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Perceived consequences of migration on the social networks and adaptation of long-term migrants
Estonians in the Netherlands

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Abstract

Moving to another country concerns not merely a change in physical environment but also in social surroundings. The breakdown of social networks in the home country and adaptation to the new society are found to be stressful for migrants. This study aims to explore and understand the consequences of migration on the social networks in the home and host country of long-term migrants from Estonia in the Netherlands, and the influence of these consequences on the adaptation to the Netherlands. 19 in-depth interviews were conducted; UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) and an ego network questionnaire were employed as additional instruments.

The findings suggest that migration disrupted social network in Estonia, but only with regard to weak ties. Strong friendship relationships were resistant to the spatial distance between the two countries regardless of the frequency of the contacts. The contact and thereby the quality of the relationship was maintained by means of the Internet and visits to Estonia. Almost all respondents experienced difficulties in establishing social contacts in the Netherlands, particularly at the beginning stages of the settling. This often resulted in loneliness, which decreased or disappeared in the course of time as satisfactory social relationships come into existence. The main entrance points to social networks in the Netherlands were one's partner, job or study position, and local Estonians. However, close others are more likely to be found in the Estonian rather than Dutch social network, a possible explanation is the long duration of friendship ties in Estonia.

Integration was perceived to be the most successful adaptation strategy. Contacts with the Dutch and a command of Dutch language were indicated as essential components of adaptation. On the other hand, importance was attached to the maintenance of Estonian identity and cultural aspects. Comparing and combining Estonian and Dutch values and customs appeared to be the most common practice for adaptation.

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1 Introduction

When you leave home,
you know what you leave behind
but not what you will find.
Sicilian proverb

Moving to another country concerns not merely a change in one's physical environment but also in social surroundings; migrants thus have to adjust themselves to both dimensions of the new circumstances. On the one hand, the spatial distance has often grown too large to enable frequent face-to-face contact with friends or family who still reside in the home country, on the other hand, starting social relationships in the host country may require some time. Perceived lack of social contacts, in turn, can result in feelings of loneliness (Weiss, 1973; Russell et al., 1984, Pinquart and Sörensen, 2001). In addition, many migrants may experience difficulties when adapting to the new country of residence, its society and norms. Numerous studies have therefore concluded that migration is stressful (e.g., Scott and Scott, 1989; Jerusalem et al., 1996; Berry, 1997; Coll and Magnuson, 2001; Marsella and Ring, 2003; Suarez-Orozco, 2005; Narchal, 2007; Polek and Schoon, 2008). The major reasoning behind this is that migration "removes individuals from many of their relationships and predictable contexts: extended families and friends, community ties, jobs, living situations, customs, and (often) language" (Suarez-Orozco, 2005, p. 136). The main resources to cope with the stress are support from one's social network (Salgado de Snyder and Díaz-Guerrero, 2003), and employing a relevant adaptation strategy (Berry et al., 1987, 2006; Berry, 1997, 2001; Snel et al., 2006).

1.1 Background

Studies regarding migrant adaptation processes and behaviour have unanimously recognised that migration is disrupts one's social network (Scott and Scott, 1989; Jerusalem et al., 1996; Salgado de Snyder and Díaz-Guerrero, 2003; Suarez-Orozco, 2005; Narchal, 2007). Hence, apart from the availability of a social network in the home country also the behavioural strategies for accessing social networks in the host country are of great importance. Based on a sample of Iranian asylum seekers in the Netherlands, Koser (1997) proved that the absence of a social network accounted for a high degree of depression and dejection. Migration is generally regarded as one of the major perceived causes of loneliness (Stephan et al., 1988; Rokach and Bacanli, 2001; Narchal, 2007). Jerusalem and colleagues (1996) found that loneliness is an inhibiting factor which tends to result in poorer social bonding. Failing to create and maintain social contacts as a part of the adaptation process to the new society can thus result in stress and loneliness.

The results of Prins (1996) suggest that for Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands integration is a successful strategy in order to adapt themselves to the new society. Van Oudenhoven and Eisses (1998) put forward somewhat opposite findings, namely, integrated Moroccans in the Netherlands experienced less respect and more prejudice than their assimilated counterparts, as immigrant assimilation rather than integration tended to be favoured by the native Dutch. Buijs (1993) distinguishes several types of adaptation behaviour in young Moroccan males in the Netherlands: the ones who immigrated as children and already attended primary school in the Netherlands, tended to have friends both among Moroccans and Dutch, while adolescent or student immigrants had already been used

to socialising with compatriots in Morocco, and Moroccan peers continued to play a central role in the host country as well, at the same time finding contact with native Dutch was experienced as more complicated. These results were confirmed by Snel and his collaborators (2006), who observed in six immigrant groups a strong positive association between the length of the stay in the Netherlands, and the number of native Dutch in the social network and the extent to which one endorses Dutch values as an indicator of social and cultural integration (as opposed to structural integration, i.e., participation in the societal institutions such as labour market and educational system). Polek and Schoon (2008) add the finding that Polish marriage immigrants in the Netherlands, in comparison with their non-marital counterparts, are better integrated due to the intense contact with the Dutch culture and language provided by the spouse. However, occupational status explained the sociocultural integration even more clearly, despite the marital status (ibid). It sum, it can be concluded that contact with the native Dutch is one of the major factors contributing to migrant adaptation.

1.2 Dutch integration policies[1]

In order to place the current study into the Dutch context, the importance of immigrant policies must be realised. Integration is a mutual process (e.g., Berry, 2001) that requires actions from both the immigrants and the host country, thus the policies regarding integration regulation set the conditions for migrant adaptation and participation in the society at least on the structural level. The need for integration policies lies in the assumption that general public institutions determine the position of immigrants in the society (Penninx, 2004). One can hereby think of the predetermined socio-economic status of immigrants, their access to the labour and education market, participation in the elections and other domains of society. One of the prerequisites of an effective integration policy is therefore "transparency of admission of immigrants and their residential and legal status" (ibid, p.5), whereby immigrants themselves have the right to engage in the process of policymaking that has an impact on their position. In order to better understand how and why the current integration policies have come into force, development of these policies during the past decades is shortly described in the following.

Until the end of the 1970s, the Netherlands did not consider itself to be an immigration country, thus issues of immigrants and integration were not debated at large. Although in the context of great shortage of labour force tens of thousands 'guest workers' had been invited to the country from former colonies (Suriname, Dutch Antilles, Indonesia) as well as from other countries (mainly Turkey and Morocco), they were seen as living in the Netherlands temporarily. The guest workers were expected to return to their countries of origin when the need for additive labour force was due. Dutch government, therefore, did not implement any immigrant integration policies and considered its task to encourage guest workers to maintain their cultural identity. This view was summarised in the slogan promoted before the 1980s, 'Integration with retention of identity' (Scholtens, 2007).

In 1979 Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid*, henceforth referred to as WRR), an advisory board that coordinates scientific institutes of the government, published its report 'Ethnic Minorities' (*Etnische*

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[1] This section is based on a paper by the author for the course Population Debate during the Master programme Population Studies at University of Groningen.

minderheden), where was claimed that the majority of the immigrants will not return to their countries of origin but stay in the Netherlands. A policy was formulated in Minorities Memorandum (*Minderhedennota*) which declares its goal to achieve "a society in which all members of minority groups in the Netherlands, individually and also in groups, are in a situation of equality and have full opportunities for their development" (Minderhedennota, 1983, p.10, cited by Entzinger, 2003, p. 63). In that manner, immigrants were declared to be also an independent societal group and ethnic communities were empowered. However, the policy was applied mainly to selected ethnic minorities, such as the migrants from former colonies (except Indonesia) and the foreign residents who were invited to the country as guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s (Bruquetas-Callejo et al., Working Paper). Under the idea of mutual adaptation, the objectives of the Ethnic Minorities' policy were emancipation in a multicultural society, equality before the law, and promoting equal opportunity (Entzinger, 2003).

By the early 1990s the share of ethnic minorities in the total population had doubled, also new immigrant groups had emerged, particularly refugees and asylum seekers. Within the "old" ethnic minorities' groups already a new generation entered the labour market, and they had been partly or fully educated in the Netherlands and hence oriented better in the Dutch society and language than their parents (Entzinger, 2003). These developments led to the recognition that the problem has to be redefined again. The WRR argued in its new report, 'Immigrant Policy' (*Allochtonenbeleid*), that government had concentrated too much on multiculturalist ideas, while immigrant participation should have been facilitated as well and in order to avoid the further dependency of ethnic minorities on public subsidies, government must promote education, employment, and Dutch language training for immigrants so that they could participate in the society with their own human capital (ibid.). Whereas group level was in focus so far, individual approach was introduced now. The new policy direction was voiced in 1994 in the governmental document Contours Memorandum (*Countourennota integratie-beleid etnische minderheden*). Integration of immigrants was the central theme and was defined as "a process leading to the full and equal participation of individuals and groups in society, for which mutual respect for identity is seen as a necessary condition" (Contourennota, 1994, p. 24, cited by Entzinger, 2003, p.72). Integration was also believed to be a better policy subject in the sense that it recognises integration as "a mutual process of acceptance" (Contourennota, 1994, p.8, cited by Scholtens, 2007, p.86).

The new policy implied that immigrants have not only rights but also duties, and participation in the society is dominantly one's own responsibility. According to the WRR, Dutch language training was the main prerequisite for enabling the immigrants to integrate. In 1998 the Civic Integration Act (*Wet Inburgering*) was adopted, which established civic integration courses (*inburgeringscursus*) the immigrants were expected to follow and that consisted of 600 hours of Dutch language training, labour market orientation, and social skills. This programme was designed to prepare immigrants for their stay in the Netherlands and prevent the formation of underprivileged groups (Magnée and Gerritsma 2003). The courses were obligatory also for Estonians as citizens of a non-EU country; residence and working permits were still required.

By the turn of the century the context had changed again and the integration policies were perceived as a failure. The government realised that by laying emphasis on cultural differences the groups—within the migrant groups as well as between the natives—also feel themselves different from one another, but stressing the common features would be more appropriate for mutual understanding. In order to give formal touch to these ideas, the so-

called Integration Policy New Style was established. The new policy style lays emphasis on common citizenship, and asserts that all members of the society should abide to basic Dutch norms such as "taking care of the social environment, respecting physical integrity of others, also within marriage, accepting the right of anyone to express one's opinion, accepting the sexual preferences of others and equality of man and woman" (TK 2003-2004, 29203, nr.1, p.8, cited by Scholten 2007, p.86). In 2006, Civic Integration Abroad Act (*Wet Inburgering in het Buitenland*, henceforth referred to as WIB) came into force which was designed to be an effective tool for selecting migrants who would be useful for Dutch labour market and limiting the new flows of immigration. By the mechanism of laying financial responsibility of fulfilling the integration prerequisites on the immigrant is considered to motivate him[2] to do his utmost to acquire basic language knowledge and social skills, and, moreover, to restrict the unwanted immigrant flows of family members who would not integrate into the Dutch society. However, WIB is not applicable to the citizens of the EU member states, and since Estonia was admitted to the EU in 2004, its citizens are subject to free movement within the EU countries.

To conclude, the multiculturalist ideas expressed in Dutch integration policies which were earlier considered as promoting cultural diversity are nowadays perceived as a threat or hindrance to integration. Instead, the latest policies advocate the common features between different ethnicities that, from the point of view of the current study, form a favourable basis for intergroup contact. Civic integration courses, although not compulsory for Estonians anymore, provide immigrants basic linguistic and societal skills in order to participate in the Dutch society in occupational perspective as well as extend their opportunities in establishing contacts with the natives. There are not many further implications for Estonian migrants in the Netherlands, since the integration policies and programmes are targeted not to all immigrants but certain ethnic groups such as Moroccans, Turks, Surinamese, Dutch Antilleans, refugees, asylum seekers. A potential reason could be the assumption that the member states of the EU share common norms and values, hence, general introduction to the basic norms and values in the Netherlands is considered unnecessary for the EU citizens.

1.3 Objective and research questions

The aforementioned findings of migration as a stressful event, which disrupts existing social networks and contributes to stress to a large extent, imply that the social and emotional consequences of migration need to be studied in order to provide coping strategies for migrants. Research regarding migration often lays the emphasis, particularly at the micro level, on the reasons for migration and much on its consequences. Moreover, rather few studies on this particular field regard migrants from the European Union member states in Eastern Europe to the old member states in Western part of Europe.

The Netherlands could be referred to as a multi-ethnic society as the share of first and second generation immigrants is 19.6% of the total population (CBS, 2008a). Only the large ethnic minorities' groups (such as the Moroccans, Turks, Surinamese, Dutch Antilleans, Indonesians) have dominantly been in the focus of research, whereas little is known about smaller ethnic groups. Furthermore, countries of Eastern and Central Europe or Former Soviet Union have often been regarded as one area, even though the differences in those countries' demographic, economic, cultural and social aspects appear nowadays even more

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[2] Whenever 'he', 'his', or 'him' is used, the female form is also implied.

clearly. The phenomenon of a small ethnic minority also allows for studying network of immigrants for whom finding and meeting a fellow native is more complicated than in the case of immigrant groups with larger share of the total population.

Therefore, the objective of the current study is to explore and understand the consequences of migration on the social networks in the home and the host country of long-term migrants from Estonia in the Netherlands, and the influence of these consequences on the adaptation to the Netherlands in order to provide coping strategies for migrants.

In order to meet the objective, the main research question is formulated as follows:
What are the perceived consequences of migration on the social networks of Estonian long-term migrants in the Netherlands, and the impact of these consequences on their adaptation?

The main research question is divided into more specific sub-questions:
- *How do Estonian long-term migrants in the Netherlands maintain contacts with their social network in Estonia?*
- *What are their perceived changes in the existing social relationships in Estonia after migrating to the Netherlands?*
- *How do those migrants gain access to and participate in the social networks in the Netherlands?*
- *How does their subjective satisfaction with social relationships influence the stress caused by migration?*
- *What are the main determinants for adaptation of Estonian long-term migrants to the Netherlands?*

1.4 Overview of the chapters

Given the problem formulation, the thesis has the following structure: firstly, a theoretical framework outlines the theories that serve as basis for the approach of this study. Several perspectives of theories of social networks, transnationalism, and migrant adaptation are discussed; as the result a conceptual model is derived from the theories. The third chapter describes the methods applied in the current research and the data used in order to answer the research questions. The main instrument, in-depth interview guide, is examined in detail in order to provide an overview of the measurements of concepts. Attention is also drawn to the ethical aspects of the study, as the confidentiality of the respondents is of particularly high importance in qualitative research. The fourth chapter deals with the interpretation of data regarding the maintenance and establishment of social networks; the following chapter reports results with respect to migrant adaptation. In the final chapter the main outcomes and conclusions are presented as well as recommendations for migrant coping processes and further research.

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter gives an overview of theories employed in order to answer the research questions. Firstly, within the social network theory quality and quantity of social ties is discussed as well as the relationship between the size and content of social network, and loneliness. Secondly, the transnational migration theory is examined from the perspective of identity and potential ways of maintaining contact with people residing in the home country. Thirdly, migrant adaptation strategies as developed by J.W. Berry are presented. The conceptual model in Section 2.4 provides an illustration for the connections between different concepts emerged from theories.

2.1 Social network theory

A social network represents a set of individuals[3] and relationships between them (Wasserman and Faust, 1999; Kadushin, 2004). The individuals constituting the network are interconnected in various ways, whereby these linkages determine the content of the relationships and the structure of the network. The patterns and implications of these relationships impact the behaviour of individuals within the network as well as the functioning of the group as a whole (Wasserman and Faust, 1999). This intertwining of micro and macro level allows studying the interdependence of individual behaviour and collective phenomena, and further illustrates the recognition that social networks are the cause of individual behaviour as well as the result of it (Stokman, 2004). As co-operation, support, and influence are performed through the underlying relations, studying social networks often delivers clarity about micro processes in the society (Snijders, 2001).

Migrant networks are according to migrant network theory defined as "sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants at places of origin and destination through reciprocal ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community of origin" (Massey et al., 2005, p. 29), and facilitate migration in the sense that they decrease the costs and risks of migration and at the same time increase expected returns (Hugo, 1981; Taylor, 1986; Massey and García Espana, 1987; Massey, 1990; Gurak and Caces, 1992, all cited by Massey et al., 1993). This theory, however, lays emphasis on the economic aspects and gain of migration networks, be it lower costs of settlement, arranging necessary documents, or finding employment, but little attention is paid to social relationships among the individuals. Moreover, this central model of migrant networks excludes a host of important actors, such as neighbours or co-workers, restricting the individuals participating in the migrant networks to the shared community of origin (Krissman, 2005).

One of the main principles in social network theory is that ties between individuals are viewed as channels for the flow of resources, either material or nonmaterial (Wasserman and Faust, 1999). These resources underlying the relationships are referred to as social capital. Social capital is an opportunity structure that is brought into existence by social relations (Lin, 1982; Flap and De Graaf, 1986; Burt, 1992, all cited by Stokman, 2004). Individuals invest in social relationships in order to gain access to resources embedded in the social structure that "enhance expected returns of instrumental or expressive actions" (Lin, 1999,

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[3] The social entities central in the theory of social networks are actors or "discrete individual, corporate, or collective social units" (Wasserman and Faust 1994, p. 17), however, as the current study focuses on the individual actors, the actors are here referred to as individuals.

p.39). Hereby instrumental action involves social, economic, and political returns, whereas expressive action embraces physical health, mental health, and life satisfaction. Hence, an important aspect of social relationships is that the available resources paired with the relations can be used for the realisation of one's goals (Stokman, 2004), be it receiving emotional support, gaining access to valuable information, or acquiring tangible goods. Social networks both provide and limit opportunities for an individual (Lin, 1999; Stokman, 2004), depending on the extent to which one engages in social interactions and on the content of these interactions. It follows that social networks can be of crucial value to migrants in order to improve their position, at least in the early stages of migration process, i.e., when making the decision to migrate, and settling down in the new society. The ties by which migrants are linked to other individuals transmit information and settlement assistance, thus studying social networks "permits understanding migration as a social product—not as the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actors, not as the sole result of economic or political parameters, but rather as an outcome of all these factors in interaction" (Boyd, 1989, p. 642).

2.1.1 Some characteristics of social networks

The patterns of social networks and the position of a particular individual in the network can be described by means of a number of concepts. The dimensions relevant for the current study are the quantity, quality, and strength of the ties.

The quantity of the relationships constitutes the size of the social network. In this study, egocentric networks—the set of ties surrounding a particular individual—are of interest. The main measurements for describing the size of a network are outdegree, which embodies the number of ties that one claims to have, and indegree, which is the number of individuals in the network who have nominated that particular person to be their acquaintance or friend (Wasserman and Faust, 1999). From a more qualitative point of view, the size of a social network is restricted to the significant others, with whom the individual interacts regularly (Stokes, 1985). The size of the social network then determines to a certain extent the amount of possible social capital to be expected from the network as a whole.

Although the need for social contact in humans is hardly arguable, personal preferences for and satisfaction with the number of acquaintances and friends varies largely. The differences could be attributed, among others, to dissimilarities in personality and time constraints (Stokman, 2004). One might desire more social relationships, but does not possess enough social competence needed for establishing interpersonal ties. This and other restraining elements can lead to stress caused by the incongruity between the desired actual numbers of contacts, as observed in sojourner samples by Berry and his associates (1987). On the other hand, someone with highly developed social interaction skills might simply not have time to manage all the relationships once created. A choice has to be made in which relations one will invest more time, or in other words, the quality of the social contacts comes into play.

The quality of the ties relates to the degree to which one feels close to others in the social network, being understood by them, being able to confide in them, and turn to when in need for help (Stokes, 1985; Pinquart and Sörensen, 2001). Given the constraints of time, it is obvious that the quantity of social relationships often does not have implications for their quality as one could most likely not sustain very close ties with all the individuals in the social network. As for migrants, also the spatial distance with the social network in the

homeland may hinder the quality of the relationships. Migration, therefore, may limit the availability of and support from the existing social networks, because immigrants are often "deprived of important social network qualities such as intimacy and warmth" (Salgado de Snyder and Díaz-Guerrero, 2003, p. 149), which are important sources of strength for coping with emotional problems occurring when settling in a new society. The quantity and, moreover, the quality of the social ties may become less important when they are not available for affecting one's daily life (Sarason, 1976, cited by Stokes, 1985). Engaging in common activities and having an opportunity to interact is one of the prerequisites of maintaining friendships (Newcomb, 1956; Van de Bunt, 1999; McPherson et al., 2001; Van Duijn et al., 2003, all cited by Stokman, 2004). Hence, migrants may encounter difficulties in doing things together with friends across large distances (however, see Section 2.2.3 for the role of communication technologies as an enabling factor).

The quality of the relationships in the social network can be extended to the strength of the ties. This concept is combined of the amount of time spent on interacting, the emotional intensity, the level of intimacy, and reciprocity of the given relationship (Granovetter, 1973), however, Marsden and Campbell (1984, cited by Marsden, 1990) demonstrated that frequency of the contact is only weakly linked to the closeness between individuals and the duration of their friendship. Thus the more investments made in a relationship, the stronger the tie. Strong ties are important for preserving the resources gained from the relationships associated with expressive action; weak ties are used for gaining resources related to instrumental action (Lin, 1999). Both types of ties result in access to social capital, albeit the content of the social capital differs per strength of the tie.

Paradoxically, weak ties are 'strong' from another perspective. As social networks consisting of strong ties tend to be small in size, they entail a limited capacity of resources, because individuals constituting the network interact intensively and build social capital only within the group. Weak ties, on the contrary, provide a variety of resources, as they exist within and between larger groups. One is connected to others through the weak ties who have different information, expertise, and resources than the individual self and the ones he is strongly connected to (Granovetter, 1973). The strength of weak ties lies in their property of acting like mediators between social networks or distant parts of a network. This mediating role is to function as a bridge—and as the only bridge—between two individuals in a network, therefore a strong tie can never fill the position of a bridge (ibid.). The aspect of a bridge, also named a broker, is the reason why relationships with acquaintances, rather than with close friends, maximise the flows of information and social mobility opportunities (Boyd, 1989). Whereas strong ties facilitate cohesion within the social network and thus lead to fragmentation into small groups or even isolation from other networks, weak ties are means for integrating social systems as they bring different actors together (Granovetter, 1973; Snijders, 2001; Blokland, 2003; Kadushin, 2004; Krissman, 2005).

Following this line of reasoning, the potential of weak ties is vividly pronounced in migrants. While having at least some contacts in the host country is crucial for settling, the social network often has to be built up from a scratch. In this situation, weak ties with co-workers, neighbours, or compatriots who might be acquaintances of one's acquaintances from homeland are of high value (Wilson, 1998), because they are the key to the extension of the social network and access to gaining the resources needed. The less attainable the strong ties are, the more essential the weak ties become (Collyer, 2005), implying the need to seek opportunities to establish social relationships and create social capital via moderately close others.

2.1.2 Loneliness with regard to social networks

As previously discussed, both quantity and quality of the relationships in the social network plays a substantial role. Experiencing the number and/or the content of social relationships as unsatisfactory can lead to feelings of loneliness. Definitions of loneliness unanimously put accent on the perceived deficits in relationships (Weiss, 1973; Peplau and Perlman, 1982 (cited by Green et al., 2001); Russell et al., 1984). Hereby it is important to note that loneliness is distinct from social isolation, because it expresses one's subjective perception of deficiencies of social contacts (Russell et al., 1984). These shortcomings can be of quantitative and/or qualitative nature. Indicators for the former include, among others, the number of friends, and the frequency of the contacts with them, while the latter incorporates aspects such as feeling close to others, feeling being understood and loved (Russell et al., 1984; Pinquart and Sörensen, 2001). In fact, low quality of relationships is more strongly associated with loneliness than low quantity (Pinquart and Sörensen, 2001). The quantitative and qualitative shortcomings in social relationships are not interrelated; in addition, loneliness is a perceived subjectively. Even if one has quite a number of social ties, it does not necessarily suggest satisfaction with the content of these ties, at the same time another individual may not feel lonely when having only a few ties and low frequency of contacts.

Although loneliness is by and large considered to be unidimensional, Weiss (1973) has distinguished between two categories of it with regard to the type of perceived deficiency in the social relationships. According to his typology, emotional loneliness is the consequence of lack or loss of close, intimate bond with another person. This attachment need not always be of romantic character, but can also represent a close relationship providing affection. Social loneliness stems from the lack of relationships available in the social network. In Weiss's view, one is exposed to insufficient social integration due to the absence of a group of friends with whom to share interests and engage in common activities. Nevertheless, these two types of loneliness can be treated as separate from one another, because emotional loneliness does not imply social loneliness, and vice versa, one can have a close other but still not participate in an overall social network.

Given that it results from the scarcities of social relationships, loneliness is closely related to the aspects of social networks described in the previous sections. Intense relationships needed for preventing emotional loneliness correspond to strong ties, however, the association between the number of social relationships and weak ties remains less evident, as a small network could also consist of strong ties. Russell and his collaborators (1984) found that emotional loneliness strongly correlates to the feeling of closeness to others in the network, and social loneliness to the degree to which one feels being part of the network. The former was associated with aspects of intimate contact, the latter with these of casual contact. Smaller networks and less satisfaction with the ties were shown in socially lonely people, while the absence of intimate attachment prevailed in emotionally lonely people. Green et al. (2001) supplemented these results with the findings that in younger adults, apart from the size of the social network, also the presence of a close other was related with social loneliness. This effect could be pronounced in young people because a close other provides more likely opportunities for expanding contacts and thereby gaining access to various resources, whereas the social networks of older people are seldom extended through a close other as the friendships are often long-term and social networks already integrated (ibid.).

Having not enough friends and/or lack of intimacy may describe migrants' social relationships in the host country, at least at the beginning phase of settling down.

Establishing social networks is often a time-consuming process, and given that participation in the social networks in the home country might be somewhat complicated due to the spatial distance, it can be argued that migrants are subjects to loneliness. This line of argument is consistent with Stokes (1985), whose findings confirm that the higher the density of the network (i.e., the larger the network, and the more interconnected the actors in the network are), the less lonely the individual is. Social loneliness is related with the absence of the social network that was disrupted due to migration (Narchal, 2007). Loneliness then also hinders new social contacts (Jerusalem et al. 1996) as well as the whole course of adaptation to the new society, or it can even be a symptom of adjustment difficulties (DiTommaso et al., 2004). Hence, the quantity and quality of the social ties indeed do play a significant role in the well-being of migrants.

2.2 Transnational migration

The traditional approach to immigration, that it is a phenomenon whereby migrants leave their home country, settle permanently and assimilate in the host country while having little to do with the country of origin anymore, has lost its prominence during the past decades (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2001; Snel et al., 2006; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). These views are outweighed by the emergence of transnationalism, a concept which comprises the incorporation of migrants into both sending and receiving country. Glick Schiller and Fouron (1999, p. 344, cited by Snel et al., 2006, p. 286) claim transnational migration to be "a pattern of migration in which persons, although they move across international borders, settle, and establish relations in a new state, maintain ongoing social connections with the polity from which they originated", and thus migrants involved in transnationalism "literally live their lives across international borders". People engaged in transnational migration are likely to be involved in various domains, among others, economic, social, and cultural, both in the country of origin and settlement (Portes, 1997).

As transmigrants are simultaneously embedded in multiple societies, their daily activities constitute linkages between the home and host country. The relationships maintained across boundaries of nation-states could be of familial, social, economic, political, organisational, and religious nature (Szanton Blanc et al., 1995, based on Basch et al., 1993), the socio-cultural aspect is of interest to the current study. Due to sustained ties in the society of origin, migrants visit home country for vacations, family occasions, cultural celebrations, and the like (Morawska, 2003). Transnational undertakings within the society of settlement include attending activities where compatriots meet such as events organised by the local embassy, visiting cultural events where national artists perform, and the like (Portes et al., 1999; Snel et al., 2006). In that perspective, transnationalism is also regarded to be a form of migrant adaptation (Portes et al., 1999). Participation in the social networks and traditions of the homeland ensures lower level of stress in migrants, which in turn can have a positive effect on adapting to the host society. For a more practical reason, migrants have to sustain relationships in home country, so that there are still contacts and support available from the social networks in case returning back (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007).

Given the socio-cultural dimension of transnational migration, it can be stated that whenever a migrant maintains contacts with his social network in the home country, particularly with the strong and active ties, and/or seeks contacts with compatriots and aspects of national culture in the host country, he engages in transnationalism. However, transnationalism is not universally applicable to migrants as a whole population, as for a number of intrinsic or

extrinsic reasons many of them might be not willing or able to engage in the communities in the host and/or home country.

2.2.1 Identity

Transnationalism closely links to the issue of migrant identity as it involves attachment both to the home and host country. Because social relationships reinforce identity (Lin, 1999), it can be argued that identity may pose confusion in (transnational) migrants due to engaging in the social networks, assumingly constituted of co-nationals, in the country of origin, and in the social networks, where also other nationals are likely to be represented, in the country of settlement. Merton (1968) argues that social identity is based on and result of comparing the characteristics of ingroup—a group one is a member of—with the reference group. The former group is then that of compatriots, and latter the host nationals; similarities and differences in the attributes of those two groups are evaluated when constructing one's identity. The same logic applies to cultural identity: the set of believes and attitudes of the cultural group one feels related to become salient when in contact with or comparing to another culture (Berry, 2001, based on Phinney, 1990; Berry, 1996).

Identity can broadly be understood as "psychological sense of self" (Encyclopaedia of Human Geography, 2006, p. 239), in the case of migrants this sense of self also includes associating oneself or being associated by others with a certain group of people on the basis of ethnicity or culture (Bretell and Sargent, 2006). Although identity is formed individually, it is closely related to the group: "identity is simultaneously a deeply personal phenomenon and social phenomenon that reflects, and in turn shapes, individual and collective behaviour" (Encyclopaedia of Human Geography, 2006, p. 239). Identifying oneself as a member of a particular ethnic or cultural group includes adopting norms and values of this particular group or society (Cropley, 1983, cited by Coll and Magnuson, 2005), which is expressed through behaviour, and that individual behaviour contributes to social processes at larger scale. Personal identity, on the other hand, draws on the sense of belonging to a certain group, but embracing the values, norms, attitudes, and the like of the host society does not imply per se the feeling of belonging to the host country (ibid.). Hence, theoretically, personal and cultural identity can even conflict with one another. This contradiction can be particularly conspicuous in transnational migrants, given they have multiple identities that owe to the interconnections with more than one nation-state and culture (Glick Schiller et al., 1995, p. 48, based on Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Basch et al., 1994). Nevertheless, the polyvalence of identities does not necessarily undermine migrants' identification with the host society (Ehrkamp and Leitner, 2006), albeit some results suggest that migrants tend to associate themselves more with their own ethnic group rather than with host nationals (Scott and Scott, 1989).

2.2.2 The role of technologies

As the social ties are forged and sustained in both home and host societies, transnationalism by definition involves migrants' participation in their existing social networks in the home country. It is inevitable to include the advanced technological possibilities—as facilitators of the contacts between migrants in the country of settlement, and their social networks in the home country—into discussion.

The emergence of transnationalism and its prevalence on a mass scale was to a large extent made possible by technological prerequisites such as the availability of air transport, long-distance telephone calls, mobile phones, and the Internet (Faist, 1999 (cited by Brouwer, 2006), Portes et al., 1999; Mahler, 2001; Panagakos and Horst, 2006; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). These facilities promote migrant adaptation by compensating for the physical absence from the social ties in the homeland. Vertovec (2004) uses the metaphor 'social glue' when assessing the impact of inexpensive telephone calls: low-cost international calls and prepaid telephone cards connect social networks across the world. Mahler (2001) adds that this real-time contact allows migrants, although behind a physical distance, still feel and function like a family.

The allegory of social glue can certainly be extended to the Internet as it is an important tool for cultivating the maintenance of social networks in the country of origin, and participation in the home society on the whole. In the age of the Internet, physical distance need not be a key factor for the existence of social networks, since "cyberspace may allow for the reconstruction of communities without propinquity" (Encyclopaedia of Human Geography, 2006, p. 480). Research conducted by Shklovski (2004) suggests that the negative effects of migration experience on social ties can be reduced by means of the Internet: results show that the use of the Internet decreases stress through enabling the maintenance of interpersonal relationships on daily basis at least online. Advantages of the Internet as compared to telephone are low costs and diverse ways of communicating such as e-mails, instant messaging, and (tele)conferencing. Another privilege of the Internet is the strengthening of national identities (Eriksen, 2007) by means of online newspapers, virtual community homepages, discussion boards, and many more. Information on the Internet can be shared and found easily, and it reaches a large audience.

Although the variety of available ICTs and the advancements in transport undoubtedly do contribute much to migrants' maintenance of linkages to their home countries and social networks, there is a threat to overestimate the role of technologies, and misattribute causality. Technologies have rather enhanced than produced transnational migrant social networks (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2001). The increased use of ICTs in itself does not suggest higher levels of feeling connected to others (Panagakos and Horst, 2006), as the interactions might not always be meaningful. Besides, the time spent online is often at the costs of face-to-face socialisation with the members of one's social network in the host country. Devoting disproportionally more time on the virtual communication with social ties in homeland, one places himself in a vulnerable position with regard to adapting to the country of settlement, because this process more or less prescribes contacts with the members of the host society.

2.3 Migrant adaptation strategies

Migrants inevitably have to adjust themselves to the society of settlement in order to proceed with the normal functioning of their lives. The process whereby the changes occur in individuals and groups as a reaction to the new environment is called adaptation (Berry, 1997). Adaptation, in turn, is influenced by acculturation, a course of cultural and psychological changes that are the result of intercultural contact (Berry, 2003, cited by Berry et al., 2006). At group level, cultural changes are adjustments in the customs, economy, and politics; at individual level, psychological changes entail modifying one's behaviour regarding the other cultural groups, attitudes with respect to the acculturation process, and

cultural identities (Berry et al., 2006). As briefly discussed in the introduction to the current study, these changes may pose many psychological and social difficulties to migrants as they are subjects to acculturation. This phenomenon is known as acculturative stress; some most common examples of it include lowered mental health status (particularly confusion and depression), feelings of alienation, and identity confusion (Berry et al., 1987).

John W. Berry has been developing a model for acculturation strategies since 1976. Two dimensions stand central in this model: firstly, cultural maintenance indicates to what extent people value their cultural identity and other cultural attributes, secondly, contact and participation refers to the extent to which people wish to have or avoid contact with other (cultural) groups (Berry et al., 1987; Berry, 1997; Berry, 2001). These dimensions can be evaluated either from the perspective of immigrant or ethnocultural groups, or from the point of view of the receiving society. As to be seen from Table 2.1, there are eight possible approaches to acculturation.

Table 2.1 Acculturation strategies in immigrant groups and in the receiving society

		Strategies of immigrants		Strategies of receiving society	
		Maintenance of heritage culture and identity			
		Yes	No	Yes	No
Relationships sought among groups	Yes	Integration	Assimilation	Multiculturalism	"Melting pot"
	No	Separation	Marginalisation	Segregation	Exclusion

Source: Berry, 1997; Berry, 2001

According to Berry (1997, 2001; Berry et al., 1987), the coping strategies for acculturation are the following:

1. When immigrants value both their own cultural heritage and participation in the host society, they pursue *integration* strategy. When society at large values cultural diversity, *multiculturalism* is promoted.
2. When immigrants do not consider the maintenance of original culture important, but engage in daily interactions with other cultural groups, *assimilation* is defined. It is called *melting pot* (or even *pressure cooker*), when expected or enforced by the receiving country.
3. When immigrants remain to their culture, but at the same time seek no contact with other groups, *separation* strategy occurs. When demanded by the dominant group, *segregation* takes place.
4. When immigrants take no interest in both cultural maintenance and having relationships with others in the society, *marginalisation* is defined. *Exclusion* refers to situation when the receiving society imposes the same.

An essential aspect of the strategies employed is the mutuality of the process, because attitudes and behaviours of both parties are concerned. The reciprocity comes forth especially in the case of integration/multiculturalism as it „requires immigrants to *adopt* the basic values of the receiving society, and at the same time the receiving society must be prepared to *adapt* national institutions (e.g., education, health, justice, labor) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the larger plural society" (Berry, 2001, p. 619, italics original). Efforts of immigrant groups are not enough for successful integration if not recognised and responded to by the mainstream society.

The strengths of this model lie in enabling to evaluate acculturation strategies at the individual, group, and society level, and, at the same time, it allows for description of acculturation attitudes and behaviours from the perspective of both migrant groups and host society (Schmitz, 2003).

2.4 Conceptual model

Given the theoretical background presented in this chapter, a conceptual model (see Figure 2.1) is constructed. The broad idea behind the model builds on methodological individualism theory coined by Coleman (1986), which lays emphasis on the importance of linkages between macro and micro levels. The context on the macro level has an impact on the individual background at the micro level, which then defines the individual behaviour, this, in turn, determines the social outcomes on the macro level again.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual model
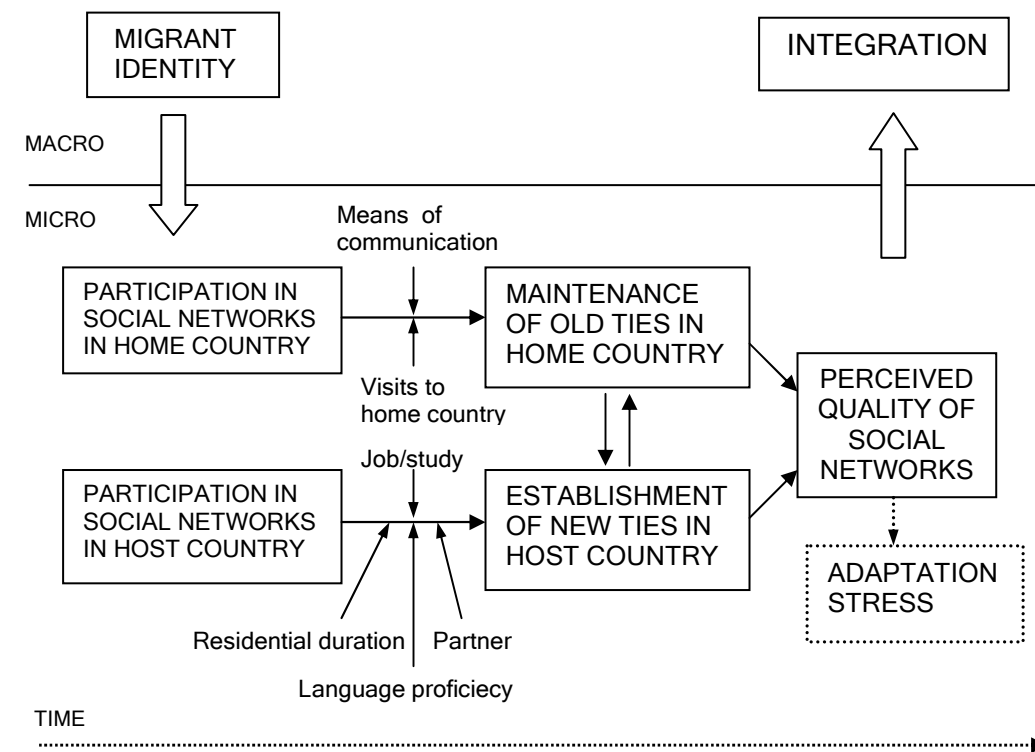
Although the macro level gives a larger setting of the current research, the main focus in is on the micro level processes. (Collective) migrant identities impact integration at the macro level indirectly via micro level: participation in social networks in the home country has to do with one's identity as related to the native land, whereas participation in the social networks in the host country also includes readiness to adapt to the norms and values of the host society at least to some degree. Participation in social networks leads to maintenance and establishment of ties, this process may be affected by several factors which can act as stressors or facilitators. This list of factors is not claimed to be exhaustive, only the main factors are named.

Virtual contact is basically the only way of keeping contact regarding the maintenance of relationships in the home country, since daily face-to-face contact is impossible due to

physical distance. Therefore access to means of communication, particularly to the Internet, is inevitable (Portes et al., 1999; Brouwer, 2006; Panagakos and Horst, 2006; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). Visiting friends and family in the home country is a part of transnational activities as well as important aspect with respect to fostering national identity attachment and affiliation with home country (Brouwer, 2006; Snel et al., 2006).

With respect to the establishment of relationships in the host country, residential duration plays an important role—the longer one has lived in a new country, the more relationships he has established (Scott and Scott, 1989; Buijs, 1993; Coll and Magnuson, 2005; Snel et al., 2006; Polek and Schoon, 2008). Also (local) language fluency is considered to be a strongly enabling factor for making contacts with members of the host society (Buijs, 1993; Jerusalem et al., 1996; Morawska, 2003; Salgado de Snyder and Díaz-Guerrero, 2003; Coll and Magnuson, 2005; Narchal, 2007; Polek and Schoon, 2008). A partner who lives in the same country is predicted to be a facilitator as well because the migrant can then automatically benefit from the social network of the partner (Jerusalem et al., 1996; Polek and Schoon, 2008). The same is expected when a migrant has a job or study position as colleagues or fellow students form a possible starting point for social contacts (Polek and Schoon, 2008).

The extent of maintenance and establishment of ties—these two are interconnected through transnationalism—contribute to the perceived quality of social networks in general. Low level of subjective satisfaction with the content of these network connections may accentuate the adaption stress caused by difficulties of acculturation even more. It is assumed here that adaptive stress need not occur in every migrant. As derived from literature, integration is a successful strategy for coping with acculturation. When the perceived quality of social networks is high, migrants already engage in integration behaviours because social contacts with natives (or other foreigners) in the host society imply understanding and accepting the values and norms of other ethnic or cultural groups.

3 Data and methods

In this chapter the adopted methods and resulting data are described. The concepts from the conceptual model are defined and operationalised in order to enable the measurement of the concepts. This is done by means of questions asked in the in-depth interviews. The study population, Estonian migrants in the Netherlands, and selection of respondents are described in Section 3.2. The research instruments in-depth interview guide, UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3), and Ego network questionnaire are discussed in Section 3.3. In the following sections, a brief description of data collection and analyses procedures is introduced. Reflections on ethical aspects of the study and experiences from the fieldwork are provided as well.

3.1 Definitions and operationalisation of concepts

The concepts used in the conceptual model (see Section 2.4) of the study need to be explained in more detail as they serve the basis for the list of questions. The definitions then specify the meaning of the abstract concepts; operationalisation is the development of concrete measurements for the concepts (Berg, 2004; Babbie, 2006). The operationalised concepts are elucidated by means of questions asked in the in-depth interviews (see Section 3.4.1). Some of the questions are supported by follow-up prompts that exemplify possible answer categories in case the respondent is unable to recall any of them (Wengraf, 2002).

In the following, the definitions of concepts and the questions aimed to reveal their content are presented. Some sets of questions are applicable to several concepts, here, however, they are referred to only once.

Long-term migrant
Definition: "A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence" (UN, 1998).
Operationalisation: One year as minimal length of residence was a selection criterion for respondents.

Migrant identity
Definition: "The extent to which people feel related to a particular ethnic group and orient themselves to the norms and values of that group" (Snel et al., 2006, p. 290). In addition to the sense of belonging, and adopting norms and values of a certain cultural group, attitudes towards own or other cultural groups play a role (Berry, 2001).
Operationalisation:
- Do you regard Estonia or the Netherlands as your home? Why?
- How has living abroad, if at all, changed your feelings of 'Estonianess'?
- What are the things you like more about Estonia/the Netherlands than about the Netherlands/Estonia? The things you dislike? Why?
- What are your perceptions of and experiences with the attitudes of Dutch towards Estonia and Estonians?
- Do you consider it important to have contacts with local Estonians, to participate in the local Estonian community? Why?

- Which Estonian/Dutch holidays do you celebrate here (if any at all)? What are the reasons for celebrating/not celebrating? How do you celebrate? Prompts for Estonia: Independence Day, Re-independence Day, Midsummer Day, Christmas. Prompts for the Netherlands: Queen's Day, Liberation Day, Sinterklaas.
- Which Dutch customs and traditions do you know? What are your experiences with those customs and traditions, and what do you think about them? Prompts: three kisses for hello and good-bye, taking/offering only one cookie/piece of cake, fixed agendas, ultraliberalism with regard to soft drugs, prostitution, homosexuality.
- Do you consider it important to be acquainted with Estonian/Dutch news? Why?

Social network
Definition: "The kin, neighbours and friends to whom an individual is tied socially, usually by shared values, attitudes and aspirations" (Dictionary of Human Geography, 2000, p. 759).
Operationalisation regarding participation in social networks and maintenance of the old ties in Estonia:
- How do you keep in touch with your friends in Estonia? Prompts: the Internet, phone, visiting Estonia, friends visiting the Netherlands.
- How, if at all, have your friendship relationships in Estonia changed because of living abroad?
Operationalisation regarding participation in the social networks and establishment of new ties in the Netherlands:
- How, if at all, have you found new acquaintances/friends in the Netherlands? Prompts: contacts at work/university, hobbies (e.g., sports), partner.
- Has it been easy for you to find new contacts here, why/why not?
- How, if at all, have you found contact with other Estonians who live in the Netherlands? Prompts: some other acquaintances/friends, activities organised by the Estonian community or embassy, Orkut.
- How acquainted are you with the activities of local Estonian community?
- In which of their activities, if in any at all, have you participated? Why (not)?
- In which of the activities, if in any at all, organised by the Estonian embassy have you participated? Why (not)?
- What do you know about the Estonian School in the Netherlands? Have you participated, why (not)?

Means of communication
Definition: the utilisation of the Internet, mobile phone, telephone, and/or mail in order to maintain social relationships in the home country.
Operationalisation:
- What are the main ways you keep contact with your friends and acquaintances in Estonia? Prompts: Skype, MSN, e-mails, social networks sites (e.g., Facebook, Orkut), telephone calls, text messages, letters/postcards.

Visits to home country
Operationalisation:
- Do you consider it important to visit Estonia? Why (not)?
- How often do you visit Estonia?
- Would you like to visit more often, if it was possible? If yes, what are the reasons for not doing so? Prompts: time, money, no interest/need.

Residential duration
Definition: the length of time (in years) a migrant has lived in the host country.
Operationalisation:
- How do you perceive the time lived in the Netherlands with regard to making new friends/acquaintances here? Prompt: its impact on the quantity and quality of the relationships.
- How do you perceive the time lived in the Netherlands with regard to getting accustomed to this society?

Language proficiency
Definition: the extent to which migrant comprehends and speaks Dutch. Since Dutch integration policies prescribe the knowledge of Dutch language as an important aspect of migrant integration (see Section 1.2), this concept overlaps with that of integration.
Operationalisation:
- What is your level of understanding and speaking Dutch?
- What are (in case the respondent has poor or no knowledge of Dutch: could be) the advantages of it? Prompt: daily situations, getting contact with Dutch, understanding their culture.

Partner
Definition: the presence of a romantic partner of the migrant in the host society, and the role of the partner as an accessing point to social networks and as a facilitator of migrant adaptation.
Operationalisation (if applicable):
- In what ways, if in any, has your partner made things easier in the Netherlands? Prompts: someone to turn to, finding new friends/acquaintances, adaptation, understanding the Dutch culture.

Job/study
Definition: the presence of an occupation (whether as work or study position) of the migrant in the host society, and its role as an accessing point to social networks and as a facilitator of migrant adaptation.
Operationalisation:
- Which kind of contacts do you have with your colleagues/fellow students? Prompts: no contact outside the workplace/university, engaging in common activities also in leisure time.
- From which countries are your colleagues/fellow students?

Perceived quality of social networks
Definition: the extent of feeling close to and being understood by others in the social network, and being able to turn to them when in need (Stokes, 1985; Pinquart and Sörensen, 2001), as subjectively experienced by the respondent.
Operationalisation:
- (See the questions about maintenance of social networks in Estonia) How do you feel about the changes that have taken place in your friendship relations in Estonia, because you moved abroad?
- How satisfied are you with the content of your friendship relationships in Estonia/the Netherlands?
- Are there enough people for you to share your ups and downs with? What makes you

feel this way? Who are they? Prompts: friends, colleagues/fellow students, Estonians/Dutch/other nationals.
- Are there enough people to turn to for practical matters? Who are they? Prompts: friends, colleagues/fellow students, Estonians/Dutch/other nationals.

Adaptation stress
Definition: stress is a "generalized physiological and psychological state of the organism, brought about by the experience of stressors in the environment, and which requires some reduction (for normal functioning to occur), through a process of coping until some satisfactory adaptation to the new situation is achieved" (Berry et al., 1987, p. 87). In the case of migrant adaptation, the stressors in the environment are the phenomena accompanied by the adjustment to the new society such as the disruption of social networks in the home society, the need to establish social relationships in the host society, adopting the values and norms of the country of settlement. One of the possible indicators of adaptive stress is thus loneliness, "experienced suffering from contact deficit" as well as "experienced discrepancy between the kinds of relationships one perceives as having and kinds of relationships he would like to have" (Pinquart and Sörensen, 2001, p. 245).
Operationalisation:
- What are/were the difficulties, if any, you have experienced when adjusting to living in the Netherlands? Prompts: finding a place to live, a job, friends, hobbies, dealing with bureaucracy, understanding Dutch culture.
- How serious do/did you evaluate those difficulties to be?
- Do you feel yourself lonely sometimes? (If applicable) why?
- (If applicable) What do you do to overcome loneliness?

Integration
Definition: the extent to which the respondent preserves own culture and identity, at the same time engages in daily interactions with other cultural groups, particularly with the members of the national group, and seeks "to participate as an integral part of the larger society" (Berry 2001, p. 619).
Operationalisation:
- What are your experiences with blending into Dutch society?
- Do you consider it important to feel like a part of the Dutch society? Why (not)?
- Which kind of contacts, if any at all, do you have with Dutch? Prompts: partner, colleagues/fellow students, contacts through hobbies/sports.
- Do you consider it important to have contacts with Dutch or other nations? Why?
- Do you have a close friend among Dutch?

3.2 Study population[4]

Figure 3.1 summarises the total number of Estonians in the Netherlands on January 1 over the time period 1996 till 2008. As to be seen, the total volume is rather small even at its peak: 589 in 2008. Whereas the number had been increasing at a constant but slow pace since 1996, somewhat larger increase occurred in 2005, the most likely explanation for this intensification is the enlargement of the EU[5], due to which there were considerably less

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[4] The first part of this section is based on a paper by the author for the course Population Information during the Master programme Population Studies at University of Groningen.
[5] Estonia was admitted to the EU on May 1, 2004.

restrictions for Estonians to live in another EU country. Fully opened Dutch labour market for the new EU member states[6] can probably be attributed to the second slightly higher rise in the Estonian population in the Netherlands in 2008. It is interesting to note that, according to the data of CBS (2008b), the number of female Estonians has grown remarkably faster than that of males: the former by 221, while the latter by 83 over the 13 years under observation.

Figure 3.1 Estonians in the Netherlands on 1 January, in 1996-2008
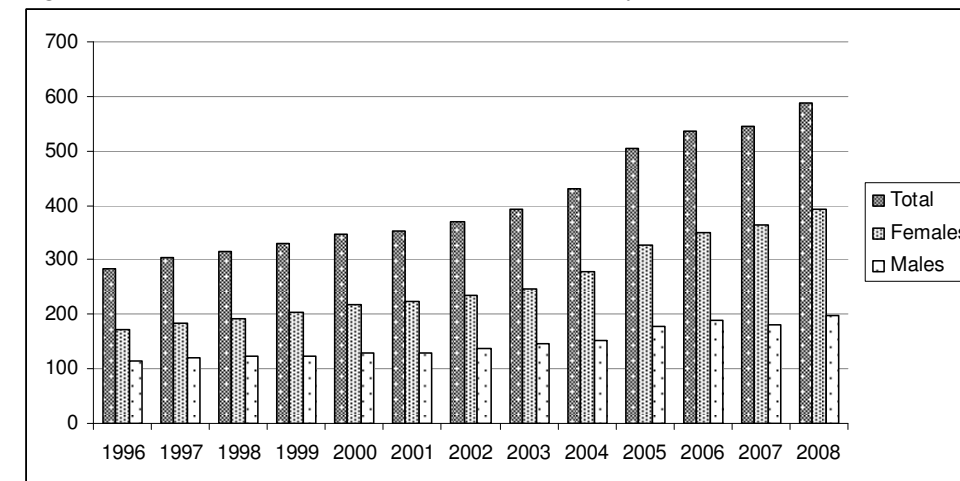
Source: CBS 2008b

Statistics Netherlands have data only on those immigrants who have registered their stay in the Netherlands (with the expected duration of the stay at least six months) at the local municipality administration (*Gemeentelijke Basisadministratie,* henceforth referred to as GBA*)*. Not every immigrant does so, particularly from 2004 onwards when residence permit is no longer required from Estonians. Moreover, when emigrating from the Netherlands, many immigrants do not register their leave at GBA, which creates the situation that their stay is still registered albeit they might have already left the country[7].

Regrettably, it is not possible to compare these data with the emigration numbers from Estonia. Statistics Estonia (SE) does not provide any migration data at all. Population statistics system was changed as one of the numerous consequences of the transition after breaking free from the Soviet Russian occupation in 1991. The old system was abandoned, and, following the example of West-European countries, population register was created. There is a lot of criticism to the reliability of Estonian population statistics: the data gathering methods of SE are outdated, the census in 2000 was a failure (some seven per cent of the total population is estimated to be not enumerated); in addition, rigid regulations defending personal data do not enable to construct a proper sample for demographic studies, and population register does not provide with demographically important characteristics. Only data for 1965-1990 are recalculated in a manner that they are comparable with the rest of the world. From 2000 onwards the development has been more significant, but nevertheless SE cannot supply all the data needed for migration statistics. Joining the EU in 2004 required SE to overview the definitions and methods once again. Unsatisfactory coverage of the population led to incomplete internal and international migration data. Statistical unreliability also occurred when comparing the migration data to and from Estonia with other countries' data.

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[6] The Netherlands opened its labour market on May 1, 2007 to the ten new member states who joined the EU in 2004.

[7] However, administrative corrections are applied in order to prevent those inconsistencies.

It is interesting to point out that in September 2008 there were 257 Estonians living in the Netherlands who had registered their stay with the Estonian embassy[8].

3.2.1 Selection of respondents

With respect to the definition of long-term migrant (see Section 3.1), the only selection criterion for respondents among Estonians living in the Netherlands was the minimal residential duration of one year.

As qualitative methods do not require a large sample, it was estimated that 15-20 in-depth interviews were needed for drawing reliable conclusions on the study population. The number of interviews in itself, however, is not as important as their content. If a level of theoretical saturation has been reached, there is no need for further data gathering. Theoretical saturation is attained, when no new information or different insights emerge from the interviews, categories are well developed with regard to their variation, and relationships among concepts are founded and validated (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, cited by Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Information richness and variation was established by purposively selecting the participants, and combining the types of participants by age, sex, residential duration, and place of residence.

Given the relatively small size of the study population, snowball sampling technique was employed. This sampling strategy is a process of first identifying a few informants, who then refer to people they know who could be of interest to the researcher as meeting the selection criteria, those people then, too, refer to potential respondents they know, and so forth (Patton, 1990; cited by Wengraf, 2002). This method, however, could not be used too extensively as it would have lead to many participants sharing the same social network of Estonians in the Netherlands, but the aim of the research entails studying a variety of social networks. Of course, in case the respondent had no contact with Estonians in the Netherlands, it was logically impossible to suggest any other informants for the researcher.

In order to find the first few respondents, use of personal network was made. Potential respondents were also approached through the community 'Estonians in the Netherlands' at social networking website Orkut[9]. Researcher left a message to some 40 members of that community. The message contained a short introduction to the study, confidentiality measures, and personal e-mail address to reply to in case willing to participate or any further questions.

3.3.2 Description of study participants

A total of 19 interviews was carried out, 14 with female and 5 with male respondents (for age and sex distribution, see Table 3.1). The mean age of respondents is 29.2 (SD=5.1), the mean length of residence is 4.6 years, ranging from slightly less than a year[10] to more than 15 years. Ten of the respondents live in one of the three major cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague), five respondents reside in cities that have 100,000 to 200,000 inhabitants, and

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[8] Personal correspondence, September 12, 2008.

[9] See Appendix V for the screenshot.

[10] Although a minimum of 12 months was required, the respondent was still interviewed given the difficulties experienced in finding respondents willing to participate.

four respondents have settled in cities with less than 100,000 residents. Six respondents are married, seven respondents have a partner who also lives in the Netherlands.

Table 3.1 Distribution of respondents by age and sex

	Age group			
Sex	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40
Females	4	5	3	2
Males	2	0	2	1
Total	6	5	5	3

3.4 Methods

3.4.1 In-depth interviews

The main instrument of this study is a semi-structured in-depth interview guide (see Appendix IV) that is aimed to reveal the experience and context of consequences of migration on social networks and adaptation as perceived by respondents. Qualitative methods enable to get a broader insight into a phenomenon at the micro level. They are employed in order to examine complex behaviours and motivations, gather a variety of opinions and experiences, compensate for the knowledge that other methods cannot capture efficiently, and empower the informants (Dunn, 2000). A semi-structured interview guide consists of questions that are open enough to allow for adjusting to the narrative of the respondent and improvising as a reaction to the responses, however, this has to draw on the theoretical framework (Wengraf, 2002). Therefore, the researcher must be prepared for the interview with full care.

The validity of this method will be ensured by deriving questions from theoretical framework which is based on published findings, as well as data triangulation when combining qualitative in-depth interview with a quantitative scale (see Section 3.4.2). The reliability of qualitative methods is considered to be more problematic due to the larger extent to which the results can be interpreted subjectively. In order to ensure data reliability, cross-case verification of issues is be used as well as both tape recording and verbatim transcription of the interview, data are analysed with relevant software. Qualitative methods are not aiming at generalisations, thus it is important to avoid applying an effect for all persons.

3.4.2 UCLA Loneliness Scale

The instrument for assessing loneliness in respondents is the University of California, Los Angeles Loneliness Scale Version 3 (UCLA LS 3) (see Appendix II). This instrument and its earlier versions have dominantly been used in loneliness studies (see Russell et al., 1980; Stephan et al., 1988; Russell, 1996), research has been carried out on diverse populations, among others, students, elderly, nurses, teachers, opiate dependent patients among others.

The original version of the scale was constructed by Russell and associates in 1978, when they measured loneliness in university students by a 20-item Likert scale. The scale had very high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha .96), validity checks were made by correlating the scores on participants' self-reports about their feelings of loneliness with the scores on UCLA LS (r=.79, p<.001) and by linking UCLA LS scores to test scores on other emotional

states correlated to loneliness (such as depression and anxiety), which delivered again significant results (Russell et al., 1978).

In 1980 a Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (R-UCLA LS) was developed in order to "counter the possible effects on response bias in the original scale" (Russell et al., 1980, p. 472). The negative wordings of statements in the initial scales were changed so that half of the 20 statements were now aimed to reflect one's satisfaction with his social relationships and the other half dissatisfaction. The internal consistency remained high (α=.94) and it was reported that loneliness is discriminable from conceptually alike determinants such as depression or lack of affiliative motivation (Russell et al., 1980).

Even the revised scale was still criticised for not dealing with loneliness as a unidimensional construct (see McWirther, 1990; Oshagan and Allen, 1992; Hawkey, 2005). In order to answer the critique and compensate the deficits of previous scales, the R-UCLA was re-designed, resulting in UCLA Loneliness Scale Version 3. Russell (1996, p. 35) claimed the new, simplified scale to be a unidimensional measure since "all the items were found to load significantly on a bipolar global loneliness factor". The reliability of the scale is still very high (α=.89-.94, test-retest correlation over a one-year period .73) and it provides valid assessment of loneliness—the scores on Version 3 strongly correlate with those on New York University Loneliness Scale and Differential Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996).

A few examples of the items in UCLA LS 3 are: 'How often do you feel that there is no one you can turn to?', 'How often do you feel part of a group of friends?', 'How often do you feel that your relationships with others are not meaningful?'. The answer categories given are 'never', 'rarely', 'sometimes', and 'always', which seemed to the researcher to be biased towards the 'never' side. As this doubt was confirmed by the two test respondents, category 'often' was added to the range. The first test respondent also corroborated the need to adjust the scale to social networks of migrants, namely, to distinct between the social networks in the home country and in the host country. Filling in the questionnaire separately with regard to social network in the Netherlands and with regard to the social network in Estonia proved to be justified during data collection. The coefficient alpha was high for both of the scales: .86 and .85 for the Netherlands and Estonia, respectively.

3.4.3 Ego network questionnaire

In order to quantify the measurements of social networks to some extent, an ego network questionnaire is adopted (see Appendix III). This instrument is designed for a multi-disciplinary research project conducted University of Groningen, namely, Tracking Adolescents' Individual Lives Study (TRAILS) which is a longitudinal research on wellbeing, health, and social development from childhood to adulthood.

The questionnaire is adjusted to the current study, therefore some items are excluded. The respondent has to name up to seven close others and provide with some background information characteristics such as age and sex of the close other, relationship to the respondent and the duration of their relationship. The quality of the relationship is assessed by the frequency of receiving both practical and emotional support from the close other; the quantity of the relationship is revealed by means of frequency of the contact. Answer categories to those two variables are provided on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'always' during the last three months. For the current research, the country of

residence of the close other (answer categories 'Estonia', 'the Netherlands', and 'other') is included as an additional item in order to determine the spatial distribution of the significant others of the respondents.

3.5 Ethical considerations

A written informed consent was taken from respondents before the interview. Informed consent is a permission to involve the participants in the research and it must indicate "what is it they are consenting to" (Dowling, 2000, p. 21). Basic information on the content of the research, voluntary participation, and right to confidentiality and to withdraw from the study at any stage are indicated in the consent (see Appendix IV). It has to be ensured with care that the data cannot be related back to a particular informant. The aspect of remaining anonymous is especially important in the current research, because the total study population is small, and participants could be rather easily identified, particularly by other Estonians living in the Netherlands, based on age in combination with residential duration and/or place of residence, or even on the basis of a single character if it has a distinctive value. Therefore these combinations will not be allowed when quoting from an interview or otherwise regarding a particular respondent. In order to defend the participants' anonymity, a fictitious name will be given to every respondent instead. The draft version of the results was sent to the respondents as an additional measurement of ensuring their confidentiality, so that they could ascertain being represented anonymously enough, and in case needed, adjustments with regard to referring to the respondents could still be made in the final version.

It is the duty of every researcher to realise that the research must not expose those involved to harm of any kind. It has to be taken into account that the issues raised may upset the respondent or be potentially psychologically damaging (Dowling, 2000). In the current research the topic of loneliness may pose discomfort in respondents. Negative feelings must be dealt with sensitivity, should they thereby emerge.

Further measurements taken to protect the privacy of respondents were anonymising and coding tapes and transcribed data, and coding questionnaires. The file with names and contact data of the respondents was not retained.

3.6 Data collection

Two test-interviews with Estonian long-term migrants in the Netherlands were conducted in March 2008. Based on this experience, the interview guide was improved and some of the topics elaborated. However, the test-interviews are included in the research as the adjustments made to the interview guide were not substantial. The next in-depth interview was carried out in July[11] and the rest of the fieldwork took place during September 11-26, 2008. 13 people replied to the message in Orkut, two of them had to cancel the appointment later. Three people responded when the fieldwork was already conducted.

The interviews were carried out in the place of residence of the respondent[12]. Less than a half of the interviews took place at the home of the respondent, in the rest of the cases they were

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[11] The only interview that was carried out in Estonia, other respondents were interviewed in the Netherlands.
[12] In two cases the interview took place in another city as it was proposed by the respondent.

conducted in a café or a bar. The duration of interviews ranged from 25 minutes to one and a half hours. The interview language was Estonian.

All of the interviews were tape recorded, additionally, the researcher took notes during the interview. The notes are necessary in order to capture non-linguistic data such as body language, make associations between concepts, establish connections within and outside the interview, return to the issues raised during the narrative, assist in case the tape is lost or the tape recorder does not function (Wengraf, 2002). Unfortunately, the latter 'nightmare assumption' came true in one of the interviews: when about to transcribe the tape, it turned out to be empty. Since it was discovered the next day, the researcher could retrospectively write some more notes, because the information was still freshly memorised. Albeit otherwise negative surprise, the loss of the taped material was a good example to illustrate the needfulness of taking notes during the interview as well as the advantages of not loosing the touch with the data when leaving as little time as possible between the interview and the process of transcribing it.

3.7 Data analysis

3.7.1 Qualitative data

A verbatim transcript was created of every interview. These transcripts serve the basis for the qualitative analysis, which was performed with the help of computer programme ATLAS.ti (version 5.2). The analysis is guided by grounded theory. This method "allows the theory to emerge from the data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 12) by means of systematic gathering and analysing data. Through this repetitive procedure a theory is eventually developed that is based on the issues identified by the respondents.

Firstly, pertinent text passages of each interview are coded. Codes are often supplemented with memos that record comments about the content of the concepts and/or its relations with other codes. If all the interviews are coded and the relationships between the codes studied, relevant codes are grouped into categories. Categories are concepts of higher order that can explain and predict phenomena (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). After defining the categories, a conceptual model is derived that represents the interrelations and subordinations of categories. The induced theoretical framework is then to be validated with or 'grounded' in data.

3.7.2 Quantitative data

In order to reveal with the help of UCLA LS 3 whether there is a significant difference between the loneliness scores with regard to Dutch and Estonian social networks, the scores of both scales are added up, and the mean scores are compared in a paired samples t-test. If necessary, differences between every pair of items are looked at for detecting the items that account for the overall difference. In addition, items regarding social and emotional loneliness (see Russell, 1996) are tested in the same manner. When considered necessary, the results of individual questionnaires are related to the qualitative data from the in-depth interview with the respondent.

The ego network questionnaires are analysed in order to receive descriptive values of the social networks, i.e., duration and type of the relationship with the close other, and the country of residence of the other. The second purpose hereby is to reveal whether there are any significant differences in the quantity and quality of the relationship with regard to the country of residence. This is done by means of an ANOVA test. A correlation analysis will be conducted for establishing the relationship between quality, quantity, and duration of the relationship.

3.8 Reflections

The experience in conducting qualitative research differs from other methods in terms of personal and intensive contact with the respondents. There are no identical in-depth interviews, since the story of the respondent determines the course of the interview to a large extent. Unless acquainted with the informant beforehand, starting an interview, though after a warm-up social talk, is a jump into the unknown – how talkative is the person?, how willing is he to share his views and experiences?, how does he perceive the research?, what are his motives to participate?, how will the interview evolve? Unexpectedly, in almost all of the cases these questions received a positive answer. However, the researcher has to bear in mind that the conversation is most of all an interview with a purpose, non-related but interesting discussion points emerged must be left for the time after the interview session. Simultaneously listening to the respondent, determining issues that would logically follow, evaluating the depth and range of coverage of topics in the interview, writing down notes, and taking into account the time limit is rather an exercise.

The positionality of the researcher had its advantages and disadvantages, since the researcher could also have been subject to this research. The main benefits of it were talking the native language of the respondents, common cultural background with them, and personal contacts with Estonian and Dutch contexts. All these factors saved time and effort as respondents could express themselves in the mother tongue, and, moreover, without having to potentially explain some keywords embedded in the culture or history. At the same time, the latter were a potential source of hindrance as well, because of subjective interpretation—albeit sharing a common background with the respondents, the researcher could have different views or perceptions—and the risk to ask not in depth enough. In order to prevent that, sometimes questions have to be asked about issues that seem to be logical at first sight. When having several important background characteristics (nationality, migrants, country of residence) in common with the respondents, holding back from interrupting or sharing own experience can be an effort for the researcher.

Given the distance—in most cases, more than 200 kilometres—between the researcher and respondents, the budget, and time constraints, it was desirable to have three interviews per day. The fitting of the time schedules, locations and availability of three respondents can pose quite a logistic challenge to the researcher. Even if this puzzle was theoretically solved, most likely something occurred that started a chain reaction ending in a disturbed schedule. If it was not the train that was late for a transfer due to which the final destination was reached more than half an hour later than announced and caused researcher to be late to the appointment (although the arrival to the interview venue was scheduled half an hour prior to the interview), then it was the respondent who for some other reasons was late for the interview, or an interview which took much more time than it should have—anything like

that, and the other interviews later in the day/evening were exposed to starting and ending later than initially agreed on.

On the other hand, this very busy schedule (record was nine interviews and approximately 1,600 kilometres within three days) established a very active contact with the interview guide, already after a few interviews the flow of the topics was not forced by the interview guide but the issues were handled in a natural conversation.

Several respondents expressed that the interview was a good chance to ponder their friendship ties, and relationship to Estonia and the Netherlands. With regard to the research methods, almost all respondents claimed to have difficulties with filling in the two questionnaires, since they found that a number is rather arbitrary indication for evaluating several aspects of social relationships. For instance, a low frequency of receiving support from one's social network is interpreted correctly only when accompanied with the comment of the respondent that he did not even seek support, thus the conditions for receiving support were absent in the first place. These perceptions, among other factors, proved the advantages of qualitative methods particularly when doing research on the micro level, and their importance for meaningful data analysis.

4 Social networks after migration

In this chapter, the findings concerning social networks are summarised (see the theory and terminology used in Section 2.1). Section 4.1 deals with the respondents' social networks in Estonia, namely, the ways of maintaining contacts and the perceived change in the social relationships after migrating to the Netherlands. The process of establishing new social ties in the Netherlands is described in Section 4.2. The last section of this chapter builds on the combination of those two networks and its connection to the perceived quality of the relationships; besides the data form the interviews, the results of UCLA Loneliness Scale and an ego network questionnaire are employed.

The findings are often illustrated by quotations from the interviews. All the names are fictional in order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. The citations are rather transliterated than translated, allowing for the nuances in the text. Underlined words or phrases refer to the emphasis laid by the respondent, words in italics were pronounced in Dutch. Comments in the brackets specify the emotion expressed in the speech, or the context of a sentence.

4.1 Social network in the home country

All of the respondents engage in transnational migration, given that one of its features is sustaining social ties in the home country (see Section 2.2). The interviews revealed that they have maintained social relationships in Estonia at least to some extent; the involvement varies with regard to the number, content, and frequency of the contacts, and the manners in which the contacts are maintained.

4.1.1 Maintenance of relationships

4.1.1.1 The Internet

The interviews confirmed that spatial distance had imposed restrictions upon the interaction between the respondents and their friends and acquaintances in Estonia, particularly on the ways of communicating with each other. Almost all the respondents claimed the Internet to be the most common solution to overcome those restrictions. The Internet is valued because it offers a wide range of communication possibilities from sending emails to participating in videocalls. The reason for preferring the Internet to other means of communication lies in its universality, as it enables one to choose a practice that corresponds to his needs and purpose of the contact.

> Margus: 'I'd say that this [Internet] is now the most important means of keeping relationships and friendship relationships.'

The majority of the respondents indicated instant online communication (MSN, Skype) to be the most widely used and efficient way of continuing social relationships in Estonia. Particularly these facilities remove the barrier caused by distance, allowing for the reconstruction for quite a usual communication pattern. A common practice is to log into MSN when being online in order to be available for communication whenever one self or his friends want to discuss something or just exchange a few sentences.

Merilin: 'Thanks to this… that messenger and all those Skypes and, communication is kind of… well, very… intuitive, that if you have something to say or you want to say something, then you say, you don't need to… well, I don't know, that you have to write a letter, how are you doing and this and that, a major undertaking. This is like, yes, if you have something to say, then you communicate.'

Maris: 'I use the Internet every second! [laughter] Taking into account that my work is mainly with computer, this means that most of the time I have Internet connection, this means that I'm logged into MSN, this means that my friend clicks to me, every day after a while, that my mother clicks to me, my old friends click to me. This means that communication takes place, I'm not that separated, communication takes place all the time, there is no single day when I don't talk to someone [in MSN].'

However, for the same very reason of 'just saying something', some respondents perceived the instantaneous contact via MSN superficial and claimed it to lack of depth in the conversation. It held particularly in the case of weak ties with whom respondents did not interact as often as with stronger ties, and therefore knew less from each other and had less topics to talk about. Respondents then argued that these shortcomings are absent in Skype: whereas MSN contacts' list often consists of hundreds of contacts whereby the majority are weak ties, people tend to add to their Skype contacts' list only those others with whom a face-to-face contact is more likely to occur, i.e., strong ties.

Tarmo: 'Skype is very important. With several of my friends who are elsewhere in the world in the same situation, we have contact via videocalls and this is very good. This is, Skype is very good in the sense that it is not like a random chatting programme, MSN for example, which is completely overloaded with trifling conversations. But if you make a call with someone, then you, at least this is my approach, then you make a contribution to it. These are important people I communicate with.'

One of the disadvantages of instant online communication is that it requires both parties to be behind the computer and, moreover, online at the same time. Often this is not the case:

Kaidi: 'I have contact… it depends, too, that how often I'm online and whether my friends are online. Then we talk something quickly.'

Triinu: 'I communicate mainly via the Internet. And those are mainly people who are working, which means that they're gone at five o'clock. But I come later in the evening.'

Also social networking websites serve their goals for people who are not able to engage in daily interactions with their social contacts. The respondents reported to use Orkut and Facebook[13] for having an overview of their social network. As members of those websites have the possibility to upload their recent information, photos, or, for instance, even a comment about their feelings on this very day, it is a convenient way of keeping up with the updates from the members of one's social network. Again, it is especially common with respect to weak ties, as it often remains the only contact with the respondent.

Helina: 'Because there is this Orkut, then I probably know a lot more what people are doing. I didn't have any contact data or things before. Now I can get into touch with someone, if I might want to at some moment.'

Tarmo: 'After some time I figured out how to use things like Orkut and Facebook in order to, exactly for keeping… myself in the social network. [---] There's a multitude [of people] with whom I basically don't have any more contact than Orkut, Facebook, that, well, if they have birthday, then you congratulate them and so forth. Do things that you'd do if you met someone in the street in Tallinn.'

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[13] See Appendix VI for the screenshot of the opening page of a user account.

A few respondents write a weblog, the main reason therefore is to keep friends in Estonia and other countries up-to-date with their daily lives. Weblog saves time as it reaches many people, but this also determines the level of intimacy of the weblog. Emails can serve the same function, but are of more personal orientation. Although only a couple of respondents considered emails to be the foremost part of the communication with the existing social network, besides daily matters, important issues were discussed with close others in course of emailing.

> Tuuli: 'So mainly it is via MSN, and then I and then some more from my circle of friends, we write our own blogs and then we comment there on each others' stories and then it's quite funny, then you can read a whole story, it isn't like in MSN, question-answer, question-answer... This is rather cool. And then you know, more or less, that what they are doing there.'

4.1.1.2 Visits

All respondents regarded visits to Estonia essential for maintaining their social relationships; slightly less importance was attached to friends' visits to the Netherlands. Those visits are the only opportunities for face-to-face interaction, and the more highly this genuine contact is valued. The vast majority of contacts are meeting the people the respondent has a strong tie with, as the limited time in Estonia is preferably invested in the quality of the relationships.

> Heiki: 'This company[14] in Estonia is, is so very important, that... I couldn't imagine that I wouldn't visit Estonia.'

The frequency of visits ranged from once in every two months to less than once a year. When visiting Estonia, respondents were often forced to employ a busy schedule of appointments with friends in order to meet everyone within a short period of time. Although meeting as many friends as possible was generally perceived as positive, a few respondents claimed it to have a negative side effect, namely, hurrying from one appointment to another without having enough time for a meaningful conversation with any of the friends. Despite this, the personal contact outperforms the time available for the interaction.

> Grete: 'When we go to Estonia, I have at least three appointments every day.'

> Merilin: 'In this sense too, if I go to Estonia, then... well, this 'programme' is very dense [laughter]. But then, nevertheless, you try to meet with someone with the two of you rather than, I don't know, organise a big party and see everyone and at the same time still not properly talk to anyone. Rather that you meet in a row, with the two of you, you make some appointment or... This works.'

There is also another confrontation with regard to restricted time: some respondents indicated that going to Estonia is for the abovementioned reason of course always a pleasure, but at the same time it is tempting to visit some other country during one's vacation. A compromise is then sought, in order to both meet friends and 'see the world'. Often the logical combination is to go to a holiday together with some friends from Estonia.

Besides time, money determines the possibility of visiting Estonia. Six respondents claimed the frequency of visiting Estonia lower than desired due to the costs[15] related to this undertaking. One respondent viewed this problem from a distinct angle, illustrating the importance of friendship relationships for her:

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[14] 'Company' as in group of friends, not business organisation.
[15] A return flight to Estonia costs approximately €300.

Liis: 'There is never time. I take time. Money… there is never enough money, right? And why not? Why should I buy clothes for this money or go somewhere out? I better go [to Estonia to] talk with my friends and make jokes.'

Some respondents, who did not experience financial difficulties in purchasing air ticket as often as willing to, found that this has eased or even eliminated the perception of disrupted social network in homeland.

Maris: 'You don't have this stress that you have to wait for half a year and think, oh God, when can I finally go again? It gives you a freedom of choice, and often this freedom of choice creates a feeling of freedom that well… you don't want to go that often.'
Interviewer: 'In what sense don't want to go that often?'
Maris: 'I mean that if you know that you cannot get something, then you will terribly want it. But if you know that you can go any time you want, then it becomes normal life, going there and seeing your friends.'

With regard to friends' visits to the Netherlands, almost all reactions of the respondents were positive. It was often seen as an excellent opportunity to spend time with friends with whom the respondent usually has a few possibilities to engage in common activities. Another aspect mentioned was introducing one's living environment to the people significant for the respondent. The willingness to entertain guests often depends on the strength of the tie: the less close the person to the respondent, the less willing the latter is to invest resources in the visit. In case of weak ties, a few respondents even had to reject some visits.

Grete: 'I don't know, friends, then I think always that oh, they come… I mean, you want that you'd have time for friends and then you have to spend some of your free days and… go to places that you've seen already hundred times and shown to everyone and… also a lot of money has to be spent…'

Tarmo: 'Well, the problem is actually that there are a very few people who come to visit you in order to visit you. [---] Many come to do all sorts of things, don't they? Especially if this person is not one of your closest friends, then you don't have any interest in what he wants to try or do here. [---] On the other hand, of course, friends who come to visit in order to spend time with you here and… this is fantastic and very important.'

4.1.1.3 Other communication

Besides face-to-face communication and contact via the Internet, respondents reported to make use of mobile phones, telephone and regular mail in order to maintain social relationships in Estonia. The advantage of telephone and mobile phone in comparison with Internet contacts is easy access to those means of communication in almost any place whatsoever. Because of the higher costs, when compared to Internet contact, the calls are almost unexceptionally made to close others. Some respondents indicated the wish to increase the frequency and duration of calls, but being not able to afford this. Only one respondent said to use the discount numbers for low fare international calls. The respondents who reported using regular mail send postcards for birthdays and Christmas, only a few of them sometimes send also letters to very close people.

In sum, the respondents use a large set of means of communication for the maintenance of contact with social network in Estonia (and other countries where their friends reside). Important factors worth of mentioning with regard to communication in real time are the minor difference between time zones of Estonia and the Netherlands, and the relatively small distances within Europe compared to the rest of the world.

Heiki: 'I don't know, I… don't miss Estonia. Because this communication and thing has become so dense and here… Estonia doesn't seem terribly far away… that it would be impossible because of the distance. The time difference and everything, it is easy to communicate, 2,000 kilometres and an hour of time difference, this is not so important.'

Maris: 'I don't feel this distance between countries, the only difference is that you have to go home by plane not by bus.'

4.1.2 Perceived change in social relationships

Whereas communication with people behind a distance can be solved by means of various technologies, less practical matters such as the emotional aspects of relationships are more exposed to the side effects of remarkably reduced spatial proximity. Approximately half of the respondents attributed the change in their social relationships after migration to the physical distance between them and their social network in Estonia. The change cannot always be compensated by communication technologies, as face-to-face contact is often a prerequisite for engaging in common activities. Alas these activities tend to be impossible due to the distance.

Margus: 'Some have disappeared. I mean this distance frightens a number of people away.'

Piret: 'Well this has changed so much… People like… tell me 'But you're away!' I ask, why wasn't I invited to class reunion? But you're not [here]! I say but… well, I am, e-mail and everything, but…'

Karin: 'Well this is of course, that you don't do so many things together anymore, those birthdays and… you cannot be anymore like… participate in their lives, just like when living in Estonia.'

On the other hand, some respondents view even advantages in the hindrance caused by distance, namely, testing the quality of a social relationship:

Kristiina: 'I think that moving to abroad is the best way to filter one's friends [laughter]. That who remains on the sieve. Of course everyone is busy and… there is no difference whether you work and have a [romantic] relationship in Estonia or somewhere else, although the distance is hampering, but… it is good in some ways, you'll see whether there are friends who are ready to sacrifice something for you.'

Tarmo: 'And just purely the distance of course influences a lot too. That it is not possible to talk like that to a person. Actually it also becomes clear whether you have anything at all to talk about with the person.'

The changes dominantly occur with respect to the strength of the ties. People with whom respondents already had weak ties in Estonia tend to withdraw from the social network. At the same time, almost none of the respondents experienced the loss of strong ties. The latter are generally formed on a solid basis of qualitative features, such as closeness to others, and distance does not have a remarkable effect on those ties.

Tarmo: 'And actually, this is a problem, I have, let's say, a couple of hundred people whom you're acquainted with, but you haven't had any close contact with them. This bond… well, this kind of thing that you keep contact with people, doesn't actually work out very well.'

Maris: 'That particularly with those fresh acquaintances, whom you maybe don't know so well, that with them a distance emerges, but with old friends, with them definitely not. That they are just like family members, like mother. That they will remain, doesn't matter how often you have contacts, but they still are somewhere for you always.'

Several respondents further confirmed that the frequency of the contact need not correlate with the quality or strength of the social contact:

> Anneli: 'So funny, the best friends, the ones who are, well seriously good friends, with them I don't have to keep in touch so much. You talk in MSN, but in MSN I talk more with my fellow students than with my Estonian friends. Sometimes you send a postcard and a letter… But if you meet, then… it is as if you've always been together.'

Kaidi expressed the opposite perception, claiming that apart from the distance also the frequency of the contact has to do with the change in social relationships. She also exemplifies an important aspect of social network density: the more interrelated the individuals in the network are, the more likely contacts between the individuals will occur and, thus, the more likely it is to maintain contacts with the social network as a whole.

> Kaidi: 'I think that it's more that I am afar. Everyone's lives go on, right, mine too, but… at the same time, talk about things thoroughly or… You have to know, be in touch with the life of another person. We still send birthday cards, this is, say, twice a year, for Christmas and birthday, and well… If earlier was that every week you have contact or meet, this isn't anymore and… often we don't have anything to talk about. They have their own lives, I don't know about that so much, they also don't know, they don't know my friends, I don't know theirs, don't know their families.'

Almost all respondents concluded that when meeting closest friends, no matter how frequent the contact, 'it is just like it was in the old days' (Tuuli). Grete, in contrast, asserts that 'You cannot pick up [the contact] from where it was once broken'. Several respondents claimed to have minor or even no changes in their social relationships despite the distance. However, it must be noted, that those respondents had very frequent contacts with their friends.

> Laura: 'I have very often contacts. I'd say that it's so funny, I even didn't believe that it is possible, that so far and actually I don't see people, then I thought that in some ways these relationships change and decrease, but I can say honestly, that according to my opinion I get along with my friends as good as always and I'm as close and I know about them as much and they know about me as much, just as when I was in Estonia.'

In general, the social network in Estonia tended to be more highly valued than that in the Netherlands. Many respondents indicated that the difference is caused by the strong ties in Estonian social network, the longer duration and closer attachment to the social relationships was claimed to be most important of all.

> Tõnis: 'This [friendships in Estonia] is gold. This is gold, it doesn't vanish. You can go there at two o'clock in the night, knock on the door, they will let you in. Or the other way round, should they happen to come here. No problems.'

4.2 Social network in the host country

The contacts, usually from distance, with social networks in Estonia form only a part of the total social networks of the respondents. Considering social needs in one's direct environment, all respondents have also established social ties in the Netherlands. The quantity and quality of those relationships again differ per respondent.

4.2.1 Establishment of new ties

Unless knowing someone in the Netherlands beforehand, establishing social ties may pose some difficulties. Taking a look at the main reason for migration to the Netherlands reveals that all of the respondents had at least some basis for the development of a social network.

Ten of them, all female, came to the Netherlands due to Dutch partner, five respondents accepted a job offer, and four respondents had arranged a study position in a Dutch university. Even though some of those reasons or functions have later merged in almost every respondent, it does not necessarily imply an automatic extension of social networks. Already since the beginning phase of settling, some respondents have prioritised finding a close friend, from whom to receive emotional support. This strategy proved to be rather complicated as strong ties require time to emerge.

> Grete: 'This is difficult thing, to find contact. I don't know… everyone knows others from school times, I've been to all kinds of trainings and courses, but, well, no one walks around 'O, I'm seeking a friend'.'

> Maris: 'Of course I would want that I had more [social relationships in the Netherlands]. But everything takes… needs its own time. It can't be like this that you go to a new society, to a new environment and you'll receive a bunch of friends at once. This is not possible. Probably it will require at least five years before you'll be… you'll create a circle of friends around yourself. I need to take this into account.'

Respondents engaging in the strategy of first finding as many weak ties as possible were somewhat more successful, as later some of those weak ties evolved into a strong tie, or at least access was gained to others in the social network of the weak tie.

> Merilin: 'And when going to a new environment, this creation of social environment is like so important, to shape it. So when I think back to when I came here, then I was not very picky [laughter], that anywhere you can get from… all sorts of, whatever, gatherings and… It was very-very active and then at a certain moment then evolves this… little group, with whom you will associate and then as time passes, some new people might join the group as well. But… yes, in the beginning like an omnivore.'

It is interesting to note that on the whole, with some exceptions, respondents reported stronger ties among fellow students and weaker ties among colleagues. Respondents seldom had contact with the latter outside the workplace, but engaged in common activities with the former, often considering them to be close friends. Both were nevertheless important sources for social contacts, the absence of either type of occupation was claimed to be a major hindrance in finding new friends.

The presence of a Dutch partner was expectedly said to have positive implications on the finding of new friends, as the partner has established own social network in the Netherlands which the respondent then has more or less automatic access to. However, the interviews suggest that the association between the presence of a partner and increase in one's new social ties, particularly the strong ones, is not one-to-one. Firstly, the partner might not have the kind of friends or acquaintances whom the respondent is seeking in terms of common interests or emotional bond. Secondly, the partner may have only a few friendship relationships, so that drawing on the resources of his social network is limited for the respondent. Often, those few ties are strong and offer thus restricted access to various weak ties. Thirdly, the access to the social network of the partner prescribes to a certain degree the social ties of the respondent and may hamper seeking 'own' friends. When a pool of social relationships was open to the respondents without the costs and effort one has to make in order to establish social ties from a scratch, they tended to be less active in creating social network other than that of the partner.

> Tuuli: 'With his friends I had some contact, but they had their own lives, too, and work. And then our interests didn't overlap so much with those people, that... No, I didn't feel much, that how the social life will come into being.'

Liis: 'It [finding new friends] certainly would have been more difficult. Because… let's say, the friends and family of the partner are… how would I say… a matter of safety. Especially in the social sense. At the same time, I was like in a cocoon. Everything was there, I didn't even need to go out somewhere, to seek friends. It would have been more difficult [without the presence of partner], but I would have had more own friends from the beginning on.'

The ability to establish new social ties was also affected by a different cultural background than that of the Dutch. Some respondents perceived it complicated to form and maintain social contacts, again particularly strong ties, without a base of common understanding and shared norms. It was often perceived that the meaning of cultural experience undergone on native basis, such as the Estonian Singing Revolution in the end of 1980s to struggle free from the Soviet rule, could not fully be understood by other nations. Also differences in behavioural norms had posed problems to many respondents.

Kristiina: 'Because we… Estonians and Dutch have so very different background, I shall never, I think, feel myself with a Dutchman, or let's say a non-Estonian, as comfortable [as with an Estonian]. Friends and people who know your background… even when just talking, about, I don't know, history and something based on which some attitudes have evolved and… For example something that could be of emotional meaning to me, then Dutchman thinks 'Lame, rubbish!' In that sense… it is more complicated being in tune with the Dutch.'

Triinu: 'This culture isn't that much different, but then again, this common… Also when communicating with people. I have a friend, there are some norms that I don't perceive, what should you say, what should you do, how should you be… Even on that level problems occur.'

Heiki: 'On the other hand, the Dutch have own elements of peculiarity. They are… much more straightforward in their nature than Estonians. That they can, probably without realising it, offend you, get at you… this scares off for a moment. There wasn't anything, why do you pick a quarrel with me?'

Piret: 'Or some jokes, in our sense you make a joke, and no one is laughing, no one understands.'

4.2.1.1 Social ties with local Estonians

The issue of cultural differences is by and large out of question when seeking contacts within own national group. The respondents were in complete accord in the experience of establishing social contacts with local Estonians as a simple way of finding acquaintances and friends in the Netherlands. Many important shared characteristics such as the home and the host country, common cultural background and, for many respondents, the need for social contacts were perceived as facilitating factors for the establishment of ties with Estonians in the Netherlands.

Merilin: 'In the beginning, when I came to the Netherlands, in the beginning I somehow sought this contact [with Estonians] much more. And it must have been also because of… I didn't have this own… yes, socialising circle I didn't have and then it is kind of… an easier way to find common language with people. And also very, well… we all have something in common, okay, we are Estonians here in the Netherlands, already two big things that connect us, right?'

As Merilin indicates, the local Estonian community as a potential source of social relationships was particularly significant in the first stages of settlement, when other contacts have not yet had time to evolve. Social contacts with local Estonians provide access to a number of ties without making any considerable efforts to spot the potential acquaintances and friends: one can meet compatriots at activities organised by the embassy and/or by the Orkut community. The latter is also used when searching for Estonians living in the same city as the respondent in order to have contacts on a more daily basis or to meet once in a while

'just to speak Estonian'.

> Grete: 'The need [to meet Estonians] is stronger when you are new. If you are already an old-timer, the need to meet is much more smaller.'

> Tarmo: 'Well, it inarguably plays a role that we speak Estonian, we understand the same keywords, the same… we get the same feeling if we experience certain things together, this is always good because we are humans and it's nice to share this with other similar people. But… this kind of… yes. The more time goes by, the less I need this.'

Some of the respondents maintain ties with other Estonians for practical reasons. Here, the strength of weak ties comes to forth:

> Piret: 'I would say that we exchange information. In this sense that… well, who goes when to Estonia. [---] It's like we use each other too, that if someone has a visitor [from Estonia], I don't know, maybe you do the same thing, to send something with him or ask to bring something or… or that you can join when someone goes by car [to Estonia], things like that. It makes life easier.'

Many respondents felt uncomfortable with the social relationships from the Estonian community. This social network based on nationality and host country was often perceived as unnatural and lacking of genuine emotional bond between the members of it. Nationality-bound contacts did not inevitably result in strong social ties that the respondents claim to be searching for. Moreover, the contact with other Estonians was sometimes regarded as forced upon the respondent, not as an act of conscious choice.

> Liis: 'I don't have… friends among them. There are some very pleasant people, but this is, it seems forced to me. And I'm afraid, to them as well. At least who I would potentially want to become friends with, I have the feeling that they have the feeling 'I must'.'

> Piret: 'Well, it's the same that you don't have contacts… because the other happens to be an Estonian too. For example with one of them, if I'd live in Estonia, I'd have no contact with her, so the contact here is very minimal, only to… But with another one—we are friends!'

> Merilin: 'Would I have contacts with her in Estonia as well or do we have contacts here only because I am an Estonian and she is an Estonian? But I think that we've surpassed this stage and that, well, it is something more, not only nationality that connects us.'

4.3 Total social network

Given that in the present study ego networks (see Section 2.1.1) are under observation, the existing social network in Estonia and the new social network in the Netherlands are combined into one social network[16]. Comparing the two social networks from the perspective of a whole network allows for explaining the willingness and need for social relationships in respondents.

Even though not asked directly, several respondents raised the issue of the quantity and quality of social ties. As time imposes constraints upon one's availability for social relationships, he has to make choices regarding the number of people with whom to have contact as well as the extent of the contact. Almost all respondents preferred investing the resources in the existing relationships rather than seeking new contacts.

> Kristiina: 'Of course there could be more people to communicate with, but well, at a certain moment this problem of quantity-quality emerges. I prefer quality then. [---] Now I have somehow this feeling that I don't want so many good friends maybe. That the ones who are there,

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[16] Also social relationships with friends and acquaintances living in third countries are taken into account.

are enough, there is so little time anyway.'

This approach causes strong ties to outweigh the weak ones and eventually leads to less interest in actively establishing new social relationships in the Netherlands:

> Merilin: 'Now it is, in this sense, the problem of time, right. Because this… this group [of close friends] already exists, then you want to invest your time in the existing acquaintances and friends rather than, well, continuously generate them. So it's rather about quality than quantity.'

Furthermore, the reason for (un)willingness to establish contacts with other Estonians in the Netherlands lies as well in the complementary nature of the two social networks. A few respondents claimed to have no need for contacts with local Estonians because the overall satisfaction with social network was already received from the social network in Estonia or/and the Dutch social network consisting of other nationalities than Estonians. Again, the issue of supranational contact establishment and maintenance emerged.

> Margus: 'For me it is substantially—substantially—more important to maintain contacts with those people who are in home-Estonia, with my friends and acquaintances.'

> Helina: 'Well, it was a nice company [in the Netherlands], I didn't feel that one of those people necessarily has to be an Estonian. Just if it happens that I… I meet someone, then it has to be that you regard each other as persons… cool or… that some friendship emerges.'

Close attachment to friends in Estonia can act as hindrance to establishment of and satisfaction with the social ties in the Netherlands, as the existing ties serve a reference point to the new ones. Tuuli expresses her difficulties with the quality of the relationships as compared to Estonia:

> 'Because I always thought that I'll come here and then... In Estonia I had so cool friends, with whom you could talk about everything. And we were somehow on the same level, in tune. And we understood each other well and simply, well, do random things together and even live at each other's place. But... then I thought, well, that here too I will anyhow find some new cool friends and... And then... ah... maybe it's my problem, but they seem to be so superficial, that it feels that it just isn't possible to talk with them about something in a normal way that... everything is some... yes. Like a big joke.'

The comparison starts already in the beginning phase of settlement:

> Kaarel: 'Here you start creating own, this social network from zero completely. At home you have, everyone is, friends and just… this is quite a different situation. Your friends and this you miss. You are in a foreign environment, you can never feel completely free here. Well… you are free, but this certain… if you are with your own friends, then it is real.'

Some respondents consider the course of weak ties evolving into strong ties much more complicated in the Netherlands than in Estonia. One has gained knowledge over time about the potential ties that can be accessed via the social network in Estonia, whereas exploring the same opportunities with regard to the social network in the Netherlands costs remarkably more time.

> Tarmo: 'This sacrifice of time that is needed to communicate with literally hundreds of people in order to find someone… [---] In Estonia the network of people you're acquainted with or that enables you to find new similar people is so much stronger, there is a much higher probability of finding someone.'

Despite the complications in maintaining and establishing ties in the home and host country, approximately half of the respondents claimed the content of their social network to be satisfactory.

> Laura: 'I'm very pleased with the number and quality of the people that I have.'

With regard to the social relationships in Estonia, the difficulties are overcome by investing

time into contacts, whether from a distance by means of communication, or during visits to Estonia and friends' visits to the Netherlands. In the Netherlands new contacts emerge either via a few strong ties, such as one's partner, or when engaging in a multitude of weak ties, such as the Estonian population in the Netherlands.

4.3.1 Results of the ego network questionnaire

A quantified overview of the respondents' total social network is provided by the means of an ego network questionnaire that describes some characteristics of the relationships with close others (see Section 3.4.3 and Appendix III). 16 respondents filled in the questionnaire and named a total of 77 close relationships. The descriptive statistics of the measurements are presented in Table 4.1. The mean age of the close others is 33.1 years (SD=10.1), on the average 3.0 years higher than that of the respondents[17]. The mean duration of the relationship, 11.7 years (SD=8.8), may shed some light on the location of the relationships: the mean residential duration of respondents is 5.0 years, thus unless knowing someone in the Netherlands before migration, the close other is more likely to be found in the social network in Estonia than in that of the Netherlands. The mean scores for receiving emotional and/or practical support from the close other during the last three months, and having contact within the weekdays and/or in the weekend in the same period of time all refer at least to the level of 'sometimes' (to recall—these variables are estimated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'always').

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics of ego network measurements

	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	70	33.1	10.1	19	65
Duration	77	11.7	8.8	0.5	33
Emotional support	77	4.1	1.1	1	5
Practical support	73	3.5	1.4	1	5
Contact weekdays	77	3.3	1.3	1	5
Contact weekend	77	3.1	1.4	1	5

Table 4.2 Frequencies of relationship types in ego networks

	Frequency	Percent
Partner	9	11.3
School	15	18.8
University	10	12.5
Colleague	7	8.8
Hobby	6	7.5
Relative	7	8.8
Neighbour	2	2.5
Estonian activities in NL	4	5.0
Other	16	20.0
Total	76	98.7

Half of the close others were reported to live in Estonia, 35.0% in the Netherlands and 11.3% elsewhere. The types of relationships between the respondent and the close other are summarised in Table 4.2. It is interesting to note that nearly every fifth friendship is reported

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[17] In this section, only the 16 respondents who completed the questionnaire are included.

to have started from school, which adds weight to the assumption that a considerable number of close others are embedded in the Estonian social network. Only four close relationships were indicated to have emerged from the contacts with Estonians in the Netherlands.

A correlation analysis was performed (see Table 4.3) in order to determine the association between the variables named in Table 4.1. All but two combinations showed significant effects. There is a weak negative relationship between the duration of the social relationship and receiving emotional support (r_{PMCC}=-.19, p=.09, N=77). With regard to receiving practical support, the results suggest that the longer the relationship, the less practical support received (r_{PMCC}=-.31, p<.01, N=73). These findings are consistent with Lin's (1999) line of argument that strong ties are associated with expressive actions (i.e., expected returns are physical and mental health, life satisfaction) and not with instrumental actions (i.e., resulting in social, economic and political returns). On the other hand, the positive strong correlation between receiving emotional and practical support (r_{PMCC}=.67, p<.001, N=73) indicates that also instrumental actions are related to strong ties. The frequency of the contact is negatively correlated with the duration of the relationship—however, only contacts in the weekend had a significant effect—which points out that the longer the respondent is friends with the close other, the less contact they have. Receiving support logically is strongly and positively correlated to the frequency of contacts, as the latter has to precede the former.

Table 4.3 Correlations between duration of the relationship, receiving support, and frequency of the contacts

	Duration	Emotional support	Practical support	Contact weekdays	Contact weekend
Duration	1.00				
Emotional support	-.19	1.00			
Practical support	-.31**	.67***	1.00		
Contact weekdays	-.10	.46***	.53***	1.00	
Contact weekend	-.25*	.44***	.57***	.79***	1.00

* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

An ANOVA test was carried out in order to detect the differences between receiving emotional and practical support from and having contacts in the weekdays and in the weekend with close others living either in Estonia, the Netherlands, or elsewhere. Perhaps the first result to be highlighted is that there are no differences in receiving emotional support from close others with regard to the country of residence, albeit the significance of this finding is very close to the critical .05 level ($F_{(2, 74)}$=2.76, p=.07). Thus a conclusion to be drawn is that, on the average, the respondents have established a close emotional bond with someone in the Netherlands as well, although this does not imply the nationality of the close other. The other three variables indicated a significant difference between groups.

The differences in countries that brought about the significant effects in the other variables were further revealed by means of a Post Hoc (Bonferroni) test (see Table 4.4 for descriptive statistics). As expected, the difference in receiving practical support is ascribed to the social relationships in the Netherlands. The people able to help in practical matters often need to be familiar with the circumstances in the Netherlands or even be physically present. The frequency of contacts with close others in the Netherlands appeared to be significantly higher when compared to those in Estonia or third countries. Weekend contacts with friends living in the Netherlands scored 3.89 on a five-point scale compared to only 2.65 to that of Estonia. A possible explanation is that in the weekends, when people have no work or study duties, is more time to engage in common activities with friends in the Netherlands, and thus less time

to spend behind the computer in order to communicate with friends in Estonia. Hence, the data suggest that physical proximity is of importance with regard to having contacts.

Table 4.4 Descriptive statistics for the split by country of residence of close others

		N	Mean[a]	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Emotional support	Estonia	40	3.88	1.20	1	5
	The Netherlands	28	4.46	.84	3	5
	Other	9	3.89	.93	2	5
Practical support	Estonia	38	3.16	1.46	1	5
	The Netherlands	26	4.19	1.06	1	5
	Other	9	2.89	.78	2	4
Contact weekdays	Estonia	40	3.00	1.26	1	5
	The Netherlands	28	3.79	1.37	1	5
	Other	9	3.00	1.32	1	5
Contact weekend	Estonia	40	2.65	1.17	1	5
	The Netherlands	28	3.89	1.34	1	5
	Other	9	2.67	1.12	1	4

[a] The numbers in the table are scores on a scale from 1 up to 5

The duration of friendship expectedly appeared to differ between the countries of residence ($F_{(2, 74)}$=11.72, p<.001). The mean duration of the relationship with close other in Estonia is 15.5 (SD=8.9) years, more than twice as high as that in the Netherlands. An interesting finding is that whereas the mean residential duration in the Netherlands is 5.0 years, the mean duration of the relationship with a close other in the Netherlands is 6.2 years, implying that one knew the significant other in the Netherlands already before migrating, and that the relationships established after migration play a less important role.

4.3.2 Loneliness

As described in Section 2.1.2, one may feel lonely when subjectively evaluating the size of the social network and the content of the ties in it as unsatisfactory. In this study, loneliness is viewed as a form of adaptation stress, caused by the physical absence of familiar social surroundings from home country and entering new social surroundings in the host country. With the exception of a few, the majority of respondents claimed to have experienced loneliness. Respondents expectedly reported feelings of loneliness particularly in the beginning stages of their settlement. The combination with other changes that migrant must adjust to increased the effect of loneliness.

> Margus: 'It was a severely desolate time. I basically howled, I had had the feeling that I just pack my things and well, I will leave. That I just borrow from Estonia this damned… money for the plane, and I just go away, I was completely fed up with this everything.'

> Tuuli: 'The first half a year it was… Besides my boyfriend I didn't have any social life. I got on his nerves all the time, called all the time that he'd come home earlier from work [laughter]. I seriously thought that when half a year has passed, I will decide whether I'll quit and go back to Estonia or stay here.'

The perceptions of Tuuli illustrate that the presence of a partner in the Netherlands cannot always prevent the feeling of loneliness. In Weiss's (1973) terms, not feeling emotionally

lonely does not necessarily compensate for social loneliness. The need to be a part of a group of friends was sometimes eased by having as much contacts with friends in Estonia as possible:

> Laura: 'I certainly have had this, eh, if I don't have contact with anyone for some time, then I get this feeling that, help, I am alone in the world!'

In some other respondents the loneliness could not be overcome by means of communication, as the absence of a possibility to engage in common activities with friends in the Estonian social network was pronounced rather strongly:

> Merilin: 'There was this… mental loneliness, this existed. Or somehow that the quality… that you know that your friends are in Estonia and then… somehow this… impatience that when will they come [to visit]. Yes, in some ways that what I am doing here if my friends are overall elsewhere...'

As Merilin indicates, the quality of the relationships plays an important role. Although weak ties contribute to the number of relationships in the social network, which might give an impression of interacting with many people, social loneliness is not overcome with the help of weak ties, because the meaningfulness of the contact matters primarily. Whereas the example from Tuuli above illustrated the case of an emotionally non-lonely respondent, some others attached more importance to the presence of a very close relationship:

> Margus: 'I got some friends and so forth, but they weren't quite those friends. You know them barely two months, right, they are foreigners, they have own problems at this moment, they, too, are trying to accommodate themselves to this society, and so forth. That I had rather maybe this, that I didn't have a point of support.'

Even though some respondents claimed to initially have managed with loneliness, the need for social contacts induced them to search for ways to surmount loneliness. Strategies employed most often were re-establishing social contacts in Estonia, and more actively seeking new contacts in colleagues or fellow students, joining a sport or other hobby club in the Netherlands. Also participating in the activities organised by local Estonians was perceived as a good opportunity to share the experiences with people who are in the same situation.

> Tarmo: 'That I was completely alone in the world, this was for me very… sharp feeling for several months. It played an important role in the first year, this being alone. [---] But I must say that I didn't actually make much efforts in keeping those things [relationships] alive, I wanted to be on my own. And well, then I realised that this isn't actually right. So I started to have much more contacts again.'

> Tuuli: 'Only then it changed when I got to know those sport association people, then there was like own group or so… Then I took part in their activities and went together with them somewhere.'

> Merilin: 'So then I, in the beginning I sought much contacts with those Estonian… Estonian people. I think. But a concrete recipe or [laughter]… how to overcome loneliness I don't know.'

4.3.2.1 Results of UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3)

In order to provide a quantitative aspect in describing the general loneliness of respondents, UCLA Loneliness Scale Version 3 was applied (see Section 3.4.2 and Appendix II). Respondents were asked to evaluate their agreement to the statements in the scale twice: when evaluating their feelings with regard to the social network in the Netherlands, and when assessing the social network in Estonia on the same grounds.

The potential UCLA LS 3 score ranges from 20 to 100, the principle hereby is that the higher the score, the higher the loneliness. For respondents of this study, the mean loneliness score regarding Dutch social network was 51.3 and that of Estonian 43.4 (see Table 4.5). Both scores are thus below the potential average of the scale. When taking a closer look at the data, there appear to be four respondents who have on both scales higher scores than the sample mean, whereas seven respondents score lower on both scales than the sample mean. The two scales are positively but not significantly correlated with each other (r_{PMCC}=.45, p=.08, N=16), however, taking into account the small sample size, the significance level is considered satisfactory enough to conclude that the higher the score on one of the scales, the higher the score on the other.

Table 4.5 Descriptive statistics of loneliness scores (N=16)

	Mean [a]	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Dutch social network	51.3	9.0	36.0	67.0
Estonian social network	43.4	8.0	29.0	62.0

[a] The numbers in the table are scores on a scale from 20 up to 100

A t-test proved the differences between the mean loneliness scores with regard to social networks in the Netherlands and in Estonia as significant ($t_{(df=15)}$=3.50, p<.01). Table 4.6 specifies the items that contribute to the difference between the two scales. The scores on items 'social relationships are superficial', 'no one knows me well', 'are people who really understand me', 'are people I can talk to', and 'are people I can turn to' are significantly higher[18] for the social network in the Netherlands at .01 level. Drawing on Weiss's (1973) typology, these items reflect one's emotional loneliness—or the lack or loss of a close, intimate relationship—rather than social loneliness, or the lack of relationships available in the social network. When including items significant at .05 level, 'feel "in tune" with others', 'no one I can turn to', and 'are people I feel close to' are added. With the exception of the first one, these items too are associated with emotional loneliness.

The data thus suggest that the higher loneliness in respondents with regard to social network in the Netherlands than in Estonia stems from the absence of a very close other in the network. These results raise some interpretive questions, given that ten respondents have a romantic partner in the Netherlands. The explanation could lie in the assumption that the partner was not regarded as a part of one's social network but rather a distinct category of relationships. When taking into consideration that the loneliness score with regard to the Dutch social network is below the potential average of the scale, it could also be concluded that a close relationship other than romantic is still sought.

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[18] Positive items are recoded so that the principle remains that the higher the score on an item, the higher the loneliness score.

Table 4.6 Paired samples statistics on UCLA Loneliness Scale Version 3 items; paired samples test

	Country	Mean	SD	t[a, b]
Feel "in tune" with others	NL	3.56	0.63	2.41*
	EST	4.00	0.63	
Lack companionship	NL	2.81	0.75	-0.89
	EST	3.06	0.85	
No one I can turn to	NL	2.63	1.02	2.24*
	EST	2.13	0.96	
Feel alone	NL	2.63	0.96	1.32
	EST	2.31	0.95	
Feel part of a group of friends	NL	3.81	1.05	1.25
	EST	4.19	0.75	
Have a lot in common with others	NL	3.31	0.79	1.73
	EST	3.81	0.75	
No longer close to anyone	NL	2.25	1.18	1.43
	EST	1.94	0.77	
Interests and ideas not shared by others	NL	2.69	0.60	1.00
	EST	2.50	0.63	
I am outgoing and friendly	NL	4.13	0.34	-1.00
	EST	4.06	0.25	
Are people I feel close to	NL	3.44	0.73	2.15*
	EST	3.88	0.62	
Feel left out	NL	2.56	0.96	0.00
	EST	2.56	0.89	
Social relationships not meaningful	NL	2.94	1.00	3.10**
	EST	2.31	0.87	
No one knows me well	NL	3.31	0.79	4.96***
	EST	2.50	0.82	
Feel isolated	NL	2.63	0.81	1.70
	EST	2.25	0.93	
Can find companionship	NL	4.13	0.96	1.58
	EST	4.44	0.73	
Are people who really understand me	NL	3.13	0.96	3.42**
	EST	4.00	0.73	
Feel shy	NL	2.63	0.72	1.46
	EST	2.38	0.72	
Others around me but not with me	NL	2.69	0.60	0.57
	EST	2.56	0.96	
Are people I can talk to	NL	3.38	1.02	3.42**
	EST	4.25	0.93	
Are people I can turn to	NL	3.63	0.81	4.87***
	EST	4.50	0.52	

[a] df=15
[b] Positive items recoded
* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

5 Adaptation

The results concerning migrant adaptation processes are presented in this chapter. When applicable, the findings are related to the results of the previous chapter. The first section describes respondents' perceptions with regard to the settling phase and the adaptation stress it is likely to cause. Section 5.2 discusses the role of identity in the adaptation process. In the following section, light is shed on integration and the components that contribute to the success of this adaptation strategy.

5.1 Adaptation stress

Settling in a new country brings about many issues that need to be arranged or get accustomed to. Respondents indicated a range of topics from finding a job to the absence of some food products, such as black bread and sour cream, commonly available in Estonia. Whereas minor daily practices such as the latter are quite easily surmountable, matters such as the former can pose a considerable problem if persistent. This was particularly the case for the respondents who had moved to the Netherlands before Estonia became a member of the EU and therefore restrictions with regard to working were imposed upon them (see Section 1.2 for Dutch integration policies). These regulations were described as frustrating, since the respondents were willing to work. Participating in civic integration course or doing some voluntary work as temporary solution was not enough to fulfil the idea of engaging in normal life. When Estonia had joined the EU, but the Dutch labour market was not fully opened to its citizens, the confusions regarding the new working regulations were often not solved even by civil servants.

> Grete: 'Well, those institutions here, they didn't know self what the rules are, and every time you called, if you finally got someone on the line, then every time they had a different story and didn't know, too. Eventually they said that the only possibility for granting a working permit is when the employer applies for it. But it was tricky, the employer had to advertise for six weeks in a national newspaper and if no one replies, then maybe they will hire you. If they hear that you don't even have a working permit, they don't bother themselves to mess with it. I thought I have to give myself at least six months to find a job.'

Many other respondents, too, were confronted with the ambiguity of bureaucrats' knowledge and suggestions, therefore other sources of information were used in order to learn about the bureaucratic procedures that needed to be undertaken for any purpose whatsoever. It was most often done with the help of Dutch partner or colleague. A key role was also played by other local Estonians who already had dealt with those problems and gave advice based on own experience. Several respondents indicated that a common thing to do was to create a topic in the forum of Dutch Estonians community in Orkut so that even people the respondent did not know personally could reply and share experiences.

> Kaarel: 'All this adaption has come relatively due to my work. Thanks to this job and colleagues, this has made it substantially easier. That I think if… to come to the Netherlands without having something, that you should look for things only when you've arrived, then it would have been, I believe, twice as difficult.'

> Triinu: 'Well… in the supermarket I didn't find the food I was looking for, I couldn't recharge my prepaid phone card and… those little things. Well… I did have to cry for a few times, but… As for other things, this Estonian girl, she did actually quite a number of things for me. She called to *gemeente*, made an appointment for me, we even went there together, she also needed to go there, well, very many things together. I think she helped me quite a lot.'

> Kristiina: 'This Orkut community, that of Estonians in the Netherlands, I received help from there if I moved here, that what is needed and how things exactly work for Estonians now after 2004.'

Albeit all respondents moved to the Netherlands for a certain purpose—either because of Dutch partner, or a specific job or study that was already arranged—, the assumption that one then has people to turn to held not for every respondent. The local others cannot always fully put themselves into the shoes of the migrant, and the migrant often does not realise where to turn to for help or what kind of help is needed first place.

> Margus: 'It was just… well, this kind of… hanging in the air. You don't know what to do, you solve for the first time in life a bunch of completely different problems.'

> Karin: 'In the beginning it's like… everything is unfamiliar and you don't have friends, there are tears shed and… I remember that it was difficult, certainly the first two years. And then either things go to their own place or… or you actually go back. When you get your rhythm, and of course if you speak the language already, then everything is easier. But the beginning was… complicated. And I don't know, if I knew what is awaiting, would I take this step again? Probably would not. [---] That you start actually completely from zero, try to build something, you are nobody actually.'

The highest level of adaptation stress was reached in the beginning of settling also because the experience of living in Estonia was still very fresh and some respondents therefore often compared the circumstances in Estonia and the Netherlands. Those comparisons were made outstandingly in the area of social relationships, and since it requires time to build up a social network in the new country, the Netherlands was in this aspect certainly not regarded as an improvement over the circumstances (physically) left behind in Estonia.

> Tuuli: 'I was just so stuck with my Estonian life and my Estonian friends, that maybe I sought for something that would be alike, but this here, this was quite a big disappointment. [---] Uh, these were really disgusting times!'

> Grete: 'It was definitely very difficult for the first years. Well, who did I have? I had my partner and his family. In Estonia I had very many friends… my partner has… a few very good friends, not many at all, two-three of them.'

> Kristiina: 'In the beginning, they say, that the first three months are the most difficult ones if you move to another country, that after three months comes this… this collapse, that 'Oh, I want to go back!' I had something like this. That… because the longing is so dominant.'

As Karin earlier reflected, adaptation stress is alleviated in the course of time. The longer the residential duration, the more likely one has established some social relationships, and the less problems are encountered also on a daily basis:

> Heiki: 'How would you know in the beginning where the sour cream is on the shelf, right? You don't even know first that it's called some kind of *room*. For sure, for sure it is easier. No question in that.'

Whereas the majority of the respondents experienced adaptation stress at least to some extent in certain points of time, there were a few respondents for whom the settling process was not paired with stress. Their success in preventing the adaptation stress lies in the combination of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. Some people are more sociable and able to find new friends in a short time period, or are satisfied with remarkably lower number of social relationships than the others; if this is combined with favourable circumstances such as the absence of policy restrictions and presence of partner, settling is likely to occur without complications.

Anneli: 'Well, I moved in with my boyfriend, so there was no problem of place of living. Then… I just concentrated and looked for places where I could do something. So I had this [names the job] job. I didn't have those difficulties. The overall settling was painless [laughter]. As I said, I found some Estonian friends at once, then the circle of acquaintances, very many people from different countries. We had our own gang, it was very cool.'

5.2 Identity

Next to practical and emotional matters, such as finding a job, or missing one's friends in Estonia, an abstract issue—identity—also emerged as a component that needs to be taken into account when settling in a foreign country. For all but a few respondents the experience of living in the Netherlands involved adjusting their identity to the new circumstances. Daily participation in or at least observation of Dutch society, at the same time not (physically) being able to do so anymore in Estonia both contribute to some changes in the identity. However, the awareness of one's identity had increased in the course of living in the Netherlands in every respondent. This finding is consistent with Merton (1968) and Berry (2001) who argue that identity becomes meaningful when compared to or in contact with another group (see Section 2.2.1). The Estonian identity became stronger for most of the respondents due to the same very reason, namely, when juxtaposing the two countries and/or cultures.

Liis: 'I'm from another cultural space and I'm from a richer cultural space. Sounds very lame, but I'm terribly proud that I'm an Estonian.'

Kristiina: 'I think that… now I even think that I really wouldn't want to be of any other nationality than Estonian. Because it is so small country and we have been through so much and… I think thanks to this we can value things more. Smaller things, more important things.'

Anneli: 'When I tell someone that I'm an Estonian and I will not change my passport in order to get Dutch citizenship, everything, when you are a Dutchman, everything is one big country… For me this own language and culture remains.'

Anneli draws attention to language as one of the key aspects in identity forming. Chambers (1994, p. 22, cited by Findlay et al., 2004, p. 72) explains this by observing that "[l]anguage is not primarily a means of communication" but "a means of cultural construction in which our very selves and sense are constituted". For Estonians the importance of own language lies in several societal, historical, and cultural reasons such as nearly one third of foreign population[19] of whom a large share cannot speak Estonian, so that Russian ineluctably has become the unofficial second language. This, in turn, is not favoured by a great number of Estonians as it is a perceived threat to the official language. The fact that the number of Estonian speakers in the world is estimated to be approximately one million most likely magnifies the need to acknowledge and conserve own language. Several respondents therefore indicated it to be severely unwelcomed when asked by a Dutchman whether Russian is the (only) language spoken in Estonia.

Anneli: 'I always remain polite, that no, we have our own language, and then I always warn that if you see some other Estonian, please don't say this [that only Russian is spoken in Estonia] anymore. Because I am friendly, someone else might not be.'

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[19] 31.3% of the total population is of foreign origin, and 81.8% of them are Russians (SE, 2008; data pertaining to 1 January 2008). The majority of Russians arrived to Estonia during the communist occupation regime as a part of the Soviet policies to replace the Estonians who were deported to Siberia, and to homogenise the population in the whole Soviet Union.

Heiki: 'Sometimes they've started to talk to me in Russian when they hear that I'm from Estonia. 'Yes, *Estland*, dobroe utro[20]!' or whatever… it has happened a few times. To my <u>utmost</u> indignation.'

More often than the unawareness of Estonian language, respondents reported to be confronted with generalised perceptions of Eastern Europe and the disregard of distinct countries in it. This extension assumed by a number of Dutch was regarded negative, because the image of Eastern Europe was mainly associated with unnecessary immigration flows, cheap labour force, and alcoholism. The respondents were unpleased with those perceptions, because, as Tajfel (1982) asserts, people strive for a positive identity. All but a few respondents had experienced an unfavourable set of attitudes towards Eastern Europe. Moreover, collective identity imposed on a host of groups, i.e., countries of Eastern Europe that see themselves as distinct from one another, was perceived to be unjust. This observation replicates the results of Findlay and his collaborators (2004), who found that English migrants in Scotland perceived that the Scots regard them as a homogeneous group unwilling to integrate or assimilate into the society.

Kaidi: 'People think something of Estonia. That it is Russia, mainly it is guessed where it is and what language is spoken there. Mainly they think that it is Russian language. And so forth. But usually I have this feeling that when you say that you're from Estonia, then people have 'aha', this negative kind of. Maybe this is how I see it, I don't know. Negative 'Aha, you're from Estonia', it means that you are Eastern European, you are poor, maybe you are Russian, and you come here, I don't know, to do… You want to get money from our state and our jobs and our men. That… somehow I feel myself minor or lower.'

Tarmo: 'I feel that injustice has been made when they say about me that… or someone says something bad about Estonia. [---] And actually this upsets me a bit. That here this… well, prejudice is pretty big, that if you're an Estonian, then you consequently drink vodka. Well… yes. The whole image of Eastern Europe is very strongly connected to it. When there are some activities, for example parties and other things, then who are the people made alcohol jokes at, something like 'Did you bring the vodka?' Poles, Estonians, yes, everyone who comes from some <u>strange</u> place.'

Piret: 'Well, then I explained that I am from Estonia and… but no one could remember it, I know that the neighbours had said 'We have a Polish girl living next to us'. [---] But now it is also, that… even someone I know sometimes automatically says Latvia. And then I always tell them that I don't call you Belgians, do I? Or, well, you don't want that, do you? Remember this!'

Some respondents referred to be regarded by Dutch—albeit not on purpose—as immigrants in the negative dimension of the word. This perception includes feeling of being the 'other' in the society or in an abstract aspect being unequal with the Dutch.

Tõnis: 'But this isn't… well, it sounds very modern and cool and interesting and exotic, and so forth, but… it isn't easy. This is quite a road of sufferings. If you choose this way of emigrant, you will remain a foreigner. You can be <u>so</u> in [the society] here and speak the language as free of accent as you want, you will still be the other, you will never become <u>them</u>.'

Triinu: 'Exactly this feeling as well, that you are not <u>own</u>. They don't say or do anything, but you know that there is a distance.'

The respondents did not experience any negative aspects of their Estonian identity other than the adverse generalisation of Eastern Europe and the recognition of immigrant identity. However, living in a foreign country of itself exposed some respondents to put their Estonian identity into question. As the bond with Estonia had weakened in the course of time, so did

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[20] 'Good morning' in Russian.

the identity. Pointing out unwillingness to become a Dutchman and at the same time acknowledging decreased level of 'Estonianess' placed those respondents in between the two groups. The confusion of belongingness was said to emerge especially when visiting Estonia as the feeling of not being part of Estonia was confirmed when experiencing directly in the local environment.

> Merilin: 'Well, I know that I will never become a Dutchman and I don't want to become one, but I know that the longer I'm away from Estonia the less Estonian I become. I don't know whether it's good or bad.'

> Karin: 'At the same time, in Estonia you don't also feel yourself… you are an Estonian, and here as well, but now this feeling begins to disappear, before it was… when you went back to Estonia, where do I exactly belong now? That this… this some kind of schism exists, that my home is quite not in Estonia and here you are… well, I'm not a real Dutchman, that… yes, this 'schism' exists. That this adaptation always takes time when you come back every time. [---] There, this home-feeling probably hasn't emerged anymore. This somewhat funny feeling is there always… somehow like a foreign feeling. That… it has become foreign.'

A few respondents used the term tourist when describing the foreign feeling during their visits to Estonia:

> Kaidi: 'At the same time, every time I go, I feel that I've become a stranger. Things change, there are new buildings in the city, I don't even know what it is and where do I have to go and… I don't quite <u>belong</u> there anymore. I feel myself sometimes as a tourist, that it is cool, a week and then I already feel that I want to come back [to the Netherlands].'

Whereas the feeling of being a tourist in Estonia had primarily to do with (the change in) physical surroundings, the participation in Estonian social and cultural environment in the Netherlands was viewed as means of preserving one's Estonian identity. Respondents perceived contacts with other local Estonians as a source for strengthening the identity and establishing a 'feeling of Estonia' in the Netherlands. The identity intensifies when the inner norms and values are confirmed by other members of one's cultural group (Berry, 2001).

> Interviewer: 'Is it important for you that… now living here abroad, that you have contact with other local Estonians?'
> Tõnis: 'Of course it is. Essential. Very important.'
> Interviewer: 'Why?'
> Tõnis: 'It is this conserving of own roots, I guess. This… own circle of friends. Not that one would be worse than the other, but this… own homelike is very… important. If you lose this, then, I guess, it is a rather empty feeling. When you are a stranger… So it [contact with local Estonians] helps to keep this Estonia-feeling.'

> Maris: 'Of course it's important. Because it helps me to keep this… that 'Who am I?' I am an Estonian. This helps me not to forget who I am when being here too. Of course it's important. To forget al.l your past and move to a new place, this is relatively illogical.'

Next to interaction with local Estonians, many respondents related visiting a cultural event that has an Estonian aspect in it to reinforcement of their Estonian identity. Participating in performances by co-national artists in the host country corresponds to the principles of transnationalism (see Section 2.2). Respondents said to have attended concerts, exhibitions, films, and lectures; a few of them additionally mentioned some elements such as posters or flags in public spaces that drew their attention to Estonian identity. The events that had to do with Estonian artists famous in their field throughout the world accentuated respondents' proud feelings of being an Estonian as if the success of a compatriot was their personal success too.

Tõnis: 'When there were some events, concerts, Neeme Järvi[21] in The Hague, then you called other Estonians that are you going, or there was Ellerhein[22] singing somewhere in Groningen for instance, then everyone rushed there. Or there was a screening of Priit Pärn's[23] movie, everyone rushed there. I mean… there was a reason. [---] Well, if there is some… I stand in the bus stop and there is a poster with the portrait of Carmen Kass[24], J'adore. Or there is some concert of Arvo Pärt[25] or some CD presentation somewhere, then is, well, this… very <u>lofty</u> feeling. Very lofty. '

Tõnis: 'When Estonia won the Eurovision or… Anyway, a major victory, Gerd Kanter[26] won the gold, well let's say, Estonia scored very very very good. Then I have a tear in my eye, this is terrific! This Eurovision evening, for instance, [---] you reached complete euphoria. Later in the evening we went out to some pub where they played this song out loud and people were dancing on the bar counter and well… this is a triumph! A triumph of your roots, your culture.'

5.3 Integration

As discussed in the previous section, discovering new aspects of and/or perceiving change in one's identity was closely related to respondents' experience of living in the Netherlands. On the one hand, the influence stems from the absence of a familiar environment, or, on the contrary, the imagined presence of Estonia; on the other hand, identity is reassessed in terms of the presence and dominance of another cultural group and their norms and attitudes. Adjustment to the new circumstances thus requires coping with the combination of those two components. The extent to which both dimensions are valued or neglected determines the adaptation strategy (see Section 2.3). Although being in different stages, all respondents appeared to engage in integration as the most optimal approach

Almost all respondents' practices confirmed that contacts with Dutch people constitute the basis for understanding the background and functioning mechanisms of the Netherlands, its culture, norms and values, and for being able to relate to them. This is done so in order to prevent or overcome the feeling of being a foreign element in the Dutch society and ensure being part of it instead.

Maris: 'In order to blend into the society, you have to have contacts with locals.'

Anneli: 'Just, if you live in a country, then, I believe, you self have to make some efforts, show a bit of interest. If I was talking about the [names another nationality] friends of mine, they have only own group and for them the Netherlands is just a country where they live. That they don't know anyone here actually. They know only their external circle [of friends] and other acquaintances. I experience all sorts of other things because I have those Dutch acquaintances as well and then… On the one hand, you get justifications to those clichés that you've heard, on the other hand, there are people who show that this thing is the other way round here.'

Of all possible sources of contacts with the Dutch (see Section 4.2.1), the presence of a Dutch partner was perceived to be the most effective link to integration. Basically all respondents who had a Dutch partner believed that constant availability of a very close other who could introduce and explain the Dutch context in different situations stimulated the process of integration and served as extra motivational factor to become integrated.

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[21] Conductor. Among his other tenures, holds the position of Chief Conductor of The Hague Philharmonic Orchestra since 2005.
[22] Girls' choir.
[23] Animator.
[24] (Former) supermodel.
[25] Composer.
[26] Olympic winner in discus throwing in 2008.

Maris: 'Boyfriend is the major help for integration, this half that connects you with the rest of the country, with Dutch people.'

Helina: 'A whole bunch of friends emerged thanks my partner immediately. That all his friends were at once my friends as well, in this sense it was very cool, or, well, it was very easy for me to integrate. Because… and they helped me to learn the language, I haven't been to language courses. And… they've taken me everywhere, to some other cities or to cultural events or just to some places where tourists go or don't go, whatever. That I had guides at once due to my partner.'

In addition to seeking contact with the Dutch, showing respect to the Dutch value system and behaving accordingly were considered to be prerequisites for the recognition as a full member of the society.

Tõnis: 'I think that, coming back to this integration, that if they see that I have completely settled here, that I don't… depreciate, don't despise, don't ignore their customs, on the contrary, then I am more than welcome. I've been accepted very very warmly. I really cannot complain.'

A common approach to both confirming to Dutch norms and feeling as one with the Dutch appeared to be the celebration of Dutch holidays. Some respondents regarded it as a compensation for their non-Dutch origin, others as an act of manifesting the willingness to promote fellow feeling in public.

Tarmo: 'This is interesting, how inside a person… that if you live somewhere, that you will start to feel for this place. Certainly celebrating holidays has its role in it. That I live here and then in some ways I feel proud of this place. Although I self have nothing to do with building up this place.'

Maris: 'On the Queen's Day we go to the city. My boyfriend certainly wears something orange. For example I was very anxious that I didn't have a single orange item to wear [laughter]. Just this going with the flow… It is… you would do the same in Estonia, if everyone wore blue, you of course would wear too. It feels more supportive.'

Whereas celebrating a holiday is rather uniform as the actions performed are annually repeated and thus can easily be learned by observing, becoming acquainted with traditions and customs is a more complex process due to the multitude of them. Even though otherwise open to Dutch norms, some respondents unintentionally had conflicted with a certain custom or tradition due to having no prior experience in a similar situation.

Piret: 'Everyone had those white curtains. I was so terribly irritated by that, like this hospital… a feeling of hospital. [---] And then I enthusiastically made colourful curtains and hung them up. So when my boyfriend came home, his face was completely pale… that what is going on? [laughter] I didn't expect this kind of reaction, because in my view some colours came into our lives, and these were very beautiful curtains. I remember that… who then drove by our house, everyone was looking all the time. And then, I heard, they were talking, that what is going on, is there some sort of amusement park opened!? Something like this. This was a small… I didn't expect… I violated a tradition and it was resented a bit.'

Customs performed on a daily basis allow for a quick awareness of them. Many respondents noted that it has been difficult to take up a standpoint with regard to certain Dutch customs, particularly if differing from the practice in Estonia. The confusion was reported to have been solved by clearly either adopting the Dutch norm or maintaining the Estonian habit, often the former strategy was employed in order to not feel left out. Some respondents had decided to act according to the circumstances, sometimes the situation was avoided as much as possible. The following examples reflect experiences regarding Dutch custom to give three kisses on the cheeks when greeting or leaving someone:

Liis: 'Three kisses anyway! Except with Estonians, because I don't know how people take it

[laughter]. The silly thing is that if you pick up those customs, then you don't know anymore that this isn't your custom. What I have picked up, I don't know, because if there has been something, then I don't notice it.'

Anneli: 'I hold my hand out already from a distance so that the length of the hand remains in between us [laughter]. That yes, I don't want this with everyone so much. It gets excessive sometimes. Especially when you go somewhere, out with your boyfriend, his friends, and there are six guys, their girlfriends, 12 persons, everyone wants to kiss, argh… I sit in the corner of the table where there is no accessibility. I only wave to them for hello, but there is always of course this certain number of people who, no matter what, climb over the table [to give the three kisses], this is yes, [ironically] so nice.'

Kaidi: 'Yes-yes, you notice it. For instance those three kisses, then I also do. Otherwise it's strange, you are alone this kind of… on your own. I cannot say that I like it, for me it is somehow unpleasant or foreign.'

Some of the Dutch customs were reported difficult or even almost impossible to get used to. A lot of respondents referred hereby to the necessity to make appointments several weeks beforehand even with friends, or the rather strictly fixed dinner and coffee times. Almost all respondents considered Estonian customs and people to be more flexible.

Tõnis: 'In Estonia, for instance, you can drop by a friend's place without warning. Without making *afspraak* three weeks in advance, that can you [have an appointment] this evening, and we have to write it down by all means. That you just ring the doorbell, mkm [laughter].'

Piret: 'And if you go at the wrong time, then… too early to a birthday, then they don't offer anything at all. I mean, not even, I thought that we'll get at least some cake, but we didn't! But this kind of attitude is… traditions. Eating at six o'clock and at eight o'clock coffee. And then going home after coffee. Well, something like that.'

Unless contradicting with Dutch norms or customs, respondents tended to continue doing things in Estonian way. However, when a compromise had to be made between the two approaches, Dutch manners were often adopted in order to show respect towards the local culture.

Kaidi: 'Usually I try to combine what is common to me and what suits other people here, right. That if it is unacceptable, for instance, when you go to a birthday and then you want to start with a salty dish, but you cannot, because cake must be eaten, well, then I eat cake as well. Cake and coffee, and then they start with salty dishes. I then do also as it must be done.'

The celebration of Estonian holidays in the Netherlands was indicated to be a feature of maintaining own culture in the foreign country. The interviews suggested that Independence Day and Midsummer Day are commonly celebrated with other local Estonians by means of attending the official celebration at the embassy or more informal gatherings organised by the Estonian community. Many respondents indicated, however, that the celebration of Midsummer Day has become rare as making a large campfire, an essential part of this holiday, is complicated in the Netherlands due to the lack of appropriate space for it. As Christmas is a holiday celebrated to a large extent within the family, and more importance is attached to it than in the Netherlands, almost all respondents visited Estonia during Christmas. If that was not possible for some reasons, an Estonian-like Christmas atmosphere was created in the Dutch home.

Piret: 'Once I couldn't go [to Estonia] for two years during Christmas. Well, no one eats blood sausages here during Christmas, I don't know, this isn't how we are used to. So during this Christmas back then, all of a sudden there were two tiny black blood sausages put in my letterbox, it was [names an Estonian friend living in the same city] who had received some from Estonia, and felt sorry for me and put those two blood sausages in my letterbox, this was nice, I had a

Christmas feeling right away.'

5.3.1 Language proficiency

As prescribed by Dutch integration policies (see Section 1.2), knowledge of Dutch language is considered to be an integral part of migrant adaptation in the Netherlands. The same was the perception of all respondents regardless of one's own command of Dutch. The majority had already learned Dutch and used it daily, the ones with poor or no language skills were either subscribed to a language course or intended to do so.

The reasons named for learning Dutch were quite the same in every respondent. Many perceived it above all as simply a natural part of living in any foreign country. The most practical advantage pointed out was being able to manage by oneself in everyday situations from finding the right food in a supermarket to studying in a Dutch curriculum or calling to Tax Administration where an official policy obligates employees to speak with customers in Dutch only. It is interesting to note that several respondents were glad about the named policy, albeit they claimed their knowledge of Dutch to be poor, as other than this they rarely felt enforced to speak Dutch. Ironically, the respondents perceived the overall good English spoken by Dutch as a hindrance to their motivation to learn and practice Dutch. Whereas the Dutch themselves think they are doing a favour when replying automatically in English to a foreigner who is making efforts to compose a sentence in Dutch, several respondents indicated this to be a hampering factor in terms of integration.

> Anneli: 'This is like very simple. If you live in a foreign country, learn the language, it makes all the things easier for yourself.'

> Maris: 'To understand the surroundings without that someone would have to translate it for you, this is completely something different.'

Language proficiency was also regarded as a key to perceive Dutch cultural context:

> Liis: 'I think that language proficiency is important in order to understand people at all. Not in the linguistic sense, that I can understand when you say 'I want something to drink', but to understand who they are and what they think and what their culture is. It was terribly important to me. Especially this that you can begin to read their books, that you understand where do they come from, why are they like this… Therefore it was important.'

As already mentioned above, all respondents associated language skills directly with integration.

> Helina: 'If you can speak the language, then you are more respected and they take you like… people see that you really want to… that you live here in this society and you've learned the language, this is actually logical. And right. You self try to do everything possible so that you would… integrate here. This is very important. I would like if Russians in Estonia would learn Estonian.'

The latter comment made by Helina reflects the perceptions of several other respondents too. The eagerness to learn the local language might be stressed in Estonians because of the direct experiences with an example of largely failed integration of Russians in Estonia (see also Section 5.2). Bearing this undesirable scenario in mind, some respondents had taken the initiative to learn Dutch or at least realised that they should do so.

> Heiki: 'Of course I should learn the language, it's a shame that I have such a bad command of this language. I feel myself like some… like a Russian immigrant in Estonia. That… everyone else speaks Dutch and I have to talk in English. But… there are no excuses why I shouldn't speak [Dutch]. I think that you don't… get half of the contact with people, you get ten times less

contact than if you speak the official language… A gesture towards this local culture, society.'

In general, Dutch language was perceived to be a part of the Netherlands, and a good command of it created conditions for positive association with the country, its culture and people. Feeling comfortable in the society allows for long-term plans with regard to the country of residence.

> Kaarel: 'I believe that if I would, the main factor that I would adapt here, is the language. If you speak the language at a certain level, then there's a relatively high chance that you can stay here for longer.'

6 Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter finalises the thesis by discussing the major findings. Given the results presented in two previous chapters, answers to the sub-questions of the main research question (see Section 1.3) are first provided, which then contribute to the final conclusion. In Section 6.2 recommendations for further research and migrant coping strategies are formulated based on those conclusions.

6.1 Conclusions

How do Estonian long-term migrants in the Netherlands maintain contacts with their social network in Estonia?

This study demonstrated that the Internet is for long-term migrants from Estonia in the Netherlands the primary source of contacts with their friends and acquaintances in the home country. Given that all respondents had daily access to the Internet and so did the members of their social networks in Estonia, the Internet is preferred to other means of communication due to the variety of communication modes it allows. Different modes appeared to serve different functions and aim at different types of social relationships. Instant messaging programme MSN and Internet telephone Skype were reported to be used the most frequently, it can be explained with the observation that these forms of Internet communication, videocalls specifically, reproduce many features of face-to-face interaction and thus provide migrants an optimal way to still participate in the existing social network. Skype and, to a lesser extent, MSN are used in order to communicate with people with whom one has established strong ties. The need for vis-à-vis simulation is thus indeed strongest with regard to the close others. Social networking websites, on the other hand, provide primarily a form of passive maintenance of contacts, and are applied to the weak ties. Profile visits often result in recent information on the person, occasionally this is supplemented by the exchange of messages which still does not require active contact.

Visits to Estonia form an essential part of sustaining the relationships, since it is the only manner, next to friends' visits to the Netherlands, to experience the face-to-face communication as the most genuine from of interaction. However, generally restricted resources such as time and money often enable the visits less than desired.

What are their perceived changes in the existing social relationships in Estonia after migrating to the Netherlands?

A prevailing experience of Estonian long-term migrants in the Netherlands was that the spatial distance with respect to their social relationships in Estonia influenced only the weak ties. Whereas physical absence and lessened contacts were often reported to result in the loss of weak ties, the strong tie still remained close friends, also after the migration, regardless of the frequency of the contact. Some respondents suggested that the lack of engaging in common activities reflected decrease in emotional intensity of the relationship. Nevertheless, almost all respondents agreed that living in another country has not changed the relationships with the most close others in Estonia. A busy schedule of appointments with friends whenever visiting Estonia is an indication that all respondents have maintained contact with their existing social networks at least to some extent. In general, social relationships in

Estonia were considered of higher priority than those in the Netherlands. The results from the ego network questionnaire revealed that half of the respondents' significant others live in Estonia, whereas only one-third in the Netherlands. While the mean length of stay in the Netherlands is 5.0 years, the mean duration of the relationships with the close others is 11.7 years, implying that the close other is more likely to be found in the Estonian than Dutch social network.

How do those migrants gain access to and participate in the social networks in the Netherlands?

The majority of respondents had experienced difficulties in establishing social ties in the new country of residence. Albeit all respondents already had some basis to build the social relationships on—such as a partner, job or study position—when they migrated to the Netherlands, it was not sufficient for automatic access to social networks. Even the presence of a Dutch partner and the availability of his social network did not always result in participation in his social network: either the partner had only a few social ties, the respondent did not find common language with his friends, or the respondent tended to be more passive in finding other contacts than those of the partner. Regardless of the presence of a partner, respondents initially seeking weak ties were more successful in establishing new ties than those who concentrated on finding close friends.

Different cultural background and hence lack of common understanding was sometimes perceived as a hindrance to forming social relationships with the Dutch. This was not the issue when looking for new friends and acquaintances among other Estonians who live in the Netherlands. Several important shared characteristics such as common countries of origin and settlement were considered to facilitate the creation of social ties. Moreover, the national group could be accessed rather easily, either by participating in official gatherings organised by the Estonian embassy, or via the virtual community in Orkut. Some respondents drew attention to the role of residential duration. The need to meet local Estonians tends to decrease over time, firstly because a social network has most likely emerged during the longer time period, secondly because common nationality loses its salience as a basis for establishing contact. The latter aspect stems from the perception that a migrant group in a foreign country forms an unnatural social network, sometimes even forced upon the group members.

How does their subjective satisfaction with social relationships influence the stress caused by migration?

The social network in Estonia and in the Netherlands proved to complement one another. Whereas in the beginning phases of the settling process only a few social ties had emerged in the Netherlands, the contacts were more active with social relationships in Estonia. On the other hand, when some more social contacts were established in the Netherlands as well, restricted time drove several participants to stop with actively seeking new ties in order to manage with both Estonian and Dutch social network. The majority of respondents emphasised the quality rather than the quantity of social networks. With regard to Estonian social network, as described in the answer to the previous sub-question, the quality remained to a large extent, whereas only quantity had remarkably decreased due to the physical distance between Estonia and the Netherlands.

Despite these findings, the direct absence of close relationships from the Estonian social network led to loneliness. Feeling lonely in combination with having few social ties in the Netherlands, and comparing the quality of Estonian social contacts to those of Dutch were reported as the major contributors to adaptation stress. The results of UCLA Loneliness Scale suggest that loneliness is larger with regard to the social network in the Netherlands than that in Estonia, and that this stems from the absence of a very close other in the network. On the other hand, results of the ego network questionnaire indicate that emotional support received from the social network in the Netherlands is significantly higher than that of Estonia. This is explained by the significantly higher frequency of contacts with close others in the Netherlands, since a positive significant correlation was found between receiving support and frequency of the contacts. The quantitative data thus imply that physical distance plays a role with regard to the quality of the relationships.

What are the main determinants for adaptation of Estonian long-term migrants to the Netherlands?

All respondents had employed integration as a relevant adaptation strategy to the Netherlands, often in order to prevent or overcome the adaptation stress. Two dimensions were thereby identified: integration facilitators with regard to the Netherland, and with regard to Estonian origin.

Respondents considered the major aspects of successful integration to be contacts with the Dutch and language proficiency. Whereas the former was seen as direct introduction into the Netherlands and link to get familiarised with Dutch norms and values, the latter contributes to the broader understanding of Dutch society as well as facilitates dealing with practical issues without needing external help. In many respondents' view, learning the national language was an act of expressing respect to the country of residence.

Other commonly named facilitators for integration were celebrating Dutch holidays as an opportunity to feel part of the society; Dutch partner as, among others, constantly available connection with the Dutch context; the latter is also applicable, albeit to a lesser extent, to colleagues or fellow students; contact with other local Estonians as a potential source of practical experiences and information to share; the absence of policies with regard to working restrictions, since it allows for faster participation in the society.

In the interviews it was suggested that the second component of integration was the maintenance of one's 'Estonianess'. When in contact with other (ethnic) groups in the society, respondents seemed to become more aware of their Estonian identity. It emerged specifically clearly as a protest reaction when having to deal with stereotypes regarding the whole region of Eastern Europe. From the positive side, Estonian identity was expressed in the Netherlands when attending cultural events of Estonian artists. The celebration of Estonian national holidays contributed to the strengthening of own heritage, assigning value to national traditions in general, and thereby also recognising the importance of Dutch traditions. Comparing and combining Estonian and Dutch values and norms appeared to be the most common practice for adaptation.

What are the perceived consequences of migration on the social networks of Estonian long-term migrants in the Netherlands, and the impact of these consequences on their adaptation?

An answer to the main research question can be given on the basis of the sub-questions discussed above. The interviews confirmed to some degree that migration disrupts social networks due to the physical distance it creates between individuals and deprives them of frequent face-to-face contacts and common activities to engage in. However, because of the wide range of available communication technologies, particularly the Internet, relationships can still be maintained despite the spatial distance. The major change in respondents' social network in Estonia was a decrease in its quantity, caused by the loss of many weak ties due to the lack of contact with them. Strong friendship relationships appeared to be resistant to the distance, thus the qualitative aspect of the social network did not change remarkably, even when the main source of contacts were only respondents' visits to Estonia. The long duration of friendship ties could be seen as one of the reasons why close others are more likely to be found in the Estonian rather than Dutch social network.

In order to fulfil the social needs, social relationships have to be established in the Netherlands as well. Almost all respondents reported to have encountered difficulties in doing so, as often time is needed for social ties to emerge. The main entrance points to social networks in the Netherlands were one's partner, job or study position, and local Estonians. The latter were considered the easiest way for meeting new people; importance was also attached to the common background, and shared values and norms. According to the experiences of the respondents, loneliness is likely to occur particularly in the beginning stages of the settlement, when only a few social ties have been established in the Netherlands and thus longing for friends in Estonia is considerably higher. Rather low scores on the UCLA loneliness scale suggest that during the course of time loneliness decreases or even disappears, because meaningful and satisfactory social relationships have come into existence also in the Netherlands.

Social network in the Netherlands creates opportunities for contacts with the Dutch, this in turn accounted for integration to the society on the whole, since the contacts allowed familiarising with Dutch norms and traditions. Proficiency in Dutch language was reported to be another major contributor to the participation in the society and understanding the Dutch culture. On the other hand, conserving Estonian identity and cultural aspects were perceived as the second important component for adaptation, this was done by means of transnational activities such as contacts with Estonians both in Estonia and the Netherlands, celebrating Estonian holidays, visiting Estonian cultural events in the Netherlands. Comparing and combining of Estonian and Dutch attitudes, norms, and customs mainly allowed for finding one's place in the society.

6.2 Recommendations

This study examined the relationship of social networks and adaptation of Estonian long-term migrants in the Netherlands. Based on the conclusions presented in the previous section, it can be stated that integration appears to be the most successful strategy to cope with the stress caused by migration and adaptation to the new society. It is quite obvious that universal guidelines with regard to finding new friends or not feeling lonely cannot be given; instead, potential migrants can be informed in terms of the experiences of the respondents. Those

practices suggest that contacts with the Dutch contribute to the understanding of the functioning of Dutch society, its norms and customs, which in turn favours the adaptation process. Proficiency in Dutch language contributed both to the dealing with practical daily matters as well as to participation in the society at large. Seeking contact with own national group is often a facilitator of new social relationships, source of information, and confirmation of national identity.

With regard to the host country, promotion of contacts with migrants at the grassroot level contributes to mutual understanding of each others norms, prevents stereotypes, and allows integration and a more coherent functioning of the society.

Several implications for further research can be thought of. Firstly, a comparative study could be conducted in order to determine whether the current results could be generalised to Estonian long-term migrants in another country, or some other migrant groups in the Netherlands. In order to challenge the stereotype of homogeneous Eastern Europe, the study population for the latter case could be selected from the same region. As the size of Estonian community in the Netherlands was not perceived to be too small for finding contacts with fellow nationals, even smaller migrant group could be studied to detect the effects of its size on the migrant networks and adaptation. In the present study only respondents aged between 20 and 40 years were interviewed, including other age groups would most likely bring some new dimensions into the discussion. The UCLA Loneliness Scale should be tested on a larger sample of migrants, as the present sample is too small for a quantitative research. The instrument used for assessing the social network consisted of only a few items, an extended questionnaire would produce results that are more clearly interpretable. Finally, a psychological perspective could additionally be applied by means of including personality characteristics, such as sociability and adaptability, to the research.

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Appendices

Appendix I In-depth interview guide

<u>Introduction</u>

<u>Background characteristics of the respondent</u>
- age
- residential duration
- occupation

<u>General topics</u>

Life in Estonia before coming to the Netherlands
- where did you live (city/town; alone/with parents/partner, etc)
- study/job
- activities
- spending free time, etc

Decision to move abroad
- why?
- why the Netherlands? Did you already know someone here, who?

How did you imagine your life in the Netherlands?
- everyday life (job)/study
- activities
- getting accustomed to NL
- old friends, new friends

<u>Research topics</u>

Has it turned out the way you were thinking? Is something different, what?
Describe your life here (for example, a typical day/week)

What are/were the difficulties, if any, you have experienced when adjusting to living in the Netherlands? Prompts: finding a place to live, a job, friends, hobbies, dealing with bureaucracy, understanding Dutch culture.
How serious do/did you evaluate those difficulties to be?

What are your experiences with blending into Dutch society?

(if applicable) In what ways, if in any, has the your partner made things easier in the Netherlands? Prompts: someone to turn to, finding new friends/acquaintances, adaptation, understanding the Dutch culture.

Do you consider it important to feel like a part of the Dutch society? Why (not)?

Which Dutch customs and traditions do you know? What are your experiences with those

customs and traditions, and what do you think about them? Prompts: three kisses for hello and good-bye, taking/offering only one cookie/piece of cake at a time, fixed agendas, ultraliberalism with regard to soft drugs, prostitution, homosexuality.

Which Estonian/Dutch holidays do you celebrate here (if any at all)? What are the reasons for celebrating/not celebrating? How do you celebrate? Prompts for Estonia: Independence Day, Re-independence Day, Midsummer Day, Christmas. Prompts for the Netherlands: Queen's Day, Liberation Day, Sinterklaas.

Do you consider it important to be acquainted with Estonian/Dutch news? Why?

What are the things you like more about Estonia/the Netherlands than about the Netherlands/Estonia? The things you dislike? Why?

How has living abroad, if at all, changed your feelings of 'Estonianess'?

Do you regard Estonia or the Netherlands as your home? Why?

How, if at all, have you found new acquaintances/friends in the Netherlands? Prompts: contacts at work/university, hobbies (e.g., sports), partner.

Has it been easy for you to find new contacts here, why/why not?

Which kind of contacts, if any at all, do you have with Dutch? Prompts: partner, colleagues/fellow students, contacts through hobbies/sports.

Do you consider it important to have contacts with Dutch or other nations? Why?

Do you have a close friend among Dutch?

How, if at all, have you found contact with other Estonians who live in the Netherlands? Prompts: some other acquaintances/friends, activities organised by the Estonian community or embassy, Orkut.

How, if at all, have your friendship relationships in Estonia changed because of living abroad? How do you feel about those changes?

How do you keep in touch with your friends and acquaintances in Estonia? Prompts: the Internet, phone, visiting Estonia, friends visiting the Netherlands.

How satisfied are you with the content of your friendship relationships in Estonia/the Netherlands?

Are there enough people for you to share your ups and downs with? What makes you feel this way? Who are they? Prompts: friends, colleagues/fellow students, Estonians/Dutch/other nationals.

Are there enough people to turn to for practical matters? Who are they? Prompts: friends, colleagues/fellow students, Estonians/Dutch/other nationals.

Do you feel yourself lonely sometimes? (If applicable) why?
(If applicable) What do you do to overcome loneliness?
Do you consider it important to visit Estonia? Why (not)?

How often do you visit Estonia?

Would you like to visit more often, if it was possible? If yes, what are the reasons for not doing so? Prompts: time, money, no interest/need.

Do you consider it important to have contacts with local Estonians, to participate in the local Estonian community? Why?

In which of the local Estonian community activities, if in any at all, have you participated? Why (not)?

In which of the activities, if in any at all, organised by the Estonian embassy have you participated? Why (not)?

What do you know about the Estonian School in the Netherlands? Have you participated, why (not)?

What is your level of understanding and speaking Dutch?

What are (in case the respondent has poor or no knowledge of Dutch: could be) the advantages of it? Prompt: daily situations, getting contact with Dutch, understanding their culture.

How do you perceive the time lived in the Netherlands with regard to making new friends/acquaintances here? Prompt: its impact on the quantity and quality of the relationships.

How do you perceive the time lived in the Netherlands with regard to getting accustomed to this society?

General topics

Future plans, why
- stay in the Netherlands
- return to Estonia
- go to some other country

Closure

- Thanking for participation
- Any questions?
- Filling in the UCLA LS and Ego questionnaires

Appendix II UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3)

Instructions: The following statements describe how people sometimes feel. For each statement, please indicate how often you feel the way described, when thinking of your circle of acquaintances/friends in the Netherlands and when thinking of that in Estonia, by writing a number in the space provided.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

	NL	EST
1. How often do you feel that you are "in tune" with the people around you?		
2. How often do you feel that you lack companionship?		
3. How often do you feel that there is no one you can turn to?		
4. How often do you feel alone?		
5. How often do you feel part of a group of friends?		
6. How often do you feel that you have a lot in common with the people around you?		
7. How often do you feel that you are no longer close to anyone?		
8. How often do you feel that your interests and ideas are not shared by those around you?		
9. How often do you feel outgoing and friendly?		
10. How often do you feel close to people?		
11. How often do you feel left out?		
12. How often do you feel that your relationships with others are not meaningful?		
13. How often do you feel that no one really knows you well?		
14. How often do you feel isolated from others?		
15. How often do you feel you can find companionship when you want to?		
16. How often do you feel that there are people who really understand you?		
17. How often do you feel shy?		
18. How often do you feel that people are around you but not with you?		
19. How often do you feel that there are people you can talk to?		
20. How often do you feel that there are people you can turn to?		

Appendix III Ego network questionnaire

E: How do I know this person? (more than one answer possible)
1. Partner
2. From school
3. From university
4. Colleague
5. From hobbiclub/-association
6. Relative
7. Neighbour
8. Estonians activities in the Netherlands
9. Orkut community Estonians in the Netherlands
10. Other

F-I: Frequency
1 – never
2 – seldom
3 – sometimes
4 – often
5 – always

H and I: Contact

Contact:
Doing something together, calling, smsing, Skype, etc.

Weekdays: Monday till Thursday
Weekend: Friday till Sunday

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Every row represents a friend who is very important to you. (No need to write a name here)	Age	Sex	Does he/she live in Estonia, the Netherlands, or in some other country?	How long do you know each other? (in years)	What is your relationship with him/her?	Has he/she helped you when you have had [emotional] difficulties during the last three months?	Has he/she helped you in practical matters during the last three months?	How often have you had contact with each other in the *weekdays*?	How often have you had contact with each other in the *weekends*?
1		F / M	E / N / O			1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2		F / M	E / N / O			1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3		F / M	E / N / O			1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4		F / M	E / N / O			1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5		F / M	E / N / O			1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6		F / M	E / N / O			1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7		F / M	E / N / O			1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix IV Informed consent

INFORMED CONSENT

I, ..., agree to participate in a research carried out by Anu Kõu.

I am aware that taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. I am free to choose not to answer any question and I may decide to discontinue.

1. The topic of the research: influence of migration on social life.
2. Form of the research: interview (duration approximately 30 to 60 minutes) and a questionnaire (filling in 5 to 10 minutes).
3. No stress or discomfort should emerge due to the research.
4. The data will be processed anonymously; the respondents cannot be identified individually.
5. The researcher will answer my questions about unclear matters concerning the research.

Researcher .... Participant ....

Date ... ... 2008 Date 2008

Appendix V Screenshot of Orkut community Estonians in the Netherlands

Appendix VI Screenshot of an opening page in Facebook