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Master thesis

The role of social network
on deepening the sense of belonging
among Syrian migrants in the Netherlands

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Abstract:

Research aims to investigate whether the social network deepens the sense of belonging among Syrian migrants in the Netherlands. Background of the research was established in order to give general view about the researches which tackled these two concepts.

Method of In-depth interview was applied to reach the goal of the study. Thirteen in-depth interviews were conducted with Syrian immigrants in the Netherlands. Verbatim transcribing for each interview was done in order to serve the requirements of qualitative analysis of the data. Analysis of the data was done by the help of computer program ATLAS.ti (version 5.2).

In summary, findings suggest that immigrants try to keep links with their relations back home. Besides that, maintaining relations with social network back home strengthen their sense of belonging to their home and their feeling of being Syrian. In regard to the social network in the Netherlands, it seems to be helpful means to integrate into the society and becomes more familiar with the Dutch traditions and customs. Besides that, social network in the Netherlands also play a role in deepening their feeling of belonging to the Netherlands.

1- Introduction:

Migration is a stage in the life course of people, carry on not only physical changes, but also emotional and social changes on the individuals' life. According to the literature, changes in social network and sense of belonging are highly expected after migration (Blunt, 2007; Bloem et al, 2008). The current research discusses these two aspects among Syrian immigrants in the Netherlands. Literature suggests that; migration changes the way in which immigrants maintain their relations back home, and challenges them to establish new relations in their new place. With regard to the sense of belonging, published works pointed to the change of sense of belonging after migration. So, in order to find out the experience of Syrian immigrants, in regard to social network and sense of belonging to their home country and to the Netherlands. In addition, research trying to investigate the relation between those two aspects. Research starts with question about the role of social network on deepening the sense of belonging. In fact, assuming the deepening role of the social network on the sense of belonging, was established on the literatures. Which suggest that sense of belonging to the home country already exist inside every human, also feeling of belonging to the host country is something normal to generate after migration. So, respecting theses suggestions, the research comes to find out whether the social network plays a role in deepening the sense of belonging after migration. Indeed, social network is not the only reason in generating and deepening the sense of belonging but in this research, it was the main aspect to discuss and study.

However, this chapter displays the objectives of the research, in addition to the questions and theoretical frame work and the conceptual model; which was established depending on the theoretical framework and literature review. In addition, the Dutch integration policies are described in order to reveal the link between the research and the policies.

1-2 Research objective :

To investigate the social network among Syrian migrants in the Netherlands, and to find out whether this network influences their sense of belonging.

1-3 Research question + sub-questions

Regarding to these objectives the questions could be formed, in main question and three sub questions as the following;

The main research question:

What is the role of social network on deepening the sense of belonging among Syrian migrants in the Netherlands?

With three sub questions:

1-What are the features of social network among Syrian migrants in Netherlands?

2-How do Syrian migrants keep links with their social network back home and in Netherlands ?

3- How do Syrian migrants in Netherlands express their sense of belonging?

2- Theoretical background of the research:

This chapter gives an overview of the studies which handled the social network and the sense of belonging; also the theories were applied in this regard. The conceptual model comes at the end to illustrate the relation between the two concepts.

Report on cultural geography of migration was done by Blunt(2007), has revealed the growing field of mobility studies and the breadth of research field on both physical movement of humans and the cultural phase of this movement. That, in this research the cultural geography was discussed within three types of movement, mobility, transnationality, and diaspora. Blunt(2007) argued that moving to new community generates a multiple sense of belonging, in this meaning, they seek not only to merge with the host society but also to keep this links with their home land. Further, these attempts to keep links with home show up in their visual and other cultural representations and practices, which foster and recast memories, identities and attachments within particular places. From psychological point of view, sense of belonging represent a unique mental health and according to Maslow (1945) sense of belonging is a basic human need (Hagerty and, Patusky, 1995). Regarding to this importance the study aimed to develop and test psychometrically a self-report instrument designed to measure sense of belonging in adults. This instrument consists of two separately scored scales. SOBI-P (psychological state) and SOBI-A (antecedents). The subjects of this experience where three groups, community college students, patients in treatment for major depression, and Roman catholic nuns. The results out of this experiment suggested that SOBI-P is a valid and reliable measure of sense of belonging. SOBI-A appears to reflect an individual's motivation for its construction validity and internal consistency. (Hagerty and, Patusky, 1995).

A study concerning sense of place was conducted to investigate whether the dimensions of sense of place can discriminate those residents who identify with their rural town and prefer to stay, from those who don't. And whether patterns of association between these dimensions differ between adolescent and adult residents. The three different variables are, place attachment (emotional bonding and behavioral commitment), sense of community (affiliation and belonging) and place dependence (available activities, quality and quality comparison with alternative communities). This study describes belonging in terms of one's sense of community, Pretty et al.(2003), in this term when the individual has a sense of belonging to identified community, the individual anticipates receiving resources from that community, at the same time, responding when the community requires something of the individual's resources, (Pretty et al.2003). Moreover, sense of belonging of citizens is derived from the actions of the state or the citizens around them (Kaplan 1993), and they will know if they are welcomed or not through theses actions. According to Pretty et al.(2003), sense of belonging appears as interaction process between the individual and the community, that when individual has the sense of belonging to identified community, he will anticipate receiving resources from that community, at the same time, responding when the community requires something from the individual's resources.

The importance of social network in the process of international migration has appeared more in the economic point of view. That, migrant network lower the costs of migration and increase the probability of finding job and have a decent income in the host country. According to the convoy model the social network consists of a variety of accompanying and supporting individuals who surround people from childhood to old age, (Bloem et al.2008). Using this model, a research was conducted among the Dutch adults, to investigate the impact of relocation on one's network. The research examines the differential impact of relocation, depending on the moved distance, upon the size of three types of role network. Which are,

neighbor network, fellow club members, and the co-worker. The study discussed that social network changes over the life course, and moving as a change in the life course affects some types of social network and has no effects on other types of social relations, (Bloem et al. 2008). Kadushin(2004), argued that; a network contains a set of objects and a mapping of relations between the objects, on the social level, individuals represent the objects. Indeed, needs change when the surrounding circumstance change, and as people move through the life course, their social network changes regarding to this move. Regarding to Schiller et al.(1995), through the transitional movement, individuals establish new relations at the host country beside maintaining their relations back home. In another words; new environment living generates needs to make new relations and contact with surrounding people to compensate the old relations which have been ended because of moving. In this sense the current research gives more attention to the social impact of international migration, and how moving changes the ties between people who move and who stay. Besides that, literature pointed out to the role of technology in facilitating material and imaginative communication between people (Blunt,2007).

2-1 Conceptual model:

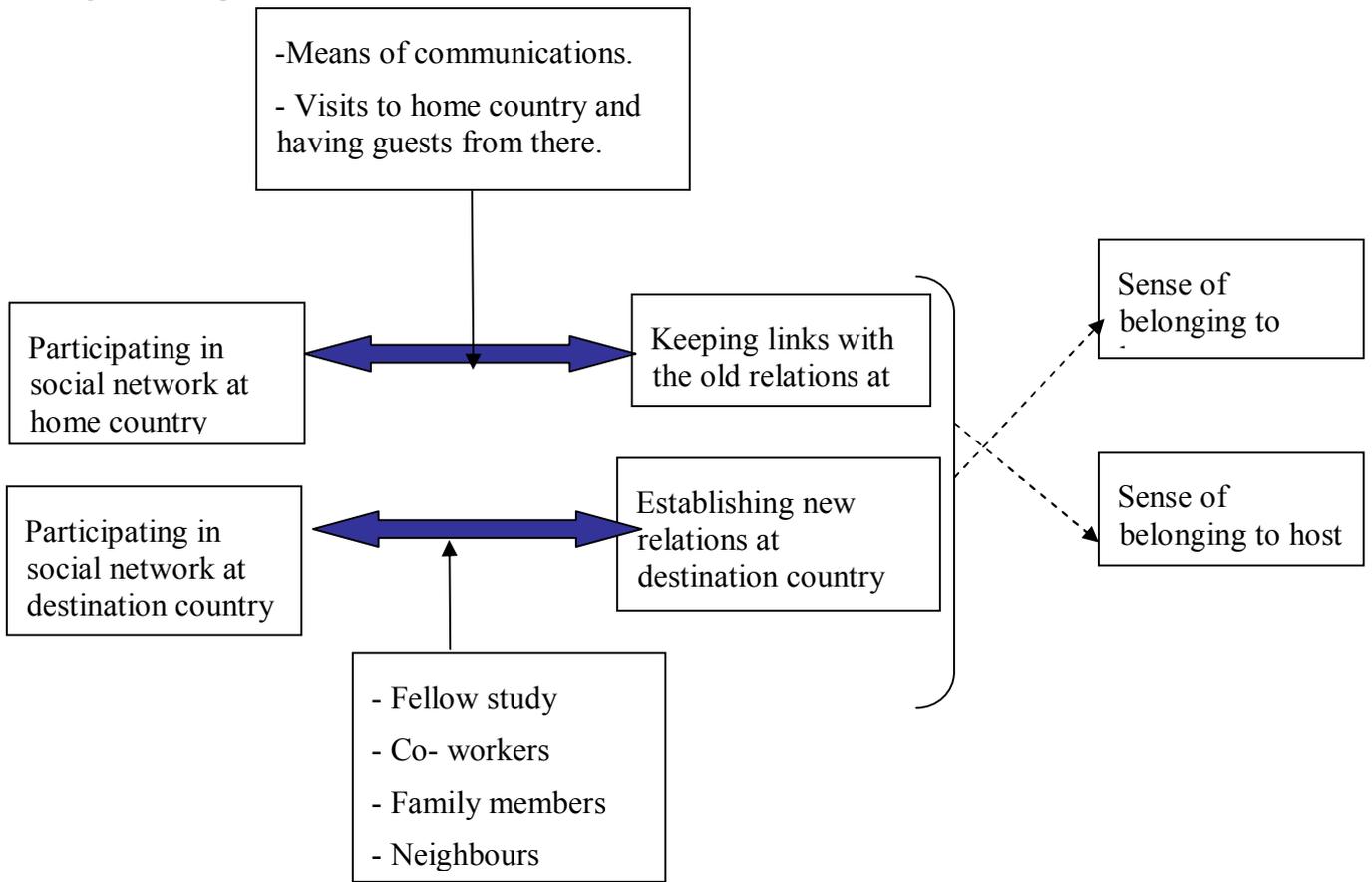
According to the literature review and the theoretical frame work, applied in the research, the conceptual frame work could be in the following form:

Arrows between boxes reveal the relations between the concepts and other aspects related to them. For instance, participating in the social network at home, proceed through maintain relations back home through the available means of communications.

In the same way, participant in the social network in the host country, proceed through establishing new ties with the people through daily life at school and work.

Because the literature didn't bring any evidence on the relation between the social network and the sense of belonging, so the arrows between both of them were removed until the relation being proved through the research and after analyzing the data of the study.

Figure 1 conceptual model



3- Integration policies in the Netherlands:

According to Kaplan (1993), sense of belonging of citizens is derived from the action of the state or the citizens around them, and they will know if they are welcomed or not through these actions. In this sense, the issue of belonging seems to be linked and related to the integration policies which applied by the governments to merge the newcomers into the society. Regarding the Netherlands, studying of immigration and integration is relatively recent, publications concerning these topics started in the 1970s (Verwey-Jonker 1971, van Amersfoort 1974, Heijke 1979, Bovenkerk 1978, Entzinger 1975, Groenendijk 1979, and van Praag 1971). Expansive growth of this literature was in the 1980s, following the beginnings of the new 'Ethnic Minorities Policies' (Ministerie van Biza 1980, 1981, 1983). However the growth did not stop in the 1990s and new specialisms were developed. Beside that research institutes at Dutch universities were established like (ISEO, ERCOMER, IMES), Penninx et al (2005). Consequently, this development resulted in rich literature concerning this field in 2004.

Below; brief description of the Dutch integration policies, also the integration programs which applied to support the policies.

3-1 Policies of the 1970s and before:

After the Second World War, the process of reconstruction, led to shortage in labour market in many sectors, and the current population couldn't fill the gap, this situation led the country to recruit foreigner workers from different countries to fill in the vacancies. At that time Netherlands considered itself a non-immigration country, there was no explicit policy to regulate incoming flows of immigrants, and no policies for these newcomers, (Bruquetas-Callejo et al.2008). With this point of view, the Netherlands assumed that the guest workers will go back to their countries. Depending on this, the main policy goals concerned remigration and the accommodation of guest workers to Dutch society for as long as they would stay in the Netherlands. Maintaining migrants' own identity was thus considered important, but as part of the mind frame that saw migrants as planning to return to their countries of origin.

Beginning of the 1970s, and in the ministry of Culture, Recreation and social work(CRM), a welfare policy was developed to respond to the needs of some vulnerable groups, such as guest workers, asylum seekers, migrants from Surinam and the Dutch Antilles, Moluccans and the travellers known in Dutch as woonwagenbewoners, literally meaning 'caravan dwellers'. Through this policy, those groups got welfare services by many of private institutions. During the 1970s, scientists started to get involved into these issues and they drew attention to the gap between the fact of permanent settlement of immigrants in the country and a policymaker's view of temporary migration. Then, in the 1976, the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work installed the Advisory Committee on Research on Minorities (ACOM), which united academics in this domain within a policy frame. Lately of the 1970s, the government decided to develop an EM (Ethnic Minority) Policy and to install a strong coordinating structure for such policy within the Ministry of Home Affairs.

3-2 Ethnic Minorities Policy in the 1980s:

The need for integration policy was clearly realized early in the 1980s. By this time the Netherlands has been struggling to find the right policy to integrate immigrants into the society, (Penninx et al .2005). Over the past decades several policy approaches have come and gone in order to find fitting policy, then, the Ethnic Minority policy was developed to meet the need of specific groups in Dutch society; which combined a low socio-economic

status with being perceived as ethnically and/or culturally different would run the risk of becoming permanently marginal groups in society. In order to avoid this marginality the policy aimed to achieve the equality of ethnic minorities in the socio-economic domain; inclusion and participation in the political domain; and equity in the domain of culture and religion within constitutional conditions. Furthermore, it was targeted at specific groups regarded as endangered of becoming distinct minorities: guest workers, Moluccans, Surinamese and Antilleans, refugees, gypsies and woonwagenbewoners. At the last stage the policy should cover all relevant domains and ministries, and be anchored strongly in the governmental organization, (Bruquetas-Callejo et al.2008).

In brief, the EM policy was applied to prevent ethnic minority formation, by promoting socio-economic equality and cultural and religious equity. Furthermore, it was good progress through the term of integration. However, policies regarding integration; kept changing and progressing to be more able to face the need of new characters of migrants.

3-3 Integration Policy in the 1990s:

A broad debate started when the WRR presented a new report 'Immigrant Policy' about the social economic approach as well as the obligations and rights of immigrants in their participation in the Netherlands (Scholten, 2007). Consequently, efforts during this period aimed to get migrants with good citizenship and self responsibility. The argument was that citizenship requires duties as well as rights, and that each citizen must be active and responsible for himself or herself. Comparing to the EM policy, the 1990s policy reflected three changes; first: shifting to focus not on target group, but on individuals who are in a disadvantaged situation. Second: more concentrating on improving the socio- economic incorporation through labour market and education measurement. Third: shifting away from cultural and multicultural policies as well as away from the strong reliance on immigrant organizations, Bruquetas-Callejo et al (2008). Apparently, the main policy goals were to achieve equal participation of immigrants in the socio-economic sphere, housing, education and labour, and to facilitate the initial integration of newcomers by providing civic integration courses, Penninx et al (2005). Until the beginning of 2000, this policy was existing. Therefore, new policy was implemented by the new government with different view on the integration and immigration issues,(Scholten, 2007).

3-4 New style of integration policy:

A series of events around the turn of the millennium triggered a new shift in the public and political discourse on immigration and integration issues. On the international level, the eleven of September attack changed the image of Islam and Muslims around the world, even the general view on foreigner has been changed. Beside that, on the Dutch level, also series of violent events took place by some immigrants. Like the murder on Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh, and other criminals were executed by youngest immigrants against native inhabitants.

All these events had two significant effects. First of all, they drew attention to policy failure. Also, parliament established a Parliamentary Research Committee on the Integration Policy in order to examine 'why policy had thus far resorted in such limited successes', Bruquetas-Callejo et al(2008). Since 2002 and further, integration policies took another turn according to new political majority was in power. New style integration policy; followed the model of 1990s policy as it is based on the leading concepts of 'citizenship' and 'self-responsibility', but its emphasis is much more on the cultural adaptation of immigrants to Dutch society, Bruquetas-Callejo et al(2008). During this phase, integration policy was linked to

immigration policy; It facilitated the selection of migrants and restricted new flows, in particular those of asylum seekers, family reunion and marriage migration.

The novelty in this policy; is the early integration of newcomers, that, before entering the Netherlands, immigrants are obliged to pass an exam in Dutch language and culture. And when they arrive to Netherlands, they have to follow civic integration courses. Further, getting the citizenship is something completely related to their result out of the courses and the exams.

In conclusion, integration policies in the Netherlands, were changed gradually from the multiculturalist ideas in the early stages of arranging the policy, where promoting the culture diversity was the main concern. Recently, policies are focusing more on the homogeneous population. More attention in the last 20 years, was devoted for individual responsibility in the process of integration into the society. Where, not only the government is responsible for the integration, but also every individual is responsible for part of contribution to a have comfortable life in the Dutch society.

3-5 Integration Programs in the Netherlands:

To support the official policy and achieve its goals, consequent programs should be applied. Next to the integration policy in the Netherlands, an integration program was carried out since 1998. Where, immigrants who want to stay permanently in the Netherlands; have to follow an integration program, which follows from the Wet Inburgrieng Nieuwkomers (WIN), in English (Integration of Newcomers Act). The main goal of this program is increasing the individuals self reliance, Doornik(2004), in the way of moving the focus from the group to the individual. Focusing on this program was on individual training needs; beside that language skill is fundamental requirement. Apparently, the WIN has turned out to be less successful than what was expected, due to a huge dropout rate and a sanction system that does not appear to have achieved its goal. Till 2004, the WIN was seen as noncommittal. Discussions among political parties, about improving the program to face its fail, and several proposals from the government to remedy this. New provisions were scheduled to take place in 2005 or 2006. Until 15 March 2006, certain foreign nationals; wishing to settle in the Netherlands for a prolonged period who require a provisional residence permit will have to take the civic integration examination abroad, Ministry of VROM (2009). This program was implemented to facilitate the integration of immigrants into the Dutch society after their arrival to Netherlands. Where, people who are planning to immigrate to Netherlands should have basis of Dutch language and aware of Dutch norms and values. To insure this understanding, immigrants will be examined in their country of origin. Passing the Civic Integration Examination Abroad is one of the criteria for being granted a provisional residence permit, which is required to travel into the Netherlands and in turn is a requirement for being given a residence permit entitling you to settle in the Netherlands, Ministry of VROM (2009).

However, after some observation for the civic integration process, it was clear that the results often don't measure up to the require level, or even to the minimum level for successful participation for immigrants in the Dutch society. Therefore, the government wants to improve the quality of civic integration programs, in order to achieve real and successful integration for immigrants. Regarding this desire, Delta Plan for Civic Integration, was applied to address the improvement of implementation, the quality of the courses and the results of immigrants. On 7 September 2007, the delta plan for civic Integration was submitted to the Lower House of the Dutch Parliament, and €460 million have been made available for this plan, Ministry of VROM (2009).

4- Data and methods

This chapter includes the method was applied to complete the research and obtain the results of the study. Starting with the definitions and operationalization of the concepts that were used in the conceptual model. The next step was; moving to the implemented method with further explanation about all the steps were followed and the process of collecting the data. Complete description of the study population and the process of the selection of the respondents, came after. As at the last step in this chapter, the ethical consideration regarding the current study was displayed as well.

4-1 Definitions and operationalisation of concepts:

In the following, concepts of the conceptual model are defined and operationalised. However, definitions specify the real meaning of the concepts through the study, and then operationalisation is the development of specific research procedures which enable the measurement of the concepts in reality (Babbie, 2006). For the current study, measuring of the concepts, was through questions in the in-depth interview, however, questions were based on the theories which applied in the research.

Below, the definitions of the concepts and the questions were asked in order to operationalisation it, are displayed.

Social network: “ The people especially kin, friends and neighbours – to whom an individual is tied socially, usually by shared interests and, in many cases, values, attitudes and aspiration”(Dictionary of human Geography, 2009).

Operationalisation: since the concept of the social network includes the social network back home and in the Netherlands, so the questions will differ regarding to this.

Regarding to Social network back home:

- Have you tried to keep in touch with your acquaintances back home after migration? Why?
- How do you keep link with your acquaintances in Syria? Probe: The Internet, phone calls/messages, visiting home, friends visiting the Netherlands?
- With whom you still keep in touch/ the most? Why? Probe: *Friends, family, neighbours, co-worker.*

Regarding establishing new relations in the Netherlands:

- Was it easy for you to find and establish new relations in Netherlands? Why?
- With whom you mainly contact in the Netherlands? Probe: *Other Syrian, other migrants Arabian/non Arabian, Dutch*
- Whom from your acquaintances you contact the most? Probe: *Other Syrian, other migrants Arabian/non Arabian, Dutch people.*

Sense of Belonging: “The experience of personal involvement in a system or environment, so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment”, Hagerty et al.(1992).

Questions were asked to find out how the respondents experienced their sense of belonging to both Syria and the Netherlands.

Operationalisation:

-In what way, if at all, keep in touch with your relations back home could affect your feeling toward Syria?

- Have you followed any integration program?

- In what ways, if at all, the integration program facilitate your life in the Netherlands? Probe: *The language, new friends, knowing the Dutch customs.*

4-2 Methods:

Considering that the topic is so related to the peoples' stories and their experiences, qualitative methods could provide an insight into how people make sense of their life stories which is difficult to be gained with other methods, Liamputtong et al (2007). In this regard, conducting a qualitative research; was seen as a proper way to find out how people make sense of their personal experiences regarding the social network and sense of belonging. Moreover, peoples experience personal stories in regard those two aspects, and maybe they don't feel fully comfortable to talk about these stories in front of other people. So to keep this personality, the method of semi structured in-depth interview guide, was implemented as the appropriate way to collect the data and go in-depth in people stories with keeping the privacy of those stories. Generally, in qualitative researches, attention is given to the richness of the data more than to the samples size. So the size of the sample depends on the sufficiency of the obtained data. That, when the information derived from the interview answer all the queries of the research and cover the theoretical frame work, and no new information could appear from more interviews. Then, there is no need to collect more data from the respondents.

Regarding the current study, thirteen in-depth interviews, were conducted with Syrian immigrants who live in the Netherlands. Number of interviews was terminated when the derived information was enough and rich in which it is supporting the desired analysis. Interviews were done in the period between 10th to 17th of December 2009 in different cities in the Netherlands. Meeting with participants took place in social places out of their houses, except one interview was done at the participant's place. Out of thirteen interviews, 10 of them were tape recorded, and three of them were dictated verbally by the interviewees. Next to the tape recording, notes were taken during the interviews; in order to catch the body language of the participant, which is difficult to be recorded, also to make connection between all components and issues could show up during the interview. Actually the real advantage for taking notes appears; when the tape fails and loses some information, then, by notes this shortage could be offset. Unfortunately, this was experienced through conducting the interviews, and one interview was lost because of problems with the recorder, but, by notes; the researcher could complete the transcribing with full information.

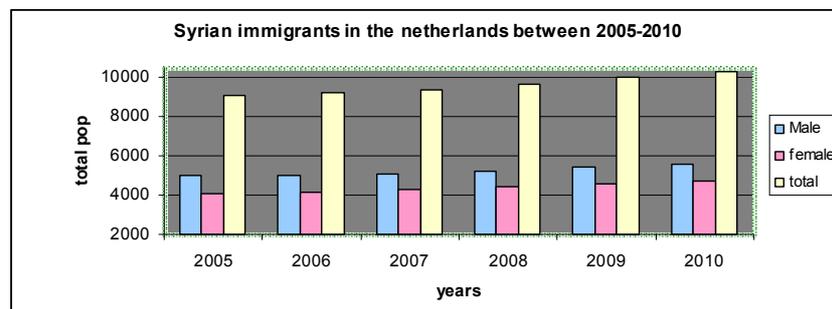
The issues of validity and reliability should be guaranteed by the adopted methods. Although, field researches can pose problems of reliability, that; results could be interpreted subjectively and depend too much on the researcher point of view, what is difficult to occur with interpreting numbers in quantitative researches. On the other hand, qualitative methods seem to provide measures with greater validity than quantitative ones,(Babbie, 2006). However, validity in the current research was guaranteed by establishing the interview guide on the theoretical framework and the real meaning of the two concepts applied in the research. Regarding the reliability of the method, it was ensured by transcribing the interviews data word for word, and by comparing the results with the applied theories respecting the concepts in the research.

4-3 Study participants:

Study population includes Syrian immigrants in the Netherlands. In fact, after serious seeking for information about Syrian immigration and immigrants in the Netherlands, results came with so poor data. That, no studies were found on the history of this immigration or about the immigrants themselves. This shortage of information required serious searching for the reasons, in order to understand and attribute this situation in reasonable way. Therefore, this lack on studies was ascribed to some reasons. First, Syrian migration to the Netherlands, is considered as a new movement compare to the Moroccan and Turkish one for example. That, Syria is not a former Dutch colony and there wasn't any agreement in recruiting people from it, to work in the Netherlands after the Second World War, so immigration was not regular or notable action. Second attribution for this lack in information is that Syrian ingathering, in the Netherlands, is relatively small and doesn't have this huge impact on the Dutch society. So maybe this was the reason for not attracting the researchers to investigate the components this group of immigrants, and the reasons behind their immigrating to the Netherlands.

However, statistic Netherlands provides data of the total number of Syrian in the Netherlands, distributed by sex for all age groups, on the period between 2005 till 19 March 2010. The figure below illustrates this numbers and distribution by sex during the mentioned period.

Figure 2: Syrian population in the Netherlands between 2005-march 2010



Source: Statistic Netherlands, 19-3-2010

It is not a long series to study specific population's aspects, but it is enough to know the number of the study population during conducting the research. According to the (CBS) data, the total number of Syrian in the Netherlands has increased during this period to reach 10261 after being 9044 in 2005. The increasing was in both male and female numbers, with small differences in 2006 and 2007, that the increasing in female numbers was more than in males. Later in 2008, males increased by 102 with 24 for the females, what was huge different between the two numbers.

Respondents were selected among Syrian immigrants; who live in the Netherlands. Snowball sampling method was adopted to approach the respondents. However, there was no specific criterion to choose between them, but they should be Syrian and resident in the Netherlands; not only for temporary reason, like study or visit. In order to guarantee information richness and quality, choosing participants; based on combining different age groups, sex and residential duration in the Netherlands.

Below the table show the respondents' distribution by sex, age groups and residential duration

Table 1 participants distribution by age and sex

	Age groups			
Sex	15 - 25	26 - 36	37 - 47	48 - 58
Female	-	1	5	-
Male	2	1	3	1
Total	2	2	8	1

Table 2 participants distribution by residential duration

Residential duration	2-6	7-11	12-16	17-21
Total participants	5	3	4	1

4-4 Ethical considerations:

At the first step, participants had a complete introduction about the research, and its objectives, and what are the consequences of participating in the interviews, thus, their participation in the research was totally voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any stage during the interview. By giving fake names and not provide any details which is able to be referred to specific respondent, the issues of anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. Therefore, it was guaranteed not to expose the participant to any kind of harm due to their participation in the research.

Furthermore, reporting the results and the data was done with high respect to accuracy, with referring to the shortcoming regarding some information was needed in the research. List of references summarized all the literatures and sources had been used in the research what enable to refer to any of them.

5- Social network after migration:

In this chapter, the results of the in-depth interviews regarding social network after migration, which include both social network at home country and social network in Netherlands are presented.

5-1 Social network at home:

Literature suggested that migration, as a stage through the life course, brings different challenges to the individual's life. One of those challenges is the break and the changes in the individuals' social network, and the way they maintain their relations back home after migration and being faraway.

5-1-1 Maintenance of relationships:

One of the migration's effects on the individuals' social relations back home; is the way on how they keep in touch with each others. Concerning that the geographical distance and availability of technology in the two countries, play a role in the whole communication process. Below, the different ways of contacting the social network back home, which are, phone calls and visits to the home country or even having acquaintances as guests in Netherlands, are presented according to what the respondents mentioned during the interviews.

Phone calls:

Taking into consideration that; the internet service is not available in Syria as it is in the Netherlands, calling friends seems to be as the most important way to keep in touch with relations back home.

Nabeil:' well...it is a pity that there is no fast internet in Syria...i really would like to see all my people there, but ok.... still I can call them and hear their voices through the phone, it is good way'(male, 39 years old)

Radwan:' yes I would like to see them every time we call....but I can't force them to go to the internet café every time, it is hard for them....so I convinced my self that calling is enough for the moment.... and ja [said in Dutch] they don't need to be online to call...they can pick up their phone whenever I call, even in the street or at work'(male, 37 years old)

Phone calls appear as a practical way to keep in touch with friends back home. Not only because of the internet availability, but because sometimes it is faster and doesn't require being at home and sticking to the computer. Although, the respondents would like to see their friends and have an eye contact with them, but they try to satisfy themselves with what actually available regarding the technology of communication. Furthermore, they feel pity or even sorry for the lack of fast internet in Syria, as what Nabeil has said, but he tried to be satisfied just to hear their voices and check on them by the phone.

Depending on what Radwan has mentioned, the advantage of phone calls that; it doesn't require to be at home or to be online, so he can reach his friends wherever they are, and this provides immediate communication when he needs to call on them. Although, he prefers to see his acquaintances, but he takes into consideration the difficulty for them being online, or to go to the internet café, but he still hopes to have this eye contact with them in the future, and not to be restricted by phone calls for the whole time he is staying abroad.

Rawan:' ja [yes in Dutch]...internet connections is good...but I had computer only since three months, but of course I contact my friends before that time through the phone...we call every week for an hour...we send messages constantly....and ja ja we exchange miss calls every

day and sometimes more than one time, every time we think about each others....i think this fast contact is difficult to be achieved through the internet, at least we don't need to sit to our computers every time we want to check on each other'(female,37 years old)

Monther:' you know...I use internetphone...that what I call it [smile]...since I call my friends through the internet but to their phones...this relay great thing...once I called my friend and he was at his farm taking care of the plants ...imagine...he started telling me what he is doing.. i felt great, like I am with him...oh it was so good for me'(male, 53 years old)

According to what the respondents have mentioned above, phone calls are preferable and easy mean to contact friends back home. They insist again on the point of availability of phone more than the internet, not only in Syria but also for some of them in Netherlands. Furthermore, phone calls provide this positive feeling or even feeling safe just to be sure of those friends, who are very far in distance, are thinking and remembering them several times a day.

In addition, respondents express this great happiness, when they accompany their friends during their daily activities; this makes them feel like they are home, which they want to do actually not only by phone.

Rawan:' Frankly I think about my friends and my family every single day. Sometimes It keeps me up all the night...yes...let me tell you something...once I stayed awake till 3 a.m, I was thinking about my friend...i felt so strange feeling...so... I called her, and guess what....she was awake and thinking about me [look with surprise]...we talked for an hour...after that...I kissed my phone [laughing]...yes... I felt great relief to call her, and if I didn't I'll be worry about her....imagine if I want to use the internet to send her an email or even to talk...it is long way...nothing better than hearing the voice of whom you think about in the same moment'.(female,37 years old)

Rawan kissed her phone, of course, not because of its material value as a phone, but because it is enabling her to have intimate talking with her close friend, whom was thinking about her at the same time despite of the long distance between them. Moreover, the positive situation after making the call, let the respondents appreciate this kind of technology which allowing them to express their feelings toward their friends without any delay, and if they didn't have this possibility, they will feel uncomfortable and confused, what could affect their social and daily life in the Netherlands.

Obviously, using the phone is preferable way to contact because, it is more available to both parties and it provides immediate transfer to what they feel and want to express to each other.

- Visits:

Visiting home or even friends visit to Netherlands, were regarded as important way to keep in touch with friends and relations back home. Since it is difficult for them to have this eye contact through the internet.

Rasha:' It is different feelings to see all your people... we make Phone calls every week, and sometimes for many times in a week, but visiting home and meet every one there is the best way to check on them, I go there every summer for one month....oh... it is the best month during the year'(female,37 years old)

Referring to what the respondent had said, visiting home appears as the best way to be close to all friends and relatives back home. It is allowing them to have face to face contact with every one, which gives the opportunity to see how they have changed by time and if they are in good condition, what it is difficult to be achieved through phone calls. Moreover, having

intimate time with friends, always linked with relaxing and spending most joyful period, which is difficult to have in Netherlands with all work stress and lack of close relations.

Rami: 'I was 10 years old when I visited Syria for the first time.[silence]when the plane landed on Syrian land, I had the same warm feelings.....even greater than the feelings I used to have when I just see pictures of Syria and of my relative there...it was great feeling to be able to hug them not only hear their voices through the phone...I felt they are real...not only in my imagination'.(male,21 years old)

Warmth, intimacy and great feelings, that what Rami felt when he visited Syria and saw his relatives there. Although he used to see their photos and keep in touch with them through the phone, but having this eye contact proves that they are really exist, and he can touch them and feel their emotions toward him and how they love and care about him. Moreover, the trace of visiting and seeing people back home, emerges as a constant desire to be in touch with them, and keep this warm relation, as Rami continued...

Rami: 'My second visit there was 10 years later,[last year]....during this time I though about them in different way ...i was more familiar with them and with their life... I could remember their features and how they smile or even how they shout [smile]... and after last visit I feel like I need to call them more and to be in touch with them constantly, at the beginning our calls were shorted on few general questions...but now it is different...we did many nice things together ... and sometimes I need to call them and talk about those things'.(male, 21 years old)

Here, visiting home country and having direct communication with the people there; make the two parties closer to each other, since it is enabling them to have daily life together and recognise how they react and express their emotions, this gives human aspects to their relation, and motivates them to keep these links between each other. Moreover, this way of communicate creates memories to the person; which are important part of human's life. That every person seeks to remember beautiful things happened to him through his life, this logically brings to the mind people whom shared him these memories. From this point, the importance of visiting home country appears in strengthen the relationship between immigrants and their network, despite of the great distance between them.

Besides visiting their home country, respondents indicated that friends or relatives visit to Netherlands as important way to keep in touch with each other.

Hamed: ' yes it is nice to have friends here...but you know...not all of them have enough money to come and visit Europe it is too expensive for them.... beside that I can't afford all costs for their visit, I wish if I could...but really it is difficult..., I have one friend who doesn't have this problem and he used to come here from time to time...we used to go places together and have tours around...it is nice thing, but rarely to happen' (male, 47 years old)

No doubt that having friends for few days is a nice way to keep in touch, but not possible every time. That for Hamed, he would like if his friends visit him and spend time together, but having financial difficulties determines their visits.

For other respondents having friends or family from home, was seen in different way like for the one below.

Fadia: 'Last time when my parents visited me I was extremely happy to see them again after one year and half of being far away...I felt like I have the opportunity to live home atmosphere again; we talked about everything....our neighbours...our village.....even about the streets of our city...absolutely every thing'(female,38 years old)

AB: what do mean by home atmosphere?

Fadia: ' [thinking]...it isit is simply being with them and living in the same way like home...we cooked traditional food which I miss too much and It was more tasty than when I make it alone...oh... they gave different taste to my life here, it was very nice time'.(female,38 years old)

Having people from home looks an opportunity, not only for seeing them and spending time together but also to live as home again. According to Fadia, her feeling was indescribable to see her parents again and having intimate time with them. Even though, she didn't leave Holland but just being with people from home changed her life here and turned to be nicer with different taste. Actually, what she meant by (taste) not being salty or sweet as in flavour, but simply this means; that she can feel the reality of every thing she does with them, laugh, feelings, even places and food, every thing look real and valuable.

5-2 Social network in the Netherlands:

Being far away from home and friends, and living in new society with new people, requires building new relations with those people in the new place. In this regard, maintain relations with friends back home; appears as one part of the total social network of immigrants. The other part of this network appears in their attempts to build relations with people in the new place. That, human nature always demands having social relations with other people, especially whom living in the same geographical area.

5-2-1 Establishing new relations:

Establishing new ties in the host country is one of many difficulties the immigrant could have through the migration course. Taking to considerations, differences between the society of origin and the host society, differences between people characters, and many other obstacles could emerge according to exceptional circumstances.

Rawan: 'at the beginning I was very scared of starting relationships with other people..... Dutch or even other migrants, i wanted to but it was so difficult for me.....since I do not know anything about human nature here...or how they behave with each other...but fortunately all the people I met here were very kind and open...then things became easier and more comfortable for me'.(female,37 years old)

Fear and alienation controlled Rawan desire to build new ties with people around her. Such feelings are normal to emerge at the beginning of moving process, since, being in a new social environment; imposes dealing with different characters of people from totally different cultures, that new immigrants have no clue about them, so, they face problems in dealing with others at the beginning and every thing sound to be strange. Further, what really helped Rawan to overcome her fear was the people whom she met, that the nature of new people play an important role in easing the process starting new relations in the host country.

Nabeil:' It wasn't very difficult thing to start new relations.....most of the people here are open and accept other people, although there are people who aren't flexible in having relations with new comer, but for me in general I didn't have big problems with this'(male, 39 years old)

Finding people and starting new relations in Netherlands, appear as individual case and every migrant could have special way of dealing with it. Going through what respondent have said above, starting new relations depends on how other people are accept newcomers and willing to build relations with them.

Azzam: 'no at all, this was very difficult because of the language difficulties...you know language is the only way to communicate with others...addition to cultures differences...also something important which is the prior ideas about eastern people that they are underdeveloped and don't have good education, all these make the process of starting relations looks difficult'.(male,35 years old)

According to what Azzam mentioned, language, was considered as important way or even the only one to communicate with other, and as migrants need time to be familiar with the language, so this affects their desire to build and have new relations with other people. Moreover, coming from eastern culture and having different values about life, hinder both immigrant and native from starting new relations, and even if the migrant took the step, maybe others will not have the same willing, or simply they need more time to trust him and be able to build new relation.

Mouna: 'No, it wasn't easy at all, since people here are very different, and there are varieties in nationalities.....talking about new relations remind me when I moved to my house and after establishing every thing, I started looking for people around me, I was standing on the balcony and looking to the other balconies and to the street to see who is living here and if someone is around, that time I met my neighbour, who lives next to me, I felt so happy and amiability especially that she speaks Arabic and we have similar tradition and norms what make us get along to each other easily'(female, 32 years old)

Referring to Mouna above, looking for people and try to build relations was first thing she thought about. Although, she knew already the variety of people around her, but she didn't hesitate in her seeking to find new relations. Moreover, she couldn't hide her happy face while telling her story with her neighbour and how she felt relief to meet someone speaks the same language as her and having similar traditions. Actually, shared points between people make them closer and ease their relations together, since they could understand each other better than if they are from different social background.

- Relations with Dutch:

Relations and communications with Dutch people come as normal results of being in Netherlands. Was it easy or difficult to build these relations?, to what extent they are deep, and how much they are important for the respondent? it is all different from one respondent to another, as it is explained below.

Radwan: ' Yes, actually its normal to have relations with Dutch, since we live together ...so during our daily life we meet in street, work and as neighbours..... normal relations... and I think it is important to have those relations ...because they provide kind of stability and a sense of being accepted in the society'.(male,37years old)

Fadia: 'of course, because I live with them....and through Dutch acquaintances I can be closer to the community, they help me to integrate more with the society'(female,38 years old)

Shared place and living among Dutch, appear as important reasons to have relations together through regular life activities. Moreover, those relations were indicated as important demand for respondents, as they reduce their feeling of alienation and being stranger, even if they are not so deep and strong relations. In addition to, relations with Dutch make a bridge between immigrant and society, since they know more about traditions and norms in Holland than any other, so they could be good way to merge easily into the society.

Malek:' for me it is important to have relations with Dutch, Since I live here and I want to establish for my life here, so I need to be adapted to the society.... in this way Dutch acquaintances help me to know more about the traditions and norms here'.(male,16 years old)

Nabeil:' my life here requires having relation with Dutch since I live among them, sharing the same country, so It is important to have contact with them'(male, 39 years old)

The ability of building relations with Dutch depends not only on immigrants willing and need to start these relations. But also on Dutch people themselves and how they react to this request, and whether they are willing to have relations with the newcomers or not.

Amani:' no it wasn't easy to have relations with Dutch, since they are so careful in building their relations, and take too much time to trust others and consider them as friends.....what I realised through my relations with them, that they surround themselves with a circle and not every one can enter the line, only close and intimate people but when they call someone friend this mean they trust him and will help him as much as they can'.(female, 39 years old)

For Amani, the manners in which Dutch people build their friendships delayed her willing to have relations with them. Therefore, by time she realised that they just want to have confident friends to share intimacy and difficulties through life time.

Radwan: 'It wasn't easy because building relations requires common problems, ideas and beliefs between individuals, which I cannot feel it with Dutch.... since they differ in their life's problems and affairs as they don't live experiences we have as immigrants...but we may have common general or universal interests which any human who interacts with life and society can feel it and think about it'(male, 37 years old)

Malek:' although Dutch are nice and open people...but I find it difficult to build relations with them... we are different in the way of thinking...for example, while am worry about my future and how to work in order to secure better life, I find them thinking about buying new clothes and where to go in the weekend....of course am not blaming them... that they shouldn't have the same worries I have, since they live in their country, and no worries about their future, addition to, they don't suffer of alienation'(male,16 years old).

Zeina:' no I can't share every thing everything with Dutch...simply because most of my problems and difficulties are because am a migrant here and not in my country, and they don't have this problems so they will not be able to help me if I share them what I feel' (female,44 years old).

Differences in social background create differences in people's behaviour, interests and worries; what complicate their relations and make it difficult to find shared points between them. According to what respondents have said; having different problems and issues than Dutch people; hindered having deep relations with them, and shorted these relations to transient one. In fact, being a migrant imposes new issues and problems which related to establishing new life and adjusting to new society. Those issues don't disturb natives' life, in this term; they find it difficult to understand all immigrant's problems, what prevent them of having deep and intimate relation together.

Rami:' although I was almost born here....sometimes I feel a gap between us, they do not understand me, they have different culture which guide them to a different behaviour.... for example some of them yell at their moms, and treat them with no respect....for me this is not acceptable and it is against the way I was raised up' (male, 21years old)

It is interesting to find that even for Rami, who came to Holland when he was seven months old, and was surrounded with many Dutch friends since he was a child, but he still feel gap

between him and them. Actually, what he said reflects his family culture and how they educated their children as they are at home not in different society.

Hamed: ' for me it is important to have friendships with Dutch, since they are frank and open people what make relations with them very interesting and comfortable....although they put limits in their relations with other but they are honest and serious in their way of dealing'.(male, 47 years old)

Apparently, relations with Dutch is important not only to be closer to the society, but simply, because they are kind, confident, and educated people, for these traits having relations with them provides kind of relief and social stability for the respondent.

6- Sense of belonging after migration:

Transitional movements hold not only physical change, but also emotional and psychological confusions about many aspects and issues; which related directly and indirectly to being abroad. According to the literature, migrants tend to have multiple sense of belonging. That, beside their sense of belonging to their home country, they will feel belonging to the host country.

In this section, sense of belonging among Syrian migrants, was explained depending on what the interviewees mentioned and expressed through the interviews.

6-1 Sense of belonging to Syria:

Moving beyond the borders and being far away from the home country; could be a good way to discover the in-depth feelings toward home. Generally, people don't think about their belonging to their home land, or how they feel this belonging or even to what extent it is important for them to be on this land and among their people, before migration. Although, most of the migrants could have confusion about their belonging, but it is still personal thing and each one feels belonging in different way.

Malek:' I feel my self as Syrian, and I don't think this will change by time or by living here....honestly, am proud of my belonging and i don't want Syria to be like Europe....i feel like my life here is not real.... back home... there is beautiful social life...intimacy among people what make you feel home and its beauties.... every thing there is real and I like to belong to this reality'(male, 16 years old)

Zeina:' why should i change my feeling? I'll be Syrian for all my life even if I am not living there and am proud of this belonging...that is my country...my origin...I belong to that culture and to that land' (female, 45 years old)

Respondents talk about their belonging as something solid and not able to be shaken by time or by moving out of Syria. Indirectly, they hint to social differences between Syria and Holland and how those differences form their sense of belonging. Also, they drew attention to intimate social relations back home, and how this warmth makes their lives meaningful and their happiness real. Although, they may not satisfied with all life aspects in Syria, but they prefer to keep this speciality and not to turn the way of living to be like in Europe. Actually, this intimacy, in way or another, provides a warm shelter for migrants, that, when they feel tired and exhausted of being abroad, they will turn toward home seeking warmth and simple life.

Rawan:' yes...my feelings toward Syria has been changed a lot...now I feel my self Syrian more than before....i feel proud of being Syrian...I feel it is deeper and stronger now'(female,37 years old)

AB: how you feel proud?

Rawan: ' am proud of my culture and old civilisations were there...it is nice to come from such rich origin...and you know what...many of my Dutch friends went there and they like it very much, ...even couple of them bought a house there and they go every year....one another friend he wrote a book in Dutch about his stay in syria....i really feel proud of belonging to Syria' (female,37 years old)

Sense of belonging to the home country could increase after moving, like what happened with Rawan. Actually, what is interesting in Rawan's case is the interaction between her Dutch network and her sense of belonging. Hence, when her friends visited Syria and came with positive attitude about it, she felt more confident and proud about her belonging, especially that she is already proud of belonging to this old region with all old civilizations.

Azzam: ' this feeling of belonging to Syria will not change at all, since I spent there thirty years of my life...full of beautiful and sad things; which affected my imagination and my personality, I find it difficult to forget' (male, 35 years)

Respondent here; links his sense of belonging to Syria with the long time he spent there. That, he can't ignore 30 years of his life; for him those years are important and unforgettable, since during those years he formed his personality and his aspirations for the future.

Fadia: ' my feeling as Syrian will not change....I was raised up in Syria...it gave me love and affection...how to forget 35 years of my life...above all its my country, how to change my sense of it...but at the same time I feel belonging to the Netherlands...here I had my own house my family...my children my husband...those are important things for me' (female, 38 years)

Fadia was surprised with such question, for her, Syria is her home country so there is no reason to change her sense of belonging to it. Beside that, she feels belonging to the Netherlands, as it was the place where she established her own family; what means a lot for her. Here, respondent refers her feeling of belonging to the Netherlands, to her start of a new life as a mother and wife and being independent in her own house.

Radwan: ' being Syrian didn't change after I came here...specially I consider my presence here is temporary or at least I want it to be like that... at the end my returning will be to Syria...maybe geographical distance and daily life here made me busy from my country but it remains in memory and the deep sense of everything there'(male, 37 years old).

Monther: ' no being Syrian will not change by leaving abroad or having another citizenship... it is my country and it is the last place to stay'(male,53 years old)

Respondents here point to their intention to go back to Syria as a final stage for their life. What is clear from their statement; that they planned from the beginning for temporary stay in Netherlands this made them think about Syria and always feel connected to there.

Amani: ' what is important here...that feeling of belonging to places of childhood and youth is something intuitive... human can't control it...so from this point it is difficult for me not to feel belonging to Syria!'(female, 39 years old)

Rasha: ' in depth of my soul I can't feel that am Dutch, although of having the citizenship and all my rights as a Dutch...maybe it is something or feeling which is related to the place where the person was born and raised up and to all memories about this place'(female,37 years old)

Sense of belonging to home country and place attachment here, appears as one unit. Which make respondent attribute their belonging to Syria to their feeling of the places where they were raised up and spent their childhood and youth. Furthermore, they speak about this

feeling as something difficult to be understood or guided. Even if the immigrants had new citizenship and complete rights in another country after migration, there is always this presence of old places back home, which they can't forget. Memories of those places link them to their country and strengthen their sense of belonging to their country.

Fadia:' I watch soap operas on Syrian channel although I am so busy and I am not a big fan of them [smile]... but they take me to the atmosphere of home... I see the streets and open spaces and people...once I was watching one of them with a hidden voice...my husband asked me: what are you watching if you are not listening?!!....well I was watching the places and landscapes [smile]...I was plugged in the views...and way of life...oh.. I miss there too much...I spent the happiest days of my life there... impossible to forget the childhood and youth place...I think it is impossible for human to forget his homeland...or what?(female,38 years old).

Mouna:' my feeling didn't change [wondering look]... Syria is the place where I was born and raised up and I have Syrian nationality...my friends there are from different cities... sometimes I feel that I belong to many cities there...being Syrian is something mixed with my soul...I always surf the internet to see photos of Syria to refresh it in my mind '(female,32 years old)

Apparently, the place of birth and youth and memories of happiest time back home, take huge part of respondents thinking and feelings toward their country. Although of their busy life in Holland, they devote time just to remember those places, and make the memories of all views new and fresh in their mind, by watching T.V series and checking the internet for photos of home, what strengthen their feelings of home and make them closer to their country. Referring to Mouna, she hinted to the link between her network in Syria and her feeling of belonging, and how she feels belong not only to her hometown, but more to many cities; because of here friends and relations who are coming from different cities and places in Syria. Furthermore, respondents insist that feeling of belonging to home country, is blended with their entity, and it is difficult to change or forget.

Rawan:' feel that I live in the past more than the present...my childhood and adulthood memories were there...I feel that all the places and all Syria lives inside me; and contacting with my friends bonds my link with my home with my past which I really do like it...I do not forget Syria to remember it...I always watch T.V. series and programs which show the streets and Syrian places; I also enjoy reading books talking about our region in general(female,38 years old).

In the issue of belonging, interviews included some questions to find out how the respondents experienced their belonging through their network back home.

Rami:' I see Syria through them...through my family there...they are my strong bond with home...I came here when I was only 7 month old and have no memories to connect me to Syria...so they are all what I have to feel belong to Syria'(male,21 years old)

The absence of memories and days in Syria; let the relations with people there appears as link between the respondent and his home. Rami, who came to Netherlands when he was an infant, sees in his relations with family members who still live in Syria, the only link with his country, and this relation formed his sense of belonging to Syria.

Fadia:' I feel more attached to home when I talk with my family and acquaintances there...in fact my family makes me connected to the country more and more. They get me to feel that I belong to Syria and deepening the feeling that am Syrian....further, I don't think that I'll feel the same if they were not living there and calling me from there'(female,38 years old)

Amani:' frankly, they are the most important and the strongest link between me and my country, I feel if they leave Syria my heart will follow them where ever they go. That if they are not in Syria I'll not miss it or think of it like I do now'(female,39 years old).

Relations of respondents show up as the most important link with there home. That when they keep links with their relations, they keep in touch with their country and strengthen their feeling of being Syrian. Further, they consider that their feelings toward Syria will not be the same if their families and network left the country.

Radwan:' sure they close me to home, they are an important part of what make sense for me there, everything happens there means to me, in all cities, I even follow the weather conditions there, when I call my friend I ask about public and country situation, what happens , and what changed in places there'

AB: Will you feel the same if your relation there left Syria?

Radwan:' absolutely yes, because they cannot take my country, my city, my memories and my childhood, such things are important part of my life there'(male,38 years old).

Relations back home appear as important link with what is going on there that; they can transfer details about particular things which is difficult to be known through the news on T.V or internet. So in this way they make the sense of home. Despite of the importance of relations in bonding immigrant with home, they can't eliminate the importance of places and memories of childhood. Which also here play a role in linking with home and deepening the sense of it regardless of relations.

Azzam:' I see that longing to home and to friends is the same...personally I can't separate them, home is the beautiful and gloomy things the person live, and friends share those things...so they are so close to each other and they make sense of home'(male,53 years old)

For Azzam, relations and friends back home, not only strengthen the link with home. But also they merged in one unit, because they shared him his happy and sad time back home, so it is difficult to separate between them. From this point keeping in touch with his friends strengthen his feeling toward his home.

During their immigration, migrants could try many ways to keep the sense of home alive in mind. So, beside maintain their relations back home and watching programmes and TV series which are talking about home, respondents pointed to another aspect helping them to relive the atmosphere of home, which is celebrating feasts and occasions of home.

Rasha:' I like to celebrate our occasions...although it is difficult to feel the same like home...but I insist that my children will celebrate and enjoy feasts as we used to do back home....i see this celebration as a link between us and our home...and celebrating brings happiness and strengthen our sense of home' (female, 37 years old).

Amani:' I celebrate Fitr and Al Adha...I like those celebrations...since they represent my belonging to my religion and my culture...also celebrations give me good feelings and remind me about the joy I used to have it when I was in Syria with my family and all the people there... so I try to meet my friends and my family member here, trying to feel the same as home but still different than being at home'(female, 38 years old).

Although, it is difficult for the respondents to feel the same happiness they used to feel it back home, but they insist to celebrate their occasions in order to live the atmosphere of intimacy they used to have it back home again. So, they try to meet with their friends and acquaintances in order to create kind of warm and intimate atmosphere like home. Moreover,

they recognise this celebration as important way to express their believes and original culture; in another word, this could be another way to express their feeling of home.

Monther:' we celebrate the holidays (al-Fitr and Adha)... gather with family eat together and do the feast rituals...we try to do as we used to do in our country because this atmosphere make us live the intimacy that we need in our daily lives'(male, 53 years old).

For Monther, he needs to celebrate with his family and live the atmosphere of home, in order to compensate the intimacy of, which they need in their exile to be able to continue their daily life normally.

Azzam:' well... I don't celebrate any occasion, since for me celebrating is being with family and friends to feel happy and relief...otherwise, there is no meaning to celebrate'(male, 35 years old).

Rawan:' I celebrate events here but without any joy...my joy is through sharing Syrian people their happiness... they are my people...i like to celebrate in our traditional way...you know every year I spend the new year celebration watching Syrian channel...i feel more happy than to spend it out in a bar...I feel like I can't feel the meaning of the occasion if I spend it in different way [smile]...maybe it is strange not to try...but this is how I feel'(female, 37 years old).

Meaning of celebration comes from sharing people their happiness and celebrating in traditional way, otherwise there is no meaning to celebrate. Even New Year celebration, which is worldwide celebration, respondent prefers to spend it watching local celebration in Syria.

Mouna:' I like to celebrate our occasions and feasts...through celebrating I can feel the home again...I love to live the atmosphere of Ramadan...preparing special food...gathering with the family even if they are not fasting [laugh]...you know when I celebrate feasts or even our national occasions...i feel more Syrian'

Ab: how you feel more Syrian?

Mouna:' yes...because they are our occasions and feasts...I mean we used to celebrate them in Syria and we have special rituals and customs we do when we celebrate...so I see feasts as occasion to strengthen our feeling of being Syrian'(female, 32years old)

According to Mouna, relive the atmosphere of home and compensate missed intimacy, not the only reason to celebrate feasts, but also it seems as a representative aspect for her belonging to Syria. That, celebrating in specific way and living the events as home, bring the atmosphere of home and strengthen their feeling of belonging to their home.

Fadia:' I like Participation in Dutch events they are nice activities...although I don't feel the same feeling like when I celebrate our local occasions or feasts...but I want to integrate into society and become closer to the people'

Ab: what do you mean by: you don't feel the same feeling?

Fadia:' I mean...I can't enjoy the Dutch events as I enjoy ours...I was raised up with celebrating some occasions which mean too much to me and give me nice feelings when I celebrate...especially here...I fined it is important to celebrate our events as part of our belonging to our home'(female,38 years old).

Although, the respondent like Dutch events and finds them nice occasions, but she can't feel the same joy as she is celebrating Syrian one. Depending on her explanation, celebrating Syrian events and occasions, gives her nice feeling and make her feel real happiness and joy.

Beside that, she pointed to the importance of celebrating especially after migration, that celebration represents home and she can express her belonging to her home through it. What is interesting, that she is making personal efforts to integrate her self into the society by sharing people their happiness and joyful.

6-2 Sense of belonging to Netherlands:

Feel belonging to the host country is something expected after migration. But what could affect this feeling and how Syrian immigrants felt belonging to the Netherlands, these what was discussed in following session.

Rasha:' I love Holland and care about every thing happen here...I don't know if this called belonging... depth in my soul I can't feel that am Dutch, although of having the citizenship and all my rights as a Dutch' (female,38 years old).

Azzam:' i care too much about Holland, since I live here and I don't want Holland to be exposes for dangerous at all...but I don't feel like I completely belong to here'(male,36 years old)

Respondent seem confuse in their feelings toward Holland. That while they care about it and have the citizenship with complete rights as any other Dutch inhabitant. They can't feel themselves as real Dutch citizen or complete belonging in their depth.

Monther:' Syria is my country...but I feel grateful to Holland since it secured my life... I feel it as second home... but I can't feel totally Dutch or complete belonging to Holland'(male,53 years old)

Rawan:' for me I have adapted and merged with the community....my thoughts and my way of thinking are more acceptable than they were in Syria [smile] but I do not feel that I am real here...I think that belonging reflects something deeper within the self and the soul'

AB: reflect something like what?

Rawan:' like roots...I came from there, born there, my mother my father my brothers, my essential relations, everything is there....here I do not have roots or any basis, simply...I belong to that place to that environment to those people... I don't know how to explain ...I feel like a plant uprooted from her original soil to be planted in another one...as a result the fruit will has no flavour and the flowers will has no smell...can you imagine this plant'(female,37 years old).

Confusion with Rawan seems more difficult, that she feels adapted to the Dutch society and her way of thinking and life is more acceptable in Holland than in Syria. But on the other side, she doesn't feel complete belonging to Holland since she is without roots and without history so she finds it difficult to consider her self as a complete Dutch. Even though, she can't feel the reality of her life in Holland, that even if she worked and gave something to the society, this will not be real and she will not feel happy with her work.

Mouna:' am citizen in this society and I have rights and duties toward it, so I feel part of this society'(female,32 years old).

Radwan:' Belonging process; represents the group of rules that guarantee individual's rights and make him feel his existence and his role in society. Therefore, it keeps individual's advantages and rights. For example, I feel as I am Dutch, since I have as rights as any Dutch citizen and a sense of duty towards society and country, I mean, towards Holland. Moreover, my advantages and future greatly intersect with future and advantages of Dutch society.

Subsequently, this system of rights and duties give me the sense of belonging to the place I live in'(male,37 years old).

Respondent here explain feeling of belonging as a result of the country system. When this system guarantees the rights of the individual and clarifies his responsibilities toward the society, he will feel equal to the other citizens, what create feeling of belonging to the place and to the whole system. In this sense, feeling of belonging to the country appears as a reaction on how the state deal and organise the life of the citizen especially the newcomers.

Amani:' actually, i felt belonging here after my accident and being in danger...because of that I needed to spend long time in health centres and hospital, and during this time I met with many people from different social classes, educated, literate, poor and rich people, we became so close and we shared difficult circumstances...that time I felt how they care of weak people during their miseries, after this experience I felt closer to the people and that I really belong to here'(female,39 years old).

Bad circumstance gave Amani the chance for more involving in the Dutch society. First dealing closely with health care staff, allowed to Amani, to see nearly how they treat weak people and how they care about them. Second, her relations with many other patients who came from different social classes, but were also in the same situation of sickness. These two relations gave her deep understanding of the society and the people, what made her feel belong to the Netherlands and to the whole system.

The case of Amani was special, but also gave a hint how relations with people and the involvement in social services, and state's system could affect the feeling of belonging of the immigrant. Another experience with social network and its link with the sense of belonging come with Hamed who explained...

Hamed:' I feel belonging to Holland since I feel responsible to keep the civilization of the country, responsibility I share it with my academic class of my Dutch friends, who have knowledge in history and philosophy... what I feel is, having these kind of relations with educated people generate and strengthen my feeling of belonging to Holland' (male,47 years old).

Respondent here feels his belonging through his relations. That; when he shares them thoughts and aspirations in life, beside sharing the responsibility toward Holland, he feels that this group of educated people around him is the suitable environment to feel belonging to the country.

Literatures suggested that immigrants tend to have duality of belonging after migration. That, they will feel belonging to their home country and to the host country.

Amani:' No, I always feel like belonging to Syria...and even if I lived here 100 years, sense of belonging to Syria will always exists...but this does not reduce my belong to Holland'.(female,39 years old)

Hamed:' they are both my home...after all this time in Holland I can easily regard it as home for me'. (male,47 years old).

Zeina:' it is confusing me sometimes...i feel belonging to both places...Syria and Holland...they are both like home to me'(female, 44 years old)

Regarding Holland as home besides their feeling of belonging to Syria, reflects the duality that immigrants have it after migration. Some of them regarded this duality to the time they spent in Holland, but even long time in Holland will not eliminate their sense of belonging to Syria.

Rami:' I feel they are both my home...I have dual feeling toward both of them, I don't feel like an hundred percent as syrian or Dutch'(male, 21 years old).

Although, Rami came to Holland when he was an infant and spent all his life in it, he still carries this sense of being Syrian and he can't feel himself complete Dutch or complete Syrian.

In brief, this was exact transferring to what respondents mentioned through the interviews. Expand explanation for the most important points regarding the social network and the sense of belonging.

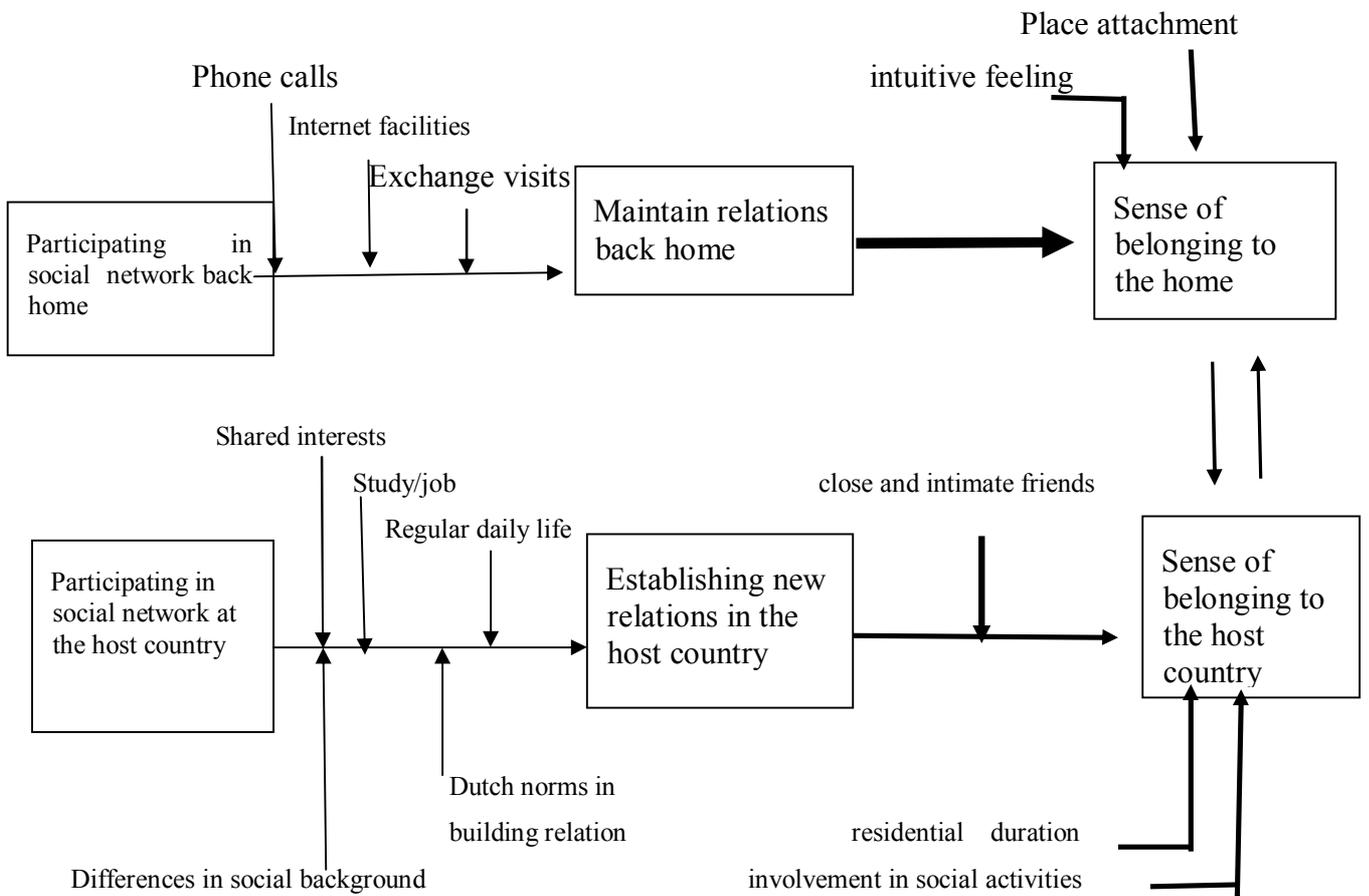
7 – Inductive model and Conclusions:

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the thesis in two parts. Firstly, the inductive model which was established depending on the findings came out from the interviews analysis. Secondly, the answers of the research's questions which were derived from the analysis of the interviews and displayed in the previous section.

7-1 Inductive conceptual model:

Section (2-1), displayed the deductive conceptual model; which was established depending on the theoretical frame work and the back ground of the research. In this section, and after completing the analysis of the information derived from the in-depth interviews, the inductive conceptual model was developed.

In two horizontal series of boxes, and based on the findings come out from the interviews, the inductive conceptual model below; reveals the interaction between the social network and the sense of belonging among Syrian migrants in the Netherlands. Participating in social network back home takes place through different means of communication. Apparently, this participation strengthens their sense of belonging to the home country. In addition, the role of place and the intuitive nature of sense of belonging, come out as important factors in keeping the sense of belonging to the home country alive despite of being far away from there. In regard participation in the social network at the host country, the figure illustrates that; study, job and daily life interaction, represent migrants' resources to access and establish their social network in Holland. Beside that, differences in social background and norms between the migrants and the Dutch people; hinder some immigrants from having deep relations with their Dutch acquaintances. Moreover, intimate relations with Dutch people generate the sense of belonging to Holland. Also, the residential duration and the government policies regarding immigration and its action towards immigrants, play significant role in generating and deepening the sense of belonging to the host country. Finally, the double arrows between the last two boxes reveal the multiple sense of belonging after migration.



7-2 Conclusions:

Going back to the section 3-1. The sub questions of the research were:

1-What are the features of social network among Syrian migrants in Netherlands?

Taking into considerations, the differences among respondents in their network features, but analysis of the interviews revealed that; the social network of Syrian immigrants in the Netherlands mainly consists from their family members who are still in Syria. Next to their families, they still in contact with their close friends and co-workers who shared them the long time of friendship and intimate time back home. Depending on what the respondents explained, their social network back home appears as important link between them and their home, and as a remainder for the respondent, always reminds them about home and their first belonging. Furthermore, in some cases, the existing of acquaintances at home; seems to be the only reason to feel belonging to the home country, in these situations belonging to the home was through the network there.

Regarding their social network in the Netherlands, immigrants have relations with different people, Syrian, Dutch and other migrants. Most of their relations are family members, colleagues and fellows at school or at work. Regarding their Dutch network, respondents showed differences in their relations. Where, some of them have only regular relations during the daily life, and they couldn't build any deep or strong relation with Dutch. Respecting this, there are many reasons which hindered them from having deep and close relations with Dutch, mainly, differences in social back ground and in their point of view about life and future. In contrast, other respondents talked about deep relations with Dutch, which are important and valuable for their social life, and how it is easier for them to deal with Dutch than to deal with other migrants or other nationalities.

In general, Dutch acquaintances were seen as important mean to be closer to the society and to know more about the Dutch norms and traditions. Since they know the most about the society and how people should behave in order to be accepted and guarantee quick mergin into the society.

2- How do Syrian migrants keep links with their social network back home?

Results out of the interviews; revealed that respondents try many ways to maintain their relations back home. Like internet, phone calls and visits between them and their relation. But the most used mean; is phone calls, which provides them fast contact with there acquaintances and friends, since it is the most available mean and doesn't need many outfits like internet connection.

Visiting home country; strengthen the relations with the social network back home, and motive the respondents to keep in touch with their acquaintances after visiting. In regard to the visit of friends and family members to the Netherlands, was seen as good chance to live the atmosphere of home and feel the intimacy of home and they miss in the Netherlands.

3- How do Syrian migrants in Netherlands express their sense of belonging?

Regarding their sense of belonging, respondents showed that their feeling is something not able to change by time or distance. Besides, duality in their feeling of belonging to Syria and to the Netherlands was so clear through the interviews.

The manner, in which respondents express their sense of belonging, appeared in many phases. First, in their habitude to keep in touch with their acquaintances back home, who still at home and asking them about every thing going on there. That for some of them, calling friends and people back home, was only to keep this link with the country and stay in touch with events and things happening there. Second: following news and watching program which are talking about their region, in order to keep home in mind and strengthen bonds with there more and more. Furthermore, respondents demonstrate a kind of pride comes from their belonging to Syria as a culture and old civilization. Third: celebrating occasions and Syrian events and feasts. That for some respondents this behaviour is important not only for celebrating it self, but also it is kind of expressing their belonging to their culture and their country.

About their feeling of belonging to the Netherlands, this also was related to many aspects. Firstly, it was concocted to the system of the country and how it is welcoming the newcomers and helping them to integrate into the society. Secondly: feeling of belonging to the Netherlands was normally generated after living for along time there. Thirdly: having intimate relations with Dutch people and being surrounded with close friends, play huge role in creating and strengthen the sense of belonging to the Netherlands.

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Appendix:

In-depth interview guide:

1- Background of the respondent:

- age - marital status
- residential duration in Netherlands - study/occupation

2- General topics:

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

3-Research topics :

Social life in Syria:

- How you describe your social life in Syria?
- How you describe your relation with your acquaintances back home?
- Have you had enough people to turn to for moral and material issues?
- How satisfied were you with your relations in Syria?
- Have you tried to keep in touch with your acquaintances back home after migration? why?
- How do you keep link with your acquaintances in Syria? The Internet, phone calls/messages, visiting home, friends visiting the Netherlands?
- With whom you still keep in touch/ the most? Why? *Friends, family, neighbours, co-worker.*
- Do you still in touch with your acquaintances in the same average since you came here till now? Why?
 - In what ways, if at all, it is important to you to keep links with your relations in Syria? Why?
 - In what ways, if at all, maintain your relations back home could change your mood?
 - In what way, if at all, keep in touch with your relations back home could affect your feeling toward Syria?

Social network and life in Netherlands

- How you describe your social life in Netherlands? Your relations, your activities.
- How you can describe moving to new society?
- Was it easy for you to find and establish new relations in Netherlands? Why?
- With whom you mainly contact in the Netherlands? Other Syrian, other migrants Arabian/non Arabian, Dutch
- How you found your new contacts in the Netherlands? Fellow study, co-worker, neighbors, common interests.

-Whom from your acquaintances you contact the most? Other Syrian, other migrants Arabian/non Arabian, Dutch people.

-Do you consider your acquaintances as friends? Why? If yes which nationality

-How do you keep link with your acquaintances in Netherlands? *Visits, calls, meeting at public places, trips.*

-Do you generally contact your friends here or they take the step? Why?

-Do your acquaintances contact you just to ask about general life conditions?

-Do you consider it is important for you to have Dutch acquaintances ?why ?

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

-Do you find your Dutch acquaintances as a close friends? Why?

-Can you share your Dutch acquaintances all your difficulties? Why?

-Do you consider that your friends in Netherlands could replace your friends in Syria? Why?

-In what ways your relations in Netherlands help you to surmount on moving difficulties?

-In what ways, if at all, your Dutch friends make you feel belong to the society?

Topics related to belonging:

- Have you followed any integration program?

- In what ways, if at all, the integration program facilitate your life in the Netherlands? *The language, new friends, knowing the Dutch customs.*

- Was it easy for you to adjust with the Dutch norms? Why?

- In what ways you feel welcomed/unwelcomed, in the Dutch society? *Greetings, having job, participating in social activities.*

- Do you have a Dutch citizenship?

- How, if at all, having the citizenship changed your status in the society?

- Do you feel that having the Dutch citizenship more important for you than Syrian one? Why?

- Does your feeling of being Syrian changed during the time that you spent here? Why?

- How do you keep updated, if at all, with the events and news in Syria?

- Do you think it is important to be acquainted with Syrian/Dutch news? Why?

- Do you usually celebrate national and religious Syrian/Dutch occasions? Why?

- Do you regard Syria or Netherlands as your home? Why?

4- Closing:

- General questions about future plans.

- Thanking for participating.

- Any questions?