The Influence of Migrants' Social Networks on their Social Integration Process: The Case of First Generation Middle age Western migrants in Rotterdam, the Netherlands

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The Case of First-generation Middle-age Western Migrants in Rotterdam, the Netherlands

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Dedicated to Elly, Fradiferi, Jane, Julka, Karl, Lara, Margarida, and Maria for opening your lovely homes and telling your unique experiences to me.

Abstract

Rotterdam has one of the largest amount of migrants living in its city in relation to other cities in the Netherlands (IDEM Rotterdam 2019: 1). Most European countries, including the Netherlands, look at integration as a two-way process between migrants and the host society while also assuming assimilation to social cohesion (Anthias et al. 2013: 3). A big part of social integration is establishing social relationships through bonding and bridging (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 126). But migration studies often take social networks for granted while researching migrants' lives. Therefore, there is a need to research the influence of migrants' social networks on social integration from a sociological point of view (Ryan 2011: 720). Studies on integration often focus on younger migrants. While first-generation older migrants are one of the most disadvantaged groups because of their migration background, age, and otherness (Warnes et al. 2004: 307). Therefore, this research investigates the influence of first-generation middle-age to older migrants' social networks on their social integration process in Rotterdam. The research draws on three months of ethnographic fieldwork in the social lives of eight migrants living in different neighbourhoods throughout Rotterdam. The aim is to find out what the experiences of these migrants are regarding their migration trajectory, family and non-family social networks, and sense of belonging in a transnational context, considering their social integration process. In this thesis, I argue what the influences of the social networks are and that all experiences are situational by giving examples of multiple experiences per subject. In the conclusion, I connected the different aspects of the social networks' influences to argue that all these aspects influence each other and therefore the experiences the migrants have.

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Introduction

The Zumba class

The Zumba class starts at half past seven. Margarida cheerfully welcomes everyone inside. She has told to the group in advance that I will take part in a trial lesson. The group is a regular group, so I stand out as a newcomer. I feel a bit uncomfortable because of it. Margarida stands in the center of the room and tells everyone I'm Lonne from the community center and I'm here to spy on her. She laughs as she says that. Everyone reacts relaxed to it and I laugh with it. Margarida comes a little closer to me and tells me that these are the Spanish women. She points to the two women next to me. Margarida says they are mother and daughter and that another niece is coming soon. Shortly afterwards, the niece does indeed walk in. Margarida says that there are normally also four other female relatives of theirs but that they could not come because of illness or the bad weather. Then she points to the women on the other side. They are all Dutch kindergarten teachers. They come to her classes for 20 years and they became close friends of her. The lesson starts fairly soon after. I stand on the outside next to the three Spanish women. On the other side are the three kindergarten teachers. Margarida is in the front and center. The music is Spanish and we dance the salsa, cumbia and other Latin dances, Margarida explains during the lesson. At one song, she waits a while before she starts and asks the Spanish women if they know this song. It is, in fact from a well-known Spanish artist, she says. Only when the artist sings, all three women recognize the song. This get-together stands out to me as it shows Margarida's Spanish roots. During class, we have a few short drinking breaks. During this, Margarida continues to chat with the group and tries to involve the two groups, the Spanish women and the kindergarten teachers, in each other's conversations. Margarida encourages this as she asks questions to one group about their lives and relates it to the lives of the women from the other group. At one point Margarida tells me that the fact that they take this lesson together shows her closeness with both countries. She really is trying to connect both groups as she thinks they can learn a lot from each other, she says. This also confirms what she said about herself in one of our conversations, that she feels half Dutch and half Spanish.

Social networks as the focus

Rotterdam is one of the most diverse cities in the Netherlands, with over 170 nationalities. More than half of the Rotterdammers have a migration background. From which a large group is from European countries (IDEM Rotterdam 2019: 1). Countries direct integration often not at people from Western countries since there is an assumption they already know the language and values. In Europe, most countries claim to look at integration as a two-way process while also assuming assimilation as the way to social cohesion (Anthias et al. 2013: 3). But integration is a disunited and

contested concept (Ager & Strang 2008: 167) and therefore, I view it critically in this research. Social integration is the emotional adjustment, sense of belonging, and formation of social relationships (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 125). I also use this description of social integration in this research. But I do not view these parts of social integration as something measurable. Instead, I look at the processes of the different parts of social integration. Part of the social integration process of migrants is establishing social relationships through bridging with Dutch natives from the host country and bonding with co-ethnics from the origin country. These relationships form the social capital (i.e. the benefits and support from membership in social networks) of first-generation migrants. This relates to the embeddedness (i.e. sense of rootedness in the local environment) migrants gain from the social relationships they build in the host country (ibid: 126). As comes back in the narrative about Margarida's social connections in her Zumba class. Therefore, social networks closely relate to the social integration process of migrants. Migration researchers rarely study this, as migration studies mainly take social networks for granted. Therefore, there is a need to research the development and characteristics of migrants' social networks from a sociological point of view (Ryan 2011: 720). This makes it interesting to see what influence social networks have on the migrants' experiences with their social integration process in Rotterdam. These social networks exist of family and non-family members (i.e. friends, colleagues, neighbours, and acquaintances) in the origin and host country. Margarida is one of these migrants. This also relates to my background as a social worker in the welfare sector in Rotterdam. As my work partly exists of strengthen the social networks of people. Therefore, this is also where my personal interest lies. Another part of social integration is the sense of belonging. This is multi-sided as first-generation older migrants have a sense of belonging to their co-ethnics and the larger society. These social networks cause social in- and exclusion that influences the sense of belonging. The sense of belonging also influence the social networks. As increasing feelings of belonging relate to socializing more and building bonds with others. Whereas decreasing feelings cause the opposite (Klok et al. 2017: 343). This makes it also interesting to see how social networks influence the sense of belonging of the migrants and vice versa. Older migrants all live transnational lives that influence the social relationships with family members, partners, and other social ties in both places (Zontini 2004: 1114). These lives exist of living in both the origin and host country at the same time (Bolzman et al. 2016: 7). This leads to experiences of duality, which causes a sense of in-betweenness by first-generation migrants (Ghorashi 2004: 329). For example, Margarida mentioned that her home will always be Spain, but that she stays in Rotterdam for her husband and son. For first-generation older migrants, this means that they often live in transnational mobilities, travelling from their host to origin country and back (Bolzman et al 2006: 7). This is the case for the migrants of this research as well.

Middle-age migrants' social lives

Migration and integration studies often focus on younger migrants as they are more prominent in the European migration and integration policies (Warnes et al. 2004: 307). Research on older migrants often is about one aspect of integration like the inequalities they face (Faist 2016) or one part of their migration process like returning to the origin country (Bolzman et al. 2016). But researchers rarely take the perceptions of older migrants into consideration. Since there are differences in studying older migrants as ageing migrants and migrating elderly (Torres 2006: 1352), this research focuses on ageing migrants in Rotterdam. In specific, middle-age migrants between 55 to 65 years old from West and East European countries, who often fall into the group older migrants. These people are often still working, but are ending of their working lives. Like Margarida, who still works as a sport instructor. This makes them different from the older migrants most literature talks about since most of them did not yet retire. That the ageing process of becoming an elderly start in this age range, makes the group different from younger working migrants. Therefore, the combination of working and ageing as migrants makes them a unique group. It contributes to the recently upcoming knowledge on the group of older migrants. As age explains differences in social networks in time (Martinovic et al. 2009: 877). These migrants often deal with inequality gaps that become bigger with age (Flores Morales 2021: 2), meaning that older migrants face multiple inequalities because of their migration background and age. Society sees older migrants as a marginalized group as they face disadvantages through their otherness by living in a foreign country (Warnes et al. 2004: 307). Therefore, it is important to study understudied objects and places, like older migrants, to make them visible in society (Fassin 2003: 632). By explicitly investigating the experiences of middle-age migrants themselves with their social networks, this research adds personal insights to the existing literature. Therefore, this research with its sites is innovative to research done before concerning older migrants. Since this research focuses on the experiences of migrants, it is important to note that the findings of this research are parts of the multiple realities about their experiences. As there is no objective truth, only representations of versions of the truth that make up an event together (Hastrup 2004). This research' aim is to find out what the influences of family and non-family social networks are on the social integration process of first-generation middle-age migrants between 55 and 65 years old from West and East European countries in Rotterdam. The focus in the influences lies on experiences with the social networks through education, employment, social capital, domestic relations, housing, social activities, reciprocity, and social in- and exclusion in a transnational context. Here, I include the situational differences between and within the West- and East-European migrant groups. As research on migrants often focuses on one migrant group or the similarities and differences between the migrant and native group.

Research questions

This leads me to the following research question: What is the influence of social networks on the social integration experiences of first-generation middle-age migrants from West and East European countries in Rotterdam? The focus lies on the personal experiences and social connections of first-generation middle-age migrants with their social network. To answer that question, I broke it down into smaller and more specific sub-questions. The first being: What is the influence of the social networks on the migration trajectories of first-generation middle-age migrants from West and East European countries in Rotterdam? Here, the focus lies on analysing the post-migration trajectories as part of the background information of the migrants' social lives. Including the migration processes of the migrants to the Netherlands, language proficiency, and economic integration. As it is the start of their social integration process, it is a logical choice to make this the first sub-question. The second sub-question is: How do the family social networks of first-generation middle-age migrants from West and East European countries influence their social integration process in Rotterdam? This sub-question looks into the family structures in the Netherlands and origin countries, living situation, social activities, and reciprocity in a transnational context. The goal here is to see to what extent the family social networks influence to the social integration process of the migrants. The last sub-question relates to the second one as it also analyses the degree in which non-family social networks influence the social integration process of the migrants. It reads: How do the non-family social networks of first-generation middle-age migrants from West and East European countries influence their social integration process in Rotterdam? This sub-question investigates the non-family structures in the Netherlands and origin countries, the formation of these social relationships, social activities, social in- and exclusion, and ageing influences in a transnational context.

Research participants

This research draws on three months of ethnographic fieldwork among eight migrants living in different neighbourhoods throughout Rotterdam. See figure 1 below for an overview of the living areas of the participants. Through my contacts at my workplace gro-up buurtwerk, I came into contact with these eight participants based on voluntary response sampling. In this research, I refer to them as migrants since I look at their social lives as a migrant. I know migrants are often racialized because of their being (Stolcke 1995: 4). Therefore, there is a need to emphasize that the participants are more than migrants as they are also parents, partners, brothers, sisters, friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc. The participants are all first-generation middle-age migrants from 55 to 65 years old. The reason for the age group is as practical as it gets since the migrants that are willing to corporate are all within this age. Four of the migrants come from West-European countries and the other four from East-European countries. Even though they come from different countries, all

migrants speak either Dutch and/or English. They all came to Rotterdam 25 years ago or longer, meaning that they are in the Netherlands from at least 1997. Their reasons for migrating differ between labour and family migration. All migrants came here legally. To give a better idea of who these migrants are, I introduce them below. First are the four migrants from West Europe. The first is Margarida, 61 years old and from Madrid, Spain. Living in Rotterdam for 35 years. The second is Jane, 65 years old from Glasgow, Scotland. She has been living in Rotterdam for 43 years. Karl is 60 years old and is from Stockholm, Sweden. He has been living in Rotterdam for 40 years. Elly is the last from the group from West Europe. She is 60 years old and from Bonn, Germany. She lives in Rotterdam for 38 years. The second group are the four migrants from East Europe. Julka is the first. She is 65 years old and from Gdansk, Poland. She has been living there for 40 years. Second is Lara, the youngest at 55 years old. She is from Prague, the Czech Republic and lives in Rotterdam for 25 years now. Fradiferi is now 60 years old and has migrated from Budapest, Hungary 38 years ago. At last, we have Maria from Strumica, Macedonia. She is 63 years old and has been living in Rotterdam for 36 years.

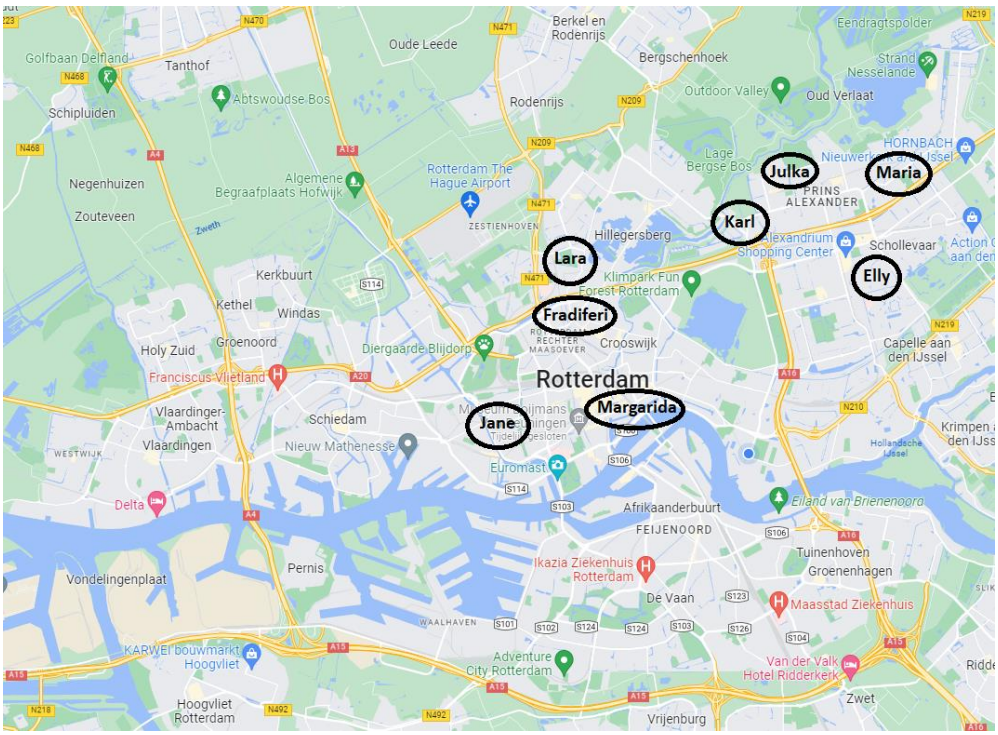

Figure 1. The migrants' neighbourhoods throughout Rotterdam.

Methodology

This research is a postmodern overt ethnography that focuses on the learned reasonableness of social scientific methods. Whereas centring identity is as important as centring resources (Wydra & Thomassen 2018: 274). The social scientific methods in this research are the literature reviews on migration studies, (social) integration studies, and social gerontology. I research the social lives of first-generation middle-age migrants through the knowledge gained from these concepts. By

centring the experiences and perceptions of these migrants, their identity instead of the literature review becomes central in this research.

Reflection on the interviews

During the fieldwork, unstructured interviews worked out well as they gave personal information about the migrants' experiences with their social networks. The interviews provided an open space for the migrants to talk freely and ramble about their social lives, migration process, and social integration experiences. I noticed by asking open, indirect questions without a questionnaire, like 'how did you end up in Rotterdam?', the migrants talked about their perspectives on their migration trajectory from beginning till now. The interviews were flexible, which helped to reveal unexpected topics like the boundary making of the migrants. This is in line with other unstructured interviews, where one question is the start of a conversation about the interviewee's story and perspective (Bryman 2012: 470). By engaging in small talk before, during, and after the conversations I noticed the migrants getting more comfortable during the conversations as I was building a bond with them. This helps to overcome the otherness between the migrants and me (Driessen & Jansen 2013: 252). But during the interviews, I also noticed that there was sometimes too much room for other topics which led to undetailed information about the interviewee's lives. I struggled with making the questions concrete. My supervisor reminded me that getting to know the lives and experiences of the migrants was already a big part of my research. This is indeed a disadvantage of unstructured interviews, as it is harder to have a specific focus and reconstruct experiences. Something you can do during semi-structured interviews (Bryman 2012: 495). The semi-structured interviews as second conversations helped to get more in-depth information from the migrants' experiences with their social network. It contributed to lay the focus on parts of the migrants' experiences which we did not yet talk about. During these conversations, I had approximately five questions as guidelines that I generated from the transcripts of the unstructured interviews. This helped me to get a bit more focused information while also leaving space for the migrants' perspectives. The sequence of these questions is not vast, but it is common to have some kind of questionnaire during semi-structured interviews (ibid: 212). Another disadvantage is that the interviewees were out of their naturalistic sphere as they were not in their normal flow of social events (ibid: 495). Especially with Lara I noticed this. When I asked her if I could record our conversation, she hesitated. After explaining why I wanted to record the session, she said yes and since the others had no trouble with it, I assumed it was okay. When we finished, she immediately asked to stop the recording and said she felt uncomfortable because of it. We talked a bit afterwards, and she became more open about her feelings and experiences. This showed me the difference in Lara's front and back stage since she first

presented herself in a certain way from which she thought was expected of me. While later on, she could drop her front mask more, got relaxed, and spoke more freely (Goffman 1956: 66).

Influence of the communicative context

Covid-19 influenced the methods as some migrants got sick or were careful in meeting up. Therefore, more conversations happened online than thought in advance. These conversations were more anonymous, which led to personal information of the migrants (Hine 2015: 86). For example, Julka was very open about her homesickness when I talked to her online. This was after seeing her in-person the first time we met, which could also have had an influence on how personal the conversation was. While people can also experience the internet as more impersonal, which leads to less information (ibid). With Maria, this was the case, as we did not meet before. This led to shorter answers and less in-depth information about her experiences. In addition, all migrants are in the Netherlands at least 25 years, meaning that their age influences their experiences with their social network and social integration process and therefore the data (Martinovic et al. 2009: 877). This time of their lives helped them to reflect on their experiences as they could look back on their social lives after such a time. Another part of the context is myself as a person and researcher. This also influences the conversations and participant observations I did with the migrants. Either this was positive or negative is hard to determine but it is important to know that my being influences the narratives the migrants tell about their experiences. I need to be aware of me not hearing all experiences of the migrants because of my positionality. Therefore, it is important to keep my role as a person and researcher in mind and be specific in my notes about the perspectives of the interlocutors and my own (Bryman 2012: 68).

Reflection on the participant observations

The participant observations were harder to do than expected because of the covid-19 restrictions in Rotterdam. They put many social activities on hold and/or the migrants were hesitant to do social activities or go to their social spaces. Therefore, I could not do participant observations with four of the migrants. But the participant observations I did helped to confirm or deny the data gathered from the interviews. I joined Karl in his art lesson, followed multiple of Margarida's Zumba and BBB classes, worked with Elly during her volunteer work at community centre Het Lage Land, and went to a Hungarian supermarket with Fradiferi. I show one of the participant observations at Margarida's Zumba classes in the beginning of the introduction. These settings are open like social groups or social gatherings (Bryman 2012: 442). In all cases, I was an active participant and was fully present in the social activities (ibid: 446). The advantage of participant observation is that I can map out the context of the migrants' social networks. I can see the experiences of these migrants regarding their

social network through their eyes. In addition, participant observation does not take the behavior of the interlocutors for granted (ibid: 494). This happened, for example during the sport classes of Margarida. Here, I got the chance to observe her in one of her non-family social networks to see how she positions herself and interacts with others. Participant observations indeed gain intensive and detailed examinations of social life. It also helps to form a bond with the participants (ibid: 68). At one point, Margarida expected me at the Zumba classes and we would share many brief conversations about our lives with each other. A disadvantage of participant observing is that I could get too engaged in the social lives of the migrants and lose my awareness of my role as a researcher (ibid: 445). Therefore, I was always aware of what I wanted to say about myself and in what activities I wanted to engage.

Ethical considerations

There are some ethical considerations that arise from working with a marginalized group. Therefore, it is important that I stay open-minded throughout the course of my research to not make assumptions about them. I do so by being reflective about what I think and see during my fieldwork and in analysing the data. For example, not naming the migrants ' older migrants' in front of them as it racializes their identity. When I first used that word to describe my participants to Jane, she started laughing and said she did not feel old. Therefore, I changed it to people with a migration background between 55 and 65 years old. This put away the meaning of old while still being specific about my target group. I try to incorporate this reflexivity also in my research findings to not do them harm or cause more discrimination or marginalization in what I write about them. The experiences of the migrants can be sensitive and/or private. Especially when they are negative about some or all points of their experiences. The interlocutors may imply that expressing themselves causes certain implications. Like being put in a poor light or that they are not grateful. Therefore, I explained to the migrants why I am researching this and from what position. Explaining to them I am not connected to any institution helped to make them more comfortable. As said, Lara was not comfortable recording our conversation, so the next time I spoke with her I did not record the session. This made her speak more freely and made it possible to only write the things down she was comfortable being in the research. That way I prevented to do her any harm and made sure I kept her private stories out of the research. I asked consent of the migrants by explaining my research and their and my positionality. They all gave oral consent, which I checked every time I met up with them. This gave them the opportunity to always withdraw from the research if they wanted to. I also asked the migrants to come up with pseudonyms for themselves to make their stories anonymous. In this way, the research keeps authenticity concerning the names of the migrants. I also gathered other personal information like the migrants' names, age, gender, addresses, phone numbers, family ties, social

networks, race, and nationality. To make sure I kept this safe, I stored all this information in an encrypted Excel document on my laptop. From which only I know the password. For the contact details in my phone, I used the pseudonyms the migrants gave themselves so that no one would really know who they are. Again, I am the only one who can access that information. I do not use any personal contact details in my findings. These are all not relevant for my research and therefore I can anonymise it easily. In the findings, I discuss the other personal information about the migrants' experiences with their social networks. By relating it to the pseudonyms of the migrants it is almost impossible to trace it back to the migrants themselves. This information is accessible for my supervisor and me.

Thesis structure

The structure of the rest of this thesis is as follows. In the next chapter, I elaborate on the theoretical framework of this research. Here, I analyse the concepts social networks, transnational lives, sense of belonging, migration, ageing migrants, integration, and social integration. From there on, there are three ethnographic chapters that contain the research findings and analysis. Each chapter answers one sub-question. The first chapter looks into the migration trajectories of the migrants and how this influences their experiences with their social networks and social integration process and vice versa. From there on, I move to the second chapter. Here, I investigate the family social networks of the migrants and their influences on the migrants' experiences with socially integrating into society in Rotterdam. The third chapter deals with the non-family social networks and their influences on the experiences of the migrants with their social integration process in Rotterdam. To put all this in context, a discussion about the contested concepts integration and migrants follows the research findings. At last, I draw a conclusion from all these chapters that will connect the multiple concepts and analyses to answer the primary research question.

Theoretical framework

Migrants' social networks in everyday life

Central to social networks are the strong social connections migrants have. This can be through bonding or bridging. Together, these form the social capital of migrants (Ager & Strang 2008: 180). The concept of sociabilities of emplacement makes the establishment of social relationships. This stands for the interaction build upon shared competencies with other persons and the desire to form social relationships. In addition, the socio-economic, cultural, and physical characteristics of the local environment influences the social capital over time and place (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 127). Bonding with co-ethnics provides cultural and social activities that include maintaining migrants' own customs and language. It is important to migrants to have these moments to keep their own traditions, norms, and values alive. This helps to foster the social integration as it forms a haven for migrants (Ager & Strang 2008: 180). Bridging with natives helps to increase the emotional, social, and practical support migrants get in their host country. The natives contribute to an increased subjective well-being of the migrants as they expand their social capital. Which secures feelings of security and belonging by the migrants (Fietz & Kaschowitz 2019: 16). Bridging adds to the participation of migrants in activities in the host country like sports, community groups, and political activity. Which helps the social integration of the migrants as the more the migrants take part, the more beneficial it is for their integration (Ager & Strang 2008: 180). Migrants often make these social contacts and spaces through day-to-day activities (Korac 2003: 406). Engagement in social activities helps to maintain the cognition and increases the community social integration of older migrants. It helps to keep social contact with relatives alive. Older migrants specifically take part in social activities with their children. This can be through visual contact or through the telephone or the internet. Especially for men, these social activities and contacts are important to keep their cognition from declining. For women, the social engagement with friends is more important in relation to this matter (Zunzunegui et al. 2003: 96). In addition, the amount of people in the social network of first-generation migrants influences their satisfaction with their network. The more people they have around them, the more satisfied they are. Time also influences the satisfaction with social networks as over time social networks expand (Fietz & Kaschowitz 2019: 19). Therefore, having or not having certain social contacts causes first-generation migrants to feel in- or excluded (Gilmartin & Migge 2015: 290). Identity plays a vital role in moderating these social relations and human actions. But social integration studies rarely include identity. Therefore, Grzymala-Kazlowska defines social anchoring as finding social spaces that help migrants to restore socio-psychological stability in their lives and find footing in the host society. This assists them in finding their place in the world and forming their sense of being and functioning (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016: 1134).

First-generation migrants also often keep contact with people in their origin country (Bolzman et al. 2016: 2). They feel like they are part of both social networks as they have remained in contact with people in the origin country while integrating in the host country (Zontini 2015: 335). It differentiates whether migrants are close with their social network in the origin country or not (Fietz & Kaschowitz 2019: 18). Transnational kinship is one of the three transnational social spaces distinguished by Faist (2000: 8). Here, family structures are extended and rearranged beyond the borders of the origin country (Zontini 2004: 1114). Within transnational kinship groups, transnational marriages influence what these groups look like and how these groups systemize them. First-generation migrants marry someone from their origin country, which implies that they keep old traditions in place. But the opposite is true. The migrants mix previous patterns of behaviour with new ambitions, obligations, and constraints (Beck-Gernsheim 2007: 283). Female migrants play a vital role in these transnational kinship ties. They contribute to the labour market to support their family, keep kinship relationships alive, and care for family members. This leads to feelings of satisfaction but more often results in having tasks and responsibilities beyond their limits (Zontini 2004: 1139). The reciprocity in care can cause tensions as there are differences in what family expects from migrants and what they can do. This then can lead to guilt among migrants as they feel they cannot take care enough of their family and vice versa because of spatial distances (Coe 2016: 44). First-generation older migrants' families often socially support them. They often get support from their children as they live close by and have a close bond with them. But when financial and/or health problems occur, they often depend on social systems and institutions to help them. This relates to having a small family network, geographic distribution, lack of affinity, or a reluctance to ask for help (Bolzman et al. 2004: 420). According to Larkin, researches can look into all these processes through the aesthetics of infrastructure. Here, a poetical view is used to investigate social engagements (Larkin 2013: 336). This means that this thesis investigates the social networks of the migrants through their embodied experiences with it.

Transnational lives and mobility of first-generation migrants

Continuing on the transnational lives of first-generation migrants, trans relates to beyond the borders of the origin country. As first-generation older migrants live in multiple societies, their lives become transnational as they detach it from any borders (Ghorashi 2004: 331). Because of this diasporic life (Levy 2000), the lives of these migrants become multi-sited as they live in multiple places at the same time (Gupta & Ferguson 1992: 10). Like what happens with first-generation migrants in transnational kinship ties. These transnational lives include the flows of communication, places of residence, local and trans-local links, and positionalities. All this causes intersecting connections but also contradictions in the lives of first-generation migrants (Anthias 2016: 183). This

causes a duality of resources in the lives of first-generation older migrants. They have economic benefits, social relationships and emotional attachments in both their origin and host country. Employment in the host country with a social contact in the origin country often leads to this duality (Zontini 2015: 2). The transnational and new mobilities paradigm argues that first-generation ageing migrants live a double presence instead of a double absence in social networks. The double absence, central in the structural perspective, states that these migrants are neither fully part of their host nor origin society. In contrast, the double presence argues that these migrants simultaneously live in their host and origin society. This can be virtual or through physical mobility (Bolzman et al. 2006: 2). The paradigm shows how first-generation migrants can view their position in their social networks in a transnational light. The essentialist approach sees the duality of migrants as having a sense of belonging to their origin country. This makes their identity directly related to their roots. Researchers relate duality also to changing identities. Here, first-generation migrants have a sense of in-betweenness as their identities focus on both the origin and host country (Ghorashi 2004: 330). This relates to the double presence talked about earlier. Another issue in the transnational lives of first-generation older migrants is the question of circulation. This question looks into the extent these migrants can travel between their origin and host country and stay in contact with both societies (Bolzman et al. 2006: 2). The question of circulation often comes in place of the question of return in the lives of first-generation older migrants. The latter concerns whether ageing migrants in the host country return to their origin country after retiring. They either return after retirement, permanently settle in the host country, or travel between both countries to keep all social ties intact. Often, older migrants keep on travelling between their origin and host country because they believe borders are gateways instead of barriers (Bolzman et al. 2016: 1372). There are some gender differences in this decision among these migrants. Men are more likely to return to complete their migration process. Whereas women often stay because of ties with (grand)children in their host country. For women, this influences their life satisfaction more. In addition, changes in values and lifestyles make women often better off in the host country (Zontini 2015: 330). These decisions also relate to feelings of homesickness. These feelings are common among migrants. Researchers see it as an illness that affects the psychological and social well-being. When migrants are alone, they can feel a sense of grief in terms of loss of family and friends and the environmental familiarity. This can cause psychological health problems and social disruption among migrants. Which affects the bridging with natives in the host country as migrants are more focused on the gap between their origin country and themselves. Socially integrating into society can fill this void (Hack-Polay 2012: 68).

The sense of belonging of first-generation migrants

As briefly discussed earlier, the sense of belonging relates to the social networks of the migrants in a transnational context. The notion of belonging comprises a dynamic process of emotional attachment, feeling safe, and at home. Yuval-Davis constructs belonging on three levels, at social locations, by identifications and emotional attachments, and ethical and political value systems (2006: 199). This research focuses on the second level, being attached to a person and/or society and identifying yourself in particular ways or being identified. These emotional attachments can change over time and within situations (ibid). The attachments lie in subjective feelings of connections with social groups, social places, and social experiences (Allen et al. 2021: 88). These attachments make sure that people can build social relationships as they form the basis of these relationships. More or less feelings of belonging therefore influence the bonding and bridging with certain groups (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 127). This relates to the duality of the transnational social networks of first-generation migrants discussed earlier. The collective subjectivity links to this idea. It argues that one's individual consciousness stands in relation to others. These others, all part of society, influence what an individual does as social life is a fluid process (Domingues 2000: 230). It therefore explains the influence of society on the sense of belonging of migrants. This concept needs to be considered when analysing the social networks of the migrants. First-generation older migrants have emotional attachments to both their origin and host society. They remained in contact with people from their origin country while building a social life in the host country over long time. The way society sees these migrants makes them question their sense of belonging as neither society sees them as fully their own. This affects their social adaption negatively. Making the sense of belonging of first-generation older migrants more linked to where their close family lives instead of linked to a place (Zontini 2015: 335). This relates to the structural perspective of the double absence. But place and place-making can have an influence on the sense of belonging of migrants. The more migrants feel like the place they live is their home, the more they feel like they belong there and the more they socialize with others (Raffaetà & Duff 2013: 342). In addition, the longer migrants live in a place, the more social contacts they get there and the more they feel like they belong in the neighbourhood (Kearns & Whitley 2015: 2119). The social connections these migrants have to family in their host country help them build these emotional attachments to that country (Ager & Strang 2008: 178). Building friendships and other affective relationships increases the sense of belonging of these migrants the most in the host country. Which increases the amount of relationships and the position of the migrant in these social networks (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 134). Therefore, the engagement of these migrants in society in the host country increases their sense of belonging to co-ethnics and the host society in contradiction of those not engaging (Klok et al. 2017: 343). This is in line with particularised trust in those of the same or very similar backgrounds. This type of trust

influence the sense of belonging of first-generation migrants positively or negatively depending on the experience the migrants have (Pearce 2008). An anxiety in speaking Dutch can also cause a decline engagement in social networks. This then influences the sense of belonging negatively and the investment in increasing their language proficiency (Pot et al. 2020: 1147). A sufficient language proficiency helps migrants to feel more part of a society and become less homesick as it is a primary source of socialization. It allows them to engage in social spaces (Hack-Polay 2012: 66). This relates to the links to the host society that are important for the social wellbeing of first-generation migrants. These links are status control, confirmation of behavior, affection, and the context of comparison among people (Arpino & de Valk 2018: 1167). Therefore, the formation of, social relationships and the sense of belonging in the host country influence each other (Chen et al. 2020: 6).

Belonging and identity relate to the question of difference and categorize people by socially relating them to others. Identity associates with what people feel and their orientations. Belonging looks at what instead of who an individual is. Identity sees an individual as a whole subject, here the focus lies on who that individual is (Anthias 2016: 177). The self-identification of first-generation migrants is not linear to either society. Instead, it adds up to each other. Therefore, how the migrants identify themselves relates to their (subjective) feelings of belonging and their position in their social networks (Zimmerman et al. 2007: 779). Which is in line with the double presence transnational first-generation migrants experience to both social networks. Older female migrants have a more complex self-identification than male migrants because of different cultural expectations in the origin and host country (ibid). This relates to the higher expectations of reciprocity that female migrants also experience more. These ideas also relate to the politics of belonging Yuval-Davis talks about. She argues political projects aim to construct belonging in certain ways that fit these projects. Mainly, doing so by imagining communities that separate a society in us and them. Yuval-Davis criticizes this view and argues for cohesion within and between countries (2006: 204). Here, identity also plays a role, as people often construct their identity by what one is not. When doing so, one must exclude which is the basis of boundary making and othering. Here, people distance themselves from others by socially separating themselves from them. Society often racializes migrants as the other in a lower hierarchical order. They are seen as different because of their migration backgrounds (Dawney 2008: 2). This relates to xenophobia, which defines migrants as others based on cultural differences. People often see migrants as different because of their being, which racializes them. It results in us-them thinking instead of we-we thinking (Stolcke 1995: 4). Which relates to being and feeling socially in- or excluded in certain groups. This makes it important to analyse perspectives on belonging critically and be aware of these subjective feelings and political ideologies considering the transnational social networks of the migrants.

Migration studies

As I already discussed the social networks, transnational lives, and sense of belonging of these migrants, the focus changes to the bigger contexts. This thesis is at the intersection between migration, integration, and social gerontology studies focusing on first-generation middle-age migrants. These three studies all deal with the social networks, transnational lives, and sense of belonging of migrants in different ways. Researches often divide migration studies into migration and post-migration studies. The first focuses on the migration flows and mobility of migrants, including the motives and movements of migrants, and the aligning policies. And the latter emphasizes the settlement of the migrants in a new country. This includes the allocation of a place, integration, identification, social in-/exclusion, and the aligning policies (Martiniello 2013: 8). Like studying the post-migration construction of social networks (Ryan 2011). Within this division, researchers often study the two separately while they have a lot in common. The conditions of the migration movements influence the integration opportunities in the host country. Therefore, it is important to investigate migration processes by looking at both. Comparative migration studies do this as it looks into migration dynamics while taking the post-migration situation into consideration (Martiniello 2013: 8). This thesis is in line with the comparative migration studies as it focuses on the post-migration social life of the migrants while taking their migration backgrounds into account. Transnational migration studies often lean towards the comparative migration studies' perspective. These scholars argue migrants stay part of their origin society while becoming part of their host society. They do so by participating in familial, social, economic, religious, political, and cultural processes in both societies. For example, through sharing old and embracing new traditions and habits from both countries (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007: 130). Which relates to the discussion about the transnational lives of first-generation migrants. This thesis is in line with this last perspective, as it investigates the influence of social networks and the migrants' participation in these networks in both countries on their social integration process.

Social gerontology

Migration studies and social gerontology have a common ground in researching older migrants. Both investigate the migration processes and their personal, societal, and welfare consequences on older migrants (Warnes & Williams 2006: 1261). Like the consequences on the social networks of the migrants and vice versa. Within social gerontology, the focus lies either on migrants who migrated in their younger years and age in place or retirement migrants, whom in or close to retirement migrate to another place. These migrants all deal with vulnerabilities through social policies, ethnic community and family networks, and migration trajectories. Migrants overcome this through social embeddedness and reciprocity (Ciobanu et al. 2017: 166). Therefore, social gerontology closely

relates to the social networks' influence on the migration and social integration process of migrants. Social gerontology research shows that the age at migration plays a vital role in the post-migration adaption in the host society. Therefore, migrating as an elderly is not the same as ageing as a migrant (Torres 2006: 1352). The subject of this thesis is migrants in the age of 55 till 65 years old whom migrated to Rotterdam at least 25 years ago and now age in place. Employment, social and family transnational networks have a positive influence on ageing migrants' well-being and life satisfaction (Cela & Barbiano di Belgiojoso 2021: 3690). The living space of ageing migrants becomes increasingly important as they will spend more and more time at home. Therefore, the living quality and facilities influence the subjective well-being of older migrants. It shows how the living situation of migrants is. Which in an indicator of the social integration of migrants as the neighbourhood correlates with the social standards in society (Steinbach 2018: 295). First-generation older migrants often live in deprived areas in big cities where there are fewer options for improvement. This feeds their feelings of social exclusion (Fokkema 2020: 13). Living in deprived communities also results in local hostility and prejudice, poor community relations, and exclusion and isolation by migrants (Kearns & Whitley 2015: 2123). Therefore, it is important to study factors like employment and the living space to understand its influences on the social networks of ageing migrants. Because they are first-generation migrants, they often get to deal with needing to raise immediate income and life prospects, at the verge of losing social interaction and support with the origin society, and get to deal with policy disadvantages and xenophobia (Warnes & Williams 2006: 1262). This relates to influences on the transnational lives, mobility, and sense of belonging of these migrants. In addition, social connections, participation in social activities, and social engagement influence the cognition of older migrants. Especially visual contact with family members and being socially integrated into a community impact the cognitive increase or decline of older migrants (Zunzunegui et al. 2003: 96). Therefore, I take the age-related influences on the social networks and social integration process of the migrants into account. This makes this thesis is in line with other studies about social gerontology.

Social integration of first-generation migrants

The social networks, transnational lives, and sense of belonging are also part of integration studies. They affect the integration of migrants and vice versa. As shortly mentioned earlier, integration is a chaotic and contested concept as there is no accepted definition of it (Ager & Strang 2008: 167). Meaning that there are different perspectives of what integration entails. Sociological analyses argue that integration is becoming a member of society through multiple forms of participation. They see social integration as migrants and the native society's participation and therefore relate to all members of society. Here, social networks are an important factor of social integration. In

contradiction, The Chicago School of migration studies relates integration to the specific problems of migrant in a society. They see social integration explicitly linked to migrants' integration within a native society. At last, contemporary societies view integration through the boundaries of the state. Here, the amount of migrants' integration depends on an individual's being whom is part of a society (Anthias et al. 2013: 3). All these different views affect the sense of belonging of migrants, as they have different influences on to whom the migrants make emotional attachments. Another way of looking at integration is dividing it into different parts. There is a public (i.e. legal and social environments) and private (i.e. personal experiences and social connections) dimension (Kearns & Whitley 2015: 2106). Or into the four themes, employment, housing, education, and health, citizenship and rights, social connections, and structural barriers (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). Another view on the division of integration is by looking at it as integrating first-generation migrants on socio-economic, political, social, and cultural levels. Here, as said, Wessendorf and Phillimore view social integration as the emotional adjustment, sense of belonging, and formation of social relationships by migrants (2019: 125). This thesis looks from a sociological point of view into the private dimension, third theme, and social level (i.e. the social integration). These relate to the social networks and sense of belonging of the migrants, as discussed earlier. It takes the other dimension, themes, and levels into consideration, as they are all connected. For example, education and employment have a big influence on the social integration process of migrants as it relates to issues like independence, bridging with the host society, improving language proficiency, and restoring self-esteem and self-reliance (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). It also relates to developing feelings of belonging because of more social relations. Which influences the social integration of migrants as they feel like they belong in the host society because of these relationships (Kearns & Whitley 2015: 2118). Here, I consider the situational differences within and between the migrants' social lives. As different social spaces and time influence the social integration process (ibid: 2107).

In addition, migration and integration policies state integration assumes assimilation of migrants in their host society. Those who integrated enough get equal rights and treatment and the right of residence instead of these being pre-given (Anthias et al. 2013: 3). Schinkel's argument is in line with this perspective on integration. He states that integration implies that members of societies become properties of such a social whole because there are different levels in how integrated they can be. Society sees the lack of immigrant integration as dependent on the beings of migrants. As their beings must be problematic to affect their integration. Therefore, integration becomes an individual responsibility instead of that of the state. This makes the term integration politically loaded and therefore problematic (Schinkel 2018: 3). Which relates to boundary making and the xenophobia of migrants. That is why, within this thesis, I use the term integration critical as I do not want to

presume that there is an amount of how integrated migrants can be. Meaning that I relate to Schinkel's perception of integration and agree with him. We need to view integration as a problematic concept. Therefore, this thesis does not investigate the amount of integration. Instead, it is in line with sociological analyses as I consider the societal influences from the social networks of the migrants on their lives and social integration process.

Migration trajectories

As said, this thesis partly focuses on the migrants' migration trajectories and experiences with it to research the post-migration social experiences of the migrants. I analyse the process of migration to see how the social networks influence the migrants' migration trajectories and vice versa. I describe these trajectories in chronological order. To start with the motives and movements of the migrants. Next, I describe the integration policy and language proficiency. From there on I describe the education and employment of the migrants in Rotterdam. All these subjects include the migration process as background information on the lives of the migrants. They lie at the start of the migrants' social integration process. Therefore, these are discussed first.

Motives

It is important to know the history of a person to understand how they place themselves in the world. This means that you cannot take one person's life and generalize for an entire group (Gupta & Ferguson 1992: 18).). As every experience of the migrants is situational and unique, it is important to know the migration backgrounds of the migrants to understand where they are coming from. Therefore, I outline the motives and movements of the migrants below. Within the motives, different themes occur as motives to migrate to the Netherlands. The first theme is employment and counts for Fradiferi and Maria. Fradiferi first started working when he was 18 years old at a hotel in Budapest. His manager worked at restaurant Engels in Rotterdam for 3 years before that. After a year of working in Budapest, his manager said Engels needed staff for their Hungarian restaurant and meeting and conference centre. After two weeks of working there, Fradiferi liked it so much he said he wanted to stay. Engels did not need any staff for a longer period, but they would think of him when they would. Two months later, on 31 December 1981, when Fradiferi was back in Budapest, his manager told him he could start working at Engels on January 5. That is when he decided to move to Rotterdam for good. Maria has a similar but unique motive. She worked at a blanket factory in Strumica for 7 years. A Dutch company contacted the factory as they were looking for employers for factories in the Netherlands. She decided to go and migrate to the Netherlands. Another theme that occurs as a motive is a partner or friend whom motivated the migrants to migrate. When Jane was 19 years old, she moved to Lloret de Mar in Spain to work at a bar with three friends. Her friends really wanted to go, and she joined them. After three years, two other friends from Scotland who worked in Rotterdam encouraged Jane and a friend to come. At first, Jane was hesitant about going, but eventually she did. During that time, Jane met her husband Harold in a bar in Rotterdam. After a couple years they moved in together in a house in the Oude Westen in Rotterdam. That is when she decided to stay in Rotterdam. For the other migrants, a partner all influenced their decision to

migrate. Elly fell in love with a Dutch man in Germany. When he had to go back she followed him. Karl also met a Dutch girl in Germany when he was travelling there. They fell in love and when she had to go back he went with her. Margarida met her Dutch husband in Madrid. He was working there as a geologist. They fell in love and also went back to Rotterdam together. Julka met her now late Dutch ex-husband in Gdansk while she was still studying. They got a relationship, and he became friends with her friends. He worked there in the harbour for a year before returning to Rotterdam. After two years she followed him. When she got divorced, she stayed in Rotterdam for her daughter. Lara has a similar but again unique motive. Her now ex-husband is also from the Czech Republic, but lived in Rotterdam for two years when he was younger. After those years, he moved back to Prague with his father and his mother stayed in Rotterdam. When their son Paul was 1,5 years old, Lara's now ex-husband wanted to move back to the Netherlands. Lara was not sure about that decision at first but her then husband got really homesick to the Netherlands. Initially Lara, her husband and son would move to the Netherlands for 1,5 years. After those years, they stayed since they got used to their life in Rotterdam. After the divorce, Lara again decided to stay as Paul already have had built his life here at school and with his friends. This was a really hard decision for Lara as she actually also wanted to go back but did was she thought was best for her son. It shows her duality in feelings of emotional attachment to the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. This is common among migrants as they often feel like they belong somewhere and long to belong somewhere else (Yuval-Davis 2002: 202). As said, certain themes do occur here even though all experiences are unique and situational, as the stories show. All migrants dealt with some kind of influence of their social network on their motive to migrate. Whether it is from employers or colleagues to friends and partners. This influence relates to the social capital of the migrants as the strong social connections, especially within the last theme, are an important influence on the decision to migrate (Amit & Riss 2007: 292).

Movements

Because of the decision to migrate and the different motives, the migrants made different movements in coming to the Netherlands. Fradiferi, Maria, and Jane travelled with co-ethnics. Together with a couple of other staff members, Fradiferi went to Rotterdam to for two weeks. This was in October 1981, when he was 19 years old. After those two weeks, he returned to Budapest to continue his life there. But two months later he was back and worked at Engels for 1,5 years before returning to Hungary. He wanted to rebuild his life there, but once he was back, he missed the people in the Netherlands. So after a year in Budapest, he came back, and he stayed. This was in 1984, when he was 23 years old. This relates to the emotional attachments people make to a certain group. These can shift over time and within different situations (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202). This

happened with Fradiferi and makes his migration experience unique. Maria also went to Rotterdam for work. A bus of 30 women, including Maria, left to work at a fish factory in Katwijk. This was in 1986, when she was 28 years old. She worked there for half a year before transferring to a cookie factory in Dordrecht. Maria got a contract which stated that she could continue to work there if she learned Dutch. She did and stayed. She got an apartment in Rotterdam and travelled back and forward between her job in Dordrecht. From there on, her feelings of belonging to Rotterdam grew as she built her life there. At 23, Jane moved to Rotterdam with one of her friends. She lived with three friends in an apartment in Spijkenisse before moving in with her Dutch husband. The others, Elly, Karl, Margarida, Lara, and Julka came with their partners to Rotterdam. When Elly's Dutch boyfriend had to go back to Rotterdam, she joined him and moved in together when she was 23 years old. Karl also moved from Germany to the Netherlands when his Dutch girlfriend needed to go back to Rotterdam. This was after he was in Germany for three months. He could rent a room in her brother's house. After a year, they moved in together and got pregnant. Karl really liked the ambiance of the Netherlands and stayed in Rotterdam. This again relates to the emotional attachments that shift over time and space. As someone can change the narrative, they tell about themselves as by how connected they feel to a certain group (ibid). For Karl, this means that he slowly felt more and more Dutch and therefore stayed in the Netherlands. Margarida joined her husband in travelling to Rotterdam when she was 26 years old. They settled and got pregnant. After their son was born, she stayed. Lara was 30 years old when she moved to Rotterdam with her now ex-husband and son. When Paul was 11 years old Lara and her then husband got divorced and he moved back to Prague. Lara stayed behind with her son. At last, Julka and her Dutch husband travelled back and forward for two years until she finished her studies. She then moved to Rotterdam for him. These stories show the influence of people on the emotional attachments of others. As the emotional investments and desire for attachments with others influences belonging (ibid). All these migration processes illustrate unique experiences and are all subject to situational differences. Therefore, it is hard, if not impossible, to generalise these experiences for all first-generation older migrants from East and West European countries. But there is one commonality as all migrants' sense of belonging to the Netherlands started during or after their movements. Meaning that from here on, they start to build emotional attachments to persons in the Netherlands that is the basis for the formation of social relationships (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 127). Which makes these first feelings of belonging important for the rest of the research.

The integration policy

From here on, the focus changes from migrating to the Netherlands to the post-migration experiences of the migrants in Rotterdam. None of the migrants had to do an official integration

process since this was non-existing at the time they moved to Rotterdam. The Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers (WIN) went into effect in 1998 (Bakker et al. 2020: 3), a year after the last migrant, Lara, migrated to Rotterdam. Equal access to institutions is an important factor of integration for migrants (Ager & Strang 2008: 181). As there were none integration policies, this ensured that policies gave the migrants the same rights as Dutch natives when they got here. Therefore, the migrants have equal access and no obligations to integrate or trouble getting a residence permit or passport. But their nationality is not very important to the migrants. They view their passport as something practical. For example, the Dutch passport provides Jane a more easy access to other countries, especially since her husband and daughters have the Dutch nationality. It also provides a better standard of class in society, as Fradiferi from Hungary said it looks better than his Hungarian nationality. This shows the easiness for the migrants in migrating and integrating on this level as they have equal rights. But this easiness was not the case for most migrants in getting a sufficient Dutch language proficiency.

Language proficiency

Even though the migrants did not need to follow an official integration course, most of them took Dutch classes. They wanted to learn Dutch as fast as possible as it helped them to take part in social activities more and gives them opportunities for education and employment. As these are all first-generation migrants, it was for them even more important and harder to learn a new language as they had to start building their (social) life from the ground up (Pot et al 2020: 1142). As said, having a sufficient language proficiency helps the social interaction and engagement in social spaces (Hack-Polay 2012: 66) and economic integration and full participation (Ager & Strang 2008: 182). For example, Jane, Maria and Karl took Dutch lessons to keep their jobs. Julka took Dutch classes to help understand her studies better so that she could work at the pharmacy. While Fradiferi learned Dutch during his job at meeting and conference centre Engels. Elly and Lara also took Dutch classes to learn the language. Besides the Dutch lessons and work, the migrants also learned Dutch from their social networks and social activities they did. For example, Lara learned Dutch better when she volunteered at her son's school. She got in contact with other parents and had to talk Dutch with them. This helped her to improve her language proficiency. This also counts for the other migrants with children, Julka, Maria, Karl, Jane, and Margarida. They all learned Dutch while their children were learning it as well. A Dutch partner does not seem to have an influence on the language proficiency of the migrants as they all put in effort to learn Dutch as soon as possible. Which amazed me as they all had an incredible internal motivation to learn Dutch. Even though they all had difficulties learning the language. It does not matter from which country they are, all migrants had a hard time. Which is

in line with other studies about migrants' language proficiency. Many first-generation older migrants have an anxiety in speaking Dutch as they do not feel comfortable in their second language. This causes a decrease in engagement in social networks. Which affects the sense of belonging to the host country and therefore the investment in learning and speaking a second language (Pot et al. 2020: 1147). For example, Elly who speaks German, which is often seen as a language that has a lot of similarities with Dutch, found it difficult to speak Dutch. On time she wanted to buy some carrots and thought the right plural word for it was 'penissen'. So she asked if she could have some 'penissen'. The man behind the counter looked really confused as 'penissen' in Dutch means penises and the right word for carrots is 'penen'. Elly laughs while telling the story. At the time she was ashamed but now she knows what she did wrong. The same counts for Margarida who has a Spanish accent and pronounces words differently sometimes. People would start laughing at her because of it which she found horrible as she did not know what she did wrong. Julka also had trouble speaking Dutch. 'I had a period where I had an ambition to talk Dutch as well as possible, so no one would here I am from Poland. Nonsense, of course.' This relates to a common anxiety among first-generation migrants in speaking Dutch, as it is not their mother language (ibid). The rejections on linguistic grounds can feed insecurities like a shame and avoidance of speaking Dutch and decrease social interaction among older migrants. These negative emotions from experiences with social relationships cause a lower sense of wellbeing of these migrants. Which in turn can cause a lower sense of belonging to one place due to these negative emotions (ibid: 1142). For Jane, this was the case since her parents-in-law would talk to her through her husband and made Jane feel like they did not put any effort in talking directly to her or involve her in the conversations. This made her feel like an outsider and therefore she addresses the importance of learning Dutch. These examples are in line with other studies on the language proficiency of migrants and align with their results. A more sufficient language proficiency does indeed contribute to a higher sense of belonging to the host country (Amit & Bar-Lev 2014: 958). And a higher sense of belonging leads to more emotional attachments to others and the willingness to socialize with those others (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202). These experiences with the Dutch language illustrate that it is indeed a primary source of socialization, like other studies suggested, and therefore important in the social networks and social integration process of the migrants.

Social exclusion based on the migrants' language proficiency

Some migrants have experiences with feeling excluded by their non-family social network in the Netherlands because of their language proficiency. Unlike what was expected, differences between East and West European migrants did not occur here. Karl had such an experience when he worked in the harbour of Rotterdam. After finishing his Dutch test, he felt excluded by his migrant colleagues

for speaking Dutch better than them. They sent him away and would not be nice to him anymore because of it. Julka has a similar experience. She also felt excluded by her Dutch native colleagues because she could not speak Dutch sufficient. The same counts for Margarida. People would speak English to her instead of Dutch because they heard her accent. She felt excluded and was not comfortable speaking Dutch because of it. This language barrier is common among first-generation migrants as they learn a new language while coping with feelings of exclusion and shame in speaking Dutch. These feelings can affect the social integration of migrants negatively since they are the starting point of an avoidance in speaking Dutch (Pot et al. 2020: 1147). Which affects the sense of belonging negatively as the migrants have less social contacts whom they socialize with. That in turn affects the bonding and bridging with others (Mason 2004: 424). These examples of the migrants surprised me as I did not thought they would have so many experiences with feeling excluded by their non-family social network. In addition, most migrants have an accent and got the question where are you from asked multiple times. They all agree this question is unnecessary as for them it is unimportant where you are from. As Julka said, 'What does it matter where I am from? I speak Dutch sufficiently, so do not whine like that.' Maria also experiences this as sometimes people would say 'oh there is the Moldovan again' when she walked somewhere. She laughed while telling this and did not experience it as being excluded. This made me aware that I also ask that question sometimes and what effects it has on the person on the other side. These experiences illustrate what the influences of the language proficiency are on the migrants' social networks and vice versa. It shows that the language proficiency does influence the acceptance of migrants in certain social networks. Therefore, having a sufficiency language proficiency can influence the opportunities to socialize and build a social network. Which align with results other researches on this topic. As said, a sufficient language proficiency helps migrants to become part of a society, like following education and getting employment. Therefore, these two topics are discussed next.

Education

As briefly discussed earlier, education is an important factor for migrants to become more active members of a society. Having an education therefore helps the social integration of migrants like increasing the language proficiency, independence and bridging with the host society (Ager & Strang 2008: 172). All migrants followed some form of education. Fradiferi, Maria, and Jane finished high school but did not go to college. Instead they started working right after high school. In Macedonia, it is common that the father is the head of the house. Therefore, Maria's father made the decision that her brothers could go to college but his daughters could not. This was hard for Maria as she really wanted to go to college to get a good job, but with this decision that was of the table. Instead, the

daughters stayed at home to take care of their parents. The other migrants, Elly, Karl, Margarida, Lara, and Julka did go to college. When Elly was 18 years old, she went to college to study literature. After two years she dropped out because of the dead of her boyfriend and the accompanying emotions. Karl also started college at the age of 18. He started an art studies in Stockholm, which he finished three years later. The same counts for Lara, she started a law studies in Prague when she was 18 years old and finished it. Margarida went to study educational science in Madrid. After finishing her bachelors, she continued to study for her master, again in educational sciences. When she finished that study, she started her PHD in it. After migrating she stopped her PHD in Madrid. In the Netherlands, she got into college again to give it another try. But since she already had a son of 3 years old, she could not give all her attention and time to her studies. It was extra hard for her since she had to learn Dutch at the same time. Therefore, she did not finish it. Julka also finished her studies as a pharmacy assistant in Gdansk, but her diploma was insufficient in the Netherlands. Which caused feelings of inequality within Julka in relation to Dutch natives. This is a major barrier for migrants in finding employment, as employers rarely recognize their qualifications. Programmes that allow migrants to find a place in the host society by converting their skills and qualifications help migrants' successful resettlement (Ager & Strang 2008: 171). Julka started her studies all over again as she wanted to work in a pharmacy. She failed her first exam because of insufficient Dutch language proficiency. The study was easy for her as she did it already finish in Poland, but the Dutch language was something she really struggled with. In the end, Julka finished her studies with the help of her boss. This example shows the influence of the language proficiency on the ability of the migrants to take part in a society (Hack-Polay 2012: 66). It also illustrates the influence of the social network on the education and vice versa. As through support during the education the bridging social capital of the migrants expands and bonds grow closer (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 126). Leading to the beginning of the social integration of the migrants during their education. There are similar influences of employment on the social network, which are discussed next.

Employment in Rotterdam

As said, employment also has an influence on the parts of social integration of first-generation migrants that are also influenced by education. Because these are all first-generation migrants, employment plays an even bigger role as it is one of the starting points for these migrants to build their social networks in the host country (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). It helps them to develop feelings of belonging because of building social relationships with colleagues. In turn, these feelings help the migrants to form their place in their social networks, including the one at work (Kearns & Whitley 2015: 2118). All the migrants have a different trajectory in their careers. There are no significant differences between the migrants from East and West Europe here. Julka started working at a

pharmacy in Hillegersberg-Schiebroek while finishing her pharmacy studies again in the Netherlands. After her studies she continues to work at the pharmacy until she got pregnant of her daughter. During the first years of Julka's daughter's life, she took care of her and received a social benefit where they lived from. When Julka's daughter went to primary school, she started working at the pharmacy again. She retired last year and is now enjoying her spare time. Lara also finished her studies in her origin country and worked there at a law firm for 10 years. She could not continue to work at a law firm in Rotterdam since the laws of the Czech Republic and the Netherlands differ too much. Even though the government found her diploma to be sufficient to keep it. Therefore, Lara worked in finances, at the same company as her now ex-husband worked at. After her divorce, she needed to change jobs to keep work and her private life separate. A friend of hers suggests she applied for a job at the vocational school for wood, interior, and design in Rotterdam. She did, and she got the job. Here, she works in the study centre and lab, which she still does until today. This shows the influence of her social network on her employment. Work is for Lara an important factor in feeling less like an outsider, as she then has the feeling she is taking part in society. As said, employment can have this kind of influence on the integration of migrants (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). After migrating, Margarida got a job in the special education again and worked with children with an IQ below 80. Her diplomas were sufficient, which made it easy for her to get a job. She did this until 2001, when she wanted a change. Margarida started taking Zumba workshops to learn how to be a sport teacher herself. From there on, she started giving multiple sport lessons like Zumba and fitness training at community centres in Rotterdam. Which she does is until today. For these migrants, education played a role in accessing employment, which is also seen as a part of the integration process of migrants (ibid). In some cases, the social networks did too as they influenced decisions in the career paths of the migrants.

As mentioned, others immediately started working with no studies. Being in employment increases the social integration of migrants as it offers them opportunities to get to know people and socialize. These migrants are more likely to meet up with relatives and friends and develop feelings of belonging to the host society. Which helps to build social networks there (Kearns & Whitley 2015: 2118). Like Fradiferi, who got a job at meeting and conference centre Engels before even migrating to Rotterdam. Here, Fradiferi worked as a caterer at events, conferences, and parties in their meeting rooms for eleven and a half years. He became close friends with some of his colleagues, which helped him to feel at home in Rotterdam. After his boss and a befriended colleague passed away, he could not continue to work there. He stopped working for half a year before getting a job at a friend's restaurant. He worked as a server for a couple of months. Here, he met Martijn, the owner of a pancake restaurant in Rotterdam, and became friends. He asked Fradiferi to work for him on

Sunday and with holidays and special events. Fradiferi said yes, and he has been working there for the past 18 years as a server and in the kitchen. This shows the importance of employment in bridging with Dutch natives and vice versa (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). Jane had a similar experience with switching between jobs. She first started at the Canadian Nova Scotia bank in Rotterdam at the human resources department. Here, she worked for a year until her first daughter was born in 1980. She stopped working until her daughters were 8 and 10 years old. Then, Jane started working at the municipality of Rotterdam, again in the human resources department. Here, she worked until she retired last year. Now, she enjoys her free time by doing social activities with family and friends. Maria also already had a job before migrating to the Netherlands. After five years, she got a job as a hostess and receptionist at the Erasmus university in Rotterdam. Here, she worked all her life and really enjoyed it. She often would drink coffee with students and help them with all kinds of questions. At 61 the university fired her because of reorganization. From there on, she receives a social benefit which she lives from. As she did not want to sit at home all day, she now does volunteer work at community centre Zevenkamp. Karl also switched between some jobs. As said, he first started working in the harbour of Rotterdam. Which he did for a couple of years before pursuing a career as an artist. He also started giving art lessons through SKVR at multiple community centres in Rotterdam. Some years later, Karl also started a business in selling violins from Sweden in the Netherlands, which made him travel between and within the countries a lot. He is still invested in these careers until today. Elly found a job at the library in Rotterdam. She worked there all her life until five years ago. Then Elly got some mental and physical issues and had to stop working. Until today, she receives a social benefit and does volunteer work to stay busy. All these experiences show the influence of employment on the social networks and social integration of migrants and vice versa. The influence from the social network on the employment did not seem to play such a big role as was expected. In some cases it did through encouragement or discouragement in continuing certain jobs and finding new ones. Leading to specific career paths. For all migrants applies that employment does indeed have a big influence on their opportunities to socialize with others. As through all these jobs the migrants made social contacts and expanded their non-family social networks. Meaning that employment is also a starting point for the migrants' social integration process. Which makes these outcomes in line with other researches.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed the migration trajectories of the migrants to see how these influence the migrants' social networks and vice versa. Which then leads to influences on the social integration process of the migrants. Each migration trajectory of the migrants exists of situational experiences relating to differences in time and space. This means that there are also different influences of the

migration trajectory on the migrants' social lives and the other way around. First, the motives and movements of the migrants in their migration process lie at the basis of the social integration process of the migrants. These two are greatly influenced by the social network of the migrants, as neither of them would not have moved to the Netherlands without the support of their network. Whether this was from employers, friends, or partners. Which is also common among first-generation migrants, as their social capital often influences these decisions (Amit & Riss 2007: 292). Second, the family and non-family social networks influence the language proficiency of the migrants by either encouraging or discouraging the migrants to speak the Dutch language. Especially social exclusion by the non-family social network plays a big role in discouraging the migrants from speaking Dutch and engaging in social activities. This is in line with other research about the influences of social networks on the language proficiency of migrants (Pot et al. 2020). This leads to creating bonds and bridges with people that speak the same language or accept the migrants' language proficiency. Meaning that the language proficiency also influences the social networks. Third, the social networks also influence education and employment and vice versa. As it relates to bridging with the host society and improving the language proficiency (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). This was also the case for the eight migrants. Again, they all experienced encouragement or discouragement by the social networks in building a career for themselves. Leading to the development of certain career paths and others to stop depending on how social networks treat the migrants. These also influence the social networks as in some career paths migrants form relationships with colleagues while others stay more superficial. These examples show how the migration trajectory of the migrants influences their social networks and social integration process. Each of the different situations within the different parts (i.e. paragraphs) of the migration trajectory therefore has a different influence on the migrants' experiences with socially integrating into society. The next chapter focuses on one of the social networks, namely the family social network in the Netherlands and origin countries to see how this influences the social integration process of the migrants.

Family social network

I divide the social networks of the migrants into their family and non-family networks. Because of the differences in structures, positionality, and influences on the sense of belonging and social integration process of the migrants. This second chapter looks into the family network of the migrants to see how these influence the social integration experiences of the migrants. First, I discuss the pre-migration family life in the origin countries. Next, I analyse the family structures, including the family in the origin and host countries. The frequency and depth of those social relationships are part of these discussed structures. This also includes the question of circulation between both family social networks. From there on, the focus lies on the domestic relationships and living situation. Next, I discuss the social activities, and traditions and habits to see how these play a role in the family social networks of the migrants. To give a better idea of the positionality of the migrants, I analyse the reciprocity within the family social network. The influences on sense of belonging of the migrants come back in all analyses to see how the family networks affect it and vice versa.

Pre-migration family life

There is a great variety in the meaning of the concept family. Some view it as the household they live in, others include step-family and the family-in-law (Trost 1990: 432). This research views family as the descendants of one ancestor including the (ex-)in-laws with their descendants. As already mentioned, it is important to know the background of one person to understand their place in the world (Gupta & Ferguson 1992: 18). Therefore, I describe the pre-migration family life of the migrants in their origin countries. The first 19 years of his life Fradiferi lived in Budapest, Hungary. He lived with his parents and older brother in the neighbourhood Rozendom, which is on the side of Buda. The neighbourhood is quite prestigious and many rich people of Budapest live there. Fradiferi's parents worked in the catering industry so Fradiferi does not know how they ended up there, but it was nice living there. He had a good childhood and got everything his heart desired. For example, he got his driver's license when he was 17 years old and got a car immediately after that. His father travelled a lot and Fradiferi and his brother went with him on many of his journeys. Whereas Maria grew up in Strumica, Macedonia with three brothers and two sisters. She is the fourth of six children. Her father worked, but her mother stayed at home. Strumica is a city in the East-Southern part of Macedonia near Greece. Growing up, Maria often went on holidays to Greece with her family. Which she always enjoyed. Lara's background is again unique, as she is the only child of a divorced couple from Prague, the Czech Republic. Both of her parents remarried when she was young. She used to live one week at her mother's place and one week at her father's. With both parents Lara grew really close during her childhood but especially her mother is very close to her. Lara's contact with her

stepparents is also good since they are in her life as long as she remembers. For Julka, this experience is a bit the same but also unique because of situational differences. In the first 26 years of her life, Julka lived in Gdánsk, Poland. She has an older and a younger brother whom she was not very close with. Both of her parents worked, but her father has a history in alcohol abuse. Therefore, Julka was away from home often to avoid seeing her father drunk. He would hurt no one physically but would say mean things to anyone around. This made that Julka spend a lot of time with friends and her niece, whom she still is in contact with. Together with her family, she used to go to a nature reserve close by Gdánsk. This is where she would spend many of her summers and she has wonderful memories of. Continuing to illustrate the difference in backgrounds is Elly's life in Bonn, Germany. During her childhood, Elly lived there with her parents and younger brother. Her parents both worked, and they had it good at home. From an early age, Elly has been close with her brother. They used to play together a lot and had the same group of friends. During college, Elly met her late boyfriend. Whom she grew really close with. They were together for 2 years before he got a car accident which he did not survive. Elly was heartbroken and got depressed. His mother urged her to attend his funeral, but she could not because of it. She was 20 years old. For another background I turn to Karl. Until he was 21 years old, Karl lived with his parents and older brother in Stockholm, Sweden. Karl never really felt at home there and often wandered through the streets of Stockholm. He was not very close to his brother, but family was important to his parents. Therefore, he often went to family visits during the weekend. Another of these backgrounds is from Margarida. She grew up in Las Delicias, Madrid, Spain with one younger brother. Her mother passed away when she was three years old. Her father got remarried to her stepmother a year later, whom she calls her mother. They got a son, her half-brother, but Margarida sees him as her full brother. Family is really important to them. Each Sunday they would go to her grandmother's to eat together with the whole family. Her grandmother is from Italy and would make pasta each Saturday. Each Sunday she hosted a meal all day long. The children would eat and play and the grown-ups would eat, drink wine, and chat. According to Margarida, this was always a lot of fun. Her grandmother also used to babysit all ten grandchildren when their parents went to work. She was very easy with them, as they could do what they wanted. Her grandfather was from Portugal and had a bakery. As a young girl, Margarida spent many hours there helping him bake sweets. At last, there is Jane. She lived in Glasgow, Scotland with her parents and two older sisters. Jane had a great childhood and was close with her family. Both of her parents worked. All of them went to Edinburgh every August for the Edinburgh festival. She also had an aunt living in Edinburgh, so her sisters and she often went there for the weekends. As she lived in Glasgow, she also lived close by Loch Lomond. From there on, you can get to the islands of Scotland easily. Jane often made this trip with her parents and sisters during her childhood. All these stories show the position of the migrants in their family networks in the origin

countries before migrating. What the influences of the pre-migration family life exactly are on the rest of the lives of the migrants is hard to say as these experiences are all subjective and situational. But they do form the basis for the further development of the family structures in the origin countries. Therefore, these are analysed next.

Family structures in the origin countries

All migrants are still part of transnational kinship groups with family in the origin countries. To display these family structures, I made maps of the transnational social networks of the migrants. See appendix A. As most migrants also started talking about their family themselves, this seemed an important part of their lives. This is also often the case for first-generation ageing migrants, as their family transnational networks have a positive effect on the migrants' well-being (Cela & Barbiano di Belgiojoso 2021: 3690). All migrants have contact with their family in the origin countries often. These are always close family members like parents, sisters, brothers, nephews and/or nieces. Contact with other family members has faded over time in all migrants' lives. This is common among migrants as emotional attachments and investments change over time and space (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202). In addition, transnational belonging helps migrants to feel attached to people of migrants' own group (Klok et al. 2017: 343). Meaning that these connections also helped to maintain the bonds with family members in the origin countries. For example, Jane has two sisters with their husbands and nephews with their families living in Glasgow whom she has contact with and sees regularly. She is especially close with her sisters as they lookalike a lot. See the first map in appendix A for a visualisation of her social network. Margarida has a family in Spain as her (step)mother and (half)brother still live there. She is very close with her brother as they call daily to keep each other up-to-date about their lives. See the second map in appendix A for a display of Margarida's social network. Karl has an older brother who lives with his wife in Stockholm. He sees them once a year approximately, as he is not very close with them. The third map summarizes his social network. Maria also has a brother who lives with his wife in Strumica, Moldova. She visits him once a year when she is on holiday there but is not really close with them. The fourth map shows the family structure of Maria. This is also in line with other studies that show that Eastern European migrants have fewer ties abroad (Fietz & Kaschowitz 2019: 18). For Julka from Poland, this does not add up. She has a brother, family-in-law, nephews, and nieces with their families in Gdánsk. When she goes to Poland, she visits her brother and often her nephews and nieces as well. Julka is especially close with one of her nieces as they go to comedy shows and other social gatherings together when she is there. To see a display of Julka's social network, see map 5 in appendix A. Map six shows Lara's social network in Rotterdam and Prague. She had her son in Rotterdam, but he moved back to Prague where his father lives. Therefore, Lara's family is in Prague, where her parents with their partners

also live. She is very close with her son and parents and calls daily with her mother and weekly with her son and father. Fradiferi also only has family in his origin country. He has a brother and niece in Budapest, Hungary, whom he sees when he visits Budapest. See the seventh map in appendix A for his social network overview. For Elly, this is the same, she has a brother and nephew in Bonn, Germany, but also has no family in the Netherlands. She is close with her brother and nephew as they call every week and she usually visits them twice a year. The eight map shows the social network of Elly in both countries. Family is extremely important to migrants as it is a way to maintain contact with the origin country and maintain their cultural practices and familiar patterns of relationships. Bonding with family members also provides a safe haven for the migrants while integrating in their host society. These connections help them to feel settled (Ager & Strang 2008: 178). All these stories of the family in the origin countries show this importance. Which is in line with results from other studies on the importance of family. From these transnational kinship groups, the question of circulation of appears. Therefore, I deal with this next.

Question of circulation

First-generation older migrants often live in transnational mobilities, travelling between their host and origin country. Because of a duality between Rotterdam and their origin countries, the migrants all circulate between those places. As these migrants are ageing, their abilities to travel become less. Therefore, the main issue for these migrants becomes the question of circulation (i.e. the extent first-generation older migrants can keep contact with both societies and be mobile) (Bolzman et al. 2006: 7). The reason for circulating is the same for all migrants, they visit family and sometimes friends in their origin country. For example, Jane goes back at least two times a year and her family also visits her in Rotterdam. Margarida also visits family and friends in Spain at least once a year but also has family in Italy and Portugal whom she visits from time to time. All other migrants also visit their place of origin at least once a year and some multiple times a year. Lara, whose son lives in Prague, travels back and forward the most. It does not seem to matter from which part of Europe the migrants are, they all go back from time to time. Covid-19 made it harder for the migrants to go back. For example, for Elly, going back was also not possible because of covid-19. Her brother has a psychical illness, and she did not want to make him sick. Therefore, she stayed away, which caused her to feel more and more homesick. She went during Easter of this year to see her brother and nephew. All migrants expressed their dissatisfaction with not being able to travel because of Covid-19 and their willingness to travel to their origin country as soon as possible. This also relates to the importance of the family in the origin countries, as those are to whom they mostly travel. In addition, visiting family in the origin country relates to an act of kinship existing of understanding social interactions and obligations

and the norms van values involved in one's family. It also includes knowing your family members by maintaining the bonds. This can happen by doing things together and being there at key moments. Visiting these family members helps to maintain an active kinship network and confirms a sense of belonging to the origin country. These visits influence feelings of belonging of the migrants to their origin countries as they ensure that the migrants' lives remain attached to those countries (Mason 2004: 424). Meaning that belonging influences the question of circulation as well. This is also how the migrants approach their visits and contacts with their family in the origin countries. The question of circulation therefore seems really important to the migrants, even more than other studies suggest. As discussed earlier, the question of circulation relates to feelings of homesickness as well. When the migrants just moved to Rotterdam, most of them experienced some kind of homesickness in different degrees. Julka talks about her first year here and got really homesick to Poland. She had a really hard time and was becoming ill without knowing what was going on. At one point, she could not eat or move anymore. Her general practitioner diagnosed her with homesickness and sent her back to Gdánsk. She went for two weeks and after those weeks her symptoms faded away. The other migrants share these feelings and some still experience feelings of homesickness. This relates to what homesickness can do among migrants, it affects the psychological and social well-being (Hack-Polay 2012: 68). Females also seem the have a higher change at homesickness because they were closer to their family and friends in the origin country to begin with (Ten Kate et al. 2020: 295). This also comes back in this research. The female migrants all experienced some sort of homesickness, while Fradiferi and Karl did not during their entire course of migration. In the end, these experiences demonstrate to what the extent the migrants are able to keep contact with both societies and be mobile.

Family structures in the Netherlands

Besides, the family structures in the origin countries, some migrants also have family in the Netherlands. It differs per migrant whether they are part of such a family social network. If they do, the social network always contains a partner and/or (grand)children. Sometimes, the family social network also exists of family-in-law. The frequency and depth of those social contacts is big, especially with the children. They visit each other often or talk through WhatsApp or on the phone. Over time, the influence of the family social network on the lives of the migrants grew as their family expanded. Jane has her Dutch husband, two daughters, sons-in-law, and two granddaughters living in Rotterdam whom she is close with. See the first map in appendix A. Jane sees her daughters and granddaughters at least weekly and talks on the phone with them multiple times a week. Margarida sees her son also every week as he comes to visit her and her Dutch husband often. She is also very close with her husband as they share a friend's group and do social activities together. See the

second map in appendix A. Karl also has family in Rotterdam, his son, daughter and grandson. See the third map for an overview of Karl's social network. He sees his children almost every week and chats with them on the phone weekly. This is the same for Maria, as she is very close with her sons, daughter, family-in-law, ten grandchildren, and great-grandson in Rotterdam. For an overview of her family structure, see the fourth map in appendix A. Maria sees her family in Rotterdam every week and calls with her daughter daily. Julka does the same with her daughter, as they speak with each other daily on the phone. She is also close with her son-in-law, and two grandchildren in Breda. To see a display of Julka's social network, see map five in appendix A. Jane, Karl, Margarida, Maria, and Julka all have their children close by and see them at least every week. This makes them feel like they belong in Rotterdam. For the women with children, their social satisfaction and sense of belonging depend more on where their children and grandchildren live. They state they are most satisfied when they are close by their children. This also comes back in other research, as family often influences the level of satisfaction with the social network of first-generation migrants (Ten Kate et al. 2020: 297). In addition, migrant parents see their children often several times a week, which also makes their bond stronger and therefore their satisfaction higher (Bolzman et al. 2004: 420). This is in line with the bond the migrants have with their children. As said, Lara has no family left in the Netherlands. She has a boyfriend here whom she lives with. They are very close as she considers his family and they share every detail about their lives with each other. Map six shows Lara's social network in Rotterdam and Prague. In addition, Fradiferi and Elly also have no family in the Netherlands. Therefore, their sense of belonging to Rotterdam is more influenced by their non-family social networks (Ten Kate et al. 2020: 297). But for the migrants that have family in the Netherlands these are as important as their family in the origin countries. When it includes children, these are often even more important. Which aligns with results from other studies. In addition, these experiences with family structures in the Netherlands illustrate how they influence the social lives of the migrants.

Domestic Relations

As said, within transnational kinship groups, there are different influences of transnational marriages on these groups (Beck-Gernsheim 2007: 283). This is also the case of the migrants of this research. They note a difference in being married to a native Dutch or a co-ethnic partner. A native Dutch partner fosters the social integration process of first-generation migrants more. They already have a social network in the Netherlands, which the migrants also become a part of. Meaning that the adoption of new patterns of behaviour and socialization goes more easily since they can rely on their Dutch native partner to help them adjust. It also helps the migrants to get accepted sooner in their new society. For example, Julka says 'If two Polish people are together, it is different. Maybe I have a

slightly easier start because he had work, friends, and family here right away.' This becomes more common as European migrants in Europe marry natives more (ibid). For co-ethnic partners, this is not the case, as they both have to build a social network from the bottom up. Which is what happened in Maria's life. Her Moldavian now ex-husband did not want to learn the Dutch language. This made it also harder for her to learn the language as she continued to speak Moldavian at home. Here, you see the difference in wanting to keep old traditions in place while also wanting to adapt (ibid). This made it more difficult for Maria to socialize with Dutch natives as she could not speak to language properly. This then influenced her sense of feeling at home, as she did not have a big social network in Rotterdam. As mentioned, having children also helped the migrants to get more socially integrated. Maria states, 'But you integrate well because your children go to school. They are going to learn and then you learn too.' This second generation most often becomes part of the native society from an early age while also becoming friends with co-ethnics. The native society helps them to get the advantages other natives also have while contacts with co-ethnics makes sure the children of migrants stay connected to their origin culture (Portes & Zhou 1993: 96). Especially this first part has an influence on the social integration of migrant parents, as they integrate with their children. For Fradiferi and Elly, who do not have children, this relies more on their non-family social network. All this shows how the domestic relations influence the migrants' social integration process. One of these biggest influences is having a Dutch partner or not as a Dutch partner has a more positive influence in increasing the socialization of migrants with others. This did not come back in other researches but comes back several times in my research.

Living situation

Part of the domestic relations is the living situation of the migrants. Older migrants, especially older labor migrants, often live in cities (Steinbach 2018: 294). This is also the case for the eight migrants, they all live in Rotterdam. Living in a city helps migrants to adapt sooner as they have more opportunities to socialize and connect with institutions (ibid: 295). It also influences the sense of belonging positively as it offers more options to socialize with and attach to others (Chen et al. 2020: 6). The fact they migrated from one city to another made migrating easier for all migrants. For example, Elly was happy to be in a city again instead of a small village, as she was used of living in a city. As said, their living space becomes increasingly important to them as they grow older (ibid). In addition, place-making (i.e., making yourself a home) determines the sense of belonging and sense of feeling at home of migrants (Raffaetà & Duff 2013: 342). This is also the case for the migrants of this research, as place-making seems to be important to them. Their living situation differs as they all live in different neighbourhoods throughout Rotterdam. Margarida lives with her husband in an apartment in Stadsdriehoek and Jane with her husband in a single-family home in Oude Westen,

both in the centre of Rotterdam. Here, most of the houses are rental properties and they are the most expensive in all of Rotterdam. Approximately as much migrants as natives live there and the average income is higher than in other neighbourhoods (Gemeente Rotterdam 2022). This shows that the living situation of Margarida and Jane is quite good in relation to other neighbourhoods in Rotterdam, which they also experience themselves. Fradiferi lives alone in an apartment in Provenierswijk in Rotterdam Noord. In this part of Rotterdam also live as much migrants as natives. The average income is low till average and there are more rental, especially social housing, than owner-occupied properties (ibid). The lower incomes and social housing make Noord seem lower on the social standard in relation to the city centre. In contradiction, Fradiferi says he enjoys living where he lives as it feels like home. This shows that his living situations influence his subjective well-being positively (Raffaetà & Duff 2013: 342). For Karl, this does not count. He lives alone in a single-family home in Terbregge but does not feel at home there as he does not like the neighbourhood. As said, first-generation older migrants often deal with local hostility and prejudice, poor community relations, and social exclusion and isolation by neighbours (Kearns & Whitley 2015: 2123). Which is the case for Karl as he does not have any contact with neighbours and is on his own mainly. Terbregge is part of Hillegersberg-Schiebroek, the same area where Lara lives. She lives with her boyfriend in an apartment in Schiebroek. Hillegersberg-Schiebroek is famous for its big expensive owner-occupied houses where a lot of Dutch natives live. The average income is the highest of all neighbourhoods of Rotterdam. This also makes the social cohesion and security very big (Gemeente Rotterdam 2022). From this point of view, Karl and Lara seem to live in a great neighbourhood which stands high on the social ladder in society. But again, the subjective well-being and sense of feeling at home seem to be more important to the migrants then the social standards their neighbourhood is categorized in (Raffaetà & Duff 2013: 342). At last, Julka lives alone in a single-family home in Ommoord, Maria lives alone in an apartment in Zevenkamp, and Elly also lives alone in an apartment in Oosterflank. Which are all located in Prins Alexander, the eastern part of Rotterdam. Here, the majority of the residents are Dutch natives with low to average incomes. The houses are often social housing or owner-occupied homes with an average price in relation to other neighbourhoods in Rotterdam. The facilities are less which influences the living quality of the residents. But on the other hand, are the security and social cohesion bigger than in other parts of the city (Gemeente Rotterdam 2022). Julka, Maria, and Elly are all happy in their homes and the places they live. Julka and Maria are close to their neighbours and ask them for help if they need anything. This correlates with how this area of Rotterdam is. From the conversations and observations, where the migrants live does not seem to have a big influence on their social integration process as most of them moved around in Rotterdam. But contact with their neighbours does have an influence on their social integration process. As Maria and Margarida are very close with their neighbours, they see them as

friends instead of neighbours. These contacts help them to feel more at home as they have someone living close to them whom they can socialize with and ask for help. The connections with neighbours influences the social integration of migrants as it gives them access to learning the customs of the host society (Ager & Strang 2008: 171). By showing these experiences with the living situation, the influence on the social integration of the migrants becomes clear. Place-making does indeed influences the sense of belonging of migrants, more so than I thought beforehand. This makes these experiences in line with outcomes of other researches.

Social activities

The migrants do social activities that increase their bonds with both family social networks. As argued already, engagement in social activities with the family social network helps to maintain the cognition of older migrants (Zunzunegui et al. 2003: 96). In addition, social anchoring in social spaces (i.e. finding social activities that fit the migrants) helps migrants to find footing in the host society. It helps them to socially integrate as they look for social activities that fit their identity (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016: 1134). Which affects their sense of belonging to the host society positively as they build emotional attachments to others through the social activities. This offers opportunities to socialize and build social relationships with others (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202). For example, Jane goes on holidays with her husband, goes shopping with her daughters, babysits her granddaughters, and has dinner together. Her husband and she also have the same friend group and therefore, they also go to the café together often. When she is in Glasgow, she likes to join her sisters' hiking group, have a drink together, or go shopping together with her sisters. Maria also does a lot of social activities with her family in Rotterdam. She has her children and/or grandchildren over for dinner, or goes for dinner to them. They visit each other often, and she talks to her daughter daily on the phone. Julka does the same with her daughter, with whom she is very close. She visits her every week, and they go shopping together often. She also sees her son-in-law and grandchildren every weekend. They travel together, spend holidays and birthdays together by doing social activities like going to the beach or have dinner. When she is in Gdánsk, she visits all her family and joins them for holidays and birthdays. For example, when she last visited she went to the baptism of one of her nieces. Margarida loves to cook and make or have dinner with family in Rotterdam and Madrid. She also visits mutual friends with her husband at least once a month. Karl visits his children from time to time, but more often they come to visit him. His son stays for dinner every week and then they often cook together. The amount of these activities depends on the amount of family members in the Netherlands and the origin countries. Social activities with people from the origin country help migrants to keep feeling like they belong to that society as they continue to take part in it (Mason 2004: 424). For example, Elly has no family in Rotterdam and therefore has less social activities she

can do there. Therefore, she seeks more contact with her brother in Bonn. Elly calls her brother in Bonn weekly and has a chat with him and her nephew. When she visits them, they make dinner together and go for a walk often. She also babysits her nephew when she is there. Fradiferi also talks to his brother and niece in Budapest sometimes. He visits them at least twice a year and every few years his niece visits him. Then, he shows her the highlights of Rotterdam and they always go to the Efteling together. At last, Lara calls a lot with her son and parents in Prague. They visit each other multiple times a year and then go for dinner often. These experiences shows the influence of social activities on the social integration process of the migrants. The social activities are part of the bonding and bridging with co-ethnics and Dutch natives. They lie at the basis of the socialization and formation of social relationships of the migrants (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016: 1134). It helps the migrants to form their place in the social spaces they go to. Even more so than I imagined beforehand. That is how these activities influence the social integration process. Besides these social activities, the migrants also have traditions and habits that are transformed in (social) activities. Therefore, these are discussed next.

Traditions and habits

Besides social activities, the migrants all have maintained traditions and habits from the origin countries and embraced traditions and habits from the Netherlands. Migrants keeping their own cultural traditions and sharing this with others contributes to an integrated community. It soothes the experiences of migrants in a new country as they stay connected with their roots (Ager & Strang 2008: 183). This aligns with the results from my research, as all migrants have kept traditions and habits to stay connected to their origin country. For example, Jane makes specific Scottish dishes from time to time and she celebrates Christmas the traditional Scottish way, which entails having dinner on Christmas eve with her family. She also used to go to Scotland with her husband and children at Christmas time to celebrate it with her family there. Lara also celebrates Christmas with Czech traditions and has kept certain traditions and habits from the Czech Republic. For example, she always takes off her shoes when entering a house, as this is common in the Czech Republic. She also notices a difference between people from the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. People from the Czech Republic often stand up for elderly, ill people, and pregnant women on public transport sooner than people from the Netherlands. This is a habit she also maintained as she thinks it is polite to do so. As for the second generation, they seem to embrace the roots and culture of their parents. The bonds the migrants have to their origin country and whether they put in effort to teach their children values from the origin country influences this (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007: 138). Julka says about her daughter ‘She loves it. She thinks it really belongs to her, and she has absolutely no problem with it. It is more her pride and what makes her different’. For the third generation, this is different, as they

have lesser transnational connections because of changes over their life course (ibid: 137). Julka also mentioned this when she talks about circulating between both countries. Her grandchildren do not see the need to do so, as they feel like they do not have any connections there. Besides traditions and habits, all migrants with children also learned their children their language of origin. For example, Margarida speaks Spanish often with her husband and son. During one of the participant observations, Margarida says that she learned her son, Carlo, Spanish so that he can talk to his family in Spain. Margarida has a Spanish friend in Rotterdam, Oscar, who comes by sometimes. He then wants to talk Dutch to Carlo, but Margarida always urges him to talk Spanish so that Carlo can practice. Jane does the same. She always speaks English with her daughters and granddaughters. But her husband speaks Dutch with his daughters and granddaughters. This shows the duality within the family social network. This shows how keeping one's traditions contributes to an integrated community. The migrants also adapted to some Dutch habits. As cultural knowledge helps remove barriers to social interaction, economic integration, and full participation. Getting to know the host country's procedures, customs, and facilities helps this process (Ager & Strang 2008: 182). For example, Lara greets everyone with three kisses, something she did not do before migrating. In addition, in the Czech Republic it is more common to say 'u' to strangers while in the Netherlands people say 'jij' sooner. Lara needed to get used to this habit but did eventually. Karl had the same experience since in Sweden the same norm is common as in the Czech Republic. Other migrants also had difficulties in adapting to other norms and values in the Netherlands. For example, Elly found the Dutch mentality distant, whereas she was used to the cosiness of the people from Bonn. She found it hard to deal with this and it took some time getting used to this given. But in the end it helped her to understand the Dutch natives better. This shows that getting to know the host country's traditions and habits does indeed help to socialize with Dutch natives. These experiences with traditions and habits illustrate how these influence the social networks and social integration process of the migrants. Something that did not come forward often in other researches as an influence on the migrants' social lives.

Reciprocity to family social network

Besides social activities, traditions, and habits, all migrants also deal with obligations to and care for a family in the origin countries (Zontini 2004: 1139). The support migrants give to their family network in the origin country feeds their feelings of belonging to the country as they keep emotional attachments intact (Mason 2004: 421). This correlates with the lives of the migrants. The women felt certain responsibilities and obligations to family members in the origin countries. Women more often take care of their family members and return home, while men use their authority to lend their female family members do the job (Coe 2016: 44). For example, Julka used to send packages with

food and supplies to her mother when she was getting older. She felt like she could not help as much as she wanted to because her mother was in Gdánsk. This filled her up with guilt towards her brother, as he was the one to take care of their mother. This relates to the tensions of reciprocity and feelings of guilt talked about earlier. Especially for women, a motivation for reciprocity towards their family social network is the expectations of the network itself. As not living up to these expectations can lead to disapproval and increased feelings of guilt (Coe 2016: 44). The sense of needing to take care for family in the origin country stayed the same during the time the female migrants are in the Netherlands. The women also feel a greater responsibility to take care of their children and be there for them. For example, Jane helps to pick up her granddaughters from school and babysits them often. Julka used to do the same when her grandchildren were younger. Parents often give this form of support to their children (Bolzman et al. 2004: 420). It is a way for the migrant women to have an increased sense of purpose in life and affects their well-being positively (Cela & Barbiano di Belgiojoso 2021: 3690). For Karl and Fradiferi, this feeling of needing to take care is less present. This surprised me as they both seemed to be caring persons, Karl to his children and Fradiferi to his non-family social network. They took care of their parents when they were on their deathbeds and after they passed away. But when their parents were still alive, they did not feel any obligations to take care of them. This correlates with other studies since women's involvement in care for family is often bigger than men's (Zontini 2004: 1115). These experiences with reciprocity to the family social network show how these affect the migrants' positionality within these networks. The effects are not as intense as the literature made it seem in the social lives of these migrants. Therefore, the reciprocity to the family social network only comes back in certain extents but not in cases of great tensions.

Reciprocity of family social network

First-generation older migrants often get social support from their families, especially their children (Bolzman et al. 2004: 420). As emotional attachments to persons shift over time and within situations (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202), getting support from certain family members can also change. For example, when the migrants just got to Rotterdam, they received support from their family in the origin country. In the beginning, Julka was homesick to Poland and her family supported her whenever she wanted to come back. Over time, this shifted to getting support from family in the Netherlands as they got partners and children and grew closer with their family-in-law. This shows the ageing influence on the position of the migrants in their family social network and the reciprocity of the family social network. This supports influence the social integration of migrants positively as it forms their bridging social capital. Which in sequence positively influences the migrants' sense of belonging to the host society since they expand their bridging social network (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019:

126). For example, Julka still sometimes feels homesick to Poland. She was always welcome to stay the weekends at her daughters' and son-in-law's place. As the weekend was the worst because then she had nothing to do. This correlates with the positive experience of the migrants with the support, emotional and practical, they get from their children. As they know, they can call someone when they need help or can go somewhere. The more support they receive, the better their subjective well-being is (Peng et al. 2015: 382). In addition, since the migrants took care of their children, they expect the same support from their children in later life (Cela & Barbiano di Belgiojoso 2021: 3690). At last, when the migrants have family in the Netherlands, this is from whom they get support of. When they do not, like Fradiferi and Elly, they get the support from their non-family social network in the Netherlands. All these experiences illustrate how the reciprocity of the family social network affects the lives and social integration process of the migrants. Here again does the tensions within reciprocity of the family social network do not seem to play a big role in the lives of the migrants. Whether this is because there are no tensions or because we did not talk about it is unclear. But most migrants have positive experiences with the reciprocity of their family. Which is in line with studies about reciprocity from children but not with other researches.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analysed the family social network to show what the influence of it is on the social integration process of the migrants. These influences are all situational as it depends on the unique experiences in certain situations and times what influence the family social network has. These influences of the family social network also depend on how the migrants perceive their experiences with their family social network. But there are some key influences of the family social network on the migrants' social integration process. First, one stimulation of the social integration process is engaging in social contact and social activities with family members in both societies. Especially a Dutch partner fosters the social integration of the migrants. As they already have a social network of their own in the Netherlands. Here, engagement with children is also especially valuable to the migrants' social integration process. These children learn the Dutch customs from an early age, which stimulates the parents to learn with them. This includes keeping traditions and habits alive while embracing new ones. It helps them to keep social ties intact and maintain their cultural practices and familiar patterns of relationships (Ager & Strang 2008: 178). Second, the spatial dimension in their lives, their living situation, does not have an enormous influence on their social integration process. As all migrants made social connections while living in different households and neighbourhoods. Third, the family social network also influences the sense of belonging of the migrants and vice versa. A close bond with family in both countries ensures a sense of belonging to both societies. This influences family social network also as the migrants continue to socialize with the family in both

countries to keep all social ties intact. Therefore, the sense of belonging makes sure that the migrants maintain or get access to their family social networks in both societies (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 126). This relates to the question of circulation as that is how the migrants maintain these social ties. Meaning that the question of circulation also influences the social integration process. As it helps to ease the process of socially integrating because the migrants stay connected to their roots (Ager & Strang 2008: 183). The transnational lives of the migrants therefore shape the context of these influences. Fourth, the migrants perceived getting reciprocity from family members in the origin country in the beginning of their social integration process positive. By getting support, the migrants assume a confirmation in their decision to migrate. Which led to them being more open to socially integrate as well. Having family in the Netherlands supports this as well. Gender differences come back in the reciprocity to and from the family social network. Women are more likely to support their family than men, which is in line with other research (Zontini 2004). Age influences the migrants' family social networks as the migrants become more depended on their family social network by age. This outcome also relates to other research about ageing migrants (Ciobanu et al. 2017). All these influences show that every situation within the experiences of the migrants with their family social network is situational and has a different influence on the social integration process. From here on, the focus shift from the family to the non-family social networks. In the next chapter, I analyse the influences of the non-family social networks on the social integration process of the migrants.

Non-family social network

Besides the family social network, the non-family network is also part of the social network of the migrants. These exist of friends, colleagues, neighbours, and acquaintances of the migrants in the Netherlands and origin countries. I analyse the non-family network to see how they influence the social integration process of the migrants. At first, I discuss the non-family structures of the networks in the origin countries and the Netherlands to see how these are part of the lives of the migrants. Again, including the frequency, depth, and amount of the social relationships. Then, I analyse the formation of these social relationships. The bonding with co-ethnics and bridging with Dutch natives is part of this analysis. From there on, I make the social activities and volunteer work the migrants do with their non-family social network clear. Next, I discuss the social in- and exclusion of the migrants within the non-family social network. Then, I analyse othering and boundary making by the migrants to put their social integration process in context. At last, I look into the ageing influences on the social integration process of the migrants by concentrating on feelings of dualities over time and the question of return. The influences of the non-family social network on the sense of belonging of the migrants come back in all paragraphs.

Non-family structures in the origin countries

First-generation migrants often keep contact with people other than their family in their origin country (Bolzman et al. 2016: 2). Some migrants still have these contacts in their origin country. Not all the migrants as some relationships faded and/or the influence and importance of these contacts on their lives. This is common among migrants as there are changes over time and space within their emotional attachments and investments to others (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202). Migrants from East Europe often have fewer friends in their origin countries whom they are also less close with. But being a first-generation migrant can influence this given (Fietz & Kaschowitz 2019: 18). This last statement is often the case of the migrants of this research. As the migrants from East Europe have not fewer friends in the origin countries than the migrants from West Europe. Therefore, these results are not fully in line with the research of Fietz and Kaschowitz. For example, Lara is close with her friends in the Czech Republic and chats with them every day. She believes the distance does not matter since it is easy to maintain contact over social media. Mobile phones often play a role in maintaining social contacts across borders and help to keep networks of solidarity among migrants and their transnational social networks alive (Hunter 2015: 486). From the observations, it stood out that Elly calls every week with her friend in Bonn, Germany and chat for at least half an hour. In these conversations, they talk and update each other about their lives. When she visits Bonn, she always visits her friend as well. Staying connected to people from the origin country fuels the transnational

belonging of migrants as they stay attached to people with the same backgrounds (Klok et al. 2017: 343). This helps the migrants to socially integrate into society, as it soothes their experiences in a new country. Bonding with people from the origin country provides a haven for the migrants while integrating in their host society. These connections help them feel settled (Ager & Strang 2008: 178). Fradiferi, Julka, Karl, and Margarida also have some friends in their origin countries, but those are not their closest friends. Therefore, the frequency of contact is also less compared to that with their friends in the Netherlands. In addition, Jane states that time influenced the bonds she has with friends in Glasgow and most of the friendships or depths of friendships faded. She sees them more than acquaintances as they only have contact when she is there. For Maria, this given also counts. She has no friends left in Strumica as they all faded away. Fewer friends can make the social integration process harder because migrants then have fewer people to fall back on (ibid: 183). See the maps of the migrants' social networks in appendix A for an overview of these networks. These experiences show it does not depend on the origin country whether the migrants have friends back there. It more depends on the generational and temporal influences of their migration process. This illustrates how the non-family social network in the origin countries influences the social integration process and vice versa. These influences are not as big as the influences of the family social network from the origin countries. To see if this is also the case between the non-family and family social network in the Netherlands, I discuss to first next.

Non-family structures in the Netherlands

Besides the non-family social network in the origin countries, the migrants also have this network in the Netherlands. All eight migrants have bridged with Dutch natives and most of them also bonded with co-ethnics. Over time, these bonds grew stronger and the influence of this network on the lives of the migrants grew. It differs per migrant whom they are friends with, but the theme that emerges is that they all have friends from different backgrounds. Fradiferi has multiple Dutch native friends and colleagues whom he is close with. He also has good friends in Rotterdam who are also from Hungary. He sees his friends and chats with them on the phone every day. Fradiferi says about his social network 'I live alone but I am never alone'. This is the same for Jane. She has a friend group of English women whom she met when she first came to the Netherlands. They are her best friends as they share a similar history of migrating. Particularised trust in those of the same or very similar backgrounds influences the sense of belonging of first-generation migrants the most. This can be positive or negative (Pearce 2008). In Jane's case, this is positive, as she had her English friends around her to make her feel at home. This relates to the positive influence friendships have on the sense of belonging of migrants in the host society. Meaning that they feel like they belong more to the host society as they build relationships there (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 134). Jane also

became friends with Dutch native colleagues and other Dutch native people. Jane sees her friends weekly as they visit each other or do social activities together. Lara is also friends with some of her Dutch native colleagues whom she does social activities with. She also became friends with people from the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Belarus since they all speak Russian. Lara sees and talks to her friends weekly. The same counts for Margarida. She also has multiple Spanish friends in the Netherlands, but her best friend is a Dutch native woman. They call every day to keep each other up-to-date about their lives. Margarida is also friends with some women who follow her sport lessons. She sees her friends every week as they do social activities together. Karl has some Dutch native and some Swedish friends in Rotterdam but is with neither really close. He sees them approximately once a month and sometimes chats on the phone, but not regularly. Ten Kate et al. argue that first-generation migrants are more socially and emotionally lonely as they are less satisfied with their social relationships (2020: 297). This does not count for all migrants in this research, but does for Karl. Therefore, my research is only partly in line with the outcomes of that of Ten Kate et al. Feeling at home, for Karl, depends on his acquaintances. His social network affects his social satisfaction and therefore also his sense of belonging to Rotterdam. Which causes him to socialize less as he feels like he belongs to the Netherlands less. For Maria, this is different. She is very close with two of her Dutch neighbours as they see each other regularly to keep each other up-to-date about their lives. Establishing relationships with neighbours gives migrants opportunities to learn customs from established members in a society (Ager & Strang 2008: 171). This is also the case for Maria, as she has known her neighbours for a long time. Maria is also part of a woman group at community centre Zevenkamp, which exists of migrant women from (non-)Western countries. Here, they share experiences and chat about their lives once a week. Julka also has a friend group from her activities at community centre Ommoord. She walks with them three times a week. She also has a Dutch native best friend who was her colleague before. They are very close and see each other weekly. They also chat on the phone often. Elly also has a Dutch native best friend whom she is close with. They visit each other every week. Elly also has a friend at community centre Het Lage Land. They chat on the phone weekly and visit each other from time to time. Elly and Julka do not have any co-ethnic friends in the Netherlands as they do not feel the need to connect with them. As already discussed, for first-generation migrants, the amount of people in their social network influences their satisfaction with their network (Fietz & Kaschowitz 2019: 19). Therefore, socially integrating into and links to the host country is important for the social wellbeing of first-generation migrants (Arpino & de Valk 2018: 1167). The migrants with Dutch native and co-ethnic social contacts have a bigger social satisfaction than migrants without those contacts. This is the case for Fradiferi, Jane, Lara, Margarida, and Maria, as they all have multiple social contacts in their host country. First-generation migrants who are more satisfied with their lives, also experience more feelings of belonging to the

host country (Amit & Bar-Lev 2014: 955). Which is also the case of Fradiferi, Jane, Lara, Margarida, and Maria. It shows that the social networks are important for the migrants to feel at home. Therefore, social integration, including the formation of social relationships, the sense of belonging in the host country, and the life satisfaction influence each other (Chen et al. 2020: 6). These experiences with the non-family social network in the Netherlands show how these influence the migrants' social integration process. The particularised trust, positive influence of friendships on the sense of belonging, and building relationships with neighbours all do indeed influence the socialization of the migrants with their non-family social network as other studies suggested.

Formation of social relationships

The migrants formed their non-family structures in the Netherlands over time and at different occasions. These formations of social relationships took time to develop but eventually most of these relationships lasted a lifetime. When the migrants just got here, it was hard for them to make friends because they did not speak the same language as most people in Rotterdam. Therefore, this also influenced their social integration process (i.e. sense of belonging to Rotterdam) as they did not have many social contacts. As it was hard for them to socialize with others, as discussed earlier. Migrants often of make these contacts through day-to-day activities. Especially bonding with members of the host society fulfils this void (Korac 2003: 406). This is also true for the migrants of my research. They all made friends during the social activities they do like sporting and doing volunteer work. For example, Jane is still friends with the women of her football team from when she was younger. Lara, Julka, Elly, Margarida, and Karl made friends with other migrants and Dutch natives during their Dutch classes they took when they just got here. Fradiferi, Julka, Lara, Jane, and Margarida made friends with Dutch natives and co-ethnics at their work. Margarida, Maria, Lara, and Julka became friends with their Dutch neighbours or met their co-ethnic friends in their neighbourhoods. Besides this, it differentiates where they met their acquaintances and friends. For example, Lara became friends with other parents at the primary school of her son. Whereas Fradiferi made friends at the gym, he often goes to. As shown, the migrants bonded with Dutch natives and bridged with co-ethnics. This helped them to socially integrate and feel at home because of the friendly encounters with people in their common spaces and assuring similarities with other migrants (Ager & Strang 2008: 180). To give a better idea about the non-family social networks of the migrants, I list the social activities they do with their network below. These different formations through different social activities show multiple influences on the social integration process of the migrants. I mention these below.

Social activities

With both non-family social networks, the migrants do social activities that increase their bonds. As already argued, social anchoring in social spaces helps migrants to socially integrate as they find social activities that fit their personality (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016: 1134). In addition, participation in social activities with friends increases the community social integration of older migrants. Having those contacts and social engagement with friends is especially important to women (Zunzunegui et al. 2003: 96). It also positively affects their feelings of belonging to a certain group positively as they get the chance to socialize with others through social activities. Which helps the migrants to build social relationships as their emotional attachments to others grow (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202). This also counts for social activities with non-family social networks and aligns with the results from my research. All migrants do multiple social activities with friends, neighbours, colleagues, and/or acquaintances in the Netherlands and the origin countries. The size of the non-family social network influences the amount of social activities in both countries. As not all migrants have social contacts in the origin countries or are less close with those contacts, the social activities with them are also less common. The social activities with social contacts in the Netherlands is the biggest as it is easier to meet up with those contacts. For example, Margarida has lots of friends with whom she does different activities. She likes to sport a lot and does this with acquaintances and friends in the Netherlands often. She also loves to cook and make or have dinner with friends. When she is in Spain, she also does this with her friends there. The same counts for Jane, she also has a lot of friends in the Netherlands. Whom she goes on holidays with, visits them at their homes, has dinner together, used to play football together, and goes to the bar with her husband and friends in the Netherlands. She also plays tennis and golf with friends. When she is in Glasgow, she also visits her friends. They go for a hike, go shopping, and have dinner together. Maria has her neighbours over a lot and likes to drink a cup of coffee together. She also goes to the fitness with a friend. The women group of the community centre comes together once a week at the centre. Here, Maria is also a hostess which she does as volunteer work. Julka visits her close friend every week, and they go shopping together often. They also like to have dinner, travel through the Netherlands, go to Breda, and visit social gatherings like birthday parties together. She also works as a volunteer in the community centre Ommoord where she helps with different activities. For example, she set up a walking group, which she is still a part of. In contradiction, Elly has one friend in the Netherlands and therefore, has less social activities. She likes to go shopping at the second hand store Opnieuw & Co and takes her friend with her often. They also visit each other at their homes and make dinner, watch a movie together, or just chat. This is nice according to Elly. But she does not have many other friends and likes being at home as well. As said, she also calls her friend in Bonn often. When she

visits Bonn, they go to the bar often and have a couple of drinks. Elly also does volunteer work as a hostess in the community centre Het Lage Land. Here, Karl works as an art teacher. Karl also does not have as many friends but still likes to come by the community centre Het Lage Land often and goes to the market with a friend. The social activities are also influenced by the amount of family in the Netherlands. When the amount of family members is less, the amount of social activities depend more on the non-family social network (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016: 1134). For Fradiferi and Lara this is the case. As Fradiferi and Lara have no family members in the Netherlands, they do more social activities with their other social contacts. Fradiferi does have a lot of friends and visits them often. They like to play games, have dinner, go shopping together, have a drink, and go to the bar. He also talks to his friends in Budapest sometimes and visits them when he is there. They go on trips together then or have a drink somewhere. Lara still has friends in Prague with whom she also chats a lot. She also like to have dinner with friends or just visits them. With her friends in the Netherlands, she likes to have a drink and chat, have dinner together, go to the museum or a movie or travel together through the Netherlands. These experiences show that the amount family and non-family members do indeed influence the amount of social activities with the non-family social network. All these experiences with social activities show its influence on the social integration process and sense of belonging of the migrants. The more social activities the migrants do, the more positive influence it has on the socialization and sense of belonging of the migrants in their networks. This did not explicitly came forward during other researches. The non-family social networks and the social activities the migrants do with them in certain social spaces partly lead to the self-identification of the migrants. Therefore, I discuss this next.

Self-identification

As said, the self-identification of first-generation older migrants relates to the stories people tell about themselves (Yuval-Davis 2006: 202). Since the identities of first-generation older migrants focus on both their origin and host country, this can cause a sense of in-betweenness. In other words, changing identities are dynamic as it includes multiple cultures and ethnicities (Ghorashi 2004: 330). This relates to how the migrants identify themselves, as partly Dutch and partly their origin identity. They believe they are both as they grew up in their country of origin, but live in the Netherlands for such a long time that they became partly Dutch as well. This temporal influence comes back in the experiences of all migrants. For example, Lara says she feels fifty percent Czech and fifty percent Dutch. But when people ask her where she is from she often answers she is from Rotterdam as she does not feel the need to explain her migration background. This depends on who is asking, as she will explain it to people she knows better or is closer with. Which surprised me, as I almost assumed she would say she is from the Czech Republic. In addition, social anchoring helps

migrants to form their self-identification in relation to the social spaces they go to (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016: 1134). For the migrants, these social spaces are often with people from the origin countries or with Dutch natives. When the migrants are with the first group, they often identify themselves according to that group. And when they are with the Dutch natives, they also often identify themselves as Dutch more. Meaning that the self-identification is situational depending on the social group the migrants are with. This aligns with other studies as everyone has multiple identities, which are hybrid as they change in different situations. Therefore, it is important to find the connection between those identities and cultures to see how these interact (Gupta & Ferguson 1992: 18). Here, the influence of a society also comes back in how people identify themselves. The individual's consciousness and identity stand in relation to the collective (Domingues 2000: 230). Therefore, individuals use strategic essentialism to identify themselves in a certain way to be part of a group (Eide 2016: 2). As with Lara, when she says she is from Rotterdam and leaves out her migration background. Therefore, the self-identification of the migrants closely relates to the influence of the non-family social network and the social activities they do in certain social spaces. Which also influences whom the migrants meet up with and where they go according to their self-identification. This result was new information to me as I thought the migrant would either identify themselves as Dutch or not. These experiences show how the migrants perceive themselves and how their non-family social network influences it. Which leads to influences on the social integration process, increasing certain bonds or bridges or not, as well. From here on, I analyse how others perceive the migrants.

Social in-/exclusion in the non-family social network

Society often puts migrants in a lower hierarchical order, as they are seen as different because of their migration backgrounds (Dawney 2008: 14). As said, belonging (i.e. socially including or excluding to a group) relates to differences and categorizes people by socially relating them to others (Anthias 2016: 177). Meaning that how others see them influences the migrants' feelings of belonging. The concept of collective subjectivity also influences this. As society's doing affects the subjectivity of an individual (Domingues 2000: 230). And therefore, also the feelings of belonging and feeling in- or excluded from certain groups. For example, when Julka would correct a Dutch native person on his Dutch language, she would also feel like they were judging her. She would interpret their non-verbal communication as judgmental and felt like an outsider because of it. This is in line with the concept of collective subjectivity, as it shows society's influence on the subjective feelings of a person. In addition, the transnational lives of migrants influence being in- and excluded from society as well. As transnational migrants focus on two societies of which they both are a part (Anthias et al. 2013: 7). The social in- and exclusion that is caused by these transnational social networks influences the sense

of belonging of migrants (Klok et al. 2017: 343). What these influences exactly are differ per situation and migrant. For example, Jane felt excluded from the Dutch society when her English friends left the Netherlands. As she had no friends left, she did not feel like she belonged there. Instead, she felt like she was more part of the English society as she was more in contact with people from the United Kingdom. By making new friends and contacts, this feeling changed to feeling more and more at home in the Netherlands as well. This shows the influence of the transnational life of Jane on her feelings of belonging to both social networks. In addition, first-generation migrants often feel more socially excluded when they have a limited social network in their host country. They experience less control over their lives than Dutch natives. This relates to having or not having certain social contacts (Gilmartin & Migge 2015: 290). Like Lara, she became friends with people in the Netherlands while remaining part of her friend group in the Czech Republic. This made her feel like she belongs to both social networks in both countries. These examples show that feelings of social in- or exclusion influence the sense of belonging of migrants, as other researchers also showed. To continue to illustrate this are some examples of how the non-family social networks in both countries perceive the migrants. In all these examples of experiences are there no big differences between the migrants from West and East Europe. They all get to deal with forms of in- and exclusion by their non-family social network. Both non-family social networks in the Netherlands and the origin countries identify the migrants as part of their own group. When the migrants are in Rotterdam, they are Dutch and when the migrants are in their origin country, they are fully that ethnic group. Being included in the bonding and bridging social network ensures migrants to feel at home sooner and induces their social integration as they have contact with both groups (Klok et al. 2017 343). During a conversation with Lara, she asked her colleagues around her how they see her. They all answered they see her as Dutch, as part of their own. Whereas, when she is in Prague, her friends see her as fully part of their group. According to Lara, this is because she speaks fully Czech, know Czech jokes, and is up-to-date about the news. Lara also feels like she is part of both social groups. Jane has a similar feeling. Her friends in the Netherlands do acknowledge her Scottish background as they always refer to her when people want to know anything about Scotland. For Julka, this is the same. Her Dutch friends would talk about migrants as outsiders while she was there. When she said she is also a migrant, they would answer that she is one of them instead. This demonstrates that the experiences with being socially in- and excluded are situational as it depends on person who is in- or excluding and how the migrants interpret these actions. It also shows that there are indeed effects of it on the social integration process of the migrants in a transnational context. But society's view of migrants as different and less in a hierarchical order did not occur in the experiences of the migrants with their non-family social network. This could be because the social network knows the migrants and not only perceives them

as migrants. From here on, the focus changes from how others perceive the migrants, to how they perceive others (i.e. whether they in- or exclude others themselves).

The process of othering and boundary making

One thing that came forward during the fieldwork is the othering and boundary making by the migrants towards other migrants. Most of them are negative about other migrants who migrated to the Netherlands at a later time. For example, Margarida argues that Colombians always live in groups and do not socialize with Dutch natives. She argues that people who migrated at a later time than herself do not put as much effort in socially integrating as she did. The other migrants share this view. Karl mentioned he thinks migrants nowadays do not work as much for their money as he had to. He believes those migrants do not adapt as much to their new surroundings because there are more co-ethnics in the Netherlands whom they can socialize with then before. This shows that the migrants distinguish themselves from other migrants and view them as different. Which is the basis of boundary making (Dawney 2008: 15). This relates to the discussion about the politics of belonging as the migrants think about communities that separate us from them (Yuval-Davis 2006: 204). It also relates the concept of xenophobia as the migrants define the other migrants as different, which results in us-them thinking (Stolcke 1995: 4). These ideas of the migrants shows how they think about their own and other migrants' social integration process and how they relate themselves to other migrants. These stories were something I did not expect and found ironic as it is also how society perceives migrants. Therefore, I found it even more important to include it in the research.

Dualities through time

Throughout the entire course of their migration and post-migration life, the migrants have dealt with many experiences in their social networks. To end this thesis in chronological order, the last two paragraphs are about the (changing) experiences and perceptions of the migrants about their social integration process over time. As there are some age and time influences on the experiences of the migrants with their social integration process. One being, the way people see them makes migrants question their sense of belonging as neither people from their host and origin country see them as their own. This fuels the insecurities of migrants and affects their adaption negatively (Zontini 2015: 335). To deal with these insecurities and difficulties, some migrants talk about a certain mindset they developed. Like Jane, she says, 'To prove yourself is not right, instead of thinking I do not care. That kind of mindset is what you need to get through it all.' Karl has a similar view and relates it to being open to change. Having a growth mindset helps migrants to a more positive attitude that can affect the acceptance of migrants since they become more open to adaptions (Lou & Noels 2020: 55).

Getting a place within the host society is a big part of integrating. Looking at the experiences of migrants shows their agency in their social integration process (Anthias et al. 2013: 7). Like developing a growth mindset. These mindsets were new to me and came unexpectedly. As I did not think about needing a certain mindset at all. Which made it even more interesting to include those in the experiences of the migrants that are influenced by their ageing. Besides this, is it for the migrants important to put in effort and time to get used to their new lives in Rotterdam and to adapt themselves to their new surroundings. Fradiferi says it took some time to adapt to his new life. 'I do not think that will happen in the first five years here. I think you need at least ten years to adapt to the social life and culture in Rotterdam.' This also surprised me, as I assumed it would take less time to adapt yourself. Most of these age influences lead to feelings of dualities. As said, the transnational lives of first-generation migrants cause connections and contradictions like a double presence or absence (Anthias 2016: 183). These lives lead to experiences of dualities which cause a sense of in-betweenness by these migrants (Ghorashi 2004: 329). Most of the migrants of this research experience such a double presence in their host and origin country. Margarida talks about a friend who states that migrants will never be happy as they live in-between two countries. She disagrees as she is happier living between two cultures as she gets to experience both. While Julka feels a double absence instead of a presence. 'You are homeless, you do not belong there. … And here I also do not belong.' She experiences a sense of in-betweenness between Rotterdam and Poland. This shows that it depends on the personal experience of the migrant with their social integration process whether they experience a double presence or absence. The sense of in-betweenness is common for all migrants. They feel like they have one foot in Rotterdam and one in their origin country. For example, Lara argues that Czech is in her blood as it is her mother language and country. But she have lived in Rotterdam for so long that she also feels Dutch. This relates to the self-identification of the migrants and a duality of resources first-generation older migrants have. Meaning that they have economic benefits, social relationships, and attachments in both the origin and host country. For these migrants, participation in the labour market in their host country with contacts in their origin country leads to this duality (Zontini 2015: 2). These experiences show the duality in the transnational lives of the migrants as Ghorashi (2004) indicated and how the social networks influence this duality. These are the biggest experiences of the migrants through time. The migrants did not yet experiences changes within the process of becoming elderly. Looking back, some migrants would not migrate again because it was so hard. For Julka, this is because of her homesickness. She argues that she would want another life if she came to earth again. But for now is she happy because she has her daughter. This shows the duality of the experience of migrating for Julka. More of the migrants experience similar dualities. Like Maria, she also would not want to migrate in another life as she found the entire experience difficult, but is grateful that she can live

here. These experiences with adaptions and dualities relating to their social integration process reveal how the migrants deal with these over time. It shows that there are indeed age influences on these experiences, something that other studies have not yet indicated. As some migrants would not migrate again, the question arises whether they would return to their origin country. Therefore, I analyse the question of return next.

Question of return

Migrants who are ageing in place (i.e. in the host country) often have the question of return. Regardless of whether they stay, their transnational mobility most likely stays intact (Bolzman et al. 2016: 1372). The migrants of this research also often keep on circulating between Rotterdam and their origin country. Therefore, this question does not play such a big role in their lives as other studies suggest. These visits confirm a sense of belonging to the origin country while remaining feelings of belonging to the host society. As they ensure that the migrants' lives remain attached to both countries (Mason 2004: 427). Whether the migrants ever want to return to their origin country mostly depends on if they have children or not. The migrants with children want to stay in Rotterdam because their children live there too. Maria says, 'I have children and grandchildren. Where should I go?' The other migrants agree with this statement. They are open to migrate if their children are migrating as well, but otherwise they have no intention of returning to their origin country. Having children comes back in a great extent as a reason to not return for women, which is not a result of other researches about the question of return. This relates to an emotional attachment to the migrants' children. Which can be indicated as bigger than their sense of belonging to their origin country as they choose to stay with their children. For example, Lara's son lives in Prague, therefore she does not have a fixed decision whether she will return. But she has a Dutch partner whom she lives with and whom keeps her in Rotterdam. Therefore, the decision of the migrants of return can also depend on the other social relationships they have in Rotterdam and the sense of belonging to those relationships. Therefore, belonging influences the decision on the question of return (Bolzman et al. 2016: 1372). For Karl, having less social relationships means he is less bounded to one place even though his children live in Rotterdam. Therefore, he is more open to migrate again and had plans to migrate to Argentine since he had a girlfriend there. The same counts for the other man of the group, Fradiferi, but not for the same reason. He talks about a friend of his who lives in Florida, Miami. He wants to go live there in the future. The men feel less bounded to one place compared to the women, whose sense of belonging is more affected by their social network in the Netherlands. This relates to the gender differences in the decisions and experiences with returning for first-generation older migrants, which are discussed earlier. Returning for women means new separations

which they are not prepared to (Zontini 2015: 330). While this is not the case of men. The gender differences in reasons to return or not align with the study of Zontini (2015). These experiences relate to the question of circulation among the migrants and reveal that they indeed more often travel between countries to keep all social ties alive. It shows how the social integration process has and still influences the migrants' lives and choices. These reveal that because of the social integration process, most migrants likely stay in Rotterdam for good.

Conclusion

The paragraphs above show what the influences of the non-family social network on the migrants' experiences with their social integration process are. It depends on the perceptions of the experiences with the non-family social network what these influences are. These influences are also situational, like the influences of the family social network. Therefore, it also depends on what situations and in what time the experiences with the non-family social network take place. I list the key influences of the non-family social network on the migrants' their social integration process below. First, the non-family social network in the origin country does not specifically fuel the social integration process of the migrants. Over time and by age, the non-family social network of most migrants in the origin country faded, as they did not keep social ties intact. This also relates to the spatial influences between the origin and host country on the non-family social network (Fietz & Kaschowitz 2019). Second, having a non-family social network in the Netherlands positively influences the social integration process. As the family social network also does. Within the non-family social network, the social relationships with co-ethnics ensure the migrants with cultural and social activities that maintain the migrants' own customs and language. Which is in line with other researches about the influence of co-ethnic relationships (Ager & Strang 2008). Here, the influence of the transnational lives of the migrants mainly comes back in the bonds with co-ethnics. Whereas bonds with Dutch natives fosters the migrants' sense of belonging to the host society. This also correlates with other studies on bonding and bridging (Klok et al. 2017). Meaning that the sense of belonging of the migrants relates to both societies. Third, engaging in social activities to form social relationships has a positive influence on the social integration process as well. Here, the more social activities the migrants have, the more they connect with their non-family social network. Fourth, experiences with in- and exclusion in the non-family social network also have an enormous influence on the social integration process. Success experiences of the migrants with their non-family social network in the Netherlands lead to a more positive point of view on their social integration process. While, exclusion often leads to less desire to take part in the non-family social network among the migrants. Which affects the social integration process also negatively. Fifth, over time, feelings of duality have grown within the migrants as they made both countries their home. They keep social

ties intact that create these feelings. This then influences whom the migrants stay in contact with and whether they feel a double presence or absence. Which is the biggest age influence of the migrants on their social integration process. At last, the non-family social networks also affect the migrants' sense of belonging. For example, as Jane now has a big non-family social network in the Netherlands, she is certain she will stay there as they make her feel at home. This satisfaction with her non-family social network influences her sense of belonging positively. In this question of return, gender differences did occur as women more likely choose to stay in their host country while men are more open to return or migrate again. All these influences show that the migrants' experiences with their non-family social network are situational and that they have different influences on the social integration process of the migrants. As the three sub-questions are now discussed, what follows is a discussion about the concept integration in relation to the xenophobia of migrants to understand the context of the migrants' lives better.

Discussion

As researchers see integration and the xenophobia of migrants as contested concepts, there is a need to discuss this further to understand the social integration process of the migrants better. Like said before, integration is a concept from which there is no unified definition. Many people use the word, but the definition of each person differs. Researchers often see it as individualized and contextual, which makes migrant integration controversial. But it remains significant in policies and outcomes of projects working with migrants (Ager & Strang 2008: 167). Therefore, it is hard to research migrants' integration as there are different ideas of what integration means. Meaning that how the migrants of this research view social integration and their experiences with it are also subjective. As said, researchers view integration as assimilation, the specific problems of migrants in societies, or their being part of a society (Anthias et al. 2013: 3). They do not specify what it precisely means. Therefore, it is almost impossible to study integration processes because of different assumptions about what it means. Often, when society finds the integration of a migrant insufficient, they problematize the being of a migrant. As already argued, integration is politically loaded because of this given. Researches on immigrant integration rarely consider this as it is non-applicable or not policy relevant (Schinkel 2018: 3). Therefore, there is a need to highlight that integration indeed needs to be research critically and handled sensitively.

This discussion about integration relates to the xenophobia of others. It perceives migrants in terms of us-them and classifies them as outsiders of a nation state. Cultural fundamentalism argues that this comes because of human's nature to be ethnocentric and destructive to others. Political and legal traditions often keep the assumptions about migrants intact (Stolcke 1995: 5). This is in line with statements earlier made about migrants being racialized as homogeneous and seen as outsiders because of their being. Society does so by boundary maintenance between migrants and them (Dawney 2008: 15). This view on migrants is not right as migrants are more than how society identifies them. They are more than their migration background. Especially the migrants from this research, they live in the Netherlands longer than they lived in their origin countries. Therefore, they do not identify as migrants, but mainly as Dutch. This perception of them is situational and subjective considering their migration background and social integration process. As Schinkel argues, the integration of migrants is not only depended on the migrants themselves. It also depends on how the host society perceives migrants (Schinkel 2018: 3). Therefore, I ask, why do we not perceive migrants as one of our own, as that is whom there are?

Conclusion

Migrants establish social relationships through bonding with co-ethnics and bridging with Dutch natives. These relationships create the social capital and embeddedness in the social lives of migrants. This is a big part of the social integration of migrants (Wessendorf & Phillimore 2019: 126). Researchers rarely investigate the opportunities and obstacles that arise from these social networks (Ryan 2011: 720). Therefore, there is a need to research the influences of social networks on the migrants' social integration process. In addition, migration studies often focus on younger migrants, leaving older migrants out of the picture. While the latter get to deal with multiple inequalities because of their migration background, age, and otherness (Warnes et al. 2004: 307). Therefore, studying understudied subjects, like older migrants, makes them visible in society (Fassin 2003: 632). This research brings together insights from integration studies, migration studies, and social gerontology on the social networks' influence of the first-generation middle-age migrants on their social integration process in Rotterdam. It does so by focusing on the migration trajectories, family and non-family social networks of the migrants to understand the influence of these on the migrants' social integration process. I researched this through ethnographic interviews and participant observations on the migrants' experiences with their social networks during their social integration process.

Social networks' influences

This has produced multiple key influences from the social networks on the social integration process of the migrants. First, within the migration trajectories, the family and non-family social networks influence the motives, movements, language proficiency, education, and employment. The social networks do so by either encouraging or discouraging the migrants from taking on certain decisions or skills. Encouraging leads to a positive influence on the social integration process as it becomes the starting point of socialization. Whereas discouraging often leads to a negative influence as it withholds the migrants from socializing with their new society. Here, the differences between the family and non-family social network and in time and space are not substantial. This relates to another research about the influence of social networks on these topics (Ager & Strang 2008). Second, there are differences and similarities between the family and non-family social network in how these influence the migrants' social integration process. The influence of the family social network on the social integration process changes over time and space. At first, the family network in the origin countries had the most influence on the social integration process. Over time, this changed to the family network in the Netherlands. This influence can be positive or negative depending on how the migrants perceive the feelings and thoughts of their family. This relates to other studies about the influence of transnational family networks of ageing migrants (Cela & Barbiano di

Belgiojoso 2021). These perceptions then influence the question of circulation of the migrants depending on how the migrants perceive their family in both countries. Within the family social network, the domestic relationships are especially important. Whether the migrants have a Dutch or co-ethnic partner is likely to make a big difference in the influence on the social integration process. As a Dutch partner seems to foster the social integration more. Children also play a vital role in the social integration of the migrants, as they offer opportunities to learn and socialize more. Especially for the women, this was the case. For the non-family social network, the differences between the networks in the origin counties and the Netherlands are the same. Here, the importance of the influences also changed over time and space. In addition, the non-family social network in the origin countries seems to have less influence than the family social network in the origin countries. As the migrants mentioned the latter more in their experiences with their social networks. In addition, the formation of social relationships in the host society has a positive influence on the social integration process. This can be through bonding or bridging. This distinction does not seem to matter to the migrants. They all stated that they form relationships to whom they feel compatible with regardless of their ethnical background. The social activities with these relationships have a positive influence on the social integration process of the migrants. As it increases feelings of belonging to the non-family social network. This is the same within the family social network. Only here, the positive influence mainly comes from social activities with children. This is in line with other research about the influence of social activities on ageing migrants (Zunzunegui et al. 2003). One of the biggest differences in influences on the social integration process between the family and non-family social network revolves around reciprocity. The migrants find this important within the family social network but not within the non-family social network. All migrants would go to their families when they need support or when they feel obligated to care. While the idea exists that the non-family social network does not need to know when the migrants need support. The migrants stated that they do not want to oblige their non-family social network with such reciprocity. They would rather go to their families and especially their children when they are in need of something. Here again, there is a shift in reciprocity over time. The migrants first were depended on their family network in the origin country and vice versa. While this changed to their family network in the Netherlands. Because of the social embeddedness and reciprocity migrants gain from their family and non-family social networks, their vulnerabilities of ageing in place also become less. As they have a social safety net they can rely on when needed (Ciobanu et al. 2017: 166). Another difference between the social networks relies on the self-identification of the migrants. This is mainly influenced by the non-family social network as their identity relates to how they think they are perceived by the society. This relates to other studies about identity (Domingues 2000). One last difference between the family and non-family social network is in the influence of social in-/exclusion and boundary making on the

social integration process. Social in-/exclusion and boundary making in the non-family social network influences the social integration process deeply. While the family social network does not substantially influence this by socially in- or excluding the migrants. It seems like the migrants all assume they are already included by their family social network as they feel like they are part of it themselves. Therefore, they are less subject to these feelings in that network. At last, the biggest ageing influence on the social integration process of the migrants concentrates on feelings of duality and the question of return. As over time, the migrants built social contacts in both countries making them feel a double presence or absence. This then influences the question of return. Where there are some gender differences. For women, this question depends more on their children while for men this question is more open. Which relates to other researches about this subject (Zontini 2015). In the end, there are substantial influences of the social networks on the social integration process of first-generation middle-age migrants in Rotterdam. These can be either positive or negative.

Situational experiences

The research shows that the influences of the family and non-family social networks on the social integration process are all situational. That is why each influence can be positive or negative, depending on the space and time the experiences of the migrants with their social network. As already argued, people do not tell the objective truth but only their representations of versions of the truth. These together form an event (Hastrup 2004). Meaning that the importance of cultural, economic, and social factors in the social integration process of migrants change over time and within situations. This comes back in the changing narratives of migrants used to construct and describe their experiences. In addition, their backgrounds, perspectives, and feelings of those experiences influence the migrants' narratives of their experiences. In addition, the different aspects of the social integration of the migrants (i.e. the migration trajectory, social networks, and sense of belonging) not only influence the social integration process but also each other. See figure 2 below. Making the influences of the social networks on the social integration process even more situational. This is in line with other outcomes of studies on the lived experiences of European migrants with their social integration process. As improvement in one aspect of migrants' lives can affect other aspects as well. Which influences becoming part of a new society too (Gilmartin & Migge 2015: 296). This helps to show the complexity of studying the migrants' experiences with the influences of their social networks on their social integration process.

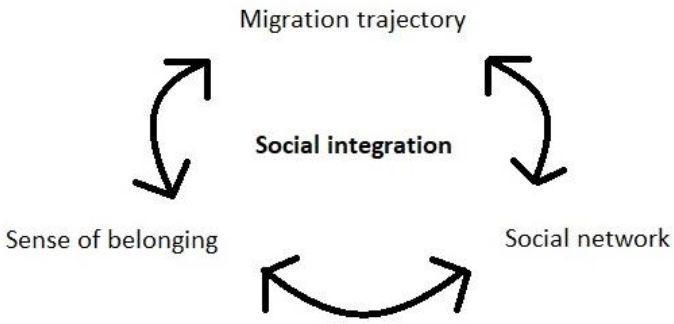

Figure 2. Vicious circle of the social integration process.

Notions of belonging and boundary making

To go more in-depth about the influences of the different aspects of the social integration of migrants, I outline the influences of the social network and migration trajectory on the sense of belonging below. Again, these influences can be positive or negative depending on the situation and how the migrants perceive the influence. The biggest influences of the migration trajectory and social networks on the sense of belonging are through the language proficiency, employment, bonding and bridging with family and non-family in the Netherlands, social anchoring through social activities, reciprocity in the family social network, and social in-/exclusion in the non-family social network. In the end, the migrants do not have a fixed sense of belonging on either the origin or host society. Instead, it is open to both societies. The sense of belonging also influences the family and non-family social networks as the migrants keeps on socializing with the networks in both countries because of this dual sense of belonging. Which leads to influences of the sense of belonging on the migration trajectory too. As a positive influence means the migrants are more open to stay in the Netherlands while a negative influence leaves the question or return more open. Belonging also relates to the process of boundary making. By relating yourself to others, you exclude people who do not fall in the group to whom you feel you belong (Dawney 2008: 2). As argued, this is also the case for the migrants of this research. They distance themselves from other migrants based on cultural differences. While this also happens to them, as first-generation migrants deal with xenophobia by the host society (Warnes & Williams 2006). By doing so, society problematizes their being and excludes them from society, as the examples have shown. Which influences the sense of belonging of the migrants as they feel less belonging to people whom exclude them. Whilst, they are actually people like you and me. Therefore, it is important to address this more extensively.

Towards an inclusive understanding of migrants

I have shown the influences of the family and non-family social networks on the social integration process of the migrants above. These outcomes may have relevance beyond first-generation middle-age migrants in Rotterdam. Researchers could explore these in other migrant groups. Research on

migrants' integration often focuses on whether migrants integrate. While this is actually not measurable as integration is a chaotic and contested concept without a unified definition (Ager & Strang 2008: 167). Therefore, I argue that researches on migrants' integration do not focus on integration but look at migrants' subjective lives and well-being. Because why bother forcing the migrants to become one of us whilst still perceiving them as outsiders? I vow for an inclusive understanding of migrants and their lives because in the past months, I learned that the eight migrants of this research have more similarities than differences with me. They are more than migrants, as they are unique beings of their own. Therefore, more extensive research on the experiences of first-generation middle-age migrants with their social networks is important for understanding the situational influences and complex experiences further. I argue that there is a need for such research to understand the lives of middle-age migrants better and to get rid of the xenophobia of migrants. As that is what they deserve.

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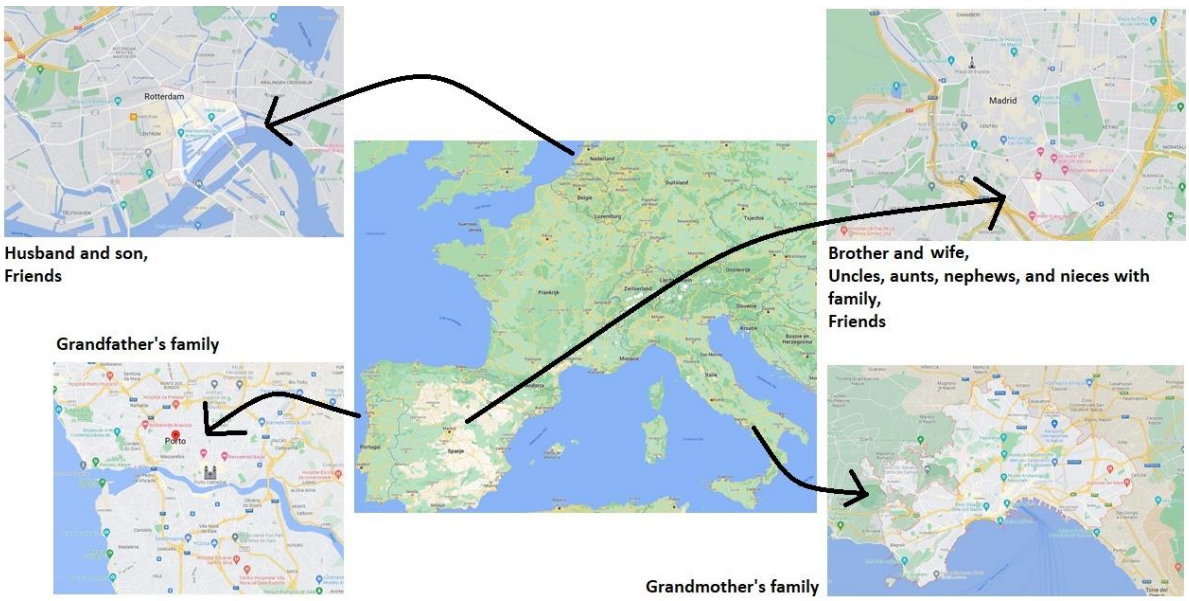
Appendix A: Maps of the migrants' social networks

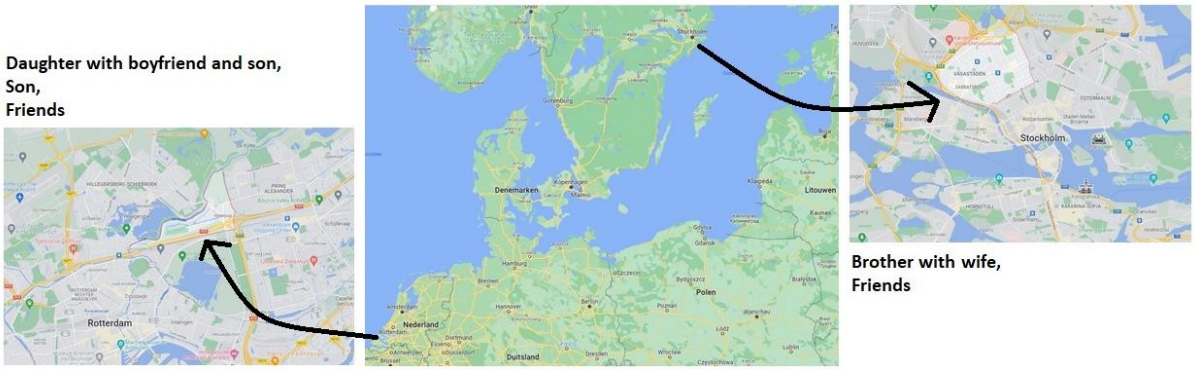
The maps show the social networks of the migrants in Europe. The networks contain the family and non-family social networks. Within the maps the exact members of the networks are listed per country to show which contact and the amount each migrant have in every country. The maps also indicate the transnational lives of the migrants as they show the place of the countries in the world.

1. Map social network of Jane

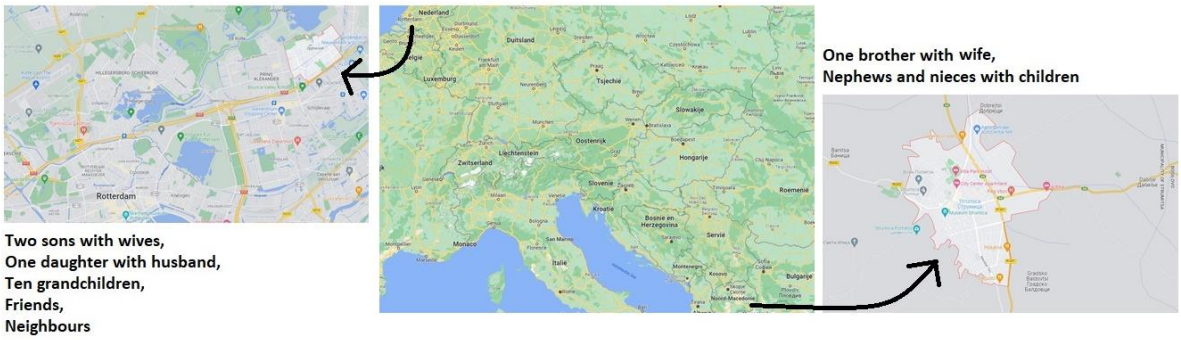
2. Map social network of Margarida



2. Map social network of Karl



4. Map social network of Maria



5. Map social network of Julka

6. Map social network of Lara

Boyfriend,
Friends

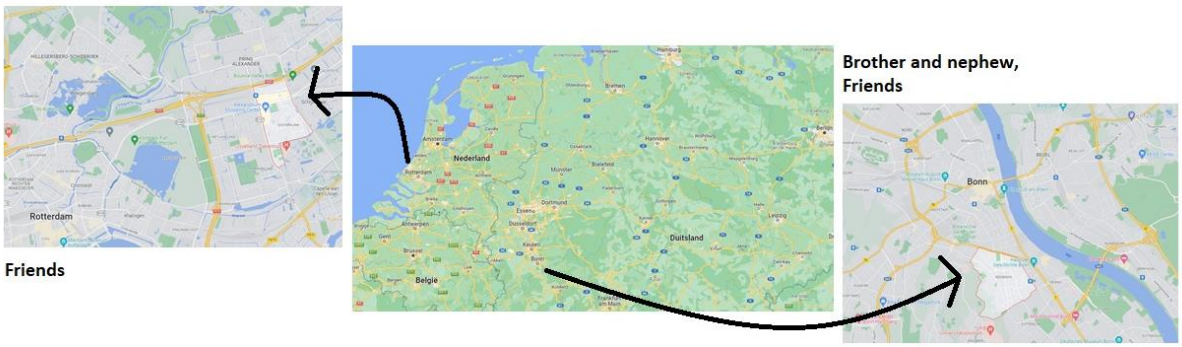
Son,
Parents with partners,
Ex-husband,
Friends

7. Map social network of Fradiferi

Friends

Brother
Niece and fiancé
Friends

8. Map social network of Elly



Friends

Brother and nephew,
Friends