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# **Job Search Methods of Refugees in the Netherlands: Determinants and Consequences**

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*This study examines the job search methods of refugees in the Netherlands. It uses a large-scale survey, collected in 2003, among refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, former Yugoslavia and Somalia. Results show that refugees mainly search and find jobs via an employment agency. Refugees search less often via their personal network, though 20% found their job via personal contacts. Furthermore, the study examines the determinants and consequences of the job search method used. It appears that higher skilled refugees more often use formal methods and directly approach employers. Some evidence exists that refugees who maintain close contacts with native-born Dutch (“bridging social capital”) are more likely to search via their personal network. Finally, refugees who found their job through their personal network have jobs of lower status and at a lower function level than those who found their job through formal means or via direct application.*

*KEYWORDS* job search methods, refugees, Netherlands, economic incorporation, ethnic inequality

## INTRODUCTION

There has been an increasing interest in the literature to study the job search methods of immigrants, as well as the consequences of the job search technique for the economic career. In particular, research has been done on the job search methods of immigrants and racial minorities in the United States, such as among Blacks (Mouw, 2002), Hispanics (Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Mouw, 2009), Asians (Sanders, Nee, & Sernau, 2002), and among

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Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians comparatively (Green, Tigges, & Diaz, 1999). More recently, studies have also been conducted in Europe: among immigrants in Great Britain (Frijters, Shields, & Price, 2005), Germany (Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008), and Sweden (Behtoui, 2008). These studies show that there are large differences in job search methods across ethnic groups and countries.

The current study contributes to this growing literature on job search methods by looking at an unstudied country—the Netherlands—and by focusing on a specific group of immigrants, namely refugees. Prior research has examined job search methods of “immigrants” without differentiating between different subgroups (e.g., labor migrants, family migrants, refugees). Although refugees are becoming an increasingly important part of the immigrant population of western countries, little is known about their economic performance and the possible barriers they face (De Vroome & van Tubergen, 2010). In this respect, the Netherlands provides an interesting case to study, because it hosts refugees from different countries, such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, former Yugoslavia, and Somalia. Possible differences across refugee groups in job search methods are examined.

First, I provide a descriptive outlook of how unemployed refugees in the Netherlands search for jobs, and how those who are employed obtained their job. Second, I examine the determinants of the job search method. What determines why some refugees search via “informal” channels, whereas others use more “formal” methods or directly contact employers? Third, I assess the economic consequences of the job search method for the economic career. Is the job search method associated with the socioeconomic status and function level of the job? By studying the prevalence, causes, and consequences of job search methods of refugees, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of ethnic inequality in the labor market.

The data in this article derive from data collected in a large-scale survey (SPVN conducted by ISEO & SCP, 2003). The survey was specifically designed to study the five largest refugee groups in the Netherlands (i.e., refugees from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, former Yugoslavia, and Somalia). Most refugees escaped from their country because of war and extreme poverty, but also because of political suppression—particularly in the case of Iran. Most of the refugees belonging to these groups arrived and settled in the Netherlands in the 1990s. The survey was conducted in 2003. For this survey, a total of 3,500 respondents were interviewed face-to-face.

## BACKGROUND

### Prevalence Informal Job Search

Ever since the groundbreaking study by Granovetter (1995), researchers have been interested in the way people find jobs, and the economic consequences

of the job search method that was used. In the migration literature, as well as in the more general (not migration-specific) literature, job search methods are often distinguished in two broad categories: informal methods (i.e., searching with the help of friends, acquaintances, and family) versus other methods. These other methods are then sometimes divided into formal methods (i.e., searching via an employment agency or advert) and direct applications (i.e., when one goes or writes directly to a firm). In his study of professional, technical, and managerial workers in a Boston suburb, Granovetter (1995) found that more than 50% used personal contacts to obtain their current job, about 20% used formal methods, and around 20% used direct applications. In subsequent studies, researchers have examined the frequency of informal, formal, and other job search methods in different age groups, occupations, and countries (for an overview, see Granovetter, 1995, Afterword).

More recently, studies have been done on the job search methods of immigrants (i.e., foreign-born persons and the children of foreign-born parents) and ethnic or racial minority groups, to understand the ethnic inequality in the labor market. In a study by Green, Tigges, and Diaz (1999) it was found that around 50% of Whites, Blacks, and Asians used informal search methods, as against 72% of the Hispanics. Sanders, Nee, and Sernau (2002) reported lower rates of informal search among Asians. In their study of immigrants from China, Korea, and the Philippines in Los Angeles in 1989/90, about 35% of the jobs were obtained with the assistance of interpersonal ties. In a detailed study of the largest Hispanic subgroup—Mexicans—Aguilera and Massey (2003) found that 60% of documented and 71% of undocumented Mexican immigrants in the United States got a job through friends or relatives.

As a follow-up to these studies in the United States, a few studies have been done on the job search methods of immigrants in Europe. Using data from the Quarterly Labour Force Survey 1997–1998, Frijters et al. (2005) found that in the United Kingdom, only about 12%–16% of the unemployed immigrants searched via the personal network, and this was true for 10% of the White U.K.-born. Between 27% and 38% of the immigrants who were unemployed searched via employment agencies (as did 36% of the natives). When looking at those who were employed and at the immigrant groups more specifically, about 25% of the Black and White immigrants found a job through the personal network, about 37% of the South Asian immigrants, and about 27% of the White U.K.-born.

Using the Swedish Labour Force Surveys conducted in the period between 1992 and 1999, Behtoui (2008), observed that about 37% of the employed immigrants in Sweden has found a job informally as against 42% of the employed native-born Swedes. In Germany, Drever and Hoffmeister (2008) used data from the German Socio-Economic Panel survey for the period from 1999–2003, and found that around 50% of the employed immigrants from Turkey, Southern Europe, and Eastern European found a

job through the personal network as against around 32% of the employed native-born Germans.

Although specific studies on the job search methods of refugees have not been done before, and although prior studies on job search have not distinguished refugees from other immigrants and ethnic groups, these findings provide a useful starting point for the analysis of refugees.

### Determinants and Consequences of Informal Job Search

Closely related to the question how people find jobs, Granovetter (1995) and many researchers after him have been interested in the determinants and economic consequences of the job search method used. To begin with the determinants first, prior research has emphasized the importance of human capital and social capital (Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Holzer, 1988; Livingston, 2006; Mouw, 2003).

One hypothesis in the literature is that, for various reasons, people with more human capital (i.e., people's skills, knowledge, and capacities) less often use informal means and more often search through formal means (Holzer, 1988; Livingston, 2006; Mouw, 2002, 2003). First, higher status jobs are more often advertised via formal means and less often communicated through personal contacts. Second, and particularly relevant in the case of refugees, one needs to possess several relevant skills to make use of formal search methods, and to directly apply to employers. For instance, refugees in the Netherlands must be able to read Dutch newspapers, or to register at a Dutch employment agency, which requires at least the ability to communicate in Dutch and some know-how about the Dutch labor market. In addition, refugees need to write an application letter, or to directly present themselves to Dutch employers. Thus, Dutch language skills, and also schooling and experience in the Dutch labor market, might be prerequisites to make use of formal methods and direct application. If refugees do not possess these skills, they might instead rely on their social network to find jobs.

Previous studies have tested these assumptions empirically with data on immigrants in general (i.e., not specifically among the subgroup of refugees). In line with expectations, lower educated immigrants were more likely to use informal job search methods (and less likely to use formal methods) in Sweden (Behtoui, 2008). A similar finding was observed among Blacks and Hispanics in the United States (Elliot & Sims, 2001; Mouw, 2009), but no such relationship was found among immigrants in Germany (Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008) and in a study of documented and undocumented Mexicans in the US (Aguilera & Massey, 2003). In addition, earlier studies found mixed evidence for the effect of destination-language proficiency and (host-country) work experience on job search method (Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Behtoui, 2008; Elliot & Sims, 2001; Mouw, 2009).

A second hypothesis proposed in the literature states that people with more social capital, more often make use of informal search methods (Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Holzer, 1988; Livingston, 2006; Mouw, 2003). Social capital indicates the resources that can be accessed and mobilized in people's network, thereby depending on the size of the network, the resources within the network (most notably information), and the willingness of network members to share their resources. Thus, it is argued that people who have many friends and other social contacts, and particularly those who have more resourceful social contacts within their personal network, search more often through their personal network, and eventually also find jobs more often through their network (Mouw, 2003). Previous studies indeed found some evidence that immigrants with more social capital are more likely to use personal methods (Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008).

The economic consequences of the job search method have been extensively examined in the general social capital literature (e.g., Lin, 1999; Mouw, 2003). It is generally found that jobs acquired through people's social network are of lower status than jobs obtained through more formal procedures (Franzen & Hangartner, 2006; Granovetter, 1995; Lin, 1999; Mouw, 2003). This pattern has also been observed in the few studies that have been done among immigrants. Although Aguilera and Massey (2003) found no statistically significant effect of job search method among Mexicans in the United States, studies on immigrants in Sweden (Behtoui, 2008) and Hispanics in the United States (Green et al., 1999) found that jobs found through the personal network were negatively associated with job status and income. In this study, I examine the role of job search methods for the economic performance of refugees.

## DATA, MEASUREMENT, AND METHODS

### Data

To examine the prevalence, determinants, and consequences of job search methods of refugees in the Netherlands, I make use of an existing, large-scale survey that was specifically designed to study five refugee groups in the Netherlands (SPVN, 'Sociale Positie en het Voorzieningsgebruik van Nieuwkomers'; ISEO & SCP, 2003). The sampling frame consisted of foreign-born households from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, and (former) Yugoslavia, which are the main refugee groups in the Netherlands. To reduce the costs of the survey, only those refugees who resided in the 12 major cities in the Netherlands (where most refugees live) were in the sample frame. In 2003, face-to-face interviews were conducted with members of these groups. Response rates varied between 43% and 55%. These response rates may seem low compared with international standards, but they are normal for large-scale surveys conducted in the Netherlands, including surveys

among other immigrant groups and the native population. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, in Dutch, English, or French.

Within the household, different household members were interviewed, though to a different degree. The head of the household was interviewed more extensively than the partner and the children. Because of this reason, I focus on the head of the household only. In total, 3,547 heads of the household were interviewed. Of these, 639 were unemployed and actively searching for a job, and 1,421 were employed (the other refugees were inactive and not searching for a job).

## MEASUREMENT

### REFUGEE GROUPS

Groups are defined on the basis of the country of birth of the refugee. Four dummy variables are included, with those from Afghanistan being the reference group. Only foreign-born refugees are included in this study.

### JOB SEARCH METHOD

I distinguish between various job search methods, namely: (a) via an employment agency, (b) via an advert, (c) through friends and family, (d) via direct application, and (e) other. Job searches through an employment agency or via an advert are often considered as formal methods of jobs search, whereas search via friends and family is classified as informal search.

In the analysis of the determinants of job search methods, I look at the importance of human capital and social capital, while controlling for other variables. Human capital is measured by refugees' language proficiency, schooling, work experience, and having followed an integration course.

### SPEAKS DUTCH WELL

The respondents' proficiency to speak Dutch was rated by the interviewer on a 3-point scale, with the following answer categories: bad, moderate, and good. Because of the few people classified as speaking Dutch bad, I contrasted good with the other two.

### EDUCATION ABROAD

Measured in five categories: none, primary, lower secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary. Including education as separate dummy variables does

not improve the model significantly, however, and therefore education was treated as an interval variable.

#### EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

Measured in five categories: none, primary, lower secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary. Those who are enrolled in school at the moment of the survey are treated as if they would complete their present education successfully.

#### WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE NETHERLANDS

I include a dummy variable, indicating whether the respondent has ever worked in the Netherlands (1) or not (0).

#### FOLLOWED INTEGRATION COURSE

Measures whether the respondent has participated in an integration course in the Netherlands (1) or not (0). Integration courses in the Netherlands are aimed to promote the integration of refugees and other immigrants in Dutch society, not only by improving their Dutch language skills, but also by informing refugees about the Dutch labor market, and about the Dutch norms, values and customs more generally. I therefore assume that refugees who have followed an integration course possess more host-country specific human capital (i.e., skills specifically related to the Dutch context, such as knowledge of the Dutch labor market and how to present oneself to an employer in the Netherlands).

#### HAS DUTCH FRIENDS

As a measure of social capital, I look at interethnic friendships. Although other measures of social capital would obviously be desirable to include as well (e.g., co-ethnic friendships, diversity of social contacts, resources contacts), these are not available in the survey. Also, the role of interethnic ties has been emphasized in the literature, as such bridging ties (Putnam, 2000) are assumed to be particularly valuable for immigrants and refugees (Kanas & van Tubergen, 2009). Within the own ethnic community, there is less information about the labor market as many refugees are unemployed or unfamiliar with the host-country labor market. Ties outside the own ethnic community are therefore considered to be particularly important.

Respondents were asked whether they have Dutch friends. I contrasted those who indicated to have Dutch friends (1) with those who say not to



have any Dutch friends (0). I include several control variables, which are related to both the independent and dependent variables.

#### AGE AT MIGRATION

The age of the respondent, in years, at the time of migration to the Netherlands.

#### LENGTH OF STAY

Total years of stay in the Netherlands.

#### MALE

A dummy variable is included, contrasting males (1) and females (0).

The economic consequences of the job search method are assessed by looking at two outcomes: occupational status and job-function level.

#### OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

The occupations of the respondents were recoded into the socioeconomic status of the job. For this, I used the International Socio-Economic Index, ISEI (Ganzeboom, De Graaf, & Treiman, 1992).

#### FUNCTION LEVEL

This measure ranks jobs on a 5-point scale based on its requirements and difficulty, ranging from *elementary jobs* (1) to *scientific jobs* (5). The classification is designed by the Central Bureau of Statistics Netherlands.

## RESULTS

### Prevalence Job Search Method of Refugees

How do refugees in the Netherlands search for jobs? To examine this, I make a distinction between refugees who were unemployed at the time of the survey and those who were employed. Table 1 presents the job search method used by refugees who were unemployed and actively searching for a job.<sup>1</sup> It appears that many refugees did not rely on a single method, but instead used several methods simultaneously to find work (1.97 on average; 60% more than one method). By far, the most popular method to search for work was through registering at an employment agency. At the time of the survey, about 89% of the unemployed refugees in the Netherlands were registered at an employment agency. Another frequently used method was

**TABLE 1** Job Search Method Mentioned Among Those Who Are Actively Searching for a Job: Five Refugee Groups in the Netherlands, 2003

Group	Employment agency (%)	Friends and family (%)	Advert (%)	Direct application (%)	Other (%)	N
Afghanistan	90	15	31	32	10	155
Iraq	88	18	42	26	15	173
Iran	92	17	52	47	17	118
Ex-Yugoslavia	84	26	59	41	15	87
Somalia	91	17	43	22	11	106
Total	89	18	44	33	14	639

*Note.* Percentages exceed 100 per group, because some people search through various methods simultaneously.

to answer a wanted advert in a newspaper or respond to ads on the internet (mentioned by 44% of the refugees). Direct application to employers (33%) and, in particular, searching via friends and family (18%) were mentioned less often.

There are some differences between refugee groups in job search method. Former Yugoslavians were searching through family and friends more often than other groups. Moreover, refugees from former Yugoslavia were also more likely to respond to adverts and to approach employers directly. This group seems to have higher search diversity in general than the other refugee groups—in particular Afghani, Iraqi, and Somali. It should be noted that these are group differences at the bivariate level, thus not including controls (see Tables 3 and 4).

What was the successful job search method used among refugees who found a job in the Netherlands? Table 2 shows that 43% of the jobs were found through an employment agency, thereby exceeding other job search methods. Jobs were also found via direct application (24%), family and friends (20%), and adverts (10%). When these figures are compared to those

**TABLE 2** Job Search Method Used to Find Current Job: Five Refugee Groups in the Netherlands, 2003

Group	Employment agency (%)	Friends and family (%)	Advert (%)	Direct application (%)	Other (%)	Total (%)	N
Afghanistan	44	24	7	24	1	100	286
Iraq	47	21	8	21	3	100	224
Iran	38	16	15	28	2	100	339
Ex-Yugoslavia	36	26	11	25	2	100	379
Somalia	62	8	9	18	3	100	193
Total	43	20	10	24	2	100	1421

who were still searching for a job, it seems that searching via an employment agency was less effective than searches via personal ties.

There were differences across refugee groups. Most notably, few refugees from Somalia found a job through family and friends (8%). Instead, most Somali found a job via the employment agency (62%). The situation is quite different for former Yugoslavians, of whom 26% found a job through personal ties, and only 36% via an employment agency.

### Determinants Job Search Method

What determines refugees' job search techniques in the Netherlands? Table 3 presents the results of five binomial logistic regression models, one per each search method mentioned among those who were unemployed

**TABLE 3** Binomial Logistic Regression of Job Search Method Mentioned Among Those Actively Searching for a Job. Refugees in the Netherlands, 2003

	Employment agency	Friends and family	Advert	Direct application	Other
Speaks Dutch well	.006 (.306)	-.335 (.248)	.385* (.203)	.146 (.213)	-.040 (.288)
Education abroad	.059 (.116)	-.164* (.096)	.298*** (.081)	.171** (.082)	.213* (.112)
Education in the Netherlands	-.009 (.938)	-.148 (.100)	.078 (.075)	.130* (.074)	.317*** (.093)
Work experience in the Netherlands	.291 (.295)	.360 (.243)	.863*** (.195)	.525*** (.203)	-.017 (.274)
Followed integration course	.419 (.274)	-.559** (.223)	.050 (.185)	-.310* (.188)	.296 (.258)
Has Dutch friends	-.836** (.340)	.118 (.634)	.383* (.203)	.366* (.214)	.128 (.296)
Age at migration	.003 (.018)	-.026* (.015)	-.020 (.012)	-.010 (.012)	.006 (.017)
Length of stay	.059 (.045)	-.050 (.033)	.011 (.027)	-.035 (.028)	.027 (.036)
Male	.632** (.310)	-.051 (.276)	-.207 (.230)	.006 (.237)	.437 (.344)
Refugee group Afghanistan (reference)					
Iraq	-.110 (.367)	.154 (.313)	.365 (.249)	-.400 (.256)	.376 (.350)
Iran	.233 (.458)	.283 (.364)	.549* (.286)	.480* (.281)	.424 (.397)
Ex-Yugoslavia	-.271 (.429)	.731** (.367)	.814** (.317)	.216 (.311)	.409 (.441)
Somalia	.251 (.475)	-.120 (.380)	.412 (.305)	-.589* (.326)	.285 (.446)
Nagelkerke $R^2$	.059	.072	.189	.118	.072

Note.  $N = 639$ . Reported are unstandardized coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

\* $p < .10$ . \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ .

**TABLE 4** Multinomial Logistic Regression of Job Search Method Used to Find Current Job Refugees in the Netherlands, 2003

	Employment agency or advert versus friends and family	Direct application versus friends and family
Speaks Dutch well	.459** (.186)	.634*** (.228)
Education abroad	-.037 (.068)	-.085 (.078)
Education in the Netherlands	.048 (.055)	.252*** (.062)
Work experience in the Netherlands	.232 (.590)	-.002 (.631)
Followed integration course	.400** (.159)	.463** (.182)
Has Dutch friends	-.389 (.237)	-.355 (.277)
Age at migration	.053*** (.011)	.027** (.013)
Length of stay	.025* (.013)	-.012 (.017)
Male	.065 (.188)	-.346* (.206)
Refugee group Afghanistan (reference)		
Iraq	.216 (.236)	.095 (.278)
Iran	.379 (.238)	.417 (.271)
Ex-Yugoslavia	-.120 (.221)	-.016 (.254)
Somalia	1.601*** (.314)	.826** (.358)
Constant	-1.332* (.718)	-.862 (.785)
Nagelkerke $R^2$		.115

Note.  $N = 1,389$ . Reported are unstandardized coefficients. Standard errors are in parentheses.

\* $p < .10$ . \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ .

and actively searching for a job.<sup>2</sup> Second, I analyse the job search method used among those who were employed at the time of the survey. To those refugees, it was asked how (i.e., by which job search method) they obtained their current job. Table 4 shows the findings of the multinomial logistic regression for refugees who had a job, contrasting formal methods of job search (i.e., employment agency and advert) and direct application with jobs found through family and friends.<sup>3</sup>

The results for the hypothesis on the role of human capital are in line with expectations. Among the refugees who were unemployed, those who spoke Dutch well were significantly more likely to search via advertisements than those who spoke Dutch less well or not at all (Table 3). In addition, those who spoke Dutch well had more often found their job via

formal methods and direct application than via friends and family, compared to those who were less proficient in Dutch (Table 4). Furthermore, unemployed refugees who were higher educated and who had ever worked in the Netherlands before more often indicated to search via advertisements and direct application. Higher educated refugees had also significantly more often found a job through direct application than via their personal network. Finally, I examined the role of having followed an integration course. The results show that refugees who had participated in an integration course were significantly more likely to have found their job via formal means or through direct application instead of via their personal network. Overall, the results indeed confirm that the human capital of refugees in the Netherlands is positively associated with searching and finding jobs more often through formal methods and direct application instead of through their personal network.

It was also hypothesized that social capital would be positively associated with informal job search. Table 3 suggests that refugees who had Dutch friends, more often searched through their personal network than those who had no Dutch friends, but the relationship is not statistically significant. I do find some evidence that among the refugees who were employed, those who had Dutch friends more often found a job via family and friends than via direct application ( $p = .050$ , one-sided test) or an employment agency or advert ( $p = .10$ , one-sided test).<sup>4</sup> Naturally, this is not an extensive test of the importance of social capital (which would require more detailed measures and panel data), but these findings tend to confirm expectations.

### Consequences Job Search Method

What are the economic consequences of refugees' job search techniques in the Netherlands? To examine this issue, one needs to take into account that those with fewer skills are generally more likely to find jobs through their personal network. For that reason, I estimate two models: an "unadjusted" model including only dummy variables for job search method, and an "adjusted" model that also includes measures of human capital, interethnic contacts, and demographic controls. I assess the economic consequences of job search by looking at occupational status and job-function level. The results are presented in Table 5.

The findings suggest that refugees who found a job via personal methods do less well than those who found their job through either an advert or direct application. In particular, the findings consistently show that refugees who found their job through an advert have a better economic position. The unadjusted models show that, compared to those who found their job via their personal network, those refugees score 9.2 higher on the occupational

**TABLE 5** OLS Regression of Occupational Status and Function Level on Job Search Method, Unadjusted and Adjusted for Other Variables

Job search method	Occupational Status		Function level	
	Unadjusted	Adjusted	Unadjusted	Adjusted
Friends and family (reference)				
Employment agency	-1.015 (1.113)	-.111 (1.016)	-.134* (.077)	-.066 (.070)
Direct application	3.995*** (1.243)	2.176* (1.118)	.326*** (.086)	.215*** (.077)
Advert	9.174*** (1.583)	4.902*** (1.428)	.573*** (.110)	.277*** (.098)
Other	8.056*** (3.075)	6.832** (2.736)	.465** (.214)	.384** (.188)
$R^2$ (adj.)	.045	.255	.051	.277

Note.  $N = 1,365$ . In the adjusted regression models, the following variables are controlled for: speaks Dutch well (0/1), education abroad, education in the Netherlands, work experience in the Netherlands (0/1), followed integration course (0/1), has Dutch friends (0/1), age at migration, length of stay, male, and dummy variables for refugee group.

\* $p < .10$ . \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ .

status scale (range: 16–88), and .57 higher on job-function level (range: 1–5). Although these differences become less pronounced in the adjusted models, they remain significant and substantial.

## CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In the growing literature on job search methods, it has been generally found that immigrants rely extensively on their social network to find jobs. No study has been done, however, on the job search methods of refugees—a specific group of immigrants. In the present study on refugees in the Netherlands I find that finding jobs via friends and family appears to be less common. Instead, I find that unemployed refugees in the Netherlands mainly searched via employment agencies, and that those who were employed most often found their job through an employment agency as well.

One explanation for the difference between the findings of previous research and the present study has to do with the specific group of immigrants examined here: refugees. It could be that refugees in the Netherlands use personal contacts less often than the overall group of immigrants in other countries, because refugees in general (i.e., not only in the Netherlands) use informal methods less frequently than other types of immigrants, such as labor and family migrants. Possibly, refugees have less resourceful personal networks (e.g., many co-ethnics unemployed, few contacts outside

their group) than other kind of immigrants, and therefore rely less often on personal contacts. Furthermore, because refugee groups tend to be smaller in size, the personal networks of refugees are possibly also smaller than that of labor and family migrants. The refugee groups studied here are possibly too fragmented from each other, and too small on their own to form ethnic enclaves where jobs can be found informally.

Another explanation for the infrequent use of personal contacts among refugees reported in the current study has to do with the countries being compared. It could be that in the highly regulated labor market in the Netherlands, jobs are less often found informally than in other countries. In a comparative study of job search methods among the general populations in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, De Graaf and Flap (1988) indeed suggest that social capital is less important in the Netherlands than in the other two countries. They found that in the Netherlands in 1982, 32% obtained their current or last job via informal sources, as against 43% in Germany in 1980 and 59% in the United States in 1975. When combined, these figures and the current study suggest that not only among the general population (De Graaf & Flap, 1988), but also among refugees it is less common in the Netherlands to find jobs through interpersonal connections. To validate these conclusions, however, research is needed in which the job search methods of the same (or multiple) group(s) of refugees are compared across receiving countries (van Tubergen, Maas, & Flap, 2004).

I also examined the determinants of the job search methods used by refugees, testing two hypotheses. According to the human capital hypothesis, immigrants and refugees who are more skilled are more likely to search via formal methods and less likely to use informal methods. Whereas the evidence in prior research (using data on immigrants in general) was mixed for this hypothesis, I find clear confirmations for the subgroup of refugees. It appears that higher skilled refugees more often searched jobs, and also found jobs, through formal methods and via direct application instead of through their personal network. These findings are in line with the idea that the human capital refugees (and other immigrants) possess is positively associated with formal job search methods. Thus, those who were higher educated, who spoke better Dutch, who had followed an integration course, and who had ever worked in the Netherlands, were better able to respond to adverts in newspapers and on the internet, to make use of employment agencies, and to effectively approach employers in the Dutch language. Refugees who had followed an integration course were equally more likely to use formal methods or direct application, and this is in line with the idea that such courses increase the knowledge on the Dutch labor market, and on such issues as how to apply for jobs and how to present oneself to employers.

In addition, I find some evidence for the social capital hypothesis. Refugees who had close contacts outside their own ethnic group—with native-born Dutch—more often have used their personal network to find their current job. Because native-born Dutch are more often employed, occupy better jobs and are better informed about the Dutch labor market than co-ethnics, such contacts with natives (bridging social capital) can be particularly valuable for refugees in their employment search. Further studies could examine whether these jobs were indeed found through native ties, and to assess the importance of co-ethnic contacts. In addition, follow-up research is needed that contains direct measures of the resources of refugees' personal networks.

Finally, in line with prior research that has found a negative relationship between informal search and economic outcomes in the general population, I find that refugees who obtained their job through friends and family on average have lower status jobs and jobs of a lower function level than those who found work via adverts or direct application. The difference becomes less strong when human capital, interethnic contacts and background variables are taken into account, but remains statistically significant and substantial in size. The evidence, however, comes from cross-sectional data, and endogeneity issues cannot be ruled out conclusively (Montgomery, 1992; Mouw, 2003, 2006). Further studies using panel data on the job search methods and economic incorporation of refugees are therefore needed. In addition, it would be important to assess the role of the ethnicity of the social contact (i.e., co-ethnic vis-à-vis native) through which the job was found.

## NOTES

1. Unfortunately, the data do not allow me to include the search methods of refugees who are currently employed, as the question on search method was only asked for those who are unemployed and actively searching for a job. Excluding the group of “nonsearchers” might underestimate the importance of social contacts when searching for a job (McDonald & Elder, 2006).

2. In additional analyses, not presented here, several sensitivity checks were performed with alternative specifications and measures (e.g., writing skills instead of speaking skills, schooling in years, age at migration squared, duration of unemployment). The results are substantively the same.

3. In the multinomial logistic regression model, presented in Table 4, “employment agency” and “advert” are taken together because numbers are too small to estimate both search methods separately. Note that in the literature these two are often taken together as representing “formal” methods of job search. The very small group of “other search method” (2%) was omitted from the multinomial analysis.

4. Given that the hypothesis on social capital is directional, one-sided tests are appropriate here.

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