

knowing Seeking Being told Know?  
Rumors Misleading Difficult Policies  
Waiting Satellite cities ASAM Refugee  
Trust Asylum Story McKenzie Model  
Practices Context Safety Sources ELIS  
Forced migration Iran Iraq Oman  
Afghanistan Pakistan Somalia Flee  
Education Societies  
Waiting Information poverty Know?



# MSc Thesis Report

To know or not to know:

Information behavior of refugees coming to  
Turkey

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*"You who are so-called illegal aliens must know that no human being is 'illegal'. That is a contradiction in terms. Human beings can be beautiful or more beautiful, they can be fat or skinny, they can be right or wrong, but illegal? How can a human being be illegal?"*

- Elie Wiesel, writer, holocaust survivor, Nobel Peace Prize winner -

## I Abstract

Based on 25 in-depth interviews with refugees, this thesis aims to analyze the information behavior of refugees before and upon arrival in Turkey. The data collection was performed in 4 different cities in Turkey for a period of two months. For the theoretical background, concepts of Literature and Information science were used, these included information sources, information needs, information poverty, information seeking and the model of McKenzie (2003) on information practices.

What can be learned from this study is that active engagement in information seeking does not account for all the information behavior of refugees. Refugees did also receive information through less directed practices. Information needs were low since they did not perceive themselves as being a refugee yet. Consequently, there was much missing information regarding asylum policies. The most used and trusted information source was social network and access to this also influenced their information behavior. Similar information seeking behaviors were found between groups of different nationality, gender and age. However, the religious Iranian Bahá'í community proved to have access to the strongest social ties and consequently more information, compared to refugees from Somalia, Afghanistan or those who had to enter Turkey through a smuggler.

Most refugees in this study can be characterized by being informationally poor. This information poverty includes both external factors such as barriers in accessing information as well as internal factors like showing self-protective behavior, selective attendance and avoidance of exposure of their problems. These contextual and personal disadvantages in access to information caused for many problems, such as financial problems and emotional distress, once in Turkey. Access to relevant information and sources could greatly empower the lives of refugees and is therefore important to address.

This research builds on existing theories as well as on the model of McKenzie (2003). An important addition to literature is the combination of Literature and Information Science with a refugee study. Moreover, this research gives interesting insight into information behavior of fleeing refugees, which can help to develop a better information provision policy for refugees in Turkey and beyond.

## Key terms

Refugees, asylum applicants, Turkey, Information behavior, Information poverty, information needs, information sources, ELIS, McKenzie model

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## IV List of Abbreviations & key terms

### Abbreviations

<b>ASAM</b> -	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
<b>SGDD</b> -	SİĞINMACILAR VE GÖÇMENLERLE DAYANIŞMA DERNEĞİ (Turkish name for ASAM)
<b>UNHCR</b> -	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>IOM</b> -	International Organization for Migration
<b>LIS</b> -	Library and Information science
<b>ELIS</b> -	Everyday Life Information Seeking
<b>LGBT</b> -	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
<b>UNITED</b> -	UNITED for Intercultural Action, European Network Against Nationalism, Racism, Fascism and in support of Migrants and Refugees

### Key terms

<b>Migration</b> -	The movement of a person or a group of persons across an international border or within a state, including economic migrants, displaced persons, movement of people for family reunification or refugees.*
<b>Immigration</b> -	A process where a non-national moves to a country for settlement.*
<b>Refugee</b> -	A refugee is a person who flees in the face of danger or a life-threatening situation, anyone who needs refuge from danger. Recognized refugees can be defined as those asylum-seekers that are awarded a refugee status.*
<b>Asylum seeker</b> -	An asylum seeker is someone who is seeking international protection as a refugee but is not yet formally recognized as one. This term usually applies to those who are waiting for the government or the UNHCR to decide on their claim on refugee status. An asylum applicant was a term specifically used for refugees in Turkey applying with UNHCR for resettlement to a third country.*

\* Sources: Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2011; Amnesty International, 2009; UNITED, 2013; UNHCR, 2011

## V Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank all the participating refugees of this study for their time and stories. I learned a lot from all of them and I will cherish these special moments I was able to experience. I wish all of you the best and I very much admire the strength and perseverance that you showed.

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## 1. Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to my thesis. I will start by explaining something about my background since this has led me to conducting this research and the epistemic stand I take.

Furthermore, the aim of my thesis is introduced and I will provide a chapter overview to show the structure of this report.

### 1.1 Personal interest into the topic

My whole life I have wanted to support other people. In definite need of support are refugees. My interest in refugee issues started many years ago. My father is director of UNITED, the European Network Against Racism and in support of Migrants and Refugees, and through his network he meets a large variety of people from all over the world. When I was still a little girl, I met a friend of his, who was a refugee who had fled from the Bosnian war. He was missing one arm and one leg, and now he was living with his family in the Netherlands. This really made an impression on me. Many years later, I joined a conference of United and I spoke to an African asylum seeker who was waiting on the judgment of his status in Germany. He was away from his family, could not leave the country, could not go back to his home country and could not travel in general. He was 'tolerated' to live in one city in Germany, but he was not recognized or respected as a human being in my eyes. His story also kept me thinking.

When joining the master Development and Rural Innovation (MDR), I was sure I wanted to study migration. At first, I became part of the excursion group for the course Cutting Edge. We organized an excursion to Malta to study the migration to the island. This was one of the first encounters for me of refugee issues at a larger scale. In Malta, many refugees are arriving by boat from Sub-Saharan Africa. During the excursion we spoke to many different parties and persons, and the complexity of the issues of refugees became visible to me. I was quite struck by how much still needs to be improved in this area, even in a European Union member state. One of the issues that came forward was the knowledge the refugees had about Europe, the asylum procedures and their rights, which all seemed to be very little. Many of the migrants in Malta had never even heard of Malta, but they were now 'stuck' on the island while living a very difficult life. I perceive migration in general as hugely complex phenomena. And in my eyes information is part of basic human rights. I find it interesting to see what role information plays in the life of refugees. I really want to study this field in order to make a small contribution in improvement of these issues.

Turkey had come to my attention due to the large influx of refugees from Syria caused by the civil war. I discovered that Turkey is in a unique position. Turkey is facing large influx of refugees from the neighboring countries and beyond, but the country does not accept refugees from outside of Council of Europe member states. For the large influx of Syrian refugees, a temporarily solution is created by the Turkish government in the form of refugee camps and temporary asylum. However, the other huge numbers of refugees already present in Turkey (from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan etcetera) are at the moment almost forgotten. Below I will explain in more detail about migration to Turkey.

## 1.2 Background: Situation of refugees in Turkey

### 1.2.1 History of refugees in Turkey

From the perspective of Europe, Turkey has long been seen as a country of emigration and as a country of origin of asylum seekers. From 1990 onwards, it has also been seen as a source and transit country for illegal immigrants (Kirisci, 2004). Turkey is situated on a major migration route leading from the south-east to the north-west (Kolukirik & Aygül, 2009). Less well known is that Turkey has already since long been a country of immigration and asylum. The first large influx of migrants into Turkey occurred during the Second World War, mostly from Greece or Bulgaria but also many Jewish and German intellectuals. Most came to seek temporary asylum. One of the largest waves of non-European refugees arrived from Iran after the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Iraqi refugees were the second largest non-European group to enter the country between 1988 and 1991. During the 1990's again a large number of refugees from Southeast Europe arrived in Turkey, of which many Bulgarians of Turkish ethnic origin. From the late 1980's onwards, these refugees were also increasingly originating from other developing nations such as Ghana, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The majority of whom intended to transit onwards to Europe or Northern America (Mannaert, 2003; Kirisci, 2004). The country can be seen as a crossroad between East and West, North and South (Kolukirik & Aygül, 2009; Kaya, 2008). Turkey is bordered by eight countries and has a land border of 2949 km and a sea border of 8333 km (UNHCR, 2013). This brings a great diversity of origin of migrants to the country. It is both a destination and transit country, visited by many people fleeing from insecurity and danger in their own countries (Kolukirik & Aygül, 2009; UNITED, 2013).

### 1.2.2 Current situation of refugees in Turkey

Since 2010, the rate at which new asylum seekers and refugees arrived in Turkey has again increased considerably, with a significant increase in Iranians, Iraqis and Somalis. Since the start of 2011, an increase of 60 per cent in new arrivals has been observed (UNHCR, 2013). Some of the migrants view

Turkey as a destination country since they have a Turkish ethnic origin or are coming for economic reasons, mainly originating from Balkan, Caucasian and central Asia and some from Europe (Kolukirik & Aygül, 2009). However, the majority of the migrants arriving in Turkey are trying to leave their country in order to escape poverty, conflict or oppression. Many migrants lose their lives while trying to reach safer land, due to sea or road incidents or poor living and transport conditions (UNITED, 2013). The rapidly increasing number of refugees and asylum applicants places additional pressure on existing structures (UNHCR, 2013).

*Table 1.1 Asylum seekers and recognized refugees by gender as of 30.04.2013 (UNHCR, 2013)*

	Asylum seekers		Recognized refugees		Total
	F	M	F	M	
<b>Afghanistan</b>	2330	3374	1657	1994	<b>9355</b>
<b>Iran</b>	1637	2349	1354	1822	<b>7162</b>
<b>Iraq</b>	1237	1716	4994	6203	<b>14150</b>
<b>Somalia</b>	177	236	881	876	<b>2170</b>
<b>Other</b>	684	948	512	683	<b>2827</b>

The 1951 Refugee Convention and the later amended 1967 protocol are key legal documents defining who is a refugee, their rights and the obligations of the reception state. Initially, this signed convention was limited to refugees from World War II. However, the 1967 protocol has expanded this. It removed geographical (Europe) and time limitations. The 1951 Convention only protects persons who meet the criteria for refugee status. According to this document, the term refugee can apply to persons who: 1) are outside their country of origin or outside the country of their former habitual residence; 2) are unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted; and 3) the persecution feared is based on at least one of five grounds: race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion (UNHCR, 2011; Amnesty International, 2009; Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2011; Rulac, 2012). Refugees are amongst the most vulnerable people in the world, and the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol help to protect them (UNHCR, 2011). Turkey was amongst the original signatories of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the legal status of refugees (Kirisci, 2004; Amnesty International, 2009). However, Turkey has a geographical reservation that restricts its obligations under the 1951 convention to people uprooted by events in Europe. This means that Turkey does not

process request from asylum seekers unless they are from Council of Europe member states (UNHCR, 2011; Kirisci, 2004; Amnesty International, 2009; ASAM 2013). Therefore, in Turkey, the UNHCR registers non-European asylum-seekers and determines their refugee status (UNHCR, 2013). Due to this geographical limitation, Turkey is currently for many refugees a transit country. Asylum seekers that do want to apply in Turkey and are from non-European countries, for example from Iraq or Somalia, should apply with UNHCR. They first have to wait in Turkey for acceptance of their status by UNHCR and then wait for another country to accept them. Once asylum seekers are registered, they are dispersed to one of 61 'satellite cities' in which they must remain until they have been recognized as refugee and are resettled in another country (Amnesty International, 2009; ASAM, 2013). This process can take many years. Refugees will need to prepare themselves for this, since during this period there is no support from the Turkish government. They can be expelled from the asylum procedure or be fined, imprisoned or deported when leaving these cities without permission. They are responsible for arranging and paying for their own accommodation and living costs. In these cities, they should obtain a residence permit for which they pay up to 300 Turkish lira fees per six months. These conditions are similar for recognized refugees waiting for the acceptance of resettlement to a third country (ASAM, 2013; PICUM, 2012). Wissink, Düvell and Eerdewijk (2013) found in their study that asylum applicants generally struggle with paying their fees. Consequently, the majority of refugees face economic hardship and social isolation and many are forced into illegality to overcome these economic and other difficulties (Wissink et al, 2013; Mannaert, 2003).

The EU is pressuring Turkey to lift the geographical limitation as part of the accession process of becoming a member of the EU (UNHCR, 2013; Mannaert, 2003; Kaya, 2008). This would imply that asylum seekers have to stay in Turkey due to the Dublin regulation. It is interesting to see how much or little refugees coming to Turkey know about Turkey, the current situations and how they prepare themselves for coming to Turkey. With ten thousands of people fleeing annually to Turkey, there are significant challenges and opportunities for the information provision and gathering. Refugees come across many organizations and actors in the migrant process (Kolukirik & Aygül, 2009). Multiple country-specific structural factors influence the lives of immigrants and refugees before and after arrival, including migration policies, economic and labor market issues, degree of assistance provided by government and agencies and public perceptions towards immigrants and refugees (Caidi et al., 2010). They encounter many problems among the way. It is necessary to ensure that migrants are not subjected to any inhuman treatment during or after their travel. Therefore they need the right information and access to sources. Immigrants often lack basic information as well as social, cultural and economic capital (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Nevertheless, without adequate information access,

immigrants are unable to make informed choices and decisions and their lives could be even more difficult.

### 1.3 Research in Turkey

Turkey has become a country of large-scale, continuous and complex immigration since the twenty-first century. It stands at centre of the most sensitive geo-strategically area. However, most of the studies on migration have focused on 'emigration from Turkey' or 'internal migration within Turkey'. Immigration to Turkey or refugees in Turkey has received relatively little attention and seems to be considered as a minor issue by Turkish people and scholars. Furthermore, studies are mainly descriptive and give often only technical and informative knowledge (Tolay, 2012). Part of this can be explained since many research was done for reports that have been published by international institutions such as IOM, UNHCR or policy-oriented institutes like CARIM. The field of migration studies in Turkey is still at an early stage. Recently, some researchers initially studying topics like Turkish diasporas (Kaya, 2002), Turkish labor migration (Akgündüz, 1998), legal rights of Turkish migrants in Europe (Cicekli, 1999) and Turkish migration to Australia (Icduygu, 1998), have started studying 'immigration to Turkey'. Some authors have published Turkish studies, such as Didem Danış, Deniz Yükseker and Sema Erder (Tolay, 2012). Still, many studies are focusing on the immigration of Europeans to Turkey and not many studies focus on refugee issues in Turkey. The development of a more analytical and critical field is required in order to receive an advanced understanding of immigration, the challenges it brings and underlying mechanisms. Moreover, studying the linkage between different studies would help to constitute a more cohesive and coherent field (Tolay, 2012; Caidi et al., 2010; Benson-Rea & Rawlinson, 2003).

### 1.4 Research aims and questions

As explained above, information is of great importance to refugees. Information could even be seen as a basic human need. Understanding how refugees seek information, what their needs are and what practices they have adopted and adapted, and potential barriers they face along the way is of importance. This research aims to understand how refugees move in the information fields available to them, what this means to them and whether they are able to make informed decisions. It seeks to identify and analyse information behaviour, needs and information seeking-patterns of refugees coming to Turkey. To gain understanding as to how refugees find and receive information, it is insightful to study where they get their information from and which kind of information is important to them. This research could help refugees coming to Turkey and beyond in proving insight into

information behaviour of refugees. Furthermore, this research can add to existing literature on both refugee studies and information science. The overall research question of this study is:

*“What is the information behaviour of refugees coming to Turkey?”*

Information behaviour encompasses the specifics of how people seek, search for, access, find and make use of information in different context (Case, 2007; Savolainen, 2007), in this case relating to information around migration by refugees coming to Turkey.

Sub research questions are:

1. *What are information seeking (active seeking, active scanning, non-directed monitoring and by proxy) practices of refugees coming to Turkey?*
2. *What kinds of information sources are available to refugees coming to Turkey?*
3. *What are the information needs of refugees coming to Turkey?*
4. *How informationally poor are refugees coming to Turkey?*
5. *What could aid the information giving system towards refugees in Turkey?*

The concepts used in these research questions will be further elaborated on in the next chapter. These research questions will be researched by studying the information behaviour of refugees by means of in-depth interviews. This thesis was written on the basis of two months of fieldwork between half of February and half of April 2013, in 4 different cities in Turkey. The focus is on asylum seekers, defined as those who are in the process of negotiating refugee status, and on recognized refugees, those who have been granted refugee status by UNHCR, in Turkey. For the purpose of this thesis, the term refugee will be used pointing to a person who has fled to Turkey, either being an asylum applicant (still in the process of acceptance or rejection) or a recognized refugee by UNHCR.

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework guiding my research will be explained. Chapter 3 will be about the research methodology of my research. Chapters 5 to 8 are about my findings and the analyses of my data. These will cover information seeking, information needs and information poverty. In chapter 9 the conclusion of this thesis will be made, including a recommendation part. In chapter 10 a reflection part is included.

## 2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I am providing a brief summary of a literature study so as to give some theoretical underpinnings for the topic as well as to have some handles on information behavior.

### 2.1 Migration studies

Migration studies are multidisciplinary as fields and interdisciplinary in their approach. Many research has been conducted on issues concerning migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, for example on legal perspectives and policies (Lindstrøm, 2005), integration and social inclusion (Caidi & Allard, 2005) or health status (Rechel, Mladovsky & Devillé, 2012; Carballo & Nerukar 2001).

Different studies have examined the decision making, mobility and settlement of these groups (Fafchamps & Shilpi, 2012; Day & White, 2001; Havinga & Böcker, 1999). Furthermore, information needs of refugees have been studied (Shoham & Strauss, 2008; Flythe, 2001; Su & Conaway, 1995). Day & White (2001) found that decision making power of individual migrants and their ability to weigh alternatives is generally held to be weak or non-existent. Many refugees are conceptualized as 'forced migrants', who are forced to move by 'push' factors (Day & White, 2001). However little is known on what information is actually available for refugees, what they actually use to base their decisions on and how they can access this information (Caidi, 2010; Benson-Rea & Rawlinson, 2003).

Several stages in the migration process can be defined (see figure 2.1). These are pre-migration stage, information search and decision stage, physical migration and arrival, post arrival and early settlement and the settlement and outcome stage (Benson-rea & Rawlinson, 2003). In their study on the pre-migration flows of business migrants to New Zealand, Benson-Rea and Rawlinson (2003) found that pre-migration information is an essential component of the immigration process. This pre-migration information is often found to be insufficient in terms of qualitative and quantitative information. Furthermore, they recognized that second phase of 'information search' phase may be bypassed in practice (see figure 2.1). This study will focus on the first three stages of the migration process.

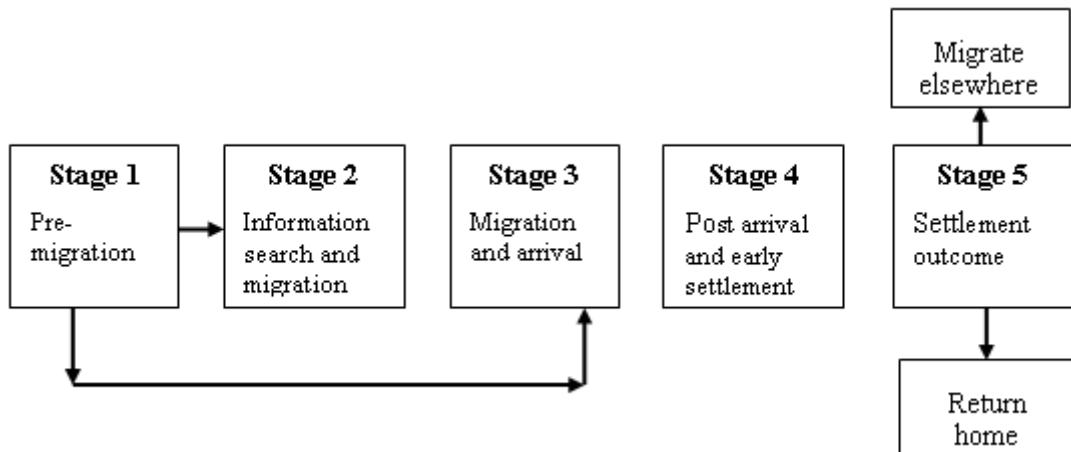


Fig. 2.1 Migration process stages model (Benson-Rea & Rawlinson., 2003)

## 2.2 Theoretical concepts

In this section I will explain the theoretical concepts used for this study. These concepts are from the field of information science. Human information-related behaviours have been perhaps most vigorously examined by the field of Library and Information science (LIS), a discipline conducting research seeking to understand such behaviour. Information practices include information seeking, information use and information sharing (Savolainen, 2008). Information practices are described by Savolainen (2008) as 'a set of socially and culturally established ways to identify, seek, use and share the information available in various sources such as television, newspapers and the Internet'.

### 2.2.1 Information needs

An information need is a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you believe exists. It can also refer to missing information through a lack of understanding or barriers in finding/ accessing information (Case, 2007).

### 2.2.2 Information sources

Information sources refer to anything that might inform an asylum applicant or refugee about migration to Turkey, or provide knowledge about it. Examples of information sources are Internet, telephone, radio as well as family and friends. Information sources can be products or providers of these products. There are both informal and formal sources:

- Informal sources: friends, family, colleagues as well as popular culture such as TV programs, songs on radio or Internet mailing list discussions (Case, 2007)

- Formal sources: printed once, such as textbook, encyclopedia, newspaper etc as well as the words of an acknowledged expert on a subject (Case, 2007)

### ***2.2.3 Information poverty***

Another useful concept for understanding migrants' information encounters is 'information poverty'. Information poverty is characterized as lacking necessary resources, such as adequate social networks and information-finding skills, which can enable everyday life information seeking (Chatman, 1996). Among migrant groups, new immigrants can in particular be characterized as information poor, since they have had no opportunity to develop a social network and might not yet know how to navigate their new information environment. Besides, barriers in seeking orienting information also apply for immigrants. They struggle with information overload, problems related to credibility of sources and difficulties in identifying where to gain access to information that suits their needs best (Savolainen, 2008). Furthermore, immigrants face specific difficulties like emotional stress, social isolation, limited support networks and lack of financial stability (Caidi et al, 2010; Fisher, Marcoux, Miller, Sanchez & Ramirez, 2004; Jeong, 2004). However, there is a lack of empirical studies that explore how new migrants make use of information (Caidi et al., 2010). Yu (2010) highlights that it is not clear how informationally poor the information poor are.

### ***2.2.4 Information seeking***

Information seeking includes a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge, as well as other unintentional or passive behaviours, as well as purposive behaviour that does not involve seeking, such as avoiding information (Case, 2007). The notion of everyday life information seeking (ELIS) is useful for shedding light on the complexity human information practices. ELIS encompasses that individuals seek information on a daily basis in complex ways and from a variety of sources in order to manage their lives (Savolainen, 1995). It provides a thorough anthropological analysis of the situational aspect of information behaviour in everyday life information practices (Spink & Cole, 2006).

#### ***2.2.4.1 Model Mckenzie***

The model of McKenzie (2003) recognizes that information practices capture both active information seeking as well as less directed practices. Active information practices include the recognition of an information need and acting upon this through active and conscious information seeking. Less directed practices include browsing the Internet or gaining unanticipated but useful information from

unexpected encounters, such as chatting with someone. Many research based models of information seeking behaviour are limited in their ability to describe the complexities of everyday-life information seeking. Most of these models focus on active information seeking and neglect less directed practices. Furthermore, many models developed have used a cognitive approach (McKenzie, 2003). Savolainen (1995) highlights that by focusing on the cognitive processes of individuals, the richness of information as constructed through the interaction of the individual in the socio-cultural context will not be recognised. McKenzie (2003) describes a research-based model of information practices in everyday-life, building on growing literature of non-active information seeking (see figure 2.2). This model divides information seeking behavior into four modes (see the left column) which are furthermore carried out in two phases: first the act of contacting and followed by a period of interacting. In the following the model is further described:

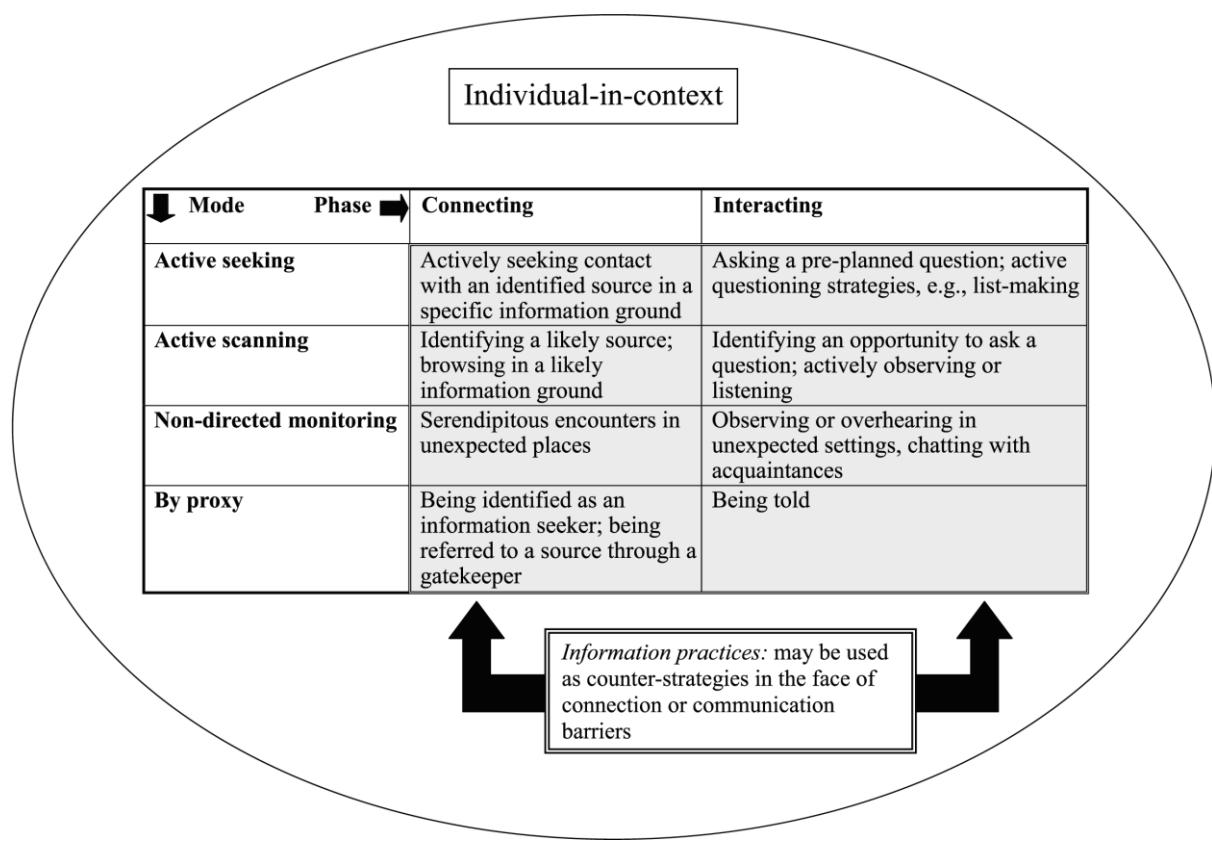


Figure 2.2 Two-dimensional model of the information practices described by McKenzie (2003)

The left-side column of the model identifies the following modes:

- Active information seeking: this is the most directed mode of information practice, such as specifically seeking out of a previously identified source.

- Active scanning: this involves activities such as scanning in likely locations or active listening in conversations. Active scanning involves recognition of a particular location as information ground or a particular source that is likely to be helpful.
- Non-directed monitoring: this involves serendipitously encountering and recognizing a source in an unexpected place.
- By proxy: refers to occasions where someone makes contact with or interacts with information sources through the initiative of another agent, such as a gatekeeper or intermediary. Examples are being given advice or being referred to a source.

The top-most rows of the model describe two phases of the information process:

- 1) Making connections: consider descriptions of the barriers and practices involved in identifying and making contact with information sources or potential sources (directly or through referral).
- 2) Interacting with sources: consider descriptions of the barriers and practices involved during the actual encounter with an information source.

By combining these two phases of information practices with the four modes of the information seeking processes, it can help to provide an overview of the information searching behaviour of an individual. This model will be used for guiding and organising the data collected, as can be seen in chapter 5. The study of McKenzie (2003) suggests that further research in different context is necessary to determine whether her model in information practices in accounts of everyday life is usable for information seeking processes. This thesis can add to this by introducing a context of refugees coming to Turkey. The research will further focus on the concepts explained in this chapter. Few studies in the information-seeking literature focus on a person's social attributes, such as age, gender, ethnicity or income (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2006). This study will pay attention to these characteristics as well.

### 2.3 Refugee studies and ELIS

Immigrants and refugees are an extremely heterogeneous group, whose needs, experiences and strengths vary considerably depending on various factors such as education, age and country of origin, which makes it difficult to compare groups. Furthermore, difficulties in contacting and recruiting of immigrants have posed barriers for those wanting to study the information practices of immigrants (Caidi et al., 2010). Nevertheless, there is little information-related research focusing specifically on refugees (Lloyd, 2013; Fisher et al., 2004). Relative little is known on how immigrants locate and access information in forms that are usable and understandable to them. Furthermore,

little is known about their attitudes, skills and awareness of the use of various information sources and technologies (Lloyd, 2013; Caidi et al., 2010). Most research in information science is on immigrants from United States and Canada. Furthermore, many of these studies are studying immigration in a broader sense, also including family or economic reasons for migration. Research on undocumented migrants is much scarcer (Caidi et al. 2010; Fisher et al., 2004). Furthermore, academic research addressing the information practices of migrants (Fisher et al., 2004; Jeong, 2004; Caidi & MacDonald, 2008; Flythe, 2001; Benson-Rea & Rawlinson, 2003) is mainly focused on their information behavior when living in the destination country and not on information behavior in the process of migration. The main focus in these studies is on information needs and uses only (Caidi et al., 2010). The focus of this study is specifically on information behaviour of refugees before and upon arrival in Turkey. In the next chapter the methodology used for this research will be explained.

### 3. Research methods

This chapter will discuss the methods for data collection and analysis of this research. For this research, an exploratory study was performed by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with asylum applicants and recognized refugees in four different satellite cities in Turkey. This was done in collaboration with the NGO ASAM (see heading 3.3). The first step was to develop an interview guide (see appendix II), which was done by a literature study and the initial observations in Turkey. The second step was the conducting of in-depth interviews with 25 refugees.

#### 3.1 Interpretive research

For this research, a qualitative approach was used to study the research problem. This was chosen in accordance with the research aim of an enhanced understanding of information behavior of refugees coming to Turkey. A quantitative approach would not cover an in-depth understanding of the information behavior of refugees. The study is conducted from an interpretative approach. An interpretative approach is based on the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of natural science. It therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. This approach acknowledges the social world as being distinctly different from the natural world and it should be studied from within and with different methods from the natural science. The emphasis is on understanding of the social world rather than establishing causal relations (Grix, 2004). This is linked to the ontological position 'constructivism'. Constructivism states that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that the world does not exist independently from our knowledge of it, thus the world around us is socially constructed (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Grix, 2004). By assuming that social constructs are unique to individuals, the role of the researcher automatically becomes problematic. The influence of the researcher cannot be changed and it cannot be repeated since it is contextualized. My 'point of view' can never be completely equal to that of the respondent own interpretations. The interviews are structured, steered and managed by both the interviewer and the interviewee. However, this research does not try to give an objective presentation of 'the truth'. Rather it tries to understand the subjective meaning of the information behavior of refugees, by studying the phenomenon of information practices in the context of the everyday life of refugees. The viewpoints of respondents have been addressed with an open mind. By getting to know their world, I aimed at reducing the risk of being led by my own assumptions. Open-ended questions were asked and time was allowed for personal stories to learn about their wider background.

### 3.2 Study area

This research was performed in Turkey. Turkey is a transcontinental state, part of the country lies in Europe and part in Asia. The biggest part of Turkey lies in Asia, but due to political, historical and economical reasons it is often counted as Europe. Turkey is bordered by eight countries: Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Armenia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq and Syria. The official language is Turkish. The biggest ethnic group consists of Turks, and the largest ethnic minority is Kurds. Islam is the dominant religion in Turkey. Turkey is a constitutional democracy and a parliamentary republic with a president, Abdullah Gül, at the head and a Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The biggest city in Turkey is Istanbul. But the capital and location of the government is Ankara. The country has about 79 million inhabitants. Turkey has become increasingly integrated to the West through memberships in organizations such as the Council of Europe, NATO, UN, OSCE, OECD and G-20 major economies. Turkey is an associate member of the European Economic Community, predecessor of the European Union (EU), since 1963. It is a candidate country for the European Union and negotiations for full membership started on 3 October 2005 (CIA, 2013; FCO, 2012). As explained in Chapter 1, Turkey does not accept refugees from outside the Council of Europe member countries.



Figure 3.1 Map of Turkey (UNHCR, 2013)

### 3.3. ASAM

The Association for Solidarity with Asylum seekers and Migrants (ASAM, Turkish: SGDD) was established on 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1995 in Ankara, Turkey. ASAM is a humanitarian, non-profit, non-governmental organization working towards improvement of the conditions of asylum seekers and refugees regardless of their gender, religion, language, race, sexual preference and/or political

beliefs. ASAM is the major implementing partner of the UNHCR in Turkey (ASAM, 2013; UNHCR, 2013).

The purpose of ASAM is to deal with the problems refugees, asylum seekers and migrants face, to find solutions to these problems and to help these people. The major objective of ASAM is: *to promote better understanding and to generate solutions to those problems encountered by asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees via media events so as to raise awareness in public opinion and obtain their support*. Further objectives are: *to impede the refugee creating predicaments, to conduct research to better understand reasons of those predicaments; supporting and publishing research in the field, advising and doing enterprises in the field. Advocating the rights of refugees an asylum seekers, providing counseling to those people, and helping them to establish communication with authorities can also be counted as further goals of the organization*. (ASAM, 2013)

The three primary interest areas of ASAM are:

- 1) Providing psycho-social and legal counseling for refugees and asylum seekers;
- 2) Improving societal understanding, as well as increasing the awareness of relevant authorities, and;
- 3) Monitoring and analyzing (inter)national crises in order to anticipate international and national migration movements.

ASAM currently has 19 offices in Turkey, covering 22 cities. ASAM is working with 86 staff members. In addition to administrative staff, they have social workers, sociologists, psychologists, health workers, legal counselors and interpreters for Arabic, Farsi and Somali (ASAM, 2013).



Fig. 3.2 ASAM offices (ASAM, 2012)

### 3.4 Subjects and sampling

#### 3.4.1 Subjects

The groups of interest for this study were asylum applicants and refugees recognized by UNHCR, in Turkey. Creating a representative sample of refugees would be virtually impossible, and therefore there is chosen for an illustrative sample. The research sample included both men and women, from a range of age groups, education level and nationalities. The aim was to interview 20 refugees, or till saturation was reached. I managed to conduct 27 interviews, of which the first 3 were pilot interviews. The data of the pilot interviews could also be used for this study. Unfortunately, two interviews were not completed due to language difficulties and no suitable English speaking interpreter available. Therefore, 25 interviews could be used for the data analysis of this paper.

#### 3.4.2 Sampling

Those to be interviewed were contacted via the NGO ASAM. ASAM operated as a gate keeper to the field. I went to four different local offices in Turkey. These were chosen based on accessibility and differences in refugee nationality groups in the respective cities. In the local field offices of ASAM, the staff would ask refugees whether they wanted to participate in the interview. Thus this study made use of convenience sampling. Criterion for selection was based on their time in Turkey (as limited as possible) and nationality (trying to get a range of different nationalities). Unfortunately it was not possible to interview refugees who had just arrived in Turkey. I had discussed the possibilities of this with the director of ASAM and he thought that interviewing newly arrived refugees would cause confusion for the refugees which could influence their asylum application with UNHCR. Participation in this study was voluntary, and all participants had the study explained prior to the interview and were asked (verbally) for their consent, see appendix II and III. The four biggest nationality groups of asylum seekers and recognized refugees in Turkey were reached, namely from Afghanistan (9355), Iran (6129), Iraq (15153) and Somalia (2170) (UNHCR, 2013). It was more difficult to find participants from Afghanistan, since these refugees are often sent to remote and far distant cities in Turkey (ASAM, 2013). Eventually, the sample consisted of 12 persons from Iran, 5 from Iraq, 3 from Afghanistan, 3 from Somalia and from Oman and Pakistan each 1. I interviewed 11 women and 13 men and one transgender. There are approximately 20 to 30 percent more male refugees in Turkey, (see table 1.1) so there was a good division between genders in my sample. Of the participants in this study, their status with UNHCR was for 20 recognized refugee and 5 had the status of asylum applicant. The sample was relatively highly educated, highest education level ranged from primary school (1), secondary school (8), and higher education (5) till university (11). Most

refugees (19) were in Turkey between 1 and 2 years, with one refugee being in Turkey for 2 months and 5 refugees being in Turkey between 4-6 years. Participants' ages ranged from 18 till 57.

### 3.5 Data collection

This research used in-depth interviewing, varying between 50 minutes and 2 hours, in order to understand and examine the different experiences and views of respondents. Interviews started with refugees telling their story of immigration. Furthermore, open-ended questions were used to introduce topics of interest. It is important that human agency of refugees is sustained and promoted (Hugman, Bartolomei & Pittaway, 2011). By letting the interviewees be in control of their story, I tried to promote agency and assumed they were more likely to open up and explain their experiences. I sought information on basic characteristics and demographics of the participants, their journey to Turkey, their preparation, what information they looked for, which sources they used and why, knowledge on asylum policies, expectations and information sharing (see appendix II). Due to sensitivity of the interviewees, the participants were not recorded on tape. Data collected from the interview was written down during (some) and immediately after the interview. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all the names were changed. If possible, the interviews were held in English. For all non-English speaking persons, an interpreter was used. Interpreters of ASAM from the field offices supported when necessary. Most interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. In one case, the interviewer used double translation. In one other case, the interviewer interviewed a married couple.

I followed an interview guide (see appendix II) and asked questions while the interviewees told their story, in order to collect as much appropriate and informative data as possible. An interview guide is a predetermined set of questions or general topics that the interviewer wants to explore during each interview. There are no predetermined responses and the interviewer is free to probe and explore within these predefined topics. Interview guides help the interviewer to stay focused and is helpful with multiple interviews and/or limited time. Furthermore, it allows for a certain degree of flexibility (Grix, 2004; Hoepfl, 1997). I dealt with the topics in any order, and phrase questions which fit best in the circumstance. The interview guide was created based on literature study (see appendix I) and observations and conversations during the initial fieldwork. Furthermore, the first three interviews served as pilot test, in order to see whether the interview guide needed to be revised or not. After the pilot test, some small adjustments were made. The changes were made in wording for a better understanding or a more suitable understanding for the interviewee. Furthermore, some topics were left out as they appeared to be irrelevant to the refugees in this study, such as economic opportunities in Turkey. Moreover, some words were added in order to create a more direct and

specified focus for the interviewer, such as the adding of keywords like “understandable”, “useful”, “credibility”.

Very important in conducting interviews is that it needs to be clear to the respondent what you want to know. Furthermore, one topic at a time needs to be addressed and questions need to be as neutral as possible (Baarda & Goede, 2001). It is important to make the respondent feel as comfortable as possible in the interview (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). Therefore, it was ensured that the interviews were held in a private room in the ASAM office. It was often not possible to conduct private interviews in the homes of refugees due to practicalities as well as the multiple people present due to sharing of accommodation. To make sure the interviews were private and in a trusted place, the ASAM offices could be used. The refugees were familiar with the setting and local staff was present when there were any language difficulties. I would start with some small talk and took time to explain the instructions to the interviewees. The instructions were not explained in the same manner every time, but the introduction stated in the interview guide served rather to ensure the content of the interview was clear to the participants.

### 3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis was initiated by typing out of the interviews. A coding scheme was developed, for the main part based on theory and the model of McKenzie (see figure 3.2) and theoretical concepts. The coding scheme was partly based on the interview guide (see appendix II). Furthermore, themes came up during re-reading of the transcripts, and were integrated into the coding scheme (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Finally, a consistent and coherent coding scheme (see Appendix III) was used for analyzing the conducted interviews.

### 3.7 Strengths and limitations

The big advantage with interviews is that it is possible to hear the opinion of a variety of persons, analyzing the what and why of behavior. However, the reliability could be influenced by the selective memory of the interviewee. This research asked the participants for past behavior and therefore had to rely on people's ability to recall the past. Furthermore, one could not be aware of his or her own behavior or motives. These biases could be minimized by asking for concrete examples (Baarda & Goede, 2001; Evers, 2007). Another difficult concept in interviewing is generalization. When a participant is referring to something general it is difficult to define his or her own role in this. Someone could use generalization when a question is not correctly understood or due to a lack of

experience or knowledge (Evers, 2007). To ensure validity, I made sure to keep on asking for their personal experience and behavior and specifically asked for concrete examples.

The number and particular cases selected in this study were partly affected by the amount of time and money available. I tried to find as much refugees as possible that had been in Turkey for a limited time. Since I was the only interviewer, consistency was promoted. However, I interviewed both men and women. There could have been gender bias when interviewing males. I did not experience any difficulties when interviewing males. I had consulted the director of ASAM before starting the interviews about his experience and he did not see any problems. Probably it would have been better to interview refugees immediately on arrival or when they were en route to Turkey. However, such an approach was not feasible for this study and I did not have access to newly arrived refugees in Turkey. I was dependent on ASAM for the access to refugees. Since there were not have many interpreters available who could speak English, I interviewed more English speaking refugees (18) and had just 6 interviews with translation. This could influence my sample. Nevertheless, studies recognize that it is very difficult gaining access to refugees (Caidi et al., 2010). With the help of ASAM I was able to speak to 25 refugees in 2 months.

### 3.8 Ethics

In conducting interviews, it is very important that interviewees know their participation is voluntary and that they can stop at any moment. Furthermore, they should be allowed to give an informed consent, based on information of the purpose of the study, the identity of the researcher and the use of the data (de Vaus, 2011). In this research, I included these elements in the introduction of the interview and made sure the refugees understood that their participation was voluntary and they were asked for verbal informed consent, see appendix II. The reason that I have chosen for verbal consent is because I did not want to put additional pressure on the refugees by asking for a formal autograph. They were already telling their story to many official institutions and I wanted to create an open atmosphere in which they could tell me what they wanted to tell. Furthermore, anonymity is very important and therefore all the names of the participants in this research have been changed. Social science research involving refugees is often undertaken in politically complex and difficult settings and involves participants who may be traumatized and vulnerable (MacKenzie, McDowell & Pittway, 2007). Research with refugees therefore presents challenges that are both practical and ethical (Hugman et al., 2011). Some of the issues involved when doing research with refugees are power, consent, confidentiality, trust and mistrust, cultural differences, risks and benefits, autonomy and agency, gender and social justice (MacKenzie et al., 2007). When doing research with vulnerable

groups, it is especially important to consider ethics (Mackenzie et al., 2007; Hugman et al., 2011; Schmidt, 2007; Hugman, Pittaway & Bartoloeo 2011). Furthermore, the principle of respect is very important in research with refugees. It entails responsibility of the researcher, to be very mindful of the trust that is being placed in researchers and to reflect carefully on ways to build trust (MacKenzie et al., 2007). The more the interviewee feels accepted as a person, the more he or she is willing to participate (Hulshof, 1992). Research with refugees can only be justified when it provides reciprocal benefits for those concerned (MacKenzie et al., 2007). In my research I was very aware of the fact I was dealing with a vulnerable group. In one interview, a woman cried for the whole hour of the interview. She explained to me that at home she always had to be strong for her children. It was really special to me that she felt safe enough with me to let her guard down. I was aware of the fact that I have no psychological background and I could not support the refugees in this way. Nevertheless, I tried to make them feel comfortable, made sure we were in a private room, offering some snacks and drinks and allowing time for personal stories. I was surprised that by the end of the interview, often the participants would thank me for listening to their complete story. It seemed that they had very few opportunities to share their experiences with someone and they seemed relieved at the end of the interview. It felt difficult that I could not mean anything else for their situation in that moment, but the participants seemed to understand this. I did not want to persuade them to come to the interview by offering money. This could affect their story and motivation. But as a sign of my appreciation I would give them a present after the interview, consisting of basic practical things like pasta, soap, coffee and cookies. Everyday living conditions are hard for the participants and they seemed genuinely happy with the small offer. One last ethical concern to consider is that the presence of the researcher could influence the reaction of the participant. In chapter 10 I will elaborate on the reflexive part of myself as a researcher in this study. The next chapter will explain some things about the countries of origin of the refugees in this study.

## 4. Refugees in Turkey: countries of origin

In the following chapters I will discuss my findings from my fieldwork in Turkey. The data is from the interviews in the field. In this chapter I will introduce my study context and sample in more detail. The subsequent chapters will cover information seeking, information sources, information needs and information poverty. In these chapters I aim to answer my sub-research questions (see chapter 1). I will conclude my findings in chapter 9. Quotes in these chapters were taken from the interviews. As explained earlier, all names have been changed. In this chapter I will elaborate a bit on the countries from which the refugees in this study have fled, these include Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan and Oman.

### 4.1 Iran

Iran is an Islamic republic since 1979 (CIA, 2013; BBC, 2013). Since the Islamic Revolution (1979) hundreds of thousands of highly skilled Iranians have fled the country while many migrants from Afghanistan and Iraq have entered the country. There has even been a reference to a 'brain drain' from Iran. The government is targeting civil society activists, human right defenders, students and journalists. Also, Iranian women face discrimination in personal status matters related to for example marriage. Several universities have banned female enrollment. Furthermore, the government denies freedom of religion and is actively targeting Iran's largest non-Muslim religious minority, the Bahá'í community (HRW, 2013). Most people fleeing from Iran are either marginalized in society by belonging to a religious minority group such as Bahá'í or fled due to political, socialist or liberalist reasons (MPI, 2006). Furthermore, homosexuality is seen as a punishable crime in Iran, therefore many LGBT people (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) choose to flee the country in order to secure their physical safety (IRQR, 2013). The Iranian refugees from this study stated that they either had to flee due to religious reasons or political reasons. I interviewed 12 refugees from Iran, of which 8 women and 4 men. Of these, 9 refugees belonged to this religious Bahá'í community and the rest were Muslim. 8 refugees had studied at the university, 2 had completed higher education, 1 had followed secondary education and 1 primary education. Only one refugee entered Turkey, the rest entered legally by bus, plane or train by using their passport.

### 4.2 Iraq

Human rights conditions in Iraq are poor, especially for detainees, journalists, activists, and women and girls. Many families have been separated due to armed conflict, generalized violence and displacement. Furthermore, there are ongoing attacks towards LGBT people as well as towards

young people with socially non-conforming appearances such as those who are identified as “emo”—a subculture characterized by distinctive clothes and musical tastes (HRW, 2013). There has been an invasion of the US army in Iraq leading to the ouster of the Saddam Hussein regime and the Ba’ath party. After this, parliamentary elections were held. The American presence in Iraq ended in 2011 (CIA, 2013; BBC, 2013). The refugees in this study who had fled Iraq stated that they had fled for political reasons, religious reasons, appearance, LGTB background or for the fact that they had worked together with Americans and were now targeted by terrorist groups. I interviewed 5 Iraqis, of which 1 woman and 3 men and 1 transgender. 4 were Muslim and 1 Christen. 2 refugees had studied at the university and 3 had followed secondary education. All came legally to Turkey by bus.

#### **4.3 Afghanistan**

Decades of war has left Afghanistan to be one of the most dangerous countries in the world, and the largest producer of refugees and asylum seekers (HRW, 2013; Olson, 2010). After the 9/11 attacks, America has attacked Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. International forces are to be withdrawn in 2014 (CIA, 2013). Nevertheless, civilian causalities from the civil armed conflict remain high (HRW, 2013). The presence of the Taliban and provincial instability still leads to serious challenges in Afghanistan (CIA, 2013). In 2012, new government efforts were seen to stifle freedom of speech through new legislation and targeting journalists (HRW, 2013). The refugees I spoke with from Afghanistan told me they had lost family or friends and their lives were in danger as well. I interviewed 3 refugees from Afghanistan, all male. All were Muslim. Two had entered Turkey illegally by use of smugglers and 1 had come legally by plain. 1 had followed higher education and the other two had attended secondary school.

#### **4.4 Somalia**

There has been an ongoing civil war in Somalia since 1991 (HRW, 2013; CIA, 2013). The long running armed conflicts by both the terrorist group al-Shabaab and the forces against them cause harm to civilians. In areas under its control, al-Shabaab administers arbitrary justice and imposes harsh restrictions on basic rights. Al-Shabaab applies an extreme form of Islamic law and commits serious abuses such as target killings, beheadings, executions and forcibly recruiting of adults and children (HRW, 2013). Somalia had been without a formal government for more than two decades after the overthrow of the president in 1991. The Somali government failed to protect basic rights of its population (HRW, 2013; BBC, 2013). In 2012, a new Somali government came into power (BBC, 2013). The refugees from this study explained to me that they had to flee from threats of targeted killings by terrorists. I interviewed 3 Somali refugees, two men and one woman. All had entered

Turkey illegally by boat by use of a smuggler. They told me they had no choice in their destination, some even did not know they were going to Turkey. All were Muslim. 2 had followed higher education and 1 had attended secondary school.

#### 4.5 Other countries

Both Oman and Pakistan face problems with limited freedom of speech and political and religious exclusion based on cultural norms (HRW, 2013; BBC, 2013). Pakistan furthermore faces violence and terror attacks. There is a continuing political dominance of the military, which operates with almost complete immunity. Religious minorities face insecurity and persecution as the government fails to provide protection to those threatened or to hold extremists accountable (HRW, 2013). Refugees from this study stated that they were either targeted or severely disadvantaged in society. They could enter Turkey legally. Both were male. 1 had attended university and the other had attended secondary school.

## 5. Information seeking

This chapter will explore the information seeking behavior of the subjects interviewed. It aims to answer the sub research question: *What are information seeking practices of refugees coming to Turkey?* As explained in Chapter 2, information seeking behaviors consist of active seeking behavior as well as less-directed practices, these include active seeking, active scanning, by proxy and non-directed monitoring. The next paragraphs will explain these information practices of the participants in more detail.

### 5.1 Active seeking

Active seeking practices include the specifically seeking out of an information source, such as asking pre-planned questions. From this sample it became apparent that the refugees made very little use of active seeking. When actively seeking, participants expressed they were looking for basic information needs for arriving such as how they could rent an apartment or how much money they would need. Some refugees were also more focused on the new environment and orientation of the life in the new country. One woman from Iran expressed she was searching for how the Turkish behavior was towards Iranian children, expressing she was scared for ill treatment of her children. Furthermore, several participants expressed searching for information on the religious community in Turkey. Jeong (2004) and Su & Conoway (1995) found similar interests for information about cultural or religious events by refugees in their studies. Yet, these studies focused on the settlement process.

[Tara, 28, Iran]

*"I had a lot of friends that came here before me. Before coming I was asking about information on for example living here, about renting a house, about how to buy something. We used chatting on Skype or Facebook. I asked them about what I needed to bring, I am a stranger here, and everything is unknown for me. I asked what can I do, can you help me, and can you come to take me? Do I need to bring food? Do I need to bring a pillow? These kind of things."*

*[Fazel, 41, Iran]*

*"I asked from our relatives here in Turkey how much it would cost for living to see if it would be possible to come here. I talked to them via Skype and Yahoo. It was not difficult to talk to them and find this information. I also tried to look on Internet for information, but everything is in Turkish so I couldn't understand or find anything. Before we decided to go, we spoke again to the sisters of my wife. I asked them what happens here, how long it will take before going to another country. They provided us with basic information. After hearing this, we went to Turkey."*

The model of McKenzie (2003) (see figure 2.2) makes a distinction in two stages in the information process: making connections and interacting. The active seeking practices of refugees often involved making connections or re-connecting with their network for questions, such as asking a friend who had already come to Turkey before them, like Tara explains above. They would ask their friends, family or acquaintance for an impression of Turkey, costs and housing, or even ask them to arrange something for them, like Ziba (Iran) explains: *"A family friend lived in Nevşehir (in Turkey) and I had asked him to rent an apartment for me"*. Making connections through active scanning also involved activating an ongoing informal consulting relationship for a specific need, such as calling a relative multiple times like Fazel explained above. These relatives or friend could be in Turkey, but could also already be in a third country such as America or Canada. When a refugee did not have access to a network, they described seeking contact with different sources, such as visiting a website or an organization or the embassy or even a travel agency. For example, Noah (Oman) expressed he visited the UNHCR website for information. And a married couple from Iran explained they talked to a lawyer before coming. The interacting part of the active seeking practice included asking specific questions to social network or institutions. In a rare case, the participant would have a strategy or plan for finding specific information. Such as Badee describes below, looking for a fast solution he went to ask about visa possibilities at a travel agency.

*[Badee, 34, Pakistan]*

*"In Pakistan, embassies have to give you an appointment date and you would have to wait for maybe 3-4 months and it is a long procedure. Everybody knows this. When I was trying to leave my country I would have liked to run to England or America. But I get to know the procedure is too long. I consulted with a consultant of a travel agency, he told me about different information for applying for visas. Some visa applications could take three months. He advised me I should leave as soon as possible and Turkey is a good option and quite easy for me to take visa. I couldn't move freely in my country, that was the problem, so I had to take a fast solution."*

The participants either explained about actively seeking, or provided compelling reasons which made that they could not actively seek information. What was interesting to see is that while most of the respondents expressed some forms of active searching, the refugees from Somalia and two of the refugees from Afghanistan had not. Part of this can be explained by the fact that this group did not have any relatives or friends in Turkey or other countries. Furthermore, their destination country was in the hands of smugglers and they had little or no choice in where to go. Anxiety or worries were expressed as other barriers for active seeking of information, such as Bibi explains who was travelling together with her husband. She expressed that her husband was mainly arranging everything and that she was having a very difficult time since she had to leave her country.

*[Bibi, 37, Iran]*

*"I did not focus on special things, I was just worrying about leaving the country and that I will have to leave. Nothing was very important other than that. I was not seeking for information. My family was not happy about our migration, they have not come to visit. They are just saying 'come back please'. The main reason for us to leave was a lack of security and safety. That was all that was important."*

While not so much active seeking was done before coming to Turkey, this mode of information practice did change considerably by the refugees accepted by UNHCR. They explained that they were actively looking for information about their third country. The information they were searching for was more specific as well, such as looking for information on education, insurance and work. It could be that the refugees knew better what their needs are concerning immigration. Nevertheless, like Sabina expresses below, many refugees still believed that even though they were searching for some more information than they did before coming to Turkey, they still expect the situation cannot be learned until they are actually there in the third country.

*[Sabina, 24, Iraq]*

*"I am searching on Internet about Australia. My goal is to complete my studies, so I am searching a lot about this, on different studies in Australia. But doing research is not the same as being there, but I hope like this it will be easier than it was for us in Turkey."*

*[Boris, 57, Iran]*

*"We know we cannot stay in Turkey, everyone knows you can stay here for about 1,5 or 2 years. In the pre-interview they had asked us whether we want to go to America, then they would send us to another office in Istanbul IMC. But we said no we don't want to go to America. This is because we can get health insurance in Canada and we need this since my daughter is sick. I have asked friends, and niece and nephew about this. I learned that in Canada you must stay for 3 years and after that you will get a passport. In America this will take 5 years I think. We are preparing for Canada by learning English. I am thinking about our future. I am learning about living in a Western country. The information about that country I mostly get from friends and other people. We don't have television. We do have 3 laptops in our home now. Most of the time, Facebook and Skype are on and we can talk to friends and family."*

Most of the participants of this study often were aware that they could not stay in Turkey; this could also have affected their search behavior. Even more so, many refugees were forced to migrate, having little preparation time available for seeking of information.

## 5.2 Active scanning

Active scanning involves the browsing or scanning in likely places for information. It involves a search for more broadly specific information. The participants had all became refugees in a considerably short time and it could be that the operating in new information fields makes it difficult to think of specific questions or information needs. The refugees definitely described the active scanning practice more often than active seeking. Often they would place themselves in a resource-rich environment that they trust, such as looking for people from same nationality like Buushow describes:

*[Buushow, 28, Somalia]*

*"When I arrived in Istanbul I found these Somalis. Some planned to flee further to Europe, some planned to apply to UNHCR, and some were refugees. They told me all about asylum procedures in Turkey, I learned everything from them. I got information about resettlement, I learned about rights of refugees. That was very important to me. I was safe here, because I could go to the police and complain. I heard about illegal working, for example in furniture. I stayed for 3 days in Istanbul and 1 week in Ankara before I applied to UNHCR."*

Edris (Afghanistan) describes that he just went to a border region in order to find a smuggler to come to Turkey. Similarly, Salim, (Afghanistan) describes: *“To find the smuggler is, how can I say, as easy as a pie. If you just ask one Afghan family they say ‘I know someone’. You can find as many as you want”*. Both he and others describe looking for familiar faces on arrival for information. The recognition of a likely information ground for the refugees was thus often to look for someone from their own nationality by focusing on physical characteristics. From these information providers, something helpful was expected but there was no specific question in mind.

*[Edris, 18, Afghanistan]*

*“When I came to the bus stop I was scared of being caught by police, I was afraid of deportation. I was looking for help and a familiar face. I saw some people and from their face I could see they were Afghan. I told them I was scared of deportation and being arrested by police. They told me ‘if you don’t want to be deported, you can go to UN and register.’ I went to the UN to register, and the UN send me to Nevşehir.”*

Active scanning interactions described were browsing on the Internet, like Ziba (Iran): *“I searched a little bit about on the Internet on Nevşehir, when I decided to come here. I searched for changes in Nevşehir and about its geographical location.”* Or scanning printed material, for example a refugee explained he used a dictionary or the Internet to study English. However, in actively scanning on the Internet many participants expressed facing language barriers with many websites being in Turkish. And when they did have a network of which they could get information, it seemed that they preferred asking spontaneous questions or observing and listening to other people rather than looking for other sources.

*[Rahele, 37, Iran]*

*“I did search for some websites, I searched for some forums on refugees, I looked for keywords such as ‘refugee AND Turkey or Kayseri’. I did found some information but I never relied on this too much. I think it is better if you know them. I knew many people that have come here, and whatever they did I will do as well because it has worked for them. I knew I would have to stay some 2 or 2,5 years. I didn’t rely on cases I found on Internet, some were very different for example political. I did found some information on Kayseri, but just about the weather and tourist information.”*

Again, refugees explained employing active scanning for a possible third country while being in Turkey. Even when refugees were not yet sure to which country they would be send, they explained about browsing for information for possible third countries.

[Jasmine, 42, Iran]

*"Now I am searching from Internet, some friends live in Australia. I am especially searching for my children about possibilities for universities and jobs. In Internet I use Yahoo, Skype and Facebook. I can find good information on sites on Internet here. We will need to find someone to protect us for the beginning of our arrival in the third country. After that my children could go to college, school and we can find jobs. These are the elementary things we should do. We have enough time to search for these things here. My daughter would like to go to USA. She likes basketball and she would like to go to the best college to become a doctor. We could also be going to Australia, some of my husband's relatives are there. From here we can contact them and my husband can ask them questions."*

Refugees from all groups expressed some active scanning practices. While again the refugees with an established social network would preferably consult them, refugees without social ties would also employ active scanning by searching for likely information grounds based on physical characteristics. Nevertheless, the refugees were even more often being told. This is part of the information practice by proxy, which is explained below.

### 5.3 By proxy

Most of the information received by refugees had seemed to come to them by proxy. By proxy practices are other than the other three information seeking practices in the sense that an agent other than the primary information seeker is engaged in active seeking or scanning on the behalf of the primary information seeker, or when the primary information seeker is recognized by another agent as information seeker. Refugees explained about situations in which social ties or professional contacts acted as by proxy connections. For example, Noah (Oman) explained his sister would look for information for him. Three by proxy connections were described by participants, these were either persons they knew very well, like family or colleagues, or persons they knew through someone else, like a far relative, or someone they had just met, for example of the same nationality. The last group was not part of direct social ties, however often refugees had no choice but to rely on these weak connections. Information interactions received by proxy were often situations in which they were being told or acquired information without asking for it. Furthermore, interactions were often advising, instructing, or directing. Almost all of the refugees explained that they were advised by someone to come to Turkey. Furthermore, the participants explained about being advised or being told about many things from Turkey, such as how much money to bring or where the office of UNHCR is located. They spoke of ways of coming to Turkey, like finding a smuggler, and about renting and living prices.

*[Gatha, 40, Iran]*

*"When I left, nobody but my boss knew about this. He gave me the number of UNHCR. I came to Turkey for two reasons. It was nearest and my boss said me to go to Turkey."*

*[Arman, 26, Iran]*

*"I called the smuggler. I got his number from friend of my family in Turkey. My family had entered legally, they had passport and didn't need a smuggler. They did not know someone directly, but they could find out in Turkey."*

Furthermore, participants were told about the procedures of UNHCR and to some extent about refugee policies. The extent and truth of this information about refugee policies was very different among participant. Few of them explained to have a thorough idea before coming, whilst most just knew where to go for the UNHCR office or were even given false information.

*[Fazel, 41, Iran]*

*"The sisters of my wife introduced us to UNHCR. We entered Kayseri on a Saturday and we introduced ourselves to ASAM on Monday. It took 3 months before pre-registration. Our family here gave us information about what to bring for documents, how many copies of passport, how many photographs and so on. They made a list of what to bring."*

In this next example of Salim, you can see that he relied on information about Turkey that he was told by other Afghans in Iran. However, it appeared after arriving in Turkey that many of the information received was false. In this case below, Salim and his family relied on the information received by others to go to Turkey. Other refugees in this study without social ties in Turkey described similar situations of failed interaction outcomes of by proxy practices.

*[Salim, 24, Afghan]*

*"In Iran, we knew some other Afghans that were living there. Many Afghans were living there, and they had come before us and could get an ID card. They told us, if you go to Turkey, the UN will give you a home, will support you, you can study and after 1 year you can go to another country. Not even half of what they told us was true."*

Few participants even told that they would only rely on the information that was given to them by their relatives, like Bibi (Iran) who was too worried and let everything to be done by her husband, or Hadi (see below) who had an elder brother who came to Turkey before him.

*[Hadi, 27, Afghanistan]*

*"I did not know exactly what it would be like as a refugee. I relied on my brother for all of this. My brother told me about these things. Now I see it was not so good of me to rely so much on my brother. I should have known more myself. I did not even know I would be sent to another country, I learned this when I came here. My brother told me they don't accept people in Turkey. This was a shock for me. All things got changed for me."*

Often the by proxy interactions were derived from ongoing consulting relationships with a certain source, for example a family member. Therefore it could sometimes be difficult to make clear distinctions between the three information-seeker-initiated forms and the 'being told'. For instance, in the example below of Nabil you can see that his cousin was giving him advice (by proxy), he sees an opportunity to ask specific questions (active seeking) and he explains about active scanning. The fluency of information practices can be seen from this example. Nevertheless, overall it appeared that the refugees did not have many clear-cut questions and were relying very much on information that was given to them by interpersonal connections like social ties or professional contacts or even newly made contacts. Unfortunately, many of these connections could not provide them with sufficient or truthful information.

[Nabil, 23, Iraq]

*"My cousin lives in America for 3 years now, he tells me many things, he tells me life is really good, easy when you know the language. I asked him about college, and my cousin told me if you come here you can make an exam and maybe you will be accepted. But he tells me that 'when you come here I think your life will be easy and normal for you. He did not speak English when he came. He told me many things about America. For example that you can work for 7,50 or 8 dollars per hour, what the price is of vegetables or renting a house or price of electricity. He told me everything. I don't need more than that and websites, for example Wikipedia. I checked the weather and some videos on YouTube."*

#### 5.4 Non-directed monitoring

Non-directed monitoring is about receiving or observing information from completely serendipitous encounters, like overhearing something unexpected. The refugees I interviewed did not give many examples of non-directed monitoring information practices. Non-directed monitoring practices are difficult to detect since often people are themselves not aware of such encounters. Difficulty with this mode of information practice is also that participants themselves could not be aware of an information need until they 'picked it up' (Williamson, 1998). Nevertheless, participants did explain about hearing of some stories in unexpected places or finding information 'accidentally'.

[Hadi, 27, Afghanistan]

*"When we came to Turkey I hadn't thought about working. My brother told me that in Turkey in some places they needed English teachers, people needed to learn English. I did not expect myself to find a job in one month. But in my first weeks in Turkey I already got very bored at home, and I just passed by the place I am working now and I saw they needed teachers. I accidentally saw a teacher's card, so I thought maybe I could do this job."*

[Aban, 33, Iraq]

*"After Saddam Hussein, there is a phone problem. Police can see what you are doing and the government is making problems, you could have to pay or go to prison. The government is very controlling. I heard girls needed to borrow a telephone of a friend and after two days this man was taken to prison, the police in Syria is watching telephones. I am very careful when I am calling, I don't say anything about the government."*

Furthermore, one interesting 'unexpected' source of information that was described by the participants (which was otherwise not seen as information given) was a Turkish television series

broadcasted in their home country. Many refugees explained that part of their expectations of Turkey were from watching these television series.

*[Hadi, 27, Afghanistan]*

*"In Afghanistan we had some channels with some Turkish series or movies in Afghan. I was getting all this info, but furthermore I was not curious, I didn't search and left everything for destiny."*

### 5.5 Analysis of information seeking practices

All in all, the 4 different modes of information seeking practices show a fluency from moving from one to another and one single interaction can be described a variety of information practices, as can be seen from Nabil in §5.3. It shows the complexity of accounts of ELIS. From this study it appeared that the refugees did not use active seeking very often and this mode was more dependent on the existing social ties of the refugees. It is recognized that refugees have to operate in new information fields (Lloyd, 2013) and when coming to Turkey as an asylum seeker, it could have been difficult to anticipate what to look for. A study on the knowledge of asylum seekers coming to the UK found that these asylum seekers knew very little before arrival, which was partly explained by the researchers by the fact that the asylum seekers had to flee without time for seeking information (Gilbert, 2006). In the study of Benson-Rea and Rawlinson (2003) they recognized that the information searching stage of the migration process might be skipped in practice. Definitely many refugees from this study were forced to leave their country and could have little time to prepare themselves. Although they did not employ many active seeking as already suggested by these other studies, it was surprising to see that they did explain about using different modes of information practices, such as active scanning and by proxy. The refugees in this sample clearly expressed rich accounts of information practices by the use of different modes. The main modes were by proxy practices and active scanning. Both included relying on information received from interpersonal relations as well as newly established contacts.

The information searching practices were fairly basic, mainly informing about housing and costs of living, while just a few refugees had expressed some broader curiosity towards climate or cultural behavior for example. It has already been acknowledged that migrants have to make sense of new patterns and networks for finding information and have to deal with a very new and complex information environment (Srinivasan & Pyati, 2007; Caidi, 2010; Lloyd et al., 2013). This could explain why at first the refugees seem to do limited active seeking and rely more on what they are told. Or

why active scanning is more prominent than active seeking, since they might not know what to search for. Part of the active scanning was looking for people from the same culture as likely information ground. In the study of McKenzie (2003), she found that the making of connections was related to physical characteristics of the pregnant woman of her study and furthermore by the meaning of multiple pregnancy as something to disclose easily. The scanning of physical characteristics or behavior of other people proved to be an especially common and effective strategy for finding information for the refugees in this study as well. The context in this study is very different; nevertheless the making connections phase of active seeking was often indeed promoted by physical characteristics and the meaning of being a refugee. In this study, most information searching was connected to the use of social or professional ties. Social ties and professional connections were also found as by proxy connections in other studies (McKenzie, 2003).

In this study it proved to be difficult to measure the non-directed monitoring practice. Retrospective in-depth interviews have been used to examine information behavior before (Williamson, 1997; McKenzie, 2003). Nevertheless, in this research non-directed monitoring proved to be difficult to study by means of in-depth interview. This could be because participants themselves often are unaware of these encounters and it is then difficult to recall it in an interview. In the research of McKenzie (2003), besides semi-structured interviewing a diary/ diary method was used as well. Perhaps such a method can improve findings on non-directed monitoring practices.

Asylum movement can be unexpected and fitful. Often asylum seekers are not well-informed about possible countries of asylum which can make them very sensitive to rumors. For instance, a rumor can cause asylum seekers to suddenly change their journey to an alternative destination if they heard someone got a residence permit (Havinga & Böcker, 1999). Participants described receiving both information that was helpful and unhelpful, with no account of active seeking on their part. Some had to rely on only information from weak ties and ended up in Turkey with completely different expectations.

Overall, in this research sample, the information seeking behavior of refugees can be characterized by very low active seeking practices compared to active scanning and by proxy practices. Nevertheless, the participants did use these other modes of information practices and could therefore receive in some extent information about Turkey. The major component of their seeking behavior of connecting and interacting was by proxy, followed by active scanning. The non-directed monitoring practices were difficult to measure. Similar information seeking behaviors were found between groups of different nationality, gender and age, however refugees without access to strong

social ties showed less active scanning and were more dependent on weak ties. The group that had the least active seeking practices was constraint by barriers like the absence of social ties or the reliance on smugglers for their destination. A large part of the information seeking practices of these and the other refugees can therefore also be explained by the sources that are available to them and the context in which they are in which will be further explained in the next chapters.

## 6. Information sources

Very important aspects for information activities are the sources available. This chapter will explore the information sources used by the participants of this study of their pre-migration phase. It aims to answer the sub research question: *What kinds of information sources are available to refugees coming to Turkey?* In this chapter I will elaborate on the different sources that were available and trusted or unavailable or not trusted by the participants. These information sources included informal as well as formal sources.

### 6.1 Social networks

Research in the field of LIS has already pointed out the importance of social networks as sources for information needs of vulnerable populations (Fisher et al., 2004; Flythe, 2001; Birkel & Repucci, 1983). Furthermore, people in general tend to prefer informal information sources (Savolainen, 1995). In this study, the use of the social network as information source was also most dominant.

[Ziba, 37, Iran]

*"I knew about UN in Turkey because my brother lived here as a refugee in 2007 and lives now in USA. Also, some friends of me were arrested in Iran and after prison they went to Turkey and they now live in other countries, like Australia and England."*

Like Ziba explains above, her brother had already come to Turkey and could successfully continue to America. Ziba followed, and her brother being in America even significantly increases the chance of Ziba to go there as well. Many refugees had similar experiences. Other studies (Havinga & Böcker, 1999; Shah & Menon, 1999) have also recognized that the migration of asylum seekers often shows a pattern of chain migration: the migrants try to go to a person they know and/or make extensive use of their network of kinship and friends. An initial group of asylum seekers arrives in a country and when they are found to be successful, others will follow. However, in the asylum process of UNHCR this chain migration is also stimulated, as became clear from the stories of participants. When a refugee has family in a third country their chances increase of going there as well. Furthermore, even just people from the same country or persons met along the way could work as a chain mechanism for information, like Buushow explains:

*[Tara, 28, Iran]*

*"My relatives, cousins, support me in Australia. For UN you should choose a country, 'tell us where you have friends'. So we told them Australia. I have no information on other countries. We would just be alone there but in Australia my cousins can support us with starting a new life. It is very important that I can get some support."*

*[Buushow, 28, Somalia].*

*"There is a Somali network, everyone learns something from previous cases. I started in Syria, then Istanbul and then Ankara. It is like a chain. From Somali to Syria I travelled alone. But with the trafficker, there were a lot of other persons, many from Bangladesh, Pakistan".*

Refugees in this study explained about relying on strong ties or people with whom they have close personal relationships, such as family, as their information source. But they also explained about relying on weak ties or people with whom they are not particularly close with. In this example of Gatha she explains that at first she relied on her sister, but after her sister left she started to make new friends and relied on these newly acquired contacts for information. For the refugees without any strong social ties, they had no choice but to rely on these weak ties.

*[Gatha, 40, Iran]*

*"When I came I had no information about anything. After 3 months in Ankara my sister from Canada came to me and brought me some money. She always connects me and helped me. I was in a foreign country. I didn't know Turkish and did not know what to do. I felt alone and I was scared. I was here with my little son. I was in a bad mood, I felt I had lost my family. When my sister came it was better. She stayed for one month or so, I don't remember exactly. After I had settled a bit in Ankara she left me alone. After that, I made some new friends here, they helped me to find a house. Step by step I found information about my situation here."*

Koser & Pinkerton (2004) state that social networks are the most important source for information about destination countries for potential migrants. Social networks are also one of the few sources that asylum seekers are likely to trust (Koser & Pinkerton, 2004). What I noticed from the participants of this study is that the access to strong social ties as information source, such as family, could indeed provide them with a lot of usable information. The contrast became visible with people without such

a network, who often had much more difficulties in finding reliable information. In my sample, I interviewed 9 Iranian refugees who were part of the Bahá'í religious community. This community proved to be very strong and it appeared that these refugees were most prepared for the situation in Turkey and could more easily make connections in Turkey. Boris (Iran) explains: *"Everyone, especially Bahá'í people, know about Turkey. They explain to each other about this. It is easy to connect to other Bahá'í's in every city."* Part of this could be explained by the fact that Bahá'í refugees were more easily accepted by the UNHCR in Turkey and many have preceded the refugees of this study. Most of the interviewees knew someone who had came before him or her and they would just follow their lead. Like Soraya, also from the Bahá'í community, describes below. Refugees fleeing for other reasons from Iran, like for political reasons or due to conversion to Christianity, had notably more difficulties with accessing useful information.

*[Soraya, 35, Iran]*

*"We knew Turkey helps refugees to go to other countries. My uncle told us about Turkey. He said that after 1/2 year you could come to the USA. My uncle had gone to Turkey and he now lives in USA. He is our sponsor, supporter. We keep in touch by telephone. Our cousin lives in Nevşehir, so we came here. My cousin helped me to apply and showed me how to rent a house. I did not have any information or experience here, just my cousin. The guidance of friends and family was successful, friends told us about ASAM and their classes and the content".*

*[Tara, 28, Iran]*

*"What I heard is that for Bahá'í people, 2 or 3 years is a rule, I am no exception. But I am sure to be accepted, because Bahá'í people have the same problems. The only thing important to me is being safe, being sent to another country. It is not important for me to find things out, just from experiencing. We know all information about being a refugee, 4 or 5 years ago many of our friends refuted."*

## 6.2 Information and Communication Technologies

Besides these informal social sources, refugees also expressed using information and communication technologies as information sources. These included the Internet but also radio or television. A study into the information behavior of Canadian Muslims found that the majority of the participants in their study used newspapers and magazines as information source. Radio was also used but less frequently (Caidi & MacDonald, 2008). The study of Caidi & MacDonald (2008) also found Internet as a popular information source, with a large variety of websites with different purposes and in

different languages. In the study of Su & Conaway (1995) on elderly Chinese migrants, the most frequent used sources were, besides family and friends, the newspaper and television. Furthermore, most of the participants stated that the newspaper was their most useful source. However, in this study a big problem for the use of telephone or Internet and even television proved to be either the trust the refugees had in them or the access to them. Refugees from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan all explained that the government was restricting Internet and telephone communication. Furthermore, the IT-infrastructure and the provision of electricity were often suboptimal to say the least. Especially the refugees from Somalia and Afghanistan expressed they did not even have any access to Internet or a computer. Or they did not know how to work with Internet. None of the participants explained using newspaper as information source.

Even when having access to sources, many refugees still have gaps, lacks and uncertainties. In the study of Callard & MacDonald (2008) the search for trusted information sources was related to the participants' identity and the context which they were in. For example, Muslims in Canada were afraid they were being monitored and were therefore more careful when using Internet browsing, email or cell phones (Callard & MacDonald, 2008). The context that participants of this study were in also proved to be of vital importance for their available information sources. Many refugees expressed that they did not trust using Internet or telephone.

*[Fazel, 41, Iran]*

*"In Iran we just have state television and because of political problems they usually don't tell the truth. Therefore, I can't believe anything they say on television or radio or in the newspaper. I have experienced this for many years, for example they give wrong information about Bahá'í and other groups in Iran, wrong opinions. Therefore I cannot believe anything else."*

### 6.3 Formal information sources

Other studies have indicated that formal sources are scarce and or have little visibility (Benson-Rea, 2003). Participants in this study also did hardly made use of formal institutions or organizations. Only a few refugees had expressed visiting the embassy. One person went to a travel agency for information. One married couple had consulted a lawyer. But besides these, going to a formal information source either did not seem to have crossed the mind of the participants or they expressed they did not trust the organizations in their country.

*[Tara, 28, Iran]*

*"So, I received all my information from friends. I have six friends here and some relatives and friends in Australia. There were some organizations in Iran but I did not go there, it was not necessary. Do you know, any organization in Iran is illegal. It can be very harmful to go there, join or speak to them. You can be put in prison. Being free in Iran is forbidden."*

#### 6.4 Personal experience

For information sources, often a distinction is made between formal and informal sources. However, what was interesting to see was that another source of information for the refugees in this study proved to be their own personal experience or experience of others. For example some expressed expectations about money whilst prices in their country of original countries being lower. Furthermore, stories from friends of families could raise expectations while in their cases the process could look totally different. This included mainly expectations about how long the process would take, while it could in fact take much longer in their own specific conditions. Moreover, some refugees told me they knew they would go to a Muslim country, Turkey, so they were expecting it to be similar. Also, some refugees had tried to get asylum in a different country first and thought the policies would be similar in Turkey. For example Mika tried asylum in Syria first, but when the conditions in the country worsened due to the civil war he decided to come to Turkey. He expected the process to be similar and that he could continue his case, however it proved to be taking much more time than expected. Other refugees who had stayed in Iran or Syria first explained about similar experiences.

*[Mika, 28, Iraq (transit Syria)]*

*"I went to same office in Turkey as in Syria. In Syria they accepted me in the first month as a refugee. Now I am waiting in Turkey. When I asked what about my case, they told me I must wait. I think maybe I don't have a chance to go to another country. A friend of mine is now in America, but I just have to wait and wait... for how long??"*

[Aban, 33, Iraq (transit Syria)]

*"I know a lot of families are telling stories that are not true. I have friends in America and I thought I was just waiting a small time. But I don't have stamp from Iraq, it takes some more time. In Syria I already had my last interview and was waiting for America. But then problems started in Syria. When I came to Turkey I went to UN and I thought I would just have one interview before America, maybe waiting a half year. But here they are not helping, and there is no answer when calling. How long do we have to stay? I did not know about this. I see many Iraqis being accepted. A friend of mine went to America in 1 year and 3 months."*

## 6.5 Analysis of information sources

What became apparent in this study is that the refugees were most likely to use humans as sources, such as from their social networks. My findings confirm results of other studies (Fisher et al., 2004; Flythe, 2001; Birkel & Repucci, 1983; Savolainen, 1995; Koser & Pinkerton, 2004). However, what also became clear is that there were many barriers in accessing other information sources. Mostly, the barriers involved access to sources or trust of the participants toward sources. The refugees in this study indicated making use of multiple sources, however informal sources were much more dominant. Strong ties in networks were especially present with members of the religious Bahá'í community. Formal sources were hardly used or thought of. What was furthermore very interesting to see was that previous personal experience could also work as an information source for the refugees. Previous experience has been incorporated in other studies related to information behavior as well (Johnson, Andrews & Allard, 2001; Robinson, 2013). In the models of Johnson et al. (2001), it is assumed that there are underlying imperatives to seek information, which include demographics, experience salience of information and beliefs. It is recognized that there are personal and contextual factors that can motivate or inhibit information seeking (Robinson, 2013) which will also be elaborated on in Chapter 8. When someone is not motivated to seek information or is inhibited from doing so, he or she might take action on the basis of existing knowledge (Robinson, 2013). The model of McKenzie does not include personal experience. The next chapter will explore the information needs of refugees before coming to Turkey.

## 7. Information needs

Information needs lead to information-seeking behavior (Savolainen, 2007). As explained in Chapter 2, a need is a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you believe exists. Other studies that have studied information needs of refugees found that their needs included information about health care (Fisher et al., 2004; Conaway, 1995), learning the local language or learning English (Flythe, 2001; Fisher et al., 2004), finding a job (Fisher et al., 2004), learning about social service and legal system (Fisher et al., 2004), hobbies or interest (Conaway, 1995), cultural or religious activities (Conaway, 1995), banking structures (Fisher et al., 2004). So these needs basically comprehend learning about how everything works in this new country as well as learning about asylum policies. When migrants are going to a new country, one would expect they would search for these kinds of information. This chapter explores the information needs of refugees of this study. This chapter aims to answer the following sub research question: *What are the information needs of refugees coming to Turkey?*

### 7.1 Seeking refuge

What was interesting to see is that I initially also wanted to know what the knowledge of refugees was on asylum policies in Turkey. This was partly important for ASAM as well, since ASAM was conducting an own survey to see whether refugees were intending to stay in Turkey once geographical limitation would be lifted. This would mean that refugees have to be aware of current asylum policies and possible policy changes. However, from my study it became apparent that this awareness of asylum policies was not present at all when coming to Turkey. Often the refugees from Turkey's neighboring countries were already aware for a very long time of the fact that they could not stay in Turkey, since family, friends or acquaintances had went to the process in Turkey before them and were now residing in a third country. They were not looking for any changes in this process. This often caused many problems once in Turkey, for example they had not bring the right documents as proof for their case or they had expected that they would be resettled soon and did not prepare themselves enough for their stay in Turkey. One thing that the refugees were clearly not aware of is that resettlement is not a right and just a possibility offered by UNHCR as part of a durable solution approach (UNHCR, 2013). On the other hand were there also some refugees that did not know that they could not stay in Turkey when coming to Turkey. These refugees had come by Turkey by accident, for example by a smuggler from Somalia, and just heard this when arriving in Turkey. That being said, Turkey had not been their preferred destination country and intentions were to go to Europe or elsewhere.

Part of this low awareness and interest in asylum policies could be explained because many participants did not see themselves as being a refugee when leaving their countries and coming to Turkey. It was difficult for them to grasp the meaning of what a 'refugee' is. They expressed they just wanted to flee. The expressed needs of refugees in this study included: '*safety is the most important thing for me*', '*I just want a peaceful life*', '*I just want to go as soon as possible to another country*', '*I was just worrying about leaving the country and that I will have to leave*', '*after what happened I was just looking for security*'. This finding of security was their first need.

*[Buushow, 28, Somalia]*

*"I knew nothing about asylum policies when I came here. I did not think of myself as being a refugee".*

Some refugees expressed they had some more information needs, but all remained very basic and practical such as how much money to bring or where the UNHCR office was located or what the weather was like. It was surprising to see that these refugees did not search for more information about refugee policies or rights, but can be understood since their needs are not yet associated with being a refugee. Often the refugees had received some information about asylum policies from their network, however not all refugees had access to such a network and, even when they did, this information often proved to be insufficient which could lead to delay in their asylum procedure.

*[Badee, 34, Pakistan]*

*"I never thought I could be in this situation. I had a good life, I was working, I had money, and I had a good job. I never thought I would be in this situation, I was very surprised and shocked. I had no choice except putting myself in safety. It was very difficult for me. I didn't know much about being a refugee, just some general information."*

*[Bibi, 37, Iran]*

*"We did not have sufficient information when we came here. Just God could help us. I did not know about bringing case documents, and now we have many problems. I just brought ID card and passport. Our cousin did not tell us to bring political documents and proof of firing our daughter from school. If we had known, we would have been more successful."*

*[Sabina, 24, Iraq]*

*"If you are of risk of death, you will come. Nobody wants to leave their country and be a refugee, it is really hard, it is unbelievable. But you have no choice, it is really hard. I had no idea about being a refugee. It feels like I am in a pool but I don't know how to swim."*

## 7.2 Development of other needs

A large part of the literature on information needs of refugees is focused on the settlement stage of the migration process, where refugees have to find their ways in the new information landscapes (Lloyd, 2013). This study was focused on the stage before settlement and furthermore the participants of this study were aware they could not stay in Turkey indefinitely. Upon arriving in Turkey the information needs of refugees developed into more specific needs. They started to think of other things, their needs for their stay in Turkey. These needs were more similar to the needs in other studies as explained above and involved learning about the country, such as finding an apartment, earning some money or being active. Some participants expressed they wanted to be busy and feel that their time spent in Turkey was useful so they would take computer lessons or would just be creative and make carpets or photos. Furthermore, many refugees expressed improving their English or learning Turkish while being in Turkey. Once in Turkey their needs for information about a third country increased as well, such as learning about financial stability, continuing of education, finding work, residence permit and health insurance in third countries. Their needs changed as well as their searching behavior, as can be seen from Chapter 5.

*[Soraya, 35, Iran]*

*"After making the decision of coming here, I was just worrying about my children. Worrying what will happen to them when they cannot speak English. Fortunately, the children do not have many problems here in Turkey, they can go to English lessons and learn the language. It is not so much education, but still. Now I am worrying about myself, I am just a housewife, not a worker. We were farming in Iran, I know just this."*

*[Rahele, 37, Iran]*

*"When I came for the first interview date, which was 3 weeks after my arrival, I got a booklet of UNHCR with all kind of information about telephone numbers, contacts, ASAM, job permit, diseases etc. Because I had a reliable person here, my cousin, I already knew a lot of that information, even the telephone number of ASAM. But if you are here for 2 years before your first interview date it is very late and difficult".*

### 7.3 Analysis of information needs

This research focused on information practices in accounts of everyday life. Of course, being a refugee is not an everyday life occasion. Many refugees in this study explained to me that they could not grasp the meaning of being a refugee when having to leave their country. They would never have pictured themselves in this position and it was hard for them to understand what was happening and what it is to be a refugee. In this research, it became clear that information needs were quite invisible to the refugees since they did not yet think of themselves as such. The need to search for information on refugee rights or policies or even about living in Turkey was consequently very low. No LIS research to date has examined how asylum policies affect the seeking practices of refugees (Caidi et al., 2010). In this study, the refugees were not influenced by asylum policies in their seeking behavior. As can be seen from Chapter 5, their active information searching was also overall very basic. They were aware that they had to leave. It became visible from this study that the prime need of the participants was seeking refuge for themselves and sometimes their families. Only after this immediate need, their needs would develop into something more specific. This can be very important in considering and addressing the information needs of refugees. Just offering more information will not change the perception of their new status. This asks for a more complex approach in information provision towards new refugees. What can be seen from this study however, is that the information needs of refugees grow more specific once in Turkey. Information provision in Turkey could therefore help addressing these specific needs such as information on asylum policies as well as information on living in Turkey and in a third country. With information needs is meant missing information one might have that they are aware of exists. As explained above, the refugees often did not see themselves yet as a refugee and therefore they would not be aware of missing information. However, information need also refers to missing information through a lack of understanding or barriers in finding/ accessing information (Case, 2007). This was definitely also the case in this study as will be explained in the next chapter in more detail.

## 8. Information poverty

Information and access to it should be recognized as being important, as highlighted in this report. Information poverty is characterized as lacking necessary resources such as adequate social networks and information-finding skills that can enable everyday life information seeking (Chatman, 1996). This chapter aims to answer the sub research questions: *How informationally poor are refugees coming to Turkey?* The information poverty of these refugees could be explained by barriers in accessing information as well as the context in which they were in, which will be explained in this chapter.

### 8.1 Barriers in accessing sources

Part of information poverty can be explained by barriers in accessing sources. The participants in this study faced many barriers in accessing information, these included language barriers, barriers in access to ICT and barriers in access to informal sources.

#### 8.1.1 Language barrier

Lloyd (2013) recognizes that language can be a barrier in accessing information. In this study language barrier proved to be an issue as well. None of the refugees I have spoken with could speak Turkish before coming to Turkey. This proved to be a barrier for those who tried to look up information on Turkey by the Internet before coming, since many websites turned out to be in Turkish. The refugees I have spoken with who could understand (some) English could find some more information. However, webpages in local language proved to be insufficient and only focused on irrelevant information such as tourism, in the eyes of the refugees.

[Arman, 26, Iran]

*“I didn’t know anything about Turkey, even basic greeting customs. Someone told me ‘Merhaba’ (hello), but I didn’t know what this means.”*

#### 8.1.2 Barriers in access to ICT

Refugees in this study were disadvantaged by information deficiencies in their countries of origin, for example by inadequate access to ICT, as can be seen from Chapter 6. Adding to this is consequently a

lack of skills in using such information sources (such as knowing how to browse on the Internet). Dijk and Hacker (2003) classify barriers to access of ICT in 1) a lack of digital experience; 2) no possession of computers and network connectors; 3) lack of digital skills and 4) lack of usage opportunities. All these four factors could be addressed to the participants of this study. In accessing ICT participants faced educational and cultural barriers, lack of infrastructure and a lack of accessing emerging ICT. Many of the participants did not have any computer and/or Internet at home. When there was a computer and/or network available, this proved to be very slow and limited by the government. Cognitively, participants of this study differed in levels of education, numeracy, information and analytical skills. Remarkably though, all participants expressed similar information practices. There were only two participants who expressed more advanced skills in Internet browsing, by for example searching for 'Refugee AND Turkey'.

*[Saad, 41, Somalia]*

*"The communication in and with Somalia is very poor. If you have a telephone number you would have to repeat it for maybe one hour, there is very little electricity, no Internet, very bad telecom. It is almost impossible. People can access Internet, but you know, Internet in Somalia is very rare. There is often no electricity. Government or private organizations have access to the Internet, we don't have Internet at home. Some friends are working in places where you can access Internet and there are a few access points. But I couldn't find Internet. I had not read about Turkey before coming here".*

### ***8.1.3 Barriers in access to informal sources***

As can be seen from the Chapter 6, personal sources were preferred over professional ones. It is inadequate to say that the refugees from this study did not have any access to information since all participants received information from informal sources as can be seen from Chapter 5. However, there was a big difference between the quality and trust in these informal sources. The Bahá'í community from Iran proved to have adequate access to networks, as opposed to other refugees in this study. The study of Sligo and Jameson (2000) showed that people who lived with "community connectedness" could benefit from the information shared. This was the case for the Bahá'í community from Iran. However, people who had to use a smuggler to get into Turkey proved to have very little information and did not have access to these strong informal ties. This group was facing even more barriers in access to information.

*[Buushow, 28, Somalia]*

*"I knew nothing about Turkey. The trafficking men knew how to enter Turkey. I paid 200 dollar just to meet this Syrian trafficking men. Another 500 dollar to reach the Turkish border. Here we met with Turkish traffickers and they exchanged me. I paid another 200 dollar to the Turkish trafficker to get to the bus to Istanbul".*

## 8.2 Contextual factors in information poverty

Besides barriers in accessing information, the context in which a person is in can also add to information poverty. It is recognized that often information poverty is related to the socio-economic position of people (Yu, 2010). Chatman (1996) furthermore recognizes that information poverty is associated with class distinction. The participants in this study were forced into a disadvantaged socio-economic position when they became refugees while not necessarily belonging to such a group in their country of origin. Often these socio-economically disadvantaged are taken for granted to be informationally poor. However, more things can be involved which influence information poverty such as disadvantages associated with behavioral, cognitive, cultural and attitudinal factors (Yu, 2010). Chatman (1996) distinguished four concepts that influence information poverty: risk-taking, secrecy, deception, and situational relevance.

### 8.2.1 Self-protecting behavior

Lloyd (2013) states that refugees might face additional problems in an information search such as problems related to trust or trauma from leaving their country. These issues were definitely present for the refugees in this study. The information behavior of the refugees could often be characterized by great distrust of outsiders, therefore characterizing their information practices with secrecy and deception. Several refugees explained that they were not sharing their case with others since they were afraid they would copy their story. Or they expressed that they would not share information on the phone or Internet because they were afraid someone was spying on them. It was also heard that refugees would fake stories, hiding their true condition by giving false or misleading information, with the belief that this would help them in the asylum process. This leads to others not sharing their cases in the fear that people won't keep it confidential. This makes the asylum procedure even more fitful and unexpected. Especially the refugees in this study originating from Iraq expressed that in their culture they face a lot of distrust and secrecy. The purpose of secrecy and deception can be to protect someone at risk or oneself when someone perceives that revealing of information is potentially dangerous. It can therefore be seen as a form of self-protection (Chatman, 1996). Refugees are a very vulnerable group and self-protection behavior can be understood. However, a

principle component of information-seeking is risk-taking. Information received from outsiders is related to a degree of trust associated with the source (Chatman, 1996). Participants in this study who came from the Bahá'í community in Iran clearly trusted their network sources and often explained to have benefited from the information received by them. However, other sources were perceived as less trustworthy and participants would express self-protecting behavior. Chatman (1996) argues that these behaviors can lead to reinforcing of information poverty.

*[Sabina, 24, Iraq]*

*"We were forced to leave, we just closed the door with everything still in the house. We had no time to prepare. We came to Turkey since we heard the process is faster, from our relatives. Nobody told us when we came here that we have no right to work, this was like a shock to us. In eastern societies, when you call someone to ask something, they don't tell you the truth, I don't know why. They told us you will find help. We didn't find. The biggest problem is language. They told my family that you don't need the language, because it is just temporary. My father is old so it is more difficult for him to learn, but even young people are not learning. You can't force locals here to learn English, but I could learn Turkish so I did. Learning Turkish made a lot of things easier. It is really hard to be a refugee. But when you have no choice – leaving of being killed – it's just running away. I was supposed to know more before we came, to ask more, but it was something out of our control."*

*[Mika, 28, Iraq]*

*"Not everyone will give you information. I don't know why, but if I ask some people 'how did you do it', they will not say. It is difficult. Because of the situation in Iraq, they put something in you, people don't trust anyone anymore."*

### **8.2.1.1 Avoidance of exposure of their problems**

Avoidance of exposure of their problems also existed for refugees in this study. Some refugees even expressed that they did not want to share being a refugee, afraid of being treated differently. This can also be recognized as deception, a form of self-protecting behavior. However, when not expressing to be a refugee, information needs related to their status cannot be met. Nevertheless, refugees felt that expressing being a refugee would place them in a lesser position while they wanted to be seen as normal and capable. Similar behavior was found by Chatman (1996) and these behaviors are meant to hide their true crisis and can be seen as efforts to appear normal and to exhibit acceptable coping behavior. These self-protection behaviors can therefore be part of a response to social norms. Caidi & Allard (2005) conceptualize social exclusion as an information

problem: immigrants without adequate access to information are socially excluded, and those who are socially excluded may also lack access to mainstream sources of information or the proper social capital. The perception of being isolated could further stimulate risk avoidance (Chatman, 1997).

*[Salim, 24, Afghan]*

*"Besides here in ASAM, nobody knows me as a refugee, I don't tell them. If I tell them, they would see me differently, weak, or cannot trust me like I am just saying something. They don't look at you as who you are, as being a human."*

*[Bibi, 37, Iran]*

*"When I came to Turkey, we were very careful, isolated from Iranians and Turks. Because I was told Turkish people treat you very badly and are really not kind. We were also told not to talk about our case because people may copy your case and tell your story to the UN. We heard this from our cousin. This problem has happened to us: some Iranians have deceived us economically, not our case, but I can't tell everything because I am careful. I am worried about our Iranian identity, I prefer not to say. I have had bad experiences, we have experienced many problems here."*

### **8.2.2 Selective attendance**

Another problem is the fact that the refugees in this study often did not yet think of themselves as being refugees, as explained in the previous chapter. Therefore without an information need recognized, they cannot seek for relevant knowledge. This can lead to selective attendance to relevant knowledge, since it is not yet recognized that this should be important. Also, the refugees expressed that it would be better to gain experience by themselves and therefore hardly relied on information that came to them. Yu (2010) furthermore recognizes that people almost always choose to use resources from within their own information resource bases when there is need. This means that often they will not think of searching for different sources for information and will use the information sources they have used before. Therefore, only a small number of categories and ranges of sources are relevant from the individuals' perspective. In this study this also seemed the case. For example hardly any refugee thought of looking up information from an organization.

*[Edris, 18, Afghanistan]*

*"Before coming to Turkey, I had no access to Internet, no books, there were no organizations. I was not seeking about information on living in Turkey because I wanted to go to Europe. I did seek information about Europe through friends I made. My sources of information were these friends. They gave me only very general information about life in Europe and about some rights, these were the most important things to know. However, I had too little information. Most information I got about immigration was not good, not real and not useful to help me. For example, they told me I should go to Ankara and you can find persons there to cross the border and to go to Europe. They told me Ankara was full of immigrants who could help me. But when I came in Ankara I could not find anyone to help me go to Europe, and I could not speak Turkish, so I had to go to register with UN."*

### ***8.2.3 Situational relevance***

Another aspect of information is the situational relevance (Chatman, 1997). Most of the refugees knew that they were not going to stay in Turkey and had to be resettled in another country. They were only searching for very basic information as can be seen from Chapter 5. However, this could induce information poverty as well since their knowledge was very superficial and therefore their expectations were much different from reality. Furthermore, the situation in which they were in would not allow for an extended information search. All refugees had very little preparation time due to forced migration. In this preparation time the most important things addressed were gathering of money by selling their possessions and saying goodbye to family. Furthermore, their situation would often not allow them to look for sources that were not accessible within their spatial territory. Several refugees had to hide to protect their lives before being able to leave the country.

*[Saad, 41, Somalia]*

*"I was not trying to escape, but the situation forced me to escape, there was a lot of insecurity and nobody there to protect me. Marka is a port, I was hiding there while my friend was managing my escape. The smuggler just took money from me, not knowing where I would go. But I was targeted, they were going to kill me so my only option was to escape, to where was not necessary. The fishing men told me I was going to Europe. My destination was just to be out of my country. When we arrived, there were more Africans, they did not tell us where we were, they didn't tell us we were in Turkey".*

### 8.3 Analysis of information poverty

Almost all of the refugees expressed that they did not have sufficient information about Turkey before coming. Mostly they expressed they did not have enough access to good information sources. Especially the ones who had to enter Turkey with a smuggler proved to be informationally poor. Some of them even did not know they were going to Turkey or that they would be resettled to a third country and that they have to wait in Turkey until this process was finished (which could take years). This caused major problems for them, financially as well as mentally. Their expectations were very much different from reality in Turkey.

*[Noah, 46, Oman]*

*"I really had different expectations. I have no rights as refugee, no food support, no financial support. I used to work at home and I was busy. But here it is very difficult. I take classes, I keep myself busy. I have no income. My daughter is not studying. We are just waiting and waiting, it is very difficult. There is not even a call to ask about how you are doing. This makes me very depressed. My wife and I are taking pills, anti-depressions for this. I didn't know about other things, like Helsinki and ASAM. I just learned about them here. If I look back I really had too little information. It would have helped me if I had known more. Maybe if I would have gone first alone to here and ...."*

Information poverty of refugees seems to go beyond socio-economic status and is related to both external factors as well as internal factors. External factors were barriers in accessing of information, such as language barriers, inadequate access and/or skills in using ICT and barriers in accessing informal sources. Internal factors were induced by the context in which they were in, these included showing self-protective behavior, selective attendance and avoidance of exposure of their problems. Secrecy and deception are used due to a mistrust in others ability to provide useful information or due to self-protective behaviors in response to social norms. Furthermore, the relevance of information to their situation proved to be important since they did not think of themselves as being a refugee and were furthermore not in the ability to perform an extended search. All these behaviors can reinforce information poverty. However, these behaviors were stimulated by the societies from which they had to flee. They had faced many disadvantages in their home countries and had been subjected to severe inhuman treatment. Furthermore they experienced limited freedom in accessing information as well as using of information. Therefore most of these limiting factors were beyond their control, including a lack of necessary skills and service infrastructure.

Yu (2010) points out that often it is unclear how informationally poor the information poor are. So, how informationally poor are these refugees? Overall, the refugees in this study recognized to have

too little knowledge about Turkey before coming. Other studies found that there could be an information overload (Savolainen, 2008). However, none of the participants explained receiving too much information. Especially the groups without sufficient networks proved to be very informationally poor and not well prepared enough for the asylum process in Turkey. Their expectations were very far from reality. These expectations were based on previous experiences in asylum processes, Turkey or on false or insufficient information. Due to the factors explained above the refugees in this study were disadvantaged in a number of ways. These factors limit refugees and leave them with too little or insufficient information in order to be able to make informed decisions. This created multiple problems once in Turkey, mainly consisting of financial problems and emotional distress. One refugee even explained needing anti-depression medication due to the hard conditions in Turkey that turned out to be so different from his expectations. Most refugees in this study could therefore be recognized as being informationally poor. Persons from the religious Bahá'í community seemed to be less informationally poor than the other refugees in this study. Nevertheless, access to relevant information could greatly empower the lives of refugees. One refugee even expressed that she would never have come if she would have known that the process would take so long. It is therefore of great importance to improve the information provision to these groups.

## 9. Conclusion

The previous chapters have provided interesting insight into the information behavior of refugees. In this chapter I will conclude my findings as well as make some recommendations and suggestions for further research. I will place my findings and experience in the context of the theory I have used and literature I have found.

### 9.1 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to understand how refugees move in the information fields available to them, what this means to them and whether they are able to make informed decisions. It sought to identify and analyse the information behaviour of refugees before coming to Turkey. Data was collected through 25 in-depth interviews with refugees in Turkey. The theoretical concepts of information needs, information sources, information poverty, information seeking and the model of McKenzie were used. The situation in Turkey is unique due to a large influx of non-European refugees while obtaining a restriction that excludes refugees from outside of Council of Europe member countries of asylum in Turkey. Refugees in this study should apply with UNHCR for asylum in a third country, but meanwhile had to stay in Turkey whilst receiving no support and no working permit. These migrants faced numerous challenges and it is therefore of great importance to ensure valid information to be available to them in order for them to prepare themselves. The research question of this study was: *“What is the information behaviour of refugees coming to Turkey?”*

What we have learned from this study is that active engagement in information seeking does not account for all the information behavior of refugees. The active seeking practices from refugees were low and basic while other modes of information practices were much more dominant. These included by proxy and active scanning practices. Part of this can be explained by the fact that the refugees did not yet see themselves as being a refugee and active information practices require the recognition of a need. Information on asylum policies did not seem to play a role for the refugees. Active searching was partly depending on the access to social ties. Informal sources were preferred over formal sources. Similar information seeking behaviors were found between groups of different nationality, gender and age. However, not all participants had access to reliable social ties and this could influence their seeking practices. The Iranian religious Bahá’í community proved to have access to the strongest social ties with trusted (whether or not sufficient) information provision. Refugees from Somalia, Afghanistan or those who had to enter Turkey through a smuggler proved to have encountered the most barriers in accessing trusted information. Almost all of the refugees expressed

that they did not have sufficient information about Turkey before coming. Expectations were very much different from reality, which caused financial problems and emotional distress. I found that the information behaviour of these refugees can be characterized by information poverty. This information poverty includes both external factors and internal factors. External factors were barriers in accessing of information, such as language barriers, inadequate access and/or skills in using ICT and barriers in accessing informal sources. Internal factors included showing self-protective behavior, selective attendance and avoidance of exposure of their problems. What can be seen from this study is that these situational and contextual factors play a very important role and are an explaining and inducing factor for the information poverty of refugees. After arriving in Turkey the needs and seeking behavior of refugees seemed to develop. However, before coming to Turkey they had faced many challenges and disadvantages. Access to relevant information could greatly empower the lives of refugees and it is therefore important to address this.

## 9.2 Theory building

One of the criticisms in LIS research is that it fails to build on existing theory. Many theories and models have been developed without real advancement of theory or comparisons in findings (Case, 2007; Robinson, 2013). The role of theory in this research was threefold. Firstly, it helped to frame the proposed research in a focused manner. Secondly, after entering the field and analyzing the data it helped to offer further insight in information seeking. Finally, the results of this research can also contribute to theory. This thesis builds upon the earlier work in LIS research and migration research on information needs information sources, information poverty and everyday life information seeking. Furthermore, it adds to the few studies combining these two fields.

This study specifically builds on the model of McKenzie (2003). This model has not been extensively tested and there was little guidance in literature. McKenzie (2003) stated that further study in different contexts is needed in order to determine the applicability of the model. For this study, the model of McKenzie (2003) provided important tools for analyzing the seeking practices of refugees. My study confirmed that that information seeking behavior consists of more than active seeking. The active scanning and by proxy accounts proved to be very essential components in the seeking practices of refugees. Furthermore, my study confirmed overlap in the information practices of refugees, showing the complexity of ELIS. Yet, measurability proved to be more difficult for the 'non-directed monitoring' practices. Non-directed monitoring in the 'making connections' phase might not be applicable in this context of refugees, since it entails regular monitoring of the context, such as watching the news. The refugees in this study did not have much time to prepare themselves for

leaving, thus monitoring the context could be difficult. Moreover, they were leaving their countries and moving to a different country, which could make monitoring the context irrelevant for the information they needed to find. For the non-directed monitoring in the 'interaction' phase, participants hardly provided examples of any unexpected encounters. It could have been difficult for participants to recall and distinguish these 'unexpected information encounters'. In the study of McKenzie these non-directed monitoring interaction occasions also proved to be rare. Nevertheless, in her study she included a diary/diary method, which could have made this specific information practice more measurable. Furthermore, my study confirmed that physical characteristics and social meaning are important aspects in the making of connections and interacting of information practices.

In addition to this study, I have found one other study that has tested the applicability of the model of McKenzie (2003). In this study of Yeoman (2010) again a different context was introduced by a study on women in menopause. Yeoman (2010) found that the framework of McKenzie was applicable to her study but there were some challenges in the process. Furthermore, she found that the value placed on by proxy interactions extended beyond being told but evolved in an active exchange of information and support. This was also true for the refugees in this study, where sharing of information was an important part of their information behavior. The refugees themselves can therefore have an important role as source of information as well.

All in all, the model of McKenzie does show transferability to different study topics. The model shows enough flexibility to be applied in a different context as this study as well as the study of Yeoman (2012) have helped to show. The model is simple in design and interpretation. This simplicity enhances the explanatory power. Nevertheless, both Yeoman (2010) and myself found some missing elements relating to the conceptualizing of the context in which participant are in. Many models fail to conceptualize and integrate context in their models (Courtright, 2008). Yeoman (2010) suggests that the model of McKenzie could be extended by taking into account what happens to information after it is acquired, for example the use of information for sense-making. Furthermore, the suggestion was made to include the role of the individual who may in turn become a provider of information. I agree that adding of these elements could indeed provide a richer and deeper interpretation of information practices. The current model of McKenzie (2003) can be seen as analyzing a sub-set of information practices, namely the information seeking (both active and passive). For this study it was used as such, but I would like to add that this model could move towards a more generic model of everyday information practices by including information sharing, needs and use as well. Furthermore, the current model assumes there is a context while this is not

yet conceptualized. The study of McKenzie focuses on the context of everyday life information seeking, while it is recognized that in the sample of twin-pregnancy women there are relatively limited opportunities for information exchange. Pregnant women are working with new information environment, and their normal sources would probably not be of much use. Furthermore, pregnancy involves a relatively short period of high information seeking. Similarly, though in a complete different setting, refugees in this study had to make use of new information environments in a very short period of time as well. In this study, the context in which the refugees were in proved to create many disadvantages beyond their actual information seeking practices. I therefore believe it could benefit the model to incorporate individual's personal and environmental context as well. Furthermore, personal experience proved to be important source for the refugees in this study. Some studies have already acknowledged previous experience as an underlying imperative to seek information (Johnson et al., 2001; Robinson, 2013). In the model of McKenzie, previous experience or any other personal or contextual factors were not included. Especially for refugees I believe these are very important factors to consider and they could strengthen the model.

Findings learned in this study from the framework of McKenzie can be a valuable contribution to migration studies as well. The finding that also in the case of refugees, information seeking behavior consists of more than active seeking practices, is very relevant contribution to refugee studies. Most information of refugees actually comes to the refugees through by proxy or active scanning practices. Other refugee studies (Gilbert, 2006; Benson-Rea & Rawlinson, 2003) stated that refugees would have too little time to search or would skip information seeking in whole. While there were certainly many practical limitations for the participants of this study, it can be recognized that refugees did receive information through active scanning and by proxy practices. In information provision towards refugees it is therefore important to consider these practices as well. Furthermore, the making of connections phase in information practices seemed to be very critical for refugees in order to interact and thus for being able to receive relevant information. Refugees who were part from the Bahá'í community could more easily make connections than participants who had no access to social ties or had to rely on weak ties. The initial connection with a source and the quality of that source can therefore be recognized as very important factors for the interaction phase of information practices of refugees.

An important addition to theory as well is therefore the combination of LIS with a refugee study. As mentioned in Chapter 2, there is little information-related research focusing specifically on refugees. Furthermore, within the current studies, the focus is mainly on the settlement process by which immigrants adjust to their new homelands (Caidi et al, 2010). This study provides deep and rich

descriptions on information behaviour of refugees from flight situations. My study highlights the uniqueness of experiences of refugees as well as the commonality of experiences and can therefore be seen as an important addition to refugee studies beyond the context of Turkey.

Another important finding was that the information needs of refugees before coming to Turkey were not yet developed into specifics. Most important reason found for this was that they did not see themselves as refugees yet. Most studies focus on information needs in the settlement stage and I believe that this pre-migration stage mindset can contribute to a better understanding of information behavior of refugees.

### 9.3 Strengths and limitations

Despite some limitations there are valuable lessons that can be drawn from this study. It provides deep description and explanation that is instructive beyond the specific research site and can contribute to theory building. This thesis shows the complexity of information behavior of refugees. Whereas the sub questions can be answered separately, the answers show overlap as there is a complex and diffuse interplay in information seeking behavior, needs, available sources, use and context. They strengthen each other, yet also evolve and change separately. In conclusion, this study provides an in-depth holistic view of information behavior of refugees before coming to Turkey.

As can be seen above, an important strength of this thesis is that it builds on existing theories as well as on the model of McKenzie (2003). There is still a gap in literature on information behavior of refugees and the findings and challenges of this thesis can strengthen future research in this field. Furthermore, there is a shortage of empirical studies on refugees in Turkey. Much current research is technical or focused on migration out of Turkey. This study can contribute to a better understanding of refugee issues in Turkey. The findings of this study also contribute beyond the context of Turkey, by providing detailed description and insight into the information behavior of fleeing refugees.

There are some limitations that need to be kept in mind. This sample is not representative for the refugee population in Turkey or elsewhere. This study is local and situated and therefore not empirically generalizable. Turkey is in a unique situation with a geographical limitation and a very large influx of refugees. Furthermore, those interviewed were voluntary and willing to talk about their practices and experiences, this could have lead to selection bias. There could be many more individuals with different experiences. Nevertheless, I was very happy to have access to refugees in this study since access is often acknowledged as a limitation in refugee studies. Moreover, this

sample was for a large part highly educated which could have influenced the results of this study. Migration from Iran has also been referred to as a 'brain drain' of the country (MPI, 2006); therefore it is not strange that mostly refugees from Iran in this sample (10) had enjoyed higher education. Additionally, there seemed to be very little difference in information behavior between persons from different education. As can be seen from this report, active seeking was very low in general and all refugees had experienced situational and contextual disadvantages.

Some of the limitations of the methods of this study had already been anticipated on in chapter 3. This study only made use of face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews as data collection method. This research is based on analysis of described accounts of information practices by the interviewees and not on observations of information practices as it happened. I was therefore dependent on what the participants have told me. Even though the interviews provided detailed information about information behavior, some things should be kept in mind. There could be a recall bias (Evers, 2007). The refugees interviewed were already in Turkey 1 or 2 years, some even more. They were asked to recall their information practices before and upon arrival to Turkey and it could occur that the respondent can remember or recall the events differently. It was however not possible to reach newly arrived refugees. On the other hand, due to the fact that they were now in Turkey, they could reflect on missing information and needs from before their migration, which they earlier might not have been aware of. One of the things I noticed is that the interviewees had a very precise memory of when they had arrived, for how long they have been in Turkey and when exactly they had progressed from which stage in their asylum process. In the study of van Liempt (2007) she experienced that previous interviews can have an impact. She found that interviewees past interviews with official agencies had felt more like an interrogation to them (van Liempt, 2007). Most probably the refugees from this study had had similar experiences because they had already gone through multiple interviews with UNHCR and possibly also other organizations or agencies. Their impressions of those interviews could have influenced their behavior in my interview as well. Van Liempt (2007) recognized that these experiences could create a larger distrust, which needs to be kept in mind by researchers. Letting them be in control of their story and creating an informal interview setting proved to be important in the removing of distrust. Often at the end of an interview refugees showed their gratitude to me for listening to their full stories, happy for being able to talk about their difficulties. Another difficulty was that it was difficult to measure non-directed monitoring with this data collection method, as can be seen from chapter 5. Other methods such as diary/diary methods could have been useful but unfortunately did not fit in my data collection time frame.

Despite the fair amount of data I was able to collect in just two months, this study was still influenced by a time limitation. It would have been interesting to have even numbers of refugees from each nationality group. Bigger numbers would have allowed for more group comparisons. Due to time limitations, practical difficulties and ethical concerns it was necessary to use a gatekeeper to gain access to the refugee population. ASAM proved to be an organization in which the refugees had trust, which made it possible for me to establish direct contact with them.

#### 9.4 Further research

Further research could investigate whether these findings could be affirmed by a similar research with different refugee groups in Turkey or other regions. The model of McKenzie (2003) has helped to show that the seeking behavior of refugees does not consist of active seeking practices alone. Nevertheless, the model failed to address contextual and personal factors, which played a very big role for the refugees in this study. Using a different model that aims at combining these factors would be very useful. Including information providers as well would make it possible to show how to get information receivers and providers better aligned. Also, it would be very interesting to compare these results with follow-up interviews or another study once the refugees have settled in Turkey and/ or once they have settled in a third country. What could be seen from this study is that the information behavior and needs of refugees started to change in Turkey. However, the focus of this study was on the pre-migration phase to Turkey, so it would be interesting to compare information behavior over different stages in the migration process to see whether information behavior indeed changes and how.

#### 9.5 Recommendations

My last sub research question stated: *What could aid the information giving system towards refugees in Turkey?* In this section of recommendations I will take some time to elaborate on this. I have studied information need, use and seeking from the perspective of refugees. I have not studied the current information giving systems or providers. Recommendations can therefore include important findings in my study from the perspective of refugees.

##### 9.5.1 Information giving in Turkey

An important finding of this research is that the information needs were not yet very present when leaving their country of origin, since they did not perceive themselves as being a refugee. I have found that these needs grew once arriving in Turkey. Therefore effective improvements for

information provision can be made in Turkey. Whilst preparing for this study, ASAM had taken over an operating task of the UNHCR namely the pre-registrations of asylum applicants. This means that newly arrived refugees first have to go to ASAM for registering of basic information, and then wait for an interview date assigned by UNHCR. In this first contact moment with ASAM, newly arrived refugees currently receive information about their status as a refugee and some practical steps in the asylum procedure. I was very pleased to see that there were already some very valuable improvements in information provision towards refugees made by ASAM. The refugees I have spoken with would only receive some information in their first interview with UNHCR, which could take weeks, months or even years. In light of my findings, it was interesting to see that asylum policies did not play a large role for refugees when coming to Turkey. It would be interesting to try to address this. As can be seen from their stories, refugees were missing all kinds of valuable information on asylum policies such as which documents to bring, how long the process will be and how to prepare for it. As this information is of great importance, I consider this contribution of ASAM as a very good improvement compared to the previous situation. Still, with the results of this study in mind, ASAM could focus on specific information needs, such as the exact missing information on asylum policies of UNHCR and Turkey as well as information on living in Turkey and in a future country.

Furthermore, improvements can be made in information provision about how long the process of asylum can take. Since this is different for each person, I think it would be important that UNHCR provides regular updates as this was clearly something the asylum seekers were missing. As was highlighted in this study, refugees could also act as an information source themselves. When information provision towards refugees currently in Turkey improves, they will be able to better inform the connections they have in their countries of origin. This would most probably lead to some people deciding to stay and others coming to Turkey better prepared.

An interesting finding to keep in mind is that refugees seem to use the sources that they already have been familiar with, as Yu (2010) has recognized as well. Often they will not even think of searching for other sources for information. ASAM and other NGO's could help refugees by introducing them to a larger variety of sources and helping them in learning how to use these different sources as well.

### ***9.5.2 Information giving outside of Turkey***

From this study it became clear that refugees had very little knowledge on asylum policies. Part of this was because they did not experience an information need because they did not yet see

themselves as being a refugee. This can be very important in considering and addressing the information needs of refugees. Just offering more information will not change the perception of their new status. This asks for a more complex approach in information provision towards new refugees. One very important opportunity for information improvement could already be made by the offices of UNHCR in the transit countries, such as in Iran and Syria. Refugees who had been in the process of asylum in these countries and continued to Turkey were facing many problems since they had already started an asylum process somewhere else. According to the process of UNHCR, refugees should actually ask for asylum in the country most near to them, but often this is not clear to refugees. Improvements can therefore also be made to the UNHCR website in describing the steps in asylum procedure in Turkey. Some refugees had expressed visiting the UNHCR website but had developed wrong expectations based on the information they had found. Of course as long as there are still these many inequalities between countries and with many problems in the societies where these refugees have fled from, refugees will not stop coming to Turkey. My research has highlighted the importance of improvements to access to information and information provision which can greatly benefit the lives and chances of refugees in Turkey.

While this study was focused on Turkey, in other countries information provision policies can also be improved by taking into consideration the findings of this research. This research gives interesting insight into information behavior of fleeing refugees, which can help to develop a better information provision policy towards refugees. In this thesis I have illustrated that even though all refugees received information most of them can still be characterized as being information poor. What could be seen however is that even though active seeking was low, they were able to receive information through different information practices. The most notably important information missing included information on asylum policies. Information has a great influence on the lives of refugees, it is a powerful tool and can help to prepare and make informed decisions. It is therefore of great importance that governments and organizations make an effort in improving information provision towards refugees.

## 10. Reflection

In this final section of my thesis, I will take some time for some critical reflection on my role as a researcher in this study.

### 10.1 Reflection on my role as a researcher

As a reflection on my role as a researcher in my research field, it cannot be unnoticed that there is a dynamic process where one influences the other. My behavior will have affected the interviewees as well as they have affected me. From my personal perspective, I was very much affected by the stories of the refugees. They have very difficult lives and have to deal with harsh conditions and experiences. My heart very much goes out to them and this will have most possibly reflected in my report.

My personal background from a Western country and student of a university often caused that people tend to have an image of me and seemed to associate me with being rich. Being just a student, having to finance my research myself, I really could not offer anything to the people I came across. Despite this, they seemed to understand and seemed to be happy I was there. I felt I wanted to give something back, so I prepared little practical present packages for the refugees (with pasta, soap, coffee, cookies) and I brought some Dutch souvenirs for the ASAM offices.

One of the reasons that I wanted to study refugee issues, is that I feel there are still many things which could improve their lives and many hugely complex issues. It is difficult to realize that I most probably cannot help the participants from this study directly. And even though I am hoping that this report might add to literature or improve situations, I am aware that it is a master thesis report for my graduation. What I can do however, is sharing my findings with ASAM. I was really pleasantly surprised by the drive of that NGO and the things that they have accomplished so far. I am positive they will know how to use these research findings for the improvement of the daily lives of refugees in Turkey. Furthermore, I am myself even more motivated to continue in this field and I will do my best to find a way to do this, either in my future job or through volunteer work.

## 10.2 Reflection on my study

### 10.2.1 Reflection on methods

It took quite some time to get my ideas formulated for a suitable research. Looking back, I am very happy with the combination of information science and refugee studies. Literature in the combination of LIS and refugee studies is still at an early stage. The using of a model that has not been extensively tested nor has a lot of background literature was a risk and gave some challenges. It took some time for me to fully understand McKenzie's decision making and fully grasp the subtle differences in the different modes and phases. Furthermore, it proved to be a challenge to deal with findings that did not directly fit in the model. In my case many statements were related to personal context, such as social environment, and psychological factors, such as salience and beliefs. Nevertheless, the risk of using this model of McKenzie proved to be very fruitful in the end. And I was happy I could find very interesting literature to combine. By combining the concepts of information needs, sources and poverty with the model of McKenzie, I could highlight different sites of the problems and incorporate context as well.

### 10.2.2 Reflection on data collection

As a reflection on the in-depth interviewing, during data analysis I felt sometimes that I could have had created more opportunities for follow-up questions. More probing might have contributed to a richer data set for analysis. On the other hand, the interviews proved to be very emotionally heavy, as expected beforehand. In trying to create a balance in allowing the refugees to tell their story and myself asking questions, overall I am still quite happy with the way the interviews went. The interview guide proved to be very helpful for keeping the interview focused. Furthermore, the participants were quite open in responding to my questions and probing and in sharing their story with me. I felt to me that participants were very open about their experiences, seeming to be very shaken up by it and eager to tell someone. It has been a very special experience for me. Some of the refugees and staff in ASAM spoke about people telling fake stories. I will however never be able to be entirely sure that the stories of refugees I have interviewed were true and I will have to deal with what they told me. Since my focus was on the way they searched for information and not for the reasons they have come to Turkey I don't think it can influence my data very much after all. Furthermore, ASAM was familiar with the refugees I have spoken with and ASAM knew about their stories and difficulties.

Once I returned home I felt that I could have done more with observations or interviewing the ASAM staff and others. Also due to the limited time I only used one mode of data collection, the in-depth interviewing. Triangulation of my data was difficult since I could not observe migrants coming to Turkey or in their country of origin within the time frame. This would have been practically very difficult.

#### ***10.2.2.1 Practical difficulties in the field***

Unfortunately, sometimes a language barrier was in place, which proved to be difficult. First of all, I had the expectation that many people in Turkey could speak English, but I have been disappointed in this (just like many refugees have these wrong expectations). This made the practical side of performing my research a bit more challenging. Furthermore, when coming to Turkey I was under the impression that ASAM could help me with interpreters during my interviews. This turned out to be more challenging in the field as well. They had only 1 or 2 interpreters available in the local field offices and they were needed in the office as well. Furthermore, sometimes the interpreters that were available had insufficient knowledge of English (usually translating from Farsi to Turkish for example). Since I cannot speak Turkish this resulted in two interviews I could not complete since no one could help with translating to English. Nevertheless, I am happy of the mixture of interviews with English speaking refugees and some interviews with translation.

### **10.3 Lessons learned**

One of the lessons that I have learned is that even though I was expecting the data analysis would take much time, it took me at least thrice as much time as expected. Furthermore, with many computer hours I still have trouble with RSI and so the writing of my research report has taken longer than hoped at first as well. I am very glad Margit was flexible in this. And in the end I am very happy with the result. All in all, with creating my research from scratch, organizing the data collecting myself (with all practicalities involved) and the final report that is here before you, I can say that I am pretty proud! I have learned so much. This was the first time I completed an extended qualitative research. Moreover, it was my first time to work with a vulnerable group. Also, during the writing of this report I could again improve my scientific skills, also due to the guidance and support of my supervisor.

I have learned more beyond the topic of this research as well. Conducting my research I also came across some very interesting, although not directly related topics, which I believe could aid the refugees from this study. One thing, which seems to be a big problem, was the low awareness the

Turkish civil society had of the situations of refugees. One refugee told me: *“Two months ago, some UN people came here to talk. I only suggested that people from refugee don’t get any help. Maybe it would be an idea to put on these big billboard some texts like for example ‘refugee are our guests’, ‘help them’, ‘cooperate with them’. Just to have them thinking about this and to awake them that we are also human.”* I found it very special that this man was making some suggestions about improvement of situations in Turkey. This was also related to not only missing information but also missing interaction. Also in this field many improvements can be made.

All in all, I have learned many things about refugee issues in Turkey and beyond as well I have grown in scientific research and writing skills. Thank you for taking the time to read this report.

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## Appendices

Appendix I : Interview items

Appendix II: Discussion guide

Appendix III: Coding scheme

## Appendix I - Interview items

The items which will be included in the interview will be based on the information found in the literature and on the data collected from the initial contact and pilot study during field work.

### Basic info about country

#### Housing

- Housing information (Caidi et al., 2010)
- Information about making connections in the community (Caidi et al., 2010)

#### Economic

- Economic opportunities (Havinga & Böcker, 1999).
- Employment information (Fisher, et al. 2004; Caidi et al., 2010)
- Information about workplace safety (Caidi et al., 2010)

#### Education

- Education-related information (Fisher, et al. 2004; Caidi et al. 2010)

#### Political

- Political relations (Havinga & Böcker, 1999)
- Political information and current events (Caidi et al., 2010)

#### Living conditions

- Health information (Caidi et al., 2010)
- Information about cultural or religious events (Caidi et al., 2010)
- Language information (Fisher, et al. 2004; Caidi et al., 2010)
- Information about recreation (Fisher, et al. 2004; Caidi et al., 2010)
- Information about transportation (Caidi et al., 2010)
- Information about banking (Soham et al, 2008; Caidi et al., 2010)
- Information about making connections in new community (Caidi et al. 2008)

#### Sources

- Formal sources (Caidi et al, 2010 ; Fisher et al, 2004)
- ICT (Caidi et al, 2010 ; Srinivasan & Pyati, 2007 ; Shoham & Strauss, 2007)
- Ethnic media (Caidi & MacDonald., 2008 ; Caidi et al, 2010 ; Srinivasan & Pyati, 2007)
- Pre-migration stage : use of formal sources such as government agencies, publications and websites, as well as informal sources such as family and friends, blogs and online lists (Caidi et al. 2008)
- Intermediate stage : information needed to access various local systems and institutions, such as municipal, long-term housing, health, and employment services (Caidi et al. 2008)

#### Networks

- Social and transnational networks (Caidi et al., 2010)

### Policies

- Asylum policy (Havinga & Böcker, 1999)
- Legal information (Fisher, et al. 2004; Caidi et al., 2010)

### Journey

- Trafficking? (Day & White, 2001).
- Use of 'specialist' help in country of origin, such as paperwork and advice (Day & White, 2001).
- Ties between country of origin and destination: existing communities of compatriots in the country of asylum, colonial bonds and knowledge of the language (Havinga & Böcker, 1999)
- Immediate stage: information about pressing needs for survival such as shelter, orientation and language instructions (Caidi et al. 2008)

### Problems

- Insufficient language proficiency (Fisher et al, 2004 ; Jeong, 2004 ; Caidi et al., 2010)
- Differences in cultural values and understanding (Srinivasan, 2007 ; Caidi et al., 2010)
- Information overload (Caidi et al., 2010)
- New culture (Caidi et al., 2010)

## Appendix II – Interview guide

# Interview guide

Babs Ates – Wageningen University

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Information behavior of refugees coming to Turkey

Commentary on the interview guide:

The questions in this guide represent main issues to be explored. Preferably, each participant will go through the same set of topics, although the order in which these topics are introduced may vary according to the particular interviewee.

## Introduction:

Checklist intro
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Thank you</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> My name</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introducing interpreter</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Purpose</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confidentiality</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Duration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How interview will be conducted</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity for questions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal consent</li> </ul>

I want to **thank you** for taking the time to meet with me. My **name** is Babs Ates and I am from the Netherlands. This is ..... and he/she will be **translating** for us.

I am a **master student** of Wageningen University of the Netherlands and I am here for conducting **research** in Turkey on **information behavior of asylum seekers and refugees**. I am interested in **your experience** as a migrant. What you knew **before** you came here? Which information was **important** to you? What information was **accessible** to you? So I would like talk with you about your experiences, your journey to Turkey and the decisions you have made and which information was available to you. I am interested in what you found easy and difficult. I am gathering this information to get **better insight** to what **information is available** for refugees and asylum seekers. This research can help us to **understand more** about asylum seekers situation and information provision. It is hoped that the results of this study will **benefit** refugees and asylum applicants through providing greater **insight into the information seeking and needs**. Hopefully it can help the **information provision**.

Your **participation** will only be needed **once** for an informal interview. Please known that I will do everything I can to **protect your privacy**. For the answers that you will give, **your name will not be used**. The names used will be made-up names, or you can choose your own fake name. So your answers **cannot be linked** to you. This interview will be about **your story** and about what you like to **share** with me. I am very **grateful** for your time. I will be taking some **notes** now and then to be sure I don't forget anything but our conversation will **not be recorded**. The information gathered from this interview will be used for **academic purpose** and will be used for my master thesis report. It will not be officially published. There are **no wrong or right answers**. I would like you to share your thoughts and opinions, it is about your experience. Please take **as much time** as you need to answer the questions. You can **decide not to answer** questions, or to **stop** the interview any time you want. The interview will take **about one hour**, maybe more maybe less. Is this ok with you?

If you have any **questions** for me during the interview feel free to ask them!

Do you have any questions so far for me before we start? Do you need me to **clarify** anything?

Would it be **ok with you if we started** with the interview?

*The participant has been informed of my role, the purpose of the research, the conditions of the interview, confidentiality and rights and is provided with the opportunity to ask questions.*

*Student's Name* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date of Interview* \_\_\_\_\_ *Student's Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

## Topic list

Checklist topics
<input type="checkbox"/> General information <input type="checkbox"/> Own story journey destination: how and who? Preparations? <input type="checkbox"/> Sources: ICT / (Ethnic) media / Social (trans)network / official / by proxy / non-directed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment opportunities</li> <li>- Social relations</li> <li>- Housing</li> <li>- Security</li> <li>- Health care</li> <li>- Education</li> </ul> <input type="checkbox"/> Migration policy: borders, registration, documents, resettlement, rights, other <input type="checkbox"/> Expectations/ use of knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing? 

Active seeking, Active scanning, Non-directed monitoring, By proxy

(Date: ..../...../2013, place: ..... , time: ..... , people present: .....)

<p><b>Age:</b> Minor/ 18-30/30-65/ 65-older .....</p> <p><b>Nationality? / Last country of residence:</b> ...../.....</p> <p><b>Family status:</b> Parents, head of family? Siblings, oldest, youngest, who responsibility family? Relationship, married, single? Children? .....</p> <p><b>Highest education:</b> None/ Unofficial/ Literacy classes/ Primary school finished/ secondary school finished/ higher education/ university/.....</p> <p><b>Employment/ Occupation in country of origin</b> None/ student/ Farming/ Sales / Government/ Private business/ Tailor/ Construction/ .....</p>	<p><b>Fake name?</b> .....</p> <p><b>Religion:</b> Islam/ Christen/ None/ Other: .....</p> <p><b>Current status:</b> Refugee/ Asylum applicant/ Asylum seeker .....</p> <p><b>How long are you in Turkey:</b> &lt; 1 year / 1-2 years/ &gt; 2 years/ other: .....</p> <p><b>Gender:</b> Male/ Female</p> <p><b>Languages:</b> Turkish/ Arabic/ English / Persian/ Somali/ French/ Kurdish/ Armenian/ Hebrew/ Italian/ Farsi / local dialect/ other: .....</p>
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**Topic 1**

Thank you for sharing this. Maybe you can tell something about your **journey to Turkey?**  
How did you came to Turkey and why?

**Intended destination country? Reasons?**

**Aid (trafficking/ money/advice/ties)? Connections? With whom?**

**Relevant for decision?**

**How did you know how to come here? How contact**

- Trafficking
- Social network (→ how in contact?)
- Officials
- Other help/ info
- Did not know: expectations/idea?

**What did you wanted to know?****What did you use to come here? Understandable?**

- Transport
- Sources
- Ties/ network

**Topic 2**

**How did you prepare yourself? What did you look for when decided to come?**

**What did you wanted to know?**

**Possible sources: (attitude, skills & awareness)****pathways and sources:**

→ Access? → Understandable? → (most) Importance/ influence? → Useful? → too much/ little? → problems? (language etc) → Trust?

- **ICT, technologies** (Internet; social media, online media)
- Other **media** (radio, television, printed: paper/ library, telephone: calling/ texting/ ethnic media)
- **Human** sources: social (trans)network (family/ friends/ other inside/ outside country)
- **Organizational** sources: informal information sources/ organizations, Formal institutions
- By proxy, gatekeepers (advice, referred)
- Non-directed, unexpected (place, incidental)

**What kind of information did you look for when you decided to come here?**

**Did you have/sought information on....? (info seeking, use, sharing)**

- Importance
- Missing/ need

- Easy/ difficult
- Credibility/ trust

- Employment opportunities**
- Social relations**
- Housing**
- Security**
- Health care**
- Education**
- Cultural/ language differences**

### **Topic 3**

**What did you know/ search about being a refugee (immigration policies) before you came?**

- Border, police, customs, visa
- Documents
- Rights refugee
- Organizations (ASAM/ UNHCR): registration, satellite cities?
- Geographical limitation & resettlement: if changed what then?
- Other countries?
- Policy changes, new law

### **Topic 4**

**What were your expectations based on the information you had?**

**How did the information that you had helped you when you arrived here?**

- Needs
- Barriers/ difficulties? **Making connections / actual connections** (language, system, status/ background, (cultural) understanding)
- Strong points
- Too much/ too little?
- What could have helped you?

### **Topic 5**

**Do you share your information with others and what?**

Situation, social, economical, cultural, political:

- Stay in contact?
- Explaining about Turkey?
- Advice?
- Mentoring?

### **Concluding/ Closing**

Ok, I think we are almost done. I will have a look at my notes (*see checklist*) here for a second to see whether I have missed something.

Please take a moment to think about whether there **is anything else you would to add?**

OK, I **checked** and .....

Furthermore, how did you experience this interview? Was it clear to you? Do you have any **recommendations** for me?

I would like to **thank you** very much for your time and sharing, you were amazing! As an appreciation of your time I have a small present for you. Thank you again and I wish you all the best.

(Do you know anyone interested in sharing their story?)

## Appendix III – Coding scheme

### Code 1: Information sources

- Used information sources, including formal and informal
- Access to sources
- Information from network
- Preferred sources and reasons for preferred source(s) (time efficiency, access, perceived trustworthiness)
- Previous experience as information

### Code 2: Information searching

- Active seeking (active search before + during journey)
- Active scanning (passive search before +during journey) (scanning in likely location or active listening/ observing in likely place)
- Non-directed monitoring (encounters in unexpected places and/or overhearing/ observing in unexpected place)
- By proxy (being told, being referred, being given advice)
- Not seeking

### Code 3: Information sharing

- Asking/ sharing information with fellow refugees
- Being asked by fellow refugee

### Code 4: Information needs

- missing information
- information overload
- barriers (e.g. language)
- understanding

### Code 5: Information needs

- Need for information
- Expectations

### Code 6: Reason

- Reason(s)/ motivation for coming to Turkey
- Motivation for coming to Turkey

### Code 7: Preparation

- Steps taken for preparation leaving
- Sources/ information searched

- Way of preparing for leaving

Code 8: Intervening variables:

(Factors that could influence information behaviour)

- Context: Demographics, Social environment
- Psychological factors: belief, salience
- Characteristics source: credibility, accuracy, comprehensibility, relevance etc

Code 9: Information poverty:

- Indicating a lack of information
- Reason for a lack of information

Code 10: Policies

- Knowledge on policies
- Lack of knowledge on policies