individual member of a group can also be based on proximity. Research conducted by Fried (1963) illustrates group formation of people forced to relocate from their neighbourhood in Boston. They were brought together as a group as they were living near each other. They were not bound together as a group based on shared values, but as individual neighbours they shared feelings of grief and sadness after having to leave the places they got emotionally attached to in all the years they lived there (Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

The distinction between individual and group level place attachment is blurred. As we tend to form our own identity based on belonging to particular groups of people or cultures and vice versa, the personal level and group level extend along each other. Therefore they should not be treated as being independent. Cultural or group place meanings, values and identities have impacts on place attachment of the individual, whereas individual experiences of place meanings, values and identities can influence cultural or group place attachment (Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

2.5 The place dimension of place attachment

In the model used by Scannel and Gifford (2010) it is argued that place plays the most significant role as a determinant of place attachment. Although places might have no distinct boundaries and scale levels might be perceived differently by individuals (Jorgensen, 2010; Tuan, 1974), Hidalgo and Hernández (2001) advocate that spatial level should be taken into account when measuring place attachment. Their findings illustrate that place attachment of residents towards home and city proved to be much stronger than towards their neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood remains to be popular research area for place researchers (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Lewicka, 2011). In refugee literature the essential role of the neighbourhood is also acknowledged. Kohlbacher et al. (2015) emphasise the importance of local, social ties in the neighbourhood that are fundamental for place attachment. Access to cultural sensitive amenities and services in the local area fosters shared activities (Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). Lastly, the neighbourhood is important in the process of homemaking. Capo (2015) argues that creating a feeling of home and a sense of belonging is not only bound to one's house, but is also related to attachment towards the neighbourhood.

Another division that can be made in the dimension of place is the physical and social environment (Low & Altman, 1992; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). The social aspect should be associated with social ties,

sense of belonging and social networks in the neighbourhood. The physical aspect can be linked to 'rootedness', length of residence, nature, recreation and ownership. For a long time much of the research within this dimension was focused on the social environment, whereas the physical environment was merely seen as a framework for social interactions (Gustafson, 2006). The meaning mediated model of place attachment as proposed by Stedman (2003) argues the importance of the physical environment in developing relations between people and place. So as with the person dimension, the social and physical parts of place attachment should be seen as complementary to each other as they both influence the overall connection (Hidalgo and Hernández, 2001; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004).

2.5.1 The social environment

Studies on the social aspect of place attachment focus on places that give opportunities for social interaction and group identities (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Furthermore, the neighbourhood as a local context is an important setting for social coexistence between different ethnicities and social groups (Kohlbacher, 2015). Social ties on a neighbourhood scale and the attachment of individuals towards their living environment are therefore strongly interrelated (Altman & Low, 1992; Lewicka, 2011).

Place attachment towards the neighbourhood based on social ties can develop a sense of community (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Feeling attached to places that represent one's social group can lead to self-identification with a place and simultaneously creates distinctiveness towards other groups (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). This can be based on a common interest, backgrounds and lifestyles (communities of interest), but residents can also form a community of place as they are connected by their geographical location. Studies indicate that sense of community is positively related to improving social capital of the individual (Perkins & Long, 2002; Nannestad et al., 2008). On the other hand, a greater sense of community can lead to feelings of discrimination as some residents are included where others are left out (Pretty et al., 2003). The social relations within a community of place are based on three relations of proximity: contact with neighbours, encounters with strangers and visits to shops and retail businesses (Gardner, 2011).

To get a better understanding of these different social relationships within communities, an analytical framework is provided by Gardner (2011) to structure the different places where social interaction can occur. She identifies a complex system of social relationships and social interactions that boosts wellbeing and joy of everyday living, called natural neighbourhood networks. Alongside home (first place) and work (second place) she suggests another type of setting that facilitates informal interaction. They are easily accessible, neutral and based on conversation. As a consequence these informal, public places become meaningful to individuals (Lewicka, 2011).

These places are what Gardner calls third places. They come in many forms as characteristics of different individuals determine to which extent a place become a third place. Community centres, parks and churches can be seen as places where people like to go (destinations), whilst thresholds are more in-between places that divide public and private life. Patio's, porches, backyards and balconies are places that stimulate easy forms of social contact as we pass through them every day. Transitory zones are places we pass through in everyday life, like public transport, waiting area's and sidewalks (Gardner, 2011; see also Peace et al., 2005).

A different concept to understanding the complexity of social contacts on a neighbourhood scale is the concept of time geographies by Hägerstrand (1970). This concept draws on the different daily patterns of individuals regarding space and time and the restrictions that different groups of people come across that prevent social interaction (Hägerstrand, 1970). Lager et al. (2015) have demonstrated how varying time geographies between older and younger people limit the opportunities to have social contact in their neighbourhood. As a result, the older people had difficulties with developing social capital plus they felt less useful and alive when confronted with the busy schedules of their younger neighbours (Lager et al., 2015).

The importance of everyday contacts in the neighbourhood is further endorsed in the context of integration. As migrants have lost their local, social network as they had in their home country, the redevelopment of weak ties in the neighbourhood is important. Small talk in the neighbourhood can lead to a sense of belonging and improve wellbeing (Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Poortinga, 2012). Furthermore, weak ties are more easy to establish compared to strong ties, which in general take more time and shared interests (Granovetter, 1973; Henning & Lieberg, 1996). Although individuals may not know one another too well, maintaining informal, social contact in the neighbourhood will still foster social cohesion in the community (Kohlbacher, 2015). Weak ties also have the potential for newcomers to gain access to new sources of information or resources, to which would be excluded otherwise (Granovetter, 1973). Moreover it also allows newcomers in society to develop their language skills and intercultural contact will familiarise both parties with cultural customs, norms and values (Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014; Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016).

Rose et al. (2008) argue that social integration processes of migrants benefit from forming weak ties as migrants becomes less dependent on strong ties like family or other migrants. Local contacts might support migrants in getting a new role in society by providing a sense of belonging and a feeling of acceptance especially in the early phase of immigration. Even simple gestures as greeting or 'nodding relationships' in transitory zones (Kohlbacher et al. 2015, p. 449; Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015) makes individuals feel recognised and gives them a place in society (Gardner, 2011). Doing favors for neighbours and helping each other out, influences how refugees experience comfortability and safety in the local area (Poortinga, 2012; Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). These actions will improve wellbeing of refugees in the early stage of integration as some see themselves as a burden to the host society (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008).

The strong and weak ties as identified by Granovetter (1973) strongly relate to another "division" within the concept of social capital. Putnam (2007) makes a distinction between bridging and bonding capital. Bonding capital is often present in local closed communities or social networks and is therefore related to strong ties. More diversified, open places offer more intercultural contact and sharing new information which in turn strokes with the idea of weak ties (Lewicka, 2011). Bonding capital is created within groups and thus inward looking, whereas bridging capital is more outward looking and generated between different groups (Putnam, 2007). As none of the two is good or bad, both forms of capital are necessary to provide in a person's wellbeing (Putnam, 2007). As a consequence the social environment should be both cohesive, safe or mutual trust and at the same time offer diversity and new possibilities for personal development (Lewicka, 2011; Nannestad et al., 2008).

In the context of integration and the inclusion of refugees in society and place, bonding and bridging capital can help to understand place attachment. Nannestad et al., (2008) measured bonding capital as being more exclusive, whilst bridging capital allows for more inclusionary processes. They also state that bonding capital does not function as a obstruction to developing bridging capital, which confirms earlier statements by Putnam (2007) and Granovetter (1973). However language difficulties, cultural differences, exclusion and unwillingness might discourage people and groups from maintaining an outward looking view so that bridging capital is hard to develop (Nannestad et al., 2008). Whenever refugees take up residence in a neighbourhood, the change in the composition of a neighbourhood has an impact on social capital and social cohesion (Kohlbacher et al., 2015). Diversified neighbourhood can have lower levels of trust, where people are less acquainted with each other (Lewicka, 2011). Weak ties will help to develop bridging social capital so that all individuals in the neighbourhood can integrate more easily (Putnam, 2007). On a neighbourhood scale this can foster social cohesion, whilst on an individual level it can improve place attachment (Kohlbacher et al., 2015).

Finally, individuals tend to have different preferences towards the social arena that comes with a place. More heterogeneous, urban places accommodate higher ethnic diversity compared to traditionally closed rural communities (Lewicka, 2011). Although conversations in ethnic diverse, urban neighbourhoods is positively related to more interpersonal trust and social cohesion between residents, personal preferences still divide people in urbanophilics and urbanophobic (Félonneau, 2004). This also relates to the cognitive process of developing place attachment as these preferences are based on an individual's character and identity.

2.5.2 The physical environment

Next to the social aspect of place, individuals attach to places based on their physical features (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Although one might feel attached to the physical environment based on appearance or the aesthetic nature of the setting, these attachments are most of the time underpinned by cognitive and perceptual processes (Lewicka, 2011). Therefore the different physical settings are considered meaningful by individuals, ranging from buildings, streets or houses to forests, rivers or mountains. On this premise Manzo (2005) state that a distinction is to be made between the built environment and the natural environment. As stated above focus of place attachment studies is mainly on the social aspects where the physical aspects were just used as a framework or seen as a social construction. Stedman (2003) acknowledges that physical environment is a social construction, but points out the relevance of the meanings that physical features of a place represent. Environments, buildings or natural settings in this context would symbolise particular memories or experiences in the past or symbolises the individuals own identity (Scannel & Gifford).

However some authors argue that the physical features of place are also directly linked to place attachment (Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Individuals might feel attached to beautiful nature, the opportunities for rest or recreation within the physical environment or a physical setting that challenges the individual. The physical environment can also be appreciated in terms of the proximity of amenities, services and social relations. If it offers the necessary amenities and services to support one's way of living or one's goals to maintain a specific level of wellbeing (Scannel & Gifford, 2010; Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). This becomes more important if an individual is dependent on amenities and services that are not really used in the host society (Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014). In Dutch society, refugees will need to put in more effort to maintain closeness to cultural and religious places than they were used to in their home country. In this context the physical environment relates to the behavioural aspect of the process dimension in the model (see 2.6.3 the behavioural component). Place attachment towards the physical environment is expressed by the individual through proximity maintaining, efforts to return and place reconstruction of the physical environment (Capo, 2015; Lewicka, 2011).

In addition to the social environment, the shape of the physical environment also relates to place attachment (Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). The extent to which a place offers possibilities for social contact relies on the presence of physical features such as benches, sidewalks, parks, public playgrounds and other amenities that facilitate social interaction. Newcomers to a local environment such as refugees might experience difficulties with the physical surroundings. This can lead to disorientation, being unfamiliar with local amenities or facilities and the need to grow accustomed to local opening hours and weather conditions such as winter darkness (Powell & Rishbeth, 2012). This uncertainty about the new physical environment can produce place reconstruction behaviour (see 2.6.3 the behavioural component).

These psychological processes will be discussed more broadly in the next paragraph, but the physical environment also plays a role in homemaking in relation to place attachment. Different rituals and practices can be performed to alter the physical environment to one's liking (Capo, 2015; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Savas, 2014). This recreates feelings of home and causes the development of an intimate connection with place (Lewicka, 2011). What is suggested in literature are practices and rituals such as decorating and cleaning (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Savas, 2010). Objects and ornaments can serve as material culture that gives individuals a feeling of belonging and therefore sustain a diasporic community (Savas, 2014). This relates to the symbolic meanings of the physical environment as discussed above. It is not so much about the aesthetic value of these objects or decorations, but the feelings and emotions that are evoked that remind refugees of home (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). These emotional, cognitive and behavioural processes are elaborated on in the next paragraph.

2.6 The process dimension of place attachment

The psychological elements should be seen as the underlying processes that develop the connections between people and important places. How does place attachment as discussed in the person and place dimension come into existence? Whereas the person and place dimensions focus respectively on subject and object, the psychological dimension is about processes. These processes are well embedded in the literature, but an overarching framework is yet to be found as authors have different views about the relations between the concepts (Giuliani, 2003; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Lewicka, 2011, Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

The model used in this research comprises three different psychological processes, namely an affective component, a cognitive component and a behavioural component relating to the sense of place model of Jorgensen and Stedman (2001). The Jorgensen and Stedman model (2001) offers three different place constructs that collectively foster a sense of place, namely place attachment, place identity and place dependence. These constructs relate to the dimensions in the model of Scannel & Gifford (2010). Place attachment is a bond between place and people based on emotional processes. Place identity is a result of the cognitive processes between place and the self and place dependence is a product of behavioural processes between an individual and place (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

2.6.1 Emotional component

The bond between person and place is formed by an emotional connection to a particular place (Altman & Low, 1992; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Manzo, 2005). Early notions of this bond were suggested by Tuan (1974) who described this feeling of belonging to a place as topophilia to emphasise that people-place relations can arise out of love. Relph (1976) who emphasised that this bond is used to satisfy fundamental human needs. Fried (1963) found evidence of people mourning as if they lost a loved one after they were displaced out of their homes. This illustrates how intense the connection between people and place can be.

Next to different levels of intensity, there is a broad spectrum of emotions and feelings within the emotional component of place attachment. The range of emotions that can be associated with place can represent feeling of love, pride, happiness but also sadness, anger, anxiety, hate (Manzo, 2005). Emotions related to place might also be mixed or individuals might have no emotions at all towards a place (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Although Giuliani (2003) finds that people tend to visit places that bring back positive emotions and feelings of happiness, strong relations to place can also be a consequence of negative experiences (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). These are nevertheless often ignored by researchers when explaining place attachment as we are often more interested in the positive relations (Lewicka, 2011).

In relation to place attachment and displacement, many authors found evidence that suggest the relevance of affect in bonding with a place (Fried, 1963; Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Powell and Rishbeth (2012) stress the importance of the emotional component in making home in an unfamiliar environment. Practices and rituals that represent one's culture can trigger emotional memories and feelings (Powell & Rishbeth, 2012). Informing others about this culture can provide an individual with feelings of pride (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). The daily routines that refugees and other displaced people have, are often based on habits one had in the country of origin (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016). Cleaning, cooking, decorating, eating together e.g. evokes intimate feelings.

2.6.2 Cognitive component

The cognitive element of place attachment explains the memories, knowledge, beliefs and meanings that individuals associate with important places (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). The combination gives the place its distinct place meaning which is used to give meaning to the self as people try to find a place in the world (Proshansky et al., 1983). The cognitive aspects facilitate closeness to a place, familiarity

with a place and efforts to organise and make sense of the surroundings (Manzo, 2005; Twigger-Ross & Uzell, 1996). Getting to know the environment and making efforts to make sense of the surroundings also leads towards place attachment (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Powell & Rishbeth (2012) argue that gaining knowledge about the local environment is a priority of homemaking. Understanding the environment is a crucial part of defining one's self in a new environment (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001).

During the identity formation process of a refugee, he or she will need to find a balance between the new host environment and his or her former home place (Powell & Rishbeth, 2012). Because home is far away for Syrian refugees in the Netherlands, they will need to rely on memories, everyday practices and decorations to maintain their identity (Savas, 2014). Although possessions are often left behind or lost during the trip to a new country, ornaments and objects are of great value to reconstruct a sense of identity (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Savas, 2014). Through these memories, schemas, meanings and knowledge the country of origin can still represent who they are (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Both the new and the old surroundings therefore can exist of places that are valuable and meaningful.

Finally, as referred to above (see 2.5.1 The social environment), people in general have preferences towards living environments that correspond with their own character or identity. For instance, some prefer rural settings as other thrive in more urban environments. Scannel & Gifford (2010) argue that place attachment towards particular environments is related to how one sees him- or herself. For example, urbanites might portray themselves as more outgoing, while more reserved, easy going individuals are more bound to the countryside (Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). As a result attachment to place can be seen as a reflection or an extension of one's identity. This relates closely to the notion of place identity proposed by other authors (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Proshansky et al., 1983)

2.6.3 Behavioural component

The last aspects of place attachment is expressed through actions and behaviour. In this process place attachment is often characterised by proximity-maintaining behaviour. As it focuses much on the positive emotions towards a place, behaviour is expressed by staying close to this particular place as we want to experience the positive vibes it produces (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Place dependence is therefore often associated with length of residency (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001, Lewicka, 2011) as repetitive confrontations with the same place lead to familiarity, safety and comfort (Tuan, 1974). A similar expression of behaviour are the efforts that individuals make to return to a specific place that is meaningful to them (Cross, 2015; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Home is a perfect example, because in general individuals want to return to the safe environment of home every day. However other meaningful places can be the house of a friend or amenities. Amenities are vital places to provide in our needs, but we can also be drawn towards places because of the aesthetic beauty of the place (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016).

Although being away from home can strengthen the emotional connection towards home too (Lewicka, 2011), people tend to feel at home because of the feelings, memories and activities that are associated with home itself (Savas, 2014). For refugees who have been forced to move and are newcomers in Dutch society, this is particularly relevant. They have not been living here that long and it will take some time to develop place attachment based on length of residency (Ng, 1998). This strokes with Relph (1976) and Tuan (1974) who argue that newcomers are only able to develop a superficial sense of place. Other authors however emphasise that place attachment can develop apart from residence time, but that we should see this as a different kind of attachment (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Lewicka, 2011).

As a consequence, for refugees other forms of behaviour are more important to foster place attachment. They can form a connection with place as a result of place reconstruction behaviour. Findings illustrate that as people are forced to relocate, they are drawn towards places that are similar of the places they bonded with before (Michelson, 1976). This is also expressed through behaviour to alter the current environment in order to make it look like the environment that was left behind

(Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Homemaking processes therefore are an important aspect of place reconstruction behaviour (Savas, 2014). Cleaning, cooking and decorating are expressions of behaviour that make an individual feel at home. The importance of sensory experiences in this process is emphasised by Cross (2015). Listening to familiar music, stories and language, eating food that reminds of “home” and seeing familiar objects and ornaments are examples of behaviour that is applicable to newcomers such as refugees (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Savas, 2014; Powell & Rishbeth, 2012).

For example, Mazumdar & Mazumdar (2016) found that the kitchen of Vietnamese immigrants was most central in their lives. For them, eating together in these settings means telling stories to one another, preserving cultural norms and values in order to find a way to adapt to a new host society. This study also argues the importance of family and close friends in homemaking behaviour. The positive aspect with these strong ties is that culture is preserved and identities can be maintained, too much of a focus on strong ties however limits inclusion and social integration processes (see 2.5.2 The social environment).

3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the research methods used in this study will be discussed. To understand how Syrian refugees make sense of place in an unfamiliar part of the world, a qualitative research design is applied. A qualitative method is useful to understand different cultural meanings, perceptions, beliefs, norms and values. Data was collected using both in-depth interviews and walking interviews whilst trying to gain insight in the world as they perceive it. The first paragraph 3.1 elaborates on qualitative research in general and the research methods used during this study. The method of data collection including the recruitment of participants is discussed in paragraph 3.2, whereas the method of data analysis is clarified in paragraph 3.3. Paragraph 3.4 considers the research ethics and explores the reflexivity of the researcher.

3.1 Qualitative approach

In this research a qualitative approach was used to learn more about the way Syrian asylum migrants give meaning to places in a new environment. Hennink et al. (2011) define qualitative research as “an approach that allows you to examine people’s experiences in detail, by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods, and life histories or biographies” (p.9). A vital aspect of conducting qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to explore issues from an emic perspective (Hennink et al., 2011). It encompasses methods that allows the researcher to explore the meanings, emotions, intentions and values that make up “our take-for-granted lifeworlds” (Clifford et al. 2010, p.5). An insiders point of view is essential when interested in understanding the meaning and interpretations that participants associate with behaviour, events and objects. When studying place making processes from a Syrian asylum seeker perspective, qualitative data methods are an effective research method to identify their experiences and to gain an in-depth understanding of how they develop connections with place (Babbie, 2013; Hennink et al., 2011; Van Hoven & Meijering, 2011).

The subjectivity that one might associate with qualitative research is acknowledged within the interpretative paradigm (Clifford et al., 2010; Hennink et al., 2011). Instead of looking for facts, the interpretive approach features studying the subjective meanings that people attach to experiences and how meanings of behaviour can be related to the context of people’s daily life. This corresponds with the notion that multiple perspectives on reality or “the truth” exist and would legitimise a qualitative approach as all perceptions and views matter (Clifford et al., 2010; Van Hoven & Meijering, 2011). As reality is socially constructed, the background and context in which people live allows people to form shared or inter-subjective (Hennink et al., 2011) constructions or interpretations of the world. One might even question if science is ever truly free of values, as researchers by definition are influenced by for instance gender, age or culture. Even the physical environment and the body itself can determine how data is created (Van Hoven & Meijering, 2011). Interpretivism emphasises the inherent subjectivity of both researcher and participant and that context and background influence the data that is generated (Hennink et al., 2011). Consequently, the unique relationship between researcher, participant and surroundings produces equally unique knowledge (Van Hoven & Meijering, 2011).

Guided by this interpretative framework, this research takes on an exploratory character. Although placemaking among newcomers is a popular research topic in contemporary literature (Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014; Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Philips & Robinson, 2015; Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015), the issues regarding the integration of Syrian migrants in the Netherlands as a whole (Engbersen et al., 2015) are not well documented. Therefore it is hard to formulate clear expectations up front which in turn legitimises exploratory research (Babbie, 2013).

To explore the research questions of this study, a mix of qualitative research methods were used during the collection of data. In-depth interviews were conducted first. As participants were mostly interviewed in their homes or a familiar/favourite environment, the results try to provide insights in

the context of people's lives. Walking interviews functioned as a method to reduce power relations between researcher and participant (Jones et al., 2008; see section 3.4.3 for positionality of the researcher), but also offered some other advantages compared to the in-depth interviews.

3.2 Method of data collection

A mix of two qualitative research methods is used in this study, namely in-depth interviews and walking interviews. The participants that were interviewed were the same as the ones who participated in a walk around the neighbourhood. As a result the sessions with participants took about 2 to 2,5 hours in total, but with some participants the interviews and walking interviews were done separately. This total time of 2 to 2,5 hours also includes the introductory talks, the discussion of the consent form and any questions that were brought up beforehand or after the interview. The interview itself took about 45 minutes and depending on weather conditions we walked for 30 minutes on average. Both interviews were conducted mostly in English and occasionally Dutch was spoken.

3.2.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews are methods of data collection which include an interviewer and interviewee, who discuss perceptions, experiences and views of the interviewee in a two-way dialogue (Hennink et al., 2011; Valentine, 1997). Through in-depth interviews the researcher is enabled to get an insight into the socio-cultural context of people's lives (Valentine, 1997). In this study the interviews are semi-structured, which led to a more conversational and informal dialogue (Hennink et al., 2011; Longhurst, 2010). Open questions were used to stimulate the interviewee to think about the questions and to formulate the answers in his or her own way (Richards, 2015). As knowledge is produced in a fluid and conversational way by both the interviewer and the interviewee and as they react to each other's personality and appearance, rich, unique data is generated (Hennink et al., 2011; Valentine, 1997). This might revolt positivists as in-depth interviews are claimed not being objective or verifiable. However when designing a questionnaire to do quantitative research, a researcher is always influenced by experiences, aims and interpretations and therefore not free of subjective values, beliefs and thoughts (Valentine, 1997). In line with its research question, this research is based on an emic perspective and therefore benefits from subjective, rich and in-depth information of individuals.

The in-depth interviews were conducted using an interview guide, which was tested during two pilot interviews at the beginning of this research. This guide consists of opening questions, key questions and closing questions (Hennink et al., 2011; see appendix I for interview guide). The interview guide is built around the three dimensions and categorizations as proposed in the model of Scannel & Gifford (2010). Opening questions were used at the beginning to make participants feel at ease or comfortable and to get familiar with each other's body language, voice and the interview setting (Longhurst, 2000). These were mainly closed questions to ensure the participants would be able to answer them easily. Key questions were used to attain the essential information used to answer the research questions and were supported by the use of probes. Closing questions were used to end the interview in a proper way, but in practice this happened more naturally by talking about starting a business in the Netherlands, going to college after the language course or other future plans.

A semi-structured interview guide however does not mean that the questions have to be asked in a specific order (Longhurst, 2010). The interviewee benefits from a fluid conversation as this comforts her or him, which results in more personal and in-depth information (Hennink et al., 2011). The interview guide is made as a handhold to ensure important themes have been covered in the end. This fluid style of interviewing also empowers the interviewee. As the participant is aware of the fact that he or she can change the subject of the conversation at all times, he or she can speak more freely of what comes to mind (Valentine, 1997). Although I do not know how participants would have reacted if this was not explained to them, they seemed open and assertive during the interviews.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed afterwards. By processing the interviews as soon as possible, the conversation and notes are still fresh in mind (Valentine, 1997), which enhances the quality of the transcript. By reflection on each interview, the interview guide was updated for the next interviews. This is relevant to exploratory research as important themes and findings that were overseen by the interviewer at first, should be included in the next interviews to reach a more in-depth conversation (Hennink et al., 2011). Being aware as a researcher whether new themes and findings are discussed in the interview, also provides information concerning the possible saturation in the collection of data (Hennink et al., 2011).

In the process of collecting data, I had to adjust the interview guide and phrasing of the questions several times. During the first interviews, I started with open questions by asking about a participant's favourite, special or intimate place followed by asking to motivate this. This way I could stimulate the participant in giving an unaffected answer. After the participant's motivation I asked more specific questions about particular places and the underlying processes as discussed in the theoretical framework to make sure all relevant information was talked about. This design was a result of adjustments made after pilot-interviews, in which the questions were too closed. In one of the interviews for example, I immediately confronted the participant with a mosque as an important place based on shared group values. The mosque however was not a special place to him personally and the idea of shared group values was unclear to the participant. There was little room for personal experiences and the questions proved to be too abstract to answer. Also the straightforward link to theory in the questions were too confusing for the interviewee as they were not familiar with this subject.

When the participants could not come up with anymore places that they feel attached to, I used the interview guide to make sure that all dimensions of the model were explored and discussed. Sometimes this would also trigger the participant to come up with new experiences, whenever we came to talk about different forms of place attachment. By reflecting after each interview, I also identified some relevant themes that link to place attachment which I added in the interview guides for the next session. For instance the Syrian food culture and language difficulties were often not addressed by the participant during the interviews. At first these topics were mostly talked about during small talk before and after the interview. During the interviews that followed, I started to explicitly ask them about these matters. As a result, I found out that both play an important role in exploring the possibilities for and obstacles to Syrian refugee placemaking.

3.2.2 Walking interviews

Although in-depth interviews can be used as 'stand-alone' methods for gathering information (Valentine, 1997), walking interviews were also undertaken as well. This method can be useful as researcher and participant are actively engaged in a walk throughout the research environment. This can lead to conversations that might not have occurred otherwise and thus provides additional information about the research topic (Cele, 2006; Jones et al, 2008). Being directly exposed to the research environment triggers the senses which can result in recalling memories or emotions attached to particular places (Trell & van Hoven, 2010). As the participant decides on what route to take, the researcher is allowed to have a peek in the lifeworld of the participant. This way details that might be missed or undervalued by the researcher are taken into account (Cook, 1997). When studying how Syrian refugees in the northern part of the Netherlands interact and bond with their environment this makes for a valuable supplement to in-depth interviews.

However, during this research physical impairment and weather conditions turned out to be obstacles to complete a walk around the respondents' neighbourhood or in the vicinity of the place where the interviews were conducted. As a consequence not all participants could be persuaded to go for a stroll. As some of the interviews with participants exposed more fruitful information than others, the information of less fruitful interviews could be expanded by going for a walk. Regretfully, this could not be realised with all participants.

The walks that were completed though, were of additional value to the interview and the research in general. Because the interviews were conducted beforehand, the exercise gave the interviewer and participants an opportunity to reflect on and revisit statements made in the interview. It proved to be helpful to underline or exemplify thoughts and views of the participant and the route that was chosen by the participant sometimes illustrated his or her behaviour when going outside. During the walking interview with Mahmoud for example, we took a path he crosses on a daily basis to school, friends or the supermarket. I asked him whether he liked walking along this road or if it was just the shortest path to his destination.

Mahmoud (Roden): *“I always walk here. If I walk somewhere else, I will get lost (...) Often Dutch people walk here too. Then we say hello and sometimes people ask me how I am. It is good if other people are also here. I can also go to my friends or supermarket on my bike. I don’t do that, because I like to walk. That is much better.”*

This way I was given insight in their personal experiences with and preferences for particular places and therefore helped me as a researcher to understand what they were actually talking about before in the interview and also resulted in a more detailed interpretation of how Syrian asylum migrants “make place”.

Another positive aspect of taking a walk in their surroundings was that it triggered new memories or experiences related to place attachment. To come across people on the sidewalks and streets and to look at the physical environment in a new way, made both researcher and participants think about place attachment at that particular spot. It provided new information that was valuable to the research and as a researcher the participant was observed in his or her natural setting. For example when walking through the city centre of Groningen, one participant had a vague recall about a bar we just passed, which made him think about the time he just arrived in Groningen and shared a meal there with locals. It made him feel happy at that particular time, thinking about this experience in the past.

3.2.3 Recruiting procedure

As the aim of qualitative research is not to be a representative sample, but to understand subjective individual experiences of people, a random selection of participants is not relevant (Hennink et al., 2011; Longhurst, 2010). Participants were recruited deliberately, this does not mean that participant recruitment is not well considered. In defining which people might have the most in-depth and detailed understanding of this research topic, not all refugees from Syria are equally qualified to participate. First, only participants living in Roden and Groningen were approached. This selection was used so that similarities and differences in the experiences of participants make sense as they talk about the same living environment. By including an urban and a more rural environment, it was also possible to compare experiences between these two.

Second, the participants in this study all have a residence permit that allows them to stay in the Netherlands for at least three years. During this period they are provided with social welfare payment, social housing and they start to learn Dutch. This implicitly means that they have been in the Netherlands for at least six to twelve months as the application procedure of this permit will take approximately half a year (Engbersen et al., 2015). As a result the participants will already have been exposed to the physical environment in the Northern Netherlands and will likely have started to develop connections or bonds with places.

Participants were recruited using several non-random recruiting techniques (Hennink et al., 2011; Longhurst, 2010; Valentine, 1997). At the beginning formal networks and informal networks were used to make contact with Syrian refugees. My neighbour introduced me to two Syrian refugees. Then I used the snowballing technique (Valentine, 1997) by asking them to bring me in touch with other Syrian asylum migrants. This was useful as some asylum migrants were hesitated to talk to me, but were comforted by the idea that his or her friends also took part in the research. However, a limitation of asking participants to use their social network is that the new participants come from the same

social context (Hennink et al., 2011). As one of the participant functioned somewhat as a gatekeeper (he introduced me to his social relations as he was the most charismatic and eloquent among them) and in some interviews also translated Arabic statements to English for me, I got the feeling that experiences, views and perceptions started to look alike. No new information was produced and it felt like the participants role as a gatekeeper had too much of an impact on the data that was generated.

This was confirmed after I interviewed a participant outside this group, who provided me with new additional information. The group I interviewed before had similar routines and were interested in the same activities. For example, the basketball court in Roden was an important place for the group. They are really fond of basketball and love to hang out at this place. A participant from Roden outside of this group however was not aware of the existence of a basketball court as he was not into sports. Moreover, to obtain Halal meat, the participants who are part of the group often travelled to a place called Leek. They are familiar with the butcher there and choose to go to this place for meat instead of going to the bigger city of Groningen. Yamen, the participant from Roden who is not included in this group, chooses to go to Groningen, because the butcher there was recommended to him by his uncle.

I also approached formal institutions like VluchtenlingenWerk Noord-Nederland and Humanitas Groningen to make use of their Syrian contacts. Both institutions emphasised that participation should be on a voluntarily basis and that I was not allowed to take a look in their administration system. Therefore, a written recruitment message (see appendix II) was forwarded by email to these contacts. In the end I was very glad with this procedure as it provided me with enthusiastic and motivated refugees who could speak English better than average and as a consequence would have more rich information to share. On the other hand, these are also the people who are expected to make contact more easily with the host society and will have less trouble in finding their way in the Netherlands. The ones who do not speak Dutch or English might experience more exclusion and negative feelings towards places.

3.2.4 Participants

Within qualitative research methods few participants are necessary to provide rich data and depth of information to successfully conduct research (Hennink et al, 2011). This does not mean that this small group has to be representative for a specific population as this study is not aiming to test hypotheses based on a sample as one might expect in quantitative research. This research is about the stories, views and experiences of these participants who each have their own story to tell.

Ten participants were recruited to participate in this research. They are all refugees from Syria and have been staying in the Netherlands for different periods of time ranging from ten months to three years. They have all obtained a status, which means they are accepted as asylum migrant and have started a procedure in which they are expected to integrate in Dutch society. All participants are male, which is not that strange considering the fact that refugees from Syria who apply for asylum are mostly men (CBS, 2016). Furthermore, the women that do arrive from Syria in the Netherlands often do not speak English and as a male researcher it is more difficult to get into contact with Muslim women or even to be in the same room together (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016). As a result I did not find any Syrian women using my personal network and the institutions were hesitant to help me in this as they felt a bit uncertain about the ethical implications.

Further characteristics of the participants are mentioned below (see table 1). They originate from different parts of Syria so both rural and urban residents are included. Concerning their place of residence in the Netherlands, a division between rural and urban is also present. All the participants live in the Northern part of the Netherlands. They are all young adults ranging from 22 years old to 32 years old. The majority is single and is living alone in an apartment. As all participants are obligated to finish their Dutch language course first, they are not permitted to work or to study at this moment. Some of them do have volunteering jobs.

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Recruitment procedure	Place of residence	Location of interview	Walking interview
1	Azwer	22	Male	Informal network	Roden	Participants' home	Yes
2	Ayman	23	Male	Snowballing	Roden	Participants' home	Yes
3	Mahmoud	30	Male	Snowballing	Roden	Participants' home	Yes
4	Abdul-Halim	28	Male	Snowballing	Roden	Participants' home	No
5	Yamen	23	Male	Informal network	Roden	Bar	No
6	Hevdem	30	Male	Vluchtelingenwerk	Groningen	University	Yes
7	Ferhat	24	Male	Humanitas	Groningen	Participants' home	No
8	Qasim	32	Male	Humanitas	Groningen	Participants' home	Yes
9	Welat	25	Male	Informal network	Groningen	Home of friend	Yes
10	Aziz	25	Male	Humanitas	Groningen	Participants' home	Yes

Table 1 Background information on the participants

3.3 Method of data analysis

The core of qualitative data consists of the description of data, the classification of data and trying to find out how different concepts interconnect. Qualitative research is therefore more than just describing data. We want to be able to interpret meanings and experiences to explain or understand the data that is generated (Kitchin & Tate, 2010). To be able to advance in this process, the data first needs to be edited. Hennink et al. (2011) identify three main steps of the preparation process which were followed during this research. First, a verbatim transcript was written. These transcripts capture all the spoken words, pauses and speech fillers, but is enriched by comments about non-verbal gestures, emotion and body language.

Second, the researcher might need to translate the transcript for a better understanding of its content. This is a delicate and time-consuming process. The participants in this research were not speaking in their native tongue, but were speaking English or were being translated in English. I chose not to translate the English transcripts into my own native tongue Dutch either. This way I averted further loss of rich data or unnecessary translation errors. I also felt that the inadequate use of English illustrated the difficulties of some Syrian male refugees to participate in Dutch society. However, I did alter the quotes who were transcribed in poor English in order to maintain readability in the final thesis. This was only done to strengthen the point that the participant was trying to make.

Lastly, the data should be anonymised. This is discussed broadly in the next paragraph (see 3.4 Ethical considerations), but the importance of this procedure is also crucial in the analysis phase. Identity markers have been removed so the researcher should not be able to trace back participants in the transcripts. This forces the researcher to remain true to the actual transcripts while integrating experiences and recollections that were obtained through observing and conversations that were not recorded. As a result, findings and theories are derived from the data itself (Hennink et al., 2011).

For the next phase, three transcripts were initially used to develop a codebook that functions as a framework to further analyse all transcripts (see appendix IV for consent form). Deductive codes were derived from the body of literature to maintain a structure coherent with the theoretical framework used in the research. To provide continuity, the deductive code names and families therefore correspond with the model of Scannel & Gifford (2010). However as this research is looking for experiences and perceptions of participants also inductive codes are included in the codebook. This is a process of rereading, evaluation and reflection (Hennink et al., 2011) For example many homemaking processes such as preservation of Syrian food culture were not included at first. New code names and families had to be designed to describe the unique views, explanations and experiences of the participants until a point of saturation was reached. This way the codebook lives up to expectations of good qualitative research, which suggest including both techniques to ensure theory connects to the actual data and vice versa (Hennink et al., 2011).

Atlas.ti software is used in the research to maintain an overview of all the data. As the program does not analyse data, it merely functions in providing structure and ease to make sure connections between concepts are not overlooked and forgotten. As a researcher it was extremely helpful to get an organised view of all the quotes from the data and being able to allocate a quote under different categorizations or family names. Whilst writing down the findings of this study, the “Code neighbours” function was really helpful. This allowed me to identify combinations of codes that were often used together as labels to a quote. This was relations between codes of different code families were found.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Whether doing qualitative or quantitative research, a researcher must always keep in mind the ethical issues that arise during the research process (Richards, 2015). However qualitative research is often more associated with ethical challenges due to the nature of qualitative research (Hennink et al., 2011). This paragraph discusses the ethics of this study and how harm and risks have been minimalised for the participants. Informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity are discussed in the first section of this paragraph (section 3.4.1), section 3.4.2. elaborates on the cultural barriers that have influenced this research and in the last section (section 3.4.3) the reflexivity and positionality of the researcher are discussed.

3.4.1 Informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity

Participants should be informed what the research is about before the interview starts. They must be made aware what it will mean for them to participate, in a format that is easily understandable (Hennink et al, 2011; see appendix III for consent form). In the consent form the participants were made aware that the interview is recorded. They were also informed that they could refuse the interview beforehand and could stop the interview at any moment to pause or even to cancel the interview at once. We also had an elaborate discussion on the research topic, my objectives and what is asked of them as participant in the research. In the end, based on this consent form and questions prior to the interview, the participants was able to make a voluntary, informed decision to participate in the research. During this research no participant showed hesitation in participating and they seemed eager to tell their stories.

Another aspect that is relevant to this research was the minimization of harm during the interviews (Hennink et al., 2011; Valentine, 1997). As most of the participants are just starting with their lives in the Netherlands, the interviews were conducted in a safe and comfortable place. Interviewees decided where the interviews took place. Where the interview takes place can make a difference in the data that is produced, plus a safe and familiar environment can lead to more conversational interview (Valentine, 1997). As a consequence the interviews mostly took place within the homes of the participants and in some cases a familiar environment like the university complex or a park. Some emotional moments were encountered during the interviews as we came to speak about exclusion in Dutch society, negative media coverage or feelings of discrimination. Because a lot of the participants were single men, we inevitably came to talk about families who stayed behind in the Middle East and the difficulty of finding a partner in the Netherlands. During this moment I made sure to protect their integrity and to not force them to talk about traumatic experiences by offering them comfort or the use of a break.

Additionally it is important that the participant suffers no long-term negative consequences after the research or might feel deceived in any way. Obviously I cannot be sure of any consequences at this moment, but I feel the right measures were taken to rule negative consequences out. The participants were made aware that the generated data will be treated confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes (Hennink et al., 2011; Longhurst, 2010; Martin & Flowerdew, 1997). Most of the participants have had a turbulent past in Syria and have travelled illegally completing a dangerous and hazardous trip to the Netherlands. Although these issues were not part of the research topic, we came

to talk about it during the interviews or when we were having small talk during smoking breaks, for example some of the participants were still having troubles with the IND (Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Office), but spoke freely about these problems. Others pointed out that they did not want their social network in the Netherlands to know how they lived their lives in the Netherlands as they have turned away from Islamic practices and beliefs. Taken the uncertainty into account that all participants were not granted a permanent residence permit in the Netherlands yet these were delicate situations. First of all, I pointed out that only relevant information regarding the research question will be used in the thesis as this is my focus point as a researcher. Second, I entrusted my participants that I was not going to talk about these issues with their friends or any organization that might want to inflict any harm to them.

Lastly to guarantee full confidentiality, no real names are used in this research, because anonymity of the participants is important to make sure they cannot be identified by any personal characteristics (Babbie, 2013; Longhurst, 2010). However full anonymity cannot be guaranteed as we had face-to-face meetings and walks. Just as in other qualitative researches (Hennink et al., 2011), only ten interviewees participated in the research. With such a small number of participants it is difficult to forget about faces, names and locations. Still personal information cannot be traced back to participants.

3.4.2 Working with different cultures

Cross-cultural research demands a sensitive approach due to power relations, language and translation, and cultural similarities and differences (Smith, 2010). The researcher needs to be aware that one's own culture is not set as the measure for "other" cultures (Smith, 2010). This was especially relevant as this research tries to portray the physical environment from a Syrian perspective. For this reason I was well informed prior to the interview about customs, norms and values. I visited organizations like Vluchtelingenwerk and Humanitas to find out how to approach the participants. Still I encountered differences that might have influenced the conversations and interviews as a result of my own lack of knowledge. For example in the first interviews I made a mistake of not taking off my shoes in the homes of participants which is an Arabic custom. In other occasions I refused to drink tea or smoke a cigarette without knowing that I was rude not to accept their hospitality. As we came to speak about it later, I was made aware of these customs which helped me to create a more informal environment in my later interviews.

On many occasions I encountered language and translation problems during the conversations. Not all participants spoke English or Dutch and I did not speak Arabic. As both parties were not speaking in their native tongue, I noticed that some responses were simplified, losing some of their richness and depth. In some interviews I made use of a Syrian translator, which might have led to answers and quotes that were not the personal experience of the interviewee himself. This issue was tackled by making sure that the translator was a friend of the interviewee, so that the translator was familiar with the interviewees personal stories and experiences. If my questions or the answers of the interviewee were unclear to the other person, we tried to explain it further by using more simple language or using translation programs or images on phones or examples from when we took a walk together. Sometimes words were used that were not translations of what the participants actually were saying. Context and the recordings proved to be useful to check the actual meaning of the data in the transcripts.

Regretfully not all the participants have equally contributed to the production of data. As some of them were more familiar with the English language than others, more useful data was produced during these interviews. Some of the participants played a bigger role in the research, where others in retrospect might feel excluded if they would read through this thesis. Finally, as discussed by Tuan (1991), language is a complex aspect of how places are made. Naming objects or places, written texts and informal conversations are processes that contribute to placemaking, but are often only understood in particular social and cultural contexts.

3.4.3 Positionality of the researcher

In qualitative research the researcher functions as the research instrument and therefore becomes a part of the data (Richard, 2015). The characteristics, appearance and background of the researcher have to be taken into account during data collection as well as during the data analysis (Hennink et al., 2011). So the researcher should always reflect on one's role, a process better known as the reflexivity of the researcher (Hennink et al., 2011; Longhurst, 2010; Richard, 2015). Recognising and understanding the social position of the interviewer in relation to the interviewee can be influenced by several relations of power, e.g. gender, sexuality, class or job status (Clifford et al., 2010).

In the actual interviews I did not perceive a distance between researcher and participants. I was able to connect with all even when language barriers made it difficult in doing so. The similarities and differences that were encountered both contributed to the informal conversation as we came to get familiar with each other's preferences and views. Some of the participants also questioned the way I formulated questions or why I asked particular questions. This was useful because we could speak more like equals and it also helped me to revise my interview guide. For example, during the interview with Mahmoud Azwer was translating. As Azwer was the first interviewee, my interview guide was altered after I interviewed him. When we finished the interview with Mahmoud, Azwer wanted to know why certain topics were not discussed. I did talk about these topics with Azwer, but afterwards I found these particular topics were not relevant to my research as they did not relate in any way to place attachment. He did not agree as the topics were important to him. This led to an interesting discussion in which he challenged my research methods. While I was introducing my research topic to Hevdem, he listened to me for a while before criticising my choice of words.

Hevdem (Groningen): *"Why do you use the word asylum seeker? I do not like this word. Asylum seekers are all kind of people. They don't necessarily have to be refugees. Some people request asylum to get more money. You should name us refugees, because we fled our country. It is not safe to stay in Syria. We are refugees."*

The relationship between the researcher and subject is sometimes seen as being exploitive (Martin & Flowerdew, 1997). Prior to the interviews I was aware of the fact that participants might feel inferior to me as I am Dutch and a master student. During the actual interviews I had with participants this seemed to be true in some of the conversations. Some of the participants acted a bit retained at first, but as I showed interest in previous education or occupation of the participant this uncertainty disappeared as the interview moved on. I made sure that when the actual interview started we could speak to one another more informal way.

The fact that I was conducting interviews among Syrian refugees was also appreciated. Some of the participants explicitly mentioned this during the interviews as they were happy that I as a researcher and many other researchers with me showed interests in their lives. They expressed a feeling of relief that they were cared about. Others mentioned that they liked the fact that they could finally speak to a Dutch person and could even invite a Dutch person to their house to show their gratitude. One might say that this was only to give something back to Dutch society, but I feel that this was genuinely an expression of Syrian culture. Furthermore some participants were motivated to do the interview to practice their Dutch and English or to ask me about Dutch legislation, how to start a business in the Netherlands or how to build your own house in the Netherlands. I think this was important as it bonded us during the interview and made us both feel comfortable, because these are less emotive subjects. So even though participants might not have benefitted directly from the research topic, I was also "exploited" in a way by the participants as they had their own personal agenda.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The data derived from the in-depth interviews and walking interviews illustrates what Syrian refugees encounter when rebuilding their new lives in the Netherlands. It provides information of how these people develop connections to place in a new environment, what places are seen as important or meaningful places and how behaviour influences and is influenced by placemaking processes. As this research takes on an exploratory, qualitative approach, a broad range of emotions, views and experiences were talked about during the conversations. All participants were very open to tell about their life stories as set in Syria and in the Netherlands. This led to interesting, but also emotional moments. With the participant's home often as a meeting place, I was introduced to Syrian hospitality and customs. I drank Syrian tea and coffee that I would otherwise never drink, listened to music that is not played on Dutch radio and was stuffed with Syrian pastry during these conversations. This way I could immerse myself into Syrian culture which helped me to get an understanding of daily routines and customs.

In general, the participants in this research had similar experiences with living in their neighbourhood. An important aspect is the development of social contact with other people in the neighbourhood. Some of them maintain contact with neighbours on a regular basis. They meet for coffee and tea, play videogames together or invite each other over for dinner. During these meetings they get familiar with their new environment as they hear stories and are given information about the neighbourhood. For the participants informal social contact like is difficult to develop. So despite the fact that some of them have established these contacts, all of them still feel quite lonely in their neighbourhoods. Because of different daily patterns than other residents and language barriers, they still find themselves hanging out with other refugees or family. They go to Dutch class together for six hours per week and therefore have a lot of spare time. During the day they buy their groceries, exercise and go to hang-out places in the neighbourhood. They eat and spend time together in their homes during the evening. As a consequence there are few opportunities to get into contact with locals.

The presence and proximity of amenities and services in the neighbourhood was often mentioned. For example, supermarkets and convenience stores in the neighbourhood help to foster attachment towards the neighbourhood. To fulfill in their culinary needs, Islamic butchers and Islamic supermarkets are important facilities. These are nearby for participants in the urban area of Groningen, whereas participants from Roden have to travel to gather their supplies. This has an impact on the place attachment of the participants in Groningen as well as in Roden. The importance of amenities to facilitate in religious practices was barely mentioned or not important at all. Most of the participants do not go to a mosque or a church to pray or to attend a service. They only pray in the privacy of their own homes and are very tolerant in adjusting their praying schedule.

Life in the neighbourhood is more broadly discussed in the following paragraphs. To structure all this rich data, three important themes could be derived in relation to the theoretical framework. The first paragraph 4.2 discusses the relevance of the neighbourhood and the role of weak ties in developing place attachment. Paragraph 4.3 discusses the consequences of living in an urban or rural environment and people-place relations. Lastly, paragraph 4.4 explores how Syrian refugees create a feeling of home and the impact of this process on place attachment.

4.2 Weak ties in the neighbourhood

When discussing the important and intimate places of the participants, the participants generally speak about their experiences in the neighbourhood. This makes sense as the neighbourhood scale is an important setting for developing place attachment and to construct a feeling of home (Capo, 2015; Gardner, 2011; Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Weak ties play an important role in this process, because local, social relationships are more simple to establish and to maintain due to the fact that the spatial proximity towards people offers possibilities for social contact (Henning & Lieberg, 1996).

This paragraph explores multiple facets of weak ties in the neighbourhood. First, a brief introduction is given in which the importance of the neighbourhood is stressed followed by a brief notion of what weak ties look like. Then the effect of weak ties on wellbeing is discussed. Weak ties can be associated with general feelings of happiness. Feelings of happiness can be generated as a consequence of feeling recognised by others and therefore feeling included in the social arena of the neighbourhood. Furthermore, it can provide the participants with feelings of belonging to Dutch society which strengthens their identity. The formation of a new identity in Dutch society is essential to feel at home and can improve one's wellbeing.

In the second part of this paragraph the relation between weak ties and social capital is discussed. Contact with neighbours can increase trust and familiarity amongst each other. When people are more willing to help each other out, this can benefit the neighbourhood as a whole and residents can become more attached. Individually, it provides the participant with a safety net with people who want to help him or her out. Moreover, weak ties can provide the participants with new information and opportunities. In relation to integration it is important to learn Dutch culture and language. Weak ties can help in this process as one can practice Dutch easily by talking and intercultural contact stimulates the exchange of different cultural norms and values. This increases the familiarity with place and fosters place attachment.

Home making processes should not only be associated with just the physical structure of one's house. This should be researched in a wider context. Feeling at home, feeling safe or the ability to move around freely is just as much based on social, cultural and natural aspects on a community level (Capo, 2015). The participants stress the importance of sidewalks in the neighbourhood, places such as supermarkets and playgrounds or porches, balconies and stairwells closer to house. These findings substantiate the statements made by Gardner (2011), who suggests the importance of natural neighbourhood networks to develop and maintain social relationships. It also reinforces the argument made by Scannel & Gifford (2010) that the social environment of place is an important factor in developing place attachment. The physical aspect of place is less important. As a result, these are the places where the participants feel they come into contact with the host society as it is perfectly acceptable to start a conversation in these third places. It provides them and people in general with a chance to develop weak ties.

There are only few references towards home places and second places such as school and work environments in relation to informal contact with locals. Often work and school are places where somebody can meet new people without putting in much effort as they are bound to go to these places. However for the participants, these places are essential to keep in touch with strong ties such as friends or family and formal ties such as teachers and contact persons of the municipality.

The importance of developing and maintaining weak ties in the neighbourhood to foster place attachment is mentioned by the participants for a variety of reasons and the social encounters that facilitate weak ties occur at different places. For the participants in this research, weak ties are the informal conversations with people in the neighbourhood. These conversations mostly take place in the staircases of their apartments, the sidewalks in the neighbourhood or at locations such as supermarkets, butchers and places to hang out. They also take on different forms in this study. It can be based on informing about one's wellbeing, chit-chat regarding the weather or retrieving new

information by asking directions or particular neighbourhood customs. Weak ties are informal social relations of an open, accessible and temporary character (Granovetter, 1973; Kohlbacher et al., 2015).

First, in the interviews the participants seemed cheerful when they were greeted or engaged in small talk by locals. They talk about social encounters with neighbours with much enthusiasm. The walking interviews proved to be a great addition to clarify this aspect, because we would actually come across other people. During the interview Ayman mentioned these encounters as an important aspect of his place attachment towards his place of residence Roden. During our walk through his neighbourhood, we saw an elder couple who greeted us and wished us a pleasant day. After they passed us, Ayman smiled and said to me: "this is what I mean", in which he referred to a statement he made during the interview.

Ayman (Roden): *"I really like my town Roden. All the people who are living here are very nice to me. Every time I am walking here in Roden, all the people are speaking to me (...) I don't like Groningen. People are not interested in me and not talking to me. In Roden people are interested in me, so I like walking to the supermarket or the park."*

As Ayman is relatively capable of speaking English with Dutch people, he can actually engage in a conversation. Some of the participants talk about encounters in public spaces with people from the Netherlands where no words are spoken, but where contact is only made by simple gestures as described by Kohlbacher et al. (2015) as 'nodding relationships' (p.449). Aziz for example mentions that his mother is always being talked to by their neighbour. While she does not understand what he is saying to her, Aziz says that his mom is just happy that he keeps trying to talk to her, despite that fact that he and his mother have been living there for only three weeks.

Aziz (Groningen): *"Did you see my neighbour? He is always sitting in front of his door. He is so nice, because he always ask me how I feel and if I need something. He also gives us food sometimes. My mother she doesn't speak English or Dutch, but he always greets her or waves to her! I like that, that is very good!"*

Social interactions as illustrated by Aziz and Ayman can provide newcomers such as refugees with a feeling of being recognised. To be included like this means that one exists as he or she is there at that place at that particular time (Kohlbacher et al., 2015). This can generate feelings of happiness among both which will ultimately foster wellbeing. These forms of contact also help the refugee in building a new identity. In an unfamiliar environment the refugee can feel out of place, which can result in a loss of identity (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Developing place attachment based on weak ties can provide the newcomer with a feeling that he or she matters and therefore has an identity (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996).

Additionally, on a community level, local, social contact with neighbours can also trigger processes of inclusion in the neighbourhood. When included in the social environment within the neighbourhood, refugees might develop a sense of community or a sense of belonging (Giuliani, 2003). This can stimulate the feeling of belonging to a group and feeling part of a community. The neighbourhood then becomes an important place for an individual as this is where he or she feels at home or where the group feels safe (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). This is characteristic for the place attachment Qasim developed towards his neighbourhood. He explicitly states that the physical environment where he resides, is not to his liking. He lives in a more deprived neighbourhood in the city of Groningen with relatively few amenities nearby. However when I asked him if he wanted to move to a different part of the city, he clearly said he did not because he feels he belongs to the neighbourhood.

Interviewer: *"Would you rather move to a different place where the environment is more beautiful?"*

Qasim (Groningen): *“No not anymore. When I moved here, I was really unhappy. There was nothing here. I was painting, laying down laminate. A lot of work. But now I have made many friends here. So we have a barbecue together. Sometimes I go to market or museum with neighbours from downstairs or ‘there’ (across the street). I have many friends now here and now this is my home. Also my neighbours say to me: Qasim, I like you!”*

Feelings of belonging to a community are strongly dependent on the weak ties in the social environment of the neighbourhood (Giuliani, 2003). In the experience of most of the participants these inclusive processes are a result of initiatives of organizations and well willingness of the residents in the neighbourhood. As a consequence, there is spatial variation in the reception and integration of refugees, which reinforces the critique on the spatial dispersal policy as discussed by Larsen et al. (2008) and the crucial role of locality as suggested by Balassiano & Maldonado (2014). This will be more broadly discussed in the next paragraph which explores the role of urban and rural communities (see 4.2 Rural vs Urban).

Next to direct linkages with wellbeing, weak ties relate to social capital which influences wellbeing (Poortinga, 2012) and place attachment (Kohlbacher et al., 2015). Social capital is found to be a broad concept of different processes that stimulate community resilience and social cohesion on the neighbourhood scale (Nannestad et al., 2008; Poortinga, 2012). The different forms of social capital, bonding and bridging capital (Putnam, 2007), can be traced back in the findings of this study. This has influence on the place attachment as the degree of social capital determines whether a community is able to sustain itself (Nannestad et al., 2008; Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014). The participants have to develop social capital in a new environment, so during the interviews this was often mentioned.

This is illustrated by Ayman who lives in an apartment with different tenants. When I asked Ayman about the building in Roden he was living in and if he had any contact with neighbours, he replied that he is very happy with his home environment right now. The first thing that came to mind when I asked why, was that he really appreciated the fact that people were willing to do favours for each other to help. This is a consequence of social encounters on the stairs and the gallery. By saying hello and showing interest in each other, the residents become familiar with the other tenants. Together they build social capital by developing a system to organise themselves.

Ayman (Roden): *“Yes I am living in -name of street- and this building is special to me, because there are many people who are old or ill. Nobody is making dinner alone, because a lot of times people are making food together, but only for this building alone. I am alone and my neighbour is an old woman about 92 years old. You know sometimes she is asking me: ‘Please do you have something like toilet paper or something else like food or cigarettes. So I help her out. Why I help her out? I help her out because your people also help me and I must therefore help you. I can’t refuse to do nothing, because your people here are not doing something wrong to me. Everybody is helping me. That means I have contact with my neighbours. I talk to my neighbours when I see them. Every time when I go to the supermarket to buy things, I ask my neighbours if they need anything. And then I will buy it for them. Sometimes I am ill. I can’t go to the supermarket. Then I ask my neighbour for help.”*

The way that the tenants in the building of Ayman take care of each other, makes him feel at home. He feels safe as people are looking after him and he feels proud when he can do something in return to help others. He feels in place as he feels he belongs to this small community. He seems eager to tell this story which emphasises his affection towards the place. This is a form of bridging capital as people with different background and interests find a common goal (Nannestad et al., 2008). This can also be

qualified as bonding capital as they are all residents of the same building. They are a group of people different from others and have developed a small community (Poortinga, 2012).

But more often bridging social capital plays an explicit role with regard to place attachment. The presence of weak ties in the neighbourhood functions as bridging capital between refugees on one side and local people on the other side (Granovetter, 1973; Nannestad et al., 2008). Everyday communication can lead to new access of information, knowledge and eventually job opportunities (Kohlbacher et al., 2015). Social capital relates to higher levels of trust and safety and thus functions as a fundament for society (Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). Place attachment can stimulate social capital. When someone feels strongly attached to a particular place, it is more likely that this individual will put in more effort to preserve the place he or she is attached to (Jupp, 2008; Poortinga, 2012). Residents will be more eager to collectively make up for a better living environment (Manzo & Perkins, 2006). In turn, the effects of social capital in turn influence the degree of place attachment (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). The act of making one's environment more safe, more beautiful or more familiar can evoke emotional attachment to this place (Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015).

Furthermore, the data in this study shows the relevance of local, social contact to overcome the distance between young Syrian refugee males and local people. Participants mention that the distance is often a result of language barriers and cultural differences. In their eyes their integration procedure in the neighbourhood is being disturbed as a consequence. The inclusionary and exclusionary aspects experienced through everyday contact influence their sense of place.

To give an example, Yamen is expressing his concern about the social arena in his neighbourhood as it is very difficult for him to develop and maintain social relationships. He is not bonding with his place of residence, because he feels lonely and excluded. He experiences difficulties in having conversations with people. He loves to play soccer, because playing soccer gave him status in Syria as he was pretty good. In the morning he plays soccer alone or sometimes with a friend, but he leaves when the Dutch children are finished with school. He feels scared as he does not understand what they say to him. He worries that if he cannot practice his Dutch with locals, he will not make it past his naturalization exam and this haunts him every day. Weak ties offer opportunities to practice his language skills, but he feels that both sides shy away from social contact.

Yamen (Roden): *“When I am going to the supermarket in Roden, I am asking in your language what is the price? Sometimes I don't understand and people in the supermarket don't understand me. When I am walking on the street I greet people, but I am not talking to them. I know now something of your language, but you know if I want to learn everything I must have contact with people from your country. Because in school you learn something, but you learn best if I talk to your people. My friends only speak Arabic, no Dutch. If I have a Dutch friend, he can learn me one or two words every day. Then I can speak with people on the street. You know... to practice.”*

It is crucial to understand Dutch language in order to be included in Dutch society. Gaining the language skills is a priority to placemaking as place attachment is mainly about conversations and other forms of social interaction (Powell & Risbeth, 2012; Tuan, 1991). All participants agree on the fact that they can learn the language best when talking to Dutch people in the streets, supermarkets or other places that give room to small talk.

Language is an important aspect of preserving culture (Tuan, 1991). Cultural norms, values and customs are also exchanged as a consequence of conversations between refugees and the host society. This is an informal way to get familiar with each other to share experiences and views. This will accelerate the social integration process (Kohlbacher et al., 2015). During the interviews some of the participants discussed their experiences of spontaneous encounters with locals that eventually led to a quick peak in Dutch or regional culture. Welat became familiar with regional culture in the province of Groningen in the Netherlands as he was greeted to by someone who was passing by.

Welat (Groningen): *“When I walk in my neighbourhood I say ‘hoi’ (hello) to everybody on the sidewalk. People say to me ‘Hoi, hoe gaat het?’ (Hello, how are you doing?). One time a person here said ‘moi’. At first I did not understand what this person was saying, now I know this also means hello. (...) I like this very much, because I learn your culture. I need to speak to more people if I want to learn language and culture.”*

‘Moi’ is the regional equivalent of the Dutch word ‘hoi’ which means hello. It is a typical way for people in Groningen to say hello to one another. It is therefore an expression of regional culture and keeps the existing regional culture alive. The fact that the local guy used this expression is also an example of including the ‘other’. This little part of knowledge of Groninger culture helped Welat to feel more familiar with his neighbourhood and at home in Groningen.

Not all local, social contact is positive as referred to by Hevdem. He remembers an incident when he went to the store with a friend and got into contact with a Dutch woman. She got a bit mad at his friend as he was expressing willingness to help. This attentive behaviour is explained by Hevdem as typical for Syrian social conventions. He was not yet familiar with a more individualistic society as we often see in the Netherlands, in which some people may reject this kind of behaviour as they are not used to it.

Hevdem (Groningen): *“My friend is a really kind guy, we were still in the refugee camp in Delfzijl and we went to the supermarket. We just wanted to buy stuff. So there is an old lady and she was carrying bags which looked heavy. My friend wanted to help her, because that is normal in Syria. She didn’t accept anything and she started talking in Dutch. I didn’t really understand. But we understood later in the refugee camp that it is impolite to do such things in Netherlands. It means that she cannot depend on herself. I don’t need help anyone. Okay as you want. But in Syria it means respect to old people to do it. It is a kind of misunderstanding. He didn’t mean anything bad to her. He just wanted to help.”*

Just as with language, these kind of cultural differences is being taught to the participants by a teacher during class. However all participants feel that intercultural contact is the best way to learn both the Dutch language and to get familiar with local or Dutch culture. For them, experiences as a consequence of social encounters stick more easily in the mind than learning from textbooks and hypothetical situations.

To sum up, the different quotes in this paragraph illustrate both the necessity of weak ties and the difficulty of developing them on a neighbourhood scale. Weak ties can provide individuals with a general sense of wellbeing. Especially to newcomers in a neighbourhood, it can be a pleasant feeling to feel included in a community. Informal social contact creates trust and safety amongst residents, which can develop a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood.

The degree of bridging social capital in a neighbourhood determines in what way residents can find common ground. In this process, weak ties are helpful in removing the barriers between different groups of people in search of a more self-sustaining community. The interplay between these different concepts can improve people’s affection towards place.

4.3 Rural and urban placemaking

The next theme concerns indications that Syrian male refugees have different styles of placemaking in rural areas when compared with urban areas. The findings in this study suggest that opportunities for and limitations to placemaking are different between the urban area of Groningen and the more rural town of Roden. Almost all of the participants give preference to living in the city of Groningen. This is understandable for the ones who actually live in Groningen, but most of the participants living in Roden express a preference towards living in a large city.

Three different aspects between living in urban and rural environment are discussed in this paragraph. In the first part, the different time geographies between refugees and local residents within their neighbourhood is covered. The participants who would like to leave Roden to go to Groningen point out that they often feel excluded in their living environment. In the current stage of their integration process they are not allowed to work or study. Dutch people of the same age as the refugees (aged 22-32) however do go to work or school during the day. The opportunities to walk into each other or to meet with each other are therefore small as they do not go to the same places at the same time.

A second aspect is the preference of living in the city based on personality and familiarity. When the participants were living in Syria, they all lived in large cities with, back then, inhabitant numbers ranging between 100.000 and 2.3 million. They enjoyed living in an urban environment which has shaped their character into urbanophiles (Félonneau, 2004). They like crowded streets and the noise that goes hand in hand with city life which reminds them of home. This is important for refugees, because refugees often search for similar environments as the environments they were forced to leave (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Scannel & Gifford, 2010) Groningen therefore is more appealing to the participants who live in Groningen and those who want to move to Groningen.

The third and final aspect discussed in this paragraph, are the possibilities and constraints to undertake activities during the day. All participants express feelings of sadness, because they feel they take money away from Dutch citizens and don not contribute themselves. The feeling of being a burden to society, make the participants feel unhappy and slows down the process of shaping a new identity in the Netherlands (see also Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Nannestad et al., 2008). According to the participants, Groningen offers more chances of making oneself useful compared with Roden.

The participants in Roden experience little activity in streets of the town and feel that Roden's town life is boring. This can be explained as Roden is characterised as a commuter town by a liveability examination by the municipality (STAMM CMO, 2012). This means that on working days residents travel back and forth to larger cities nearby such as Groningen and Roden. When they return back home, they often stay inside during the evening. Local supermarkets often function as a third place (Gardner, 2011) to meet, but people who have no occupation during the day often shop for groceries in the morning or afternoon while working people seem to do their shopping later in the afternoon. This minimises the chances for the participants to meet with other young adults that have an occupation.

The same applies to students, who in general are away to college during the day. According to the same liveability examination by the municipality, Roden suffers from a "brain drain". They see a lot of young adults leaving Roden to further educate themselves in cities that accommodate universities (STAMM CMO, 2012). As the participants are aged between twenty and thirty years old, they feel disheartened as they miss the possibilities to be around their Dutch peers. During the interview with Azwer he mentioned that he is really eager to meet Dutch people of his age. He is twenty-two years old and he only comes across people who are older or younger than he is. He knows there are people of his age living in his neighbourhood, but different time geographies prevent social encounters between them.

Azwer (Roden): *"I want to live in a city, because I am still young at this moment. I'm not to be out and live here in this village. Because when you are young, you want to be where*

people are. People are in the city and there we can talk more. You know, maybe we can make friends there also. But here in Roden I don't see anybody that is my age. People here in Roden are old or very young. Old people are always inside the house. I have neighbours here in my apartment building. We are almost of the same age I think. We only say hello, because they are always working. I don't see them often being home."

When people of the same age as the participants are away, the people who stay behind are older people. Due to mobility and health constraints older people show specific daily routines and behaviour opposed to the routines of young adults (Lager et al., 2015). The different groups of people living in Roden therefore have different time geographies. They are rarely in the same place at the same time, which limits the chances of the participants to interact. They do not meet at bus stops as they do not go to the same places, they do not meet in the supermarket and they are constrained in their opportunities (see Hägerstrand, 1970). For example, they lack the financial resources to meet other people in bars or café's.

Off course this is no different from participants in Groningen. However, the city of Groningen offers more places to hang out without any extra costs. Welat for example often goes to the city centre when he has spare time. There is a hangout spot on one of the main squares of the city, which he describes as the stairs. Here he meets fellow refugees, but there are a lot of young people hanging out there to have contact with.

Interviewer: *"What kind of activities do you undertake during the day?"*

Welat (Groningen): *"First I go to the supermarket for groceries. Then for one or two hours I study. In the afternoon I take my bike or go on foot to the city centre. Sometimes I go alone and see if there are other people. I often go the stairs on the big square in the centre. Then I just sit there and watch the people. I try to speak to Dutch boys and girls who are also there. I have friends here in Groningen from Syria, but I don't like to friends with only Syrian people. I want friends like you, Dutch people."*

The participants in Groningen seem to experience less disadvantages of the different time geographies between refugees and people who work or study. Groningen is a relatively large city and being a student city, it accommodates a lot of students. These students have more similar daily rhythms to the refugees as students in general have more spare time during the day (Onderzoek & Statistiek Groningen, 2012). Many neighbourhoods in Groningen accommodate students, which makes Groningen a more lively environment (I-Graduate, 2014). Moreover, a lot of these students come from abroad which provides Groningen with a more international appearance (I-Graduate, 2014). As a result people are familiar with speaking English in supermarkets, café's or on the street.

Aziz has only been living in Groningen for one year now, but he says he is fond of Groningen already. He regrets the fact that he is not able to study yet in a Dutch university, but he made an arrangement so he is allowed to enter the library of the university. He spends his time here reading to prepare himself for the moment he is allowed to start with his masters. As the library is positioned in the city centre, he often goes for a walk when he is tired of reading. I asked him why he likes to go the library so much. From his reply I understand that the library is important for reading, but that the environment surrounding the library is equally important. The streets surrounding the library are crowded with people during the day and this atmosphere really pleases him.

Aziz (Groningen): *"Sometimes when I study, I do not want to read anymore. I leave the library to go walking or to buy something. Sometimes I do nothing and I sit on a bench on the street. There are a lot of different people. Young and old, but also many people from outside the Netherlands. It is okay to speak English to somebody on the street. People understand English here. So after walking or talking with people, I feel that I can read again. Then I go back to the library."*

The second indication that most of the participants feel more at home in a city, is based on references during the interviews towards experiences and memories of living in cities in Syria. When we were talking about attachment to places in the Netherlands, this was often compared to places in Syria. Aside from Ayman and Mahmoud, the participants love the atmosphere of a city, because it reminds them of their home city in Syria (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). According to Félonneau (2004), people love city life or they hate it. He distinguishes urbanophiles and urbanophobes to illustrate how people's character and their preference towards living in an urban or an rural environment relates to each other. These preferences came forward during the interview with Mahmoud, while Azwer was translating. Azwer thinks Mahmoud is more of an urbanophobe because of his distant character.

Interviewer: *"Azwer told me he would rather live in Groningen than in Roden. How do you feel about Roden?"*

Mahmoud (Roden): *"No, I don't want to live in Groningen. There are too much people and a lot of noise. That's not good. When I was living in Damascus, it was the same. It needs to be quiet where you live. The sun shines into my living room here and the garden is nice. I want to stay here. I like my house."*

Azwer (Roden): *"Mahmoud is more of a quiet person. He loves a quiet life, not a loud one. He doesn't like being around many people, maybe because he is shy. (...) I want to move to Groningen. More people to talk to, more shops, more friends. Roden is boring for me."*

For Abdul-Halim the memories of the social environment in the streets of Aleppo play an important role in developing place attachment in his new place residence Roden. This is typical behaviour for refugees according to Mazumdar & Mazumdar (2016), who state that people tend to settle and bond with places that have similar features as the place they were forced to abandon. Abdul-Halim points out during the interview that Syrian people are not used to desolate streets in their home cities in Syria. He is really missing the activity in the streets that he is familiar with. He describes this as a Middle-Eastern culture where people meet on the streets, interact with each other and have fun together. When he thinks about how this was before in Syria, he feels out of place in his new environment and finds it hard to emotionally bond with his current place of residence.

Abdul-Halim (Roden): *"My neighbourhood in Roden is boring. There are no people on the streets during the day. I don't speak with any Nederlanders (Dutch citizens), because they stay in their houses after 6 PM. During the day, they work. When I do see people in my neighbourhood, I only see old people. They cannot speak English and they don't say hello. Therefore I don't like my neighbourhood. I want to speak with people who have the same age as I have. I think this is normal (...) we are not used to these empty streets. Talking to all the people on the street is typical Middle Eastern culture. But in the Netherlands I always have to look for social contact, I always have to look for a conversation. How can I learn Nederlands (Dutch)? How can I do it? I have very little time left to become a Nederlander."*

Where Abdul-Halim was talking about the social environment of living in cities in Syria, Hevdem sees similarities between the city of Groningen and the physical environment of his former place of residence Damascus. When I asked him about his favourite place in Groningen, he instantly drew a parallel with the physical environment he was living in Damascus. It seems like Hevdem is bonding with his new place of residence as it reminds him of pleasant memories in the past. This is an example of place reconstruction behaviour to develop place attachment (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Familiarity with the local environment helps newcomers to feel at home more quickly (Lewicka, 2011).

Hevdem (Groningen): *“The most beautiful place for me in Groningen is the city centre. I’m talking about the Vismarkt and the Grote Markt (main squares in the city of Groningen). I guess these are really nice places. For me it looks like an ancient, historic place. I love this type of cities. As I said I was living in Damascus and this is kind of an ancient place too. Damascus and Groningen are cities where you have many interesting places.”*

The final section in this paragraph focuses on the opportunities that the living environments offer to make the participants feel useful. The dissatisfaction that some of the participants Roden display, has an impact on their wellbeing and the transformation of a new identity in the Netherlands (see also Capó, 2015; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016). All participants explicitly mentioned feeling like a burden to Dutch society during their first arrival to the Netherlands. Some felt like an intruder who acts lazy and profits from tax money on the expense of Dutch citizens. Not feeling like a full-fledged citizen lowers their self-esteem and limits their freedom of movement as they feel uncomfortable going to certain places (Kohlbacher et al., 2015). Due to authority constraints (Hägerstrand, 1970) it is difficult for them to make themselves useful during the day and to develop similar time geographies as other citizens. They are not allowed to do any kind of work or to study in their first three years as a permit holder as they first have to finish their language courses (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016). Confronted with the busy schedules of their Dutch neighbours and friends they develop a feeling of inferiority (Lager et al., 2015).

The participants living in Groningen seem to take up a new role in society more easily. They mention multiple initiatives which enable them to make themselves useful. Ferhat who is living in Groningen, considers himself lucky as he is offered to do some voluntary work for Humanitas Groningen during the period that he is not allowed to work or study. This organization often employs refugees to help out with their work. For Ferhat, this allows him to build up confidence and regain feelings of self-respect. He feels more happy now, because he feels less ashamed.

Ferhat (Groningen): *“As a refugee when you try to meet people what do you say? I am a refugee from Syria and I do nothing. This is not a nice feeling, because people are working and pay taxes. As I am a refugee, I take a part of this tax money. It gives me the feeling that I am a burden. Therefore I must try to do something. Now I have a volunteering job with Humanitas, because I can speak English and Arabic. First, I am able to help my people. The Syrian people. Second, I participate in society. Now when I meet people outside, I can tell them I also work.”*

Apart from the Islamic supermarket that Aziz wanted me to see, we also went to a particular store during our walk. This seemed to be a shop for second-hand products, not only meant for refugees, but for people in general. For example, people can take home books, cutlery, electronics, cloths and furniture. The owner does not want anything in return. He trusts the people that if they do not need the products anymore, they return them to the store.

For Aziz, this store is an important place. He got into contact with the owner during his search for a couch. Although he did not find a couch in the store, he was surprised by the books that were displayed in the store. He loves to read and was really happy when he realised the books were free to take home. When we were standing in front of the store, he told me why this place is special to him and that he often goes here because it brings back positive emotions (see also Giuliani, 2003).

Aziz (Groningen): *“This is the shop I was telling you about. It does not look beautiful, but that does not matter. I go to this place now a lot. I told you there are many books here and I can read them at home. If I am finished or if the book is boring, I give it back to the shop. Now I know the owner, we drink coffee sometimes here. Sometimes I go the shop with other refugee people, when they need anything. Then I can help them and translate their words. I think the owner is also happy with me.”*

To sum up, the findings in this paragraph relate to the argument made by Nannestad et al. (2008), who question whether refugees should be dispersed in both rural and urban settings throughout the country. Different time geographies in Roden prevent social encounters between refugees and their Dutch peers from happening. They feel less attached to their living environment as they feel excluded. The participants in Groningen seem to connect more to Dutch peers, because of the social environment of a student city.

Furthermore, the desire that most of the participants express to live in the city of Groningen seems to be a result of feeling accustomed to city life. All of the participants were living in urban environments in Syria, which has developed this urban preference. It seems like place reconstruction behaviour is an important aspect in developing place attachment in their new living environment. This is illustrated by the references they make about their former places of residence based on memories and experiences.

Finally, according to the participants living in Groningen, the city offers more chances to develop activities during the day. By making themselves useful, the wellbeing of these participants is secured. The feeling that they contribute to society, provides them with a better self-image and strengthens their identity. As a consequence they are more optimistic about finding a place in Dutch society.

4.4 Taste of home

According to the interviews, walks and the opportunity to take a look inside the homes of the participants, different homemaking rituals and practices could be identified. Some homemaking practices were not often mentioned, while one might have expected these practices to be important based on the literature. For example, there are only few references of religious practices. The participants were all Muslim which would suggest that a mosque or even a church would be an important place (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004). This is not found in the data of this study as most of them practice their religion at home if they pray at all. The symbolic value of goods such as ornaments and objects is suggested in multiple articles and by the participants themselves (Dowling & Mee, 2007; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Meijering & van Hoven, 2003). The absence of these goods are mentioned by the participants as they arrived to the Netherlands with no possessions at all. During the interviews however, the participants did not demonstrate any emotional value to these kind of goods.

One aspect of Syrian culture proved to be essential in the lives of all the Syrian refugees studied in this research. All of them emphasised the role of Syrian food. Food from home is associated with different practices and (religious) rituals that together create the feeling of an ideal home (Law, 2001; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Meijering & van Hoven, 2003). As found in this set of data, the importance of preserving a Syrian food culture comprises different aspects. First, the social aspect of cooking can be associated with the act of cooking together and being around family and friends. These get-togethers can raise emotional conversations and intimate moments. By telling stories or sharing images they bring back memories of the past in Syria and feelings of pride.

Second, cooking is associated with specific rituals and acts. The Islamic dietary laws necessitate food to be Halal. This is coupled with cleanliness and efforts to visit specific amenities and services such as Islamic supermarkets. These rituals and acts provide the participants with a familiar structure of home and make it more easy to build up their lives in a new environment (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Meijering & van Hoven, 2003)

First, all of the participants made clear the importance of eating together. This was what they are used to back in Syria, where they would have long table dinners with friends, neighbours and family. As single young men, they live alone in the Netherlands, so the social aspect of sharing a meal is a way to be around other people. During the interviews, it became clear that most of the time they eat together with friends and relatives. They do the shopping together and then go to someone's house to prepare and eat dinner. This is mainly a social affair and illustrates the bonding qualities of food between refugees in general (see also Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016; Meijering & van Hoven, 2003).

Preparing and eating dinner together is based on certain social conventions and rituals in Syria according to the participants. In his house in Roden, Ayman was reminded of how rituals give shape and meaning to different parts of the house. The main difference in his house are the features of the kitchen area. In their apartments in the Netherlands, the kitchen area is often integrated in the main living room or in a small corridor of the house, which makes it quite small and as a consequence loses its social function (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016).

Ayman (Roden): *"In my house in Syria we have a room where we would cook together. This is a big room, because we are all helping. Then there is another room where we eat. After dinner there is another room where we can sit down. Here we drink coffee or tea, smoke and talk. But in Holland, I have only one big room. In this room I have a small place for cooking. Whenever I am with friends, this is too small, because we do not fit in this area together. I don't mind this now, but this is different. It's not the same as in Syria. Now I'm cooking by myself. When I'm finished I call my friends to come over and eat."*

The comment made by Ayman illustrates the relevance of social interaction in relation to food. Furthermore, it also shows how cultural routines when it comes to food, give meaning to one's house and develop place attachment. For Ayman it is difficult to feel at home at his current place. He

experiences difficulties to develop an emotional bond to his house, because in his mind the house he lives in does not represent a home environment.

In general, all participants have joyful and cheerful memories when discussing family dinners in Syria as they gave notice of a different set of emotions. For them eating Syrian food and dining together in the Netherlands with fellow Syrian refugees, seems to take them back to these moments in Syria and makes them feel happy. For Qasim, Syrian cuisine is familiar and this is something he feels comfortable with. The smell and the taste of the food make him happy as this is the food he likes and is raised with in Syria.

Qasim (Groningen): *“I don’t know how to prepare Dutch food. I only know how to cook Syrian food. Just as I did with my family before. I cannot cook anything else, because it is not the same. The taste and smell is different. Syrian food is more spicy and tasty than Dutch food. So I am always very happy when I eat Syrian food, because it tastes very good.”*

With most of them I could also sense a feeling of pride. They seemed eager to tell more about these habits and during the conversations it became clear that their spirits were lifted because of this topic. Some of the participants informed me about their family recipes and allowed me to try on of their pastries or other kinds of food, because they wanted me to know how great their food tastes. During the daily routines of cooking a meal, these positive emotions help the participants to adapt in a new environment (see also Law, 2001; Meijering & van Hoven, 2003). Azwer for example reacted really enthusiastically when we came to talk about Syrian food. He offered me Syrian pastry called *basbousa* and when he noticed that I liked it, he started to list all the dishes that he would like to make for me in the future.

Azwer (Roden): *“Okay, next time when you are in my house, I am going to cook for you. I will make bread for you that is called like my grandma, Maria. Maria is very nice. It is filled with meat, onion and tomatoes. Do you like to barbecue? I can make Syrian chicken or lamb on the barbecue for you. This is with many herbs, a recipe from my father. I will also make fattoush for you. It is something like a salad with aubergine (‘eggplant’). I think you will really like it.”*

Yamen displayed intense emotional feelings associated with eating together. During a period of one year in the Netherlands he was dining alone. This made him feel unhappy. He is very explicit in the fact that he wants to return to Syria as soon as there is peace. As a consequence, he seems to make little effort in developing connections with the host society and, according to himself, he suffers from homesickness. When I asked him if he is sad that he cannot eat with his family anymore, he felt really nostalgic about the times that he sat down with his family to eat together. However, after he got into touch with some more male refugees from Syria, they started going to the supermarket together and eat together. These social events helped him eventually in feeling happy in the Netherlands.

Interviewer: *“Do you feel sad that you cannot eat together with your family anymore?”*

Yamen (Roden): *“Actually I quite miss this habit from Syria. I am used to eating with my whole family. We were always eating together, every day. But now I am living alone and I am eating alone. I got used to this over time as I feel that eating alone is part of life here in the Netherlands and I have to follow these rules” (...) “Eating alone is not really a problem for me, but sometimes I want to eat with other people. Now I invite more people to my place and I will prepare dinner for them. Sometimes I invite my neighbour. Just to try to see if they would try Syrian cuisine and if they like it. There are two guys from Syria that I know here in Roden. We cook for each other. You know, my heart is in Syria. By eating I kind of get a feeling of home.”*

These emotions rise as a consequence of successfully transferring cognitive ideas and memories from the past to the present. Food is a tangible form of cultural continuity (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2012). The symbolic meaning of maintaining an ethnic cuisine strengthens one's own identity and anchors them in a new environment as they have lost material culture (Law, 2001). Their identity becomes rooted in food (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016). When eating together with other Syrian people, their bonds are reinforced as they share the same group values and provides them with a sense of belonging (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2012; Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

In addition, the Islamic supermarkets serve as venues for social interactions between people of the Muslim community together with the mosque and Middle-Eastern restaurants. These stores are a perfect example of a third place as suggested by Gardner (2011; see theoretical framework 2.5.1). It's a accessible place outside the home and work environment, where informal contact is easily made. As Turkish people have been living in the Netherlands for decades now, the Islamic supermarkets are often run by Turkish people. When Hevdem illustrates the social aspects of shopping in Islamic supermarkets, he therefore uses the term Turkish supermarket.

Hevdem (Groningen): *"Syrian refugees try to look for Syrian or Islamic communities just to share opinions about specific Arabic topics. Therefore they go to the mosque to meet with all the Islamic or Syrian people here in the Netherlands. However, the mosque is not always open. The Turkish shop is also a way to meet the people. Sometimes for refugees it is difficult to talk to Dutch people about this. When he or she goes to the Turkish shop this is no problem" (...) "Have you ever been to a Turkish shop? Sometimes it takes a really long time to buy things, because people are talking and talking about a lot of different things."*

For the participants in Groningen Islamic butchers and supermarket are right around the corner. For Aziz, an Islamic supermarket is only three blocks away. Apart from the convenience of having a supermarket nearby, Aziz likes the fact that the store draws Islamic people from different parts of the city towards this place. As a result, it is often crowded with people and this pleases him as there is always something going on around the supermarket. According to Aziz, if he comes across somebody in the streets of Damascus, he is obliged to talk to this person and inform about his or her wellbeing. It is considered rude not to do this, even if he is in a hurry or does not even know this person too well. A quick visit to the supermarket, therefore is often accompanied by conversations.

Aziz (Groningen): *"Sometimes we forget to buy ingredients. My mother is a bit old, but the supermarket is close. Then she can go there, but more often she asks me to go to the supermarket. I don't mind. I'm happy to do this (...) the supermarket is always very busy. Many people from different places. People are inside and outside. They are talking, sometimes about war, sometimes about family. Then I say hello and they say hello back to me. They say 'Hello Aziz, how are you?' and then I say 'Fine... thank you, how are you?'. We talk about many things and after I buy the ingredients for my mother."*

Aziz showed me the way to the store during our walk. As Aziz mentioned in the quote above, it was crowded in front of the store when we came close to it. It was quite warm that day, so people were sitting outside drinking tea. It was nice to see how the men who were sitting outside greeted Aziz when he approached them. After he introduced me, we were instantly offered to drink a cup of tea with them. After we sat down, they immediately started to talk to each other again. This is another example that illustrates the social aspect of cooking food from home (see also Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016).

Finally, the Islamic supermarkets and butchers are of great significance to the participants in providing resources to preserve this food culture. Muslims attach value to a specific slaughtering process of animals called Halal. An animal is blessed before it is sacrificed to Muslims. Although Dutch

supermarkets have enlarged their line of Halal products over the years, participants feel the need to visit Islamic supermarkets and butchers. Some comment that they do not trust the meat in Dutch supermarkets to be really Halal or feel it is more expensive to buy Halal meat outside Islamic shops. Another advantage of these Islamic supermarkets is that they have a broad selection of produce from the Middle East. For instance, they are able to buy cookies, coffee, soft drink, spices and tableware that they know from back home. These aspects make these stores familiar and therefore meaningful places (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016).

As stated above, Groningen offers multiple Islamic supermarkets. Roden however, does not accommodate these kind of facilities, so Muslims living in Roden have to travel to Groningen or the nearby town of Leek. As the participants in this research do not own a car and thus have to rely on public transport, they have to put in some effort to obtain Arabic products and Halal meat. Public transport is expensive so these trips have a significant impact on their income from social welfare. As a solution, Mahmoud and his friends make arrangements to go to the Islamic supermarket on separate turns. This way they are provided with their desired produce and make less costs. These efforts that the participants have to take, emphasise how important and meaningful Islamic supermarkets and butchers are to them (Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

Mahmoud (Roden): *“We only want Halal meat. We go the butcher mostly in Leek or in Groningen. But the bus is expensive. That’s a big problem for us here. So when I go to Leek or Groningen, I buy ten kilos of meat. This is not only for me. I give two kilos to Azwer, maybe 2 kilos to my other friend and the rest I put in the freezer. When we run out of meat, then my friend goes to the butcher. Then he also buys meat for me. This is how we do it”.*

To summarise, the food culture of the country of origin can play a relevant role in finding one’s place in a new host society. As a newcomer to society, the aspect of eating together is essential as most of the participants have travelled to the Netherlands alone. During the conversations that arise from getting together or general discussions about food, memories and emotions can be triggered. Talking and thinking about Syria, can lead to feelings of happiness, pride, but also homesickness.

The role of Islamic supermarkets and butchers is crucial in preserving this Syrian food culture. They do not only sell the necessary supplies to make food, it also functions as a meeting place. People meet here to have small talk, while they shop for the supplies. Because the participants depend on food that is considered Halal, they rely on these stores. In the rural area of Roden, the participants have to put in a lot of effort to go to these places. Because travelling by public transport is expensive, the fact that they are willing to do this illustrates the importance of Syrian home cooking rituals.

5. CONCLUSION

The goal of this research was to explore the possibilities for and obstacles to developing place attachment by Syrian refugees in the Northern part of the Netherlands. In general, place attachment is described as the positive, affective bond or connections between people and place (Altman & Low, 1992; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010) The data illustrates the difficulties of coping with an unfamiliar environment as a consequence of forced relocation (Philips & Robinson, 2015; Platts-Fowler Robinson, 2015). As suggested by other authors, daily routines such as eating habits, exercising and socialising can all of a sudden become complicated and problematic (Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Larsen, 2011). The study of place attachment can offer insight in how refugees reshape daily routines and in what way they interact with the physical and social environment.

This chapter answers the main research question: *What are the obstacles to and opportunities for placemaking in the Northern part of the Netherlands for Syrian refugees?* This is done by discussing the three sub-questions that have structured this research. The input for this discussion is derived from the three themes that were identified in the findings: the importance of developing weak ties on a neighbourhoodscale, the perceived advantages regarding placemaking in urban environments and the importance of preserving the Syrian food culture. The person dimension is discussed in in the first sub-question. This section elaborates on the development of place attachment on a personal level as well as on a group level. The second sub-question focuses on the dimension of place in which the social and physical environment are the main focus point. Lastly, the process dimension is subject of discussion in the third sub-question of this chapter. Here, the psychological processes that underlie the connections between people and place are discussed. These are the emotional, cognitive and behavioural components of the process dimension.

What role do the individual and shared group norms and values of Syrian male refugees play in developing place attachment in the Northern Netherlands?

Personal memories of experiences with places in the past are an important aspect in developing place attachment for young Syrian males in the Netherlands. These are often social encounters with people, that create either positive or negative recollections of these particular places (Manzo, 2005; Scannel & Gifford, 2010). As the refugees are new to the Dutch environment, they encounter a lot of unfamiliar, new places. Talking about the different kinds of places they have been, brings up many associations with these place that refugees have developed. Most of these associations are about meeting friends or in particular Dutch people, especially when Dutch people act nice to the refugees.

In this study no evidence was found to prove that young Syrian males have an emotional connection with place based on important realizations, events or happenings. This might have to do with the fact that they have not been living in the Netherlands for that long in order to experience this. Another explanation could be a consequence of feeling like a burden to society. Most of them feel they do not contribute to society, whilst they are granted a house and an income. It might be difficult to be proud of any accomplishments then (Kohlbacher et al., 2015; Manzo, 2005).

For Syrian refugees, Muslim beliefs and practices are important with regard to place attachment (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016). In this research this was pointed out by the preference towards Halal food. The fact that this butchering ritual is important to them, forces the refugees to go to specific stores. As a result, the Islamic supermarkets and butchers become significant places based on shared cultural values. This is illustrated by the effort individuals in some cases have to put in as in the Netherlands these supermarkets and butchers can only be found in the larger cities.

What is the effect of the social and physical environment of the Northern Netherlands on the emotional bond between Syrian male refugees and place?

Within the place dimension, place attachment is an interplay between the social and physical environment (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004). However in this research and, as suggested by different authors (Lewicka, 2011; Scannel & Gifford, 2010), the social aspect of place environment takes on a bigger role than the physical aspect. Syrian male refugees seem to bond more with places based on opportunities for social interaction and group identities. This reinforces the argument of Kohlbacher et al. (2015) who state that the social context of place is an important setting for social coexistence between different ethnicities and social groups.

This research found evidence that the neighbourhood is an important setting for social interaction (Altman & Low, 1992; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). The natural neighbour networks of Gardner (2011) such as staircases and sidewalks provide opportunities for Syrian male refugees to get into contact with locals. This allows them to develop weak ties that can foster a feeling of belonging, can improve their wellbeing and allows them to develop social capital. The development of weak ties is an important process towards more social integration as refugees become less dependent on strong ties such as family and fellow refugees (Kohlbacher et al., 2015). Managing social integration should therefore start on a neighbourhood scale.

Additionally, the findings in this study suggest that Syrian male refugees feel more in place in urban environments. In more rural areas, refugees experience difficulties to develop place attachment as a result of different time geographies with their Dutch peers. This limits the chances of being in the same place at the same time and thus prevents social encounters from happening. In urban environments there are more opportunities for refugees to get into contact with locals. Therefore this study questions the efficiency of the Dutch spatial dispersal policy (Anderson, 2003; see also Larsen 2011). Being placed in a house in a rural environment might not benefit social integration as it is supposed to do according to this policy.

Although the social aspect of place is crucial to developing place attachment, the physical environment was found to influence placemaking too. Often the physical aspect of the living environment in the Netherlands was compared to Syria. As suggested by Stedman (2003), people do not get attached to the actual physical features of a place, but rather the meanings that these features represent. Because Syrian refugees were forced to relocate, they seek for physical environments that represent the more familiar Syrian environment (see also Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016). The physical environment is therefore important for place reconstruction behaviour during the process of homemaking (Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

How do emotional, cognitive and behavioural processes influence the connection to place of Syrian male refugees?

The emotional component is essential in homemaking processes in an unfamiliar environment (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016). Practices and rituals that represent one's culture can trigger emotional memories and feelings (Powell & Risbeth, 2012). For the Syrian male refugees in this study, preserving the Syrian food culture was connected to emotions. Eating together with others makes them feel happy and talking about Syrian cuisine fills their hearths with pride. In Syria the refugees often ate together with their whole families. Thinking about this evokes both happy memories, but can also cause homesickness. To overcome the distance between refugees and locals, food seems to be a good way of connecting both. In the North of the Netherlands this is practiced by hosting an *eat and meet* event. Eating together brings joy to both parties and it allows them to get familiar with each other's culture.

Emotions also influence the daily routines of refugees in the Netherlands. Processes of exclusion or discrimination might influence their wellbeing (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). This study illustrates that refugees feel like a burden to society, which stops them from going to places and meet people. Negative experiences prevent them from bonding with places, which in turn makes them feel sad and

disheartened. On the other hand, positive experiences makes them want to maintain closeness to particular places to bring back positive emotions and feelings as if it was a drug (see also Cross, 2015; Giuliani, 2003; Scannel & Gifford, 2010).

The cognitive aspect of place attachment can help refugees with their identity formation process to find their place in the Netherlands (Proshansky et al., 1983). To find a balance between the new host environment and their former home environment, refugees rely on memories and practices from home (Powell & Risbeth, 2012). The data shows that it can be difficult to make sense of the surroundings in the Netherlands, because of a lack of social interaction with local people. This troubles the formation of a new identity in the Netherlands and constraints placemaking processes (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001).

A different aspect of the relation between the self and the environment, is the fact that the Syrian male refugees see themselves as city people (see also Félonneau, 2004). They have been living in cities in Syria all of their life. Especially in rural places, most of them do not identify with the quiet atmosphere of a town and would rather live in more larger cities. However, they do not get a choice in this as they are forced to live in places as a result of the spatial dispersal policy mentioned earlier.

The last element in the process dimension is the behavioural component. Efforts that people make to return to meaningful places, is behaviour that was often found in this study. To obtain food that is halal the refugees depend on Islamic supermarkets and butchers. Especially refugees living in places that do not accommodate these amenities, have to invest a lot of money and time in this.

Other behaviour that was observed in this study, is the place making behaviour of Syrian male refugees. This is expressed by altering the current environment in order to make it look like the environment that was left behind (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). The data illustrates how the refugees eat familiar food, listen to familiar stories and speak familiar language with their friends and family. The importance of these sensory experiences is essential for homemaking processes (Cross, 2015).

6. FURTHER RESEARCH

This research described the views and experiences of young Syrian male refugees and their relation with places in an unfamiliar Dutch environment. Despite the exploratory character of this study, the findings gave a lot of insight in placemaking behaviour of the participants. Due to the nature of qualitative research, the stories told by these participants should be seen as individual perceptions containing rich data and detailed information. The theories and information derived from this data are helpful when trying to understand place making processes of young Syrian male refugees. I believe that many outcomes of this research will apply to other refugee groups in the Netherlands, but I want to point out the relevance of being aware of the limitations of this research.

First, this chapter reflects on the process of this study. Some aspects that came forward in the literature were not brought up by the participants or they were hesitant to talk about it when I asked them about it. This is fine as the research focused on experiences of the refugees, but I feel some aspects that were not mentioned do influence place attachment. Second, the data in this study is generated by a specific group of people, namely young Syrian male refugees in the Northern part of the Netherlands. Other groups of people did not take part in this research and this should be taken into account when making generalisations. So in the second part, the absence of women in this research is discussed. Furthermore, hypothetical contributions of other ethnic groups are covered and the final part of this chapter the role of locality is discussed.

As stated in the introduction, the reception of (Syrian) refugees in the Netherlands was not always welcomed by the host society. During the first interviews, discrimination and inappropriate behaviour therefore was one of the main focus points. When I confronted the participants with this question, they often told me they did not experience discrimination of any kind or they reacted laconic regarding discriminatory experiences. Some of the participants explained racist behaviour as normal, but I do not agree with them on this. However, the topic remained a bit of a taboo. Because of time limits, I was not able to spend a longer period of time with the participants to find out how they really feel about discrimination and inappropriate behaviour. It would therefore be interesting to do a follow-up research on these participants to see whether their opinions changed as they spend more time in the Netherlands. According to the integration paradox, refugees should experience more discrimination as they develop a better understanding of the Dutch language (van Doorn et al., 2013; de Vroome et al., 2014).

Another aspect that was kind of difficult to talk about was the religion practiced by the participants. Apart from one, they are all Muslims. One would expect a mosque or a church to be a place of importance to them. However, this was not even brought up once by the participants in this research. I do not feel that this topic was not spoken about because of my positionality as a researcher. I rather think that they are uncertain to speak about it or to express their faith as they realise they do not live in a Muslim society (see also Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2004). They do their praying in the privacy of their homes instead of going to the mosque with other Muslims. Just as the topic of discrimination, it would be interesting to get more familiar with these preferences.

Due to several reasons female refugees from Syria are absent in this research. Mostly men have fled the country and the processes of family reunification have just begun to develop (IND, 2016). During the recruiting phase in this research, it proved to be extremely difficult to come into contact with female refugees. According to organization Vluchtelingenwerk (2016) who's volunteers guide refugees during integration, this is a result of the male dominance in Muslim culture. Male refugees are always spokesperson for their families as most of the time they are able to speak English. Contact with women in the first stadium of integration is therefore scarce. Their experiences, views and stories are valuable as women stay at home more often, have less intercultural contact according to other authors (Nannestad et al., 2008; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016). This implies that placemaking processes differ between male and female Syrian refugees. Furthermore, studies on place attachment of female refugees will provide insight regarding in processes of exclusion, sexual harassment and discrimination.

The focus towards this subject has shifted significantly within refugee literature (Freedman, 2016). Experiences of Syrian female refugees in Dutch society will contribute in trying to provide a complete understanding of Syrian place attachment.

The fact that a specific ethnic group was studied in this research should also be taken into account when drawing conclusions about refugees in general. In the Netherlands, findings in previous research illustrate that place attachment and integration trajectories between refugees vary (de Vroome et al., 2014). At this moment refugees who arrive in the Netherlands are mainly from Syria and Eritrea. Theories derived out of this research will be less applicable as it comes to understanding place attachment of Eritrean refugees. Eritrean religious and cultural norms, values and traditions might lead to different placemaking processes (Scannel & Gifford, 2010). Moreover, Eritrean refugees come from a less civilised society and have more trouble with the English language (IND, 2016). Most of the time these refugees have no knowledge about Dutch society (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2016) and will experience a greater “root shock” (Fullilove, 2013, cited in Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016, p. 23). Comparisons between ethnic groups and within ethnic groups would be relevant to understand placemaking behaviour of refugees as a whole. Strengthened by this knowledge, governments and organizations will be able to develop better integration strategies and a deeper understanding in dwelling behaviour of different refugees.

The findings might be tested in a quantitative way to strengthen the statements above in order to have more leverage when developing policy. However I think this will be difficult as locality plays a major role in developing place attachment (see also Balassiano & Maldonado, 2014; Nannestad et al., 2008). As this study is performed in a rather peripheral part of the Netherlands, it would be interesting to discover perceptions of refugees who, for example, reside in the more metropolitan area of the “Randstad” in the Netherlands. Spatial dispersal policy was introduced because many immigrants and refugees went to the “Randstad” area (Anderson, 2003; Favell, 2001). Something must have pulled these people towards urbanised areas. I can imagine that higher levels of amenities and services together with a larger number of nationalities, make up for a vibrant environment. The individual mentality that is often associated with cities like Rotterdam, Amsterdam or the Hague however, could also alienate newcomers and hinder processes of inclusion (Larsen, 2011).

REFERENCES

Altman, I. & Low, S. (1992). *Place attachment*. New York: Plenum Press.

Andersson, R. (2003). *Research on immigration and integration in the metropolis. Settlement dispersal of immigrants and refugees in Europe: Policy and outcomes*. Rapport 3 (8). Vancouver: Vancouver Center of Excellence.

Babbie, E. (2013). *The practice of social research*. 13th Edition. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Balassiano, K. & Maldonado, M.M. (2014). Placemaking in rural new gateway communities. *Community Development Journal*, 50 (4), 644-660.

Capo, J. (2015). "Durable Solutions," Transnationalism, and Homemaking among Croatian and Bosnian Former Refugees. *Refuge*, 31 (1), 19-29.

CBS (2016). Asielverzoeken en nareizigers; nationaliteit, geslacht en leeftijd. Retrieved from: <http://www.statline.cbs.nl>

Cele, S. (2006). *Communicating Place, Methods for Understanding Children's Experience of Place*. Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Clifford, N., French, S. & Valentine, G. (2010). Getting started in Geographical research: How this book can help. In N. Clifford, S. French & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Key methods in geography* (pp. 3-16). Second edition. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Cook, I. (1997). Participant observation. In R. Flowerdew & D. Martin (Eds.), *Methods in Human Geography: a guide for students doing a research project* (pp. 167-188). London: Longman.

Cross, J.E. (2015). Processes of place attachment: An interactional framework. *Symbolic interaction*, 38 (4), 493-520.

Doorn, M. van, Scheepers, P. & Dagevos, J. (2013). Explaining the integration paradox among small immigrant groups in the Netherlands. *International Migration and Integration*, 14, 381-400.

Dowling, R. & Mee, K. (2007). Home and homemaking in contemporary Australia. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 24 (3), 161-165.

Engbersen, G., Dagevos, J., Jennissen, R., Bakker, L. & Leerkes, A. (2015). 'No time to lose: from reception to integration of asylum migrants'. WRR-Policy Brief 4. Den Haag: WRR.

Favell, A. (2001). Integration policy and integration research in Europe: a review and critique. In: T.A. Aleinikoff and D. Klusmeyer (eds.), *Citizenship Today: Global Perspectives and Practices*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution/Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Félonneau, M.L. (2004). Love and loathing of the city: Urbanophilia and urbanophobia, topological identity and perceived incivilities. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24, 43-52.

Freedman, J. (2016). Sexual and gender-based violence against refugee women: A hidden aspect of the refugee "crisis". *Reproductive Health Matters*, 24 (47), 18-26.

- Fried, M. (1963). Grieving for a lost home. In L.J. Duhl (Eds.), *The urban condition: People and policy in the metropolis* (pp. 124-152). New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Garvey, P. (2005). Domestic boundaries: Privacy, visibility and the Norwegian window. *Journal of Material Culture*, 10 (2), 157-176.
- Gent, W. van (2016). In de stad verloopt integratie sneller. *De Volkskrant*, 27-7-2016.
- Giuliani, M. V. (2003). Theory of attachment and place attachment. In M. Bonnes, T. Lee, & M. Bonaiuto (Eds.), *Psychological theories for environmental issues* (pp. 137–170). Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Granovetter, M. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78 (6), 1360-1380.
- Gustafson, P. (2006). Place attachment and mobility. In N. McIntyre & K.E. McHugh (eds.). *Multiple dwelling and tourism: Negotiating place, home and identity* (pp. 17-31). CAB International.
- Hägerstrand, T. (1970). What about people in regional science? *Papers of the Regional Science Association*, 24 (1), 6-21.
- Heck, W. & Leijendekker, M. (2015). Dit is wat je moet weten om de vluchtelingencrisis te begrijpen. *NRC Handelsblad*, 14-09-2015.
- Henning, C. & Lieberg, M. (1996). Strong ties or weak ties? Neighbourhood networks in a new perspective. *Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research*, 13 (1), 3-26.
- Hennink, M., Hutter, I. & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Hernández, B., Hidalgo, C.M., Salazar-Laplace, M.E. & Hess, S. (2007). Place attachment and place identity in natives and non-natives. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 27 (4), 310-319.
- Hidalgo, M.C. & Hernández, B. (2001). Place attachment: Conceptual and empirical questions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21, 273-281.
- Hoven, B. van & Meijering, L. (2011). On the ground. In V. J. del Casino Jr, M. E. Thomas, P. Cloke & R. Panelli (Eds.), *A companion to social geography* (pp. 161-180). First edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- IND (2016). *Asylum trends: Monthly Report on Asylum Applications in The Netherlands and Europe Recent trends*. May 2016. Rijswijk: Immigration and Naturalization Service.
- I-Graduate (2014). *Global student experience 2014*. Good Practice Case Studies, Times Higher Education.
- Jones, P., Bunce, G., Evans, J., Gibbs, H., & Ricketts Hein, J. (2008). Exploring space and place with walking interviews. *Journal of Research Practice*, 4 (2), Article D2.
- Jorgensen, B.S. (2010). Subjective mapping methodologies for incorporating spatial variation in research on social capital and sense of place. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 101 (5), 554-567.

- Jorgensen, B.S. & Stedman, R.C. (2001). Sense of place as an attitude: Lakeshore owners attitudes toward their properties. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21, 233-248.
- Jupp, E. (2008). The feeling of participation: Everyday spaces and urban change. *Geoforum*, 39, 331-343.
- Kitchin, R. & Tate, N.J. (2000). *Conducting research in human geography: Theory, methodology and practice*. New Jersey: Presence Hall.
- Klaver, J., Witkamp, B., Paulussen-Hoogbeem, M., Slotboom, S. & Stouten, J. (2014). *VluchtelingenWerk IntegratieBarometer 2014: Een onderzoek naar de integratie van vluchtelingen in Nederland*. Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek commissioned by Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland.
- Kohlbacher, J., Reeger, U. & Schnell, P. (2015). Place attachment and social ties – Migrants and natives in three urban settings in Vienna. *Population, space and place*, 21, 446-462.
- Lager, L., Hoven, B. van & Huigen, P.P.P. (2015). Understanding older adults' social capital *in place*: Obstacles to and opportunities for social contact in the neighbourhood. *Geoforum*, 59, 87-97.
- Larsen, B.R. (2011). Becoming part of welfare Scandinavia: Integration through the spatial dispersal of newly arrived refugees in Denmark. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37 (2), 333-350.
- Law, L. (2001). Home cooking: Filipino women and geographies of the senses in Hong Kong. *Ecumene*, 8 (3), 264-283.
- Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 31, 207-230.
- Longhurst, R. (2010). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In Clifford, N., French, S., Valentine, G. (eds.), *Key methods in Geography* (pp. 103-115). SAGE publications Ltd, London.
- Manzo, L. C. (2005). For better or worse: Exploring multiple dimensions of place meaning. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25, 67–86.
- Manzo, L.C. & Perkins, D.D. (2006). Finding common ground: The importance of place attachment to community participation and planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 20 (4), 335-350.
- Martin, D. & Flowerdew, R. (1997). Introduction. In R. Flowerdew, & D. Martin (Eds.), *Methods in Human Geography: a Guide for Students Doing a Research Project* (pp. 110-127). London: Longman.
- Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Mazumdar, S., & Mazumdar, S. (2004). Religion and place attachment: A study of sacred places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24, 385–397.
- Mazumdar, S. & Mazumdar, S. (2016). Interiors and homemaking in displacement: A study of Vietnamese Americans in Southern California. *Journal of Interior Design*, 41 (2), 23-37.
- Meijering, L. & Hoven, B. van (2003). Imagining difference: The experiences of 'transnational' Indian IT professionals in Germany. *Area*, 35 (2), 174-182.

- Michelson, W. (1976). *Man and his urban environment: A sociological approach, with revisions*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Mihaylov, N., & Perkins, D.D. (2014). Community Place Attachment and its Role in Social Capital Development in Response to Environmental Disruption. In L. Manzo & P. Devine-Wright (Eds.), *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Research*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Nannestad, P., Svendsen, G. and Svendsen, G. (2008). 'Bridge over troubled water: migration and social capital'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34 (4), 607-31.
- Nelson & Hiemstra (2008). Latino immigrants and the renegotiation of place and belonging in small town America. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 9 (3), 319-342.
- Ng, C. (1998). Canada as a new place: The immigrant's experience. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 18, 55–67.
- Oliver, J.E. (2010). *The paradoxes of integration: Race, neighbourhood, and civic life in multiethnic America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Onderzoek & Statistiek Groningen (2012). *Monitor leefbaarheid en veiligheid 2012*. Assen: Koninklijke van Gorcum.
- Peace, S. M., Holland, C., & Kellaher, L. (2005). Making space for identity, policy, practice. In G. J. Andrews, & D. R. Phillips (Eds.), *Ageing and place: Perspectives, policy, practice* (pp. 188–204). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Perkins, D. D., & Long, D. A. (2002). Neighbourhood sense of community and social capital: a multi-level analysis. In A. Fisher, C. Sonn, & B. Bishop (Eds.), *Psychological sense of community: Research, applications, and implications* (pp. 291–318). New York: Plenum.
- Philips, D. & Robinson, D. (2015). Reflections on migration, community and place. *Population, space and place*, 21, 409-420.
- Platts-Fowler, D. & Robinson, D. (2015). A place for integration: Refugee experiences in two English cities. *Population, space and place*, 21, 476-491.
- Poortinga, W. (2012). Community resilience and health: The role of bonding, bridging, and linking aspects of social capital. *Health and Place*, 18 (2), pp. 286-295.
- Powell, M. & Rishbeth, C. (2012). Flexibility in place and meanings of place by first generation migrants. *Journal of Economic and Social Geography*, 103 (1), 69-84.
- Pretty, G. H., Chipuer, H., & Bramston, P. (2003). Sense of place amongst adolescents and adults in two rural Australian towns: The discriminating features of place attachment, sense of community and place dependence in relation to place identity. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23, 273–287.
- Proshansky, H.M., Fabian, A.K. & Kaminoff, R. (1983). Place-identity. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 3, 57-83.
- Putnam, R.D. (2007). E pluribus unum: Diversity and community in the twenty-first century. The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 30 (2), 137-174.

- Relph, E. (1976). *Place and placelessness*. London: Pion Limited.
- Richards, L. (2015). *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide*. 3th Edition. London: Sage publications.
- Rose, D., Carrasco, P. & Charboneau, J. (1998). The role of 'weak ties' in the settlement experiences of immigrant women with young children: The case of Central Americans in Montréal. Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement, Toronto (CERIS). http://reel.utoronto.ca/relac/PDF/Damaris_98_the_role.pdf (Accessed on 29-6-2016).
- Savas, O. (2010). The Collective Turkish Home in Vienna: Aesthetic Narratives of Migration and Belonging. *Home culture*, 7 (3), 313-340.
- Savas, O. (2014). Taste diaspora: The aesthetic and material practice of belonging. *Journal of Material Culture*, 19 (2), 185-208.
- Scannel, L. & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30, 1-10.
- Smith, F.M. (2010) Working in different cultures. In Clifford, N., French, S., Valentine, G. (eds.), *Key methods in Geography* (pp. 157-169). SAGE publications Ltd, London.
- STAMM CMO (2012). *Leven in Noordenveld: Barometer leefbaarheid Gemeente Noordenveld*. Assen.
- Stedman, R.C. (2003). Is it really just a social construction? The contribution of the physical environment to sense of place. *Society and Natural Resources*, 16, 671-685.
- Terphuis, S. (2016). Ik was eenzaam in het AZC. Integratie, begin er aub snel mee. *NRC Handelsblad*, 29-1-2016.
- Trapp, M.M. (2015). Already in America: Transnational homemaking among Liberian refugees. *Refuge*, 31 (1), 31-41.
- Trell, M.E., & van Hoven, B. (2010) Making sense of place: exploring creative and (inter)active research methods with young people. *Fennia*, 188 (1), 91-104.
- Tuan, Y. (1974). *Topophilia: A study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values*. Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice Hall.
- Tuan, Y. (1991) Language and the making of place: A narrative-descriptive approach. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 81 (4), 684-696.
- Twigger-Ross, C. L., & Uzzell, D. L. (1996). Place and identity processes. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 16, 205-220.
- UNHCR (2016). *Figures at a glance*. Retrieved from: <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.
- Valentine, G. (1997). Tell me about...Using interviews as a research methodology. In R. Flowerdew, & D. Martin (Eds.), *Methods in Human Geography: a Guide for Students Doing a Research Project* (pp. 110-127). London: Longman.
- Vluchtelingenwerk (2016). *Feiten en cijfers*. Retrieved from: <http://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/>.

Vroome, T. de, Martinovic, B. & Verkuyten, M. (2014). The integration paradox: Level of education and immigrants' attitudes towards natives and the host society. *Cultural diversity and ethnic minority psychology*, 20 (2), 166-175.

APPENDIX I Interview Guide

Background information

1. No. of interview:
2. Age:
3. Place of residence in the Netherlands:
4. Former place of residence in Syria:
5. Education in Syria:
6. Occupation in Syria:

Opening questions

- How long have you been living in the Netherlands? Which places have you been?
- Where do you live now and how long have you been living in this house?
- Can you tell me what kind of activities you undertake during the day?
Probes: sports, hang out with friends, study, (voluntary) jobs

Core questions

- Can you tell me what your favourite place is in your city/village? Why?
- Where do you like to go in your city/village?

Person dimension

- What places are meaningful to you?
Probes: experiences, milestones, realizations, discrimination, inclusion/exclusion
- What places are important for you as Syrian people? For example with family or friends?
Probes: Religious places, historical places, cultural places, places of origin

Place dimension

- What places are important for social activities or social interaction?
Probes: home, city centre, third places, Turkish supermarket, Halal butcher
- Are there any places that you like because of their physical appearance?
Probes: buildings, natural sites, parks, decoration, ornaments

Process dimension

- Are there any places that evoke emotions?
Probes: happiness, pride, love, hate,
- Can you tell me if there are any places that help you
- Are there specific places that you like to go to often and you like being around it?
Probes: friends, home, neighbourhood, Turkish supermarket

Themes

Home

- Why is your home important to you?
Probes: safety, comfort, quietness, peace, realizations, memory, milestones, efforts, location
- What do you feel when you are at home?
Probes: happiness, pride, sadness, loneliness
- How do/did you make yourself feel at home?
Probes: ornaments, objects, reconstruction of place

Neighbourhood

- Why is your neighbourhood important to you?
Probes: quietness, peace, neighbours
- What do you like about the neighbourhood and what don't you like?
Probes: physical appearance, neighbours, quietness, noise
- Do you speak to your neighbours? Do you do activities together or help each other out?
Probes: small talk, favours, time/space geographies

Third places

- How do you experience walking on the street?
Probes: greeting people, small conversation, discrimination, language
- Do you have social interactions or conversations with people in supermarkets e.g.?

Places of religion

- Are you religious? What places are important for you as a religious person? Where do you practice your religion?
Probes: home, church, mosque, Halal supermarket

Food

- In many cultures food is an important aspect. What kind of role does food play in your own life?
Probes: eating together, memories of the past, feeling of home, expressing culture
- What places are important to provide in this food culture?
Probes: Islamic supermarkets, Halal butchers, home, home of friends, proximity

Language

- Do you experience problems with Dutch or English language?
Probes: daily activities, talking to neighbours, public places where people speak Dutch
- Are there places that you don't go to because of the difficulties of communicating?
Probes: supermarket, public places

Closing questions

- What does your future look like?
- Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

APPENDIX II Recruitment message VluchtelingenWerk and Humanitas Groningen

Dear sir, madam,

My name is Rik Huizinga and I am a master student at the University of Groningen. I study Cultural Geography and at this moment I am writing my final thesis to get my certificate from the university. For my final research I am interested in the experiences of people from Syria who now live in Dutch society. It's about places in the Netherlands that are important to you as a person, places that have special meanings because of experiences or memories in the past or about places that you really like to go to. These kind of emotional connections with place, are of importance to a person's wellbeing, identity-formation and understanding how these connections work will ultimately benefit integration in Dutch society.

I want to ask you for a favour regarding this research project. I've already spoken with people from Syria, but I would like to talk to some more people from Syria to hear about their experiences. I have no preferences about age or gender, but for practical reasons a permit to stay in the Netherlands is required. These interviews will take about an 60 minutes of your time. In my research no names will be used. It is anonymous and only for research purposes. Also I would like to add that you are not obligated to participate, this is not required from any organization in the Netherlands. You are totally free to decide whether you want to participate or not. If you do or can think of a person who would like to help, please contact me.

I look forward to your reply!

Kind regards,

Rik Huizinga
06-22490494
r.p.huizinga@student.rug.nl

APPENDIX III Consent form

Thank you for participating in this research! This research aims to explore the ways in which Syrian asylum migrants experience places in the Northern part of the Netherlands and how/if connections between individuals and intimate places develop. In this interview I am interested in your experience. Think about places that evoke emotions like happiness or pride, place that play an important role in your culture or religion or places you (dis)like based on experiences and memories in the past.

The interview will take about 1 to 1,5 hour of your time, but your free to pause the interview whenever you feel like. The interviews and results will be used only for academic purposes by the researcher and supervisor. All information will be treated confidentially and participants in the research will be anonymised. Please take your time to consider the following points:

- I voluntarily participate in this research. Yes / No
- I am aware that the interview is being recorded. Yes / No
- I approve that this interview and the results will be used for academic output. Yes / No
- I understand the subject of the research and what is asked of me. Yes / No

If there are any further questions you would like to ask, please do! If not, please fill in the date, your name and your signature below.

Date-.....-.....

Name participant:

Name researcher:

.....

Rik Huizinga

Signature participant:

Signature researcher:

.....

.....

Contact

Rik Huizinga
0622490494
r.p.huizinga@student.rug.nl
Master student Cultural Geography at University of Groningen

APPENDIX IV Codebook

Code name	Code definition	Type of code
Person dimension		
Experiences	Participant makes notion of emotional bond with a place as a consequence of an experience in the past	Deductive
Milestones	Intimate place to the participant as the place takes on an important role during a particular stage in life	Deductive
Symbol of religion	Reference to a place that is important as it symbolises the shared norms, values and beliefs of a religious group that the participant identifies with	Deductive
Symbol of (food) culture	Notion of a meaningful place because it expresses the cultural norms, values and beliefs of a culture to which the participants relates himself with	Inductive
Discrimination	References of inappropriate behaviour, lack of access or lack of information associated with a place	Deductive
Language difficulties	Positive or negative associations with place as a consequence of communication problems of the participant towards the host society	Inductive
Psychological dimension		
Affective	A place that evokes negative or positive emotions	Deductive
Cognitive	Notions of attachment to a place because of a relation between self and the place.	Deductive
Knowledge of place	Participant is naming places or shares information about places that illustrate place attachment	Inductive
Proximity maintaining	Notions about staying close to a particular place and references of effort to return to an important place	Deductive
Place reconstruction	Quotations that illustrate how the participant reconstructs memories of other intimate places in the temporary physical environment	Deductive
Social environment		
1st places	References of social interaction in home places that lead to place attachment	Deductive
2nd places	References of social interaction in work/school places that lead to place attachment	Deductive
3th places	References of social interaction in transitory zones or destination places that lead to place attachment	Deductive
Weak ties	Place attachment as a result of informal, local contact	Deductive
Strong ties	Place attachment as a result of formal contact or social contact with friends, family and relatives	Deductive
Eating together	Notions of social gatherings where eating together develops an emotional bond with that place	Inductive
Time space geographies	References towards the different daily rhythms of refugees and people from host society	Inductive
Physical environment		
Aesthetic value	Notions made by the participant about the physical features of the natural and built environment. This	Deductive

	code comprises both the aesthetic beauty of the environment and the symbolic meaning it represents	
Amenities	Participant discusses the extent to which the physical environment helps to support his life goals such as the local presence of amenities, services and strong ties	Deductive
Physical appearance home	References towards physical aspects of participant's home that are imbued with meaning	Deductive
Turkish supermarket	Attachment to the home environment based on proximity of Halal shops and Turkish supermarkets to provide in participant's lifestyle preferences	Inductive
Food culture		
Eating together	Notions of social gatherings where eating together develops an emotional bond with that place	Inductive
Turkish supermarket		Inductive
Symbol of (food) culture	Notion of a meaningful place because it expresses the cultural norms, values and beliefs of a culture to which the participants relates himself with	Inductive
Place reconstruction	Quotations that illustrate how the participant reconstructs memories of other intimate places in the temporary physical environment	Deductive
Affective	A place that evokes negative or positive emotions	Deductive
Inclusion/Exclusion		
Discrimination	References of inappropriate behaviour, lack of access or lack of information associated with a place	Deductive
Language	Positive or negative associations with place as a consequence of communication problems of the participant towards the host society	Inductive
Amenities	Participant discusses the extent to which the physical environment helps to support his life goals such as the local presence of amenities, services and strong ties	Deductive
Turkish supermarket	Attachment to the home environment based on proximity of Halal shops and Turkish supermarkets to provide in participant's lifestyle preferences	Inductive
Strong ties	Place attachment as a result of formal contact or social contact with friends, family and relatives	Deductive
3th places	References of social interaction in transitory zones or destination places that lead to place attachment	Deductive