"Paris, that is another world"

A portrait of the heterogenous perceptions and reactions towards social exclusion amongst migrants in the banlieues of Paris

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Emily Louisa
Student number: 940223529050
Wageningen University, Netherlands
Supervisor: Bram Jansen

Abstract

The relation between deprived neighborhoods and (lack of) integration has in recent years received much attention. Especially after a series of terroristic attacks in the US and Europe, of which many of the perpetrators were assumed to come from such neighborhoods. This thesis is focused on the case of banlieues in France. Increasingly they are compared with ghettos and problematized as places of criminality, violence and radicalization, excluded from mainstream society. There has been much research on banlieue youth who show most visible criminal and violent behavior. Likewise, Muslim migrants attract attention, as radicalization and consequently terroristic attacks is feared. However, in this thesis it is argued that the diversity amongst migrants in the banlieues should be recognized, to understand better the impact of living in a socially excluded area. Following an explorative research approach in which subjectivity and intersectionality are central theoretical concepts, I focus on the daily life experience of diverse migrants. In analyzing how exclusion mechanisms of the state and society interact with diverse identities of people, this thesis notices how migrants encounter different forms of social exclusion and have different responses to it. Studying the daily experiences and perceptions of diverse migrants regarding their social exclusion, will thus broaden our understanding of the variety in ways that people are marginalized from society, and in their strategies to navigate their position in it. Moreover, this thesis demonstrates how "the neighborhood" is not automatically a unifying community for all inhabitants: social exclusion mechanisms, but also social networks go beyond its borders.

Key words: social exclusion, subjectivity, migrants, banlieues, deprived neighborhoods intersectionality, integration

Table of contents

1. Introduction

One of the days that I walked in Saint Denis, Paris, I stumbled upon a demonstration of a group of residents. They protested the fact that inhabitants were still locked out of their apartments, which happened after the terroristic attack at Charlie Hebdo. The perpetrator supposedly lived in this street, so the government had closed the whole block of apartments. As a result, around 30 people, mostly migrants and many of them without documentation, left without a place to stay. It is two years later and these people still cannot go back to their apartment. As one of the protestors said: the government does nothing to help them.

During my research in the banlieues of Paris, I would more often hear the complaint that the government doesn't take the needs of people serious. And if attention is given to their situation, it is often stigmatizing, focusing on criminality and violent uprisings. Since the eighties, the banlieues have known outbursts of violence in which youth burned cars and attacked the police. In 2005 the tense atmosphere in the banlieues exploded again: series of violence happened in the *quartiers*: youth burned cars and attacked the police. What made the outbursts of 2005 special, was that they spread throughout the whole country. An often-named explanation is the widespread media coverage and attention, that sparked competition between the different *cités* (neighborhoods) (Koff 2009).

Not without surprise, the banlieues in France are notorious. Worldwide media-attention is given to the ghettoization of these areas and the violent uprisings that take place there. Often, the banlieues are compared with the American ghettos: both are areas of poverty, they are marginalized and excluded from the mainstream, and both constitute a large percentage of minorities (Wacquant 1993, Kokoreff 2009, Slooter 2015, Beaman 2015). In France, the banlieues are mostly comprised of migrants from North Africa, the Maghreb and Western Africa. In other words, *les noirs* and *les Arabs.* They experience discrimination, based on the place where they live, but there is also a race, ethnicity, age and gender component interwoven in the discrimination of *banlieusards*, as how the youth in banlieues are called as well (Slooter 2015).

The state has a long history of right wing policies and interventions that have affected the citizenship of migrants and their offspring (Laforcade 2006). Since the protests in the 1980s, the marginalized banlieues have been subjected to special urban policies: attempts of the French government to control and improve the inhabitants' quality of life and social cohesion to stop criminality and violence (Slooter 2015). On top of that, the banlieues are increasingly perceived as breeding grounds for radicalization. The worldwide terroristic attacks since 2001, have fueled a "war on terror" and forthcoming a fear that migrants in segregated deprived communities will radicalize and consequently act on it (Van Liempt 2011). Consequently, the banlieues are in the center of attention of media, government policies and academic debates, all trying to understand processes of radicalization and arguing about integration strategies (Ponsaers and Devroe 2016, Leman 2016).

The group that receives most of the attention is the youth in banlieues, also described as *banlieusards* or simply banlieue youth (Kokoreff 1994, Dikeç 2007, Slooter 2015). Much is written about the lives of these youth, the stigmatization and exclusion. Many of these banlieue youth suffer from unemployment, discrimination and repression (Dikeç 2007). They are heavily stigmatized as being involved with drugs and violence. In addition, in the French debates on banlieue youth, immigrant and banlieue youth are often equated (Body-Gendrot 2005). Large percentages of the banlieue youth are indeed "second or third generation immigrant". The stereotype of banlieue youth is also gendered: the focus is on boys or young men, and their violent relationship with the police and French state. In contrast, girls are less prominent in the discussions about banlieue youth and are less seen as 'typical' *banlieusards.*

Nevertheless, the banlieues are comprised of diverse groups of people, varying in ethnicity, age, gender and religion. It is especially the diversity amongst the residents, that will be central in this thesis. The objective of this research is to twofold. First, I want to understand how migrants themselves experience processes of social exclusion. Underlying questions are how they perceive their own position in society, what obstacles they encounter in participating in society, and their opinions and feelings about it. Secondly, this research aims to provide insights in the various strategies of migrants in banlieues to deal with the social exclusion they experience. Therefore, the overarching question of this thesis is: in what ways do migrants in Grigny and Saint Denis experience and cope with social exclusion and to what effects?

The thesis is set up as an exploratory research in two neighborhoods in the banlieues of Paris: Grigny and Saint Denis. It is not my goal to present generalized statements, but rather to sketch an overview of the heterogeneous experiences and actions of migrants who in live these places. In doing so, the findings of this research might provide new insights concerning the integration debates in France.

The structure of this thesis is as follows: in the next chapter I will explain two central concepts, namely banlieues and migrants. Moreover, I present information on the related debates of racism and citizenship in the context of France. This knowledge is important to understand the background in which the research participants are positioned. Chapter 3 contains the theoretical framework in which the concepts of social exclusion, intersectionality and subjectivity are linked. In Chapter 4 I will discuss my methodological approach and its implications for the research. Chapters 5 – 7 present the empirical findings. The first chapter elaborates on the barriers that enforce the social exclusion of the research participants. The second empirical chapter explains how research participants react by withdrawing themselves in a particular community. Chapter 7 chapter discusses the strategies of participants to expand their networks beyond their neighborhood. Chapter 8, the last chapter, will be used to bring together all the themes that are came to the front in this thesis and conclude on what they can mean in the current debates regarding integration and deprived neighborhoods.

2. Context

The aim of this chapter is to explore the socio-political situation in France concerning the banlieues and migrants. This context is necessary to understand the experiences and actions of the research participants in relation to their neighborhood and social networks. I will sketch an overview of relevant topics and debates that have informed this anthropological research and that recurred in the conversations with the research participants. For these topics exists large bodies of academic literature. Yet, to keep the context comprehensible, I will only touch upon the information and arguments that are relevant to understand the context of this thesis.

First, I will start with a discussion on the concept of banlieues. The banlieue is the setting in which my thesis will take place, yet the concept is highly debated and not as straightforward as it may seem to be. Hence, it is needed to define in more detail what in this thesis is meant, when speaking of the banlieue. The banlieues are made up of a high percentage of people with an immigrant background. Hence, in the second section I will shortly summarize the immigration history in France and focus on how immigrants are framed by the French state.

Following the immigration history, I discuss the issue of racism and lastly citizenship. Racism has become intertwined with debates on cultural fundamentalism and citizenship. The topics of racism and discrimination have been mentioned by research participants as negatively impacting their lives. Therefore, I want to shortly dive into the debates concerning these topics.

2.1 Banlieues

The banlieues form the suburbs of the French cities. They are comprised of many different *quartiers* (neighborhoods), which vary in standards of living. Some of these are highly impoverished. These neighborhoods consist of a high population of people without a job, and a low socio-economical low status (Slooter 2015). Instead of talking about banlieues, it would thus be more precise to speak about these quartiers, which have several names, such as *les quartiers populaires* or *les quartiers sensible*, or to speak about the *banlieue sensible.*

Grigny and Saint Denis are both Parisian quartiers, increasingly seen as a ghetto, although this is debated within the academic debate. According to Wacquant the French banlieues should not be defined as ghettos. The following reasons he uses to support his claim: the ghetto is an area in which the population consists of an ethnic or racial concentration (Wacquant 1993). Racial issues prevail in the exclusion of this population. In France however, the banlieues are not mainly "black" or "Arab" but consist of a variety of races and ethnicities. The exclusion and stigmatization of the banlieues does come from class factors (Tissot 2007). The stigmatization of banlieues origins thus from a different background than ghettos. By contrast, Lapeyronnie and Kokoreff argue, that the research of Wacquant is outdated, and nowadays there are French banlieues which have become ghettos. Although the population is ethnically mixed, they can also be a homogenic group, namely as a group of migrants (Kokoreff 2009).

In this thesis, it is not so much of importance whether the banlieues should be defined as ghettos or not. More interesting is to see how the inhabitants themselves define and relate to the neighborhood they live in. Relevant is however the fact that the population in these places is excluded and stigmatized. Especially the youth are depicted as troublemakers. Since the 1980s, the youth living in these banlieues are in special a nation-wide concern. In these years, banlieue youth enacted large scale protests racism and discrimination (Aquatias 1997). Many scholars within the social sciences have described and analyzed the stigmatization, behavior and lives of banlieue youth, often in relation to

youth violence and unrest in the banlieues (Kokoreff 1994, Derville 1997, Body-Gendrot 2005, Balibar 2007, Dikeç 2007).

As Slooter (2015) also argues, the *banlieues sensibles* are places that are excluded from the mainstream and the inhabitants live isolated and under strict control of the state. The banlieues divides citizens in France, with negative consequences for the people living in the banlieues, especially for the youth.

2.2 Immigration

After the Second World War, France lacked the needed labor to rebuild the country. Therefore, foreign laborers were highly needed. The state enforced legislation that gave the *Office national de l'immigration* (ONI) the monopoly to recruit foreign laborers and to grant them residency permits if they have a legal work contract. An influx of immigrants was welcomed, mostly coming from Italy, Algeria and Western Africa (Laforcade 2006). However, in 1972 the economic expansion began to stall and in 1974 the French state decided to halt labor migration, as a response to the oil crisis. Whereas immigrants first were welcomed as laborers, now the France immigration policy had as priority to stop immigration and to diminish the number of foreigners in the country (Laforcade 2006).

Together with the declining need for foreign laborers, the framing of immigrants in France changed. In the public discourse, immigrants were increasingly associated with criminality, unemployment and job insecurity for the native French people (Laforcade 2006). The Far Right *Front National* brought the "immigrant threat" to the fore in the public debate. When the Right came to power, they reformed the entire national code, which resulted into the revoking of French nationality for many immigrants born on French soil (ibid.). In the following years, immigrants became subject of harsh state policies, with the aim to control and decrease the number of immigrants: many now "illegal" immigrants risked deportation and family reunification was made as difficult as possible (Laforcade 2006).

Increasingly, immigrants are framed as being a part of the problem themselves. They are depicted as being unable to fully integrate and therefore as a threat to the French values: the headscarves worn by Muslim women is often used as example to support the failed integration (Laforcade 2006). The practical implication for many second or third generation migrant youth in France is that they must deal with being denied as full members of the society (Beaman 2016). In her research to second generation migrant youth from Northern African descent, Bauman concludes that the "North-African culture" is framed as cultural opposite of the French cultural values. Furthermore, these post-migrant youths are often born and raised in France, yet they do not "look" French and are constantly reminded that they are not seen as French as anyone else. The following conclusion from Beaman (2016) is: "In other words, North African-origin individuals are marginalized because of their racial status and ethnic origin, yet this marginalization is framed in terms of culture [Beaman, 2015]."

2.3 Racism (?)

As discussed previously, marginalization of immigrants is often discussed in terms of culture, yet also interwoven with race and ethnicity. However, whether the public debates regarding immigration, integration and the banlieues, are rooted in cultural fundamentalism or in racism, is a strong debate amongst scholars (Stolcke 1995).

To understand why the public debate in France rather speaks about culture than racism, it is important look back at the history of the republic. French policy has a strong emphasis on formal equality before the law. The republican history, rooted in the Revolution, was deemed incompatible with ethnic or racial groups making identarian claims to the state (Bleich 2011). Moreover, due to WOII and the felt consequences of ethnic marking, categorizing individuals in terms of ethnicity of race was viewed as a dubious practice. Therefore, in France a very strong stigma was developed "against unequal treatment

by race or ethnicity" and issues regarding race, ethnic monitoring, affirmative action and minority representation were for a long time not debatable in the French public sphere (Bleich 2011).

This is not to say that a debate about the status of minority groups is absent. Stolcke (1995) describes how in Europe a new rhetoric of exclusion and inclusion developed, based on the distinctiveness of cultural identity and traditions. The new rhetoric of cultural fundamentalism sets immigrants apart as lacking the Western values and norms, being culturally different, which leads to all kind of socioeconomic ills in Europe (such as unemployment and housing shortages).

Some authors (Beaman 2015, Ong 1996) claim that a hidden form of racism is noticeable in the debates about immigrants, culture and marginalization. For example, Beaman argues how racism continues in a cultural frame: the visible racial status and ethnic origin of post-migrant youth makes them not "look" French, of which they are constantly reminded, although people refer to their difference as being part of another culture (Beaman 2015). Stolcke (1995) has written an elaborate article in which she reasons that the idea of "old racism in disguise" is nonetheless a too simple thought. Western racism justifies a hierarchical society with certain groups of people being superior to others, based on a certain moral, intellectual and social defects which are supposed to be grounded in "racial" characteristics. Racism assumes thus an asymmetric counter-concept in which "race" is seen as a natural cause of the inferiority of "others" (ibid.).

By contrast, cultural fundamentalism has developed symmetric counter-concepts, namely that of the foreigner as opposed to the national citizen (Stolcke 1995). In the rhetoric of cultural fundamentalism, the world is divided in distinct and disparate cultures, conflicting due to the universal xenophobic human's nature. Cultures are supposed to be spatially segregated and matching with a national identity. The influx of foreign culture (brought by immigrants) threatens "our" national culture and integrity. Accordingly, nation-states are much concerned with the assimilation of foreigners into the dominant culture, and those who fail are considered dangerous (Stolcke 1995). Contrary to racism, cultural fundamentalism leaves some openness towards inclusion of "the other", when they are willing to assimilate culturally.

In the cultural fundamentalism rhetoric, "race" is no longer used as a justification for inequality of immigrants. Yet, phenotype tends to be used as a marker of immigrants' origin (Stolcke 1995). As Stolcke also shortly notices, the rhetoric of racism and cultural fundamentalism can both be present in practice, which becomes visible when we turn back to the French context. Since the 1990s, France opened for more public debates regarding race and discrimination. The *conseil d'État* wrote a report in which discrimination was raised as a key challenge for the French model of integration. This opened some more space for debates on affirmative action, minority representation and ethnic monitoring, not only for the state, but also for anti-racist activists (Bleich 2011).

In short, whether racism is the most relevant concept to understand exclusion of migrants continues to be a point of debate. Either way, I would argue that we should acknowledge the existence of both racism and cultural fundamentalism rhetoric in societies. As Tejani (2015) describes, the different conceptualization and understanding concerning racism and culture (in his case mostly focused on religion and Islamic culture) has led to division within antiracism movements in France. It is thus important to understand how racism and cultural fundamentalism simultaneous structure in- and exclusion of (2th and 3th generation) migrants in society, although in different manners.

2.4 Citizenship

States have used the concept of citizenship to in- and exclude people (Schinkel 2010). Under pressure of wars, the newly formed nation-states in Europe, did actively partake in the formation of citizenship by reinforcing nationalist ideologies, to win the loyalty of its citizens (Pakulski 1997). Pakulski (1997) argues that the development of citizenship in Europe can be accommodated in two dimensions. The first dimension refers to the *domain* of rights and the second is about the *scope* (inclusion of social groups). The domains include the rights of citizens to participate in the social community, in special regarding to politics (voting and possibility of holding a political office). Furthermore, since the first half of the twentieth century the rights are expanded to social welfare and security. The dimension of rights gave rise to the modern notion of citizenship, defined by Marshall as: "a juridically described set of rights and duties, and citizens can be regarded as a bundle of such rights and duties" (Schinkel 2010).

The scope of rights was in first instance limited to white able-bodied adult males. However, with the widening of domains, the scope was also extended to include all women, males, indigenous people and so on (Pakulski 1997). This is not to say that the extensions of citizenship scopes went smoothly: unrecognized social groups had to push for and claim their rights. An example is the slow political incorporation of non-European migrants in France. In first instance, these migrants did not have any citizenship rights: they had to be assertive in claiming their rights to citizenship (Maxwell 2010).

While the scope and domains of citizenship expanded, the formal notion of citizenship (often seen as fitting within the liberal paradigm) has been supplemented by more ethical and normative virtues, coming forth out of communitarian and republican paradigms. Being a citizen is no longer confined to the juridical legal sphere, but now it is also about having certain values and norms as to belong to a society (Dahlgren 2006). Schinkel (2010) discusses in his article on citizenship in the Netherlands how the emphasis on the moral aspects of citizenship (the values and norms) leads towards inequality. Moral citizenship prescribes what and how a citizen should be. The shift in emphasis of formal aspects of citizenship towards moral aspects, has led to the creation of a scale of citizenship: you can be a fuller or half citizen, according to how well you fit within the prescription of a "good" citizen.

In France, an equally focus persists on "good" citizenship (Tejani 2015). The French state has developed a normative republican citizenship model which is based on *liberté*, *égalité*, *fraternité* (freedom, equality, brotherhood), defined by the French revolution in 1989 (Lurbe I Puerto 2015). Another notion that has become an important norm in French society is *laïcité* (civic secularism) (Tejani 2015). These norms are held to be universal: all rights and laws should be equally applicable to all human beings, irrespectively religion, sex, origin, sexual orientation and personal convictions (Lurbe I Puerto 2015).

Consequently, the French republican discourse considers minority identities as "an illegitimate basis for political claims-making" (Maxwell 2010, 427). To benefit from the laws and rights, citizens must uphold the precise cultural codes as is envisaged by the "ideal universal citizen": the French white upper or middle-class man (Lurbe I Puerto 2015). For immigrants, this means that they should surrender any profound differences to be viewed as "good" citizens (Tejani 2015). While the republican citizenship model in France aims towards equality for all, it creates division between citizens: the ones who are upholding the republican values and norms are considered good citizens, whereas immigrants who choose differently are othered as "bad" citizens (Tejani 2015).

Hence, the lack of differentiation renders minorities invisible, which leads to difficulties for minorities in participating in the society and politics. An example is the low formal political participation amongst migrants. The French political framework has limited the options for non-European migrants to access mainstream political channels as integrated French citizens, and political mobilization around migrant and homeland-based identities has been limited as well due to this framework (Maxwell 2010).

Likewise, migrants vote less in comparison to the voting of native French people. The reason behind it, lies in the fact that many migrants live in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods that suffer from several constraints on full participation in mainstream society (ibid.).

The given background information on the socio-political context in France serves to understand the backdrop to which the migrants in Grigny and Saint Denis navigate their lives. Next chapter I will present the theoretical framework that will be used to analyze and interpret the experiences and actions of migrants in deprived neighborhoods.

3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will clarify the theoretical concepts that I use: social exclusion, intersectionality and subjectivity. Furthermore, I will discuss the wider academic debate about deprived neighborhoods and immigrants, which is closely related to societal issues of integration and concerns of radicalization. I will end with a conclusion.

3.1 Social exclusion

Social exclusion is a widely used concept in European policies and has its roots in the 1970s in France (Daly and Silver 2008). The debates about social exclusion are not unique to France: the concept of social exclusion has become central in discussions about social policy, inequality and integration in Europe and the United States. (Atkinson and Davoudi 2000). In this section I will start shortly with the roots of social exclusion. Subsequently I will explain how I conceptualize social exclusion, using the analytical framework of Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997).

René Lenoir is credited as the one who developed the concept and spread its use. He was mostly concerned with the people who live in the periphery of society: the poor and the disabled people (Daly and Silver 2008, Abello et al 2016). The French debates about social exclusion root firmly in a republican discourse and social Catholicism (Daly and Silver 2008). Central to this discourse is the role of the state in protecting and maintaining social solidarity in society. In this vision, social ills are a result of weak social ties: belonging or not belonging to society (ibid.). In the French debates the terms *social disqualification* and *social disaffiliation* are often used to discuss the "breakdown of the relationship between society and the individual" (Bhalla and Lapeyre 1997, 414).

Other states in Europe such as the United Kingdom had a different orientation regarding societal issues: they were concerned with poverty because of unequal incomes (Atkinson and Davoudi 2000). In the first half of the 1990s European countries started to combine the typical Anglo-Saxon focus on income inequality with the French interpretation of social exclusion with more room for social and cultural dimensions of exclusionary processes (Atkinson and Davoudi 2000). The European Union tried to bring these diverse traditions together, for example with the Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion, a team of researchers who were brought together to develop an analysis of social exclusion (ibid.).

Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) argue that social exclusion is a useful concept in drawing attention to issues of poverty and inequality. It makes it possible to direct our attention to institutional systems in Europe and look at the inadequacies of these systems: how they enhance or reduce social exclusion and where we can change them. Not all researchers agree, because social exclusion is a very broad concept, and they miss a well-funded theoretical base (Daly and Silver 2008). Yet, I would argue that precisely since social exclusion is so important in the policy and popular world of the European Union, researchers should as well critically analyze and consider what social exclusion as concept does to positions of minorities in France.

Going to a more theoretical understanding of exclusion, Agamben and Bauman are two scholars who have written about the processes of exclusion in nation-states, and how these affect the excluded people (Bauman 2004). Agamben formulated a characterization of the *homo sacer*, the human who is completely excluded, worthless and stripped of all human and divine significance (Bauman 2004). Agamben argues how the value of people is nowadays nothing more than state identity: everyone who cannot be recognized as a citizen belonging to a nation-state is excluded and can be oppressed (Ibid). Bauman builds further on the notion of *homo sacer* and reasons how the modern nation-state claims authority in determining who is included (using citizenship) and who is excluded (Bauman 2004). Those

who are excluded have become ''wasted lives'' according to Bauman. His explanation is that nation-states are designing society: they structure society. Yet, through this process there will always be a part of the population that doesn't fit within the order: those are the undesirable people, the ''wasted humans''. In early modernity these unwanted people could leave the country, for example go to America and build a life there (ibid).

Today however, the whole globe has become a modern society, and consequently there is no possibility for further expansion. Bauman argues that there is no hope anymore for wasted humans of today: there are no jobs for them, there is no possibility for alternative titles of belonging, and no return path to fully fledged membership (Bauman 2004). Since these people are rendered as useless and unfit for society, nation-states try to separate these people and deny them access to society. We see this for example for many migrants and refugees who are regarded as illegal and put away in detention centers or refugee camps (ibid.).

Minorities who are officially French citizens, such as second-generation migrants are in a different situation, although there are many similarities. In legal sense, they are full citizens and belong to the nation-state (Schinkel 2010). Yet, many policy makers and academics are concerned with the fact that many of these people are not able to fully participate in society (Blanc 1998). Instead the broken relationship between the nation-state and minorities is manifested through forms such as discrimination and segregation (Daly and Silver 2008). Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997) have developed an analytical framework that enlarges the understanding of social exclusion. They argue that social exclusion is multidimensional: there is a political, economic and social dimension.

The political dimension is concerned with citizenship. As seen before, the nation-state uses citizenship to control who belongs in society and who doesn't. It is also possible that there are deviancies in citizenship. Marshall (in Bhalla and Lapeyre 1997) discerned three groups of rights: civil (e.g. freedom of expression), political (e.g. right to participate in exercise of political power) and socioeconomic (e.g. right to minimum health care). Certain groups in society might lack complete citizenship due to lack of enforcement of rights of the states, or the inability to fight for their rights (ibid.).

The economic dimension of social exclusion is concerned with the question of income and access to goods and services (Bhalla and Lapeyre 1997). They define employment in three aspects: income, production and recognition. People can be excluded from employment, livelihood, and access to the labor market or basic needs such as health or housing (ibid.). According to Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997) the recognition aspect is in fact better at its place in the social dimension: employment offers social status and social legitimacy to people. Lack of employment often results in lack of recognition of the productive roles of human beings.

Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997) concern three main categories in the social dimension: (lack of) access to social services (education), access to the labor market, opportunity for social participation and its effects on social society (crime, homelessness) (ibid., 419). These categories are closely connected but where the economic dimension is more concerned with the lack of goods and services, is the social dimension more concerned with the effects for social relations. The social dimension is as well concerned with the social relationships within a society on the level of families, communal relationships and the citizen – state relationship (Bhalla and Lapeyre 1997). These relationships are governed by social norms, religious or cultural guidelines, and concerning the last one, state actions. These social characteristics help to understand that social exclusion can be manifested in different manners, according to the context of where it takes place. Furthermore, it is relational: people feel the need to be recognized by others in society to have a decent life (ibid, 424). The social dimensions show

that lack of recognition and not being able to fulfill criteria of personal achievements that are socially determined, is another aspect of social exclusion.

In short social exclusion is a concept that is rooted in the French republican discourse, yet nowadays the concept is expanded and broadly used within European countries. To view social exclusion as multidimensional helps to unravel the different forms and aspects of exclusion that minority groups might experience.

3.2 Intersectionality

In the last section it is made clear that social exclusion is theorized as a relationship between different groups in society: often ethnic minorities are in a more or lesser degree socially excluded mainstream society (Phillimore & Goodson 2005). We should realize however that even within a minority group heterogeneity exists. Intersectionality is a useful term to understand how different social categories influence social exclusion of different individuals in society (Valentine 2007).

Intersectionality is rooted in feminist studies (Valentine 2007). Early feminist academic debates were concerned with the lack of incorporating women in research: both as subjects of research and as in women who do research (ibid.). In first instance gender was mostly researched in the setting of patriarchy. However feminist researchers were also actively looking for ways to relate gender and patriarchy with the broader debates concerning capitalism and oppression (ibid). For a long time, feminists struggled with terminology for the interconnectedness of diverse social categories.

Black women have made an important contribution: they pointed out that black women in the United States are more oppressed than white women (Valentine 2007). In other words, gender is not dichotomous, it is influenced by race and ethnicity. Minow defines intersectionality as "the way in which any particular individual stands at the crossroads of multiple groups" (Minow 1997 in Valentine 2007, 12). Intersectionality became the used term to better understand to deepening of inequality and discrimination, due to multiple identities of gender, class and ethnicity (Anthias 2012, Valentine 2007).

Within feminist studies, questions are also asked regarding the supposed duality of social exclusion or oppression. Jackson (1999) argues how the duality of excluded versus included groups is not as sharp as often suggested. She does so by exploring literature about the exclusion and integration of women in the labor market (Jackson 1999). The Gender and Development school criticized the idea that the inclusion of women is simply realized through employment and income generation projects. Instead the results were twofold. At one hand these projects have been beneficial to individual women and gender-progressive cultural change. At the other hand led the integration of women in the labor market, to more work for women and greater exploitation of their labor (Jackson 1999). Taking these nuances into account, it is thus possible that "a person might be simultaneously included and excluded" (Jackson 1999, 129).

Another aspect what needs to be kept in mind when talking about intersectionality is the context of time and space (Anthias 2012). In some spaces people are encouraged to express their identities, in others they are forced to hide (a part of) their identity (Valentine 2007). Anthias (2012, 14) takes it a step further by discussing that "social categories are not equally positioned or salient at all times." She proposes to view intersectionality in a broader societal sense. It is not that for example, being "a working class black woman", automatically leads to some sort of oppression (Anthias 2012).

Instead, we need to consider social divisions in light of hierarchical (power) relations which are changing and depend on different time and space frameworks (Anthias 2012). In other words, intersectionality on its own terms is not enough to understand inequality. It is necessary to research the relationships between social divisions and the hierarchical power constructions to understand at

what time and place inequality emerges, and from there we can analyze what roles intersected identities serve (ibid). Following the idea of Jackson (1999) that people are being excluded and included at the same time, opens space for people at the margins to maneuver in their position in society, although within constrains, and practice agency in how they present themselves.

In short, intersectionality is a theoretical concept that helps in understanding the heterogeneity amongst excluded groups such as migrants. In doing so, it highlights and explains the variation of experiences of social exclusion amongst individuals. To truly understand intersectionality, means also considering the local time and space context. Within the general context of social exclusion, we should realize that people can be partially included and excluded at the same time. Furthermore, intersectionality gives attention to the agency of individuals: people can resist and react against their oppression.

3.3 Subjectivity and power

The theory of intersectionality does give already some attention to the notion that individuals can (partly) control their identities and have some agency in claiming a status in society (Hulko 2009). Ortner (2005) is even more concerned with the agency of actors and she highlights the importance of the notion of subjectivity in understanding resistance and agency against exclusion.

Ortner (2005) goes back to the 20th century in which debates evolved between different lines of thinking in philosophical and the emerging social sciences theories (Ortner 2005). Freedom versus constraint and determinism is the central discussion. Levi-Strauss went beyond the debate by talking about structuralism: men are not simply constrained by society; the idea of freedom is even illusory (ibid). Diverse strands in social sciences have built on this notion, but also criticized it and brought again more attention to the acting of subjects within the limitations of power structures. An example is the idea of the habitus of Bourdieu which is about the limited choices people have, to determine how they live (ibid). The acting subject is brought back into social theory but Ortner (2005) notices that most theories tend to neglect the question of subjectivity.

According to Ortner (2005) subjectivity is central to power, yet often ignored in the academic debates regarding power and agency. She defines subjectivity as "the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, fear, and so forth that animate acting subjects" (Ortner 2005, 31). In other words, subjectivity is the basis of agency: specific desires and intentions are shaped through feelings, thought and meanings. Consequently, we act on it (ibid).

Reflexivity is a key concept in the work of Ortner that has its base in subjectivity. Since actors can perceive, feel, think, they are at least partially conscious about themselves and the world around them, and they can reflect on it (Ortner, 2005). Ortner opposes thus the ideas of habitus or false consciousness. Yet subjectivity is not purely an individual matter. We need to understand that cultural formations provoke and shape subjectivities (Ortner 2005). Of course, no one can stand "outside of culture" but even in the face of the most dominant cultural formations, actors still have subjectivity and thus consciousness. Consciousness together with reflexivity makes it possible that we can question and criticize the world in which we find ourselves and consequently act upon it (Ortner 2005).

The reactions and performances of people groups in the margins of society have been researched by many scholars, often in terms of resistance and alternative politics (Das and Randeria 2015, Jackson 1999). Das and Randeria (2015) discuss a variety of ethnographies that studied diverse cases of "politics of the urban poor". This concept relates to an unstable and moving relationship between the state and urban marginalized populations. The cases demonstrate the diverse ways in which urban poor creatively search for ways to remake networks within kinship and local community, and with the street

level bureaucrats or other brokers from the state. It is about a kind of politics that is outside of the frame of neoliberal citizenship notions and the formal politics (Das and Randeria 2015). These ethnographies show how people, even those who are very much excluded from participating in mainstream society, still have agency and are actively engaged in navigating their lives and position in relation to, or outside of the mainstream society.

Unruly politics is another concept that offers insights in how marginalized groups practice agency. Whereas in the cases of Das and Randeria (2015) the relation between marginalized groups and the state is still central, unruly politics takes a step further by demonstrating how marginalized groups create their own rules. As Khanna et al define it: Unruly politics "is political action by people who have been denied voice by the rules of the political game, and by the social rules that underpin this game. It draws its power from transgressing these rules - while at the same time upholding others, which may not be legally sanctioned, but which have legitimacy, deeply rooted in peoples - own understandings of what is right and just. This preoccupation with social justice distinguishes these forms of political action from the banditry or gang violence with which threatened autocrats willfully try to associate them" (citation in Kaulingfreks 2016, 37).

As we have discussed in the section of intersectionality, people are not fully in- or excluded. Jackson (1999) demonstrates how the processes of being partially in- and excluded opens space for people at the margins to define their relationship with the "center", or the groups with more power. Jackson (1999) gives the example of the women in the Meratus mountains in Indonesia, a poor marginalized people group. To gain more wealth and power, these women could try to move themselves closer to the center by marrying a foreign man. Yet there were also women who deliberately refused to do so, because being married to a rich foreign man meant less autonomy as well (Jackson 1999). This example illustrates well how exclusion and inclusion is not synonymous for respectively bad and good. Furthermore, people can choose to reinforce their own exclusion for several reasons or try to become more included, although always within constraints.

Hence, we see thus that people who are excluded from participation in mainstream society, search for other ways in which they can navigate their lives and build networks or alternative power structures. As seen with the examples of Das and Randeria (2015), Kaulingfreks (2016) and Jackson (1999), the actions of people can vary from trying to strengthen their bond with the powerful center to demand inclusion, or to dismissing the society in which they are excluded and form an alternative social community or parallel world. An interesting note is that people may also shift between different strategies. Through his fieldwork Slooter (2015) demonstrates how banlieue youth use multiple strategies for navigating their lives and searching for identity, depending on what fits best in the given situation. They can "escape the neighborhood, contest stereotypical images through contentious performances, or act out the image gangster from the ghetto" (Slooter 2015). In other words, people are thus not only aware of their marginalized position, but they also know how certain acts or performances might help them or fits best for specific situations in what they are trying to achieve.

All in all, subjectivity is a concept that allows us to recognize the agency of those who are excluded. By acknowledging subjectivity, the experiences of "the excluded" are taken serious and as well, it offers insights into how people cope with their position in society and react to it. By diving into themes of power, agency and subjectivity, it becomes clear that the diverse groups of "excluded people" are not only aware of their status in society, but also actively navigate their position and find space to resist or change their position, demanding inclusion or establish alternative social orders.

3.4 Deprived neighborhoods, social exclusion and the integration debate

The question of this thesis is: in what ways do migrants in Grigny and Saint Denis experience and cope with social exclusion and to what effects? To understand the significance of this for my thesis, we first need to consider the wider European debates regarding migrants and deprived neighborhoods. Keeping in mind the theoretical concepts social exclusion, intersectionality and subjectivity, I relate my research case to the integration debates which are undergoing intense study, both in public and academic debates.

The original debate concerning ethnic segregation and integration has its origin in the 20th century in the United States where new immigrant groups lived in ethnic enclaves. The Chicago School of Sociology developed the idea that intergroup mixing would foster social integration and reduce discrimination (Van Liempt 2011). This was supposed to be a natural process, but when time made clear that this did not naturally occur for everybody, more attention was given to structural factors that contribute to segregation (ibid). The debates in the United States shifted towards the social and economic constraints people in certain neighborhoods experience: neighborhoods who are increasingly excluded from mainstream society and in which the residents also increasingly withdraw themselves (Smets and Den Uyl 2008).

The situation in the United States is often compared with Western Europe (Smets and Den Uyl 2008) and more with specifically France (Wacquant 1993, Kokoreff 2009, Beaman 2015). Wacquant (1993) for example, has compared the "black belt" of Chicago with the "red belt" of Paris. He concluded that the banlieues aren't a ghetto, since the division is not along ethnical lines but along economic lines. The stigmatization of banlieues origins thus from a different background than ghettos (Wacquant 1993). By contrast, later authors disagree: although the population is ethnically mixed, they can also be viewed as a homogenic group of migrants, mostly blacks and Arabs (Kokoreff 2009). Furthermore, compared to the mainstream society, these neighborhoods consist of a high population of people without a job, and a low socio-economical low status (Slooter 2015).

Whether we speak about ghettos in Europe or not, deprived neighborhoods with a large percentage of migrants are still a concern to many Western European countries. Research shows evidence of a positive correlation between deprived neighborhoods and the presence of a high percentage of ethnic minority groups (Phillimore and Goodson 2006). Buck (2001) demonstrates that living in deprived neighborhoods does further the social exclusion of individual inhabitants. The discussions regarding these deprived neighborhoods with many migrants, take place within an even larger debate concerning the (lack of) integration, and supposed dangers that these marginalized groups of people present in society.

Atkinson and Davoudi (2000) were mostly positive about the use of the concept of social exclusion, yet they warned as well for the use of the concept within a dominated paradigm of economic liberalism and social conservatism. They argued that the danger lies in defining the socially excluded people as socially deviant, behaving in self-destructive manners and seeing the welfare state is a consequence to fix the dangerous behavior of these socially excluded people (ibid). Van Liempt (2011) discusses how the events in 2001 and following the war on terrorism, together with the riots in British towns (Oldham, Burnley, Bradford) have triggered fear for immigrants who live "parallel lives", supposedly completely segregated from mainstream society. An example of another notorious municipality that receives international attention is Molenbeek in Brussels, Belgium. The perpetrators of terroristic attacks in Paris (2015) and Brussels (2016) were linked to Molenbeek (Ponsaers and Devroe 2016). Consequently, questions arose about the bad circumstances, high unemployment amongst youth and influence of Islam, that are supposed to stimulate the radicalization of the residents (Ponsaers and Devroe 2016, Leman 2016). Deprived neighborhoods with many migrants, especially when it concerns Muslims, are

thus increasingly regarded as breeding grounds for radicalization, terrorism and other dangers to society.

In the battle to combat terrorism, governments highlight the need for more and better integration, hoping that improved social cohesion will decrease radicalization (Brighton 2007, Rahimi and Graumans 2015). The assumption is that people who are segregated and excluded from mainstream society, respond through radicalization and maybe even terrorism. Nevertheless, the relationship between segregation, integration and radicalization is debated (Rahimi and Graumans 2015). Rahimi and Graumans (2015) argue that the presumed relationship between integration and radicalization is not supported by evidence. Contradictory to popular believes, it is for example impossible to make a typical profile of radicals or extremists: these individuals are in fact "unremarkable in demographic, economic and psychological terms" (ibid, 40). They proceed in arguing that regarding social exclusion and/or individual psychology as direct causes for radicalization, we neglect essential factors such as international relations, especially colonialism and historical injustices. The consequences are dangerous: interventions in 'risky communities' may not only be ineffective but also seriously damage intercommunal trust (ibid.).

In trying to increase the social cohesion many states have established policies that should stimulate better integration and social cohesion, often with a focus on foreign policy, deprived neighborhoods and migrant communities (Bright 2007, Smets and Den Uyl 2008). An illustration is offered by Smets and Den Uyl (2008) who research the (ethnical) mixing policies in the Netherlands that should stimulate the integration of inhabitants in deprived neighborhoods (Bijlmer and Transvaal). In their research the consequences of these policies, they found that stimulating ethnic mixing policies, is not automatically followed by better social mixing. In fact, it may even lead to a widening of ethnic cleavages (Smets and Den Uyl 2008). De Koning (2013) demonstrates another negative consequence of policies and media attention to deprived neighborhoods. She argues that policies and media attention create a notorious image of deprived neighborhoods that advances the stigmatization of these areas and the inhabitants.

 In France president Hollande created the priority neighborhoods (*quartiers prioritaire*) in 2012, based on the income of inhabitants. These neighborhoods should be improved through investments in amongst other things education and (youth) employment (Slooter 2015). Furthermore, the government established the *zones de sécurité prioritaires* (ZSP): these are places in need of additional attention by security forces (ibid). A group of inhabitants that receive much attention is the banlieue youth. The stigmatization, behavior and lives of banlieue youth is a much-debated topic, often in relation to the riots and violence in the banlieues (Body-Gendrot 2005, Koff 2009, Dikeç 2007, Slooter 2015). The policies of the French state and the impact on the banlieues are followed and criticized by a variety of researchers (Dikeç 2007, Kokoreff 2009, Vieillard-Baron 2000). Dikeç (2007) for example researched the French policies during 1981 and 2005 relating to the changes in conceptualization of urban space.

The wider debates in which my thesis takes place, is thus very much informed by contemporary issues regarding integration of migrants and the "war on terror". In the public debate the integration of migrants is increasingly seen as failed, especially concerning the Muslim population. Radicalization and terroristic attacks are perceived as consequences of this failing, and a wake-up call for the state to intervene with all kinds of integration policies. The deprived neighborhoods where high percentages of migrants live, are in the center of attention: it is the site where the state needs to intervene with policies to control the population and to make sure that these people "better integrate" in society. Nevertheless, academic scholars demonstrate that the assumed links are not straightforward, and the interventions might even cause additional harm.

3.5 Conclusion

My thesis is a case study done in Grigny and Saint Denis, two deprived areas in the Parisian banlieues with a high percentage of migrants. With this thesis I want to contribute to the debates around deprived neighborhoods and migrants by researching the experiences of migrants who live in these neighborhoods through the lenses of social exclusion, subjectivity and intersectionality.

Social exclusion is a much-debated concept with multiple layers and dimensions, broadly used in European countries. Keeping in mind the diverse dimensions of social exclusion (Bhalla and Lapeyre 1997), I will identify the variations in social exclusion that migrants in Grigny and Saint Denis experience. In doing so, I will be aware that people can be simultaneously excluded and included to recognize the constraints and possible opportunities that social exclusion offers (Jackson 1999).

The roles of emotions and feelings in society is often not given much attention (Ortner 2005, Van Leeuwen 2008). A scholar who has analyzed the effects of emotions and feelings in a cultural diverse society is Van Leeuwen (2008). In his work he demonstrated how in a cultural diverse society people live with mixed feelings variating from positive feelings of wonder and fascination, to negative feelings of fear and shock (Van Leeuwen 2008). According to Van Leeuwen (2008) these negative feelings contribute to the growing aversion against migrants and rising nationalism. His work is thus an example of how subjectivity informs the actions of people. Going a step further, it is also interesting to see the diversity in reactions of people who live in Grigny and Saint Denis. Do they resist or reinforce their exclusion, search for inclusion or maybe find totally other strategies to navigate their lives within society? And what role does the neighborhood play in the actions of these people?

I will follow Ortner (2005) and Van Leeuwen (2008) by giving attention to the modes of perception, feelings and thoughts immigrants have concerning their lives in Grigny or Saint Denis, and how these modes shape their actions. Researching a diverse range of migrants, hopefully gives me the opportunity to understand how intersectionality has a role in the variation of experiences migrants have. In the conclusions of my thesis I will relate the case study to the bigger debates regarding integration and social cohesion and to understand what the meaning is of living in deprived neighborhoods.

4. Methodology

In the chapter Methodology I will elaborate on the methodological choices that inform my research and how this research was conducted. I will discuss how I came to the topic, why I chose for an ethnographic approach, how I got to know my research participants and how I conducted my research. I take time as well to reflect on the changes during the fieldwork and my own positionality in it. Lastly, I will share how I processed my data gained during the fieldwork.

4.1 Setting up the research

This thesis initially came forth out of my interest in the lives of migrants and especially second-generation migrants in Europe. During my bachelor I developed an interest in the given that many second or even third generation migrants are born and raised in European countries, yet still feel like they are not fully accepted as citizens. Courses within the bachelor and master, such as ''multiculturalism, diversity and space'' and ''sociology in development: towards a critical perspective'', further opened my eyes for the relation between migration, space and the marginalization of specific people groups. The interest was not solely fuelled by literature, but also by conversations with friends and family who have a migrant background (as I myself have too).

France became the country in which I was most interested, since the debates concerning migrants and ghettoization of certain areas seemed to be most hardened in this country, compared with other European countries. While practicing my French I started to follow blogs such as Bondy blog (bondyblog.fr) and watch French movies such as La Haine (Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995) about the lives of people in the stigmatized areas of the banlieues. Doing so I got interested in the effects of living in such stigmatized places, and how people in these places organize their own lives. There are multiple interesting cities in France, but I chose to go to Paris out of practicality: in August I could already go to Paris to practice my French, through contacts with a church in the center of Paris. In that month I started looking for entrances to one of the deprived neighborhoods while also writing my proposal.

Being warned by many French people that I shouldn't just go to these deprived neighborhoods I decided to search on the internet for youth organizations and schools that are active in these neighborhoods. I hoped that one of these organizations could be an entrance point from where I could start my fieldwork. I emailed and called them, and, in this way, I got in touch with La Constellation: a non-profit organization in Grigny that used art to connect the inhabitants – especially youths - and stimulates the practice of citizenship. Subsequently, Grigny became my focus point in the thesis proposal. Since the activities within the project are all arts-related, I organized my thesis proposal around Grigny and the use of arts as method to stimulate the practice of citizenship amongst the Grignois (inhabitants of Grigny).

Soon after starting fieldwork it appeared that I had to change my initial plan, since there were no activities planned in the months that I came: La Constellation only had one final activity at 14th of October which I could join. Luckily, through the final activity where I could come, I got some contacts in Grigny that gave me an entrance to some of other activities where I could meet Grigny's inhabitants. Meanwhile I also got to know a volunteer organization in Saint Denis, another deprived neighborhood, yet in the north of Paris. I decided to widen my focus from second and third generation migrants, to all migrants living in Grigny or Saint Denis and to change my research based on the conversations I had. Through the diverse range of people I met and talked with, I developed my final research question: in what ways do migrants in Grigny and Saint Denis experience and cope with social exclusion and to what effects?

4.2 Methodological approach

I have chosen for ethnography to gain more in-depth knowledge of the experiences of migrants in Grigny and Saint-Denis. An ethnography is ideally suited to study the viewpoints of another person, since it is an approach that reveals cultural meanings of daily practices and the meanings that people give to their practices (Spradley 1980).

My first weeks were reserved for participant observation, which can be defined as "a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture" (DeWalt and DeWalt in Diphoorn 2013, 207). I've visited diverse places and joined in the activities, where I focused on interactions of people with each other and what kind of topics came up.

Participant observations at activities opened many possibilities for small talk, which became a central aspect of my fieldwork. As Driessen and Jansen (2013) argue, small talk has a central place in ethnographic fieldwork. Small talk is often only seen as informal light talk or conversation, mostly useful for building rapport with research participants. Yet it gives enormous possibilities to gain surprising insights and valuable data: informal conversations might bring up new or unexpected information, topics and viewpoints, it might provide "backstage information" such as hidden tensions in community or insights in taboo topics that are not easily discussed in formal interview settings. Moreover, small talk is very useful in learning cultural meanings (Driessen and Jansen 2013).

Informal conversation can thus be very meaningful, especially when the researcher is attentive during small talk and responses with sensitive questions, changing the encounters in deeper conversations in which people reveal their "inside knowledge" (Driessen and Jansen 2013). The people I've met were not always open for an interview, especially not recorded ones. Yet during an activity small talk came naturally. As I later explain in more detail, the topic was quickly related to immigration which was a fruitful ground for meaningful conversations with the research participants. Later, I also asked questions that I prepared for interviews during small talk occasions.

In addition to participant observation and small talk, I conducted qualitative interviews with diverse inhabitants. These interviews help in understanding aspects which are not comprehensible through observation alone, such as the meanings behind certain practices (Gobo 2008). Following to the topics and relevant questions came to the fore in the first exploring weeks I developed an interview guide. I have chosen to use semi-structured interviews, as it gives opportunity to ask key issues, but it also gives space for rich detailed answers: interviewees can tell what they think is important and possibly raise new issues (Russell Bernard 2011).

4.3 Implications for research

The positionality and identity of the researcher is influencing the direction and outcomes of ethnographic research in which social interactions are central. Hence, transparency is needed about the process of the fieldwork: how did I gain access to the field, and how did I do the observations, small talk and interviews. In the next sections the details of this process will be discussed. Furthermore, I reflect on my own positionality in the field and the most important aspects of my identity that played a role during the fieldwork. Since I am a non-native French speaker, I will discuss the implications of this language barrier in a specific section as well. I end with an explanation of my data analysis after the fieldwork was done.

4.4 Entrance to the field

In Grigny initially I started my contact with La croisée des Chemins: a local art project, organized by La Constellation and funded by the municipality. The contact person was Benjamin who connected

multiple people who are active in Grigny. During the time I did my fieldwork however a brainstorm phase was planned, which meant there were no activities planned. October 14th I could luckily still visit the final inauguration day which existed of a tour along the finished artworks in the neighborhood. Although the artworks were created by artists in collaboration with youth from the schools, this day the youth wasn't present: only the artists, some people from a newspaper, from the municipality and a few other social organizations. At this day I met the director of Pablo Picasso, the community center of the neighborhood who invited me to the coming holiday activities, and Fatima, a woman who worked for mission locale, and decided to help me with youth contacts in the neighborhood.

Thanks to the meeting with the director I could participate in activities of Pablo Picasso, *la maison du quartier*, or community center in the quartier Grigny II. I just arrived when the autumn holiday of two weeks started, so daily family activities were scheduled at the Pablo Picasso. These were all fun activities, and often with an educational touch, such as visiting a vegetable garden or enjoying the performance of an African storyteller with stories about Africa. At these activities I met several women who came along with their children. The fathers of these children never went to the activities. I had most contact with Karima, Aïda, Tavssi and Youssra. Most of my data arrived from small talk during these activities, yet with Karima, Aïda and Tavssi I could do a more elaborated interview while their children played with a volunteer at Pablo Picasso. Often, I arrived half an hour earlier, which gave me time to sit in the waiting hall of Pablo Picasso. I used the time to observe the people who came in, and talk with other waiting people, or with the lady at the front desk who not seemed very busy. In the waiting hall I met Amin and Ballo-Chiaka, whom I interviewed as well.

When I met Fatima at the final inauguration day, she was immediately enthusiastic about helping me. She is a social worker at *Mission Locale*, an organization that provides education and accompaniment to youth who dropped out of school without a diploma. In first instance Fatima tried to arrange that I could join activities at Mission Locale and interview the youth there. I've visited the location, but sadly enough the director did not give his permission for me to interview people there. As a result, Fatima searched in her own network of recently graduated students for people who wanted to be interviewed. Hence, I met Selen and Farah, whom I could interview.

To expand my network in Grigny I decided to look for a church, guessing that a church might lead to finding more people with other backgrounds. I found one church in Grigny – La Grande Borne: the church *Jésus mon Roi,* which was established by Congolese Christians. Every Sunday I went to the church service. They had also services at Friday evening and on Saturdays, so sometimes I went to these services as well. I listened to the sermons and songs, and after the service we could drink and eat snacks together. *Jésus mon Roi* is a small church: around thirty people came to the Sunday services, on Saturdays and Fridays there were even less people. At the end of the services, I could talk with several persons of which most notable John, Papi, the pastor Type and Nadine. I could interview Chantal at her home and with Sarha I met at the mall where we had time for a conversation.

It was in the middle of October that I also went to Saint Denis. Someone in the Netherlands heard that I was in Paris and she gave me the contact details of a local organization in Saint Denis where they give voluntary French classes to migrant women: *La Joie dans ma Vie.* One day in the week I could come and help with the classes. The classes always ended with tea and time to chat. At these moments I could join and talk with some of the ladies such as Meryem, Fatiha, Fatema and Taseadit. Taseadit and Fatema were both open for a longer interview as well.

Fatema told me about her volunteer work at *Au Secours Catholique*. I could come to two activities of this organization: the Saturday brunches. At these brunches we prepare and eat a meal. Each meal is a national or specific dish from one of the countries where people are from. My first brunch was a

Guinee's dish and the second brunch we had a Sudanese meal. Not everyone was needed to cook or cut vegetables, so there were also other crafts to do, or we could just socialize together. These activities made it possible to talk with many refugees/migrants who are still waiting for their papers, and all live in Saint-Denis, or the district Seine Saint Denis. Here I met with Ibrahim, Mamoudou and Baké. I also met Ferdouz who was open for a longer interview. He invited me to an activity of *fromage et baquettes*, a small group of migrants and volunteers of Au Secours Catholique. There I could also speak with Salim.

4.6 During the research

Based on my theoretical framework of my thesis proposal, I had already some questions in my mind for the interviews. Since, the research plans quickly changed however, I decided to start with participant observations by joining diverse activities. This way I could get to know multiple people and familiarize myself even more with the French language. I always had a small notebook with me, to write down what I thought was striking: interesting quotes, words, but also posters and other material that was presented at the places where I came. At end of the day I made a summary of these notes and I used this information to talk about with people. The informal conversations lasted between 15 and 45 minutes and were used to get to know each other. I sometimes asked for explanations of things I observed and later I also asked some of the same questions I had prepared for the formal interviews.

Small talk became a central part of my time at the activities, especially since many people were very hesitating in doing a formal interview. Nevertheless, to use information from small talk, I also need informed consent of the people I interact with (Driessen and Jansen 2013). Hence, whenever I met someone I always informed them about my goals. Furthermore, I openly made notes during the small talk. Although interviews were a step too much for many people, no one had problems with me using the information derived from these small talk opportunities.

In total I conducted 8 interviews with 11 research participants. 4 interviews were recorded, with the other ones I took notes and I worked out these interviews as soon as possible after the interview was done. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours. The research participants decided on where we would meet for the interview. Almost all interviews took place at an open space such as the community center, the church, or my respondents' offices. The notable exception was Chantal, who invited me at her home for the interview. The proceedings of the interview varied hugely, based on the personality of the interviewee: some were highly talkative, and others were rather restrained and gave short answers. In most settings it was just me with one interviewee or two interviewees.

Based on my first week of observations I developed an interview guide (see Appendix). I did not follow these questions in a strict manner, but tried to conduct them in conversational manner, giving the research participant room as well to direct the conversation or even ask me questions back. Furthermore, I adapted questions or came up with new ones, based on the interviews and small talks with diverse people. Before the interview I gave an introduction in which again I explained the reason and idea of my research. I asked for permission to record the interview and asked if they had other questions before we start with the interview. I would first start the interview with some general questions, before going deeper into the more sensitive questions. Based on the answers of the respondent I would determine my follow-up questions, sometimes dropping a few of the standard questions.

My interviews with the research participants at Pablo Picasso need some more explanation. Many of them were hesitating when I asked them for an interview, and they surely did not want me to record the interviews. Karima and Aïda decided finally that they were willing to do an interview, but they wanted to have the questions beforehand, so they could formulate their answers. So, next day I

brought my questions with me on paper. When I came back with my questions others were also curious about my questions and (while the children were playing) the research participants started to discuss my questions and gave me answers. Sadly, enough not all women could speak French, so a part of the discussion was in Arabic, with Karima, Aïda and Tavssi taking turns in explaining their answers. I wrote down many notes, and I collected the notes of Karima and Aïda who also wrote down some of their answers.

4.7 Researcher's positionality

Doing ethnographic research means that there is much interaction between the researcher and the research participants. As researcher we are dependent on the voluntary cooperation of people and how present ourselves and how others see us, will thus impact my research opportunities and outcomes (Brown 2009). For this reason, I use this section to explain more of how I presented myself and the aspects that I consider having made the biggest impact on my research.

First, it was difficult to gain access to the neighbourhood and my identity as being a foreign student might have been one of the initial obstacles. Taking a careful approach of first connecting with associations before just going into the neighbourhood, meant that I had to introduce myself though email and on the phone. I presented myself as a master student of international development studies, interested in understanding the live experiences of people in Grigny/Saint Denis and write a thesis about it, looking for an organization where I can join in activities as a starting point to meet people.

The responses I got ranged from zero response to polite refusals. In talking with others about the progress of finding contacts, an often-given explanation was that French people are in general not very good with responding to emails and/or calls and besides that, they are not quickly inclined to help strangers. I think however that there was more to it. First, Grigny and Saint Denis are both very much studied places. The few associations that answered my call, did let me know that they are asked before by researchers, or already had those kinds of contacts. They were not open for other contacts with students or only for specific internships. As a simple Dutch master student, I might have been simply not interesting enough for these associations to give me access. Secondly, my French is far from fluent. Whereas in emails I could carefully check my writing, on the phone it was painfully clear that my French was not the best. I have an accent and I often had to ask the other to speak slower or repeat themselves, especially in the first phone conversations I had. Although we managed to understand each other, it might have been an additional barrier that prevented people from taking my request seriously.

When I finally could establish some contacts and started meeting people face to face, other aspects of my identity came in sight. As Brown (2009) mentions: as researcher you are also being studied by the people you interact with. People had also questions about me. Many people were surprised that I am Dutch since I don't look like what they pictured as a Dutch person: I am small, brown with dark curly hair, whereas Dutch persons are often more associated with being white, blond and tall. This often steered the conversation towards the topics of immigration and relations with family in other countries, as I explained that my father is from the Dutch Antilles and my mom is Dutch.

Some of the participants made remarks that assumed that I must understand at least a part of the same things they experience. They stressed our "sameness" with remarks such as "we are of the same blood", or that we are both immigrants or (partly) African. Other times however, my European or Dutch identity was more strongly on the foreground. Some participants for example, contradicted their own position as undocumented migrant against my position as holding a European passport. Hence, my position as Dutch- Antillean, influenced how people related to me and what they considered to be relevant topics to talk about.

Secondly, another aspect that influenced my decision on whom I interviewed, is my identity as a woman. Although I never felt unsafe, I had experienced situations in which young men made advances and were quite pushing in convincing me that we should be "more than friends". One of my first interviews was with Ballo-Chiaka. It was my only and last interview with a young man, because very soon he started into the "we can be more than friends" conversation, which I was not planning on. This type of advances was made by multiple young men, so I decided that I would only talk with men in public settings such as the activities of Secours Catholique.

Thirdly, as a Christian it was a logical step for me to look for a church in Grigny to establish more contacts. When I went to the church I actively presented myself as a *Christian* student, because I am a Christian and I would feel uncomfortable by not saying so. I was the first non-Congolese, and non-friends or -family related visitor, which made the churchgoers very happy. Promptly the next Sunday I visited, the pastor had prepared a sermon about how cultures and origins don't matter to God: "whether you are French, Congolese or Dutch, in Christ we are one family". I couldn't help but think that this sermon was surely inspired by my earlier visit.

Having shared beliefs made it for sure easier to connect with people and I've made some lasting friendships within the church. At the same time, it made it sometimes harder to ask critical questions, as people assumed that I should or would know what they are talking about. What sometimes happened, when I asked more follow-up questions was that the participants assumed that I did not understand their answers because of the language barrier, so they tried to explain it with easier French words. At other occasions I did not introduce myself immediately as a Christian, but sometimes it came up. Often people already assumed me to be a Christian. For example, when someone explained more about their beliefs (often Muslim) it frequently was paired with statements that still stressed our similarities, such as "you as Christian belief in God and so do we Muslims" or similar sentences, without having asked me first about my faith.

Each interview I ended with asking if the research participant had other remarks or questions for me. These questions were as well about my identity, my family and life in the Netherlands, but also about my opinions of the neighborhood and France. In the church I also experienced what Brown (2009) wrote about: people in the field talk about you as a researcher and they form opinions about you: If I met someone new at the church, they all already knew that I was the "young Dutch student."

4.8 Language barrier
The language barrier is something was a very influential aspect of my fieldwork and there I want to elaborate more on the consequences. In the year before going to France I had already taken French courses to bring my French up to date and in the month August I could practice my French as well in Paris, where I stayed within a church community. So, for my fieldwork I was confident enough to talk with people. Still I wanted to arrange a translator for the interviews. This was however difficult: many people don't have time for it. Moreover, I noticed that it was possible to have meaningful conversations without someone who could translate. So, instead of investing a lot in energy in finding translators I decided to just go for it and do the interviews on my own.

I noticed that the quality of the interviews was not only dependent on my own language skills but also on the persons I had the interviews with. My interviews with the women at Pablo Picasso and in Saint Denis at *La Joie dans ma Vie* were especially a challenge. Many of these women were also not confident in speaking French. They preferred speaking in Arabic, some did even speak less French than me. Since I don't speak Arabic, I thus couldn't interact with all women I encountered. Communications with them was hard: they did not always understand what I tried to ask, so often I wrote down my questions, so

they could read it. When I asked questions in the group they often turned to each other to discuss it in Arabic and later give me a joint answer.

With other people who could speak fluently French, the language barrier was already smaller. They could more easily understand my accent and broken phrases. They could also easier adapt their answers when I asked for some more clarification or examples. Throughout the months my understanding of the French language is much improved, yet I would probably have more in detailed interviews if the language was less of a barrier. For example, I might have missed double meanings of sayings, as I cannot pick up all the nuances. I noticed this mostly because I could speak English with Fatima and Ferdouz, with whom I had the most long and detailed interviews.

4.9 Analysing the data

After the fieldwork stage I used my interview transcripts, summaries and observation notes for an analysis to identify the recurring themes in my data. Based on these recurring themes I went back to my initial theoretical concepts to see whether they were still useful, and I've came with new theoretical concepts that more fitted with the themes of my data. Based on these concepts I went back to studying my data in more detail. In the following chapters my insights that came from these analyses are presented.

In the empirical chapters I sometimes used quotes, these are from recorded interviews or comments written down by the research participants. I have translated them in the text, except for those who are already original in English. Rather than translate word for word, I have chosen to translate the quotes as close as possible to the original meaning, as the sense and connotation is often implied between the lines. The original French version is however included in a footnote. I have done this consciously to aim transparency and give the reader the chance to interpret the original quote as well.

5. Exclusion from outside: the state, society and the market

This first empirical chapter addresses the various forms of exclusion that my research participants experience. During my conversations and observations three domains could be identified that have a strong influence on the lives of the research participants: the state, society and the market.

First, the role of the state regarding the exclusion of migrants will be discussed. This is especially an important matter for first generation migrants who are not (yet) recognized as formal citizens. The governments (lack of) involvement in the banlieues and how this impacts the exclusion experiences of the research participants is another topic that is dealt with in this section.

The second section examines the role of French society in the social exclusion of the research participants. The social barriers of encountering language problems, being physical segregated due to living in the banlieues, and the experiences of stigmatization and racism will be central. The third section discusses how research participants experience exclusion from the domain of the market. In this section I will address discrimination, and the influence of poverty and limited educational options on the possibilities of my research participants to sustain a stable professional life. The last section is a discussion in which I connect the sections with the theory on exclusion, subjectivity and intersectionality.

5.1 The role of the state

Meet Ibrahim, a young man from Equatorial Guinea, who lives for almost 3 years in France. Two times he has already applied for papers, yet two times his application is denied. Now he has given it a third try. Ibrahim expresses his dissatisfaction with the system, which he sees as unfair: I (the researcher), am European, it is easy for me to go to France, and even if I want to go Africa I can go without problems. Whereas for him, as an African, it is a tough and expensive procedure. Ibrahim touches on an important means of exclusion that is underscored by other research participants as well: the state's decision on whether someone is eligible for a (permanent) visa or not.

The procedures of application for a permanent visa or asylum take much time and it is not guaranteed that your application will be approved. Migrants such as Ibrahim, Baké and Mamoudou encounter the difficulties of the system. Coming from respectively, Guinea, Mali and Mauritania, they came to France to search for a job. Yet, the professional migration rules are very strict. The French state has a list of occupations per region for which people outside of the EU are eligible. These are however all professions that require a high education level such as electronic engineers or information science experts (immigration.interieur.gouv.fr). None of these men fit the list of these requirements which makes their application procedure for French papers challenging.

The female participants of Maghreb origin, such as Karima, Aïda, Meryem, Tavssi and Youssra, have had a less challenging migration in terms of the judicial procedure. They all came to France in joining their husbands who already work and live in France. As Jacques, volunteer at Caritas explained, for a long-time, men from the Maghreb could quite easily get visa, after the French colonization of countries as Algeria ended. Now, these women can migrate to France under the law of family immigration, which can be found at the website of the French government department regarding immigration. (immigration.interieur.gouv.fr). Following, Karima, Aïda, Meryem, Tavssi and Youssra did not have dissatisfactions or remarks on the French state regarding their migration. They highlighted that they were happy to be in France, since their husbands can work here, and the state offers good education for their children.

One of the possibilities for migrants who don't see an option to apply for a professional visa or asylum, is to apply for a visa based on health issues. The French government does provide visas based on

humanitarian reasons for foreigners who have an illness or physical issue, need medication, and especially when there is no treatment in their country of origin (immigration.interieur.gouv.fr). These people aren't allowed to work however, and the permit is for a limited period (unless a chronical issue such as Taseadit). Ballo-Chiaka and Taseadit are both in France with a visa based on this law. Taseadit has diabetes. She is very dependent on the government aid, voluntary associations who help her and on the help of her brother who cares for her. Ballo-Chiaka has a chronical backache. He showed me his Malian passport and French health permit. He is happy with this law and contradicts it with his short time in Italy where he arrived, but where the government did not give him anything. In addition to following an education program at Mission Locale, he works also. Ballo-Chiaka doesn't seem much bothered by the fact that he is legally not allowed to work, if the government doesn't know he works, he is fine.

Those who are still waiting on the decision of the state, or are denied any visa, experience many limitations. Fatema came to France with her husband, after the situation in Bangladesh became too dangerous for her husband who is a political activist. They are waiting for the approval of their asylum application. Fatema sometimes doesn't know what to do with the situation: she is not allowed to work, but she also does not get enough help from the government to support her daily living costs. Ferdouz, a thirty-seven years old man from Bangladesh came to France after his student visa in the UK was expired. He hoped that he could get asylum, but his application is denied by the state. In his own words says Ferdouz about the government: "I did not get anything but further I get negativity. For some of them [migrants] they [the government] are okay, good good good, they do many things because they got the papers. But for those who don't have papers, they say no. This is a different person and we need repercussions". In other words, someone who doesn't get papers is excluded from means that the government does provide for people who have obtained visa.

The attitude of the state towards people without papers limits the options in what they can do. Many research participants (Fatema, Ferdouz, Chantal, Ibrahim, Salim, Mamoudou) explain that it is extremely difficult to find a job and a house when you don't have papers, because you can't rely on any governmental aid. Additionally, traveling is difficult. Papi a Congolese man who waits for his papers for one year and six months, discuss also their limited travel options. Papi has many family members in other European states such as the UK and Belgium. However, without the right papers, and to avoid jeopardizing the procedure, it is not possible to leave the country. For some migrants (Chantal, Ferdouz) this means that they haven't seen their families for already six years or more.

The government is more involved with migrants who have obtained a permanent visa. An example is Chantal, a Congolese lady who after years of waiting, finally received her papers. When she didn't have papers, she and her two sisters with children moved around, sleeping in hotels. Now, the government has assigned her to an apartment. Yet, the apartment is too small and does not live up to her standards: it has just two bedrooms, while they live in it with a total of eight persons. As well the neighborhood needs improvement: the buildings are old and ugly.

Here we come to another topic yet related: many of the migrants find a place or are placed by the government in one of the banlieues such as Grigny or Saint Denis. The research participants who live in Grigny all put forward their dissatisfaction with the lack of government involvement regarding their neighborhood: they especially criticize the high, old and grey buildings. This gives the neighborhood a sad and grey outlook, what is criticized as making people depressive. My first day in Grigny was at the inauguration day of street-art projects. All the participating artists are born and raised in Grigny (with exception of one). All emphasized that the buildings are old, grey and high, giving a sad feeling when you walk in the neighborhood. They used their street-art to improve the outlook, such as Benjamin who painted an abstract green snake as to bring more "nature" in the *rue de la serpent* (snake-street).

Even more, the old buildings are dangerous. Fatima is born and raised in Grigny, her parents came from Morocco. She explains how there have been fires in the buildings, and she wishes that the government would put an end to these dangerous situations by destroying the buildings and build better apartments for the people. Ballo-Chiaka, a young man from Mali, gives an example of august, when a fire broke out which killed three people. He blames the government for not having an interest in helping the neighborhood, since many migrants, and more specifically black people, live there and the government just doesn't care for them. Magalie, a French lady who lives in Paris and whom I met at the language school where I stayed, confirmed in our conversation that the government doesn't invest much in Grigny and rather neglects the people living there.

In Saint Denis the situation is not much better for the participants. The small apartments in which people must live is mostly a concern (Mamoudou, Ibrahim, Fatema, Ferdouz). Fatema for example tells that she and her husband have only one room for themselves: it is too small and very expensive. Yet, there is no other option for them. Ferdouz has enough space for himself but he tries to minimize his time in his apartment as much as possible because of illegal activities. About his neighborhood he says: "my neighborhood is more complicated. Therefore ...That area. Especially like foreigners' palaces, are more foreigners are selling drugs, illegal substances. And uh, is not good, I don't like them." Ferdouz mentions an additional problem of the neighborhood: the criminal activities that take place. To avoid contact with these people Ferdouz leaves early in the morning and late in the evening he goes back.

We can thus conclude that the research participants experience the exclusion by the states in two ways: at one hand the state uses its power to determine whether someone can become a citizen and receive government help or not. Secondly, the research participants experience that the state tends to neglect the neighborhoods where they are living and in doing so they must live in bad circumstances.

5.2 Exclusion by society

A recurring theme that popped up in conversations with research participants was the distance they experience between themselves and the white French people who live in Paris. As Ibrahim frames it: he likes France in the sense that it offers him opportunities for earning money, but the French themselves are a bit distant, they don't talk with him. In total four barriers are identified by the research participants: racism, physical segregation, stigmatization of the neighborhood and language.

At first the question arises what the research participants perceive as "society". Although often subtle, when talking about their lives and future in France, jobs, networks and friends, research participants often opposed themselves and their neighborhoods respectively to the "French" and "Paris." In doing so, the "French" were often perceived as being white, born and raised in France, and Paris as the rich city were these French people live and where the good jobs are. As opposed, Grigny and Saint Denis were described as another world, filled with migrants. Selen illustrates this by summing up foreign dishes such as mafé (western-African dish) as characteristic images for the neighborhood. In addition, Ballo-Chiaka pointed out that in Grigny only black people live, Africans, when we discussed the differences between Grigny and Paris.

Racism is identified as a barrier in establishing contacts with French people by research participants. Multiple times does Ballo-Chiaka express that he prefers to stay within a community of black people, because white people don't want to talk to or help him. For him this is also the reason why Grigny is neglected by the government: the government exists of white people and in Grigny the majority is black, thus not important in the eyes of the government. Ibrahim and Chantal are less explicitly using the term racism, yet they both start with emphasizing that skin color shouldn't matter and that according to them all people are the same underneath their skin (same blood, same heart). Sadly, enough they experience that this logic is not followed by all French people: they have noticed that

French people are mean to them, and are not willing to talk with them, just because they are "black and African". Following this statement, Chantal gives an example of how people quickly doubt her willingness to work, and quickly judge her if she arrives late at her job, whereas she really wants to work.

In contradicting black people to French people, Chantal and Ibrahim identify French people as white people. The conflation of nationality (French) and race (white) more often came to the fore in subtle manners. For example, Farah is born and raised in Grigny, and of Tunisian-Lebanese origin. In discussing the diversity of people living in Grigny, she said the following: Here you see Arabs with blacks, and French people with Arabs. You can even see a Spaniard married with an Italian."[1] Farah uses both race, ethnicity and nationality to describe the diversity of people, as if a person cannot be both black/Arab and French. An underlying assumption might be that the "French" are thus white. The same attitude is spotted in my few conversations with white French people: Magalie and Jacques. Both discussed their own position in terms of being "French", as opposed to the position of "Arabs" and "blacks", even those who are born and raised in France. Both Magalie and Jacques were much socially engaged and wish that the French people stopped discriminating immigrants. Still, even for them, it seems natural that by talking about "the French" is meant white people.

Although there are also white French people who live in Grigny or Saint Denis, research participants often regarded Paris as the place where the French live. For instance, Ferdouz is actively trying to get contacts with French people. He searches these contacts by going to Paris, where the French are. To Farah, Paris feels distant, as opposed to Grigny which is familiar, because of her friends and family who live here. In her own words she repeated multiple times during the conversation: Paris and Grigny are two other worlds[2]. Selen is as well born and raised in Grigny, her parents are Turkish. She describes in more detail the segregation of Paris and Grigny: taking the train from Paris to Grigny is going from a world of rich and mostly white people to an impoverished city with migrants as clear majority. In her eyes migrants and blue-collar workers are not welcome in Paris. Instead they and their children are placed in the banlieues like Grigny, where they "can be forgotten" by the rich in Paris who don't want to mingle with the poor.

A very concrete barrier that hinders the contact between many research participants in Grigny and the French is the physical distance between Paris and Grigny. Grigny lies in zone five around Paris. It takes proximality 40 minutes by public transport to go from Grigny to Paris. Fatima emphasizes the need for better public transport, according to her this could help improve the relation between the two places. Although Saint Denis closer to Paris, there are still problems with public transport. Ferdouz states that the RER is often delayed or does not go at all because of traffic problems. He does not like that he often pays for a ticket only to find out that he cannot even reach Paris.

Furthermore, the research participants who live in Grigny are very aware of the stigmatization of their neighborhood and they feel limited by it. At the street art inauguration day, the artists addressed the negative image of Grigny: the idea that Grigny is dangerous and its inhabitants should be feared. Tis negativity would only lead to more problems in the neighborhood. Selen and Fatima criticize the outsiders who judge Grigny based on the appearance of the big buildings and the many youth who live

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[1] Quote from Farah in French: la mixité, ça aide, parce que on ait pas tous, par exemple, comme tu disais La Tunisie, là-bas sont tous des Arabes. Tu vois, on y tous les Arabes culture, il y a toute la même façon penser. Moi je l'aime pas trop. Comme j'aime la différence.. [Ici].. Tu peux voire une Arabe avec un noir, et Français avec un Arabe. Tu peux voire un Espagnol marié avec un Italien.

[2] Translated from French. Farah : Grigny II et La Grande Borne c'est un peu pareil. Mais uh en fait, quand on sort ici, c'est outre monde. Si tu vas à Paris par exemple ça n'a rien à voir. Venir à Paris c'est rien à voir. C'est un outre monde.

there. These outsiders judge them without even really knowing them. Farah notices how especially youth in Grigny are marked as criminal, thieves. She goes on to explain that the stigmatization of Grigny leads to much trouble for people who are searching for a job.

The last identified barrier is language: this is a huge obstacle for the participants who are coming from non-French speaking countries. Salim, a Bangladeshi man, could not speak a word of French when he arrived in France. When he tried to get in touch with the municipality they refused to help him, instead they told him to come back when he speaks proper French. It took a year before he encountered one lady who was friendly enough to arrange a meeting with him and a translator. Ferdouz compares his meetings with French people to meetings with English people. French people are according to him more distant, expecting him to talk French, and when you don't, most of them don't like talking to you. He lived before in the UK, there people expect you to speak English, but since he speaks English, this made it easier for him to befriend English people.

Many research participants I spoke come from countries that in the past were French colonies. They have more knowledge of the French language. However, they are still insecure about their ability to speak. An example are the women I met, such as Aïda (from Algeria) and Karima (from Morocco). They can have French conversations, yet they are insecure about their accents and possible mistakes in grammar. Their French was better than mine: in our conversations they often corrected my wrongly formulated sentences, yet for an interview they didn't wanted me to record the conversation due to - in own words- their bad French (regarding accent and grammar). They preferred to stick to Arabic, as much as possible. Together they always spoke Arabic, and when I asked a question, often they first discussed their answers in Arabic amongst each other before answering me in French.

Generally, the conversations about racism, segregation, stigmatization and language obstacles resulted in a main concern for all research participants: obtaining a job that can provide them in their own and their family's needs. This leads us to the next section of exclusion at the market.

5.3 Exclusion from the market

Section 5.3 discusses the exclusion of professional life. This concerns the access migrants / banlieue inhabitants must the job market, education and getting out of poverty. The one topic that always popped up in conversations with research participants is the concern with professional life: having a job is of great importance for supporting your own, and your family's subsistence as well. Obtaining work is however a serious challenge for many of my research participants. In the conversations with my research participants, the obstacles they mentioned were: discrimination, language barrier, poverty, and unequal education options.

As explained before, Grigny suffers from a negative image, which influences the chances of inhabitants to find a stable job in multiple ways. Research participants call out discrimination as a barrier in gaining access to a job. Farah, Fatima and Selen provide examples of the many youth they know who want to work in Paris but are refused and told that there is no place for them. Outside of Grigny youth don't have a fair chance due to their stigma of coming from a criminal environment, and thus possibly be a thief themselves (Farah). In Paris I met Magalie who acknowledges the negative image of people in Grigny. She understands that companies rather hire her, a French woman living in Paris, than someone with the same qualifications but lives in Grigny. Jacques, a French volunteer at Secours Catholique (in Saint Denis), adds that many people in Grigny have a Maghreb origin, and often experience discrimination based on their names: French people are hesitating in hiring someone with an Arabic name as they doubt whether these people can speak fluently French.

For first generation migrants an additional factor plays a role in the struggle of finding a job: as explained in section 5.1, it does not help if you are an undocumented migrant. In this case finding a job is solely possible through informal ways, such since officially you are not allowed to work. The research participants who officially were not allowed to work, must rely on their social network and be satisfied with jobs that pay low and even might hazard your health (Ferdouz, Salim, Baké, Ballo-Chiaka, Mamoudou). Ferdouz explains that there are however some loopholes that open the opportunities for undocumented migrants to gain a legal job: if you are three years or longer in France without leaving the country it might be possible to apply for a job. At the other hand, if you say that you want to stay in France for under five years you can also apply to some jobs. The employer who decides to give a job to an undocumented migrant can apply for the right papers for them, which is also very helpful with finding housing, as happened in the case of Baké, a man from Senegal.

As explained earlier as well, the inability to speak fluently French is a barrier for getting in touch with the French society. Even more so, this is a problem in gaining access to jobs. Fatima and Ferdouz, both from Bangladesh argue that the only jobs they find are on volunteer basis: for any payed job you need to be fluent in French. For some of my research participants, the result is long term joblessness, or to be satisfied with whatever low paying bad job is available, such as Mamoudou illustrates. He found a job in a restaurant kitchen. It is tough work and he does not really like it; however, his level of French is not good enough for better work.

At my Tuesdays at *La Joie dans ma Vie*, a volunteer organization in Saint Denis that teaches French to migrant women, I noticed that many of these women do speak quite some French, yet they are illiterate. The literacy classes were mostly full, and often women had to be send back because there was no place for them anymore. Most of these women I spoke there were satisfied because their husbands were working, and they dedicate their time to caring for their children. However, a few women (Meryem, Fatiha) really wanted to find a job themselves, but if you cannot read and write, and have young children, this is almost impossible. Youssra was the only one who worked: she had a part-time job as a cleaning lady, a job which does not require much language skills and is easily combined with caring for her daughter.

Selen and Fatima are concerned about the segregation between the poor in the banlieues and the rich in Paris. Fatima argues that youth in Grigny often end up doing the same as her parents, she labels it as "social reproduction". The parents, mostly first-generation migrants work as laborers, doing the low-payed jobs and their children will become so as one. Farah gives a more personal anecdote: her mother is a cleaning lady and her father doesn't work. So, at home they never had much money which made it difficult to stay in the right track of going to school. She succeeded but many youths she knows drop out of school and fall for the seduction of "easy money" to take a part in earning money for their family. Another example of how poverty might limit someone's options is given by Sarha, a 24-year-old Congolese girl who worked in a restaurant to help her family with the financials. Her contract is not extended however and now she is looking for a new job in a restaurant or shop. Her dream is to study at a law school, but this is too expensive and in the current situation all family members are needed to earn enough money.

Poverty has also its influence on the type of education someone can get. Although the research participants agree that the education system in Grigny is just as good as in Paris, they also notice some problems that might disadvantages youth in Grigny (Selen, Fatima, Farah). Paris has some very well private schools, for example highly specified technical schools that enable their students to have a high advantage on the job market. Yet, these schools are private, which means that it is very expensive to study there. And since many youths grow up in low income households, they often cannot go there, although they are talented enough (Fatima). Furthermore, the French education system has rules that

disadvantages schools in Grigny. Fatima explains how she wanted to start teaching Spanish at one of the schools, yet this was refused due to the idea that there were not enough children who would need it.

Although education is surely needed to gain access to jobs, on its own it is not enough, according to Farah, Selen and Sarha. Sarha worked in Paris before and for the new job she is as well looking in Paris. In the question about the difficulties she encounters in searching for a job Sarha is not much concerned with discrimination. According to Sarha the most concerning part is the general lack of jobs which causes a highly competitive environment. Farah as well acknowledges that finding a job is difficult for many youth: there are so many high educated youths that are looking for job. In Farah's own words: studies no longer say anything, even with a bac plus six (comparable with master) you might still be at home[3].

Selen and Farah both recall numerous friends with a high educational degree but without work. Selen discusses in more detail the lack of help for youth from Grigny who want to go further with their study: there is no aid available. Farah contributes this to the lack of communication between organizations like mission locale, companies and youth who are just finished with school. She describes how she sees that there is in fact a need for people in certain sectors such as education. But this need does not reach the youth in Grigny. It is Farah's wish to start a recruitment bureau in which she can fill this communication gap by reaching out to jobless youth and help them finding a job.

All in all, gaining access to jobs is a struggle for many of my research participants. Although both first and second-generation struggle in establishing a stable professional live, the barriers they encounter differ. The first-generation migrant participants experience how lack of the right papers, the language barrier hinders their chances to legal, well-paid and healthy jobs. Second generation migrant participants experience the consequences of poverty on educational chances, the highly competitive job market, and stigmatization that impede their access to stable jobs.

5.4 Discussion: barriers of social exclusion

This chapter has highlighted the variations of exclusion that research participants living in Grigny or Saint Denis experience. The research participants have identified barriers at the political, economic and social domains in society, that hinder their full participation in French society. Of course, these domains are analytical concepts and in real life very much intertwined. Going back to the concept of intersectionality (Valentine 2007), we see that the intersection of different social categories contributes to a variety of degrees and forms of exclusion that is experienced by the research participants: citizenship status, knowledge of French language, economic class, ethnicity, gender and age are all influencing factors. For example, having a legal status is a very influencing aspect in the possibilities of getting a job or house as seen in the case of Chantal and Ferdouz.

Nevertheless, there are some striking similarities in the experiences of the research participants. Of course, to all participants applies the fact they live in a segregated and impoverished area: Grigny and Saint Denis. Going back to the Bauman's (2004) concept of wasted lives, we can see elements coming to the fore in the case of migrants living in the Parisian banlieues. In the theoretical framework (Chapter 3) is discussed how "wasted lives" are, the people in society who are no longer deemed as needed. Living in Grigny or Saint Denis certainly has an impact on the lives of the research participants. Following Bauman (2004) it can be argued that many of these by society declared redundant people

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[3] Translated from French. Farah: Les études. Ça c'est plus rien dire. Même si un bac plus six, tu peux être en maison encore. Tu vois aujourd'hui c'est compliqué trouver un emploi.

are set apart in "camps": places separated from mainstream society, of which ghettos are most relevant.

These people often feel neglected by the state and society, and experience that is especially difficult for them to gain access to the job market. All participants recognize the struggle as well in gaining access to jobs and know what it is to live in poor situations. The participants have mixed feelings regarding the French society. At one hand they are happy to be part of it, as it offers them some opportunities for building a safe and good life. At the other hand, they often feel unwelcome or not really fitting in a society of white French people. During conversations participants expressed feelings of invisibility and neglect, as is illustrated by their comments on the lack of government involvement in the neighborhood, which is visible through the old and ugly buildings in which they must live. Furthermore, Ibrahim and Ballo-Chiaka emphasized that French people and the state don't want to care for them, even don't want to talk with them. Discrimination is a topic that came to the fore during conversations as well, as illustrated by Jacques who explained that many French employers don't hire people with Arabic names because they think that they cannot speak enough French, even though many people with Arabic names are born and raised in France.

The research participants are also very aware of the segregation and differences between themselves in Grigny or Saint Denis and the rich white French people in Paris. They compare the situation and highlight they are worse off, experience poverty and discrimination. As discussed in the theoretical framework (chapter 3) it is an ongoing debate if places like Grigny and Saint Denis are ghettos. Although my research participants never defined their neighborhood specifically as ghetto, I would argue that they at least live in strongly marginalized areas, and I would agree with the scholars who see a process of ghettoization of the banlieues (Kokoreff 2009, Slooter 2015, Lapeyronnie 2008). Selen's remark about Paris where the people don't want to mingle with the poor migrants illustrates well the awareness of the participants of their exclusion. Especially amongst the youth I spoke, the stigma hinders them if they want to leave the area and search for a job in Paris.

The first-generation migrant participants spoke less about problems due to stigmatization of living in Grigny or Saint Denis. A reason might be that for these participants, other factors such as not speaking fluently French or having valid French documents are more pressing concerns that limit their access to jobs and contacts within mainstream society. What all research participants have in common though, is their awareness of the neglection of their neighborhood by the state: they criticize for example the lack of government involvement in improving the buildings, care for the people in the neighborhood, and they wish for better public transport. In a sense the research participants feel set apart from mainstream society, like the "camps" that Bauman (2004) describes.

Following the theory of Ortner (2005), we see that the research participants are subjective actors. Going back to what the research participants must say, they are very much aware of their unequal position in society: they have feelings about it, they think about it, and criticize the state and society. They are knowledgeable of the world around them, and their perceptions of the world are important their choices on how to act. Within their own options and limits, they try to manage social networks, and build a life in which they can sustain themselves and their families. The participants were all eager to build a stable life in which they can support themselves and family. For example, Fatima works for Missions locale, Ferdouz is an active volunteer at Au secours, and Mamoudou has found an (illegal) job.

5.5 Conclusion
In this chapter I have described the various forms of exclusion that my research participants experience on the levels of state, society and the market. The question I had in mind while writing this chapter

was: what barriers do migrants in Grigny and Saint Denis encounter that withholds them from full participation in society? In answering this question intersectionality became a relevant concept to keep in mind. Although people lived in the same neighborhoods, they have different experiences and they emphasize other aspects of difficulties in their lives. Their diverse identities influence how they view and think about the world and the kind of experiences and interactions they encounter.

Three levels could be identified at which the research participants undergo hinder from full participation: the state, society, and the market. Nevertheless, the three levels can't be totally separated: they are interlinked and barriers at one level has consequences for the other ones. We see this most at the state level: the state decides who gets French papers and who doesn't (yet). The legal status of the participants is much definable for their opportunities and chances. The undocumented participants highlight their "illegal" status as problematic: the government does not help them, and they are not allowed to work. Furthermore, in society they are as well often ignored by the French people. For the migrants who have papers, especially the second-generation other problems are emphasized: their focus is more on the social stigmatization that discriminates them and makes it much harder to find a stable job or get out of the neighborhood.

There are also shared experiences. All researched participants recalled the neglect and lack of interest of the government in their neighborhoods. They criticize the segregation between them and the white French, Parisian, people. Although the participants have struggles, they are also trying to make ends fulfill their needs and dreams. Examples are Ballo-Chiaka who is officially not allowed to work, but still does, or Farah who wants to start a recruitment bureau to help fellow unemployed Grignois youth. Given in by their own identities, possibilities and limitations, the research participants search thus for ways in which they can have a place in society.

In short, it is through the different identities of participants that they encounter other situations and therefore have diverse perceptions and their position in it. Nevertheless, there is a shared experience for all of them: they are immigrants living in a deprived neighborhood and they all recognize that this marks them and sets them apart from "French society" in a manner that negatively impacts their opportunities in building a live in France and participate fully in society. Based on their personal identities and experiences and shared experiences, people search for ways to have a meaningful live in France. In the next chapter I will explore in more depth the several actions of research participants in how they search for a place in society.

6. Withdrawal: alternative communities

In chapter five I have analyzed in which society excludes or limits the full participation of research participants. This chapter provides an in depth look at the actions of research participants in the banlieues: in what ways do the participants search for inclusion in communities and reinforce their own exclusion from "French society"?

The first section discusses how the banlieue can function as safe haven for the people who live there. In this section mainly three second generation migrant participants speak about the meaning of Grigny to them: how does the neighborhood function as a place of belonging of them? In section 6.2. I will discuss how the importance of family and belonging to a cultural group as a social network, replaces the needs of some research participants to participate actively in the wider French society. The third section demonstrates how religion is used by research participants to make sense of their position in society. I will finish with a discussion of the social networks of research participants and following a conclusion.

6.1 A safe haven

Together with a group of artists and interested people I stood by a big wall in La Grande Borne. The wall was painted with colorful strokes who formed a strong looking woman with spread arms in the air and her mouth open as if she screamed: "Marianne" as the artist Shaka named it. He told us about how he, as a local artist, used this artwork to symbolize the spirit of the neighborhood: the people are suffering, but they are strong, they support each other and have revolutionary power together. Knowing that "Marianne" is the national symbol of the triumph of the French Republic and the personification of liberty and reason, important French values, makes the street-art even more powerful. It opens all kinds of questions about the identification and relation of people with the French Republic. The day ended with another artwork, made by Myriam Maxo, the only artiste who did not come from Grigny, but she was especially invited to create an artwork inspired by African art. She remarked how in the months that she was in Grigny she experienced the warmth of the people: although the people in Grigny endure suffering and neglect, they are nice and full of love.

The artists acknowledge the feelings of neglect and exclusion that inhabitants of the neighborhood experience. Nonetheless, they emphasize the caring community: once you live in this neighborhood you'll see that the people are lovely and care for each other. Three research participants which whom I had in depth interviews express the same warm feelings towards their lives in Grigny. Selen, Fatima and Farah are all born and raised in Grigny, more specifically the quartier La Grande Borne. Selen and Fatima live now in Grigny village and Farah is just moved to Ris-Orangis, another municipality though very close to Grigny. She works still in La Grande Borne and feels very connected to this place.

When I asked Selen and Fatima about Grigny they both reacted firmly against the prejudges of people outside. They judged outsiders for giving Grigny a bad name, while not even knowing people who live there. As Selen continues: for her Grigny is her real home. Even more specific: La Grande Borne, the neighborhood where she is born and brought up. It is where Selen feels most safe, because she knows the people and she knows they respect her. Grigny village is still Grigny, but there the community sense is less (Selen). Selen gives an example of her car which was never harmed in La Grande Borne, but in Grigny village people broke the window. A sign for Selen that the respect and care for each other is less in Grigny village. In La Grande Borne that would have never happened she argues: people there don't harm belongings of people they know well; instead people would intervene when or warn others warn if they would see something like that happen.

Nevertheless, Grigny is still great according to Selen. She sumps up a variety of things that she loves about the neighborhood: the couscous, the mafé (western-African dish) and the thawb (traditional Arabic clothing). These are all well-known dishes and clothing styles that correspond with diverse cultural backgrounds of many immigrants who live in the neighborhood. In summing up these "foreign" symbols as markers of Grigny, Selen presents Grigny as a multicultural place. Both Fatima and Selen add that it is the place of family and friends. In doing so Selen presents the image of Grigny as a multicultural neighborhood in which the inhabitants can get very well along with each other. According to her, the diversity is a sign of the open mindedness of people; that people can live together and can learn from each other. Farah also praises the cultural diversity in Grigny when comparing it to Tunisia: "mixing helps because it is not as in Tunisia where there are only Arabs, where everybody thinks the same. I do not really like that. I like the differences. […] Here you see Arabs with blacks, and French people with Arabs. You can even see a Spaniard married with an Italian."[4]

Laetitia and other artists also expressed feelings of love and warmth in Grigny: here residents help and care for each other. The warmth of the people, the social ties of friends and family who are still living here, make that people feel really connected. Laetitia illustrates it by telling how she cooks and brings meals sometimes to friends in the neighborhood who are having a difficult time. Farah illustrates the connectedness with an example of how she grew up with a friend who was her neighbor and went to the same schools. They played together and helped each other with homework.

Many friends of Farah and Selen still live and work in La Grande Borne, others have spread to other parts of Grigny and some even to Paris. Those who went to Paris however, miss their lives in La Grande Borne and people return as well. Fatima has been there by herself: she moved out of Grigny to Paris for ten years, until she returned. After all, Grigny was the place where she felt like she truly belongs: here she knows many people, and here she feels like she is valuable to others: she has meaningful work in which she can help youth in getting education and finding a job.

Farah is as well very active in social work. Together with a few colleagues she works for *élan solitaire*: An association to support people in Grigny. The association is based in one the flats in la Grande Borne and functions as an open house: people can come in without an appointment for help or simply for a drink and to socialize with others. Here they help people with all kind of questions or issues. It can be simple such as printing a photo or document or more long-term help such as assisting people without papers in obtaining the rights documents. Farah also mentions how there are people in the neighborhood who don't speak French or cannot read. She helps them, by for example going with them to a doctor's appointment when needed.

The duty to help is as well strongly felt by Fatima and Selen. Pointing to their own positions as having a stable job and income, they feel morally obligated to help others in Grigny who aren't as lucky. Farah, Selen and Fatima do so through their jobs actions in which they try to give support to those whom need it. In a less official way, they also help family members and friends. This is also what is expected from each other: being friends and family is helping each other. Selen gives the example of how her boyfriend helped her by using his network of friends to get her in contact with a famous radio DJ, whom she could interview for her work. Farah tells how she visits her sister in the weekends and helps taking care of her nieces and household duties. Fatima uses her work connections as well to help unemployed friends and family members in finding a job.

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[4] Quote from Farah in French: la mixité, ça aide, parce que on ait pas tous, par exemple, comme tu disais La Tunisie, là-bas sont tous des Arabes. Tu vois, on y tous les Arabes culture, il y a toute la même façon penser. Moi je l'aime pas trop. Comme j'aime la différence.. [Ici].. Tu peux voire une Arabe avec un noir, et Français avec un Arabe. Tu peux voire un Espagnol marié avec un Italien.

Although Farah really wants to help people, she also feels the pressure of being the social worker in the neighborhood where she grew up. Through her job she suddenly had knowledge of the private and often difficult circumstances of the people she sees daily. Everybody knew as well that she could help, and her neighbors would easily come to her out of office hours, asking for help, whether it is for advice, support or money. A complicated situation that led to the decision of Farah to move to another municipality although very nearby. In this manner she is still connected with the people in La Grande Borne, but she also created some distance.

Fatima stated first that she returned to Grigny because she knows the people and feels like she belongs there, but it was also because she wanted to help others in Grigny. Fatima still encourages youth to step out and go to Paris or elsewhere. She uses her own network connections to help youth in taking those steps. She notices however that people prefer to stay in Grigny because it is safe, and they are afraid of leaving the neighborhood. Consequently, the options of youth in finding a stable professional life is limited. As Fatima explained Grigny does not have much employment options. Yet, in another conversation she stated that Grigny has in fact an industry that provides job opportunities. These are low paid simple jobs though and Fatima thinks that the youth deserve better jobs. Additionally, it is surely not enough work for all people in Grigny.

According to Fatima the problem is partially created by the parents. She explains that many parents are afraid to let their children travel to Paris on their own, especially when it concerns girls. Selen emphasizes that not all parents are the same: her sister is going to a hotel school in Paris, this includes evening classes and working till late midnight. Her parents support her sister completely just as they support all careers of their children.

Selen mentions another of the downside of a closed community: for outsiders it is difficult to get in. People are hesitant to talk with you when they don't know you. Through her job, Selen realized how much of importance it is to have a network, to really know the people. She gives the example of what happened to journalists who came in La Grande Borne and took pictures. They were chased away by youth who threw rocks at them. Fatima points out that for me it was also difficult to connect with people. Luckily, I met her, because she can introduce me to others which helps much: if you are a friend or relative of someone people trust you more easily.

In short, Selen, Fatima, Farah agree that the segregation and stigma of Grigny has a profound influence that limits and excludes them from full participation in the French society, especially with regards to the ability of finding a stable professional life. At the same time feels Grigny as a safe haven for them. They express warm feelings towards the community and explain how Grigny functions as a place in which people are recognized and respected. They are however aware how the closeness of the community not only shields people, but also excludes people who are new to the neighborhood, and how its strong ties prevent people from leaving the neighborhood, even when they want to.

Not all informants expressed the same opinions about their neighborhood. In the following chapter I will present the informants who search for another way to find their place in society: namely through family and the own cultural group.

6.2 Families and cultural groups

Some of the firsts participants I met were Youssra, Karima, Aïda and Tavssi who live in Grigny, and later Meryem and Taseadit who live in Saint Denis. All women came to France after marrying their husbands who already worked in France, except for Taseadit who came with her father and brother. They have a Maghreb background: Karima Tavssi and Youssra are Moroccan, Meryem, Aïda and Taseadit are Algerian.

In my conversations with Youssra, Karima, Aïda, Tavssi and Meryem they were positive about their neighborhood. Reasons that were listened are the many activities that are available for the children (Karima, Aïda, Tavssi) and the better affordable apartments and grocery costs in comparison with Paris (Meryem). Nevertheless, when discussing the relevant social relations, the neighborhood did not matter much to them. As Karima explained: she knows many people who live here, and she talks with some of them, for example when she sees them at the school yard when she picks up her children. However, these people are not her friends and she doesn't consider them as important contacts. Aïda confirms that the neighborhood is not a place for her to make friends, but if she lives with her husband and children she is happy here.

At Pablo Picasso, the community center of Grigny, the front desk worker Marie told me that many people live only temporary in the flat apartments. Families come for two or three months and then leave again. The flat apartments frequently house too many families: sometimes up to four big families. It all happens illegal through *les marchand de sommeil*, brokers who rent the apartments to people in financial trouble out of sight of the government. The high fluctuation of people moving in and out, might partly explain the hesitation in considering people in the neighborhood as important or helpful contacts or friends. At the other hand a network of friends and family is needed to get in touch with the illegal brokers. As the Marie said, it is often via friends of friends and family that people find a place in one of the apartments.

The research participants I spoke to at Pablo Picasso attached much value to their own family as social network. Karima tells enthusiastically about how much she loves her family and often returns to Morocco to visit them: at least one time in the year. Aïda adds that she also calls a lot with their family, and Tavssi explains that she uses WhatsApp to speak with her family and friends in Morocco. Meryem and Taseadit have as well family in France. Taseadit lives together with her brother. Meryem has one brother who lives with his family in Marseille. She often visits him, or he comes to visit her. In the summer she goes to Tunisia to meet with the whole family. So, the social contacts of these research participants seem to be mostly oriented at their countries of origin, where still most of their family lives (Karima, Youssra, Tavssi, Aïda).

Family relations in France and in the country of origin also have a practical side. Taseadit lives with her brother who supports her. Because Taseadit is physical not fit to work, her brother provides for her basic needs such as a house to sleep and food. Ballo-Chiaka came to France on his own but his brother-in-law was already there. His brother-in-law introduced him to the Malian community which could again help him in finding a place to sleep and get a job. Together they also save money for the family in Mali. At the day of the interview Ballo-Chiaka wanted to go his brother-in-law to receive the money and sent it home through the Western Union bank. Karima also tells that she and others send money to their families in Morocco and Algeria.

The participants I spoke were mostly positive about live in France because of the job opportunities for their husbands (Tavssi, Karima, Aïda, Meryem). In the words of Karima: the two countries are the best. Morocco has the sun and family. In France is life, work.[5] Taseadit is happy to live in France as well, because in France she can receive the medical help she needs for her diabetes. To the question if they ever want to return to their country of origin all women answered positively. As Tavssi says: she misses her family in Morocco. Karima and Aïda would also love to return as soon as their children are grown

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[5] Quote from Karima in French : les deux pays sont les meilleurs. Maroc a le soleil et la famille. Dans la France est la vie (Moi : la vie ?) le travail !

up and can live their own lives in France. Taseadit expresses her wish to return someday but is realistic as well: she cannot go back with her medical problems.

The ties these women -all first-generation migrants- still have with their background are also experienced by some second-generation migrants. For example, Amine, a young man whose parents are Algerian, expresses how he likes to live in France, but in is heart and blood he is foremost Algerian and Muslim. His family is spread over the Mediterranean and he visits them regularly. The same goes for Farah who each year goes to Tunisia to spend the whole summer with her family there. Although she is born and raised in France, she still feels very much connected with the country of her parents. In her own words: "I speaks fluently Arab and each year of my life I am Tunisia. There is my country, my blood, my family."[6]

As a short conclusion I would argue that for these research participants (Tavssi, Karima, Aïda, Meryem) family replaces their direct need for social contacts within the French society. If they have income and a place to live, they are happy with their lives in France. Socially they are however more focused on their familial relations and country of origin. Coming from my observations I see however that the participants do have more social relations beyond family, yet they are focused on the relations within the same cultural group.

The social relations of some of these women (Karima, Aïda, Taseadit, Fatiha, Meryem) don't exist of family only. Although in the conversations with these women, they claimed family to be their most important social contacts, they have also build relationships as Maghreb women among each other. Aïda and Karima are for example very close, even though they are not family: they are always together at the activities I visit, laughing and talking together in Arabic. And later they explained to me that they are neighbors.

Pablo Picasso seems to play an important role in these contacts. The center has a wide variety of activities. The activities I could visit took place during the fall holidays and were especially focused on children with their mothers. Outside of the holidays Pablo Picasso offers activities such as French language courses, integration courses, tutoring classes for children, celebrating Christmas, or learning how to ride a bike. Practical help to individuals is also given, such as advise and help with paperwork for people who apply for a visa or need help in understanding letters from formal institutions such as the municipality or hospital.

Marie taught me more about how Pablo Picasso works: it is funded by the municipality but she and others who work her are volunteers. Pablo Picasso is especially for Grigny II, but people from other quartiers in Grigny are as well welcome. No-one must pay to attend or profit from the activities, as people here don't have the financial means to do so. Activities such as the French courses are popular however, and for that reason they work with lists to sign up. The inhabitants of Grigny find their way to Pablo Picasso through words of mouth: people invite and tell others about it.

In Saint Denis word of mouth plays also a large role for the French language courses, given by *La Joie dans ma Vie*. Many of the women who enter the language classes are brought in by others whom they have met in the neighborhood, often through other community associations or friends of friends (Taseadit, Fatiha, Meryem). When the association announced that a local church will give monthly food packages on Fridays for the women in the language classes, even more women came by on that Friday. There were so many women that the association needed to be very strict in who is getting a package

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[6] Quote from Farah in French : je parle aussi couragement l'Arabe. Bien sûre toujours toujours [j'ai un connection]. Je vécu comme ça depuis petit : Chaque année je suis en Tunisie. C'est là-bas, c'est, c'est … mon pays. C'est mon sang. C'est ma famille. Et puis ma famille, et ici j'ai pas la famille, mais là-bas…

who doesn't. So, I would argue that apart from family, social contacts within the own cultural group are as well relevant for knowing what is happening in the neighborhood and to which associations people can go for support.

For Ballo-Chiaka, his most meaningful contacts lie within the Malian community. His family is very important to him and here in France he wants to find a stable job, so he can provide for them. Ballo-Chiaka does not expect much help from the French government and white French people. Instead he emphasizes that black people help black people. He lived before in French cities with a low number of black people. He did not feel welcome there, but in Paris the black community is large. Especially Malian people: he can speak in his own language with people, he can eat his own food and he knows that these people will help him. Ballo-Chiaka illustrated this with a money example: when he first arrived in Paris he did not have anything. People within the Malian community lend him some money to buy food and clothes.

An interesting note is that Ballo-Chiaka denied that there are also many Maghreb people in Grigny. For him, in this neighborhood are only black people: Malian people. He does not speak with many others. His perspective gives a bit of an understanding that not all people experience the to the same degree the diversity in the neighborhood. Furthermore, not everyone is positive about the diversity. Taseadit is an Algerian woman who is not happy with the many black people in Saint Denis. She contradicts people from Africa and Asia with the French and Algerian people. In the words of Taseadit, black people are not proper: they ruin the neighborhood because they don't have houses and sleep in the parks.[7]

In the activities I have participated in Grigny I also noticed the attention given to the roots of the people who live here. The first time I went into Grigny, I went to the inauguration tour of the artworks that were made throughout the neighborhood. Especially in the last artwork the highlighting of the roots of people was visible: the walls of the community center Pablo Picasso were covered by hearts of African fabric. The artiste, Myriam, explained how she was inspired by the African heritage and tradition of waxing. Later I spoke with another Laetitia, another artiste who made jewelry from vegetables, inspired by old African and Antillean traditions. She came from Guadeloupe and explained to me how she wanted to continue these traditions, as they shouldn't be forgotten.

The activities I participated in Pablo Picasso were mostly oriented at children, although their mothers were also present. One specific activity that children taught about their origins, was the "voyage en Afrique", which took place in the library. This activity was a show, performed by Gabriel. Gabriel is a Congolese man who has traveled in almost all African countries and in Europe as a storyteller: his job is to perform traditional African stories. Dressed in a traditional costume, using traditional objects such as calabash he told his audience (children, a few teenagers and mothers) the story of how an African boy lost his father and had to search him. This activity is one of the examples that brings attention to the roots of people and how this sense of belonging is present.

 A special group that stood out for me was the church I visited regularly in La Grande Borne: this church existed solely of Congolese people. In a sense they are together as a cultural group, though merged with religion. For these people Christianity offers them community. In the next section I will discuss how religion is used to find a place in society.

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[7] Quote from Tasaedit in French : je trouve les français sont propres, mais maintenant on reste des gens d'Afrique, de l'Inde, de de Pakistan. C'est trop. Ils sont pas comme les français mais jusqu'à là. Ces gens, c'est changé... c'est pas bien. Le monde, c'est pas propre. Ils ont pas les maisons. Ils viennent tout seules. Ils ont pas les maisons ici. Ils dorment, dorment, dorment dans le parc, ils dorment dans ...

6.3 The role of religion

Every Sunday I went to the Jesus Christ Notre Roi church in La Grande Borne (Grigny). Here I was welcomed by a Congolese community of around 30 people, who celebrated their faith together. Although the church was in Grigny, not all people lived here as well: many people I spoke came from nearby neighborhoods as well, but they all preferred to go this church. The church service was in many ways typical for all evangelical / protestant church services: we start with singing, a sermon follows, we sing some more and afterwards we gather to talk with each other while drinking and eating some snacks.

As multiple people told me: ''in this church we are all family" (Type, Chantal, John, Papi). As John elaborates: we help each other, and we care for each other. The caring attitude is visible for me in small practices, such as someone who prepared a Congolese snack (sweet fried dough) for all church goers to take home after one church service in the evening. The pastor Type explained to me that every Wednesday evening they come together as well to pray for each other needs. In more practical sense they also care for each other: during the service we always sung a special song and people could come to the front to put money in two baskets. John told me that the money is used for church issues such as renting the building, but also to support church members who lost their jobs or for other reasons need some financial help.

One of the ladies in the church, Chantal, invited me for dinner at her house. During and after dinner she was on the phone with a diversity of people from the church. She explained to me that normally, every Sunday evening, she calls the people who couldn't be at the church service. Sadly enough, the church has much more members than I see on the Sundays, since many people must work on Sundays. Chantal sees it as her task, given by God, to remember these people that they are still a part of the church and cared for, and to speak with them about God.

This conversation brings us to the comparison between Congo and France. Chantal has warm memories of Congo: In Africa the people still pray, and on Sundays everybody goes to church. She criticizes Europe for the lack of faith amongst people. The Europeans have forgotten God: they only live for money and nice houses. It is this attitude of people who think that they don't need God, that is troubling here, because she notices the bad influences for Congolese people. Many people who work on Sundays are forced: the people Chantal calls would love to come to church yet refusing to work on Sundays will often result in having no job. Chantal is lucky with her work from Monday till Friday, but she sees the struggles around her. She notices a danger as well for the youth: the French lifestyle of going out, the movies, the concerts like Beyoncé, according to Chantal they are all seductions inspired by the Devil: if the youth is going to all these kinds of entertainment they are too tired to go the church.

Chantal emphasizes that she wants to follow God. She tells the story of Michel Bakenda, a Congolese worship leader who sings in Lingala (the local language) and is famous throughout the world. He is an inspiration to her: he had a very poor life, but when he decided to use his singing talent for God, God gave him lots of money. For Chantal this is a clear sign that we should always live for God.

Papi did not tell me about Michel Bakenda, but it seems like he has the same desire. Papi is one of the musicians of the church. I met with him on my way to the church, so we could speak together. He lives in France for 1 year and 6 months, together with his sister. He enjoys living in France since life is her much calmer and there are no fights. However, he didn't come only for a calmer life. He told me that he was very active in the Christian world in Congo: he plays piano, drums and preaches. He came to France with a special reason: he hopes to spread Gods words to the French people with his music.

During the church services I could listen to the sermons of pastor Type. He is an enthusiastic man who often stopped in the middle of his story to check if I was still following his message. In all five sermons I have witnessed, I noticed a recurring theme: the contrast between the church versus the world around them as non-believers. For example, in the second sermon the pastors main message was that in God cultures such as "African, French or Dutch" do not exist: together as Christians we form a new culture in Christ"[8] (Type).

The red line in the sermons is that as Christians our place on earth is temporary: Jesus prepares for us a place with God. Until that time, we have a task here in France, and the neighborhood where we live. As pastor Type said, the reason many visitors of the church came here is because of work and education. God has a meaning for them to be here: we should spread the message of God, demonstrate out love and live proper lives. Not to say that this easy. In talking about the difficulties people might face he is criticizing the society: the French ridicule people who are believing in Jesus, yet their unbelief leads to situations of low morale and miserable situations in the neighborhood: for example, men who are mistreating their wives.

Although the church members I spoke to emphasized that all people are the same for God, ethnicity and so forth does not matter (Type, Chantal, John), it is striking that the church has only people with a Congolese background. Type explained to me how the church has also connections with two other churches who share the same building, both churches are Congolese as well. Surprisingly the church has also connections with a church in the Netherlands (Rotterdam) and the United States: both are, again, Congolese churches (Type). In a sense, religion and ethnicity seem to be closely related.

The intersection of ethnicity and religion is what I also noticed in conversations with other research participants who identified themselves as Muslims (Farah, Amine, Ballo-Chiaka, Ibrahim, Ferdouz). For example, Amine, identified himself as Algerian and "thus" Muslim, seeing both identities as intertwined. Ferdouz explains how most Bangladeshi are Muslim and he happens to be one too. Ballo-Chiaka has the same reasoning: he is Malian, and Malians are Muslim, so he is too.

The degree to which the Muslim research participants are living their religion varies. Ibrahim told me that he surely prays every morning. He wants to be respected in his religion just as he himself respects others with a Christian religion. To the contrary, for Ballo-Chiaka being Muslim seems to be a less relevant part of his identity. He doesn't like the Islamic rules in Mali which he experienced as too restrictive: for example, men and women are not allowed to talk with each other. He prefers the freedom in France where we can talk and where he can drink alcohol. Farah and Selen identify themselves as Muslim, yet when talking about religion they applaud the idea of *laïcité*, in other words, the principle of separation between religion and state. Selen compares France to Turkey and concludes that *laïcité* is missing in Turkey. As a result, people have less freedom. Farah remarks that there are people in the neighborhood converting to Islam. Nonetheless, in the context of her story she uses the example to show how much freedom and diversity is in Grigny: there are so many religions and people still live very well together.

6.4 Discussion: social networks and the neighborhood
This chapter demonstrates how research participants in Grigny and Saint Denis relate to their neighborhoods and their social networks.

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[8] Sermon pastor Type: Dans Dieu il n'y a pas les cultures Africains, Néerlandais, Françaises mais seulement la culture de Christ : dans Dieu nous sommes les mêmes. Comme chrétiens nous devons travailler pour la vision de Dieu : établir la culture de Christ.

As Warr (2005) argues, in depicting people in deprived neighbors as socially excluded, they are often misrepresented as lacking sociability within the neighborhood. Notwithstanding, within these deprived neighborhoods several social networks, facilities and services are present (Warr 2005). For some participants the neighborhood is a very meaningful community in which they can experience a sense of belonging. It is striking that most people who express these feelings, are second generation migrants who are born and raised in Grigny (Fatima, Selen, Farah, Shaka). For them the neighborhood is a place of friends and family. To describe the community in Grigny they use words like "warmth", "respect" and "love". The research participants highlight the cultural diversity intermingling of people from all kind of origins and religions, which is in their eyes lacking in either Paris and in the countries of their parents.

Furthermore, neighborhood associations and projects such as Pablo Picasso, La Joie dans ma Vie, Élan Solitaire and La Croisée des Chemins, give a chance to connect with others, to find a job or other useful resources such as cheap or free food. The safety of the neighborhood for its inhabitants is not shared by everyone, but those who feel safe point to the protection of the inhabitants towards each other and their possessions: it is not accepted to damage objects of a known individual in the neighborhood.

The emotional and affective ties these participants express regarding to their neighborhood can be described as a form place attachment (Baily, Kearns, Livingston 2012). Place attachment refers to the 'positive affective bond or association between individuals and their residential environment' (citation in Baily, Kearns, Livingston 2012, 208). Key factors that influence the experience of place attachment are length of residence, age and gender (ibid.). It is therefore no surprise that the participants who all express positive emotional ties with their neighborhood, are the ones who are born and raised in this neighborhood.

There is however an interesting twist to the expressed place attachment: although Selen, Fatima, Farah express warm feelings for La Grande Borne, they have all decided to move. Selen and Fatima still live in Grigny, but at the less notorious side, namely Grigny village, and Farah is moved completely to another municipality (although very close). Some of their friends still live in La Grande Borne, others have also moved to other parts of Grigny or even to Paris. Maybe what we see here is explainable by the findings of Baily, Kearns and Livingston (2012) that taken everything in account, neighborhood deprivation still lowers place attachment and social cohesion. At the other hand, the reason why they moved seemed not so much because lower social cohesion, but because the social cohesion became too strong: these research participants were relatively successful with diplomas and a job. They feel responsible for helping others who were less fortunate, and they enjoy doing so. At the same time, it is also difficult to live in the same place as the people you want to help: you are always expected to help, and that is exhausting.

The participants who are born in another country and moved to Grigny or Saint Denis are emotionally less attached to their neighborhood (Karima, Tavssi, Meryem, Ballo-Chiaka, Chantal). In practical sense the neighborhood offers enough facilities such as activities for the children, French languages courses and it is cheaper than living elsewhere in Paris. For social support however, they seem to turn towards family and people within the same cultural group and/or religion. These social networks partially fall within the neighborhood but are also going beyond it. For example, the Malian community is spread over other banlieues of Paris.

Warr (2005) discusses how people in deprived neighborhoods keep to themselves as to avoid difficulties with "bad people". Family can be an alternative for loose social contact with residents: family can offer emotional support and access to practical resources (Warr 2005). At the same time, we should be careful in assuming that kinship is able to mitigate circumstances of residents (Williams

2000). As William (2000) points out: kinship in these neighborhoods is not that dense. The family networks of my participants are all spread out over multiple countries and therefore they cannot offer the same practical support that participants might need in their daily lives in Grigny or Saint Denis.

The social networks of participants, oriented at people with the same cultural or ethnic background, might offer an outcome. Marie and Musterd (2004) have found that groups of people based on local cultures or a specific culture of origin, have a relatively strong social network in deprived neighborhoods. An example are the relationships amongst the Maghreb participants. They connect and help each other as is illustrated through the women at La Joie dans ma Vie, who often introduce other women who also need French courses. Another example is the Malian community in which Ballo-Chiaka finds himself. They help each other with finding jobs, housing and money problems.

An interesting note is the difference in feelings about cultural diversity by the participants. Reactions range from negative to very positive. Taseadit, an Algerian woman, was very negative about the growing presence of black people (Africans, Indians, Pakistanis) in the neighborhood. She blamed their improper habits for ruining Saint Denis. Ballo-Chiaka, a Malian man in Grigny was not even much aware of the presence of Arabs in the neighborhood. For him only the black community matters. As discussed earlier the second-generation migrant participants were very positive about it and have friends with other ethnicities and religions.

Pastor Type, John and Chantal, Congolese Christians, express the idea that within Christian religion culture or ethnicity does no longer matter: the church is one family. In practice however, they do not have much interaction with others outside of the Congolese Christian world. I was for example, the first non-Congolese and non-family or friends related Christian who entered the church. Although they have relations with Congolese churches in other countries (US, Netherlands), they are not in touch with other Parisian churches. For these participants, living their religion seems to be intertwined with expressing their ethnic identity (Foner and Alba 2008). Examples that came to the fore at the Congolese church are the Lingala worship songs and eating Congolese snacks.

In the American literature on religion and immigrants, the influence of religious congregations on the reinforcement and reshaping of immigrants' ethnic identity is often treated as a positive development (Foner and Alba 2008). In the Western European literature however, religion is mostly viewed as a problem. In discussing religion Islam is in the center of attention, and often subjected to discussions about its role in the integration of immigrants and as source for conflicts (Foner and Alba 2008). Nonetheless, in this research, the Christian participants were the ones who were most outspoken about the cleavage they experience between themselves and the secular French society. The secular society is perceived as a threat to the Christian lifestyle and values as exemplified by Chantal's fear that Congolese youth will be seduced by the world's entertainment and leave the church. Disbelief in God is mentioned as a cause for low morale in society and harsh reactions against immigrants. As a result, Congolese Christians need to protect themselves and others by going to church. Some feel the need to go out and preach the gospel to the French (Papi).

The Muslim participants were less inclined to discuss society in light of Islam. When speaking about their beliefs, they merely talked about the need for respect for both sides in society or emphasized the French republican principle of *laïcité* as important for society. For them religion seemed to be more of a personal matter. Although no one directly spoke about discrimination or negative stigmatization on basis of their Islamic faith, the careful stand of the research participants regarding faith and society, and forceful emphasis on respect for both sides, might be related to the heathen debates regarding "radicalization and the dangers of Islam" (see chapter 3.4). As Ibrahim made clear, being a devote Muslim is frowned upon by some of the French. In ensuring that faith is a personal matter to them,

these research participants distanced themselves from the image of being a dangerous and radical Muslim.

6.5 Conclusion

The overarching question of this chapter was: in what ways do they search for inclusion in communities and reinforce their own exclusion from "French society"? This chapter builds on chapter five, which demonstrated the diversity in identities of the research participants. In this chapter we have seen in more detail how research participants relate to their neighborhood in diverse manners. Herein, their identities have a critical role. It influences the type of community and networks they are looking for.

I have identified three main forms of networks that are relevant to the research participants in Grigny and Saint Denis. In the first section, the neighborhood (Grigny) is central to the community, especially for those who are born and raised there. For them, the neighborhood provides a sense of belonging in which they feel at home and where they have friends and family. Other research participants (mainly the Maghreb women in Grigny and Saint Denis), seem to care more about their families and/or people within the same cultural group, as most relevant to their social networks. The last group of Congolese Christians were very much focused on their own religious oriented community as a network in which they can support each other emotionally and practically.

Of course, these networks are interlinked as well: family is for example important for all participants. Yet, the different forms of networks came to the fore due to the distinct emphasis that diverse research participants placed on them. In first instance, the research participants talked mostly about social relations and emotional attachment to their neighborhood, or family and friends. Yet, also in practical issues, these networks are important to them, as is illustrated by inhabitants who protect possessions of others (Selen), loan money (Ballo-Chiaka), or advising others on where to get cheap or free food (Taseadit, Fatiha, Meryem).

These social networks aren't confined to solely the neighborhood; some even cross the borders of countries. Think of Tavssi who is regularly calling with her family in Morocco and sends them money. Furthermore, social associations are relevant for networks as well: these associations fulfill the role of a meeting place for inhabitants in the neighborhood, and (often) offer practical assistance that might be difficult to get from direct friends and families such as legal advice or language courses.

In addition to practical and social support in the neighborhood, these associations also help research participants who are looking to expand their social network, beyond direct contacts in the neighborhood. In the next and final empirical chapter, I discuss the actions of participants who are eager to connect with either specific white French people, or more general people in Paris.

7. Building bridges beyond the neighborhood

Last chapter discussed how research participants relate to their neighborhood and their social networks. This chapter will go further, by exploring the actions and wishes of some of the research participants, who are very intentional about expanding their social networks into contacts with French people in Paris.

In this chapter I discuss the search of research participants in expanding their networks beyond the neighborhood into Paris: what are their strategies and limitations, and what is the reason for them to do so? The first section is a short outline of the multiple associations and projects in Grigny and Saint Denis that are relevant in creating a meeting space. In this section I will also discuss my conversations with white French volunteers. In the second section I will discuss the stories of Ferdouz and Fatema, two research participants who are both actively searching for contacts with French people in Paris. In the third section I discuss the strategies of migrants who are to a lesser extent searching for those connections, but still highlight the importance of contacts outside the neighborhood. In the fourth section I will bring the sections together in an analysis. I finish with a conclusion.

7.1 Outline of associations

In both Saint Denis and Grigny I found access to research participants through visiting activities of several associations. Some of these associations function as a place to meet and build connections with people outside of the own community (Fatima, Ferdouz, Fatema). In this section I will shortly introduce the relevant associations I've encountered, which facilitate in creating contact between residents in Grigny or Saint Denis and (white French) people in Paris.

In Grigny I could participate in activities of Pablo Picasso, *la maison du quartier*, or community center in the quartier Grigny II. The people who work here are volunteers and activities are free to ensure that they are reaching the often-poor families in the neighborhood (Magalie). I just arrived when the *Vacances de la Toussaint* started, a two weeks school-break in the fall, so daily family activities were scheduled at the Pablo Picasso. Since train options to go to Grigny were not the best suitable, I was often arriving half an hour earlier. However, this gave me the opportunity to sit in the waiting hall and observe other activities, and also to speak more personally with Rebekka and Marie, two volunteers.

Rebekka is doing her internship for social work at Pablo Picasso and she is organizing and leading the family holiday activities. These were all fun activities such as playing board games together, but they had often an underlying educational motive as well, such as visiting the vegetable garden of Grigny (a project of the municipality) or going to the *Muséum National D'histoire Naturelle* in Paris. Especially the museum trip was a very special occasion according to Rebekka. Unfortunally I couldn't join the group activity since they had limited group and bus-tickets, and they were all full already. Rebekka emphasized how meaningful it is for children to leave their neighborhood and visit activities in Paris. Not only the museum is educative, the whole day of going to the big city Paris is exciting. It shows children that there is more in the world than Grigny and Rebekka hopes that with these kinds of activities children later will feel more comfortable when leaving the neighborhood to study, for example.

Marie works at the front desk, but she did not seem to be very busy. Often when I came in she was knitting. When other volunteers came in she introduced me to them, so I could gain some knowledge of the several activities that are going on within Pablo Picasso. She introduced me for example to the *écrivan public*, a man who helps people with filling in documents for obtaining important papers such as a passport. Another volunteer is a lady who helps people with searching for jobs. It is here in this waiting hall where I met for example Ballo-Chiaka who came for an appointment with the *écrivan*

public. These volunteers have a mediating role between often undocumented migrants and the municipalities and governmental associations.

The volunteers were very passionate about the good work of Pablo Picasso for the neighborhood. The visitors discussed in the activities as well in a positive light, highlighting it use for their children, and happy with practical help and fun activities if they have time for it. Yet, the community center seems to have other goals as well, besides creating solidarity and being of help. It functions as well as a communication tool of the government towards the residents of Grigny.

Observing in the waiting hall and diverse rooms, I could see multiple posters, displaying the French flags and symbols such as the Marianne, and the slogan "*Liberté, egalité, fraternité.*" All kinds of meetings in the evenings such as government plans for new central heating in the flats, but also courses for the citizenship test. Sadly, I wasn't allowed to join these, courses, as at the front desk they told me there is a waiting list, so it is only for people who really need them. The posters and announces triggered me to think that the integration or assimilation is a big theme for people living here. Trying to discuss this with the women was difficult however. Asking whether they join these events, courses or meetings, was met with indifference: they did not seem to understand it or looked at the posters and shrugged, as if it is not relevant. The volunteer Rebekka, has as well difficulties in communicating with the women. Sometimes she tried to clarify my questions, but the women did not always understand her either. She told me though, that these integration meetings were less visited by the inhabitants than the fun or more light activities.

Mission Locale is another organization in Grigny that I got to know through Fatima who is working there. She invited me to come to the location where she could tell me more about the work of this organization. Mission locale is a government funded organization that helps youth between sixteen and twenty-five years old who are dropped out of college before graduation. Youth can follow classes at a mission locale and receive help in obtaining a job (mission-locale.fr). At mission locale Fatima works as a *patron*, she functions as a mentor for youth by giving them advice and accompany them while studying, searching for a job and during the job, till the age of twenty-five (Fatima). This particular mission locale is only for youth in Grigny, but they are encouraging youth to find a job elsewhere, since Grigny does not provide enough jobs for all inhabitants. In doing so they teach Grigny youth as well how to present themselves in a way that aligns with the French social norms in Paris: examples are speaking correct French and shaking the hand firmly (Fatima). Concerning the expansion of networks of Grigny youth, Mission locale seems thus mostly oriented in facilitating professional relations between Grigny youth and employers in Paris.

In Saint Denis I became a volunteer at *La Joie dans ma Vie*. It is a small volunteer association, run by a local protestant church. The goal of the association is to teach French and literacy classes to immigrant women and to make them feel welcome in France. In addition to teaching French, the association provided a monthly food package for the women as well, since many of them have a low or no income. Kristine, one of the volunteers told me that one of the reasons to help these immigrant women, is to make them feel welcome in France. According to her many of these women don't have any social contact with French people besides the French classes they follow here. For this reason, every class ends with tea and cake to socialize together. Aïsha is one of the women who follows the French classes. In Algeria she studied French and taught it for 5 years. Yet she comes to the classes since she highly enjoys the time together with other women and the volunteers.

Fatema is another lady who goes to La Joie dans ma Vie. She told me about her volunteer work for *Le Secours Catholique-Caritas*, an NGO who helps refugees, migrants and people in poverty. She invited me to come to a brunch she monthly organizes and so I did. The names Le Secours Catholique and

Caritas are used interchangeably for the same association. It is a professional NGO with a Catholic background and with offices all over the world (secours-catholique.org). Caritas has many activities and locations spread over Paris, but I went to Le Cèdre, were support is given to refugees and migrants who have applied for asylum or visa (secours-catholique.org). Le Cèdre is in Aubervilliers, but very close to Saint Denis.

One of those volunteers I met is Jacques. He told me that according to him it is important that there are more social contacts between refugees, migrants and French people. For this reason, he works for Caritas. He oversees organizing trips to museums or other daytrips, where he can teach people more about France: the culture and history of the country. Yet the association could do more Jacques thinks, if they had more resources. However, Caritas is a religious association (catholic) and the government is does only provide a small amount of money for religious associations.

The organizations I've summed up here is neither exhaustive nor representative for everything that is going on Grigny and Saint Denis. These are however the ones that I've encountered, and where I could talk with involved people. In the next sections I will discuss how my research participants in Grigny experience the influence of these organizations in their lives.

7.2 Bridging the social gap between migrants and "French society"

In this section I discuss in more detail the experiences of Fatema and Ferdouz. Fatema and Ferdouz are both from Bangladesh and actively involved in volunteer activities at Caritas, aimed to expand their social networks. At my third time at La Joie dans ma Vie I encountered Fatema. I noticed her early as she was the only lady without a Maghreb background that visited the French courses and she spoke very well English. We talked about the necessity to speak the language fluently to get a paid job. Fatema told me about how she was happy to follow the French course here. These courses offered her support in learning French as well as enjoyable social contacts. In addition to following French courses, she is also very actively involved at Secours Catholique. This association helped here with the first months in France and now she one of the volunteers. Fatema invited me to come over to a brunch at the secours catholique where I could talk to more people.

Fatema was already familiar with Caritas in Bangladesh. She has finished her master in humanitarian studies and has an extensive work experience in many fields such as inspecting factories on child labor. When Bangladesh became too dangerous for her and her husband who writes critical songs against the government, they fled to France. They knew that Europe would be safer for them and both in the UK and in France is a large Bangladeshi community. When the time came, plane tickets to France were most easy to get, so this is how Fatima and her husband ended up here.

At secours catholique Fatema guided me at the diverse rooms in the center and introduced me to the other people. She told me how Caritas was the first organization where she could follow beginners' classes French for six months. She is happy with the NGO as it offers not only help with the language but now she can also fill her days with volunteer activities: She helps translating for new arrived Bangladeshi people who only speak Bangla, she organizes the monthly brunch and festivities such as new years' eve and at her own initiative, she started with a vegetable garden.

Other social activities Fatema enjoys are the ones that teach her more about the French culture and places. Fatema went for example out camping with a group refugees at Saint Michel. These activities are not only for leisure and entertainment. Knowing more about France, is important to Fatema, as she wants to understand and fit in society. In describing "French culture" she mentions equality, freedom and brotherhood (*liberté, egalité, fraternité*) as central principles. Knowing these helps in

understanding French people and connect with them. Fatema criticizes as well other refugees who are less interested in learning about French culture and adapting themselves to it.

Fatema would love to get a paid job, since all her volunteer activities are unpaid. It would help here a lot if Caritas would pay her, since now she and her husband (who also only has volunteer jobs) have much trouble in sustaining themselves: they can only afford a small room for both to live in, and food is expensive as well. She also thinks that the government should also be more responsible and help her and others in this situation. The expansion of social network is also necessary, according to Fatema, but it is difficult to establish friendships with white French people. The only French people she has contact with are people who volunteer or work at La Joie dans ma Vie and Caritas, such as Jacques and Kristine.

Ferdouz is a Bangladeshi man I met during the brunch who is also very actively seeking relationships with French people at a social but political level as well. Before Ferdouz came to France he was a student in England. His visa expired however, and he had to go back to Bangladesh to apply for a new visa. Instead Ferdouz decided to go to France as that was cheaper. Now he is already six years in France. He applied for asylum in France, but up until now his application is every time rejected. Meanwhile Ferdouz is actively participating in activities and projects of diverse associations. He even goes to catholic church services of Caritas, since "the French are catholic", while he is Muslim himself. During this moments he meets with French people who are also interested in those activities. To him it is necessary to have these contacts: the French people can help him in improving his language and he can learn more about the French culture. Understanding French culture is important to Ferdouz as it helps him to build a social network in France and to speak on a more equal level with other French people.

Although Ferdouz is happy with how Caritas offers him the possibility to build a social network with French people, Ferdouz criticizes Caritas for the lack of juridical support. According to him, immigrants need more help in dealing with the government. As Ferdouz said during our interview: "the association, many associations, like to get people by volunteers, but they don't think about of helping for papers." In the end he spends a lot energy and time as a volunteer but is all unpaid and it does not help him to get any further with obtaining a passport or other official documents. But Ferdouz doesn't leave it like that. Whenever there is a chance to be engaged in Caritas projects and meetings that aim to improve the lives of immigrants socially and politically he likes to be part of it. His Facebook-page show the results: the last update was that he could visit three parliament members of France to talk about immigration laws, together with other volunteers and employers of Secours Catholique.

Ferdouz is as well part of the project "baguette et fromage" of Secours-Catholique. A team made of diverse migrants, refugees and French people are creating a movie series about the experiences of migrants in Paris. I could go at one of those meetings of the start-up period: in these meetings they talk about their experiences varying from language struggles, obtaining French papers, housing and culture-shocks. It is through these projects that Ferdouz feels he can contribute to the French society. In France we have good values, he further explains: people here are supposed to be fee and equal and help each other. Nevertheless, in reality migrants and refugees are not accepted.

Ferdouz hopes that people will learn to build relationships with each other beyond ethnicity, origin or else. The French people in these projects seem to have the same attitude. Jean and Javier, both white French men emphasize the wish that French people become more open towards immigrants. Yet, as Ferdouz notices: the project still lacks enough committed French people which he thinks is a shame. The French people are needed to help with language and with promoting the project amongst Parisian people they can't reach now.

In short, we can conclude that Ferdouz and Fatema are two examples of research participants who are very intentional or even opportunistic in expanding their social networks with French people. Next to social reasons as enjoying getting to know other people, they are aware that knowing French people might be very helpful in practical issues such as help in improving their French, and in long-term with getting a visa and a job. Associations play a vital role as meeting place from where they can build those relationships.

7.3 Widening social relations outside of the neighborhood

The research participants I met in Grigny had less a focus on establishing social relations with French people but more with people outside of the neighborhood. When talking about the social and physical segregation of Grigny and Paris, the biggest concern is the lack of opportunities for building a professional life in Grigny or elsewhere (Fatima, Selen, Farah). Starting from there, more attention was given to the need of professional relationships beyond Grigny.

In the interview with Selen and Fatima, Fatima is very outspoken about the need for Grigny youth to leave the neighborhood. As a second-generation migrant, born and raised in Grigny, she feels very connected to the youth she accompanies. As said in chapter six, Fatima actively encourages youth to go to Paris or elsewhere. After her graduation, she has lived as well in Paris for a few years. Living elsewhere is an experience that helps in life with building up professional chances. At her job at Mission Locale, Fatima teaches Grigny youth how to present themselves in a way that aligns with the French social norms in Paris: examples are speaking correct French and shaking the hand firmly (Fatima).

The appearance of the youth is also given attention. They must present themselves decently and professional. In practice this means that young boys shouldn't walk in their training suits, and girls should wear a bit of make-up and not cover their heads. To not cover your head, is not a problem according to Fatima. She is a Muslim herself, but sees it as a private matter that should not be a visible part in the professional work field. In a later discussion on education, Selen and Fatima compare France with Turkey. In their eyes, the education in France is better, amongst else because here education is built on the principles of *laïcité* (strict separation of religion and state) and freedom.[9] To Fatima and Selen, these French principles are key to a professional career in France, Concerning the expansion of networks of Grigny youth, Fatima seems thus mostly oriented in facilitating professional relations between Grigny youth and employers in Paris.

Farah seems to have the same professional orientation as Fatima in discussing the widening of professional opportunities for Grigny youth. She isn't looking for social relationships outside of the neighborhood, but in professional terms she wants to know people, and especially employers outside of Grigny.

Instead she highlights the principle of equality (*égalité)*. To her, this is a guiding principle for society yet not realized for all people, especially not for migrants or the inhabitants of Grigny and similar places. One of Farah's desires is to start her own recruitment bureau in which she can reach out jobless youth in Grigny and guide them in finding a job. Farah is very aware of the difficulties and discrimination Grigny youth face at the job market, but she sees opportunities for them in Paris and all over France, because there are still a great deal of companies who are searching for employees. Yet,

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[9] Selen: mais je connais le niveau de condition à l'école, par exemple en Turquie c'est pas pareil. Laïcité, c'est important comme même… E: la laïcité? F: la laïcité, liberté, fraternité. S: ça en Turquie malheureusement pas possible, quoi c'est la politique F: c'est pas pareille. S: si c'est pas pareille, oui un peu mais bon, F: c'est diffèrent.

communication needs to be improved and with her future recruitment bureau Farah wants to be the mediator between employers in Grigny and all over France, and youth in Grigny.

Farah does not speak directly about *laïcité.* Only after the interview she tells me that she is Muslim, when I told her that I wanted to visit a Christmas market in Paris. We engage in a short conversation about the many Muslim people in Grigny, hence the lack of Christmas markets and decorations in this area, as opposed to Paris. But, Farah stresses that although sometimes people are discriminated because of their Muslim faith, this is not the biggest issues to her. If people keep their faith private, as she does, everything is fine, and you will be able to get a job.

In the interview with Selen, she expresses her desire to not only increase professional relations, but also decrease the segregation between the rich people in Paris and the poor in Grigny. She sees it as negative that poverty is concentrated in certain areas. At the end of the interview Selen gives to examples of activities that were organized to connect Grigny youth with inhabitants of other parts of Paris. Striking is that these activities were however not with "the rich Parisians". One activity was organized for youth in Grigny with youth in district 95 Val-D'Oise, another impoverished area of the banlieue in the north of Paris. The second activity Selen mentions is an activity in which youth of La Grande Borne helped to cook for Syrian refugees in a refugee center of Paris. Proudly she tells me that a similar activity of 2016 even came in the Parisian newspaper.[10] The connections outside of the neighborhood made by Selen are thus focused on people with similar backgrounds and helping others who are as well marginalized in Paris.

As discussed in chapter six, for Ballo-Chiaka the Malian and black community is extremely important. When talking about community he is talking about the black community and more specifically the Malian community. These communities partially lie within Grigny, which is the reason he feels like he belongs in this neighborhood. At the same it is also extended to other areas of Paris. For example, Ballo-Chiaka has a brother in law in Denfer-Rocherou. In discussing his choice to live in Paris Ballo-Chiaka compares Paris to other cities where there is a lack of black people. He isn't looking for relationships with people based on place but based on ethnicity and race. The only places where he interacts with people outside of his direct community are at places such as Pablo Picasso, for support with juridical issues such as his asylum application or Mission Locale where he receives education.

In short, we can conclude that for the research participants I spoke to within Grigny (Selen, Fatima, Ballo-Chiaka and Farah) pursuing social relationships with French people is less needed. More relevant is trying to bridge the gap between Grigny and Paris concerning professional relations. Fatima and Farah are both emphasizing though, that professional relationships outside of Grigny are important and that people should be willing to leave Grigny if they want to have a stable professional job. Selen gives a new dimension to the widening of social relations by participating in activities that create a bond between diverse socially excluded groups of people in Paris and its banlieues. Ballo-Chiaka emphasizes the bond with Malian and black people as his most significant network, which is beyond the neighborhood and stretches over Paris.

7.4 Discussion: opportunities and limitations in expanding social networks

This chapter demonstrates the possibilities, limitations and needs research participants have for expanding their social network into French society. I have discussed the role of associations and opinions of some of the volunteers and the desires and actions of (second -generation) migrants focused on expanding their social networks.

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[10] LeParisian.fr. Grigny : les jeunes de la Grande-Borne cuisinent pour les sans-abris parisiens. 26 October 2016

The several associations I've visited were places from where research participants could start building a network. They differ in size, goals and place, but these associations have in common that they are meeting places for the research participants and help them in networking within or beyond the neighborhood. Especially when we look at the cases of Fatema and Ferdouz at Caritas, we see that the association functions as a bridge to establish contacts beyond their migrant network with French people in Paris.

Ferdouz and Fatema are both examples of people who are highly aware of the meaning of their status in society, as respectively migrant and refugee. They are very clear about their goal to obtain French citizenship and get a paid job. The process of applying and waiting for a French passport, takes a long time and there is little they can do to directly influence the process. Yet, they are very actively in volunteering at Caritas and intentionally try to build a network with French people, demonstrating their willingness to integrate in French society and using the association as a starting point to do so.

Voicu and Serban (2012) research immigrants' involvement in voluntary associations across Europe. They found multiple factors which influence the decision of a migrant to become an active volunteer. Some important factors are education, length of residence and background of civil participation in country of origin (Voicu and Serban 2012). These might explain partially the active participation of Fatema and Ferdouz. Both are highly educated. Fatema was already active in addressing social problems in Bangladesh, where she was also involved with Caritas. Length of residence entails the assumption that someone who lives longer at a place knows more about the culture, customs and traditions and thus easier partakes in them (ibid.). Ferdouz has stayed quite some time in France and before he stayed in England, where he learned already more about Western-Europe culture. He does not notice many differences in culture between the two countries.

Fatema and Ferdouz mention other reasons as well that motivate their actions: they want to learn more about French culture and they want to obtain a payed job. I would argue that in this way they differ from the Maghreb women who are hoping to return to their country of origin when their children are adults. Fatema and Ferdouz don't have the hope to return permanently to Bangladesh and this could make them more motivated to really settle in France. Here we see thus an example of how perceptions and feelings guide actions of people (Ortner 2005). Furthermore, being a volunteer gives them something to make it through the days, since payed jobs are out of option if you don't have the asylum papers. Both dislike the boredom that comes with endless waiting on your papers. The investment in volunteer activities might eventually help them with finding a job later, if they obtain a French passport (Baert and Vuijc 2016).

The situation of Selen, Fatima and Farah as second-generation migrants in Grigny is different, as we have seen in chapter five and six. They have a French citizenship status and don't struggle with a language barrier. Selen, Fatima and Farah are quite successful compared to many other youths in Grigny: they have a great social and professional live and through their jobs they can expand their network. In discussing the eventual expansion of their networks, they refer mostly to overcoming spatial distance between Grigny and Paris and the need for a professional network that reaches into Paris. In doing so, Selen and Fatima underscore that it is essential to adhere to the French values, and especially *laïcité*: private and public should be separated, especially religion. Fatima, Farah and Selen define themselves as Muslim, but at the same time they downplay their religious identity, as is illustrated by their decision to don't wear a veil, since it is not regarded as professional in the French society, and especially at the job-market. Instead they emphasize that religion is a private matter.

It is striking how the language and choices of the research participants in this chapter seem to echo the prevailing discourse within the French state: a normative republican citizenship model which is

based *on liberté, égalité, fraternité* and *laïcité* (freedom, equality, brotherhood, civic secularism), as is discussed in chapter two. These norms are also made visible at many sites: posters within associations such as Pablo Picasso show the French flag with underneath written the principles, walking past old buildings such as schools, you can see the republican slogan written on doors or walls. Every governmental website is characterized by the French republican symbols. The overall message is thus clear: being French means to adhere to these principles.

The research participants in this chapter have all accepted the French principles to increase their success in either social or professional relations with French people in Paris. Ferdouz and Fatema seem to be perfect examples of how the government likes to see migrants: eager to learn and adapt to the "French model of citizenship" (Tejani 2015). In getting to know their reasons behind their actions, we see how they exert agency over their lives, by choosing to follow what is "expected from them": they emphasize the relevance of the French republican values, they (especially Ferdouz) denounce Saint Denis and surroundings for its criminal and bad image, and they even visit church services even though they are Muslim. Selen, Fatima and Farah emphasize the French principles as important standards as well to succeed in society, but only when they are truly upheld.

The last additive, *when they are truly upheld*, demonstrates also a critical attitude towards the government. The research participants criticize the state and in more general French people, for not upholding the same standards and values for migrants, or inhabitants of deprived neighborhoods such as Grigny. What we see in the cases of these research participants, is that they reflect on their circumstances in light of the French discourse on citizenship. They take the values that are claimed to be French and use them to reflect on their position in society, and how the government and society is treating them.

Following Ortner's (2005) theory of how reflexivity is a key to agency of people, we can see how the awareness and reflexivity of the research participants translates it into their actions. They use the French republican principles to reflect on society and translate their perceptions and critics in a wide range of social activities at a professional or volunteer level. These activities are not limited to their own neighborhood, but rather demonstrate care for people with similar backgrounds and marginalized positions in Paris, as is demonstrated by activities of Selen and Ferdouz. which is demonstrated by Selen and Ferdouz. Selen is interested in relations with other people who are marginalized in Paris.

7.5 Conclusion

In the final empirical chapter, I have zoomed in on the activities and perceptions of research participants who want to expand their networks beyond their neighborhood and direct family and friends. The several associations in the neighborhood have a vital role for many of these research participants: they provide a meeting place with white French people, are places where they can learn more about French culture and which can help them to find contacts with other parts in Paris.

At the same time, the research participants of this chapter experience limitations, as illustrated by associations that don't always offer the help migrants really want (such as money). A divide is seen between second and first generation migrant participants. First generation migrant participants were more focused on integration in the French context: learn the culture, language and get to know French people. For second generation migrant participants these are not big issues. Instead they are more concerned with jobs and segregation problems.

What we do see however, is that for all research participants in this chapter, the French republican principles of freedom, equality and brotherhood are central to relate and understand their position in society. They praise the values as relevant for the structure and binding in society. Adhering to the

values and norms are also deemed necessary and normal if you want to be more accepted by the wider society. Especially Ferdouz and Fatima take up many volunteer activities at Caritas in the hope that it might help them to become accepted as French citizen, in legal and social sense.

Nevertheless, the research participants do also see how the principles are not equally enforced by the state: minorities, refugees, immigrants or inhabitants of deprived neighborhoods are not receiving the same treatment. They are not (enough) cared for and it is much harder for them to find a job and build a stable life due to discrimination or legal obstructions, as already seen in chapter five. Where the state is forsaking its task, the research participants (Fatema, Ferdouz, Selen, Farah and Fatima) have taken up a variety of activities to connect with other marginalized people and help wherever they can. The interconnectedness of people from several marginalized neighborhoods and places around Paris, will be discussed in more length in the final analysis of the next chapter.

8. Final conclusions

Every chapter finished with a discussion and conclusion. In this conclusion I will bring together the various themes and theoretical strands and see how they link together. I will start with a summary of the empirical chapters. Thereafter I return to the theoretical framework of chapter 3 and see how my empirical data builds on, diverges or offers new insights to the concepts of social exclusion, intersectionality and subjectivity. The next section relates the outcomes to the debates regarding integration and deprived neighborhoods. I will finish with an outlook for further research and final reflections.

8.1 Summary

In this thesis I have aimed to shed light on how diverse migrants in Grigny and Saint Denis experience and cope with social exclusion and to what effects. I have taken an approach with attention to the perceptions of migrants in deprived neighborhoods: how they understand, feel, think and reflect on their position in society. Secondly, I wanted to see how this subjectivity shapes the strategies of migrants in dealing with their marginalized positions within society.

Since the research is explorative, I have chosen for an ethnographical approach in which I started with observations and small talk at social activities in diverse (neighborhood) associations. From there on I started with interviews about topics that had come up frequently during these observations and conversations. Experiences with exclusion or marginalization always came up during the small talk and interviews. The deprived neighborhood often served as a backdrop for these conversations. Many participants pointed out the differences between themselves, living in Grigny or Saint Denis as opposed to those living in Paris. In doing so they conflate Grigny and Saint Denis as neglected places by the government, where many migrants and poor people live, while Paris could be described as symbol of the "mainstream society": the place where the rich French people live, where the jobs are and where you must be if you want to fully participate in society.

To gain multiple perspectives of people in the neighborhood, I sought access to diverse associations. Here I've encountered people with diverse backgrounds and they underscored different aspects and barriers that hinder them in their daily lives. Two major variations that came to the fore, were the distinction of people who have French citizenship and those who don't have it (yet), and those who are French speaking and those who aren't. The first group, those without legal status, highlight their inability to gain access to jobs or housing due to all kind of laws. For those who also don't speak French, it is especially difficult as they experience that many French people are not willing or able to communicate in another language or have patience to listen to their basic French. At the other hand, those who have citizenship and speak fluently French still experience exclusion. The underlying causes that are stressed are discrimination and stigmatization because of their foreign names and residence in a neighborhood with a bad name.

Other obstacles that were mentioned contribute to exclusion are unequal access to education, poverty and racism. Although the exclusion has its influence on social and political aspects of life, participants were most concerned about the economic consequences. It is very challenging to find a (decent) job amidst of obstacles like stigmatization and a language barrier. However, having an income is of uttermost importance for supporting your own and family's subsistence.

In short it can be concluded that there is a sort of shared sense of exclusion amongst research participants and a concern for the economic implications. However, the obstacles that contribute to the exclusion are not the same. The different research participants illustrate how the experiences and perceptions of people deviate from each other, based on age, generation, length of residence, legal status, ability of speaking French and ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

As follows, the perceptions of the neighborhood and its inhabitants also vary amongst the participants. There is a shared opinion amongst participants that their neighborhood is segregated and disadvantaged. Yet participants relate differently to the neighborhood, which becomes most visible when reviewing their social networks. Some of the research participants are highly involved in the neighborhood to support other inhabitants. They emphasized the good things that happen in the neighborhood and feelings of mutual support and connectedness amongst its inhabitants.

Other participants seem to be quite indifferent towards their neighborhood. For the time being it is a good enough residence and they enjoy facilities offered by neighborhood associations. Yet it is not a place that they feel highly connected with. Their social network is not so much place related, but rather based on family, people within the same cultural group. These relations go beyond the neighborhood and even cross the state borders. Some of the participants have mixed feelings about their neighborhood. They defend the neighborhood and its inhabitants against the stereotypes and highlight the good things that are part of the place. At the same time, they literally distance themselves by moving away from the most disadvantaged places and encourage others to get out of the neighborhood.

In discussing how research participants relate to their neighborhood we also need to give attention to the several associations that provide support for the inhabitants. All the research participants are either directly involved as volunteer or professional or visit regularly activities of (one) of the organizations. At these places inhabitants can get practical assistance that is difficult to get from friends or family, such as legal advice or language courses. Furthermore, at these places inhabitants can socialize together and exchange useful information.

Few participants regard their neighborhood as totally criminal and unsafe. Yet, those who have this outspoken opinion responded in two different manners. A special group that formed its own community exists of the Congolese Christians. Religion and ethnicity is their binding factor: together they form a close social network to support each other socially, practical and financially. Some of the church visitors live in Grigny, where the church is located, others lived there but moved to close surrounding neighborhoods. This group of participants stood out from the others due to their highly religious perception of society. The neighborhood, but even more in general France, is seen as a place of low morale that corrupts people and informs bad behavior such as criminality, discrimination and racism. The research participants in this community felt strongly called to care for each other and make sure that everyone can keep following the Christian faith.

Another response is given by the last research participants who regard the neighborhood as criminal and unsafe. They rather spend their time elsewhere, resulting into actively trying to expand their social network into the center of Paris. Volunteer associations are helpful starting points to create these networks. As we have discussed previously, research participants perceive a segregation between them as migrants in deprived neighborhoods and white French people in Paris. At volunteer associations however, these worlds can come together. Here research participants meet French volunteers and professionals. Through these people they can learn more about the French culture, values and way of life. An underlying hope of these research participants is as well that they can

establish friendships with these white French volunteers, which might help them to receive French citizenship or later a paid job.

To conclude, the research had two aims: understanding the experiences of migrants themselves and providing insights in the various strategies of migrants in banlieues in dealing with social exclusion. In doing so, the diverse obstacles that contribute to the exclusion of research participants came to the light, just as the heterogenous responses. Nonetheless, all these research participants have some sort of shared sense of exclusion and that is the neglect of the neighborhood by the government.

8.2 Theoretical conclusions

All the empirical chapters have a discussion section which relates the themes of the chapter to literature. in this section I want to come to an overarching theoretical discussion and final conclusions in relation to the theoretical framework. Social exclusion, intersectionality and subjectivity are the central concepts of the theoretical framework. In combining these concepts, the thesis draws attention to the perceptions and agency of migrants in deprived neighborhoods and see how they live their daily lives.

In chapter three attention is given to the social exclusion framework of Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997). In this framework social exclusion is defined by the legal, economic and social dimension. All mentioned barriers in the empirical chapters, that exclude participants from participation in society, could be placed in one the dimensions. More interesting however is the outcome that many participants were most worried about the implications of their low socio-economic position, due to exclusion at a legal and social dimension. It is a daily life struggle to sustain their (and their family's) livelihood in a country where it is hard to find decent work due to all kind of obstacles ranging from laws that prohibit working, to less access to schooling and discrimination.

Here we see thus how interlinked the dimensions are. I want to point to the social dimension as is described by Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997): the social relationships within a society on the level of families, communal relationships and the citizen – state relationship. People need recognition from each other as worthy to be part of society. Yet, the recognition for migrants and inhabitants of deprived neighborhoods is lacking, or at least not enough, in the eyes of the research participants. Research participants note the social and physical segregation between them (migrants, inhabitants of Grigny or Saint Denis) and Paris, the place of rich French people.

Regarding the social segregation, participants explain the social distance between themselves and the French. They feel not always respected by the French, and experience discrimination and racism. In their experience, many of the French people are closed towards people with Foreign appearances and names, and inhabitants of neighborhoods with a stigmatized reputation. Following these conversations, it is noticeable how the perception of "the French" has a connotation of "white people". Even the youth who are born and raised in France but have migrant parents, are not considering themselves to be fully French. Instead they are still labeling themselves as Tunisian, Moroccan or Turkish. The social segregation is strengthened further by the physical segregation of the deprived neighborhoods. During the conversations, Paris was often opposed to Grigny and Saint Denis: Paris as the rich French capital, and Grigny and Saint Denis as impoverished neighborhoods where many poor people live, those without a job. Following Jackson's (1999) wording, Paris can be described as the "center" in society, the people which it represents, are the powerful groups in society.

The experience of social and physical segregation by research participants, sheds light on the debate of ghettoization of deprived banlieues. Although only one participant literally described his neighborhood as a ghetto, the wording and feelings of participants resemble Bauman's (2004)

conceptualization of a ghetto: a place that is surrounded by physical and social barriers and contains people who are currently out of function.

Still, I would argue that the depiction of Grigny and Saint Denis as ghettoes is rather incomplete. First, following Bauman (2004) the ghetto still had a function, namely that of a storage of people who are currently not needed to economically participate in society, but they might become useful again in the future, when new employers are needed. Yet, as we have seen, the people in Grigny and Saint Denis are increasingly rejected by society based on their migrant background. They are not recognized as full citizens and therefore deemed to be permanently unfit for society. When discussing the situation of the research participants in Grigny or Saint Denis, I would rather argue that they live in a hyperghetto, as explained by Bauman (2004): a space for 'wasted lives', people who are discarded such as 'people without papers' and all those who are not deemed as worthy citizens. As such the hyperghetto is also less a fixed place, but rather the world of those rejected.

Regarding the hyperghetto as the world of those rejected, also helps us understanding the connections between diverse groups of marginalized people beyond the borders of either Grigny or Saint Denis. Cases of research participants who step out of their neighborhood to volunteer or meet people at other parts of Paris and its banlieues, demonstrate the awareness and support of people in different places but in similar excluded circumstances.

At the same time decision of the research participants contribute as well to the making of the hyperghetto. Bauman (2004) depicted ghettos as a structure of an alternative world: it formed its own social and economic structure, almost like a parallel society. Yet, for hyperghettos, these structures are disrupted: the people who belong to the middle classes, who have found a job, are moving out, leaving the neighborhood with even less possibilities for an independent socio-economic structure (Bauman 2004). Three participants who are quite successful have all left the La Grande Borne, the quartier in Grigny that is most deprived and stigmatized and decided to move to other, though still close surrounding, neighborhoods. They encourage other youth as well to go out and follow education in Paris or search for a job outside of Grigny. Even though these participants express their love for the La Grande Borne, and more general Grigny, they know that the options to find a steady profession in Grigny are too few. As a result, the people who are stuck in the neighborhood, are those with least options to get out.

The focus on social exclusion of the migrants in deprived neighborhoods, can quickly fall into the trap of displaying them solely as victims (Ortner 2005). However, all the research participants demonstrate agency over their lives: in the interviews and during small talk research participants shared their critical views on society and the government. They have desires, feelings and fears that inform their behavior. In other words, people are animated by subjectivity. According to Ortner (2005) it precisely this notion of subjectivity that is necessary to understand resistance and agency against exclusion. As explained in the theoretical framework, subjectivity is closely related to intersectionality and power. The research participants come from a variety of backgrounds and have diverse identities. These do not only influence the kind of barriers research participants encounter that contribute to social exclusion, but it also informs their responses toward their excluded position. In the theoretical framework are examples listen of how these reactions can vary to demanding inclusion within the powerful center (in this case Paris) to responding by forming an alternative social community (Das and Randeria 2015, Kaulingfreks 2016, Jackson 1999).

The research participants that were central in chapter six, were those whose actions could be described as a form of withdrawal. Looking for social and practical support, they turned towards networks within the neighborhood, family and cultural or religious groups of people. In doing so, they

form a community that is withdrawing itself from directly interacting with the powerful center. This reaction was most visible amongst the Maghreb women, the Malian participant and the group of Congolese Christians. However, the underlying reasons for self-exclusion differ, based on ambitions, feelings, perceptions of society, or thus in short, subjectivity (Ortner 2005).

Concerning the Maghreb women, they seemed to perceive their life in France as temporary: it is a country where their husbands have found jobs and where their children can receive good education. However, many of these women want to return to their country of origin when their children will be adults. As a result, these women are not much interested in demanding inclusion in the center of society. Instead, their most important network is formed by family: they keep in touch with family-members in the country of origin, in other European countries or in France. Within the neighborhood contacts are made between women with similar cultural background, with whom they can continue to speak Arabic.

The Malian research participant had experiences of racism that led him to the conclusion that he could only rely on black people, or more specific the Malian community that is spread all over Paris. For the Congolese Christians, their reaction of withdrawal stems from a concern that the French society is materialistic and corrupt. Based on the Christian faith and the Congolese identity, this group forms a strong community in which the participants help each other to make a living, while also shielding themselves from the bad influences of society, thus segregating themselves.

In chapter seven we see how other research participants actively try to expand their networks beyond the confines of their direct environment, moving closer to the center, Paris. For them, associations have a significant role in their lives as places that can help in moving closer to the center. Participants work as volunteer or professional within an organization, which gives them the opportunity to relate with other people beyond their neighborhood. The forthcoming networks might lead to better job opportunities (Baert and Vuijc 2016). In doing so they hope to gain access to decent jobs and maybe even to French citizenship.

The two strategies in dealing with social exclusion seem straightforward: either withdrawal or demanding inclusion. However, when analyzing in more detail the actions of the participants we see that those strategies are not mutually exclusive. As Slooter (2015) already pointed out in his research to youth in banlieues: diverse strategies are used by the same people, depending on what is needed in each situation. The strategies that came to the fore in this research, were separated into two chapters to better understand underlying motivations and results. Nevertheless, participants can follow both strategies for different goals. This is best displayed by the participants who are at one hand gravitating towards their own neighborhood as a "safe haven". Here they have a social network of friends and family. At the same time the same participants demand their inclusion in society, particularly within the job market. They are willing to move out of the neighborhood for professional gains.

In addition, it should be noticed that not one of the participants is fully excluded or withdrawn from society (see Jackson 1999, and Randeria 2015). This thesis demonstrates how several volunteer associations play a vital role in bringing people from different parts of society together. By offering language courses, education, social activities and more, these associations provide resources to the research participants to become more involved in society. I would argue that for participants who are going to the courses or activities, such as the Maghreb women, these associations fulfill a role as mediator between the government and these migrants. Volunteers help for example, with understanding and filling out documents of the French government such as applications for a visa.

Furthermore, they teach what is needed to participate in society such as the language or adhering to the central principles to French citizenship.

Speaking about French principles, we see how a strong discourse of the French citizenship model is influencing the way the research participants discuss society. During conversations, participants referred to norms and principles that are considered to be French: freedom, equality, brotherhood and laïcité (Lurbe I Puerto 2015 and Tejani 2015). Republican symbols such as the Marianne and connected norms are used as a starting point to evaluate the French society. One of the principles that receives much attention in French public debates is that of laïcité, or civic secularism (Tejani 2015). The debates concern often the Islamic religion, fearing that Muslims endanger this principle and pose a threat to society.

It is therefore striking that the Muslim research participants were often as well underscoring the principle of laïcité, or at least talked about mutual respect beliefs. Additionally, these research participants often described their religious identity as part of their ethnical and cultural identity, yet not something that should be at the forefront of their identity. In speaking about the relevance of the French republican values, research participants are aligning themselves with the official language of the government (Lurbe I Puerto 2015). One of the concerns with this strong discourse on citizenship that is propagated by the French government, is that it renders minorities invisible (ibid.). However, participants take a critical approach by claiming these principles as equally important for them. Consequently, they criticize the state for not upholding these principles equally for everyone in society, pointing to ongoing social issues such as discrimination. They use thus the language of the state to claim their rights of inclusion in society.

To conclude, the contribution of this thesis lies in the linking of theoretical concepts of social exclusion, intersectionality and subjectivity, to gain insights into the experiences and actions of migrants in deprived banlieues in France. I have sought to demonstrate how their backgrounds and identities of the research participants highlight a variety of barriers that cause exclusion and consequently elicit different responses. The deprived neighborhood is the backdrop of these experiences, yet it is not in itself the binding factor for all participants. We need to realize that people relate to it in various manners. Furthermore, we see how participants not only reflect on society from their personal experiences, but their perceptions are also shaped by a strong presence of the French republican discourse on important values for the society. In the following section I will explain the implications of this thesis for further research and debates concerning integration and deprived neighborhoods.

8.3 Placing findings in the debates on integration and deprived neighborhoods

This section will be used to relate the findings of the discussion chapter to the wider debates on integration and deprived neighborhoods. In both public as academic debates, deprived neighborhoods and migrants are in central in the concerns about integration processes and increasingly, the war on terror.

Fear for radicalization, terrorism and losing a national identity prevail the public debates in Europe. Some of the perpetrators of terroristic attacks were to be found living in deprived neighborhoods, which soon led to the assumption that impoverished neighborhoods with large numbers of immigrants, function as breeding grounds for radicalization (Brighton 2007, Rahimi and Graumans 2015). Although this relationship is never proven, all kind of policies are made to intervene in deprived neighborhoods, trying to encourage segregation and decrease criminality and foremost the chances of radicalization.

For this research I've been in Grigny and Saint Denis, two deprived neighborhoods in France. The findings in the thesis are helpful in shed another light on the influences of social exclusion on inhabitants and how they relate to the neighborhood and society at large. At first it is noticeable, how "the neighborhood" isn't a central point of focus for all the research participants. Yes, they do recognize how the neighborhood is neglected by the government and they are aware of the segregation. Yet, living in this place does not automatically lead to an overarching sense of community with other residents.

Instead diverse identities and backgrounds might lead to different obstacles that exclude people, with most notable their legal status and ability to speak French. Furthermore, the social networks and connections of people are not confined to the neighborhood. Instead these networks involve friends, family and professional relations with people in different parts of Paris or even beyond country borders. Therefore, I would argue that focused policies only focusing on neighborhood units as strategy to decrease segregation is not enough. The various obstacles in society wide need to be addressed.

A concern of many states is that migrants and people in deprived neighborhoods are disrupting society by forming own community with own rules and norms that go against the mainstream. So, it is interesting to see how the research participants were in fact agreeing with the French republican discourse on the norms of society. Especially the Muslim participants made very clear that they are supporting these norms and principles. It is striking that the group of people that was most withdrawing themselves and was most critical towards the values of society, were the Congolese Christian research participants. These people criticized the materialistic standards of the French people, which in their eyes leads to a low morale in society and social problems such as discrimination. They segregate themselves by forming a strong community based on religion and ethnicity, to protect themselves from bad influences of society.

In short, this thesis demonstrates how the debates concerning integration are too much fixated on deprived neighborhoods as a fixed place with a negative influence on the residents and the supposed dangers of Islam. Instead it would be helpful as states identify the various obstacles that block the full participation of migrants and their descendants and address these, whether these stem from neglect of neighborhoods, racism or other factors.

8.4 Limitations of this thesis and recommendations for future research

One limitation of this thesis is the small scope of the research: a very small sample of the residents of both Saint Denis and Grigny has been interviewed. Therefore, no conclusive statements can be made based on this research. However, the exploratory research can be considered as a starting point to understand of the variety amongst migrants of deprived neighborhoods. Future research topics that need more understanding are identified.

Another limitation of the thesis is the focus on migrants, either first or second generation. The choice to select migrants followed the information that majority of the population the deprived banlieues are migrants, or non-whites, and consequently banlieue inhabitants and migrants are often equated in the debates. Although most white French I met during fieldwork were indeed not living in the deprived neighborhoods, a few did. I decided that it would be too much for thesis to take up their experiences as well. Nonetheless, for future research it would be interesting to see if and how they experience living in a deprived neighborhood, majority migrants.

A third limitation of the thesis concerns the way in which I found my research participants. All of them were found through associations. The reason is practicality: visiting activities was the easiest method to meet people. Once I knew people I tried to expand my contacts via snowballing, which had a

mediocre effect: many people were hesitating. I managed to get some appointments for interviews via friends of friends, but most of them got cancelled. The result of my access through associations, is that I only interviewed people who have an interest in being involved at these places. Nevertheless, 33 will also be people who never or seldom visit these organizations. Therefore, the thesis might present un unbalanced picture of the role of these associations. For further research it would however be very interesting to dive more into the roles of diverse associations in the neighborhood and lives of migrants.

Lastly, for further research it will be interesting to get more focused and zoom in on diverse inhabitants of the deprived neighborhoods to gain a better understanding of the lives of those who are less visible in the integration and radicalization debates. Based on this research I think foremost of the lives of migrant women in the banlieues, since the focus is often on male youth. Furthermore, the banlieues comprises more religious groups than Muslims. In this thesis came to the fore how the Congolese Christians are very active, yet this group is much ignored in the academic and public debates regarding integration. It would be very interesting to get a better understanding of the role of religion in relating to French society and dealing with a marginalized position.

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10. Appendix

The initial interview guide

These questions were not strictly followed, but rather used as a starting point for the interviews and during small talk. Based on the answers of the research participants I asked follow-up questions or dropped parts of these questions.

Daily activities *Aim: get to know more about the background of participants*	- What are you doing during the week? - With whom are you living? - How would you describe your family? - What is your (parents) country of origin?
Neighborhood related questions *Aim: collect perceptions of participant regarding their neighborhood and other inhabitants*	- In what neighborhood do you live? - For how long are you living there? - In case people have moved: what are reasons you moved? Can you compare the places you lived in? - What are negative and positive points of living in Grigny/ Saint Denis? - What do you think of the media attention for Grigny / Saint Denis? - How are your contacts with other residents of the neighborhood? How important are these contacts for you?
Social relations *Aim: see what kind of social relations participants have and consider as relevant*	- How did you come to visit/be involved in the association …? - What role does (name association) have in your life? - Are there other associations or groups of people that are important to you? - Whom are the important people in your life? -> why these people, how you keep in touch
Ambitions *Aim: see what goals/desires participants have in life and link to societal issues*	- What are your dreams for your future? - What do you need to realize your dreams? - What are according to you, obstacles in realizing your goals? - What would be your ideal world? - What kind of changes are needed to reach that world?
France *Aim: reflection of participants on society, state and their position in it*	- How would you describe French society? - What are positives and negatives for you about living in France? - In case people lived elsewhere: could you compare live in (country) and France? - What does it mean to "be French"? - What is needed to succeed in life in France? - What do you think of the French government? - What do you think of the current political situation regarding migrants and or banlieues?
Other (last questions) *Aim: give participants opportunity to come up with themes not discussed in interview or elaborate on certain themes*	- What do you want people outside the neighborhood know about your neighborhood? - Do you have questions for me?