Networks at work – Syrians building up their life in Istanbul

JOLINDE DERMAUX
STUDENT NUMBER: 3542599
E-MAIL: J.M.DERMAUX@STUDENTS.UU.NL

SUPERVISORS: *ANNELIES ZOOMERS –*   *UNIVERSITEIT UTRECHT*
   GRIET STEEL –   *UNIVERSITEIT UTRECHT*
   JORIS SCHAPENDONK –   *RADBOUD UNIVERSITEIT NIJMEGEN*

Summary

Since the Syrian revolt started in 2011, around 4 million Syrians sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Turkey is currently hosting over 1.8 million Syrians, of which only 13% reside in refugee camps. The remainder resides in urban areas. Istanbul is top of the list, by hosting 300.000 refugees. This puts a growing pressure on the society. Integration is bound to happen, as the prospects of returning home becomes less likely. To be able to maximize the benefits of hosting such a big population, it is essential to learn about the ways in which Syrians integrate. This study explores how Syrians start building up their life in Istanbul and what role social networks play in this process of integration.

Integration in Istanbul is based on four pillars, namely housing, employment, education and healthcare. Integration is studied in three stages: 1. Initial motivation of Syrians to come to Istanbul, 2. Integration in Istanbul and 3. Future aspirations of Syrians. Refugees are upon arrival completely dependent on their social networks. Social networks are webs of interpersonal connections, comprised of relatives, friends and other acquaintances. Social networks can be used to explain integration.

Social networks are the main information providers about a new destination. Internet greatly transformed communication ways between friends and family. Social media like Facebook and WhatsApp enable personal conversations between people abroad. Transnational connections can therefore motivate Syrians in Istanbul to keep going once they arrived.

Upon arrival in Istanbul, the first thing Syrians do is contact their social network for job or housing opportunities. This is the way they are used to, as it is the same way as organizing their life in Syria. People without a network have a disadvantage in finding a house and a job. However, for finding education and a hospital, having a network is less relevant. Once the initial house or job is found, networking becomes a way to climb up the social ladder. New job and housing opportunities arise through meetings with colleagues and neighbours. In the fields of education and healthcare, it appears that being linked to an NGO network can ease the road of actual enrolment in a university or admission into a hospital. The choice of a future destination is dependent on both the social network, as well as political and economic opportunities.

To conclude, a networking approach appears to be a successful tool to see how integration of Syrians in Istanbul happens.

Table of Contents

List of figures and tables

Preface

This research is part of a research project, with as its main aim to provide insights in the urban refugee experience, along the refugee trajectory from Syria to Europe. The team consists of five team members; one team member in Athens, Greece and four team members in Istanbul, Turkey. The first team member in Athens, Claire Pursey, aimed to gain insight in the aspirations of Syrian refugees once arrived in Europe[1]. This study focusses on the integration of Syrians in Istanbul and the role of social networks in this process. The third team member, Tamara van der Sar, focussed on housing and a feeling of belonging[2]. The fourth team member, Teun Smorenburg, focussed on integration in the Turkish employment market[3]. The last team member, Pedro Valarini Peirera, focussed on the role of entrepreneurship on the (re)-settlement of Syrian refugees in Istanbul[4]. Together with the four team members in Istanbul, we tried to be complementary in our topics. This thesis provides a general context of Syrian integration in Istanbul, by analysing all integration indicators and determining the influence of social networks. Van der Sar, Smorenburg and Valarini-Peirera make an in depth analysis of respectively the housing and employment indicators of integration. To increase the likelihood of reaching the target group, this research project is promoted and will be spread to several NGO's and government bodies in Istanbul.

---

[1] Pursey (2015) From Syria to asylum, refugee transit migration through Greece
[2] Van der Sar (2015) In search of a home in Turkey
[3] Smorenburg (2015) Labour market situation and occupational mobility among Syrian refugees in Istanbul
[4] Valarini-Peirera (2015) Entrepreneurship among Syrian refugees: a solution to displacement?

1. Introduction

The Arab spring has turned into a harsh winter for Syria. Around 4 million Syrians have fled the war to look for safety in the neighbouring countries of Syria. Figure 1.1 depicts the countries in which most Syrians have sought refuge. The size of the circles refers to the amount of refugees the country hosts (UNHCR, 2015I).
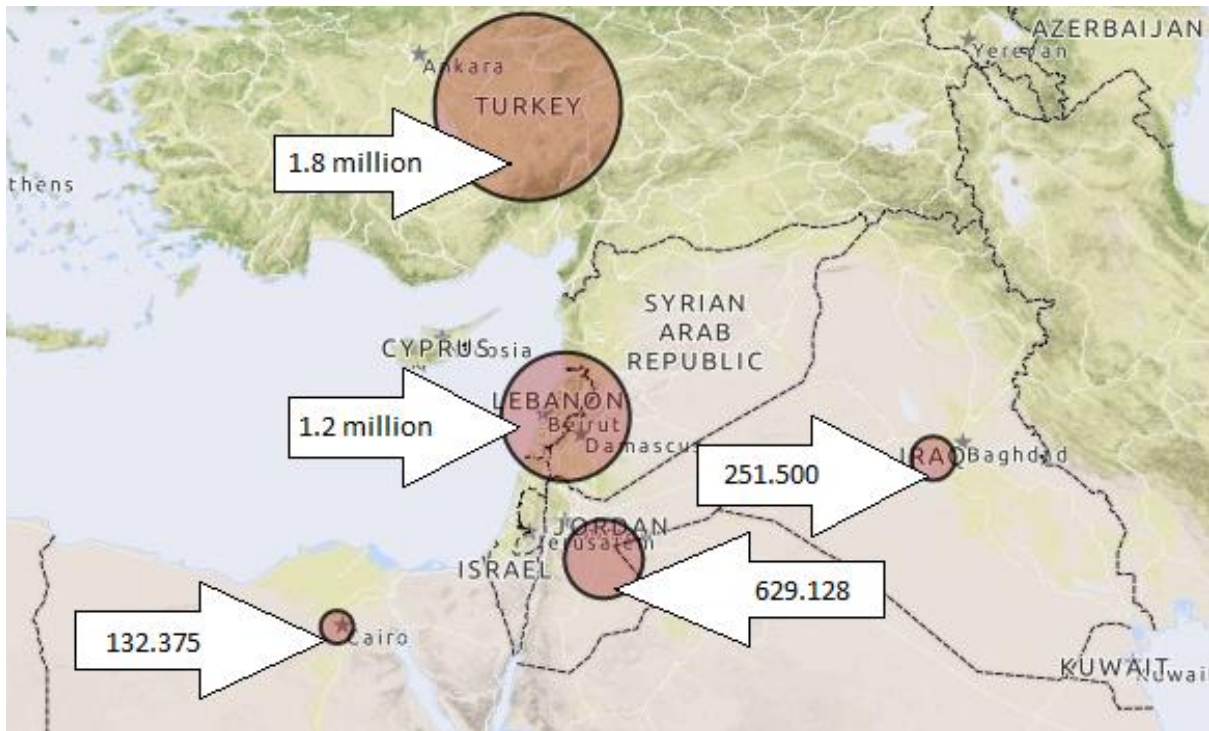
FIGURE 1.1: AMOUNT OF SYRIAN REFUGEES HOSTED BY THE MAIN COUNTRIES PROVIDING REFUGE - SOURCE: UNHCR, 2015I

As becomes clear from figure X, Turkey is currently the biggest host of Syrian refugees. Turkey hosts over 1.870.000 Syrian refugees and is coping with a protracted refugee situation (UNHCR, 2015II). Of these refugees, only 13% reside in refugee camps. The others reside in cities throughout the country (AFAD, 2013; Amnesty International, 2014; Erdogan, 2014). Istanbul is top of the list, as it currently hosts around 330.000 Syrian refugees (Erdogan, 2014). In these numbers the unregistered Syrians are not included. Comparing this to the total population of Istanbul, 14.000.000, it is evident that the amount of Syrians put a growing pressure on the society in Istanbul (CIA, 2015).

Integration of Syrians in Istanbul is bound to happen, as the prospects for Syrians of returning home become less likely. Syrians are shifting their expectations from a temporary residence towards a more permanent settlement in Turkey. The alternatives are crossing the border to Europe illegally or being resettled by a resettlement program, for which not many places are available. Both options do not have a high chance of success. Proceeding to Europe is in most cases a risky option (Erdogan, 2014). To be able to maximize the benefits of hosting this new population, it is essential to learn about the ways in which the Syrian migrants integrate.

Integration is a central concept in studying refugee settlement, although its exact content varies across settings. Ager and Strang (2004) have developed a framework on the indicators of integration. When narrowing down to the initial basic needs of refugees, a focus on integration on the housing market, the employment market and access to education and healthcare arises. A recent trend in integration studies, is the use of social networks to explain integration (Castells et al., 2001; Ager and Strang, 2010).

Migrants are upon arrival in a new place completely dependent on the contacts within their social network (Jacobsen, 2006). In addition to looking at the types of relationships within a network, like Granovetter does in his 'Strength of weak ties' thesis, this research will take a personal networking approach. In this approach the Syrian refugee and his abilities and strategies to use his networks to shape his life are central. Different scholars in the field of social networks and migration, like for example Vertovec (2001), Pathriage and Collyer (2011) and Schapendonk (2014) argue that such an approach is needed to fully grasp the dynamics of social networks.

This research will explore how Syrians start building up their life in Istanbul after having fled the war. This study follows the trend in integration studies, by exploring how social networks play a role in the integration of Syrians in Istanbul. The main question to be answered is therefore: *How do Syrians integrate in Istanbul and what role do social networks play in this process?*

Besides looking at the integration in Istanbul, it is also important to look at the intentions and aspirations of the migrant prior to arrival in Istanbul. These intentions and aspirations can also influence the integration process. Therefore, to create a comprehensive picture of integration in Istanbul, it is useful to look at three stages of refugee movement: First, the motivations for choosing a destination, second, the integration on arrival and third, the future aspirations of Syrians.

This is translated into the following three sub-questions:

1. What are the characteristics of Syrian refugees and which role did social networks play in the choice of a Syrian to come to Istanbul
2. How are Syrians currently integrated in Istanbul and how do social networks influence housing, employment and social services as education and healthcare.
3. Which aspirations do Syrians in Istanbul have for the future and what is the role of social networks in these aspirations?

The scientific contribution of this research lies firstly in the fact that this research adapts the framework of Ager and Strang (2004), to fit the basic needs approach necessary for refugee integration. This translates in a focus on housing, employment and access to public services as healthcare and education. Furthermore, this research explains how integration of Syrians

in Istanbul is influenced by their social networks. By doing so, it explores a frontier in integration studies; namely using a personal networking approach to explain integration. In this approach, the Syrian refugee and his ability to use his networks to shape his life in Istanbul are central.

By taking the case study of Syrians integrating in Istanbul, this study contributes both to the scientific and societal knowledge base. Even though there is an increase in studies on the Syrian crisis and its consequences for bordering countries, the recent character of the conflict remains a cause for an underdeveloped knowledge base. Despite the high numbers of refugees in the cities, studies on Syrian refugees mainly focus on refugee camps in the border regions with Syria (UNHCRI, 2015; Erdogan, 2014). Within Turkey, there is therefore a lack in knowledge on the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkish cities outside the border regions, including Istanbul (UNHCRII, 2015). As most urban Syrian refugees in Turkey reside in Istanbul; Istanbul is chosen as a case study for this research. It remains largely unknown what the lives of Syrians in the city look like, where they reside, work and what their aspirations regarding the future are (United Nations, 2014). As the numbers of Syrians entering Turkey keep increasing, so do the challenges to provide adequate facilities like housing, employment and education. Especially as most Syrian urban refugees are not registered. To be able to maximize the benefits of hosting this new population as Turkish policy makers, it is essential to learn about the ways in which the Syrian migrants integrate.

The strategic location of Turkey as a border country of Europe, makes that this research will also be relevant to European policy makers. As migrant trajectories run from Turkey to Europe, it is useful for Europe to know what is happening exactly at the bordering countries of Europe. Hopefully, this research can inspire governing bodies of the more prosperous countries to search for more sustainable, long-term solutions for the refugee problem. Currently, The European union is supporting Syrian refugees by providing funds to NGO's which are dealing with refugees in the refugee camps and border regions of Syria (European Commission, 2014). Urban integration can be an alternative to the short term solution of a refugee camp. Studying refugee integration in an urban context can provide insights in potentially long term adaptation and integration strategies of refugees.

This report will start off with a theoretical background, in which the concepts of urban refugees, integration and social networks are clarified. The research frontiers in the field of social network theory in relation to explain integration are explored. An elaboration on the methods used in doing this research follows. Here, the motivations for an informal way of interviewing and the methods for data gathering and analysis are discussed. Next, a chapter on the context of Syrian settlement in Istanbul is provided. General migration movements throughout Turkey are discussed, as well as the policies of Turkey applicable to the Syrian refugees. Lastly, the influence of language and the organizations supporting Syrians in Istanbul are discussed.

Next, the Syrian refugee experience in using social network to integrate in Istanbul is discussed in eight empirical chapters. These chapters are based on the three sub-questions. Chapter five describes the role of the social network in leaving Syria and choosing Istanbul. Also, the respondents are introduced. In the sixth chapter the social networks of Syrians at the moment are described, together with the strategies they use to meet new people. This chapter illustrates a personal dimension of a social network. The seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth chapter each cover how the social network influences one integration indicator. Chapter seven focusses on finding housing. Chapter eight focusses on finding work. Chapter nine focusses on finding education and chapter ten focusses on accessing healthcare. In each of these chapters, the social networking strategies of Syrians used to promote the integration indicators are the main focus.

The final chapter deals with the future plans and aspirations of Syrians in Istanbul and how these are influenced by their social network. In the discussion, the use of the social network theory to explain initial integration is assessed. Furthermore, some policy implications are provided, as well as the limitations and related recommendations for further research. The conclusion provides a final answer to the question of how social networks influence the integration of Syrian refugees in Istanbul.

2. Theory

The main concepts in this research are urban refugees, integration and social networks. In this chapter the definitions as used in this research will be clarified. Both the concepts of Integration and the relevance of social networks in integration are explained. Furthermore, the current debates and developments in this field will be discussed to explore the research frontiers.

2.1 Urban refugees

The definition of a refugee varies in different contexts. The most often used definition of refugees was defined by the United Nations in 1951 in the convention on refugee status:

Any person who: owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country – UN, 1951.

Turkey signed this convention, but narrowed its definition by adding a geographical boundary, stating that only European people can be considered to be refugees. This implies that people from non-European origin are not considered refugees. They can get a temporary residence permit with asylum-seeker status (Ackapar, 2009; Republic of Turkey, 2015). This means that following Turkey's definition, Syrians are not considered to be refugees, but asylum-seekers.

Whereas refugees are treated the same as Turkish nationals, asylum seekers do not enjoy the same rights. Therefore, Syrians do not enjoy the same rights as Turkish nationals. To provide the Syrian nationals with some form of support, Turkey established the 'Temporary protection regulation' (TPR) in 2011. This regulation assigns certain rights to Syrians. The exact content of this regulation is discussed in the chapter providing the context of Syrian refugee settlement in turkey. An important conclusion is however that Syrians are thus treated as a separate population group in Turkey. They are not considered refugees, but simultaneously they are no asylum seekers as the TPR provides them with basic rights. For the sake of convenience, this study will however refer to the Syrian nationals in Turkey as 'Syrians' or 'Syrian refugees'.

Urban refugees can be defined as refugees who are currently residing in an area designated as urban by the government (Jackobsen, 2006). This means that these refugees choose not to settle in a refugee camp context, but self-settle in a city. The choice of self-settlement over a refugee camp has no further implications for the status of a Syrian national in Turkey.

13% of all Syrians entering Turkey decides to settle in a refugee camp. In a camp context, food, shelter and services are provided for free. This is not the case for self-settlement in a city. However, in many cases refugees with the capital and a network prefer self- settlement over the restrictions in for example employment they will face in a refugee camp. (Sommers, 2001). A second reason for self-settlement is that the unprecedented influx of Syrians already

exceeds the current capacity of refugee camps. Lastly Syrians who entered Turkey illegally cannot register in a camp (Içduygu, 2015).

2.2 Refugee integration

Integration is a central concept in studying refugee settlement, though its basis, form and character vary widely across settings. Integration of refugees starts directly at the moment of arrival in a new location. The process is shaped by the intentions and aspirations of refugees themselves, as well as the status and context of the country in which they arrive (Ager and Strang, 2010). It is possible to look at integration through a psychological lens. Within this view, belonging and citizenship are the main focus. This thesis will however elaborate on integration in a more practical way. The focus is on direct social protection of refugees, by gaining access to the housing market, employment market and public services as healthcare and education (Danis, 2006).

Alastair Ager and Alison Strang (2004), two scholars in the field of refugee integration, created the 'Indicators of integration' framework. In this framework, they conceptualized practical integration of refugees, to create a common understanding of this concept among policy makers. The framework suggests several fields which are crucial in understanding integration. There is no hierarchical order between the themes and the relationships between the different factors which influence integration are not explored. The themes are selected through extensive literature research. This framework is used in the basis of many academic studies as for example Danis (2006), Castles et al. (2001) and different other studies in the Journal of Refugee studies. Their framework will be the starting point of this thesis. It is depicted in figure 2.1.

The indicators of integration framework

Means and markers

Employment   Housing   Education   Health

Social connections

Social bridges   Social bonds   Social links

Facilitators

Language and cultural knowledge   Safety and stability

Foundation

Rights and citizenship

FIGURE 2.1: THE INDICATORS OF INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK - SOURCE: AGER AND STRANG (2004)

The relevant aspects to integration, as distinguished by Ager and Strang, are divided in in four themes. The first theme, *means and markers*', refers to indicators of integration. These correspond to the basic needs of refugees on arrival: Employment, Housing, Education and Health, as was also previously defined by Maslow (1943). The second theme, *Social connections,* stresses the importance of social relations, or the social network within integration. The basis of this theme is Putnam's distinction in social connections, namely: social bonds, bridges and links (Putnam, 2000). An elaboration on the bond, bridges and links within social networks, as Putnam describes, will be provided in the next paragraph on social networks. The third theme, *Facilitators,* represents the essential facilitating factors of integration, namely knowledge of the language and culture of the host country, as well as a safe and stable environment. The last theme, *Foundation*, refers to the legal foundation on national level, which is necessary to enable integration (Ager and Strang, 2004).

Upper figure illustrates the different aspects relevant to practical integration of refugees. In this research, the focus won't be on full integration of refugees, but on the initial phase of integration on arrival in Istanbul. However, as mentioned before, Ager and Strang do not apply a hierarchical order to their framework. Maslow (1943), created a hierarchy of human needs, which is depicted in figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 shows that the basic human needs are food, water and shelter. Next come financial safety, personal safety and health safety. As this research focusses on the initial integration of Syrian refugees into Turkey, the basic needs need to be addressed first. This means that the indicators finances, housing and use of public services as healthcare and education are prioritized when looking at practical integration. Translating this to figure 2.1 by Ager and Strang, results in a focus on the *means and markers* of integration.

Whereas Ager and Strang identified the relevant aspects of integration, it is useful to go one step further than defining, namely linking these aspects together. Linking the aspects together can explain integration. Integration studies makes this link. A recent trend in integration studies, is the use of social networks to explain integration (Casteles et al., 2001; Ager and Strang, 2010). This study follows this trend, by focussing both on the integration of Syrians in Istanbul, as well as the role of social networks in the process of integration. When translating the focus of this research to figure 2.1, this study aims to explain how the *'social connections'* (in this thesis referred to as social networks) are used by refugees to integrate by considering the four '*markers and means' of integration.* The themes '*facilitators*' and '*foundation*' will be treated as context factors.

As mentioned before, integration is not a static phenomenon. Besides the different aspects of integration as defined by Ager and Strang (2004), the process is furthermore shaped by intentions and aspirations of refugees over time. Schapendonk (2009) studies migrant trajectories. He argues that the choice of a migrant to stay or leave a place is dependent on where the migrant is coming from and a migrant's aspirations for the future. When applying this reasoning to this study of integration, it follows that integration does not take place in

isolation, but that it is shaped by the background and aspirations of the migrant. When a migrant does not have the intention to stay in a place, this will have an influence on his integration. When a migrant chooses Istanbul as a destination because of its proximity to Europe and he does not have the intention to stay here for a long time, he will have need the need for housing in Istanbul, but might have less need for a job or education. This example illustrates the relevance of looking at the reasons for choosing a destination and future aspirations in the study of integration.

In figure 2.3, the focus of this thesis is schematically vizualized.
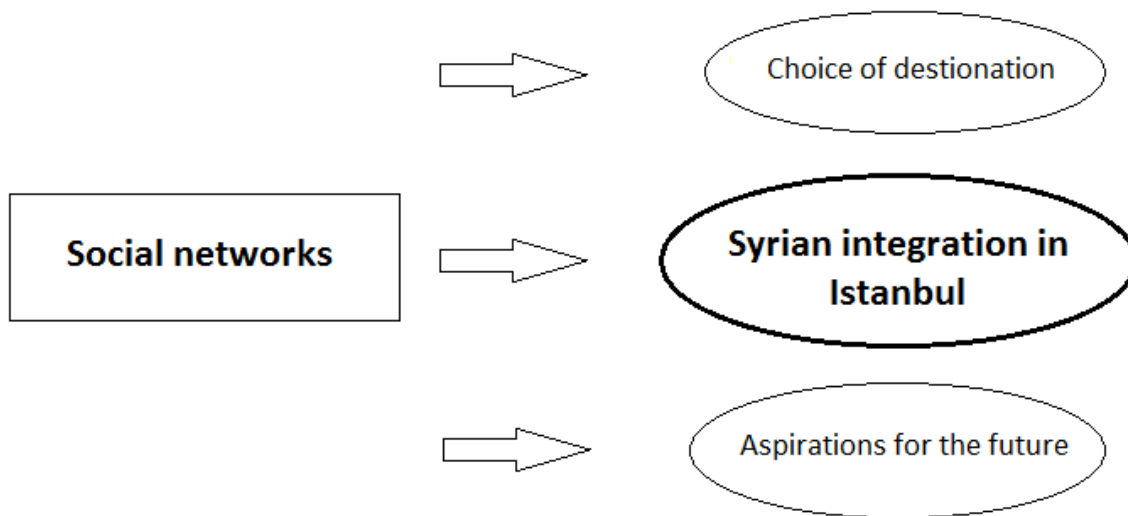
FIGURE 2.3: FOCUS OF THIS RESEARCH VISUALIZED - SOURCE: AUTHOR

on the process of integration in Istanbul. Both the choice of destination and the aspirations for the future are also addressed, as these can impact the integration process. The indicators used to assess Syrian integration in Istanbul are based on Ager and Strang's framework in figure 2.1. In framework of figure 2.1, the influence of social connections is used to explain integration. However, in this study, social connections are extended to include the whole social network. Therefore, in figure 2.3 social connections are replaced by the social network. The argument for a focus on social networks rather than social connections only will be explained in next paragraph.

2.3 Social networks
Gross and Lindquist (1995) define social networks as: 'webs of interpersonal connections, commonly comprised of relatives, friends or other associations, forged through social and economic activities that act as conduits through which information, influence and resources flow' (Samers, 2009, p. 35).

There are several social network characteristics. First, the network consists of individuals, connected through different links and types of relationships. Together they form a structure. Where many individuals meet, a network 'node' arises. Nodes are places within a network

where many individuals gather. It is important to realize that social networks are not necessarily something tangible but exist in space. More recently, the internet is a new space where social networks manifest itself (Hiller and Franz, 2004).

2.3.1 Strength of weak ties
Granovetter (1973) is with his 'strength of weak ties' thesis one of the founders of social network theory in social sciences. He started studying different types of relationships within a network. He characterizes family and friends as the 'strong ties' within a network. People a little more distant to a person are called 'weak ties'. Granovetter argues that strong ties tend to stay in close contact with each other, which means that information is shared within the group but new information is only obtained by the 'close group' members themselves. Therefore, 'weak ties' are crucial in a network as they are loosely connected and connected with different networks which results in new information inflow (Borgatti et al., 2009; Granovetter, 1973).

Coleman (1988) acknowledges this hypothesis, but additionally emphasizes 'the strength of strong ties'. In this argument, a dense network is stressed as a resource, rather than a burden. Furthermore, Ackapar (2009), stresses that no strict distinction between strong and weak ties can be made, as the former can develop out of the latter. An example he mentions is how church members can develop from being weak ties to becoming friends over time. The idea of strong and weak ties has further developed in the social capital theory.

2.3.2 Social capital
Social capital is a concept much used in social sciences and has a wide variety of definitions. Bourdieu, a practical theorist, is one of the first to define social capital, in his book 'The forms of capital' (1986). 'Social capital is the assets gained through the membership of networks'. He theorized an old common knowledge, namely that 'being involved in a society matters' (Portes, 1998). Loury, Coleman (1988) and later on Putnam (2000), renowned authors in this field, argue that to who a person is connected and how these people are connected are factors which enable people to create capitals, as for example finance or employment. Coleman stresses the importance of reciprocity within a network as an important condition to yield social capital (1988). Putnam (2000), further distinguishes between bridging and bonding capital. Bridging capital is created by social networks enhancing communication with the wider society, whereas bonding capital is the main source of bonding and solidarity between migrants. Bridging capital is illustrating Grannovetter's argument on the strength of weak ties, whereas bonding capital illustrates the strength of strong ties. Based on this distinction, Putnam identifies tree types of relationships: social bridges, social bonds and social links. Social bridges are the relations which can result in bridging capital and social bonds are relations which can result in bonding capital. Social links are the relationships with the institutions and organizations relevant to a person. They form the contextual relations.

Portes (1998) highlighted and important point of social capital, namely that the outcomes are not necessarily positive. So far, only advantages of social capital, like financial capital or employment, have been expressed. However, social networks are fields where both cooperation and struggle take place (Suter, 2012). Portes (1998) identified four types of negative social capital; 1. Exclusion of outsiders, 2. Excess claims on group members, 3. Restrictions on individual freedoms -being part of a group can mean negative stereotyping- and 4. Discouragement of individual success.

2.3.3 Networking
'*It is important to distinguish what social capital is from what it does'* – Alexander Portes (1998). This quote illustrates that the assets derived from being part of a social network, social capital, are something different than the network itself. A social network does not necessarily result in social capital (Ackapar, 2009). A more recently emphasized feature of social networks, is the changeability. A social network is not a static set of relationships, but can evolve over time. Both factors result in the need for a more dynamic understanding of social networks. An understanding in which the influence of agents within the network is more explicitly accounted for. To get the benefits of social capital out of a network, an active relational effort needs to be made (Pathriage and Collyer, 2011; Schapendonk, 2014). This thesis will take a networking approach, in addition to looking at the types of relationships within a network. In a networking approach, the networking strategies employed by a person are central. This approach builds on a vision of Coleman, namely that contact with influential individuals is necessary, but not sufficient to benefit from social capital in a network.

2.4 Social networks and integration
Combining the fields of social networks and migration can result in a better understanding of integration, as was earlier visualized in figure 2.3. Migrants, and especially refugee, communities form the ultimate example of networking. For this group of people, it is essential to actively develop and maintain contacts during travel and at a place of arrival. The contacts refugees meet during their travel and in a new destination, may be determining the further course of integration. They could for example become essential to provide a visa and information on potential destinations (Pathriage and Collyer, 2011).

As earlier mentioned, to understand integration, it is useful to look at 3 stages of refugee movement. 1. Choice of destination, 2. Integration on arrival and 3. Future aspirations. In the following paragraphs, an elaboration on the networking dynamics of these 3 stages of refugee movement will be provided. The interesting developments in the fields of each of these stages are discussed.

2.4.1 Choosing a destination
Social networks can influence the choice of a destination in two ways. First, social networks are usually the main information providers on new destinations. Second, social networks can

stimulate migrant movement, by meeting new people and hearing about opportunities in new cities and places.

Information provision

A major function of a migrant network is the provision of information during travel and at a new destination. Every agent within the social network can be a potential source of information. This means that family, friends, colleagues and organizations can provide information on potential destinations, travel (both legal and illegal options) and integration strategies. A recent development is the addition of internet to the sources of information. Scholars on migration communication and social media all agree; social media and internet have transformed migration (Hiller and Franz, 2004; Dekker and Engbersen, 2014; Haythornthwaite, 2002). There are four developments which represent this transformation:

1. It became easier to keep strong relationships with people abroad, whereby overcoming the friction of distance. This means that whereas in the past it was only possible to call family back home, now more personal video conversations via Skype and Viber can take place (Hiller and Franz, 2004; Dekker and Enbersen, 2014).
2. The network of weak ties became much bigger with social media websites as Facebook (Haythornwaite, 2002; Dekker and Engbersen, 2014).
3. It became possible to create a network of latent ties. Latent ties are ties which are potentially existent but not yet activated (Haythornwaite, 2002; Dekker and Engbersen, 2014). Through network websites like LinkedIn and Facebook people without a real life connection are still connected.
4. It is easier to obtain information based on personal experience of migrants (Dekker and Engbersen, 2014).

A problem with the provided information, remains however the uncertainty of the reliability. Whereas people who are migrating often have a tendency to tell the good stories and leave the bad ones behind, internet adds to this pool of uncertainty. There is a lot of contradictory information available through the internet and social media and it remains a challenge for most migrants to validate the information they obtain. (Lyngstad, 2015; Gilbert and Koser, 2006).

However, the additional ways in which migrants can now obtain information, ensure a broader knowledge base. Using this online network, additionally to the information obtained through personal contacts, can increase the social capital of migrants if information is properly validated (Hiller and Franz, 2004).

Migrant mobility

Migrant movement or mobility, has been the traditional focus of social network theory in social sciences. As mentioned before, transnational ties can influence destinations (Schapendonk, 2009). Interpersonal connections are seen as furthering individual mobility (Portes, 1998; Herman, 2006). Migration mobility scholar, Faist (2000), and Collyer (2006),

identified two levels of analysis which are important to take into account when studying the choice of a migrant to move to a certain destination:

1. The macro-level: this level consists of economic, political and legal aspects of the host and departure country.
2. The meso-level: this level consists of social networks; without the help of others (eg. border guard, co-migrant), a migrant might have the will to leave but do not get very far

An important nuance Schapendonk (2009) adds to this debate is that it is important to not see the process of migrant mobility as a pre-defined trip from A to B, but as a continuously developing trajectory. This trajectory is not only influenced by macro-level push factors like conflict and violence and pull factors like economic prosperity, but also by the social networks and meetings with 'very new contacts'. The changeability of social networks itself is reflected in the migrant trajectory. Collyer (2007) also adds that that besides the rational factors for choosing a destination, a destination can also be determined by less rational factors, for example having a conversation with a random person or taking a chance and choosing an unknown destination.

Whereas weak ties can create the means for travel, strong ties can provide a motivation to move on and settle in a new place (Suter, 2012).

2.4.2 Integration and adaptation on arrival

As mentioned before, studying the influence of social capital on the integration into new societies is especially interesting in the case of migrants, as they lack the social network which the other members of society have built up over time (Pathriage and Collyer, 2011). This creates challenges for both the migrant as the receiving community. The social networks influences integration and adaptation on arrival in two ways. First, just as with choosing a destination, the network of a migrant is often its most important source of information. Second, the social network of a migrant influences the ability to create capitals and receive social support.

Information provision

Regarding the information provision, the same dynamics as described earlier in the choice of a destination apply. This means that internet greatly transformed the information provision, and validating the reliability of information remains a problem.

For a newly arrived migrant, the dynamics of a new society remain largely unknown. Therefore, it is important to keep validating the information which is provided through a network, by using different sources of information. Usually, the longer a migrant lives in a place, the more sources of information will be available to them.

Creating capitals

Using a social network and expanding it in a new community can clearly assist in providing basic needs as housing, employment and information about the new place of settlement

(Ryan et al., 2008). Upon arrival in a new destination, a migrants physical ties are often absent at first. This means that transnational ties are essential in providing support (Suter, 2012; Collyer, 2007).

Sutter (2012), found that initially migrants, and especially refugees, help each other out. There is however a thin line between providing migrant support and migrant exploitation upon arrival. Migrants need to actively work to keep the advantages of social relations, especially because social capital can also turn out to be negative (Suter, 2012). Networks can work exclusionary, excluding minorities within a social group. Furthermore when mismanaged, networks can destroy social capital. Practical examples are quitting a job or leaving a house due to bad experience with colleagues or neighbours.

Taking a migrant perspective when looking at integration, highlights the importance of the ability of the migrant to mobilize his network at the right time. Small events can have large effects. To use Schapendonk's (2014) words: 'An unexpected encounter can create surprising opportunities. Also, it gives us some intellectual space to think about non-rational migrant decisions as good and bad luck, love and unexpended opportunities'.

2.4.3 Future aspirations

Schapendonk (2012) studied migrants aspirations to move to Europe. He notes that migrants are on the move and so are their aspirations. Aspirations are subjected to change, and therefore difficult to approach analytically.

When asking about future plans at the moment, the way in which future plans can be influenced by social networks is virtually identical to the choice of destination. The topics of providing information and facilitating migrant mobility won't be repeated here, as they have been described in the previous section on choice of destination.

3. Methods

In this chapter, the main methodologies used to execute this research are discussed. First an operationalization of the concept of integration is provided. Then, the methods of data gathering and data analysis are discussed.

3.1 Operationalisation

As integration is a very broad concept the following operationalization of the concept will be used to fit the context of refugees in Istanbul. As already became clear in the theory description of integration, it consists of both sociological and psychological aspects. In this study, the focus will be on the practical, sociological aspects, namely:

1. Housing
2. Finance
3. Education and
4. Healthcare

In table 1, upper indicators are operationalized. In this operationalization the potential influence of social networks on an integration indicator is the main focus. The psychological aspects as for example 'a sense of belonging' or 'feeling safe' are left out of the scope of this research.

Integration indicator	Operationalization
Housing	Housing conditions
	Location of housing (neighbourhood)
	Relationship with neighbours
	Who are household members
	Relationship with household members
Finance	Receiving remittances
	Where do you work
	How did they find the job
	Employer/employee relation
	Colleague relation
Education	Going to school
	Following courses to update education
	Language lessons
	Classmates relationship
	Teacher relationship
Healthcare	Having access to healthcare

Table 3.1: Operationalization of integration indicators – Source: Danis, 2006

In determining how social networks and networking of Syrians influence the process of integration, a distinction between two types of networks is made:

1. Formal networks, including: strategies related to contacts within an NGO network, hospitals, schools, housing agency
2. Informal (personal) networks, including: strategies related to family and friend networks

The influence of each strategy on the four aspects of integration is determined through the analysis of personal stories. The methods of data gathering are discussed next.

3.2 Data gathering

The nature of this research is qualitative. Qualitative research is mainly used to find out about the motivations and reasons behind behaviour, whereas quantitative research is mainly used to find out about general patterns and theories of behaviour. As the main aim of this research is to find out which network strategies migrants are using to integrate in Istanbul, a qualitative research method connects to this aim best.

The first step was to find the respondents. Upon arrival in Istanbul, I used different strategies to enter Syrian networks. I established contact with Syrian refugees in the 'nodes' of the network. First of all, I applied for volunteer work at an organization in Istanbul working with refugees called the IIMP. Second, with the group, we went to a member meeting of an NGO called 'Small projects Istanbul'. Here we met many Syrians. Furthermore, we joined a Turkish class where many Syrians attend as well. A last method, was to simply walk around in neighbourhoods where many Syrians reside and find shops or restaurants where Syrians work. To complicate the issue, there is virtually no statistical information on the residence or employment of Syrian refugees in Istanbul. However, there are some neighbourhoods with the reputation of hosting many Syrian refugees, as Fatih, Esenler and Esenyurt districts (Akagündüz, 2014). In finding the initial respondents, the location of the other research group members was taken into account.

When initial contact was established in the different locations, the snowball sampling method was used to gather new respondents. Snowball sampling is a method in which the initial respondents are the source of future respondents. This method is especially useful in explorative studies, where little is known on the research environment and target group (Bernard, 2006). This was the case with Syrian refugees in Istanbul. Furthermore, as my aim was to find out about network connections, the snowball method guided me through a family network of a refugee. An additional benefit of using the snowball method is in this case that

trust bonds between the respondent and the interviewee are more easily established as the respondents know each other (Danis, 2006). I noticed this as well within my interviews.

In total with the group, we met with around 90 Syrians to speak about our research. Of these 90, I personally interviewed 27 Syrians of which 20 refugees, 3 Syrian schools, 3 NGO's and 1 Syrian hospital. The conversation like interviews, took approximately 3 hours. After this initial interview, I usually met 2 or 3 times after in a more relaxed setting. Therefore each person is interviewed on average for 8 hours. In the follow-up meetings, more stories came up which could be used to validated the initial story. Other people of the research group talked to different people, so their interviews are in some cases also used as source for this report. This is the case for 14 respondents. The people from the NGO's, Schools and hospital for a secondary, form a complementary data source for this research. I spoke to the directors of 3 Syrian schools, had a group meeting with 14 teachers, interviewed 3 different types of NGO's (mentioned before) and the director of 1 Syrian hospital. In the table in appendix I, an overview of all respondents is presented. In this appendix is indicated which respondents were used for which chapters. Not every respondent could be used in every chapter, as not all respondents had a job and education for example. Furthermore, some respondents refrained from talking about certain topics and interviews from other group members did not cover all my personal topics.

I gathered data through in-depth ethnographic open-interviews with these refugees. I always went to an interview with at least one other person, being either a group member or a translator. The informal character of the interviews contributed to a trustworthy, open atmosphere, to create a trust bond between the interviewee and the interviewer (Schapendonk, 2012). This is in my opinion vital to obtain reliable data. I did for the same reason not use any recording devices. This might result in losing some relevant data as well as credibility of the data. However, the credibility of the data will in my opinion greatly increase by creating a trustworthy environment. Furthermore, I kept a logbook of every conversation, to keep track of the people I spoke to, the content of our conversation and the ideas which came up. This logbook is the basis of my interview transcripts. To increase the validity and reliability of the results, I crosschecked every transcript with the transcript of my team members or translator.

In these ethnographic interviews, I kept some general themes in the back of my mind during conversation. This, to ensure that all relevant data topics are discussed. To make the topic of networks less abstract, I started the interviews by letting respondents draw a picture of their own friends and family network. The questions are centred around the integration indicators:

1. Trip to Istanbul
2. Housing
3. Finance
4. Healthcare
5. Education
6. Future aspirations

We furthermore established some general questions on gender, age and birth place, which are combined in a common database to benefit the entire research group.

3.3 Data analysis

The data obtained via the interviews needs to be translated in workable data for this research. To structure the information I get out of the interviews I used Excel. This software enabled me to find similarities and generalize common concepts in all interviews.

Based on the interviews with Syrians in Istanbul, I tried to determine how and where Syrians use their social network to integrate in Istanbul. The dynamics in networking are discussed in three stages, namely choosing Istanbul, integrating in Istanbul and future aspirations. Integration in Istanbul is discussed per indicator. As mentioned before, a core point is the distinction between the social network itself and the action of networking by the migrant.

I tried to reconstruct the networks of the refugee for this moment in time. This means that I made a map of the personal networks of the refugees I met in Istanbul. This map illustrates the transnationality of social networks. This map is based on the drawing of the respondents. The program used to do this will be Netdraw, which is software designed for visualizing networks.

Combining upper findings in a concluding chapter which will create an insight in how networking by Syrians affects the patterns of migration and integration in Istanbul.

3.4 Limitations of the methodology

There are several limitations and risks involved with this research. A first important issue is the vulnerability of the research group. Refugees are a very vulnerable target group. Therefore it was in some cases difficult to establish contact and gain trust to do the interviews. This resulted in less useful interviews, because less information was shared by the respondent in these cases. Second, there is a big cultural and linguistic difference. The mother tongue of Syrians is Arabic, and many speak various levels of English. Therefore we sometimes used a translator, in many cases a friend of the respondents themselves. This generated trust of the respondents. However, in some cases the translator interpreted the question himself to better suit the needs of the respondent. I tried to minimize the influence of the translator by discussing the need of each question together and providing constructive feedback after every interview.

Next, when gathering respondents, a few issues need to be taken into account. A sampling bias was created by finding the respondents in accessible locations in Istanbul. Also, using the snowball sampling method furthered this bias in type of respondents. It was a challenge to find respondents representing all classes of society in the limited amount of time of three months. We mostly talked to highly educated Syrians, whereas many people are living on the streets. I believe that the snowball method was in this case the only option of finding respondents amongst this vulnerable target group. However, I acknowledge that previously described biases in gathering respondents will limit the generalizability of my results.

4. Context of Syrian refugee settlement in Istanbul

In this chapter, a contextual background of Turkey and Istanbul in particular will be provided. First, a brief (historical) explanation of the current migratory movements throughout Turkey is provided. Furthermore, an elaboration on the reasons why Istanbul is an attractive destination for migrants is provided. Then, the influence of the influx of Syrian refugees on Turkish policy and practice is provided. Lastly, the impact of language is discussed, as well as the organizations supporting Syrians in Istanbul.

4.1 Migration trajectories in Turkey

Besides being known for its emigration to mainly European countries, Turkey has a long history of immigration (Danis, 2006). Especially from the 1990's on, Turkey is increasingly known as a migration hub on the route to Europe (Lyngstad, 2015; Danis, 2006). Irregular migration via Turkey as a country of transit has been a major issue of discussion between Turkish and European authorities. In spite of the hot debate on how to control and manage irregular migration, there is still no precise information on the amount of irregular migrants staying in- and transiting through Turkey (Danis, 2006). There are three main factors shaping the migratory movements in Turkey today.

The first factor consists of turkey's migration history, in which several big refugee and migratory waves have taken place. A first group of migrants entering turkey, consisted of Iranians who came seeking for refuge after the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979. A second group, are the Afghans who came in during the 1980 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. A third group is formed by the mass flow of Iraqi and Iranian people during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. Fourth, the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 caused a more recent inflow of Iraqis (Danis, 2006; Icduygu, 2000). These groups of migrants form the background against which the Syrian migrants currently enter Turkey. Together with the Syrians, Afghans, Iraqis and Iranians form the major migrant groups in Istanbul (Danis, 2006).

A second factor influencing the migratory movements, is Turkey's geographic position between Europe and the Middle-Eastern, North-African (MENA) region. This strategic location made it a suitable transit zone for people intending to go to the northern and western countries (Icduygu, 2000). Also culturally, turkey lies in between the Islamic and western culture, which makes it an interesting bridge between both cultures.

A last and more recent factor enhancing the migration flow towards Europe, are the increasingly restrictive European policies towards their borders. These European policies have pushed migration flows to peripheral zones, like Turkey (Icduygu, 2000).

Within Turkey, Istanbul is an attractive destination for migrants. Besides being the biggest city in Turkey, with 14.000.000 inhabitants, it is moreover the economic capital of Turkey (CIA, 2015). Furthermore, the flourishing informal economy and flexibility with existing rules, make Turkey in general an attractive location for irregular migrants. Lastly, Istanbul is positioned in

the centre of the migrant trajectory towards Europe. It is a place where migrants can acquire economic, social, linguistic and professional capital. Furthermore, an abundance of meetings can result in new identities and anonymity, as crowds provide the best hiding place from the authorities (Aslan and Pérouse, 2003).

4.2 Turkey's policies for Syrian guests

Since the Syrian revolt in 2011, the amount of Syrians entering Turkey to seek refuge has been increasing. Turkey is currently hosting 18 million Syrian refugees and the numbers are still increasing as Turkey applies an 'open door' policy towards Syrians (UNHCR, 2015I). The overall response to the influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey is mainly led by the Turkish government, but there are also international organizations and NGO's active in this field.

Since 2012, Turkey developed a temporary protection regime for Syrian refugees and facilitated protection and assistance in 22 refugee camps set up by the disaster and emergency management agency, AFAD (Erdogan, 2014; UNHCR, 2015IV). Most Syrian refugees live in the Southern regions of Turkey, close to the border with Syria. However, major cities as Istanbul, Konya and Mersin also witnessed an increase in the number of Syrians (UNHCR, 2015IV).

Upon arrival in Istanbul, there are several options to obtain a legal status as 'Syrian guest'. As described in the theoretical framework, a person entering Turkey is only considered a refugee when coming from a European country. As a consequence, Syrian nationals do not enjoy the same rights as a refugee in Turkey would.

When you arrive as a Syrian national in Turkey having a passport, you get a stamp in your passport which allows you to stay for 3 months in the country legally. To prolong your stay, there are a few different options to choose from:

1. The first option to stay legally in Turkey is to obtain a residence permit. To obtain this permit you can either get a student visa, a work/investor visa or another tourist visa. These are valid for one year. If you want to prolong this visa you need to re-enter the country through an airport. To obtain a residence permit is a great advantage compared to the other options, at it gives you the legal right to sign contracts, for housing, gas and internet for example.
2. A second legal option is to register at the authorities based on the temporary protection legislation. This will provide you with a temporary protection identification document, called a Yabanci card (Içduygu, 2015). This card enables you to have access to healthcare, social support and employment. The temporary protection regulation is discussed in further detail next paragraph.
3. A third legal option is to renew the stamp in your passport, allowing you to stay again three months. In order to do this, you need to leave Turkey, and re-enter the country through an airport.

4. A last option is to overstay your visa. From that moment you are in Turkey illegally. You are prohibited from using public services.

As Turkey has a more or less open door policy, you can also enter the country without a passport. In this case you can only register for the Yabanci card to stay in Turkey legally. If you do not register, your stay in Turkey is considered illegal.

4.2.1 Temporary protection regulation

In October 2014, the Turkish government issued a temporary protection regulation. This regulation applies to all foreigners who were forced to leave their country and due to the mass influx, cannot be treated as individual asylum cases. This thus applies to the Syrians entering Turkey, regardless of staying inside or outside a refugee camp. Syrians enjoy temporary protection in Turkey, which means that you won't be sent back to your country and have access to healthcare, education, social assistance and the labour market. The implementation of the rights of social assistance and access to the labour market are subject to future decisions by the relevant Ministry in place (UNHCR, 2015III).

Employment

The relevant ministry for employment issues is the Ministry of Interior affairs (MoI). People in Turkey can only work with a work permit. Officially, as stated in the temporary protection regulation, people with a temporary protection document can apply for a work permit in certain sectors or geographical areas that have been issued new biometric identity cards by the authorities (Içduygu, 2015). However, as these areas have not been issued yet, no work permits are provided on this basis. This means that there is not yet an option for Syrians to apply for a work permit and consequently Syrians end up mostly in the informal economy (Kolorukik and Argul, 2009).

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, the informal economy in Turkey consists of 33.3% of the work force in April, 2015. (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2015). Data specific for Istanbul on the size of the informal economy is not available. However the informal economy is widespread throughout the city, as becomes evident in studies by Danis (2006), Tokoz et al. (2012) and Smorenburg (2015), which specifically focussed on the labour market in Istanbul.

Education

The relevant ministry for education activities is the Ministry of national education (UNHCR, 2014). Since 2012, the Turkish government allowed Syrian primary- and high schools to be established. Before this time, Syrian students were already informally allowed to join regular Turkish schools. As this group of students experienced many problems related to language, they got assigned Arabic-Turkish mentors. As the influx of refugees kept growing the Turkish government decided to allow for specific Syrian schools.

By 2014, the government decided to fix the position of Syrian students by law. According to the Turkish law 'every child in Turkey has the right to primary and secondary education'. This

includes international children. The ministry of Education issued a 'foreigners and education' document in 2014, which explicitly states that children enjoying the temporary protection status have access to government schools (UNHCR, 2015III). This means that Syrian children in Istanbul have access to government schools.

In order to register as a Syrian in a Turkish school, you need to show either a residence permit, or a temporary protection identification document, or a yabanci card (UNHCR, 2015III). Syrians staying in Turkey illegally can therefore not register at a Turkish school.

In order to enrol in a Turkish university, Syrian students need to pass a language test and fulfil academic requirements, just like all international students. For the year 2014-2015, the tuition fees for Syrian students were removed (UNHCR, 2015III). This policy aimed to attract Syrian students to keep or start studying upon arrival in Istanbul.

A Syrian school certificate or university diploma is validated by the Provincial Educational Directorate in Turkey, if it is used for entering an education in Turkey (UNHCR, 2015III).

Healthcare

The temporary protection regulation states that the medical costs fee is not collected for emergency health situations and the related treatment and medication. Therefore, free access to healthcare and medical treatment should be provided for all Syrians in Turkey. To access non-emergency healthcare, permission from the state hospital should be granted. Just as with education, registration is a perquisite (UNHCR, 2015III).

4.3 Language

Besides Turkish policies, language has an enormous influence on the life of Syrians in Turkey. The main language spoken in Turkey is Turkish. 17% of the Turks speaks English. 1.4% of the Turks speak Arabic. This is mainly spoken in the border regions with Syria. The Syrian population mainly speaks Arabic. The younger generation of students usually speaks English as well (AFAD, 2013).

Turkish is a language which virtually no Syrian speaks upon arrival. This creates difficulties. There are different ways to learn the Turkish language in Turkey, namely (Kolorukik and Argul, 2009):

1. Through language school/class
2. Through primary- or high school
3. Through Turkish friends or colleagues
4. Self-teaching

Besides making communication in Turkey easier, learning the Turkish language can also contribute to a sense of cultural understanding (Danis, 2006)

4.4 Istanbul's support organizations

As previously mentioned, there are, besides the Turkish government, also some organizations actively working with Syrians. In this paragraph the schools and organizations used in this research are presented. These are organizations in Istanbul, actively involved in supporting Syrians.

4.4.1 Schools

The Syrian schools in Istanbul were established as a response to the big amounts of Syrian refugees entering Istanbul. There are 36 Syrian schools in Istanbul. Syrian children can also enter Turkish schools, but language appeared to be a big problem as the Syrian children mainly speak Arabic.

El Mena Hil

El Mena Hib is a Syrian primary school in Sultan Ciftligi neighbourhood in Istanbul. The school started as a voluntary project, with all teachers being Syrian refugees themselves. The staff shares the same philosophy: '*There is this tragedy, and we have to stand together to create a learning environment for the kids of the school*'.

There are 600 students enrolled in this school and there is a waiting list of 150 people. There are 30 teachers and 10 managers both male and female. The curriculum they teach is Syrian, but the Turkish government checks the level and adequacy of teaching. The children pay a symbolic amount of money to go to school here, but if parents cannot afford this they school covers the fee.

El Zinki

El Zinki is a boarding school for Syrian boys in in Istanbul. The school opened in 2014. Especially for orphans and students living too far from Istanbul to travel every day. El Zinki works together with El Mena Hil, as El Mena Hil does not have enough space to host their students. Therefore boys come to El Zinki for some classes. They teach 7th grade for now, and will start expanding every year with one grade.

All teachers are male in the school. Currently there are 18 students enrolled in the school. The other students they teach come from El Mena Hil. There is capacity for 70 students to sleep over. The curriculum is the same one as is taught in El Mena Hil. They also give Turkish classes.

Shamouna

Shamouna is the biggest Syrian school in Istanbul, located in Essenler neighbourhood. The school was founded in 2012 as a voluntary project. The school has mainly Syrian students, but also some Pakistani. There is a kinder garden, primary school and secondary school.

There are 3000 students in the school. The staff is both male and female. The curriculum is Syrian, but they also teach Turkish. The student fee is 440TL per year, but if parents can't afford this the school covers the fee.

4.4.2 NGO's

Small projects Istanbul
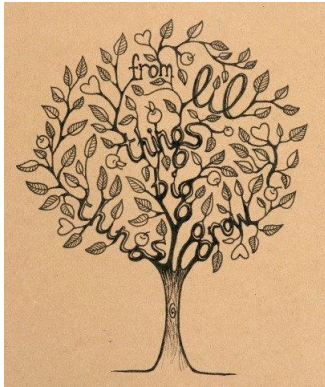
Small Projects Istanbul, is a small organization focussing on assisting Syrian refugees in Istanbul. Their mission statement is 'to provide access to supplemental education that will assist students and families from Syria to succeed in Turkey and beyond, paving the way for better opportunities in the future'. The organization is currently in the process of gaining official NGO status. It is a small organization, which enables them to change the lives of many Syrian refugees in a personal way. They help out with enrolling in university, language lessons, books and in the past with a bigger variety of aid like protease leg, clothing, food and housing.

'The future of Syria might be uncertain, but the future for students and families from Syria doesn't have to be'.

Goç-der

Goc-Der is an organization focussing on Kurdish people in Turkey. They therefore also focus on Kurdish refugees from Syria now living in Istanbul. They are a research organization which started off as an NGO in the field. They provided food and shelter for Kurdish-Syrian refugees. As the number of refugees increased, they couldn't help everybody, so they started to conduct research with the aim of changing public opinion. They currently have two big research programs, one on forcibly displaced people and one on return-village intentions of Kurdish people.

Christian organization

The main aim of this organization is to help the migrant population of Istanbul through Christian Ministry and aid. They have many different types of projects to assist refugees. They visit the houses of the refugees every two weeks. They have a 3 week rotation program of 'Moms and Tots' which enables refugees to meet each other and create an environment for children to play. The parents engage in different Christian workshops. There is a separate group for Arabic speakers, which consists mainly of Syrian refugees. There is a clothing place, where refugees can choose clothing for their kids and there is assistance from a nurse who helps out with health issues. Also, they help refugees to gather the right papers for their UNHCR resettlement appliance.

Syrian Nour Association

The Syrian Nour association has four types of projects running in both Istanbul and Syria itself. The first is a hospital in Fatih neighbourhood. Because the war broke out, there was a direct need for hospitals. The current hospital has 30 doctors. The second are schools. The organization owns 7 schools in Syria and 1 primary school in Istanbul. The third project consists of Turkish and English language classes. The last projects are support centres along the Turkish-Syrian border. In these centres food, blankets and medical support are provided.

Suriye Nur Derneği

جمعية النور السورية

The Syrian Nour Association

5. From Syria to Istanbul

This chapter starts with an elaboration on the characteristics of Syrian respondents. Then the background in which the Syrian refugees decided to leave Syria is provided. The motivations to move from Syria to Istanbul are discussed, as well as the motivations to choose Istanbul. These motivations are related to the social networks of the refugees making this trip. The central question of this chapter is: What are the characteristics of Syrian refugees and which role did social networks play in the choice of a Syrian to come to Istanbul?

5.1 Who are the Syrian refugees?

Syrian refugees are only one group amongst the many migrant groups which are hosted by Istanbul. In this paragraph, the respondents which are quoted in this research and their characteristics are introduced.

Amilah(f) and *Fidyan(m)* are a young couple who came to Istanbul one year ago. They both work in medicine business and just got resettled to Sweden.
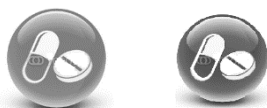
Azmina(f) and *Aatif(m)* are a young couple as well. Aatif came to Istanbul two years ago and Azmina joined him one year after. Azmina is a teacher and Aatif works in the textile industry. They plan on staying in Istanbul and raising their child here.

Kafeel(m), Talhah(m), Aziza(f), Jamilla(f) and *Aamil(m)* are friends who met in Istanbul. Kafeel is a student in University. Talhah is working in a clothing shop but planning on studying later. Jamilla is also planning to study in the near future and Aziza works as a vessel broker. Aamil is an entrepreneur with a housing and money transfer business. They all plan on staying in Istanbul for the near future.

Shaista(f) and Nimerah(f) are two good friends who met in Istanbul. They both came two years ago. Shaista is an architect and Nimerah studies engineering at a university in Istanbul. They plan on staying in Istanbul for the near future.

Alman(m), Abdul-Hakeem (m) and *Aftaab (m)* are three guys going to the same Turkish class in Istanbul. Alaman is a student International business administration. Abdul-Hakeem works as a computer translator and Aftaab works as a translator as well. Alman plans on staying in Istanbul in the near future and Abdul-Hakeem and Aftaab hope to get to Europe soon.

Nawaz(m) and *Mansur(m)* are colleagues working at the same real-estate company in Istanbul. Nawaz came to Istanbul last year and Mansur two years ago. They both plan on building up their life in Istanbul.

Salah(m), Basimah(f) and *Amaal (f)* are part of a Christian community in Istanbul. Salah arrived a few months ago and is planning to go directly to Europe. Basimah arrived one year ago with her family and is now working at a soap shop. Amaal arrived a few months ago with her family and is physically disabled so not able to work or study in Istanbul.

Areeb(m) arrived one year ago to Istanbul and studies economics at university. He also works for a tourist agency.

Baber (m) and *Nadir (m)* are two friends from back in Syria. They arrived in Istanbul one year after each other. Baber works in a pastry shop and Nadir is working in a clothing shop. Both plan on staying in Istanbul for now.

Hassan (m) is a young guy who works in graphic design. He came to Istanbul one year ago and plans to go to Europe in the near future.

Anwar (m) is a pharmacist living in Istanbul for 1 year now. He likes it there and has a girlfriend.

Adib (m) is a young guy working at the spice bazaar. He arrived in Istanbul two years ago and is not so happy here.

Abu-Majid(m) came to Istanbul two years ago. He now is a landlord and rents out houses to Syrians. He wants to go back to Syria when this is possible.

Mahfuzah (f), Azado (m) and *Fateen (m), Jamal (m), Ayman (m) and Mr. Bulus* are six Syrian entrepreneurs in Istanbul. Mafuzah owns a small, family business type restaurant in Aksaray, Azado owns a big, famous restaurant chain in Istanbul and Fateen owns a Syrian coffee café. Ayman and Mr. Bulus are two Syrian restaurant owners and Jamal is opening a clothing business.

Illas (m) arrived 1 year ago in Istanbul and directly became a student from Syrian school El Mena Hib. This is a boarding school for boys only. He would like to become a good doctor like his father. His family lives in Cyprus, but he prefers to stay in Istanbul.

Ghayda (f) is a 16 year old girl working in a Arab women clothing shop. She will leave Istanbul in a few days to join her family to a border city of Syria in Turkey.

The respondents are mostly young, highly educated Syrians. This can be seen in figure 5.1 and 5.2 where their age division and education levels are shown.
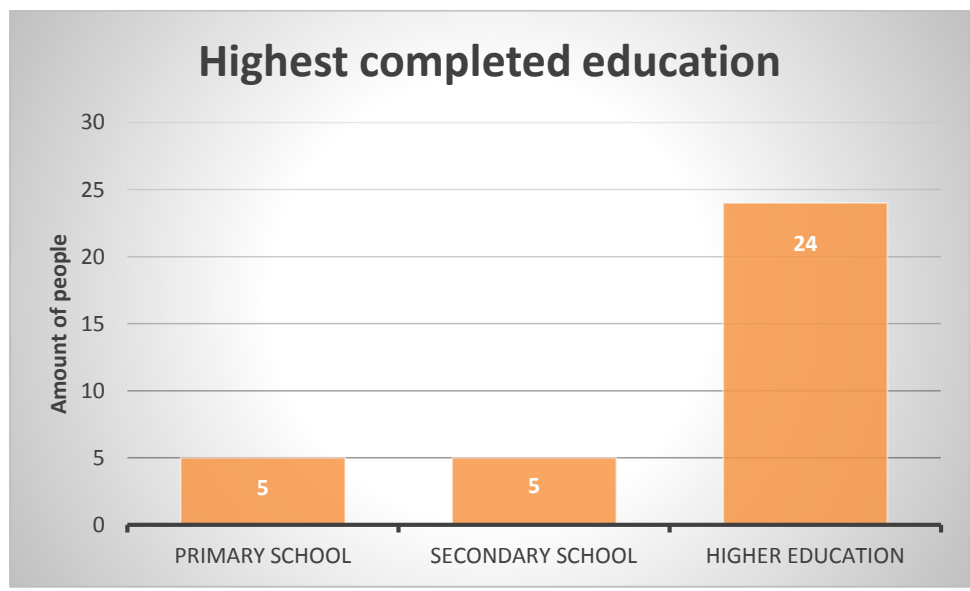
FIGURE 5.1 : HIGHEST COMPLETED EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS IN THIS RESEARCH - **SOURCE: AUTHOR**

36
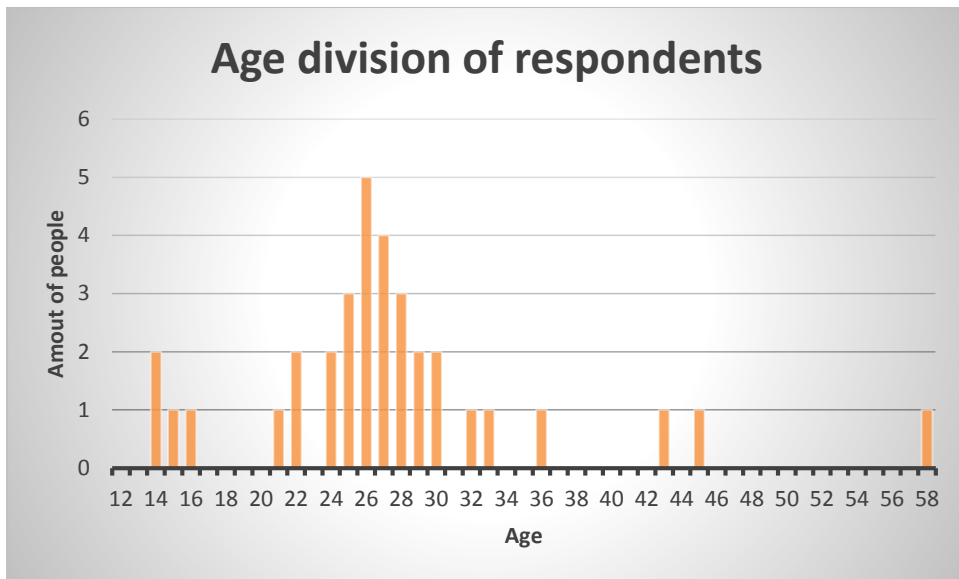
FIGURE 5.2: AGE DIVISION OF THE RESPONDENTS IN THIS RESEARCH - SOURCE: AUTHOR

There are twice the amount of men compared to women participating in this research. The main reason for this is that it was more difficult for the men in our group to interview women, whereas for the women of the research group it was possible to interview both women and men.
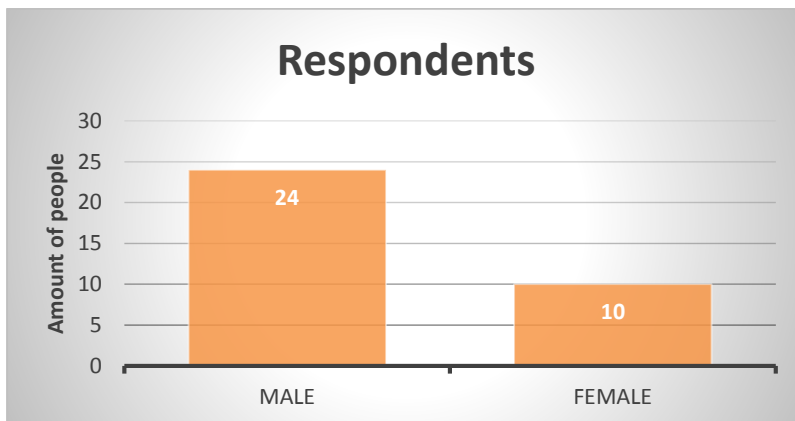
FIGURE 5.3: GENDER OF THE SYRIAN RESPONDENTS IN THIS RESEARCH - SOURCE: AUTHOR

Every respondent acknowledged that learning the Turkish language is one of the most important skills to acquire in Istanbul. Some people make learning the Turkish language their first priority, others refrain from learning Turkish because they do not feel good about themselves in the first place.

Learning Turkish can happen in schools, either private or provided by the government. This is discussed in the chapter on education. However, there are also many unofficial ways to learn the language, for example people who engage in a buddy project. In table 5.4 the ways in which Syrians learn Turkish in Istanbul are summarized:
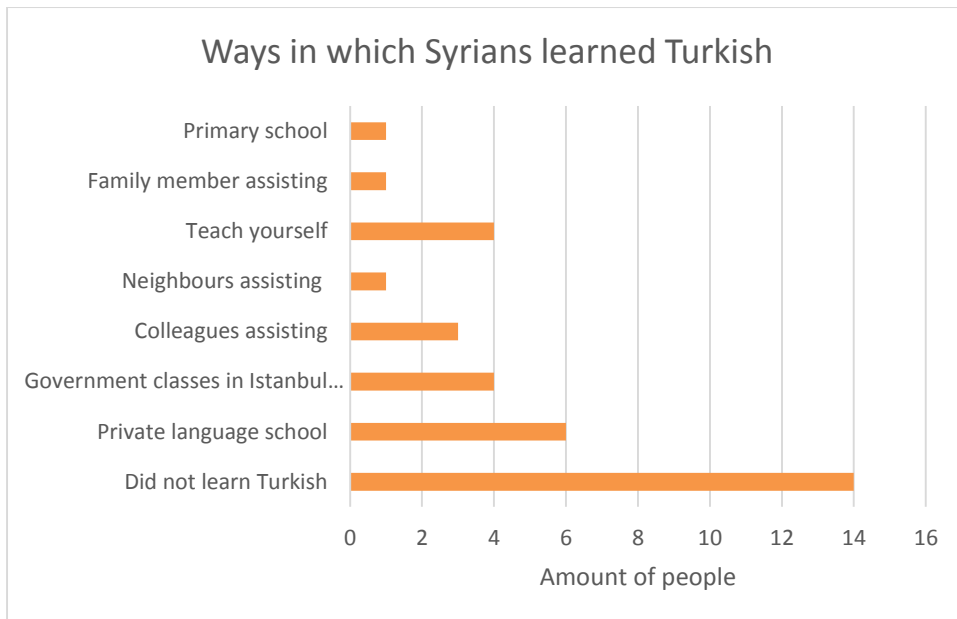
FIGURE 5.4: WAYS IN WHICH SYRIANS IN ISTANBUL LEARNED TURKISH – SOURCE: AUTHOR

As can be seen in the table, 20 Syrians indicated to have learned Turkish in Istanbul. However, this means that 14 (out of the total of 34) respondents have not learned to speak Turkish. It appears that university students and entrepreneurs virtually all speak Turkish. The reason for this, is that they are in need of the language. It is an entry requirement for university, and it is impossible to set up a business in Istanbul without speaking Turkish. For people who found a job without speaking the Turkish language, or people who mainly sit at home, the need for the language is virtually absent. A last thing which appears to influence the motivation to learn Turkish, is whether friends, colleagues or neighbours speak Turkish. When they do, the language can be learned in a more informal way.

5.2 Life in Syria

Syria is a Middle-Eastern country located on the right side of the Mediterranean sea. Syria was in 2011 home to roughly 22.000.000 Syrians (Worldbank, 2015). The country is since 2000 led by president Bashar al Assad. The country is a secular country, but most people are part of different religions and sects. As depicted in graph 5.5, only one percent of the population is categorized as 'other', including non-religious.
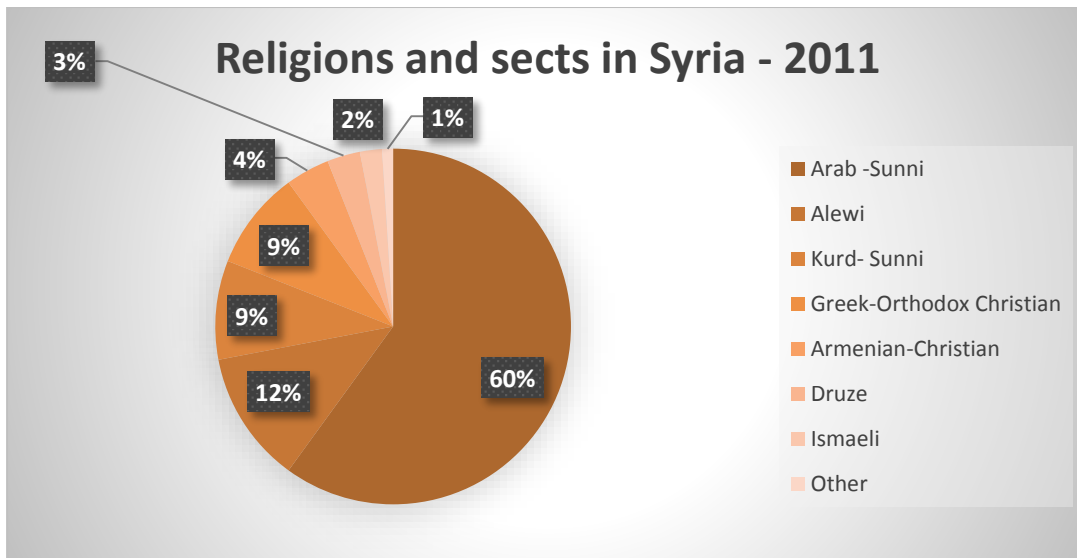
Figure 5.5: Religions and Sects in Syria - Source: Holiday, 2011

The people of Syria remember their home country for many different reasons. Every person has both good and bad memories. Some people identified societal problems, even before the war broke out. However, to all people Syria was their home, the place they were born and the place where they had friends. The next figure gives some impressions of life Syria.

I had a good life as a Christian in Syria. I lived in a Christian community and never really knew what a Muslim was – Basminah

I couldn't marry the girl I loved back in Syria. She is from a different religious group than I am. Now we left and can start our life together - Mansur

My religious group was like my second family. Neighbourhoods were segregated, but we could get along with everybody. The extremists started this war. I was happy in Syria - Salah

We lived in a conservative society. The position of women was subordinate to that of men. It was so embedded in our society that many men up to this point don't see this. My parents were liberal, but still I could never go out. The family would be condemned if they gave the girl too much freedom - Shaista

FIGURE 5.6 STATEMENTS ON LIFE BEFORE LEAVING SYRIA - SOURCE: AUTHOR

This figure shows that also before the war, as in any country, the opinions on how life was are different. There are however a few common characteristics mentioned by most respondents. The first is a segregated society. People from different ethnic and religious groups did not mix. They lived in different neighbourhoods. Second, strong ties within the religious or ethnic groups. Jobs, houses and schools were most commonly found within this network. If there were money issues, these would commonly be solved within the community. Third, a lower position of women compared to men. Women had to marry at a certain age, men did not. Women could study, but never go out for a drink after, men could go out for example. Fourth,

there were still many arranged marriages. Fifth, and last, Syria had an authoritarian regime. People were afraid of the police and the government enforced strict power. People started becoming aware of some of these characteristics, especially the last, which meant that problems arose. This is part of the reason why the initial protest for a more liberal society started. Talhah shares his experience on how the situation changed when the revolution started:

'On the 3rd of March 2011 the revolution started. Moving around in the city got more difficult as there was an evening clock at 21:00. These were messy times. The revolution started first in Daraa. The demonstration in Homs started one week later. My first protest was on March 28th. I participated because the system in Syria was based on fear and it was undemocratic. I felt that I was doing something for his country by protesting. "The Syrian people deserve better. After Tunisian and Egypt, yes, we thought that he (Bashar al Assad) would go down". I stopped protesting when the military invaded my neighbourhood Baba Amr in Homs. In February 2012 they started to fully attack this neighbourhood. This was the moment I decided to leave my home'.

Source: Interview Talhah

5.2.1 Leaving Syria

The situation in Syria kept going worse. As upper story illustrates, people started leaving their homes, with as the most common reason the fighting and bombing in their close neighbourhood. Most Syrians never intended to leave Syria before the war broke out. The most common reasons for leaving the country are summarized in figure 5.7. The reasons for

Reasons for leaving Syria

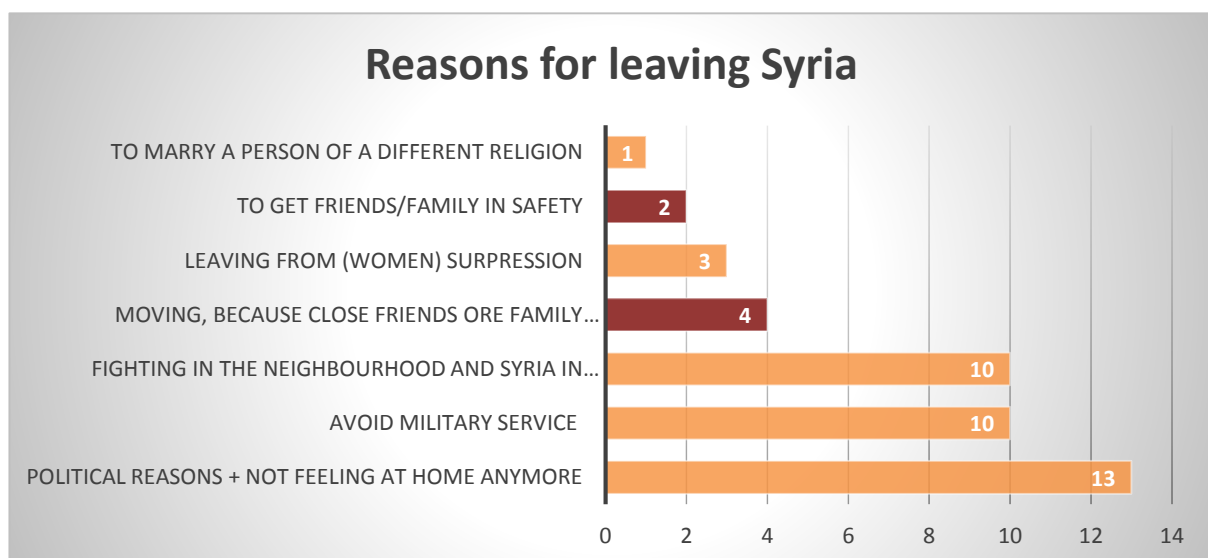|	
TO MARRY A PERSON OF A DIFFERENT RELIGION	1
TO GET FRIENDS/FAMILY IN SAFETY	2
LEAVING FROM (WOMEN) SURPRESSION	3
MOVING, BECAUSE CLOSE FRIENDS ORE FAMILY…	4
FIGHTING IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND SYRIA IN…	10
AVOID MILITARY SERVICE	10
POLITICAL REASONS + NOT FEELING AT HOME ANYMORE	13

FIGURE 5.7: MAIN REASONS FOR LEAVING SYRIA FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES – SOURCE: AUTHOR

leaving which can be related to the personal network of a refugee are coloured red. The figure is based on 21 respondents (specifics on the respondents can be found in Appendix I) These respondents could indicate multiple answers.

As becomes clear in the figure, the main reasons for leaving Syria are not network-related. This makes of course much sense in case of Syria where the war is the main reason for leaving. In only 6 out of 21 people, the social network influenced the decision to stay or leave. In these cases it were close family members or friends who influenced this decision. The danger of fighting's in Syria was not always perceived personally. In a quarter of all cases people decided to leave their life in Syria behind to bring not themselves, but their family, husband or wife in safety.

When studying the mobility of migrants, it is important to look at both macro- and meso level to identify reasons for leaving. In this case, the main reasons for leaving were obviously related to the political, economic and legal aspects of the country of departure. 13 times respondents mentioned that besides the fighting, they wanted to leave for political reasons. They started disagreeing with the current regime of Assad, and in some cases even joined opposition. This created very risky situations, which is a common reason for fleeing the country.

Male and female respondents also had different reasons for leaving. Males are obliged to do two years of military service in Syria. In the current situation this means they have to fight in the war on the side of Assad. *'I should either kill or be killed'* – Source: Interview with Kafeel. In most cases, men decided to leave Syria to avoid this service. For women this was not obliged. Women however had more indirect reasons for leaving. One example is given here:

The direct reason that Aziza left Syria is because of the war. The indirect reason for leaving was that she didn't like the society back in Syria. Women had a supressed position. Also the different types of people living in Syria didn't like each other. She believes that this is an underlying reason why the war started. 'This did not come out of nothing. There were reasons and this war is the only way in which a reform can be made. Aziza wanted to divorce from her husband. Whereas from the outside Syria looks very developed, from the inside there is much hypocrisy and it is a very conservative country. Nobody in society would accept a divorce. As I could not live with my husband, I decided to leave Syria. This meant I needed to leave my children behind, as men get custody automatically in Syria. Yet another example of the inequality of man and women'.

Source: Interview with Aziza

This story has been a reason to leave Syria for half of the group of women in this study. Pyridoxal as it may sound, the war was for them a way to liberate themselves from the, in their perception, conservative Syrian society.

The following figure depicts the trajectories which Syrian refugees have before ending up in Istanbul.
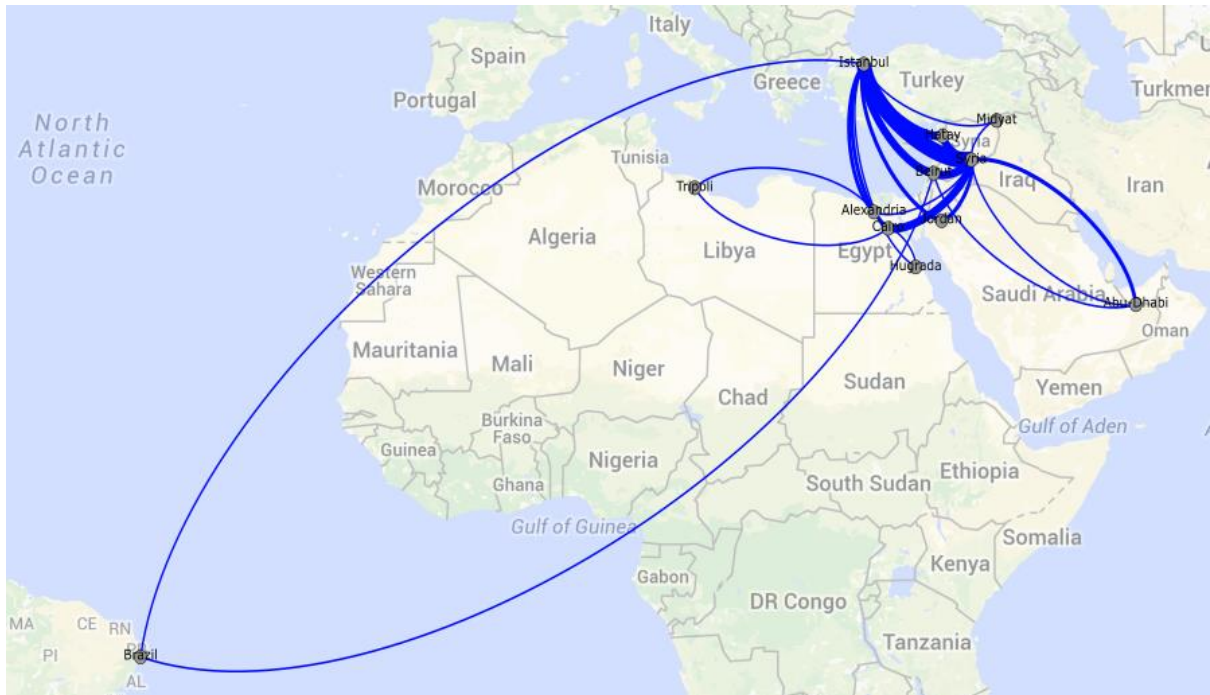
FIGURE 5.8: TRAJECTORIES OF SYRIAN REFUGEES ENDING UP IN ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

As is shown in this figure, only 5 out of 15 Syrians chose Istanbul as their initial destination. The thickness of the lines illustrate how many people travelled along this trajectory. Whereas every trajectory starts in Syria, many Syrians lived in Egypt, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Brazil or Libya for a period of time before ending up in Istanbul. 15 respondents never intended to end up in Istanbul, but it became a convenient destination along the way.

5.3 Choosing Istanbul

The reasons why Syrians decide to come to Istanbul are very diverse. The most common reasons for choosing Istanbul are summarized in figure 5.9. Again, the reasons related to the social network are red. Again, this figure is based on 21 respondents. Respondents could indicate multiple reasons for coming to Istanbul. 18 Syrians mentioned that an actor in the social network was the main reason for coming to Istanbul. 15 respondents indicate macro-level reasons as economic, legal or political factors for choosing Istanbul. Lastly, for 2 people coming to Istanbul was a random idea.

The most common reason, related to the social network, is that a friend recommended living in Istanbul. Sometimes this was because they had a job in Istanbul, or because they can join in the house where a friend is already living. In 3 cases family members were already living in

Istanbul so the choice to go there was easy. In 2 cases it appeared that NGO workers which were in contact with refugees tipped off Istanbul. In 2 cases it was the close friends or family network which could provide for a job for a person in Istanbul.
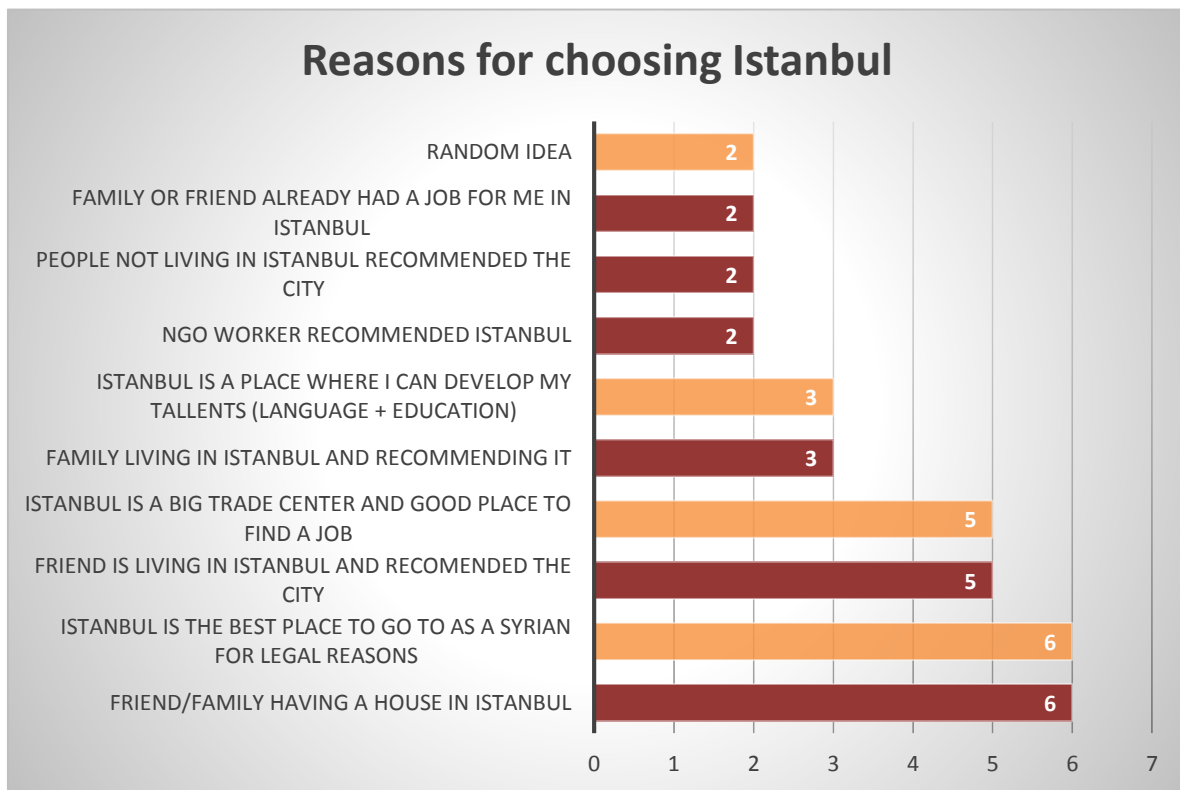
FIGURE 5.9: REASONS FOR SYRIANS TO MOVE TO ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

In 6 cases, the legal context of Turkey and Istanbul was a reason to come here. As Turkey is one of the few countries where Syrians can stay without a passport, people prefer staying here than traveling somewhere illegally. Another reason to choose Istanbul, especially for entrepreneurs, is because it is a great city and a trade centre, just like Damascus for example. Also, there are many options here to develop yourself, in terms of studies and different languages. Lastly, for 2 people it was just a random choice without any knowledge on Istanbul before actually arriving here.

5.4 Making informed decisions

In choosing a place to live, the Syrian people are virtually entirely dependent on the information provided through their social network. As can be seen in figure 5.9, 2 people came to Istanbul because a friend who does not live in Istanbul recommended the city. This means the information this person provides is already second hand. The bigger the network of a refugee is, the more options exist to cross-check the information provided by one person on a potential destination. It appears that close family and friends networks tend to describe the situation in Istanbul more beautiful than it is. Kafeel came to Istanbul because a friend of him was living there. He explains his disappointment after learning his friend presented his stay here a bit more positive than expected:

I thought of Istanbul because I heard that it was a good place for Syrians to go to. Aatif is a friend from Syria who lived with me in Egypt. He went to Istanbul before me and told me to come. He already had a place to stay. When I arrived, the room of Aatif was a shock. How could he have told me to come over here?! The complete apartment was in bad state and unfurnished. I was so disappointed and we needed to furnish the apartment together.

Source: Interview with Kafeel

On the other hand, some people have explicitly stated not to invite their family over because they do not want them to have a hard time as they did themselves. As Haythornwaite (2002) and Dekker and Engbersen (2014) noticed, the sharing of information became much easier through online social media websites like Facebook. Old contacts can easily be found and contacted, which happens at large scale during the planning of a trip. Often people do not even recall where they got their information about Istanbul from, as their image is mainly based on posts on Facebook of friends of friends. The downside of this medium is that people only post the nice pictures of happy times, and never the troubles they have encountered. If this is the only information source, a distorted image can be created. What appears to work best is ask unrelated people about their experiences. However, not everybody has the luxury to do so.

5.5 Conclusions

This chapter introduced the respondents and answered the question to what extend the social network influences the trip from Syria to Istanbul. The main reason for leaving Syria was not network related, namely the war. The only cases in which the social network did have an influence in the reason for leaving, was when friends or family were in danger. Whereas the war did not personally impact their lives, people still left together with the friend or family member in danger. The trajectories of Syrians mark many different destinations, which means that Istanbul was in many cases not the first choice of destination. It became a destination along the way. The reasons for choosing Istanbul were influenced by actors in the social network. The most common reason for choosing Istanbul is because friends/family already had a house in Istanbul where they could join in. The reasons for choosing Istanbul are closely related to the information provided about the city. This information is not always correct. Friends can make the city sound better than it actually appears to be and Facebook pictures can be deceiving. Cross-checking the information by using different sources appears to result in the most reliable information. However, as the Syrians often left their country in a rush, they did not always have the luxury to take time to validate the information.

6. Meeting people, making friends

When Syrians arrive in Istanbul, they usually already have a social network on which they rely. However, the sudden distance between friends and family can result in a need for meeting new people in the place of arrival. Some people start actively networking directly upon arrival in a new city, whereas others have different priorities. The aim of this chapter is to show what social networks of Syrians in Istanbul look like and what the experience of Syrians is in expanding their network to make new friends.

6.1 Networks in Istanbul

Most Syrians already have a social network upon arrival in Istanbul. These people are scattered over many different countries. Figure 6.1 on the next page, depicts the social networks of the Syrian respondents currently living in Istanbul. The thickness of the lines represent the amount of people mentioning this country as a place where friends or family live. The thicker the line, the more transnational connections. The figure is based on 25 respondents. Further information on the respondents can be found in Appendix I. As can be seen in figure 6.1, the social networks of the Syrian respondents in Istanbul extends to the whole world. The thickest line lies between Turkey and Syria, this means that most transnational ties exist between Turkey and Syria.

FIGURE 6.1: TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS OF SYRIANS LIVING IN ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

On average Syrians arriving in Istanbul are in contact with 16 good friends and/or family members. However, there are two examples of situations in which persons had no contacts upon arrival in Istanbul. This was because they had to break all connections with the past. Amilah explains how this situation developed for her:

Amilah's parents don't approve of her relationship with her boyfriend. They don't approve for religious reasons. As they wanted to be together, Amilah had to cut all contact with her family. When the war broke out, it created an opportunity to leave the country without looking suspicious. She told her family and friends she lives in Germany. However she lives in Istanbul. She cannot contact her friends from Damascus who also live in Istanbul, which is very hard. It is dangerous if her family or the government finds out about the place she lives. She has to avoid her old friends and even deleted her Facebook account. She has a very hard time at the moment.

Source: Interview Amilah

This story shows that it is very difficult to abandon your network. Networks are not abstract contacts which can prove to be useful in some point in time, but families friends gathered throughout a lifetime. The next pictures show the networks people have drawn to make the concept of a social network more tangible.
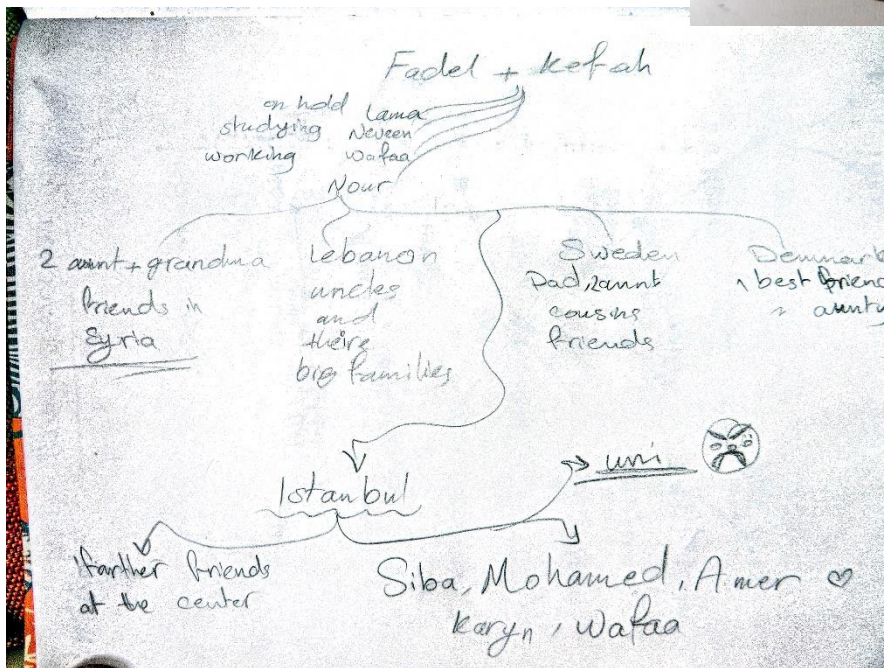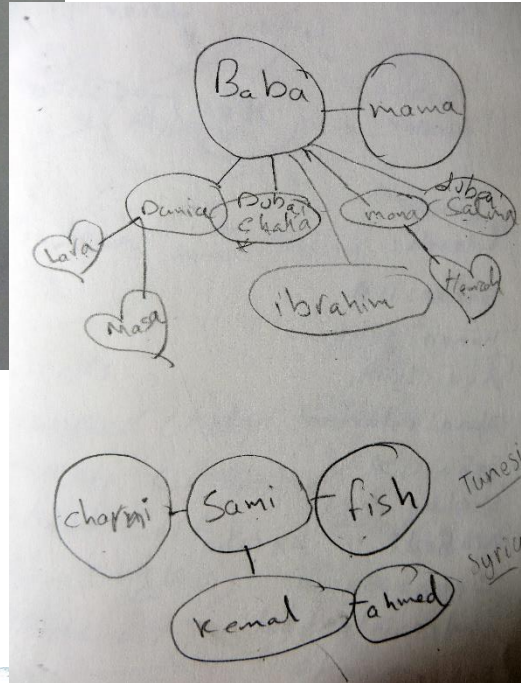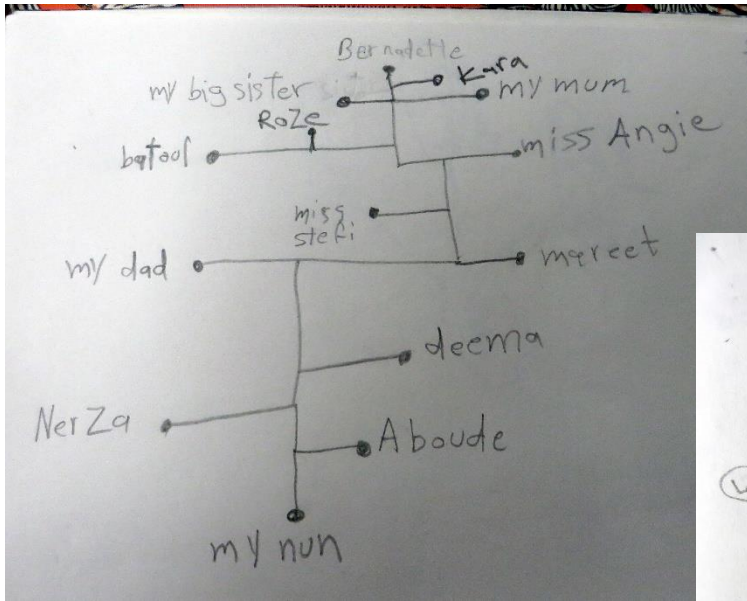
FIGURE 6.2: NETWORK DRAWINGS OF SYRIANS IN ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

These drawings illustrate the personal nature of social networks. Furthermore, the sizes of networks differ per person.

People have different ways of staying in touch with their friends and family abroad. Figure 6.3 shows the most common ways of communication.
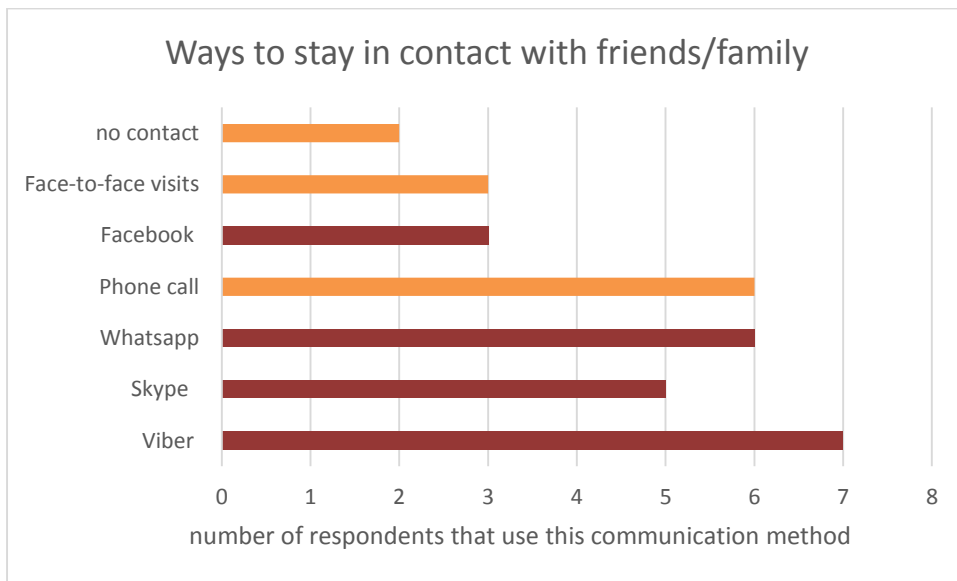
Ways to stay in contact with friends/family

number of respondents that use this communication method

In this figure, the communications methods using internet are coloured red. The total amount of respondents was 25 (specifics on the respondents can be found in Appendix I). One respondent can indicate multiple ways of communication. What becomes clear from this figure is that internet (Viber, Skype, Whatsapp and Facebook) is the major facilitator of contact between family members and friends living in different countries. Internet made transnational communication much easier and personal, which makes it possible to remain close to even friends and family living abroad.

6.2 Networking strategies

Syrians use different strategies to deal with their situation. Some prefer to meet new people, while others grow closer to the people they already know. Not everybody feels like walking around and meeting new people in Istanbul. Many Syrians are unmotivated and are even depressed upon arrival. However, the Syrians who do want to get in touch with new people in Istanbul, use different strategies. These strategies are summarized in table 6.4. The total amount of respondents was 24. However, people could mention multiple strategies to meet new people.

Strategies to meet new people in Istanbul
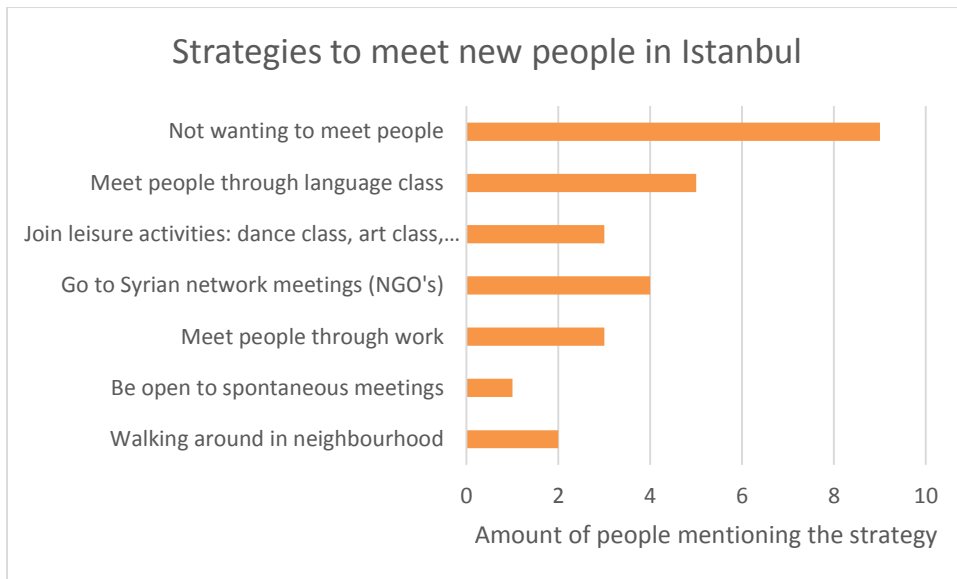
FIGRURE 6.4: STRATEGIES TO MEET NEW PEOPLE AS A SYRIAN IN ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

Strategies to meet new people require per definition an active networking effort of a refugee. Not everybody is willing to meet new people. 9 out of 24 respondents indicated they don't want to meet new people at this moment in time. Syrians start participating in activities if they do want to meet new people. Apart from meeting new people through colleagues, neighbours, language class, joining in sports or dance classes and other informal activities, some NGO's are also organizing specific network events.

'Small projects Istanbul' organizes for example craft workshops and language lessons. Whereas their main aim on the long term is promoting education, a side goal is to connect Syrians in Istanbul with their meetings. The Christian organization has weekly meetings with crafts and bible readings as well. The aim of these meetings is to connect likeminded Syrians in Istanbul. In these meetings people get to know each other and talk about their daily struggles.

Whereas there are common strategies to meet new people in Istanbul, the experience of is always personal. Nimerah and Shaista explain how meeting each other in Istanbul was for both a turning point in time:

Shaista: The first eight months I knew nobody in Istanbul, apart from my brother. We had a house on the Princess Islands and were so isolated here. Especially during winter. I felt so miserable. After eight months a friend of a friend connected me to Small projects Istanbul. This has been a turning point in time. I met Nimerah and we became inseparable.

Nimerah: I never felt at home in Istanbul, until I made friends here. Before that time, I felt miserable. Now, I couldn't live without them. I have always been a family person.

Source: Interviews Shaista and Nimerah

Whereas Shaista and Nimera met each other through an NGO activity, targeted for Syrians in Istanbul, some Syrians prefer to avoid Syrian meetings and prefer to meet with Turkish people. Adib shares this idea and he explains why:

I deliberately try to be more in contact with foreigners and Turkish people. I avoid meeting other Syrians. I have a nice job here. Life in Istanbul started when I met my foreign friends. I don't like to confront myself with the situation in Syria. Everybody has horrible stories, so I don't want to bother people with mine.

Source: Interview Adib

It is interesting to see that some refugees experience a new start of their life when meeting people from the same ethnic network, whereas others explicitly avoid becoming part of this ethnic network.

1.3 Conclusions

This chapter showed what the current social networks of Syrian refugees living in Istanbul look like. The picture sketched in this chapter is a temporal one. The social networks of Syrians in Istanbul extends over many countries. However, as relationships within networks change over time, so do the networks themselves. Internet became a major facilitator of transnational connections. This results in the fact that while people still have family abroad, they still know each other's whereabouts.

This chapter reflects the personal dimension of a social network. It is not yet concerned with creating social capitals out of a network, but one step before this; meeting new people. New contacts can always be useful. However, the experience in meeting new people differs per

person. Common strategies include, walking around, going to Syrian NGO meetings, join leisure activities and join a language class.

An interesting finding is that some Syrians explicitly avoid meeting other Syrians. As Adib explained in his last textbox, he does not want to bother other Syrians with his stories. It is important to acknowledge that not everybody of the target group (Syrian refugees in Istanbul), wants to be part of this ethnic group. Azmina presents another example of this finding:

Azmina is not connected to any organization or official network which helps Syrians in Istanbul. She just uses her personal contacts. She explains: 'Organizations often help the poor people. The people without parents or money. I do not want to take up the place of another Syrian in need.'

Source: Interview Azmina

7. Networks for living

One of the crucial aspects of building up a life in Istanbul, is finding a house. In this chapter the ways to find a house as a Syrian refugee in Istanbul are described. The strategies people use to search for a house are discussed, as well as how the social networks in neighbourhoods contribute to integration.

It was the first time in Istanbul for all Syrians participating in this research. In the map below the neighbourhoods were the Syrian respondents live in Istanbul are depicted.

FIGURE 7.1: MAP WITH THE NEIGHBOURHOODS WHERE THE SYRIAN RESPONDENTS LIVE - SOURCE: AUTHOR

7.1 Finding a house

When people have decided to come to Istanbul, the first step is to notify the people within their network through Facebook and phone. There are no NGO's or other organizations specifically focussing on providing refugees in Istanbul with housing. This means there is no formal network for Syrians which can assist them in finding a house in the city. The ways of finding a first house in Istanbul are summarized in figure 7.2.

Finding the first house in Istanbul

- friend/family offering a place
- found a house as payment for a job
- staying in a hotel found on the internet

88%
8%
4%
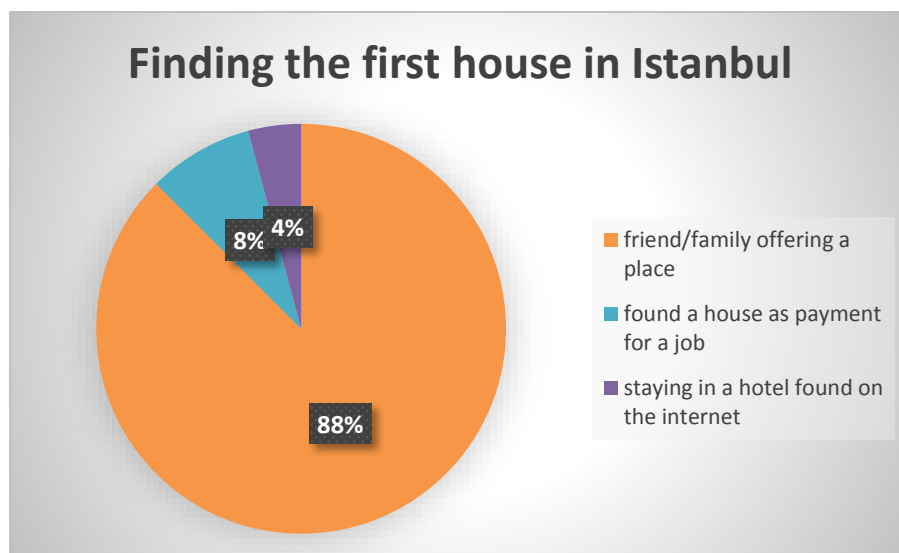
FIGURE 7.2: HOW SYRIAN PEOPLE FOUND THEIR FIRST HOUSE IN ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

What becomes clear from this figure is that 96% of all respondents, corresponding to 23 of the 24 Syrians found a house by using his social network (friend or family offering a place + found a house as payment for a job).

Syrians arriving in Istanbul can be divided in two groups based on their network. The persons already having a (small) network in Istanbul and the people who arrive completely alone. Most people belong to the first category. The first thing people with a network in place do, is to ask around for housing options. People are actively involving their network to search for a place. Using the social network was also the way in which Syrians found a house back in Syria. Alman explains how the process of finding a house usually works:

'When friends come over to Istanbul, I try to use my network to find them a place to stay. I know people who rent beds. I call them to ask if they have beds available. I know several places in Fatih. Some places are very expensive, varying from 240USD to 380 USD per bed. If you don't have much money you usually end up in bad housing conditions. Single rooms are usually more expensive than shared rooms.

At first Syrian refugees arriving in Istanbul helped each other only informally upon arrival in Turkey. Now it became a business. The downside of this development is that people now start making a lot of money on the Syrians. Sometimes Syrians even exploit Syrians.

Source: Interview Alman

This short story illustrates a few aspects in finding a house in Istanbul. First of all, Syrian people do usually use their social network to find a house initially. They are in touch via Facebook and Whatsapp and ask both their strong and weak ties in Istanbul for a place to stay. It does take an active effort to ask around, but as many Syrians have experienced themselves in

Istanbul; it is difficult to find an affordable place to stay. This is why people are inclined to help, be it only for a place to stay for the first few days. There is often a lot of sympathy amongst Syrians to find a house. Many respondents even ask friends of friends for a place if somebody comes over to Istanbul. This illustrates that both strong and weak ties are involved in finding housing A second aspect which the story illustrates is that renting out houses became big business with the huge influx of refugees.

When people do not have a network, it requires a more assertive attitude to find a house. People need to ask around for real estate agencies or search the internet. In a few cases the job came together with a house. Looking and asking around actively proves to be difficult, especially for people who enter Istanbul dispirited due to the war. Salah, a Christian man who moved to Istanbul together with his parents is one of these. He had to cut the ties with his past, but luckily their family had a vague acquaintance living in Istanbul already. Salah explains:

'There is this psalm in the bible saying 'Man is a stranger on the earth'. This never felt more true. We knew just one family vaguely before arriving in Istanbul. Luckily they knew a house owner in their neighbourhood who found us a place to stay'.

Interview Salah

Other than being dispirited, language complicates the issue of finding a house, as most Syrians do not speak Turkish or English. Combined with the huge influx of Syrians in general, this means that people without a network and an assertive attitude usually end up in very bad housing conditions. Syrians who do manage to be assertive and search for houses in less familiar ways tend to, usually, with a bit of luck, end up in better places. Comparing both Syrians with and without a network, it is evident that people with a network have a big advantage over people without one in finding a house. However, it is possible to compensate for the lack of network, by pro-actively to searching in new directions.

7.1.1 Moving to a second house

After living in Istanbul for a while, most people change houses as a better opportunity arises. As previously mentioned, renting out houses became big business. Many Syrians are exploited, and the longer the stay in Istanbul, the more evident it becomes. In many cases the rent for a place is too high. In other cases the tenants don't get along with the business minded house owner which is a second reason to start looking around for a new place. The main ways to search for a second house are summarized in figure 7.3.
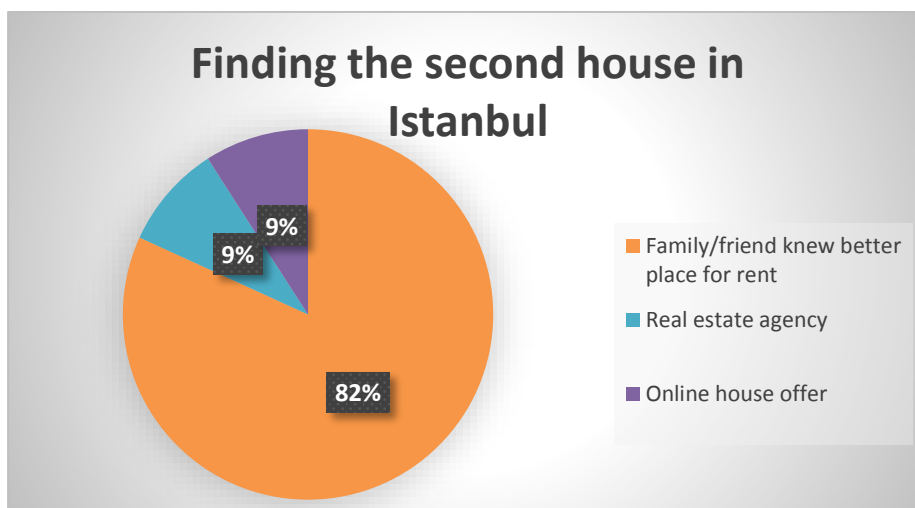
Finding the second house in Istanbul

- Family/friend knew better place for rent
- Real estate agency
- Online house offer

9%
9%
82%

The total amount of respondents moving to a second house is 11. This is because 13 respondents still live in their first house in Istanbul. What stands out in this figure, is that the amount of people finding a house through their personal network dropped down to 82%. Furthermore, one different way of finding a house is added, namely people found a house through a real estate agency. Non-network related ways of finding housing now amount for up to 18 percent, corresponding to 2 out of 11 people.

These dynamics can be explained as follows. When the second search starts, the social network of Syrians has usually expanded. People have met up with old friends now also living in Istanbul and made new ones, which results the most common way to find a second house: a better offer by a good friend. Also, people start working which expands their network even further. Colleagues hear of their situation and sometimes have contacts to arrange a better house.

Besides asking around in their own network, Syrians start learning Turkish. Therefore, they become much more informed on ways to find housing in Istanbul. This means that people start using real estate agencies and websites to find a house.

7.1.2 Moving on
The longer people live in Istanbul, the more they become accustomed to search for houses. In figure 7.4, the strategies for finding a 3rd, 4th and for some people 5th house are depicted.

Finding the third (and more) house in Istanbul
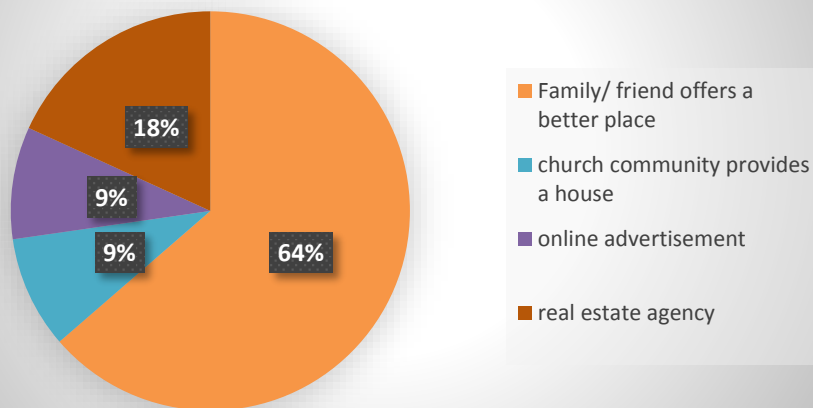
- Family/ friend offers a better place
- church community provides a house
- online advertisement
- real estate agency

64%
18%
9%
9%

The amount of people finding a third (or more) house is again 11. What directly stands out in this graph, is the diversification of the ways of finding a house. The non-network related ways of finding a house (real estate agencies and online advertisements) now amount for up to 27%. Furthermore, 9% of the respondents, meaning 2 out of 11 now found a house trough their church community.

The most common way of finding a house at this point in time is still through the close network. Some people moved in with a friend or their girlfriend. Some got a new place through their job. As people learn to speak better and better Turkish, they become more capable of negotiating for a house. Abu-Majid explains how his house search changed because his son learned to speak Turkish:

Life in Istanbul got much better as soon as my son learned to speak Turkish. We found our house through a real estate agency. At first the house owner did not want to give the house to us. I had many meetings with the house owner and my son as translator, because we needed to build trust. Now we live there and the house owner thinks I am a good tenant.

Source: Interview Abu-Majid

Still however, you have to be lucky sometimes. Kafeel explains how he found his third house:

On average Syrians move to a different house in Istanbul around 3 times. The main reason for moving is the (too) high rent or irritations with the house owner. As migrants are in a vulnerable position, they are prone to exploitation. It is difficult as a migrant to identify this, especially just upon arrival when you have no information on housing prices. A connection between a house owner and a tenant remains a two-way process and if one of both parties exploits the other or does not treat them in a polite way, it might unfortunately be inevitable to search for a new place.

When looking at the development of the house search, it becomes clear that upon arrival Syrians are most dependant on their social network for finding a house. The longer people live in Istanbul. The more their search strategies diversify. They meet new people in Istanbul who become weak ties. Therefore, the longer people live in Istanbul, the less they are dependent on their strong network to find a house.

7.1.3 The house owner's perspective

When taking the perspective of a house owner it is possible to gain insights in their strategies to find tenants for their houses. The ways in which house owners search for tenants correspond to the strategies used by Syrians to find a house. The ways in which Syrian house owners find tenants are summarized in figure 7.5.
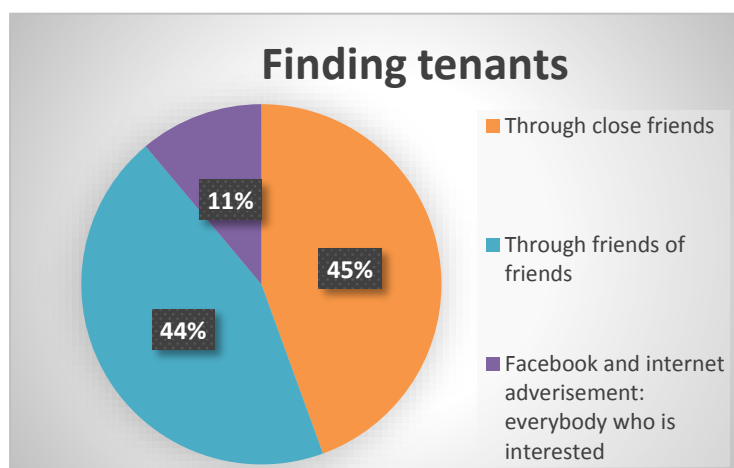
FIGURE 7.5: HOW HOUSE OWNERS FIND SYRIAN TENANTS - SOURCE: AUTHOR

The Syrian house owners spoken to in this research, 9 in total, gave an unambiguous answer, every house owner, except for one, finds its tenants through their friends and family network. They only rent houses to friends or friends of friends. In some cases people simply open up their house to friends who are coming and share their apartment for an unknown period of

59

time. In other cases renting out houses has a more business like character, but they usually still rent only to friends of friends. Only one case, the case of Aamil, handles his business differently:

I rent out five houses. One is only for friends. I pay gas, water and electricity for them. The others are commercial. I don't know the people living in the apartments. They have a verbal agreement and have to be male. I found these tenants through friends, Facebook and internet advertisements.

Source: Interview Aamil

7.2 Housemates and neighbourhoods

After having found a house, people can start settling down in a place. Their new house can be a place where new social networks are built up. A negative experience can however also result in moving to a different place. In this paragraph the dynamics of the relationships formed with housemates and the neighbourhood are described.

7.2.1 Relations within the house

Syrians often end up in crowded houses of on average 4 to 5 housemates. Often this results in a bit of annoyance with the people in the house, but no real fights. Everybody tries to deal with the situation to their best ability, but when living with strangers annoyance is unavoidable. Nimerah explains her difficulties with the big amount of housemates:

The first house where Nimerah lived in had 21 people, the second 24. It is impossible to concentrate there, let alone study. This was annoying, even though nobody could really do something about it. Luckily short time after a friend found Nimerah's family their own place.

Source: Interview Nimerah

Back in Syria, most Syrians had their own house or shared a house with their family. Now people have to adapt. This can sometimes prove to be difficult as is exemplified with this short story:

We have an unstable housing situation. We live with 3 families in the house and relations are tense. The other families are related, we came in last. They complained 5 times to our house owner about our behaviour. We don't know what we did wrong and we cannot have a conversation about this topic. Our house owner gave us an ultimatum, either they leave or we leave before the end of this week. We are afraid we will be pushed out.

Last week the two other families behaved rude to the house owner which is why she told them to move to another place. A new family arrived yesterday. We get along well. My mother is much more happy. I will take them to Turkish classes and to my Christian community as they are also Christians.

Source: Interview Basimah

This story shows that the making or breaking of social relations can have consequences for the housing situation. In the first situation the relationships within the house got so tense that one of the families would be kicked out of the house. This negative relationship resulted in the loss of a house for one family. In the situation which followed, Basimah's family did not want to repeat the same pattern and risk losing their house again. Basimah's family got the opportunity to start over and now tries to create a friendship ties between the two families.

It does not happen often that people make new friends in the house. People living together usually knew each other from before or do not know each other at all. However, as everybody came from the same bad situation people accept their situation and try to make the best out of it. Talhah explains his strategy:

For me living with Syrians makes me feel more comfortable. We can speak with each other easily and we can use each other's connections to find a new house or a job for example. Therefore I am always friendly.

Source: Interview with Talhah

This strategy represents the strategy of most Syrians sharing a house in Istanbul. Even though they would prefer living in a different situation they try to be polite to each other and help each other out where possible.

7.2.2 Relations with the neighbourhood

Virtually every Syrian family or individual experiences problems with integrating in their neighbourhood. Aamil explains the difficulties his family experiences:

We live in Avcilar in Istanbul. My grandmother and mother both said they were bored here. This place feels temporary to her, even though we can stay in this house until we want to leave. My family does not have much contact with the neighbours or with the people on the street. However, Avcilar is a neighbourhood know for housing many Syrian families. My mom believes that for a man it's easier to make contacts, as they are trained to do so for their job. 'Men are less shy'. Grandma communicates with her neighbours, only by using her hands and feet. The mother explains: 'It is difficult for us to mix in the Turkish society. We didn't learn the Turkish language because they find it too difficult. Back in Syria we had a big social life and people always dropped by. Here this is not the case'. My mother invites people to come over, but they are afraid to come. Now we are in Turkey we are more protective of our sisters and children. We want to make sure they are fine and therefore they don't visit others so easily.

Source: Interview Aamil

This story illustrates some crucial problems which many families experience when living in a neighbourhood in Istanbul. The first is a communication problem between the Syrian and the Turkish community. Syrian people experience difficulties in learning the Turkish language, especially when they are older. This means that communication with their Turkish neighbours gets difficult. A second problem which this story illustrates, is the lack of trust between Syrians due to their common background of war. As a consequence of the war people are still cautious when meeting Syrian people in Turkey. You can never know which side of the conflict the person supported. This means that even though Syrian families are neighbours in Turkey, they often afraid to contact each other. The last problem which this story illustrates is the protective nature of the Syrian community. As Aamil explains, Syrian families are quite protective over their women. Because the Turkish society is new to the whole family, the men are protecting their women at first. You cannot see directly from which ethnic or religious background a person is. This protectiveness is a reason why Syrian women experience more difficulties in meeting Turkish women. Of course these findings differ per neighbourhood. Abu-Mustaffa explains:

> *I am interested in getting to know the neighbours, but in this neighbourhood (Avcilar) it is difficult to be in contact. It is not the culture of this neighbourhood. In the first neighbourhood where we lived (Kirazli), this was very different. The neighbours would come over for food and the other way around. In Syria neighbours were like our family.*
>
> *Source: Interview Abu-Majid*

Abu-Majid finds it important to know his neighbours. One of the reasons is that he is renting out a house as well. Abu Mustafa is actively building up a small network in the neighbourhood and in Turkey. He uses his connections to be able to manage his life and help out his tenants. He knows places where Syrians are employed and can therefore help his tenants in finding a job.

7.4 Conclusions

It appears that the longer you live in Istanbul, the more the influence of the social network in finding a house decreases. The most common way to find a house is through your family and friends network, as is indicated by both the tenants and house owners. However, the longer you live in Istanbul, the more the ways of finding a house diversify. The major part of the respondents still uses their social network to find a place, but real estate agencies and NGO networks now also start yielding benefits.

There appears to be a big solidarity amongst Syrians. Everybody knows how hard it is to find a house in Istanbul. Therefore, people often ask everybody in their network and even friends of friends if they can help to find a house or room. There is however a thin line between support and exploitation, so Syrians need to be careful with who they rely upon.

People without a social network have a disadvantage in finding a place. To compensate for their lack of contacts, they have to be assertive and actively search in new places like housing agencies or the internet. These are not the ways to which Syrians are accustomed to. Therefore this requires a big effort and an attitude which not all Syrians poses, especially not after having fled a war. Therefore, people without a network usually end up in worse housing conditions.

Usually, the longer people live in a place the more their network expands. This should translate in easier integration in houses and Istanbul neighbourhoods. However, the case of Syrian refugees proves to be different. The personal history of war in Syria and the Syrian cultural background often result in a reluctance to meet new people. This holds for Syrians meeting people from both the Turkish community as well as the Syrian community in Istanbul. Also language forms a big barrier, specifically between the Syrian and Turkish community. However, the situation is different in different neighbourhoods. Some people, like Abu-Majid are actively involved in creating a neighbourhood network. Because he is trying to get to know

his neighbours, he can help his tenants out if they need something. In general however, the lack of contact between Syrians arriving and Syrians and Turkish living in Istanbul is not contributing much to integration on a neighbourhood scale. Neighbours often don't know each other whereas creating some neighbourhood solidarity can especially be beneficial for a migrant community.

8. Networking for work

Finding a job in Istanbul is crucial in providing an income. Income which is usually not spend alone, but to sustain whole families. Besides this, the workplace is a place where people meet and new friendships are made. In this chapter the question how the social networks play a role in the generation and spending of income is answered

8.1 Finding a job

When looking for a job in Istanbul, the first step Syrians take, just as with housing, is to notify their personal network of their job search. The strategies which Syrians use to find a job in Istanbul are summarized in figure 8.1.

FIGURE 8.1: STRATEGIES OF SYRIANS TO FIND A JOB IN ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

It appears that 67% of all respondents, 15 out of 22 employees, found their job by using their personal network (consisting of 'asking friends/family network' and 'NGO network'). 7 respondents, or 35% of the respondents find their job in a non-network related way.

Jobs are most easily found through friends, housemates, family members and other acquaintances as the house boss for example. There are examples of Syrians extending their network to help other Syrians to for example find a job. Azado explains what he usually does when somebody applies for a job at his restaurant:

As I own a big restaurant, people pass by searching for work every day. I do not always have place for more employees, so sometimes I cannot help them myself. Then I head to an unmarked building a few blocks down the road to see Hussein. He is the owner of a money exchange agency and has a big network. Therefore he can always help people with finding a job.

Source: Interview Azado

However, the initial jobs Syrians take in Istanbul are usually labour intensive, low paid jobs. Therefore, a dilemma is created, as using the personal network does provide a job, but often not a very good one. Abdul-Hakeem explains the struggle in searching for a job:

Connections are the most important to find a job, anywhere. This made it difficult for me to get a job in Istanbul. If I would have gotten in the Syrian work-circuit, I would end up in the low end jobs. On top of this I would have had to justify myself the whole time for being a Syrian. I heard many different stories of Syrian people who work here and I didn't want to end up like them. You get into this stigmatized image, which is difficult to break out of. My strategy was to get to know more Turkish people. If I make more connections through the Turkish network, this ensures better wage and work conditions.

Source: Abdul-Hakeem

What usually does results in better job opportunities, is making a CV and being pro-active in asking around for jobs at both Syrian and Turkish employers. This enables Syrians to break out of their low-end job network. Furthermore, it is also possible to find jobs online in Istanbul. Websites as:

- Facebook
- Jobs in Istanbul – www.jobsinistanbul.com
- Kariyer – www.kariyer.net and
- Dubarah – www.dubarah.com

post vacancies online. However, most Syrian people are not used to making a CV. In Syria the most common way to find a job is through the personal network. The second way of finding a job is not straightforward for Syrians. Therefore, many Syrians experience difficulties in finding a job in Istanbul. Areeb explains the struggles he sees the Syrian people in Istanbul having:

At the time I was looking for a job, I met with other Syrian people too. I noticed that Syrian people need encouragement to achieve their potential. It is about taking advantage of opportunities after recognizing them. This is a combination of skills and connections. This combination is needed when you want to find a job. In Syria, people mostly depend on their connections to get a job. Although that is also true in Turkey, you really have to have some skills. You need to use these skills to find a job. You have to recognize opportunities. This is also a skill, just like languages and work ethics. Actively searching for jobs by reacting on vacancies is needed, but a lot of people do not do this. Their moms are still taking care of them. The just ask family members: 'Do you have a job for me?' 'No'. 'Ok'. This is not enough. You have to ask why, or present yourself in a different way. This is key to finding a job. You have to be assertive. Furthermore it is good to know what your skills are, as I have also a group of friends which have basically no skills and they keep complaining that the Turkish people don't hire them. They use culture and language as an excuse, but they simply don't have the skills.

Source: Interview with Areeb

The problem described by Areeb, is a problem recognized by many Syrians. It might be that hiring a Syrian is less likely than hiring a Turkish person, but the biggest obstacle in finding a job at the right education level is own motivation and assertiveness. Due to the war, many people think negatively and lost their trust in the situation everywhere. This is of course completely understandable, which unfortunately results in many Syrians finding low end jobs in Turkey.

Nawaz story provides another example of how a motivation can be an obstacle:

67

During my time in Istanbul, I strengthened my believe that nationality does not matter and skills are more important. My housemate Tom, saw how down I was. He gave me a book which stated 'stop thinking negatively. Start thinking positive. When you think positively, you will chase opportunities and you will improve yourself'. I told myself to stop thinking like a Syrian, start thinking like a human. Due to Tom's advice I started looking for a new job, and quit my old one. After 15 days I got a call from my current employer for a job interview. I got the job!

My explanation: In Turkey, business people also just want to make money. If you are good in your job you get it. My success motivates me to continue working. I believe that highly educated people from Syria can do the same thing I can, If they change their attitude.

Source: Interview with Nawaz

This story illustrates a few important findings. First of all, breaking though a negative attitude did in this case result in a better job. Secondly, friendships can be of great influence in finding motivation. The comments of Tom pushed Nawaz to realize his potential and start actively searching for a better job.

The website 'Dubarah', which was previously mentioned as a vacancy website, also recognized the need for motivation amongst Syrians. Dubarah is a network by Syrians, for Syrians all over the world. This network was established right after the war began. Its main purpose is to posts articles which stimulate Syrians to keep their head up and motivate themselves. Furthermore, it provides Syrians with information on visa's, job opportunities all over the world.

Whereas personal communication was already greatly altered by the internet, the online network of Dubarah goes one step further. An online support network was created to motivate Syrians in many localities in the world. Therefor people who do not know each other personally, can support each other though this online communication platform.

A contextual factor which appears to play a role in finding a job is language. Speaking Turkish, enables you to better present yourself in the Turkish labour market. Also, Turkish language proficiency is often a requirement of Turkish employees. On top of this it appears to be an advantage for some jobs to be able to speak the Arabic and sometimes even the English language. The tourist and housing business for example attract many Arab investors

There were 7 Syrian entrepreneurs, or employers included in this study. The way in which these employers look for employees corresponds with the ways in which Syrians try to find a job. These ways are summarized in figure 8.2. Employers could indicate multiple ways of finding employees.

FIGURE 8.2: MANNERS IN WHICH SYRIAN EMPLOYERS FIND THEIR EMPLOYEES – SOURCE: AUTHOR

What becomes clear is that Syrian employers mostly use their personal network to find employees. Once having a group of employees, expanding is easy because many employees have friends who want to get a job in Istanbul as well.

Besides the network, they use different types of media to advertise their place and attract new employees. They use flyers, business cards, an own website and often Facebook. The more famous a place gets, the easier it is to find suitable employees, as Azado explains:

Our Syrian restaurant is a famous restaurant in Istanbul now. People pass by searching for work every day, asking whether we can use more employees. We have the luxury position of only hiring people with previous experience.

Source: Interview Azado

8.2 Meetings on the workplace

Besides using a network to find a job, the job itself is also a great place to meet new people, get to know colleagues and integrate in the work place. The experience with these people can be critical in staying or leaving a certain job.

8.2.1 Getting to know colleagues

When working at a company, there is immediately contact between colleagues. This can result in integration in the company and create a feeling of family. Colleagues can become friends and are a useful source of job-related information. Furthermore, they can be of great personal support and in some cases combine their personal networks to help each other out

In graph 8.3, the work experience as perceived by Syrian employees is depicted.

FIGURE 8.3: EXPERIENCE OF SYRIANS IN MEETING COLLEAGUES ON THE WORK FLOOR - SOURCE: AUTHOR

As can be seen in this figure, 41%, corresponding to 9 out of 22 respondents, indicates to have a positive experience in getting to know their colleagues. In 23 %, corresponding to 5 out of 22 cases Syrians have a negative experience. Lastly 8 people have a neutral position in meeting colleagues, meaning they just work together and are not really talking to each other.

The respondents having a positive experience, base this on meetings with both Turkish and Syrian colleagues. In some cases Turkish colleagues learn their Syrian colleagues Turkish, in others they become friends and drink a beer together Friday after work. Employers use different strategies to promote friendly relations between colleagues. They for example organize a common lunch every day. Others try to create an atmosphere which feels like family, just as is the case with Mahfuzah:

I am Syrian myself. My five Syrian and two Turkish employees are like family to me. I did not know any people before arriving in Istanbul, so it was important for me to take my Syrian employees with me from Syria. They already know how this restaurant works, how to prepare food and what the menu is. The Turkish employees also do more than they are paid for, like teaching me Turkish, translating my personal bills. They take care of me like I was their daughter, we are like a family in this restaurant.

Source: Interview Mahfuzah

Mahfuzah is not the only employer trying to create this atmosphere. It is mentioned multiple times that employers try to make their company and employees feel like a home with a family.

A good relationship with colleagues can be beneficial. Expanding the network with a colleague, means adding knowledge on job related issues. If colleagues start feeling like family an extra personal dimension is added. In other cases, colleagues heard the story of a Syrian colleague and saw the skills somebody possessed. They noticed a huge over-qualification, and went asking around in their network for other, better, job opportunities for their colleague.

Unfortunately, not all work experiences are positive. As can be seen in graph 8.3, 5 people had a negative work experience with colleagues. It happens that Syrians have the feeling they are treated differently from and by their Turkish colleagues. Also sometimes colleagues are competitive or simply just work together and stick to strictly that. Anwar gives an example of his experience in working together with his colleagues:

My relation with other colleagues is professional. They respect me and I respect them. However, I do understand Turkish and not all of my colleagues realize this. Sometimes I overhear them talking in a funny way about me. It's annoying, but what can I do? If I pretend that I did not hear anything and I'm doing my job, they have to respect me. When I am in direct contact with my colleagues they are nice.

Source: Interview Anwar

A negative relationship with colleagues can be reason for a less satisfying work experience. In extreme cases it can even result in leaving a company.

8.2.2 Who's the boss?
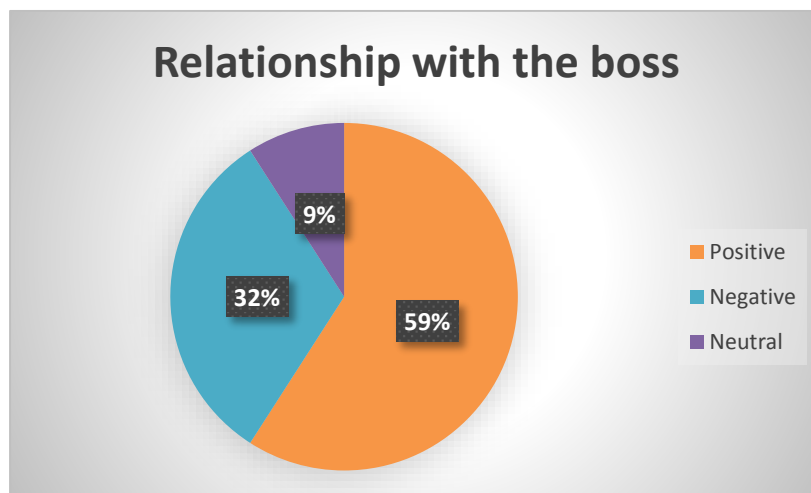
FIGURE 8.4: EXPERIENCE OF SYRIANS IN WORK-RELATION WITH BOSS - SOURCE: AUTHOR

Besides meeting colleagues, Syrians are also in contact with the boss of a company. The relationship between a boss and his Syrian employees is in 59% positive, meaning 13 out of 22 respondents, perceived positive, as can be seen in figure 8.4. Furthermore, it becomes clear that 32%, or 7 respondents does not have a good relationship with his boss.

Usually Syrians and their employers are respectful to each other. In some cases the boss feels responsible for the wellbeing of his employees. In these cases they talk about the background of the Syrians and often become friends. Basminah shares how she experiences the relationship with her boss:

Basminah works in a soap store with Miss Steffi. She is happy with her job, because of the nice salary and the low work pressure. Basminah and Miss Steffi talk about faith and the bible together. 'We get along very well and I see Miss Steffi as a friend'.

Source: Interview Basminah

A good relation between a boss and his employees is not only beneficial to the Syrian employees who try to start over, but also for the boss himself. Fateen, the owner of a coffee place in Istanbul, explains how he sees this issue:

I have a friendly relation with my employees. I completely trust them. This is crucial when hiring people, as I need to be able to trust my employees. I am not around all day in the café, so I need people I trust to run my business.

Source: Interview Fateen

Again, there are also examples of less fortunate relations between the boss and his employees. Bosses can be arrogant and bossy and the most commonly heard complaint is that they push their employees too much. In these cases the company makes excess claims on its employees, as it offers lower wages or longer working hours than fellow colleagues. In some cases a boss can even discourage individual success. This happens when it is in the company's best interest to keep a low wage employee, rather than encouraging an employee to find another job matching his education level. This negative experience can be a cause for quitting a job and in some cases enforce the feeling of low self-esteem. In Nawaz case however, things went a little different:

At Nawaz office, they have two managers. A Dutch/Turkish and a pushy manager. The Dutch/Turkish manager is not a nice guy. He believes that he knows everything, partially because he is from the Netherlands and his team consists of Syrians and Turkish people with less than his superior education. They are always to blame when something goes wrong. The manager is very arrogant. Nawaz does not like the pushy manager either. He believes that his employees can only deliver good work when you feel you are not working hard enough. Therefore he tries to give this feeling to his employees. Besides his two managers, there is a director on top of their company. He usually does not really get involved. He trusts his employees. At some point Nawaz got so fed up with his two managers he decided to quit. He went talking to the director, to announce his leave. It appeared that the boss got one complaint the same week regarding both managers. His boss took care of the situation and fired both managers. He acknowledged to have put his faith in the wrong people. He wanted Nawaz to stay at his company. 'To make up, I got to go on a paid holiday. My whole situation changed through this conversation.' Now I am a manager.

Source: Interview Nawaz

This story is an example in which usage of the right skills and contacting the right people at the right time can change the situation of a negative work relation completely around.

8.2.3 Customer relations

Besides creating contacts with colleagues and your boss, it is also possible to create relations with the customers of a company. Usually people do not really use a strategy to meet customers, but these encounters are inevitable during work. Graph 8.5 shows how Syrians experience their contact with customers.
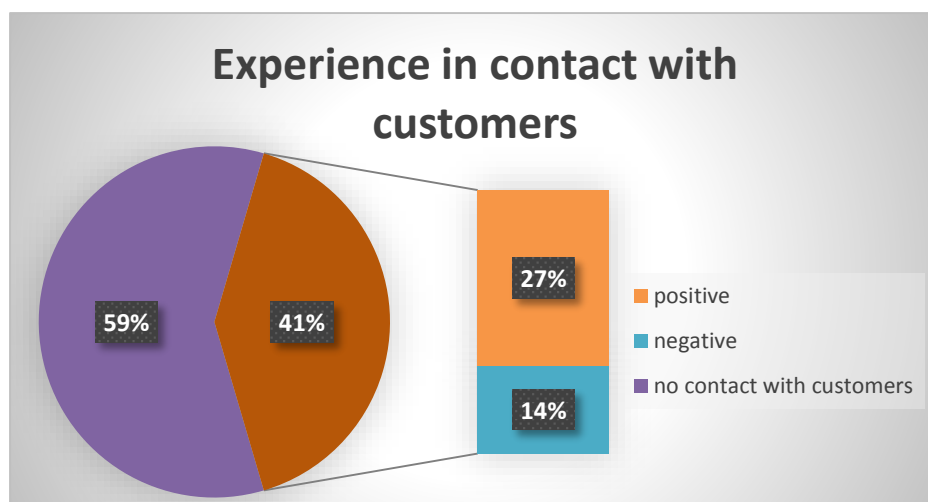
FIGURE 8.5: EXPERIENCE OF SYRIAN EMPLOYEES WITH CUSTOMER CONTACT - SOURCE: AUTHOR

As becomes clear in this figure, 59% of the respondents, 13 of 22, is not in contact with costumers of the company. Of the 41% which is in touch with customers, 27%, meaning 6 out of 22 respondents, indicate this contact is positive. 3 people have had negative experiences in meeting colleagues. Adlib is an example of the former. He got to know many of his friends through one Italian customer of his shop:

For work, I have to sell spices. This means I am always talking to customers and try to be social. One day an Italian customer dropped by. He was an Erasmus student on exchange in Istanbul. We got along pretty well and he introduced me to his other friends on exchange. As I was earning quite a lot in the shop I had enough money to join in their activities during the weekends. I hang out with them every day after work and even slept over often. They became great friends and it is such a pity that they had to leave after a half year.

Source: Interview Adib

Unfortunately, not all customer contact happens positively. There are also some cases of discrimination. The Arab customers prove to cause most trouble, as Nimerah explains:

I am Syrian/Palestinian. I never tell people that I'm Syrian, I always say Palestinian when they ask for my nationality. The Turkish people treat you so much different as a Palestinian, because they see Palestinians as victim of the Israeli conflict whereas they see all Syrians as the cause. I always try to show the customers that I am fluent in English, Arabic, Turkish and I study. In this way they respect you more. Arabs are the most difficult customers. They are much more conservative than I am, which is why they don't respect me. One time a girl asked me directly 'where is Mecca'. I answered that I didn't know and she said to her mom in Arabic: 'of course she doesn't know, look how she is dressed'. After this, they don't want to order anymore. The worst example was when two Arabic speaking men came in. I greeted them in Arabic. One man started yelling and cursing me in Turkish and Arabic and said that it's not normal to greet somebody in Arabic while working in Turkey. I explained I could also talk in Turkish if he preferred, but he would not hear anything of it. The threw the money for the order on the counter. It is common that people treat me a little different during work when they find out I'm Syrian. They often ask for a different coffee or something but this was plainly rude which I felt very bad about.

Source: Interview Nimerah

This is not the only case of discrimination. Three respondents have indicated to be treated differently when people notice they are Syrian, especially by Arabs. The reason for this, according to Nimerah, is that they are disappointed that an Arab girl became more liberal. In another case, Baber, a guy, pretend to have a different nationality, as he does not obviously look Syrian. Sadly this works as he experienced:

People treat me differently when they notice I'm Syrian. Sometimes I also say that I'm Russian (I can do this because I don't look Syrian). Then people suddenly find my stories very interesting. This discrimination from costumers happens very regularly and I am sad and unhappy about that.

Source: Interview Baber

As mentioned before, most customer encounters are however positive. This makes sense, as companies and customers are dependent on each other. Without customers a business cannot exist, and without the business the customers do not get their service.

8.3 Networking outside the workplace

Besides integrating in the workplace, there is also interaction with people from the neighbourhood and other places in Istanbul. There are some pioneers who try to build up a job related network besides their work at a company, or even set-up their own business. These pioneers are called entrepreneurs. They use their network to team up with others to open a business together, they collaborate with friends to gather enough money and the create a network of Syrian clients.

Fateen is an example of an entrepreneur which saw the opportunity to expand his network further to create more future employment opportunities for more people. He explains his strategy as follows:

Together with a group of other Syrian entrepreneurs, we established the Association of Syrian entrepreneurs in Gaziantep: SEF. With this association, we would like to create a voice for Syrian entrepreneurs in Turkey. The project is still starting up, but we got the organizational part going and our ideas are growing. We are in touch with many organizations and try to gain influence in politics.

Source: Interview Fateen

This innovative thinking resulted in a new network of Syrian entrepreneurs in Turkey. Another example is when people extend their network to expand their business. This is the case for some entrepreneurs who have a business based on a network, like money trade. Another example is Mansur, who owned a shop for some time:

Me and a friend opened a shop with Syrian products in Avcilar. Initially, we had a basic stock of products which we sold. However, when we started telling people about this business, they wanted us to sell their Syrian products as well. This evolved in a smuggle network in which we get products freshly from Syria to Istanbul. We sell them for the owners and make extra profit.

Source: Interview Mansur

This example shows how an initial job can expand its network into different countries.

Relations between employees and the neighbourhood are virtually always good. For a company this is often necessary, as there are potential customers in the neighbourhood and negative experiences could lead to complaints. Aamil's father, who owns a restaurant in Istanbul therefore hands out food to neighbours. In this way good relations with the neighbours are ensured. Other restaurants have indicated to use the same strategy and bring around free food to neighbours.

8.4 Chop my money

Besides building up a network in Istanbul when generating income, there is in some cases also a network related to the spending of money. Istanbul is a city where many remittances are generated. In Figure 8.6 is depicted whether Syrians receive or provide remittances for family or friends.
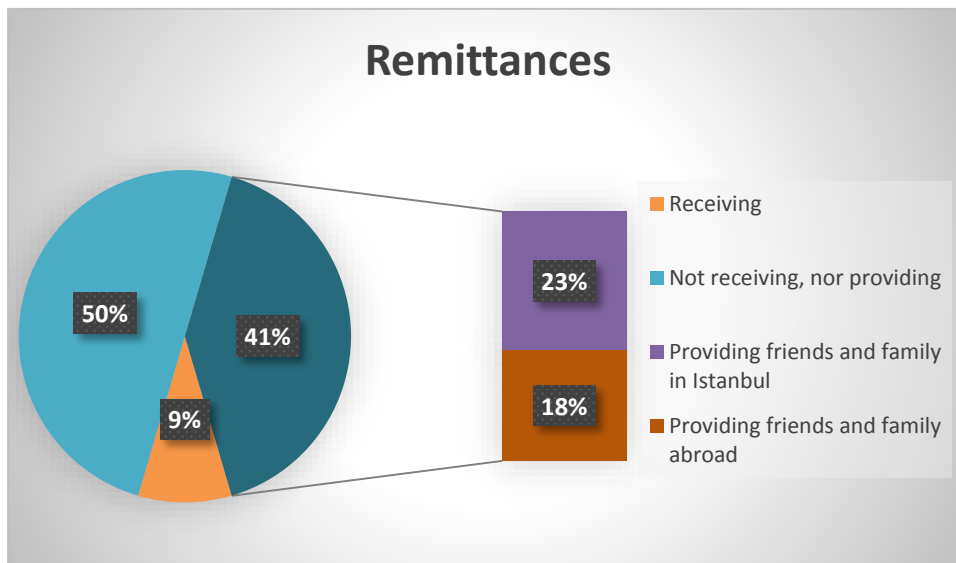
FIGURE 8.6: SYRIANS IN ISTANBUL PROVIDING OR RECEIVING REMITTANCES - SOURCE: AUTHOR

As can be seen in this graph, 41% of the respondents, corresponding to 9 out of 22 respondents (excluding entrepreneurs generates remittances for one or more family members. Of this respondents 5 generate remittances for family in Istanbul, 4 generate remittances for family abroad. 9%, corresponding to 2 out of 22 respondents receive remittances. 50%, or 11 respondents, work to sustain themselves and their close family living with them.

In some cases, the children are the people generating remittances. In these cases, the son or daughter of the family found a job in Istanbul, whereas there are not many work opportunities left in Syria. Regardless what type of job this is, it is the best shot at income a family has. Basminah explains how this happened in her case:

Basminah is 14 years old. She and her big sister speak great English, a welcome skill to find a job in Istanbul. Her mother lost her job and her father is depressed. Basminah explains proudly that she is trying to make it better and easier for everybody at home by putting a smile on her face and earning extra income. The job in the soap store is very important to Basminah, because she likes her work very much and it allows her mother to stay at home and take care of her father and her little brother and sister.

Source: Interview Basminah

In this case, the family of Basminah lives in Istanbul and is unable to find a job. In other cases family members provide for family living in Syria. Remittances virtually always consist of money, it is not common that goods are sent as support. Furthermore, if other family

members ask for money, people usually send some as family is considered important in the Syrian culture. As mentioned before only 2 people receive remittances from family abroad. This is the case for two students in Istanbul.

8.5 Conclusions

The most common way to start looking for a job in Syria is through the personal network. Therefore, this is the first thing most Syrians try upon arrival in Istanbul. It however appears that many Syrians end up in low end jobs. This creates a dilemma, as the most common way to find a job results in a low-end job. Breaking out of this network, requires an active search attitude. It appears that people who are currently satisfied with their job, all started by looking around for good/better opportunities. They started either by asking around both Turkish and Syrian employers, making a CV, doing an online job search or in some cases even opening their own business.

The online Syrian community Dubarah, represents a major development in the communication ways of migrant. Besides enabling personal communication, it also facilitates communication and motivation by people who have never met each other. This online network can thus support the network of migration in Istanbul. As many Syrians have indicated to deal with motivation problems, this community has great potential.

In most cases, relations with colleagues and the boss of a company are fine. Syrians become friends with colleagues and learn Turkish or drink a beer after work. However, in other cases colleagues or a boss exploit their relation with a Syrian employee, by demanding too much work for not enough money. This can result in quitting a job. Nawaz initially faced this situation. By talking to the right people at the right time he however completely turned his situation around. Mobilizing his network and taking a chance paid off for him. This process is the same for relations with customers. Usually costumers treat the respondents with respects, however there are also obvious cases of discrimination.

Besides taking a job, there are people who create their own employment. They are actively extending their network to create more opportunities for the future. These people gather and create new communities, or combine their personal networks to be able to better help others. These pioneers are usually well connected, innovative entrepreneurs who often have a history of creating their own business. They are the living argument that networking works!

In Istanbul most people appear to work to sustain themselves and their close family. However, 41% generates remittances. Only two people receive remittances. In some cases children are generating income for their family.

Overall, it appears that personal networks can assist in finding a job. However, with regards to finding well-paid jobs on education level, networking and searching in new places offers more opportunities. Actively showing initiative and motivation pays off. The pro-active

persons who create and extend their own networks, usually end up more satisfied with their jobs than others. Lastly, the website Dubarah presents an interesting network-development, by creating an online support network for Syrians.

9. The learning network

'If we want to prevent today's Syrians to become a lost generation, we should invest in their education today' – quote by Small projects Istanbul.

This chapter will elaborate on the ways to find these schools and on how these schools form a platform to enlarge the social network. The dynamics in finding schools and meeting people differ for primary- and high school and university. Therefore this chapter is divided in two parts, namely primary- and secondary school and a part on university.

Of all respondents, 8 are going to school or university in Istanbul. 3 respondents have indicated to be willing to go to school but are currently not able. There are different ways in which Syrians can enjoy education in Istanbul:

1. Syrian students are allowed on every primary- and high school due to the temporary protection regulation
2. There are specific Syrian schools
3. For higher education, Syrian students can join the Turkish in university.

9.1 Primary and secondary school

In this research, only Syrian primary- and high schools are visited. These are schools run by and for Syrians. There are currently around 36 Syrian schools in Istanbul. The amounts of students per school vary from 18 (one of the smallest) to 1150 (the biggest school in Istanbul). When a family is looking for a school for their children, they first have to find a school and then apply.

9.1.1 Strategies to find a school

Finding a primary school appears not to be a big problem. People use two main strategies to find a school. First of all, people prefer a school within the neighbourhood. Therefore, the first and most used strategy is just to walk around in the neighbourhood where the house is. Schools confirm that this is the most common way to find students. No network is usually involved in this. One school however especially targets children without parents or children living far out of town. They use a different method to find their targeted students. School El Zinki explains their strategy:

We have a boarding school. We focus on Syrian orphans, or children of which the parents live far from Istanbul. It is not possible for these children to go to a Syrian school, unless they can sleep over. The only way to reach these people is through the internet. We for example put advertisements on Facebook and got 70 applicants before we even opened the school.

Source: Interview El Zinki

The example of El Zinki exemplifies a second strategy to find a school, namely search the internet. Two out of the three schools have indicated to actively post announcements for students on a Facebook page.

9.1.2 Enrolling

In the beginning all schools accepted every Syrian student. As there are still so many Syrians waiting for primary and secondary education, now schools prioritize students. Most commonly, this happens based on proximity to the school. However each school has their own placement policies. Parents sometimes criticize these policies. El Mena Hil explains the problems they experienced with their placement policy:

We always discuss our decisions with the parents. When we take on a new student, we evaluate in which grade the child will function best. It often turns out that this grade is the same or one grade lower than the school they attended in Syria. We think this makes sense, as the children are affected by the war and forgot about study related topics. Parents don't always agree with this policy and therefore sometimes decline to put the children in our school. This is frustrating, because we try to do what seems best for the children.

Source: Interview school El Mena Hil

Another problem which people encounter, is the need for documents when registering. Basminah is still not enrolled in high school because of this. She explains her situation:

I always loved going to school. Now I keep up my schoolwork at home. I tried to enrol in a Turkish high school, but because I do not have a passport this didn't work out. This was two years ago. Now regulation changed and they have to accept me. I hope to talk to some people soon who will arrange my application. I found a school close to my job so I could perfectly combine both.

Source: Interview Basminah

Basminah is able to combine her work with school. However, this is not the case for all children. This story points to a second problem which some children experience, namely the need to work to provide their families of income. Schools also identify this problem. They notice that in primary- and especially high-school much more girls are enrolled than boys. Sadly, the main reason for this is that boys are sent to work at younger age than girls.

All schools in Istanbul but one have school fees of $100 per semester. This however virtually never causes problems, because if a student is not able to cover this fee, there are donation mechanisms in place by which the school or other parents cover this student's fee.

9.1.3 Socializing youngsters

The children in the classes usually get along very well. Some schools stated explicitly that they find it important to create a 'home' in the school. School El Zinki and one of their students, Ilias, elaborate on the school's strategy:

El Zinki: Our students are staying here for a whole week. Therefore, we want them to feel at home. Once a week, we eat Syrian breakfast together with all students and the staff. This is on a Sunday. We have somebody responsible for cooking and cleaning every day. We think it is essential for students to have a place like home. Otherwise it is impossible to study.

Ilias: I like going to school here. In Syria, people used a lot of bad words, here nobody does. This school is like my home and the teachers act like my parents. The kindness of my classmates makes me feel at home. I try to communicate with them like they are my brothers. The director feels like a father to me.

Source: Interview El Zinki and Ilias

However, still both students and teachers experience stress. Children are appointed in lower grades or do not pass on to the next year because they are stressed as they often need to provide income for their families besides going to school.

What stands out is the solidarity amongst students in primary school. Many parents do not have the money for extra facilities, like a school bus ride. The school anticipates on this issue, by putting a box in the class in which students can donate money for the children who cannot afford the bus ride.

9.2 University students

It is first of all important to stress that not all people who would like to apply for a university can do so. Many people arriving in Istanbul had the ambition to study, but end up working to make a living.

9.2.1 Finding a university

Finding a university in Istanbul is not a problem for most Syrian students. Universities advertise online and it is possible to visit their buildings throughout the city. This means that in principle no network connections are needed to find a university. However enrolling in one is a whole different story.

9.2.2 University application

There is a formal network supporting university applications of Syrians in universities in Istanbul, consisting of 2 NGO's, namely the Syrian Education Commission (SEC) and Small Projects Istanbul (SPI).

SEC is an organization which assists students in applying for and studying at a Turkish university. Kafeel worked for this organization and explains what type of work he did for them:

I have worked for over one year for the Syrian Education commission. In this organization I helped Syrian students enrol in the university and find housing for them. I organized a lecture on how to apply for Turkish university. Still one year after I receive phone calls of parents which ask me for assistance. Furthermore I provide information on how to study for exams and extra home-schooling.

Source: interview Kafeel

The SEC employs students to support other students with enrolling in university. They create their own network to support university students by organizing this.

SPI, the second organization, promotes education amongst Syrian students in Istanbul. They provide supplemental education, for example Turkish classes, so students from Syrian can

more easily enter Turkish university. Nimerah explains how the organization assisted here with her application for university:

I have no money to go to university. This means I needed a scholarship to be able to study. In principle, no university in Istanbul provides a full scholarship. Small Projects Istanbul introduced me to a friend of theirs, a teacher at university. She heard my story and passed me on to the director's office of uni. When they saw my grades, they made an exception for me. Now I'm finishing my first year of engineering.

Source: Interview Nimerah

In other cases SPI created funding for students to be able to study.

There are several steps which need to be taken when enrolling in a university in Istanbul. In most cases the first step is to arrange the paperwork. Diploma's or certificates from high school need to be brought over from Syria. Furthermore, a student needs to have a passport. It took Areeb 7 months to get the paperwork from Syria.

The second requirement which holds for every international student, is to pass the language proficiency test. International students need to pass the English IELTS test. Additionally, they need to pass a Turkish proficiency test. These requirements prove to be challenging, as is illustrated by the following stories:

I study economics at Bahcesehir University (BAU) in Istanbul. When I first entered the building I thought, could I ever study here? I needed to pass the English proficiency test IELTS, within 6 months. When I arrived I just had a very basic English level from high school in Syria. By luck I met a women involved in developing the IELTS exams. She helped me study for the exams. I made it just in time!

Source: Interview Areeb

It became clear that Areeb met the right person at the right time for passing his English test. Alman passed the English test at once but failed his Turkish test. He explains how this turned into a positive development in the end:

I was accepted for Istanbul University. To enter, I needed to do an English and Turkish proficiency exam. I passed the English, but failed the Turkish exam. I needed to take Turkish classes, which I started taking at TOMA language school. It was expensive, but I saw it as an investment in my future. I am now here for 1.5 year and find that learning the language was essential. Only after I learned Turkish I got more interested in learning about the Turkish society as well. My department at University is completely in English. I didn't understand the Turkish proficiency requirement at first, now I see the point.

Source: Interview Alman

Still many Syrian students appear to have difficulties applying for a Turkish university.

9.2.3 Socializing students

It appears that Syrian students do not completely blend in with their fellow Turkish students at university. Even with the Syrian classmates it is difficult to connect. Nimerah explains the struggles with her fellow classmates:

There are Turkish and Syrian students in my class, but they do not understand what it means to be suffering the complications as a Palestinian. They have money and can still apply for a tourist visa. I can't. They can still visit their home in Syria. They show no compassion. Because my family does not have money, I need to work long hours besides studying. I am worried about my exams, as I am working 48 hours per week at the moment. I also need to finish my exams in two weeks. I have no time to study, and when I'm free I can't focus on studying. I am afraid to ask for more days off at work, because my boss already fired many people.

Source: Interview Nimerah

Two factors influencing the lack of socialization in the class of Nimerah, namely first the feeling that her fellow classmates don't understand her. Second, she has to work so hard besides studying that she does not have extra time to socialize at all. Especially the second factor has been identified by multiple students. Areeb explains how working hard influences socializing at university for him:

It appears that when Syrian students are enrolled in a Turkish university they want to work hard to get their diploma's. This is their first priority. Socializing comes in the second place. If students have a job besides their studies, the second place of socializing is even further pushed down.

9.3 Conclusions

The social network of students and families with children who study does not appear to have much influence on the finding of a school or university. Schools advertise well, on streets and through the internet, which makes connections superfluous when searching for a school.

In the application procedure for a school, this happens to be different. Documentation on previous education in Syrian needs to be provided. Furthermore, it is obligatory for university students to take an English and Turkish language proficiency test. To prepare for university, and to assist with the application for university, there is a formal network of two NGO's, SPI and SEC. Both can assist in the process of application. SPI even provides sponsorships for students. Combining this network with a pro-active attitude, like Nimerah showed when searching for a scholarship opportunity, appears to provide benefits.

A big difference is found between meeting people at school and university. The atmosphere in a university is of course far different from a primary school. This especially becomes clear when looking at the ways of socializing. In primary- and secondary schools, children appear to make many friends. Syrian schools are encouraging this, by creating a relaxed environment, in which children can feel relaxed. This pays off.

On University level, it appears to be more difficult for Syrians to make friends. Many Syrians have a predominant focus of on studying or working, as they see studying as a great opportunity. Therefore, Syrians sometimes feel misunderstood by their Turkish classmates. This results in less bonding with classmates. An interesting factor is that during the language courses, new contacts are made. During these pre-university courses, people meet each other in a relaxed setting and get more interested in Turkish society in general by learning the

language. All people struggle together, and many people made new friends during these classes.

Lastly, sometimes it helps to be lucky. This was the case for Areeb who by chance ran into the developer of the IELTS exams, during the time he needed to take this exam himself. This meeting ensured he passed the test according to himself. Therefore it had a big influence on his future.

SPI highlights the importance of encouragement of Syrians to start studying after arriving in Istanbul. Syrians logically think about their basic necessities like a house and income first. Many Syrians have indicated a wish to proceed studying, but cannot because they need to finance their stay by working. Education feels supplementary, but is not less important with an eye on the future. Encouragement and financial support makes, according to SPI, a world of difference.

10. Getting injured, and then?

This chapter will elaborate on the ways in which social network are used to find and receive treatment at a hospital or by a doctor. There are 3 options available to Syrians regarding healthcare.

1. When registered, the temporary protection regulation allows for free admission into public hospitals. However, it appears that these hospitals are not well equipped and can only treat basic injuries.
2. There are private hospitals as well, but people need to pay for the treatment themselves which is quite expensive. Especially regarding the fact that most respondents do not have a health insurance.
3. A last option is going to a Syrian hospital. There are 2 Syrian hospitals in Istanbul. The Syrian Nour organization is one of them.

10.1 Finding a hospital

The first thing important when needing medical treatment, is knowing where to find it. The social network of a refugee does not play a big role in finding a hospital. Figure 10.1 provides an overview of whether Syrians in Istanbul can find healthcare if they need it. This graph is based on 14 respondents. Further information about the respondents is provided in appendix I.
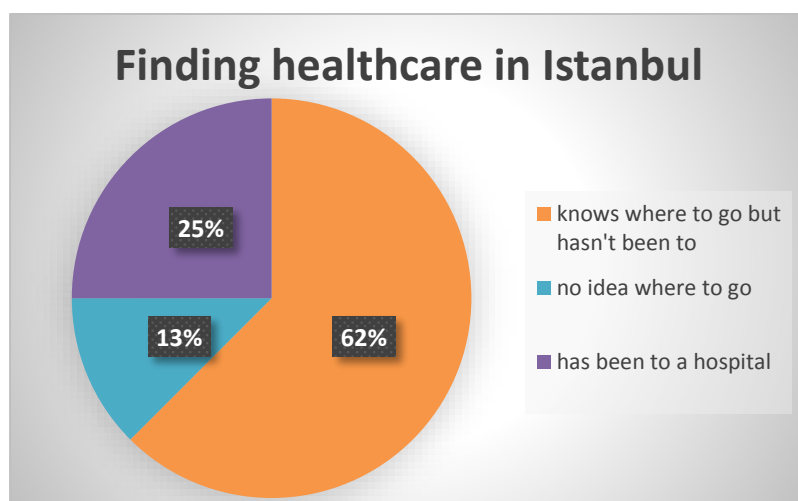
FIGURE 10.1: WHETHER SYRIANS ARE ABLE TO FIND HEALTHCARE IN ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

In this graph it becomes clear that 14 out of 16 respondents knows where to go in case of a health problem (consisting of 'knows where to go' and 'has been to a hospital'). 2 people have indicated to have no idea where to go. Of the Syrians who do know where to go, everybody indicates that they have seen the hospital in their neighbourhood, while walking around. This makes sense, as the public hospitals are available to everybody and thus need to be clearly indicated. The private hospitals however need to promote themselves.

The Syrian Nour hospital is well known amongst Syrians. Everybody in the neighbourhood of Fatih has heard of this place. There is a lot of mount to mouth advertising for their treatments. They help between 100 and 200 people per day, coming from all areas of Istanbul. As they have around 17 specialists, they are able to provide all sorts of treatment. The second Syrian

hospital just started off and is relatively small compared to the Syrian Nour hospital. Only one respondent mentioned having heard of this hospital.

Nobody indicated to know of an illegal hospital or doctors which informally drop by peoples house. All respondents in this research thus used a formal network to gain access to healthcare.

10.2 Receiving treatment

Whereas most people can find a hospital, receiving treatment appears to be more difficult. Networking does appear to pay off if somebody is in need of medical treatment. Especially taking into account that many Syrians are not officially registered and therefore have no official right to healthcare. On top of this, the majority of the Syrians has no health insurance.
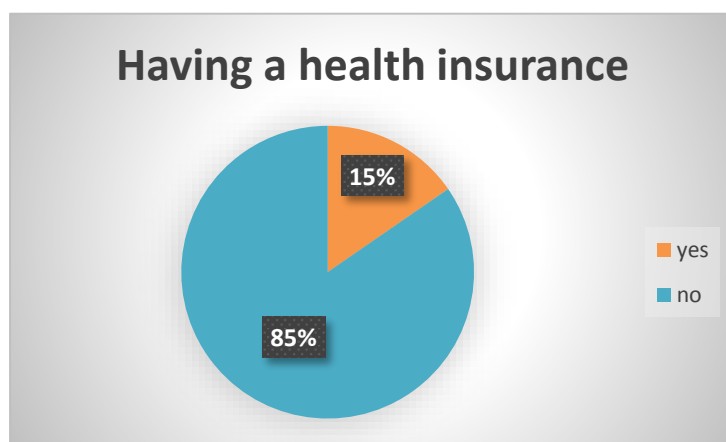
GRAPH 10.2: SYRIANS HAVING A HEALTH INSURANCE IN ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

In graph 10.2 is depicted how many respondents have a health insurance. 85%, meaning 11 out of 13 respondents, (excluding the organizations), indicated not to have a health insurance. Of the 7 employers talked to in this study, only one arranged health insurance for his Syrian employees. This shows that in case of big injury, only two respondents are able to cover the costs when using regular healthcare.

Whereas public hospitals should provide treatment for free, this is not how it works out in practice. The following story by the Christian organization illustrates this:

We went to the hospital (a public hospital) with a refugee who needed to give birth. After 5 days the mother needed to come back to do a blood test. She was sent to a second hospital. In this hospital they did not know who she was. She went back to the first hospital where she gave birth. They recognized her, but she could not do the blood test there as she was forwarded to the second hospital. We went back and forth between these hospitals for 4 times. Then the second hospital closed. We went to a private hospital and paid for the blood test ourselves (127 TL, 42 Euro). It appeared later that the public hospitals did not know how to get the government funding for refugees. Therefore they denied her treatment.

Source: Christian organization

This story illustrates two things. First of all it is an example of how NGO's support refugee medical treatment. Second, it illustrates that the Syrian Nour hospital fulfils a pressing need, by providing cheap treatment. Going to a private hospital is usually expensive. The Syrian Nour Organization is the only exception to this rule. In their hospital, treatment prices vary from 5 to 10 dollar per treatment. If people cannot afford this, the fee is covered by the hospital.

There are two NGO's focussing on Syrians, who provide medical support in case their members need it. These are Small Projects Istanbul and the Christian organization. The focus of both organizations is on something different than healthcare. As both SPI and the Christian organization do not focus explicitly on the provision of healthcare, it is by exception that they help people organizing these issues. Therefore, a person needs to be well known within the organization to be able to use this support. This means that networking within a support network of an NGO can yield benefits.

Lastly there are also other creative solutions to the need of healthcare. Jamila has been to a private hospital three times. She explains how she arranged this:

When I needed to go to the hospital I notified my boyfriend. He has his own company and has a heal insurance for his employees. I pretended to be one of his employees, and therefore got treatment paid by the company.

Source: Interview Jamilla

Jamilla's story illustrates how knowing the right person and having enough credits with this person can result in free healthcare. Jamilla was obviously lucky with her boyfriend owning his own company. However, combined with his willingness to bend the rules a little, she got her medial needs arranged.

10.3 Conclusions

Social networks do not have a role in finding a hospital. However knowing where a hospital is does not equal receiving treatment. In trying to receive treatment, being part of the formal network of NGO's can assist.

The first and most important organization in this field is the Syrian Nour hospital. It facilitates healthcare for Syrians exclusively. The prices of their treatments are cheap. As being dependant on public or private Turkish hospitals does not work for most Syrians there are two NGO's assisting their members by providing financial support for medical treatment. Being actively involved in such a network can provide benefits. As the main aims of these

NGO's are not related to healthcare, they only provide this service to well-known actors within their network.

11. Picturing the future

In this chapter will be discussed how social networks play a role in the potential next movements of a Syrian refugee. The future of refugees, and Syrians in particular, is usually very unclear. Still, people keep hoping and creating aspirations for the future. Figure 11.1 depicts the future aspirations of Syrian refugees in Istanbul. The red colour indicates aspirations which are influenced by the social network. The aspiration 'Staying in Istanbul and build up a life here' is both orange and red, because reasons for staying in Istanbul are both network related and non-network related.

Aspirations for the future

Aspiration	Amount
NO PLANS	3
GOING BACK TO SYRIA AS SOON AS IT IS SAFE	2
UN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM	4
GO TRAVELING	1
STAYING IN ISTANBUL AND BUILD UP LIFE HERE	15
GOING TO EUROPE BECAUSE OF STUDIES OR WORK OPPORTUNITIES	2
GOING TO EUROPE BECAUSE I HAVE FRIENDS/FAMILY THERE	6
JOIN FAMILY IN OTHER CITY IN TURKEY	1

Amount of people mentioning this aspiration

FIGURE 11.1: FUTURE ASPIRATIONS OF SYRIANS IN ISTANBUL - SOURCE: AUTHOR

What becomes clear from this graph is first of all that 15 people out of 34, so 44% of all respondents, intend to stay in Istanbul and build up their life here. 3 people have no plans for the future and live day-by-day. 13 people, or 38% of all respondents (consisting of 'going back to Syria', 'UN-resettlement', 'traveling', 'going to Europe' and 'join family in a different city in turkey') plan on moving to a different location. Of the 13 people with the aim of moving, 9 wish to move to directions where friends and family are residing. The reasons for Syrians to stay in Istanbul are very diverse. It are combinations of finishing studies, building up a company to having found a relationship and friends in Istanbul. 2 respondents have indicate the wish to return to Syria. In addition to this 8 respondents have indicated the wish to help rebuild the country after the war or visit family back in Syria once the war is over. However these 8 people want to live in Istanbul and only go back to Syria for a visit.

Baber is one of the people with a wish to go to Europe. He hopes to finish his studies there. He explains his strategy to get to Europe:

I would like to go to Europe, maybe to Sweden or Germany. I have many friends living there. I would like finish my master there. This is currently not possible in Turkey because I need the money I work for. I have two ways in which I could get to Europe. The first is by buying a fake passport. The other option is to marry a European girl. I currently date a divorced mother with 2 children who likes to marry again. During summer holidays she plans to visit me in Istanbul.

Source: Interview Baber

Baber's story illustrates different strategies to go to Europe.

11.1. Conclusions

It appears that for many Syrians, Syria holds no future anymore. Half of the respondents is aiming to build up their life in Istanbul, even after the war has ended. 8 people have the aspiration to move to Europe. Of all people with the ambition to move, half does so because of friends or family abroad. Just as with the initial reasons for leaving Syria, both macro-level factors as economic and political reasons, as well as meso-level factors like friends and family provide reason to move.

Discussion

The networking perspective to explain integration

This research has studied the ways in which refugees use their social network to integrate in Istanbul. It is argued that the networking perspective is a suitable and interesting tool to analyse initial integration in Istanbul. Especially because on arrival refugees are mainly dependant on their social network.

Besides looking at the types of relationships within a network, like Granovetter does with his 'strength of weak ties' hypothesis and besides looking at the social capitals which are created, like Bourdieu does, the networking approach as used in this study adds a dimension of analysis, by looking at the strategies of networking Syrians use to build up their life in Istanbul.

In this research, three stages of refugee movement were studied, namely: 1. Choice of destination, 2. Syrian integration in Istanbul, 3. Aspirations for the future. Taking a networking approach has proved to create interesting insights in each of these fields.

Choice of destination

Faist (2000) and Collyer (2007) identified macro-level factors, as the political, economic and legal context of a country and meso-level factors, being social relations as factors influencing mobility, to explain migrant mobility. The data gathered in this research confirms this thesis. Both in the trip to Istanbul, as well as the aspirations for future movement, political, economic, legal and social network determine and creates pathways. Furthermore, trajectories are never fixed, just like the future aspirations for moving, they are influenced by contacts and experiences over time.

Regarding the information provision by refugees in Istanbul, it is argued by Hiller and Franz, (2004), Dekker and Engbersen (2014) and Haythornthwaite (2002) that internet has transformed the ways in which information can be provided and spread. This transformation is reflected in the ways of communication between Syrians in Istanbul and their personal network. Internet is the major facilitator of contact between Syrians in Istanbul and abroad. Furthermore, more personal communication is facilitated though internet based media as Skype and Viber.

Syrian integration in Istanbul

The main focus of this research was on the influence of networking on integration. It appears that having an active networking approach as a Syrian in Istanbul, can definitely assist in creating capitals.

The first thing refugees do on upon arrival is contact their social network for job or housing opportunities. This is the way they are used to, as it is the same way as organizing their life in Syria. People without a network have a disadvantage in finding a house. However, for finding a job, education and a hospital having a network is less relevant. Once the initial house or job

is found, networking becomes a way to climb up the social ladder. New job and housing opportunities arise through meetings with colleagues and neighbours. In the fields of education and healthcare, it appears that being linked to an NGO network can ease the road of actual enrolment in a university or admission into a hospital.

In the initial phase of arrival, when Syrians are not yet accustomed to the Turkish society, they have a vulnerable position. The social network is their only means to survival. As the number of Syrians arriving in Istanbul keeps increasing, refugees became big business. This results in a thin line between helping each other out and exploitation. The advantage of being still relatively disconnected, is the flexibility. Syrians in Istanbul are endlessly flexible in finding an initial house and job and changing to a second or third house or job. When a relationship in a network yields only negative social capitals, there is nothing stopping them from taking on another job. The longer Syrians live in Istanbul, the more they start realizing this.

Regarding information provision, Dekker and Engbersen (2014) and Haythornthwaite (2002) argued that internet has transformed migration flows, by facilitating by the possibility to create a network of weak and latent ties. This appears to correspond to the findings of this research, as Syrians indicate to participate in meeting organized through Facebook. When looking at the strategies Syrians use to motivate themselves in their search for a job, the internet community 'Dubarah' popped up. This online network motivates and activates Syrians all over the world. This network goes one step further than the transformations the earlier mentioned scholars suggest, by besides creating a network of weak and latent ties, also stimulating Syrians to actively support each other online, without knowing each other in person. As motivation appears to be one of the most common struggles of Syrian refugees, the support provided through this website can significantly influence the motivation to stay in Istanbul and make a living there.

By gathering information about the city and its opportunities through their newly made connections, Syrians get one step closer to finding a satisfactory job, house or education which will in turn lead to integration. Acquiring information on housing, employment, education and healthcare requires a networking attitude. This is an attitude which most Syrians possess, but sometimes are unable to access due to their personal history of war. NGO's, but also online networks like Dubarah have great potential in addressing this need.

Aspirations for the future
As Schapendonk (2012) noted, the aspirations for the future are constant on the move. It appears that aspirations are partly determined by social contacts, but for the other part determined by macro-factors as economic or political opportunities in other countries.

Upper findings illustrate not only that having an active networking approach works out well in the case of Syrians building up their life in Istanbul, but also that from an analytical perspective the networking approach proves to come up with credible explanations for initial

integration of Syrians in Istanbul. Therefore, a networking approach forms a welcome and necessary addition to the both the strength of weak ties thesis and social capital theory in analysing integration.

Policy implications

The establishment of the temporary protection law by the Turkish government is a step further to a long term solution for dealing with Syrian refugees, compared to the establishment of refugee camps. However, this transition is far from ready. Parts within the temporary protection status on social protection and access to labour markets are not properly developed. Furthermore, housing is a topic not discussed in the temporary protection regulation. Also, people have expressed their fear to register, as nobody can explain them what they sign up for and what their exact rights will be. Whereas the regulation is established as a response to the Syrian refugee crises, a long term solution needs to include policies addressing refugee integration in the housing – and employment market, as well as access to public services. This, especially as a large part of the Syrian population is expected to stay in Turkey.

Whereas the integration indicators as housing and employment can be separately addressed by further development of the temporary protection regulation, the promotion of social networks in integration is not a policy issue. Social networks are not a topic which can be promoted in governmental or city policies. Stimulating people to actively engage in searching a house, a job, an education and healthcare can only happen on a more personal level. NGO's and the online network Dubarah can play a role in this regard.

Whereas the decision making of people remains hard to influence, the government can play a role in providing accurate information regarding migration options for people in Turkey and specifically Istanbul. The information which is currently available to Syrian refugees are either policy documents on the legal status of refugees, or evaluation documents of the situation in the refugee camps at the border of Turkey. The information refugees gather about the labour market and housing market of Istanbul is entirely dependent on their social network. Both the Turkish government and the NGO's active in this field could contribute to a validated information point where refugees can turn to during their stay in Istanbul.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

During this research, several limitations have come to mind. A first issue, is the limited scale of this research. In this research is shown how the networking approach can contribute to explaining patterns of migration and integration in the city of Istanbul. In the restricted time scope of this research, namely 3 months, I gathered 27 respondents to which I talked to for on average 8 hours per person. By working in a research group, we increased the amount of respondents. As can be seen in Appendix A, a bit over 25% of the respondents are added to this group by interviews by group members. However, it is important to realize that the scale of this research is limited. By taking more time and using more and different entry points in

the Syrian networks in Istanbul a bigger target group can be reached. This type of research could test the influence of networking on integration of Syrians in Istanbul on a larger scale.

A second issue is the structure of this research. This research had as its aim to explore the networking strategies people use to integrate in Istanbul. An ethnographic way of conducting research suited this aim best. However, it would also be interesting to gather data about Syrian refugees in Istanbul in a more structured way. A qualitative study on this topic can identify the bigger patterns of migrations of Syrians within the city of Istanbul.

Lastly, conducting this research in different localities, could provide a more general insight in how refugees build up their life in a city. The focus of this research and this research group was on different topics of integration in one city, namely Istanbul. By doing so, we generated an in depth insight in the Syrian refugee experience in this city. Doing this in multiple cities in Turkey or choosing multiple cities where Syrian refugees reside, could provide a broader perspective on Syrian integration in the city context.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to answer the question how Syrian refugees build integrate in Istanbul upon arrival and what role social networks play in this process. It is argued that besides social networks, the ability of Syrian refugees to mobilize this network influences the integration process immensely.

The choice of leaving Syria is not related to social networks, as the main reason for leaving Syria is the war, which has been entering its 5th year now. Istanbul was not always the first destination. Syrians have lived in countries like Lebanon, Libya and Egypt before. Decisions on a destination are hugely influenced by the information provided through the social network of a refugee. This information does not always appear to be correct.

Syrian integration in Istanbul, can be facilitated through integration on the housing and employment market, as well as having access to education and healthcare. In this thesis, a temporal picture of the current social network of Syrian refugees is sketched to explain this integration. This network consists of both transnational relations as well as relations in Istanbul. Internet greatly transformed communication, by facilitating face-to-face communication through Skype between people in Syria and Istanbul. The decision to search for new friends in Istanbul is a personal one. Some people have explicit preferences for meeting people within their ethnic network, whereas others try to avoid other Syrians. Conclusions for each of the indicators of integration are provided next.

The first thing Syrians do upon arrival in Istanbul is asking around in their social network for a place to stay and a job. The most common way to find a house in Istanbul is through the social network, just as is the case in Syria. However, with the amount of Syrians entering Istanbul increasing, housing became big business. There is a thin line between help and exploitation, so Syrians need to be critical to the information on pricing and location they collect. People without a network upon arrival have a disadvantage in finding a place to stay. However, by looking in new places as the internet or real estate agents this disadvantage can be compensated for. Syrians perceive difficulties in creating relationships within the house and neighbourhood. The most mentioned reasons for this are the history of war, the difficulties in learning the Turkish language and the culture of protectiveness over women. The society in Syria was very segregated, this still reflects in the way how Syrians meet each other in Istanbul.

Arranging a job is also part of the priorities of Syrians arriving in Istanbul. Again, the most common way to find a first job is through the social network. However, a dilemma is created as asking Syrians for a job usually results in low end jobs. Making a CV and actively asking around for opportunities appears to yield better results. Having lost the opportunism and motivation appears to impede finding a job. The website Dubarah tries to respond to this need, and provides motivational messages, visa information and job support to Syrians all over the world. This online network is an example of an ongoing internet communication

transformation, as it connects previously unknown Syrians all over the world in order to support each other. Within companies, colleague and boss relationships are usually good, which results in friendships and job advise within a company. Knowing the right people in a company and being able to contact them at the right moment can create job opportunities. Unfortunately there are also cases of exploitation and discrimination on the work floor. Having an exploitative relationship with a boss in a company can result in leaving the job.

Entrepreneurs an example of networkers in heart and soul. They have created their own network of Syrian partners, producers and customers in Istanbul. This group of Syrians illustrates that networking really works!

The last pillar of integration in Istanbul consists of gaining access to the public services of education and healthcare. Two aspects are relevant here. First, finding the public service, and second, accessing the actual service. Finding schools and hospitals does not appear to be a problem. Both are well indicated throughout the city, and no social network is involved in finding the locations. This makes sense, as they are supposed to be public services. Accessing the service is less straightforward. When applying for a school or hospital treatment, being part of an NGO network can be beneficial. The NGO's 'Small projects Istanbul' and the 'Syrian Education Commission' assist in applying for a school or university.

There are 36 Syrian primary- and high schools in Istanbul. These schools aim to create a feeling of home and safety in their classes. This pays off, as the children in school appear to get along and play. It appears to be more difficult for Syrians to make friends in university. Usually, Syrians have, compared to their Turkish classmates, a more serious focus on the study and a job. They often feel misunderstood by their Turkish classmates. In Turkish language classes this dynamic proves to be different, as many Syrians do meet friends here.

Receiving treatment at a government hospital appears to be difficult. Private hospitals are usually expensive, with the exception of the Syrian Nour hospital. Within the NGO communities of Small projects Istanbul and the Christian organization, possibilities for support exist. However, they only do this with people who are actively engaged in the organizations.

The aspirations for the future of Syrians lies for half of the Syrians in Istanbul. They are starting their life again in Turkey. From the people who has the aspiration to move, half has this aspiration because of friends or family members living abroad and is thus influenced by their social network. Only 8 out of 34 respondents has the wish to go to Europe.

With upper conclusions an elaboration on the dynamics of integration by Syrians upon arrival in Istanbul is provided. These integration dynamics upon arrival are explained by taking a networking perspective. This means taking the perspective of a refugee and looking at the networking strategies he/she uses to start up their life. Taking such a perspective provides a welcome and necessary framework to explain integration .

The refugees who participated in this study, have shown an incredible resilience. The cases of people who started actively taking their lives in their own hands, appeared to be successful in finding a house and job or education. Syrians are directly upon arrival completely dependent on their social network. The longer Syrians live in Istanbul, the more they get used to the city. They start finding new ways of collecting information, and start creating their own opportunities by actively networking. Looking at the strategies Syrians use to integrate in Istanbul, it became clear how they start to build up their life again after having fled the war in Syria. A networking approach proves to be a successful tool to see how integration of Syrians in Istanbul happens.

To conclude, Aftaab wrote a message to say goodbye to all the friends he met in Istanbul. This story illustrates how migration pathways constantly change, under the influence of the people we meet. By meeting the people Aftaab met, his translating business became much more successful than expected, which is why he stayed in Istanbul. Now, it is for him time to move on.

Saying goodbye

Dear everybody I got to know in Istanbul. Excuse me (I know you are good enough people to do it), if I didn't tell you before. I am about to leave the city, now that the wind I've long waited for has come to take me to the promised land in the North. I thank the good spirits for giving me this chance to live here with you for a while. The Istanbul chapter of my personal story was an amazing and enriching experience. I will of course keep in touch with you (thank you technology) and with the city. I wish the best of luck to all of us, in the journey called life – Best spells be upon you -

Sources

Ackapar S. (2009) Re-Thinking Migrants' Networks and Social Capital: A Case Study of Iranians in Turkey. *International Migration.* pp. 161-196.

AFAD (2013) Syrian refugees in Turkey. Published by: Republic of Turkey prime minister – Disaster and Emergency management Presidency. Istanbul.

Akagündüz U. (2014) İstanbul fears 'Arabization' with Syrian refugee influx. Article on September 27th in Today's Zaman. Istanbul.

Akgündüza A. (1998). Migration to and from Turkey, 1783-1960: types, numbers and ethno-religious dimensions. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 24, pp. 97-120.

Ager A., Stang, A. (2010) Refugee Integration: Emerging Trends and Remaining Agendas. *Journal of refugee studies.* Vol. 23, pp. 589-607.

Amnesty International (2014) Struggling to survive: Refugees from Syria in Turkey. Amnesty International, London

Aslan M., Pérouse J. (2003) Istanbul: Le comptoir, le hub, le sas et l'impasse. *Revue Europeenne des Migrations Internationales.* Vol.19, pp.173-204

Atger A., Carrera S. (2011) Integration as a two-way process in the EU? - Assessing the relationship between the European integration fund and the common basic principles on integration. Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS). Brussels.

Bernard H. (2006) Research methods in anthropology : qualitative and quantitative approaches (4th edition). Rowman& Littlefield: AltaMiraPress.

Borgatti S., Mehra A., Brass D., Labianca G. (2009) Network analysis in the social sciences. *Science.* Vol. 323, pp. 892-895.

Bourdieu P. (1986) The forms of capital. Published in *J. Richardson (Ed.) Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York, pp. 241-258.

Brass D., Labianca G. (2006) Exploring the social ledger: Negative relationships and negative asymmetry in social networks in organizations. *The academy of management review.* Vol 31, pp. 596-614.

Castells S., Korac M., Vasta E., Vertovec S. (2002) Integration – mapping the field. Centre for Migration and policy Research and Refugee Studies Centre. University of Oxford. Oxford.

CIA (2015) The world factbook – major urban areas: population. Accessed online on: 22-07-2015. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2219.html

Coleman J. (1988) Social capital in the creation of human capital. *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94. Pp. 95-120.

Collyer M. (2006) When Do Social Networks Fail to Explain Migration? Accounting for the Movement of Algerian Asylum-Seekers to the UK*. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.* Vol. 31, pp. 699-718.

Collyer M. (2007) In-Between Places: Trans-Saharan Transit Migrants in Morocco and the Fragmented Journey to Europe. Journal compilation - Editorial Board of *Antipode.* Pp. 668-690.

Danis A. (2006) "Integration in limbo" Iraqi, Afghan, Maghrebi and Iranian Migrants in Istanbul. Migration research program at KoçUniversty. Istanbul.

Dekker R., Engbersen G. (2014) How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration. *Global Networks*. Vol. 14, pp. 401–418.

Dorai M. (2003) Palestinian integration from Lebanon to Northern Europe: Refugees, Networks and transnational practices. *Refuge*. Vol. 21, pp. 23-31.

Erdogan, M. (2014) Syrians in Turkey, social acceptance and integration research. HUGO, Ankara.

European Commission (2014). Humanitarian aid and civil protection – Syria. [Website consulted on:17-12-2014] http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/where/middle-east-north-africa/syria

Faist T. (2000) The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gilbert A., Koser K. (2006) Coming to the UK: What do Asylum Seekers Know About the UK before Arrival? *Journal of Ethnic and migration studies.* Vol. 32, pp. 1209-1225.

Granovetter M. (1973) The strength of weak ties. *American journal of sociology.* Volume 78, pp. 1360-1380.

Gross J., Lindquist B. (1995) Conceptualizing International Labour Migration: A Structurationist Perspective. *International Migration Review*. Vol. 29, pp. 329.

Haythornthwaite C. (2011) Strong, Weak, and Latent Ties and the Impact of New Media. *The Information Society: An International Journal.* Vol. 18, pp. 385-401.

Heaney, C. A., & Israel, B. A. (2008). Social networks and social support. Published in: *Health behaviour and health education: Theory, research, and practice*. 4th edition, pp. 189-210.

Herman E. (2006) Migration as a Family Business: The Role of Personal Networks in the Mobility Phase of Migration. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Oxford.

Hiller H., Franz T. (2004) New ties, old ties and lost ties: the use of internet in diaspora. *New Media and Society*. Vol. 6, pp. 731-752.

Holliday J. (2011) The struggle for Syria in 2011 – An operational and regional analysis. *Middle-East security report 2.* Institute for study of war, Washington.

Içduygu A. (2000) The Politics of International Migratory Regimes: Transit Migration Flows in Turkey*. International Social Science Journal*, Vol., pp. 357–367

Içduygu, A. (2015) Syrian refugees in Turkey. The long road ahead. Published by: the Transatlantic Council on Migration – a project of the migration policy institute. Washington.

Jacobsen K. (2006) Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Urban Areas: A Livelihoods Perspective. Published by: Oxford University press. Oxford.

Kolorukik S., Argul H. (2009) Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey: Sociological Aspects of an International Migration Movement. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*. Vol. 29, pp. 69-82

Korac, M. (2001) 'Cross-ethnic networks, self-reception system, and functional integration of refugees from the Former Yugoslavia in Rome'. *Journal of International Migration and Integration.* Vol. 2, pp. 1–27.

Lingstad M. (2015). Refuge beyond safety. A Study on Syrian Refugees in Jordan Preparing for Irregular Onwards Travel to Europe. Malmo University – faculty of culture and society. Sweden.

Losi N., Strang A. (2008) Local communities and refugees, fostering social integration. Project Report. Institute for International Health and Development. Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*. Vol. 50, pp. 370-96.

Muanamoha R., Maharaj B., Preston-Whyte E. (2010) Social networks and undocumented Mozambican migration to South Africa. *Geoforum.* Vol. 41. Pp. 855-896.

Ozden S.(2013) Syrian refugees in Turkey. Published by: European University Institute Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies Migration Policy Centre (MPC).

Pathirage J., Collyer M. (2011) Capitalizing social networks: Sri-Lankan migration to Italy. *Ethnography*. Vol.12, pp. 315–333

Poros, M. (2001) The role of migrant networks in linking local labor markets: The case of Asian Indian migration to New York and London. *Global Networks*. Vol. 1, pp. 243-59

Portes A. (1998) Social capital: its origins and applications in modern sociology. *Annual reviews sociology*. Vol. 24, pp. 1-24.

Putnam R. (2000) Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of the American community. Simon & Schuster. New York

Republic of Turkey (2015). Basic information for they asylum-seekers in Turkey. Published by the Ministry of internal affairs, General doctorate of Security. Accessed online on: 08-05-2015. http://www.unhcr.org.tr/uploads/root/9_-basic_information_for_the_asylum-seekers_in_turkey_%28by_turkish_ministry_of_interior%29.pdf

Ryan L., Sales R., Tilki M., Siara B. (2008) Social Networks, Social Support and Social Capital: The Experiences of Recent Polish Migrants in London. *Sociology*. Vol. 42, pp. 672–690.

Samers M. (2009) Migration – Key ideas in geography. Roudledge and Taylor and Francis. London and New York.

Schapendonk, J. (2009). Moving and mediating: a mobile view on sub-Saharan African migration towards Europe. *Communication Technologies in Latin America and Africa: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*, pp. 293-318.

Schapendonk J. (2012) Turbulent Trajectories: African Migrants on Their Way to the European Union. *Societies*. Vol.2, pp. 27-41.

Schapendonk J. (2014) What if networks move? Dynamic social networking in the context of African migration to Europe. *Population, space and place.* Published online in: Wiley Online Library.

Simich L., Beiser L., Mawani F. (2003) Social support and the significance of shared experience in refugee migration and resettlement. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*. Vol, 25, pp. 872–891.

Smorenburg (2015) Labour market situation and occupational mobility among Syrian refugees in Istanbul. Master theisis. University of Utrecht, Utrecht.

Sommers M. (2001) Young, male and pentecostal. Urbanrefugees in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *Journal of Refugee studies.* Vol. 14. Pp. 347-370.

Sparrowe R., Liden R., Wayne S., Kraimer M. (2001) Social networks and the performance of individuals and groups. *The academy of management Journal*. Vol. 44, pp. 316-325.

Suter B. (2012) Social Networks in Transit: Experiences of Nigerian Migrants in Istanbul. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*. Vol. 10, pp. 204-222

Taylor S. (1991) Asymmetrical effects of positive and negative events: The mobilization-minimization hypothesis. *Psychological bulletin.* Vol. 110, pp. 67-85.

Turkish statistical institution (2015) Labour force statistics 2015. Accessed online on 22-07-2015. http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=18639

UNHCR (2015I) Syria regional refugee response. Document retrieved online on: 28-06-2015. http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php

UNHCR (2015II) Syria regional refugee response – Turkey. Document retrieved online on: 28-06-2015. http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224

UNHCR (2015III) Syrian refugees in Turkey – Frequently asked questions. Document retrieved online on: 08-05-2015. http://www.unhcr.org.tr/uploads/root/frequently_asked_questions.pdf

UNHCR (2015IV) Regional refugee and resilience plan 2015-2016 – Turkey. Accessed online on: 21-07-2015. http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/the-3rp/turkey/

United Nations (1951) Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees. Protocol retrieved online: 6-2-2015. http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html

United Nations (2014) Syria regional response plan – Turkey. Published by: United Nations.

Uzzi B. (1997) Social structure and competition in inter-firm networks: The paradox of embeddedness. *Administrative science quarterly.* Vol. 42, pp. 35-67.

Van der Sar (2015) In search of a home. Master thesis. University of Utrecht, Utrecht.

Vertovec S. (2002) Trends and impacts of transnational migration. Working paper – Center on Migration, Policy and Society. Oxford.

Worldbank (2015) Data by country – Syria. Population – Total. Website consulted on 02-06-2015. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL/countries/SY?display=graph

Appendix I

I.I My personal interviews

NO.	Pseudonym	M/F	Age	Comming from	In Istanbul since	House location	Occupation
1	Aatif	M	29	Homs	aug-13	Esenler	textile worker
2	Azmina	F	27	Homs	aug-14	Esenler	teacher
3	Alman	M	26	Damascus	jan-14	Zeytinburnu	student
4	Abdul-Hakeem	M	25	Damascus	apr-14	Bomonti	translator - wikipedia
5	Talhah	M	27	Homs	nov-13	Avcilar	student, job in Mersin
6	Ghayda	F	16				Shop employers
7	Shaista	F	26	Damascus	sep-13	Sultan Ahmed	Intern civil engineering
8	Salah	M	26	Aleppo	mrt-15	Selimpasa	unemployed
9	Nadir	M	26	Aleppo	mrt-13	Laleli	starting entrepeneur
10	Nimerah	F	22	Yarmouk	jul-13	Capa	Student and coffee waitress
11	Baber	M	26	Aleppo	feb-14	Aksaray	Employee in pie store
12	Basimah	F	14	Idlib	mei-14	Yedikule	Shop sales
13	Aziza	F	30	Damascus	okt-13	Bahceevler	Ship broker
14	Kafeel	M	22	Homs	aug-13	Avcilar	student
15	Jamila	F	27	Damascus	sep-13	Bahcelievler	unemployed
16	Ilias	M	14		jun-14	Sultanciftligi	student at high school
17	Amaal	F		Damascus			
18	Hassan	M	21	Damascus	mrt-14	Avcilar	graphic designer
19	Areeb	M	28	Homs	nov-13	Cihangir	student, tourist sales
20	Aamil	M	28	Damascus	feb-14	Avcilar	entrepeneur

NO	Name of organizatation	Type of organization	Talked to who?
21	El-Zinki	School	14 teachers
22	Shamouna	School	School director + 1 teacher
23	Christian organization	NGO	Weekly meetings with all staff
24	Small Projects Istanbul	NGO	2 projects with founder
25	El Mena Hil	School	School director
26	Syrian Al Nur Organisation	Hosipital	Hospital director
27	Goc-Der	NGO	Director

I.II Interviews by group members – used in this research

Interviews by Tamara

NO.	Name	M/F	Age	Coming from	In Istanbul since	House location	Occupation
28	Adib	M	25	Damascus	okt-14	Esenler	pharmacist
29	Amilah	F	24	Damascus	okt-14	Kartal	workshop
30	Aftaab	M	29	Latakya	nov-13	Üskudar	translator

Interviews by Teun

NO.	Name	F/M	Age	Coming from	In Istanbul since	House location	Occupation
31	Anwar	M	24	Damascus	mei-13	Bayrampasa	Salesman
32	Fidyan	M	30	Damascus	okt-14	Kartal	workshop
33	Mansur	M	33	Homs	nov-13	Merter	real estate agent
34	Nawaz	M	25	Aleppo	dec-13	Kasimpasa	real estate agent

Interviews by Pedro

No.	Name	F/M	Age	Coming from	In Istanbul since	House location	Occupation
35	Abu Majid	M	58	Damascus	mei-13	Avcilar	Landlord
36	Mona	F	27	Damascus	apr-15	Fatih	Restaurant owner
37	Azado	M	28	Jordan	aug-12		Restaurant owner
38	Farid	M	45	Damascus	jan-12	Fatih	Coffee business entrepeneur
39	Jamal	M	36	Damascus	jun-12	Basaksehir	clothing entrepeneur
40	Ayman	M	32	Damasus	mei-11	Avcilar	entrepreneur
41	Mr. Bulus	M	43		okt-14	Avcilar	Restaurant owner

I.III Which respondents used in which chapters

Name	5. From Syria to Istanbul	6. Meeting people making friends	7. Networks for living	8. Networking for work	9. The learning network	10. Getting injured and then	11. Picturing the future
Aatif	x	x	X			X	X
Azmina	X	X	X	X		X	X
Alman	x	X	X	X	X	X	X
Abdul-Hakeem	x	X	X	X			X
Talhah	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ghayda				X	X		X
Shaista	X	X	X	X		X	X
Salah	X	X	X			X	X
Nadir		X		X			X
Nimerah	X	X	X		X	X	X
Baber		X	X	X	X	X	X
Basimah	X	X	X	X	X		X
Aziza	X	X	X	X		X	X
Kafeel	X	X	X		X	X	X
Jamila	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ilias			X		X		
Amaal			X		X	X	X
Hassan		X	X	X			X
Areeb	X				X		X
Aamil	X	X	X	X			X
Tamara							
Adib	X	X	X	X		x	X
Amilah	X	X	X	X			X
Aftaab		X	X				X
Teun							
Anwar	X	X		X			X
Fidyan		X	X	X			X
Mansur	X	X	X	X			X
Nawaz	X	X	X	X			X
Pedro							
Abu Majid	X	X	X	X	X		X
Mona				X			X
Azado	X			X			X
Fateen				X			X
Jamal				X			X
Ayman				X			X
Mr. Bulus				X			X

Organizations							109
El-Zinki					X		
Shamouna					X		
Christian organization						X	
Small Projects Istanbul					X	X	
El Mena Hil					X		
Syrian Nour Organisation						X	
Goc-Der							
Total	21	25	24	26	16	16	34