

The role of social networks in subjective social well-being

Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands

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This thesis is the result of a fascinating discovery of the lives of Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands. By performing a qualitative study, I was invited to be in close contact with the people. It was an experience to enter a world, that without the writing of this thesis I would not have known about.

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Abstract

Migration into a new society brings a lot of adjustments to the life of migrants, the life they used to have. Not only physical adjustments, but also adjustments in the educational area, workforce and economical situation. This can influence the well-being of immigrants. Where their economic status, demographic and health conditions, cultural and religious identity and practice, family structure, and kin networks are altered by their move to a new country, it is possible the status of their well-being will also alter. This study seeks for roles social networks can have in the social well-being of Ghanaian migrants. Ghanaian migrants entered the Netherlands from the 1980s and are a growing migrant group in the Netherlands. They especially migrate to Europe and the United States for economical reasons.

The social networks discussed in the literature review are the social ties with family and friends, the social contacts in church, social networks with Dutch and the social networks at work. The social ties with friends and family in the Netherlands and within church are said to be important to the social well-being of the migrants. The social networks with people of the host country are most successful for the migrants and their well-being when they integrate into the host society. Contacts at work often have a negative influence on the social well-being of the migrants, due to discrimination. The literature is supported by the Social Production Function (SPF) Theory and the Social Network Theory.

To observe if and how social networks are incorporated in the lives of Ghanaian migrants, in-depth interviews were conducted. Seventeen participants were involved in these interviews. Furthermore the social networks of the Ghanaian migrants were observed on three occasions, in a Ghanaian shop, at a migrant organization and in a church service.

The results indicate that social networks are of high value to the social well-being of the Ghanaian migrants interviewed and observed in this study. The participants did develop several new social networks when entering the Netherlands. The contacts to other Ghanaian or African migrants in the Netherlands were very intense. The social networks with migrants, who they met in the Netherlands, were often also related to church. The social networks with other migrants create a sense of belonging to the home country and feelings of security and familiarity. In the church and their daily lives the participants perceive positive social well-being when they hold on to their original traditions. Together with other migrants they share emotions. The ties with Dutch people are experienced as more difficult. Most participants said to feel disrespected by Dutch people, because of negative approaches and the perceived difference in norms and traditions. As they feel disrespected, Dutch people are often not taken up in the social networks of these participants. On the other hand the participants with a Dutch partner and some other participants without a Dutch partner approached Dutch people and the society differently. These participants feel a sense of belonging to the Dutch society and feel respected by their Dutch contacts. These feelings enhance their social well-being. However, close others are more likely to be found within the Ghanaian networks rather than Dutch social network, because of the relations to the home culture and a shared background.

The family in the home country is a representation of the way of life the migrants like to be part of. This is why the ties in Ghana are maintained. Within these networks the participants feel a sense of direct belonging to Ghana, they can relate to the traditions and norms and values and share emotions with their family. But by being in the Netherlands, the high expectations of the family and being the one the family depends on can leave the participants with feelings of guilt. The SPF theory provides an interesting setting for the research of social well-being among the Ghanaian migrants. Although they do not provide fit concepts for the social well-being among the Ghanaian migrants, the participants are looking for the needs of belongingness and love and the needs of security. This leads to self-esteem and a status in the Netherlands.

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1

Introduction

Happiness is only real when shared. - Alexander Supertramp (Into the Wild)

The world is full of connections. These connections are made more visible by the extending networks over the world. Migrant groups are using these connections in their process of migrating to another country. Still, it is a vulnerable group. Migrants are often subordinated groups in their host country and are quite often subject to prejudices and discrimination (Werkuyten & Nekuee, 1999; Carballo & Mboup, 2005). The process of migration and settling in a new society is also often accompanied by stress.

The process to transform this distress into mental well-being is for some migrants a difficult process or might not happen at all (Hao & Johnson, 2000; Prilleltensky, 2008). To cope with a new cultural context and a new overall society it is important to understand the diverse perceptions of mental well-being among the host population and the diverse groups in a society. All migrants have a different background and these may influence the manner in which they can cope with the process of migration and the impact it has on their well-being (Hao & Johnson, 2000). Well-being is shaped by many different aspects of life. It can manifest itself through contentment with family and friends, but also achievements at work, at educational level or in self fulfilment (Reis et al., 2000; Muntaner et al., 2000; Vega & Rumbaut, 1991).

Many studies conclude social networks play an important role in the (re-)establishment of positive social well-being of migrants (e.g. Kawachi & Berkman, 2001; Pinquart & Sorensen, 2000; Jasinskaja-Lahti, et al., 2006; Snowden, 2001). The established networks introduce migrants to the different aspects of the society they now live in (Hagan, 1998; Riccio, 2008; Chelapi-Den Hamer, 2008). Also these networks may influence how well settled migrants feel in their new environment. Social contacts, or the lack thereof, influence the feelings of belongingness and social and physical well-being in a host country (Mazzucato, 2008; Chelapi-Den Hamer, 2008; Nee & Sanders, 2001). Social networks can be developed in different contexts and can have different influences on the migrants. Contacts on the work floor, contacts in the neighbourhood or contacts in church can play various roles in the well-being of the migrant. These new and old ties are connections which shape the new life.

1.1 Background

In 2004 a large report on the integration of immigrants stated that the integration in the Netherlands was a success for many of the immigrants (Blok et al., 2004). Still, the conclusions of the report were not satisfying for many of the stakeholders in the discussion (Demant, 2005). They specifically saw conflicts on the cultural level, between the immigrants and the domestic population. These differences between the Dutch and other cultures could lead to social arrears and segregation (Demant, 2005). These discussions are a consequence of a long history of immigrants in the Netherlands. The last fifty years especially Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese and Antillean migrants entered the country. From 1980 onwards an increasing number of African migrants came into the Netherlands (CBS, 2010).

The largest groups of African migrants in the Netherlands include Ghanaian, Sudanese, Angolan, Nigerian, Senegalese, Ethiopian, Congolese and Somali migrants. These groups account for a total of 100 thousand migrants (van Heelsum, 2005). Among the groups of African migrants the

group of Ghanaian migrants is the largest, next to the Somali migrants (CBS, 2009). The Ghanaian immigrant group is one of the fastest growing migrant groups of the last ten years. Where this group had a size of about 12.000 in 1996, in 2008 it grew to almost 20.000 migrants (CBS, 2009). Knipscheer et al. (2000) state the group of Ghanaian immigrants was unknown until the plane crash in the Bijlmer, a suburb of Amsterdam (1992), which particularly affected this group of migrants. Many (illegal) Ghanaian migrants lived in, or in the surroundings of this suburb. They lost family or got homeless by this crash. In 2002, Choenni wrote a profile on the Ghanaian immigrants in the Netherlands. This study shows that Ghanaian immigrants in the Netherlands are highly concentrated, especially in Amsterdam and in The Hague. In this cities the communities are living closely together and seem to be closely related in their daily lives. The adaptation of the Ghanaian immigrants in the Netherlands is obstructed by the high unemployment rate and the problems with family reunion (Choenni 2002; Marinelli, 2005). Furthermore, due to stringent migration policies, many Ghanaians live in illegality. The group of Ghanaian migrants is a relatively young group and many do not have a legal status (Choenni, 2002; Mazzucato, 2008).

Migration into a new society brings a lot of adjustments to the normal life of migrants, the life they used to have (Mulder, 1993). Not only physical adjustments, but also adjustments in the educational area, workforce and economical situation (King, 2002; Mulder, 1993; Koopmans, 2002). This can influence the well-being of immigrants. Where their economic status, demographic and health conditions, cultural and religious identity and practice, family structure, and kin networks are altered by their move to a new country, it is possible the status of their well-being will also alter (Hao & Johnson, 2000).

Research states that the well-being of migrants is a multilevel, dynamic and value-dependent concept (Prilleltensky, 2008; Easley Allen & Easley, 2006; Maclachan, 2006). The well-being of the migrant is multileveled in that it is present in very different levels of the society, not only at individual, but also at community and society level. These levels also determine the well-being of migrants. Due to the creation of favorable and unfavorable conditions in the host country the well-being of migrants can be influenced. Also the access to resources is controlled by the norms of the host society (Prilleltensky, 2008). Werkuyten & Nekuee (1999) state that migrant groups often lack respect by the host population. The social exclusion and low acceptance may contribute to psychological problems and negative well-being of the migrants. Also, migrant groups often hold different cultural values and traditions than those of the host population. The twofold identity of the home and host society can create conflicting poses (Werkuyten & Nekuee, 1999, Mazzucato, 2008).

Research on well-being of immigrants shows how networks are beneficial for the tackling of problems in settlement, which immigrants find after their move to a new land and culture (Hagan, 1998; Guest & Stamm, 1993; Curran & Saguy, 2001). Owusu (2000) notes "it is worth investigating whether ethnic associations and networks are a help or a hindrance to the immigrants adaptation to, and economic and social well being in, the new society" (p. 1178, Owusu, 2000) on his study on Ghanaian immigrants in Canada.

1.2 Objectives and research questions

The discussion on how an immigrant should integrate, sometimes ignores the concept of well-being among the immigrants. More knowledge on the social well-being of the migrants is complementary to the adaptation process of immigrants. It is important for an immigrant to feel well in the new society, before entering the process of adaptation and integration into the new culture. To see if diverse, positive social contacts are beneficial to the well-being of Ghanaian immigrants in the Dutch society it is important to conduct more research.

Some literature has been produced on the Ghanaian migrants and some of the problems they experience with their position in the Netherlands and family reunion, but there is a lack of research on their well-being and the role of social networks in coping with the problems of well-being and eventually their happiness in the Dutch society. Where there exists much research on the large groups of immigrants in the Netherlands, the relatively small group of Ghanaian migrants has not been studied as thoroughly and also the role of the Ghanaian culture in the Dutch society could create new insights.

To get insight, the objective of this study is to obtain knowledge on the well-being of Ghanaian migrants in the Dutch society and to study whether a social network has a role in social well-being of the Ghanaian immigrants. To study the subject and to meet the objective, the following research question is formulated:

How do social networks shape the subjective social well-being of Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands?

In order to explore this question, the following sub questions are formulated. These questions specify the research question.

What are important social networks of Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands?

What is subjective social well-being to Ghanaian migrants?

What changed in social relations of Ghanaian migrants after migrating from Ghana to the Netherlands?

How does the satisfaction with social networks play a role in the subjective well-being of Ghanaian migrants?

1.3 Overview of the chapters

After the introductory chapter, in the second chapter a theoretical framework will be provided. Here, significant theories and perspectives are described, which provide a background for this study, like the Social Production Theory and the Social Network Theory. These theories are supported with literature. Chapter 3 consists of a profile of Ghana, which will elaborate on the background of Ghanaian immigrants. The fourth chapter explains the methods of data gathering and the methods to analyse the interviews and observations. Also the concepts used, the study population and the ethics of the study are described. Chapter 5 shows the results of the analysis and interpretation of the information provided in the interviews and observations. The final chapter outlines the conclusions and recommendations.

2

Theoretical framework

This chapter provides an overview of the theories, that support the background of this study. These theories are of significance by developing the framework of the study and give background to the processes described in this study. In the first paragraph some literature on well-being is presented, followed by an explanation of the Social Production Function Theory of Ormel et al. (1997). This theory defines different elements of subjective well-being and processes in the development of well-being. Next, the link between well-being and social networks is outlined by elaborating on literature. Then, the literature is linked to the Social Network theory. This theory describes the assumptions of a social network. The subsequent paragraphs describe the role of social networks related to religion, family and friends, the host population and work and their influence on social well-being. The concepts are translated into a conceptual model in the last paragraph.

2.1 Theories

Two theories are closely related to the study described. The Social Production Function theory describes the concept of subjective well-being according to a combination of psychological and economic theories and categorizes different kinds of well-being. The Social Network theory, elaborates on the social network as a basic assumption in the lives of people. Social contacts can build and shape the subjective well-being of people, as explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

2.1.1 Well-being of Ghanaian migrants

The motive for migration and the situation upon arrival in the Netherlands is stated to be of a large impact on the health and well-being of Ghanaian migrants (Knipscheer, 2000; Uniken-Venema et al, 1995). Ghanaians who migrated to the Netherlands for political reasons have a lower mental well-being than Ghanaians with other motives (Knipscheer, 2000). Overall, migrants are exposed to more potential stress factors than the native population will be exposed to. Especially the cultural change can have an effect on the mental health of immigrants (Uniken-Venema et al., 1995; Carballo & Mbou, 2005). Sellers, Ward and Pate (2006) indicate that the primary factor associated with a low well-being is change. Adapting to a new environment, culture, people and language is a great cause of depression among African immigrants in the USA. This might be due to the high expectations migrants have of their travel to another country, but also racism and discrimination plays a role in the feelings of negative well-being. Moreover social isolation is of influence on a lower status of well-being (Sellers et al., 2006; Werkuyten & Nekuee, 1999). Collective orientation, where the experiences of and with fellow migrants are shared, are important to the well-being (Werkuyten & Nekuee, 1999; Arthur, 2008).

Besides studies on the negative effects of migration on well-being, there are also studies which show the positive contribution of migration to the well-being of migrants. Stillman et al. (2009) show large positive effects of migration on mental health in New Zealand, especially for women and for individuals with low mental health. This effect is explained by the higher welfare migrants experience in the host country. When migrants are involved in a job, it also influences their psychological well-being. These migrants are able to support themselves and their family,

which is of significance to their self-esteem (Portes, 2006; Samuel & George, 2002; Shields and Wheatley Price, 2003).

Economic factors influence the well-being of Ghanaian migrants, although these are often nursed by the social factors. So can be said that the social factors exceed the economic factors in the enhancement of the well-being of migrants (Orozco, 2005; Heliwell et al., 2009). Not (only) the gain in wealth is most important to the well-being of Ghanaian migrants, but more are the social interactions they have in the host country. The Ghanaians try to influence their well-being by the acquisition of homes, the sending of money to extended families (remittances) and by the formation of hometown associations. Their sense of well-being is influenced by the help of family and a felt connection with their home country (Orozco, 2005; Mazzucato, 2008). By supporting family the Ghanaian migrants also experience much spiritual support from the people in the home country (Arhinful, 2001).

Sackey (2009) states that the role of culture, tradition and family are probably the most important to the well-being of the Ghanaian immigrant. The same result comes from studies of JeongHee Yeo (2009) and Hao and Johnson (2000), who also conclude that family-based relationships play a crucial role in the enhancement of well-being among immigrants. Also a strong, secure identity is a positive contribution to the psychological well-being of migrants. This identity is often determined by the attitudes of the immigrants and the responses of the host society (Phinney et al., 2002; Berry 1997). The maintenance of an own ethnic identity in combination with the development of a national identity is best for the mastery and self-esteem of migrants (Phinney et al., 2002).

2.1.2 Social Production Function Theory (SPF)

The nature of well-being and the sources of influence in this well-being are already an interest to scientists for some time. Many different fields of research study this subject. In an article of Diener (2000) he suggests that indicators of subjective well-being should be found to track the feeling of well-being over time. The Social Production Function Theory attempts to find indicators for subjective well-being. It assumes that people produce their own well-being and try to optimize this well-being by achieving universal needs and individual goals (Ormel et al., 1997; Ormel et al., 1999).

The sources of subjective well-being are integrated in psychological and economic theories, resulting in the Social Production Function Theory (Ormel, Lindenberg, Steverink & Verbrugge, 1999). It finds its background in discussion the theory of Maslow (1970). The critique to this theory is that it is referring to the end states, but not to the process towards the end state (Ormale et al., 1999). Still, the SPF-theory is based on the Hierarchy of Needs, the pyramid which is central in the theory of Maslow.

The SPF theory was first introduced by Lindenberg in 1986. The sources of subjective well-being provide assumptions about how people produce well-being and how they optimize their well-being (Ormel, et al., 1999). The theory states that overall well-being consists of a function of physical well-being and social well-being. Subjective well-being is then a person's perceived well-being (Ormel, et al., 1999).

Physical well-being is a combined production of stimulation and comfort. Social well-being is produced by status, behavioral confirmation and affection (Nieboer, Lindenberg, Boomsma, van Bruggen, 2005). These five dimensions could be produced by activities (e.g. sports, social activities, work) and means (e.g. money, power, autonomy, competence) (Nieboer et al., 2005, Ormel et al., 1999). Differences in these dimensions, produces differences in the feelings of well-being. Figure 2.1 explains the different functions of well-being and shortly explains their contents. In this study these functions are taken into account in the interviews with the Ghanaian migrants and indicates if they are also feasible for this group. Figure 2.1 shows the

different goals that need to be achieved to find a high level of well-being, according to the SPF-theory.

Figure 2.1 The hierarchy of social production functions. (Source: Ormel et al., 1997)

Top level	Subjective well-being				
	Physical well-being		Social well-being		
Universal goals					
First-order instrumental goals	Stimulation/ activation (optimal level of arousal)	Comfort (absence of physiological needs, pleasant and safe environment)	Status (control over scarce sources)	Behavioural confirmation (approval for doing the right things)	Affection (positive inputs from caring others)
Activities and endowments (means of production for instrumental goals)	Physical and mental activities producing arousal	Absence of pain, fatigue, thirst, hunger, vitality, good housing, appliances, social welfare, security	Occupation (lifestyle, excellence in sports or work)	Compliance with internal and external norms	Intimate ties, offering emotional support
Resources	Physical and mental effort	Food, health care, money	Education, social class, unique skills	Social skills, competence	Spouse, empathy, attractiveness

The theory distinguishes between theory of needs, goals and recourses and a theory of behaviour. The theory of needs, goals and resources shows an hierarchy of universal needs, instrumental goals and resources. The *needs* need to be fulfilled by an individual before he/she can experience any form of well-being. The behavioural theory notes that people are always trying to improve their levels of satisfaction. People are seen as *active agents* who produce their own form of well-being. When some needs are achieved and are a stable factor in the life of the individual, this will enhance the feelings of well-being. Because they have this natural tendency, people try to substitute or compensate decreasing satisfaction of one need by an increased effort to satisfy the other social needs (Steverink & Lindenberg, 2006, Ormel et al., 2009).

In the theory two different kinds of goals are specified. Universal goals (e.g. physical well-being and social well-being) are goals which are identical for all human beings. Instrumental goals are individual realizations for the means leading to universal goals (Ormal et al., 1999). Resources and constraints are important in the process of achieving the instrumental goals. Some of the personal resources that are very important to achieving goals and eventually universal goals are mental and physical health, time, energy, income, education and kin and friend ties. The lack of these resources can pull constraints on the achievement of instrumental goals (Ormel et al., 1999).

The hierarchy of Social Production Functions, as presented in Figure 2.1, will act as a starting point for this study. Where this theory indicates that status, behavioural conformation and affection are important factors in subjective well-being, this study will try to translate this to a model that fits the participants of this study.

One of the things that has a great influence on the well-being of the migrants is the existence of social networks in the host country. In the following paragraphs the relation between well-being and social networks is outlined.

2.1.3 Role of social networks in well-being of immigrants

On the role of the social networks of Ghanaian immigrants in the Netherlands and the relation to their well-being not much is known. There have been studies on the relation between social networks and well-being among other population groups (e.g. Helliwell & Putnam, 2004; Winkelmann, 2009; Morrow, 1999). Also there is research on this relation among other immigrants groups in other countries (e.g. Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006; Hagan, 1998; Yip et al., 2007). These studies elaborate on different roles social networks can serve in the well-being of immigrants. Studies elaborate on positive as well as negative effects of social networks on the well-being of their users.

Social networks can be beneficial for the feelings of well-being, in that they create a sense of identity and create self esteem in the process of social change in the new society (Jasinskaja-Lahti, et al., 2006; Morrow, 1999; Diener, Suh and Oishi, 1997). Greenblatt et al. (1982) point out that the social ties of a person are supportive in meeting this first needs, which includes the need of feeling loved. The social contacts are the ones a person can talk to and give an opportunity to give affection and receive it from others. It can then also be defined as a sense of belongingness (Greenblatt et al., 1982). The role of belonging to a community, gives members a freedom to express their identity and roots, their emotions and shared history within a trusted environment. They can experience a sense of being valuable within a community, and relate positively to others who have similar histories and experiences. Also it can contribute to the well-being on community level (Pretty, et al., 2007; Antoci, Sacco & Vanin, 2001; Helliwell, Barrington-Leigh, Harris and Huang, 2009). Especially for women the existence of a social milieu is experienced as an aid to the social security and adjustment (Donkor, 2005).

Moreover, family brings emotional support, for Mexican immigrant women in the United States of America. An analysis indicates that lack of social networks and income are the two best predictors of depression for Mexican immigrant women (Vega, Kolody, Valle & Weir, 1991; Hovey & Magana, 2000).

The study of Syed et al. (2006) suggests that frequent interactions between immigrants and the *host* society have a positive influence on the mental health of immigrants. The active involvement gives a sense of empowerment, as the immigrants can meet their own needs, instead of the powerlessness they feel when there is no social contact with people of the host society (Syed et al., 2006; Safi, 2009; Jasinskaja-Lahti, et al., 2006; Yip et al., 2007). Social support and self-esteem, created with help of the host society, are important factors of mental health among ethnic minorities in a society (Oppedal, Roysamb & Lackland, 2004; Safi, 2009).

Among the Somali migrants in Australia, the social networks are found to be restricting the Somalis to settle down in the society. This is because the social contacts of the Somali migrants are only based on the relationship with other immigrants. This especially effects the well-being of the Somali women in Australia. The Somali women feel displaced in the society of Australia (McMicheal & Manderson, 2004). Still, most migrants perceive their social capital, which is often measured by strength of family, neighbourhood, religious and community ties, to determine both physical health and subjective well-being (Helliwell et al., 2009). These ties can exist independently from each other and often provide trust and happiness (Helliwell et al., 2009).

2.2 Social network theory

The social network theory is highly relevant in this study to the Ghanaian immigrants and their social networks. The social networks of migrants seem to be of rich influence in the well-being of Ghanaian migrants. Within their social networks they find family and friends and a help in adjusting to the new society (Gelderblom & Adams, 2006). Also within these social networks they might find support from their native culture as well as find manners to cope with the new culture they are now in (Elison & George, 1994; Safi, 2009).

The social network as a key concept in the social science has been growing exponentially in the last two decades; the concepts and measures of this theory are being used in research on a regular basis (Knoke & Yang, 2008). The theory on social networks emphasizes social relations as a basic assumption, in where social structures exist of 'a regularity in patterns of relations, within a concrete unit' (Knoke & Yang, 2008; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The simplest network is one between two persons with one relationship that links them. These so-called ego-centric networks are connections with a single individual, like close friends (Kadushin, 2004). This study will focus on the individual networks of the Ghanaian migrants, the ego-centric networks. These can explain the meaning of the close social ties in the direct environment of the participant and also elaborate on the larger segment of weak social ties.

The individuals that shape the network are connected in various ways. These connections determine the content of the relationships and the structure of the network. The patterns and implications of these relationships impact the behavior of individuals within the network as well as the functioning of the group as a whole (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The units are connected in a social network through different types of dependency, like values, opinion, friendship, trade, etc. (Carrington, Scott & Wasserman, 2005). The links can be intimate or non-intimate and routine or non-routine. This distinguishes friendship and family from coworkers and other vague relations in a network (DeGenne & Forsé, 1999). Relational ties among people are primary in the structures of social networks (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The concept of a network stresses the fact that each person has ties to other individuals. Each of these individuals are again linked to others (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). By analyzing a social network, one can study the impact of this structure on the functioning of a group and the influence of this structure on the individuals in the group (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

Massey et al. (2005) explained that the social ties, created in a social network are important to migrants. Migrant networks are 'interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin' (Massey et al., 2005, p.448). The existence of social network theory, increased the attention to social networks among migrants. The networks increase the chances on international migration, because they lower the risks and costs and increase the net return migration, according to the network theory (Massey et al., 2005). When the network reaches a certain extent, the expansion of networks reduces the negative elements of movement, like costs and risks (Massey et al., 2005). This shows that the probability of movement will increase, which creates a cycle of more movement and further expanding networks, etc. (Massey et al., 2005). Berry (1997) as well as Hagan (1998) support the assumption that not only social network with the immigrants within a country are important, but also social networks with members of the native population should be built. The general idea behind research in social networks among migrants is that the existence of a social network in a host country is important for many of the immigrant groups (Hagan, 1998; Kou, 2008; Guest & Stamm, 1993). In a review on literature on social networks Ebaugh and Curry (2000) argue that social networks serve several functions and have effects on educational achievement, income, entry into

organizations, potential for career achievement, where to migrate and return migration. Also kin as social ties and ties with the home country and settlement experiences in the housing and labour market are influenced by social networks.

2.3 Well-being and religious networks

The religious institution is seen as one of the cultural institutions that is of significance in different stages of the migration process (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003; Van Dijk, 1997). Sharing of belief leads to the gathering of immigrants in religious institutions in their host country. Under the Ghanaian immigrants there are Muslims and Christians, but the Christian belief is more practiced among the Ghanaian migrants. The studies used here are based on experiences among Christian immigrants.

In the decision to migrate as well as in the settlement in the host country, shared religious activities are important. The religious belief of the migrants is also shaped by the migration process and the migrants' trust in a God may become stronger or weaker throughout this journey (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Religion is important in the lives of several immigrant groups, in times of hardship, but also in the celebration of life. This is part of the culture of many African populations, and is indispensable to their lives (Hagan & Ebaugh, 2003). The religion is also incorporated in other parts of the people's lives, like their economic and political behaviour (Moham & Zack-Williams, 2002). The church is an alternative place of belonging, which the immigrants sometimes are not able to find in the new country. It is of large influence in creating a new identity and also preserving the old identity towards religion in the home country (Levitt, 2003). Many of the Ghanaian immigrants go to congregations with other migrants and find their culture in the sharing of their beliefs with other (mostly African) migrants (Van Dijk, 1997). The church among the African migrants continues to act both as a contributor in the socializing process of the new migrants to their new environment, as well as in maintaining contact with home (Moham & Zack-Williams, 2002; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). The religious ties often cross boundaries and become transnational (Leonard et al., 2005)

The church is the place where people share fundamental characteristics, like being religious and being a migrant. When people are joining a community and are embedded in a social network, it often feels like their status changes from *outsider* to *insider* (Arnts, 2005). This social framework and the experiences in the church are of crucial importance to the well-being of these migrants (Arnts, 2005; Levitt, 2003). It offers psychological support, trust and acceptance, which again reinforces the extension of social capital (Foley & Hoge, 2007). Especially the smaller groups, as bible study and prayer groups can provide immigrants with small intimate social relations (Foley & Hoge, 2007).

In the help that churches offer to migrants there is often a distinction between the formal help and the informal help of social networks (Arnts, 2005). For example, the original Ghanaian Pentecostalism has spread to the western countries, as it looks like they followed the flow of immigrants and try to give them the comfort of a recognizable religion in the host country. This influences the empowerment and arrogation of the immigrants in taking up residence in the host society (Van Dijk, 1997). Within these religious networks the church community is actively involved in the lives of the migrants. The church can help in arranging the required papers for the stay in the host country, state lawful weddings and visit police station and prisons, to look for immigrants that need support. Also the leaders of the church try to seek for engagement of members of the host society in their churches. Still, most of the leaders say they fail to achieve this ideal of a 'multicultural church' (Van Dijk, 1997; Arnts, 2005). Friction between the non-religious and religious groups has increased over the years. But in the debate on migrants and religion the Christian migrants are often overlooked. This is something that the leaders of the migrant congregations try to overcome (Van Dijk, 1997). Next to these formal roles of the

church and providence of food, clothes and shelter, the church offers emotional assistance. The church is consciously increasing their networks, to position themselves in the lives of migrants (Arnts, 2005).

2.4 Well-being and family and kinship networks

As with religious networks, family and kinship networks are used in different stages of the migration process. As said before, most studies conclude the family networks are included in the decision to migrate, but are also important as social support in the host country (Choenni, 2002; Donkor, 2005).

The social relations a migrant develops in the host country are dependent on many processes (Menjivar, 1997). The kinship networks are often shaped by the broader context, which immigrants encounter in the new environment and by the socio-cultural characteristics of the migrant group. The way the receiving end of the migration process is organized influences the relationships that will originate (Menjivar, 1997; Winters et al, 2001). In some host countries the own cultural characteristics can only be sustained when the conditions in the new society permit this. The bonds between groups may differ due to poverty, a poor immigrant community and politically weak ties. When the material and physical conditions in the new society allow it, kinship and family relations can be sustained. In immigrant groups where the relations are based on mutuality and reciprocity, it is important to be in touch with family and friends in the host country. This increases the feeling of home and gives a comfortable feeling to the immigrants (Menjivar, 1997).

As reported in different studies, friends and family can be especially important in physical and emotional support and familiar lifestyles (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007; Winters et al., 2007). This makes it easier for a migrant to settle. Without fellow migrants, with the same characteristics, this settlement may take longer.

Significant interaction effects are found by Oppedal et al. (2004) between family support and positive effects on identity crisis and mental health.

In African immigrant groups the care for the extended family is a norm embedded in their culture, also in the new country (McAdoo, Younge & Getahun, 2007). It is not very likely this cultural norm will be replaced when members of the networks will become more established in the host society. The extended kinship not only exists of parents and children, but also siblings, aunts, uncles and also fictive kin (McAdoo et al., 2007). The values, norms and beliefs are passed on through family, church and community relations, also in the new society.

When immigrants are in a disadvantaged status in the host society and experience discrimination and poverty, kin networks are important in the social and economic resources of the community. Ritual kin systems practice social control over the kinship system. They look after the kinships and family network in following the norms, incorporated in the culture of the immigrants (Ebaugh & Curry, 2000). Still, the solidarity of the Ghanaian family has two sides. The immigrants are likely to always be together, and will find support with his/her family, but also experience competition and frustration. There can be constant bargaining between the migrant and members of the family (Riccio, 2008).

2.5 Well-being and (social contacts at) work

Immigrants often use their social networks to find a job. The information about available jobs is passed through the social networks. In some cases a job is already arranged when immigrants enter the host country, but most immigrants have great difficulty in finding a (legal) job (Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008).

Having a job does not only provide immigrants with income, but also with status and a new identity. Also a job establishes new relationships with colleagues (Antonioni & Dalla, 2009). But

having a job can also display another side of new life in the host society. The working conditions in a low paid job can have an influence on the workers' health. But also discrimination at work can influence the migrants work ethic (Antoniou & Dalla, 2009). Discrimination can be addressed as a (health) risk factor within the immigrants' working environment, especially for those immigrants at greater risk from social exclusion and marginalization (Agudelo-Suarez et al., 2009). Immigrants in Spain (among others African migrants) reported discrimination on the work floor and poor relations with colleagues. They experienced racism, mistreatment and worse working conditions than that of the native workers (Agudelo-Suarez et al., 2009). This influenced the mental as well as physical health of the migrant workers. Difficulties at the work floor can again be supported by social networks outside the job. The help of family and friends can help a migrant in looking for another job or support the migrant to continue at the job despite the difficulties (Wong & Leung, 2008). Due to experiences of job-instability among migrants the workers fail to establish strong ties to their co-workers and the workplace. The poor relationships with colleagues and the supervisors also make it difficult to manage the institutional regulations on the work floor. This can have an effect on problems outside the workplace (Crutchfield, Matsueda & Drakulich, 2006). While most migrants do find their job through their social networks, there is evidence they do not develop new social ties at the work-floor.

Another way of earning an income is to become self-employed. There is a group of immigrants who start their own business in the host country and hire employees from within the community of fellow migrants. Often a business in food or clothing with a religious or other meaning are started within the community (Basu, 1998; Clark & Drinkwater, 2000). These businesses strengthen the community identity and also provide job opportunities for fellow migrants. Employing a co-ethnic migrant is favorable, because the employee speaks the same language and knows the traditions (Clark & Drinkwater, 2000). Still, the situation for employees from the same community is complicated, because of informal loan arrangements which are often made between the owner of the business and the employee. The rights of the employee are often not formally transcribed (Basu, 1998; Iyer & Shapiro, 1999). Also it is difficult for an employee to step out of the job, because of the close community which surrounds the businesses and the low chance of getting another job (Iyer & Shapiro, 1999, Gold, 1994). The economic well-being is shared by other people, like family members or close friends. The income and position of one person may influence the status and income of others as well. The sense of status is then obtained by the position of the individual with regard to his/her social ties (Kalmijn, 1998).

2.6 Well-being and social networks between migrants and host population

The way an individual behaves when s/he moves from one cultural context to another, cannot be predicted. They might change their way of behaving, but they can also continue her/his way of living as they did in the previous setting (Berry, 1997). The chance that immigrants are getting acquainted with the host population is dependent on several issues. The migrants can develop *cultural distance* towards their new society and also the host population can be hostile towards the immigrants (Berry, 1997; Vergunst, 2009). It is quite dependent on the person, whether he/she develops personal contact with natives. Some experience links to their own culture as a situation with lower stress, for other migrants contact with the host population is helpful. Some studies show evidence that contact with both groups (other migrants and inhabitants of the host society) are most helpful in the settlement in the new situation (Berry, 1997; Owusu, 2000). Van den Reek and Hussein (2003) show that Somali migrants choose for their traditional habits in the domains of identity, partner choice, raising of children and traditions. Migrants choose for the options of their host country in language, news and

developments and education. In public domains the migrants are often more influenced by the host society (Van den Reek & Hussein, 2003; Luque, Fernandez & Tejada, 2006). Owusu (2000) states that migrants are often focused on their ethnic identity, through membership and participation in ethnic organizations, in the early stages after their migration, but that their focus on ethnic associations can diminish and change after some time in the host country. Often migrants focus more on the host relations after a period of time (Owusu, 2000). Vergunst (2009) argues that the social interaction between communities-of-place and migrants is often problematic due to differences in institutions for social behaviour. It is dependent on individuals whether they hold on to their institutions or that they produce different relationships with others. Still, institutions will be changed in one way or another, by the involvement of migrants in the host society (Vergunst, 2009; Van Oudenhoven, Ward & Masgoret, 2006).

Some studies show a positive effect of host support networks on the immigrants. It is of help in situations of racism and has a advantageous influence on the well-being of migrants. The host networks help them understand the norms and values of the host society and help them understand the behaviour of people. Also they gain understanding on the policies for immigrants in the new country (Jasinskaja-Lathi et al., 2006; Luque et al., 2006). Still, migrants keep separate behavioural norms for family relations and relations with members of the host society.

Not only the immigrants influence their contacts with the host population, the host society also has a role in the contacts they are willing to have with immigrants. When the host population has indications migrants are not willing to be part of the culture of the host society, the host population can develop hostile behaviour towards immigrants. Intercultural relations are difficult to establish in these societies (Van Oudenhoven et al., 2006; Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000). Members of the host society often prefer assimilation, which means immigrants should abandon their cultural differences. It also seems the assimilation process eventually increases the life satisfaction of immigrants. They are less discriminated against and it reduces psychological pain inherent to the migration experience (Safi, 2009).

A study on African immigrants in the Netherlands immigrants indicates that they did develop social contacts with the Dutch population and exemplified these relationships to be valuable to their lives (Van Heelsum, 2006). Still, the African immigrants do experience cultural differences. The Africans are more community oriented as the Dutch are. Their social networks with the Dutch are important to understand some of these differences and to learn from each other (Van Heelsum, 2006; Kuo & Tsai, 1986).

2.7 Well-being and illegal status of migrants

Illegal status can have a profound influence on the lives of the migrants. It creates barriers to the freedom of movement of the migrants and also to their well-being (Paspalanova, 2005). People often migrate illegally because of the adventure of this travel and the money they can encounter in illegal work spheres (Aroian, 1993). Some of the problems that arise to illegal migrants are difficulties in finding (legal) work, uncertainty about the future, vulnerability and fear of being found and banished out of the host country. These all affect the well-being of the migrant (Aroian, 1993). Also the social well-being of the migrants is influenced, as they cannot join activities within their social networks and are also not able to return home or have much contact with friends and family in the country of origin. The risks of being discovered are too high (Aroian, 1993).

Not only does illegal migration create barriers in economical and social well-being, also it addresses problems in health. For illegal migrants it is difficult to reach out to health services. The cost, the language barrier and the danger of reporting of their illegal status to official

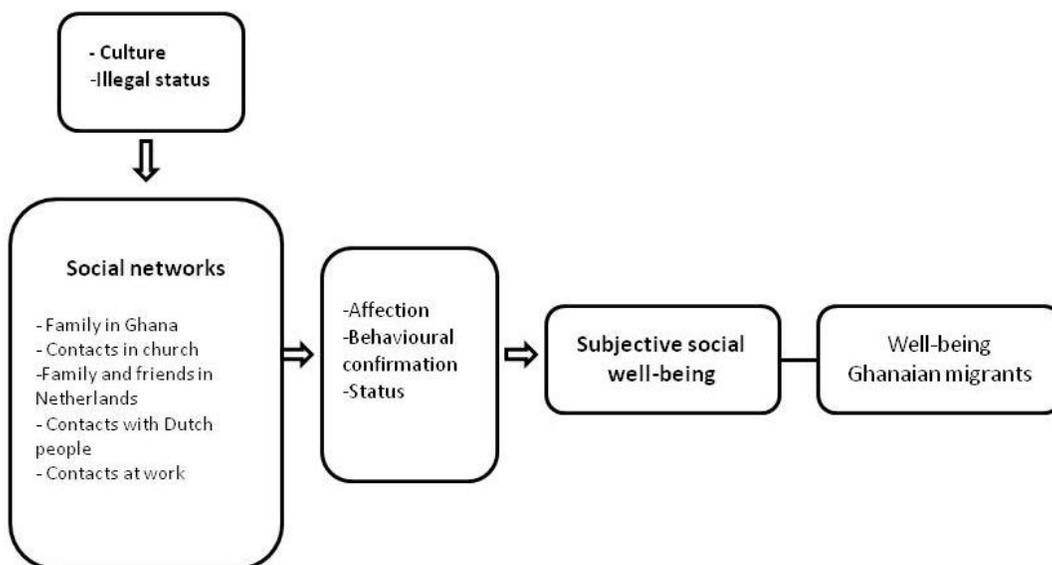
authorities, halts migrants to visit doctors or other forms of health services (Ruiz-Beltran & Kamau, 2001). By waiting to attend a doctor, a migrants' health can become a serious issue. Illegal migrants often do not have much social contacts among the members of the host population, because they are not out in the open society and try to secure their identity (Paspalanova, 2005). These migrants often find their social networks and support system among fellow migrants (often family members) and in church. Church also creates a social support system, in where information on job possibilities and accommodation and the latest news from the home country is spread (Paspalanova, 2005). Because of these social networks, illegal migration is still in existence. It helps illegal migrants decide to migrate to a certain country (Paspalanova, 2005).

2.8 Conceptual model

The conceptual model is based on the literature and theories described in this chapter. It concentrates on the subjective social well-being of Ghanaian immigrants and the processes that play a role in this well-being, like social networks. This study is done on micro level, which indicates the study covers the individual experiences of people.

Social networks and subjective well-being are the macro concepts, which are studied on micro level in this study. The social networks are defined according to what the literature presents to be the most important social networks to (African) immigrants. These social networks can trigger positive contributions to the social well-being of the migrants. In the conceptual model, the concepts which are influenced by the social networks are related to the Social Production Function. The concepts Status, behavioural confirmation and affection are parts of social well-being according to the SPF-theory. Culture and illegal status are related to the social networks the Ghanaian migrants create and effect the well-being of the migrants. Culture shows to be of main importance at the entry of the host country, as it also derives from the original background of the migrants. Illegal status is an element that relates to the social networks and the social well-being of the migrant, during the process of migrant settlement. The perceived role of social networks in the well-being of the Ghanaian migrants is the main relation studied in this research. The relations are shown in the figure below.

Figure 2.2 Conceptual model



2.9 Conclusion

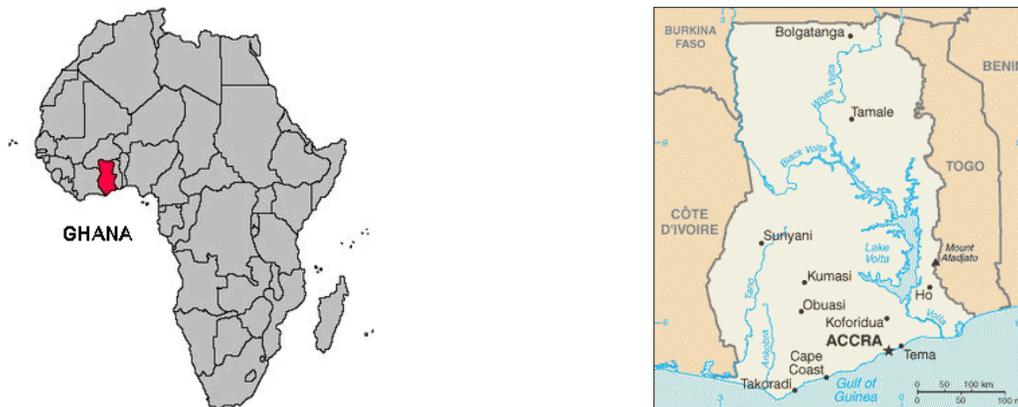
This chapter gave an impression of the theories and literature found on the basic themes in this study. The SPF theory and the theory of social networks are linked to this study. When entering the host country, migrants often need to seek for a new balance. Their self confidence and identity needs be readjusted to the new situation. The processes which can enhance or decrease the well-being of the migrants, can be supported by social networks. Social networks can help in developing a new identity and make migrants feel more comfortable. Together they can share and experience the new society. Also fellow migrants can help in housing and work. Contacts in church are also valuable to migrants. Literature indicates that the church is a reminder of the original society of migrants and can also help them in feeling comfortable. The church offers a familiar environment to migrants. Social contacts with the host society can be built and help in integrating into the society. Social contacts at work do not play a large role in the lives of migrants, according to the literature, because it is often incorporated with discrimination and a difference in work ethic. By working in a co-ethnic working environment can also be difficult, because it can relate too much to the informal network. This can create problems, when rights and duties are not formally arranged. Migrants seem to built on networks from church, the Ghanaian community and strong relations with their family, who remained in Ghana. When being in a country illegal, the social networks with other migrants and in church are very important to live a comfortable life in the host country.

3

Profile on Ghana and Ghanaian migrants

The West-African country Ghana is situated at the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. At the west the country borders on Ivory Coast, to the north on Burkina Faso and on the eastern border is Togo. Ghana consists of 238.000 square kilometers. The population accounts for 23,89 million people (CountryStat Ghana, 2010). The capital of the country, Accra, has a population of 1.6 million inhabitants (CountryStat Ghana, 2010).

Figure 3.1 Maps Africa and Ghana.



3.1 Demography

The annual growth rate of the country is 1.882 %. This growth rate has gone down in the past years. This is mostly due to the starting decline of fertility rate. The total fertility rate in Ghana is now 3.52 children born per woman. The birth rate is 28.58 per 1000 of the population. The death rate is 9.24 deaths per 1000 of the population, with a life expectancy of 59.85 years. The life expectancy is slightly higher for females (60.75 years) than for males (58.98 years). The average age of the population is 20.7 years (World Fact book, 2009). The country has a negative migration rate of -0.53 migrants per 1000 of the population.

The death rate is profoundly influenced by the problem of HIV-AIDS. The official number of people living with HIV-AIDS is 260,000. With this number of people living with HIV-AIDS in the country, Ghana is ranked place 27 in the list of countries with people living with HIV-AIDS. There is still a high risk of infectious diseases in the country (World fact book, 2009).

3.2 Economics

Ghana is one of the fastest growing economies in Africa, with an economic growth of 4 to 5 percent per year. The Ghanaian economy is profoundly based on forestry and agriculture as the most important sources of income. The Ghanaians are especially farmers and traders of authentic handwork, clothes and fruit and vegetables (Choenni, 2002). Ghana has an unemployment rate of 11 percent (rank 123 on the list of unemployment rates in the world). The reduction in export of cacao has increased the unemployment rate in the past years. The GDP per capita is now \$ 1,500. A 2005 estimate of the labour force occupation in Ghana shows the following percentages: agriculture 56%, industry 15% and services 29% (World Fact Book,

2009). The financial means from Ghanaian migrants overseas are an important source of income to the economy of Ghana. The estimated income from remittances was about \$1.9 billion in 2008 (Bureau of African affairs, 2010).

3.3 Politics

From 1874 until 1957 Ghana was a British colony. Ghana was the first Sub-saharan country to recover independence. The country is now ruled by a democratically chosen president. Since January 2009 this president is John Atta-Mills, member of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). In 1992 the country has approved on a democratic constitution, through a referendum. The president is chosen every four years by the electorate, for a maximum of two terms of office (Choenni, 2002).

3.4 Culture

Next to Christianity (42 percent) and the Islam (30 percent), the local religions in Ghana have many followers (28 percent). The culture of rituals at birth and death are still very profound. Also the historical family structures are still intact. There is no large tension between the different religions (Choenni, 2002).

Despite the diversity of ethnic groups, the government succeeded in creating one nation, with much attention to the development of one Ghanaian identity. Also the literacy level of the country is better, compared to other African countries. The male literacy is 76.5 percent and for females 56.5 percent (World fact book, 2009).

3.5 Ghanaian migrants

African migrants are increasingly migrating to the Netherlands. The groups of immigrants entering the Netherlands before were guestworkers and people from the former Dutch colonies. The migrants entering the country now, including the Ghanaian, experience a different context and other dynamics than the former migrant groups (Mazzucato, 2008). A legal status is not self-evident for immigrants and they are confronted with a state that is not very hospitable to migrants. Dutch politicians often think migrants are oriented towards their home country and do not invest much in the Dutch economy and society (Mazzucato, 2008).

Two phases can be perceived in the migration of Ghanaians to the Netherlands. The first phase was from 1974-1983. This phase started by the oil crises. A large part of the migrants were economic migrants, a small part political migrants. Most of the Ghanaians wanted to go to Great Britain, as the former colonizer of the country. When Great Britain intensified its rules on migration, many of the migrants entered the Netherlands instead. Many of the illegal migrants, had the advantage of the 'generaal pardon' of 1975, which provided all immigrants with a residence permit (Tichelman, 1996; Choenni, 2002). The second flow of immigrants from Ghana entered the Netherlands at the end of the 1980s. This was related to the extreme drought in Ghana, the political instability and the banishing of Ghanaians out of Nigeria. Where the first flow of migrants into the Netherlands was quiet, this second flow was under discussion for illegality and criminality. The group became more visible in the Dutch society (Choenni, 2002).

For the recent flow of Ghanaian migrants the economic wealth of Europe is still the main reason to migrate. The migrants are looking for employment, education and training. Not only low educated migrants but also highly qualified migrants travel to Europe, because of a lack of job satisfaction in Ghana, the poor salary and lack of motivation (Anarfi et al., 2003).

The Ghanaian migrants are especially settled in the large cities in the west of the Netherlands. Many migrants are localized in Amsterdam and The Hague (Tichelman, 1996).

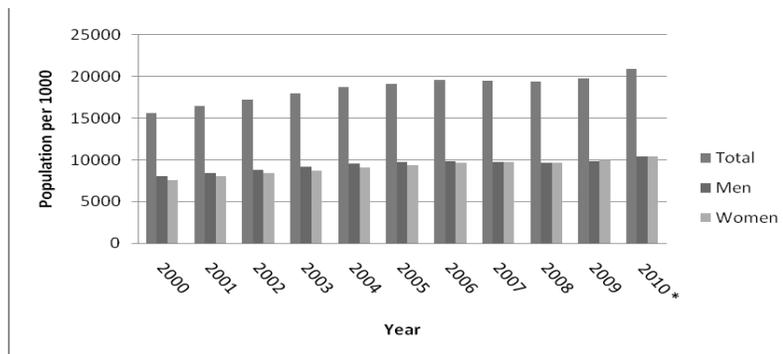
As a part of economic reasons, many Ghanaian migrants also migrated to Europe for the better education in this part of the world. The introduction of compulsory education has been an

important factor in the process of migration to other countries. Everyone learns English, which improves the chances of migration even more. Also the work force did not grow hard enough, to keep up with the increasing educational level of the migrants. This encouraged a *brain drain* in Ghana (Kraan, 2001). The growing community of Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands also encouraged migrants to come to the Netherlands, for family reunification and family formation (Kraan, 2001). Still, many of the Ghanaian migrants have an illegal status in the Netherlands (Van Dijk, 1997; Kraan, 2001).

To understand the Ghanaian settlement in foreign countries, first the reasons to migrate from Ghana are described. The settlement of Ghanaian migrants abroad has its background in the home country.

In general, Ghanaians are known for their mobility. It is one of the most mobile populations of Central and Sub-Saharan Africa, next to Nigerian and Cameroon migrants (Fleischer, 2006; Choenni, 2002). Where the size of some of the other African migrant groups is decreasing, the number of Ghanaian migrants has been increasing in the last ten years. Per January 1, 2008 the Ghanaian immigrant group in the Netherlands accounted for 19.346 persons. In 1996 this was 12.480 (CBS, 2009).

Figure 3.2 Ghanaian in the Netherlands, 2000-2010* (Source: CBS 2010)



Ghanaians' most important problems in the Netherlands are the language, their socio-economic status, the legal position and discrimination. The solutions for these problems are related to the Dutch government as well as to the Ghanaian community itself (Kraan, 2001).

The extended family of the Ghanaians is of great importance in the decision to migrate. As in other African societies, family is of significant value to the social identity of the Ghanaians (Kraan, 2001; Rose, 2003). The family network and bonds of Ghanaian families are based on blood, marriage and adoption (Arthur, 2008). Intertwined with this importance of the concept community or family, Ghanaian migration is a decision made within the community. The decision to migrate and the process to actually migrate is experienced by the whole extended family (Kraan, 2001; Fleischer, 2006). These networks may enhance or limit the chances of a family member migrating to western countries. The migration is seen as a family affair and the bonds with family members abroad are kept (Arthur, 2008). Where the migrant is dependent on the psychological and spiritual support of the family in Ghana, the extended family is the main receiver of the money earned by a migrant, when everything goes well. Also it is very important that a migrant paves the way for family members to follow in the migratory process (Arthur, 2008).

Next to their role in the decision to migrate, the presence of extended family or community members in the foreign country is also of importance in the decision to migrate. The existing social networks in the destination country makes the decision to migrate easier (Donkor, 2005;

Henry & Mohan, 2003; Owusu, 2000). They inform the future migrants on the (job and housing-) opportunities, that are available. This creates a safe situation to travel to a host country. The initial search to a job and accommodation are already done by fellow migrants in the country where the migrants travel to (Adepoju, 1995). The improvement of communication and transportation infrastructure also enhances chain migration (Adepoju, 1995).

4

Methods

This chapter describes the concepts applied to the study and the methods used. This study will be set out in a combination of methods. Qualitative interviews as well as observation methods will be used to study how social networks shape the subjective well-being of Ghanaian migrants. In the first paragraph the definitions of the concepts used in this study are described. In the next paragraph process of operationalisation is outlined. In paragraph 4.3 the participants of this study are portrayed. The following paragraphs indicate how the data are collected and how these data are analyzed. The Chapter is concluded by the personal thoughts of the researcher on the process of the research.

4.1 Definition of concepts

The construction of a theory will be based on the following concepts:

Immigrant: 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).

Subjective well being: A person is said to have high subjective well being if she or he experiences life satisfaction and frequent joy, and only infrequently experiences unpleasant emotions such as sadness or anger. Contrariwise, a person is said to have low subjective well being if she or he is dissatisfied with life, experiences little joy and affection and frequently feels negative emotions such as anger or anxiety (Diener et al., 1997, p. 25).

Status: feelings of distinction in valued aspects, like skills, education and health (Nieboer et al., 2005, p. 317).

Behavioural confirmation: feelings of belonging and doing things right (Nieboer et al., 2005, p. 317).

Affection: feeling of being loved by oneself and others (Nieboer et al., 2005, p. 317).

Social network: a social structure of individuals that are tied by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friendship or kinship (Wasserman & Faust, 1999).

Perceived quality of social networks: the degree to which respondents feel close affective bonds with friends and family members (Ellison & George, 1994, p. 52)

Culture: as a shared set of basic assumptions and values, with resultant behavioural norms, attitudes and beliefs which manifest themselves in systems and institutions as well as behavioural patterns and non-behavioural items (Dahl, 2004, p.6).

Illegal status: All foreigners who stay in the Netherlands without a legitimate residence permit, regardless they entered the country legal or illegal and regardless they accomplish a job (Hoogteijling, 2002, p.3)

4.2 Operationalisation

Operationalisation is not that clearly defined in qualitative research. For the specification in the interviews the concepts are used. It is important to have a definition of these concepts (Babbie, 2006). The concepts are used to provide direction to the interviews held with the Ghanaian immigrants. To make an operationalisation of well-being the classification of social well-being of the SPF theory can be used. Here, well being is outlined in the topics *status, behavioural confirmation and affection*.

In the process of the operationalisation of well-being it is important to keep in mind the differences in hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. These derive a different focus on well-being. The hedonic view is centered to maximize the pleasure and happiness in one's life. According to hedonic psychologists the well-being is subjective happiness and includes all judgments of the good and bad elements in the participants life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Diener (1994) describes the hedonic component of subjective well-being as 'the presence of ongoing pleasant affect (due to positive appraisals of ongoing events) much of the time and infrequent unpleasant affect (resulting from few negative appraisals)' (p.107). Also, researchers use the eudaimonic view . Here, the focal point is well-being as a life in accordance with the true self. Eudaimonic well-being indicates that well-being is related to personal growth and development (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Both views can be incorporated in this study. To give a broad image of the well-being of the participants the hedonic as well as the eudaimonic component is discussed. Also there are broader as well as narrow categories of subjective well-being. The broader categories focus on more global themes in the life of participants, in the narrow categories is asked for specific constructs that can make a person happy (Diener, 1994).

The operationalisation of the concepts is based on concepts used by Van Bruggen (2001) in her dissertation on an exploration of the qualitative approach of the SPF theory. Furthermore operationalisation of the concepts is derived from the literature used in the theoretical framework.

Operationalisation social networks:

- How was your relationship with your family members, when you lived in Ghana?
- Can you tell me about the relationship with your family members, since you are in the Netherlands?
- In what ways has your partner/ home in the Netherlands made things easier in the Netherlands?
- Can you tell me about your children? (What role do they play in your life?)
- How do you use your leisure time? (What? (reading, sports, music, clubs),with whom?, where?, why?, how often?)
- Where do you meet new friends?
- Can you tell me about your social contacts in daily life? (whom, where do know each other, how often)
- Can you tell me something about the Ghanaian community in the Netherlands?
- Do you feel part of such a community? (in what way?)
- When you came to the Netherlands, did you have any contacts with Dutch people? (why (not)? Who? Where did you meet?)
- Do you have any Dutch contacts at this moment? (why (not)? Who?)

- Where do you meet these people?
- What people do you meet at the church?
- What activities do you do together?
- How do you get along with your colleagues?
- How do you perceive the time lived in the Netherlands with regard to making new friends?

Operationalisation well-being

Status:

- How do you support your family in Ghana?
- Why do you support your family in Ghana?
- Are there things you do in order to get respect of these friends? (what?)
- Do you think you can use your skills fully in your work in the Netherlands? (why (not?))
- What aspirations do you still have in your labour career?
- What is important to you in work?
- What things are you proud of in your work/ the work you used to do?
- How do you distinguish yourself from others?

Behavioural confirmation:

- How do you support your family in Ghana?
- Why do you support your family in Ghana?
- Do you consider it important to still feel like a part of the Ghanaian society? Why (not)?
- Are there things you do to get appreciation of your family and friends? (what?)
- Do you consider it important to feel like a part of a family in the Netherlands? Why (not)?
- Do you consider it important to be part of a community? (how? Why?)
- How do you contribute to this community? (in what way?)
- How do you contribute to the church life? (in what way?)

Affection:

- How important is this home to you? Why?
- Do you feel appreciated by your wife/husband and children? In what way?
- What do you feel you can bring to a friendship? (what makes you a good friend?)
- Do you consider it important to have the contacts with the Dutch people?
- Are there any problems you encounter in your contacts with Dutch people?
- Do you feel appreciated by the Dutch people?
- What does it mean to you now (religion)?
- How do you feel when you are worshipping?
- Do you feel appreciated in church? (why (not)? in what way?)
- How do you get along with your colleagues?

Well-being:

- What would you say is 'quality of life'? What is it to you?
- Please describe the things you are satisfied with in your life.
- Tell me about things you like in your life.
- Please describe the things you are dissatisfied with in your life.
- Tell me about things you dislike in your life.
- What things are you proud of? (What, why?)

- How do you feel about your life at this time in your life?

Perceived quality social networks and well-being:

- You told me you live with... how do you feel about living with...?
- How do you feel when you are around your family and children?
- Tell me how you feel during the company of your friends
- Can you tell me what contact with Dutch people means to you?
- Can you tell me how you feel in contacts with people from church?
- How do you feel when you are around colleagues?
- What do social contacts mean to you?
- How do social contacts influence your life?

4.3 Participants

4.3.1 Selection of participants

Data were collected from Ghanaian migrants, female as well as males. Furthermore the Ghanaian migrants had to live in the Netherlands for at least a year.

The study included 17 participants, to provide the researcher with enough detailed information on the subject. The content of the interviews was most important, for the completeness of the study, not as much the number of respondents. To determine the completeness of the information, the study was based on the concept of *theoretical saturation*; it is this moment that new data no longer bring new theoretical insights and also do not reveal new properties of the main topics of the interview (Wiener, 2007).

The participants were identified through snowball sampling. First, a few respondents were approached (e.g. through contact with contacts of friends and family), after which more respondents were identified through links with these immigrants (so called snowball sampling). This means that through the participants that are already in the sample, new respondents are recruited. It was important to search for participants that are not immediately related to the same social network. This was accomplished by approaching different associations for Ghanaian immigrants. Although the majority of the Ghanaians live in Amsterdam and the Hague, only a few of the participants came from these cities. The connections of family and friends of the researcher, who were used for the initial contacts, were not based in Amsterdam and The Hague and so especially social networks in other parts of the Netherlands were explored. By exploring also other parts of the Netherlands a variety of stories could be included in the study. That these stories did not include one from The Hague, is more coincidence than purpose.

As the researcher was not familiar with the Ghanaian in the Netherlands, the first contacts with the Ghanaian migrant population were made through connections of family and friends. By sending an email to friends, family and other connections, who might be familiar with African migrants, the initial contacts were made. Also the researcher left messages on social network sites of Ghanaian communities at Facebook and Hyves and contact was set up with some migrant organizations.

4.3.2 Description of participants

The data were collected from 17 interviews that were done among Ghanaian migrants. The average age of the respondents is 34 years, although one of the respondents did not give her age. Among the respondents were five female and 12 were male. Table 4.1 shows an age and sex distribution of the respondents. The respondents lived in the Netherlands on an average of 8.3 years, ranging from one year to 20 years. There were seven participants who did not have a partner, ten of the participants were married. Of these married participants, 5 had a Dutch partner, 3 were married to a Ghanaian and the other partners came from England and Ivory

Coast. All respondents were living in a city. One was from one of the major cities in the Netherlands, sixteen of the respondents reside in cities that have between the 100.000 and 200.000 inhabitants.

Table 4.1 Distribution of the respondents by age and sex

Sex	Age group						
	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50
Females	1	0	0	2	2	0	0
Males	0	1	1	3	4	1	1
Total	1	1	1	5	6	1	1

Also two interviews were done with key-informants. These were the priest of a church and an employee of a migrant organization. The key respondents were one male and one female. They were both from the Netherlands and resided here their whole life.

4.4 Data collection methods

Paradigm

The study is based on the construction of micro theory (Babbie, 2006). Hereby the researcher tries to create a theory which explores the social life at an *intimate level*, which means the understanding of individuals and their interactions (Babbie, 2006). The findings on micro level may eventually be used in the development of macro theory in other studies.

The study is built on the paradigm of Symbolic interactionism. It focuses on the micro level and aims at revealing the interactions between individuals (Babbie, 2006). Symbolic interaction assumes that the meaning people give to things and events is essential to understand the person and his/her reality. For this study it was also important to understand the background and the surroundings of the participants, to say explore their lives and direct environment at that moment, to give an explanation to how they feel and how they act. It describes the subjective view on their life, which might tell something about their subjective well-being.

In-depth interviews

Where many studies on well-being are structured in a quantitative manner, this study focused on qualitative methods. This study explored the issues of subjective well-being and studied the role of social networks in the well-being of Ghanaian migrants. These issues were thoroughly questioned by qualitative methods.

Qualitative research begins by accepting that there is a range of different ways of making sense of the world and is concerned with discovering the meanings seen by those who are being researched and with understanding their view of the world rather than that of the researchers (Silverman, 2000). An in-depth interview combines flexibility with structure. The researcher is intending to explore some issues, but the order of the interview is left to the interviewee (Legard, Keegan and Ward, 2003). An in-depth interview about the lives of people can provide the researcher with qualitative information on well-being, without it being subject to artificial constructs (Diener, 1994). A second advantage of qualitative data is that it can be personalized to the specific life events of the participants (Diener, 1994). An *interview guide* can list the topics and themes an interviewer wants to address in the interview, but still the sequencing and wording of questions can be changed during different interviews (Rubin & Babbie, 1993). The detail of an interview guide, anticipates how structured an interview will be and how an interviewer is able to anticipate on the important topics and issues (Rubin & Babbie, 1993). In this study, the researcher made an interview guide, according to the operationalisation of the

concepts derived from the study. The interview was structured by the questions, but there was enough room to change the order or phrasing of the questions, according to the personal situation of the participant. Although the structure was clear, the freedom to explore issues in another sequence was used extensively, as the story of the participant was the directory for the interviewer. When the participant had a specific network which proved to be very important, the time and questions asked on this topic could be more extensive.

At the start of the interview the interviewer has to establish rapport with the interviewee, a comfortable, private atmosphere in which the interview can take place. This is used to enhance the confidence of the interviewee and as an indication of the expectations of the interviewee (Babbie, 2006). Not all people are willing to share story to an almost stranger. Some tell their story without hesitation. Some of the benefits of the interviewees to share their story are: a clearer perspective on personal experiences, greater self-knowledge and a stronger self-image and sharing of cherished experiences and insights with others (Atkinson, 1998, p. 25). In in-depth interviews the interviewees were more thoroughly interviewed on some of the life segments, as social contacts and work. This explored the role of these issues in the life and well-being of the participants. To create a comfortable setting for the participants, first some introductory questions were used, which were not difficult and created some easy starting points for the more in-depth questions.

A qualitative research method is subject to the meaning given to an interview by the interpreter. The knowledge and background of the researcher can influence the analysis of the information provided by the participants (Thomas & Chambers, 1990). Qualitative analysis is the result of the interaction of one interpreter and the participant. The researcher should look at the exact words of a respondent as well as at the meaning of these words in the context and culture of the participant (Holliday, 2002). In this study the qualitative information was treated with an emic approach; this means the researcher tried to view things from the participants' point of view (Holliday, 2002). In this study the in-depth interview could elaborate on the subjective view of Ghanaian migrants on their well-being and social networks in the Netherlands. The in-depth interview represented an explanation for the main issues in the study. It was about feelings and larger issues, which can be covered in an interview. The interview provided an opportunity for the participant to tell his/her story. Descriptions of issues concerning well-being and the relationships between concept as social networks and well-being can best be explained in a story, which only the participant is able to tell.

Observation

Another technique that was used to gather data on well-being is observation. By using this method the observer could enter the life of a migrant for a few hours or days, to see how their life is arranged and how the migrant is using social networks in his/her life. The observer could interpret if social networks were important in the daily activities and if the participant seemed happy when he/she is around friends and family or other forms of social networks.

The advantage of an observation is that an observer can see the actual behaviour of the participant, which cannot be seen from interviewing alone. An interview gives the subjective view of the participant, an observation may be a supplement to that information, but can as well be contradictory in the eye of the observer (Baarda & de Goede, 2001). This research focuses on the details of everyday life as they present themselves in a natural setting (Rubin & Babbie, 1993). In this study the role of *participant as observer* seemed most appropriate. Here, the observer and the participants in the study are aware of an observational setting. It indicated an emphasis on participation and social interaction over the role of observing and by this setting the observer created rapport and trust among the observed (Walsh, 2004). Still, there was a

danger of reactivity to the observers presence. This was handled by keeping a role as stranger by the observer (Walsh, 2004).

Diener (1994) states that the recording of non-verbal behavior (during an interview or in a natural setting) can supplement in a study on well-being. Gestural, postural and facial expressions can all give important information on the emotions of the participant. This can also contribute to a 'thick description' of the data. This means that the context of an experience is showed and also reveals the experience as a process. The observation in the natural setting can contribute to information provided in interviews, as a real-life setting of processes and feelings that are described (Holliday, 2002). By using observation techniques the primary aim of the researcher may not be to generate theories of the data. The theories should be grounded in the data (Walsh, 2004).

In this study some social situations were observed by using the 'structure on ethnographic observation' of Angrosino (2007). The ethnography is 'the art and science of describing a human group, the institutions, interpersonal behaviour, material productions and beliefs' (Angrosino, 2007, p. 14). The observation scheme also included descriptions of non-verbal behaviour, which was important to detain information on the emotions of participants (as explained by Diener, 1994). The descriptions of the social situations were used as background information to the interviews. By observing some social situations the answers to the interview could be linked to actual events. The events observed are a church service, a gathering at an office of a migrant organization and a day in a Ghanaian shop. The observations also provided a 'context' to the stories of the interviewees. They presented the context in which social networks and the production of well-being came to a realistic situation.

4.5 Ethical issues

The study is based on interviews with Ghanaian immigrants about their experiences with their social networks. The study was based on voluntary participation. The participants were asked to give up some of their own time, to participate in the study. This can only be asked if they volunteer in the study (Babbie, 2001). It should also be clear to all respondents to what they give their consent. Miller and Bell (2002) indicate that the informed consent of participants in interviews is a delicate subject. The shift towards subjective experience and the meaning the participants give to their own actions is a research into people's lives. This is considered to be handled with much care, especially in the representation of the interviews in a study report. So, furthermore, the responses of the participants were handled with care. Before the interview started the participants were asked if they were willing to participate and also if they would agree to the use of a tape recorder (only after this consent the tape recorder was started). The participants were explained they could stop the interview at any time and were not obliged to answer all the questions.

The interviews were confidential. The identity of the participants is not known to the readers of the research report. Only the researcher is able to link answers to a specific respondent, but may not do so in public reports (Babbie, 2001). In this study the identity of the participants was kept confidential. To protect the identity of the participants, all the respondents are named by a pseudonym. When they are quoted in this report the answer cannot be related to the individual respondent. Moreover the pseudonyms were not used in relation with some characteristics of the respondent, like place of residence. Because there were not so many Ghanaian migrants in the places they were living at the time of the interview, it could damage the confidentiality, when their answers were quoted together with their place of residence. Other characteristics could be used, to give some more background to the participants.

While the subject of illegality is discussed in section 2.7, it has not been taken into the interview. The sensitivity of the subject could have scared the participants and also illegal migrants were

not easily found, especially because of the small amount of contacts the researcher had. To make the interview more comfortable, the status of the immigrants was not discussed.

The establishing of rapport can also be a subject to ethical considerations. The establishment of rapport should be done subtle, not to persuade a participant to give rightful answers (Duncombe & Jessop, 2002). It should not be about 'doing rapport' by 'faking friendship' (Duncombe & Jessop, 2002, p. 120). It is important to continually giving attendance to the power of the interviewer and the management of consent in the interviews. Rapport is most believed to be a combination of professionalism and a trustful bond between the interviewer and interviewee (Maier & Monahan, 2010; Duncombe & Jessop, 2002). The researcher was aware of the sensitivity of some questions and tried to be aware of the body language of the participants during the interview. When a participant did not seem at ease, the interviewer tried to comfort the participant. Also at the end of the interview the participants were asked about their thoughts on the interview. Most responded they enjoyed the interview.

4.6 Data Collection

4.6.1 Interviews

The data collection started with one test interview, done with a Ghanaian migrant. This interview was conducted in April 2010. After this the interview was transcribed and discussed. Based on the comments and the own experience with the interview some questions were adjusted. The adjustments made to the interview guide were not extensive, so the test interview is included in the study and the data are used. The rest of the interviews was done in the months April and May 2010. The first interviews were conducted with participants, who were contacts of family and friends. The rest of the interviews were done with contacts of the respondents, by the so-called snowball technique.

Most of the interviews were done in the house of the respondent, three were carried out at the office of a migrant organization and two were conducted at the workplace of the participants. The duration of the interviews varied between half an hour and two hours. The interviews were done in English or Dutch, depending on the choice of the participant.

In all interviews, with the exception of one, a tape recorder was used to tape the response of the participants. Also the researcher noted some keywords of the replies of the respondents, prominent concepts in the interview and characteristics of the environment in which the interview took place. These notes could help to connect concepts used in the interview, link responses to circumstances during the interview and transcribe an interview in case the taped interview was lost.

4.6.2 Observations

The observations were done on three occasions. One took place during a church service. This observation took about three hours. Another observation was done during a social gathering (with drinks and food) in the office of a migrant organisation. The gathering lasted for about three hours. The last observation was done in a Ghanaian shop. Here the researcher observed for an afternoon. The events were done with consent of the participants. In the church, before the service started, the pastor asked the church members if anyone had any objections to the presence of the researcher and to an observation of the church service. No one objected. During the gathering, the researcher was introduced as a guest and the purpose of the visit was explained. On the observation in the Ghanaian shop the shop owner gave consent for the observation in the shop.

During the observation the researcher was part of the observed event. Notes were taken sometimes during, but mostly directly after the observation. From most of the participants the

external characteristics (appearance, clothes) were noted and the facial expressions during the observations. The rest was done in the end of the observation.

4.7 Data Analysis

Researchers sometimes see data collection as one part of doing qualitative research and analysis as another part. This might lead to failure, when the researcher has to perform analysis or in the collection of data (Lofland & Lofland, 2006). It seems to be more helpful to see a temporal overlap between both stages. The final stage of analysis becomes then, the time to bring some final adjustments into previously formed ideas and concepts (Lofland & Lofland, 2006).

4.7.1 Interviews

The researcher literally transcribed all interviews into a Word-document. These transcripts were the first basis for the analysis, which was carried out with the help of the computer program MAX-QDA. This is one of the computer programs which researchers developed to support systematic text analysis in qualitative research. The interviews served as the basis for the development of new theory. By analyzing the interviews, the theory was subtracted from the data. The data were the source of the development of a 'grounded theory' and were based on induction. The theory developed is based on the subjects raised by the participants.

The first step in analyzing the material of the interviews was coding the text quotations that were relevant for the study. The participants used different wordings and expressions for their feelings and aspects of well-being. In the initial process of open coding all quotations were read carefully and then a code was assigned to the passage. These codings were required to ask analytical questions of the data gathered (Charmaz, 2006). The process of coding was done with an open mind. Theories from relevant study areas and ideas of concepts from the theoretical framework should not lead the process behind coding. The researcher tried to listen to the stories of participants with an open mind and, after some struggling, also approached the analyzing of the interviews with focus on the actual words of the participants.

When the open coding was completed the codes were explained by memos and related to other codes. This needed profound study. The codes and links between the codes needed to be set with enough evidence by the data (van Bruggen, 2001). The codes were then categorized into groups. The code tree which derived from the data is presented in appendix two.

Categorising qualitative data is not straightforward. Placing data in meaningful categories can be a difficult task (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). But these categories form the prominent concepts in the study and can describe and portend the phenomena (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The codes and the categories can be used to portray a nature of relationships between the data. Here the researcher can see how things interact (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). With these interactions the links between the different concepts is revealed and the data can be theorized and validated by the data gathered in the process.

The categorising of data was done with the help of the notes taken right after the interviews and some thorough exploration of the open concepts. It took some time to make a rightful analysis of all the concepts and the relations between the concepts. Because of the extensive information, which the participants provided, the links between the concepts were closely registered and also signed out in maps. These also proved to be helpful in relating the concepts and make a profound and valuable analysis of the data. In appendix three one map is presented.

4.7.2 Observations

All the notes of the observations were written and documented in the computer. The three observations were considered as a background study to the interviews. During the observations a social network was seen at work and also a subjective description of the behaviour of the

participants was written down. The notes were also analyzed with the MAX-QDA program. The notes were coded and also placed in meaningful categories. The codes have been linked to the codes in the interviews and showed what could provide valuable information to what category, distracted from the interviews.

4.8 Reflections on the gathering and analysis of data

Qualitative research is about exploring issues and understanding phenomena. This study is not only done by professionals, but also by individuals in every-day situations. It is very interesting to try to understand people and its relations and motives for behaviour. Qualitative research provides the opportunity to explore issues in-depth. To go in-depth was a whole new experience. By starting and updating an audit trail, the experiences before and during the process of gathering data were noted. The notes written here are based on my personal audit trail.

The actual study started with finding respondents to take part in the interviews. Since I had never been a part of the group under study and also was not familiar with any Ghanaian migrant in the Netherlands, the first challenge was to find participants and next to find enough participants. Starting off with one contact, luckily the group of participants grew quite fast, with help of family and friends who suddenly knew people, in often indescribable patterns of relations (for example one participant was found by 'acquaintances of the neighbours of the parents of a friend'). Although I had not met these people before, all the participants were very welcoming and also very willing to help me find more people to participate in the study. Some placed an invitation for real Ghanaian meals and different parties. Because I was interested in getting familiar with the customs and culture of the Ghanaians, the food was tasted and the insights of the Ghanaians into different cultures were shared. Not being familiar with the Ghanaian culture (although with other African cultures), gave an interesting touch to the study. I did not speak the traditional languages, and I also did not share all the cultural characteristics and was not familiar with the life of African migrants in the Netherlands. Though this may have seemed as a disadvantage at first, I was also completely unbiased towards the participants. The participants were very willing to share the things that were not familiar to me and could show their expertise on their own life.

Every interview had its own characteristics. Not every person is willing to tell their life story to a complete stranger. However, after an introduction, a cup of tea (which always got cold!) and some social talk to warm up, almost everyone lost its nerves and reservations and could talk freely. Also I was nervous at first, but also got more at ease when I became more familiar with the interview guide and the management of the interview. The audit trail holds this text about the first test interview: 'At first I was quite nervous and he [the participant] as well. I asked a lot and he did respond, but very shortly. During the interview, it got much better. He told me a lot. I was very glad he could share his story and I learned a lot.'

The one thing that should not happen to a researcher in a qualitative study is losing the tape recorder or find out that an interview is not taped. Still, I was stupid enough to drop the tape recorder, while cycling back from the first interview. The excitement of doing the first interview was of short notice. Luckily only the screen of the tape recorder was broken and the recorded interview was still there. But from that moment the tape recorder was handled with very much care.

The different interviews all provided me with interesting answers to the questions in the interview, but also with answers to urgent issues in the world politics. At all times most of the interview questions were replied, but also things were shared on the immigrations politics, the

poverty in the world and so on. How interesting these were, proved the information that these messages provided on the well-being of the interviewees and their real wishes in their life. It was exciting to notice the ideas the Ghanaian had on these matters. Still, I had to be aware of the stretch between the role as an interviewer and as a person with an opinion. Also when asked about my marital status, it was a challenge to not cross the fine line of being a researcher and social talk about the private life.

Next to remarkable interviews with the Ghanaian, I also got familiar with some of the situations of the daily life of the participants, during the observations done. These gave insight in the actual happenings and showed the stories, which were described in the interviews. To be part of the daily life of the people for a few hours confirmed the image that was created during the interviews.

And not only the Ghanaians surprised, also the meetings with some of the key informants showed that Dutch people can learn something from each other during interviews. Like, not all people from Groningen have an accent...

The participants were spread throughout the whole country. Although it was very interesting to have people from different parts of the country in the study and so also from different networks within the Netherlands, it also takes a while to travel to these participants. The public transport has been used extensively in this period. Where I never had any aversion towards travelling, in this case it was even more a place to get the mind at ease after a long day of interviewing and let the first analysis slip through the mind. When other passengers started to ask why I was so busy with writing, the answer was: 'Just ordering my thoughts'. Because there was no laptop to use in the train, the first thoughts were handwritten in the train and later typed out. Logistically it was all arranged well and the public transport helped me to get to the interviews in time, by not having any delays, even though the travelling was quite extensive.

The responses to the interview were very positive. Where some of the participants were hesitant to answer questions at the start and did not really know what to expect, most of the respondents told that the interview was very comfortable and they could express the thoughts they have on the different topics. They all hoped they contributed to my study. Some expressed they never spoke about some topics this extensively and were glad they could do so in this way.

When asked by the supervisors if I noticed some repetition in the interviews and if I thought I could stop interviewing, there was some hesitation. Although the topic was brought up by myself, thinking of all the interviews done, not one was the same. Although the information might become repetitive in some ways, the information was still valuable and unique. Of course there is a time to stop doing interviews, but this style of doing research is very valuable and, on my thought, is very much contributing to the world of science.

And when Ghana made it to the semi-finals on the World Championship, the only thing I could do is call some of my new Ghanaian acquaintances and watch the matches together. Although Ghana did not make it to the finals, the Netherlands did and this was also reason to celebrate together.

5

Role of social networks in subjective social well-being

In this chapter the results on the role of social networks in the subjective social well-being of the participants, from the analysis of the interviews and observations, are summarized¹. By interviewing and observing the participants, the important social networks and the different roles they fulfil are described in this chapter. In section 5.1 the importance of social networks in the subjective social well-being of the participants is described shortly. This section can serve as an introduction to the different social networks and its meaning to social well-being. In section 5.2 the different social networks of Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands are outlined and the functions they serve in the well-being of the participants. Then, in section 5.3, the relations with Dutch people are portrayed, also with its contributions to the well-being of the participants. The following section 5.4, defines the social contacts with the home country and the influences these serve in the lives of the migrants. Lastly, section 5.5 presents an image of a good and bad Ghanaian migrant, subtracted from the stories of the participants.

To place a background to the life of the Ghanaian in the Netherlands, Abena, one of the participants illustrates the situation of the Ghanaian migrants when they come to the Netherlands.

Abena: Why? I have decided to migrate by myself. I don't know. I can say it short, maybe for the economical reasons. I decided myself. I didn't have any responsibilities then. On the one side, I wanted to go to the Netherlands to do a study. I thought that would be the situation. I didn't expect to stay this long. That was not my intention. And I think I can talk for other Ghanaian people. Maybe you heard this before. Most think: we go to Europe for two, maybe three years and then go back. That is always what they think. But when you are here, within two years, the dream that you had, is gone. Maybe you thought I am going to study and I will finish in three years. And after three years you didn't even start a study. Or you think, I will get a job and work for some years and then go back, but you aren't even working after these years (female, age group 36-40, residential duration 20 years).

(Waarom? Ik heb mijzelf besloten, niemand, ik weet het niet. Ik kan het kort zeggen, misschien economische redenen of zo. Dat is het makkelijkst. Ik was niet bewust dat ik, toen had ik geen verantwoordelijkheden of zo. Het was de ene kant, misschien wilde ik in Nederland verder gaan leren. Zo, dat had ik gedacht en dan ook, ik had niet verwacht dat ik zolang ging blijven. Dat was niet de bedoeling. En ik kan ook voor andere Ghanese mensen ook praten. Misschien heb je dat ook wel gehoord. De meeste denken, ik ga naar Europa voor twee, drie jaar en dan kom ik weer terug. Dat is altijd zo. Maar als je hier komt, binnen twee jaren, die droom wat je had, ik ga misschien studeren en binnen drie jaar ben ik klaar. En in drie jaar ben ik nog niet aan die school begonnen. Of als je denkt, ik ga snel werken en dan na een paar jaar ga ik terug, maar dan ben je nog niet aan het werk.)

¹ In the following chapters the findings of the study will be supported by quotations of the participants. All the names of the interviewees are changed to secure their identity and the confidentiality. Because the interviews are done in the language the interviewee preferred, some of the quotations are originally in Dutch and other in English. Because sometimes the meaning of the words got lost in the translation, the quotations are also formulated in the original Dutch language. Sometimes a word is placed between brackets to show the context of a citation.

5.1 Social networks and subjective social well-being

The role of social networks seems to play a large part in the well-being of the participants. The participants share their perceptions on the role of social contacts in their life and indicate if their perceptions changed by migrating to the Netherlands.

Where the life in Ghana was more outside and informal, a place to make friends easily, this is more difficult in the Netherlands. "The life outside" represents a social life in which participants grew up. To give a short inside in the lives of the participants in Ghana, a participant describes the social life in Ghana.

Kaleb: In Ghana it is not difficult to make friends. How life, life is more outside, like you meet people outside and you speak to anyone. Yeah, and it is not so difficult to know someone. If compared to here, you see, because of the weather, people are more indoors. And so because of that, it affects your social life, like the more, more like eh, I see, just more to themselves, I say, in a way (male, age group 31-35, residential duration 6 years).

The importance of social life did not change. In the following sections will be set out how the social networks become a part of the lives of the participants, after they moved to the Netherlands. Although it takes some more effort to accomplish the social life, participants preserve this value and explain the significance of friends and other relatives to their well-being.

Joshua: It helps, you see, to revive you mentally. Because of the pressure and stress here, you can't say, I don't want to talk to this person. It really helps you a lot. It helps you to have human contact. Because human contact is very important. No matter what you are, you have to have human contacts. Because nobody can live in a house that you are not be talking to anybody. You cannot switch on the tv or radio, and sit there without having any social contacts. Having social contact can also, someone can talk to you and you can talk to someone. To relief you from stress, and worries and other things. This is something that helps me in my life. I always feel refreshed, when I talked to friends (male, age group 46-50, residential duration 16 years).

To be part of a social network, participants indicated some aspects that are important in such a social network to enhance their well-being. These factors also illustrate why it is they feel well in one social network and not in another, because some of these aspects are missing.

5.2 Social networks with Ghanaians in the Netherlands

In their life in the Netherlands the Ghanaian participants built on different social networks. These networks are established on different occasions. The social contacts of the participants circle around important elements in the lives of the Ghanaian participants, especially around their religion, the connection to their home culture and sharing emotions with family and friends.

Most participants already knew some Ghanaians before entering the Netherlands. Also they feel it is easy to establish new ties with other Ghanaian migrants. The places participants met their Ghanaian friends and acquaintances differ. Some met their friends in the institution they studied, the church, the existing network of Ghanaian/African migrants², in the neighbourhood or in shops. These are also the places that become important to the interviewees in their later life in the Netherlands. Some of the participants specify that the Ghanaian friends are especially important in the initial phase in the Netherlands. These are the people who showed them

² African culture and Ghanaian culture are used interchangeable by the participants. This indicates the African culture holds much of the same values and traditions as the Ghanaian culture. The continent can be compared to the country Ghana, according to the participants.

around in the Netherlands and made them familiar with the first unfamiliar things, like the travelling and shopping system, in the Dutch society.

Interviewer: *And where did you meet your friends when you came to the Netherlands?*
Joshua: *Most of the time, in those days, then you go Saturdays or Sundays to play football. They come from the east and the west to come and play football. And sometimes also in churches (male, age group 46-50, residential duration 16 years).*

Joe: *They are especially important in the first two years. They are the ones to show you around the shopping center. After that you become part of the group. We do our things together. It doesn't matter, we realize that all Ghanaians are together here (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 2 years).*

The other Ghanaians in the Netherlands were also the ones that were a foundation for a social network in the Netherlands. The ties with friends from the same origin are important to the participants. It is easy to find people of the same origin and it is an easy way of communication. Participants feel they understand each other, because there is a similarity in background and culture. Some experience it as 'coming home'. Kaleb and Gita refer to some of the relationships with other Ghanaians they established. The time participants are in the Netherlands does not seem to play a role in this matter.

Kaleb: *In Ghana it is not difficult to make friends. Here you are in a foreign country and when you see, that you are from the same country, you spontaneously become known to one another. It doesn't take a long time. I don't have a lot of friends here apart from those Ghanaians (male, age group 31-35, residential duration 6 years).*

Gita: *The Ghanaian people are very hospitable and will do anything for you. You are all brothers and sisters. You are not easily let into this community of brothers and sisters, especially not as a foreigner. But for me it is very great to be part of it, also in the Netherlands (female, age group 31-35, residential duration 12 years).*

These quotes illustrate the feelings the participants have, when they are a part of a Ghanaian community. The contacts with the Ghanaian are spontaneous and tight. Ghanaian friends are often referred to as 'brothers and sisters'. The feeling of *being brothers and sisters*, despite that the participants are from different regions in Ghana, is a continuation of the feeling in Ghana. Regardless of the Dutch environment they live in, the Ghanaian way of life is continued. The feeling of 'home' pleases the participants, although it is a preservation of home and not the actual environment they lived in in Ghana. No matter what, Ghanaian are friends to each other. When they recognize each other as being Ghanaian, having the identity of a Ghanaian is already enough to start the contact and relate to each other. Some of the participants also assign to a formal Ghanaian community in the Netherlands. This is mostly an extension of the sharing with friends. Also it provides an opportunity to show Dutch people the Ghanaian migrant group and its traditions in public.

Sarah: *It [the Ghanaian community] is very nice. They go once a month, first week of the month. They go to think about the Ghanaians that are here and also the society from the Netherlands. And they also, sometimes, they go to Africa festivals. They go there to cook, to present their food. Make Netherlands or Europe see what they have for their country. They sell it (female, age unknown, residential duration 14 years).*

The link with the original culture of the participants is an important element in the social networks of the participants. Traditions from Ghana are representing what the Ghanaians stand for and increase the feeling of identity, belonging and sharing.

A very important word, that came back in almost all interviews, is the word 'food'. It represents much of where the Ghanaian migrants stand for, according to the participants and it is essential to them in their social contacts with their Ghanaian friends. Food is a social aspect and shows the hospitality of the Ghanaian migrants and is a preservation of their culture. You always invite everyone for dinner and it is an expression of social life. When eating food, it is common to share and help people who are in poverty, by inviting these people. This tradition is maintained in the Netherlands. Also it is a social gathering, 'then you meet and everyone is happy'. Joshua and Abebe explain that it is not especially the food that is making the tradition, but it is everything surrounded by that tradition. By being in the Netherlands eating together accompanies speaking the local language, sharing stories from Ghana and feeling emotions participants are still looking for, the feeling that re-establishes their culture .

Joshua: The food is an African thing. When you go and meet someone, you always invite someone to come and eat. You invite someone to your home, you have to give them at least something to eat or drink. That is your welcome to him or her. So we have that also here. When we meet, there must be something of that culture in that (male, age group 46-50, residential duration 16 years).

Abebe: My friends are coming, just because we would like to eat Ghanaian food, eat, speak the language, you know we just talk and talk about certain things we did in Ghana (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 2 years).

Also some other traditions are kept in place in a friendship with other Ghanaian. A participant tells that he is having more girlfriends at one time. His friends are accepting this and he is explaining why it is.

Joe: (Talking about having more than one girl). But marriage is not, I don't think it is a problem. Polygamy in Ghana is accepted. If you want to marry two, it is allowed. It doesn't matter. Actually, in my environment, it depends on opinions (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 2 years).

Whereas the life outside is a common thing in Ghana, this is not so much in the Netherlands. The livelihood on the streets and the informal meetings on the street are elements participants miss and they try to shape their lives, according to these traditions. Especially with official holidays participants miss the style of celebrating these days together and the large parties. Edward explains why he thought something needed to be done, to make the days more similar to those in Ghana.

Edward: It is already a long time ago, 26th of December, if believe in 2001. And the city was so boring. Everyone was inside, nothing happened. And the year after that, I wanted to organize something for the 26th of December. Because the first day of Christmas is for family, but the second day everything is closed in the city and everything is so quiet! And then I thought: Music can be something fun. So I opened a telephone line, so you can eat, African food and make an African day. I made such a day and do that every year now (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 16 years).

(Was een tijd geleden, 26 december, dat was lang geleden, ik geloof in 2001, en het was zo saai in de hele stad, iedereen was gewoon binnen, er gebeurde niks. En in het jaar daarna, ik wilde iets organiseren voor de 26 december. Want de eerste kerstdag is met de familie, maar tweede kerstdag is alles gesloten in de stad en is het gewoon rustig! En muziek kan iets leuks zijn. Dus ik heb telefoonlijn geopend, zodat je kan eten, Afrikaans eten, Afrikaanse dag van gemaakt. Ik heb er een hele dag van gemaakt. Dat doen we nu elk jaar.)

Abebe: For instance, somebody, one of the Ghanaians, asked me, are you going out with Easter? I said, it doesn't make anything of a difference, there is nothing happening, it is cold outside and nobody is there, but these times are very much of festivities in Ghana, you can't be indoors. It is so

weird people are all inside here. I want to celebrate these days (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 2 years).

These quotes again illustrate how important it is to the participants to relate to the feelings they have towards Ghana and how much they miss some parts of their former life. By not celebrating the festivities as they are used to, the memories of how it was in Ghana become stronger. This shapes their life in the Netherlands. They try to arrange their lives in the Netherlands as it was in Ghana, to not be constantly reminded of what they miss here. Also by ordering their lives in this way, it brings them into contact with other Ghanaians. Participants feel comfortable with that. It appears that having the same norms and values within the Ghanaian culture creates a large sense of well-being. It is a safe haven to be built on. In their life in the Netherlands they take time to remember their traditions, like eating Ghanaian food, speaking the own language, following the news and celebrating the important holidays. They refresh their memories (like their social lives, their family and friends and the surroundings of Ghana) with others from Ghana, so they won't forget.

Within the social contacts with other Ghanaian migrants participants also look for some mutual dependency around people. This can be explained on micro level, as participants largely feel part of a private social network or a relatively small community in the Netherlands. But it can also be explained as a feeling of belonging to a larger entity, like a society. Participants try to be part of some kind of functional group. This is shown in their contact with the Ghanaian people in the Netherlands. This allows the people to serve a common goal and a common understanding of some sense.

Joshua: It is very important, because if I am part of let's say a community, it helps you to be part of the community in Ghana. When you are all to yourself, it will not help you. I may not know everything of Ghana. A person may know something of a part of Ghana that I don't know. Or let's say something I may not know, so that person may tell me, that is what was going on and we tell each other what we experienced (male, age group 46-50, residential duration 16 years).

Joe: I think it is a large part of my life here. Other from the people I go around here, you always interact with other Ghanaians. It doesn't matter if they are in Amsterdam or Rotterdam, you do communicate. You are surrounded by them. We are always in contact with them. You become part of the group. Actually in this country, you really get to know the Ghanaian. Then you see who we really are and that they are so important to me (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 2 years).

Sarah: it is very important, because we Ghanaians are here and also the Netherlands people accept to open the club and thinking and they comment. I am proud to go to see my people and them talking together once a month. They discuss themselves together. Also about how to raise the children in this country, which norms you give them and how you go about things you experience. I am proud (female, age unknown, residential duration 14 years).

By belonging to a social network with other Ghanaian, participants can derive the identity of belonging to a group. Participants indicate that by being part of the group they understand even better how the Ghanaian identity is formed and they would like to hold on to this identity and thus to the group. Also participants are proud belonging to a group. Being part of a group gives some kind of status and that is what they want to express, especially to the 'outside world'. By having a Ghanaian network, participants feel they can share. Sharing a common background and the move to a new country influences the participants in a positive way.

Participants hold on to the thought they are not forgotten, when they would return. This is also an explanation for the eagerness of the participants to be involved in the Ghanaian community in the Netherlands. For the participants it is a sign of their commitment to the home country.

When they would return to the country, they would still be accepted. They do not want to run the risk of not being accepted by their 'own' people. This can also explain why participants do not want to be involved in the customs of the Dutch. Changing is difficult and insecure. Participants are familiar to the habits of the Ghanaians and have always been in their social network. Being involved in the Dutch culture might give them a subordinate position in their culture of origin.

During observations done in a Ghanaian shop and at the office of a migrant organization also parts of the Ghanaian networks are observed. These observations describe a part of the social life of the Ghanaian migrants. They illustrate the importance of the sense of belonging and the connections to the Ghanaian culture as described above. These observations are related to meetings with other Ghanaian migrants. First the text boxes will provide a general observation of the Ghanaian shop and the migrant office.

The Ghanaian shop is a valued place to the participants. As said before, the sharing of food is an important element of their social life. Not only is the Ghanaian shop a place to buy Ghanaian food, also it is a social place. A participant introduced the researcher to the Ghanaian shop, which was just opposite to his house and a place he always bought his food. Also other participants indicate a shop is a place to meet people.

Brian: And we also make friends when we go to the city center and we meet friends in the shop.

Text box 5.1 Observation in a Ghanaian shop



Front of the shop



African Foodstuff, sold in the shop



Cosmetics behind the counter in the front of the shop



Hair products, sold in the shop

The shop is located in the city centre, in one of the shopping streets. The shop is surrounded by other shops and some houses. The shop exists for about 4 years now and is run by a Ghanaian woman. The food for the shop and other shops in the country is

shipped from Ghana and is original food. Also the products for hair and body care are from Ghana. The Ghanaian flag was waving, attached to the front of the shop.

When standing before the shop on the left there is large window with the presentation of some of the hair products. Above the window is a yellow/orange sign with the name of the shop in red letters and the products sold and the things done in the shop (African cosmetics, African food and black hair salon). To the right there are white doors and the same yellow/orange sign is placed above these doors. It displays the name of the shop in red letters and the products and things done in the shop, but then in Dutch (cosmetica, Afrikaanse levensmiddelen en kapsalon). When entering the shop there is a counter on your right hand side. On this counter a cash register was placed. The counter was made of glass showcases, where hair products and cosmetics were shown. Also behind the counter the products were displayed. Further to the back there were the products for the hair. Different types of hair and different colour were displayed and also wigs were displayed on models, which were behind the counter and also in a corner opposite of the counter.

After entering when looking to the left hand side, there were the food and drinks. Against the wall on the left side are shelves with different kinds of products. Next to the shelves and opposite to the shelves are some refrigerators and freezers with also different food, like fish and vegetables. The scent of food and strong spices prevailed when entering the shop. African music was playing from a radio in the corner and a television in the corner of the shop was tuned to an African channel.

In the back of the store was a separate space, where some chairs were standing. Three small wooden ones, which were standing around a round, wooden table and two large ones, which were black and could be adjusted to another position. On the wall there were several posters of models and some mirrors. This space is used for hairdressing. The space was separated from the rest of the shop by some walls, with windows.

The people entering the shop were of African descent and dressed in jeans and shirts, with exception of some women who entered the shop in colourful traditional clothes. All people made conversation with the owner or other customers.

Customers are coming and going in the shop. All customers stay in the shop for a while to talk to other customers or the owner of the shop. The owner of the shop was always answering the people with a smile, while entering and during conversations different topics were discussed. Most conversations were opened by the owner of the shop.

By the start of the observation first a woman entered the shop, which was asking for advice on new hair and color of the hair, to be braided into her own hair. The owner of the shop advised the girl and they were talking about the style of wearing the hair in Ghana and other countries in Africa. The owner also asked the girl about her mother, who was ill.

Then some more (3) women entered the shop and walked around the shop. They were getting some food supplies and started talking to the owner of the shop. This took about a quarter of an hour and then they left the shop. The conversation was in Twi (as told by the owner), so the topic of the conversation could not be heard.

Then a man entered the shop, with a child and he was getting some cosmetics from the shop. He talked to the owner in the shop for about 10 minutes and then left the shop again. The conversation in the shop was about the festivities during Queens day and the job of the man.

Next a woman entered the shop and talked to the owner of the shop and got a large sack with products. The owner and the woman talked about the competition the owner got from another African shop in the town. They kept talking for a while and then left the shop.

Two men are coming into the shop and ask the owner of the shop if they can get some product from Ghana through her. The owner explains what she will do to help the men with getting the products.

Then a man comes in to ask about a car that is for sale by the owner. The man would like to buy the car and they are negotiating about the price. Also the owner is asking about the family of the man. They keep talking for a while and then the man leaves again.

A girl is entering the shop and asking for an appointment to get her hair braided. The owner of the shop is explaining the different models and the prices of these different models. Also she asks the girl how she is doing in her education.

A group of 4 women is entering the store and look around the food and drinks. They are starting a loud conversation with the owner of the shop in another language then is unfamiliar to the observer. The women are talking in a loud tone and laughing. Also two of the women are hugging each other and then smiling with the others. After half an hour the women are leaving the shop again and taking products.

Next, a man is entering the shop and talks to the owner of the shop. He asks how she is doing and if anyone has come and asked for him. She answers negatively. He walks to the back of the shop and sits in the hairdressing saloon. The owner tells the observer this is her nephew. Five minutes after this man arrived in the shop another man arrives in the shop and goes to the back of the shop and sits with the other man and they start talking. They talk about music (drumming) and the second man is asking the first man for some money, because he would like to buy some food. The first man is giving him some money.

Next a girl arrives in the shop and starts talking to the owner of the shop. She tells about her baby and that she is glad that she is out of the house for a while. She buys some food and leaves again after a quarter of an hour. She also talks to the two men in the back of the store.

Then a group of two women is entering the shop and ask for the cosmetics behind the counter. They ask if these products are the same as they used to buy in Africa. The owner confirms. The owner is starting a conversation on the products she sold in Africa and tells about the business there, also at this moment. The women are responding in to the owner and tell about family in Africa. They talk for ten minutes and then they leave the shop again with some products.

Another woman is entering the shop and she is talking to the owner in a language which cannot be understood by the observer. But the conversation is going on for about a quarter of an hour and the woman is taking small book from her bag and writes something down in the book. Also the owner of the shop notes something down in a small book. The woman walks to the back of the shop and talks to the man sitting there. The second man, who approached the other man in the back is leaving at that moment. The man and the woman also talk for a quarter of an hour and they drink a cup of tea together. The owner of the shop is joining the conversation in the last 5 minutes.

In the Ghanaian shop people gathered. During the observation period about 25 people entered the shop. This was normal for a weekday, in the afternoon, the owner of the shop told. All people entering the shop were of African descent. They were there to buy different African products or just for social gathering. For the description of the shop, see text box 5.1.

All people coming in approached the owner with a greeting and started some kind of conversation with the owner or other customers. The people were standing close to each other, mostly at the counter and talking to each other. Some people were walking around first and took some products from the shelves or pointed at the products behind the counter. The interaction mostly started after products were bought or questions about the products were asked and answered. Most of the people had a smile on their face during the conversation and the people talked for quite some time. Also some people walked to the back and starting a conversation with the man there. All people seemed familiar to each other, because all people started conversation and stayed in the shop for a while, just to talk.

(Observation, May, 2010).

After some time a man, familiar to the owner was entering the shop and joining lunch with the owner. This man stayed after lunch. People entering the shop also walked to the back, where this man was sitting and started a conversation with the man.

This man: *a lot of people come here often. They often see me here. I do not often sit in my own home. I am at work or I am here. Here in the shop. Last time a guy was at my house; I was not there and he immediately thought: he is at [name of the owner]. We often see each other here. (Veel mensen komen vaak hier. Dan ze zien mij hier vaak. Mijn eigen huis, ik zit niet vaak daar. Misschien werk of hier. Hier in de winkel. Een jongen, hij was bij mij thuis: ik was niet thuis, ik heb meteen gedacht, die is bij [name of the owner]. Vaak zien we elkaar hier.)*

A single woman is entering the shop in bright clothing, the skirt in the same print as the top and with a colourful bandage in her hair. This woman and the owner talk about the competition to the shop:

The woman: *I always say about you: here it is home, with [name of the owner]. I cannot buy everything here, but what I can buy here, I take from here. Also when the kids could not go home to eat something after school, I said: go to [Name of the owner], there you can get something to eat and I will go and pay later. I think you have a better shop than the new store, but that you know. Here is home and although the other shop is cheaper, you are better. (Ik weet het, maar ik zeg altijd over jou: hier is het thuis, bij [name of the owner]. Ik kan hier niet alles kopen voor het eten, maar wat kan dat doe ik hier, dit is belangrijk. Ook toen de kinderen niet naar huis konden naar school om wat te eten, dan zeg ik: ga naar [name of the owner], daar kun je wel wat eten en dan ga ik later wel betalen. Ik vind dat jij beter bent dan de nieuwe winkel, maar dat weet je wel. Hier is thuis en ook al is de andere winkel goedkoper, jij ben beter.)(Observation, May, 2010)*

The shop was a social network in itself. All people entering came there to make conversation and being in touch with the Ghanaian culture. It literally surrounded the customers with products from Ghana/ Africa (for a description of the products see text box 5.1). Some people described the shop as a 'home'. It preserved all of Ghana they needed and it was also a place to meet. The conversations in the shop were often about Ghana, family, festivities and customs of Ghana. All people were happy to see each other and took the time to talk to each other. Everyone knew about the latest events in the lives of the other. Again, people wanted to share their common identity and feel as they were part of the network which flourished in the shop. It was like 'Little Ghana'.

The other observation was done at the office of a migrant organization. Interviewees spoke of this place as a location which was a regular meeting place for them and their friends. One of the participants said about this place:

Dave: *One day I walked from across the street and passed the window. I walked in and I asked what they did and I thought: this is for me. This also helped me to get out of my difficulties and showed me an answer to some of my questions. Here I can use the computer at all times and be close to other people. We can chat and so on.*

Text box 5.2 Observation at the office of a migrant organization



Front of the office, couch with colourful African cloth



Back of the office with computers and a large table for meeting

The migrant organization is an African migrant organization. The office is centered just outside the centre of a city. The centre opened about 5 years ago as a centre for the African migrants in the society. They can walk into the office for questions and information about different procedures and problems they experience in the society here. That is the main task of the organization. Besides that, There are courses in Dutch and computer courses. Also they organize projects with schools, where the migrants show the African dance and music, so that the youth can get familiar with the African culture and way of life. Another project is 'Taalmaatjes', where a Dutch person and an African migrant are joined to do some nice things, once a week. The organization is working together with the municipality, in the 'Milleniumdoelenproject'. In these projects the migrants can get a fund from the municipality, with which they can start a project on their own in the land they came from.

The mission of the organization is to fulfill an educational and informative role for the African people in the broadest sense of the word. The foundation seeks mutual appreciation of different cultures on the basis of justice and equality. The vision the migrant organization works with is making visible of the hidden talents within the African community. To improve the skills and independence of African people in the disadvantaged situation in terms of language and cultural knowledge significantly. To increase the chances of participation in economic, social and social movement. Help people to acquire skills that a person can demonstrate to an employer to increase the opportunity to work. Improve concentration problems because of multilingualism. To stimulate using the language within and outside the family, for full participation in social movement. To reduce failure or delay in other subjects due to insufficient control of the Dutch language. Protecting children and parents against prejudice and discrimination.

The office had a glass front window with the name of the organization on it. The office was localized between shops and other companies. When entering the office there was a desk on the righthand-side, with a computer placed on it and one of the employees sitting behind the desk. In front of the desk was a grey cupboard, with posters on it of several activities, that would be organized in the town in the coming period by several organizations. On the left there was a coloured couch, which was draped with African fabric, with a table and one other chair. Also on the left, there was a coffee and tea machine. In the center of the office was a large oval table, with 12 chairs around it. On both sides of this large table were computers stalled, 10 in total. Then behind a glass wall were three more desks, with computers, where the female employees were working

during the observation. The left wall was painted yellow/orange, the right wall was painted grey. On the grey wall, above the computers, was a large yellow painting and on the yellow wall were some other pieces of art. When entering the office African music was playing and people were walking around or sitting on tables.

Almost all people said a 'Hi, how are you' to anyone in the office at that time. The people were entering the office with neutral facial expressions, except for some people. Two were laughing loudly and one man came in angry. The interactions the people had were mostly in the local language of the people and especially between the colored people in the office. There was regular physical contact between people entering the office, by knocks on the shoulder or hugs, and greeting of people.

The people were sitting with each other and talking, in front on the couch. Other people talked to each other behind the computers. There was a mutual greeting when someone came into the office and walked to one of the places of interaction. Also there were interactions between the employees and the people coming into the office. Especially during Dutch lessons and computer lessons the employees and the other people were talking to each other. Food that was brought was shared between the people present at that time in the office.

The first observation handles about meetings between Ghanaian migrants in an office for African migrants. The observer observed:

hands are shaken between different groups of people who are in the room. This indicates people are familiar to each other. The groups of people entering are talking and laughing with each other several times during the observation. The people come and meet each other in this place and share the last news. Also they show each other things on the computer.(Observation, May 2010)

The people were sitting with each other and talking, in front on the couch. Other people talked to each other behind the computers. There was a mutual greeting when someone came into the office and walked to one of the places of interaction (Observation, May 2010).

The food that was brought by a woman was shared between the people present at that time. (observation, May 2010)

This observation illustrates one of the situations in which the social networks are used in their natural form. The gathering at the office of the migrant organization shows that the interaction between Ghanaian is very important and that they often look for a central place to meet, which is again linked to their culture. The office is also decorated with a lot of African reminders (see for the description text box 5.2). The interaction was natural and all migrants seemed familiar with each other. Everything was shared, food, as an important cultural custom and also the latest news from the Ghanaian society and family. The people observed seemed happy to see each other and were chatting with each other all the time.

5.2.1 Religion and church

As said, Ghanaians meet in different places and one of the most important meeting place is the church. This section will integrate the religion and church in the social networks of the Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands and in their social well-being. Religion is the basis, which forms an entry point for the social contacts participants have in church. The participants are positively affected by the sense of religion and the feeling of being close to God. For some it is the priority

in their life and their life is inspired by Christianity³. They believe there is a spirit behind everything. This spirit helps participants in improving and leading their life. It brings peace and comfort to the participants. Abebe and Brian explain what religion means to them. All share their faith in an African congregation. They all have a strong bond with God.

Abebe: First, ehm you oblige following sentences in the Bible and you, it brings some peace to you. You know that, you always believe there is belief, that turns on happiness, there is like a spirit behind everything, you know (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 2 years).

Brian: Religion is very important to me, in the sense that ehm I believe in the, ehm, in spirituality, I believe that the human being is not only a physical entity, there is another part of the human being that is a spiritual entity. Because, I do not know, if you believe in the bible, but I believe in the bible and the bible tells me that God created man and he breaths his own breath into men. That breath made us living beings. So that spirit is our spirit. And that spirit should always be in contact with its Creator. So you have to create a bond or relationship between you and your Creator. That is my point as a Christian (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 4 years).

Travelling to a new country by yourself is a lonesome matter. Participants indicate it is a comfort when they feel there is an entity that protects them from harm. By reading the Bible or celebrating faith in a church, participants are reminded of the security the religion gives them and also a reminder of the celebration of religion in the home country. This sentiment also gives them a boost. By being in church, participants feel they can develop themselves and make a progression which they themselves and their surroundings can be proud of. Also religion is part of the identity of the participants. They like to be associated with it. Religion also serves some specific functions in the well-being of the participants.

5.2.2 Social contacts in church

The participants are closely connected to the church. All participants, with exception of one, joined a church when they came to the Netherlands. Their faith and the gathering of people in church is incorporated in the lives of the participants since they were young. Religion is 'my everything, everything is by God' (Kaleb). Faith and going to church are very much intertwined. The social contacts participants have within the church are often very important. They feel the people are there for the same purpose and that is something they can build a friendship on already. The participants reflect on church as a place where you don't solve your problems only with God, but also with the people that surround you in church. Together with others, problems are solved more easily. And it contributes to the feeling of strong ties, when these are likeminded people.

Brian: In the first place, the church is a social place. You meet friends, talk to new friends. A place you are able to meet people. In the second place, it is a solemn place. A place that is secret. A place where you focus your mind. This is where I am going to meet my Creator. This is where other human beings with the same spirit, that made them, are coming to converge and we all have a common goal, at looking up to our Creator (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 4 years).

Mosi: I think in my life it [church] is quite important. Because apart from shaping, giving you directions, that social relationship that we enjoy in the church is quite important. Very, very important and when you go home, that is spectacular (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 7 years).

³ All participants spoken to are related to the Christian belief. Although Ghana also has a small population of Muslims, none of the participants was follower of the Islam

Moreover it is a place to celebrate the faith. In many African countries this is done by dancing and singing. This is also something the participants experience when they go to an African church in the Netherlands.

Abena: I like to go to church. If I can, I go every Sunday. Yes, it is part of me. You cannot practice your religion without the church. Some people say: I believe in my own way. But you cannot believe in God on your own. Faith is the body of Jesus and it breathes people. So you cannot say, I stay outside the church and I believe in my own way. It is part of life in the church and the church is the body of faith. And the church is no building, the church are the people (female, age group 36-40, residential duration 20 years).

(Ik ga graag naar de kerk. Als dat kan, ga ik elke zondag. Ja, dat hoort erbij. Je ken niet zonder de kerk geloven. Je kan niet op jezelf blijven als je geloofd. Sommige mensen zeggen: ik geloof op mijn eigen manier. Maar geloven kun je niet alleen. Geloof is het lichaam van Jezus en het ademt mensen in. Dus je kan niet zeggen, ik blijf buiten en ik geloof op mijn eigen manier. Dat hoort bij het leven van de kerk en het kerk is het lichaam. En de kerk is niet een gebouw, de kerk zijn de mensen.)

In the next text block the description of an observation in a service in a catholic church is provided. Important elements will be discussed hereafter

Text box 5.3 Observation at a church service



The 'Boomkerk'(Tree church)

The observation takes place in a church in Amsterdam. The church is located at a large road and surrounded by (to the left), the house where the priests live and some shops and houses. The people living around here are students and (migrant) families of different descent. An estimated number of 150 people visited the church service at this Sunday afternoon. The large majority of the people was colored. Including the observer there were three other white people in church. The service was held in a square hall, next to the church. Father Affum told the central heating in the church had broken down and because there was no money to fix the central heating the services were held in this hall, until the weather outside was better and the church had warmed up a bit.

The hall was a square, with a glass ceiling. You could look up to the sky. Also on the right hand side there were windows. The walls in the back, to the left and the front were white. The floor was black and the chairs were people were sitting on were red with black.

In the front there was a large white table, with an increase to put a book on, in the middle of the table. On the left of this table was a pulpit, a place where people can speak from. This was also white. In front of the large white table and to the right of it, were plastic, coloured flowers, in about three large bouquets.

The choir was sitting to the left of the white tables and the public was sitting in front of it.

Behind the large white table there were three men and one girl, who helped the priest. They were sitting on beige chairs. Also on the white table was a copper bowl, with water in it.

The service started with singing by the choir and the church joined the choir in singing. A word of Welcome was said by Father Affum, followed by some events, where a tube was filled with incense, which was swept around the church. Thereafter the public in church was sprinkled by water, accompanied by some words of the priest. This Holy water was received by the people in church by their eyes closed and the shouting of 'Halleluja'. It looked like they were surrendering to God. During the service the singing and playing of music in the church, were the factors of celebration and livelihood. While singing, the people in church started dancing and the choir praised the Lord very intensely. One song was performed by a solo singer and the people in church were clapping and dancing with him. The singing was followed by reading passages from the bible, by different people from church. While reading the bible, the people in the church were confirming the sentences from the bible, by shouting 'Yes' or something in that sense.

Father Affum started a long speech, based on parts of the bible (lecture). During this lecture, people were literally answering his questions. After this, some songs were sung and people danced again. Half way the service money was collected from people in church. Two bowls were set in front of the church and people were walking to the front to put money in here. All people in church were putting in money, some in Ghanaian Cedi, other in Euros. Most people in church put in paper money. Hereafter, a select group of people from church walked up front with plates with food and drinks and other supplies (like toilet paper and detergent), which were received by Father Affum and some other priests. This all, was accompanied by singing of the choir. Again some songs were sung by all of the church.

At the end of the service a woman came forward and made some announcements about the meetings that were scheduled this week and she told about the happenings in the community. She also introduced a woman, who had been in church before. She is a (Ghanaian) politician and was looking for votes for the regional elections at the beginning of March. She was there again now, to tell she was re-elected in the municipality board. She was thanking the people in church for their support. After this the choir sang some last songs together with the people in church. After the service there was tea and coffee for the public. The public stayed some time and talked to each other.

The atmosphere in the church was exuberant. Children were running around at the start of the service and people were talking to each other loudly. During the service the emotions were very clear. People were dancing and waving their hands, closing their eyes. The scent of incense was stunning during the service. The singing and dancing of the choir and the public was very intense. The atmosphere in the church after the service was still very vibrant after the church. Everyone was talking to everyone and there was much physical contact.

In observing the church service of a (mostly) Ghanaian congregation, the practice of social life in church was noticed:

The people entering the church started talking to one another and often a hug was shared. Almost all people were talking to someone. When the service started the liveliness of the service increased physical contact between people. During all songs people in church were dancing together. After the service coffee and tea was served. Although some people left the church, the majority of the people stayed in the church and chatted to other people. Up to two hours after the service people stayed in the church and interacted with each other.

“People were talking to each other, shaking hand and hugging each other or gave a knock on the shoulder. Children were running around. People were shouting names and made conversation. The church was full of noise and laughter” (Observation, April 2010).

The observation of the service gave the impression of a social gathering with the important function of celebrating faith together. Especially this togetherness seemed important. This was observed as

At one time during the service people shook the hand of the person sitting next to him/her and said ‘God bless you’. Also people started walking around and gave some other people a hand with the same message. (observation, April 2010)

During the next song that was sang, all people took each others’ hand and kept holding the hands in course of the song. (observation, April 2010)

Also, the participants described the intimate atmosphere they felt, when they were in church. Rosalyn attends church regularly and she really feels at home when dancing together in church.

Rosalyn: I find it very nice, I am very happy about it. If you go to the church once a week. I see my African friends and we are talking and singing and dancing. It makes me happy, because when I was here in the beginning, my Father was here as well. And then I dress myself in nice African clothes. All people dance and then I feel like I am home (female, age group 36-40, residential duration 12 years).

(Ik vind dat leuk, ik ben er ook blij mee. Als je een keer per week naar de kerk ga. Ik zie mn Afrikaanse mensen en we gaan praten en zingen en dansen. Maakt me blij, omdat toen ik hier in het begin was, was mijn Vader ook hier. En dan ga ik mooi in Afrikaanse kleren naar de kerk gaan. Wordt dan veel gedanst en dan voel ik thuis.)

In conversations after the service, some people told about the role of the social contacts in church in their lives:

‘I cannot work long and when I get stressed I get an attack. So this makes me dependent on the people from church. They give me money and sometimes they visit me to see how I am doing. But there is no cure. I am glad I can talk to people sometimes, but it will not make me better. I hope God will hear my prayers. He has a plan with me, but I don’t know what it is.’

‘This is my free time in the week. Just go to church and see my friends. That gives me hope en strength for the next week.’ (observation, April 2010).

Samuel explains why it is different to go to a Dutch church compared to an African congregation. He experienced both church communities in the Netherlands and stays in the Dutch church, because they do not preach money for the community. He does not have the money to give to the church.

Samuel: It is a white church, so there is some difference, because in the catholic, we spend all the time on the seat, until it is finished. The pastor does not preach money. Everything that you are doing is sit and listen. But in the African churches people are more alive and celebrating (male, group 41-45, residential duration 11 years).

The social contacts in church are one of the most important social networks to participants. It is the one thing they are familiar to, which has always been of great importance in their life and a place where they can relate to people with the same background. Meeting with people with the same spirit and the same feeling towards a spiritual creature. It is not only about meeting and celebrating faith with other people, the church also creates a social security. When people cannot take care of themselves the church can be the social place people are looking for. Also in church people can express themselves as they used to do in their church back in Ghana. As

dancing, singing and playing music is a large part of the church service (see text box 5.3), participants like they can also experience this tradition in the Netherlands. Dressing up for a service is a part of this life. The effort taken to put on African clothes is done for the whole community and is a way of showing respect, not only to God, but also to the community. It also provides the participants with a status symbol, respect, when being dressed in the best clothes they have.

In the church the participants experience some sense of belonging. By belonging to a congregation in the Netherlands, participants feel they do not have to give up the way of celebrating faith in Ghana. These feelings can be shared by the other Christians they meet in church.

Samuel: I feel part of all the members of the church. Because in the church there is no discrimination. You sit there in Christianity. We are all the same. People are not looked at if they are black or white. So I have experienced it as you are embraced by everybody (male, group 41-45, residential duration 11 years).

Abebe: Then, you know you are devoted to each other when you are in a religious society or something, everyone with religion is bridging. You should be good. Everyone is everybody's keeper. So at least you know you can find some very genuine people and some very honest people, to deal with religion in this society (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 2 years).

Theresa: I believe as a Christian, that we should not stop meeting as Christians. Where ever I find myself it is good to meet. We can share our faith and our feelings (female, age group 31-35, residential duration 2 years).

By being in church some kind of reciprocal empathy is felt. In the church everyone is the same and differences in background are not noticed. Also all good characteristics are appointed to the people that join the church. When being in the church everyone is honest and good. The participants want to share in these traits. Also discrimination and other negative experiences some participants encounter in the Dutch society are left behind when entering the church. The embrace of all people in church, offers a secure place in the lives of the participants. In the church participants feel they can be an *insider*, where they sometimes still feel like an outsider outside of church.

Part of this feeling of belonging is a sense of belonging to God. It means participants feel a large connection to God and are admitted to the circle of believers. Although this sense of belonging is largely connected to one person (God), it is very important to the participants to know they also belong to His good will. When belonging to God, all miseries come to an end and positive feelings are finding their way in the well-being of the participants.

Abena: For me it is the number one in my life. I remember that God shaped me and he knows, better than anyone, what I need and which paths I should go. So I leave it to Him. And I like Him and I maybe have more contact with Him then with people. I think I can better tell him about the things that are not going right in my life, as I can tell it to people (female, age group 36-40, residential duration 20 years).

(Voor mij is het echt nummer 1 in mijn leven. Ik herinner me dat God mij heeft geschapen en hij weet beter wat ik nodig heb en welke paden en wat ik moet doen. Dus is laat het aan Hem. En ik vind Hem ook aardig en ik heb meer contact met Hem dan misschien met mensen. Ik vind dingen in mijn leven die niet goed zitten, kan ik beter aan hem vertellen dan aan mensen.)

Edward: In principle he is everything, that is my opinion. I think everything I achieved is by God. You can have your own talents, but without the help of God, nothing happens. I have seen a few

things in my life and I thought: This is the Hand of God. I feel He took me into His arms (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 16 years).

(In principe is Hij alles. Ik, ja ik vind, dat is mijn mening, ik denk dat ik alles wat ik gewoon bereik heb, is gewoon door God. Ik bedoel, ik kan...Je kan zelf je talenten hebben en hoe vaak mensen aan God vertellen, maar er gebeurt niks. Ik heb een paar dingen in mijn leven gezien en gedacht dit is de hand van God. Ik heb het gevoel dat hij me heeft opgenomen in Zijn Koninkrijk.)

The participants associate God with good qualities and they want to be directed in this way. They are very grateful towards their God.

It gives peace and quiet to the participants when they know they do not have to solve their problems on their own, especially when they feel they cannot talk to anyone but God. They feel religion is like a protective shield, that protects them from making wrong decisions and gives hope for the future, when things already got into a wrong direction. This shows again that the religion is a destiny for the participants and there is a dependent relationship between God and the participants. This dependency can be quite strong, as they leave their decisions to a sign of God. This indicates they try to find the security in God, because they feel they lack this security in the situation they are in at the time.

Furthermore, by being in the church, especially a Ghanaian/African congregation, participants experience a part of their ethnic background. The continuation of this commemoration in the Netherlands is expressed by some of the participants as 'feeling at home'. Church and religion play a large role in the culture of the participants. It represents one of their daily occupations in life.

First a Dutch pastor from an African congregation explains how he sees the Ghanaian migrants use their social networks in church. Although he is not African himself, he can see up close how the Ghanaian feel about church. Joe and Kaleb explain it from the perspective of the Ghanaian migrant.

Pastor of an African congregation: The most important contacts are run by the church. It reminds them of the situation at home. The church and the social structure around it is of great importance.

(De belangrijkste contacten lopen bijna allemaal via de kerken. Het herinnert hen aan de thuis situatie. De kerk en de sociale structuur daaromheen is van groot belang.)

Interviewer: Why is that religion important?

Joe: If I am not mistaking, all these things we are doing, definitely come to an end. But we do not know when that is coming to an end. So when you want to do something with it, you go to church. I was always going to church. So once you come here, you want to continue. God does not only exist in Ghana, but also here in the Netherlands. So you try to, not being in your room and praying is the best, cause, it is a good fellowship, to be around other people (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 2 years).

Kaleb: I don't know if there is much difference, but eh where it is being conducted. Like, we all worship one God, but eh the way in Ghana, we play a lot of music and drums and shouting and dancing. But that is not done in a typical Dutch Church. That is how it is conducted. And a lot of noise we make in Ghana, here it is more quiet. That is also why I go to the African congregation here (male, age group 31-35, residential duration 6 years).

Participants conceive the contacts they have in church as another opportunity to be together with people with the same background. To be with a community with the same traditions in service and faith makes participants feel comfortable in church. Different elements of the

traditions of the participants come to life in the church. They experience feelings they also have in the church in Ghana. These feelings are positive for the participants.

Social approval is already established, so participants explain they don't have to worry about this confirmation by people in church. It is already there. Relating to the traditions one is familiar with establishes a feeling of security in a country with other traditions. As the pastor of the church says: 'The roots of someone is the basis whereupon someone builds and stands'. To stay in the Ghanaian culture, confirms you are a Ghanaian. Kaleb and Will think by having contact with other Ghanaians, they feel at home.

Kaleb: I suppose it depends on, when I am in a Ghanaian church, then I feel more at home. Like I am in Ghana. Then you are talking your own local language and that is making you feel good (male, age group 31-35, residential duration 6 years).

Will: I feel wonderful then [being with Ghanaian friends]. It is chatting, forget about the culture you are in at that moment. Doing African things. It makes you feel you don't have to try your hardest. I have a lot of African friends (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 8 years). (Ik voel me dan prachtig. Het is kletsen, even de cultuur vergeten. Even Afrikaanse dingen doen. Je hoeft dan niet heel hard je best te doen. Ik heb veel Afrikaanse vrienden.)

It can be questioned if it is the homely feeling that creates positive feelings or it are the specific people the participants are with. Most probably the feelings of ethnicity are a large part of the influence on the lives of the participants. The feeling of ethnicity enhances the feeling of having an own identity and being alike to others. Where the participants feel different from the Dutch people, being able to be with people with the same identity makes the participants more at ease. It is more comfortable. By protecting or reinstating the traditions of Ghana, the roots cannot be forgotten and this is where a large part of the participants is focused on.

Within the contacts with other Ghanaian in the Netherlands also another important issue comes up, which is helping people. An act which is also connected to the social background of the participants. Helping and supporting others introduces participants to the dependency they can have on people or how people can be dependent on them. Sarah describes why it is important to her to help others. Giving help is a wonderful feeling. It takes her back to the center of what is important. Mosi explains how this feeling of taking care of others is also very important in the church. He feels it is very important to create a collective feeling of helping people in the community.

Sarah: I really like helping friends who are in trouble. Because I don't know, if you are in need, you need something, they can be there for you in another way. They can also help me. So me, I don't want to help somebody and I need back. I want to help somebody from my heart (female, age unknown, residential duration 14 years).

Mosi: When someone is sick, you see the whole church moving to visit that person that is sick. And that alone, you feel that you are with other people. And that is quite important (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 7 years).

The feeling of helping others provides some sense of social security. The participants indicate that when helping others they can also expect this in return. There is trust surrounding the social contacts within church and among the other Ghanaian contacts, which creates interdependency, which is important to regain a trustworthy social network in the Netherlands.

The social networks with other migrants in the Netherlands are a great support to the participants. The social networks are related to the social life in the Netherlands and the church

life. Both serve similar functions to the social well-being of the participants. The contacts with other Ghanaian migrants show they still belong to the Ghanaian traditions and norms and values. By having Ghanaian friends not much changes and they can still live their lives as they are used to. This provides also a sense of security and familiarity. The security of this identity makes the participants very comfortable. Belonging is important, because it means you are still part of a larger group and participants can hold on to their old identity. This also relates to belonging to faith and the church community. The feelings of being with God and people who also believe in God, indicates participants are not alone and can hold on to their way of celebrating faith, together with others. Also relating to the Ghanaian traditions and believes fulfills the participants with very positive feelings. The sharing of food, speaking the language, celebrating faith etc. are practices which are linked to good memories and moments of positive social well-being in their lives. Next the sharing of emotions, like taking care of each other, support and love, facilitates positive social well-being among the participants. To be able to help others which are in need and being taking care when they themselves are in need is important to the participants. It is a social duty, which is very fulfilling. These conclusions are reflected in the observations among several social networks.

5.3 Social contacts with Dutch people

Most participants did have some sort of contact with Dutch people. The quantity and quality of the contacts with Dutch people differed per interviewee. Some had established some social ties before they arrived in the Netherlands, others built social ties with the Dutch during their time in the Netherlands. A few of the respondents did not feel they needed any contact with Dutch people, alone from the daily situations in which they need to take part.

5.3.1 Meeting Dutch contacts

Some participants already new some Dutch people before coming to the Netherlands. This also affected the choice to migrate to the Netherlands. Having some social ties with people from the Netherlands, made this country more accessible to the participants. They met these people in Ghana, on different occasions. One worked with Dutch people in Ghana, another met some Dutch people during their holidays in Ghana. Dave told he met a girl during a feast in Ghana. Kaleb met some Dutch people trough his parents.

Dave: I came here for a girl about 4 years ago. She was in Ghana for a traineeship and went back to Holland after a while. We met during a party in the city center. It was nice, this was one of the first foreigners I met. I heard a lot of stories about Europe and I thought it would be good to go to Europe. I hoped I could get a job easily and make some money for me and my girlfriend (male, age group 21-25, residential duration 4 years).

Kaleb: I know [calls some names]. Some Dutch people who lived in Ghana before. They are here now. I worked with one of them in the hospital. He was also a friend of my parents and he advised me to go to the Netherlands. When I showed up and wanted to do physiotherapy, he said: Holland is also good in training students. So, then I came to this country and also he came back to this country, because it was easier to help me here. Because of finances and papers (male, age group 31-35, residential duration 6 years).

These contacts are all based on meetings with Dutch people in the home country. Although for some participants the choice to migrate to another country was already settled for some years, these participants, who met Dutch people, could define these contacts as decisive. The choice to migrate to the Netherlands was based on the contact with these people and the choice to go to the Netherlands was supported by these contacts. By arriving in the Netherlands these

acquaintances proved to be of importance in relating to the Dutch society and also starting off financially.

Participants who did not know Dutch people before they came to the Netherlands, met them on several places. The most important places are at the working place, the former educational institutions or with special activities, like a festivity in town. Mosi tells about his first contact with some of his Dutch friends and the impact they still have on his life:

Mosi: Back in 1999 there was an opening in the place I worked and there is a lady. I was in my Ghanaian clothes and then she came to me and said: Ah, are these Ghanaians? Are you from Ghana? And I said: Yeah. Not knowing that this woman had been in Ghana before. So that is how it started. We started talking. (...) Since that time I have been in touch with them, they took me in their house and then I saw they went to my village! So it was a surprise. So those people were taking photograph with them. So since then, even when I am in Ghana, I was calling them, they call me and they come for me. I come back and I bike to them and they come to me and our Ghanaian meetings. They are quite old, but that couple I love (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 7 years).

This Dutch couple is so important because they are taken care of him like a child. They can serve as a substitute, as long as participants are away from the family in Ghana and Mosi can come whenever he wants. Also they are familiar with Ghana and Ghanaian and this is also an important issue in having contact with Dutch people. When Dutch are familiar with other Ghanaian or African, the participants feel it is easier to get along with the Dutch and feel they are more open to the Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands.

5.3.2 No ties with Dutch

There are also participants who do not feel like meeting Dutch people. They feel they have enough social contacts besides the Dutch and do not believe they need contacts with other than their Ghanaian friends.

Participants indicated that they see a large difference between the social life in Ghana and that in the Netherlands. The culture of social contacts in Ghana plays a large part in that matter. Social life in the Netherlands as well as in Ghana seemed important, but the frequency and style of social life is different in the two countries. In Ghana the social contacts were more informal and not so much regulated. In the Netherlands you have to make an appointment to see friends, while it is normal in Ghana to walk in at any time. Also the kind of friendship differed. Where in the social life in Ghana you talk with everyone and it is easier to get in contact with people. In the Netherlands it is more difficult to approach people. The culture of the participants is based on the life outside and meeting each other everywhere on the streets, whereas the Dutch society is less accessible, because people cannot be approached as easily on the streets. The life is more inside.

Theresa: In Ghana you do not live in corners..

Interviewer: what do you mean with 'in corners'?

Theresa: a small square room that I have here, I am here every day, morning after morning I am here. In Ghana there is no way that you can sit in your room morning after morning. Someone will come and ask you why you are inside. You always see someone you can say hello to. Much more interactions, that is nice (female, age group 31-35, residential duration 2 years).

Edward: It is also, just the street life. Everything is outside. Yes, in the summer the weather is good here, but in the winter you are just inside. That is something I miss; being outside with friends, doing social outside and music (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 16 years).

Anna: ...Just as I am.

Interviewer: What do you mean with 'Just as I am...'?

Anna: I don't know, a different life, more to live on your own here and make appointments before you come. It is bigger and in Ghana the life is smaller. It is easier to get together and then you do things together. Here there is more distance and you have to arrange more if you want to see each other (female, age group 16-20, residential duration 2 years).

The participants liked this informal aspect of friendship in Ghana. They miss that aspect, especially in the beginning of their stay in the Netherlands. They feel they are, in a way, left out of the Dutch society. People are not approaching them as they are used to and they find it difficult to get in contact with the Dutch, as they are not as open to the approaches of the participants. The way Dutch people act in daily social life, is not as they are used to and that already prevents them from having social contacts with Dutch. If they feel the Dutch are not that open to them, they do not open up to the Dutch people. Participants indicate they do not approach the Dutch people, because they do not feel the need to be in contact with them and interact with the Dutch.

The only time these participants turn to Dutch people is when they need help to arrange some things or translate letters for institutions. These are people from work, which are often weak ties⁴, or people from a migrant organization.

Interviewer: Do you have social contacts with Dutch people?

Abebe: Ehm, not really. But eh, because the language is a problem, occasionally I had to give them my letters to read for me. And about general processes. If there is something to be done and I don't understand how to go about it. I rely on some people for this (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 2 years).

For help participants often turn to weak ties, because these are often the only Dutch contacts these participants have. Only when they cannot turn to anyone else (which is the case, when the Dutch language is involved), the participants ask for help of Dutch contacts. It seems like the participants do not want to be too dependent upon the Dutch contacts. When they would ask more, they would feel obliged to make more of these contacts. They are not really willing to do this, because they do not feel Dutch are the kind of people they want to be close to. The participants feel differences in culture and language between Dutch people and the participants prevail.

The language barrier is also a hindrance in making social contacts. Although most of the participants speak Dutch, it is important to master the language in some level, before you can really make friends.

Anna: You cannot, so to say, make a real friendship. With the Dutch people you have to talk another language. And if you do not know some of the word, you are screwed, that is hard. Then you cannot say everything in the right way and you do want to do that. With African people you can say everything

(female, age group 16-20, residential duration 2 years).

(Je kunt, zeg maar, niet een echt vriendschap maken. Met die Nederlandse mensen moet je een andere taal praten. En als je sommige woorden niet weet dan ben je de lul. Dat is moeilijk. Dan kun je alles niet goed zeggen en dat wil je wel. Tegen Afrikaanse mensen kun je alles zeggen.)

⁴ "(...)our acquaintances (*weak ties*) are less likely to be socially involved with one another than are our close friends (*strong ties*)". (Granovetter, 1973).

Employee of a migrant organization: *They speak English, that is in their favor, this is something the Dutch can also speak and the Dutch also approach them in English. This is easy for them, but also sets up a barrier to learn the Dutch language. It is easier for them, just to continue speaking English.*

The employee of the migrant organization explains the Dutch themselves are also creating a barrier for the migrants. She feels it would help the migrants when Dutch people continue to speak their own language. This seems to be objected by the participants who feel the Dutch are not speaking English to them and are offended by this. The stand the participants take in this matter, makes them more offensive in developing ties with Dutch people. As explained by the employee of the migrant organization, mainly the participants do not seem to be interested in making contact with Dutch people.

Employee of a migrant organization: *We are trying to contribute to their well-being, by looking for ways to help them to get to know the society. But most are really not interested, other that they can meet other Africans here.*

And as shown in the observation, in a group of 24, only two are interested in meeting Dutch people in a project. They also seem to be insecure about the contact they will have with the Dutch. Contact with other Ghanaian is much safer, because it is familiar.

As explained in the previous section on contact with Ghanaians, Ghanaians associate a lot with other Ghanaians in the Netherlands and they do not seem to need any contacts with Dutch. Their lives revolve around contact with other Ghanaians and together with the way social life is practised in the Netherlands and the language barrier which is built, a part of the participants is happy with their life as it is, without too much contact with Dutch people. But there are several other reasons for the participants not to develop social contacts with the Dutch. The following sections will explain why the social network with the Dutch is not important to the social well-being of a part of the participants.

Participants told about respect in relation to the Dutch people. As immigrants they are sometimes confronted with their minority-status in the society. This might affect their feelings of social well-being more than that of original inhabitants of a society. By not feeling to be treated respectfully by Dutch people, it can also explain why participants do not enclose them into their social networks. Participants feel they are especially being looked down upon their skin colour. This is creating a gap between the participants and the people who disrespect them. This gap is difficult to overcome, because it is based on a, for the participants, fundamental characteristic of their culture and life. It is depressing for them to know, that for some people they will never be equal. This keeps them from having contact with the Dutch society as well.

Edward: *Well I have to, I can't do much about it. Sometimes I need to complain, but the major problem I see, that most of the Dutch who have not travelled outside. To live in Africa, to experience our way of life. They still have the old mentality about Africans, because can you imagine someone can even ask you: Do you have buildings in Africa? Do you have traffic lights in Africa? Surprisingly, someone you don't even expect to ask you a question. Also the way some Dutch people look down upon us 'Africans'. It is the insecurity in this country, I do not know, what will happen. It is something that is even not just the satisfaction. I don't feel comfortable at all at those moments (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 16 years).*

Brian: *Also the way some Dutch people look down upon us 'Africans'. And then the issue of generalization, when one African does something, it has been generalized to all Africans. One African is an individual, and you cannot generalize that, because there is no research to that. Because there are certain acquisitions, that have no scientific background (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 4 years).*

Participants feel their appearance and habits are not accepted by Dutch people. This is an image the participants created for themselves and it is hard to break through. They feel when they are not accepted by their background, they are not able to be respected by the Dutch and respect them in return. The bridge that is created in the eyes of the participants is difficult to withdraw. But by feeling they are generalized by 'the Dutch', also indicates it is a natural process to create a generalized feeling towards a group of people. To break through this generalized pattern is difficult.

Edward also blames the distance between Dutch people and him on the ignorance of Dutch people on his country and culture. Because people do not know about his country, they place him at a lower position in the society. It hurts him that is he is not treated as any other, especially when people know so little about him. This creates a distance, which he is not willing to overcome. When there would be more knowledge among Dutch people on the way of living and country of the participants, the differences might be easier to overcome.

But also the other way around, participants feel a lack of respect towards Dutch people. They expressed the difficulty they have with the way Dutch people express and experience faith, or do not believe at all. Especially the absence of faith, homosexuality and the smoking of weed were seen as abnormal processes in a developed society.

Abebe: But I see a lot of very Christian, calling it religious, Dutch people. But a lot about 80 percent of people, they just think there is no God. But in Ghana, Wauw, you really feel it. You are qualified, but you don't have a job. Then you see everything is shattered, you can be hungry and , you know, It makes you closer to God. When you believe in the spirit, the spirit will come and bring me some. It really makes you to believe in something, whereas the Dutch don't believe in anything because, everything is there for them, so what should they worry about. So that is some of the checks and balances that being in the society puts you through. For instance, we don't smoke, it is not that I can't smoke or so, but, Christianity they think your body is the body of God and you should not put anything in (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 2 years).

Joe: I find it very difficult to accept. For smoking weed, Yes you can smoke it, I don't have any problem, because you choose to smoke, but for especially with homosexuality, I am trying very hard to understand it, but. I am very liberal about things, but I still don't understand that. The body is a preservation of God, you should not spoil it (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 2 years).

Samuel: And it says in the bible that a man should not marry a male and a woman should not marry a female, but it is that in the Dutch culture. So where are they standing? They brought the bible, but when you come to meet Christians here, they are different (male, group 41-45, residential duration 11 years).

This may also indicate why some of the participants are not relating very well to the Dutch people. As religion, faith and God are a priority in the life of the participants, they feel not many Dutch share their vision. They notice this, as they tell in the quotes above. The participants feel it is a desecration of faith. Participants feel some of the Dutch are playing with the things God created and this feels quite unfortunate to them. To create social ties, it is important to share a common background, at least on things that are important in the lives of the participants. Also they feel, the Dutch are not consistent in their behaviour. Although they say they are Christian, they do not act on the rules set by the Bible. This is confusing for the participants and feel a bit hypocrite. As the Dutch cannot show respect to the things created by God, the participants cant have respect for them and that is the basis for being friends. But also a lot of Dutch people do not share the background of the participants. Participants link not being Christian, to a lack of

respect to the world around them. Although being Christian is presented to be a choice in the Netherlands, the participants cannot really respect this.

As the participants do not feel they are either respected or recognized by the Dutch, it depresses their feelings of social well-being. For these participants the (lack of a) Dutch social network does not do them much good. To protect themselves from not being hurt by Dutch people and feeling comfortable, participants turn to their own culture again and try to enhance their feelings of well-being, by holding on to their original habits. Participants are romanticizing and surrounding themselves with their culture, to create a kind of defence mechanism.

Brian: (...) the whole day you experience the Dutch life, outside. You are working, have people around you, in the street in the city, in the shops, you try to interact. And you know, you still need to feel some kind of nativity around you. So the native people, like the Africans, you come home and you see them, it is like a spirit of coming home. So that is why I really like living among my African friends (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 4 years).

5.3.3 Participants with a Dutch partner

For the participants with a Dutch partner the association with Dutch people is more straightforward. The participants who married a Dutch partner do have stronger social ties with the Dutch networks. These partners already have their own social networks within the Dutch population and the Ghanaian partners are easily introduced to their social networks. The ones that came here for a partner are directly related to the social networks of their partner and stretch these are important to them. Still, this link is not as straightforward to the interviewees that met a Dutch partner in the Netherlands. They already established their own ties before meeting their Dutch partner. They are not directly linked to the relatives of their partner and are more aware of the existence bonding interests. If this feeling of mutual interest is not there, they are less likely to enter into strong ties and relate to these people only as acquaintances. But still these are participants who do have more contacts with Dutch people, related to their partner or not.

Abena got to know her partner in the Netherlands, by a mutual friend. They met at a dinner with friends. She explains:

Abena: A Dutch partner makes life in the Netherlands easier, in a way. With filling out of papers. But I also have arranged much myself. I learned much from him about customs, like funerals and weddings. But we are also two very different people. He has his own things and I have mine. We do not do much together, we do our own thing, with our own friends (female, age group 36-40, residential duration 20 years).

(Een Nederlandse partner maakt het leven in Nederland wel makkelijker. Op een bepaalde manier. Met het invullen van formulieren. Maar ik heb ook wel veel zelf geregeld. Maar wel veel geleerd van gebruiken, bijvoorbeeld begrafenissen en huwelijken. Maar we zijn ook twee totaal verschillende mensen. Hij heeft zijn eigen dingen en ik ook. We doen niet heel veel dingen samen, we doen ons eigen ding, met onze eigen vrienden.)

Will came here with his partner, whom he met in Ghana. She was working there for a short while and they fell in love. Will decided to come to the Netherlands to be with her. He explains:

Will: I find it very important and also easier [to have a Dutch partner]. If you are in Africa, you are in Africa. There it is easier with an African wife. But for me, I am in another culture. And for me, it is important, I want to know more. My girlfriend discusses a lot with me and a few things are easy for me to do. There are things I cannot do, but she does make it easier for me. Living together, her parents welcome me. We eat together and we eat with her parents. And we eat with her family and friends. Her friends also become my friends and that is really great (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 8 years).

(Ik vind het heel belangrijk en makkelijker. Als je in Afrika bent, ben je in Afrika. Makkelijker met Afrikaanse vrouw. Maar voor mij, ik zit in een andere cultuur. En voor mij, het is belangrijk, ik wil meer weten. Mijn vriendin overlegt mij heel veel dingen en paar dingen is makkelijke voor mij te doen. Wat ik niet kan doen, maar met haar is het makkelijke voor mij. Samen leven, zij, haar ouders vinden mij welkom. We eten samen en we eten met haar ouders. En we eten met haar familie en vrienden. Haar vrienden zijn ook mijn vrienden geworden en dat is heel fijn.)

Edward had experienced a period in which he was married to a Dutch woman and a period with a spouse from Africa. He does see differences in his social contacts during these two different settings. He explains:

Edward: After my [Dutch] wife passed away, I lost a lot of my Dutch friends. I then understood that I knew these people especially, because they were friends to my wife. But I never established a good connection with them myself. Now I have an African girlfriend and I also have established some more contacts with African friends again (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 16 years).

(Nadat mijn [Nederlandse] vrouw was overleden, verloor ik veel van mijn contacten met Nederlandse vrienden. Ik snapte toen dat ik hun vooral kende via mijn vrouw, maar nooit echt een goede band met ze had gehad. Nu heb ik een Afrikaanse vriendin en heb ik ook weer meer contacten met Afrikaanse vrienden.)

Especially this last example shows the social networks with Dutch people are influenced by a Dutch partner. When a partner is of another origin the social networks shift from being Dutch to a social network from other descent. It illustrates that when participants are especially linked to Ghanaians, this is where their network will especially revolve around, but when they meet with a Dutch partner or are open to Dutch people, this may shift to having social networks among Ghanaians as well as Dutch people. In other respects the participants with a Dutch partner are related strongly to the Ghanaian contacts as well, like other participants. They do feel it is important to see people as individuals and not as groups of Dutch and groups of Ghanaians.

5.3.4 Having contacts with Dutch people

There are participants who want to make an effort to develop contacts with Dutch people. They have the feeling they have to become familiar with the Dutch society. This also increases their chances of meeting Dutch and establishing ties with Dutch. The difference between the participants is largest here, when it comes to making an effort to associate themselves with the host country and its people. Noticing customs and perceiving the differences between the two cultures relates to the understanding of the participants to the culture and society surrounding them. Participants can choose to adjust to this the culture and habits of the Netherlands, but can also choose not to. Dave and Sarah choose to be part of the Dutch culture as well.

Dave: Important is integration, but not isolated integration. For example, when I look at Amsterdam, then you just have all Ghanaians in one place. They go to school or work and come back in that one group of the own community. What you learn in school about the language and the habits, you apply in this group. I always think integration is important, but that you integrate in the country that you live in and not within your own community (male, age group 21-25, residential duration 4 years).

(Ten eerste integratie, maar niet geïsoleerde integratie. Als ik kijk naar bijvoorbeeld Amsterdam, dan heb je gewoon alle Ghanezen in 1 plek. Ik ga naar school en ik kom terug in die ene groep van de eigen gemeenschap. Wat je leert ga je toepassen in je eigen groep. Dat is, ik heb altijd mijn mening dat integratie is ok, dat je integreert in een land met de mensen die hier wonen, maar niet binnen je eigen gemeenschap in Nederland., dat vind ik gewoon belangrijk)

Sarah: (...)But you are here then and you need to make the best of it. You learn the habits the people in the Netherlands have and built your own life. You have to learn the language and

integrate and built a social life on that. That is the source to improve the quality of life, wherever you live (female, age unknown, residential duration 14 years).

((...)) Maar dan ben je hier en dan kun je er beste van maken. Je leert mensen en de gewoonten. Dan kun je een eigen leven maken Je moet taal leren en integratie en sociaal leven daarmee opbouwen. Dat is de bron van verbeteren van kwaliteit van leven, waar je ook woont. Maakt niet uit waar.)

These participants have strong ties with Dutch. The Netherlands has become their home country as well and they do not want to make any differentiations. They like their friends for who they are and do not pay attention to the skin colour anymore. Participants who do not have contacts with Dutch people, see Dutch people as one population and not as separate human beings. That is a difference between the expressions of the participants in this section and in the previous section on participants without ties with Dutch people.

Abena: Dutch people...I would rather look at them as individuals. I cannot say they are all the same. And this also applies to people from other countries. At my work there are people which I like and some that I do not like. Some people get you and others don't. People are not all the same, but this is not dependent upon the country of origin (female, age group 36-40, residential duration 20 years).

(Nederlandse mensen... Ik wil ze liever als individu bekijken. Ik kan niet zeggen, ze zijn allemaal hetzelfde. En dat zou ik ook willen voor mensen uit andere landen. Op mijn werk zijn er mensen, die zijn echt, sommige mensen. Ik hoef niks te zeggen en dan snappen ze me wel. En sommige mensen snappen je echt niet. En dan denk ik ja...Het is heel verschillend. De mensen zijn niet hetzelfde. Maar dit wordt niet bepaald door waar de mensen vandaan komen)

Some participants are open to another culture and also want to belong to the Dutch society. But the feeling of needing to belong to the Dutch society seems to be based on other things than wanting to belong to the Ghanaian society. Participants explain about their sense of belonging in the Dutch society:

Dave: it is good to know about the Dutch, otherwise I would not accept I would not understand the way of life of the Dutch. So I am here I am learning, I am integrating. I shall tell you, the first time that I came, there were certain things, I took so much offense, but now I take them as a joke. And there were certain things that I saw, I initially thought were abnormal, but now I see them as normal. Sometimes I even do the same things. This makes me feel good, to understand the people and feel you do the right thing at the right place (male, age group 21-25, residential duration 4 years).

Joshua: I am living here for some years now and I cannot come here and say someone is maybe a Dutch, and I am not. Then I would exclude myself and that is not good. I try to mingle in their culture. So I think it is very important to be part of the Dutch society. In Dutch society they do not live that way, so if I want to do this also. I want to do what the forefathers did in Ghana, when they got there (male, age group 46-50, residential duration 16 years).

Belonging to the Dutch society does not have the same meaning. When belonging to the Dutch society, participants try to understand the things they see. There is not a much deeper sense or felt connection to the Dutch society. This feeling of belonging to the Dutch society relates to a state the participants want to accomplish, in which they do not feel different from the Dutch society. Participants are eager to understand the things they see around them and understand what Dutch people are doing. But belonging, in the sense of connecting to the norms and habits of the Dutch society and feeling at home in the Netherlands, is not a level the participants all (want to) achieve. As participants have some knowledge about the way of life in the society, they could be taken up into the society, be accepted by Dutch people and can be part of social networks. This increases the feeling of being comfortable and also enhances the feeling of social

well-being. Although it might not be connecting to all that participants stand for, coming from another background. But being accepted by people and accept the people in the Netherlands, supports participants in their identity.

The participants try to achieve this sense of belonging by adapting to the society. Noticing the customs and perceiving the differences between the Ghanaian and the Dutch culture, initiates the understanding of these participants to the culture and society surrounding them. An interesting effort is made by Abebe. Although he does not always get Dutch people surrounding him, he is very happy in representing the Dutch culture.

Abebe: Usually on Wednesdays I go swimming in the evenings, Yeah, I want to be a swimmer for the Dutch national team, Somebody told me , I'll go with the disabled, the Paralympics. You race with the Paralympics, because every Dutch baby knows how to swim and I still swim like a baby. But I want to try (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 2 years).

5.3.5 Between two worlds

Some participants (who are also telling about their experiences in the sections on ties with Dutch) developed ties among the Dutch as well as among the Ghanaian. These networks can be really helpful in building a new life. These participants are committed to both parties and can settle with and evolve on both worlds. But it can also be hard to live in between two worlds. To have ties among the Dutch, but missing the close contacts with the Ghanaian can be hard and then it can depress the feelings of well-being. Both sides of the situation are explained by participants. Sarah is very happy in her role in networks with Dutch as well as Ghanaian. She sees the advantages of getting some of both worlds.

Sarah: I am doing things the Dutch way, I learn the language, I pay my taxes I learn from my Dutch husband, But I am connected to the Ghanaian social networks very much, In my shop in my free time. This creates a homely feeling, although I also learn a lot from the Dutch (female, age unknown, residential duration 14 years).

Abena finds it more difficult to live between the two worlds. She feels she is lacking contact with the Ghanaians in the Netherlands and she would like to associate with them more.

Abena: I am still in between two worlds. It really feels I need a bit of both. There are a lot of things. Here I do not have much contacts with other Ghanaians. I have more acquaintances who are Dutch. I also know the Ghanaian people, but I do not have much contact with them. It is not that I do not want to, but it just isn't so. When I was in The Hague, I saw them more in church. And there you talk together. But on weekdays, everyone is going to their work and I cannot visit someone that often. I don't have that. I would like to have people around, from both worlds (female, age group 36-40, residential duration 20 years).

(Ik zit nog tussen twee werelden. Het is echt een beetje van beide. Er zijn heel veel dingen. Hier heb ik niet heel veel contact met de Ghanese mensen. Ik heb meer kennissen die Nederlands zijn. Ik ken de Ghanese mensen ook, maar ik weet niet. Ik heb niet zoveel contacten met hun. En het is niet dat ik dat niet wil, maar ja, het is gewoon niet zo. Toen in Den Haag, was het meer de kerk. Daar zie je ze meer. Echt de zondag. En dan kun je met elkaar praten. Maar doordeweeks, iedereen is ook naar zijn werk en zo en ik kan niet zo vaak op bezoek bij iemand. Dat heb ik niet. Ik heb graag mensen om me heen, uit beide werelden.)

Will: I'm somebody, when I am with Dutch, I need to be Dutch. And When I am with African, I have to switch to being African. I do not want to mix that. I live with African as well as with Dutch. I cannot handle mixing this cultures. And also my friends do not like it (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 8 years).

(Ik ben iemand, als ik bij Nederlanders ben, dan moet ik Nederlands zijn. Als ik bij Afrikanen ben, moet ik ook dat kunnen. Ik wil dat niet door elkaar. Ik heb mijn eigen leven. Ik leef met Afrikaanse

mensen en ik leef met Nederlanders. Ik kan het niet goed mixen. Ik kan daar niet tegen. En mijn vrienden vinden het ook niet leuk.)

Living in between two worlds can be confusing to participants. They feel they have created a background in both the Dutch and the Ghanaian society, but it is not always easy to combine these worlds. To have feelings of belonging towards two cultures can be complicated and can summon confusing feelings. Not all participants find it easy to mix cultures and people do not often accept or understand, when using other habits as expected. The feelings of belonging get mixed up.

This paragraph shows the differences in social networks with Dutch among the participants and the different ideas there are about having contact with Dutch. The people who are not acquainted with Dutch people feel the language barrier and the cultural differences are too large to make the effort of getting to know Dutch people and they also feel Dutch people are not easy to relate to. The participants feel the Dutch people are not open to foreigners. Dutch people are also not living up to the norms and values of the participants, according to their responses. This is creating a sense of disrespect towards Dutch people. Participants are satisfied with the contacts they have and can do without social contacts with Dutch.

Dutch social networks have a different impact on the social well-being of some other participants, who do appreciate contact with Dutch people. Whereas people without Dutch social contacts perceive a lack of respect and recognition, other participants, with Dutch social contacts, feel a sense of belonging and respect when associating with Dutch. Participants who do have social contacts with Dutch often have another attitude towards Dutch people and towards integrating into the Dutch society. They do want to be a part of the Dutch society and feel that they can connect to the Dutch well. Having a partner increases the changes of associating to Dutch people.

5.4 Social contacts with people in the home country

The social networks with extended family in Africa seem to be the strongest bond that the participants still have with their home country. The family is a very important support system. The contact with the family is expected to be regular, at least once a week. This is a reciprocal understanding in most stories of the participants. The bond is based on advising each other and keeping up-to-date on the situation of one another. Also the recent situations in Ghana are discussed. Mosi is in the Netherlands for seven years now and has a nuclear as well as an extended family to take care of. Jonas is in the Netherlands for two years and is in regular contact with his mom and sisters. They explain:

Mosi: I am serious, It is one of the key things that you need to think about. Apart from calling, you need to keep in touch with your wife and child. And I have to get in touch with my siblings. Yes, so you can see that you have to be calling every day, and you don't have any option. Because you need to know how they are doing (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 7 years).

Jonas: Even then, since I came here, we have been talking to each other. When I do not call my mom within a week, she will call and ask : what is wrong? Then I feel like, I have a mom. Because that is something I do. I call my mom separate and I call my siblings. When I call my mom I feel I should have information about them (male, age group 31-35, residential duration 3 years).

The decision to migrate is often made in discussion with the family, or at least with the benefits for the family in mind. It exemplifies the importance of the family in whole of the migration process. The main reason to start the travel is to benefit the family, because the participants and the family believe the money and the 'better' life is in Europe/ U.S.A.. The better life is described

as a life with a better income, living conditions and better health care. The bond the participants describe is very strong. Participants always explained the bond they had with their family very extensively and illustrated the situation as being not favourable, but favourable for the family. That is the most important issue. As long as the family benefits from the migration process, they are willing to do anything. Kaleb explains that his decision to migrate to the Netherlands was very much supported by the family and community.

Kaleb: In Ghana, because of the economic situation, it is quite, everybody wishes you to have the chance to travel outside and make money and then you can do something for Ghana. (...) Your parents are very happy when you go to the States or Europe (male, age group 31-35, residential duration 6 years).

Also participants indicated the situation was difficult when a spouse and children are still living in Ghana. This made the importance of having contact with family in Ghana very intense. They often miss their spouse and children in the Netherlands and some are very driven to get them to the Netherlands. To have contact with wife and children reminds most of the participants of the situation they are in. The distance is often not understood by the children and it also reminds the interviewees of the responsibility they feel towards them. Abebe, who lives here for two years now, still misses his child every day. He is confronted with the questions of his child and this reminds him of the responsibilities he cannot fulfil at this moment.

Abebe: It is difficult. That is one of the biggest problems that I have. You go for a long period of work. And I think that when there is something you need to do, is get the spouse and child here. Especially when he is a kid. Because you can't keep people away for years. And sometimes he is asking me: I thought you were in Accra. Seven years and he doesn't even know! I felt very sad, because he did not know. That I was far away. So I feel like Oh! I need to bring him here. To get to know how long it takes him to get here. So I think, it is important, but it is really difficult (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 2 years).

Participants do keep a strong family bond, because it is the closest bond they still have with Ghana and the traditions of the country. For the participants the social contacts they maintain represent the Ghanaian traditions. Having a strong bond with the family is one of the values that is important to the Ghanaians. By remitting to the family they feel they show the people back in Ghana that they still preserve these values. Supporting parents and family is a way of showing respect. Especially the parents expect this kind of return of goods. The Ghanaian value asks the children to take care of their parents after they have taken care of them. Another reason to keep in close contact with the family and which is related to keeping connected with the Ghanaian culture, is that when returning to the country (for holiday or for good) it is important to be able to fit into the society, so nobody will notice you have left the country. Gita explains why it is important to do not feel like an alien, when going back to Ghana:

Interviewer: And why is it important to feel that nativity [ethnicity]?

Gita: It is important because ehm, well. I hope you know a little bit about culture. You cannot do without culture and as long as you cannot revise culture, you can never do without. And I think the African culture has to do with close ties and living together and that kind of social networking. You still have to feel that kind of thing. So even when you get to Ghana, after stay here for years, you do not look like some alien back home. Even though we try to integrate into the Dutch society or culture, we do not have to forget about traditional and our own culture also. I think it is important (female, age group 31-35, residential duration 12 years).

Participants do not want to stand out in their original society. They are so supportive of the traditions, that it is also important not to show any impact of the Dutch traditions when they are in their country of origin. This might damage their pride and status towards the Ghanaian community. Feeling ethnicity does the participant good and also creates a sense of belonging.

There is an important sense of commitment, not only to the family, but also in relation to the Ghanaian traditions. The Ghanaian traditions also include living together and investing in a social network, as Mosi explains:

Mosi: Most important are the social contacts, things that you need to do, commitments, visit the village, see how your siblings are doing. When my parents were alive, I had to see them. Of course you have also time with old time friends in the village. Particularly when there is a funeral. You have to go and celebrate the life of the person. These things I want to remember (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 7 years).

Sarah perceived that the traditions which are valuable to the family in Ghana, she could not always live up to in the Netherlands. This initially changed the relationship with her family. By not living according to the traditions of Ghana, she was not appreciated by her family anymore. This indicates how important the traditions and culture are to the Ghanaians. By losing the traditions, Sarah lost some of her ethnicity, according to her family, who could not accept this. This had an effect on the well-being of the participant. After some time the relationship with her family improved again, but it made an impression on her life.

Sarah: The relationship [with my family] did change. It was difficult for them, that I left. Also especially when they heard I was marrying a Dutch man. The marriage was not traditional and also my eating habits changed. I found it difficult they could not accept me anymore, it made me sad (female, age unknown, residential duration 14 years).

By being close to the family as well as Ghanaian traditions, participants create a sense of belonging. They are still part of the family, and with that also connected to the Ghanaian culture. When they regularly contact the family, help them in sharing ideas on family matters and provide family with the knowledge they gain in the Netherlands, it makes them feel important to the family. With this knowledge the family can develop more and maybe also help others in Ghana in developing. This can be said to be a social remittance to the family.

Joshua: You feel Ghanaian, no matter where you are, or where you are born. When you have the roots, you belong to this society. In Ghana, if you are going to a place, a party, they are cooking, dancing, drinking together and also enjoying together. It is a free country. You do what you want to do. This makes it a good place to live (male, age group 46-50, residential duration 16 years).

Brian: I am always very proud of being a Ghanaian and I always be proud to be a Ghanaian. Because ehm, Well, that is what I was born to be. I was born into the Ghanaian society and brought up in the Ghanaian way. Travelling does not make a difference. The difference. You are a down to earth person and the difference you should make, is made you aware of life for development. And that is where you have to acquire knowledge and where you have to work and where you have to help, in developing. So I am proud of being a Ghanaian and proud of being in the family, because it is a very happy and lovely family, which made me to who I am today (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 4 years).

Interviewer: *How do you feel you are still part [of the family]?*

Kaleb: Like now, I am living here, I can contact them. I will do anything, when there is something I have to do. If there is something with my parents or, wife or kid, I will do everything. But they will always call me when there is some information, we share information and advice on different matters. Then you know you are part of them. That is how I see it (male, age group 31-35, residential duration 6 years).

Joshua explains belonging to the society is a natural feeling, when you have been born in this society. Especially when the participants experience the differences with the Dutch society, they know they feel they belong to the Ghanaian society. And when being in close contact with the family, participants also experience they are still part of the family. Participants call to Ghana to

ask advice, but are also being involved in the family issues that exist in Ghana and the latest information on the family matters in Ghana. All participants are aware and happy about their belonging to their family, especially for love and their relation to the Ghanaian traditions.

The Ghanaian tradition and the family which is connected to this tradition makes the participants proud, because their identity is related to this. Being part of a Ghanaian family is a relation which can never be broken and this leaves the participants with a comfortable feeling. Moreover this identity they created in their years in Ghana, is also part of their being, they grew up with and is not easy to give up. The family is a large part of their memories and also the start of the creation of their identity. Participants like to belong to their family, because it makes them part of the Ghanaian culture, society and family. By being in regular contact with their family, they feel they are in control of their identity and are informed on any changes that are taking place in the situation in the home country.

Another positive gain on the social well-being is, by being involved in the family matters, participants have the feeling they can take care of people. Because it is part of their background, it is important to be able to do this from the Netherlands.

Rosalyn: I find it important to do that [remitting]. Because they are there, they have, I know myself, I know I have a good life now. You are born there, but I am not from a rich family, but from a poor family. So, I lived there and now I am here. I see myself as a rich person. If you think about how I lived there. I think for them. I see myself in the past. And so, it is not good, that feeling. That is why I do it (female, age group 36-40, residential duration 12 years).

(Ik vind dat wel belangrijk om te doen. Omdat hun is daar, zij hebben, ik ken mijzelf, hoe ik heb het goed. Je bent daar geboren, maar ik kom niet van een rijke familie, maar van een arme familie. Zo, ik heb daar geleven en nu ben ik hier. Ik zie mijzelf als rijk. Als je nadenkt terug, aan hoe ik toen daar geleven. Ik denk voor hun. Ik zie mijzelf toen. Dus ik, het is niet goed, dat gevoel. Daarom, ik doe dat.)

Sarah: It is a cultural thing for us to support each other. You support your family, if you have something to give. It makes me feel good, when I keep that tradition and help my mother (female, age unknown, residential duration 14 years).

Will: You work every month, to take care of your uncle, bother or someone else, that is sick. You just have to help. Somebody has a problem and you think: I can help. And then you feel wonderful, because you can take care of someone in trouble (male, age group 26-30, residential duration 8 years).

(Je werkt zeg maar elke maand, om jouw oom, of je broer, iemand is ziek en je moet gewoon helpen. Dat is heel belangrijk. Iemand heeft een probleem en je denkt: oh ik kan helpen. En dan voel je je prachtig, om dat je iemand met de problemen kan helpen).

Next to it being a selfless act, taking care of people also creates a status symbol. When participants feel they are able to take care of other, for them it also indicates they achieved something in life and they do have the money and the means to help the family. Not only can they be proud of themselves then, also the family will be proud and that is a boost to their social well-being. Also the realisation that the participant is the one who can improve the life of the family back home, by taking care of them from the Netherlands and providing them with the things they need, gives a good feeling, as indicated in the quote of Rosalyn. She can give her family the life she did not have in Ghana and that power to change things is very important to her.

Furthermore there are situations in where people cannot take care of the family, which has an effect on the feelings of well-being.

Brian: *Well, they ask, when are you coming, when are you coming daddy...And these are some of the questions that I don't want to hear from them. I hear these questions from them and I feel like I neglected them, I feel that they need me, but they can't have me. I keep on giving them false hope, you know, false hope. I am coming, I am coming, I need money, I have to come, I have to come. Sometimes I give extra false hope to them, to satisfy them. That's is a problem (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 4 years).*

Sarah: *My mom is still living there in a small village. They miss me and I miss them a lot. We try to call as often as we can. Especially when my mom is sick, I try to call her and support her from here. But then it is difficult. I want to take care of her, but she is far away. This is not how we are. We always try to take care of each other. We are very close (female, age unknown, residential duration 14 years).*

By not being able to help others, participants feel they lost control over their connections to the family. This security of being part of the union in Ghana, is very important, as can be seen in the previous section. Brian as well as Sarah do want to take care of their family (by physical contact), but they can't because of the distance between them and the significant others. It depresses them, because they feel they have a certain responsibility, but they cannot hold on to their own principles. They feel they are not trustworthy. They also feel a loss of face, because they were sent to Ghana to help their family and they feel they are not able to live up to that or do right to everyone.

This great significance to remit to the family and support also has a drawback. Participants feel it is a burden to support their family. Because it is felt like an obligation, the feeling of guilt is great when there is nothing to remit home. It gives stress to the participants. They feel they always need something to send to their homes and the family depends on it very much. Mosi and Jonas illustrate how hard it can be to support a family. Although they do not have enough money for themselves, they are still willing to give all to the family.

Mosi: *It is your responsibility, all the things that I am doing is my responsibility. I have to do it. And this case, I have to support my family. Of course the extended family is there, so you have to support them also, but it is not that, especially when the situation changes, it is not that. But you feel that you cannot support them as you wish. But you must, you must... (male, age group 36-40, residential duration 7 years).*

Jonas: *And since I came here, for me I don't have full salary. But then my bank does, whatever comes in, they can take what they need, my siblings and my mother. They can take everything, Even just today, yesterday they called me, they went and needed money, and in the end of the day, I asked her to take everything, otherwise it would not be enough. I know it is not enough, but that is what I am doing to support (male, age group 31-35, residential duration 3 years).*

Participants do feel they have to prove themselves to their family and feel pressured to support their family, although they all really are pleased to do so. This is mostly because it is a part of their tradition to take care of close others. Also participants feel some kind of guilt towards their family for not being in Ghana with them.

The influence the social network with Ghanaian has on the well-being of the participants is about the same as the social network with the family. The main difference is the distance that is absent in the social network with Ghanaian friends. The participants can experience their network in the Netherlands in a more direct sense. The positive influences are more concrete, because they can gather with their social contacts at any time and adapt to their needs and the

needs of their friends. The contact with the family is more distant. But it is also to honour their family and culture, that they share so much with their Ghanaian friends in the Netherlands. The family bond is very important to the social well-being of the participants in this study. The contact with the family at home provides them with love and care, a consideration of their situation. The sharing of emotions with the family shows they care and love their family. The sense of belonging in this social network links to the family as well as to a feeling of belonging to Ghana. By providing support to their family they can show them they are still committed to the family and the traditions in the country. Therefore they receive positive feedback on the work they do in the Netherlands, which makes them proud. They are the ones who support their family and make it a bit easier for the family in Ghana. Also they feel they are needed by their family, when they are asked for support and advice. This also creates sense of belonging. Being in touch with the family remembers the participants of the traditions and habits of the culture they grew up in and which they also use very much in the Netherlands. Relating to the culture confirms the identity of the participants. When showing the family they are still relating to the Ghanaian culture, this enhances the social well-being. The main importance is that they support their family in basic needs. It is something that is self-evident to all of the participants. Also it compensates for the fact they are physically absent in Ghana and are not able to support their family in other issues as money. Taking care of the family and friends is also part of the Ghanaian culture, now by sending remittances. Despite all these positive influences, by being in touch with the family in Ghana and its traditions, like the informal social life in general, the close contact with family and sharing of all their belongings, it also creates feelings of stress and guilt. Participants note they do not always have enough money to support their family, while the need for money is there. It creates a guilty feeling for being in the Netherlands and having what family in Ghana doesn't have. Also migrating to another country has an impact on family life, especially when having children.

5.5 An image of a good/bad person

During the interviews things are said on how participants thought a good person acts and how a bad person acts. They described how they felt people acted at their best and worst and what relates to feeling good about yourself or how a friend should look like. This shapes an image of the people the participants like to relate to. To illustrate what participants tell about how a person should be here, as conclusion, a case study is made on a good and a bad person. This image is stereotyped, based on quotes of the participants and related to background, culture and experiences, but relates to the image of overall well-being and the social network, as it describes how participants would like to be and how they would like the people in their social network to be. Participants are looking for a confirmation for being a good or bad person. This is often dependent on the will of God. This is also the confirmation for living a good or bad life. Participants seem quite dependent upon the spirit of their God and the approval of God they feel when they do good things.

A good person

Tidiane is a man (could also be a woman) who grew up in Ghana. His parents lived in Ghana all their life and he was raised by his mother and father with four siblings, three brothers and one sister. After graduating from secondary school he decided he wanted to be a professor in his future life. He studied Economics and was an excellent student. He became a wise man and shared his knowledge with other people as well. During his time at university he initiated a travel to the Netherlands. Here he would gain more knowledge and wanted to try to save money for his parents and siblings in Ghana. Throughout his time in the Netherlands he sent money to Ghana every month and supported his parents

and brother and sisters, especially in education. During his time in the Netherlands he was in close contact with his family and friends. Also he never forgot about his roots and made a lot of good Ghanaian and Dutch friends. With his Ghanaian friends he shared all Ghanaian traditions, in sharing food, money and the memories of the culture he comes from. In all his life Tidiane always felt God near, God is the priority in his life. He believes God leads him in his life and he can find his way by the paths God gave him. In church he sang in the choir and was always willing to help others.

As promised he came back after two years in the Netherlands. Here he married the woman he always loved. They grew up together in a small village near Accra. She always took care of him and stood by him in his time in the Netherlands. He always respected her and promised her to get married when he came back from the Netherlands. She gave him four children, two boys and two girls. He raised his children to be respectful and hard working children, who also valued the traditions of the Ghanaian culture. Next to becoming a respected professor, he also inspired his community to be close and an example for the future generation. He is an admired man by all people within his community. He shared his love and knowledge with all people.

Now, in his old age, he is taken care of by his wife and children and can look back on a successful life. He is glad he always was able to take care of his children and family and has done work in the love of God.

A bad person

Michael is a man (could also be a woman) who started his life in Ghana in a family with his parents and two younger brothers. When his education started, Michael already knew he was not very interested in school. Rather he skipped school and took advantage of this freedom by hanging out with some other boys/girls, who did not go to school. His parents were very worried about his behaviour, but Micheal did not care. He never really thought his parents were good to him and also he was not in close contacts with his siblings or the rest of his family.

After some years he decided to quit school and travel to the Netherlands. To make money he started an illegal business there. One of his contacts introduced him to weed and some other soft drugs. Michael felt good when smoking weed and also when drinking alcohol. He did not care about the damage this did to his body. When Michael got involved in this business he got even more departed from his family. Although he made some money in his business, he used it all himself and never remitted something to his parents and siblings, who tried to take care of him. His younger brothers lost their example and missed Michael. Michael did not think he needed any spiritual guidance in his life. He did not believe in God or any other spiritual creature. He never believed he needed anyone in his life. He was not interested in women and children. He lived his life in the moment and never cared about the next generation. Although he was not living in the course of the values and norms of his culture, he did not think it was very important to take any notice to this.

When he became older and his business did not give him enough profit, he turned to his parents and asked them to take care of them. His parents took care of him, but he did not really respect them. He used the money for his own good and took a place outside the community. Although the community and his family were willing to take care of him, he never accepted this. He lived his life alone and without much value for his surroundings.

5.6 Conclusion

This section on social networks shows the findings on the social contacts the participants established in the Netherlands.

Social ties with other Ghanaian people in the Netherlands are easily established. Most of the participants think these are the most important contacts they enclosed in their lives in the Netherlands. This offers them a chance to still embrace their old life style and helps the participants in getting adjusted to living in another country. They can share a language, traditions and experiences with fellow Ghanaians. The social well-being in these networks are enhanced by relating to the Ghanaian culture, sense of belonging to Ghana, sharing emotions and feelings of security and familiarity.

Church life remains a large part of the life of the Ghanaian participants, something they already started in their country of origin. The social life at the church reminds them of the 'situation at home' and also gives them some kind of safety net. The church is a reminder of how it is at home and is easily accessible. The out-going atmosphere and the contact with people with the same mindset is a good basis for developing this social network. The social well-being of the participants is influenced by sense of belonging by sharing faith and a relation to God. Furthermore they create the same feelings of well-being as in the social contacts with other Ghanaian migrants, whom they often also meet in church, like being related to the Ghanaian culture, sharing emotions and feelings of security and familiarity.

Furthermore ties are established with Dutch people, although these are often weak ties. Participants are not very interested in creating social ties with Dutch or are hesitant because of the language barrier and the differences in norm and values in the culture. This creates senses of disrespect towards Dutch people and feelings of being disrespected by Dutch people. But the differences in the social networks with Dutch are most profound in the study. There are participants who find it important to create a social network with Dutch people, their position in relating to Dutch and integrating into the Dutch society is positive. These participants have stronger ties. Also for participants with a Dutch partner the social ties with other Dutch are often more common. These participants establish feelings of belonging to the Dutch society and respect to another culture.

The family of the participants that still lives in Ghana remains of great value. The relationship with family in Ghana provides them with a link to the Ghanaian society as it is now and gives them a chance to still be part of the life of their siblings and possible spouse and children. They share and advice on each other's life. This makes the participants proud and they feel a sense of belonging. By remitting, participants hold on to traditions and pay respect to the people still in Ghana. This relations can also create guilt and stress, when participants are not able to support their families, with money or advice and sharing of traditions.

6

Conclusion and discussion

In this last chapter, the finalizing conclusions will be drawn to the research questions which are presented in the first chapter (see section 1.2). Given the results presented in the previous chapter and the inductive model presented in this chapter, some final conclusions will be drawn. Section 6.1 presents the inductive model, which is based on the conceptual model which is shown in section 2.8. The comparison between the conceptual and inductive model shows the changes made after the findings from the interviews and observations. In section 6.2 the main results will be linked to the inductive model, which is the basis for the conclusions of the thesis. The last section concludes with some limitations of the study and some recommendations for further research on this topic. Also some policy recommendations are provided.

6.1 Inductive model

The inductive model presented in this paragraph is based on the conceptual model shaped in chapter 2.

SPF theory assumes that all contributions to social well-being are reflected in the three components mentioned in chapter 2; status, behavioural confirmation and affection (Ormel et al., 1999). These were included in the conceptual model. This qualitative study implies the term social well-being is difficult to grasp under these three terms and indicates different functions for the different social networks. Based on the conclusions of the study an inductive model is constructed. Compared to the conceptual model some changes have been made. Some concepts changed, are added or left out. In the inductive model the concepts from the SPF theory are left out. By analyzing social networks separately in the present study, different concepts relating to subjective social well-being arose, which could not all be shared under the terms of the SPF theory. Also it is difficult to quantify the terms of social well-being, like in the dissertation of Van Bruggen (2005), because the concepts of social well-being should be analyzed separately. This model in figure 6.1 shows the liaisons as they derive from the study done.

The resulting inductive model is based on the relations between social networks and the social well-being of the Ghanaian migrants. The direction of the connections has not changed. The social networks serve some specific functions in the social well-being of the participants. It reveals the interaction between the social network and the sense of social well-being among Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands. By comparing the inductive model the conceptual model, some things can be noted that have changed. The concepts or relations which have been added to the model are coloured.

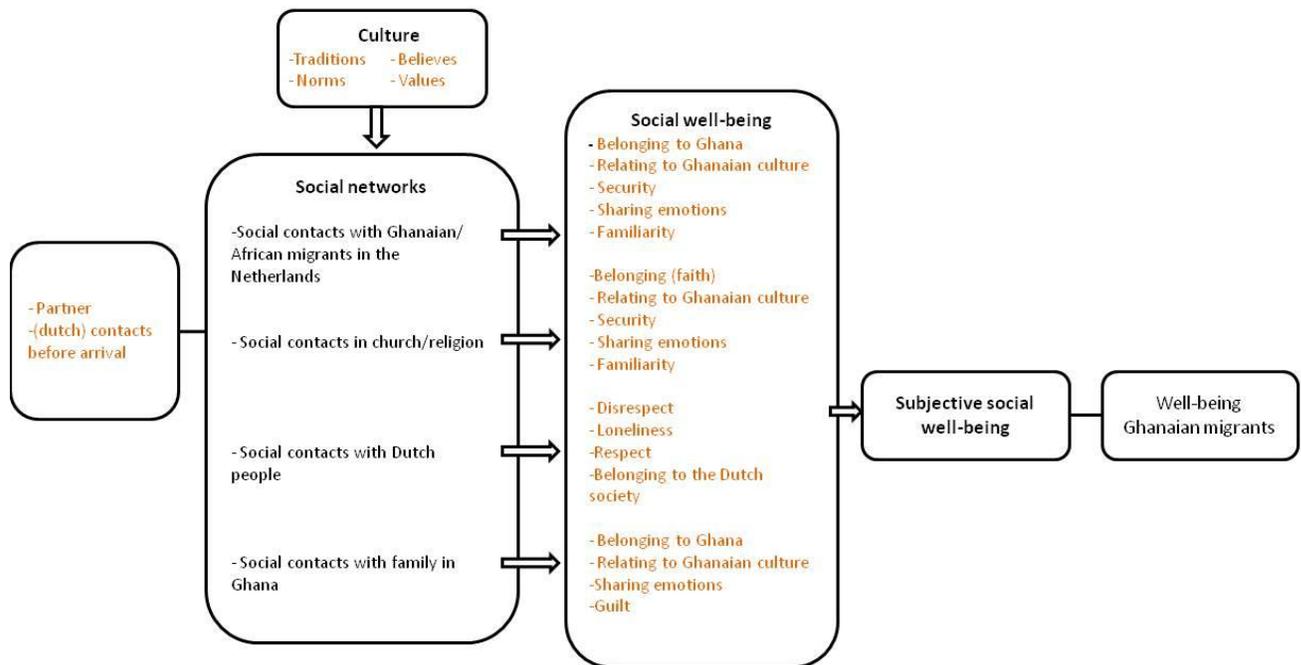


Figure 6.1 Inductive model

In the box placed before the social networks the concept of ‘Dutch partner’ and ‘(Dutch) contacts before arrival’ are included. These concepts can play a role in the social networks the migrants develop in the Netherlands. There is a difference in the social networks among participants with a Dutch partner and the ones who do not have a Dutch partner. Within the social networks, the social contacts at work are left out of the inductive model. The contacts at work did not seem to contribute to the social well-being of the participants in this study. Essential were the social networks among the participants with other Ghanaian migrants, who also link to the social contacts in church. Having Dutch contacts seems to have a twofold role in the lives of the participants. For migrants with a Dutch partner and some other participants, the Dutch contacts were valuable. To other participants these contacts were not prominent in their social networks.

The family in Ghana showed to be a significant value in the lives of the migrants. Maybe an even larger role as expected in the first place. The social contacts with the family fulfil also a negative role in the social well-being of some participants. The roles of the different social networks cannot be grasped under the same functions. This is why the social networks are placed in the box separately, with their own relations to well-being.

The concept ‘illegal status’ is left out in the inductive model, because it was not included in the interview for ethical reasons and so cannot be related to the other concepts in the study. When the participants had to tell if they were in the Netherlands legal or illegal, this could have influenced the course of the interview. Participants could have become afraid to tell all the things they experienced in the Netherlands, when their status was revealed. Also the interviewer could have become influenced by knowing a participant was illegal in the country. It could have biased the interviewer or it would have been difficult to carry this sensitive information. To prevent this would happen, it was left out of the interview and further study. Culture has shown to play a profound role in the social networks and is included in the inductive model. Culture has a lot of different interpretations, so the several concepts related to this notion are included in the model. Next, the different functions of the social networks are related to the social networks and the subjective social well-being of the migrants. The functions of

status, behavioural confirmation and affection are replaced by more specific functions. The social contacts with family in Ghana is related to belonging, feeling related to the Ghanaian culture, sharing emotions and guilt. The social networks of the participants within the Netherlands with other Ghanaian (African) migrants are also connected to functions of social well-being. Here feelings relating to the Ghanaian culture, belonging, security, sharing emotions (which includes love and care) and familiarity are incorporated. The social contacts at church serve almost the same functions in the social well-being. The social contacts with the Dutch serve different feelings of well-being among the participants. For most of the migrants the social contacts with Dutch enhance feelings of disrespect and loneliness. Disrespect indicates feelings as being ignored and not being valued as a person, in your own being. For the participants with a Dutch partner the feelings of belonging to the Netherlands and respect prevails. Still, in the lives of these participants also the social networks with Ghanaians are important.

In appendix 3 you also find a map with the most important relations in the interview of Joe, one of the participants. The map illustrates the connections between concepts in the interview. It is provided by Max-QDA, which can imply which relations are called most often, so which relations are 'thickest' in the interview. In this interview the relationship social networks-well-being is often called. From each interview such a map can be produced. It presents the different relations that are important in lives of the interviewees. This map is an extra illustration of the relations which are often pointed out in the relations to well-being and social networks. It is also a support to the inductive model presented above.

6.2 Discussion of the results

In this section, by concluding on the results and the inductive model, the sub questions and the main question, which are posed in section 1.2, are provided with an answer. The results of the previous chapter are discussed and compared to literature and the theory. From here the concluding thoughts will be drawn to this thesis, which are explained in the inductive model. The concepts in the inductive model serve as a guide for the discussion of the results and related literature.

The literature review of Ebaugh and Curry (2000) on social networks of migrants indicates the social networks are a main element in the lives of the migrants. In first instance they lower the risks involved in the migration process. Also in this study the social networks prove to be of value to migrants. When entering the Netherlands many of these Ghanaian migrants associate with other Ghanaian or African migrants. For some, social contacts with other migrants are already established from the home country. Often they know other migrants who are already in the country. This also creates a safety net when entering the host country. Oppedal et al. (2004) note the settlement may take longer when there is not such a safety net. The migrants who are already in the Netherlands, support the new migrants by showing them around in systems in the Netherlands, like the legal procedures.

The social contacts with other Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands shapes the well-being of the participants positively. It relays familiarity to their home life. It is an identity they want to hold on to, because it represents, according to the participants, the right way of life. By relating to their traditions and norms and values they also create a sense of belonging to Ghana. Belonging to Ghana and its traditions is important, because the country represents a good social life, peace and familiarity to the participants. Together with other Ghanaian migrants they can share these feelings. Among Ghanaian migrants there is a social approval for their behaviour, so they do not need to prove anything. By being able to share similarities, the participants know they are not alone. Loneliness in a host country is something the participants do not want to be confronted with. The security a social network provides to the participants is enhancing their

social well-being. Pretty et al. (2007) state the sense of belonging is providing immigrants with an opportunity to express their identity and roots, emotions and shared experience within a trusted environment of fellow migrants. This confirms the conclusions of this study.

The church is a large part of the social networks of the participants. Here many migrants gather. Literature about these social networks says the religious belief and the contacts in church can be shaped by the migration process and settlement in the new country (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). In the church an important part of the Ghanaian traditions is represented. Participants then feel they meet likeminded people in church. These people have the same background and the same norms and values and this creates a significant basis for further social contact. The church also embodies the main memories to the home country. Social networks in church provide the same positive influences on their social well-being as being related to other migrants, like the relation to the culture (as described in the inductive model as the traditions, norms and values and believes of the home country) and a sense of belonging and security. All are related to religion and faith. To find the same way of celebrating faith in another country than Ghana, is a great comfort to the participants. This is also concluded in the study of Arnts (2005). She also indicates the immigrants move from an *outsider* (to the society) to an *insider* (in church). This feeling is also expressed by the participants. Being an insider provides the migrants with influence on their lives with they sometimes lack in the Dutch society. It is crucial for the social well-being of the immigrants (Arnts, 2005). In African congregations the sharing of faith is of significance and also the sense of belonging is based on the tightening to faith. Not only belonging to God, but also to people with the same faith. It is central to the social well-being participants also to express the traditions of Ghana and this can be done, in church by singing and dancing in church and having a profound faith in the path God leaves them with.

In social life with friends and family also traditions are expressed by eating Ghanaian food, speak the language, celebrate festivities according to their traditions and in general do things like they would do in Ghana. It indicates most participants are very comfortable with their old life. McAdoo, Younge and Getahun (2007) also indicate it is not likely norms and values are replaced when the migrants are established in the host society. In the social networks among the Ghanaians also taking care of each other and supporting each other in need is part of social well-being. Participants derive a lot of satisfaction from helping people in need and being taken care of when they are in need. This is related to the traditions in their home country. The collectivistic sense of their original culture is incorporated in their sense of social well-being (Menjivar, 1997).

As much as the participants are involved in social contacts with other Ghanaian migrants, the social contacts with Dutch people are limited. Only participants with a Dutch partner were having many social contacts among Dutch. Most other participants did not have associations with Dutch people. Only when they needed help with procedures or Dutch letters with which their close ties could not help, they related to their Dutch contacts (at work or within a migrant organization). Van den Reek and Hussein (2003) show that Somali migrants choose their traditional cultural habits in the domains of identity, partner choice, raising of children and traditions. Where migrants choose for the options of their host country are language, news and developments and education. In public domains the migrants are often more influenced by the host society. In this study participants are even more focused on their home country, than implicated in the research of van der Reek and Hussein (2003).

Often participants feel they are disrespected by Dutch people, because they do not understand the way of life of the migrants and the participants feel Dutch people are not open to social

contacts with the Ghanaians. Dutch people do approach the participants in Dutch, while participants do not all understand the language. For some this is also an indication of a lack of respect. Participants also speak lowly of Dutch people, since the participants feel Dutch people do not live up to the norms and values of the participants. Due to this tense relationship participants choose not to take up Dutch people in their social networks. In a study of McMichael and Manderson (2004) the social contacts of the Somali migrants are only based on the relationship with other immigrants. This especially effects the well-being of the Somali women in Australia. The Somali women feel displaced in the society of Australia. The participants in this study derive their social well-being to the relationship with other immigrants and do not seem to be affected too much by the lack of social contacts with Dutch people.

Still, also some participants are married to a Dutch partner and define the social networks to Dutch people differently. Being with Dutch is a part of their life and, although the traditions and values are not the same as they are used to, they respect them and try to learn from their partners and the social networks surrounding the marriage/partnership. Although they often have connections with other Ghanaians, the social contacts with Dutch provide them with new knowledge and a new comfortable environment. The participants that do have contacts with Dutch people (without having a Dutch partner) specify that it does have an influence on their social well-being, because they feel they are more respected by Dutch people when they are familiar with the language and traditions of Dutch. This gives them a satisfied feeling. Also it creates a sense of belonging, when being involved with Dutch people. The sense of belonging to the Dutch society is different to belonging to Ghana. Where, in the sense of belonging to the Netherlands, participants mainly feel their social well-being is positively influenced, because they understand the things they see and can ask people for explanation of things, there is not a much deeper sense or felt connection to the Dutch society. The sense of belonging to Ghana does create this feeling and adds value to the social well-being of the participants.

One social network outside the Netherlands, which influenced the lives of the participants profoundly, was the (nuclear and extended) family in Ghana. The relationship with the family is still of main importance after the migration to the Netherlands. The family is often the reason to migrate to Europe or the USA and they will remain a prominent factor throughout the settling and life in the Netherlands. They represent the identity of the migrant, which remains a priority in the lives of the participants. This result is confirmed by the literature, which also shows the primary social contacts of Ghanaian migrants is with Ghanaians/Africans and their beliefs and traditions (Sackey, 2009; Hao & Johnson, 2000). They indicate it preserves the sense of belonging to Ghana. Participants are kept up to date on the latest happenings in the country by their family. Also the social network with the family influences their feelings of being respected, because they are asked about their opinion in family issues and support when problems arise. It fulfils them with pride when they are able to help the family, not only in sharing their opinion, but also by helping the family in financial means. It is a profound issue in their self-confidence to be the one to help the family in Ghana. Several studies confirm it is of value to migrants to be able to support their family, as it is a great support to their self-esteem (Portes, 2006; Samuel & George, 2002; Shields & Wheatley Price, 2003). Although this is a positive feeling, it can also turn into a negative strain on the social well-being when the pressure of remitting money is too large. This causes guilt feelings among the participants. There is not always enough money to support the family. But to hide this lack of financial means, the family gets all the money, although then there is no money left for the participant to support him- or herself. Also there are times participants feel high expectations are built on their knowledge, which others think they have required, by living in Europe. This pressure can crack the social well-being of the participants. Riccio (2008, p. 221) states that '*a common refrain among members of both communities*

concerns the pressure of the expectations of the extended family, members of which demand money for the house, for children's schooling etc.'

Antoniou and Dalla (2009) conclude work not only provides migrants with income and status, but also with new social contacts with colleagues. Though, in this study the participants indicate the work was especially important for the income and not so much for the social contacts at work. Their contacts with colleagues were not important to them. Also this is why it is not taken into account in further conclusions.

In the social relations Ghanaian participants created after their migration to the Netherlands, some things changed, but also much stayed the same. This is due to the accomplishment of the participants themselves. They feel it is beneficiary to their lives, to create a same sense of social relations as they were used to in Ghana. By relating to other Ghanaians they can build social relations which have a lot of similarities with the way social life was experienced in Ghana. In social relations with the home country, for most participants only the distance changed, but the close ties they have in Ghana stayed the same. McAdoo, Younge and Getahun (2007) corroborate the bond with the extended family is not likely to change. Participants still feel largely responsible for the family in Ghana, which can also be noticed by the remittances all participants send to the home country. It is often difficult to not be with the family, when there are big happenings, like marriage or funerals, but the ties are still close. Also the participants are largely involved in important decisions in the family, as they were used to.

As there is not much contact with Dutch people among most of the participants, they do not feel much has changed in their social relations. For the participants with a Dutch partner and the participants who are involved in Dutch social networks (without having a Dutch partner) there are some changes in social relations. Initially this group had to get used to the different form of social relations in the Dutch society. These social contacts are experienced as more formal and less accessible as the participants are used to in the Ghanaian social life. After some time these indications disappeared, but the difference in social relations between Ghanaians and Dutch people is still clear. In some cases, the relations with Dutch also changed the relationship the participants had with their Ghanaian family. The family had to get used to the fact, the participant adopted the habits of the Dutch culture. This change in relationship can be reestablished after some time. In general, social networks in Ghana and with Ghanaians in the Netherlands were reflected of larger concern than social networks with Dutch.

6.3 Main conclusion

The inductive model represents the main conclusions of the study. In the literature as well as the results of the study the main thought is the social networks support and shape the migrants in their social well-being. To fulfil the social needs of the participants the social networks are a support to the lives of the participants. The SPF theory is based on the assumption that some basic needs provide motivation in the human lives. The needs link to senses of belonging, self esteem and recognition, which eventually reach to the optimal sense of self-realization.

In the interviews and observations these needs of self-esteem, belonging and recognition seem to play a role in the connection to the networks of Ghanaian migrants. The participants point out most of these needs are important to their social well-being and social networks provide an important part of these needs. Social networks are supporting the identity of participants and reassures them, because they belong to a social group. This creates a sense of self-esteem and comfortability.

SPF-theory argues the sources of subjective social well-being provide assumptions about how people produce social well-being and how they optimize it (Ormel et al., 1999). People are

looking for functions to enhance their social well-being. One of these functions by which the social well-being is gaining is being part of social networks. Although the functions of status, behavioural confirmation and affection cannot be so strictly linked to the well-being of the participants in this study, there are also concepts in the present study, which help the social well-being of the participants. According to the SPF theory a certain level of satisfaction of needs have to be fulfilled before any kind of social well-being can be felt. The participants are also trying to lower the risks and try to optimize their social well-being by realizing some specific goals.

The main value of the social networks in the social well-being of the participants is fulfilling the need of belonging, which provides security and prevent participants of feeling loneliness. This study shows the coping mechanism can be focused on the ethnic identity and not so much on creating a national identity in the host country. When migrants do not experience enough of the home culture, they compensate by creating this culture in the Netherlands. This has a profound positive sense in their social well-being. The study also subscribes some of the assumptions of the Social Networks Theory (Wasserman & Faust, 1999), foremost the assumption that people seek people, select people, who are the same. The social networks among the participants were especially focused on seeking people who had the same background and norms and values. In the inductive model the most valued social network is the one with other Ghanaian (African) migrants in the Netherlands, which also relates to the people they meet in African church congregation.

Social Network Theory also indicates that the kind of group a person belongs to, determines the behaviour of the person. By living among other Ghanaian migrants, it establishes the behaviour of the migrants. It will mainly be focused on the Ghanaian way of life and the contacts within this life.

6.4 Limitations and recommendations

To set out recommendations for further research, first some critical issues in this thesis will be discussed.

Research on subjective social well-being has been under much discussion within the social sciences. The purpose and use of studies on subjective social well-being is questionable, according to some scientists (van Veenhoven 2004). The term 'well-being' has two sides, as it applies to social systems as well as to individuals. Often what is proposed to be good for the society, should also good for the individuals (van Veenhoven, 2004). This is not always the case. An allegation is that different people use different standards, so two persons stating they are 'very happy' could say so for different reasons (van Veenhoven 2004). These different reasons for being happy are tried to be taken into account in this study. Also in a qualitative study the personal experience of social well-being can be better analyzed as in quantitative measures. In quantitative measures the story of the participants is left out (Babbie, 2006). To quantify the concept of subjective social well-being is rather difficult. As the SPF theory is quantifying the concepts status, behavioural confirmation and affection (Van Bruggen, 2001) it can only capture the functions of social well-being related to some groups of people. It is difficult to apply it to other groups as well. Gasper (2004) indicates well-being should not always be tried to be measured, but should be subject to rich qualitative description.

Also, Werkuyten and Nekuee (1999) indicated that the measures of the subjective well-being among participants should also take into account the migrant status. Especially the cultural status and sense of discrimination are additional topics, which make it a special group in the analysis of the status of subjective well-being. These suggestions for the inclusion of topics is valuable. Van Veenhoven (2004) indicates studies on subjective social well-being are

indispensable for the development of policies on public health. Especially in general reports on mental health the measures of subjective well-being are important.

These discussions are important to allow in further studies on social well-being. The concept is tried to be analyzed as best as possible in this study. Some other indications need to be considered in the results of this study.

In more quantitative studies the reliability can be measured with tests. In this study the reliability of the study is subject to the interpretations of the researcher. The analysis is often personal (Babbie, 2006). To make the reliability as optimal as possible, certain checks are included. These checks include the transcripts of the interviews, the code tree (appendix 2) and the audit trail.

Next, the observations in the study were based on a general observation schedule. Because no suitable observation schedule on social well-being could be found, the observations are based on the notes of the researcher in the observation field.

Another point, which has to be taken into account is that in this study the men were a majority. It might have affected the outcomes, because more men than women were included. When there would have been more women, the outcome could have been somewhat different. Women might have sketched a different view on the role of social networks in their well-being or called other social networks to be more important. In other studies, women were more often married to a man who lived in the host country. Also in this study, the some of the women were. This might shift the social networks of women more towards social contacts with people from the host country.

Also implications for further research can be considered. It would be interesting to expand this study, by including more groups participants. More intensive observations can also provide new information to the subject. Furthermore, the study could be conducted among other (African) migrant groups, to see if they give the same implications on the subject. Although it is too difficult to quantify this study, more information from other migrant groups can give some support to create generalizations on this topic. Also the study could be shifted to other countries, to see if there are comparable results to the study. This can offer some more information on the life in different host societies as well. Next, the different social networks can be studied more intensively in separate studies.

The conclusions of this chapter show the participants in this study are not so much related to the Dutch society, although they are living in this society. It might be helpful to find out why exactly this is and how this could be improved. It might help the social well-being of the some migrants when they would not have such a tense relation with Dutch people. Also for Dutch people it might help to understand what the lives of the migrants hold. Migrant organizations, the church and other gathering places among the Ghanaian migrants may play a crucial role in establishing a more close relationship between the Ghanaian migrants and the Dutch society. These places can bring the people together. They have links with different groups and can create activities which support the interactions between both groups. Especially the church and places like a Ghanaian shop serve a prominent place in the lives of the Ghanaian migrants and can support and encourage the contacts.

The participants shared a lot of information on other issues, which could not be incorporated in this thesis. Especially on the migration policies in the Netherlands and the regulations for family reunion and work some participants had clear ideas. With a declining and aging population, the entrance of more immigrants who can support the decreasing work population, might be a solution to the problem. Though this is often an implication of what is important to the participants in their life in the Netherlands, this is what participants also view to be important to the Dutch society.

Recommendations for policies are to formulate policies which do not only focus on the economic situation of the migrants, but also the social health status of migrants. To increase their social well-being, and thereby their overall health status, ideally the government provides assistance to the incorporation of family ties among the Ghanaian migrants and a family reunification policy for these migrants. Also the lack of connections to the Dutch society could be improved by providing migrants with more opportunities with Dutch people, although it is not certain the migrants will use these opportunities.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide

Hello, welcome to this interview. First I would like to thank you very much for your cooperation and the investment of your time. My name is Sanne Visser and I am a student of the University of Groningen. For my master thesis I am interested in the process of migration and the impact this move has on your life. Also I would like to know how social contacts shape how you feel and how they support you in your life in the Netherlands. I asked you to cooperate in this interview, because your opinion and your experiences are very valuable. You traveled from your home country to the Netherlands and I would like to know how this process was for you.

You should know that your answers will be kept confidential, which means I am the only one who can link answers to the person who has given these answers. Your name will not be mentioned in public reports. Also you can stop the interview at any time. You can choose not to answer if a question offends you. If you want, I can provide you with a summary of the results of this study.

I would like to have your permission for the use of a recorder, to record the interview. The tape will only be used to transcribe the interview. Are you alright by this?

I am very pleased that you are willing to cooperate in this interview. First, I would like to know some things of your life story.

Background characteristics:

- From what age do you live in the Netherlands?
- What age are you now?
- Where did you live, before you came to the Netherlands? Is this a city or village? Can you tell me something about it?
- Now you live in the Netherlands. Where do you live now? Is this your house? Have you lived in other places in the Netherlands?
- Are you married? How long are you married for?
- Do you have children? How many?
- With whom are you living at this moment? Has it always been this way?
- Are you working at this moment? What is your occupation? Is this also what you did in Ghana?

Interview

- Can you tell me about your life in Ghana? (living conditions, daily life)
- Why did you decide to migrate to the Netherlands? (main reasons, with who)
- What memories do you have when you think of your country of origin?
- Can you describe a typical day in your life in the Netherlands?

- How was your relationship with your family members, when you lived in Ghana?
- Can you tell me about the relationship with your family members, since you are in the Netherlands?
- How do you support your family in Ghana?
- Why do you support your family in Ghana?
- Do you consider it important to still feel like a part of the Ghanaian society? Why (not)?

- You told me you live with... how do you feel about living with...?
- How important is this home to you? Why?
- In what ways has your partner/ home in the Netherlands made things easier in the Netherlands?

- Can you tell me about your children? (What role do they play in your life?)
- How do you feel when you are around your family and children?
- Do you feel appreciated by your wife/husband and children? In what way?
- Are there things you do to get appreciation of your family and friends? (what?)
- Do you consider it important to feel like a part of a family in the Netherlands? Why (not)?

- How do you use your leisure time? (What? (reading, sports, music, clubs),with whom?, where?, why?, how often?)
- Where do you meet new friends?

- Can you tell me about your social contacts in daily life? (whom, where do know each other, how often)
- Who is most important to you in your social contacts? Why?
- Tell me how you feel during the company of your friends?
- Can you tell me what you think is important in a friendship? (reciprocity, love, respect)
- What do you feel you can bring to a friendship? (what makes you a good friend?)
- Are there things you do in order to get respect of these friends? (what?)

- Do you consider it important to be part of a community? (how? Why?) (theoretical?)
- Can you tell me something about the Ghanaian community in the Netherlands?
- Do you feel part of such a community? (in what way?)
- How do you contribute to this community? (in what way?)

- When you came to the Netherlands, did you have any contacts with Dutch people? (why (not)? Who? Where did you meet?)
- Do you have any Dutch contacts at this moment? (why (not)? Who?)
- Where do you meet these people?
- Do you consider it important to have the contacts with the Dutch people?
- Are there any problems you encounter in your contacts with Dutch people?
- Do you feel appreciated by the Dutch people?
- Can you tell me what contact with Dutch people means to you?
- Do you consider it important to feel like a part of the Dutch society? Why (not)?

- What has been the role of religion in your family?
- What does it mean to you know?
- How do you feel when you are worshipping?

- What people do you meet at the church?
- What activities do you do together?
- Please describe to me what these people mean to you?

- Do you feel appreciated in church? (why (not)? in what way?)
- How do you contribute to the church life? (in what way?)

- Have you been employed in Ghana?
- Are you employed in the Netherlands?
- What educational skills do you have?

- What working experience do you have?
- What about other skills?
- Do you think you can use your skills fully in your work in the Netherlands? (why (not?))
- What aspirations do you still have in your labour career?
- What is your view of the role of education in your life? (skills, social contacts, daily rhythm)
- What is your view of the role of work in your life? (skills, social contacts, daily rhythm)
- What is important to you in work?
- What things are you proud of in your work/ the work you used to do?
- How do you distinguish yourself from others?
- How do you get along with your colleagues?
- How do you feel when you are around colleagues?
- How do you perceive the time lived in the Netherlands with regard to making new friends?
- How do you perceive your time in the Netherlands with regard to work?
- How do you feel about your life at this time in your life?
- What do social contacts mean to you?
- How do social contacts influence your life?
- What would you say is 'quality of life'? What is it to you?
- Please describe the things you are satisfied with in your life.
- Tell me about things you like in your life.
- Please describe the things you are dissatisfied with in your life.
- Tell me about things you dislike in your life.
- What things are you proud of? (What, why?)
- Do you think you will stay in the Netherlands for some time?
- What are your plans for your life in the Netherlands?
- What are your future plans?

End of the interview

Thank you for your participation in this interview. Do you have any questions?

Do you know any other Ghanaian migrants who might be willing to participate in this study?

Appendix 2: Code system of Max QDA

Code System [2863]

in vivo [0]

This is because I like the [1]
En waarom besloot u naar [1]
And for migration, it is all [1]
Sommige mensen vragen voor 50 of [1]
She said: sit down and talk, [1]
Oh, I think about the food [1]
The food is an African thing. [8]
We have [1]

Ghana [2]

Social life [24]
Improvement [5]
traditions [28]
people friendly [4]
not found of traditional marriage [1]
conditions Ghana [19]

conditions Netherlands [28]

Background interviewee [83]

Ghana memories [12]

social networks- family NL [16]

social networks - family Ghana [1]

relationship [41]
support family [22]

social networks- friends [9]

Community NL- Activities [12]
new friends- meeting places [25]
activities [39]

social network - Dutch contacts [18]

importance [25]
differences [33]
meeting places [12]

social networks-church [5]

activities [15]
social contacts [36]

social networks - work [0]

colleagues [17]

Social well-being-Status- Induction [0]

having more than one girl [1]

keeping up appearances [2]

having children [2]

good reputation-work [10]

competition [3]

treated respectfully [20]

work [13]

Dutch [20]

being proud -work [45]

love for a job [25]

being versatile [10]

respect [39]

having a job [28]

upgrading [38].

social well-being - Status-deduction [0]

being independent [24]

performing well- work [10]

performing well relative others-work [9]

being influential-work [28]

being influential-church [3]

social well-being - Behavioural confirmation-deduction [0]

belonging funct. group - NL [37]

belonging func.group -Ghan [17]

being a good person- friends [4]

social well-being- Behavioural confirmation-induction [0]

being changed [1]

making an effort [13]

being recognized [72]

cooperation [4]

feeling alike [14]

hospitality [9]

destiny/religion [30]

meeting people [39]

pressure [16]

contributing [0]

doing good things-work [6]

doing good things [27]

doing good-family [20]

contribute to society [9]

social well-being - Affection-deduction [0]

being a good person-children [3]

like/being liked - church [14]
liked/being liked - dutch friends [10]
liked/being liked- freinds [35]
liked/being liked - work [9]
interdependency-friends Ghana [9]
interdependendy-fam Ghana [7]
reciprocal empathy - friends [10]
reciprocal empathy-church [4]
reciprocal empathy- fam Ghana [9]
sense of loving and being loved [24]
loving and being loved-children [13]
loving and being loved-wife/husband [33]

social well-being- Affection- induction [0]

Not offend people [6]
openness [10]
feeling refreshed [17]
taking care of people [53]
travelling for friends [3]
being greatful [10]
being equal [26]
listening [14]
honesty [19]
advising [34]
being proud GHanaian [13]
being proud - family [7]
communication [48]
Selfevidence [6]
Sharing (thoughts) [93]
learning from eachother [26]

social well-being and social networks [5]

real friends? [6]
feel of values christianity [5]
importance home [14]
Ghana- quality of life [27]
importance social life [159]
Ok the social life, tell me more [4]
importance friends-home [11]
importance friends [21]
importance family/missin [41]

social well-being - Quality of life [4]

Music [3]
basic needs [5]
owning something [2]
commitment [16]
freedom [15]
having a family [11]

having chances [42]
legal [7]
support [44]
restrictions [24]
happiness [30]
feeling alone [35]
Hope [4]
feeling livelihood [20]
Growth [1]
bad things [7]
health [7]
money [47]
Feeling at home [53]
living comfortable [18]
remitting to family [21]
integration [24]
children around [19]
being appreciated [48]
being proud [13]
feeling nativity [68]
stress [24]
lack of free time [22]
updrading [14]
Language [29]
marriage [9]
dissatisfaction regulations [19]
religion [39]
work [41]

wanting to stay in the Netherlands [17]

Later I had my residence permit, [1]

close ties [5]

reactions to being a migrant [2]

