

Analysing political engagement

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Analysing political engagement

an interpretive and functionalist discourse analysis
of evolving political subjectivities among public
activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan
background in Flanders

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Note on articulation markers and other symbols

The reader should be aware of the specific usage of certain symbols. This goes especially for the (re)articulation markers < and >. These markers highlight those sections of the text where it is important to illustrate that the words used by the author are literally the same words as those used by the interviewees. The differences in the usage of abstract categories such as <identity>, <community>, or <politics> necessitated the introduction of a visual contextualisation cue that highlights when and where the wordings of researcher and respondent overlap. (Re)articulation markers should be conceptualized as tools that allow the reader to differentiate between: (1) the analyses of the author as made within the context of this book; and (2) the voices of the interviewees. Moreover, they mark whether the voices of the interviewees are consciously rearticulated or not. Single quotation marks without italics (‘ and ’) serve solely to indicate a coded topic. For instance, a segment of discourse may be coded under the topic ‘definition of the interview situation’. Such codes provide contextual information, coherence, and an introduction as to what the text is about. All of the data have been translated into English. The original Dutch excerpts are included in the Appendix. The heuristic guidelines and theoretical arguments for the usage of (re)articulation markers and the coding of (sub)topics are discussed in detail in subchapters 1.2.1 and 3.1. Considerations concerning the translation and transcription processes can be found in the subsections of subchapter 2.3.1. Reading these guidelines and arguments is not required for understanding the present line of argument. On the other hand, an awareness of these theoretical and heuristic principles might deepen the reader’s understanding of the data and observations presented in the first chapter of this book.

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Introduction

During the last five years many people have asked me what my research was about. Family and friends frequently wondered what question could possibly take five years to answer. It took me about three years to find out myself. And it took me about two years to write down my answers.

Quite often, I told people I investigated the *world views* of Moroccan intellectuals and activists in Flanders. This frequently prompted an *aha Erlebnis*. “*So, it’s about integration then*”, many of them replied. It usually took me some time to explain integration *was not* the focus of my research project. In the end, I realised that, in layman’s terms, my research was about the various ways in which people – not merely Moroccans or any ethnic or religious group – give meaning to their social and political engagements. How do they think about themselves? Why do we use so many abstract categories when we position ourselves in the public sphere? And most importantly, how do we manage to make ourselves and our political projects understood as more or less coherent wholes in spite of the complexities of discourse?

When confronted with colleagues deploying theoretical frameworks similar to mine, I was able to articulate my answers in more academic terms. But depending on the academic background of the person asking, I introduced my project in terms of *political subjectivities*, *discourse*, and / or *processes of identification*. Sometimes, it was useful to characterize my research in terms of an attempt to investigate *the overlap between academic and political usage of abstract categories*. On other occasions, it would seem as if there was a *methodological problematic of functional and interpretive language use* lying at the heart of my research. But perhaps, I enjoyed explaining my project in terms of *an attempt to articulate poststructuralist, linguistic pragmatic, and pragmatist modes of thought* the most.

All of these answers are true. Yet none of them fully grasps my intent. From an early age, I have been fascinated by language. As a toddler, I once asked my mother what sort of things *words* were. I forgot about this, but when she told me, I was struck by the fact that I never let this question go. Today, I would be inclined to describe words as *forms* allowing us to orient our selves to various aspects of reality, shaping this reality while we use them and interpret it, establishing our subjectivity throughout the process. This may seem a relatively straightforward answer, but as soon as we start to wonder *exactly what we do with words*, and *exactly what words do to us*, we are faced with a multiplicity of new questions.

I always found some way to occupy myself with language. Like many other adolescents, I wrote poems and short stories, hoping to become a writer. The fact that my mother remarried a psychologist with whom she established one of the biggest training institutes for *Neuro-Linguistic Programming* in Belgium, provided me with an environment in which language issues were being addressed on a daily basis. Psychologists, therapists of various sorts, and many others who discuss language from what I have come to call a *metapragmatic, metalinguistic, or metadiscursive perspective*, were part of the environment I grew up in. At our kitchen table, we didn’t discuss football or politics, but questions related to the nature of *awareness* and its function in relation to *communication*.

This was probably one of the reasons that prompted me to write a paper on *sociolinguistics* in high school. In college, I decided to study communication sciences. The interdisciplinary approach to communication at the *Vrije Universiteit Brussel* appealed to me. And when I browsed through its curriculum, I noticed that it would be possible to pursue an academic career in this domain. Like many of my interviewees, university provided me with a whole set of frameworks that allowed me to rearticulate concerns close to my heart. These were concerns related to language and awareness. Concerns that would be reframed in terms of *signifiers*, *discourse*, *ideology*, and *hegemony*.

My master thesis in communication sciences was a poststructuralist study of the discourse of a neoconservative American think tank called *The project for the new century*. I am very grateful to professor Caroline Pauwels for providing me with the opportunity to pursue my research interests in this way. After my graduation in communication sciences, I studied international relations, but the problematic of discourse never left my mind. In fact, I decided to look for a professor willing to support a research proposal that would allow me to investigate discourse from a more linguistic perspective than I was used to. I contacted many professors with whom I shared similar interests. This is when I met professor Jef Verschueren. His trust, his support, his intellectual honesty, and his empathic attitude with respect to me and my colleagues have added to the joys of writing this book. Before contacting Jef Verschueren, I wrote down a list of possible research topics. In the end, we decided to apply for a research grant on *Islamic political identities*. For reasons outlined in this book, I would come to rearticulate the title of this project in significant ways.

During the early stages of my research project, professor Marie-Claire Foblets, one of my other supervisors, asked me whether my focus would be on methodological and theoretical considerations with respect to discourse, or on the identification processes of Moroccans in Flanders. I hope this book addresses both issues in a balanced way. I believe nothing is more practical than theory, on a condition that theory allows us to critically reflect upon issues we consider to be limiting to ethical ways of being. In this sense, theory should allow people to see new interpretive options for conducting their lives in meaningful ways. This requires an interpretive and functional articulation of abstract categories with concrete experiences. I have attempted to arrive at such an articulation in the course of this book by linking theoretical concerns with the discourse of my interviewees without overpowering their voices.

My third supervisor, professor Henk de Smaele, once asked me whether I really needed this much theory in order to make my point. I think the answer to this question lies in the eye of the beholder. I did not use the full range of theoretical concepts introduced in this book in order to analyse my case studies. Yet, I do believe that all of the concepts and theories outlined in the theoretical sections of this book can be exemplified with reference to discourse data provided below. I admit that my decision to include this vast range of theories was mainly motivated by theoretical and methodological concerns. Nevertheless, these concerns are relevant to empirical analysis as well. Throughout my studies, I noticed a significant gap, a methodological deficit, between poststructuralist and linguistic approaches to discourse. On the other hand, I intuitively felt that in spite of the multiplicity of frameworks and vocabularies, many discourse analytical perspectives share similar presuppositions.

I will discuss these similarities in interpretive and functionalist terms. Every discourse analyst I ever met is facing the issue of constructing an adequate heuristic. But guidelines are rare. I wanted to go beyond an eclectic combination of macro-concepts of subjectivity and discourse provided by poststructuralist theorists on the one hand, and linguistic analyses of small stretches of discourse on the other hand. I sought to develop an approach that allows for an investigation of large-scale interpretive processes informing public interaction by means of a focus on the way individuals mark their linguistic choices at specific moments in their discourse.

I hope my interpretive and functionalist approach to discourse analysis will provide useful points of reference for those researchers engaged in holistic and interdisciplinary investigations into discourse. For those who are first and foremost interested in the various modes of political engagement of intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders, I hope that my focus on the linguistic, ideological, and interpretive dimensions of subjectivity allows them to understand the subjectivities of these people in more subtle ways.

The question remains whether the intellectuals and activists I talked to benefit from this work. Once again, the answer lies in the eye of the beholder. All of my respondents have had the opportunity to comment on the selected fragments that have been analysed in this book. Some of them found it quite strange to see their words being rearticulated in this way. However, the fact that the vast majority of these people subscribed to my analyses, is perhaps the most tangible proof of the effectiveness of this

type of analysis. Nevertheless, this book is written in an Anglophonic academic genre and its immediate impact on the Flemish minority debate will probably be very limited. I therefore hope that the impact of my work will be more lasting in the long run. I hope that the ideas articulated in this book will be trickling down into the public sphere in years to come. Hopefully, they will be picked up by colleagues and students. For this reason, I also intend to translate some of the abstract notions outlined in this book in a series of workshops, lectures, and articles, that will be more accessible to people who are not familiar with the conventions of the academic genre.

Sometimes people ask me about my discipline. Depending on the way I describe my research project, they ask me whether I am a sociologist, a political scientist, or a linguist. I consider myself to be all of these things and none of them. Disciplinary boundaries may provide one with useful points of reference for orienting oneself in the academic landscape. But they can also become obstacles if one tries to answer questions related to the nature of self and society in a holistic way. I prefer to consider myself a student of the humanities, engaged in an attempt to understand a fraction of the complexity of human awareness as marked in discourse.

I think I share an interdisciplinary attitude with all three of my supervisors. All of them have always been supportive of this project even though my theoretical and empirical investigations frequently digressed from the established pathways in their respective disciplines. In this respect, I would like to thank professor Jef Verschuere, professor Marie-Claire Foblets and professor Henk de Smaele who have always been supportive of this project. They provided me with questions and remarks that forced me to clarify my intent, making me more aware of my own presuppositions. At the same time, they provided me with an unmatched degree of academic freedom.

I truly believe that human beings have the responsibility to develop their awareness to the best of their capabilities, awareness being a process, the center of every equation, paradoxically established as a function of our relationships towards one another, towards ourselves, and towards all aspects of contextual and interpretive reality. In fact, I don't think people have a choice in this respect. They either become aware of the patterns they (re)produce, or they end up in processes that threaten to deprive them of the choices functional to their preferred sense of self.

Discourse may both restrict and offer opportunities for expanding our awareness. Empathy is another way to create a similar effect. But in contrast to empathy, discourse allows for a meta-perspective. We can turn discourse inside-out, bending it back onto itself, using it as a tool to reshape our interpretive realities. And like any other tool, it can be used in constructive, as well as in destructive ways. My concern with metapragmatic awareness is informed by this very tension. How do people manage to articulate themselves in relation to political projects they consider to be functional with respect to a preferred sense of self and in relation to a preferred mode of public interaction?

In order to answer this question, I have been on a theoretical, methodological, and empirical quest that took me about five years. This book can be read as a road map I wrote along the way. It allows the reader to orient oneself with respect to the various ways in which intellectuals and activists with – mostly – Moroccan backgrounds positioned themselves in the minority debate between 2006 and 2009. It also serves as an integrated road map for the multiplicity of approaches that shape the world of discourse theory and discourse analysis. The structure of the book provides an overview of my quest. This is not to say that the process of investigation was a straightforward line. Rather, after some years of investigating the theoretical, methodological, and empirical aspects of the minority problematic and political engagement in general, it became possible to reconstruct the world I was travelling in. Nevertheless, it is useful to keep Alfred Korzybski's warning in mind: *the map is not the territory*.

The first chapter (see: 1) of this book contains a problematisation of abstract categories such as identity, politics, and community. By articulating the original formulation of this research project with remarks and analyses made by my respondents, I will outline a number of problems one needs to deal with if one seeks to analyse large-scale interpretive processes and debates. For this reason, the first

chapter concludes with a list of requirements the required perspective should meet. A large part of this book can be thought of as a theoretical, methodological, and heuristic attempt to articulate such a perspective.

The second chapter (see: 2) begins with a focus on the concept of articulation. It provides an overview of existing theories of articulation (see: 2.1). Each of these theories emphasises one aspect of articulatory practices. Some theorists highlight the fact that discourse allows us to link semiotic elements with each other. Others highlight the socio-political dimension of articulating one (set of) identities to another (set of) identities. To some, articulation is first and foremost an ideological practice. Others argue that underlying any notion of articulation, there is a performative aspect to be considered. In fact, most etymological senses of articulation – i.e. a connection, a node, a movement, a man-made structure, a mechanism, a conceptual relationship, an interaction, a particular interpretation of an artistic performance – have been theorised in one way or another.

Nevertheless, the phonological and linguistic dimensions have been grossly overlooked.

Poststructuralist theorists of articulation frequently recognise the impact of linguistics on their thought, but it should be noted that this discipline has undergone significant changes since the days of de Saussure. More specifically, the field has undergone a pragmatic turn, emphasising the functional, interpretive, processual and intersubjective aspects of language use. As such, it provides a powerful set of ideas that allows us to explore the linguistic aspects of articulation in an empirical way.

Moving towards my interpretive functionalist approach to the self, to politics, and to discourse (see: 2.2), I will explore the function of these notions in pragmatist and poststructuralist modes of thought (see: 2.2.1). In a similar vein, I will focus on linguistic pragmatic perspectives on the context(s), the structure(s), and the function(s) of discourse with respect to politics and the self (see: 2.2.2). I am interested in a systematic integration of perspectives which I consider to be characterized by similar patterns of thought. Linguistic pragmatists frequently refer to Foucault who nevertheless wrote in a very different register. Pragmatists have been drawn to poststructuralism, and recently, poststructuralists have become aware of the need to deal with methodological issues when analysing subjectivity and discourse. I will explore the perspectives involved in great detail, arguing that the multiplicity of theories labeled as pragmatism, poststructuralism, and / or linguistic pragmatics are characterised by similar interpretive and functionalist modes of thought. I will argue that these perspectives have more in common than one might expect.

Chapter two ends with a general outline of an interpretive functionalist perspective on discourse, the public sphere, politics and the self (see: 2.3). Here, I will focus on the question of investigating large-scale processes in the public sphere and on the possibility of critique. What do we mean with publicly accessible data, and what functions do interviews perform in relation to the public sphere (see: 2.3.1)? In this context, I will discuss how the notion of integration functions in mainstream Flemish and Dutch discourse(s), highlighting the overlap between academic and socio-political modes of speech (see: 2.3.2). This introduction to the integration debate serves as a frame to discuss the way my respondents use the same words in critical ways (see: 2.3.3). Nevertheless, this is not a book about integration. To most of my respondents, other concepts and other values are more useful and functional in relation to their preferred sense of self and in relation to their preferred mode of politics.

In order to exemplify the relative importance of notions such as integration, and in order to explore the various ways in which my interviewees intersubjectively establish high degrees of cohesion and coherence within the context of our interviews, I will present a selection of case studies. My interpretive functionalist approach is most clearly exemplified in chapter three (see: 3). This chapter provides an explicit discussion of my heuristic (see: 3.1), as well as a number of case studies where I will investigate large-scale interpretive logics deployed by individuals engaged in the public sphere (see: 3.2). Individual case studies have been selected in order to provide the reader with a variety of perspectives constitutive of the minority debate as it was discussed by intellectuals and activists with – mostly – Moroccan backgrounds in Flanders in the time frame of 2006-2009. Chapter three also contains a discussion of the way individuals may link a preferred sense of self with a preferred mode

of politics (see: 3.3). A series of large-scale logics of self-interpretation informing preferred modes of political engagement will be discussed (see: 3.3.1) and exemplified (see: 3.3.2) as well.

In my conclusion (see: 0), I will take this opportunity to shed some light on issues left implicit throughout this book. I deliberately choose not to repeat myself but to offer some ideas that might shed another light on the various topics and themes addressed in previous chapters. Since many of my conclusions have been formulated at the end of my main chapters, I choose to end this book with some interpretive and functionalist remarks on the relationships between values, abstract categories, and processes of (mis)recognition. All of these questions pertain to issues addressed and illustrated in other parts of this publication.

I would like to conclude this introduction by answering one last question. Sometimes people ask me to summarise my research results in a sentence or two. In this respect, I would say that my research is about the various ways individuals engaged in large-scale socio-political debates make sense of themselves and of others. It is a manipulated recording as well as a selective montage of a particular period in the Flemish minority debate. As such, I am neither willing nor able to generalise the statements of my respondents. On the contrary, I hope my research will be read as a testimony to individual critique, and to the practical value of theory and education. Compared to the educational status of many other so-called minority members in Flanders, most of my respondents have enjoyed a relatively high degree of schooling. The theories they deploy allow them to go beyond feelings of misrecognition when faced with comments that do not conform to their preferred sense of self. Nevertheless, their analyses vary, and out of the resulting tensions, a debate characterised by a high degree of reflexivity emerges.

1 Rearticulating the case of political subjectivities of activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders

“There exists at present a problem which is not without importance for political practice: that of the status, of the conditions of exercise, functioning and institutionalization of scientific discourses” (see: Foucault 1978: 1067-68)

Doing research on minorities is a precarious and hazardous thing to do. Most of the time, it is especially precarious and hazardous for the minority members themselves. Once they have lent their voices to the ears and recorders of researchers, once they have opened up their private and (semi-) public spaces for the objectifying gaze of academic scrutiny, they run the same risk as any object of knowledge – the risk of becoming an object of control through the production of power and knowledge. This explains the ironic overtones of one of my respondents who sarcastically remarked that *‘we’re very sexy these days’* upon observing a recent boom in studies on Moroccans and other Muslims in Flanders and in Europe in general. The dubious honour of being a hot topic in social science was remarked upon in several interactions with my respondents, especially before the actual interviews took place.

The people I interviewed often indicated a high degree of awareness of the fact that they entered into an unequal communicative situation, and asked for clear agreements with respect to my usage of their discourse and their names within the context of my research. Such concerns are closely related to an awareness of the political nature of academic research – a concern that became ever more salient for me as well. This can be illustrated with reference to the very title of this book. In my initial research plan, the project was described as follows: *Islamic identities in Flanders: a discourse analytical approach of evolving Islamic political self-images in a Flemish context (1964 to present)*. The considerations that propelled me to rearticulate this project as research on *Analysing political engagement: an interpretive and functionalist discourse analysis of evolving political subjectivities among public activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders* were fundamentally informed by an increasing awareness of the close and problematic links between political and academic discourse.

But who were the people I talked to? One might say that this is the central issue of any investigation of subjectivity. It should therefore not come as a surprise that I will need a large amount of time and text to come up with some tentative answers. Nevertheless, a rather pragmatic and rough description is in order. Almost all of the interviewees were selected on the basis of their Moroccan background combined with the fact that they were publicly engaged in one or more civil society organisations or party political institutions. They were not selected on the basis of gender, age, migration-related generation, or religious conviction. The primary aim was to interview people engaged in the greatest possible variety of politically relevant organisations with respect to the Flemish field of minority politics. The selection criteria and general rationale behind this process will be described during a discussion of the abstract category of community (see 1.2.2). Nevertheless, it is useful to anticipate an important ethnographic conclusion since my object of investigation did not prove to be a community in any classic sense of the word but rather *a complex intertextual network of people discursively constructing their political engagement with reference to a great variety of concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices, and myself*. This insight is one of the most important reasons that prompted me to abandon my research as an investigation of a Moroccan community in favour of research on activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders.

It is also important to have a general idea of the topics (see: 3.1.3) that were discussed throughout the interviews I conducted. These topics pertained to five main themes: the development of political points of interest; the development of political engagements; the development of political thought; sources of inspiration; and reasons for participating in the interview. Most of the time, I asked open-

ended questions. The interviews thus followed a relatively unstructured pattern. My questions were frequently characterised by a high degree of vagueness. This allowed my respondents to articulate whatever ideas they considered to be relevant with respect to their preferred modes of socio-political engagement. The topics raised within the context of these interviews ranged from issues relating to the Flemish field of civil society organisations to international globalisation-related phenomena and/or foreign conflicts. They included both systemic analyses and highly personalised anecdotes. My interviewees problematised individual activists, intellectuals, politicians and / or political parties, as well as largely hegemonised social practices and discourses. Open-ended questions led to a great variety of answers. Nevertheless, I often experienced a sense of consistency to the various answers that individuals formulated. It was also possible to identify patterns among several individuals. The fascinating complexity of their discourse as well as the shifting and elusive sense of coherence that it triggered on my part, set me on a search for answers that culminated in the book in its current form.

The differences between a project about Islamic political identities within the Moroccan communities of Flanders and a project framed as an investigation into the subjectivities of public activists and intellectuals is not merely an issue of form. This reframing was necessary since my empirical observations were often incompatible with presuppositions carried along in the initial research design. In hindsight, some of the original presuppositions proved to be quite hegemonic within the Flemish public sphere and were criticised by a lot of the intellectuals and activists I talked to.

The subchapters below will illustrate why a rearticulation of the object of investigation was necessary. Subchapter 1.1 provides some contextual information as well as a general outline of the original research design. Subchapter 1.2 will focus on some preliminary observations that prompted me to rearticulate my topic in such a way that it would correspond better to the experiences and observations gathered throughout the interactions with my interviewees. Finally, in subchapter 1.3, I will summarise the topical shifts involved. It summarises the requirements of the heuristic needed in order to analyse the socio-political engagements of my respondents in an adequate way. As such, it sheds some light on what is to come in the next chapter. Chapter 1 prepares the ground for chapter 2 which focuses on the heuristic aspects of a linguistic pragmatic, pragmatist, and poststructuralist approach to socio-political subjectivity.

1.1 A contextualisation of the original research design

The original description of my research project will be discussed below. It is useful to have a general idea of the initial formulation of this text in order to avoid some pitfalls with respect to the usage of abstract categories such as community, identity, and politics. Moreover, a discussion of the original research design sheds some light on an aspect of the research process that is usually left implicit. Even though most explorative research in the humanities requires processes of rearticulation, this is rarely acknowledged in an explicit way. By emphasising the specific ways in which I have come to reframe my research project, I wish to demonstrate how an explicit consideration of this process may highlight important aspects of the academic and socio-political problematics under investigation.

The original research design was informed by (a) an imbalance between the discourse about and the discourse produced by Muslims in the Flemish public sphere. My research was meant to (b) close an existing knowledge gap between processes of identity formation, political positioning, and political organisation. This involved (c) an interdisciplinary approach. Moreover, (d) the original research design was informed by methodological considerations. Lastly, it is important to acknowledge (e) the concept of politics informing my original research design. As we will see, a detailed understanding of the initial project text is important in order to understand how the discourse of the activists and intellectuals I talked to challenges hegemonic notions of identity, community, and politics that seeped into the original project description.

1.1.1 An imbalance between the discourse about and the discourse by Muslims in the Flemish public sphere

The initial project description was entitled *Islamic identities in Flanders: a discourse analytical approach of evolving Islamic political self-images in a Flemish context (1964 to present)*. A brief abstract of the initial research design read as follows: “*in this project, publicly accessible and elicited discourse produced by Muslims is studied from the perspective of linguistic pragmatics, cultural history, and ethnography. The research will be carried out in view of an analysis of the Islamic political identities that are developing in Muslim communities in Flanders*”. After preliminary observations were made, the proposal required some rethinking. These observations will be discussed in the upcoming sub- sections. However, at this point, the notion of Islamic political identities requires our attention.

The original project description stated that both in the social debate and in academic studies one often presupposes that there is an increasing salience of Islam and religion as a central identity marker within allochthon communities. Moreover, the research outline pointed out that the presupposed importance of religion as a central identity marker is often depicted as a potential political danger. It also stated that such problematisations become especially salient with respect to debates about the headscarf, terrorism, the Danish cartoon issue, and so on. Simultaneously, “*the discourse and the self-images of Flemish Muslims are usually left out of the picture*”. Countering this imbalanced representation was – and still is – one of the major objectives of this project.

1.1.2 Filling the knowledge gap on the relation between processes of identity formation, political positioning, and political organisation

The original research design acknowledged an increasing scientific focus on the European / Belgian / Flemish Muslim population from the early nineties on (Witte et al. 1993). Historians attempted to reconstruct the recent migration waves from Morocco and Turkey to Belgium (Khoojinian 2005; Morelli 1992), and sociologists investigated the attitudes and convictions of Turkish and Moroccan migrants in Brussels (Swyngedouw et al. 1999). Other interesting projects included research on the relationship between mosques and emancipatory dynamics of Muslim minorities in Diaspora (Kanmaz 1999, 2007) and research on the secular and religious trajectories of Maghrebi in Belgium (Fadil 2002, 2008a). Anthropologists were also involved in the investigation of the experience of identity among various groups of so-called allochthons (Foblets and Cornelis 2003). Moreover, the integration of Muslims in existing institutions and structures such as education and health care became an object of investigation (Peeters et al. 1997). Attention was also devoted to issues related to citizenship (Foblets and Hubeau, 1997) and to the ways in which Islam is being problematised within so-called multicultural society by so-called autochthons (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Van Dijk 1988; Vandenbrande 1997). For a brief sociology of the so-called Moroccan communities in Flanders, see 2.3.2.

Based on this explorative literature review and on collected expert opinions, it became obvious that there was a significant knowledge gap with respect to processes of identity formation in relation to political positioning and organisation as far as (descendants of) Moroccan migrants in Flanders was concerned. The research project intended to fill this gap by investigating the place of religion vis-à-vis identity formation in the last forty years. The research design acknowledged that the investigation of this relationship was informed by a “*common perception of a gap between the (presupposed) premises of an Islamic identity and (acceptable) forms of political participation*”. My research should therefore answer the following questions: “*Is there indeed an increase in references to Islam in the definitions of Self? Since when? What (interior or foreign) factors determined this evolution? How is this ‘Islamic identity’ conceptualized and articulated? And what consequences does all of this have on the political positioning of Flemish Muslims? For instance, when and to what degree, do religious argumentations*

support political statements? And in what sense does all of this evolve?”. While I still hope to answer some of these questions as we go, an overall rearticulation of the research design will prove to be necessary. The reasons for such a reframing will be investigated in subchapter 1.2. There was a significant tension between the original project description which presupposed an a priori connection between Islamic and political aspects of identity, and research questions that questioned if, when, where, and to what extent Islamic and political aspects of identity can be articulated with each other.

1.1.3 An interdisciplinary perspective

From the very beginning, it was clear that this research project would require an interdisciplinary endeavour. As can be observed in the original project text, it was meant to integrate theoretical and methodological insights derived from three disciplines: linguistic pragmatics; oral history; and ethnographic anthropology. The original project description highlighted the fact that there was a significant potential for common ground between these disciplines with respect to the notion of identity. It also stated that perspectives within these three disciplines tend to conceptualize identity in terms of a *“process of ‘identification’ as a meaningful generation of social relations in terms of ‘equality’ and ‘difference’”*.

Linguistic pragmatics understood as *“the study of linguistic phenomena from the point of view of their usage properties and processes”* (Verschueren 1999) is usually pre-occupied with the generation of meaning through discourse. This perspective on language use would provide theoretical and conceptual tools to investigate how people generated meaningful self-images with respect to their presupposedly Islamic political identities. The disciplinary perspective of oral history would foreground the historical aspects of such meaning generation. The project text stated that *“precisely by considering the historicity of identities and by considering self-images as ‘moments’, one gains a deeper insight into modern processes of identity construction (de Smaele 2009: forthcoming)”*. Moreover, whereas oral history would highlight the role of historical context in processes of identity formation, ethnographic anthropology would highlight the importance of and provide the tools for *“approaching (Flemish) Muslim communities first and foremost as local, indigenous social and cultural groups and not as the exotic, strange, and Oriental Other (Ahmed and Donnan 1994)”*. Furthermore, *“insights and frameworks from anthropology should help to clarify the relationship between self-images, practices, and political positionings (T. Turner 1993)”*.

I already pointed out that preliminary observations forced me to rearticulate the initial research design in terms of an analysis of political engagement. This topical rearticulation also entailed a rearticulation of the relationship between the disciplines involved. Insights derived from linguistic pragmatics, oral history, and ethnographic anthropology still feed into the contextual background and into the actual analysis of the data. However, in order to connect these insights to one another, and to generate a coherent approach, an even wider interdisciplinary net needed to be cast. The particular configuration of this web of theories, concepts, and methods, as used in the various phases of this research project, will be outlined in chapter 2.

1.1.4 Methodological considerations

The original research design contained some ideas and concepts with respect to methodology that required some rethinking as well. The data for analysis would accommodate the three disciplines informing this project. As can be read in the original text: *“the methodology of linguistic pragmatics requires a diversity of types of discourse in order to demonstrate patterns of meaning generation in a reliable way, which would allow for conclusions about the ideologically embedded meanings of the data (Lee and Pyonton 2000; Verschueren 2011; Wood and Kroger 2000)”*. Moreover, *“the historical perspective entails specific demands with respect to the chronological proliferation of the sources, whereas the anthropological perspective compels one towards a clear delineation of the investigated*

community". In order to accommodate for the linguistic pragmatic perspective, sources would include both publicly accessible sources derived from various *"media, statements, documents of Islamic organisations and multicultural forums whereby Islamic organisations and opinion leaders express an Islamic political identity towards the outside world"*. These sources would then be confronted with elicited (recorded and transcribed) discourse gathered through in-depth interviews.

It is important to note that these interviews were meant *"to involve the larger group of Muslims who are not or hardly organised in the research"*. Moreover, the historical framework would take important developments with respect to three 'areas' into account. These areas pertain to *"three references in the identity construction of European Muslims"*. They include: the so-called 'country of origin', the European country of settlement and the 'ummah' (the world community of Muslims). The text even suggested some tentative dates such as 1964 (the conclusion of the Belgian-Moroccan treaties on migration), 1974 (the immigration stop as a consequence of the economic crisis, and the official recognition of Islam as an official Belgian religion), 1978-79 (Iranian revolution), 1988 (first electoral victory of the Vlaams Blok in Antwerp). The informants who were supposed to talk about these issues would *"obviously belong to various generations"*.

Lastly, the methodological section of the research design contained some interesting statements with respect to the notion of community. The text stated that *"the field work, because of reasons of feasibility, will be restricted to the current communities of Arab (predominantly Maghrebian) descent in Antwerp. The supervisors are aware that this limitation bears consequences with respect to the research results. However, since the project aims to connect the discourses with the specific socio-cultural context of the speakers, such a limitation is necessary"*. It is for this reason that the research would take note of the (history of) the sub-cultural organisation of Maghrebian Muslims in Antwerp (i.e. the establishment of organisations, mosques, neighbourhoods, halal butchers, and so on), so that discourses are not considered to be autonomous with respect to the practices and forms of everyday life. On the other hand, *"where possible, comparisons with research about other regions and other groups"* would be introduced.

1.1.5 An implicit concept of politics

A last set of contextual parameters that might shed some light on the project as originally formulated remained implicit. These parameters deal with the genesis of this project. Whenever I described my research project to colleagues, friends, and strangers, they often asked me whether I had any sort of affiliation with Moroccans or with the Moroccan community before I started my research. My answer to such questions was a straightforward ⟨no⟩. Previous to my first contacts with my respondents within the context of this research project, my knowledge about my so-called research object was second-hand at best.

Initially, my main concern was not so much focused on the topic of *evolving Islamic political self-images in a Flemish context (1964 to present)*, as it was focused on the theoretical and empirical aspects of processes of identification and politics. This interest gradually evolved throughout my training in communication sciences at the Free University of Brussels. My master's thesis entitled *'War' against 'Terror': a discourse theoretical political analysis of American neoconservative defence discourse surrounding 9/11 inspired by the conceptual framework of Laclau and Mouffe*, was a culmination of this interest which impacted upon the design of the research under discussion. This can be demonstrated with reference to the fact that I became an adherent to the notion of politics as used within the Essex school of discourse theory¹. I will focus on the intricacies of this type of discourse theory in the second chapter of this book. For now, it should suffice to point out that I was heavily influenced by the idea of a primacy of politics in the constitution of social relations and identities. This idea implies that one can conceptualize the difference between the category of the

¹ The Essex school of discourse theory is a cover term for a poststructuralist approach to discourse, subjectivity, identity, and politics. I will provide a detailed outline of this set of theories in subchapter 2.1.

social and the category of the political on the basis of the concepts sedimentation and (re)activation. Social relations are created throughout political struggle. However, such relations cease to be political when they sediment over time in an institutional ensemble of rules, norms, values, and regularities that we take for granted in our daily lives. As the political origin of social relations fades over time, these relations gradually sediment and institutionalise (Torfing 1999: 69-70).

Even though the political origins of a social relationship may be forgotten, they cannot be eliminated in any ontological sense of the word. For this reason, processes of reactivation of this political dimension occur whenever institutionalised practices become problematic. Both sedimentation and reactivation are political processes. The primacy of politics thus entails a notion of politics as the organising principle for the constitution of all social relations, for the formation of intra-societal spheres such as the state, the economy, and civil society. At the same time, politics is not reducible to any of these spheres alone. It should also be pointed out that the primacy of politics does not imply that everything should be labeled politics. In spite of the fact that daily routines such as watching television, shopping, or going to a mall, all have a political origin that may become salient in specific contexts, such origins remain latent most of the time to most actors. The notion of the primacy of politics favours a pragmatic usage of notions such as the political and the social (Torfing 1999: 69-70).

Whenever I formulated a politics-related notion such as *Islamic political identities* within the context of the initial research design, I interpreted this notion in terms of the idea of the primacy of politics. However, once again, empirical observations gathered throughout the interactions with my respondents forced me to critically evaluate and to investigate this idea. Lastly, it should also be pointed out that my fascination with the Essex school framework for discourse theory went hand in hand with a critical stance towards its lack of methodological tools. My main intellectual motivation to undertake this research may therefore be described as an attempt to look for analytical tools that would allow for a more empirical approach to investigating the research program outlined by the Essex school of discourse theory within the field of linguistic pragmatics.

1.2 Empirical observations and the need for a new research orientation

Several empirical observations prompted me to rearticulate the topic of investigation, the required theoretical and disciplinary perspectives, as well as the methodologies used for analysis. The sections below will illustrate the close and problematic links between political and academic discourse that should be taken into account throughout the entire book. Nevertheless, before we go into the usage of the notions of community, identity, and politics by the interviewees, it is important to shed some light on my way of marking topics and rearticulations (see 1.2.1).

A first set of observations pertains to the fact that the very categories of politics, culture, economics, ethnicity, community, and religion do not belong exclusively to the repertoire of academic research. These concepts also figure in everyday language use related to minority politics. Consequently, one cannot simply presuppose that the way an academic conceptualises notions such as identity, community, or politics automatically corresponds to the usage of the same word by his or her interviewees. These observations will be exemplified (see 1.2.2).

Secondly, my interviewees clearly articulated themselves with reference to an enormous array of subject positions, roles, identities, or voices in order to explain their relationships towards various modes of politics, engagements, practices, and institutions in the public sphere. The processes of identification involved in the generation of narratives on personal political engagements thus precluded a limited analysis of individual subjectivities in terms of the categories Islam and politics. At first sight, individuals regularly produced inconsistent statements and switched subject positions as often as they initiated topic shifts within the context of our interviews. Nevertheless, instead of giving a fragmented impression, they somehow managed to convey an impression of relative coherence with respect to their narratives and with respect to their sense of self as marked in discourse. This prompted

new questions with respect to the processes of identity formation and political engagement (see: 1.2.3).

In the sections below, I will argue for an approach that allows for a better understanding of political engagements among activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders. All of this will result in a rearticulated research topic and design (see: 1.3). On the basis of this rearticulated problematisation, I will advocate an interpretative and functionalist approach to political engagement based on pragmatist, poststructuralist, and linguistic pragmatic insights (see: 2).

1.2.1 On the usage of topic and articulation markers

The reader should be aware of the specific usage of certain symbols. This goes especially for the (re)articulation markers < and >. These markers highlight those sections of the text where it is important to illustrate that the words used by the author are literally the same words as those used by the interviewees. The differences in the usage of abstract categories such as <identity>, <community>, or <politics> necessitated the introduction of a visual contextualisation cue that highlights when and where the wordings of researcher and respondent overlap.

(Re)articulation markers should be conceptualized as tools that allow the reader to differentiate between: (1) the analyses of the author as made within the context of this book; and (2) the voices of the interviewees. Moreover, they mark whether the voices of the interviewees are consciously rearticulated or not. Single quotation marks without italics (‘ and ’) serve solely to indicate a coded topic. For instance, a segment of discourse may be coded under the topic ‘definition of the interview situation’. Such codes provide contextual information, coherence, and an introduction as to what the text is about.

All of the data have been translated into English. The original Dutch excerpts are included in the Appendix. The heuristic guidelines and theoretical arguments for the usage of (re)articulation markers and the coding of topics will be discussed in detail in subchapters 1.2.1 and 2.1. Considerations concerning the translation process will be in one of the subsections of subchapter 2.3.1. Reading these guidelines and arguments is not required for understanding the present line of argument. On the other hand, an awareness of the theoretical and heuristic reasons for the use of these markers might deepen the reader’s understanding of the data and the observations presented below.

1.2.2 Using abstract categories in scientific and political discourse

In section 1.1 we noticed that concepts such as community, identity, and politics performed key functions in the original research design. However, observations made throughout the processes of data collection and analysis indicated that these concepts do not belong to the exclusive domain of scientific investigation. This poses significant problems for doing discourse analysis since one has to realise that the very categories used for analysis might be criticised by the respondents themselves. In this sense, scientific investigations into issues such as ethnicity and identity might become politicised in the *Essex* sense of the word (see: 2.1.3). As I will demonstrate below, this frequently happened in the interviews I conducted.

I will not present a full-fledged analysis at this point. Rather, I hope to demonstrate how the usage of abstract categories by my respondents incited me to rearticulate my initial research questions. The observations illustrated below pertain to concepts used in the initial research design. More specifically, I will focus on (a) the notion of identity, on (b) the category of community, and on (c) the concept of politics. On the basis of these preliminary observations and analyses I will (d) draw conclusions with respect to the characteristics of the theoretical framework required for analysis.

a) Identity as an abstract category

The notion of identity as used within the initial research design was problematised by: observations with respect to *identity as an ontological impossibility* in the discourse of some respondents; *identity as constitutive for a sense of self and a sense of politics* for others; and *respondent awareness of using the abstract category of identity*.

Identity as an ontological impossibility

Since most of my interviewees asked me about the topic of my research project, I was usually the one who introduced the concept of ⟨identity⟩ into the interview context. During my first interviews, I truthfully told my respondents that I intended to write about ⟨Islamic political identities⟩. Later on, when I noticed that it would be useful to reframe my project in terms of ⟨political engagements of people with a Moroccan background in Flanders⟩, I told them this as well. The excerpt below is taken from an interview conducted with lawyer Bassim W who used to engage himself for the Flemish socialist party ⟨SPa⟩, and for one of the first minority civil society organisations in Antwerp - ⟨VIP⟩ (Dutch: Vereniging voor Integratie en Participatie)². The interaction takes places at the very beginning of the interview and is coded under the topic ‘definition of the interview situation – Islamic political identities’.

At the beginning of this interaction, I confessed that I was ill at ease with the initial research ⟨title⟩ ⟨Islamic political identities⟩. This was a highly suggestive statement but it is nevertheless interesting to investigate how Bassim W reacted. He responded by exclaiming ⟨ouch⟩, by putting on a painful expression, after which he started to laugh. After my remark that I wanted ⟨to get away from that⟩ topic, he continued to laugh and told me that ⟨it does not⟩ even ⟨exist⟩. At that point, I inferred that he was talking about ⟨Islamic political identities⟩, whereupon I acknowledged that I empathised with his ⟨impression⟩. I agreed in the sense that I found the concept highly problematic. However, there was a slight misunderstanding involved. Within Bassim’s view, it is not merely the case that ⟨Islamic political identities⟩ do ⟨not exist⟩, there is no ⟨Moroccan identity⟩ or ⟨Belgian identity⟩ altogether. This raises the question of how to investigate identities of people who claim that the very notion of ⟨identity⟩ is flawed at best.

BW: and what is the title of your doctoral thesis called JZ: uh yes the original title but I am not so much in favour of that any more I think it was called I think Islamic political identities in uh BW: ouch JZ: in Flanders I know BW: (laughs) JZ: and I am also completely I want to get away from that completely BW: yes yes it does not even (laughs) it does not exist JZ: no that’s why ... that impression well I had that impression as well BW: there is not even a Moroccan identity or Belgian identity, come on (laughs)

excerpt 1 – 20/05/2008

The interaction continues in the excerpt below. I acknowledged that I would like to ⟨take out the Islamic⟩ from my research title. I told him that in spite of the fact that ⟨Islam⟩ sometimes pops up as a ⟨political topic⟩, it is never discussed in isolation from other topics. Moreover, ⟨Islam⟩ is rarely the ⟨most important⟩ topic raised when I talked to people about their so-called ⟨identity⟩. In the excerpt below, Bassim subscribes to this analysis and states that a limited ⟨number of hotheads⟩ influences ⟨public opinion⟩ with respect to the topic of the Islamic or Moroccan ⟨community⟩ in Flanders. It is

² The English translation of the acronymy VIP is Association for Integration and Participation.

also interesting to note that Bassim associated ⟨Islamic political identities⟩ with ⟨hotheads⟩ going ⟨to war⟩ over the ⟨Islamic⟩ ⟨element⟩. In the end, I stated that I was ⟨predominantly going to talk with people with a Moroccan background⟩ ⟨who engage themselves in various ways⟩. Moreover, I acknowledged that this would lead me to a great variety in terms of ⟨topics⟩ that would be co-constructed throughout the interactions, and in terms of the ⟨ways in which⟩ ⟨politics⟩ would be talked about. This prediction proved to be true and turned out to be the focal point of the analyses to come.

JZ: No I am noticing that more and more so I have if I would be allowed to change the title I would definitely take out the Islamic ... also because when I talk to those people actually ... sometimes Islam is discussed as a political topic actually sometimes it does happen in those conversations but that is definitely not the only thing that comes up uhm also quite often it is not the most important or the BW: no ... it's unfortunate that a number of hotheads put that as the most important element to the fore and that because of that public opinion ultimately gets the wrong image of the remainder of the community

JZ: yes

BW: But the largest part of the community uhm is might might be pious might might be Islamic might might (?) but will not go uhm to war for it (laughs) or or or uhm

JZ: no that is why the title I know it creates immediately the impression as if

BW: it really are a few hotheads yes yes

JZ: in that sense so uhm but that is definitely not my intention to elaborate on it that way uhm

BW: yes

JZ: so uhm what it eventually became is when it began back then it was not yet so delineated uhm uhm in the end it is rather something like I am predominantly going to talk with people with a Moroccan background I will but indeed they really engage themselves in various ways that eh .. yes the topics and so on that are being treated and also the ways in which they talk about politics vary enormously of course eh so uhm ... and that is what I really want to

excerpt 2 – 20/05/2008

The concept of identity as constitutive for a sense of self and a sense of politics

Not all of my respondents denied the ontological possibility of ⟨identity⟩. The concept of ⟨identity⟩ often functioned as an important signifier in the discursive construction of both their sense of self and their sense of politics. This can be illustrated with reference to an interview conducted with former AEL (Arab-European League) activist Issam Z. As can be observed below, he wields a concept of ⟨identity⟩ that is closely intertwined with his usage of the notion of ⟨individuality⟩³. The excerpt below is coded as follows: ‘on Issam’s feeling that he had to give up his individuality, on his search for self-respect in Islam, and the answer to the issue of individuality provided by the AEL’. Within this context, Issam explained how he ⟨always⟩ thought in terms of ⟨fighting for your individuality⟩.

The way in which ⟨someone⟩ like ⟨AEL⟩ chairman Dyab Abou Jahjah was able ⟨to put⟩ this ⟨sharply⟩, was one of the main reasons why he was attracted to the ⟨AEL⟩. In the excerpt below, Issam explains how he got the ⟨feeling⟩ of a ⟨pressure to be like⟩ the majority and of having to ⟨give up⟩ his ⟨individuality⟩. He goes on and explains how his initial response consisted in reading ⟨a lot about Islam⟩. This practice gave him ⟨a kind of self-esteem⟩. Issam continued and explained how his readings about ⟨Islam⟩, about its ⟨history⟩ and its ⟨civilisation⟩, allowed him to respond to suppression in a particular way. He responded by highlighting his knowledge of this ⟨beautiful culture⟩ and ⟨civilisation⟩ whenever he was ⟨suppressed⟩ for supposedly being ⟨culturally backwards⟩. Nevertheless, the ⟨AEL⟩ showed him that ⟨you don’t need to be very pious in order to possess an individuality⟩.

³ It should be noted that within the context of my interview conducted with Issam Z, the English notion of ⟨individuality⟩ serves as an approximate translation of the Dutch word ⟨eigenheid⟩. *Eigenheid* may also be translated as *particularity*, or *selfhood*. It has a reflexive connotation that highlights an idea of uniqueness. However, upon reading my analysis, Issam asked me to emphasise that my English translation of *eigenheid* should not be mistaken for a ⟨liberal⟩ and autonomous sense of self. To Issam, the notion of ⟨eigenheid⟩ implies a reflexive stance towards one’s socio-cultural heritage. For lack of a better alternative, I have translated this notion in terms of ⟨individuality⟩.

IZ: For years, you live with the concept of a kind of, ... I always had this concept of fighting for your individuality. But someone who had a clear view on this, and who was able to put it sharply, and so on, ... no bullshit ... who could put it very sharply, like it's like this, and it's like that, it's really fantastic to experience this.

JZ: So, how did you feel before this?

IZ: Well, my feeling before was, ... you are thirteen fourteen years old. And then it starts. You feel something isn't right. You are completely different and you feel, on the other side there is a pressure to be like them, and you have to give up your individuality in order to go along with, ... jokes about Moroccans, with a certain perspective on life, with a certain lifestyle. And very early I have, resisted might not be the right word, but my way of dealing with this, I had discovered being a Muslim very early, and I started to read a lot about Islam. And there, for the first time, I got another representation of Islam than what you hear all of the time, even back then eh, I am talking about '95 '96.

JZ: By the way, how old are you?

IZ: 28, so, I was fourteen fifteen years old when I started to read about this. Everything I started to read about Islam back then basically gave me some kind of self-esteem eh. Because, we have had a history that you can definitely be proud of, with a lot of positive aspects connected to it. It's a civilisation with a beautiful culture that has triggered a lot. And my way of dealing with it back then, ... when you're being explicitly pushed into repression for being retarded or culturally backwards, ... was to emphasise this. But thanks to the AEL, I was able to learn that you don't even need this. You don't need to be very pious in order to possess an individuality, (this turn continues in the excerpt below).

excerpt 3 – 03/09/2007

The interaction between Issam Z and myself continues in the excerpt below. Thanks to the ⟨AEL⟩, it became possible for Issam to differentiate between being a ⟨Muslim because of⟩ ⟨Islam⟩ as a ⟨religion⟩, and being a ⟨Muslim because of⟩ one's ⟨culture⟩. The consequences of an inability to do so are exemplified with reference to a friend of his who ⟨did feel like a Muslim⟩ but who was also marked by ⟨Flemish society⟩. Consequently, this person who was ⟨very rigorously involved with Islam⟩ entered into a ⟨crisis of faith⟩ that caused him ⟨to derail⟩⁴. According to Issam, the ⟨AEL⟩ was able to provide answers to such religious crises. He rearticulated this potential AEL response as follows: ⟨“look, that's normal, when you study here, you start to think, you start to ask critical questions, and your faith may succumb to that”⟩.

However, the AEL response entailed a differentiation between ⟨your individuality⟩ or ⟨identity⟩ on the one hand, and your ⟨piety⟩ or ⟨religion⟩ on the other. Issam goes on rearticulating the AEL response to a ⟨crisis of faith⟩. If one is able to retain one's piety or ⟨belief⟩ this is ⟨a nice extra⟩. However, the AEL response also grants legitimacy to a Muslim ⟨identity⟩ or ⟨individuality⟩ that is not religious. Issam put it as follows: ⟨it's not because you lose your faith, that you have to start living in complete discord with your culture and with your religion⟩. Nevertheless, according to Issam, this is a typical response among ⟨a lot of allochthons⟩. His observation that a lot of ⟨Muslims⟩ become more ⟨pious⟩ is explained in terms of a ⟨search for individuality⟩, a ⟨search for identity⟩, and ⟨a search for a place⟩ one can occupy in this society ⟨without giving up too much of oneself⟩. Issam concludes this topic by asking himself ⟨why⟩ one needs ⟨a religion⟩ to find such a ⟨place⟩, such an ⟨individuality⟩, and / or such an ⟨identity⟩.

IZ: (this turn is a continuation of the turn above) and to have a clear separation like 'I can be a Muslim and I can be proud of this', but I can also be a Muslim because of my culture. And this is something I continually, ... something I saw ... For instance, I had a friend in Leuven who was very rigorously involved with Islam. And at a certain moment he got into a crisis of faith, and this has caused him to

⁴ Issam asked me to emphasise that the origin of this ⟨crisis of faith⟩ should not be explained in religious terms. Rather, this crisis was triggered by his friend's experiences as a Muslim in the Flemish public sphere.

derail to such an extent, he saw no way out. He did feel like a Muslim, but at the same time, this Flemish society had marked him, and he simply couldn't find a way out. I think the AEL could have given an answer to this, like "look, that's normal, when you study here, you start to think, you start to ask critical questions, and your faith may succumb to that. But you have to be able to distinguish between your individuality, identity on the one hand, and being pious, faith, on the other hand. When you have this [faith], that's a nice extra. But it's not because you lose your faith, that you have to start living in complete discord with your culture and with your religion". And this is what you see happening with a lot of allochthons today eh. Today, you see a lot of allochthons, this is my opinion about it, when you see that a lot of Muslims are actually becoming more pious, this is a search for individuality, a search for identity, a search for a place you can conquer in this society. A place of your own without giving up too much of oneself. But of course, the question is ... it's a bit unfortunate that you need a religion to do so. Why isn't this possible just like that, why can't you just, with your individuality as identity ... (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 4 – 03/09/2007

Issam's last remarks with respect to the notion of identity prompted me to ask him what he meant by ⟨identity⟩ in a more explicit way. The excerpt below is a continuation of the excerpt above. However, it is coded under a different topic – i.e. 'the struggle of the AEL as a struggle for a concept of identity as being who you are with your particular cultural heritage'. In the first lines of the excerpt below, Issam states that the concept of identity refers to ⟨living in a society⟩ ⟨where people take you as you are⟩ - including your identity ⟨as a Moroccan⟩. He also provides another definition of identity in the last lines of the excerpt below: no matter ⟨whether you're a Muslim or not, whether you experience that actively or not, you are who you are, including your cultural heritage⟩. In Issam's opinion, this was ⟨the struggle of the AEL⟩. It is therefore interesting to note that ⟨cultural heritage⟩ - no matter whether this heritage refers to ⟨Islamic⟩, ⟨Moroccan⟩, and/or ⟨Berber⟩ identity, and no matter whether one considers oneself to be a ⟨modern Muslim⟩ – the main issue to Issam is not to be apologetical with respect to one's ⟨individuality⟩ or ⟨identity⟩.

According to Issam, people who claim to be ⟨modern⟩ Muslims ultimately defend themselves against an ⟨other⟩ who claims that you are not ⟨"good enough"⟩. A self-identification as a ⟨modern Muslim⟩ thus amounts to a ⟨mea culpa⟩ that is not compatible with Issam's preferred senses of self and politics. We may conclude by observing that Issam's implicitly and explicitly articulated notion of ⟨identity⟩ is wielded synonymously with the notion of ⟨individuality⟩. Moreover, his concept of ⟨identity⟩ functions at a very high level of abstraction. Ethnic and religious markers such as ⟨Muslim⟩ or ⟨Moroccan⟩ are merely part of the ⟨cultural heritage⟩ that an individual may carry along. His own activities within the context of the AEL can therefore be described as a political struggle over a particular concept of ⟨identity⟩ or ⟨individuality⟩. Issam's concept of identity thus challenges theoretical models of identity formation wherein one talks about multiple or hybrid identities. To Issam, the identity question is a tautology at the highest level of abstraction, it is about being accepted ⟨as you are⟩.

JZ: (this interaction is a continuation of the excerpt above) What do you mean with identity?

IZ: Well, simply, as a Moroccan, simply living in a society, a society where people simply take you as you are.

JZ: Why do you think this type of individual identity development is less attractive than ...

IZ: Because you are being repressed. Exactly because of your being a Moroccan in this society. What choice do you have left?

JZ: And is it about being Moroccan, or Muslim, or a combination, ... ?

IZ: A combination. I don't think you can separate this that strictly. Being a Moroccan partially means speaking Arabic or Berber. I'm not so much in favour of drawing a line, ... But I do know that among the group of Muslims who are pious, they will always try to distinguish like "on the one hand there is traditional Islam, but we are different, we are modern Muslims, we are a renewed Islam ...".

JZ: And what do they consider to be traditional Islam?

IZ: Well, the Islam of their parents from Morocco, people who didn't enjoy an education, whose Islam was inherited by their parents and village imam. "but we are not like this, we are more modern", this is supposed to be some sort of legitimization of them being Muslim, something I consider to be bullshit.

Because, in the end you succumb to the same mechanism, because you are different you will have to do

your best, you will have to show something that proves you are civilised nevertheless. And their way of doing so is to say like “look, we are going back to the basis of Islam, and if you take a look at this, there are some scientific arguments that are being confirmed by science”. And I think this is a step too far. It’s still a type of mea culpa one does. This other who is demanding like “you’re not good enough, show me something”. Whereas I’m like, “whether you’re a Muslim or not, whether you experience this actively or not, you are who you are, including your cultural heritage, ...”. According to me, this was the struggle of the AEL.

excerpt 5 – 03/09/2007

Respondent awareness of using the abstract category of identity

Respondents who use abstract concepts such as ⟨identity⟩ often display a high degree of awareness of the particular ways in which such concepts are articulated. Within linguistics, this mental awareness of the way an aspect of discourse is being used is called metapragmatic awareness (see: Verschueren 1999: 187-88). Like any other reflexive process in language use, metapragmatic awareness may or may not be marked explicitly in discourse. However, in the end, “*every discourse simultaneously says something in itself (e.g. it describes a particular state of affairs ‘out there’) and about itself, about how that discourse should be interpreted, situated in relation to context, social relations, and so on. Such indexical levels can also be called ‘metalinguistic’ (i.e. about linguistic structure) or ‘metapragmatic’ (i.e. about forms of usage of language)*” (Blommaert 2005: 253). The implications for an analysis of political discourse about concepts such as ⟨identity⟩ may not be underestimated.

The excerpt below is taken from an interview I conducted with Najim Einauan. At the time of the interview, Najim was engaged in an umbrella organisation of youth organisations called PAJ (Platform Allochtone Jeugdwerkingen, i.e. Platform Allochthon Youth Organisations). The excerpt below is coded under the topic ‘Najim’s engagement as a practice of wading through prejudices in a Flanders with an identity crisis’. Within this context, Najim rearticulates the voices of ⟨policy makers⟩, ⟨journalists⟩, and ⟨politicians⟩ who question what ⟨allochthon youth work⟩ is ⟨good for⟩. He uses direct reported speech⁵ (see Coulmas 1998: 778-79; Holt 2009) in order to articulate their argument against an organisation such as PAJ: ⟨You lock yourselves away in your own identity. Why don’t you just join the Scouts and the Chiro?⟩ (see Baumers 2008; De Ceulaer 2009; Debusscher 2010)⁶.

Najim also articulates his own response to such voices in the excerpt below: ⟨come on man, wake up, (laughs) they are not welcome there, it is not adapted to them ...⟩. Moreover, according to Najim, ⟨as far as the topic of integration is concerned⟩, ⟨Flanders is faced with an identity crisis⟩. Reproaches on the part of ⟨journalists⟩, ⟨politicians⟩, and ⟨policy makers⟩ with respect to people locking themselves away in their own ⟨identity⟩ are thus countered with his own analysis of a Flanders that is faced with an ⟨identity crisis⟩.

Upon reading my analysis and transcription of his remarks with respect to Scouts and Chiro, Najim was quite surprised by the sharpness of his original statements. Because he was not very familiar with interviews at the time, he asked me to nuance his statements. His remarks with respect to Scouts and

⁵ The term reported speech is used to refer to the presentation of discourse that purports to be from a prior occasion, and may originate from another author. Direct reported speech occurs when someone refers to another speech situation and (claims to) convey(s) the original speaker’s exact words. Direct reported speech implies the articulation of two deictic centers or perspectives – that of the interaction one refers to and that of the ongoing communicative situation (e.g. *He looked at her furiously and said ‘Why can’t you stop it? Really! Why do you go on with this comedy?’*). Indirect reported speech has only one deictic center: that of the communicative situation. The point of view of the reported utterance and the report is the same (e.g. *He looked at her furiously and asked her why she could not stop it, and why she continued with the comedy*). Quasi direct reported speech implies reference to two deictic centers without an explicit reference to another speaker or speech event (e.g. *Why couldn’t she stop it? Really! Why did she go on with this comedy?*).

⁶ Youth organisations are increasingly popular in Belgium compared to most other European countries. *Chiro* was the biggest organisations in 2008 and counted almost 80 000 members. In 2009 there were 95 000 members and 15 000 leaders. *Scouts en Gidsen Vlaanderen* (Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts Flanders) counted almost 75 000 members in 2008. In 2009 they still counted 75 000 members and 13 000 leaders. Scouting and Chiro are the most popular youth organisations in Belgium. However, research from 2010 shows that the members predominantly belong to white middle class families.

Chiro were first and foremost a reaction to politicians who presuppose that the participation of a group of allochthon youngsters in a Chiro group would lead to an assimilation of these youngsters into an unchanging Chiro group identity. To Najim, this is absurd, since we are dealing with two groups with different subcultural tastes that are linked to variants in youth culture. He also emphasised that self-organisation of ethnic minorities is a right. In this sense, the argument of locking oneself away in one's identity might as well be directed at organisations of homosexual, lesbian, and bisexual people who create their own organisations, which is also absurd to Najim.

Both the original excerpt and Najim's comments a few years later illustrate the extent to which respondents may be aware of the problematic ways in which notions such as ⟨identity⟩ may be used by themselves as well as by socio-political opponents. Najim's remarks with respect to the discourse of his opponents exemplifies how metapragmatic awareness is constitutive of political awareness. All forms of critique imply an awareness of the way meanings are generated through discourse.

NE: My job and the job of all of my colleagues consist in uhm ... wading through piles of prejudices and trying to make something out of it nevertheless (laughs).

JZ: mmh

NE: I hear from uhm policy makers, and from journalists, and from politicians like "Allochthon youth work, come on, what is that good for? You lock yourselves away in your own identity. Why don't you just join Scouts and Chiro?"

JZ: mmh

NE: Then I think like, "come on man, wake up (laughs), they are not welcome over there, it is not adapted to them ... It's, it's an evolution. So, as far as the topic of integration is concerned, ... I think Flanders is faced with an identity crisis.

JZ: mmh (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 6 – 03/07/2008

The interaction continues in the excerpt below. The topic under discussion is still 'Najim's engagement as a practice of wading through prejudices in a Flanders with an identity crisis'. He associates the Flemish ⟨identity crisis⟩ with the discourse about so-called ⟨integration⟩. Najim framed the problem as follows: ⟨one is faced with a schizophrenic phenomenon over here⟩ in the sense that ⟨one says like we "want to stimulate integration", but one wants assimilation⟩. According to Najim, ⟨allochthons who are incited to integrate themselves⟩ are presented with a ⟨totally unrealistic⟩ ⟨image⟩. Contrary to this image, someone who follows ⟨an *inburgering* course⟩ (see: 2.3.2), who ⟨speaks Dutch fluent⟩, or who is ⟨active in an association⟩ and ⟨friendly to his neighbours⟩, will still have no guarantee of not being ⟨discriminated⟩.

NE: (this interaction is a continuation of the excerpt above) One is faced with a schizophrenic phenomenon over here. One says like "we want to stimulate integration", but one wants assimilation.

JZ: mmh

NE: One calls it integration, but the measures one proposes are assimilation, ... The image one presents new *inburgeraars* and allochthons who are incited to integrate themselves is totally unrealistic.

JZ: mmh

NE: If you simply take a look at what's going on in society. The image of public opinion, ... 'you come to Belgium, ... you learn Dutch, ... you follow an *inburgering* course, and all doors will be opened to you, you will be equal, you will have all the opportunities your fellow country men already have, here in Belgium ...'. It isn't like this ... Of course, it's good that one is *inburgering* eh (laughs). I don't have a problem with this, but we shouldn't pretend as if someone who is following an *inburgering*

course, or who is pushing his kids to follow a nice education, or who speaks Dutch fluent and is active in an association, or friendly to his neighbours, pays his taxes in time, and puts out the garbage at the right time, ... that he will not be discriminated (laughs), ...

JZ: yes yes

NE: or that he, eh, that he will not be addressed uhm, feel addressed by these negative stories, and by the entire perception about this, ... So, I think that Flanders has to look itself in the mirror (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 7 – 03/07/2008

In the last line of the excerpt above, Najim stated that ⟨Flanders has to look itself in the mirror⟩. He goes on in the excerpt below, and states that Flanders has never reconciled itself with its own ⟨history⟩ of ⟨collaboration⟩ during WW II. Moreover, there is no ⟨uniform image⟩ of ⟨Belgians⟩ any more. The ⟨ever changing image⟩ of ⟨Flanders⟩ has made such a ⟨romanticised⟩ or ⟨idealised⟩ image superfluous. For this reason, political discourse about ⟨the hard-working Fleming or Belgian⟩ does not appeal to the ⟨allochthon Flemings⟩, according to Najim. Also, ⟨community⟩⁷ politics between Walloons and Flemish totally escape these people. Ultimately then, the Flemish ⟨identity crisis⟩ leads to a non-recognition on the part of ⟨allochthons⟩ in Flemish or Belgian terms, and to a lack of ⟨dialogue⟩ between the Belgian ⟨communities⟩.

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) Mmh

NE: We also noticed, of course, we know the history of Flanders as well eh, I mean uhm, Flanders has never really faced itself with respect to uhm, with respect to the collaboration. And this has taken place a long time ago, but perhaps one needs to face oneself. The changing image, the ever changing image, Flanders today isn't the Flanders of Louis Paul Boon and the Kappellekesbaan eh, we don't live in bygone days anymore

JZ: mmh

NE: One used to have a uniform image about this eh, in the fifties you were either a Fleming or someone who spoke French (laughs)

JZ: mmh

NE: Today, a Belgian can be someone with allochthon roots, it can be someone who, who, ... the definitions one uses and the romanticised or idealised image one has about oneself, about the Fleming, eh, about the hard-working Fleming or Belgian is not adapted to contemporary reality. And this is sort of where the shoe pinches When some politicians say like “we are doing it for the hard-working Fleming”, a lot of hard-working allochthon Flemings will not feel addressed by that, you know

JZ: Yes, this community stuff (laughs)

NE: Yes. We are staring at this in amazement (laughs) eh, “but these are fellow country men, the same blood eh, uhm, they don't like each other”, and that makes one think like “What will they think about us then?” Okay, I know it is more complicated than this, I don't uhm think it's like this either. I do have some ideas on Flemish uhm, on the Flemish movement that I can appreciate, but what I'm saying is that it's all about perception If one talks about eh, like “for all Flemings, hard working Flemings”, often, allochthons will not recognise themselves in this, you know.

JZ: mmh

⁷ Belgium officially contains a Flemish, a French, and a German community (Dutch: *gemeenschap*). These communities are complex regional policy structures that partially overlap with the other policy structures called regions (Dutch: *gewesten*). Together, these political structures account for the complexities of the federal structure called Belgium. Within this context, Najim Einauan does not refer to common English concepts of community but to these typically Belgian connotations of the concept.

NE: If one talks about our country in the news, one rarely thinks about it like this, but one obviously recognises oneself in “it’s allochthons who have these problems, allochthons should take responsibility, allochthons should draw their conclusions”, and this makes things very difficult. There is no dialogue, there is a gap. There are beginnings, some parties take initiatives, some organisations and groups take initiatives to build bridges. But it’s not always as it should be, and it’s not always what it could be either. The potential is not sufficiently made use of, and this is a prerequisite in order to have a dialogue among the various communities. Allochthons feel hounded. One has investigated feelings of insecurity among the Flemings. One should urgently investigate feelings of insecurity among allochthons.

excerpt 8 – 03/07/2008

A little bit further down the interview, we started to discuss the topic of ‘terminology and knowledge about Islam in the Flemish media’. Within this context, Najim advised me to (take a look at the news) and pointed out that (one has invented a whole new vocabulary) by taking (the predicate Muslim) and attaching it to (a common Flemish word). This (sad) phenomena ultimately functions by means of a (pars pro toto) reasoning: (one reduces a person to the headscarf, or to a piece of his identity that makes him) (a Muslim), (as if) (one would constantly address) (everyone) (raised within the Christian tradition or who is only partially practicing) (on the basis of his Christian or Catholic identity). Najim thus proves to be engaged in a critical form of discourse analysis wherein he metapragmatically comments upon (pars pro toto) or metonymic language use (see Chantrill and Scott Mio 1996; Geeraerts 1998: 586-87; Panther and Radden 2005)⁸ with respect to (identity) and Islamic identity markers.

NE: You should take a look at the news ... a Muslim man eh One has invented a whole new vocabulary. One takes the predicate Muslim and then one takes a common Flemish word one attaches it to. Sometimes, just for fun, I am making some up myself eh, a Muslim pet eh, you can combine it with anything A Muslim man, ... it’s really just sad, it is sad through and through Imagine that one would talk about a Christian country in other countries (laughs), in East Africa eh, that makes one think about (laughs) the crusades A Muslim woman, ... a Muslim restaurant, a Muslim kitchen, a Muslim trip, a Muslim home, a Muslim organisation. I say, the sky is the limit. A Muslim headscarf. You can combine it with anything, and each time one zooms in on it, focusing on it,

JZ: mmh

NE: and one reduces, eh, what is it called again ... a *pars pro toto* eh. One reduces a person to the headscarf, or to a little piece of his identity that makes him, ... uhm, that makes him a Muslim. As if uhm, one would constantly address everybody I know who has been raised in the Christian tradition, or who is even partially practicing, on the basis of his Christian or Catholic identity. Uhm, ... or as if one would address women continually on the basis of their gender eh, or holebi’s on the basis of their orientation. So, it’s, it’s, it’s simply absurd, but apparently, it’s a sign of our times

excerpt 9 – 03/07/2008

A summary of observations with respect to usage of the abstract category of identity

It is possible to provide an even greater variety of examples that illustrate the complex usage of the notion of (identity) and its relations with other aspects of the discourse of my respondents. For the moment however, I will conclude by summarising the observations with respect to the concept of

⁸ A metonymy is a semiotic link between two meaningful elements whose relationship is one of contiguity rather than similarity (as is the case in metaphor). This contiguity may refer to associations in spatial, temporal, physical, or causal domains. Metonymies come in various forms. They may use a part for a whole; a spatial location for what is located there; a period of time for what happens in that period, for the people that live then, or for what it produces; or a material for the product made from it. It should be noted that all of these relations may be reversed in metonymy – e.g. a whole for a part. This list is far from exhaustive. Metonymy plays an important role in the construction of stereotypes and political discourse since it allows a member of a category to stand for the category itself.

⟨identity⟩ that prompted me to rearticulate the title of my research project. A first observation is related to the example of Bassim W who denied the existence of ⟨Islamic political identities⟩, ⟨Moroccan identity⟩, and ⟨Flemish identity⟩. Analysing the remainder of Bassim's discourse in terms of ⟨Islamic political identities⟩ without taking his criticism into account would constitute a flagrant example of a researcher exerting his control, power, and knowledge, in order to overpower the voice of a respondent. We are therefore in need of an analytical framework that allows for an analysis of a multiplicity of contradicting theoretical models that may or may not use similar terminology.

Other empirical observations that highlighted the political nature of academic discourse were illustrated with reference to my interaction with former AEL activist Issam Z. In his case, the double concept of ⟨identity⟩ / ⟨individuality⟩ functioned as an important signifier in the discursive construction of both his sense of self and his sense of legitimate politics. We already noticed that the initial research design contained a significant tension between (1) a presupposed connection between ⟨Islamic⟩ and ⟨political⟩ aspects of ⟨identity⟩ – i.e. an investigation of ⟨Islamic political identities⟩ - and (2) the research questions which basically questioned if, when, where, and to what extent Islamic and political aspects of identity were articulated with one another. By legitimating the AEL project as an attempt to differentiate between ⟨individuality⟩ or ⟨identity⟩ on the one hand, and ⟨piety⟩ or ⟨belief⟩ on the other, Issam implicitly challenged a key presupposition in the initial research project. Moreover, it goes without saying that the contrast with Bassim's usage of the signifier ⟨identity⟩ could hardly be greater. This provides another indication for the need for a solid meta-framework for analysis.

The observations illustrated with reference to the interview conducted with Najim Einan of the Platform Allochthon Youth Work confirm earlier impressions. However, they also illustrate how respondents may display a high degree of metapragmatic awareness in their discussion of political phenomena. Moreover, the example indicated that metapragmatic awareness is constitutive for political awareness. Since any discourse analysis ultimately amounts to a scientifically legitimated metadiscourse, this implies that discourse analysis too, has a political ring to it. This observation required a reformulation of the initial research project in the sense that we are in need of a meta-framework that is able to analyse the discourse analyses of individual respondents as well. At the same time the political dimension of the resulting interpretations should sensitise the researcher not to overpower the voices of his research subjects. We may therefore conclude that all of the examples above pointed to the close and problematic links between academic and political discourse.

b) Community as an abstract category

Some respondents wielded the notion of community in such a way that it indicated *the impossibility of a clear delineation of communities* as proposed in the initial research design. On the other hand, their *objectifying usage of the notion of community* provided another set of reasons to rearticulate the object under investigation. The same goes for observations with respect to pragmatic usage of the abstract category of community. This will be discussed in the subsection *making do with abstract categories within a hegemonic constellation: the varied usage of ⟨community⟩ by a single individual*. On top of the strictly discourse-related observations, ethnographic observations required some critical reflections with respect to the notion of community as a *criterion of unity among the respondents*.

References to community in the initial research design

Another abstract category that required some rethinking was provided by the concept of ⟨community⟩ as used within the original research design on the one hand, and by the individual respondents on the other. The conclusions with respect to this category are very similar to those depicted with respect to the notion of ⟨identity⟩ above. The initial research description stated that the research would be carried out in view of an analysis of the Islamic political identities in Muslim communities in Flanders. It also

stated that both in the social debate and in academic studies one often presupposes that there is an increasing salience of Islam and religion as a central identity marker within allochthon communities. Another reference to the concept of community occurred when we stated that ethnographic anthropology would highlight “*the importance and provide the tools for approaching (Flemish) Muslim communities first and foremost as local, indigenous social and cultural groups and not as the exotic, strange, and Oriental Other (Ahmed and Donnan, 1994)*”. Lastly, the proposal stated that the anthropological perspective compels one towards a clear delineation of the investigated community. Whether we are investigating allochthon communities, (Flemish) Muslim communities, or a Moroccan community, matters greatly. Nevertheless, after having conducted my interviews, and after having attended a multiplicity of political debates on topics related to migration, Islam, and minority politics, I became quite confused with respect to what kind of community I actually investigated. I even wondered if there was a community to be investigated at all. If there was a unity to be ascribed to the various people I interviewed, it certainly did not reside in the fact that they identified themselves as belonging to a single homogenous community.

The impossibility of a clear delineation of communities

Whereas some of my respondents talked about all sorts of ⟨communities⟩ without problematising the notion explicitly, others theorised the notion of ⟨community⟩ in very particular ways. An example of an interesting theorisation is given below. The excerpt is taken from an interview with the ⟨atheist⟩ ⟨cultural⟩ ⟨Muslim⟩ Bilal Benyaich who used to engage himself for the civil society organisation ⟨Kifkif⟩. At the time of the interview, Bilal had already quit Kifkif. During our first interview, Bilal was still employed by this organisation. The excerpt below occurs within a broader context that is coded under the topic ‘Bilal on the reasons for the lack of self-organisations and advocacy of interests – taboos and individualism’.

In the excerpt below, Bilal states that ⟨we live in a very individualist society⟩ and this goes for ⟨allochthons⟩ as well. Moreover, he explains how the very ⟨word allochthon⟩ ⟨creates⟩ an ⟨imagined⟩ ⟨community⟩. Bilal code-switched (see Eastman 1995)⁹ to English when he pronounced the word ⟨imagined⟩¹⁰ (see Anderson 1983: 6). He goes on and states that ⟨an allochthon can be anything⟩. Moreover, he states explicitly that ⟨a Muslim community does not exist⟩ and ⟨has never existed⟩ ⟨in Belgium⟩. According to Bilal, ⟨Islamic structures⟩ and the corresponding ⟨Islamic⟩ ⟨imagined⟩ ⟨community⟩ is ⟨created from the top down⟩ ⟨in Europe⟩. In turn, this imposition functions as a ⟨self-fulfilling prophecy⟩. He goes on and points out that the absence of a ⟨Muslim community⟩ is also due to the fact that ⟨Islam is a very protestant⟩ and ⟨individualist⟩ ⟨religion⟩. According to him, this individualism has been an inhibition to ⟨organisation⟩. On the other hand, ⟨self-organisation⟩ and corresponding advocacy of ⟨interests⟩ will take place – a ⟨positive⟩ process that is already in its early stages. Bilal exemplified this with reference to ⟨amateuristic lobby groups such as the AEL⟩.

It is important to point out that his problematisation of the notion of a ⟨community⟩ as ⟨imagined⟩ and erected through a ⟨self-fulfilling prophecy⟩ proclaimed by autochthon Belgians or Europeans,

⁹ Code-switching refers to language, dialect, or style alternation within a single speech event. It often functions as a contextualisation cue that signals presuppositions and information within an interactional context. Code-switching may therefore index an individual’s orientation towards specific social relations or other aspects of reality. A great deal of contextual knowledge is usually required to make a conversational inference on the basis of a code-switch. Code-switching functions as a part of a system of presuppositions in terms of which an interaction is framed.

¹⁰ It should be pointed out that Bilal is familiar with the work of Benedict Anderson who defined the nation as “*an imagined political community*” that is “*both inherently limited and sovereign*”. Moreover, “*it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion*”. Anderson also points out that “*all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined*”. Moreover, they are to be distinguished “*by the style in which they are imagined*”. The code-switch to English is therefore also a code-switch from a relatively informal to a more academic register.

constitutes a theoretical analysis that goes against the grain of the possibility of a clear delineation of the investigated community as stipulated in the original research proposal. Similar to the abstract category of ⟨identity⟩, particular usages of the notion of ⟨community⟩ prove to be heavily politicised. Comments such as those of Bilal therefore prompted me to leave the notion of ⟨community⟩ out of the rearticulated research title.

BB: But okay ... there are some things one can't talk about On the other hand, ... we live in a very individual or individualistic society. We shouldn't think that ... allochthons, ... that it's some sort of community eh, this is imagined as well It's a community constructed through language, words, 'allochthon' creates a community, but they don't consider each other as a community. An allochthon can be anything eh, and even Muslims, ... the Muslim community does not exist in Belgium and has never existed. It's something that has been created from the top down One can notice this especially in Europe because, ... there were no Islamic structures. These have been constructed, called into life, because of which, ... , it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. They create an Islamic community that's not here in any factual sense of the word. In fact, Islam is a very protestant religion, a very individualistic religion, you see So, this organisation, ... it will come about. It starts with amateuristic lobby groups such as the AEL and so on. Self-organisation is a positive thing. They are young amateurs, but it will happen In the Netherlands one is already a step further. In France as well, ... Okay, ... he who has an interest in this should defend this interest publicly.

excerpt 10 – 10/03/2009

Objectifying usage of the notion of community

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that other respondents used the notion of ⟨community⟩ in more objectifying ways as well. For instance, Mohamed Ikoubaan who used to engage himself for the umbrella organisation FMV (Dutch: Federatie Marokkaanse Verenigingen)¹¹ and who is currently engaged in the artistic platform Moussem, frequently talked about the relation between ⟨communities⟩ as a focal point for his engagements. The excerpt below is coded within the context of the topic 'dialogue between communities through art vs polarisation via the political debate'. Within this context, he explained how he ⟨returned⟩ to his ⟨true passion⟩ located in the domains of ⟨art and culture⟩. He considers ⟨art and culture⟩ to provide an ⟨instrument⟩ in order to address the ⟨dialogue between cultures⟩ and ⟨between communities⟩ ⟨in a different way⟩ compared to the ⟨political debate⟩ that is mostly ⟨polarising⟩. Mohamed is therefore interested in the way ⟨artists⟩ ⟨are usually ahead of their times⟩ with respect to the ⟨dialogue between cultures⟩ and ⟨communities⟩. The existence of ⟨communities⟩ is thus implicitly accepted in such statements.

MI: (laughs) Yes. But then, I briefly worked in insurances, and I also worked somewhere as an uhm legal consultant. But after a while, this did not turn out to be my sort of thing (laughs), but I did benefit from these studies in law. And then, well, this is also the reason why I have returned to my true passion, art and culture, ... I basically think that uhm ... on the basis of art and culture, this is basically an instrument in order to, ... to put it in a cliché, to foreground the dialogue between cultures, between communities, and so on, in a different way than in uhm, than in the debate, the political debate. Because, within the uhm political debate, most of the time it's basically polarising eh, opposite opinions and so on. This is also the case in art, but in a different way, in a more subtle, in a more original way uhm So, basically, when an artist from Morocco [does something] here about Morocco, in uhm, in the Muhka, the Museum for contemporary art, this is something entirely different from holding a debate about modernity in Morocco so to speak. Uhm, ... So, this is basically what sort of uhm, well, sort of moves me, the way artists, well, artists are usually ahead of their times (laughs).

excerpt 11 – 08/04/2008

¹¹ The acronym FMV can be translated as Federation of Moroccan Associations.

Making do with abstract categories within a hegemonic constellation: the varied usage of ⟨community⟩ by a single individual

It should also be pointed out that my interviewees often talked about a ⟨Moroccan⟩, ⟨allochthon⟩, or Islamic ⟨community⟩ interchangeably even though they often prove to be aware of the problematic nature of such abstract concepts. However, it seems as if they are forced to make do with the limited tools that abstract categories are within the context of existing hegemonies (Torfing 1999: 302)¹². The excerpts below provide a clear illustration of this phenomenon.

I met Samira Azabar during a lecture on the Antwerp integration policy given by a public servant within the context of an anthropology course at the University of Antwerp. During the question time at the end of the lecture, Samira questioned and criticised this public official about a recent political decision that banned religious symbols – and therefore women with headscarves – from public functions at the municipal level of Antwerp. Samira turned out to be a student in sociology and wore a headscarf herself. After the lecture, she agreed to an interview. In the excerpt below, she responds to my question whether there are ⟨certain topics⟩ ⟨on a political level⟩ that interest her more ⟨than others⟩. She states that it was predominantly ⟨the integration of the so-called Moroccan community⟩ that triggered ⟨discussion⟩ within the organisations she was involved in. For instance, Samira was actively involved in Student Focus and associated with the federation FMV. The adverb ⟨so-called⟩ is used to the effect that Samira indicates a metapragmatic awareness with respect to the fact that alternative ways of denominating the category of a ⟨Moroccan community⟩ are conceivable. Nevertheless, she does not provide a detailed critique of the category of a ⟨Moroccan community⟩.

In linguistic terms, Samira hedged the propositional content of ⟨community⟩ whereby she highlighted its fuzziness or vagueness while at the same time shielding herself from the potential effects of the usage of this notion¹³. A hedge makes messages indeterminate and conveys inexactitude in order to mitigate or reduce the strength of the assertions that speakers or writers make. They highlight the fuzziness, vagueness, emptiness, or polysemy. A hedge may affect the truth-conditions of a proposition (e.g. ‘sort of’; ‘about’; ‘roughly’). It may also introduce fuzziness in the relationship of the speaker’s commitment to the propositional content of what is conveyed. A hedge may thus function as an approximator or as a shielding device protecting the speaker from potentially risky claims or other speech acts that might violate conversational maxims. They are the opposite of boosters that emphasises what one believes to be correct and indicate metapragmatic awareness of the normativity of what one is saying. Hedging thus frequently occurs when interviewees use politically problematic concepts and categories (see Hyland 2000: 179; McLaren-Hankin 2008: 639; Verschueren 1999: 193; 2011: 179). For instance, other interviewees frequently talked about ⟨allochthons between quotation marks⟩, about ⟨the so-called clash of cultures⟩, or about ⟨one’s own community between quotation marks⟩.

JZ: Something I ask most people is basically whether they, to start with, what sort of things they occupy themselves with on a political level, in general eh.

SA: Yes.

JZ: So, whether there are certain topics that, I don’t know, you occupy yourself with more than with others

¹² We follow Jacob Torfing’s definition of hegemony based on the poststructuralist and post-marxist discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe. Torfing describes hegemony as: “*The achievement of a moral, intellectual and political leadership through the expansion of a Discourse that partially fixes meaning around nodal points. Hegemony involves more than a passive consensus and more than legitimate actions. It involves the expansion of a particular discourse of norms, values, views and perceptions through persuasive redescriptions of the world*”.

¹³ After reading my analysis of our interview, Samira asked me to emphasise the difficulty of defining a concept such as community with reference to notions such as allochthosn and autochthons, since none of these notions fully grasp what she means.

SA: Yes. With us, it was mostly. I have been in a number of associations, it was mostly about the integration of the so-called Moroccan community that generated, well, discussion. And this is what basically interested us. It was always in group, because we were mostly, ...

excerpt 12 – 16/09/2007

The example of Samira's usage of the notion of <community> also shows that an individual may hedge a politicised concept at some point in a conversation, but may use the same concept without marking one's awareness with respect to the problematic usage of such a term later on. While recounting her <discussion> with public servant Bob <van den Broeck>, Samira used direct reported speech in order to rearticulate her opponent's voice: <In the end, he did say like "well look, we are the integration service, we are supposedly on the side of the Moroccans, Turks, and other allochthon communities", so to say>. However, according to Samira, <if you look at the decisions> that have been made, and <the measures> that have been taken with respect to an issue such as <the headscarf>, <participation> is not granted to these <allochthon communities>. In the example below, Samira criticised the policy and discourse of the Antwerp <integration service> with respect to the <participation> of the <allochthon communities>. The objective nature of such a <community> is not being explicitly questioned at this point.

JZ: And do you sort of consider this to be, well, if you take a look at this evolution, the way the debate has evolved since you started to occupy yourself with it In what direction do you consider this to evolve?

SA: Well, I don't really see a positive evolution concerning the political debates that were going on. Uhm, in the first place one could say like, "not like this". In that case you get into a discussion with so-called parties that can do something about it, but in the end, the decision remains the same

JZ: mmh

SA: this was also the discussion I had with mister Van den Broecke. In the end, he did say like "well look, we are the integration service, we are on the side of the Moroccans, Turks, and other allochthon communities", so to say ...

JZ: mmh

SA: But in the end, if you look at the decisions that were being made, or at least, at the measures that were being taken, it didn't feel like this at all

JZ: mmh

SA: It was basically just a cover up in order to say like "look, you do have participation, you can actually do and say whatever you want". And it's not just about the headscarf. It's also about other stuff, uhm, from the environment up to taxes.

excerpt 13 – 16/09/2007

Further down the interaction, Samira talked about <our community> without an explicit problematisation of the notion. The excerpt below shows how Samira enters into a positive identification with this community through the pronoun <we> within the context of a discussion of the topic 'the EMB as a representative organ'. Within this context, Samira was discussing the fact that Moroccans and Turks who wished to participate in elections for a governmental advisory organ for Muslims called the EMB (Executive of Muslims in Belgium) were screened by Belgian secret services.

According to Samira, a lot of Moroccans did not turn up at the ballots since they were <humiliated> in terms of their <freedom> of choice. She also points out that the <climate> related to <9/11 and so on> created a deadlock. Nevertheless, she concludes that so-called <complete freedom> turns out not to be so <complete> after all. She compares the election of the EMB members belonging to the <Moroccan

and Turkish community) to the election of politicians in political ⟨parties⟩ and states that the latter are never submitted to ⟨a screening⟩ for having been ⟨in prison⟩ or for having ⟨certain connections⟩. At that point, I suggested to Samira that these feelings of humiliation were ⟨less the case with the Turkish⟩ community since a lot of Turks did vote for EMB representatives. Samira agrees with this analysis. Moreover, she starts to contrast the ⟨Turkish community⟩ with the ⟨Moroccan community⟩ on the basis of various metapragmatic qualifications. For instance, ⟨we⟩ - i.e. the ⟨Moroccan community⟩ - ⟨speak out⟩ when confronted with ⟨certain issues⟩.

Samira continues as follows: ⟨we like it all too well to be heard by other parties ... whereas the Turks are somewhat more reticent in that respect⟩. Moreover, according to Samira, there are fewer ⟨Turks⟩ walking around ⟨with the headscarf⟩ and with ⟨outspoken opinions⟩. She also commented that this is the reason why the ⟨Moroccan community⟩ is accused of having ⟨a big mouth⟩ resulting in ⟨a government⟩ intervening in the business of this particular ⟨community⟩.

SA: Yes. First, the government had to intervene in order to check whether you were suitable, and in order to quickly check whether you could posit your candidacy. Uhm, the Moroccans felt definitely a bit humiliated. Also, because of uhm, freedom. Because they could not choose uhm, like “okay, I want to pick a candidate like he is and he may probably seem a little bit radical in the eyes of the government, but the government shouldn’t occupy itself with religious matters”. And here, there’s this conflict again. On the one hand, they’re equal, but on the other hand it was difficult because of the climate ... September, 11th and so on. So, in the end, you’re in a deadlock, and if you say like ‘complete freedom’, it isn’t that complete. Uhm, I think that one usually usually talks about democracy ... which isn’t present either, because you cannot choose whom you want [to vote for]. One first makes a selection, something one doesn’t do with other parties. They [political parties] decide on their own who they want to present [as a candidate], and then it’s up to the members to vote ... there isn’t a file being cited in order to say like “let’s check whether they have been in prison first”, ... or “let’s check whether they have certain connections with gangs”. One simply doesn’t do this, ... but with the the Moroccan and Turkish community all of this did have to be done, [the candidates] had to undergo a complete screening ... and then they were sort of like “okay”.

excerpt 14 – 16/09/2007

A more inclusive usage of the notion of ⟨community⟩ can be identified within the context of the topic ‘Samira’s potential political engagement for Groen!’. ⟨Groen!⟩ is the green or environmental political party of Flanders. In the excerpt below, Samira states that she could imagine herself to be ⟨politically engaged⟩ for this party: ⟨even though it’s an autochthon party with autochthon directors, ... a chairman, they do have a number of issues including the environment for which I could give myself for one hundred percent⟩. Moreover, Samira once again makes use of direct reported speech in order to depict the stance of this political party with respect to the headscarf: ⟨and they also say like “look, to us, the headscarf isn’t an issue ... you are people like everyone else. Whether you wear a headscarf or not, to us, this does not pose any problems”⟩.

According to Samira, the leftist environmentalist party ⟨Groen⟩ is a paramount example of ⟨a party⟩ that addresses ⟨diversity⟩ and ⟨integration⟩ while at the same time subscribing to the following statements: ⟨“we’re working together with other communities here, and we do can go for a ... peaceful, harmonious community” as they put it here in Antwerp⟩. Moreover, Samira states that they ⟨really⟩ believe ⟨in a community where the communities can live peacefully with each other⟩. According to Samira, other parties such as the socialist ⟨SPa⟩ or the liberal ⟨VLD⟩ are less able to do so. These latter parties ⟨rather use allochthons as figureheads⟩ to collect ⟨votes⟩ without subscribing to such a vision of peaceful co-existence.

SA: (this excerpt is a continuation of an ongoing turn) I considered *Groen* to be ... I think *Groen* was one of the parties with respect to which I could feel myself uhm politically engaged ... Even though it’s an autochthon party with autochthon directors, ... a chairman, they do have a number of issues including the environment for which I could give myself one hundred percent, and they also say like

“look, to us, the headscarf isn’t an issue ... you are people like everyone else. Whether you wear a headscarf or not, to us, this does not pose any problems”. So, I can imagine ... participating in a party like this, even actively And who knows where they uhm, where they, how well they’re going to do. To me, this would be welcomed. ... So, ... I think it’s simply great, this is the image of a party ... that can foreground diversity, including integration, ... and that is able to basically say like “look, we’re working together with other communities here, and we do can go for a ... peaceful, harmonious community as they put it here in Antwerp. But I think that, that in other parties, including the VLD and in the SPa, this isn’t as likely Because they [VLD and SPa] rather use allochthons as figureheads ... so they can harvest votes instead of them really ... believing in a community where the communities can live peacefully with each other

excerpt 15 – 16/09/2007

Ethnographic observations and the search for a criterion of unity among the respondents

In addition to these various usages of the notion of <community>, there are other reasons to rearticulate the initial research design without an a priori focus on <community>. Traditional ethnographic research entails an investigation of the local behaviours, beliefs, customs, social life, economic activities, politics, and religion of small communities (Kottak, 1997, 6). However, even without taking the complexities of the discourse of my respondents into account, I could not objectively indicate a criterion that would allow me to identify a communal identity shared by all my respondents. This showed the need for a serious reflection on the question if, where and when it is possible to talk about a criterion of unity among my respondents.

At the beginning of my research project, I contacted people on the basis of two criteria. I selected them for having a Moroccan background and for articulating their opinions in public media such as websites, newspapers, or other mass media channels. In addition to this selection on the basis of a process of media-monitoring, I asked my interviewees <who else> I should <talk to> if I were to shed a better light on the <diversity of opinions> or on the <debate> in general. I thus used a combination of media-monitoring and a snowball-method for contacting my respondents (see Russell Bernard 2000: 179-80)¹⁴. Ultimately, this resulted in a situation in which the same names popped up again and again.

Recurring names and organisations included: Youssef Souissi of the VOEM (Vereniging voor Ontwikkeling en Emancipatie van Moslims, i.e. Association for Organisation and Emancipation of Muslims); Mohamed Chakkar of the FMV (Federatie Marokkaanse Verenigingen, i.e. Federation of Moroccan Associations); UMIVA (Unie der Moskeeën en Islamitische Verenigingen van Antwerpen, i.e. Union of Mosques and Islamic Associations of Antwerp); people from the AEL (Arabisch Europese Liga, i.e. Arab European League) such as its current chairman Karim Hassoun; activists engaged within the context of the intercultural initiative Kifkif; intellectual activists such as sociologists Nadia Fadil and Meryem Kanmaz; a political scientist such as professor Sami Zemni; or philosopher Tarik Fraihi. Also, people from organisations such as BOEH (Baas Over Eigen Hoofd, i.e. Boss Over One’s own Head); and SAMV (Steunpunt Allochtone Meisjes en Vrouwen, i.e. Support Center for Allochthon Girls and Women) were recommended to me. I was also prompted to talk to party politicians such as Fauzaya Talhaoui (Spirit), Zohra Othman (PvdA), Fatima Bali (Groen!), Mohamed W (SPa), and Hicham el Mzairh (VLD). It should be noted that in the period following our interview, this last person would exchange the VLD for the SPa. Another category of references

¹⁴ Snow-ball sampling refers to the research practice of locating one or more key individuals and asking them to name others who would be likely candidates for your research. It has been used to investigate small populations for which it is difficult or impossible to design a sampling frame. It has also been used in the study of elites. Using key informants and documents, a preliminary list of people with interesting opinions was constructed. This list is then used to ask respondents what other people should be put on the list. Informants may also be simply asked about other people who are willing to talk in an interview. When dealing with a relatively small population of people who are likely to be in contact with one another, snowball sampling is an effective way to build an exhaustive sampling frame. But in a large population, people who are better known have a better chance of being named in a snowball procedure than people who are less well known.

included people and organisations associated with the public integration sector – e.g. Amane X and Abdellatif Akhandaf of DIA (Dienst Integratie Antwerpen, i.e. Integration Service Antwerp). This list is not exhaustive but indicates that people engaged in both party politics, in public administrative functions, and in various civil society initiatives were considered to be relevant for my research project. It should also be noticed that most interviewees are active in or used to engage themselves for a multiplicity of organisations and initiatives.

Some respondents recommended me to talk to people who engaged themselves within the context of mosques. However, most of them distinguished between two categories of organisations: ⟨religious organisations⟩ such as the mosques themselves; and ⟨socio-cultural organisations⟩ such as organisations affiliated with the minority umbrella organisations FMV, VOEM, UMIVA, and FMDO. The intricacies of minority civil society organisations in Flanders will be dealt with as we go. For now, it is important to point out that I was repeatedly told that people engaged in the ⟨socio-cultural organisations⟩ were more likely to display a relatively high degree of ⟨political awareness⟩, whereas that ⟨awareness⟩ was often considered to be relatively latent among the world of ⟨mosques⟩ and associated ⟨religious organisations⟩.

It should also be pointed out that voices of Muslims involved in the organisation of Islamic life are quite rare in Flemish public media. This pertains both to Islamic authority figures such as imams and to political discourse based on Islamic theological arguments. I therefore decided to focus first and foremost on those activists and intellectuals who did pronounce their voices in the public sphere. This obviously entailed that I left a great deal of the so-called Muslim community out of the picture. Moreover, since public appearance and a Moroccan background were the main selection criteria for my respondents, I did not select them on the basis of their gender, age, migration-related generation, or religious conviction. This is not to say that these parameters are irrelevant to their world views. Quite the contrary is true and wherever my respondents entered into identification processes connected to these categories, this was taken into account during the interviews and the analyses that followed.

The fact that the same names of people and organisations popped up again and again does not mean that all of my interviewees necessarily agree with each other. I was confronted with the fact that the vast majority of the respondents criticised various aspects of one another's politics, engagements, practices, tactics, strategies, and/or discourses. Some of these people are friends who meet on a regular basis, others merely know one another's organisations and opinions through public media or through second-hand knowledge. At public events such as a fundraiser for Palestine, a debate on Islam or allochthons in education, or at an event such as a presentation of a book on Flemish and minority identity, I could expect at least a handful of my interviewees to be attending. Nevertheless, these events did not provide a sufficient ground to identify a ⟨delineated⟩ community in any objective way.

Neither the self-identifications, the practices, the convictions, or the organisational affiliations of the people I talked to, allowed me to talk about a uniform community in any unproblematic sense of the word. The fact that my respondents hardly constituted a ⟨community⟩ in any objectifiable way – be it in imagined, in organisational, in ideological, or in practical terms – forced me to look for a different way of conceptualizing the links between these people. Moreover, if I was to understand their relations to one another, I needed to make sure that I included a great variety of voices into this project. For that reason, I chose to add an additional selection criterion, namely that of maximum variety sampling (see Morse 1994 cited in Powell 1997: 148)¹⁵ with respect to types of engagement in the Flemish public sphere.

What I was faced with, was a complex intertextual network of people discursively constructing their political engagement with reference to a great variety of concepts, texts, individuals, organisations,

¹⁵ Maximum variety sampling seeks to maximise heterogeneity in the sample. This method is useful when seeking to identify patterns and commonalities which exist across otherwise divergent individuals. I sought to achieve maximum variety with respect to types of political engagement among intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders.

practices, and myself. These and many other observations prompted me to abandon my research as an investigation into a ⟨Moroccan community⟩ in favour of an investigation into the discourse of ⟨activists and intellectuals⟩ with a ⟨Moroccan background in Flanders⟩. Similar to the abandonment of the notion of ⟨identity⟩, this decision was informed by a close and problematic link of political and academic discourse on the notion of ⟨community⟩. If there was a unity to be found among my respondents, it resided in the intertextual links that were created throughout the interview practice itself. This proved to be a far more productive and far less deceptive category for analysis than the notion of ⟨community⟩.

c) Politics as an abstract category

The most problematic aspect of the initial research design was probably the notion of politics itself. Contrary to the notions of ⟨community⟩ and ⟨identity⟩, I chose to retain this concept as a category for my own analyses. However, whereas the initial project was framed as a project about ⟨Islamic political identities⟩, it has been reframed as a project about ⟨political subjectivities⟩. I will go into the concept of subjectivity later on. For now, it is important to point at the potential tension between my own usage of politics-related lexical items and the usage of these words by my respondents.

The concept of politics as interpreted by myself in the initial research text was heavily informed by the poststructuralist and post-Marxist perspective of the Essex school for discourse theory. Within this perspective, the principle of *the primacy of politics* forces one to think of politics as the organising principle for the constitution of all social relations. A practice, a discourse, or an institution is socialised as its political origins fade into the background of our awareness and becomes politicised as its social nature is being challenged and discursively activated (Torfing 1999: 69-70). The social and the political are two sides of the same idealised coin - they are mutually constitutive reifications that can never be fully realised and should be thought of in terms of a continuum between ideals.

The *primacy of politics* entails a very particular notion of politics that is arguably characteristic of post-modernity (see Hardt and Negri 2005: 78)¹⁶. It is broad, open-ended, and fuzzy. It entails that the whole of reality as experienced by myself and by my research subjects has a political ring to it. However, whereas some usages of the notion of politics by my respondents were highly compatible with the premises of the *primacy of politics*, this did not seem to apply to all occurrences.

Below, I will highlight *the primacy of politics as compatible with the discourse of respondents*. I will then go on to point out that *multiple notions of politics may be articulated by a single individual*. It is also important to discuss the *(im)possibility of being apolitical, not political, or having no political dimension in a restricted sense of the word*. Lastly, I will briefly summarise our reasons for *retaining the abstract category of politics* on the basis of these observations.

The primacy of politics as compatible with the discourse of respondents

An example that proves to be compatible with the concept of a *primacy of politics* is provided by Mohamed Ikoubaan who engaged himself for the ⟨Moussem⟩ Nomadic Art Center. During a discussion on ‘the political dimension of communication through beauty and art’, Mohamed stated: ⟨well, politics, I think that almost everything is political eh (laughs)⟩. Below, one can observe that I was the one who suggested that his engagement for Moussem might be framed as ⟨a political project⟩, but I also asked him whether it seemed ⟨legitimate⟩ to him to put it that way.

¹⁶ In an argument bearing particular relevance to the Essex line of thought, Negri and Hardt point out that “*the genealogy of resistances and struggles in postmodernity [...] presupposes the political nature of social life and adopts it as key to all the movements. [...] Here economic, social, and political questions are inextricably intertwined. Any theoretical effort in this context to pose the autonomy of the political, separate from the social and the economic, no longer makes any sense*”.

In spite of the fact that ⟨almost everything is political⟩, Mohamed's engagement for Moussem is in the first place informed by a passion for ⟨things⟩ and ⟨stories⟩ that he considers to be ⟨beautiful⟩. According to him, it is only in the ⟨second place⟩ that his engagement is ⟨informed by a political⟩ ⟨background⟩. However, he also states that there is a ⟨political⟩ ⟨dimension⟩ to the activities of ⟨artists who can tell something⟩ ⟨about their country about their situation and so on⟩. In alignment with the principle of a primacy of politics, Mohamed states that these practices thus acquire a ⟨political⟩ ⟨charge⟩ ⟨within the context⟩ of the ⟨political constellation⟩ in which we are located. Framing politics in terms of a ⟨dimension⟩ or a ⟨charge⟩ is quite compatible with a notion of politics as a qualitative aspect of all social practices – including art and communication in general.

JZ: And would you go as far as to, well, if I would interpret this as a political project, is this, is this, ... does this seem legitimate to say something like this ... because ...

MI: Well, politics, I think almost everything is political eh (laughs)

JZ: Yes. I was wondering about this, I also see it this way, but I was wondering whether you agreed with this.

MI: No, I, ... I think No, I don't do it because it, actually uhm. In the first place, I meant that I do it because I think it's beautiful eh, because I am basically moved by it, by those things eh, by the, the stories of these artists. This is basically the first reason, I think. And I think that in the second place, it's in order to basically fill a void basically located within the artistic landscape So, basically, well, ... there is a ... the genesis of uhm, of this movement, ... is also informed by a political ... uhm background so to say. But this isn't ... the essence ... It's essentially about artists who can tell something ... about, about themselves, uhm about their country, about their situation, and so on eh But, ... within the context, the political constellation wherein we find ourselves, it gets, it always has a political

JZ: indeed

MI: charge to it, I think. But this isn't essential to the project, ... so, not uhm

JZ: No, I was just wondering how you thought about this yourself ... (this turn continues but a topic shift occurs)

excerpt 16 – 08/04/2008

Most of my respondents were quite aware of the vagueness of the category of ⟨politics⟩ and asked me what I meant by it. A typical response to such a question is given below. I never referred to the Essex school since I felt that this would rather hinder the communicative process. Most of the time, I presupposed that there was no intellectual common ground to allow for a detailed exchange about this particular philosophical current. However, I did usually admit that I wielded a very open or ⟨broad⟩ concept of politics.

Below, one can observe how Mohammed Ihkan articulates his metapragmatic awareness with respect to my usage of the notion of politics. After asking him ⟨what⟩ his interests ⟨on a political level⟩ were, Mohammed noticed that I ⟨talk a lot about politics⟩ thus prompting me to elaborate. As a response, I explained that ⟨to me personally⟩, ⟨politics⟩ is a very ⟨broad⟩ concept and may ⟨in principle⟩ refer to ⟨everything⟩. However, I also stated that ⟨the question⟩ about ⟨politics⟩ is really about ⟨what people consider to to be worth⟩ ⟨foregrounding⟩ within the context of this research project.

JZ: Perhaps we can, perhaps we should start with uhm, with for instance how you, what sort of occupies yourself today on a political level. What do you ...

MI: Actually, you talk a lot about politics eh, you talk a lot about politics, but ...

JZ: ... what I consider to be politics is [a] rather broad [area], everything, to me personally eh, I basically mean the, well, the societal level, uhm, well, how shall I put it. Yes, I do have a, a particular idea about it, but what it's about, to me, when I talk about politics, it's more like, in principle everything can be political ...

MI: mmh

JZ: the question is what people consider to be worth foregrounding, socially, so ...

MI: mmh

JZ: that's what I consider to be politics. (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 17 – Summer 2008

The interaction continues in the excerpt below. It is interesting to note that Mohammed considers my ⟨broad⟩ definition of politics and asks me ⟨what⟩ I ⟨consider to be political⟩ about him. He goes on and asks me ⟨who⟩ I talk to - ⟨women⟩, ⟨men⟩, ⟨average Joe⟩, ⟨people who⟩ ⟨did something⟩ ⟨with society⟩, or who ⟨who are working in a structure⟩. My main motivation for talking to Mohammed Ihkan resided in the fact that he made a documentary film about the life stories of two first generation migrants of Moroccan descent who migrated to Belgium in the 1960s during a period of economic migration and ultimately built their lives in the Antwerp region. This film was screened at various cultural events, institutions, and universities. It was entitled *My Story* (Dutch: *Mijn Verhaal*).

Considering the fact that Mohammed was not a professional film maker but a maintenance technician, and taking the ⟨time and energy⟩ consuming nature of his project into account, I supposed that his documentary was somehow testifying to a ⟨certain engagement⟩. I also referred to a media context of ⟨mainstream television⟩ in which films such as *My Story*, focusing on the experiences of first generation migrants are a curiosity at best. He acknowledged that this was indeed an ⟨engagement⟩ - be it a ⟨small⟩ one. He considers the film to be a ⟨small engagement⟩ since it ultimately amounts to ⟨an opinion⟩ on its own. Later on, he describes this ⟨opinion⟩ as his contribution to ⟨the debate in society⟩. Giving an ⟨opinion⟩ thus ultimately constitutes a ⟨small⟩ political ⟨engagement⟩.

MI: (this interaction is a continuation of the excerpt above) Yes, yes, yes. But what do you consider to be [political] about me? This is very important, because you do choose the persons [you talk to] eh ...

JZ: Yes, well, ...

MI: ... with whom do you talk eh? Women, men, and uhm, you don't simply knock on the door of the average person. Well, I mean, the average, uhm, average Joe eh. You're approaching people who have something, something to do with society, who did something, or, or who are working in a structure, or, or, or ... ?

JZ: Yes. But the reason why I thought about you was basically, to start with, it was basically this documentary ...

MI: Yes.

JZ: you've made. I thought like "well, he doesn't do this for no reason", well, this was my presupposition. If you look at mainstream television and so on, ...

MI: Yes.

JZ: ... this type of uhm, themes, even when these themes are being addressed, they are highlighted in such compact and brief ways, that an entire documentary, which must require a lot of time and energy, I suppose, that this does testify to some sort of engagement, in one way or another. [This is what] I presupposed eh, I don't know if this is how you think about it as well, but uhm, this is how it seemed to me.

MI: Yes, that's definitely, uhm uhm, [you're] not mistaken, uhm, but my engagement is actually a very small engagement, because I ...

JZ: mmh

MI: this is my opinion, uhm. Why? Because everything has been ... told about it, said about it. Of course, 'everything' is a lot eh, between quotation marks, but it is, there's being written about it, talked about it, but I wanted, or I want, a, a, an opinion. And this is, you know, *My story* is basically [a way of] giving an opinion, my opinion, in the sense of making a movie, according to me, this is basically my opinion.

excerpt 18 – Summer 2008

Multiple notions of politics articulated by a single individual

The interaction with Mohammed Ihkan is also illustrative for the fact that one individual may wield various notions of politics. This can be illustrated by the excerpt below. On the one hand, Mohammed describes his ⟨political conviction⟩. He states that he makes himself ⟨useful⟩ for ⟨the community⟩ and for ⟨all communities⟩ by making ⟨documentaries⟩ ⟨about social interaction⟩. He states: ⟨that is my politics⟩ and contrasts his type of ⟨politics⟩ with having a party-related ⟨colour⟩ or ⟨direction⟩. Moreover, ⟨politics⟩ is about ⟨being there for people⟩ and ⟨giving⟩ them ⟨a lot of information⟩. This latter aspect of Mohammeds preferred mode of politics adds another political dimension to *My Story* since this film will be part of an ⟨pedagogical package⟩ that will be distributed in ⟨various schools⟩. This way, ⟨the history of the first generation of Moroccans⟩ will be talked about and the situation in which most ⟨Moroccan children⟩ ⟨in the Antwerp region⟩ ⟨do not know their origin⟩ or history, will be politically countered. All of this indicates that Mohammed wields various notions of politics to designate various modes of politics. This is by no means an isolated phenomenon and we are therefore in need of a framework that allows us to think various modes of politics rather than politics as a homogeneous discourse, practice, or perspective.

MI: ... Yes, yes, I am talking about myself of course, uhm, once one begins, it can hardly be stopped, you can't stop this, it, it isn't possible. Making documentaries, I want to make documentaries, documentaries about social interaction, people, their stories, uhm, and so on. Because I personally think that I can make myself useful by means of this contribution. This is what it's all about, making oneself useful for uhm, for the community, uhm, for all communities that are here. And this is my conviction, this is my political conviction, if you're talking about politics. This is my politics, because I don't really have an orientation, I don't have a colour in politics. Today, uhm, I might vote for SPa, tomorrow for Groen, uhm, and the day after that for the uhm liberals. Yes, to me, it's the person who is important, whether he (s)he did something, this is what I'm voting for, not, not in order to have a political colour. I don't have a political colour. Yes, this is, this is also my, yes, politics is about being there for people. That's it, being there for people, giving them a lot of information, we're very happy there's a pedagogical package being made, uhm, which is basically part of the film. The film is a part of this pedagogical project, and we're going to try to bring this to several schools. Because the schools, it has a surplus value for the students as well. The history of the first generation of Moroccans is unknown. It isn't being talked about at all, whereas in most schools, especially here in the Antwerp region, there are relatively, relatively many Moroccan children. Yes. And these children do not know their origin. Yes, it's not written down in any books. You can't trace this back. Who are we? Yes, Moroccans. But how did we get here? And what happened back then? And so on. Yes. We don't know.

excerpt 19 – Summer 2008

On the (im)possibility of being apolitical

Still, in spite of the fact that we find multiple modes of politics in Mohammed Ihkans discourse, his type of thinking is still largely compatible with the Essex notion of politics. In fact, almost all usages of politics-related notions within the corpus are compatible with the idea of a *primacy of politics* in the

sense that they do not fundamentally challenge it. In all usages ⟨politics⟩ refers implicitly or explicitly to the problematisation or organisation of social relations. Nevertheless, there are usages that seem to be less compatible at first sight. An especially poignant question is how a discourse, a person, a group, or an institution can be labeled as *apolitical* when there is supposedly a political dimension to the very constitution of every social practice. And if an individual considers certain aspects of social reality to be apolitical, would it not be a grave projection on our part to ignore this individual's particular interpretation of reality? An overview of an automated search result on all transcriptions might point us in the right direction. Every occurrence of “apolit*”, “not political”, and “no political”, “not politics”, or “no politics”, has been investigated and compared to the Essex definition of politics¹⁷. The results show that whenever something or someone is considered to be ⟨apolitical⟩ or ⟨not political⟩, the participant is either (1) using the abstract category of politics as a short-hand to identify a particular individual, group, discourse, institution, or practice, or (2) criticising the very idea of something being ⟨apolitical⟩, ⟨not political⟩, or having ⟨no political⟩ dimension. Some examples are in order.

Let us start with the search results for *apolit**. During a discussion of the ‘political similarities between the Flemish and the Moroccan (communities)’, Mohamed Chakkar remarked that ⟨ordinary Moroccans are not that politically aware⟩ and ⟨really have a lot in common with the Flemings⟩. Chakkar is one of the flag bearers of the first Moroccan civil society organisations in the late eighties and early nineties. I contacted him since he was – and still is – the chairman of the Federation for Moroccan Associations (FMV). Moreover, his name popped up repeatedly in other interviews as someone I should talk to. Chakkar remarks that the ⟨Flemings⟩ and the ⟨Moroccans⟩ share an attitude towards ⟨politics⟩ that is associated with a common statement: ⟨“politicians, all of them, ... bullshitters”⟩. Nevertheless, he also remarked metapragmatically that ⟨one can't say⟩ that this statement is ⟨apolitical⟩. It should be noted that further analysis of the context of this statement shows that Chakkar's concept of ⟨politics⟩ is a short-hand to refer to those involved in party political and in civil society organisations.

MC: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) Look, ordinary Moroccans are not that politically aware. They really have a lot in common with the Flemings You can't say [they're] apolitical, but “politicians, all of them, bullshitters” Today, we have a relatively big backing, but this took a long time, you know.

JZ: mmh

MC: “that's politics, leave me alone man” ...

JZ: Do they consider FMV to be political then ... ?

MC: Yes Politics like uhm. Until they come here. Their daughter or son in school. We get a lot of cases that are really uhm A question of teachers or allochthon students They say like “you have to sand up for ... for your kids eh ... and you have to organise yourself and and do something about education” and so on, and so on. And it actually works pretty fine. And then we can say like “right now, we are with I think we've started with one hundred volunteers, and right now we know about thousand ... people who are coming over”, and all of them are members This is why I say civil society grows and blooms, and this is important This is important, because this way you can [establish] a group based emancipation I don't really believe in a purely individual emancipation, that's kind of, I consider this to be a bit too liberal Whereas individuals, we should place them within a group, but this liberal idea sometimes leads to egoistic uhm, and this is what Moroccans have in common with the Flemings. Moroccans are basically all individualists

excerpt 20 -27/06/2008

During a discussion of the topic ‘alliances and differences between civil society organisations in Antwerp’, sociologist and activist Nadia Fadil pointed out that ⟨collaboration⟩ between the ⟨religious⟩

¹⁷ The search entries were formulated in Dutch. The queries identified all occurrences of “apolit*”, “geen polit*”, and “niet polit*” in the original Dutch transcriptions.

and the ⟨socio-cultural⟩ organisations ⟨is quite exceptional⟩ in Antwerp. People involved in a ⟨religious⟩ organisation such as ⟨JVI⟩ (Jongeren voor Islam, i.e. Youngsters For Islam) do not tend to go to the ⟨activities⟩ of ⟨socio-cultural⟩ organisations such as Chakkars ⟨FMV⟩ and vice versa. Nadia states that ⟨ideological differences⟩, and more specifically ⟨religious differences⟩ are accountable for this phenomenon. She considers these ⟨differences⟩ to be ⟨political⟩ as well in the sense that people involved in a ⟨religious⟩ organisation such as ⟨JVI⟩ are practicing a different ⟨type of⟩ ⟨politics⟩ than those involved in a ⟨socio-cultural⟩ organisation such as ⟨FMV⟩. ⟨JVI⟩ people ⟨are less involved in citizenship issues⟩ and more involved in ⟨personal politics⟩. This ⟨personal politics between quotation marks⟩ is a type of ⟨politics⟩ that is practiced by ⟨reshaping⟩ ⟨one's self⟩ (see also Fadil 2008a: 59-60)¹⁸ by living in accordance with ⟨the spirit of the prophet⟩. This way, ⟨a community of believers⟩¹⁹ is constructed. To Nadia, the community construction and transformation of the self through religious practice is not ⟨apolitical⟩ but a different type of politics than a politics based on the notion of ⟨citizenship⟩. It is also interesting to note that these various types of politics associated with specific civil society organisations indicate ⟨differences within the community⟩ that should be publicly acknowledged in order to counter the twin idea of a singular homogenous ⟨Islam⟩ and Muslims who are ⟨all the same⟩.

NF: Yes ... yes yes they don't go to each others' activities eh ...

JZ: Like the religious and the socio-cultural ...

NF: Yes, they don't visit one another very often ... unless something really happens with respect to, you know, ... with respect to the murder of uhm that assasination by Hans van Themse Then there really was a very broad collaboration between various I think JVI also joined in back then ... but that is rather exceptional.

JZ: And do you think there is a reason for that or ...

NF: Ideological differences ... but these are not named as such ...

JZ: Like ...

NF: uhm religious differences ...

JZ: oh religious yeah ok

NF: and political differences ... for instance, concerning JVI ... they are a lot less involved in citizenship issues and so on. They are really uhm involved in uhm the type of uhm the type of personal uhm ... personal politics between quotation marks I don't think they are apolitical. They are also very political, but it is actualized by the reshaping of of uhm one's uhm yourself. The reshaping of ... life in accordance with the prophet, to follow the life according to the principles of And out of that, there does emerge ... you can construct a certain community of believers So that is a very different way of doing politics than uhm take FMV for instance So I really think ideological differences

¹⁸ Nadia Fadil's concept of self is inspired by Foucaultian thought as can be demonstrated with reference to her Phd thesis *Submitting to God, submitting to the Self*. She cites Lois McNay who writes that "*Foucault's conception of the self ... represents an attempt to attribute a degree of agency and self-determination to the individual without jettisoning his anti-essentialist view of the subject [...]*" (McNay 1992: 62). Fadil comments that Foucault attempts to explain the notions of the self, autonomy, subjectivity, and freedom without making an attempt to uncover a supposedly authentic or natural self. She points out that Foucault thinks the Self as "*a consequence of a set of practices, techniques and discourses*". She emphasises that within this perspective, one only becomes a meaningful subject to oneself by means of techniques inscribed in discursive and non-discursive power relations that do not exist independently from other power relations, historical stratifications, material organisations, or discourses. Any transformation of the self takes place on the basis of these premises. It should be pointed out that Nadia's philosophical perspective is largely compatible with the poststructuralist insights presented in this book.

¹⁹ Like Bilal Benyaich, Nadia Fadil is familiar with Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined community. This concept also figures in her description of the ⟨minority issue⟩ as being fundamentally about ⟨what is the imagined community of Europe and how do we make sure that migrants also become part of that and that they are no longer perceived as allochthons or as outsiders⟩.

But I would, well, according to me it can be named like that. That way it becomes visible, [the fact] that there are differences within the community Also for that youngster ... because it's not that obvious you know ... who thinks "yeah we're all the same and there is just one Islam and there are ...", while that's not the case eh.

excerpt 21 – 22/08/2008

During the interaction with AEL (Arab European League) activist and student Mohamed el Khalfioui, I introduced the notion of being ⟨apolitical⟩ myself. The interaction below illustrates how Mohamed problematised my usage of this abstract category. He states that ⟨you don't have to be religious in order to be active⟩. This remark was prompted as a response to remarks by pious Moroccan Muslims in Mohamed's environment about the previous chairman of the AEL – Dyab Abou Jahjah – being a ⟨sjiite⟩²⁰ or not even a ⟨Muslim⟩ at all (see also D. Jacobs 2005: 112-13)²¹. According to Mohamed, this type of ⟨religious thinking⟩ about AEL activism is common among ⟨ordinary people within our communities⟩. At that point, I reframed this mode of thought as a ⟨religious apolitical⟩ way of thinking. Mohamed reacts by criticising my suggestion of these people being ⟨apolitical⟩ and even goes on to make my concept of the ⟨apolitical⟩ more explicit. He rhetorically asks himself ⟨what is politics⟩ and answers his own question by stating that ⟨it's all relative eh⟩. He goes on and remarks that a self-identification as a ⟨Muslim⟩ ⟨in Belgium⟩ ⟨is already a political statement⟩ and concludes with another rhetorical question: ⟨So, what is apolitical?⟩. We both laugh.

MEK: That's a reproach he's often faced with ... so, ... Uhm. When you, critical people over there, ... religious people who can sort of think critically, they understand. I say "you don't have to be religious in order to be active" ... "ah yes, you can". But ordinary people within our communities cannot uhm ...

JZ: They're ...

MEK: Well, religious thinking is uhm, is uhm, ...

JZ: you mean religious apolitical, or uhm, ...

MEK: religious apolitical, but yes, ... What is, what is politics? It's all relative eh.

JZ: Yes, that's why it's so ...

MEK: the mere fact that you say "I am a Muslim", here in Belgium, is already a political statement eh.

JZ: mmh

MEK: So, what's apolitical?

JZ: (laughs) (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 22 – 30/06/3008

The interaction with Mohamed el Khalfioui continues below and he explains how his ⟨motto⟩ might be summarised as ⟨everything is political⟩. Apparently, this is also the concept of the ⟨political⟩ that Mohamed advocates in his interactions with current AEL chairman ⟨Karim Hassoun⟩. The ⟨political climate⟩ itself is held accountable for the politicisation of self-identifications as a ⟨Moroccan⟩ or as a Muslim. The choice for these religious or ethnic markers over others such as ⟨Belgian⟩ or ⟨Flemish⟩ is

²⁰ Most Moroccans who migrated to Belgium are of suni religious inspiration. Dyab Abou Jahjah however, is a Lebanese immigrant who once fought within the predominantly sji-ite Hezbollah against Israeli armed forces.

²¹ It should be noted that even though Muslim – and Arab – identity markers constitute an important role in the ideological project of the AEL, "neither Arab nor Muslim identity markers constitute the exclusive backbone of AEL success among its adherents" (Jacobs 2005: 112). Jacobs points out that "the bulk of its followers are mainly attracted by its firm stress on the opposition between the excluded and the included, of which AEL defends the underdog position of the excluded population of immigrant (Muslim) background" (Jacobs 2005: 113).

⟨political⟩ to Mohamed. Nevertheless, he also demonstrates his metapragmatic awareness of the way I intended to use the notion of the ⟨apolitical⟩. His inference that I used the concept of the ⟨apolitical⟩ in order to describe the political inactivity of pious people in his environment was correct. In this restricted sense of politics ⟨in the sense of⟩ ⟨activism⟩ or organisation, Mohamed agrees with my suggestion that the Islamic or Moroccan ⟨community⟩ is not ⟨politically active⟩ ⟨or aware⟩.

MEK: (this excerpt is a continuation of the interaction above) (laughs) So uhm, yes, ... that's my motto. I also say this to Karim Hassoun, and others, I say "everything is political" ... "everything is political" Merely saying "well, I have my religion, it's Islam" or "I'm Moroccan" is a political statement as well because you're located within a political climate eh. You say "I'm a Moroccan, ... I'm a Belgian, a Fleming", "ah, why don't you say Belgian, or Fleming, or, ...". And this is a political statement eh. But I know what you mean, apolitical in the sense of, well, activism.

JZ: organised, or, or activism, or

MEK: activism yes, ... Our community isn't that active here in Belgium. [It] isn't uhm politically active, or aware, or uhm, ... I think it's going to take generations, well, two generations before, ... The AEL took the first step eh, but uhm, but uhm, ... It's still just a first step eh, so, ...

JZ: yes, yes

MEK: the second and the third step still have to be made, so uhm, but our community isn't politically active.

excerpt 23 – 30/06/3008

Being apolitical, not political, or having no political dimension in a restricted sense of the word

The examples above illustrate why it is impossible to consider specific individuals, practices, discourses, or institutions as being apolitical without narrowing this abstract category down to a specific type or mode of politics. When used by myself or by my respondents, the notion of the apolitical is either criticised, or used as a short-hand to identify a particular mode of politics that is lacking in the discourse or practice of an individual, institution, or any other entity. Instances conforming to the automated queries "not political", "no political", "not politics", or "no politics" confirm these observations as well²².

Results included formulations such as descriptions of the first generation of Moroccan migrants as ⟨guest workers⟩ who were ⟨not politically engaged⟩ or of individuals who have ⟨no political engagements⟩ in the sense of party politics. In this sense, some people are simply ⟨not politically interested⟩. The results also included discussions of ⟨statements⟩ that are ⟨not politically correct⟩. People or communities are sometimes discussed in terms of having ⟨no political awareness⟩ or ⟨experience⟩. They may have ⟨no political rights⟩ or no knowledge about their ⟨political history⟩.

Examples in which specific modes of politics or specific aspects of social relations are being dismissed as non-existent or absent are quite numerous. Nevertheless, even this type of usage does not contradict the broad definition of politics in the Essex sense of the word. On the other hand, whenever a specific mode of politics is being discussed and evaluated in the interview context, this should be taken into account in the analysis of political subjectivity.

Retaining the abstract category of politics

²² The search entries were formulated in Dutch. The queries identified all occurrences of apolit*, "geen polit*", and "niet polit*" in the original Dutch transcriptions.

In spite of – or thanks to – the varied usage of the abstract category of politics, this notion functioned as one of the main tools for establishing coherence (see: Bublitz 2011)²³ within and between the individual interviews I conducted and analysed. Since every interview was explicitly framed as an interaction within the context of research on political world views, ideas, discourse, and/or identity of the respondent, and since my main questions all focused on the political aspects of my respondents' subjectivity, the concept should not simply be abandoned as a useful category. However, the metapragmatic awareness of the various modes of politics marked in the interviews should be analysed. In fact, the concept of politics as used by my respondents would prove to be one of the most important entry points into an analysis of their subjectivity.

For now, it is important to note that I will retain the twin concepts of the social and the political as analytical categories. However, these concepts will be amended by an awareness of the fact that the abstract category of politics is often narrowed down during discussions of specific topics. Even though I accept the *primacy of politics* with respect to the constitution of all social relations, the specific configuration of these relations is dependent on specific normative modes of politics.

d) Conclusions with respect to the analysis and usage of abstract categories in scientific and political discourse

All of the conclusions presented below emanate from an over-arching observation that abstract categories such as politics, community, or identity, do not belong to the exclusive domain of scientific analysis. These concepts also figure in everyday language use related to (minority) politics. Interviewees are able to criticise and politicise hegemonic usage of so-called scientific categories in academic discourse. The observations above forced me to rethink some basic assumptions of the initial research project and prompted me to rearticulate the research title in a way that corresponds better to the observations gathered throughout my research. It is therefore useful to articulate some characteristics of the perspective I will use in order to analyse the evolving political subjectivities and engagements of public activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders. These characteristics can be articulated as a set of needs.

- We are in need of a perspective that allows for an empirical analysis of a multiplicity of contradicting theoretical models that may or may not use similar abstract categories such as identity, community, or politics.
- We are in need of a perspective that accounts for the fact that abstract categories such as identity, community, or politics, can function as important signifiers in the discursive construction of both one's sense of self and one's sense of (il)legitimate politics.
- We are in need of a perspective that is able to rearticulate the metapragmatic and political awareness of the respondents without running the risk of overpowering their voices by using our own abstract categories.
- We are in need of a perspective that does not seek to analyse a presupposedly unified object of investigation such as a single community, a single identity, or a specific mode of politics, but rather an approach that allows us to flesh out a complex intertextual network of people constructing their political engagement with reference to concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices, and myself.

²³ Coherence: the result of a cognitive process that structures discourse into a structured and meaningful whole. Coherence is an outcome of the language user's gestalt creating power. It is not texts that cohere but people who (interactively) make texts cohere. Discourse topic and the various procedures of handling it (introducing, changing, shifting, digressing from it) are prevalent and strong means of (re-)creating coherence (Bublitz 1998).

Another set of observations prompting specific theoretical and heuristic requirements pertains to the multiplicity of voices in coherent individuals. This set of observations will be discussed in the next section. Together, these needs will prompt the theoretical and heuristic framework outlined in chapter 2.

1.2.3 Observing multiple voices in coherent individuals

One last aspect that remains to be discussed with respect to the rearticulation of the original research design pertains to a shift from a research on identities to a research on subjectivity. In order to understand this aspect of the rearticulation, I will highlight the multiplicity of voices and aspects of self and others (re)articulated by my interviewees. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that these individuals are able to convey an intuitive sense of coherence throughout their discourse, narratives, and interactions as articulated in the interview context. This tension of individual selves balancing between fragmentation and coherence requires our attention. It is therefore useful to get ahead of chapter 2 by introducing the notion of subjectivity.

a) Who is speaking? – The multiplicity of self and other

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I asked the intellectuals and activists I talked to a set of open-ended questions with respect to the development of their political points of interest; the development of their political engagements; the development of their political thought; their sources of inspiration; and their reasons for agreeing to an interview. I also pointed out that this type of questioning involved a high degree of consciously introduced vagueness on my part that would grant my respondents a relatively high degree of freedom with respect to their responses.

At this point, it is important to emphasise that I approached these interviewees first and foremost as public intellectuals and activists. Even though there were moments when I addressed them on the basis of specific ethnic (e.g. ⟨Moroccan⟩) or religious (e.g. ⟨Muslim⟩) markers, this was not common practice. Moreover, I usually questioned them on the basis of these markers only when they had already discursively acknowledged these notions to be relevant to their self-awareness. I became increasingly sensitive to the problematic aspects of interpellating my respondents at the outset of the interview on the basis of pre-established aspects of their sense of self.

The reasons for this increased sensitivity are related to observations with respect to the usage of abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, and ⟨politics⟩ as discussed above. They are also related to another set of observations. On the one hand, my interviewees often produced seemingly *contradictory statements*. These statements usually corresponded to *different aspects of respondents' sense of self (and other(s))* that were highlighted throughout the interviews. The resulting multiplicity often led to the impression that individuals spoke with different voices depending on their perspective on things. In order to illustrate these phenomena, I will refer to the case of Abied Alsulaiman.

Individuals use voices of others in more literal ways as well. Reported speech is a case in point that will be discussed in the section *reported speech and the multiplicity of respondents' voices*. Depending on the topic under discussion, voices of others may be rearticulated in such a way that they highlight aspects of one's identity that could otherwise be left implicit. This will be illustrated with reference to the interview with Fatima Y.

Contradictory statements?

Abied Alsulaiman used to be coordinator for the Antwerp Migrant Council (Migrantenraad). He was described by many of my respondents as one of the important figures within ⟨the debate⟩ in the nineties. Abied described the ⟨Migrant Council⟩ as ⟨an advisory council for allochthons established in Antwerp⟩. According to him, it was an initiative from ⟨the progressive forces⟩ including ⟨some allochthons⟩, ⟨policy people⟩, and ⟨politicians⟩. He politically and historically contextualises the Migrant Council as a ⟨first attempt⟩ to ⟨increase the participation of allochthons⟩. On the other hand, Abied also acknowledges the voices of others who frame the establishment of the ⟨Migrant Council⟩ as an ⟨alibi⟩ ⟨to postpone⟩ migrant ⟨voting rights⟩.

It is worth mentioning that Abied has no Moroccan roots. He explained how ⟨the Migrant council⟩ originally consisted of ⟨Moroccans and Turks⟩. The issue whether ⟨a Turk or a Moroccan⟩ should be appointed ⟨chairman⟩ triggered some ⟨discussion⟩. After having highlighted these contextual parameters, Abied stated: ⟨and then I was apparently at that moment someone with a Syrian background a good compromise⟩. After some conflicts Abied left his function as ⟨co-ordinator⟩ of the ⟨Migrant Council⟩ and ⟨returned to Lessius Hogeschool⟩ where he teaches Arabic.

The interview with Abied Alsulaiman provides an opportunity to illustrate how seemingly contradictory statements are uttered within the context of a single interview. I will argue that such statements are uttered from different perspectives highlighting different aspects of one's sense of self and others. After having told Abied that I use a ⟨broad definition of politics⟩, he seems to produce a variety of overlapping and contradictory statements with respect to ⟨politics⟩. He states: ⟨actually, politics never really interested me⟩, ⟨I'm passive with respect to politics⟩, and ⟨I don't believe in politics⟩. Moreover, Abied differentiates between ⟨politics⟩ ⟨in the East⟩ or in ⟨the Arab world⟩ on the one hand, and ⟨politics⟩ ⟨in the West⟩ on the other. The criterion of difference is the effect of ⟨political engagement⟩.

Whereas, ⟨political engagement does not amount to anything⟩ in the Arab world because of the immobile ⟨power⟩ structures in the associated ⟨regimes⟩, ⟨the possibility⟩ to ⟨participate in politics⟩ does exist in the West. Abied literally states that ⟨politics makes sense over here⟩, whereas in the ⟨Arab⟩ or Eastern world it does not make any sense. For this reason, ⟨politics⟩ never interested Abied in the ⟨Arab world⟩, even though he did find it interesting over ⟨here⟩. Immediately thereafter, he explicitly states that: ⟨I don't have this calling to do politics, but uhm, ... and that's why I always am kind of passive with respect to politics⟩.

The excerpt below shows that the position from where one evaluates political practice is significant to the type of statements that are being made. It is ⟨here⟩ that politics makes sense even though there are ⟨probably invisible powers lobbying behind the curtains⟩ ⟨here⟩ as well. Elsewhere, such as in the ⟨Arab world⟩, politics does not make sense. This observation indicates that different evaluations of ⟨politics⟩ are being made from different perspectives.

JZ: So, I therefore use a ... a rather broad definition of politics

AA: Yes yes yes yes, that's nice.

JZ: Yes uhm, ... yes uhm, ... I was thinking, because you were talking about you being

AA: So, actually, politics never really interested me, uhm, ... Really, really political, ... because with respect to these things, I'm uhm, passive, I'm passive with respect to politics. I don't believe in politics I think, well, ... political agendas uhm, ... I remember ... differences I know that politics in the West is different than, than politics in the East, the East, ... uhm, or the Arab world where uhm uhm uhm heads of state, governments, ... uhm, well, achieve power in different ways than in the West. Either through coups, or through, ... uhm, well uhm, ... hereditary succession, and so on. These are regimes that ... always remain in power until ... until they die, or the king dies, and the president dies, and so on. They're, ... So, there's no uhm. Political engagement does not amount to anything in that

world So, if you're going to engage yourself politically, ... you can't influence the system in a positive way, change it or anything like that.

JZ: yes

AA: So, you don't have any voice in this process Whereas politics in the West isn't like this uhm, ... [you] do have this possibility, you can have a voice, and you [can] participate in politics, I can go along with it The extent to which you can change things is a different matter, but you, you, you, ... you can have a voice up to a certain level in politics Uhm, the United States are governed by an institution, not by a person, but nevertheless, we now have someone like Obama in power. So, ...

JZ: What do you mean by an institution?

AA: Well, it's the American institution that's governing, not uhm, ... you have two parties

JZ: ah, in that sense.

AA: that dominate uhm... the game. You probably also have invisible powers lobbying behind the curtain, who also determine uhm, and so on. So, ... and uhm, ... Nevertheless, the system allows for possibilities where participation is effectively possible, and uhm, ... in Western Europe this is definitely the case as well, and uhm ... uhm. Politics makes sense over here, ... and in that [Eastern] world I never considered it to be ... interesting. Uhm, ... over here, I did. But, ... I don't have this calling to do politics, but uhm, ... And that's why I always am kind of passive with respect to politics.

excerpt 24 – 31/03/2009

The excerpt below is a continuation of the excerpt above. However, a topic shift occurs towards 'Abied on societal and intellectual movements and the integration sector'. Within this context, Abied explains how he does <believe in> <social and intellectual movements that can> <help people to evolve and develop in better ways>. It is Abied's belief in this type of <movements> that prompted him to engage himself in a variety of civil society projects (e.g. <Safina> and <Talaba>). Such initiatives are considered to be more <rewarding> than <the integration sector> that has outlived its usefulness (see: 2.3.2). Moreover, Abied's involvement in the establishment of an international <association> of <interpreters who translate into and from Arabic> is considered to be part of a <social and intellectual> movement directed against an outdated <political order in the Arab World> that is <partly medieval> and <partly> <a dictatorship obsessed with> <security>. This obsession pushes practices of <translation> and <exchanging ideas with the rest of the world> down on the <list of priorities> of the <Arab> or Eastern political actors. Abied's <passive attitude> to politics is only <passive> in the sense that he does not wish to participate in the type of politics that he associates with the <political order in the Arab World>. It should be kept in mind that his engagement for the Antwerp <Migrant Council> entailed a lot of dealing with politicians. Moreover, Abied's critical stance is highly politicised in the Essex sense of the word.

AA: Uhm, I do believe in ... things that, uhm, social and intellectual movements that can uhm, ... uhm, ... help people to evolve and develop in better ways

JZ: mmh

AA: Hence those lessons we helped to organise in Safina, lectures and discourses Uhm, allochthon students, back in ... '93. These students, Talaba tried to organise initiatives, and ...

JZ: mmh

AA: to perform an exemplary function with respect to other allochthon students as well, and so on We sent them to ... to schools in order to present themselves to students. And there, ... uhm, ... okay, all these things did, ... I thought, or I think things like this are more rewarding in the long run than, ... uhm, ... than for instance the integration sector that I consider to be completely outdated ... having no right to exist any more.

JZ: Yes

AA: uhm ... as the years went by uhm, ... So, in 2004, in 2000, I evaluated these things eh. Not the social and so on, but rather, ... you try to ... to do something on a bigger scale uhm And hence this association Because in 2004, we started an association ... uhm ... in order to group all interpreters who translate into and from Arabic all over the world into an association

JZ: mmh

AA: This association was a reaction to uhm ... a report from ... uhm, let me concentrate a moment uhm, ... a report from ... the Educational Center of the United Nations back then ... who ... published the world-wide translation process in numbers And the Arabic world, apparently, the Arabic world with all its ... well ... potential ... translates much less on a yearly basis ... than Greece

JZ: Yes.

AA: Greece. We're talking about ten million people.

JZ: mmh

AA: So uhm, well, ... one took Greece because it was one of the least developed European countries at a certain moment eh

JZ: mmh

AA: of course, it's rather difficult to perform like Germany or Belgium, but ... Greece And uhm, ... the Arabic world, 400 million, with a vast potential of readers, and so forth, ... So, it's a much less [translations that are being made into Arabic], and this is detrimental to ...

JZ: mmh

AA: our reaction to this was ... uhm ... that ... the political order in that world isn't ... is ... it's an anachronism ... the political order in the Arabic world ...

JZ: mmh

AA: is partly medieval

JZ mmh

AA: partly ... a dictatorship obsessed with ... security ... and all resources are going to security And translating, or ... exchanging ideas with the rest of the world, this, this isn't ... part of their priorities And uhm, ... the intellectuals in this world cannot count on the state in order to do this the Arabic world realises that this is necessary, but ... if the state does not make a budget available for this, they cannot uhm, ... The responsibility to change this rests with the Arabic intellectuals, ... abroad.

excerpt 25 – 31/03/2009

Below, Abied Alsulaiman explains how ⟨we⟩ (i.e. Abied's association of interpreters), lobbied with respect to these issues and became ⟨a nuisance to⟩ the ⟨Arab⟩ or ⟨Eastern world⟩ resulting in ⟨initiatives⟩ and ⟨budgets⟩ devoted to ⟨translating European languages into Arabic and the other way around⟩. Ultimately, this should constitute a ⟨spiritual exchange⟩ that is able to change current ⟨isotropic⟩ and ⟨extremist thinking⟩. Abied's engagement as an interpreter thus constitutes an attempt to counter the situation of an ⟨Arab World⟩ that has ⟨folded back onto itself⟩ ⟨because of⟩ ⟨the political order⟩ that curtails fresh ideas.

JZ: Yes, it's recording again eh So, wait a second, where were we ... ? You were talking about these uhm translating activities.

AA: Yes, indeed, so these, ... In the mean time, we ... lobbied a bit, ... and we continually criticised ... the Arabic uhm, ... uhm, ... well, ministries of education about things, ... also on all the higher levels. So, ... at a certain point, we definitely became a nuisance in that world. And now, we do notice that initiatives are emerging with respect to this issue, over there, especially in the Gulf states, ... one is freeing budgets ...

JZ: Yes.

AA: for ... translating European languages into Arabic and the other way around ... in order to establish a spiritual exchange ... in order to ... break with the uhm isotropic uhm ... thought ... this extremist thought about a whole lot of things by means of ... fresh ideas from ... elsewhere in the world Because this Arabic world has been folded back onto itself for quite a while ... because of ... the political order

JZ: mmh

AA: that uhm

JZ: inhibits

AA: inhibits it. Yes This is a challenge, an engagement I accept, ... And uhm, in the mean time, the association exists five years, ... we have a website, and it's becoming uhm, ... in the mean time we work on projects, translation projects

JZ: mmh ...

excerpt 26 – 31/03/2009

In the excerpt below, I summarised Abied's narrative on his various engagements as follows: <your engagement> moved from <engagements oriented towards Antwerp in the sense of the Migrant Council> and <local contexts> <towards> <that rather cultural approach which is> <oriented towards> <communication between the Arab and the Western world>. Abied agrees with this analysis and confirms my inference.

JZ: Yes. I'll definitely take a look at this Because uhm, it, it, well, the way it seems to me, uhm, ... well. So, ... you basically evolved from uhm, ... well, you basically had these phases through which your engagement, ... kind of moved itself eh Like, on the one hand uhm, ... engagements oriented towards Antwerp in the sense of the Migrant Council uhm, ... uhm ... local contexts basically, towards that ... basically rather cultural approach which is a bit more oriented towards ... communication

AA: Yes.

JZ: between the Arab and the Western world eh. Uhm, but I was also wondering uhm, ... at a certain point, ... because of course, you haven't always been, ... active from the very start over here, in this local context, I was wondering what caused you to ... decide at a certain moment to uhm, I'm just saying something uhm [engage yourself] within Safina, or within the Migrant Council, ... What caused you to start with this at a given moment?

AA: It's uhm, ... well, ... coincidence, ... to be honest. Coincidence, ... because I uhm, I've uhm, ... When I graduated here, in Ghent, in '90, ... I started to teach, ...

excerpt 27 – 31/03/2009

Different aspects of respondents' sense of self (and other(s))

One might say that each evaluative statement about <politics> uttered by Abied Alsulaiman in the above excerpts corresponds to one or more aspects of his sense of self. Sometimes these aspects are left implicit, at other times they are articulated explicitly. We already noticed that Abied evaluated

⟨politics⟩ and ⟨political engagement⟩ on the basis of the geographical coordinates related to types of ⟨power⟩ that allowed politics to make ⟨sense⟩ or not. In this case, the articulated aspect of Abied's sense of self is of a spatial or geographical nature. Other types of positioning may be temporal, social, or (inter)textual. Moreover, the mode of ⟨politics⟩ that he refuses is a mode of politics connected to a type of ⟨power⟩ that ⟨curtails⟩ the communicative ⟨exchange of ideas⟩ that allows people ⟨to evolve and develop⟩. ⟨Movements⟩ that allow people to do so, practice a type of politics that carries Abied's approval. This interpretive logic also explains why Abied enters into certain identifications whereas he refuses others. It also explains Abied's statement that he is rather ⟨passive⟩ with respect to ⟨politics⟩.

Within the excerpts above, Abied positively identified himself with civil society organisation ⟨Safina⟩ and with student organisation ⟨Talaba⟩ by means of the pronoun ⟨us⟩. Within the context of Safina, ⟨lessons⟩ and ⟨lectures⟩ were organised whereas people from Talaba were sent to high schools to stimulate ⟨allochthon students⟩ to aim for higher education. Moreover, through the pronouns ⟨we⟩ and ⟨us⟩, Abied positively identified himself as a pioneer for the organisation of interpreters that lobbied with the ⟨Arab ministries of education⟩ to make more ⟨budgets⟩ available for translation and education. Another explicit identification pertains to the fact that he was a student in Ghent. It is also worth noting that Abied Alsulaiman wrote a Phd on Moroccan legal documents pertaining to family law. His research focused issues of translation (Alsulaiman 2009).

At first sight, the number of identifications seems to be limited. However, there are a lot of other entities and practices that partially or negatively define Abied's sense of self as articulated within the context of the excerpts above. The following individuals, institutions, places and/or spaces play a role in Abied's sense of self and politics as articulated throughout these excerpts: ⟨the East⟩ and ⟨the Arab World⟩ with their ⟨heads of state⟩ - i.e. ⟨king⟩ or ⟨president⟩; ⟨Obama⟩; ⟨the United States⟩ and its ⟨two⟩ political ⟨parties⟩; ⟨allochthon students⟩; other ⟨translators⟩; the ⟨Education Center of the United Nations⟩; ⟨Greece⟩ and its ⟨people⟩; ⟨Germany⟩, ⟨Belgium⟩; ⟨the intellectuals⟩ in the ⟨Arab World⟩; ⟨Antwerp⟩ and ⟨Ghent⟩. All of these actors are implicitly or explicitly associated with specific statements or social practices that define Abied's articulated sense of self. It should be noted that none of these markers can be proven to refer to an Islamic political identity as described in the initial research design. Obviously, if one takes the interview in its entirety into consideration, the number of co-ordinates that are being used in order to position one's self in temporal, spatial, social, or ideological terms, takes on much bigger proportions.

Abied's seemingly contradictory statements prove to be a matter of perspective. When he highlights his position towards Western ⟨politics⟩ in relation to individual development, he is able to state that ⟨politics⟩ makes sense in this realm. Such a statement does not apply if he directs our gaze towards the East. One might also consider the idea that Abied's positive identifications with civil society institutions such as ⟨Safina⟩ and ⟨Talaba⟩ is connected to this logic. When politics is about a type of ⟨power⟩ incompatible with his ideal of human communication and development, this mode of politics is refuted. However, types of engagement that highlight such ideals are worth the effort. It is possible to conclude that as different aspects of one's sense of self are being highlighted in discourse, corresponding restrictions and possibilities for meaning are being generated.

Some of the resulting statements may seem to be logically incompatible but close analysis often shows that contradictions are often the result of a lack of proper contextualisation. Responsibility for proper contextualisation is always shared by all participants in communication. Nevertheless, the question remains how to contextualise and how to detect who is speaking from what perspective at any given time in discourse. Who is the ⟨I⟩, the ⟨we⟩, the ⟨us⟩, or the ⟨them⟩ a speaker or writer refers to? At any rate, none of these pronouns is stable.

The relative importance of Islamic and other identity markers in discourse about politics

The instability or seemingly incoherent usage of pronouns and other identity markers also pertains to the category of ⟨Muslim⟩. The initial project outline stated that it is a common idea in both the social debate and in academic debates that there is an increased importance of religion as a central identity marker within allochthon communities. As we noticed, our own project partially functioned on the basis of a similar presupposition. Although there may be an increase in the importance of religion within the allochthon communities in general, each and every interview that I conducted, displayed an enormous variety in identification markers. Even among pious interviewees, identity markers such as ⟨Muslim⟩, ⟨Islam⟩, ⟨Koran⟩, or ⟨Hadith⟩ (Cragg 2011)²⁴ were never found in isolation from other aspects of their sense of self. Of course, some identity markers may be more important than others to a specific individual. Nevertheless, we cannot presuppose that this is the case for Islamic markers at the outset of our analysis. The enormous variety of identifications prevents us from doing so.

The interview with Fatima Y provides a useful illustration of the fact that identity markers can never be analysed in isolation. Fatima is engaged in the pressure group BOEH (Baas Over Eigen Hoofd, i.e. Boss Over One's own Head) and employed at the University of Antwerp. She positively identified herself as a Muslim by her choice of clothing (headscarf) and through her discourse. In the excerpt below, I asked Fatima about the ⟨sources of inspiration⟩ that she considers to have had ⟨the greatest impact⟩ on her way of thinking. The excerpt is coded as 'Islam as the biggest source of inspiration for Fatima's thought and openness towards others'. I suggested that she might refer to ⟨books⟩ or ⟨persons⟩ but she responds by emphasising that her ⟨entire schooling⟩ impacted on her ⟨way of thinking⟩. Nevertheless, she admits that her ⟨greatest source of inspiration⟩ is constituted by ⟨Islam itself⟩ and more specifically by ⟨the prophet Mohamed⟩ who provides her with ⟨inspiration⟩ and ⟨strength⟩.

Fatima goes on and explains the meaning of ⟨the word Islam⟩ with reference to ⟨istislam⟩ and ⟨salaam⟩. According to her, ⟨Islam⟩ ⟨contains⟩ both ⟨words⟩. She translates ⟨salaam⟩ as a type of ⟨peace⟩ that includes ⟨tolerance⟩ and ⟨istislam⟩ as ⟨surrender to God⟩. Fatima goes on and explains that ⟨God asks you to be able to live with people⟩ and not merely with ⟨Muslims⟩ and evidences this with reference to the ⟨Koran⟩. This divine request made her realise that she had ⟨to open up to others⟩ and has ⟨to learn⟩ from this experience.

The interview with Fatima is one of the few interviews in which respondents refer to Islamic theological sources for the sake of argument. Fatima refers to the ⟨hadith⟩ that contains a story about Mohamed's ⟨Jewish neighbour⟩ (who didn't want to have anything to do with the prophet). Fatima recounts how ⟨every morning⟩, the ⟨Jewish neighbour⟩ ⟨threw garbage⟩ in front of his door. Mohamed always cleaned this up without ever saying anything about it. After a few days without having to clean this ⟨garbage⟩ away from his door, he went to his neighbour's house where the ⟨son opened the door⟩ telling ⟨the prophet⟩ that his father was ⟨sick⟩. Mohamed then asks whether he may visit his neighbour since this is ⟨a duty in our religion as well⟩. He was allowed to do so, thereby surprising and befriending his neighbour. Fatima explains how Mohamed said the following words to the sick man: ⟨"well, you're a human being, and I respect you, and you may have another opinion, but this doesn't mean I have to hate you because of this, on the contrary, I am very tolerant towards you"⟩. Fatima then changed her tone of voice and concluded by telling me that these two neighbours ⟨became very good friends⟩ since that moment.

JZ: ... If you would have to talk about your sources of inspiration, or, I suppose you're somewhere today, and you have certain standpoints, certain standpoints, uhm, and so on, and uhm, ... What do

²⁴ The Encyclopaedia Britannica describes the Hadith as a "record of the traditions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, revered and received as a major source of religious law and moral guidance, second only to the authority of the Qur'ān, or scripture of Islām. It might be defined as the biography of Muhammad perpetuated by the long memory of his community for their exemplification and obedience. The development of Hadith is a vital element during the first three centuries of Islāmic history, and its study provides a broad index to the mind and ethos of Islām." (Cragg 2011).

you think has exerted the greatest influences with respect to eh way you think today? Like, ... well, I mean with respect to books, or persons, or uhm, ...

FY: ... well uhm ... basically my entire education has uhm, has had an impact upon me, on my way of thinking. But my greatest source of inspiration is Islam itself uhm, ... well, the the the central figure over there, is the prophet Mohamed eh, uhm, ... I drew a lot of inspiration out of this, and strength, ... Especially uhm, ... because of the fact that ... the word 'Islam' itself means peace, and within this peace there is also very prominently this word 'tolerance', ... And because of this I really learned, and uhm, also, uhm 'istislam' means surrender to God. Well, God asks you to be able to live with people, very literally in the Koran, *people*, not Muslims, *people*. So, to me this meant like "I just have to open up myself, also towards others, and I have to learn a lot about these things". For instance, there's this story about the prophet Mohamed that, a hadith, one says it's said about the prophet that he used to have a Jewish neighbour. And this Jewish neighbour uhm, ... he uhm, ... well, he didn't want to have anything to do with the prophet, so each morning, he threw his garbage in front of his door. And the prophet uhm, always simply cleaned this garbage away, very, very patiently, never said anything about it Until one day, he came out with his broom in order to wipe it away, and he didn't see any garbage. The second day, still no garbage, the third day, no garbage Well, something must be off So he went to knock on the door of his Jewish neighbour, and his son opened the door, and he said "well, I noticed your father hasn't thrown his garbage at my house, how come?". And he's like "well, uhm, I have, ... well, they, uhm, my father is sick, he's really very sick, and that's why he can't stand up, and so on, he, well", "ah, would you please go to your father and would you ask him whether I could visit him, because that's a duty in our religion as well, if someone is ill, you go and visit him". And he's like "okay, I'll ask him", and he asked, and he was allowed inside And he came inside, and this Jewish neighbour was so amazed about him, like "yes, but didn't I always treat you very badly? And still, you're here?", and he's like "well, you're a human being, and I respect you, and you may have another opinion, but this doesn't mean I have to hate you because of this, on the contrary, I am very tolerant towards you", and ever since, they became very good friends.

excerpt 28 – 01/02/2008

In the excerpt above Fatima explained how Islam inspires her to ⟨open up⟩ her relation to ⟨others⟩ in a tolerant and respectful way, submitting to ⟨God⟩ in the process. Throughout the previous sections we already pointed out that respondents make frequent use of (direct or indirect) reported speech. Fatima's reference to the ⟨hadith⟩ containing the story of ⟨the prophet⟩ and his ⟨Jewish neighbour⟩, allowed her to rearticulate Mohamed's voice in order to theologically legitimate her socio-political engagements. One might say that she speaks with the voice of a Muslim at this point.

Reported speech and the multiplicity of respondents' voices

In spite of the fact that Fatima emphasised her Muslim identity throughout this narrative, she was also able to legitimate her other engagements for ⟨BOEH⟩ and the University of Antwerp without making an appeal to theological arguments. At that point, other aspects of her identity seemed to be more relevant, and other voices were rearticulated. After having discussed Fatima's engagement for ⟨BOEH⟩ as a ⟨kind of feminist project⟩²⁵, we started to discuss 'Fatima's engagement for BOEH as a social vocation for functional neutrality'. She rearticulates the complaints of BOEH as follows: ⟨by introducing a measure you make the life of a minority very difficult⟩. The ⟨measure⟩ refers to the ⟨banning of the headscarf⟩.

The position of BOEH is one in favour of ⟨free choice⟩ and against any sort of ban. Fatima refers to a ⟨poster campaign⟩ she and other BOEH activists organised. This poster campaign displayed Muslim and non-Muslim celebrities with a headscarf advocating the right of freedom of choice. Nevertheless, the headscarf was banned from certain public functions at the Antwerp municipal level. The acronym ⟨BOEH⟩ stands for ⟨Boss Over One's own Head⟩, (i.e., Dutch: *Baas Over Eigen Hoofd*) which refers to the older ⟨feminist⟩ slogan ⟨'boss over one's own belly'⟩. Fatima goes on and states: ⟨we said no

²⁵ Fatima does not consider herself to be a ⟨hardcore feminist⟩ in the sense of someone who is opposed to ⟨men⟩.

no, right now, it's 'Boss over One's Own Head' eh, I choose what's in my head, and how I want to express this. But I can also be neutral in the way I function, by uhm, simply by being very kind, and by doing my job). She then stops with the reported speech and starts to illustrate the feasibility of this type of neutrality with reference to the way she practices her job at the university.

FY: It's a social uhm, ... perhaps, I would dare to call it a social calling, like uhm, ... you discriminate, by introducing a measure you make the life of a minority very difficult, ... a minority that would like to contribute to society but that remains discriminated like this. For instance, our standpoint is uhm, concerning the headscarf, uhm, forbidding the headscarf is the same as obliging the headscarf, and we are against both. We believe in freedom of choice, the woman chooses herself eh, and this was our slogan back then as well, with this poster campaign, headscarf or not, the woman decides. And so, 'Boss Over One's Own Head' [Dutch: *Baas Over Eigen Hoofd*, i.e. BOEH], that's the name of a strictly feminist thing, whereas it used to be 'boss over one's own belly'. We said no, no, right now, it's 'boss over one's own head' eh, I choose what's in my head, and how I want to express this. But I can also be neutral in the way I function, by uhm, simply by being very kind, and by doing my job.

excerpt 29 – 01/02/2008

The excerpt below occurs a few turns later. It is coded as 'Fatima's reactions to statements on neutrality in Patrick Janssens' style'²⁶. Patrick Janssens is the Antwerp mayor responsible for banning the headscarf from public functions in the Antwerp region. When asked how she reacted when confronted with statements in favour of banning the headscarf, Fatima responds once again with a rearticulation of her own voice in such a situation: (I do try to delegitimise, I say like "yes, but that isn't true"). However, she differentiates between (people with whom you can establish a reasonable dialogue) and others. An unsatisfying dialogue about the (headscarf) is illustrated with reference to her interaction with an anonymous individual during a Ramadan market organised by the Federation of Moroccan Organisations in Borgerhout. At that market there was a (booth) of BOEH where I met Fatima. She recounts the discourse of some people she talked to by means of direct reported speech. Fatima framed their discourse as follows: (a lot of people came over to say like "I'm against this eh, what you're doing", and "we don't agree at all", and "you should simply take it off, what were you thinking").

Fatima's response to this type of discourse was rearticulated as follows: ("but don't you think it's bad that we simply cannot participate because you think that I am sort of like in your way with my headscarf? Because you're telling me, this is exactly the same thing as if you're telling a black person like "you're black, I don't like you, get out of here." "). I say, "that's the same signal you're giving to us eh"). The reported dialogue continues. Fatima's question is met by statements such as ("yes, but you can take off that headscarf and you can't take off that black colour, and of course, I think it's bad, I think, ... I have nothing against it eh"). Fatima briefly stops reporting and remarks that (they always say) things such as ("I don't have anything against your headscarf, but when you're behind a counter, when you have to service me, I prefer you not to put it on"). At that point she remarks that these voices come from people who do not realise that (there really is an identity, an experience of religion attached) to the practice of wearing the headscarf. Elsewhere, Fatima metapragmatically framed this principle of neutrality as neutrality in (Patrick Janssens' style).

JZ: And how do you respond when, for instance, when you get to hear something like that in your face, well, what do you say to ...

FY: yes yes yes yes, ... I do try to delegitimise, I say like, "yes, but that isn't true, and". But I notice very quickly about people with whom you can establish a reasonable dialogue, and others with whom you can't. And concerning people with whom I notice this is a waste of time, I'm not going to put my

²⁶ Patrick Janssens is the Mayor of Antwerp who is responsible for the ban on religious symbols for public servants who have to interact with the public. One of the arguments for introducing this ban was based on a principle of safeguarding the neutrality of public functions. It goes without saying that this concept of neutrality was challenged by activists such as Fatima Y.

energy into it, I'll simply walk away, uhm. Well, we also had this, a booth at this Ramadan market, ... that's where you met me once eh (laughs)

JZ: yes yes yes, that's where you gave me your business card

FY: yes. That's where I gave you my card. On this Ramadan market a lot of people came over to say like "I'm against this eh, what you're doing", and "we don't agree at all", and, and "you should simply take it off, what were you thinking", and that sort of thing, and uhm, ... And then, well, we tried to explain like "but don't you think it's bad that we simply cannot participate because you think that I am sort of like in your way with my headscarf? Because you're telling me, this is exactly the same thing as if you're telling a black person like "you're black, I don't like you, get out of here"". I say, "that's the same signal you're giving to us he". "Yes, but you can take off that headscarf and you can't take off that black colour, and of course, I think it's bad, ... I think, I have nothing against it eh". They always say this, "I don't have anything against your headscarf, but when you're behind a counter, when you have to service me, I prefer you not to put it on" It's almost as if it's a hat that you can put on or off, and one does not realise that there really is an identity, an experience of religion attached to it eh, ...

excerpt 30 – 01/02/2008

The excerpt above illustrates how Fatima introduced voices of others into her own discourse by means of direct and indirect reported speech. These voices prove to be constitutive for her own political stance towards the banning of the headscarf and the neutrality principle in (Patrick Janssens' style).

b) Who is speaking? - Coherent individuals and subjectivity

Even though my observations during the processes of transcription and analysis highlighted the complexities of the discourse and sense of self articulated by my respondents, I often experienced a sense of coherence during the interactions themselves. This subjective experience was largely triggered by unconscious discursive and cognitive processes. As I started to transcribe the interviews, it became increasingly unclear how I was able to think I understood my respondents. The usage of abstract categories and the complexities of identification processes were only two categories of observations that contributed to this fascination. Nevertheless, somehow, I often understood my interviewees in such a way that my inferences were acceptable to them. This is evidenced when respondents confirm my explicitly articulated interpretations and speculations. Such inferences were often based on what proved to be very vague language use in hindsight. I do not believe that I am exceptional in this capacity. Rather, I think that the coherence that was established in interaction with my respondents was the result of discursive and cognitive processes that were only partly salient to our individual minds at the time of the interview itself. The establishment of coherence is by no means an exceptional process.

The issue was not merely how I could make sense of the data, but also how my respondents managed to understand themselves somehow and to some degree. As we will argue later on, both questions are inextricably intertwined. The sense of coherence that I subjectively experienced functioned largely through intuition. The same goes for any understanding of self. Nevertheless, there is no need for solipsism. Discourse allows us to mark aspects of the cognitive processes that are going on in communication. It provides pointers as to what is going on inside and outside our heads. The trick is to follow these pointers and to make inferences on the basis of empirically observable data that may indicate how an individual is able to make sense of him or herself as a coherent mind/body in relation to various aspects of social reality. In order to do so, we need a concept that can distinguish between the various identifications that my respondents articulated and the sense of coherence that was somehow communicated in spite of this multiplicity. One of the main concepts that allowed me to do so was that of *subjectivity*. It was important to distinguish between a self that somehow experiences and interprets itself as a more or less coherent whole, and the particularised aspects of that self that were being articulated in and through discourse. Here, the concept of subjectivity provides a solution.

Donald E. Hall describes the difference between identity and subjectivity as follows: “*often used interchangeably with the term ‘identity’, subjectivity more accurately denotes our social constructs and consciousness of identity. We commonly speak of identity as a flat, one-dimensional concept but subjectivity is much broader and more multifaceted: it is social and personal being that exists in negotiation with broad cultural definitions and our own ideals. We may have numerous discrete identities of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc ... and a subjectivity that is comprised of all of those facets, as well as our own imperfect awareness of our selves*” (D. E. Hall 2004: 134). The concept of subjectivity thus allows us to think the multiplicity within a more or less coherent individual. It is a way of thinking that enables us to think of the self as balancing on the edge between coherence and a multiple personality (dis)order, and more importantly, it provides a framework for thinking in terms of a category that was never used by the respondents themselves within the context of the interviews. Of course, subjectivity is still a very abstract concept. If we want to understand how it functions, we need to analyse the empirical data with more fine-grained tools. These will be provided in chapter 2. For current purposes, it suffices to have a general idea of the notion of subjectivity.

c) Conclusions with respect to the observation of a multiplicity of voices in coherent individuals

The conclusions presented below are based on the over-arching observation that individuals tend to highlight various aspects of their sense of self and others. This multiplicity may give one the impression that individuals speak with different voices depending on their perspective on things. In addition to the contradictions that the associated discursive processes seem to trigger, there is a sense of coherence at play as well. This sense of coherence is often experienced intuitively. Based on observations indicating these facts, we decided to look for a category of analysis that is able to differentiate between a particular identification that an individual may make in a specific context and the over-arching sense of self that is conveyed as well. For this reason, we got ahead of the next chapter and identified the notion of subjectivity as comprising a multiplicity of discrete identities (e.g. race, class, gender, sexual, ...) and our own imperfect awareness of our selves as more or less coherent wholes. We can now proceed to articulate the characteristics of the perspective that we will use in order to analyse the evolving political subjectivities and engagements of public activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders. As in section 1.2.2. , we will formulate these characteristics in terms of needs.

- We are in need of a perspective that is able to empirically investigate large-scale interpretive processes that provide coherence between seemingly contradictory statements.
- We are in need of a perspective that allows us to differentiate between the multiple aspects of a self and the sense of coherence that is subjectively interpreted, experienced, articulated, and co-constructed in communication.
- We are in need of a perspective that allows for the analysis of intuitive and/or unconscious processes that are empirically observable in discourse.

Taken together, the needs emerging from our observation of multiple voices articulated by coherent individuals and from our observations with respect to the usage of abstract categories in political and scientific discourse, prompted me to embark on an intellectual journey through the writings of poststructuralist, pragmatist, and linguistic pragmatic authors. The report of this journey is presented to you in the next chapter.

1.3 The rearticulated research topic

The rearticulated research title of this Phd is *Analysing political engagement: an interpretive and functionalist discourse analysis of evolving political subjectivities among public activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders*. The reframing of my research topic was necessary since empirical observations were often incompatible with some of the presuppositions carried along in the initial framing. Some of these presuppositions are quite hegemonic within the Flemish public sphere. The close and problematic links between political and academic discourse should be taken into consideration throughout this entire document. It is useful to recall that the working title read as follows: *Islamic identities in Flanders: a discourse analytical approach of evolving Islamic political self-images in a Flemish context (1964 to present)*. The usage of the categories linked to (the description of) this research title by individual interviewees often constituted a politicisation of hegemonic ideas in the Essex sense of the word. That is, they often discursively (re)activated political meanings that have become sedimented in rules, norms, practices, and discourses that constitute the majority perspective on minority politics within Flanders.

1.3.1 Topic shifts in the research design

Below, we will summarise the reasons for a shift from *Islamic political* identities to *political* subjectivities; for deleting *identity* and *community* from the (description of) the research topic; and for retaining the category of the political. We will also summarise why we prefer the notion of subjectivity over identity in order to analyse the political engagements of activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders.

a) From Islamic *political* identities towards *political* subjectivity

An important Flemish hegemonic idea concerns the a priori establishment of an associative connection between Islamic and political aspects of Muslim, Moroccan, and/or allochthon identity. Observations with respect to the usage of abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨politics⟩, and ⟨community⟩ required a rearticulation of the research topic that did not introduce this association on an a priori basis. Only in a very limited number of cases, Islamic theological arguments were made during the interviews on political interests, engagements, thoughts, and sources of inspiration. Moreover, interviewees who did so, never referred to Islam in isolation of non-religious aspects of their sense of self. This explains why we deleted the concept of *Islamic political* identities in favour of the broader *political* subjectivities in the rearticulated research topic. Whether there is an increasing salience of Islam and religion as a central identity marker among allochthons in general or not, the politics of Flemish activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background cannot be understood with reference to a presupposed Islamic political dimension constitutive of their political engagement alone.

b) Deleting *identity* and *community* from the (description of) the research topic

The way my interviewees used the abstract categories of ⟨identity⟩ and ⟨community⟩ often constituted an implicit or explicit critique of the way these concepts were being used within the initial research design. This provides another indication for the fact that the discourse of these respondents is often quite anti-hegemonic. Moreover, they often exhibited a high degree of metapragmatic awareness of the way these categories were being used. We already noticed how metapragmatic awareness (i.e. an awareness of the way meanings are generated through discourse) is constitutive for all political

awareness. This awareness allows individuals to challenge dominant academic and political discourse surrounding notions such as ⟨identity⟩ or ⟨community⟩. All of my interviewees wielded implicit or explicit theories of ⟨identity⟩ and ⟨community⟩ and not all of these theories were compatible with one another. Since some interviewees even problematised the ontological status of communities and identities, it did not seem appropriate anymore to analyse their discourse in these very terms. For these reasons, *we decided to leave identity out of the research title and not to frame this research as a research into a Moroccan, allochthon, or Islamic community.*

As we noted before, the initial research description stated that “*the field work, because of reasons of feasibility, will be restricted to the current communities of Arab (predominantly Maghrebian) descent in Antwerp. The supervisors are aware that this limitation bears consequences with respect to the research results. However, since the project aims to connect the discourses with the specific socio-cultural context of the speakers, such a limitation is necessary*”. This unproblematic usage of the notion of community is incompatible with some of the critiques articulated by the intellectuals and activists I talked to. As with the notion of ⟨identity⟩, this is one of the reasons for abandoning this concept as used in the original research design. However, another set of reasons was provided on the basis of ethnographic observations.

Contrary to our first intuitions, a restriction to “*the current communities of Arab (predominantly Maghrebian) descent in Antwerp*” did not make the research more feasible. In fact, it proved to be impossible to identify a community of political activists and intellectuals in any classic sense of the word. I was faced with a complex intertextual network of people discursively constructing their political engagement with reference to a great variety of concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices, and myself. A strict delineation of a community proved to be impossible if we were to understand political subjectivity among people with a Moroccan background in Flanders. On the other hand, it was possible to identify a loose network of activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders by means of a combination of media-monitoring and the snow-ball method. Nevertheless, if there was an over-arching unity to be found among my interviewees, it was produced through the links that were established by means of the interview practice itself.

c) Retaining the political for reasons of compatibility and coherence

An important tool for creating coherence within and between the individual interviews was provided by the notion of politics itself. Contrary to the concepts of community and identity, we retained this concept since all of the usages could be reframed as particular applications of the Essex concept of politics. We already noticed how every interview was explicitly framed as an interaction within the broader context of research on the political world views, the ideas, the discourse, and/or the identity of the interviewee. Since my main questions all focused on the political aspects of my respondents’ subjectivity, the concept should not simply be abandoned as a useful category for analysis.

As we will see, the notion of politics as deployed in the interview contexts, will prove to be one of the most important entry points into an empirical analysis of the subjectivity of my respondents. However, it should be noted that even though we accept the primacy of politics with respect to the constitution of all social relations, the specific configuration of these relations is dependent on specific normative modes of politics as articulated and practiced by individuals. Moreover, the twin concepts of the social and the political need to be amended by an awareness of the fact that the abstract category of politics is often narrowed down to a more particular interpretation within highly contextualised interactions.

d) From identity to subjectivity

The research design aimed to answer the following questions: “*Is there indeed an increase in references to Islam in the definitions of the Self? Since when? What (interior or foreign) factors*

determined this evolution? How is this 'Islamic identity' conceptualized and articulated? And what consequences does all of this have on the political positioning of Flemish Muslims? For instance, when and to what degree, do religious argumentations support political statements? And in what sense does all of this evolve? . We already indicated a tension between (1) the presupposed connection between Islamic and political identities, and (2) the research questions which basically questioned if, when, where, and to what extent Islamic and political aspects of identity were articulated with one another in the political discourse of Muslims with a Moroccan background in Flanders. We have now arrived at a point where we can problematise these tentative research questions even further.

The issue is not merely whether there is an increase in references to Islam in definitions of the self. Preliminary observations with respect to the usage <identity> have shown that the notion of the self as articulated by the interviewees constitutes a more promising avenue for investigation. From such a perspective, one cannot restrict oneself to an investigation of the aspects of the self that refer to a presupposed '*Islamic identity*'. The question how the self is articulated in and through discourse allows for an analysis that is less plagued by the hegemonic connection between Islamic and political aspects as collectively imagined in Flemish hegemonic thinking on Islamic minorities. This is another reason for abandoning the notion of identity as articulated in the research design. Also, it provides part of the explanation why we used the notion of subjectivity instead.

Other reasons for preferring subjectivity over identity in the description of this research project pertain to observations with respect to (1) the multiple aspects of a self and other that may be marked in discourse and to (2) the intuitively experienced sense of coherence that persisted in spite of the resulting complexity. As different aspects of one's sense of self are being highlighted in discourse, corresponding restrictions and possibilities for meaning are being generated. Some of the resulting statements may seem to be logically incompatible but close analysis often shows that contradictions are the result of a lack of proper contextualisation. The sense of coherence that I subjectively experienced functioned largely through intuition. One might claim that the same goes for any experience of self and other. We are therefore in need of a concept that allows us to distinguish between the various identifications that respondents may articulate and the sense of coherence that was somehow communicated in spite of this multiplicity. The concept of subjectivity provides a way out. It enables us to think of the self as balancing on the edge between coherence and fragmentation and it provides a framework for thinking in terms of a category that was never used by the interviewees themselves within the context of the interviews.

1.3.2 Desiderata of the required perspective

I indicated that a mere change of terminology does not suffice in order to adequately investigate the complex intertextual network of people discursively constructing their political engagement with reference to a great variety of concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices, and myself. In order to arrive at a better understanding of political engagements as articulated throughout the interviews, I formulated two sets of criteria that any adequate framework for analysis should answer to. The characteristics of the required perspective have been formulated in terms of needs.

First of all, we are in need of a perspective that allows for an empirical analysis of a multiplicity of contradicting theoretical models that may or may not use similar abstract categories such as identity, community, or politics. This is important, since we cannot presuppose that the mere usage of the same words implies a similarity in definitions of the self or in definitions of the situation.

Secondly, we are in need of a perspective that accounts for the fact that abstract categories such as identity, community, or politics can function as important signifiers in the discursive construction of both one's sense of self and one's sense of (i)legitimate politics. Put differently, the perspective we are looking for should be able to explain how the usage of widely available categories can become personalised and constitutive for an individuals' political subjectivity.

Thirdly, we are in need of a perspective that is able to rearticulate the metapragmatic and political awareness of respondents without running the risk of overpowering their voices by using our own abstract categories. Our own theoretical model of self and subjectivity should therefore be deployed with great care. Metapragmatic awareness is of fundamental importance to political awareness. This does not merely apply with respect to an awareness of the political nature of the concept of ⟨identity⟩, it goes for the concept of ⟨subjectivity⟩ as well.

The fourth need pertains to the fact that we do not need a perspective that seeks to analyse a presupposedly unified object of investigation such as a single community, a single identity, or a specific mode of politics, but an approach that allows us to flesh out a complex intertextual network of people constructing their political engagement with reference to concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices, and myself. Put differently, we are looking for a framework that allows us to investigate a large-scale social debate by means of an analysis of individualised utterances.

A fifth characteristic of the required perspective is that it should allow us to empirically investigate large-scale interpretive processes that provide coherence between seemingly contradictory statements produced by social actors. Since most of the investigated contradictions are the result of implicit meanings that have not been sufficiently contextualised in discourse, this approach should allow us to identify implicit meanings on the basis of empirical observations.

The sixth requirement pertains to the need for a perspective that allows us to differentiate between the multiple aspects of a self and the sense of coherence that is subjectively experienced, articulated and co-constructed in communication. We have already indicated that theories of subjectivity hold promise in this respect.

A seventh and last characteristic of the desired perspective implies that it allows for an analysis of the intuitive and/or unconscious processes that are nevertheless marked in discourse.

1.3.3 A brief look into the future

At the beginning of this chapter, I briefly indicated that my main intellectual motivation to start this research was not so much inspired by the specific social and political situation in which a great deal of people with a Moroccan background in Flanders find themselves, but by a fascination with a particular type of discourse theory. The Essex model of discourse theory will be discussed in the next chapter. The tension between its theoretical concepts and methodological drawbacks prompted me to investigate the compatibility with more empirically oriented frameworks such as linguistic pragmatics. However, as I became gradually aware of the intricacies of the debate, I developed a passion for this topic as well. The next chapter is framed in terms of a search for a heuristic. I will illustrate my approach in chapter 3. I hope to demonstrate the analytical and the political relevance of my interpretive and functionalist approach to the self.

The concept of subjectivity described above is very vague. The question remains how to contextualise and how to detect who is speaking from what perspective at any given time in discourse. I believe that responsibility for proper contextualisation is always shared by all participants in communication – including myself. The next section will have to answer the question how to identify the markers and interpretive processes that allows us to communicate efficiently. An empirical stance is required.

In spite of the relatively high level of abstraction of the next chapter, it is important to be aware of the fact that any rearticulation of other peoples' discourse implies a risk of turning them and their words into objects of control. The reader should therefore keep track of the thin and ambiguous line between academic and political discourse. Every discourse analysis ultimately amounts to a scientifically legitimated metadiscourse. Since there is no escape from metapragmatic awareness and the associated

process of politicisation, we need to consider the double question what type of rearticulation tends to dominate the voices of others, and what type of rearticulation allows people to speak for themselves through the voices of others.

2 Towards a heuristic of interpretive functionalism

As I mentioned in my introduction, I seek to integrate poststructuralist, linguistic pragmatic, and pragmatist modes of thought into a more or less coherent heuristic for analysing large-scale interpretive processes constitutive for a preferred mode of politics as well as for a preferred mode of self. In order to advance my argument, I will provide the reader with a multi-dimensional notion of articulation. In this respect, it may be useful to get ahead of myself and to describe my interpretive functionalist approach as *a general framework that allows for an investigation of the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction, and to the metapragmatic positioning of the interlocutors and voices involved in the speech event under investigation*. Such a framework involves an integration of multiple theories and methodologies. More specifically, it involves an articulation of linguistic pragmatic, pragmatist, and poststructuralist modes of thought.

I will first and foremost focus on various notions of articulation in structuralist and poststructuralist thought in order to formulate a preferred notion of articulation that meets the desiderata of an interpretive and functionalist heuristic (see: 2.1). Secondly, I will move towards an interpretive functionalist approach for analysing politics, the self, and discourse (see: 2.2), by discussing pragmatist and poststructuralist thought on self and politics (see: 2.2.1). I will also demonstrate how linguistic pragmatic perspectives on the context(s), structure(s) and function(s) of language use allow us to deal with these topics in a more empirical way (see: 2.2.2). The resulting interpretive and functionalist approach simultaneously impacts upon the way political engagement can be analysed within the public sphere (see: 2.3). After a discussion of the ideological functions of discourse in the public sphere (see: 2.3.1), I will clear the ground for an interpretive functionalist analysis of the way my interviewees use the notion of integration (see: 2.3.3) by means of a discussion of the way the notion of integration tends to be problematised in academic and in political discourse (see: 2.3.2).

2.1 Articulation and rearticulation in (post-)structuralist perspectives

In the subchapters below I will distinguish between broad and narrow concepts of articulation in order to distinguish between forms of reported speech and the theorisations dealt with in the upcoming chapters (see: 2.1.1). Secondly, I will introduce the various etymological senses of the signifier *articulation* (see: 2.1.2). This will clear the ground for a discussion of the various theoretical approaches of this concept (see: 2.1.3). The goal of these subchapters is to come up with an integrated notion of articulation that allows us to overcome terminological, theoretical, and methodological differences between poststructuralist, pragmatist, and linguistic pragmatic approaches to discourse and subjectivity. I consider it to be important to overcome these differences in order to analyse large-scale interpretive processes of socio-political engagement in an empirically sound way.

2.1.1 Broad and narrow concepts of articulation

The attentive reader may suspect that there is more to the principle of (re)articulation than I have indicated thus far. In fact, the concept of articulation is central to this endeavour of analysing the evolving subjectivities of intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders. Even though it is possible to interpret the notion of (re)articulation in a rather literal sense, the first chapter has been written with a more sophisticated concept in mind. The literal interpretation of (re)articulation was dealt with in 1.2.1 where we explained the usage of (re)articulation markers (< and >). These markers indicated where the words used by myself are literally the same words as those used by the interviewees. In this restricted sense, articulation basically refers to all forms of spoken and

written discourse. Rearticulation in the narrow sense refers to verbal and/or written rephrasings, as well as to all forms of reported speech and intertextuality.

The deployment of this narrow definition of (re)articulation could be observed when I stated that respondents were stimulated *to articulate* whatever political points of interest, engagements, thoughts, or sources of inspiration they considered to be relevant within the interview context. Interviewees *articulated* various critiques with respect to a great variety of social actors. I also explained and illustrated how I *articulated* my own interpretations from time to time within the context of these interviews. Moreover, we analysed how some respondents used direct and indirect reported speech in order to *rearticulate* the discourse of others. In addition, we noticed how it was possible for an individual *to articulate* seemingly contradictory notions of identity, community, and politics within the context of a single interview. Interviewees proved to be able *to articulate* aspects of their metapragmatic awareness in verbal discourse and we also noticed how they *articulated* themselves with reference to an enormous array of subject positions, roles, identities, or voices, in order to describe their relationship towards various modes of politics. It should also be noted that respondents were selected for *articulating* their voices in public media. The list goes on. In all of these instances, it is possible to equate the practice of articulation with the production of verbal or written discourse.

On the other hand, the reader might have started to suspect that things are more complicated than I led them to believe when I started to use the concept of articulation in order to describe why a *rearticulation* of the research title and the corresponding object of investigation was necessary. I also indicated that it would prove to be necessary to *rearticulate* the relations between the required theoretical frameworks, the disciplinary perspectives, and the methodologies used for analysis, as written down in the original research design. In addition, I explicitly stated that I meant to *rearticulate* the project in such a way that it would correspond better to the experiences and empirical observations I gathered throughout the research process. Moreover, we noticed how important it is *to rearticulate* the metapragmatic and political awareness of the interviewees without overpowering their voices by using our own abstract categories. The need for a more explicit theory of articulation became especially salient when we stated that we should distinguish between a self that somehow experiences and interprets itself as a more or less coherent whole, and the particularised aspects of that self that were being *articulated* in and through specific stretches of discourse.

We may conclude that this entire book can be framed as a series of (re)articulations. In a narrow sense of the word, the practice of articulation involves the (re)production of spoken or written discourse. However, this does not explain what happens when we use discourse. It provides no explanation at all as to why the concept of articulation is relevant to an analysis of political engagement and subjectivity. I will therefore advocate a more sophisticated concept of articulation throughout the upcoming sections. The notion of articulation as used within the context of this book, is based on linguistic pragmatic and poststructuralist insights. This broader concept exceeds articulation as a merely linguistic phenomenon. One might also argue that this latter concept is more narrow since it entails a very particular theory of articulation. Nevertheless, I consider both concepts of articulation to be highly compatible.

2.1.2 Etymological senses of articulation

In order to explain the concept of articulation as used within my interpretive functionalist approach to discourse and subjectivity, I will provide an overview of the various senses this word has acquired in other contexts. The various ways in which the notion of articulation can be used, are the result of a complex history. The etymological history sketched below is designed to shed some light on the multiple connotations that the notion of *articulation* has acquired over time. This might add “*just that extra edge of consciousness*” (R. Williams 1983: 24-25) and critical awareness with respect to the vocabulary we use as we go on to (re)articulate the various statements that constitute this book about the analysis of political engagement and subjectivity. It is interesting to note that the notion of

articulation is not to be found within Williams' vocabulary of culture and society (R. Williams 1983). Nevertheless, influential socio-political theorisations of this notion can be found from the seventies on (Daryl Slack 1996: 115). In order to understand these theorisations, it is useful to highlight the etymological senses of articulation that preceded them.

The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* teaches us that there are two primary senses of the noun *articulation*. On the one hand, there is a set of senses that is primarily anatomical or biological. On the other hand, there is a series of senses that relates the concept of articulation to speech and/or artistic expression. Since the 15th century to this day, the word is being used within the context of zoology and anatomy to designate a connection of bones or skeletal segments by a joint. It also refers to a particular manner of jointing. Moreover, the notion of articulation appeared in English botanical terminology from 1658 on. Within this context, the concept refers to a node or joint of a stem. It is used to refer to the place at which a leaf or any other part is attached to a plant. Within the context of dentistry, the concept was observed since 1849. Here, it referred to the contact made between the upper and lower teeth, especially during movements of the jaw. It could also refer to the adjustment of the position of the teeth to achieve normal contact of this kind. From the middle of the 19th century on, the word also appeared as referring to man-made structures or mechanisms. More specifically, it was used to designate a joint or connection that permits movement in a mechanical sense. Usages that were even more metaphorical appeared in the second part of the 20th century within the context of the social sciences. Here, the concept was used to designate a conceptual relationship, an interaction, or a point of juncture between two things. For instance: "*The characteristic anthropological definition which, viewing peasants in opposition to tribals, emphasises their articulation with the wider society and culture*". Another example reads as follows: "*Success of prevention programmes depends on this articulation between individual and communal responses*". All of these usages persist today (OED 2010) and impact on the way we deploy the notion of articulation within the context of this research.

The second set of senses of articulation relates this signifier to speech and/or artistic expression. The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* exemplifies late 16th century usage of the notion of articulation as referring to the distinct elements of speech within the field of *phonetics*. In this sense, articulation refers to the formation of speech sounds by the control of the air flow in the vocal tract by the vocal organs. It may also refer to the result of this process or to the particular way in which this is done. For instance: "*The phoneme is the unit which carries contrast of articulation*". Another phonology related usage of articulation relates this word to the very faculty or power of speaking in the sense of the ability to express thought by articulating sounds. This can be exemplified by "*the declarant has been without the power of articulation*". In a similar sense, articulation may also refer to the manifestation, the demonstration, or the expression of something immaterial or abstract, such as an emotion or an idea. For instance: "*All aspects of the self share in the generalization and articulation of character effected by interpersonal intercourse*". Moreover: "*For the moderately conservative spirit ... a vigorous articulation of their viewpoints was offered*". A first sense relating the notion of articulation to artistic expression was found in 1870 within the context of discourse about music. Within this context, articulation refers to the separation of successive notes from one another, individually or in groups, regarded as an aspect of a performer's technique or interpretation. Put differently, articulation refers to the interpretive processes and the associated techniques related to the expression of successive musical elements by an individual performer. For instance: "*One cannot imagine a performance more remarkable for attack, verve, clarity of articulation, and gradations of tone colour*". Both the musical and the phonetical notions of articulation are still common (OED 2010).

In addition to these more common usages of *articulation*, there are some senses which have become rare. Nevertheless, some of these senses are relevant to the concept of articulation as used within the context of this book. A first usage that has run out of fashion refers to articulation as a jointed structure or series. This usage has been observed in the 17th and 18th century as in "*an articulation of mountains*". Another usage that has grown unfashionable refers to articulation as the movement of a joint. This particular usage is illustrated by the following example: "*her legs and thighs flew in all directions, as if the American hip and knee gave free articulation all around the circle*". The word

could also be used to refer to the quality of being articulate in speech or expression in the sense of clarity and distinctness. This usage has become increasingly rare (OED 2010).

2.1.3 Theoretical approaches to articulation

The etymological senses of articulation discussed above have led to a polysemic notion of articulation that allows for a variety of theorisations. For instance, Laclau and Mouffe have put the notion of articulation with its various senses at the heart of their theory of subjectivity, discourse, politics and hegemony. To complicate matters, this theory was based on some structuralist ideas that analysed language in terms of a principle of *double articulation*. Moreover, the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe has spawned extensive discussions in psycho-analysis, cultural studies, and gender theory, that have led to some revisions and elaborations of their initial framework. My own notion of articulation was constructed in direct reference to the theoretical perspectives discussed below. I will define articulation as follows:

Articulation is (the result of) a performative practice that establishes a relative fixation between a semiotic form and it's function in such a way that it's identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. Processes of articulation perform key functions in relation to the process of hegemonising a particular discourse or practice. An understanding of articulatory principles is also important to an investigation of the development and performance of a sense of self. Articulatory principles function at all levels of discursive structure and practice (see: Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 113; Torfing 1999: 298; Zienkowski forthcoming).

I will first of all focus on (a) the notion of articulation as deployed in structuralist semiotics. This will allow me to introduce (b) the notion of articulation as developed in the writings of Laclau and Mouffe. This section also covers the various influences exerted by authors such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Žižek, and Judith Butler. In a third section (c), I will move on to the notion of articulation as used by Stuart Hall in his cultural studies. Lastly, I will highlight some recent developments with respect to the category of articulation in (d) the Essex school of discourse theory. In this section, special attention will be devoted to methodological and analytical considerations. Throughout these subsections, I maintain that various theoretical senses of articulation are closely connected to etymological senses discussed above. The interconnection between theoretical and everyday senses of the word allows it to have great relevance for the analysis of hegemonic and political discourse.

a) Articulation in structuralist semiotics

Below, I will start with a brief introduction to the structuralist perspectives of *Hockett, Hjelmslev, Jakobson, and Langer on double articulation*. These notions will shed some light on the ideas of *De Saussure on the sign and on the doubly articulated paradigmatic and syntagmatic structure of language*. It is important to understand these early theories of articulation since they have played an important role in the development of the poststructuralist theory of articulation as developed by Laclau and Mouffe.

Hockett, Hjelmslev, Jakobson, Langer on double articulation

Within structuralist semiotics and linguistics, *double articulation* is considered to be one of the most powerful features of language. Charles Hockett described it as a key design feature of language and Louis Hjelmslev regarded it as an essential and defining feature of language. The principle of double articulation implies that a semiotic code may consist of a limited number of meaningless units (e.g.

phonemes in speech or graphemes in writing) that can be used to form an infinite number of meaningful combinations. For instance, the English language has only about forty or fifty elements of second articulation (phonemes), but these can be used to generate hundreds of thousands of words (Chandler 2002: 6-7). Moreover, words, sentences, texts, and narratives, can also be articulated with each other. The infinite number of combinations is only subject to contextual and conventional limits.

One of the most interesting points raised by this structuralist notion of articulation is that words alone do not suffice in order to communicate the particularity of experience. We would need an infinite number of words and an equally infinite capacity to learn, if we required a particular word for every single object or situation we encountered. Thanks to the principle of double articulation however, we can *combine* words in order to generate highly particularised meanings (Chandler 2002: 6-7). When applied to the data constructed within the context of this research project, one might say that the principle of double articulation makes it possible for my interviewees to generate highly particularised meanings of ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, and ⟨politics⟩, by means of specific ways of combining strings of otherwise relatively meaningless discursive elements. In principle, these respondents have access to roughly the same words as many other individuals in Flemish society. However, through particular ways of combining sounds, words, statements into narratives within the interview situation, they were able to articulate highly critical perspectives on dominant modes of minority politics in Flanders. This will be exemplified during our examination of the concept of ⟨integration⟩ as used by the interviewees.

Roman Jakobson considered language to be the only semiotic system characterized by the principle of double articulation. Even though visual media such as paintings may consist of lines, colours, and shadings that can be articulated with one another into complex combinations, they have no vocabulary of units with independent meanings. For this reason, the philosopher Susanne Langer does not consider visual media to be characterized by double articulation (Chandler 2002: 6-7). In the next subsection, I will argue for a notion of articulation as the result of a practice of combining semiotic elements with one another. At the same time, I will refuse a notion of (double) articulation based on the premise of combining units with independent meanings. There is no original or independent meaning that can be associated with any of the words used within the context of my interviews with activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders. This obviously goes for the notions of ⟨identity⟩, ⟨politics⟩, and ⟨community⟩ as discussed above, but the same may be said about any signifier used throughout the interactions with my interviewees. The structuralist notion of articulation can therefore be regarded as a theorisation of articulation as a connection of elements. It also touches upon a phonological meaning in the sense that connecting semiotic elements is a prerequisite for the physical process of speech formation.

De Saussure on the sign and on the doubly articulated paradigmatic and syntagmatic structure of language

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe rely heavily on the structuralist insights of Ferdinand de Saussure. When they refer to linguistics as a source of inspiration, they usually refer to this particular influence and not to the type of linguistic pragmatics that we will argue for. De Saussure held that language is “*form and not substance*” and that “*in language there are only differences with no positive terms*”. According to him, the meaning of a specific sign – e.g. a word – can only be explained with reference to other signs (Torfing 1999: 87). He thus refuses referential theories of language in which language functions by means of designating objective coherent entities in reality by means of names and concepts that directly refer to them (Smith 1998: 31). This refusal is due to his model of the sign. Saussure considers the sign to be characterized by a double structure. It joins a particular sound-image or signifier with a particular concept or signified (Torfing 1999: 87). He states that the sign consists of three things: the signifier, the signified, and the unity of those two (Gottdiener 1995: 5). The meaning of signs is defined exclusively by the formal rules of their combination and substitution. For instance, within this model, the meaning of a notion such as *socialism* is only given in relation to other terms such as *feudalism* or *capitalism* (Torfing 1999: 87).

According to de Saussure, meaning is generated by the very structure of language. This structure is characterized by a double articulation as defined above. On the one hand, any utterance consists of a chain of words that unfolds diachronically over time. The possible combinations of words are determined by arbitrary and language-specific rules. These syntactic rules constitute the syntagmatic axis of language. The meaning that emerges from the juxtaposition of words in a sentence happens according to rules of syntax. This dimension is also called the metonymical dimension of language (Gottdiener 1995: 6). Whereas the syntagmatic structure determines the possibilities for combining words into sentences, the paradigmatic structure consists of the series of signs that is available in a specific language (Kress 2001). The paradigmatic structure thus provides us with the range of options we can choose from. This dimension is also known as the metaphorical dimension of language since it allows us to replace words by other words. For Saussure then, language is a phenomenon of structural relations and difference (Gottdiener 1995: 6-7).

Moreover, de Saussure differentiates between language (French: *langue*) – characterized by the double articulation of a paradigmatic and syntagmatic structure – and *parole*. Within this framework, *langue* pre-exists individual usage. *Parole* refers to the usage of *langue* in particular instances – it refers to actual utterances and other combinations of signs. Saussure focused on *langue* rather than *parole*. What matters most in this structuralist tradition of semiotics are therefore “*the underlying structures and rules of a semiotic system as a whole rather than specific performances or practices which are merely instances of its use* (Chandler 2002: 8-10). Even though Saussure and other structuralist linguists deploy a notion of articulation to describe the nature of language, they hardly theorise the phonological and artistic senses of the word. Their usage of articulation is restricted to articulation as connection (not of bones but of linguistic elements) and to a connection of man-made structures (not mechanical but linguistic). The concept of articulation as formulated by Laclau and Mouffe relies heavily on Saussure’s framework. It thus inherits some of its limitations. Nevertheless, it also undermines some of its most fundamental structuralist presuppositions.

b) Articulation within political philosophy – Laclau and Mouffe

The most popular concept of articulation within the context of political philosophy and contemporary social theory is without a doubt formulated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in their *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics*. Within this framework, the concept functions as the basic principle informing both politics and discourse related practices. In the following subsections, I will introduce the reader to the *politico-philosophical agenda* of the radical democratic politics as proposed by Laclau and Mouffe. This contextualisation is necessary to understand their abstract definition of articulation. I will then move on to discuss *articulation as the (result of a) partial fixation of meaning*. This allows for an explanation of why a partial fixation of meaning is a prerequisite of *articulation as a hegemonic and political practice*. In turn, this discussion clears the ground for an elaboration on *articulation as a theory of subject positions and subjectivity*. In this context, I will highlight the impact of Foucault, Lacan, and Žižek on the developing framework of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. Lastly, I will argue for a notion of *articulation as performance and performativity* with reference to Judith Butler’s usage of Foucault, Austin and Searle.

A politico-philosophical agenda

Laclau refuses any strict separation between political theory and political practice. He explicitly stated that such a distinction “*is largely an artificial operation*” since “*theoretico-political categories do not only exist in books but are also part of discourses actually informing institutions and social operations*” (Laclau 1994a; Marchart 2004: 55). This can be exemplified with reference to our discussion of the political nature of academic research on minorities in chapter one. More specifically, I illustrated how the very categories of ⟨politics⟩, ⟨community⟩, and ⟨identity⟩ do not belong to the

exclusive repertoire of academic research, but are characteristic of minority discourse as well. In this sense, the observations of chapter one are perfectly compatible with Laclau's insistence that the practice of theory – including the realm of philosophy and science – is far from disconnected from practical politics. Oliver Marchart points at some interesting consequences for philosophy, science and practical politics. All of these practices are characterized by “*the slow but steady melting-process of (seemingly) solid foundations*” (Marchart 2004: 55)²⁷. However, the experience of an absent ground in politics and other aspects of life raises our awareness of the complex processes of the construction of pseudo-foundational grounds. In alignment with Laclau and Mouffe, Marchart optimistically points out that the abandonment of the search for ultimate foundations allows us to articulate new identities, strategies, and hegemonies in an attempt to realise a *radical democratic politics*. (Marchart 2004: 55).

Hegemony and socialist strategy is characterized by a political and philosophical plea for a *radical democratic politics*. Mouffe explains how the objective of the left should be to extend and deepen the democratic revolution initiated two hundred years ago (Mouffe 1992: 1; Torfing 1999: 247). Critchley and Marchart claim that this type of politics is *radical* in its endeavour to expand egalitarian effects into more and more areas of the social. This type of politics is also characterized by *plurality*. It acknowledges the need for relatively autonomous demands of different social actors to be accepted and *articulated* into a larger common movement (Critchley and Marchart 2004a: 3-5). This notion of articulation implies a conceptual relation between discursive elements such as political statements and practices. The concept may also refer to an interaction between social actors.

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe wrote *Hegemony and socialist strategy* in 1985. The book can be described as a genealogy and deconstruction of the history of Marxism. On the other hand, it impacted upon a variety of disciplines ranging from democracy theory, over social movement theory and discourse analysis to cultural studies and regulation theory. Moreover, there is a programmatic or strategic political dimension to this publication as well. Philosophy is present in Laclau's work but always by way of its “*strategic articulation with both science (in the form of linguistics and discourse analysis) and a practical as well as theoretico-analytical involvement with politics*” (Critchley and Marchart 2004a: 3-5). Put differently, to Laclau and Mouffe, the notion of articulation is not merely an analytical tool. It is also the political practice that accounts for the *primacy of politics* as described above. Laclau and Mouffe can therefore be granted to add a political sense of articulation to the etymological senses of the word.

Articulation as the (result of a) partial fixation of meaning.

The notion of articulation performs a key function in relation to both the theoretical and the political aspects of *Hegemony and socialist strategy*. It is the principle that informs the production of all discourse, meaning, and politics – including the traditional political and academic genres. To Laclau and Mouffe, discourse is the result of a practice of articulating semiotic elements to one another. It is the structured totality emerging from a multiplicity of articulations (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 105). Their first definition of articulation reads as follows:

“we will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 105)

The authors never explicitly discuss what these articulated elements might be. However, they use the notion of articulation in reference to elements that belong to various levels of discursive organisation: they analyse the articulation of elements such as identities, subject positions, statements, narratives,

²⁷ Poststructuralist theory takes an anti-essentialist stance towards all aspects of the (post-)modern life-world. Authors are often given a poststructuralist label when they criticise the structures of (post-)modern society. Such criticism is usually based on the idea that meanings are not grounded in objective reality but constructed in various ways. Moreover, the very idea of objective reality is considered to be a construct. This entails that no societal structure can produce reliable claims about reality. This also goes for structures that emanate from philosophical, political, or scientific practices.

genres and theories (see also Verschueren 1999: 61, 66)²⁸. In this sense, we are dealing with articulation in the sense of a connection. Throughout chapter one, we noticed how individuals can articulate various notions of ⟨community⟩ with one another or with other abstract categories such as ⟨individuality⟩ or ⟨identity⟩. We also highlighted how I rearticulated the narratives of the interviewees within the context of my research. Moreover, I pointed out how my respondents were able to articulate their metapragmatic awareness in relation to their own discourse as well as to the discourse of others. The principle of articulation takes place at all levels of the (re)production of discourse. The question is why this inevitably involves a modification of the meaning of the articulated elements. The answer is to be found in the way Laclau and Mouffe deploy and alter the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure.

The authors of *Hegemony and socialist strategy* integrate Saussure's idea of language as a system that is based on difference into their notions of discourse and articulation. However, they refuse the implicit Saussurian theory that language is a closed and fully constituted totality. In Saussure's model, all meaning and identity is determined by the double articulation of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic structures of language. Room for the creative production of *parole* is very limited. The refusal to consider language to be a fully constituted and sutured totality where all elements are fixed in relation to one another at any specific synchronic moment in time, constitutes a way out of this linguistic type of structuralist determinism. Laclau and Mouffe claim that meaning is not produced as an effect of the closed structure of language where all elements are designated a differential position, but as an effect of the relative fixation of discursive elements in specific contexts. Whereas Saussure considered the value or the meaning of a sign to be a result from the arbitrary relationship between a signifier and a signified, Benveniste pointed out that "*to say that the values are 'relative' means that they are relative to each other*". Laclau and Mouffe follow Benveniste when they consider every articulated discursive element to be constitutive for the meaning or value of the element it is articulated with (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 106-07; Torfing 1999: 95). However, this happens without any reference to a reified syntagmatic or paradigmatic structure that pre-exists the subject. Laclau and Mouffe adopt the idea that the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary but amend this Saussurean idea by claiming that the meaning or value of a sign is generated by means of its articulation with other signs in actual discourse. They abandon the notion of articulation as a connection of independent linguistic man-made structures in favour of a notion of articulation as a practice connecting relatively unfixed discursive elements.

Some relevant examples are in order. The signifier *integration* will refer to a particular signified depending on its articulation within a rightist political pamphlet, a handbook on cybernetic systems, or a sociological treatise on modernity, or an interview conducted with a public activist with a Moroccan background in Flanders. We will treat the notion of integration extensively below. At this point, it is important to retain the idea that the meaning of any signifier is always overdetermined²⁹ by the other signifiers it is articulated with. It is impossible to exhaust the meaning of a word such as integration by a singular reference to a presupposedly closed and structured totality such as cybernetic, political, or sociological discourse. Every meaning, every identity is fundamentally overdetermined. For this reason, meaning can never be absolutely fixed. At most, it can only be presented as such. Echoing Derrida, Laclau and Mouffe acknowledge the infinite play of signification (see Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 112; Stavrakakis 1999; Torfing 1999: 98). However, the impossibility of an ultimate fixation of meaning does not preclude a partial fixation of meaning. According to Laclau and Mouffe, absolute

²⁸ Jef Verschueren's linguistic pragmatic notion of *structural objects of adaptability* can be used to discuss these various levels of discursive organisation. The notion of *adaptability* is defined as "*the property of language which enables human beings to make negotiable linguistic choices from a variable range of possibilities in such a way as to approach points of satisfaction for communicative needs*". One type of choices that needs to be made pertains to the choice between a variable range of linguistic tools at various levels of linguistic structure: "*from sound feature and phoneme to discourse and beyond, or any type of interlevel relationship. Not only 'structures' are involved, but also principles of 'structuring'*".

²⁹ The concept of overdetermination comes from Freud's *Interpretation of dreams*. Overdetermination occurs at the symbolic level and takes the form of either condensation or displacement. The term is also to be found in the works of Lacan and Althusser. Inspired by these authors, Laclau and Mouffe use this concept to designate the way in which the meaning of a signifier is fundamentally overdetermined by the discourse that overflows it. Processes of condensation and displacement are constantly involved in articulatory practices (see Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Torfing 1999: 98; Stavrakakis 1999).

non-fixation of meaning is an impossibility as well. If there would be no possibility of partial fixation, the very possibility of difference and dispersion of meaning would be pre-empted. Moreover, politics as conceptualized in this book would be impossible.

The main question then, is how this partial fixation of meaning is achieved. Here, we arrive at the second definition of articulation as defined by Laclau and Mouffe. In order to understand this definition, we need to introduce the notion of *nodal point*³⁰. Laclau and Mouffe consider discourses as attempts “*to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre*”. Within concrete discourses, some signifiers are given a central place that partially fixes the meaning of the signifying chain. These signifiers are called *nodal points*. However, it is important to keep in mind that – like another signifier – every nodal point is given within an intertextuality that overflows it (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 110-13). A nodal point is a kind of knot of meanings that unifies a discursive field constituted by a multitude of discursive elements (Žižek 1995: 95). Some examples are in order (see also Howarth et al. 2000; Laclau 1994c).

Slavoj Žižek provides the example of communist discourse in which the signifier *communism* functions as a nodal point in order to partially fix the signifieds of a number of other signifiers such as democracy, rights, freedom, democracy, and so on. These notions acquire specific meanings by means of specific articulations around the nodal point of communism. Traditional communist usage of the concept of democracy acquires the connotation of bourgeois democracy whereas *real democracy* is equalled to communism. A nodal point quilts a multitude of floating signifiers. It temporarily stops their sliding over signifieds and fixes their meaning. This quilting operation consists in integrating free floating ideological elements into a structured network of meaning. This idea can also be applied to Laclau and Mouffe’s idea of a *radical democracy*. Within their idealised *radical democracy*, particular struggles (for peace, ecology, feminism, human rights, and so on), are articulated with one another through the articulation of the nodal concept *radical democracy*. According to Laclau and Mouffe, particular socialist or feminist struggles could be conceived as the gradual radicalisation, extension, and application of the democratic project to new domains. (Žižek 1995: 87-88). In *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, the notion of democracy thus serves as a nodal point in order to articulate political, linguistic, and philosophical discourses with one another. It allows the authors to articulate a variety of struggles by means of a common reference to democratic-egalitarian political discourse. Throughout this process however, the articulated elements undergo significant changes. The final definition of articulation is now within reach:

“*The practice of articulation therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning; and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity*” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 112)

The definition above theorises another anatomical or biological sense of articulation. In this sense, articulation does not refer to a node or joint in the stem of a plant, but a node in a chain of discourse that connects various discursive elements to one another. Moreover, it forms a conceptual point of juncture between various social actors. The infinitude of the field of discursivity which overflows every articulation and every nodal point refers to the infinity of potential articulations and meanings. In order to clarify the political implications of this point, Laclau would later develop the concept of the *empty signifier* (see Laclau 1994b).

An empty signifier is a signifier that is so over-coded with meanings that it means everything and nothing at the same time (Torfing 1999: 301). He gives the hypothetical example of an extreme situation of radical disorganisation of the social fabric which is not far away from Hobbes’ state of nature. In such a situation, people may articulate a need for *order*. Laclau proceeds to point out that the signifier “*order as such has no content, because it only exists in the various forms in which it is actually realised*” (Laclau 1994b: 44). In this hypothetical situation of radical disorder, *order* is

³⁰ The notion of *nodal point* is an adaptation and translation of the Lacanian *point de capiton*.

present as that what is absent. It is an empty signifier. Laclau goes on and states that “*various political forces can compete in their efforts to present their particular objectives as those which carry out the filling of that lack. To hegemonise something is exactly to carry out this filling function*” (Laclau 1994b: 44). Order can be articulated within a communist, socialist, democratic, fascist, liberal, ecological, and/or Islamic discourse striving for hegemony in an attempt to fix the meaning of what society ought to be. This brings us to the political or hegemonic dimension of articulation as conceptualized by Laclau and Mouffe.

Articulation as hegemonic and political practice

Any term can function as a nodal point within a particular discourse and achieve the status of empty signifier. One of these terms is *society* itself. According to Laclau and Mouffe, society is *impossible* in the sense that we are dealing with an object that can only be known and created through articulatory and polysemous practices aimed at the fixation of particular understandings of what *society* ought to mean. The meaning of the signifier *society* can only be partially fixed in any given context. Put differently: “*the social only exists as the vain attempt to institute that impossible object: society. Utopia is the essence of any communication and social practice*” (Laclau 1990: 92). Any articulation of *society* by one agent may destabilise the identity and discourse of another. In that case, we are dealing with a dislocation which is defined as “*a destabilization of a discourse that results from the emergence of events which cannot be domesticated, symbolized or integrated within the discourse in question*” (Torfing 1999). Dislocations are “*the very form of temporality, possibility and freedom*” (Laclau 1990: 41-43) for they allow for (re)articulations of identities, ideologies and societies. It is through an explicit acknowledgment of the contingent and open nature of discourse, meaning, identity, and society, that the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe acquires its political dimension. Put differently, it is the impossibility of society that opens up the space for radical democratic and other forms of politics.

In *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, the authors provide an interesting example of the political aspect of articulation with reference to the signifier of *working class* in orthodox marxism: “*the ‘winning over of agents to their historical interests’ is, quite simply, an articulatory practice which constructs a discourse wherein the concrete demands of a group – the industrial workers – are conceived as steps towards a total liberation involving the overcoming of capitalism*”. In a successful hegemony, articulatory practices have constructed a structural system of relational identities (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 120, 38). However, due to the linked impossibility of society and fixation of meaning, the ultimate realisation of hegemony is an impossibility as well. The logic of overdetermination that is involved in this process, implies that each of these positions might function as a ground for making hegemonic claims; Laclau and Mouffe conceptualize hegemony therefore as “*a political type of relation, a form, if one so wishes of politics; but not as a determinable location within a topography of the social*” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 139) which is defined by one subject or one class of interests. The name of the practice that defines hegemony as a process is articulation. This allows us to formulate our final concept of hegemony as we will use it throughout this book.

Hegemony can be described as “*the achievement of a moral, intellectual and political leadership through the expansion of a discourse that partially fixes meaning around nodal points. Hegemony involves more than passive consensus and more than legitimate actions. It involves the expansion of a particular discourse of norms, values, views, and perceptions*” (Torfing 1999: 302) through persuasive rearticulations of discursive reality. Hegemonic claims are therefore articulations which aim to fix the socio-political meaning of discursive elements in a reductive, totalising, and universalist way (including the meanings associated with subjectivities, subject positions, statements, narratives, and other dimensions of discursive reality) for all imagined social actors. On the other hand, not every articulation is necessarily hegemonic. In order to identify hegemony, it is necessary to identify antagonistic relations between discursive elements. In an antagonistic relationship, “*the presence of the ‘Other’ prevents me from being totally myself*” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 125). However,

antagonism is not an objective relation. It is a way of imagining those aspects of the Real that we can neither imagine or articulate (see Žižek 1995).

Laclau and Mouffe identify two processes that characterize the hegemonic practice of articulation and the structuring of socio-political space. On the one hand, there is a logic of equivalence that simplifies political space. On the other hand, there is a logic of difference that expands and complicates political space (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 130). The logic of equivalence works through the establishment of a chain of equivalence that articulates various discursive elements with one another in opposition to another discursive element. Howarth exemplifies this with reference to the Black Consciousness Movement that instituted a chain of equivalence between different sections of those oppressed by the apartheid system in South Africa: a common white racism was seen to negate and block the affirmation of black identity (Howarth 2000: 107). In a similar way, Anne-Marie Smith investigated Rastafari identity as constructed through a chain of equivalence that was articulated as follows: “*Rastafari-blackness = essential blackness = goodness = the oppressed people = noble suffering = return to spiritual origin = Ethiopia = the divinity of Haile Selassie ‘I’ = a collective identity over individualism = black musical and oral expression = cleansed and strengthened bodies = harmony with nature = sensuality = virility = fertility : a divine other-worldly destiny = everyday resistances against policing, the white education system, state institutions etc ...*”. The elements of this chain are usually placed in opposition to an antagonistic white identity that is associated with the signifier *Babylon*. When a Rastafari is confronted with statements produced by a black person that cannot be integrated in the Rastafari chain of equivalence, such statements are usually interpreted as if that person is under the influence of Babylon and is unable to recognise his own identity (Smith 1994: 180-81).

In addition to this chain of equivalence, there is also a logic of difference that accounts for practices of articulation. This logic works through the expansion of the system of difference by decomposing existing chains of equivalence and by a rearticulation of these elements in a new differential order. Alletta Norval notes that apartheid discourse was characterized by a logic of difference whereby the architects of the regime attempted to institute a system of differential subject positions that were associated with territorial unities and political institutions. This was done to undermine attempts to establish a non-racist and democratic South Africa (Howarth 2000: 107). It is possible to draw an analogy to Saussurian linguistics. Whereas the logic of difference expands the syntagmatic pole of language and increases the number of possible articulations between various elements, the logic of equivalence expands the paradigmatic pole. This means that the articulated elements can be replaced by one another and that differences are becoming less relevant. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that neither logic can dominate. Also, both logics are deployed throughout articulatory practices. Even though antagonism is considered to be unavoidable, Chantal Mouffe points out that “*once we accept the necessity of the political and the impossibility of a world without antagonism, what needs to be envisaged is how it is possible under those conditions to create or maintain a pluralistic democratic order. Such an order is based on a distinction between ‘enemy’ and ‘adversary’.* It requires that, within the context of the political community, the opponent should be considered not as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an adversary whose existence is legitimate and must be tolerated. We fight against his ideas but we will not question his right to defend them” (Mouffe 1993: 4). In this sense, we are dealing with a theorisation of the sociological sense of articulation as a point of juncture established through the interaction of social actors.

The link between articulation, hegemony, and the primacy of politics as described in chapter one of this book, should be clear by now. The *primacy of politics* implied that the category of the social and the category of the political can be thought of as two sides of an idealised coin. Whether a subjectivity, discourse, or practice belongs to ‘the social’ or to ‘the political’ depends on the extent to which it is sedimented or challenged by relevant social actors. Social relations are created through political struggle. More specifically, they are created through various articulatory practices in which social actors articulate themselves, their practices, and their discourses with one another. As these relations sediment and institutionalise over time, the political origins of a social relationship may be forgotten. Nevertheless, they cannot be eliminated in any ontological sense of the word. In principle, this

political dimension can always be (re)activated through practices of (re)articulation. The primacy of politics entails a notion of politics as the organising principle for the constitution of all social relations. The double process of sedimentation and institutionalisation thus ultimately rests upon the hegemonisation of particular meanings. Both the challenges to and the institution of a hegemony are therefore the result of practices of (re)articulation. In this sense, the social is basically an analytical category that designates discursive practices that are heavily institutionalised or hegemonised and thus relatively unproblematic within a public sphere. The political can be defined as an analytical category which designates discursive practices and institutions that are being problematised within a public sphere.

Articulation as a theory of subject positions and subjectivity I: Laclau and Mouffe as Foucaultians?

The theory of articulation as formulated by Laclau and Mouffe is as much a theory of discourse as it is a theory of subjectivity. Their notion of the subject as developed in *Hegemony and socialist strategy* heavily relies on Foucault's *Archaeology of knowledge*. In a later phase of his work, a Lacanian concept of the subject would become more prominent in Laclau's work (Howarth 2004: 258-62). At this point however, it is important to emphasise the importance of the Foucaultian *subject position* in the discourse theoretical framework of Laclau and Mouffe. To them, subject positions constitute a particular type of discursive elements that may be articulated in and through discourse. Within the context of my plea for an interpretive functionalist approach to political subjectivity, it is important to highlight the fact that Foucault's notion of the subject position was first and foremost developed in order to explain the basic units of discourse as enunciative *functions*.

To Foucault, the statement (*énoncé*) is the basic unit of discourse. His concept of the statement differs from the daily use of this notion. Foucault considers the statement as a *function* that relates various discursive and non-discursive units with one another. The statement cannot be reduced to a particular layer of discursive organisation: it is not reducible to a speech act, a sentence, a sign, a logical proposition, or any other aspect of language. The function of a statement resides in the relationship that is established between such units and a field of objects and subjects. This functionality thus adds a whole new dimension to the analysis of discourse. It allows units such as the sentence to be something more than 'a series of traces, something more than a mere object made by a human being; a modality that allows it to be in relation with a domain of objects to prescribe a definite position to any possible subject, to be situated among other verbal performances, and to be endowed with a repeatable materiality' (Foucault 1969: 119-20). Considering Foucault's emphasis on the functionality of discourse, it is striking how often he is taken for a structuralist or quasi-structuralist (see Howarth 2000: 48).

At the very end of the *Archaeology of knowledge*, Foucault explicitly proposes to leave the polemics about structuralism aside: "they hardly survive in areas now deserted by serious workers; this particular controversy, which might have been so fruitful, is now acted out only by mimes and tumblers" (Foucault 1969: 221). With respect to the subject, he explicitly stated that he was not interested in a static and deterministic perspective on individuality:

"On the contrary, my aim was to show what the differences consisted of, how it was possible for men, with the same discursive practice to speak of different objects, to have contrary opinions, and to make contradictory choices; my aim was also to show in what way discursive practices were distinguished from one another; in short, I wanted not to exclude the problem of the subject, but to define the positions and functions that the subject could occupy in the diversity of discourse" (Foucault 1969: 221).

The differentiation between the Foucaultian statement (*l'énoncé*) and the linguistic utterance (*énonciation*) is at least partly motivated by a functional relationship that the statement possesses vis à

vis the subject; *“to describe a formulation qua statement does not consist in analysing the relations between the author and what he says (or wanted to say, or said without wanting to); but in determining what position can and must be occupied by any individual if he is the subject of it”* (Foucault 1969: 107). A Foucaultian analysis of statements thus involves a functional analysis of subject positions. Foucault emphasises that the subject of the statement should not be confused with the grammatical subject of the sentence. The subject of the statement is labeled as a vacant place that may be occupied by different individuals. At odds with a more structuralist conceptualisation of the subject position, he points out that this place is; *“variable enough to be able either to persevere, unchanging, through several sentences, or to alter with each one”* (Foucault 1969: 107). We will argue that the articulation theory of Laclau and Mouffe provides a detailed account of these properties of the Foucaultian statement.

Foucault also addresses the double-edged issue of reflexivity and consciousness. At the end of the *Archaeology of knowledge*, he introduces a fictive author who criticises him with the following words: *“Have you not deprived individuals of the right to intervene personally in the positivities in which their discourses are situated? You have linked their slightest words to obligations that condemn their slightest innovations to conformity. You make revolution very easy for yourself, but very difficult for others”* (Foucault 1969: 229). This critique enables Foucault to address issues of reflexivity and consciousness directly. In response to this criticism, he explains how the positivities that constitute actual discourse (e.g. subject positions, subjects, objects, enunciative modalities, discursive formations) are neither determinations imposed from the outside on the thought of individuals, nor inhabiting them from the inside in advance. Furthermore: *“I have not denied – far from it – the possibility of changing discourse: I have deprived the sovereignty of the subject of the exclusive and instantaneous right to it”* (Foucault 1969: 230).

Foucault describes his archaeological framework as *“an attempt to reveal discursive practices in their complexity and density, to show that to speak is to do something – something other than to express what one thinks; to translate what one knows, and something other than to play with the structures of a language (langue); to show that to add a statement to a pre-existing series of statements is to perform a complicated and costly gesture, which involves conditions (and not only a situation, a context, and motives), and rules (not the logical and linguistic rules of construction); to show that a change in the order of discourse does not presuppose ‘new ideas’, a little invention and creativity, a different mentality, but transformations in a practice, perhaps also in neighbouring practices, and in their common articulation”* (Foucault 1969: 230)³¹. The idea that a change in the order of discourse entails transformations in practices that are articulated with one another comes very close to the notion of articulation as developed by Laclau and Mouffe. This is why Laclau and Mouffe rely so heavily on Foucault even though they refuse his distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 107-08). The possibility of subjectivity and freedom lies in the functional articulation of various discursive elements (including subject positions) with one another. This goes both for Laclau, Mouffe, and Foucault.

Foucault’s approach is as much a theory of discourse as it is a theory of subjectivity. The same can be said about Laclau and Mouffe. Echoing Foucault’s archaeologies, they explain that whenever they use the category of the subject, they do so in the sense of *“subject positions within a discursive structure”* (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 115). Considering their conceptualisation of the discursive structure, this implies that subject positions can only be partially fixed in an open system of differences. In turn, this partial fixation occurs through the practice of articulating discursive elements with one another. Furthermore, since every discourse is open, the analysis of subject positions *“cannot dispense with the forms of overdetermination of some positions by others – of the contingent character of all necessity which, as we have seen, is inherent in any discursive difference”* (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 116).

³¹ Foucault seems to use the french noun *articulation* synonymously with the french noun *énoncé* (statement) in the *Archaeology of knowledge*.

According to Laclau and Mouffe, all meaning is overdetermined (see also Elliott 2009: 60; Stavrakakis 1999; Torfing 1999: 99)³².

Laclau and Mouffe illustrate their view on subjectivity by means of an analysis of the category of the subject in the Marxist tradition. Within orthodox marxism, the subjects are social classes “*whose unity is constituted around interests determined by their position in the relations of production*” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 118-19). The unifying signifier *working class* is used in two ways; it *defines* a subject position in the relations of production and it *names* the agents who occupy that position. In other words, within orthodox marxism, the *working class* and the *working class interests* are ontologically and empirically given. Laclau and Mouffe, propose an alternative conceptualisation. According to them; “*the winning over of agents to their historical interests’ is, quite simply, an articulatory practice which constructs a discourse wherein the concrete demands of a group – the industrial workers are conceived as steps towards a total liberation involving the overcoming of capitalism* (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 120). The discourse of orthodox marxism thus aims to hegemonise certain demands and it is through the articulation of these demands that subjective consciousness and subject positions are formed.

It might be useful to recall that Foucault described the analysis of the statement (énonciation) as an analysis of the position that “*can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be the subject of it*” (Foucault 1969: 107). He also added that subject positions are “*variable enough to be able either to persevere, unchanging, through several sentences, or to alter with each one*” (Foucault 1969: 107). The theory of articulation as proposed by Laclau and Mouffe can be thought of as an attempt to highlight this second feature of the Foucaultian analysis of subject positions. According to Laclau and Mouffe, none of these positions “*manages ultimately to consolidate itself as a separate position, there is a game of overdetermination among them that reintroduces the horizon of an impossible totality. It is this game which makes hegemonic articulation possible*” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 122). However, not every articulation is necessarily hegemonic. In order to identify hegemony, it is necessary to identify both antagonisms and the unstable frontiers which separate them (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 136). Antagonisms are defined as social relationships in which “*the presence of the ‘Other’ prevents me from being totally myself*” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 125).

Articulation as a theory of subject positions and subjectivity II: Laclau, Mouffe, Lacan, and Žižek

In his more recent writings, Laclau relies more heavily on a Lacanian theory of the subject. The Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek argued that the poststructuralist theory of discourse as formulated by Laclau and Mouffe tends to reduce the concept of subjectivity to mere subject positions (Howarth 2004: 259). Laclau acknowledges this critique in an introduction to Žižek’s *The sublime object of ideology*. He summarises the basic thesis of this book as follows: “... *the category of ‘subject’ cannot be reduced to the ‘positions of subject’, since before subjectivation the subject is the subject of a lack ...*” (Laclau 1989: xii). This so-called *lack* is a Lacanian psycho-analytical concept. Under the influence of Žižek, Laclau started to reframe his theory of articulation and subjectivity by means of Lacanian terminology (see Glynos and Stavrakakis 2004).

In *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe refuse the Foucaultian distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive. According to them, every object is constituted as an object of discourse. Moreover, “*any distinction between what are usually called the linguistic and behavioral aspects of a social practice is either incorrect or ought to find its place as a differentiation within the*

³² The concept of overdetermination is derived from Freud’s *Interpretation of dreams*. Overdetermination occurs at the symbolic level and takes the form of either condensation or displacement. The term is also to be found in the works of Lacan and Althusser. Inspired by these authors, Laclau and Mouffe use this concept to designate the way in which the meaning of a signifier is fundamentally overdetermined by the discourse that overflows it. Processes of condensation and displacement are thus constantly involved in articulatory practices.

social production of meaning, which is structured under the form of discursive totalities”.

Moreover, “*the fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought, or with that realism / idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of ‘natural phenomena’ or ‘expressions of the wrath of God’, depends upon the structuring of a discursive field*” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 107-08). One of the main reasons for Laclau’s later embrace of Lacan lies in the fact that Lacanian theory enables him to think the limits of signification and articulation (Glynos and Stavrakakis 2004: 206) – i.e. what is outside discourse and what disrupts or dislocates it.

Lacan thinks the limits of signification in terms of three orders of reality: the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. It is the Real that can never be articulated in discourse. These three aspects of reality can only be understood in relation to one another. Subjectivity only arises at the point where a child enters into the world of language – i.e. the Symbolic. This is the last stage in a process called the *mirror stage*. Thanks to this process, individuals gain a sense of being a unified self. Lacan claims that prior to the mirror stage, the child has no sense of self as a separate entity. It has no awareness of the limits of its individual body. Moreover, it has no sense of co-ordination in its limbs and perceives them as randomly moving objects. (Mansfeld 2000: 41-45). Throughout the mirror-stage, the child is enabled to view its body as a “*Gestalt [... that ...]symbolizes the mental permanence of the I*” (Lacan 1968: 94-95).

For Lacan, subjectivity arises when the child is inserted in the Imaginary and Symbolic orders. The fragmented experience of the infant is transformed into an affirmation of its bodily unity through the assumption of its image in the mirror. The child visually recognises itself as a coherent whole in a mirror, in the reflection of a set of eyes, or in any other object of reflection. It visually imagines itself as a coherent being and thus enters into the order of the Imaginary. Lacan argues that this new sense of self comes from the outside, from a distorted image of an Other observed in the external world. The Lacanian idea of selfhood is thus grounded outside of the self. According to this theory, every subjectivity is radically decentered (Mansfeld 2000: 41-45; Stavrakakis 1999: 17-19).

Almost as soon as the child has become aware of itself as a unified whole, it enters into the world of the Symbolic. According to Lacan, the child starts developing its first linguistic skills around the same age it enters the mirror stage. The passage from the Imaginary to the Symbolic thus entails an entry in to the order provided by language. Following Saussure, Lacan considers this order to be structured in terms of difference (Stavrakakis 1999: 19-29). The signifier ‘I’ provides an imaginary unity that corresponds to the self-image perceived in the mirror-stage. However, this signifier is part of a system that pre-exists the subject and over which the individual has no control. Moreover, it can only make sense in relation to an Other. According to Lacan, the subject’s sense of self is therefore lost in a field of signs that is – paradoxically – the very condition of such self-awareness. As soon as the subject becomes aware of language, the sense of unity is fundamentally undermined and out of reach. Moreover, direct access to the Real is lost to it. Our involvement in the symbolic order is the result of an imaginary identification with a mirror-image and a linguistic pronoun (Mansfeld 2000: 41-45). This is why Lacan writes that the ego is characterized by the “*function of misrecognition*” (Lacan 1968: 98) and why he describes the mirror-phase in dramatical terms:

“... *the mirror-phase is a drama whose internal impulse rushes from insufficiency to anticipation and which manufactures for the subject, captive to the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality which we shall call orthopaedic – and to the assumption, finally, of the armour of an alienating identity, which will stamp with the rigidity of its structure the whole of the subject’s mental development. Thus, to break out of the circle of the Innenwelt to the Umwelt generates the endless quadrature of the inventorying of the ego*” (Lacan 1968: 96)

The order of the Real cannot be imagined or represented in the orders of the Symbolic or the Imaginary. It can only show itself through the disruption of any attempt (symbolic or imaginary) to

represent it (Glynos and Stavrakakis 2004: 205-06; Laclau 1994b: 37). This entails that there is a gulf between the internal representations of self and external reality according to Freudian and Lacanian psycho-analysis (Elliott 2009: 66-67).

The time has come to consider how this topography of reality bears relevance to the theory of discourse and subjectivity as developed by Laclau and Mouffe. Laclau accepts the idea that “*before subjectivation the subject is the subject of a lack*” (Laclau 1989: xii). Throughout the mirror-stage we gain a sense of wholeness that is immediately lost. This *lack* at the core of our subjectivity propels a desire for wholeness. Žižek explores the cultural and political implications of this theory of subjectivity. He argues that politics and society are domains that cover over or fill in the split and decentered self posited in Lacanian theory (Elliott 2009: 82). As a result of their split subjectivity and their insertion in language, individuals will try to adopt identities only to find out that every single identification will always be incomplete. In line with Lacan and Žižek, Laclau and Zac argue that “*the ego has the function of misrecognizing the impossibility of fullness*”. This impossibility is a direct result of the impossible fixation of meaning as discussed above. Any attempt at a final fixation of an identity by means of a particular signifier is doomed to failure because of it. Laclau and Zac maintain that there will always be something that escapes signification when an individual identifies him or herself with a particular signifier. There will also be something in the Real that can never be captured by the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Consequently, there is no single subject position that is able to define an individual completely. Moreover, the ultimate failure of any identification is also central to political practice. They state that “*the problem of politics is not identification, but identification and its failure*” (Laclau and Zac 1994: 35). Laclau holds that politics is basically an attempt to fill in a lack within the self and within society. He exemplifies this as follows: “*In a situation of radical disorder ‘order’ is present as that which is absent; it becomes an empty signifier, as the signifier of this absence. In this sense, various political forces can compete in their efforts to present their particular objectives as those which carry out the filling of that lack. To hegemonise something is exactly to carry out this filling function*” (Laclau 1994b: 44). We are now able to come full circle.

The *filling function* – i.e. the partial fixation of meaning – is established through practices of articulation that take place in the Symbolic universe. The practice of articulating subject positions with one another is thus a vain but productive attempt to fix the identities of self and others. Elements such as subject positions are related with one another in such a way that their identity is modified throughout this very practice. In this sense, Žižek considers both politics and society as attempts to cover up or fill in the split and decentered self posited in Lacanian theory (Elliott 2009: 82). Lacan defines the longing for self-completion as *desire*. Within this perspective, the subject is thrown into the world with an insatiable need to fill up the lack at the center of its being by engaging in a multiplicity of identifications. Lacan calls each separate thing that we pursue a *demand*. None of these things will ever satisfy desire. To Lacan, this endless desire is the source of human motivations (Mansfeld 2000: 46). Following Žižek, Laclau has accepted the Lacanian idea that subjectivity is not reducible to any particular subject position. Žižek and Lacan thus reactivated an outdated sense of articulation since the capacity to be more or less clear and distinct in speech entails an entrance into the symbolic order that condemns subjects to a lifelong practice of (re)articulating themselves with others in an impossible society.

Articulation as performance and performativity: Judith Butler’s usage of Foucault, Austin, and Searle

Judith Butler points out that the notion of articulation entails a performative dimension. She notes that both Laclau, Žižek, and herself have been working at a leftist political project with various degrees of affinity to marxism. Moreover, she emphasises that all of them are concerned with the status and formation of the subject, democracy, and the articulation of universality within a theory of hegemony. Nevertheless, she is also quick to raise some questions with respect to the particular ways in which the subject is approached. In addition, there are differences in terms of the status granted to “*a ‘logical’ or*

'structural' analysis of political formations in relation to their specific cultural and social articulations" (Butler 2000: 11). Even though Butler's main theoretical efforts have centered around the notion of performativity, her engagement with Laclau and Žižek bears relevance to the notion of articulation as we wish to deploy it. More specifically, her notion of performativity holds the promise of reactivating some useful senses of articulation that have been left undertheorised in the writings of Laclau and Mouffe – i.e. the artistic senses of the word.

In music, the notion of articulation may refer to the separation of successive notes, individually or in groups, regarded as an aspect of a performer's technique or interpretation. As such, it refers both to the techniques as to the expression of successive musical elements by an individual performer (OED 2010). Even though Butler says little about the practice of interpretation, her theory draws attention to the performative aspect of articulatory practices. Butler's notion of performativity heavily draws on Austin who showed that there are certain classes of words and statements that *do* things rather than convey information. For instance, ritual utterances such as *I now pronounce you man and wife* not only tell a couple that they are married, it *marries* them. Initially, Austin distinguished between performatives (utterances that do things) and constatives (utterances that convey information about the world). Later on, he called this distinction into question. If one asks something, states something, shouts something, one is always doing something. All saying is doing and all speech is therefore a series of speech acts. Robinson defines speech acts as *"a type of action performed with words that may or may not be thought of as having the performative power to change (human social) reality"* (Robinson 2006: 43-48).

The notion of performativity as developed by Butler is broader than the Austinian linguistic notion of performance. She draws upon Austin and his student Searle as read by Derrida (Butler 1999: xv; Robinson 2006: 40). To her, performativity is not merely a linguistic but also an *embodied* principle. It is characteristic for Butler to argue that speech is produced through bodies (Rothenberg 2006: 77). Butler's notion of subjectivity emerges through a discussion of gender but has wide-ranging implications for other aspects of the self. She holds that subjectivity is always performed. Since we have no access to a presupposed inner core of an individual's subjectivity, we can merely construct the subjectivities of self and other through performative practices inscribed on the surfaces of the body. These practices may or may not be linguistic but all of them have the performative power to change or reproduce subjectivity and social reality (Butler 1999: xxvi-xxvii).

To Butler (as for Foucault, Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek), there is no objective core or essence to subjectivity. Whereas Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek explain this principle by means of theories centered around notions such as articulation and lack, Butler theorises this principle first and foremost by means of the concept of embodied performativity. The sense of coherence and integrity characteristic of human subjectivity is a direct result of such performative practices that are inscribed on the surfaces of the body (Butler 1990: 185). The following citation sheds some light on the similarities between Žižek, Laclau and Mouffe:

"That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body, the gender border control that differentiates inner from outer, and so institutes the "integrity" of the subject. In other words, acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality." (Butler 1990: 185-86)

Acts and desires may be articulated through the body and it is through this articulation that we change or reproduce both our subjectivity and our social reality. In other words, we are dealing with articulation in the sense of a performance. Moreover, it is important to retain that Butler considers gender to be an effect and a function of embodied practices. We will take this notion of articulation and performativity into account in the following chapters. In order to fully understand the relevance of

Butler's thought on performativity to a theory of articulation, it remains for us to highlight the Foucaultian influence on her writings.

Elliott points out that Butler's take on performativity is basically a radical type Foucaultianism (Elliott 2009: 126). This entails that both Butler and Foucault consider the self to be as much a discursive effect as an effect of power. In the *Archaeology of knowledge*, Foucault wrote about subject positions as unstable enunciative functions that allow an individual to produce a variety of statements and to occupy a multiplicity of positions that may or may not be consistent with one another in a single context. This has already been discussed. In a later phase of his work, Foucault put more emphasis on the issue of power in relation to knowledge and discourse (Faubion 1994b; Foucault 1976a). Nevertheless, he retrospectively noted that the red thread through his work is not so much discourse or power, but subjectivity. He explains how all of his work has dealt with the modes of objectivation that transform human beings into subjects.

It should be noted that Foucault acknowledges both the notion of subject as "*subject to someone else by control and dependence*", as subject in the sense of "*tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge*" (Foucault 1982c: 326-31). Foucault explains how he has investigated four types of technology that usually operate together: "(1) *technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things*; (2) *technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or significations*; (3) *technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject*; (4) *technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, or immortality*". Foucault admits that he has focused mostly on the technologies of domination and self. Moreover, he states that he has become more and more interested in the interaction between self and others, and more specifically in the mode of action that an individual exercises upon himself by means of the technologies of the self (Foucault 1982a: 224-25). For the present discussion, it is enough to retain the idea that the later Foucault considers subjectivity to be generated through a myriad of socio-historically grounded practices that allow us to arrive at an awareness of who and what we are.

Butler's notion of performativity sheds some interesting light on the notion of articulation as used by Laclau and Mouffe. Every articulation is established through the act of linking linguistic and/or non-linguistic semiotic forms to one another. This happens through bodily practices that are observable to other individuals who are able to witness this performance. Following Butler's line of reasoning, every discursive articulation (in the sense of Laclau and Mouffe) (re)produces subjectivity through the principle of performativity. All practices of articulation can therefore be regarded as self-techniques in the Foucaultian sense of the word. In *Excitable speech* (Butler 1997), Butler has sought to focus on the fact that "*the speech act is at once performed (and thus theatrical, presented to an audience, subject to interpretation), and linguistic, inducing a set of effects through its implied relation to linguistic conventions*". She emphasises that the status of the speech act as word and deed is necessarily ambiguous (Butler 1999: xxvii). The same should be said about the principle of articulation.

c) Articulation within British cultural studies – Stuart Hall

Laclau and Mouffe were not the only British-based authors engaged in a theorisation of the concept of articulation during the late seventies and eighties. Stuart Hall, one of the leading names in British Cultural Studies (see Morley and Chen 1996), was also involved in this effort, be it in a different light. With explicit reference to Laclau and Mouffe, he also aims at rethinking orthodox Marxist deterministic models of language, culture, ideology, hegemony and politics (Hall in Grossberg 1986b: 142). Nevertheless, Laclau is relatively absent in the histories of cultural studies. This is due to specific aspects of articulation that are being fore- and backgrounded by Laclau and Mouffe on the one hand, and by Stuart Hall on the other (Daryl Slack 1996: 118).

Hall accepts the double sense of articulation as theorised by Laclau. On the one side, there is a range of linguistic and discursive senses that originated within the context of phonology and artistic expression that we highlighted above. In this sense, articulation refers to the ‘spoken’ and the ‘uttered’ aspects of discourse. On the other hand, there is the sense of articulation as (the result of) a connection or combination. This sense evolved from the biological and physical history of the word. Hall thus follows Laclau in bridging these two senses and associated problematics. One might say that the notion of articulation itself articulates two paradigms (Grossberg 1986b; Hebdige 1986: 197). Moreover, Hall also aspires to a type of non-reductionist and anti-essentialist marxism. Both Laclau, Mouffe, and Hall wish to replace the principle of economic reductionism and essentialism in orthodox Marxist thought with a principle of overdetermination through articulation (Daryl Slack 1996: 118-19; Grossberg 1986a: 156; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Mouffe 1979; Sparks 1996: 90-91).

In spite of these affinities, Stuart Hall is critical with respect to a key feature of the theory of articulation as formulated in *Hegemony and socialist strategy*. In an interview with Lawrence Grossberg, he explains that he prefers the early work of Laclau in *Politics and ideology in Marxist theory*. He considers Laclau and Mouffe to be involved in a sustained philosophical effort to conceptualize all practices as nothing but discourses. Hall states that following the logic of their book, “*there is no reason why anything is or isn’t potentially articulable with anything*” (Grossberg 1986b: 145-46). He goes on and explains how according to him, society operates *like* a language. However, this does not mean that language and society can be equated. Hall recognises that the metaphor of society as a discourse as deployed by Laclau and Mouffe, constitutes an important theoretical revolution. At the same time, he criticises it for a reversed reductionism. Whereas classical Marxists often thought in terms of class reductionism, Hall claims that Laclau and Mouffe are involved in a culturalist reductionism that goes upward in the base-superstructure topology. Hall’s theory of articulation constitutes an attempt to take a middle ground (Grossberg 1986a: 155; 1986b: 145-46).

Jennifer Daryl-Slack grants Hall to have contributed to the theory of articulation in four ways. The first contribution lies in his resistance to the temptation of reduction to class, mode of productions, structure, as well as to culturalisms’s tendency to reduce culture to experience. Secondly, Hall is considered not to go ‘over the brink’ by turning everything to discourse. Third, He supposedly foregrounded the strategic feature of articulation in cultural studies’ interventionist commitments. Lastly, Daryl-Slack considers Hall’s treatment of articulation as the most sustained and accessible (Daryl Slack 1996: 121). However, not all of these contributions are innovations. We already noted that there is an important strategic dimension to Laclau and Mouffe’s theory of articulation. Their politico-theoretical agenda is explicitly framed as such. Moreover, their theory is framed as an attempt to refuse any sort of reductionism. Laclau and Mouffe do not equate discourse and society but merely argue that human reality can only be consciously experienced through discourse.

The main difference between poststructuralist and cultural studies approaches to articulation is a consequence of the middle ground that Hall seeks to achieve. He does so by differentiating between discourse and practice. According to him, ideology is articulated and constructed in and through language but is not equivalent to it. He points out that there is no necessary correspondence between a text and its politics. The function of ideology resides in linking particular texts and words with particular practices in particular chains of equivalences. To Hall, there is a difference between articulation and representation. Interestingly, the concept of *double articulation* returns. The political struggle to define the relation of a textual meaning to reality as one of representation is the essence of ideological processes. Grossberg points out that in this sense, ideological practices entail a double articulation of the signifier: first to a web of connotation (signification) and second, to real social practices and subject positions (representations) (Grossberg 1986a: 158-59). Darryl Slack points out that Hall contests the move that Laclau has made in positing the absolute, rather than the relative autonomy of social practices (Daryl Slack 1996: 122).

Hall puts special emphasis on the *unity* of an articulation and on its function in relation to coherence. He states that “*articulation has the considerable advantage of enabling us to think of how specific*

practices articulated around contradictions which do not all arise in the same way, at the same point, in the same moment, can nevertheless be thought together” (S. Hall 1980: 103-04). Consequently, articulation is being explicitly thought in terms of a simultaneous unity in difference and difference in complex unity (S. Hall 1985: 69). At this point, Hall is completely in line with Laclau, with Mouffe, and even with Foucault (see Foucault 1969: 23-33)³³. He emphasises that the so-called unity of a discourse is the result of distinct elements that are being articulated with one another. Moreover, “*a theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects*”. Put differently: “*the theory of articulation asks how an ideology discovers its subject rather than how the subject thinks the necessary and inevitable thoughts which belong to it*” (S. Hall cited in Grossberg 1986b: 141-42). Hall’s emphasis on the unifying function of articulation therefore bears special relevance to the notion of subjectivity we are looking for – i.e. a notion of subjectivity that is able to think both multiple and cohering senses of self and society.

d) The Essex school of discourse theory – analysing articulations

The graduate programme in Ideology and Discourse Analysis at the University of Essex was established in 1982. Laclau points out that this programme grew out of a dissatisfaction with dominant theoretical models of social explanation such as behaviourism, structural functionalism, and rational choice theory: “*What we set out to do was to elaborate an alternative approach to the understanding of the structuration of socio-political spaces by articulating a novel conception of discourse*” (Laclau 2000: x).

Laclau argues that the research that has been carried out after the publication of *Hegemony and socialist strategy* within the Essex graduate programme made it possible to articulate the categories introduced by himself and Chantal Mouffe in a more precise and detailed way. Moreover, he acknowledges that the programme displaced the research emphasis from mainly sociological categories that address the group, its constitutive roles and its functional determinations, to the underlying logics that make these categories possible: “*On the whole, the trend has been to move the centre of social and political research from ‘ontically’ given objects of investigation to their ‘ontological’ conditions of possibility*” (Laclau 2000: x-xi). Nevertheless, Laclau is quick to point out that a number of discursive dimensions such as speech acts and rhetorics are not sufficiently developed within Essex thought (Laclau 2000: x-xi).

The programme has been productive in a number of ways. Intellectually speaking, the school has extended its reach far beyond Essex. Scholarly texts on discourse theory are abundant by now. There is a growing number of text books and readers (see Critchley and Marchart 2004b; Howarth 2000; Smith 1998; Torfing 1999) explaining this particular strand of discourse theory and an increase in the number of empirical studies (see Howarth et al. 2000; Howarth and Torfing 2005; Laclau 1994c) that use this perspective. The framework set out by Laclau and Mouffe has proliferated throughout disciplines as varied as democracy theory, cultural studies, and regulation theory (Critchley and Marchart 2004a: 3). In addition, summer schools and workshops on discourse theory are increasingly popular (Torfing 2005: 2). Lastly, the Essex framework continues to evolve thanks to a new generation of discourse theorists. Nevertheless, we will argue that there is still a methodological deficit that can be countered by a more systematic articulation of poststructuralist discourse theory with a linguistic pragmatic account of discourse.

Below, I will focus on the response of a new generation of authors to the *methodological deficit* of the Essex approach. I will specifically focus on the writings of Jacob Torfing, Jason Glynos, and David Howarth. All of the chapters below focus on articulation as a research practice. More specifically, I

³³ Foucault framed his *Archaeology of knowledge* as an explicit critique of thinking objects of knowledge in terms of a presupposed inherent unity.

will focus on *articulation as a research practice of problematisation* in the Foucaultian sense of the word, and on the relationship between *articulation and logics of critical explanation* as proposed by David Howarth and Jason Glynos. Moreover, I will emphasise the importance of passing through *contextualised self-interpretations* in order to give an adequate account of political engagement and subjectivity. Lastly, I will conclude this subsection on the way articulations are analysed in contemporary Essex approaches to discourse theory by summarising the most important *advancements and obstacles to overcoming the poststructuralist methodological deficit*. All of this will allow us to evaluate the theories of articulation presented above and below on the basis of the desiderata of the required perspective summarised at the end of chapter one.

A methodological deficit

Both Glynos, Torfing and Howarth acknowledge that there is a serious lack of exemplary studies that discuss *how* one may conduct an Essex-inspired discourse analysis (see Glynos and Howarth 2007; Howarth 2005; Torfing 2005). According to Torfing, this lack is so prominent that it stands in the way of a more widespread application of discourse theory amongst social scientists that wish to assess the validity of the results of discourse analytical studies (Torfing 2005: 2). Recently, the theory of articulation has been expanded by Howarth and Glynos in order to highlight its implications with respect to the relationships between theory, methodology, and analysis.

Drawing on hermeneutics, discourse theory holds that theory can never be separated wholly and objectively from the reality it seeks to explain. Theoretical practices are considered to be partly constitutive of and shaped by the social worlds in which the subjects and objects of research find themselves. It also stands firmly opposed to positivistic and naturalistic conceptions of knowledge and method. Drawing on Foucault, Essex discourse theory opposes naïve conceptions of truth in which the only test of theories and empirical accounts is against an unproblematic objective reality. Moreover, reacting to Paul Feyerabend's critique of poststructuralist thought, Howarth and Stavrakakis write that discourse theory does not advocate an 'anything goes' approach to the generation and evaluation of empirical evidence: "*While the truth or falsity of its [discourse theory] accounts are partly relative to the system of concepts and logics of discourse theory used (as in any other empirical inquiry), the ultimate tribunal of experience is the degree to which its accounts provide plausible and convincing explanations of carefully problematised phenomena for the community of social scientists*". With respect to charges of relativism discourse theorists often state that discourse theory "*also rejects the rigid separation of facts and values, accepting that the discourse theorist and analyst is always located in a particular historical and political context with no neutral Archimedean point from which to describe, argue and evaluate*" (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000: 6-7). Unfortunately, such arguments have led to a neglect of methodological issues altogether.

Scientific articles and case-studies that explicitly discuss and illustrate the way poststructuralist concepts such as an *empty signifier*, a *statement*, a *subject* position, a *subjectivity*, a *logic*, or a *nodal point* can be identified and analysed in empirically observable discourse are scarce. What type of methods would be useful? To what extent can we make use of qualitative and quantitative software for such analytical purposes? How can we identify empty signifiers in case-studies based on individual interviews and/or other types of text? Can we use fine-grained linguistic notions of metaphor, metonymy, deixis, implicature, coherence, cohesion, speech acts, contextualisation cues, or discourse markers as tools for analysis, or would this lead to incompatibilities with the epistemologies and ontologies of poststructuralism? If so, how do we deal with these incompatibilities? This set of questions is not without import since any integration of perspectives requires a (re)articulation of concepts, (research) practices, and other discursive elements that have not been articulated with one another before. The very principle of articulation entails that it would alter the meaning of notions such as politics, identity and hegemony as put forward by Laclau and Mouffe. In fact, all of these issues boil down to the question *how* to investigate articulations.

Numerous case-studies have been carried out while using the Essex conceptual framework, but these papers and books hardly ever illustrate how they relate poststructuralist concepts to empirical objects of investigation. We are often left with papers that seem to provide research results without any indication of how these results were generated. There are no sections on methodology in any of the articles collected in edited volumes such as *Discourse theory and political analysis* (Howarth et al. 2000), *The making of political identities* (Laclau 1994c), or even *Discourse theory and European politics* (Howarth and Torfing 2005). This is not to say that the empirical dimension is wholly ignored. The articles often deal with concrete political situations such as Argentine politics after Peronist populism (Barros and Castagnola 2000), resistance of new environmental movements against Manchester Airport's second runway (Griggs and Howarth 2000), identity and hegemony in former Yugoslavia (Saleel 1994), or the Palestinian issue (Bowman 1994). Moreover, the introductions to and the theoretical chapters of these readers display an increasing awareness of the problematics related to methodology. Nevertheless, in spite of this increasing interest, most articles remain silent with respect to the way terminology is being applied.

Torfing acknowledges that the founders of discourse theory are “*with a few exceptions, not very interested in these issues*” (Torfing 2005: 25). Nevertheless, he emphasises that these methodological challenges are important. At this point, most Essex-inspired studies illustrate pre-established theoretical arguments and do not attempt to learn from the empirical analysis. As Torfing puts it, because of the anti-positivist stance of discourse theory, “*discourse theorists have thrown the methodological baby out with the epistemological bath water*” (Torfing 2005: 27). None of the defensive responses to the methodological challenges justify the systematic lack of critical reflection with regard to method and methodology within poststructuralist discourse theory: “*there is an urgent need for critical, explicit and context-bound discussion of what we do in discourse analysis, why we do it, and what the consequences are*” (Torfing 2005: 28).

It should be pointed out that early attempts to operationalise the rich framework provided by Laclau and Mouffe have started to appear in various strands of applied linguistics such as critical discourse analysis (see Fairclough and Chouliaraki 1999: 121-26), lexical semantics, conversation analysis, cognitive linguistics, and linguistic pragmatics. Unfortunately, the deployment of the Essex framework in these more methodologically sophisticated approaches to discourse has not led to a critical debate with(in) the poststructuralist discourse theories set out by Foucault, Laclau, Mouffe, Žižek, and Butler³⁴.

Torfing argues that there is a lot of unrealised potential within discourse theory that can only be developed if discourse theorists respond to three challenges: (1) they need to demonstrate the analytical value of discourse theory in empirical studies that take us beyond the mere illustration of arguments and concepts; (2) they need to address the core topics within social and political science and not be content with specializing in allegedly ‘soft’ topics such as gender, ethnicity, and social movements; (3) It must critically reflect upon the questions of method and research strategy without surrendering to the positivist obsession with method that is founded on the belief that the observation of a set of methodological rules somehow guarantees the truth of the research results (Torfing 2005: 25-28).

Below, I will argue that the response to the methodological deficit as formulated by Howarth and Glynos constitutes an important but inadequate response to meet the challenge of the methodological deficit. Moreover, I claim that an integration of key linguistic pragmatic insights, concepts, and methodologies constitutes a next step in this process.

³⁴ In order to meet this problem head-on, Johannes Angermüller and myself have launched a call for papers for a special issue of the journal *Pragmatics* on *The pragmatic study of language and the challenge of poststructuralism*. The issue is currently in preparation.

Articulation as a research practice of problematisation

The idea of articulation as a method was already touched upon by Howarth in his book *Discourse* (Howarth 2000) but the most elaborate response to the *methodological deficit* to date has been formulated by Jason Glynos and David Howarth in *Logics of critical explanation in social and political theory* (Glynos and Howarth 2007). This book constitutes a significant effort towards a more sophisticated poststructuralist methodology. It reframes the principle of articulation as a method for doing discourse theory and discourse analysis. However, it still lacks a detailed account of how to deal with the linguistic and textual data that provide the raw material for any investigation into discourse. I wholeheartedly agree with the poststructuralist argument that there can be no pre-established method or set of rules that can be applied to all cases irrespective of context. Nevertheless, a detailed account of how linguistic analysis can be articulated with poststructuralist discourse theory does not flaunt this principle. On the contrary, I argue that such an articulation allows for a more critical deployment of theoretical concepts in empirical analyses.

Howarth argues that the notion of articulation can be invoked to understand the practices under investigation as well as the practices of social scientists themselves (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 180). This entails that every single step in the research process involves a practice of (re)articulation. Every stage – from the initial problematisation, over data production and collection (e.g. through focus groups, interviews, literature research, participant observation, data mining, ...) and analysis (transcription, the application of theoretical frameworks to the problematised object of investigation,...), to the presentation of research results (a book, a paper, a hand-out, a Phd, ...) – involves linking theories, practices, and self-interpretations to one another while at the same time modifying their meanings (Howarth 2000: 140-41). Put differently, the production of scientific discourse is in principle a highly disciplined practice of (re)articulation. It is useful to look at the implications of this notion for a discourse analysis of evolving political subjectivities among public activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders.

The book you are reading right now is the product of a series of (re)articulations. The primary data were co-constructed with public activists and intellectuals throughout a series of interviews. Throughout the process, both my respondents and myself rearticulated the voices of a multiplicity of social entities and aspects of our selves. These interviews were recorded and transcribed. Linguistic, anthropological, sociological, historical, and philosophical insights gathered throughout my studies were articulated with the voices of my respondents in early research papers, conversations with colleagues, and thoughts. All in all, this led to a problematisation of the initial research proposal in the Foucaultian sense of the word.

Howarth considers poststructuralist discourse theory to be problem-driven. He distinguishes problem-driven from method- and theory-driven research. Whereas method-driven approaches emphasise techniques of data-gathering and analysis over the empirical phenomena under investigation, theory-driven research tends “*to vindicate a particular theory*” rather than “*illuminate a problem that is specified independently of the theory*” (Shapiro 2002: 601 cited in Howarth 2005: 318). Moreover, Howarth argues that problem-driven research should not be confused with problem-solving theory. The latter generally “*takes existing social structures as a given, as well as the assumptions of the dominant theories of such reality, and then addresses anomalies that arise within such frameworks*”. By contrast, problem-driven research in the Foucaultian sense is a research heuristic that begins with a set of pressing political and ethical problems in the present, before it seeks to analyse the historical and structural conditions which gave rise to them. At the same time, the researcher attempts to furnish critique and transgression of the problematic throughout the practice of problematisation (Howarth 2005: 318). Moreover, in poststructuralist discourse theory an object of investigation is always constructed and never objectively given in a straightforward reality. This entails that a range of disparate empirical phenomena have to be constituted as a problem and that this problem should be located at the appropriate level of abstraction and complexity. Howarth and Glynos point out that this take on empirical observations and analyses shares a family resemblance with Foucault’s practice of

problematization which synthesises his archaeological and genealogical methods of analysis³⁵ (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 167, 233).

Throughout chapter one, I have rearticulated the voices of my respondents in such a way that they problematised the research proposal as initially formulated. Throughout this rearticulation, new problematics arose. We noticed how the categories used in scientific analysis also figure in the everyday language use about minority politics. The consequent problems with respect to my own usage of abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩ and ⟨politics⟩ led me to a whole new range of questions that led me to reframe the research in terms of articulation and subjectivity. Moreover, the object of investigation was considerably redefined. My research project evolved from a problematisation in terms of Islamic political identities towards a research on political subjectivity; from a vague ensemble of allochthons, Moroccans, Maghrebi and Muslims to an analysis of the discourse of public activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders. The object of study was no longer a unified community but a complex intertextual network of people discursively constructing their political engagement with reference to a great variety of concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices and myself.

The above rearticulations emanated from the close and problematic links between political and academic discourse. This realisation led me to a new series of problems formulated in terms of seven needs. In the next subsection, I will consider to what extent the theoretical framework of articulation provides the means to provide for them. Before doing so, it is useful to highlight one last innovation that bears relevance to the methodological deficit of the Essex school of discourse theory.

Articulation and logics of critical explanation

In the sections on discourse theory as developed by Laclau and Mouffe in *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, we noticed that they identified two logics that account for political strategy and hegemonic struggle: a logic of equivalence and a logic of difference that co-define the political imaginaries of social actors. In *logics of critical explanation in social and political theory*, Glynos and Howarth expand the concept of logic as used by their mentors. It should be noted that we are not talking about logics in the formal sense of the word. As Bourdieu noted: “*Practice has a logic which is not that of logic*” (Bourdieu cited in Flyvbjerg 2001: 38).

In a similar vein, Glynos and Howarth conceptualize logic neither in terms of a formal analysis of propositions so as to determine their validity or truth, nor in terms of a predictive law such as in Marx’s general law of capital accumulation. Rather, they state that “*a logic refers, first to the rules governing a practice, institution or system of relations between objects and, secondly, to the kinds of entities (and their relations) presupposed by the operation of such rules*” (Howarth 2005: 323). The important thing about these *rules* is that they are contingent and interpretive. They do not function mechanically. The application and operation of rules in social conduct always requires some degree of interpretation, self-awareness and value-rationality (Flyvbjerg 2001: 42-43, 47; Glynos and Howarth 2007: 49-82). For this reason, “*interpretation cannot somehow be by-passed in the establishment of facts and correlations, because the interpretations of both researcher and researched are essential in determining what is to count as fact*” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 55).

As we will see, hegemonic discourse about minorities in Flanders is characterized by a logic that centers around the notion of integration. The associated logic governs a variety of practices (political

³⁵ Glynos and Howarth describe Foucault’s archaeological and genealogical approaches as follows: “*While archaeology makes possible the examination of ‘forms themselves’, genealogy accounts for their contingent emergence and production. By describing the rules that condition the elements of a particular discourse – its objects, subjects, concepts and strategies – in a given period, say the discourse of ‘madness’ or ‘illness’ in the nineteenth century, archaeology provides the means to delimit research objects, while genealogy analyses their constitution by recounting the historical practices from which they were constructed. The latter enables the researcher to show the contingency of identities and practices, and foreground possibilities foreclosed by present hegemonic logics.*”

speeches, media representations, government policies, discriminatory and emancipatory acts, ...) and institutions (civil society organisations, governmental agencies, companies, ...). Moreover, it puts these practices and institutions in specific relations to one another. The (relations between) the entities presupposed by these practices and institutions activate a myriad of subject positions such as autochthons, allochthons, citizens, Belgians, Moroccans, Muslims, and so on. We will provide a detailed analysis of this logic of integration and of the way it was contested by my interviewees later on. The main question to be answered at this point is how such logics can be identified.

Howarth emphasises that the poststructuralist and post-Marxist brand of discourse theory is to be located in the hermeneutical branch of the social sciences. This means that it seeks to provide second-order interpretations of social actors' own self-understandings and interpretations of their situations and practices. A key objective of discourse theory is to elucidate carefully problematised objects of study by seeking their description, understanding, and interpretation. Howarth states that this *"hermeneutic enterprise involves practices of characterization and explanation that require the application of theoretical concepts and logics, along with their concomitant value commitments (both of which cannot be derived from a purely ethnographic or descriptive social science)"* (Howarth 2005: 319). He states that the main aim of discourse theory is not merely to provide novel descriptions or facts about specific objects of investigation, but to produce new *interpretations* either by rendering visible phenomena previously undetected by dominant theoretical approaches, or by problematising existing accounts and articulating alternative interpretations (Howarth 2005: 320-21).

The problematisations and alternative interpretations resulting from the deployment of discourse theory all involve practices of articulation. This means that empirical and theoretical elements can be combined together to create three sets of articulatory relations. Howarth and Glynos mention relations among empirical elements, among theoretical elements, and between empirical and theoretical elements (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 180). Since the principle of articulation entails a modification of the articulated elements, the specific way in which empirical elements (e.g. interview data; newspaper articles; or field notes) are articulated with one another and with theoretical elements (e.g. theories; perspectives; or notions such as subject positions, subjectivities, self, reported speech, coherence, articulation, statement, hegemony) allows the researcher to explicitly articulate logics that allow for critical explanations of the problems at hand. Throughout this process, the articulated elements will acquire new meanings.

The types of logics that may be identified are classified into three categories by Glynos and Howarth. They distinguish political, social, and fantasmatic logics. We already discussed the political logics. These are simply the logics of equivalence and difference as described by Laclau and Mouffe. It suffices to recall that the logic of equivalence simplifies political space through the establishment of a chain of equivalence that articulates various discursive elements (identities; subject positions; practices) with one another in opposition to another discursive element. In addition to this chain of equivalence, there is a logic of difference that expands and complicates political space (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 130). This logic works through the expansion of the system of difference by decomposing existing chains of equivalence and by a rearticulation of these elements in a new differential order (Howarth 2000: 107). According to Howarth, these political logics of equivalence and difference play a quasi-transcendental role in discourse theory since they are integral to the construction and contestation of social relations and practices (Howarth 2005: 328).

The social logics of critical explanation find themselves at a different level of abstraction. They are constructed by the researcher in order to explain particular conjunctures and events (Howarth 2005: 127). The Flemish hegemonic logic of integration that we will discuss below is an example of such a social logic. Whereas the political logics of equivalence and difference are extremely abstract, the social logics are more concrete. One might say that the latter give content to the operation of the political logics. For instance, the social logic of integration functions by means of a logic of equivalence. It equates a whole set of subject positions: allochthon = not integrated = Muslim = Arab = Moroccan = Turk. The notion of integration serves as a nodal point that quilts these identities

together according to a specific logic of integration that connects the subject position of allochthon with the obligation to integrate oneself into society.

A last set of logics is of a fantasmatic nature. If the political logics of equivalence and difference capture how social practices come into being or are transformed, fantasmatic logics explain *why* specific practices grip subjects. At this point, Howarth and Glynos take recourse to Lacanian theory as described above.

We noticed how we gain a sense of wholeness that is immediately lost in the mirror stage according to Lacan. The resulting *lack* at the core of our subjectivity propels a fantastic desire for wholeness and coherence. In this respect, “*the ego has the function of misrecognizing the impossibility of fullness*” (Laclau and Zac 1994: 35). This impossibility also pertains to society, to any identification, and to any ultimate fixation of meaning. Howarth and Glynos explain this function in terms of fantasmatic logics that propel individuals to fill in the lack at the center of their split being by engaging in a multiplicity of identifications and discourses.

The main function of fantasy is “*not to set up an illusion that provides a subject with a false picture of the world, but to ensure that the radical contingency of social reality – and the political dimension of a practice more specifically – remains in the background*” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 145). With regard to social practices, it reinforces the natural character of discursive elements and prevents their politicisation. With respect to the political dimension of practices, fantasy can provide support for many of our political projects and choices. For instance, it is through fantasy that we may strive to achieve equality, democracy, or justice – ideals that can never be fully realised. According to Howarth and Glynos, fantasy promises “*a fulness-to-come once a named or implied obstacle is overcome*”. Moreover, the operation of such a paradoxical fantasmatic logic provides an account for the many contradictions that characterize specific political discourses and practices (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 147-48).

Contextualised self-interpretations and investigations into subjectivity

Glynos and Howarth emphasise that it is important to keep in mind the hermeneutic lesson that we take the self-interpretations of subjects into account when we name and identify these social logics of critical explanation. Moreover, these self-interpretations have to be contextualised with reference to the languages and vocabularies by which subjects articulate themselves (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 55-61). This is important, since an adequate study of political life involves “*the interpretation of the beliefs and desires of those we study*” (Bevir and Rhodes 2003 cited in Glynos and Howarth 2007: 61).

Even though Howarth and Glynos position their theory within the hermeneutic range of the social sciences, they are also critical with respect to some key hermeneutic ideas. Howarth wholly subscribes to the anti-positivist stance of hermeneutics but emphasises that “*despite this significant family resemblance, discourse theory is not synonymous with hermeneutical modes of inquiry*” (Howarth 2000: 128). First of all, discourse theory stands opposed to a hermeneutics of recovery that supposes that it is possible to retrieve and reconstruct the meanings of social actors as they were originally intended. The double principle of (re)articulation and the relative fixation of meaning pre-empts this possibility. Moreover, discourse theory does not seek to uncover the true underlying meanings of texts and actions that are deliberately concealed by ideological practices or discourse. In this sense, it does not subscribe to a hermeneutics of suspicion either. Rather, it seeks to provide new interpretations of events and practices by elucidating their meaning through an analysis of the way in which political forces and social actors construct meanings within incomplete and undecidable structures. According to Howarth, this is achieved “*by examining the particular structures within which social agents take decisions and articulate hegemonic projects and discursive formations. Moreover, discourse theorists seek to locate these investigated practices and logics in larger historical and social contexts, so that*

they may acquire a different significance and provide the basis for a possible critique and transformation of existing practices and social meanings” (Howarth 2000: 128-29).

In their *Logics of critical explanation in social and political theory*, Howarth and Glynos add some other critiques to the hermeneutics of suspicion and recovery. They agree with the idea that social science should explain behaviour through re-descriptions of reality as interpreted by social actors but also criticise hermeneutics for downplaying other tasks of social science – i.e. explanation and critique. Secondly, they criticise hermeneutics for eliding the political dimension of this process of re-description. According to Howarth and Glynos, a redescription of a context is never politically neutral. Thirdly, they claim that most hermeneutic accounts stick too close to the self-interpretations of social actors. There is a hermeneutic reluctance to design a richer set of explanatory and critical concepts since this would lead researchers too far away from the self-interpretations under investigation. Howarth and Glynos claim that this reluctance accounts for the hermeneutic tendency to either shy away from explicit critical engagement or to adopt an overly external vantage point in this critical engagement (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 64-65). Their logics approach aims to address these issues. The authors of the book claim that “*logics offer us a way to move between the world of self-interpretations and practices on the one hand, and our social science explanations and critiques on the other, in a way that avoids some of the problems associated with the hermeneutical and naturalist approaches*” to social science. For this reason, a passage through self-interpretations is considered to be an important starting point for any empirical analysis of political practices even though it does not constitute the point of arrival (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 157).

Discourse theory as elaborated on by Glynos and Howarth thus advocates a critical explanation of phenomena through the articulation of political and fantasmatic logics with social logics and the empirical contexts they inform and within which they function. They draw three methodological conclusions: (1) any explanation must start with intentions and self-interpretations as articulated by subjects – not merely as part of the process of problematisation, but also in the identifications of the social, political, and fantasmatic logics themselves. Put differently, we need to empirically contextualise these logics. Secondly, they emphasise that social logics are “*context-dependent constructions that are retroductively posited as a function of the rules and structures that inform practices and regimes*”. In contrast, political and fantasmatic logics are more formal, but they do not predetermine the explanations and critical engagements. They provide the means for critical explanation without determining the outcomes. Processes of social science should therefore be understood in terms of articulation instead of subsumption (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 159-61). As such, critical explanation is part of the scientific articulatory practice in the sense of Laclau and Mouffe described as “*any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice*” (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 105 cited in Glynos and Howarth 2007: 162).

Advancements and obstacles to overcoming the poststructuralist methodological deficit

It is important to recall that the various logics identified by means of a discourse theoretical analysis are themselves “*contingent and finite constructs that are contestable and revisable in the light of changing conditions and theoretical developments*” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 154). In the analyses to come, I will take this caveat at heart and argue that the empirical data collected in function of a study on the political subjectivities of public intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders do not allow for a straightforward categorisation in terms of fantasmatic, social, and political logics.

Logics of critical explanation in social and political theory constitutes an important advancement in the development of a poststructuralist heuristic for doing discourse theory. These advancements are realised through a conceptualisation of articulation as method and through a more detailed account of

the variety of interpretive logics that structure subjectivity, discourse, and society. However, there are still obstacles to be overcome if we are to apply this framework to empirical data. Most of these obstacles can be traced back to the issue of how to determine what relevant context is. If we are to start our examination of minority politics with contextualised self-interpretations of subjects and to rearticulate these interpretations with our own observations, concepts, narratives, and interpretations, how do we determine what aspects of context we should take into account? Glynos and Howarth remain silent with respect to this issue. In the upcoming chapters, I will argue that this silence results from an insufficiently detailed account of how language can be used in order to highlight and constitute relevant aspects of interpretive reality. This is one of the main reasons for my study of the field of linguistic pragmatics in subchapter 2.2.2 and for my advocacy of interpretive functionalism in subchapters 2 and 3.

Interestingly, the notion of context was recently discussed in a more explicit way in a conversation between Judith Butler and Ernesto Laclau. Laclau explains how on the one hand, “... *it is not possible to, strictly speaking, attribute closed boundaries to a context*”. We find ourselves in the paradoxical situation in which it is impossible to fully delimit contexts. Put differently: “*contexts have to be defined by their limits, and yet these limits are impossible*” to fix. The solution lies – as always within the framework of Laclau and Mouffe – in a relative fixation of meaning. It is through an imaginary assumption of existing limits, that we are able “*to fix (to close within itself) a transient context*” (Butler and Laclau 2004: 335) that provides the conditions for meaning, politics, subjectivity, and hegemony. Still, we will find no discussion of how these limits and partial fixations can be realised in empirically observable discourse in Laclau’s texts. Nevertheless, it is useful to take his definition into account when we proceed to our discussion of linguistic pragmatics.

It is also useful to take a look at the way context is conceptualized in the cultural studies approach to articulation. Within this approach, Daryl Slack points out that “... *the context is not something out there within which practices occur or which influence the development of practices. Rather, identities, practices and effects generally constitute the very context within which they are practices, identities or effects.*” (Daryl Slack 1996: 125). Grossberg states that any so-called understanding of a practice implies that we are able to (re)construct or (re)articulate that practice both historically and theoretically (Grossberg 1986a: 155). The theoretical aspect of understanding entails an awareness of the fact that any (re)articulation of context implies that one intervenes in a changing ensemble of forces or articulations that are constitutive of the production and maintenance of identities and meanings (Daryl Slack 1996: 124-25). It is in this sense that scientific discourse has a political character and constitutes “*a violence we inflict on things, or a practice we impose on them*” (Foucault, 1981, 67).

One of the main obstacles to a poststructuralist methodology is the lack of a more fine-grained account of how context is (re)produced through empirically observable discourse. I maintain that this blind spot is a direct result of an untenable distinction between discourse theory and discourse analysis. According to Torfing, the label discourse analysis usually refers to the linguistic techniques utilized in more or less formal descriptions of the different discursive forms used in communication. Even though he acknowledges that the works of Laclau and Mouffe may encourage the deployment of such techniques, he believes it to be important to maintain a sharp distinction between formal linguistic techniques and the theoretical propositions of Laclau and Mouffe. In his early work, Torfing used to stick to the label discourse theory interpreted as an abbreviation of discourse-theoretical analytics (Torfing 1999: 11-12). However, it should be noted that he has revised his position considerably.

We already noticed that Jacob Torfing acknowledges the poststructuralist methodological deficit. As such, he claims that in order to overcome this deficit, discourse theory must respond to the triple challenge of: (1) demonstrating the analytical value of discourse theory in empirical studies that take us beyond the mere illustration of the arguments and concepts; (2) addressing the core topics and areas within social and political science and not be content with specialising in allegedly ‘soft’ topics such as gender, ethnicity, and social movements; and (3) critical reflection upon questions of method and research strategy. He considers the first and the third challenges to be the most critical ones.

Nevertheless, Torfing still holds on to the label of discourse theory in order to differentiate the poststructuralist account from other so-called analytical approaches of discourse (Torfing 2005: 25-26).

The distinction between discourse theory and discourse analysis is stereotypical at best. It does not correspond to the analytical practice of either discourse theorists or discourse analysts. Discourse theory has an analytics just as much as the supposedly linguistic *tools* of the various modes of discourse analysis are based on theoretical insights that may or may not be compatible with poststructuralist thought. I am in alignment with Torfing on the idea that the poststructuralist discourse theories of Foucault, Laclau, Mouffe, Žižek, and Butler would benefit from a critical methodological reflection. However, such reflection is not merely an issue of how to apply discourse theory. In considering how linguistic methodology and analysis can be articulated with the theoretical insights provided by poststructuralism, we must be prepared to step away from an ideal-typical discourse theory as well: categories, statements, strategies and truths will have to be critically evaluated and reconsidered.

I do not advocate the construction of a “*complete user’s guide to do discourse analysis*”. Torfing is right to be suspicious of such a guide. He points out that “*discourse theory should not aim to develop a general set of methodological rules that can and should be used in all kinds of discourse analysis*”. He also states that, “*the aspiration for a rigid decontextualized method is absurd, as a problem-driven analysis of discourse will require a constant invention and adjustment of particular methodological rules*”. In fact, Torfing states that the very idea of a rule should be questioned in the Wittgensteinian sense. This entails that we should remember that the content of a rule is always an instance of its usage. He explains that “*We never really know how to follow a rule, and we need another rule to show us how, which in turn requires another rule etc. To halt this infinite regress we have to step in and make a constitutive, pragmatic, and context-bound interpretation of the rule in and through its usage.*” (Torfing 2005: 27). Howarth’s and Glynos’ notion of logics may be interpreted as a theory of such Wittgensteinian interpretive rules. In the chapters to come, I will argue that a more fine-grained theory of pragmatic and context-bound interpretation is to be found in the field of linguistic pragmatics. However, the integration of linguistic pragmatics with poststructuralist discourse theory is not merely an issue of taking up the tools provided by linguistics in order to investigate theoretical and political postulates provided by poststructuralist thought.

Any integration between linguistic pragmatic and poststructuralist perspectives would require significant rearticulations. For instance, the theory of context within linguistic pragmatics is based on the notion of indexicality. How do we connect this notion of indexical meaning with the differential concept of meaning generation provided by the post-Saussurean framework of Laclau and Mouffe? How do we connect notions such as articulation, subjectivity, politics, hegemony, and logic to linguistic pragmatic concepts such as speech acts, conversational implicatures, cohesion, coherence, presupposition, entailment, and so on? What impact do such articulations have on the original perspectives wherein these notions have been designed? And in what sense does the resulting perspective provide a heuristic that can be used in the analysis of empirical objects of investigation? I will argue that in spite of the great differences between poststructuralist and linguistic pragmatic accounts of discourse (in terms of terminology and historical development), both perspectives deploy similar *logics*. As we will see, this family resemblance is a direct result of the genealogical development of those two types of inquiry.

The distinction between discourse theory and discourse analysis is upheld by Glynos and Howarth in their *Logics of critical explanation in social and political theory* does not hold. Howarth and Glynos reiterate this distinction as follows: whereas discourse analysis “*consists of a range of techniques to analyse ‘talk and text in context’*”, discourse theory “*provides the underlying assumptions for their appropriate employment*” (Glynos and Howarth 2007). If we take linguistic pragmatics to be discourse analytical perspective, this statement might as well be inverted.

e) **A preferred notion of articulation and the desiderata of the required perspective**

An analysis of evolving political engagements and subjectivities of public intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders requires a perspective that enables us to analyse a complex intertextual network of people discursively constructing their political engagement with reference to a great variety of concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices, and myself. At the end of chapter one, we concluded with a list of criteria that have to be met by such a perspective. The time has come to evaluate the notion(s) of articulation as described above on the basis of these criteria. Moreover, I propose to redefine articulation as:

(the result of) a performative practice that establishes a relative fixation between a semiotic form and its function in such a way that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. Articulatory practices are fundamentally political and are fundamental to the process of hegemonising a particular discourse or practice.

The notion of articulation as a *performative practice* is borrowed from Judith Butler's account of performativity. This aspect of the definition theorises the etymological and common senses of articulation in the sphere of artistic expression. In this sense, articulation refers to the result of a performer's technique and/or interpretation. It refers to both the interpretive processes and the associated techniques related to the expression of successive semiotic elements by an individual performer. The way a linguistic or non-linguistic articulation is performed impacts on one's sense of self. Within Butler's framework, acts and desires are always articulated through the body and it is through this bodily articulation that we change or reproduce both our subjectivity and our social reality. Any articulation requires a linkage between distinct semiotic elements. It requires an *act* of linking that can be performed in a multiplicity of ways that impact on the way one's sense of self is constructed and communicated. In this sense, articulations are performative self-techniques in the Foucaultian sense of the word.

Performative practices establish a *relative fixation between a semiotic form and its function*. Function and form are conceptualized in a linguistic pragmatic sense. It is useful to get ahead of myself at this point. In the upcoming chapters, I will argue for a definition of *form* as *(the result of) a performance of an articulation which is positively observable for interactants and which is a pre-requisite for the establishment (of an orientation towards) a relevant context or common ground*. The notion of *function* will be conceptualized as *a flexible and temporal relationship which establishes a context by means of indexical processes of meaning generation*. In their original definition, Laclau and Mouffe defined articulatory practices in terms of the establishment of a relationship between discursive elements. I prefer to think of articulation in terms of a relative fixation between a *semiotic form and its function*. This preference is a direct result of a rearticulation of linguistic pragmatic and poststructuralist perspectives on discourse. I will devote due attention to this rearticulation in subchapter 2.2. For now, it is sufficient to note that *semiotic* forms and functions can be both of a linguistic and of a non-linguistic nature. The meanings of these semiotic forms and functions do not only arise out of highly contextualised performances, they also arise out of their articulation with one another.

The idea that a (re)articulation of semiotic forms and functions alters the very meanings of these form and functions is obviously derived from the framework of Laclau, Mouffe, Lacan and Žižek. It is a direct result of: the idea of articulation as (the result of a) partial fixation of meaning; as an attempt to overcome the split nature of self and reality; and as an attempt to fill in the lack at the center of the self that results from the entrance of the subject in the Imaginary and the Symbolic orders of reality. This aspect of the definition theorises the etymological and common notion of articulation as a connection. The political and hegemonic senses of articulation have been extensively discussed and require no further elaboration at this point. The main question that remains to be addressed is to what extent this

rearticulated notion of rearticulation enables an explanative and empirical account of evolving political subjectivities.

At the end of chapter one, I stated that we are in need of a perspective that allows for an empirical analysis of a multiplicity of contradicting theoretical models that may or may not use similar abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, or ⟨politics⟩. This was considered to be important since we can not presuppose that the mere usage of the same word implies a similarity in either definitions of the self or in definitions of the situation. Notions such as nodal points, empty signifiers, and the relative fixation of meaning hold great promise in this respect. Nevertheless, we have extensively discussed how the methodological deficit of poststructuralist discourse theory forms an obstacle to empirical observation. Even though the principle of relative fixation of meaning may explain why notions such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, or ⟨politics⟩ are so open to political contestation, poststructuralist discourse theory does not provide us with adequate means for empirical analysis. This is largely due to an inadequate account of how linguistic articulations function with respect to context generation. Put differently, the phonological etymological sense of articulation requires significant theorisation. In this sense, the analytical requirement has not been met by the theories of articulation as outlined above.

Secondly, an analysis of political engagements and subjectivities requires a perspective that accounts for the fact that abstract categories such as identity, community, or politics can function as important signifiers in the discursive construction of both one's sense of self and one's sense of (i)legitimate politics. We are looking for a perspective that can explain how the usage of widely available categories such as ⟨integration⟩, ⟨community⟩, ⟨identity⟩ or ⟨politics⟩ can become personalised and constitutive for an individual's political subjectivity. The principle of articulation as outlined above is able to provide such an account. Individualised articulations of abstract categories can be thought of in terms of individual performances in Butler's sense of the word. The political and hegemonic dimensions of articulation have been extensively theorised by Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek. The theories of articulation as outlined can definitely be interpreted in such a way that they give an account of the individual subjectivities are being constituted. Howarth's and Glynos' emphasis on moving through the self-interpretations of subjects in any form of discourse theoretical analysis affirms this idea.

A third aspect of the required perspective pertains to its ability to rearticulate the metapragmatic and political awareness of respondents without running the risk of overpowering their voices by using our own abstract categories. In the first chapter of this book, we noted the importance of metapragmatic awareness and discourse to the generation and articulation of political awareness. Glynos and Howarth have devoted considerable attention to this issue. They have shown how the principle of articulation allows one to move between the self-interpretations of subjects on the one hand, and the interpretations of the researchers on the other. This type of differentiation is the main reason for my usage of the articulation markers ⟨ and ⟩. I already noted how these markers highlight where and when my own word usage overlaps with the words used by my respondents. (Re)articulation markers are tools that allow the reader to differentiate between (1) my own analyses and theoretical articulations on the one hand and (2) the theories, concepts, senses of self and politics as articulated by my respondents. They allow the reader to problematise these articulations in all of the senses theorised above. Any understanding of the self-interpretations articulated by research subjects should take the metapragmatic dimension of awareness and empirically observable discourse into account. In this sense, the poststructuralist notion of articulation falls short. Below, I will argue that a rearticulation of pragmatist, poststructuralist and linguistic pragmatic ideas will counter this problem.

The fourth need articulated on the basis of empirical observations illustrated in chapter one pertains to the fact that we do not need a perspective that seeks to analyse a presupposedly unified object of investigation such as a single community, a single identity, or a specific mode of politics. Rather, we need an approach that allows us to flesh out a complex intertextual network of people constructing their political engagement with reference to concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices and myself. Put differently, we are looking for a framework that allows us to investigate large-scale social debates by means of an analysis of individualised utterances – i.e. language use. Even though the

notion of articulation as theorised above can be connected to large-scale social debates through notions such as hegemony, empty signifiers, and the primacy of politics, it does not provide a systematic account of how to analyse and reconstruct such a debate by means of individualised utterances. Once again, I will argue that an articulation of pragmatist, poststructuralist and linguistic pragmatic perspectives offers a way out.

A fifth characteristic of the required perspective is that it should allow us to empirically investigate large-scale interpretive processes that provide coherence between seemingly contradictory statements produced by social actors. Since most of the investigated contradictions in chapter one are the result of implicit meanings that have not been sufficiently contextualised in discourse, this approach should allow us to identify implicit meaning on the basis of empirical observations. Poststructuralist discourse theory does not meet this empirical standard even though it does provide an account of the importance of self-interpretations by individuals involved in social and political discursive practices. It should also be noted that the discourse theories of Foucault, Laclau, Mouffe and Hall devote considerable attention to the unifying aspect of articulations. For instance, Laclau and Mouffe have focused on the way social identities can be unified through practices of articulation that aim to establish or challenge specific hegemonic practices or discourses. Hall has emphasised the unifying aspect of articulation even more. Nevertheless, I maintain that without a more adequate account of how to contextualise discourse and how to relate implicit and explicit meanings, no theory of articulation will be able to empirically investigate large-scale interpretive processes that may or may not be marked in linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of the discourse produced by individuals. The detailed account of context provided within linguistic pragmatic theories of discourse may thus enrich and modify the theory of articulation as put forward by the authors discussed above.

The sixth requirement of the desired perspective for analysing the political discourse, engagements, and subjectivities of the public intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders, pertains to the fact that it should allow us to differentiate between the multiple aspects of their selves as illustrated in chapter one, and the sense of coherence that is subjectively experienced, articulated and co-constructed throughout the interviews. Laclau has refined his theory of articulation and subjectivity under the influence of Žižek's critique that an individual's subjectivity may not be reduced to mere subject positions. Under this Lacanian influence, Laclau's revised discourse theory is definitely able to think the multiple aspects of an individual's sense of self. Moreover, within this Lacanian framework, the establishment of a sense of coherence in one's sense of self is one the most important functions of discourse, the relative fixation of meaning, the attempts at delimiting relevant contexts, and so on. Nevertheless, the theories of articulation outlined above do not provide insight in the way such a sense of coherence is co-constructed in empirically observable interactions. As we will see, linguistic pragmatic accounts of subject positions, indexicality, and coherence, can provide a way out of this methodological deficit.

The last characteristic of the required perspective captures the empirical short-comings of the theories of articulation as follows: the desired perspective should allow for an analysis of the intuitive and/or unconscious processes that are nevertheless marked in discourse. This is probably one of the main difficulties in any investigation into discourse. The difficulty pertains to the issue of intentionality. In the upcoming chapters on linguistic pragmatics, I will argue that one can only speculate over unconscious processes as long as they are not marked in discourse. Researchers should refrain from such speculations if they are truly interested in passing through the self-interpretations of their research subjects. Fortunately, traces of self-interpretive processes are marked in discourse through certain expressions and (non-)linguistic articulations. No matter the extent to which an individual is aware of the way he or she articulates her sense of self with respect to his or her sense of society and politics, linguistic discourse offers the most reliable source available into the conscious and unconscious processes that account for political subjectivity and engagement.

2.2 Towards an interpretive functionalist approach to self, politics, and discourse

The concept of articulation as theorised in poststructuralist thought is alien to the perspective and vocabulary of linguistic pragmatics. The only sense in which articulation has entered pragmatic models of language use is phonological – i.e. the dimension of language use that has been neglected in poststructuralist definitions of the term. In the subchapters below, I will add the notion of articulation to the perspective of linguistic pragmatics and vice versa. This mutual enrichment may be awkward at first but as the argument develops, we will notice striking family resemblances between poststructuralist and linguistic pragmatic perspectives on discourse and subjectivity.

I will describe these family resemblances with reference to the concept of interpretive functionalism. As I mentioned before, such a perspective will allow for an analysis of large-scale interpretive processes that allow us to consider our selves as more or less coherent wholes. It will also allow for an understanding of why preferred modes of subjectivity and preferred modes of engagement within the public sphere are fundamentally intertwined. Like any other signifier, the self is a multifunctional form. Its functions vary according to the relationships that are performatively and discursively established. As such, I will argue that any analysis of the empirical self should go hand in hand with an interpretive and functionalist heuristic.

In the subchapters below, I will focus first and foremost on pragmatist and poststructuralist thought on self and politics (see: 2.2.1). Secondly, I will focus on linguistic pragmatic perspectives on the context(s), structure(s) and function(s) of discourse (see: 2.2.2). In both subchapters we are dealing with theories and analyses that react against concepts of discourse and politics based on a unified and centered concept of the self. Pragmatist, poststructuralist and linguistic pragmatic perspectives share a similar emphasis on the self as an interpretive, functional, and processual entity. As such, the theories and approaches introduced below can be articulated with each other in an interpretive and functionalist heuristic.

2.2.1 Pragmatist and poststructuralist thought on self and politics

Both pragmatism and poststructuralism partly emerged as reactions to the fallacies of the transcendental self of Enlightenment philosophy. According to both pragmatist and poststructuralist authors this brand of philosophy provided inadequate accounts of truth and subjectivity. We will not delve too deeply into the intricacies of the Enlightenment concept of subjectivity. Rather, I will present a brief account of pragmatism, pragmatics, and poststructuralist thought as a series of reactions to a particular notion of self that has long characterized Western thought and identity: the transcendental subject of Enlightenment.

This account is far from complete and merely serves the function of introducing the reader to an intellectual history shared by advocates of poststructuralist, pragmatist, and linguistic pragmatic thought. Linguistic pragmatics is indebted to both pragmatist and poststructuralist ideas on truth, discourse and subjectivity. My discussion of pragmatism and poststructuralism will focus mostly on the notions of self and subjectivity as promoted by its advocates. I aim to show how these theoretical constructs clear the ground for a rearticulation of linguistic pragmatic and poststructuralist insights. In turn, this will allow for an empirical investigation into the various notions of self and politics as co-constructed throughout the interviews I conducted.

The sections below will (a) introduce *the transcendental self of Enlightenment*; (b) discuss the pragmatist notion of the *empirical self*; (c) highlight some aspects of *poststructuralist thought on the self*; and (d) draw out some conclusions with respect to the analysis of *political engagement by means*

of pragmatist and poststructuralist insights. Throughout our discussion of these themes, we will continually draw out conclusions with respect to the relationship between politics, self, discourse and subjectivity.

a) The transcendental self of Enlightenment

Both pragmatism and poststructuralist thought evolved as reactions to the notion of a transcendental self as posited within enlightenment philosophy. This transcendental self was bound up with highly particularised notions of reason and language. In the subsections below, we will focus upon the particularities of *the Cartesian cogito* as well as on their implications for *Modernist thought on reason, language and discourse*. Considering our interest in empirical analysis, I will also discuss the *problematic status of the empirical in relation to the transcendental subject*. These subsections will allow us to highlight the family resemblances between poststructuralist, pragmatist, and linguistic pragmatic accounts of discourse and subjectivity. This brief discussion of the transcendental self will allow for a better understanding of some highly compatible features that characterize poststructuralist and pragmatist perspectives on subjectivity. Moreover, it will allow the reader to see why linguistic pragmatics – as an heir to both pragmatist and poststructuralist thought – allows for an empirical analysis of the articulatory practices that are constitutive of my respondents sense of self and politics.

The Cartesian cogito

Holstein and Gubrium explain how the transcendental self was not so much a concept that referred to ordinary men and women populating society, as to a philosophical position from which social matters were considered and argued. They state that “*Whether it was Descartes’ Enlightenment cogito, which had decidedly rational leanings, or Rousseau’s more romantic counterpart, it was a self placed prior to, or above “the artifices and superficialities of the social whirl” as Solomon puts it. [...] This transcendental self was disembodied, separated, and distinguished from the very corporeal body upon which it otherwise philosophically mused and cast judgment*” (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 18). The Enlightenment concept of the self was thus a fairly abstract notion that did not take contextualised self-interpretations into account.

The notion of a transcendental self corresponded to, was informed by, and informed the dominant European self-image and world-view during modernity. It might be said that Descartes placed a separate and logically distinct self at the center of philosophy. A key assumption of this notion entailed that “*the cogito or philosophically reflecting self not only had knowledge of itself, but, in that knowledge, knew any and all possible selves. What followed from this transcendental pretense was that everyone, everywhere was principally the same*” (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 19).

Solomon points out that “*the transcendental self was the self – timeless, universal, and in each one of us around the globe and throughout history. Distinguished from our individual idiosyncrasies, this was the self we shared. In modest and ordinary terms it was called “human nature”. In much less modest, extraordinary terminology, the transcendental self was nothing less than God, the Absolute Self, the World Soul*”. (Solomon 1988 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 19).

Ultimately, the transcendental pretence became a political weapon of enormous power: “*Even as it signalled a radical egalitarianism, and suggested a long-awaited global sensitivity, it also justified unrestricted tolerance for paternalism and self-righteousness – ‘the white philosopher’s burden’*” (Solomon 1988 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 19). This is not to say that all Enlightenment philosophers adhere to a single notion of the subject (see Atkins 2005b; G. Williams 1999). But we do maintain that the problematics that characterize the Cartesian subject have haunted them throughout modernity.

Descartes most famous statement is without a doubt *cogito ergo sum* – i.e. I think therefore I am. It is useful to briefly dissect this statement. Descartes deployed a method of doubt in order to establish one single indubitable fact from which all other truths could be determined and that would provide a sound basis for philosophy. To him, this fact would prove to be the *I*, the immaterial thinking thing that is the subject of consciousness. His reasoning might be summarised as follows: “... *even if I can call into doubt everything I perceive or believe, including my very existence, I cannot doubt that I am doubting*” (Atkins 2005a: 8). In this sense, “*Any amount of doubt simply reiterates the truth that I, as a thinking thing, exist*” (Atkins 2005a: 8).

Descartes does not talk about the *self* but prefers the notion of *cogito*. The *cogito* is described as a non-bodily thinking thing. It is characterized by an indivisibility of consciousness. According to Descartes, it is impossible to distinguish parts of the mind (i.e. the *cogito*): the *I* – the *cogito* – cannot be broken down into components and thus distinguishes itself from the body (Atkins 2005a: 8). Whereas it is possible to distinguish arms and legs with respect to the body, it is impossible to think of the *cogito* as something else than a unified whole. In addition, the Cartesian subject is centered at the point where thought begins. In summary, Descartes’ subject is conceptualized as a fully coherent, unified and centered whole (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 18).

A multiplicity of critiques may be put forward against such a notion of the subject. First of all, it is quite conceivable that there are many properties of mind and body of which we are unaware. For instance, we have no direct awareness of the physical processes involved in the establishment of awareness. Secondly, the simple and indivisible unity of thought is also questionable. As the empirical analyses in this book demonstrate, human beings may hold conflicting beliefs or goals, as well as ambivalent feelings and attitudes. Thirdly, the duality of body and mind is highly problematic since a mind must have a spatial and temporal location in order to connect to the body. If the mind is non-material, the *cogito* “*must always be an outsider, content to observe and never to participate. The latter is precisely the fate of the Cartesian subject*” (Atkins 2005a: 9-19). Interestingly, the Cartesian subject was never an idle observer. Quite the contrary, it provided the moral groundwork for a highly politicised subjectivity that ethically legitimated a multiplicity of educational, economic, political, colonial and linguistic practices and policies.

Modernist thought on reason, language and discourse

Descartes transcendental subject was constructed in relation to a set of statements about rationality. Seventeenth century philosophers came to view objective reality as identified with matter and a law-governed physical world. On the other hand, humankind became a subjective, mental being. The development of scientific knowledge would lead to rational control of the social. A cumulative view of knowledge emerged alongside a conceptualisation of society as an order or an architecture based on calculation. Reason thus became the agent of all development (G. Williams 1999: 11-13).

This was a universal human reason which served as the basis for assessing whether or not particular social and political tendencies were progressive. In this respect, Enlightenment philosophers argued forcefully for a process whereby all rationality was to be measured with reference to a single standard. This idea is most clearly expressed by Kant who argued both in favour of a single human reason and for a single true system of philosophy based upon specific principles (G. Williams 1999: 18).

At this point, the double-edged issue of language and rationality enters the picture. Glyn Williams explains how “*modernism penetrated the political realm via a form of language planning*”. In France, the establishment of the absolutist state coincided with the qualification of French as the language of reason, and with the conscious goal of eliminating all other languages within the Republic. In France and elsewhere in Europe, “*this attempt to legitimise the dominant language as the sole language of the populace was based on the claim for a link between particular languages and the process of reasoning, a claim which replaced the pre-modernist Babel thesis concerning the hierarchical nature*

of languages deriving from divine proximity” (G. Williams 1999: 21). Nevertheless, this did not mean that language and reason amounted to the same thing.

Language and reason were differentiated from one another. For instance, Condorcet recognized that all humans had language but claimed that not all humans had the capacity for reason. Even Herder drew on Condorcet and Rousseau when he stated that all humans by definition possess language even though they do not necessarily possess reason. They merely have the capacity for it. According to Herder, the crucial ingredient to create reason was “*[a Volks]organisation and mode of life, language and tradition being inherited, thereby giving continuity to the changing history of each Volk.*”. While individuals have the capacity for reason, it is their Volk-culture that provides the language to realise their propensity for it. This allowed for a differentiation and hierarchisation of cultures that would be key to various political projects such as nationalism and colonialism (G. Williams 1999: 22-23).

The main functions of language in these modern philosophies of language were either (self-) expression or correspondence. For instance, Bacon considered the human subject to be capable of manipulating language as a means of self-expression. According to him, human beings link language to their sense impressions thanks to reason and rationality. The human subject thus expresses its relationship to real objects through language. The so-called realist or correspondence theory of truth entails that sentences are true or false by virtue of the state of the world rather than that of human language. Within this perspective, thoughts reflect rather than constitute the world. Lastly – and this brings us full circle – the unobservable entities posited to explain the observable behaviour of things exist independently of thought (G. Williams 1999: 23-24).

The problematic status of the empirical in relation to the transcendental subject

It should be clear that the poststructuralist theories of discourse, subjectivity, and articulation discussed in section 2.1 do not fit with a notion of a unified self that is decontextualised from its own self-interpretations and that transcends the reality wherein it finds itself. The theories of Freud, Lacan, Althusser, Žižek, Foucault, Butler, Laclau, Mouffe, Howarth and Glynos all subscribe in one way or another to a model of the split subject. This contrast is no coincidence. The Enlightenment model of subjectivity was called into question through a confrontation with post-modern societal developments and empirical observations with respect to the self. The modernist accounts of self, language, truth and discourse were increasingly being dislocated in the Laclau / Mouffe sense of the word.

The inadequacy of the Enlightenment model for explaining political subjectivity can also be exemplified with reference to the interviews I conducted with public intellectuals and activists. We noticed how respondents articulated various and contradicting notions of ⟨self⟩ and ⟨identity⟩. Their identifications could not be traced back to a single signifier or rationality. Individuals identify themselves positively, negatively, and partially with a whole range of signifiers, practices, identities and other aspects of their interpretive reality in an attempt to make sense of both themselves and their world. Even though individuals were able to articulate a high degree of metapragmatic awareness with respect to their own and others’ language use, this does not necessarily indicate the presence of a mind that exists as a coherent and unified whole functioning independently of language (use).

Moreover, we have illustrated how public intellectuals and activists can articulate multiple aspects of their sense of self as well as a sense of coherence that is subjectively experienced, articulated and co-constructed throughout a specific interaction. We empirically demonstrated a degree of coherence in the self-interpretations of interviewees even though this coherence is never complete and always constructed both in and through discourse. Even if one considers the possible existence of such a thing as an independent and transcendent essence to subjectivity (i.e. soul, rationality, love, ...), it is more useful to act upon what we can empirically and interpretively establish. As we will see, this is a decidedly pragmatist and pragmatic stance.

The transcendent subject of Enlightenment is not the empirically observable self that we experience and encounter in daily life. It is not the social self that my interviewees talked about when they report the discourse of people who demand that ⟨allochthons⟩ ⟨integrate themselves⟩ (e.g. Najim Einauan); when someone states that ⟨being active⟩ in minority civil society organisations provides ⟨an important framework⟩ or a ⟨structure to life⟩ ⟨that you get personal meaning from⟩ (Nadia Fadil); why ⟨it is important to develop a legitimate discourse⟩ with respect to ⟨the fact that various worlds feed you⟩ (Nadia Fadil); or why it is difficult to draw ⟨a line⟩ between a ⟨job⟩ in an organisation aimed at the ⟨emancipation⟩ of ⟨allochthon women⟩ and one's ⟨self⟩. How a ⟨job⟩ and a ⟨self⟩ can be ⟨close⟩ to one another (Nadia Babazia). The Cartesian self is neither the self that is being discussed in talk-shows, therapeutic couches or in-depth interviews. It was a hypothesis that is not needed in the empirical understanding of the self propagated by pragmatist and poststructuralist approaches to truth and subjectivity. The transcendent subject may be real to a specific individual, but in that case he or she has to interpretively acknowledge it as a core aspect of his or her sense of self.

b) Pragmatism and the empirical self

Throughout my investigations into the history of linguistic pragmatic, poststructuralist and pragmatist thought, I came to realise that in spite of the differences in terms of terminology, style, and preferred topics of investigation, the ideas formulated by its advocates were informed and characterized by similar anxieties. In *The pragmatic turn*³⁶, Richard Bernstein reports a similar experience: “*Over the years I have explored the works of a variety of thinkers working in Anglo-American and continental traditions. But it has struck me over and over again that many twentieth-century philosophers – some of whom had little or no knowledge of the classical pragmatic thinkers – were dealing with similar themes and coming to similar conclusions*” (Bernstein 2010: ix). His book focuses on these convergences – his general thesis being that during the past 150 years philosophers working in different traditions have explored and refined themes that were already prominent in the pragmatist movement of authors such as Peirce, James and Dewey. Bernstein highlights the similarities between these authors on the one hand, and philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Sellars, and Davidson on the other. He also explores the development of pragmatist themes as developed by authors such as Putnam, Rorty and Habermas – emphasising both their differences and similarities (Bernstein 2010).

For current purposes, it suffices to list the most important commonalities that allow Bernstein to identify a pragmatist turn characterising the ideas of this diverse set of philosophers. According to Bernstein the turn begins with a radical critique of what Peirce called *the spirit of Cartesianism*. It is worth citing Bernstein on this spirit (Bernstein 2010: ix-x):

“*By this Peirce meant a framework of thinking that had come to dominate much of modern philosophy – where sharp dichotomies are drawn between what is mental and physical, as well as subject and object; where “genuine” knowledge presumably rests upon indubitable foundations; and where we can bracket all prejudices by methodical doubt. This way of thinking introduces a whole series of interrelated problems that preoccupied philosophers: the problem of the external world, the problem of our knowledge of other minds; and the problem of how to correctly represent reality.*” (Bernstein 2010: ix-x)

Thinkers such as Dewey, Peirce and Mead all wrote in opposition to the associated sharp dichotomies, referential theories of meaning, correspondence theories of truth, and essentialist conceptualisations of subjectivity. However, Bernstein also points out that the same goes for authors such as Wittgenstein and Heidegger – thus emphasising the continuity between their philosophical inquiries. (Bernstein

³⁶ Bernstein does not distinguish between pragmatism and pragmatics. Whenever he speaks about pragmatics, he refers to the philosophies of Peirce, Dewey, Mead, Habermas, Rorty, and so on. In contrast, we will reserve the labels pragmatism and pragmatist to refer to these authors, while we will use the notion of pragmatics for the empirical perspectives on language use that we will outline later on.

2010: ix-x; Buekens 1995; Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 4-37). He highlights the importance of pragmatism as follows:

“The pragmatic thinkers called into question the framework in which these traditional problems had been formulated. They rejected what Dewey called the “quest for certainty” and the “spectator theory of knowledge”. They sought to develop a comprehensive alternative to Cartesianism – a nonfoundational self-corrective conception of human inquiry based upon an understanding of how human agents are formed by, and actively participate in shaping, normative social practices. And they showed the critical role that philosophy can play in guiding our conduct, enriching our everyday experience and furthering “creative democracy”. (Bernstein 2010: ix-x)

Bernstein does not write a lot about post-modern or poststructuralist thinkers in *The pragmatic turn*. He mentions them only on occasion but does so in a way that is highly compatible with my own intuitions. I maintain that the pragmatist sensibility described by Bernstein is characteristic of the poststructuralist theories on discourse and subjectivity outlined above. It is therefore useful to take a look at Bernstein’s reaction to the emergence of so-called post-modernist thought:

“The late 1980s were a time when so-called “postmodernism” seemed to be the rage in many circles. Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze (and other French thinkers) were the “theorists” that excited the imagination of many young intellectuals. At first I found the talk about the novelty of “postmodern” discourse perplexing. For when I examined closely what was being attacked – foundationalism, the metaphysics of presence, grand narratives and systems – I felt that I had seen all this before. This was the starting point for the classical pragmatists in the nineteenth century.” (Bernstein 2010: 29).

With respect to Derrida, Bernstein came to realise that he rejected what the early pragmatists also rejected. Moreover, he points out that there are many illuminating points of contact with the American pragmatic thinkers in Derrida’s musings on responsibility and undecidability (Bernstein 2010: 30; see Derrida 1996; see Laclau 1996). In spite of the many differences between authors such as Peirce, James, Mead, Wittgenstein, Quine, Davidson and Sellars, Bernstein claims that these writers share a common target with continental thinkers such as Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Habermas and Apel – namely Cartesian accounts of truth, objectivity, and the self (Bernstein 2010: 107-09).

Below, I will not treat all of these authors in detail. It is sufficient to explore some key pragmatist ideas by highlighting *pragmatism as an anti-Cartesian project* and by introducing the idea of the *empirical self* as developed in *pragmatist thought*. It is also relevant to articulate the link between *politics and pragmatism in the work of William James*. It is also useful to take a look at what *John Dewey* meant by *radical democracy* and a democratic ethics. These discussions will allow me to move on to a discussion of *politics in contemporary pragmatism*. More specifically, I will be focusing on *Habermas* and *Rorty*. My key objective is to show how both pragmatist and poststructuralist critiques of the Cartesian subject account for the compatibility of poststructuralist theories about articulation with key linguistic pragmatic insights. Put differently, the discussion of pragmatist thought on subjectivity and politics will allow us to arrive at the point where we can operationalise linguistic pragmatics in an empirical investigation of contextualised self-interpretations.

Pragmatism as an anti-Cartesian project

The founding father of the pragmatist movement is Charles Saunders Peirce (1839-1914). Buekens explains how Peirce’s philosophical program was a reaction against the dominant form of Cartesian philosophy of his time. His theory was a reaction to the representational theory of mind and meaning (Buekens 1995). The same can be said about authors such as James, Cooley, Mead, Goffman, Quine, Rorty, and Habermas. For the moment we will restrict our discussion of pragmatism as an anti-Cartesian project to its most general features as formulated by Peirce and James.

Peirce starts rejecting the Cartesian model by criticising the idea that complete doubt can be the basis for knowledge about the world and about the self. He explains how all knowledge rests on prejudice since “*justification will have to come to a halt somewhere*” (Hookway 1985 cited in Bernstein 2010: 33-34). The beliefs that we hold to be true are often taken to be indubitable but they should never be considered incorrigible. Bernstein explains how Peirce is “*an anti-foundationalist when foundationalism is understood as the doctrine that claims that there are basic or incorrigible truths that are not subject to revision*” (Bernstein 2010: 34). The type of revision that Peirce advocates is intersubjective. It is enacted through the critical reflections of a community of inquirers who publicly criticise the prejudices, hypotheses and guesses we hold so dearly. Peirce also points out that beliefs can never be grounded in the subjective evaluations of a single individual. Beliefs are always social in the sense that “*the essence of belief is the establishment of a habit, and different beliefs are distinguished by the different modes of action to which they give rise*” (Peirce 1992 cited in Bernstein 2010: 35). In contrast to the Cartesian model, Peirce took a decidedly anti-representationalist stance and rejected the idea that truth-predicates designate an unproblematic relation between a knower (or a sentence used by the knower) and some language-independent fact. The pragmatist maxim is a decidedly anti-representationalist claim. It entails that an object of knowledge can only be known by means of the effects we consider it to have in our life-world (Buekens 1995). Peirce is often granted to be the father of pragmatism because of his formulation of this pragmatic maxim. But a more important reason for his fatherly status lies in his critique of Cartesianism. A critique that would come to shape much of twentieth century philosophy (Bernstein 2010: 52).

It is William James who gave the term pragmatism its wide-spread currency by means of his book *Pragmatism*. Throughout his work, James defends an instrumentalist theory of truth wherein ideas become true only in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience. There are only temporary or relative truths and there is no absolute true meaning that is immune to further experience (Buekens 1995). James felt a great attraction towards the British tradition of empiricism because of its “*down-to-earth quality [...] its insistence on the appeal to experience as the touchstone of all knowledge, its abhorrence of jargon, and its habit of explaining wholes by parts. Yet, James was one of the most acute critics of what he took to be the deficiencies of the empirical conception of experience.*”. More specifically, he rejected the classical empiricist idea that experience consists of an aggregate of discrete units of sensations. This rejection took place on the basis of a critique of Cartesian distinctions such as object and subject, consciousness and content (Bernstein 2010: 55-58).

Criticism of the Cartesian framework remains a strong theme in contemporary American and continental philosophy. This brief presentation merely scratches the surface of the discussion (see Bernstein 2010; Buekens 1995; Holstein and Gubrium 2000). Within the context of this book, the most important anti-Cartesian pragmatist ideas should be formulated in terms of the type of subjectivity they promote.

The empirical self in pragmatist thought

Andrew Feffer explains that “*the pragmatist theory of truth [is] that knowledge is [not universal, but] relative to social behavioral situations’, ... evolving as an instrument in the ongoing process of problem solving*” (Feffer 1993 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 17). One of the most significant conceptual breakthroughs fostering the development of pragmatist thought was what James called an *empirical* understanding of the self. The pragmatist notion of self thus paved the ground for the social and behaviorist sciences. This involved a shift from thinking about the self in terms of transcendental philosophy to a consideration of self-related issues in terms of the context of ordinary living. James’ discussion of the empirical self begins with the self he and others experience in daily life: “*Using personal pronouns, he explains that awareness senses a source – “I”- and an object of awareness – “me” – of whom I am aware.*” (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 20-22).

Nevertheless, James emphasises that the empirical unity of the *I* and the *me* must not be undermined by this terminology. Within his perspective, pronouns and other terms of reference are references to aspects of our selves and not distinct experiential objects. Gubrium and Holstein also point out that “*Similarly, James informs us that when we communicate with others about who we are, we again inadvertently convey both subjectivity and objectivity. That is, we distinguish between the I and the me, even while James admits that, empirically, ‘between what man calls the me and what he simply calls mine the line is difficult to draw’*” (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 23).

To James, the self does not exist separate from, or above communication, as was the case in the transcendental notion of the self. On the contrary, he points out that “*the self and its referential facets are aspects of communication, either the inner practice of self-awareness in thought or the allocations of subjectivity evident in open references to personal characteristics – to you and yours or to me and mine*”. The empirical self is both a communicative and an embodied self. But even the relationship of the *I* to the *me* is unstable (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 23). As James put it himself:

“*We feel and act about certain things that are ours very much as we feel and act about ourselves. Our fame, our children, the work of our hands, may be as dear to us as our bodies are, and arouse the same feelings and the same acts of reprisal if attacked. And our bodies themselves, are they simply ours, or are they us? Certainly men have been ready to disown their very bodies and to regard them as mere vestures, or even as prisons of clay from which they should some day be glad to escape.*” (James 1961 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 23)

Holstein and Gubrium point out that the refusal to distinguish between the body and other material markers of who we are from the selves we, and others, consider ourselves to be, is characteristic of pragmatist thought. Within this line of thinking: “*the self is viewed as a working point of reference for ourselves and others that arises and gets designated within the course of embodied interaction. Our bodies and the material aspects of social interactions are important features as well as signs of who we and others are and, as such, feature our identities in practice*. Moreover, if the self exhibits any constancy at all, “*it is as stable as the patterns and accompanying material signs of our relationships*” (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 23-24). James commented that “*a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and that carry an image of him in their minds*”. One last citation of James is worth considering to indicate the revolutionary nature of the pragmatist notion of the empirical self with regard to the transcendental subject. Whether we call it *me* or *mine*, the societal self is:

“*fluctuating material; the same object being sometimes treated as a part of me, at other times as simply mine, and then again as if I had nothing to do with it at all*. In its widest possible sense, however, a man’s Me is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, *not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank-account. All these things give him the same emotions. If they wax, and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away he feels cast down – not necessarily in the same degree for each thing, but in much the same way for all. [I understand] the Me in the widest sense.*” (James 1961 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 24)

Similar themes have been developed by Cooley who also begins his analysis of the self with the leading personal pronouns. He considers references such as *I*, *me*, *my*, and *myself* to signal commonplace communicative markers of the experiencing self. He underscores the fact that he is interested in the *social* or *empirical* self whose core he considers to be self-feeling and not philosophical categories. Even though Cooley recognises the importance of pronouns, he also asserts that “*there can be no final test of the self except the way we feel; the self is that toward which we have a ‘my’ attitude*” (Cooley 1964 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 26). Cooley clarified his notion of self-feeling in the following way:

“But as this feeling is quite as familiar to us and as easy to recall as the taste of salt or the colour red, there should be no difficulty in understanding what is meant by it. One need only imagine some attack on his “me”, say ridicule of his dress or an attempt to take away his property or his child, or his good name by slander, and self-feeling immediately appears. Indeed, we need only pronounce, with strong emphasis, one of the self-words, like “I” or ‘my’, and self-feeling will be recalled by association.” (Cooley 1964 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 26)

Perhaps Charles Horton Cooley is best known for his model of the *looking glass self* that highlights the social properties of subjectivity. Cooley introduced this notion in order to emphasise the dialectical relationship between individuals in society. According to Cooley, identity – a sense of self – originates through the way one thinks one is perceived and judged by others. Identity is therefore a consequence of the image that another reflects back to me (Buiks et al. 1980: 133; Wester and Hilhorst 1985: 9-10). This *looking glass self* thus consists of three components: *“The imagination of our appearance to the other person, the imagination of his judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification”* (Cooley 1964 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 27).

Even though George Herbert Mead can easily be labeled as another important pragmatist with an empirical orientation towards the self, he disagrees with Cooley and James on the centrality of reflexive self-feelings as an explanation of the origin of the self. In spite of the fact that Mead uses similar terminology as Cooley – the *I*, the *me* – he considers the looking glass self to be too static. According to Mead, one needs to devote attention to the development of the self which occurs in ongoing social interaction. His core idea is that self-consciousness is the inner representation of what is otherwise an external conversation of significant gestures. He refuses to make a strict line of demarcation between inner life and social interaction – both are forms of communication. Gubrium and Holstein point out that as a consequence, Mead’s *“empirical self is neither more nor less a part of internal or external life. Rather, it is an integral part of a working subjectivity, wherever that is experientially located”* (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 27-28).

In a similar vein, Mead claims that there is no clear dividing line between our own sense of self and the selves of others (Elliott 2009). To Mead, mind, consciousness, and selfhood do not come to us *ex nihilo* nor at birth. They are developed through conversations of empirically observable gestures. These gestures are basically the overt components of social acts and they function as stimuli to performed reactions among individuals. Mead points out that individuals are engaged in conversations of gestures. Within these conversations, individuals respond to their own actions as other individuals respond – or would respond – and readjust their actions accordingly. Social roles are important in this respect. For instance, in a game of tag, participants will act upon their awareness of the roles provided by the game (the one who is ‘it’ and the others who run away), but the one who is ‘it’ will also act upon the moves of the one who runs away on the basis of his anticipated knowledge of what he might do were he in the other role (Thayer 1970: 337-38).

Mead points out that it is in language, in the acquisition of vocal gestures especially, that mind and self emerge. He underscores that there is a reflexive feature to vocal gestures that allows for increasingly complex conversations of gestures. As Thayer paraphrases Mead: in and through language use *“we not only respond to ourselves as others respond, in modifying our conduct we are responding to how we respond to our own conduct”* (Thayer 1970: 339). Language is also constitutive of the self in another way. Mead points out that human beings have the ability to communicate by means of symbols and that without access to language there is no access to the symbols necessary for thinking and acting as a self in a structured world of symbolic meaning. The symbolic and interactive social dimensions of Mead’s concept of self are aptly summarised by Anthony Elliott (Elliott 2009: 31-32):

“To possess a ‘self’ then necessarily implies an ability to take one’s actions, emotions and beliefs as a unified structure, viewed from the perspective of significant others, as others would view and interpret actions of the self. Seen from this angle, the self is a social product through and through, an outcome of social symbolic interaction – of emergent, ongoing creation, thinking, feeling, the

building of attitude structures, the taking on of roles, all in a quest for coherence and orientation to the social world” (Elliott 2009: 31-32)

The self conceptualized as an ongoing quest for coherence should be emphasised at this point. This idea does not mean that Mead denies the multiple aspects of an individual’s sense of self. On the contrary, Mead speaks of the *normality of a multiple personality*, about the fact that we are one thing to one man and another thing for another. Gubrium and Holstein point out that if Mead’s self has a unity, it is a unity derived from patterns of experience with others. The citation below, illustrates this point well. It also bears special relevance to the interviews analysed within the context of this research project (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 30):

“We realize in everyday conduct and experience that an individual does not mean a great deal of what he is doing and saying. We frequently say that such an individual is not himself. We come away from an interview with the realisation that we have left out important things, that there are parts of the self that did not get into what was said. What determines the amount of the self that gets into communication is the social experience itself. Of course, a good deal of the self does not need to get expression. We carry on a whole series of different relationships to different people. We are one thing to one man and another thing to another. There are parts of the self which exist only for the self in relationship to itself. We divide ourselves up in all sorts of different selves with reference to our acquaintances. We discuss politics with one and religion with another. There are all sorts of different selves answering to all sorts of different social reactions. It is the social process itself that is responsible for the appearance of the self; it is not there as a self apart from this type of experience” (Mead 1934 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 30)

Mead’s distinction between the *I* and the *me* is crucial to this notion of the self. According to Mead, self-awareness arises when the self is able to distinguish the *me* from the *I*. The *me* refers to the socialised aspects of the self as made up by the internalized attitudes of others as experienced in the early years of life. The *I* is rather unsocialised, an assortment of personal desires, needs and dispositions. It allows one to distinguish the self from others and to inject something new, creative and innovative into the social process (Elliott 2009: 33-34). The *I* and the *me* constantly interact with one another. The *Me* is the empirical self whom both *I* and other respond to and observe. But more importantly, whereas the *me* is an object of consciousness, the *I* is not. The *I* is always presupposed. As Mead puts it, the “*process of replying to one’s own talk, implies an ‘I’ behind the scenes who answers to gestures, the symbols, that arise in consciousness*”. But the *I* is not a unified and centered whole, rather, it is a process: “*The ‘I’ is the response of the organism to the attitudes of others which one himself assumes. The attitudes of the others constitute the organized ‘me’, and then one reacts toward that as an ‘I’*” (Mead 1934 cited in Thayer 1970: 339-40). One of the main differences between Mead’s notion of the self and the Cartesian model is that within Mead’s model, consciousness cannot be the self’s own object without substantive experiences to reflect upon, and from which one indicates to oneself who one is. According to the pragmatists, consciousness is always consciousness of something, including consciousness of oneself as meaningfully something (some thing) or another. The *I* thus only exists in reflexive relation to the *me* it indicates and specifies in the course of social interaction (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 29-30).

One last pragmatist account worth considering as an alternative to the Cartesian model is the dramaturgic or performative notion of the self formulated by Erving Goffmann. Goffmann agrees to a great extent with the symbolic interactionists who followed in the wake of Mead. However, Goffmann is not merely interested in the issue of meaning in interpersonal relations, he is also deeply concerned with the situated contingencies and rituals of interaction (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 35). His approach is dramaturgic in the sense that he deploys a great deal of theatre metaphors in his analysis of the various day-to-day activities of the self. To Goffmann, the self consists in an awareness of the multiplicity of roles that are performed in various situated contexts. In addition, the self is viewed as a *dramatic effect*. Even though one might think of one’s self as the source of one’s activities, ideas, beliefs, and general being in the world, Goffmann claims that we retroactively

attribute private intentions and subjective capabilities to our identities through the realization of skilled performances (Elliott 2009: 39).

Douglas Robinson points out that there are limits to the usefulness of the dramatic or performative metaphor for speech and social life. Metaphors organize our thinking. They highlight certain aspects of reality whereas they ignore others (Robinson 2006: 5). For the moment, it suffices to realise that the performative self is to a large extent a metaphorical construct. But the same goes for notions of the self conceptualized in terms of articulation, enunciation, subject positions and so on. My own account of the self also deploys various metaphors, narratives, and other linguistic tools to highlight various aspects of the realities our selves are engaged in. The ethical and analytical validity of these metaphors should be measured by means of its practical consequences for personal, social, and intellectual organisation.

Interestingly, Goffmann does not suggest that identity is concealed behind roles or that performers are standing behind their performance. Rather, we paradoxically constitute our selves by using roles in particular contexts. For instance, a doctor engaged in a therapeutic session may rely on her role in order to perform a credible and reassuring self for her patient. This doctor may be aware of the fact that there is a *role distance* between her role and her sense of self, but at the same time this role is constitutive for her sense of self. Other stage metaphors deployed by Goffmann include: *face* or *façade* (highlighting the amount of work individuals put into the stylization of their conduct and behaviour with others); *front-* and *back regions* for self-performance (emphasising that individuals may bracket-out or screen-off aspects of identity which are felt to be inappropriate on the front- and back-stages of specific social settings); and so on (Elliott 2009: 39-40). Gubrium and Holstein point out that Goffmann's self is performative in the sense that it *presents* itself to others and in the sense that it is *staged* in order to accomplish particular ends. He acknowledges that there are differences between theatre and real life but considers the similarities to be vast nevertheless: "*The issues dealt with by [notions such as] stagecraft and stage management are sometimes trivial but they are quite general; they seem to occur everywhere in social life, providing a clear-cut dimension for formal sociological analysis*" (Goffmann 1959 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 36-37).

Echoing the early pragmatists, Goffmann preserves a notion of the self formulated as both *I* and *me*, performatively placed in the world of everyday life. In fact, he may be said to flesh out the project the early pragmatists initiated. It amounts to a view of the self that is not only social and empirical, but also contextually realised. Goffmann considers the self to be a locally interactive beacon of experience that takes shape within – *not separate from* – the various situations we encounter in daily life. He reveals how "*each and every one of us has many selves, pertinent to the purposes of daily living, always part of, yet also reflexively separate from, the moral orders we share with others*" (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 37).

Politics and pragmatism in the works of William James

From its earliest manifestations on, pragmatism has confronted the issue of (i)legitimate politics head-on. Moreover, politics and the self may be said to be the double-edged topic where affinities and differences between poststructuralist and pragmatist thought crystallise most clearly. I will not attempt to provide an exhaustive overview of political pragmatist thought. Rather, I will highlight some key ideas proposed by a selection of pragmatist thinkers in order to demonstrate that any notion of the self implies notions of (il)legitimate politics and vice versa. Moreover, these preferred notions of self and politics correspond to particular notions of communication, discourse and reality. As we will see in our empirical analyses, this goes for both the highly formalised philosophies that we have been discussing so far, as it goes for the world views and subjectivities articulated by the activists and intellectuals discussed in the empirical chapters of this book. There are significant differences between the pragmatist politics of Cooley, Dewey, Habermas, and Rorty. But they also share similar anxieties

both with one another and with poststructuralist thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida, Laclau and Mouffe.

One of the earliest manifestations of the relevance of pragmatism to politics can be found in William James' writings on pragmatic pluralism. We already noticed how this author felt attracted to the British tradition of empiricism because of its emphasis put on the importance of experience. At the same time, he criticised the classical empiricist idea that experience consists of an aggregate of discrete units of sensations. His empiricism is reflected in his plea for an empirical analysis of the self. The type of empiry that James advocates is a *pluralistic* or *radical empiricism*. It was an explicit reaction against what James considered to be the overly intellectualised monism of the absolute idealists. Bernstein points out that James would have found a great ally in the later Wittgenstein who also sought to cure philosophers of their craving for definitive order (Bernstein 2010: 55-59).

James recognized that we cannot give up the search for order and unities in self and reality but he also criticised the idea of a single homogeneous unity structuring all experience. To him, pluralism does not deny unity but directs us to ask what kind of unity we are talking about and to look and see just how much unity we really discover. He points out that pragmatic principles do not allow us to claim absolute oneness in any respect in advance. There is a significant moral and political dimension to this idea (Bernstein 2010: 59-62). The quotation below gives us a first indication of the political relevance of pragmatism:

"... I tried to make you feel how soaked and shot-through life is with values and meanings which we fail to realize because of our external and insensible point of view ... There lies more than a mere interest of curious speculation in understanding this ... The forgetting of it lies at the root of every stupid and sanguinary mistake that rulers over subject-peoples make. The first thing to learn in intercourse with others is non-interference with their own peculiar ways of being happy, provided those ways do not assume to interfere by violence with ours." (James 1997 cited in Bernstein 2010: 63)

James's pluralism is often taken to be apolitical, but a different picture emerges when one looks at the public letters against imperialism he wrote during the Spanish-American war of 1898. He also protested against the so-called lynching epidemic of African-Americans in the United States. His remarks often exhibit very similar arguments to those developed against the intellectual monism and idealism he rejected. James was very much aware of the dangers of reification – constantly championing those pluralistic perspectives that foster individuality. Many of those protesting the anti-immigration mood, xenophobia, violent anti-Semitism and racism that reigned in the US after the first World War were inspired by James's pragmatic pluralism. For instance, Kallen referred to his writings while criticising the metaphor of America as the cultural melting pot wherein individual elements lose their distinctive individuality and collectivity in a homogeneous mass. Instead, he argued for a notion of society as a harmony of a plurality of voices. Also in the wake of James, Alain Locke developed a notion of race as an *ethnic fiction* with powerful practical consequences. According to him, one should not stop using the notion of race, but develop a positive idea of it that would enable African-Americans to reshape their world in a democratic way (Bernstein 2010: 59-69).

Radical democracy in the work of John Dewey

Long before Laclau and Mouffe, John Dewey theorised what he called *radical democracy* on the basis of pragmatist principles. Dewey has been a main source of inspiration to Richard Rorty (see further). Considering the recent rapprochement between Rorty and poststructuralist authors such as Laclau, Mouffe and Derrida (see Mouffe 1996b), it is interesting to take a look at what Dewey meant by *radical democracy*. During our discussion of *Hegemony and socialist strategy*, we noted that Laclau and Mouffe advocate a *radical democratic politics*. This type of politics was *radical* in its endeavour to expand egalitarian effects into more and more areas of the social. Moreover, this type of politics is

characterized by *plurality* in a sense that is closely related to that of William James. We also noted that the idealised notion of *radical democracy* as formulated by Laclau and Mouffe basically functions as a nodal point that is meant to articulate various struggles for peace, ecology, feminism, human rights, and so on. Dewey's notion of *radical democracy* is conceptualized in very different terms. Nevertheless, there are significant parallels to be drawn. Moreover, these correspondences provide another explanation as to why the political frameworks of pragmatists such as Rorty and poststructuralists such as Laclau and Mouffe are so compatible.

Democracy is one of the central themes in most of Dewey's writings. In order to understand what he means by radical democracy, it is important to consider the fact that Dewey argues that any theory of democracy that fails to acknowledge that human beings are not isolated non-social atoms is defective. He rejects the idea of democracy as a social contract through a refusal of the idea that men are mere individuals without any social relations *until* they form a contract. Dewey also rejects the idea that democracy is merely a form of government that involves a relation of a subject to its sovereign. He considers democracy to be first and foremost an *ethical way of life*. (Bernstein 2010):

"Democracy, in a word, is social, that is to say, an ethical conception, and upon its ethical significance is based its significance as governmental. Democracy is a form of government only because it is a form of moral and spiritual association." (Dewey cited in Bernstein 2010: 73)

It is interesting to note that Dewey's notion of ethical conduct is very similar to that of Michel Foucault (Flyvbjerg 2001: 44-45; Foucault 1984b: 25-30). Dewey draws upon a rich Hegelian understanding of *Sittlichkeit* but also on the Greek understanding of *ethos* as "*the customs, norms, attitudes, sentiments, and aspirations that characterize the life of a people*". According to Dewey, without such a democratic *ethos*, political democracy becomes hollow and meaningless (Bernstein 2010: 73-74). As does Foucault, Dewey links ethical conduct to the issue of self-formation:

"There is individualism in democracy which there is not in aristocracy; but it is an ethical, not a numerical individualism; it is an individualism of freedom, of responsibility, of initiative to and for the ethical ideal, not an individualism of lawlessness". (Dewey cited in Bernstein 2010: 74)

Dewey calls this individualism *personality* – a concept that does not designate something ontologically given but rather an achievement (Bernstein 2010: 74). It is useful to draw out the link with Foucault's notion of ethics.

Foucault observed that the Greek concept of ethics was – unlike ours – not related to religion, civil law or science. He takes recourse to the Greeks since they consider ethics in relation to an aesthetics of existence – a performance. It is a relationship towards yourself established through social action (Flyvbjerg 2001). To Foucault, the main issue with respect to ethics is a determination of the ethical substance – i.e. "*the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself as the prime material of his moral conduct*" (Foucault 1984b: 26). He underscores that there are many ways of being a moral subject that result from differences with respect to: "... *the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself as the prime material of his moral conduct*"; "... *the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice*"; and various ways of recognising that "... *an action is not only moral in itself in its singularity*" but also "*moral in its circumstantial integration and by virtue of the place it occupies in a pattern of conduct*" (Foucault 1984b: 26-28). He summarises his points on the nature of ethics as follows:

"In short, for an action to be "moral," it must not be reducible to an act or a series of acts conforming to a rule, a law, or a value. Of course all moral action involves a relationship or a value. Of course all moral action involves a relationship with reality in which it is carried out, and a relationship with the self. The latter is not simply "self-awareness" but self-formation as an "ethical subject", a process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain

mode of being that will serve as his moral goals. And this requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve and transform himself. There is no specific moral action that does not refer to a unified moral conduct; no moral conduct that does not call for the forming of oneself as an ethical subject; and no forming of the ethical subject without “modes of subjectivation” and an “ascetics” or “practices of the self” that support them. Moral action is indissociable from these forms of self-activity, and they do not differ any less from one morality to another than do the systems of values, rules, and interdictions.” (Foucault 1984b: 28)

Even though Dewey is concerned with a particular type of subjectivity – the democratic personality – and with a particular type of politics – radical democracy –, his ideas on ethics are highly compatible with Foucault’s poststructuralist conceptualisation of ethics. As we noted before, Dewey advocates a *radical democratic politics*. It is radical in the following sense:

“the end of democracy is a radical end. For it is an end that has not been adequately realized in any country at any time. It is radical because it requires great change in existing social institutions, economic, legal and cultural. A democratic liberalism that does not recognize these things in thought and action is not aware to its own meaning and to what that meaning demands” (Dewey cited in Bernstein 2010: 77).

Democracy thus functions as an end-in-view that can guide our actions here and now. Moreover, he points out that *“we can no longer act as if democracy takes place when individuals go to the polls to vote. Democracy is a personal way of individual life and it becomes a concrete reality only when it is practiced in our everyday lives”* (Dewey cited in Bernstein 2010: 77).

Interestingly, Dewey considers conflict to be a key feature of this type of radical democratic ethical conduct – a dimension that is downplayed in the theories of Habermas and Rorty but emphasised in the radical democracy envisaged by Laclau and Mouffe. Bernstein does note that many political theorists stress the agonistic aspect of democratic politics whereas there are others who emphasise the deliberative features of democracy. Even though he does not mention names, Laclau and Mouffe are a case in point for the first type of theorists, whereas Habermas is indicative of the second category. Dewey however, takes an intermediate road. He believed the elimination of conflict to be *“a hopeless and self-contradictory ideal”* for social life. He considered conflict to be of key importance to the achievement of social reform and justice. On the other hand, he emphasises that the main point is how one *responds* to this conflict (Bernstein 2010: 83-85). It is for this reason that he underscores importance of the *“role of consultation, conference, persuasion and discussion in the formation of public opinion”* (Dewey cited in Bernstein 2010: 85).

Bernstein concludes that Dewey’s radical democracy entails that *“one must do more than protect the rights of minorities and dissenters; one must work toward developing a culture in which plurality and difference of opinion are encouraged”*. But he also points out that *“a democracy degenerates into a sheer contest of wills and a naked power struggle if there is not a serious attempt to engage in deliberation and public debate – if there is not a serious attempt to establish shared communal values in which there is reciprocal trust and respect”* (Bernstein 2010: 85). The establishment of such a communal value is one of the main goals of both Dewey’s conceptualisation of radical democracy and that of Laclau and Mouffe.

The contemporary political relevance of pragmatist thought may be exemplified with reference to Richard Rorty and Jürgen Habermas. My discussion of both authors will be brief and does not do justice to the complex development of their elaborate frameworks. For purposes of argumentation, I will limit my discussion to those aspects of their work that relate directly to pragmatism, politics and poststructuralism. Habermas and Rorty developed very different approaches to pragmatism. I will argue that in spite of the fact that Habermas labeled his theory of communicative practice *universal pragmatics*, some of his key ideas with respect to communication contradict the pragmatist account of meaning and truth as set out by the early pragmatists. Rorty’s version of pragmatism comes closer to their perspective.

Politics in contemporary pragmatism: Habermas, universal pragmatics and the public sphere

When asked about the most lasting contribution of pragmatism to the tradition of Western philosophy and thought, Habermas responded as follows:

“Alongside Marx and Kierkegaard ... pragmatism emerges as the only approach that embraces modernity in its most radical forms, and acknowledges its contingencies, without sacrificing the very purpose of Western philosophy – namely, to try out explanations of who we are and who we would like to be, as individuals, as members of communities, and as persons überhaupt – that is, as man” (Habermas 2002 cited in Bernstein 2010: 168)

There are several reasons why Habermas decided to call his approach to communicative action *universal pragmatics* but there are equally powerful ways in which his approach diverges from the writings of the classical pragmatists. On the one hand, Habermas is one of the few European philosophers who read and took American pragmatism seriously. Moreover, he gradually came to realize how many of his central ideas were anticipated by these writers (Bernstein 2010: 169). Even though he relies to a great extent on ordinary language philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Austin, Searle and Apel, he remarks that it was *“... the pragmatic approach to language [Sprachpragmatik]”* that *“helped me to develop a theory of communicative action and of rationality. It was the foundation for a critical theory of society and paved the way for a discourse-theoretic conception of morality, law and democracy”* (Habermas 2003 cited in Bernstein 2010: 171-72). Habermas thus acknowledges the political relevance of pragmatism in his own work.

In order to highlight the characteristics and political implications of Habermas’s universal pragmatics, it is useful to take a look at the key features of his thought with respect to the nature of the public sphere in contemporary democracies. He describes the public sphere in conversational – i.e. pragmatic – terms:

“By ‘the public sphere’ we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body.” (Habermas 1989: 102)

Habermas does not refer to a traditional notion of the public as a collection of individuals confronted with a performance or publication. He deploys the term first and foremost in order to designate a specific type of institutions that can only be established through the participation of individual citizens (comment by Hohendahl (ed) 2001 to Habermas 1989: 107). It is important to note that Habermas’s public sphere is basically a spatial metaphor that enables him to conceptualize an intermediate sphere between the state and the private realm. According to Habermas, this public sphere is constitutive for and constituted by a public opinion that should be established through a power-free dialogue. The spheres of the private, the public and the state partially overlap. This entails that the needs that originate in the private sphere of social labour and commodity exchange can be translated into the public sphere in the form of a public opinion through the medium of what Habermas calls *herrschaftsfreie Kommunikation* or a type of communication based on his *universal pragmatic* principles (Habermas 1989: 102-03). Moreover, the public sphere has an institutional core of voluntary associations that find themselves at least partially outside of the spheres of the state and the economy. Examples of such institutes are churches, cultural associations, sports clubs, independent media, grassroots initiatives, political parties, unions and so on (Habermas 1999: 453).

Even though Habermas recognises that such a public sphere characterized by an intersubjectively established *Verstandigung* is being threatened in contemporary societies, he maintains that *“the*

unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech” (Flyvbjerg 1998) remains a central and universal experience in human existence. In this sense, he considers the conversational processes that constitute the public sphere to be universal or unavoidable and man to be a *homo democraticus* (Flyvbjerg 1998: 212). His approach is characterized as a type of universal pragmatics (Cummings 2005: 194-212). It is pragmatic in the sense that it places discourse, rationality and communication in the everyday practices of the life world and shows that the critical power of reason is rooted in ordinary language use. Habermas points out that “*the expression ‘communicative action’ designates social interactions where language use aimed at reaching mutual understanding plays the role of action co-ordination. Through linguistic communication, idealizing presuppositions enter into action oriented towards reaching mutual understanding*” (Habermas 2003 cited in Bernstein 2010: 172). Habermas aims to make these ideal presuppositions with respect to communicative action explicit in his universal pragmatic approach to truth, rationality, discourse and the public sphere.

To Habermas, reaching mutual understanding – *consensus* or *Verstandigung* – is of fundamental importance for achieving democracy. There is a strong normative dimension to this position that is most clearly expressed in the following quotation:

“The human interest in autonomy and responsibility is not mere fancy, for it can be apprehended a priori. What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we can know: language. Through its structure, autonomy and responsibility are posited for us. Our first sentence expresses unequivocally the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus” (Habermas 1972 cited in Cummings 2005: 199)

Louise Cummings points out that the citation above contains the three basic elements of Habermas’s theory of communicative action: a universal pragmatics, a consensus theory of truth and an ideal speech situation. Habermas holds that if we are to understand how a rationality-based consensus can be achieved, we have to investigate the universal features of a speaker’s communicative competence in much the same way that Chomsky’s universal grammar contains universal features of a speaker’s linguistic competence³⁷. Moreover, these universal features can be obtained through “*an explicit description of the rules that a competent speaker must master in order to form grammatical sentences and to utter them in an acceptable way ...*” (Habermas 1979 cited in Cummings 2005: 200). This emphasis on the conditions that have to be met and the procedures that must be followed in order to arrive at a rationality-based consensus prompted Flyvbjerg to state that “*... Habermas’s approach remains strongly normative and procedural, paying scant attention to the preconditions of actual discourse, to substantive ethical values and to the problem of how communicative rationality gets a foothold in society in the face of massive non-communicative forces*” (Flyvbjerg 1998: 218).

An approach that pays scant attention to (the preconditions of) actual discourse does not seem to be very compatible with the empirical ideas of the early pragmatists. Whereas Habermas’s intention is pragmatist indeed – the development of an account of how a democratic sphere can be established through rational and intersubjective discursive practices – his approach seems to lack the empirical emphasis of authors such as James, Cooley and Mead. Raising a similar point, Flyvbjerg points out that Habermas “*seems to forget his own axiom that philosophical questions ought to be subject to empirical verification*”. Put differently: “*he takes for granted that which should be subjected to empirical and historical test*” (Flyvbjerg 1998: 215-16). It is worth taking a look at the processual requirements for the establishment of validity and truth as posited by Habermas:

“(1) no party affected by what is being discussed should be excluded from the discourse (the requirement of generality); (2) all participants should have equal possibility to present and criticize validity claims in the process of discourse (autonomy); (3) participants must be willing and able to empathize with each other’s validity claims (ideal role taking); (4) existing power differences between

³⁷ Louise Cummings points out that there is a strong parallel to be drawn between Habermas’s universal pragmatics and Noam Chomsky’s universal grammar. Interestingly, linguistic pragmatics reacted *against* Chomsky’s model of language wherein a universal innate deep structure of language provided a universal basis for language use.

participants must be neutralized such that these differences have no effect on the creation of consensus (power neutrality); and (5) participants must openly explain their goals and intentions and in this connection desist from strategic action (transparency) (Habermas 1993: 31; 1990: 65-6, Kettner 1993). Finally, given the implications of the first five requirements, we should add a sixth: unlimited time.” (Flyvbjerg 1998: 213)

Habermas also devotes considerable attention to the conditions that must be met in order for speech acts to succeed. Even though his initial motivation to study the interactive dimension of discourse was prompted by his reading of the early pragmatists, he relies on Austin and Searle’s pragmatic theories of speech acts to develop his account of how consensus can be achieved (Cummings 2005: 195-206). One of the consequences of his study of Austin and Searle is that Habermas subscribes to the idea that speech acts involve various validity claims. Searle contends that a speech act is performed successfully when certain propositional content, preparatory, essential and sincerity rules characterize the performance of a speech act. Cummings illustrates these preconditions by example of how these universal rules apply to the performance of a promise (which is a specific type of speech act) (Cummings 2005: 201-02):

“... these rule require that the words used by the speaker must predicate a future action of the speaker (propositional content rule), that both the speaker and the hearer must want the action of the promise done and that it would not otherwise be done (preparatory rules), that the speaker must intend to perform the action of the promise (sincerity rule), and that the utterance of the promise counts as undertaking an obligation to perform the action of the promise (essential rule). Each of these rules commits the speaker to certain obligations; The hearer must recognise these obligations and the speaker’s willingness to be committed to and act upon them if the speaker is to have an illocutionary effect on the hearer. Yet, the hearer’s trust in the speaker’s willingness is not in any sense an act of blind faith. For all ‘speech-act-typical obligations’, as Habermas calls them, have a rational basis in cognitively testable validity claims.” (Cummings 2005: 201-02)

There are basically three types of validity claims that are raised by speakers in the performance of a speech act: a claim to the truth of what is said or presupposed, a claim to normative rightness, and a claim to truthfulness. Bernstein points out that all three claims are raised simultaneously, that they function interdependently, and that Habermas is aware of the fact that all three claims may be violated in empirical discourse. One of the key presuppositions of these validity claims is that there is a common objective world about which we can make true and false assertions (Bernstein 2010: 173).

Habermas is aware of the idealizing nature of his procedural account of truth. He acknowledged that his approach was intended to take account of the fact that the truth of a statement cannot be assessed in terms of decisive evidence but only in terms of justificatory reasons. He also sheds some light on his reasons for adopting such an idealistic approach: *“the idealization of certain features of the form and process of the practice of argumentation was to characterize a procedure that would do justice to the context-transcendence of the truth claim raised by a speaker in a statement by rationally taking into account all relevant voices, topics and contributions” (Habermas 2003 cited in Bernstein 2010: 174).* It should be noted that Habermas would come to distinguish more clearly between the truth of a proposition and its rational assertibility. In this respect, Habermas defines truth as *“a property of propositions they cannot lose”*. Moreover, his theory of truth aims to answer the question *“How can we reconcile the assumption that there is a world existing independently of our descriptions of it and that it is the same for all observers with the linguistic insight that we have no direct, linguistically unmediated access to ‘brute’ reality?” (Habermas 2003 cited in Bernstein 2010: 175).*

In spite of his distinction between truth and justification, Habermas believes that truth is grounded in reality: *“‘Truth’ is a justification-transcendent concept that cannot be made to coincide even with the concept of ideal warranted assertability. Rather it refers to the truth conditions that must, as it were, be met by reality itself. In contrast, the meaning of ‘rightness’ consists entirely in ideal warranted acceptability” (Habermas 2003 cited in Bernstein 2010: 182).* The problem is that it may be possible to talk about truth by reference to reality with respect to certain practicalities in every-day life such as

determining the fastest way to get from one place to another, but the issue becomes far more complicated with respect to determining norms. Habermas's solution is formulated in terms of a Janus-faced concept of truth. He notes that:

"Pragmatism makes us aware that everyday practice rules out suspending claims to truth in principle. The network of routine practices relies on more or less implicit beliefs that we take to be true against a broad background of intersubjectively shared or sufficiently overlapping beliefs. Everyday routines and habituated communication work on the basis of certainties that guide our actions ... As soon as such certainties are dislodged from the framework of what we take for granted in the lifeworld and are no longer naively accepted, they become just so many questionable assumptions. In the transition from action to discourse, what is taken to be true is the first thing to shed its mode of practical certainty and to take on instead the form of a hypothetical statement whose validity remains undetermined until it passes or fails the test of argumentation. Looking beyond the level of argumentation, we can comprehend the pragmatic role of a Janus-faced truth that established the desired internal connection between performative certainty and warranted assertibility" (Bernstein 2010: 182)

Truth is thus Janus-faced in the sense that it rests on the intersubjective practicalities of every-day life and on a transcendent reality. Truth may be grounded in action and may be warranted through argumentation but there is a transcendental dimension to it as well. Habermas acknowledges that we act as if we know what is true. However, when uncertainties arise, one of our options is to engage in a discourse in which we problematise what we initially took for granted. At this point, Habermas claims that the ideal conditions for communicative action should be followed in order to arrive at a rationally justified alternative in order to resolve this situation. Bernstein points out that it is for this reason that Habermas's notion of truth is Janus-faced: *"because it stands between action and discourse"* (Bernstein 2010: 186). This notion of truth is highly problematical and it is one of the key reasons for Habermas's disagreement with Richard Rorty. Bernstein agrees with Rorty's critique that there is no Janus-faced role to be played in the establishment of truth (Rorty 2000 cited in Bernstein 2010: 186):

"When Habermas makes a distinction between "two pragmatic roles ... played by the Janus-faced concept of truth in action-contexts and in rational discourses respectively," and when he goes on to say that "the concept of truth allows translation of shaken-up behavioral certainties into problematized propositions," I would rejoin that he is ignoring Peirce's point that beliefs are just habits of action. A rational discourse is just one more action-context in which a behavioral certainty evinces itself. There is no Janus-like role to be played, and no translation to be performed". (Rorty 2000 cited in Bernstein 2010: 186)

There is much more to be said about Habermas (see Bernstein 2010; Cummings 2005) but for current purposes, it is important to return to the question in what sense Habermas's theory of universal pragmatics is relevant to the issue of politics. We already noted that Habermas considers the most important contribution of pragmatism to reside in the fact that it contributes to the main purpose of Western philosophy: *"... namely, to try out explanations of who we are and who we would like to be, as individuals, as members of communities, and as persons überhaupt – that is, as man"* (Habermas 2002 cited in Bernstein 2010: 168). But if one looks at the manner in which he developed his own answer to this question, it becomes clear that Habermas over-emphasises what we want to be over who we are and what we can empirically establish.

This empirical flaw becomes especially salient in Habermas's discussions of who we are and how we (should) act in the public sphere. Even though his conceptualisation of this metaphorical realm is pragmatist in the sense that it emphasises its intersubjective dimension, it is decidedly not pragmatist because of its lack of empirical reflection. This poses a significant problem for the emancipatory potential and political relevance of Habermas's public sphere. Whereas I fully subscribe to his intersubjective perspective, I also maintain that there is a significant amount of political potential that can and should be activated by developing a more empirical approach to communicative public discourse. Moreover, I maintain that this can be done by articulating poststructuralist with pragmatist

and linguistic pragmatic insights. My own perspective on the public sphere will be presented in subchapter 2.3.1.

Politics in contemporary pragmatism: Rorty, radical democracy and the public sphere

At the outset of the section on Habermas, I indicated that Richard Rorty's pragmatist approach to discourse and the public sphere comes closer to the poststructuralist and classical pragmatist ideas discussed in this book. Even though we have not focused on the poststructuralist issue of deconstruction, the collected volume *Deconstruction and pragmatism: Critchley, Derrida, Laclau and Rorty* (Mouffe 1996b) testifies to the close affinities between Rorty's pragmatism and poststructuralist modes of thought. Moreover, notions such as articulation, subjectivity, and politics as developed by authors such as Laclau and Mouffe are closely connected to ideas developed by Derrida (see Hillis Miller 2004; Mouffe 1996b)³⁸. I do not wish to reduce poststructuralism to the writings of Derrida and pragmatism to the work of Rorty, but it is useful to consider this exchange between Laclau, Mouffe, Rorty, Critchley and Derrida as indicative for tensions and convergences between pragmatist and poststructuralist approaches to discourse, politics, reality and the self. In this sense, it is interesting to note that Mouffe starts her discussion of Derrida and Rorty with reference to Habermas (Mouffe 1996a: 1):

“Derrida and Rorty are at one in refusing Habermas's claim that there exists a necessary link between universalism, rationalism and modern democracy and that constitutional democracy represents a moment in the unfolding of reason, linked to the emergence of universalist forms of law and morality. They both deny the availability of an Archimedean point – such as Reason – that could guarantee the possibility of a mode of argumentation that would have transcended its particular conditions of enunciation” (Mouffe 1996a: 1)

On the other hand, Rorty and Derrida converge with Habermas in the sense that they are all committed to the defence of the political side of the Enlightenment – i.e. the democratic project. Mouffe points out that the disagreements of Rorty and Derrida with respect to Habermas are political and not theoretical in the sense that they share his engagement with democratic politics but also *“consider that democracy does not need philosophical foundations and that it is not through rational grounding that its institutions could be made secure”* (Mouffe 1996a: 1)³⁹. Put differently, both Rorty and Derrida refuse a decontextualised and universalist understanding of reason and democracy. Moreover, Mouffe acknowledges that she shares Rorty's conviction that it is high time to *“peel apart Enlightenment liberalism from Enlightenment rationalism”* (Rorty 1995 cited in Mouffe 1996a: 5). As we will see, Rorty's response to this conviction is decidedly pragmatist.

In his 1979 presidential address to the *American Philosophical Association*, Rorty explicitly identified himself with the pragmatists James and Dewey. He developed the pragmatist thesis that *“there is simply no such thing as a method of classifying linguistic expressions that has results guaranteed to remain intact despite the results of empirical inquiry”* (Rorty 1965 cited in Bernstein 2010: 204). Throughout the 1970's Rorty became increasingly disenchanted with analytic philosophy. During this period he read authors that most analytic philosophers dismissed. Such authors include Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Derrida, Foucault, Gadamer and Habermas. Interestingly, both friends and critics thought that Rorty simply used the notion of *pragmatism* as a cover term for his postmodern – or poststructuralist – conversion (Bernstein 2010: 207-08). His 1982 definition of pragmatism is illuminating in this respect. Pragmatism is described as:

³⁸ Laclau's acceptance of structural undecidability as a key feature of subjectivity, discourse, society, politics and meaning is explicitly borrowed from Jacques Derrida's deconstructive approach.

³⁹ Mouffe does not agree with Rorty who downplays the importance of philosophical thought with respect to the establishment of democratic practices.

“the doctrine that there are no constraints on inquiry, save conversational ones – no wholesale constraints derived from the nature of the objects, the mind, or the language, but only those retail constraints provided by the remarks of our fellow-inquirers” (Rorty 1982 cited in Bernstein 2010: 207)

Rorty came to believe that *“the obsession with philosophical theories of truth, objectivity and reality was little more than a form of idolatry – a philosophical substitute for the religious belief in a transcendent God”* (Bernstein 2010: 207). This statement is compatible with both pragmatist and post-Nietzschean thought such as that of Derrida and Foucault. It also sheds light on the reasons for Rorty’s refusal of Habermas’s normative approach to communicative action. Since I am primarily concerned with the political relevance of Rorty’s pragmatism, it is worth looking into his perspective on the relationship between language, politics and the public sphere.

Rorty’s characteristic themes include: an emphasis on radical historical contingency; a groundless sense of irony and social hope; a focus on the need to extend human sympathy and solidarity; and a belief that literature may be more effective in fostering this than philosophical argumentation. Moreover, Rorty vehemently rejects all forms of epistemological and semantic representationalism (Bernstein 2010: 209). The parallels with poststructuralist theories of articulation, discourse, and subjectivity are there to grasp. As an alternative to representationalism, Rorty provides a contextual account of discourse and politics. He does not believe that it is possible to derive a universalistic moral philosophy from the philosophy of language. To him, there is nothing in the nature of language that could serve as a basis for justifying all possible audiences the superiority of democracy. Rorty emphasises that we have to acknowledge that our democratic and liberal principles define only one possible language game among others and Mouffe points out that *“it is then futile to search for arguments in their favour which would not be ‘context-dependent’ in order to secure them against other political language games”*. Habermas is a direct target of this critique (Mouffe 1996a). In the following citation, Rorty explicitly articulates pragmatism and deconstruction with one another (Rorty 1996a: 43):

“I take pragmatists and deconstructionists to be united in thinking that anything can be anything if you put in the right context, and that ‘right’ just means the context that best serves somebody’s purposes at a certain time and place” (Rorty 1996a: 43)

Rorty goes on and claims that the notion of context is of key importance to any discussion of language, meaning and philosophy. Below, we can see how Derrida is placed on equal footing with pragmatists such as Quine and Davidson. He also refers to the importance of Wittgenstein. All of the authors mentioned below are considered to subscribe to the ‘wisdom’ that meaning can only be grounded in contexts of language use – a shared presupposition of poststructuralist, pragmatist and linguistic pragmatic approaches to discourse, subjectivity and politics:

“I think it was the beginning of wisdom in philosophy of language when Frege said that words only have meaning in the context of a sentence. Quine, Derrida and Davidson have carried through on Frege’s contextualism – Quine in his claim that a sentence has meaning only in the context of a lot of other senses, Derrida in his suggestion that the Book gives place to the text, and Davidson in his pregnant remark that ‘there is no such thing as a language’. Tugendhat supplements these philosophers by carrying through on Wittgenstein’s suggestion that we change the subject of philosophy of language from meaning to use.” (Rorty 1996a: 43)

Rorty’s take on context explains why he is neither willing nor able to develop a universal account of democracy. In his perspective, Habermas’s theory of democratic communicative action is flawed since it does not rest upon an analysis of rationality, but rather on an analysis of shared beliefs with respect to rationality. According to Rorty, Democratic action does not require a theory of truth and notions like universal validity. Rather, it requires a variety of practices and pragmatic moves aimed at

persuading people to broaden the range of their commitments to others, to build a more inclusive community:

“For Rorty, it is through sentiment and sympathy, not through rationality and universalistic moral discourse, that democratic advances take place. This is why he considers books like Uncle Tom’s Cabin to have played a more important role than philosophical treatises in securing moral progress.” (Mouffe 1996a: 5)

This type of thinking about democracy and the importance of context in establishing how to expand the range of one’s commitment to others has led Habermas to accuse Rorty of relativism (see Bernstein 2010: 176). Nevertheless, Mouffe notes that the basic difference between Rorty and Habermas lies in the way in which they envisage the creation of a liberal consensus. She points out that what Rorty finds unsatisfactory in Habermas is not *“the latter’s quest for undistorted communication but the way in which he pursues it”* – the problem being that neither is *“able to grasp the crucial role of conflict and the central integrative function that it plays in a pluralist society”*. According to Mouffe, this is the reason why both can be said to subscribe to a consensus-view of society (Mouffe 1996a: 7-8).

Two issues with respect to Rorty’s thought remain to be tackled: his thought on the public sphere and his preferred type of political subjectivity. Both issues are intimately connected. Critchley describes Rorty’s preferred mode of political subjectivity as follows: *“... a person – she, the liberal ironist – who would be able to discriminate public questions from private concerns, questions about cruelty and social justice from concerns about the significance of human life and the quest for autonomy. The liberal ironist would be the sort of person who would be able to distinguish properly the public from the private.”* (Critchley 1996). This characterization prompts one to ask how the public and the private can be distinguished if Rorty does not take recourse to the type of rational democratic argumentation constitutive for Habermas’s public sphere.

Critchley points out that Rorty defines the private as a mode of being concerned *“with idiosyncratic projects of self-overcoming”*, with self-creation and the pursuit of autonomy. On the other hand, the public is defined as being concerned with those activities *“having to do with the suffering of other human beings”*. According to Rorty, it is theoretically impossible to unite or reconcile the public and private domains since there is no way to theoretically reconcile the desire for self creation and autonomy and the desire for community. This is why Rorty advocates the figure of the liberal ironist as indicated above (Rorty forthcoming cited in Critchley 1996: 21). Critchley problematises this distinction since *“it seems strange that the fact that we become ironists in the private realm seems to have few implications for our relation to the public realm”* (Critchley 1996: 25). Rorty does not respond to this point (see Rorty 1996a) but he does acknowledge Laclau’s critique that he is never entirely clear about the theoretical status of distinctions like public vs private. Rorty’s response to this critique is flagrantly pragmatic:

“This is because I am unclear about the notion of ‘theoretical status’. I have never been able to make sense of the claim that something has been ‘inadequately theorised’. As a good pragmatist, I think that theories are like tools: you only reach for them when there is a specific problem to be solved. There is no criterion of inadequacy of theorisation apart from the specification of such a problem”. (Rorty 1996b: 74)

As a pragmatist, Rorty is sceptical of what he calls an *“over-philosophication”* of *“the leftist political debate”*. He claims that the works of Derrida, Laclau and Mouffe have helped create *“a self-involved academic left which has become increasingly irrelevant to substantive political discussion”*. It is interesting to note how Rorty plays down the political relevance of Derrida in opposition to Laclau: *“Although I have learned a great deal from Laclau’s writings, I nevertheless think of him as overestimating Derrida’s political utility”*. Overtheorisation is the main problem in this respect (Rorty 1996b: 69).

On the other hand, Rorty acknowledges that “*Laclau and I of course agree that ‘language is a system of differences’*” but he disagrees with the idea that the nature of this system can be investigated by establishing its limits. Rorty admits that he has no idea what these limits could be. He goes on and agrees with Laclau that no system can be fully protected given the Derridean undecidability of its frontiers and cites Wittgenstein’s theory of rules in support of this point. His main objection to writers such as Derrida and Laclau thus seems to lie in the high level of abstraction that the latter deploy (Rorty 1996b: 73):

“I have nothing against higher levels of abstraction. They often come in handy. But I think that the pressure to rise to a higher level of abstraction should, so to speak, come from below. Locally useful abstractions ought to emerge out of local and banal political deliberations”. (Rorty 1996b: 71)

Elsewhere in his *Response to Laclau*, Rorty illustrates this point with reference to the issue of whether US civil authorities should tolerate intolerance of American soldiers with respect to their homosexual brothers-in-arms. Rorty does not think they should but points out that “*when I argue for this view with people on the other side of the issue, we never reach the level of abstraction at which Laclau is operating*”. Moreover, Rorty does not see how he could make Laclau’s deconstructive approach towards a notion such as tolerance relevant to this type of context-specific political deliberations (Rorty 1996b: 73). Considering these critiques, we should take a look at Laclau’s stance towards Rorty:

“I agree with Rorty that ethical values are only ‘conversationally’ grounded – that is (in my own terms) social and discursively constructed. ... Yet once this general agreement with Rorty has been established, the points in which my approach diverges from his are only too visible. Between what I call ‘discursive-hegemonic construction’ and Rorty’s ‘conversationalism’, the points of divergence are at least as important as those of convergence.” (Laclau 1996: 60)

Laclau goes on and points out that Rorty’s conversational grounding of democracy is too closely connected to a peaceful conceptualisation of the process. On the other hand, he explicitly states that his “*objections have nothing to do*” with Rorty’s “*pragmatistic outlook – a terrain in which I do not find myself too far from him*”. Rather, Laclau objects that Rorty “*tries to weld his liberalism and his pragmatism without reckoning enough with the fact that the latter does not necessarily lead to the former*” (Laclau 1996: 61). Laclau concludes his critique of Rorty by emphasising the latter’s merits. The remarks below bring us full circle to the common poststructuralist and pragmatist anti-Cartesian agendas (Laclau 1996: 65):

“I think that the merit of Rorty is to have reinscribed the problematic of American pragmatism within the wider field of the critique of the Enlightenment and the general discussion concerning the limits of modernity. It is certainly through this reinscription that a multitude of pragmatist themes can develop their full subversive and creative potential. Conversely, the limitation of Rorty’s approach – as it has been developed so far – is that he has accepted at face value the politico-theoretical articulation of themes coming from liberalism as if that articulation could not be, in turn, deconstructed. For here the process should move in both directions: if the pragmatist reading of the tradition of the Enlightenment can act as a fruitful corrosive of the latter, the tradition of Continental thought can react, in turn, by helping to shake some of the comfortable assumptions of American liberalism.” (Laclau 1996: 65)

There is one last point with respect to pragmatism and poststructuralism that remains to be raised. This issue relates to the concept of power in relation to discourse and subjectivity. For reasons of textual cohesion, we will discuss this problematic in the section on poststructuralist thought and the self. We will devote special attention to the notion of power as developed by Michel Foucault and to the implications of this view for poststructuralist and pragmatist accounts of subjectivity. For now, we may conclude that the empirical self as posited by pragmatist authors is far from politically neutral. Pragmatist accounts of self and politics are closely intertwined. During our discussion of the notion of articulation, we noted that the same goes for poststructuralist theories of articulation. In spite of the

fact that we certainly have problematised the notion of self through our discussion of the self as a result of articulatory practices, we still need to investigate what the poststructuralist accounts of Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe can tell us about the formation of the self. We will consider their reactions to transcendent subject to be indicative of the various poststructuralist critiques of this notion.

c) Poststructuralist thought on the self

The pragmatist notions of politics and the empirical self are alternatives to the Cartesian view on man and world. So-called (post-)structuralist authors have put forward their own alternatives. Neither poststructuralism, pragmatism or linguistic pragmatics constitute unified domains of enquiry. On the other hand, similar problematics and anxieties can be shown to inform the various authors that are lumped together under this heading. While the double-edged issue of self and politics is tackled differently in (post-)structuralism and pragmatism, the pragmatist theme of a discomfort with the transcendental self of Enlightenment is a concern shared with the poststructuralists.

There is no general consensus within poststructuralism with respect to what constitutes (il)legitimate politics or an adequate account of self and subjectivity. We have already touched upon multiple aspects of such accounts during our discussion of the ways in which the concept of articulation relates to the notion of self and subjectivity in the works of Foucault, Laclau, Mouffe, Butler and Žižek. Below, we will highlight how the *crisis of the self* deepened under the *postmodern condition*. I will go on to argue that it is possible to formulate an *affirmative reaction* to this *lack of confidence in postmodern times*. This argument will lead to a discussion of *poststructuralism as an anti-Cartesian project* in which the related concepts of *the death of the subject* and *the death of the author* should be interpreted in very specific ways. In order to allow for an in-depth understanding of various poststructuralist perspectives, I will explore *anti-humanism in the work of Louis Althusser*. The same goes for the work of *Jacques Lacan*. However, most of the subsections of this chapter will focus on the work of Michel Foucault. I will explain what is meant by *anti-humanism and anti-subjectivism* in his work as well. Moreover, this section will exhibit: a discussion of *agency, subjectivity and discourse in the archaeology*; a general discussion of the issue of *power and subject formation according to Foucault*; and a specific illustration of this perspective with reference to *Foucault's alternatives to the repressive hypothesis of power*. This will allow for understanding of what is meant by notions such as *technologies of power, governmentality, and self-techniques*. We will conclude this section with some key comments on the notions of *self and politics in poststructuralist thought*.

The postmodern condition and the crisis of the self

A notion that is so often associated with poststructuralism that it functions almost as a synonym is that of post-modernism. But whereas the label post-modernism can be said to highlight an intellectual perspective, it is also often used to designate a particular historical stage in societal development. Referring to Jacob Torfing, Saul Newman explains how poststructuralist thought developed as a response to what he calls the condition of modernity. This condition is bound up with the Cartesian notion of the self (Newman 2005: 4):

“In political terms, the postmodern condition is associated with the abandonment of the notion of the universal rational subject who could act as an autonomous and self-willed agent in the political sphere. Instead, the subject is seen to be opaque even to himself – rather than transparent and unified, as the Cartesian model would suggest. Moreover, the subject is shown to be affected, and indeed constituted, by conditions that are often outside his control; there can be no strict separation between the subject and the objective world. Furthermore, rationality and morality can no longer serve as the

absolute foundations for the subject's political and ethical judgment and decision making (Torfing 1999, 61).” (Newman 2005: 4)

In a similar vein, Patti Lather points out that the notion of postmodernism has become a code-name for the crisis of confidence in Western conceptual systems (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 56). There are many ways in which this crisis came about. I will limit myself to a discussion of some of the intellectual currents that have reacted and contributed to this development. However, concrete societal developments have also added to our increasingly ambiguous feelings towards who and what we are. Events such as the Holocaust (see Z. Bauman 2009), the perverse excesses of (neo)liberal and communist accounts of progress, rationality and development, and the spread of technologies that fundamentally alter our experience and positioning in the world have all contributed to this crisis (see Barry et al. 1996; Baudrillard 1994; Z. Bauman 2007; Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

Intellectually speaking, the optimism that seems to characterize early pragmatist accounts of the subject was severely challenged in the wake of the second World War. Many commentators and intellectuals drew attention to the fact that the processes at the heart of subject formation are to a large extent beyond individual control. More specifically, the idea that social life constructs the self *it* needed, obliterating the concept of individual autonomy, knew a period of intensive proliferation. Groups, organisations, societies and other structures seemed to provide interactional settings that exert a great deal of power over the answer to the question *Who am I?* . Moreover, sociologists became increasingly aware that the good, the bad and the indifferent sides of the social self as posited by the pragmatists all derive from the same processes (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 38-55).

A case in point is provided by the emergence of so-called labeling theory. The central tenet of this approach is that “*The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied*”. Becker claims that “*social groups create deviance by making rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders*” (Becker 1973 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000). He goes on and reverses the motivational pattern. Becker places deviance before its causes and states that it is only after the labeling has occurred, that one learns the deviant motivations in interaction with other deviants. In the wake of Becker, Edwin Schur elaborated on the process through which this happened. Interestingly, he falls back on Mead’s social psychology of the self, stressing the idea that deviance is continuously shaped and reshaped as an outcome of dynamic processes of social interaction. Moreover, Erdwin Pfuhl argued that “*the origins of the labeling perspective are found in the work of Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead*” (Pfuhl 1986 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000).

It is interesting to note that even a pragmatically oriented author such as Erving Goffmann drew attention to the perverse effects that certain types of social institutions may exert upon individuality. In a collection of essays called *Asylums*, Goffmann describes prisons and asylums as *total institutions* that are able to impose regulations on most aspects of the lives of individuals. According to Goffmann, these are “*forcing houses for changing persons; each is a natural experiment on what can be done to the self*” (Goffmann 1961 cited in Elliott 2009: 41). He describes how an individual’s normal sense of self (outside of these institutions) is gradually mortified. By screening out the rest of the world, psychiatric and carceral organisations enclose individuals within a restricted, identity trimming milieu (Elliott 2009: 41-42).

In line with his account of the self, Goffmann describes how this process is made possible: “*...the stigmatized person learns and incorporates the standpoint of the normal, acquiring thereby the identity beliefs of the wider society and a general idea of what it would be like to possess a particular stigma.*”. Moreover, he suggests that “*... the standards he has incorporated from the wider society equip him to be intimately alive to what others see as his failing, inevitably causing him, if only for moments to agree that he does indeed fall short of what he really ought to be*” (Goffmann 1963 cited in Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 54). In turn, this results in feelings of ambivalence towards one’s self, negative self-conceptions, self-derogation, and self-hate. Gubrium and Holstein point out that the irony of the social self resides in the fact that the social processes through which a sense of self is

developed may also produce a self that one accepts despite its socially unacceptable identity (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 54).

Goffmann's analysis of asylums is just one of many theoretical approaches that came to characterize individuals as structural dopes who can only exert a limited amount of control over who they are and how they may impact on the realities wherein they find themselves. Cases in point can be found in functionalist theories of society that seek to explain the order and stability of social systems. In so far as these theories treat individuals, this treatment comes after and emerges from the analysis of the system as a whole. Examples of this approach can be found in the structural-functionalist approaches of Robert Merton and Talcott Parsons, in Easton's system theory, and in various Marxist accounts of society such as that of Poulantzas (see: Barnes 1995; Becker 1993; Ellemers 1977; Trom 1995).

We will not go into these approaches towards the self and the social structure. The general point to be made is that the self as a unified whole became increasingly challenged in the humanities after the second world war. I do not maintain that the self was challenged exclusively by poststructuralist and pragmatist authors. My cursory treatment of so-called systemic- and structural-functionalist theories of self and politics is informed by the fact that my main point lies elsewhere. I wish to demonstrate how pragmatist and poststructuralist perspectives came to share so many ideas in spite of the fact that they deploy very different terminologies. This is necessary in order to understand why it is possible to rearticulate pragmatist, poststructuralist, and linguistic pragmatic insights in an empirical analysis such as that of the political subjectivities of intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders.

An affirmative reaction to the lack of self-confidence in postmodern times

The postmodern crisis of confidence amounts to the question how we can continue to view ourselves as self-conscious agents that have a semblance of control over our lives. Poststructuralist authors have responded in different ways to such questions. Some have declined the very notion of self as a useful category for analysing reality, whereas others have tried to show how the social self adapts to the post- or late modern times, leaving the early pragmatist notion of the self largely intact. However, I agree with Gubrium and Holstein that a third track is more productive. This track draws on poststructuralist authors such as Lyotard, Wittgenstein and Foucault, as well as on pragmatists such as Cooley and Mead. It allows for a notion of self that *"not only is a polysemic product of experience, but is also a byproduct of practices that diversely construct it in response to varied senses of what it could, or need, be"*. Gubrium and Holstein advocate a view of the self that is highly compatible with our preferred notion of articulation. They react to the postmodern crisis of the self with a positive reframing of the notion and by an abandonment of the quest for one true account of the self. Instead, they claim that all accounts of the self are *"working frameworks and divisions we use in practice to derive a sense of the varied truths and authenticities we are"* (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 71). It is worth while quoting them at length on the word *self*. Note their usage of articulation related notions as put forward by authors such as Lacan, Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek:

"The word self thus becomes a representational horizon for presence and personal agency. It exists in experience to the degree that it can be accountably communicated within an interpretive community. It is a "floating" signifier that is nonetheless socially organized, flexibly yet systematically constituting presence and agency through practical usage. To speak of the postmodern self is to mark a discursive framework within which further references, exchanges, accounts, desires, and resistances might be articulated. The "fabric of relations" and institutional "nodal points" in a postmodern world are so complex and mobile as to keep self construction a constant undertaking." (Holstein and Gubrium 2000: 71)

Gubrium and Holstein thus affirm the relevance of the self within the postmodern condition. But their argument also implies that no single account of the self will do. Whether we consider ourselves to be

independent actors; subjects who are grounded in a *cogito*; the results of Foucaultian technologies of the self; fantasies created through the mirror stage; products of individual performances, internalisations of others perceived points of view, or the result of articulatory practices; what matters is how these self-interpretations are connected to our practices and experiences in the world.

In alignment with both poststructuralist and pragmatist insights, I maintain that the self might best be viewed as *a reification of the processes which allow an individual body to (reflectively) position itself as a coherent and whole mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social and (inter)textual aspects of (contextual) reality*. We will go into this definition later on. For now, it is sufficient to note that the particularities of the reified processes involved – whether they are described in terms of performance, split subjectivity, articulation, or any other terminology – may differ from individual to individual and from context to context. Whereas one person may consider himself to be a multiplicity of identities, another may consider herself to be a unified and centered whole with something akin to the Cartesian *cogito* or a soul at her center. There are manifold interpretive configurations of subjectivity conceivable within and across specific social settings. However, the important thing to bear in mind is that no matter how we analyse the subjectivities of people in real-life circumstances, we must at least partially articulate our theoretical understanding of self with their articulated self-interpretations. Otherwise, our discourse runs the risk of becoming a violence we inflict upon them.

Poststructuralism as an anti-Cartesian project

It is important to touch upon the question in what sense poststructuralism is an anti-Cartesian project. Even though both pragmatist and poststructuralist authors articulate substantial critiques of the transcendental self, the poststructuralist line of argumentation follows a different track than that of the pragmatists. It is useful to recall Bernstein's feeling of recognition when he started to read the works of so-called postmodernists such as Foucault, Derrida and Deleuze. Bernstein emphasised that both pragmatism and poststructuralism were involved in a critique of foundationalism, the metaphysics of presence, grand narratives and systems (Bernstein 2010: 29). But it is also important to note that these critiques take place on different grounds. One might say that the compatibility of both perspectives hinges to a large extent upon the compatibility of these critiques.

The anti-Cartesian impetus given by authors such as Althusser, Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida was initially not framed in poststructuralist terms:

“For more than thirty years, French thinkers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida have been acclaimed as leading theorists of poststructuralism. While poststructuralist theory has become a standard currency on the international market of ideas, in France itself poststructuralism has never existed, that is neither as a collective movement nor as an intellectual paradigm. A label invented by English- and German-speaking scholars, “poststructuralism” raises the question how theoretical texts are read in their different contexts of reception” (Angermüller: 2)

It is not my intention to delve too deeply into the issue of adequately labeling the various theorists that are lumped together under the heading of poststructuralism. Rather, I would like to point out that in France, criticism of the subjectivity model known as the Cartesian subject was framed in very different terms than in the Anglo-Saxon world.

Angermüller points out that in France, the label ‘poststructuralism’ is unfamiliar even though it is *“undisputed that theorists such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, Julia Kristeva or Roland Barthes enjoyed widespread attention during the structuralist, Freudian and Marxist controversies of the sixties and seventies”* (Angermüller: 15). Nevertheless, he goes on to point out that there is a general sense of wonder among French intellectuals why these authors who reached their peak of interest in France around 1970 *“are given*

the peculiar prefix “post” by international observers and thus grouped into one movement, headed by figures as different as Foucault and Derrida”. Angermüller ironically points out that the label ‘poststructuralism’ established itself “*everywhere but in France*” (Angermüller: 15). We should also note that the label poststructuralism was met with substantial protest by so-called leading figures of this intellectual ‘movement’. This may be exemplified by a quote uttered by Foucault who did “*not see what kind of problem is common to those referred to as the people we call ‘postmodern’ or ‘poststructuralist’*” (Foucault cited in Angermüller: 16).

Interestingly, Foucault was equally critical of the label ‘structuralism’. Even in his supposedly most ‘structuralist’ archaeological period, he frames the issue of structuralism as a non-debate. After acknowledging the “*legitimate limits*” (Foucault 1969: 221) of the structuralist enterprise, Foucault proposes to leave the polemics about structuralism aside; “*they hardly survive in areas now deserted by serious workers; this particular controversy, which might have been so fruitful, is now acted out only by mimes and tumblers*” (Foucault 1969: 221). Taking these caveats into account, I will retain the label of ‘poststructuralism’ in spite of the fact that this concept has been met by criticism and outright hostility by some of the authors I wish to refer to. My main motivation for retaining this problematic label lies in the fact that all of the authors discussed under this header *do* share common interests and pre-occupations - one of these being a rejection of the Cartesian view on world and self.

The death of the subject and the death of the author

The anti-Cartesian aspect of poststructuralist perspectives on discourse, subjectivity, and politics crystallise around the debate between humanism and anti-humanism; between subjectivism and anti-subjectivism; or between humanism and (post-)structuralism. These debates were especially poignant in the French intellectual debate of the sixties and seventies (see: Angermüller 2007b; G. Williams 1999) but continue to bear relevance to contemporary discussions on selfhood and politics as well. All of the poststructuralist authors discussed in this book are either indebted to these debates or have played a substantial role in the construction of the very problematic. In this subsection, I will shed some light on these labels and on their function in relation to the structuralist and poststructuralist anti-Cartesian projects. I will do so by reference to the works of Lacan, Althusser, and Foucault. In this sense, it is worth noting that Lacanian and Althusserian theory:

“kicks away the twin pillars of humanism: the sovereignty of rational conscious, and the authenticity of individual speech. I do not think, I am thought. You do not speak, you are spoken. Thought and speech, which for the humanist had been the central substance of identity, are located elsewhere, and the self is a vacancy ... Thus, for Althusser, the “subject” of history is not the individual human being, speaking and acting purposefully in a world illuminated by rational freedom, but the impersonal “structure in dominance” – what Marx called the “forces and relations in production” that “operate outside man and independent of his will,” and that set the pattern and horizon of individual action” (Davies 1997 cited in D. E. Hall 2004: 87)

The destroyed pillars of humanism lead Terry Eagleton to decry what he terms the “*political bleakness of Althusser’s theory*”. He notes that “*For [Althusser] subjectivity itself would seem just a form of self-incarceration; and the question of where political resistance springs from must thus remain obscure*” (Eagleton 1991 cited in D. E. Hall 2004: 87). A bleak interpretation of anti-humanism is easily reinforced with reference to some of the key slogans associated with structuralist and poststructuralist thought: the *death of the subject* and/or the *death of the author*. It is worth going into these notions before elaborating on Althusser’s theory of subjectivity.

The anti-humanist notion of the subject’s death is broadly associated with the structuralist and/or poststructuralist thought of Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault. Seán Burke points out that that de Saussure’s structuralist insights with respect to the

arbitrariness and differential nature of the sign served as a source of inspiration for both Lévi-Strauss and Lacan. Both agreed that this structuralist model of language opened up possibilities for applying linguistic structures to what were previously considered natural phenomena (Burke 1999: 13):

“In Lévi-Strauss, this took the form of analysing patterns of social relationships according to a linguistic model. (...) For Lacan, linguistic research led him to Jakobson’s now famous distinction between metaphor and metonymy (substitution of the part for the whole, i.e.; the turf for horse racing) which he adapted, respectively, to Freud’s characterization of the dream process as condensation and displacement. This insight then allowed Lacan to begin his rereading of Freud from a linguistic perspective on the understanding that ‘the unconscious is structured like a language’. (Burke 1999: 13)

Lacan and Lévi-Strauss also reached similar conclusions concerning the implications of the structuralist model of language on the status of the subject in relation to language. Again, it is useful to quote Burke:

“Lévi-Strauss urged that philosophical and anthropological investigation move from their concerns with conscious phenomena to the study of their ‘unconscious infrastructure’, just as Lacan stressed that it is not man as conscious subject who thinks, acts or speaks, but the linguistic unconscious that determines his every thought, action and utterance. This ‘Copernican revolution’ set in motion by the foregrounding of linguistic structures threw down a direct challenge to the central and founding role of consciousness, whether registered in terms of Cartesian certainty, Husserlian phenomenology, or the doctrine of individual freedom outlined in Sartrean existentialism. In what was to become the ‘slogan of the decade’ for the France of the 1960’s, Lévi-Strauss could thus declare: ‘the goal of the human sciences is not to constitute man, but to dissolve him’. (Burke 1999: 13)

This dissolution – Lévi-Strauss used the French verb *dissoudre* which basically means ‘ceasing to exist’ – was often interpreted in terms of ‘death’. However, the context wherein Lévi-Strauss used this concept also allows for a reading in terms of *décomposer* in the mathematical or syntactic senses of the word. Both senses ought to be respected (Borms 1986: 63-64). Lévi-Strauss’ dissolution of man became closely associated with the idea of the ‘death of the author’ proclaimed by the literary critic Roland Barthes. Barthes aimed to show that the notion of the ‘author’ is a culturally specific construct that emerged as a result of historical development starting in the Middle Ages, moving over English empiricism, French rationalism, and the personal faith of the Reformation, historical processes throughout which the ‘human person’ and the ‘prestige of the individual’ were gradually discovered. Consequently, *“the explanation of a [literary] work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the author ‘confiding’ in us”* (Barthes 1977: 33-34). Barthes did not believe that it was possible to decipher texts in this way. To him, the text is *“a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture”*. With respect to the writer, Barthes writes:

“... the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner ‘thing’ he thinks to ‘translate’ is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely ...”(Barthes 1977)

The invocation of the metaphorical death of the author by Barthes was an intellectual event, or perhaps even a rhetorical strategy designed to highlight that it is not the ‘writer’ but the ‘reader’ who *“is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination”*. Moreover, this destination is *“that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted”*. Therefore, Barthes considers it necessary to overthrow the myth of the humanist figure of the Author: *“the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author”* (Barthes 1977).

However, it is of key importance to realise that what was problematic to these structuralists, was not so much man in the sense of the empirical selves as encountered in every-day practices, but an old-fashioned humanist and decidedly Cartesian view of man that did not hold up to contemporary scientific, anthropological, and philosophical insights. The anti-humanism of (post-)structuralist thought is an anti-Cartesian anti-humanism. In the same vein, the anti-subjectivism of (post-)structuralist thought is an anti-Cartesian anti-subjectivism. This becomes especially salient if one considers the centrality of the concept of the subject in the work of the self-proclaimed anti-humanist Louis Althusser. Far from discarding the category of the subject, his structuralist view of man entails a rethinking of the nature of this subject and of the way subjectivity is constituted in ideology.

Anti-humanism in the work of Louis Althusser

Althusser's work is to be positioned in the structuralist Marxist canon even though he provided significant input for the poststructuralist discourse theories of Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe. His project was directed against the epiphenomenalism that characterized the Marxist philosophies of his time. Simply put, there was a tendency to explain the political, cultural, and ideological superstructures of society as epiphenomena of the underlying configuration of social relations metaphorised as the economic base of society. Althusser's investigations into the ways in which capitalist society reproduces itself leads him to the conclusion that the "*reproduction of the capitalist social formation depends to a large extent upon something outside the economic sphere, such as the educational system, mass media, and legal-political authorities*". Torfing points out that this conclusion emphasises the reproductive role of the superstructure that includes both the state, the law, and ideology in general (Torfing 1999: 23-26).

What then is ideology within the framework of Althusser? The answer to this question is important since the structuralist aspect of his theory is most clearly expressed in his discussion of the relationship between ideology and subject formation as presented in *Ideology and ideological state apparatuses* (Althusser 1970). Moreover, this article is a useful starting point to address the anti-humanist aspect of his work. For Althusser, "*man is an ideological animal by nature*" (Althusser 1970: 45). In order to understand this statement, we need to realise that Althusser conceptualises ideology in terms of a process of interpellation whereby individuals recognise and/or misrecognise themselves as subjects (Althusser 1970: 44-49). He explicitly recognises the ambiguity of the notion of subject as "(1) a free subjectivity, a centre of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions" and "(2) a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission" (Althusser 1970: 56).

Through his notions of interpellation, recognition and misrecognition, Althusser theorises both ideological functions of subjectivity – or put differently, both functions of ideology. He states that "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, *by the functioning of the category of the subject*". To him, "*the existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing*". People are addressed – hailed or interpellated – as individuals by very common interactional procedures wherein they recognise themselves as subjects. Althusser gives us the example of "*the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there'*". When the hailed individual turns around, (s)he becomes a subject because (s)he recognizes that the hail was 'really' addressed to him- or herself (Althusser 1970: 47-48). Interestingly, he goes even further and claims that "*individuals are always-already subjects*" (Althusser 1970: 50) since one has to function inside ideology in order to recognise oneself as an individual.

Still, matters are a bit more complex than this. To Althusser, there is a "*duplicate mirror-structure*" that characterizes ideology. He exemplifies this with reference to Christian religious ideology claiming that the formal structure of this ideology is the same for any ideology. Althusser rearticulates the voice of Christian religious ideology as follows:

“I address myself to you, a human individual called Peter (every individual is called by his name, in the passive sense, it is never he who provides his own name), in order to tell you that God exists and that you are answerable to Him. It adds: God addresses himself to you through my voice (Scripture having collected the Word of God, Tradition having transmitted it, Papal Infallibility fixating it for ever on ‘nice’ points). It says: this is who you are: you are Peter! This is your origin, you were created by God for all eternity, although you were born in the 1920th year of Our Lord! This is your place in the world! This is what you must do! By these means, if you observe the ‘law of love’ you will be saved, you, Peter, and will become part of the Glorious Body of Christ! Etc. ...”. (Althusser 1970: 51)

Althusser goes on and stipulates a set of conditions that characterize a successful interpellation of an individual by this Christian ideology:

“... if we consider that religious ideology is indeed addressed to individuals, in order to ‘transform them into subjects’, by interpellating the individual, Peter, in order to make him a subject, free to obey or disobey the appeal, i.e. God’s commandments; if it calls these individuals by their names, thus recognizing that they are always-already interpellated as subjects with a personal identity (to the extent that Pascal’s Christ says: ‘It is for you that I have shed this drop of my blood!’); if it interpellates them in such a way that the subject responds: ‘Yes, it really is me!’, if it obtains from them the recognition that they really do occupy the place it designates for them as theirs in the world, a fixed residence: ‘it really is me, I am here, a worker, a boss or a soldier!’ in this vale of tears; if it obtains from them the recognition of a destination (eternal life or damnation) according to the respect or contempt they show to ‘God’s commandments’, Law become Love ...” (Althusser 1970: 52)

If everything happens this way, Althusser states that *“we should note that all this ‘procedure to set up Christian religious subjects is dominated by a strange phenomenon: the fact that there can only be such a multitude of possible religious subjects on the absolute condition that there is a Unique, Absolute, Other Subject, i.e. God.”* (Althusser 1970: 52). He thus distinguishes between the subject and the Subject with a capital S. Ordinary subjects – individuals interpellated as subjects – are basically mirrors, reflections or duplications of the Subject. All ideology is centered around this Absolute Subject that *“occupies the unique place of the Centre, and interpellates around it the infinity of individuals into subjects in a double mirror connexion...”* (Althusser 1970: 54). God, of course, is the ultimate Subject – *“he who is through himself and for himself (‘I am that I am’) and he who interpellates his subject, the individual subjected to him by his very interpellation, i.e. the individual named Moses”* (Althusser 1970: 53). In addition to religious ideology, Althusser points to the existence of legal, ethical, political and aesthetic ideologies (Althusser 1970: 51). All of these ideologies are centered around notions that perform the function of Subject such as Man, Conscience, Rationality, or God.

This *“duplication of the Subject into subjects and of the Subject into a subject-Subject”* characterizes all ideology according to Althusser. Moreover, this duplicate mirror-structure ensures simultaneously: (1) the interpellation of ‘individuals’ as subjects; (2) their subjection to the Subject; (3) the mutual recognition of subjects and Subject, the subjects’ recognition of each other, and finally the subject’s recognition of himself; (4) the absolute guarantee that everything is really so, and that on condition that the subjects recognize what they are and behave accordingly, everything will be all right: Amen – ‘So be it’ (Althusser 1970: 55-56).

As we can see, the notion of subjectivity is key to understanding Althusser’s approach to ideology. He writes about individuals as subjects in both senses of the word. Nevertheless, Althusser did label his preferred mode of Marxist critique as a form of anti-humanism (Althusser 1965: 233-43). In order to understand the ‘anti-humanist’ sentiments of structuralist and poststructuralist authors, one needs to realise that we are in no way dealing with an misanthropic view of man. Even though dramatic metaphors such as the ‘death of the author’ (Barthes 1977) have been used by structuralist authors to vent their frustrations with the transcendental subject of Enlightenment, we are not dealing with a

‘death’ in any literal sense of the word. Neither is the (post)structuralist rejection directed against individual human beings – or subjects – as such. Rather, structuralist (e.g.: Lévi-Strauss; Barthes; Althusser) and poststructuralist authors (e.g. Foucault) abandon a particular humanist interpretation of the self as an a-historical construct: man as the Cartesian transcendental subject of Enlightenment (G. Williams 1999: 53-54).

Althusser’s resistance to the Cartesian conception of Man is most clearly expressed in his *Pour Marx*. In this work, he advocates a reading of Marx in ‘anti-humanist’ terms. According to Althusser, Marx represents a radical break with a view of history and politics based on an essentialised notion of man. Althusser proposes to consider philosophical humanism as a theory and as an ideology opposed by anti-humanist Marxist thought. The necessity to view humanism as an ideology enables Marxism to criticise existent ideological forms such as religion, morality, art, philosophy, law, and “*humanisme en tout premier lieu*” (Althusser 1965: 235-37). Anti-humanism does not entail that the validity of humanism as a historical form should be ignored. Quite the contrary, it recognises its importance as a form of praxis defined as “... *une theorie des différents niveaux spécifiques de la pratique humaine (pratique économique, pratique politique, pratique que idéologique, pratique scientifique) dans leurs articulations proporees, fondée sur les articulations spécifiques de l’unité de la société humaine.*” (Althusser 1965: 235). Althusser proposes to redefine the status of humanism: “... *en rejetant ses pretentions théoriques, et en reconnaissant sa fonction pratique d’ideologie*” (Althusser 1965: 236). Moreover:

“*Sous le rapport strict de la théorie, on peut et on doit alors parler ouvertement d’un anti-humanisme théorique de Marx et voir dans cet anti-humanisme théorique la condition de possibilité absolue (negative) de la connaissance (positive) du monde humain lui-même, et de sa transformation pratique. On ne peut connaître quelque chose des homes qu’à la condition absolue de réduire en cendres le mythe philosophique (théorique) de l’homme.*” (Althusser 1965: 236)

As an alternative to humanist ideology and to ideology in general, Althusser proposes to take the materialistic-historicism as a ‘scientific’ alternative (Althusser 1965: 239). There is an ambiguity in Althusser with respect to the notion of ideology. On the one hand, man is an ideological animal by nature for whom it is impossible to place itself outside of ideology. He considers ideology to be an essential ‘structure’ to the historical development of societies. On the other hand, Althusser emphasises the importance of recognising the necessity to act upon ideology and to transform it into an instrument for reflexive historical action. Awareness of ideology thus allows for the possibility of a scientific approach towards ideology. To Althusser, this does not necessarily imply that ideology makes people conscious. He considers an ideology to be a system of representations. But these images and concepts are first of all defined in terms of structures that impose themselves on the vast majority of men: “... *c’est avant tout comme structures qu’elles s’imposent à l’immense majorité des homes, sans passer par leur «conscience»*”. Althusser thus proposes a structuralist reading of Marx’s statement that it is through ideology that men become aware of their place in the world and in history:

“*Que veut-on dire, néanmoins, quand on dit que l’idéologie concerne la «conscience» des hommes? D’abord qu’on distingue l’idéologie des autres instances sociales, mais aussi que les hommes vivent leurs actions, communément rapportés par la traditions classique à la liberté et à la «conscience», dans l’idéologie, à travers et par l’idéologie; bref, que le rapport «vécu» des hommes au monde , y compris à l’Histoire (dans l’action ou l’inaction politique) , passé par l’idologie, bien mieux, est l’idéologie ell-même. C’est en ce sens que Marx disait que c’est dans l’idéologie (comme lieu des lutes politiques) que les hommes prennent conscience de leur place dans le monde et l’histoire: c’est au sein de cette inconscience idéologique, que les hommes parviennent) modifier leurs rapports «vécu» au monde, et à acquérir cette nouvelle forme d’inconscience spécifique qu’on appelle «conscience».*” (Althusser 1965: 240)

For Althusser, an awareness of the structure of ideology allows for a scientific stance towards historical development. It is here that Althusser explicitly draws upon the objectifying structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss. It is mainly through the work of Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson that

Saussurian insights entered into his work. We should also note that Althusser's structuralism was rather metaphoric – he showed little interest in linguistics as a method for analysis. This is not to say that language was wholly ignored but it did not become an explicit focus of his work (G. Williams 1999: 4, 63, 75). Nevertheless, structuralist insights did allow Althusser to make his distinction between ideology and science. Althusser aimed to establish Marxism as a scientific Marxism as opposed to an ideology (see G. Williams 1999: 67-70).

Anti-humanism and intersubjectivity in the work of Jacques Lacan

Althusser argued for an integration of psycho-analysis into Marxist theory. He explains how orthodox Marxists rejected psycho-analysis as a reactionary ideology and as a practical instrument for the intimidation and mystification of consciousness in the struggle against Marxism. However, Althusser believed that a return to Freud along Lacanian lines would allow for a scientific – non-ideological – version of psycho-analysis that in turn allows for a Marxist account of subjectivity (Althusser 1971b). According to Althusser, this is possible thanks to Lacan's integration of psycho-analysis and the science of structural linguistics:

“Freud himself said that everything depended on language. Lacan makes this more precise: ‘the discourse of the unconscious is structured like a language’. In his first great work The Interpretation of Dreams (which is not anecdotal and superficial as is frequently suggested, but fundamental), Freud studied the ‘mechanisms’ and ‘laws’ of dreams, reducing their variants to two: displacement and condensation. Lacan recognized these as two essential figures of speech, called in linguistics metonymy and metaphor. Hence slips, failures, jokes and symptoms, like the elements of dreams themselves, became signifiers, inscribed in the chain of an unconscious discourse, doubling silently, i.e. deafeningly, in the misrecognition of ‘repression’, the chain of the human subject’s verbal discourse. (Althusser 1964: 159-60)

Althusser's anti-humanist stance was to a great extent informed by the work of Jacques Lacan. Lacan did not seek to dispense with the category of the subject either. We already noted how Laclau and Žižek interpret politics and society as attempts to cover over or fill in the lack in the split and fragmented self of Lacanian theory. Lacan posited that the subject was always characterized by a lack at the imagined center of its being established through the process of the mirror-stage. At this point, it becomes necessary to highlight the structuralist features of Lacan's work. Even though he was certainly influenced by the linguistic structuralism of de Saussure and by the anthropological structuralism of Lévi-Strauss, Dews points out that Lacan's work is characterized by some ambiguity:

“It is remarkable that, over a decade before structuralism attained the height of its popularity in France, Lacan had already absorbed what he understood to be the principal advances of structuralist theory. Furthermore, unlike many later converts of the 1960's, Lacan – despite his considerable debt to structuralism – never paid uncritical homage either to Lévi-Strauss, or to structuralist principles in general. Indeed, by the mid 50's he had already stated the fundamental lines of argument of the critiques of structuralism which only began to be widely accepted in the late 1960's. This cautious, discriminating reception of structuralism on Lacan's part was entirely to be expected. For Lacan's fundamental insistence on the intersubjectivity of language excluded from the very start his acceptance of any account of language as a code or formalizable system of signs.” (Dews 2007: 86)

The most important lesson that Lacan drew from the work of de Saussure is that of the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified. Lacan transcribes this Saussurian algorithm as follows: S/s. The bar between S and s indicates a barrier resisting signification since it blocks any intuitive grasp of meaning that Lacan associates with a misleading and imaginary identification with the other (Dews 2007: 89). Put differently, this barrier stands for the relative fixation of meaning discussed in the

chapter on articulation. On the other hand, Peter Dews points out that Lacan is even more indebted to “Lévi-Strauss who claims most insistently that structuralist methodology has opened the possibility of a new rigorously objective treatment of data in the human sciences” (Dews 2007: 91). Moreover, Lévi-Strauss considers significance and the lived experience of meaning as secondary “since meaning is always the result of a combination of elements which are not themselves significant” (Lévi-Strauss 1970 quoted in Dews 2007: 86). Dews points out that this belief “opens up the objectivist perspective of conventional structuralism” (Dews 2007: 91) – a perspective that was adopted by Louis Althusser.

It is interesting to note that even though Althusser heavily relies on Lacan with respect to his ‘scientific’ approach to subjectivity, Lacan’s emphasis on intersubjectivity precludes him from being a typical structuralist. In many respects, Lacan rather heralds the advent of poststructuralist theory. We already noted how within Lacanian theory the subject arises as the child is introduced in the orders of the Imaginary and of the Symbolic. We also noted how the entry into the Symbolic is accompanied by a positive self-identification with the pronoun ‘I’ that functions as a linguistic Gestalt-creating device. The time has come to elaborate a bit on the intersubjective implications of Lacan’s theory that allowed subsequent authors to move beyond structuralism.

According to Glyn Williams, “Lacan saw that the intersubjective relations which are the basis of self-consciousness depended upon the symbolic order of language and society” (G. Williams 1999: 55). Lacan claims that the ‘unconscious is the discourse of the other’ (Lacan cited in G. Williams 1999: 56). There are several ways to explain this statement but all of these explanations imply an intersubjective stance towards communication. For one, the whole process of the mirror stage is initiated by the confrontation with one’s reflection as a perceived Other – often through the eyes of an Other. Moreover, according to Lacan, the lack at the center of the subject’s being triggers a desire for wholeness which propels it to seek recognition of the Other. However, there is no escape to the Symbolic (G. Williams 1999: 55). Williams puts it as follows:

“Lacan saw that the intersubjective relations which are the basis of self-consciousness depended upon the symbolic order of language and society. ... The perpetual struggle for recognition by ‘another self-conscious’, most notably the mother, can only occur within language, which is the framework within which self-consciousnesses exist and relate to one another. Its effects are to be found in the unconscious, hence his claim that the unconscious is structured like a language, and that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other”. (G. Williams 1999: 55)

Moreover, Lacan emphasised that both the subject and the other are involved in a quest within the symbolic orders of language and society to recover – to fix – the self-conscious. This quest serves as a basis for intersubjectivity reinforcing the claim that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other. Lacan’s psychoanalysis is not a humanism:

“.... There is no emphasis upon the autonomous, self-conscious human subject which contains knowledge, experience and emotion, or which bears a relationship to the social environment which can be evaluated in terms of creativity and self-recognition. The orthodox interpretation of Freud is an expression once again of Enlightenment thought, in the form of a faith in the humankind / nature dichotomy, with the achievements of humankind in the form of culture and civilisation obscuring the biological tendencies. Thus, civilisation served as a veneer which overlay the basic tendencies, and it was claimed that Freud had managed to penetrate that veneer through his psychoanalytic work. It was this interpretation which Lacan rejected.” (G. Williams 1999: 54)

Intersubjectivity is also present in other aspects of Lacan’s theory. This becomes evident when he describes society in terms of a struggle for power and prestige. To Lacan, the subject’s imaginary identification with the Other without, and with the Other within, accounts for the human condition of aggressiveness and destructiveness. On the other hand, conformity with the subject’s idealised self-image leads to falling in love which he considers to be a narcissistic investiture. The ability to coexist derives from the way imagination is overlaid by language. To Lacan, words give permanence and regularity to human perceptions thanks to the system of pronouns. Moreover, he sees language as a

pact among people even though linguistic meaning cannot be founded in the pre-linguistic intentions of speaking subjects. Even though language is an arbitrary phenomenon, a signifier can only name an object if people agree that it does. Also, language enables law. The alienation of the subject with respect to the Real and with respect to himself paradoxically enables self-awareness and intersubjectivity (Dews 2007: 94; G. Williams 1999: 58-61).

For Lacan, there is a dialectic to recognition: even though the subject is dependent upon its recognition by other subjects, his theory also entails that the subject is constantly transformed throughout the process of recognition (Dews 2007: 75). To Lacan, *“the intersubjectivity of communication consists precisely in a continuous adjustment of assumptions about the partner in communication”*. The most important caveat being that *“our preconceptions can never be replaced by a definitive grasp of who the other subject truly is”* (Dews 2007: 95). Lacan’s notion of subjectivity can therefore be turned against the objectivist claims of structuralism since the dialectic of recognition implies that *“the meaning of speech cannot be seen as bestowed by the intentionality of the subject, but is dependent upon the response of the addressee, since it is this response which situates the subject in relation to its own speech”* (Dews 2007: 97). The affinity with pragmatist thought on the self should be evident. It should also be clear that Lacan does not wish to abandon the concept of the subject altogether. The Lévi-Straussian structuralist attempt to abolish the problem of the subject leads to the instatement of the symbolic system itself as a kind of perpetuating meta-subject – a big Other that supposedly constitutes the socio-symbolic order (Dews 2007: 94-95). This is unacceptable to Lacan since:

“the concept of the Other introduces a radical semantic uncertainty into language, and produces an endless reflexive movement of speech endeavouring to grasp its own meaning. ‘Language, Lacan remarks, ‘is constituted in such a way as to found us in the Other, while radically preventing us from understanding’ ... Thus although it may at first appear that the other subject is perpetually hidden ‘behind’ the wall of language, it becomes apparent that all subjects are on the same side of this wall, although they are able to communicate only indirectly by means of the echo of their speech upon it”. (Dews 2007: 97)

We may conclude that anti-humanism takes a different form in Lacan and in Althusser. Whereas both authors draw on de Saussure and on Lévi-Strauss, they differ with respect to the way language constitutes subjects. To Althusser, language and ideology are structures that pre-exist individual subjects whereas Lacan increasingly emphasised the intersubjective dimension of psychological and social development. This led the latter to reject those analyses of subjectivity articulated in terms of a formalised structure (language or society). The intersubjective dimension of Lacan’s work strongly parallels notions of subjectivity developed within pragmatist thought. This aspect of his work also heralds the advent of poststructuralism as a perspective on discourse and subjectivity that abandons the Cartesian subject of Enlightenment but which also aims to avoid the trap of re-instituting a metaphysics based on the impersonal structure of Saussurean language.

Anti-humanism and anti-subjectivism in the work of Michel Foucault

Already in his *The order of things* (Foucault 1966), Michel Foucault takes an explicit anti-Cartesian and anti-humanist stance towards the concept of man. Within the context of this book, he investigates the kind of scientific and social-scientific discourse that we have come to call humanism. The explicit aim of this archaeological analysis is to investigate the theoretical object of the human sciences – man – as a social and cultural construction (Allen 2000). I do not wish to delve too deeply in the historical aspects of his argumentation but it is important to emphasise his conclusion to *The order of things*:

“One thing in any case is certain: man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge. Taking a relatively short chronological sample within a restricted geographical area – European culture since the sixteenth century – one can be certain that

man is a recent invention within it. [...] As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end. (Foucault 1966: 421-22)

Foucault argues that ‘man’ as conceptualized in Modernity is a “*strange empirico-transcendental doubler*” (Foucault 1966: 351) in the sense of “*a paradoxical figure in which the empirical contents of knowledge necessarily release, of themselves, the conditions that have made them possible*”. To Foucault, this entails that “*man cannot posit himself in the immediate and sovereign transparency of a cogito; nor, on the other hand, can he inhabit the objective inertia of something that, by rights, does not and never can lead to self-consciousness*” (Foucault 1966: 351). He thus suggests that man is neither capable of complete transparency nor of a total un-self-consciousness. Moreover, he discusses and criticises the ahistorical Cartesian cogito as a concept that has evolved and changed with considerable variation from the Enlightenment over Modernity (see Foucault 1966: 351-58).

Both critics and supporters of Foucault can be seen to argue that the latter participates or even celebrates the death of the subject (e.g. Burke 1999). This reading of Foucault is underpinned by what Amy Allen calls the anti-subjective hypothesis. Different versions of this hypothesis have been formulated by a variety of authors including Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth, Thomas McCarthy, Michael Walzer, Charles Taylor, Nancy Hartsock and Linda Alcoff (Allen 2000: 115). Allen summarises their general concern with respect to Foucault as follows:

“Those who endorse the anti-subjective hypothesis argue that Foucault claims, or that his archaeological and genealogical works imply, that the subject is merely or nothing more than the effect of discourse and power. They maintain that such an account of the subject amounts to nothing short of a wholesale repudiation of the concept of subjectivity.” (Allen 2000: 115)

For instance, Axel Honneth claims that Foucault’s archaeology of humanism implies that “*the human is no longer the experiential center of a course of action which he encounters and over-sees, but the arbitrary effect of a network of events out of which he can no longer make sense and which is produced by the rules of language*” (Honneth cited in Allen 2000: 115). When Foucault shifted his focus from discourse to the question of how non-discursive social practices developed alongside the rise of humanism as a discourse in his genealogical works (see further), the anti-subjective hypothesis takes a different form. Here, supporters of the hypothesis claim that the subject is “*nothing but the effect of power relations*” (Alcoff cited in Allen 2000: 116).

Within the context of such allegations Foucault is accused of a bleak kind of cultural and social determinism that ignores entirely “*the kind of reflective self-understandings on which individuals rely in making sense of their social world*” (Allen 2000: 116). Put differently, Foucault is being accused of not going through the contextualised self-understandings of subjects in his archaeological and genealogical analyses. In a similar vein, critics argue that Foucault is incapable of explaining resistance to power. Allen also points out that “*the alleged elimination of the subject is that the death of the subject implies the death of agency, which in turn makes it impossible to assign responsibility to anyone for the unjust imbalances of power that stubbornly persist in the kinds of societies that Foucault analysed*” (Allen 2000: 116-17). I will return to the issue of power as conceptualized by Foucault in the next subsection. However, there is another version of the anti-subjective hypothesis that deserves our attention.

Allen correctly points out that Foucault’s supporters often react to the criticism outlined above with the argument that there *is* a viable account of subjectivity and agency to be found in his work. They usually refer to the second and the third volume of his *History of sexuality* and to a series of interviews and essays on what Foucault called practices or technologies of the self. Interestingly, this group of supporters “*grant Foucault’s critics that his archaeological and genealogical works lack a satisfactory account of subjectivity and agency, but, they contend, this deficiency is overcome in his ethical works, that is, in his late works on the practices of the self in ancient Greek and Roman cultures*” (Allen 2000: 118). Allen quotes Richard Bernstein as a case in point:

“One might think ... that Foucault is heralding the death of the subject, that he is claiming that the subject itself is only the result of the effects of power/knowledge regimes, that he completely undermines and ridicules any and all talk of human agency. There is plenty of textual evidence to support such claims. But it is also, clear, especially in his late writings when he deals with the question of the self’s relation to itself and the possibility of ‘the man who tries to invent himself’, that he is not abandoning the idea that ‘we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others’. (Bernstein quoted in Allen 2000: 118)

However, I agree with Amy Allen in her denial that Foucault was ever guilty in his archaeological and genealogical works of participating in the death of the subject in the first place: *“Foucault’s archaeological and genealogical works never constituted a full-scale repudiation of the concept of subjectivity; on the contrary, it was precisely the subject – and not discourse or power – that was all along the ‘general theme of [Foucault’s] research’ (Foucault cited in Allen 2000: 120)”*. In fact, I argue that this is precisely the reason why Foucault’s functionalist account of subjectivity is poststructuralist rather than structuralist.

We already discussed various aspects of Foucault’s work in this book: when we discussed the theory of subject positions and subjectivity within the framework of Laclau and Mouffe; during our treatment of Butler’s usage of the work of Foucault in her theory of performativity; and when we discussed Howarth and Glynos strategy of problematisation as a guiding principle within their approach of articulation as a method. We also highlighted Foucault’s notion of ethics as a practice of the self while drawing a parallel with John Dewey’s pragmatist notion of democracy as an ethical way of life. In the upcoming subsections, I will draw out Foucault’s interpretive functionalist account of the self throughout the archaeological, genealogical, and ethical phases of his work.

Agency, subjectivity and discourse in the Archaeology

It is useful to recall the key features of Foucault’s discourse theory with respect to the subject. In his archaeological works, Foucault criticised the subject as conceptualized within Enlightenment philosophy but refused to do away with the category of the subject as a tool for analysis altogether. On the contrary, his notion of subject positions is a key feature of his discourse theory. To Foucault, the basic units of discourse are the enunciative functions which he calls statements (*énoncés*). Describing a statement implies describing a set of functional relations between individuals and the diversity of discourse. More specifically, a Foucaultian analysis of statements involves a functional analysis of subject positions defined as the positions that an individual must occupy in order to be the subject of a (not necessarily linguistic) statement. These positions are neither stable nor fixed. Even though subject positions are vacant places that may be occupied by different individuals, these places are *“variable enough to be able to either to persevere unchanging, through several sentences, or to alter with each one”* (Foucault 1969: 107).

Foucault hardly uses the notion of ‘self’ in his early work but this does not entail that there is no way of conceptualizing agency in his early work. Even though I agree with Laclau that *“... the category of ‘subject’ cannot be reduced to the ‘positions of subject’* (Laclau 1989: xii), a close analysis of the *Archaeology of knowledge* precludes me from accusing Foucault of being involved in such a reductionist and subject-murdering enterprise. Once again, I find myself in agreement with Allen who argues that one has to bear Foucault’s objectives in mind. Even though his critics correctly point out that Foucault makes scarce reference to individual agency and subjectivity in his archaeological and genealogical works, this is not because Foucault deems agency to be an irrelevant concept in relation to the constitution of subjectivity. Allen points out that the relative absence of such references was necessary since *“the point of these works is to shift subjectivity from the position of that which explains to the position of that which must be explained, from explanans to explanandum”*. Critics often take the following citation as evidence for their anti-subjective hypothesis. However, a close

reading shows that Foucault does not dispense with the subject in its generality but with the 'constituent subject' as an explanans for human history. (Allen 2000: 120-21):

"One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. And this is what I would call genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc. , without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history" (Foucault cited in Allen 2000: 121)

The quote above is taken from an interview during Foucault's genealogical period but the statements above do not constitute a break with his earlier work. In the *The archaeology of knowledge* he described his project as belonging *"to that field in which the questions of the human being, consciousness, origin, and the subject emerge, intersect, mingle, and separate off"* (Foucault cited in Allen 2000: 122). Moreover, Allen points out that in the preface to the English edition of *The order of things*, Foucault emphasises that *"although his analysis starts at the level of discourses rather than at the level of individual subjects or agents, this should not be taken as a denial of the possible efficacy of any subject- or agent- centered account"* (Allen 2000: 122). In support of this reading Allen quotes Foucault: *"it is simply that I wonder whether such descriptions are themselves enough, whether they do justice to the immense density ... of discourse"* (Foucault cited in Allen 2000: 122). Moreover, it is interesting to see what Foucault has to say about his omission of the speaking subject in his archaeological analyses:

"If I spoke of discourse, it was not to show that the mechanisms or processes of the language (langue) were entirely preserved in it; but rather to reveal, in the density of verbal performances, the diversity of the possible levels of analysis; to show that in addition to methods of linguistic structuration (or interpretation), one could draw up a specific description of statements, of their formation and of the regularities proper to discourse. If I suspended all reference to the speaking subject, it was not to discover laws of construction or forms that could be applied in the same way by all subjects, nor was it to give voice to the great universal discourse that is common to all men at a particular period. [...] I wanted not to exclude the problem of the subject, but to define the positions and functions that the subject could occupy in the diversity of discourse" (Foucault 1969: 220-21)

If we are to understand the theme of subjectivity as conceptualized throughout the various stages of his work, I believe that it is important to emphasise the way Foucault uses the notion of function. It is striking that in spite of the fact that he uses this concept on a regular basis in his theoretical arguments and analyses, he is more often associated with structuralism than with any type of functionalism. One might argue that we are dealing with a new type of functionalism that stands apart from most sociological and anthropological functionalist approaches. Brenner contrasts Foucault's notion of function as deployed in his archaeological and genealogical works with the notion as deployed by a variety of sociologists and anthropologists. He claims that Foucault's work is written with a specific type of "functional imperatives" in mind. (Brenner 1994: 687-88):

"The conception of "functional imperatives" that Foucault implicitly employs in his studies of power is poles apart from that embraced by anthropological and sociological functionalism, for which functional imperatives are quite general and transhistorical "control values" which can be applied to the behavior of any "system" whatsoever – "the maintenance of life processes" (Malinowski), "structural continuity" (Radcliffe-Brown), "the maintenance of equilibrium" (Parsons), "system integration / social integration" (Lockwood), or "the reduction of complexity" (Luhman)". Foucault, by contrast, would reject the teleological assumptions underlying the attempts of causal functionalists to explain the existence of specific modes of behavior or institutions in terms of their beneficial effects on a given social structure, as well as the related notion that a single set of functional imperatives can be operationalized to analyze all human societies" (Brenner 1994: 687-88)

Foucault's functional analyses take many forms. In his archaeological works, this implies that subject positions and subjectivities are generated through the establishment of multiple functional relationships between individuals, and the various aspects and dimensions of discourse and knowledge as theorised by Foucault. These functions are never ahistorical but must have specific effects in specific socio-historical situations. Put differently, the effects of these functions – whatever they may be – are material. In this sense, subject positions are generated through the establishment of various flexible and temporal relationships between various discursive elements – they are the result of articulatory practices.

Throughout the following chapters, I will argue that the type of functionalism involved in poststructuralist approaches to discourse can be labeled as an *interpretive functionalism*. One might object that this is an inappropriate term since Foucault criticised descriptions of his archaeological approach in terms of interpretation:

“The analysis of statements, then, is a historical analysis, but one that avoids all interpretation: it does not question things said as to what they are hiding, what they were ‘really’ saying, in spite of themselves, the unspoken elements that they contain, the proliferation of thoughts, images, or fantasies that inhabit them; but, on the contrary, it questions them as to their mode of existence, what it means to them to have come into existence, to have left traces, and perhaps to remain there, awaiting the moment when they might be of use once more; what it means to them to have appeared when and where they did – they and no others. From this point of view, there is not such thing as a latent statement: for what one is concerned with is the fact of language (language)” (Foucault 1969: 123)

Foucault thus wanted to avoid interpretation in the sense of an abandonment of a quest for the ‘hidden’ meaning of texts and discourses. Put differently, he attacks the notion of interpretation as deployed in hermeneutical approaches that start from the point of view of a constituent consciousness. It is in this sense that Foucault has “*no great liking for interpretation*” (Foucault 1969: 222-24). The search for hidden meanings is also one of the flaws in the so-called scientific Marxism of authors such as Althusser (see: Foucault 1969: 5; see: G. Williams 1999: 68). To Foucault, both science and interpretation all too often amount to a quest for a “*hidden law, a concealed origin that it only remains to free*”. In contrast to such ‘scientific’ and ‘interpretive’ approaches, Foucault proposes to view his *Archaeology of knowledge* as a “*discourse about discourses*” (Foucault 1969: 226) – a project that did not fall into the dominant definitions of science, philosophy, or history within his own life-time.

However, it is useful to recall that there are other modes of interpretation conceivable. Howarth and Glynos follow Foucault in his opposition to a hermeneutics of recovery that supposedly can retrieve and reconstruct the meanings intended by social actors. Moreover, they also reject the related interpretive techniques grouped under the heading of a hermeneutics of suspicion. Nevertheless, if one conceives of interpretation as a way of (re)articulating various discursive elements to one another according to multiple interpretive logics (see: Glynos and Howarth 2007), there is no need to abandon the notion of interpretation altogether. On the contrary, it becomes a useful tool to investigate the social realities reflected in and generated through the multiplicity of contextualised self-interpretations that we encounter in every day discourse.

Power and subject formation according to Foucault

In the chapters on articulation, we already discussed the poststructuralist concept of politics as developed within the Essex approach to discourse and subjectivity. However, there is one central poststructuralist theme that I purposefully omitted throughout these chapters: the issue of power in relation to discourse and subjectivity. The reasons for introducing this concept at such a late stage in this book are strictly argumentative. Foucault's reconceptualisation of the historical variations that power relations may take is key to understanding contemporary poststructuralist thought on

subjectivity. Moreover, if we are to develop a concept of the public sphere that does justice to both poststructuralist and pragmatist insights, we can no longer ignore this issue. An account of the public sphere in strict Habermasian terms does not do justice to the empirical perspectives held by most pragmatist, linguistic pragmatic, and poststructuralist authors.

Many commentators distinguish between Foucault's archaeological and genealogical works with reference to the fact that the latter's works are characterized by an explicit discussion of the relationship between knowledge, subjectivity and power. As we already suggested, many of these commentators subscribe to the anti-subjective hypothesis and claim that both the archaeological and genealogical perspectives contribute to the death of the subject. Whereas the archaeological instrument of death is discourse, the genealogical murder weapon is power. The question to be answered at this point is how Foucault analysed subject-formation with reference to his theories on power. It is useful to start with Foucault's article on *The subject and power* (Foucault 1982c) where he offers a retrospective account of his work in terms of three phases:

"My work has dealt with three modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects. The first is the modes of inquiry that try to give themselves the status of the sciences [...] In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivising of the subject in what I shall call "dividing practices." The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivises him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys". Finally, I have sought to study – it is my current work – the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject. For example, I have chosen the domain of sexuality – how men have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of "sexuality". Thus, it is not power, but the subject, that is the general theme of my research" (Foucault 1982c: 326-27)

Throughout the second (genealogical) and third (ethical) phase of his work, Foucault theorised various historically grounded modes of power that find themselves in mutually constitutive relationships with historically specific modes of subjectivity, discourse and knowledge. Even though Foucault's works differ from one another with respect to the terminology used and the objects investigated, I maintain that these differences result first and foremost from the aspects of power, knowledge, and subjectivity that Foucault wished to investigate. As the quote above shows, the first phase focuses first and foremost on scientific knowledge, the second phase on the normative practices that allow one to divide and to distinguish between individual subjects, whereas the third phase emphasises the ways in which individuals are learned to subjectify themselves. Nevertheless, even though Foucault considers the subject to be the general theme of his research, it is useful to start with a discussion of the issue of power.

To Foucault, power is not a stable thing. In fact, he warns against reifying this notion and proposes to privilege the question of *how* power is exercised over the questions of *what* it is and / or of *why* it is:

"To put it bluntly, I would say that to begin the analysis with a "how" is to introduce the suspicion that power as such does not exist. It is, in any case, to ask oneself what contents one has in mind when using this grand, all-embracing, and reifying term; it is to suspect that an extremely complex configuration of realities is allowed to escape while one endlessly marks time before the double question: what is power, and where does power come from. The flat and empirical little question, "What happens?" is not designed to introduce by stealth a metaphysics or an ontology of power but, rather, to undertake a critical investigation of the thematics of power." (Foucault 1982c: 336-37)

Foucault's empirical question of the *how* of power, strongly parallels pragmatist modes of investigation. It entails that power can only be analysed in relation to their historical and intersubjective specificity. Moreover, Foucault emphasises that any analysis of the laws, institutions, ideologies, structures or mechanisms of power is based on the premise that *"certain persons exercise power over others"*. In this sense, *"the term power designates relationships between "partners" (and by this I [Foucault] am not thinking of a game with fixed rules but simply, and for the moment staying*

in the most general terms, of an ensemble of actions that induce others and follow from one another)” (Foucault 1982c: 337). As a consequence, power itself can never be analysed. We have to content ourselves with an analysis of historically grounded power relations (Foucault 1982c: 339).

Throughout his studies, Foucault investigated various modes of power. These include: pastoral power (see: Foucault 1979a; see: Foucault 1982c: 333-35); juridico-discursive power (see: Foucault 1976a: 82-91); power as strategy and tactics (see: Foucault 1976a: 100-02), biopolitics or biopower (see: Foucault 1976a: 139-45; see: Foucault 1979b; see: Foucault et al. 1997: 239-64), power as war (see: Foucault et al. 1997: 1-23), and governmentality (see: Foucault 1979b). All of these notions relate to particular strategical relationships established in particular historical circumstances. Moreover, the institution of a specific type of power relationships in a particular historical period is always intertwined with a specific form of rationalisation. It is therefore that Foucault states that *“those who resist or rebel against a form of power cannot merely be content to denounce violence or criticize an institution”*. Rather, *“what has to be questioned is the form of rationality at stake”* (Foucault 1979a: 324). The various concepts of power developed by Foucault thus indicate various rationalities deployed in the dominant ways in which individuals relate to one another and to the practices and objects that make up their environments in specific historical periods.

Before we look into the ways in which Foucault conceptualized specific modes of power and their rationalities, it remains for us to distinguish between power and violence or domination. Foucault writes that *“what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on possible or actual future or present actions”*. A relationship of violence does not work in this subtle way: it *“acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks, it destroys, or it closes off possibilities”* (Foucault 1982c: 340). To Foucault, *“the exercise of power is a “conduct of conducts” and a management of possibilities”*. It is here that he links up with the notion of government in a very particular and broad sense and where he distinguishes power from something like slavery:

“When one defines the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the action of others, when one characterizes these actions as the government of men by other men – in the broadest sense of the term – one includes an important element: freedom. Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are “free”. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available. Where the determining factors are exhaustive, there is no relationship of power: slavery is not a power relationship when a man is in chains, only when he has some possible mobility, even a chance of escape.” (Foucault 1982c: 342)

In an interview on *Sex, power, and the politics of identity* (Foucault 1982b), Foucault describes power relations as strategic relations towards one another. It is in this sense that *“power is always there”* and that we can not get away from power. Practices of resistance thus never involve positioning oneself outside of power, since this would involve a retreat from the relationship(s) we hold towards others – an impossibility. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is no room for agency in Foucault’s approach to power. He points out that even though *“there is no point where you are free from all power relations”*, *“you can always change”* the strategic power relations you are involved in (Foucault 1982b: 167). Moreover, Foucault points out that power is not a matter of simple obedience:

“You see, if there was no resistance, there would be no power relations. Because it would simply be a matter of obedience. You have to use power relations to refer to the situation where you’re not doing what you want. So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance. So I think that resistance is the main word, the key word, in this dynamic” (Foucault 1982b: 167).

Thomas Lemke points out that to Foucault, the concept of domination refers to a rather stable, hierarchical and fixed power relationship which is difficult to reverse. He uses the term domination to designate *“what we ordinarily call power”* (Foucault cited in Lemke 2002). We should therefore keep

in mind that Foucault's notions of power differs from this more common meaning of power. This will become clear in the next subsection. With respect to domination, Foucault acknowledges that:

"[...] states of domination do indeed exist. In a great many cases, power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom. [...] In such cases of domination, be they economic, social, institutional, or sexual, the problem is knowing where resistance will develop. [...] In such a situation of domination, all these questions demand specific answers that take account of the kind and precise form of domination in question. But the claim that 'you see power everywhere, thus there is no room for freedom' seems to me absolutely inadequate. The idea that power is a system of domination that controls everything and leaves no room for freedom cannot be attributed to me" (Foucault 1989: 292-93)

Neil Brenner points out that Foucault's notion of power entails a very particular type of functionalism. His interest in the question *how* power functions is proof of this. We already noticed that this type of functionalism was *"poles apart from that embraced by anthropological and sociological functionalism"*. As Brenner points out, *"Foucault's theory of power [...] undermines the functionalist sociological separation of a ahistorically specified functional imperatives from concrete social processes."* (Brenner 1994: 688). I agree with Brenner that Foucault seems to wield something like a functional imperative throughout all his works: Foucault always seems to ask himself how his objects of investigation (e.g. statements, subject positions, sexuality, the clinic, madmen, the sciences) functionally relate to the discourse, practices, and technologies that make our knowledge about them possible. The relationship of power towards the subject can therefore never be understood in an ahistorical or anti-subjective fashion (see: Allen 2000). If we are to understand how the subject is constituted as an effect of power, knowledge, and discourse, we have to investigate the specific modes of power / knowledge that we may encounter in a particular space and time. Moreover, since a conceptualisation of the subject as an effect of power, amounts to a view of the subject as constituted through intersubjective strategic relationships that subjects hold towards one another, it is hard to see how this would necessarily need to a conceptual death of the subject.

Foucault's alternatives to the repressive hypothesis of power

It is time to look into the particulars of Foucault's various modes of power. In a way that is reminiscent of the manner he dispensed with the Cartesian subject of Enlightenment, Foucault prefers to analyse specific rationalities rather than to investigate the progress of rationalization in general (see: Foucault 1982c: 329). His move towards power began in his 1975-76 course entitled *Society must be defended* (Foucault et al. 1997). In this course, Foucault started to question what he called the juridical model of sovereignty that *"assumes the individual as a subject of natural rights or original powers"* (Foucault cited in: Rabinow 1994: xvi). The questions asked during this course ultimately led to a transformation of Foucault's thoughts on power. In the years that followed, he set out to recast and to refine his core conceptual tools (Rabinow 1994: xiv-xvii).

Foucault became increasingly concerned with the various forms that power could take. He felt that in order to come up with an adequate analysis of power, one had to do away with *"a certain representation of power that I would term ... 'juridico-discursive'"* (Foucault 1976a: 82). Within this model, power is not supposed to produce anything but lack and limits. It dictates and acts by laying down rules - it's primary function supposedly being repression. The archetypical figure deploying this type of power is the legislator, hence the term juridico-discursive power. Foucault claims that the idea of power as repression is nothing more than a widely shared hypothesis that results from various historical developments: *"the great institutions of power that developed in the Middle ages – monarchy, the state with its apparatus – rose up on the basis of a multiplicity of prior powers [...]"* (Foucault 1976a: 86). Moreover, *"the slogan of this regime, pax et justitia, in keeping with the function it laid claim to, established peace as the prohibition of feudal or private wars, and justice as a way of suspending the private settling of lawsuits. Doubtless there was more to this development of great*

monarchic institutions than a pure and simple juridical edifice. But such was the language of power". (Foucault 1976a: 87). Foucault's point is not that this was the only mode of power in the Middle Ages. He does not even assert that this is how power actually functioned. His point is that the most important metaphor through which power relations were put into discourse in sovereign monarchies was law.

As a response to the repressive hypothesis, Foucault introduced a metaphor of his own: "*In political thought and analysis, we still have not cut off the head of the king*" (Foucault 1976a: 88-89). All too often the idea of "*power as being embodied in a central symbolic or structural place in society*" still permeates our theories and philosophies of power. In his genealogies, Foucault introduced a variety of alternatives to the juridico-discursive model. In all cases however, there is an emphasis put on the idea that the analysis of power must start with the observation of a multiplicity of small-scale mechanisms, relations, practices, and techniques that intersect at all levels of social reality. He thus presupposes that power is everywhere in the social body. Moreover, he claims that it is productive. It is that which produces and incites. According to this framework, subjectivity itself is produced rather than denied by the microphysics of power (Newman 2004: 143). In the following we will explore how Foucault reflects on the modes of power he called pastoral power, biopower, and governmentality.

Foucault claims that the sixteenth century fostered a new type of strategic relations which can be labeled as *pastoral power*. This notion "*designates a special form of power*" that can be traced back to Christian (Foucault 1982c: 333) and Greek ethics (Foucault 1994a). Moreover, it is a key to understand the particular ways in which the Church established itself:

"christianity is the only religion that has organized itself as a Church. As such, it postulates in principle that certain individuals can, by their religious quality, serve others not as princes, magistrates, prophets, fortune –tellers, benefactors, educationists, and so on, but as pastors." (Foucault 1982c: 333)

Christianity inherited the theme of the pastor from Greek and Hebrew ethics (Foucault 1994a: 68). The main characteristics of the power exercised by the pastor as a shepherd can be described as follows:

"... the shepherd's power is exercised not so much over a fixed territory as over a multitude in movement toward a goal; it has the role of providing the flock with its sustenance, watching over it on a daily basis, and ensuring its salvation; lastly, it is a matter of a power that individualizes by granting, through an essential paradox, as much value to a single of the sheep as to the entire flock. It is this type of power that was introduced into the West by christianity and took an institutional form in the ecclesiastical pastorate: the government of souls was constituted in the Christian Church as a central, knowledge based activity indispensable for the salvation of each and every one" (Foucault 1994a: 68)

Foucault explains how the ultimate aim of this type of power is to assure individual salvation in the next world. As such, it is not merely a form of power that commands. It also requires being prepared to sacrifice oneself for the salvation of the flock. We are therefore dealing with a very different type of power than sovereign – juridico discursive - royal power. Pastoral power is exercised on each individual over the course of his entire life. And what is even more interesting, pastoral power "*can not be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it*" (Foucault 1982c: 333). Hence the importance of the confession in Catholicism (Foucault 1976a: 61-65)

Even though Foucault admits that the pastorate has lost the main part of it's efficacy, he also claims that the "*function*" of pastoral power "*has spread and multiplied outside the ecclesiastical institution*". Moreover, it has been distributed through a "*new organization of this kind of individualizing power*" called "*the modern state*" (Foucault 1982c: 333-34). Still, pastoral power did undergo some significant changes as the modern state developed. It changed with respect to: it's objectives (salvation is now

interpreted in more worldly terms involving concerns with health, well-being, security, and protection from accidents); the number and variety of officials exercising pastoral powers (increases in private ventures, welfare societies, but also in the 18th century police that not only maintained law and order but was also deployed in assuring supplies, hygiene, and health standards considered necessary for handicrafts and commerce); and old institutions (such as the family) taking up pastoral functions. Lastly, Foucault points out that this “*multiplication of the aims and agents of pastoral power*” led to a concern both with man in terms of population and with man in terms of the individual (Foucault 1982c: 334-35).

There is another concept of power related to this concern with population that requires our attention: *biopolitics* or *biopower*. The notion of biopolitics refers to (Foucault 1979b: 73):

“[...] *the endeavour, begun in the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems presented to governmental practice by the phenomena characteristic of a group of living human beings constituted as a population: health, sanitation, birthrate, longevity, race [...]*” (Foucault 1979b: 73).

Through the rapid development of the scientific disciplines and their institutions (universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops) and through the associated emergence of new problematics such as birth-rate, longevity, public health and migration, “*numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations*” were being developed. Together, these developments “*marked the beginning of an era of biopower*” (Foucault 1976a: 140). The discourse surrounding the techniques, practices, and problematics of biopower “*allowed the state to intervene more directly in social relations, designating a new modality of power which had the purpose of securing and sustaining the conditions of life*” (Newman 2005: 109). The object of biopolitics in modern states is life itself (see: Rose 2007). As was the case with pastoral power, we are dealing with a type of power that individualises and works on individual bodies. However, it simultaneously works on the population as a whole: “*The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed.* (Foucault 1979b: 73) [...] *a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through*” (Foucault 1976a: 139).

Foucault does not suggest that biopower is less bloody than the juridico-discursive power supposedly deployed in sovereign monarchies. The crucial difference with modern regimes of biopower is that, “*unlike in sovereign regimes where blood was shed symbolically on behalf of the sovereign, now wars are waged on a massive scale by states on behalf of the populations they administer, or to intervene in humanitarian crises in order to sustain the life of the local population*”. The modern technology of power known as biopower produced unprecedented genocides and holocausts carried out in the name of protecting the biological health and purity of the population from contaminants (Newman 2005: 109).

On the other hand, biopower has a productive dimension to it as well. It enabled man to politicise life itself. Foucault points out that throughout the eighteenth century, “*death was ceasing to torment life so directly.* The development of different fields of knowledge contributed to this relaxation: “*observations and measures relative to man’s life and survival contributed to this relaxation: a relative control over life averted some of the imminent risks of death*” (Foucault 1976a: 142). Moreover:

“*Western man was gradually learning what it meant to be a living species in a living world, to have a body, conditions of existence, probabilities of life, an individual and collective welfare, forces that could be modified, and a space in which they could be distributed in an optimal manner. For the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence ...[...] If one can apply the term bio-history to the pressures through which the movements of life and the processes of history interfere with one another, one would have to speak of bio-power to designate what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation in human life.*” (Foucault 1976a: 142-43)

Foucault initially linked the expansion of politics to the management of life with the expansion of the ambitions and obligations of the state. However, Nikolas Rose points out that Foucault became increasingly aware of the fact that *“the great overall regulations that proliferated throughout the nineteenth century ... are also found at the sub-State level, in a whole series of sub-State institutes such as medical institutions, welfare funds, insurance, and so on”* (Foucault cited in: Rose 2007: 53). One might say that the function of biopower spread through the whole of the social body. In another sense, biopower gradually became a perspective rather than a concept. This perspective brings into view *“a whole range of more or less rationalized attempts by different authorities to intervene upon the vital characteristics of human existence – human beings, individually and collectively, as living creatures who are born, mature, inhabit a body that can be trained and augmented, and then sicken and die”*. Rose proposes to use the term biopolitics in order to refer to the *“strategies involving contestations over the way in which human vitality, morbidity, and mortality should be problematized, over the desirable level and form of the interventions required, over the knowledge, regimes of authority, and practices of intervention that are desirable, legitimate and efficacious”* (Rose 2007: 54).

Foucault on technologies of power and governmentality

In his genealogies on pastoral power and biopower, Foucault frequently uses notions such as technology or technique. Since he considers power to be a reification, he prefers to take a look at the specific forms that power relations may take. These forms of power may be developed in specific historical circumstances but they can also be distributed and deployed in very different political regimes than the ones in which they were initially developed. Already in *Discipline and punish*, Foucault suggested that techniques of power such as discipline and supervision could be made to serve more than one political or social interest (Faubion 1994a). This does not mean that power is inherently bad. Faubion points out that according to Foucault, *“nothing, including the exercise of power, is evil in itself – but everything is dangerous”* (Faubion 1994a: xix). However, there is more to be said about the techniques or technologies of power:

“I think that the techniques of power can be transposed, in the course of history, from armies to schools, and so on. Their history is relatively autonomous in relation to the economic processes that develop. Think of the techniques employed in the slave colonies in Latin America, which turn up again in nineteenth-century France or England. So there exists a relative, nonabsolute, autonomy of the techniques of power.” (Trombadori and Foucault 1980: 293)

In the chapter on articulation, we already noted that Foucault considers subjectivity to be generated through a myriad of socio-historically grounded practices that allow us to arrive at an awareness of who and what we are. He distinguished between four types of technology that hardly ever function separately: *“(1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or significations; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, or immortality”*. Foucault focused mostly on the technologies of domination and self. Nevertheless, he became more and more interested in the interaction between self and others, and in the mode of action that an individual exercises upon himself by means of the technologies of the self (Foucault 1982a: 224-25).

Foucault theorised the notion of technology explicitly in his writings on the self (Foucault 1988) and governmentality (Foucault and Rabinow 1982: 364). However, the concept already appears in his

writings on discipline (Foucault 1976b: 124-25), pastoral power (Foucault 1982c: 332), and biopower (Foucault 1976a: 11, 141). The archaeological approach can be described as an investigation into epistemic knowledge whereas the genealogical approach focuses more on technical knowledge. One of the questions informing Foucault's archaeologies was whether the study of human affairs could become scientific in the epistemic sense of the word. The Greek intellectual virtue known as episteme can be described as a universal, invariable and context-independent type of knowledge which is based on a general analytical rationality. Contemporary concepts related to this notions are epistemology and epistemic (Flyvbjerg 2001: 57-58, 111).

Foucault's genealogical studies led him to the question of governmentality as a *techne*. He defined *techne* "*a practical rationality governed by a conscious goal*" (Foucault and Rabinow 1982: 364) and thus follows Aristotle who considered *techne* as a craft or as an art. According to the latter, *techne* is the intellectual virtue of pragmatic and context-dependent knowledge. Today, this notion weakly echoes in notions such as technique and technical (Flyvbjerg 2001: 57-58, 111). Foucault was aware of the discrepancy between ancient Greek and contemporary uses of the term:

"The disadvantage of this word techne, I realize, is its relation to the word "technology" which has a very specific meaning. A very narrow meaning is given to "technology": one thinks of hard technology, the technology of wood, of fire, of electricity. Whereas government is also a function of technology: the government of individuals, the government of souls, the government of the self by the self, the government of families, the government of children and so on." (Foucault and Rabinow 1982: 364)

Both biopolitics and pastoral power as deployed in modern states can be described as governmentalities. They are political and practical rationalities that seek to direct human behaviour (Foucault 1979b: 73; 1994b: 81; 1994a: 67-71). Foucault examined at least two distinct forms of governmentality that emerged after the first half of the eighteenth century: reason of state and liberalism. As pastoral power entered into a crisis in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there was a search for new modes of spiritual direction and for a reconfiguration of the relations between pastor and flock. Simultaneously, there were also "*inquiries concerning the right way to "govern" children, a family, a domain, a principality*". Foucault claims that the behaviour of a set of individuals became more and more involved in the exercise of sovereign power. Moreover, he claims that this transformation is best expressed in a variety of publications on the arts of governing and on the concept of "reason of state" (Foucault 1994a: 68):

"One goes from an art of governing whose principles were borrowed from the traditional virtues (wisdom, justice, liberty, respect for divine laws and human customs) or from the common abilities (prudence, thoughtful decisions, taking care to surround oneself with the best adviser) to an art of governing whose rationality has its principles and its specific domain of application in the state. The "reason of state" is not the imperative in the name of which one can or must upset all the other rules; it is the new matrix of rationality according to which the prince must exercise his sovereignty in governing men." (Foucault 1994a: 68)

The reason of state takes shape in two "*great ensembles of political knowledge and technology*": the development of state forces through a system of alliances and the organisation of an armed apparatus; and the police in the sense given to the word then: the set of means necessary to make the force of the state increase from within. This development coincided with the development of police-science (*Polizeiwissenschaft*) at German universities concerned with the broad themes of biopolitics and the development of the welfare state through a rational art of governing (Foucault 1994a: 69-71). However, governmentality can also take a very different form. For instance, Foucault investigated liberalism as a governmentality. Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde point out that:

"Liberalism differs from reason of state in that it starts from the assumption that human behavior should be governed, not solely in the interests of strengthening the state, but in the interest of society understood as a realm external to state. In liberalism, he suggests, one can observe the

emergence of the distinction between state and society. Foucault suggests that liberalism is not so much a substantive doctrine of how to govern. Rather, it is an art of governing that arises as a critique of excessive government – a search for a technology of government that can address the recurrent complaint that authorities are governing too much” (Rose et al. 2006: 85)

According to Donzelot, the state is not to be analysed in terms of power and those who under go it, but “*as a support for technologies*” or as “*an effect of governmental strategies*” (Donzelot cited in: Rose et al. 2006: 88). He also writes that:

“We would have then not a power and those who under go it, but, as Foucault shows, technologies, that is to say always local and multiple, intertwining coherent or contradictory forms of activating and managing a population, and strategies, the formulae of government ... theories which explain reality only to the extent that they enable the implementation of a program, the generation of actions; they provide through their coherence a ‘practical object’”(practicable) for corrective intervention of government programmes of redirection” (Donzelot cited in: Rose et al. 2006: 88).

Foucault’s approach to governmentality incited a great number of studies on large-scale sociological phenomena. (Rose et al. 2006: 88). Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller argue for a loose deployment of Foucault’s concept of governmentality along two axes: governmentality as a rationality in the sense of a style of thinking or a way of rendering reality thinkable such that it was amenable to calculation and programming. They emphasise that rationality should always be thought of as rationalities. On the other hand, they emphasise the importance of investigating the technological dimension of governmentality. They describe technologies as “*assemblages of persons, techniques, institutions, instruments for the conducting of conduct*” (Miller and Rose 2008: 15-16). Power is thus understood as a form of action on the actions of others. Faubion suggests that this might even be the most paradigmatic form of power (Faubion 1994a: xxix). As such, governmentality is not necessarily linked to the state.

Michel Foucault on self-techniques, ethics and aesthetics

In his late work, Foucault came to prefer the notion of self over the notion of subject. This change in terminology might explain why authors such as Bernstein consider Foucault to abandon the so-called anti-subjective hypothesis in the latest phase of his work (Bernstein cited in: Allen 2000) However, I hope to have demonstrated that a categorisation of Foucault along pre-anti-subjective and post-anti-subjective lines does not make any sense because of the functional imperatives guiding his perspective on discourse, power, and subjectivity.

It is possible to argue that Foucault focused increasingly on the ways in which subjects constitute themselves as selves. However, this interest can be traced back to his musing on governmentality and technology. As Nikolas Rose points out, “*human technologies are hybrid assemblages of knowledges, instruments, persons, systems of judgment, buildings and spaces, underpinned at the programmatic level by certain presuppositions and objectives about human beings*” (Rose 1998: 26). An investigation into these presuppositions is key to arrive at the understanding of who and what we are from the point of view of both poststructuralist and pragmatist perspectives. Put differently, if we are to analyse the self-interpretations of individuals, we have to investigate the presuppositions with respect to what we designate as the self.

The notion of self-techniques is closely associated with Foucault’s notion of governmentality. From a Foucaultian perspective, governmentality refers to “*the more or less rationalized programmes and strategies for ‘the conduct of conduct’*”. This conduct of conduct operates through the shaping of what Foucault called ‘technologies of the self’ (Rose 1998: 29). Rose elaborates:

“Technologies of the self take the form of the elaboration of certain techniques for the conduct of one’s relation with oneself, for example, requiring one to relate to oneself epistemologically (know yourself), despotically (master yourself), or in other ways (care for yourself). They are embodied in particular technical practices (confession, diary writing, group discussion, the twelve-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous). And they are always practiced under the actual or imagined authority of some system of truth and of some authoritative individual, whether this be theological and priestly, psychological and therapeutic, or disciplinary and tutelary”. (Rose 1998: 29)

Such a perspective does not deny the possibility of agency. Rose points out that agency is *“no doubt a ‘force’, but it is a force that arises not from any essential properties of ‘the subject’ but out of the ways in which humans have been assembled together”* (Rose 1998: 187). In this sense, social scientific in-depth interviews are self-techniques as well (see: Gubrium and Holstein 2003d). I will go into this during my discussion of the methodology and analytics deployed in the investigation of the political subjectivities of the intellectuals and activists I talked to. Keeping this caveat in mind, it is interesting to see what Foucault says about the self in general and about the political subject in particular. It is worth noting the similarity with the pragmatist notions of self mentioned earlier on. With respect to the self he mentions that:

“It is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself. You do not have the same type of relationship to yourself when you constitute yourself as a political subject who goes to vote or speaks at a meeting and when you are seeking to fulfil your desires in a sexual relationship. Undoubtedly there are relationships and interferences between these different forms of the subject; but we are not dealing with the same type of subject. In each case, one plays, one establishes a different type of relation to oneself. And it is precisely the historical constitution of these various forms of the subject in relation to the games of truth which interest me”. (Foucault 1989: 290-91)

According to Foucault, one of the main problems with Modernity consists of the nearly complete uncoupling of two imperatives: ‘know yourself’ and ‘take care of yourself’. Throughout his volumes on *The history of sexuality*, he presents us with two ideal-types of constituting the self as an ethical subject: *“one that emphasises the moral code, and another that emphasises ethical practice”*. The first type of subject formation is strongly associated with Enlightenment ideals, whereas the second ideal-typical mode of subjectivation is associated with the ancient world wherein more attention is paid to the methods and techniques directed at the formation of the self within a nexus of relationships. The goal of this analysis did not consist of a return to ancient times, rather, *“to make visible a bygone way of approaching the self and others which might suggest possibilities for the present”* (Rabinow 1994: xxvi-xxvii).

Foucault points out that from Descartes to Husserl, the imperative to ‘know thyself’ increasingly came to dominate the imperative to ‘take care of thyself’. The self became an object of knowledge rather than something established through a multiplicity of practices. One of the most interesting aspects of the self as governed in ancient times, is the emphasis put on the self as an ethical and aesthetic enterprise. To him, ethics is a practice, an embodiment, and a style of life. As Rabinow points out, Foucault claims that *“whatever we were to become, it could not be legitimated by the will to knowledge”* in the sense that we will not find answers to who and what we are by referring to science, religion or law alone (Rabinow 1994: xxix). Foucault prefers to think of the self as something one does. He prefers a mode of subjectivity informed by ethical practices that are performed in an artful way:

“What strikes me is the fact that, in our society, art has become something that is related only to objects and not to individuals or to life. That art is something which is specialized or done by experts who are artists. But couldn’t everyone’s life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life.” (Foucault and Dreyfus 1983: 261)

Self and politics in poststructuralist thought

The time has come to link Foucault's poststructuralist thought on self and subjectivity with the poststructuralist notion of articulation as developed within the Essex school of discourse theory. Nikolas Rose points out that subjectivity should not be regarded as a primordial given. Neither is it something that should be accounted for by mere socialization. In alignment with both pragmatist and poststructuralist perspectives on self and subjectivity, he claims that:

"[...] all the effects of psychological interiority, together with a whole range of other capacities and relations, are constituted through the linkage of humans into other objects and practices, multiplicities and forces. It is these various relations and linkages which assemble subjects; they themselves give rise to all the phenomena through which, in our own times, human beings relate to themselves in terms of a psychological interior: as desiring selves, sexed selves, labouring selves, thinking selves, intending selves capable of acting as subjects." (Rose 1998: 172)

Rose goes on and argues that subjects might best be viewed as " 'assemblages' that metamorphose or change their properties as they expand their connections, that 'are' nothing more or less than the changing connections into which they are associated". It should be clear that Rose's definition of assemblages might as well be used to define the notion of articulation as deployed in the Essex school of discourse theory. Put differently, selves may be described as effects of self-techniques deployed with varying degrees of awareness. The deployment of these techniques generates subjectivities and the possibility of particular modes of self-awareness by articulating semiotic elements – including practices, linguistic expressions, strategically occupied subject positions, or institutions – to one another. However, the principle of articulation implies that the meanings of these elements are altered through the very practice of articulation. Earlier on, I suggested that the self might best be viewed as a reification of the processes which allow an individual body to (reflectively) position itself as a coherent and whole mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social and (inter)textual aspects of (contextual) reality. Of course, neither mind nor body are stable constructs. They are just as stable as the self-techniques we deploy to give our selves the semblance of substance. They are just as stable as our performances and our relative fixations of meaning. The self may be unified and centered, but only as far as our self-techniques allow us to be.

Earlier on, we pointed out that the postmodern crisis of confidence amounts to the question how we can continue to view ourselves as self-conscious agents that have a semblance of control over our lives. Poststructuralist answers to these questions vary. They are answered in terms of articulation, in terms of lack, in terms of performativity, in terms of discourse or in terms of self-techniques. However, no matter what metaphor we deploy, I agree with Gubrium and Holstein that all accounts of the self are basically "*working frameworks and divisions we use in practice to derive a sense of the varied truths and authenticities we are*". This idea is compatible with both pragmatist and poststructuralist insights. Such a perspective can only be considered to imply an anti-subjective or anti-humanist style of thought in a very narrow sense of the word: in the sense of an anti-Cartesian anti-subjectivism, and an anti-Cartesian anti-humanism. There is plenty of room to allow for an analysis and deployment of interpretive self-understandings and agency. Even though humans may identify themselves with an infinitely great number of contextual aspects of reality, they may also articulate various interpretive logics that allow them to recognise themselves as more or less coherent wholes. An interpretive functionalist analysis of political subjectivity could therefore start with the question how specific aspects of self are interpretively related to the political issues one articulates through discourse and practice.

d) Analysing political engagement by means of pragmatist and poststructuralist insights

At this point, we should recall the desiderata of the required perspective formulated on the basis of our observations with respect to the usage of notions such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨politics⟩ and ⟨community⟩ in chapter 1.2.2. The preceding chapters on pragmatist and poststructuralist thought perform several functions. As we will see, they allow for an understanding of why linguistic pragmatics can provide an empirical basis to investigate the self defined as a reification of the processes which allow an individual body to (reflectively) position itself as a coherent and whole mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social and (inter)textual aspects of (contextual) reality. They also enable us to understand the need for an interpretive and functionalist heuristic in order to deal with the problem of subjectivity. In spite of the variety of metaphors and terminologies deployed in poststructuralist and pragmatist accounts of the self, the authors involved denounce the Cartesian subject of Enlightenment as a valid notion of selfhood. This refusal is informed by a more empirical understanding of self and politics. On the other hand, the various accounts of subjectivity in terms of performativity, conversations of gestures, articulation, power, and/or self-techniques show that both everyday and academic talk about the self is based on a contextualised deployment of metaphors. For this reason, it is unlikely that we will arrive at an ultimate truth about the self. My own definition of the self is therefore characterized by a high degree of abstraction, hoping to accommodate for a variety of theoretical frameworks and self-understanding compatible with a truly empirical investigation of both self and politics as deployed in Flemish minority politics.

The first characteristic of the required perspective pertained to its ability to allow for an empirical analysis of contradicting interpretive frameworks in which abstract signifiers may be deployed in a variety of ways. We noticed how the mere usage of a specific signifier such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨politics⟩, or ⟨community⟩ does not guarantee a similarity with respect to the definitions of self and situation that are implicitly or explicitly deployed. At the end of the chapter on articulation, I concluded that even though the Essex framework might provide an explanation as to how and why such contradictions are made possible, it is haunted by a methodological deficit which constitutes a major obstacle for an empirical analysis of large-scale social debates and self-interpretations. In spite of the pragmatist interest in the empirical self, we are still dealing with a very abstract notion of the empirical. Pragmatist authors do not provide us with fine-grained linguistic tools to investigate the micro-processes or techniques that allow the self to relate to itself or to other relevant aspects of context. On the other hand, it does provide us with a whole series of arguments as to why an understanding of the self should be understood in intersubjective and concrete terms. Poststructuralist thought is haunted by similar problems. However, it also draws our attention to issues that are somewhat downplayed in pragmatist understandings of the self. The self as positioned and constituted through an ensemble of power relations is one of the most important aspects emphasised in the Foucaultian approach to the self. Moreover, it emphasises the historical dimension of subjectification processes in a more explicit way. Still, the empirical deficit remains a sore spot.

We noted how individuals may deploy abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨politics⟩, and ⟨community⟩ in ways that are constitutive for an individual's political subjectivity. The Essex theories of articulation provide us with formal explanations as to how this is possible. However, one might argue that such poststructuralist theories function at a level of abstraction that is not paralleled by the self-interpretations of the research subjects at hand. I do not think that this is necessarily the case. On the other hand, pragmatist modes of thought do seem to be more sensitive to the self as we encounter it in daily life. As Rorty demonstrated, pragmatism is characterized by a scepticism with regard to the high level of abstraction deployed in the Essex accounts of subjectivity and politics. Nevertheless, there is a strong impetus in Foucaultian theory and in the writings of authors such as Glynos and Howarth to be sensitive of the ways we constitute our selves in specific historical, discursive, and social circumstances. In spite of the fact that all of the perspectives discussed above are haunted by a

methodological deficit, they all subscribe to an empirical notion of self. Whether the relationship of the self to the self is articulated with reference to abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, and ⟨politics⟩, there are no conclusions that can be drawn for once and for all, nor can any particular definition of these concepts be deployed in all circumstances or in all cases.

This brings us to the third aspect of the required perspective. We need to ask ourselves how the metapragmatic and political awareness of respondents can be (re)articulated in this book without running the risk of overpowering their voices by using our own abstract categories. Put differently: how do we avoid that this Phd becomes a work of domination? Following Foucault, it is impossible to place oneself outside the field of strategical power relations. How does one acknowledge the power of respondents to decide on the way they want to relate to themselves and to the types of politics they prefer? At any rate, we have to take the self-techniques constitutive of the self-interpretations of individuals into account. One of these self-techniques involves the production of discourse. The deployment of discourse about one's relationship to oneself and about one's relationship to other aspects of contextual reality requires a high degree of metapragmatic awareness. In order to differentiate between my own interpretations and the self-interpretations of my research subjects, I introduced the articulations markers ⟨ and ⟩. However, a mere differentiation between the voices articulated by the researcher and the voices articulated by the research subject is not enough. An investigation into the microphysics of power that allow individuals to define themselves without being dominated by others, is in need of conceptual tools to investigate the specific ways in which discourse is interpretively deployed. Linguistic pragmatic perspectives provide such tools and allow us to rethink the notion of subjectivity and self as deployed in linguistic pragmatics and poststructuralist thought.

The need to approach socio-political debates as complex intertextual networks of people constructing their political engagement with reference to a variety of contradicting concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices and myself is haunted by a related set of problematics. I suggest that if we are to investigate large-scale social debates, we need a way to functionally relate the elements of such debates to one another. The interpretive functionalist approach I argue for provides such a heuristic. It allows for an empirical investigation of large-scale social debates on the basis of poststructuralist, pragmatist, and linguistic pragmatic tools and principles. I argue that the analysis of large-scale social debates requires an analysis of large-scale interpretive processes articulated by individuals. The interpretive logics that provide coherence between seemingly contradictory statements produced by social actors parallel the problematics that haunt the political debates wherein actors position themselves as selves. Interestingly, both pragmatist and poststructuralist perspectives point out that any experience or interpretation of the self rests on a series of reifications. We consist of a variety of processes that may be described in terms of (mis)recognition, interpellation, effects of the lack generated through mirror stage, performances, articulations, practices, self-techniques, power related strategies, and a great number of notions we have not even touched upon. However we conceptualize it, this multiplicity of processes constitutes the object/subject relationship we call 'self'. As always – and this is in line with both pragmatist and poststructuralist perspectives on knowledge – we have no direct access to large-scale interpretive processes. At best, we can find traces of these processes in social reality and/or discourse.

The sixth requirement of the desired perspective for analysing the political discourse, engagements and subjectivities of intellectuals and activists involved in Flemish minority politics, pertained to the need to distinguish between the multiple aspects of a sense of self, and the sense of coherence that is nevertheless (inter)subjectively experienced, articulated and co-constructed in discourse. I already suggested that the establishment of a sense of coherence in one's sense of self is one of the most important functions of discourse, of the relative fixation of meaning, and of the attempt to delimit relevant context for interpretation. All pragmatist approaches discussed in the preceding chapters suggested that the reified self is at least in part an effect of the usage of pronouns. This is also the case in the Lacanian framework that has informed the works of the Essex school of discourse theory. Even though Foucault puts less emphasis on the importance of pronouns with respect to the constitution of the self, he does recognise that selves are unstable reifications generated by a multiplicity of

historically contingent practices, technologies and discourses. Based on Foucault and Laclau's theoretical frameworks, I suggest that the notion of subjectivity allows us to distinguish between the subject positions occupied by an individual and the interpretively established sense of coherence that remains more or less intact across a multiplicity of contexts. The main key to establish this paradoxical feat is the human capacity of metapragmatic awareness.

My suggestion that the analysis of political subjectivities requires a way to conceptualize the intuitive or unconscious interpretive processes marked in discourse, links up with these arguments. It is impossible for humans to know the intentions of other humans for certain. At best, our intentions are marked in discourse, but we may also lie, cheat, tell half truths about our selves and keep others in the dark as to our true motivations for saying this or for doing that. At worst, an attempt to guess at the true intentions of our research subjects leads to the projection of our own values and self-understandings over theirs. Put differently, analysis might become an act of domination. For this reason, researchers should refrain from such speculations if they are truly interested in passing through the self-interpretations of their research subjects. In the upcoming chapter on linguistic pragmatics, I will argue that this passage is a passage through the language of the respondents themselves. No matter the extent to which an individual is aware of the way he or she articulates her sense of self with respect to his or her sense of society and politics, linguistic discourse offers the most reliable entry into the conscious and unconscious processes that account for political subjectivity and engagement.

2.2.2 Linguistic pragmatic perspectives on the context(s), structure(s) and function(s) of discourse(s)

In the preceding chapters, I suggested that an articulation of linguistic pragmatics with poststructuralist and pragmatist modes of thought might show us a way out of the problematics constructed throughout this book. These problematics include: the methodological deficit haunting the pragmatist and poststructuralist perspectives on discourse, politics and subjectivity; the problems of cohesion and coherence associated with the empirical self; the issue of context generation and contextual boundaries; the problematic of the empirical investigation of power relationships, hegemonies and the relative fixation of meaning; the trap of overpowering the political voices and discourses of respondents when (re)articulated in a book on minority political engagement; and the question of research into the metapragmatic and political aspects of awareness. In the coming subsections, I will present my arguments for this suggestion.

The perspective of linguistic pragmatics is relevant to all of the problematics articulated above. However, the added value of this approach with respect to the interpretive functionalist heuristic we are looking for lies first and foremost in three of its key concepts: indexicality, metapragmatics, and context. These notions will be discussed as we go. They will allow me to articulate the notion of *interpretive functionalism as an approach to analysis that involves an investigation of the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction, and to the metapragmatic positioning of the interlocutors and voices involved in the speech event under investigation*. The upcoming sections and subsections provide the reader with the theoretical coordinates needed to interpret my usage of the notion *interpretive functionalism* in an adequate way. However, the final evaluation of this interpretive functionalist framework will be the empirical analysis of the discourse of my respondents. Its effectiveness will have to be evaluated with reference to its usage in empirical analysis of self, politics, and discourse as articulated within the interviews I conducted.

In the following subsections, I will first and foremost articulate some (a) notes on the notion and history of pragmatics. Throughout this section, I will argue for an understanding of pragmatics in terms of a perspective or turn that is characteristic of a multiplicity of developments in the study of language. Secondly, I will discuss the most important (b) formative traditions for linguistic pragmatics. This includes: a discussion of the relationship between pragmatic approaches to language

and Cartesian propositions; an exploration of key notions developed within the context of ordinary language philosophy; a consideration of linguistic pragmatics as a reaction against various forms of structuralism; an exploration of French and Anglo-American approaches to language use; and a discussion of the relations of contemporary linguistic pragmatics to the traditions of pragmatism, behaviourism, functionalism, and contextualism. The section on (c) (Re-) articulating the contexts, structures, and functions of language use provides us with the last elements required to arrive at the interpretive functionalist heuristic to politics, discourse, and the self that will be outlined and illustrated in the next chapter. This implies a discussion of language in terms of the principles of negotiability, adaptability, and variability. Section (c) also contains: a discussion of how we use language in order to adapt to our communicative needs; an elaboration on the notions of indexical contextualisation processes, metapragmatic or metalinguistic awareness, and critique. As such, the chapter on the linguistic pragmatic perspective(s) on the context(s), structure(s), and function(s) of discourse(s) allows us to articulate a heuristic to overcome the various problematics articulated throughout the course of this book.

a) Notes on the notion and history of pragmatics

The formative traditions that (continue to) shape the field of linguistic pragmatics as we know it today, have their origins in many different disciplines, perspectives and philosophies. The few existing historiographies of pragmatics provide us with a story that begins a long time before the emergence of poststructuralist and pragmatist thought. Below, I will highlight *the problematic (inter)disciplinary historiography of linguistic pragmatics* as a historical explanation for the variety of *concepts of pragmatics* that we find across the linguistic (sub-) disciplines and turns. I will conclude these preliminary notes on the notion and history of pragmatics by hinting at the idea that the pragmatic turn in linguistics is characterized by an interpretive functionalist understanding of discourse that allows us to articulate linguistic pragmatics with poststructuralist and pragmatist perspectives on discourse.

The problematic (inter)disciplinary historiography of linguistic pragmatics

The 1996 edition of the *Journal of Pragmatics* contains an article titled *Is there a history of pragmatics?* by Anat Biletzki. The article begins as follows:

“In thirty years pragmatics has advanced from the proverbial wastebasket to a grown academic field, replete with its own journal, conferences, research grants, and comprehensive bibliography. Its maturity is attested to by both the number of practitioners in the field, and the variety of directions in which its branches grow out to various disciplines. Yet sitting on any of the branches of this pragmatic tree – be they philosophical, linguistic, psychological – one wonders if the tree mightn’t topple over for lack of roots. For pragmatics seems to have no formal, institutionalized history.” (Biletzki 1996: 455)

Biletzki continues and notes that up to 1996, the *Journal of pragmatics* printed only three articles that have to do with “*the discipline’s birth and past*”. She observes that the number of articles attempting a historical grasp of pragmatics is extremely low. Even within bibliographies of pragmatics or within introductions to the history of linguistics in general, the historical roots of pragmatics are either absent or merely mentioned in a perfunctory manner. Biletzki is therefore inclined to answer her own question – *Is there a history of pragmatics?* – negatively in the sense that no systematic historiographies of the field of pragmatics exist. On the other hand, Biletzki welcomes a rare article on the history of pragmatic ideas by Nerlich and Clarke: “*Pragmatics is obviously perceived then, as a newly born subject with no history to boast of. It is therefore promising to encounter the recent treatment of past pragmatic phenomena that does, consciously, present itself as “a history of pragmatic ideas in Europe (and to a certain extent America) during the 19th century”*” (Biletzki 1996: 456-57).

In 1996, Nerlich and Clarke published an entire book on the pre-history of contemporary linguistic pragmatics. The academic institutionalisation of the field is a relatively recent phenomenon that should be located in the second half of the 20th century. On the other hand, the themes of linguistic pragmatic thought did not originate out of nowhere. Clarke and Nerlich conclude their archaeology of linguistic pragmatics with a remark of Talmy Givón:

“The pragmatic agenda in the second half of the 20th Century reminds one, in retrospect, of a dam burst. Many of the streams feeding into the swollen river [...] had been meandering, sluggishly and unobtrusively, for a long time. They had accumulated slowly, leisurely, behind the dam of deductive logic. Somewhere along the way, the flow began to quicken, the tempo picked up. And all of a sudden the entire dam is threatened. In the space below I will briefly recount what seem to me to be some of the more obvious components of this pragmatic dam burst.” (Givon 1989 cited in: Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 374)

The pragmatic dam burst described by Givón refers to a proliferation of pragmatic ideas that had been developing along various national, disciplinary and philosophical lines. Nerlich and Clarke point out that one could trace the history of pragmatics back to antiquity. Nevertheless, their own overview is restricted to the period between 1780 and 1930 (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 5-8). Put differently, their overview stops where most contemporary approaches to linguistic pragmatics situate the origin of the perspective – i.e. at the point before linguistic pragmatics was *“integrated into semiotics with Morris in the 1930s, and before it was used as an umbrella-term for all kinds of research into language and its use in context, including the Anglo-American tradition of speech act theory which had started, independently of Morris, with Austin’s work on speech-acts”* (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 5).

The pragmatic ideas trickling down into the dam could be summarised as follows: language has various other functions than the expression of thought; it has intellectual and affective functions; and it expresses, represents, and appeals. Moreover: language can only be understood in the context of the situation in which it is used; it should be understood as a goal-directed action as well as an instrument used in the act of speech. It is used to influence others and it only functions in dialogue and conversation. Hence, the principle of reciprocity between speaker and hearer is important. Also, language is used for the co-ordination of human behaviour. It is indexically linked to reality and to the language users. Lastly, the realisation dawned that in saying things we do all sorts of things (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 375-76). Nerlich and Clarke conclude by the following lines that will prove to be indicative of the general line of argumentation in the upcoming subsections:

“These ‘ideas’ were like water-molecules that floated about and finally bunched themselves into two huge clouds which rained down upon the various rivers and streams of linguistic pragmatics. These two clouds were functionalism (instrumentalism) and contextualism” (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 375-76).

I will not delve too deeply in the history of pragmatics. The exploration of the field as presented below should not be taken as an overall introduction to the history of the perspective. The historical dimension of my argumentation is rather restricted since I am first and foremost interested in the way in which linguistic pragmatic insights may help us to articulate poststructuralist and pragmatist insights with one another so that we may develop a heuristic for the empirical analysis of political subjectivities, engagements, and discourses. But there is also another argument for my cursory treatment of the historical development of linguistic pragmatics. Before he outlines his own survey of the formative traditions of pragmatics, Verschueren highlights an important problem to any historical overview of the development of linguistic pragmatics:

“The interdisciplinarity is so fundamental, that any attempt at neatly ordering the following brief survey along disciplinary boundaries would grossly oversimplify the historical process.” (Verschueren 1999: 256)

I will therefore merely touch on those formative traditions of linguistic pragmatics that are indicative of the characteristics of this perspective on language use. Taking this caveat into account, I will devote special attention to those Anglo-American and French continental approaches to subjectivity and discourse that are particularly relevant to contemporary poststructuralist, pragmatist and linguistic pragmatic perspectives on discourse. As we will see, there are many historical links between these perspectives.

Concepts of pragmatics

The question to be answered at this point is how we may describe pragmatics. There are several linguistic notions of pragmatics that may be categorised as follows: the waste-paper basket view of pragmatics; the component-view of pragmatics; pragmatics as a (sub-)discipline; pragmatics as a fundamentally interdisciplinary endeavour; and the view of pragmatics as an attitude or as a perspective. Some of these concepts of pragmatics overlap whereas others are simply incompatible. In this subsection, I will argue for a notion of pragmatics as a perspective, attitude or turn.

Jacob Mey points out that there is general agreement that linguistic pragmatics is a young science. He refers to Geoffrey Leech who remarked that “*fifteen years ago, it [viz., pragmatics] was mentioned by linguists rarely, if mentioned at all*” (Leech 1983 cited in: Mey 1998: 716). Moreover, “*if indeed pragmatics was mentioned ‘at all’, it was more in the guise of a ‘ragbag’, or, as the Israeli mathematician and formal linguistic philosopher Yehoshua Bar-Hillel (1971) once expressed it, a ‘waste-paper basket’ designed to absorb the overflow from semantics [...]*” (Mey 1998: 716). Jef Verschueren points out that “*pragmatics sometimes looks like a repository of extremely interesting but separable topics such as deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, conversation, politeness and relevance*”. He also adds that “*more often than not, theoretical unity is not provided in spite of the many points of contact between these various topics*” (Verschueren 2009). As we will see in the upcoming sections, all of these notions refer to processes in which language users relate utterances to actual contexts of use in order to generate meaning. This will be amply illustrated in the chapters and (sub-)sections to come.

For now, it suffices to note that the waste-paper basket view of pragmatics as a study that deals with a variety of loosely related concepts may be traced back to one of the earliest formulations of the notion of pragmatics. Most textbooks in linguistic pragmatics attribute the first usage of the term to Charles Morris. Morris proposed to distinguish between syntax, semantics, and pragmatics as three dimensions of an over-arching study of semiotics. As such, syntax is described as the study of the relations between signs (such as words) and other signs; semantics as the study of the relations between signs and their referents (the real-world things to which they refer); and pragmatics as the study of the relations between signs and their interpreters (e.g. S. C. Levinson 1983: 1-5; Mey 1998: 722; Robinson 2006: 40-41; Verschueren 1999: 6). Many proponents of this component view of pragmatics nevertheless refuse the idea of a clear separability between these terms. For instance, Levinson argues for “*the need for a pragmatic component in an integrated theory of linguistic ability*” (Levinson 1983 cited in: Verschueren 2009: 12). Such a theory would include both pragmatic and semantic dimensions.

The component view of pragmatics and the associated metaphor of pragmatics as a waste-basket for interesting concepts is also connected to a notion of pragmatics as a linguistic discipline defined by its objects of investigation and methods of inquiry. Verschueren points towards some interesting similarities among the proponents of this view of pragmatics:

“Whatever differences in theory there may be, adherents of this general type of view focus on a roughly shared range of pragmatic phenomena: deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, conversational interaction, and the like. What they also share, in spite of the obvious cognitive nature of the competence or ability under investigation (inference processes for instance, being a major

concern), and in spite of the social and cultural determinants of context, is an observable fear of trespassing into the realm of sociolinguistics and psycho-linguistics.” (Verschueren 2009: 12)

On the other hand, there are many contemporary approaches to pragmatics that reject the component-view. Instead, an explicitly interdisciplinary orientation is adopted. The interdisciplinary approach to pragmatics may be exemplified with reference to authors such as Van Dijk (Van Dijk 1981), Cummings (Cummings 2005), Robinson (Robinson 2006), Blommaert (Blommaert 2005), and Verschueren (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992; Verschueren 1999, 2009, 2011). Van Dijk describes how his early writings during the seventies display a shift in perspective from a component-view on pragmatics to an interdisciplinary perspective: “[...] *whereas in the first papers a pragmatic component was still discussed in a more or less general way, with only occasional specific relations to discourse structure, the later papers try to show the inherent pragmatic properties of discourse, and the links and analogies with local and global structures of speech act sequences*” (Van Dijk 1981: vi). If there is indeed a pragmatic dimension to all aspects of language use, pragmatics cannot claim objects and methods of investigation of its own. Verschueren describes the interdisciplinary implications of the perspective view as follows:

“[...] *we must also observe that pragmatics is not only situated outside the contrast set to which phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics belong; neither does it fit into the set of interdisciplinary fields such as neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and anthropological linguistics. Each of these fields has its own correlational object in relation to which language is studied: oversimplifying a little, **neurolinguistics** tries to reveal the neurophysiological bases and processes of speaking and listening (and whatever can go wrong in this domain), **psycholinguistics** studies the relationships between language and the mind in general (a task to subareas of which certain brands of **cognitive linguistics** are also devoted), **sociolinguistics** is concerned with the ways in which social relationships, statuses, patterns, and networks interact with language structure and use, and **anthropological linguistics** is devoted to the relationships between language(s) and culture(s).* (Verschueren 1999: 7)

Verschueren continues and states that pragmatics is concerned with the full complexity of linguistic behaviour defining pragmatics as “*a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behaviour (where the string ‘cognitive, social and cultural’ does not suggest the separability of what the terms refer to)*” (Verschueren 1999: 7). We already noted that Morris distinguished between syntax, semantics and pragmatics. But it is also important to note that his pragmatic program was decidedly interdisciplinary from the beginning. It actually ventured far beyond the subdisciplines of linguistics:

“*By ‘pragmatics’ is designated the science of the relation of signs to their interpreters. [...] Since most, if not all, signs have as their interpreters living organisms, it is a sufficiently accurate characterization of pragmatics to say that it deals with the biotic aspects of semiosis, that is, with all the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs*”. (Morris 1938 cited in: Verschueren 2009: 3)

This interdisciplinary view of pragmatics as a perspective has been criticised for being too broad. Moreover, even a proponent of this broad view such as Verschueren acknowledges the validity of Davis’ concern that “*the problem with this broad view of pragmatics [as defined by Morris] is that it is too inclusive to be of much use*” since it “*includes almost all human activity, from baseball to the stock market*”. The ultimate implication being that “*all of the human sciences become part of pragmatics*” (Davis 1991 cited in: Verschueren 2009: 14). Nevertheless, Verschueren does offer an alternative to what Mey calls the Scylla and Charybdis of either confining oneself to strict linguistic definitions of pragmatics or developing impossibly vague definitions that basically incorporate “*as much social context as possible*” thus blurring the boundaries between pragmatic and other (linguistic) disciplines (Mey 1999: 43)..

The specifics of this alternative will be discussed along the way. For now, we should note that the concept of pragmatics as a perspective entails the idea of an integrated framework for the analysis of language use. Roman Kopytko points out that there are various ways of integrating the notions and theories that make up the field (Kopytko 2000: 784-85):

“The idea of integration presented by Verschueren (1999) is quite different from Nuyts’ (1992). In the place of Nuyts’ umbrella, Verschueren argues for a (pragmatic) perspective in the broad (holistic) context of the physical, social, and mental worlds.” (Kopytko 2000: 785)

Roman Kopytko labels Verschueren’s approach to pragmatics a *holistic* perspective on language use even though he also warns us that linguists tend to avoid this term (Kopytko 2000: 785). Perhaps this reluctance is informed by the basic distrust of discussing language in terms of a reified whole which is shared by basically all contemporary pragmaticians. On the other hand, if we consider holism as an approach to reality that ‘*takes into account the full complexity of its cognitive, social and cultural (i.e. ‘meaningful’) functioning in the lives of human beings*’ (Verschueren 2009: 19), Verschueren’s approach definitely fits the description.

At first sight, Verschueren’s attempt to integrate the field of pragmatics into a more or less coherent perspective seems to contrast with the claim that he developed his approach “*with a basic distrust of theories of pragmatics*” in mind (Kopytko 2000: 789; Verschueren 1999: 64). Verschueren’s distrust with regard to theory should be understood as a distrust towards the reduction of language related processes to a limited set of principles. When I asked Verschueren what he understood by theories of pragmatics, he explained that he used the notion of theory in his *Understanding pragmatics* in order to designate those approaches to language use that attempt to explain discourse in terms of a limited set of principles. Examples of such approaches can be found in classic accounts of speech act theory, relevance theory, and the like. On the other hand, it should be noted that a consideration of pragmatics as a perspective also involves significant theoretical efforts. In fact, we will see that Verschueren does not only provides us with a non-reductionist theory of language use conceptualized in terms of variability, negotiability, and adaptability, he also provides us with a meta-theoretical framework that explains how we may integrate various pragmatic traditions and concepts of discourse with one another.

If we wish to consider pragmatics as a perspective rather than as a (sub-) disciplinary endeavour or as a waste-paper basket of other disciplines, it is important to clarify what is meant by the notion of perspective. In this respect, it should be noted that Verschueren considers an organisation of the human sciences in terms of points of view or perspectives to be an alternative to the categorisation and organisation of the human sciences as a set of disciplines:

“Probably the time has indeed come for a complete reassessment of the human sciences as a network of converging and diverging perspectives on different dimensions of human reality rather than a collection of disciplines”. (Verschueren 2009: 17)

In this sense, he agrees with Ann Weisler when she argues that: “*As theoretical linguists embarking on the study of pragmatics we are not just lightly widening our area of investigation, but we are taking an entirely different point of view on language.*” (Weisler 1974 cited in: Verschueren 2009: 17). At this point, it should be noted that concepts such as ‘perspective’ and ‘point of view’ are used as visual and spatial metaphors that allow us to articulate a variety of concepts, strategies, methodologies and theories with one another without being restricted to disciplinary boundaries. Another spatial metaphor compatible with the view of pragmatics as a perspective is the idea of a pragmatic ‘turn’ in linguistics. This turn may be described as a turn towards a functional and interpretive perspective on language use that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. Put differently, the linguistic pragmatic turn can be described as a trans-disciplinary, trans-theoretical, and trans-methodological acceptance of the principles associated with the type of interpretive functionalism that I also identified in the poststructuralist and pragmatist perspectives above.

Considering linguistic pragmatics as part of a wider pragmatic turn that takes place across a variety of disciplines sheds an interesting light on Verschueren's project. Doris Bachmann-Medick did not include a 'pragmatic turn' in her overview of the various turns that continue to restructure the cultural sciences ever since an initial linguistic turn (Bachmann-Medick 2006). Nevertheless, the criteria she identifies in order to describe a turn, display interesting parallels with the notion of pragmatics as a perspective or point of view. It is possible to identify a turn when:

“der neue Forschungsfokus von der Gegenstandsebene neuartiger Untersuchungsfelder auf die Ebene von Analysekatgeorien und Konzepten ‘umschlagt’, wenn er also nicht mehr nur neue Erkenntnisobjekte ausweist, sondern selbst zum Erkenntnismittel und-medium wird” (Bachmann-Medick 2006: 26)

According to Bachmann-Medick, it is possible to identify a turn when the terminology used to describe the objects of investigation becomes constitutive of the perspective itself. For instance, the linguistic turn did not merely involve the study of linguistics, but also a reconsideration of all sorts of phenomena ranging from identities over politics and other types of (inter)action in terms of linguistic terminology. Put differently, a turn involves metaphorical language use. Theories of discourse exemplify the principle of turns very well. Discourse, subjectivity, society and politics have been metaphorised as dialogical, performative, articulatory, and spatial practices. Bachmann-Medick identifies a variety of turns that characterize the study of culture: an interpretive turn, a semiotic turn, a performative turn, a theatrical turn, a reflexive turn, a dialogic turn, a post-colonial turn, and so on (Bachmann-Medick 2006: 26-27, 36-43).

Turns are not restricted to any one discipline. On the other hand, all of these turns can be traced back to an overarching linguistic turn. This mega-turn allowed researchers to describe social processes by means of a whole range of metaphors: in spatial terms, in dramaturgical or theatrical terms, and so on. It is due to the initial linguistic turn that metaphors became an accepted part of the social scientific instrumentarium (Bachmann-Medick 2006: 33). Interestingly, Bachmann-Medick points out that turns do not have to replace one another as paradigms do. Even though they are often considered to threaten established disciplinary boundaries, it is probably more accurate to say that they provide possible focal- and reference points for interdisciplinary research (notes taken during a lecture by Bachmann-Medick about 'Cultural turns - Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften' at the 2009 Gradnet conference in Erlangen, Germany. See also: Bachmann-Medick 2006).

If there is such a thing as a pragmatic turn within linguistics, it lies in an interpretive functionalist understanding of language use. Such a view entails an intersubjective and process-based notion of indexical meaning and context generation. However, it should be pointed out that the pragmatic turn is an aggregate concept that designates those metaphorical ways of conceptualizing language use that allow us to highlight the process-based nature of the intersubjective, contextual, functional and interpretive acts we perform when we talk and write. In this sense, it encompasses a variety of turns and metaphors. It is both interpretive, performative, reflexive and spatial.

b) Formative traditions for linguistic pragmatics

The formative traditions for the pragmatic turn in linguistics are very diverse in both disciplinary and theoretical terms. In the following subsections I will introduce and discuss the most important formative traditions to linguistic pragmatics. I will devote special attention to those approaches that are indicative of the main features of this approach to language use and that bear special relevance to an integrated pragmatist, poststructuralist and linguistic pragmatic approach to discourse. In the previous chapters, I have argued that linguistic pragmatics can help us to overcome the poststructuralist and pragmatist methodological deficits. I also claimed that a rearticulated approach would allow for an analysis of the selves and subjectivities as constructed in and through the discourse of the intellectuals and activists I interviewed. Throughout this discussion of the formative traditions

of pragmatics, I will introduce a variety of concepts that have led to the pragmatic dam-burst that triggered the pragmatic turn in linguistics since the early seventies of last century.

Below, I will challenge the idea of *linguistic pragmatics as a Cartesian enterprise* and argue that if we wish to rearticulate pragmatics with pragmatist and poststructuralist insights, the resulting pragmatic perspective will have to be anti-Cartesian. This anti-Cartesian perspective is informed by a variety of philosophic, linguistic and sociologic approaches to language use. I will therefore discuss *linguistic pragmatics as ordinary language philosophy*. More specifically, I will focus on the work of Wittgenstein, on the ideas of Austin and Grice with respect to *speech acts and intentionality*, and on Grice's theory of *conversational logic and implicatures*. However, contemporary linguistic pragmatics can also be framed as *a reaction against various forms of structuralism* in the work of authors such as Boas, Sapir and Whorf, but also in the work of Noam Chomsky. Another formative tradition of the pragmatic perspective can be found in *French linguistic pragmatics*. It is therefore useful to introduce the work of Benveniste on enunciation. The impact of the notions of *function and indexicality* in the work of Roman Jakobson cannot be overlooked in this respect. It has exerted significant influence on the work of Benveniste, but also on the work of French linguistic pragmatists working on *subjectivity and polyphony as marked in discourse*. I will briefly touch upon *linguistic pragmatics as an heir to pragmatism and behaviourism* and upon the associated issue of *British functionalism and contextualism as a predecessor to pragmatics*.

Linguistic pragmatics as a Cartesian enterprise ?

Within linguistic pragmatics, it is possible to identify both Cartesian and anti-Cartesian concepts and ideas. It would be grossly simplifying and simply incorrect to argue that the entire field can be characterized either way. In fact, some of the concepts central to anti-Cartesian forms of pragmatics were initially developed within programs with Cartesian features. I will argue for an anti-Cartesian linguistic pragmatics. Nevertheless, within the context of a discussion of the formative traditions of this perspective, both influences should be recognized.

Roman Kopytko identifies fourteen features associated with Cartesian pragmatics defined as “*a view of scientific endeavour characterized by a set of metaphysical and epistemological-methodological assumptions, claims, and features including the following: (1) the duality of the mental vs. physical ‘world’, (2) the innateness hypothesis, (3) the modularity of mind, (4) a common cognitive processing mechanism, (5) the representational view of mind, (6) essentialism, (7) the discreteness / categoricity of pragmatic phenomena, (8) cognitive rationality, (9) certain knowledge, (10) universal rules, (11) universal claims, (12) the deductive method, (13) predictiveness, and (14) the priority of the ‘knower’ over the ‘known’*” (Kopytko 2000: 791). A follower of such a Cartesian perspective does not necessarily subscribe to all of these notions. In a similar vein, anti-Cartesian thinkers do not necessarily reject all of these concepts. Kopytko argues that the categorisation of linguistic pragmatic perspectives as Cartesian or non-Cartesian should be a matter of degree (Kopytko 2000).

The pragmatist and poststructuralist authors discussed in the preceding chapters do not live up to the majority of Kopytko's criteria for characterising a perspective as Cartesian. All of them are very sceptical with respect to dualities such as those between the physical and the mental world. Also, the authors mentioned above only subscribe to the most abstract universal and innate human properties such as the capacity for articulation, identity formation, the generation of discourse, and so on. The notion of certain knowledge is rejected by poststructuralists and pragmatists alike. Moreover, any physics-like predictability of human behaviour is discarded as a fiction. Rationality and deductive logic are considered to be two types of interpretive processes that can take many forms and may perform a variety of functions. In the preceding chapters, I have argued that linguistic pragmatics can help us to overcome the poststructuralist and pragmatist methodological deficits. This would allow for an empirical analysis of the large-scale interpretive processes operative in the discourse and

subjectivities of public intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders. However, such an enterprise can only make sense if we are dealing with an anti-Cartesian pragmatics.

Kopytko is right in pointing out that an integrative or holistic view of linguistic pragmatics such as that of Jef Verschueren “*goes far beyond the idealized properties of the Cartesian model, leading us straight to a non-Cartesian pragmatics*” (Kopytko 2000: 791). It is worth recalling some of the idealized properties of the Cartesian model of the self. In the preceding chapters, I argued that the Cartesian cogito was basically a transcendental notion of the self. Descartes subject was characterized by an indivisibility of consciousness. The mind or cogito could not be broken down into compartments as the body could but should be thought of as a unified and centered whole. Moreover, this notion of self was related to a set of statements about universal human reason. It was connected to a theory of truth in which the main function of language was self-expression or correspondence. We also noted how the Cartesian view of man, subject, language and discourse was rejected for both pragmatist and poststructuralist reasons.

Some pragmatic theories share important features with this Cartesian view of subjectivity and discourse. This goes especially for theories that have been informed by the notion of mind as developed within analytical philosophy. Marina Sbisà describes analytical philosophy as follows:

“The label ‘analytical philosophy’ (nowadays often, more shortly, ‘analytic philosophy’) usually refers to a certain range of philosophical inquiries and doctrines which have developed from the last decade of the 19th century to present times. These do not share a fixed number of features, but rather display some ‘family resemblances’.” (Sbisà 2011a: 11)

Thematically speaking, most authors associated with the analytical tradition are connected with empiricism and committed to the idea that the only propositions that we may know with certainty are true and analytic ones. Whereas modern philosophy often presented itself as articulating views on (the history of) man and the world, analytical philosophy focuses on “*our understanding of what we say and do, and on the chances and the means we have for controlling our own moves, when we do philosophy*” (Sbisà 2011a: 11). As such, analytical philosophers emphasise the importance of language in doing philosophy;

“Thus, they have been engaged in the search for clarity and in careful argumentation; they have often been attentive to meta-philosophical issues (what is philosophy. Can we ever solve philosophical problems and how?), and have assigned a prominent role to the study of language” (Sbisà 2011a: 11)

This philosophical interest in language basically took two forms. Gustav Bergmann wrote in the fifties of the last century that “*all linguistic philosophers talk about the world by means of talking about a suitable language. This is the linguistic turn, the fundamental gambit as a method, on which ordinary and ideal language philosophers agree*” (Bergmann cited in: Bachmann-Medick 2006: 33). Of course there are important differences between ideal language philosophers and ordinary language philosophers.

Sbisà points out that most analytical philosophers before WW II were interested in the discovery of misleading features of everyday and philosophical language use. The issue of unreliability of assertions was at stake. Faced with the success of the positivist sciences, philosophers became increasingly occupied with matters such as “*the relations between philosophical and scientific languages and the logic underlying the languages of the sciences*” (Sbisà 2011a: 14). These ideal-language philosophers take meaning to be truth-conditional. Such perspectives may be found in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* and in Frege’s way of connecting thought and truth. However, Sbisà emphasises that the later Wittgenstein and a post-WWII generation of ordinary language philosophers were critical of this view. With varying degrees, ordinary language philosophers refused the view that meaning could be analysed as a set of truth-conditions, independently from actual language use

(alone). Also, the philosopher Paul Grice would come to argue that meaning should be primarily considered as a certain kind of speaker intention (Sbisà 2011b: 9).

There are important Cartesian overtones in a notion of meaning defined as truth-conditional and as related to speaker-intentions. Since both ideal and ordinary language philosophies are formative traditions for linguistic pragmatics, we should not be surprised to find a Cartesian gloss in a variety of linguistic pragmatic perspectives. However, if we consider linguistic pragmatics as a turn or as a holistic perspective on language use, Kopytko is right to suggest that this leads us toward an anti-Cartesian theory of man and subjectivity.

Linguistic pragmatics as ordinary language philosophy I: Wittgenstein

Verschueren points out that in addition to Wittgenstein's programme of relating meaning to language use, the philosophy of language produced two of the main theories underlying present-day pragmatics: Austin's speech act theory and the Grice's concept of conversational logic (Verschueren 2009: 4). We shall briefly touch upon these formative perspectives and point to some interesting similarities and differences with respect to the pragmatist and poststructuralist notions of discourse and subjectivity discussed in this book.

Wittgenstein is often quoted as one of the most important philosophers that contributed to the development of contemporary linguistic pragmatics. Within this context, commentators usually refer to his later work as written down in his *Philosophical investigations* which can be read as a critique of the views he articulated as an ideal-language philosopher. According to Leilich, the most striking difference is that "*Wittgenstein no longer believes that there is something like an essence of human language, some general characteristics language must have to be able to function as a means of representation*". Moreover, Wittgenstein no longer holds the view that meaning results from a correspondence between logical forms and the forms of reality. Rather, he argues that there is no single way in which language becomes meaningful (Leilich 2011: 302-03). Wittgenstein describes his new view on language with reference to notions such as language games, family resemblances and rules. Leilich rearticulates Wittgenstein's notion of the language game as follows:

"This view on language is summarized by the famous discussion of games. If one would ask what a game is, one would have difficulties to give a general definition, because each definition would let out some activity we would call a game. There is no collection of necessary features such as an adversary or a board, which all games would have to share in order to be games; Instead of general features which are common to all games we find family-resemblance, a network of overlapping and criss-crossing similarities" (Leilich 2011: 303)

Just as we do different things as we play games, we do different things when we use language. The activities involved share a series of family resemblances at best. However, there is also another analogy to be drawn between games and language use. Both games and language use are characterized by rules. According to Wittgenstein, language should be thought of as a rule-guided activity. Leilich summarises Wittgenstein as follows (Leilich 2011: 304-05):

"If rules prescribe something, it is not so much the rule which does something with us, but something has the character of a rule because we make a certain use of it. Something becomes a rule because we establish a certain social practice and without this practice rules do not exist".

Moreover, rules and language games are always practiced within specific forms of life that may be defined as the non-linguistic contextual aspects of reality. All these principles highlight the idea that meaning varies according to (the rules of) contextualised language use (Kopytko 2007: 794-97).

Wittgenstein's formulation of the way language functions in terms of family resemblances between rules and language games entails a view on discourse and subjectivity which is quite anti-Cartesian. Even though Wittgenstein did not have any serious knowledge of American pragmatism, he responded to some of the same deficiencies in modern philosophy as the pragmatists did before him and as the (post-) structuralists would do after him (Bernstein 2010: x). Pragmatism did not come to an end with the arrival of analytical philosophy. On the contrary, it might be said that analytical philosophers such as Wittgenstein were able to advance themes that were anticipated by the classical pragmatists. As such, the claim that analytical philosophy displaced pragmatism in the US after WWII is a gross simplification. Bernstein points out that pragmatist themes have not been limited to philosophy in North America (Bernstein 2010: 14-15).

With respect to our poststructuralist notion of subjectivity as an articulation of discursive elements through a variety of interpretive logics, it should be pointed out that Howarth and Glynos conceptualize logics as a set of rules in the Wittgensteinian sense. This is by no means a coincidence. Howarth and Glynos link their notion of logic to Wittgenstein:

“a logic distills what Wittgenstein calls ‘the essence’ of a practice, though we need to add his important reminder that this is not an essentialist operation that penetrates below the surface to its singular ground, but seeks instead to investigate the ‘possibilities’ of phenomena – ‘the kind of statements that we make about phenomena’ – in various spatial and temporal contexts. This means, first, that the concept of a logic does not refer to the formal analysis of propositions in order to determine their validity or truth-value, or to establish the logical essence of a practice, for this runs the risk of ‘subliming’ logic by conceding it a super-hard, transcendental status in relation to the world of empirical propositions” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 135)

The name of Ludwig Wittgenstein often pops up in anti-essentialist arguments within poststructuralist perspectives on discourse (see: Glynos and Howarth 2007; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Torfing 1999). But he also figures in linguistic pragmatic argumentations. For instance, the pragmatically oriented linguistic anthropologist Alessandro Duranti considers Wittgenstein's notion of language game to constitute a much richer framework for linguistic analysis than the speech act theory of Austin and Searle. Duranti argues that the stress put on the importance of individual intentions by Austin and Searle is less useful for ethnographic studies of language use than the concept of language games which allows social activities and forms of life to play a more important role in the analysis of speech (Leilich 2011). In fact, most text-books and introductions to linguistic pragmatics refer to Wittgenstein's work.

Linguistic pragmatics as ordinary language philosophy II: speech acts and intentionality

Another key concept in ordinary language philosophy that has influenced the development of both pragmatist, poststructuralist and linguistic pragmatic accounts of subjectivity and discourse is the concept of speech acts.

Austin developed his theory of language out of the need to overcome problems encountered in philosophy. He reacted against the early work of Wittgenstein and Russell and to the philosophy of language that had developed in Vienna around Neurath, Schilick, Carnap and Tarski. He thus challenged types of philosophy that *“had reduced the function of (an ideal) language to depicting (true or false) states of affairs”* and against the associated formal and truth-conditional semantics. That is, a type of semantics in which the meaning of a sentence is defined in terms of the conditions in the world under which a sentence may be used to make a true statement. It is useful to take a look at how Austin criticises the logicism or ideal-language philosophy as advocated by Carnap (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 366-68):

“the supposed ‘ideal language [...] is in many ways a most inadequate model of an actual language: its careful separation of syntactics from semantics, its list of explicitly formulated rules and conventions, and its careful delimitation of their spheres of operation – are all misleading. An actual language has few, if any explicit conventions, no sharp limits to the spheres of operation of rules, no rigid separation of what is syntactical and what semantical”. (Austin cited in: Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 366-68)

Austin knew about Morris’s distinction between syntax, pragmatics and semantics. Even though he rarely uses the term pragmatics, *“he implicitly argues for an integration of syntactics and semantics into pragmatics, or the study of the use of words in the situation of a speech act”* (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 368). On the other hand, it is interesting to note that he admitted to Pitcher that he had chosen the title of his contribution to the William James lecture series (*How to do things with words*) *“for its pragmatic ring, to honour the man for whom the lectures were named”* (Pitcher cited in: Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 368).

In the 1940s, Austin noticed a particular kind of utterance that he chose to call performatives, distinguishing them from constatives. Performative utterances such as ‘I now pronounce you man and wife’, or ‘I christen this ship the Mr Stalin’ don’t simply state things but actually do things. They are performative in the following sense: they marry people and baptize ships. The point is that the utterance of these words themselves performs these ritual actions and thus transforms reality. Constatives rather convey information and state things. However, Austin would eventually abandon the distinction between constatives and performatives, arguing that all saying is doing (Robinson 2006: 43-45). Within speech act theory, the speech act is considered to be the basic unit of communication. Austin holds that an utterance involves the simultaneous performance of three types of acts: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts (Sbisà 2009: 231-32). He thus replaced the distinction between constatives and performatives by a distinction between locutions (the act of uttering a string of sounds), illocutions (what is intended to be done by saying something), and perlocutions (the intersubjective effects scored by the speech act) (Verschueren 1999: 22-23).

Austin also distinguished between explicit and implicit speech acts. Explicit speech acts involve the explicit articulation of what one does in language. For instance, an utterance such as ‘I promise that I won’t mention your name unless I get your explicit approval’, involves an articulation of the speech act verb ‘to promise’. As we will see, the usage of speech act verbs is an indicator of metapragmatic awareness. Verschueren points out that languages contains a range of devices that indicate illocutionary force. For instance, a rising intonation at the end of a sentence in French may mark the fact that one is articulating a question. Or adverbs such as ‘frankly’, ‘seriously’, or ‘briefly’ may indicate to a hearer what a speaker is doing when performing an utterance. Word order, prosody, and a whole range of linguistic phenomena may indicate what a speaker aims to do. When marked in discourse, the illocutionary force of an utterance thus functions as a particular type of discourse deixis that marks a speaker’s metapragmatic awareness of what he or she is doing. Of course, implicit speech acts are never completely implicit since speakers and hearers are at least partly aware of what they are doing when they deal with discourse (Verschueren 1999: 25; 2004: 446). It should also be noted that implicitness does not necessarily imply a lack of awareness.

There are many categorisations of speech acts and speech act verbs (see: Allan 1998: 922-26; Robinson 2006: 76-101). I do not consider it useful to treat these within the context of this book. I am in full agreement with Robinson who argues for a type of (performative) pragmatics in which it is more important to pay attention to the dramatic complexity of people doing things with words than it is to reduce that complexity to simplistic models (Robinson 2006: 79). On the other hand, the multiplicity of typologies might sensitize a reader to the various functions performed when using language.

Austin’s approach to speech acts is neither explicitly Cartesian nor anti-Cartesian. However, his ideas have been rearticulated in Butler’s theory of performativity. We already noted how Butler draws upon Austin and his student Searle as read by Derrida (Butler 1999: xv; Robinson 2006: 40). To Butler, not

only language, but subjectivity in general is always performed. She argues that since we have no inner core that constitutes our subjectivity, we can merely construct subjectivities of self and other through performative practices inscribed on the surfaces of the body. Such practices may or may not be linguistic but all of them have the performative power to change or reproduce subjectivity and social reality (Butler 1999: xxvi-xxvii). This rearticulated version of Austin is definitely anti-Cartesian. On the other hand, it should be noted that there are strong Cartesian elements to be found in the theory of intentionality that Grice developed out of Austin's theory of speech acts.

Grice claimed that meaning could be defined with reference to the intentions of the speaker in the making of an utterance. Speaker meaning is thus considered to be "*prior to sentence meaning and it consists in the intention of the speaker to produce an effect in the hearer by means of the hearer's recognition of the intention to produce that effect*" (Sbisà 2009: 231). In order to understand this point, we have to come to grips with Austin's distinction between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary aspects of a speech act. The concept of locution designates the fact that any speech act involves an act of saying something. The locutionary dimension of a speech act involves: the performance of a phonetic act (the utterance of sound); the performance of a phatic act (the utterance of sounds and words of specific types that conform to certain rules); and rhetic acts (the act of using the words uttered with a certain meaning). The description of the illocutionary dimension of a speech act involves devoting attention to the way in which the speaker has used his or her utterance. More precisely, it involves a focus on what a speaker is doing in saying something. The illocutionary dimension of a speech act can be described by speech act verbs such as 'to order', or by nouns such as 'protest' or 'question'. Thirdly, saying something has consequences on the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the participants. The concept of perlocution designates what a speaker has brought about by performing a speech act (Sbisà 2009: 231-33).

There is much more to be said about speech acts and about the specific conditions in which they come about and in which they succeed. However, for current purposes, it suffices to note that the notion of intentionality exhibits an important Cartesian feature: the idea that intentions are prior to language. This idea has been most clearly expressed by Searle who stated that he wants "*to explain language in terms of intentionality*" and to show that there is a relation of "*logical dependence*" between intentionality and language. According to Searle there can be intentional states without speech acts but no speech acts without intentional states (Searle 1983 cited in: Leilich 1993: 156). Leilich points out that Searle's theory involves that "*there must of course be something which is prelinguistic: the mind*" (Leilich 1993: 158). This is a decidedly Cartesian claim and goes against the grain of practically every pragmatist and poststructuralist account discussed in this book. Even Habermas took issue with this aspect of Searle's writings and accused him of wanting to make an anti-linguistic turn (see: De Mulder 1993; Leilich 1993: 158).

Sbisà points out that the linguistic turn characteristic of analytic philosophy in the first half of the 20th century was gradually replaced by a representational turn in which analytic philosophers such as Grice started to focus on the question of mental representation. According to her, pragmatics has been mostly under the influence of analytic philosophy and thus tends to assume that speaker and hearer - understood as individuals endowed with individual minds - are all there is to be examined in order to account for the functions of utterer (énonciateur), addressee, agent, and observer. On the other hand, she acknowledges that (post-) phenomenological approaches allow for a contrastive perspective in which there is no simple correspondence between these discursive functions and the actual individuals physically present on the scene of the interactional event. She also recognises that authors writing outside of the analytic philosophical environment have tackled approximately similar topics. These authors include authors such as Jakobson, Benveniste, Habermas, and even Foucault (Sbisà 2011b: 6-7).

With respect to analytical philosophers, it suffices to note that their theories of mind are rather speculative compared to the empirical self advocated by pragmatists. The type of anti-Cartesian linguistic pragmatics that I wish to articulate in this book, accepts the Austinian notion of speech acts as a useful category for investigating discourse and subjectivity, but refuses to consider speech acts in

terms of discursive acts that find themselves in an unproblematic relationship of representation with respect to internal mental states. If we are to arrive at a type of linguistic pragmatics that counters both pragmatist and poststructuralist methodological deficits, this type of pragmatics will have to do without the hypothesis of a type of intentionality that exists independently of discourse.

Linguistic pragmatics as ordinary language philosophy III: conversational logic and implicatures

One last analytic philosophical approach that remains to be discussed in terms of a formative tradition for linguistic pragmatics, is Grice's theory of conversational logic. The notion of logic can be defined as the study of the validity and invalidity of inferences. However, it may also refer to the study of the logical analysis of natural language (Hobbs 2004: 725). In formal logic, correct use of language was taken to presuppose the use of logic. As can be inferred from our discussion of ordinary language philosophy above, ordinary language philosophers challenged this view on the basis of the idea that this type of logic is *"in essence an abstraction from language, and should never be made into its dominant perspective"* (Mey 1998: 720-21; see also: Vergauwen 1995). Interestingly, it was Grice who developed an alternative system of conversational logic based on conversational maxims and implicatures in order to investigate the operation of the human mind and ordinary language use (R. T. Lakoff 2009: 102).

The central ideas of Grice's theory of conversational implicature were originally presented at the William James lectures delivered at Harvard in 1967. They were partially collected and published in 1989. Grice suggested that *"there is an underlying principle that determines the way in which language is used with maximum efficiency and effectively to achieve rational interaction in communication"* (Huang 2007: 25). This principle is called the co-operative principle and it goes as follows: *"Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose and direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged"* (Grice 1975 cited in: Verschueren 1999). For Grice, co-operation is a regulative principle of rationality in general and of conversational rationality in particular. Louise Cummings puts it as follows: *"it shapes the structure of our own contributions to conversation and how we set about interpreting the contributions of others"* (Cummings 2005: 10). Put differently, Grice's theory is a formalisation of interpretive conversational logic.

Grice composed a list of four maxims accompanying the co-operative principle (Huang 2007: 25; Verschueren 1999: 32). These maxims do not present us with an account of what we actually do when we use language. Rather, they *"specify what participants have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational, co-operative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information"* (S. C. Levinson 1983: 102). Grice's conversational maxims are usually presented in the following way (Cummings 2005: 11; Huang 2007: 25; R. T. Lakoff 2009: 103; S. C. Levinson 1983: 101-02; Mey 1999: 65; Robinson 2006: 161-62; Verschueren 1999: 32):

- (1) *The maxim of quantity*: try to make your contribution one that is true
 - a. Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.
 - b. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- (2) *The maxim of quality*:
 - a. Do not say what you believe to be false
 - b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- (3) *The maxim of relation* (later called relevance): be relevant
- (4) *The maxim of manner*
 - a. Avoid obscurity of expression
 - b. Avoid ambiguity
 - c. Be brief

d. Be orderly

These maxims supposedly make up the logic of everyday conversation. This does not mean that speakers actually speak like this whole the time. Grice's point is that "*in most ordinary kinds of talk these principles are oriented to, such that when talk does not proceed according to their specifications, hearers assume that, contrary to appearances, the principles are nevertheless being adhered to at some deeper level*" (S. C. Levinson 1983: 102). There are several things a speaker can do with regard to the maxims. First of all, a speaker may simply observe them. Secondly, he or she can violate a maxim by lying, by trying to be sarcastic, ironic or funny, and so on. Thirdly, a speaker can opt out of maxims. The use of hedges is a good case in point. Huang provides us with the following examples (Huang 2007: 26-27):

Opting out hedges in English:

(a) quality:

as far as I know,
I'm not sure if this is true, but ...
I may be wrong, but ...

(b) quantity

As you probably already know,
I can't say any more
I probably don't need to say this, but ...

(c) relation

Oh, by the way,
I'm not sure if this is relevant, but ...
I don't want to change the subject, but ...

(c) manner

I'm not sure if this is clear, but ...
I don't know if this makes sense, but ...
This may be a bit tedious but ...

Huang also points out that there is evidence that speakers are not only aware of the maxims, but also that they are actually trying to follow them. A fourth way to deal with the maxims leads us to the notion of conversational implicature: the co-operative principle and the maxims can be strategically flouted or exploited in order to generate implicit meaning (Huang 2007: 27; Verschueren 1999: 31-36). However, in order to understand the importance of this notion to linguistic pragmatics, a few words need to be said about implicit meaning.

Implicit meaning can be conveyed in a variety of ways. Verschueren points out that "*languages provide numerous conventionalized carriers of implicit meaning, tools for linking explicit content to relevant aspects of background information*" (Verschueren 1999: 27). Conversational implicatures constitute only one type of implicit meaning that may be intersubjectively generated. Within linguistics, implicit phenomena have been dealt with under headings as varied as entailment, presuppositions, sous-entendu, implicatures, explicatures, implicatures, and so on. Moreover, these phenomena have been studied from perspectives such as formal logic, logic-based semantics, ordinary language philosophy, and linguistic pragmatics (Bertucelli Papi 2009: 141). It is not my intention to focus on the debates surrounding these terms. I merely wish to point out that Grice's implicatures are just one type of implicitly generated meaning. Other types of implicit meaning include: (1) presuppositions; (2) implications, logical entailments or conventional implicatures; (3) conventional or standard conversational implicatures; and (4) non-conventionals or occasion specific conversational implicatures (Verschueren 1999: 33-34). The boundaries between the various types of implicit meaning tend to be fuzzy. For practical purposes, I will introduce some useful distinctions that will prove to be useful in the analyses to come.

Levinson points out that speech acts and presuppositions are probably the two most popular concepts written about by pragmaticians. Also, he warns us that there is a difference between ordinary usage of

the word presupposition and its technical usage within linguistics. He continues and states that “*the technical sense of the term presupposition is restricted to certain pragmatic inferences or assumptions that seem at least to be built into linguistic expressions and which can be isolated using specific linguistic tests*” such as negation (S. C. Levinson 1983: 167-68). The main property of presuppositions is that they hold no matter if sentences are true or false. For instance, presuppositions in a sentence such as ‘the year of prosperity and peace has ended’ hold no matter whether this sentence is true or not. Both the change-of-state verb ‘end’ and the definite description ‘the year of prosperity and peace’ presuppose that there has been a stretch of time that can legitimately be described in those terms (Verschueren 1999: 27-30). Linguistic items that trigger presupposition generating processes among language users are called presupposition triggers. An overview presented by Levinson includes definite descriptions, factive verbs, implicative verbs, change of state verbs, iteratives, verbs of judging, temporal clauses, cleft sentences, implicit clefts with stressed constituents, comparisons, contrasts, and questions (S. C. Levinson 1983: 179-85).

Another set of implicit meanings can be conveyed through phenomena treated under the headings of implications, logical entailments or conventional implicatures. Entailments or conventional implicatures refer to those implicit meanings one arrives at by following logical inferential process: A entails B if and only if B is true whenever A is true. Take an utterance such as ‘this UN soldier is the local peace-keeper’: ‘the local peace-keeper’ logically implies or entails that this UN soldier is *a* local peace-keeper. The former is true if and only if the latter is true. As with presuppositions, entailments can be generated in discourse in a multiplicity of ways (Verschueren 1999: 30). With respect to the third and fourth type of implicit meaning mentioned by Verschueren – (3) conventional or standard conversational implicatures and (4) non-conventionals or occasion specific conversational implicatures – we need to return to Grice and his maxims. Levinson emphasises the importance of Grice’s theory of conversational implicature as follows (S. C. Levinson 1983: 103-04):

“... *the reason for linguistic interest in the maxims is that they generate inferences beyond the semantic content of the sentences uttered. Such inferences are, by definition, conversational implicature, where the term implicature is intended to contrast with terms like logical implication, entailment, and logical consequence which are generally used to refer to inferences that are derived solely from logical or semantic content. For implicatures are not semantic inferences, but rather inferences based on both the content of what has been said and some specific assumptions about the co-operative nature of ordinary verbal interaction*” (S. C. Levinson 1983: 103-04)

Even though the distinction between semantic and pragmatic aspects of language use does not make any sense if one considers pragmatics in terms of a perspective, conversational implicatures are generated through different interpretive processes than presuppositions and entailments. Implicatures arise either out of strictly observing or ostentatiously flouting the maxims (Huang 2007: 27). Levinson provides us with the following example with respect to the way speakers convey implicit messages by relying on one another’s adherence to the conversational maxims:

A (to passer by): I’ve just run out of petrol
B: Oh; there’s a garage just around the corner

B does not tell A where to get petrol in any explicit way. Rather, he produces an utterance and relies on the idea that A will interpret his message according to the co-operative principle and the related maxims. As Levinson puts it: “*if the speaker is observing the maxims in a fairly direct way, he may nevertheless rely on the addressee to amplify what he says by some straightforward inferences based on the assumption that the speaker is following the maxims*”. B’s utterance may thus be taken to implicate that A may obtain petrol at the garage. B would certainly be less than cooperative if he knew the garage was closed or did not sell any petrol (S. C. Levinson 1983: 104).

Interestingly, Verschueren points out that “*whatever conventional means are provided for conveying implicit (as well as explicit) meaning, they are always manipulable. In the same way, the impossibility*

of being fully explicit in language lends itself to strategic exploitation". He goes on and points out that creative strategic exploitation of restrictions on the possibility of explicitness is one of the resources for the generation of meaning through language use. Flaunting or breaching conversational maxims is one of the ways in which this exploitation comes in (Verschueren 1999: 31, 33). Huang points out that if one is faced with conspicuous flouting by the speaker, the addressee has two options. The speaker may think that in addition to the maxims, the co-operative principle is breached as well. However, he or she may also assume that despite the speaker's apparent failure for co-operation, he or she is still observing the co-operative principle. In the latter case, the speaker might reason as follows: *"If the speaker is still co-operative, and if he or she is exploiting a maxim in such a way that I should recognize the infringement, then he or she is doing so in order to convey some extra message, which is in keeping with the co-operative principle at some deeper level"* (Huang 2007: 29). In the following example the maxim of quality is breached: 'Chomsky is a great sociolinguist'. If one knows that Chomsky is no sociolinguist at all, and if one still adheres to the co-operative principle, the addressee must assume that the speaker is trying to convey something different from what he or she has actually said. It is very likely that the speaker is taken to imply the opposite to the literal meaning of the sentence. Put differently, the utterance may be interpreted as ironic. Similar analyses can be made with respect to other breachings and with respect to other figures of speech such as metaphors or hyperboles (Huang 2007: 29-30).

There is much more to be said about maxims and the conditions under which they trigger particular inferences. For current purposes, it suffices to note that Grice's theory is predicated on a model of communication which attaches a great deal of normative value on rationality and efficiency. However, Verschueren notes that social behaviour also incorporates norms which would seem to require breaches of the maxims. For instance, norms of politeness and specific types of verbal activity such as humour would barely be possible with complete adherence to the maxims. On the other hand, a stretch of discourse which follows the maxims diligently might itself turn out to be quite humorous for precisely for that reason. As Verschueren points out: *"politeness and humour both exploit the impossibility of full explicitness strategically, using many of the mechanisms described by Grice, to generate implicated meaning"* (Verschueren 1999: 35-36).

Grice's theory of conversational implicature has been formative for the development of linguistic pragmatics for a variety of reasons. It draws our attention to the way in which we convey implicit meanings and to the way in which we relate linguistic utterances to non-verbalised aspects of contextual reality. Even though there is a strong normative dimension in this view on rational discursive interaction, Grice's theoretical framework has been applied in numerous studies of verbal interaction. It shows that the logic of ordinary language use is different from formal logic but nevertheless systematic in its organisation.

Linguistic pragmatics as a reaction against various forms of structuralism

Contemporary linguistic pragmatics was not informed by ordinary language philosophy alone. It should be noted that the writings of authors such as Wittgenstein and Austin were virtually unknown outside the UK until the late 1960's. Only after the publication of Searle's *Speech acts* in 1969, inroads were made into what later became known as pragmatic theory. There was a growing irritation among a new generation of linguistic practitioners with the lack of interest in actual language use among established linguistics such as Noam Chomsky (Mey 1998: 717, 20). This impatience would ultimately trigger the pragmatic dam burst described above. Moreover, it is within this context that a new generation of linguists were surprised to discover intellectual allies in the domain of ordinary language philosophy:

"When linguistic pioneers such as Ross and Lakoff staked claim in pragmatics in the late 1960's, they encountered there an indigenous breed of philosophers of language who had been quietly cultivating the territory for some time. In fact, the more lasting influences on modern pragmatics have

been those of philosophers; notably, in recent years, Austin (1962), Searle (1969), and Grice” (Leech 1983 cited in: Mey 1998: 717)

The shift towards a pragmatic and functional consideration of discourse in terms of (inter)subjective social action and processes, would prove to be one of the factors contributing to the success of the linguistic turn across the disciplines. Pragmatics oriented researchers started to investigate empirical data of language-related actions and processes without losing sight of the various contextual layers that play a role in these actions and processes. Pragmatic interpretations of abstract notions such as narrative, dialogue, or genre allow for an analysis of the material traces of interpretive processes that speakers and writers leave behind at the micro-level of discursive production (Zienkowski 2011: 7-8). The vocabularies and metaphors deployed by pragmatically oriented authors vary greatly. It is possible to observe an increasingly pragmatic orientation in heterogeneous approaches as varied as: text and discourse analysis, studies of narrative, enunciation, polyphony, intertextuality, cohesion, coherence, appraisal, public discourse, genre, figures of speech, discourse markers, and so on (see: Zienkowski 2011). In all of these areas of investigation, a dynamic and functional view of language as composed of something more than just grammatical structures started to emerge.

Jan Blommaert points out that during the 1980’s and 1990’s, pragmatics provided a forum for the integration of various branches of discourse related scholarship. These branches include: rhetoric, semiotics, stylistics, narrative analysis, anthropology, literary studies, cultural theory, and other social-scientific domains (Blommaert 2011 in press: 1):

“Going back to clear early expressions in the work of e.g. Morris (1983) and Austin (1962), pragmatics maintained that language needed to be seen as an agentive, active and dynamic object which operates between people in particular activity patterns (the interactional dimension), where such patterns are socially, culturally and politically constituted. Pragmatics, in short, shifted from language to ‘communication’ as currently understood, or from a Saussurean langue to parole, and the question guiding work in pragmatics was (pace Austin) ‘what do people do with language?’.” (Blommaert 2011 in press: 1-2).

Historically speaking, the re-appraisal of ordinary language philosophy by researchers focussing on patterns of language use, has to be contextualised as a reaction against Anglo-American and continental forms of linguistic structuralism. Pragmatics thus constitutes a variant of poststructuralist thought in the temporal and in the theoretical sense of the word (see: Zienkowski and Angermüller forthcoming). John Gumperz pointed out that when structuralists such as Boas, Sapir, or Whorf spoke of language structure, *“they generally refer to abstract features provided by decontextualizing procedures which take into account only a portion of the totality of signs that may enter into the interpretation of communicative acts”* (Gumperz 1982: 16). Gumperz thus articulated one of the main pragmatic arguments against most forms of structuralism: we cannot investigate interpretations on the basis of decontextualised claims about the nature of a language. Or, as Emile Benveniste, the pioneer of French enunciative pragmatics once put it: *“nothing is in language that has not been before in discourse”* (Benveniste 1974 cited in: Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 81). Consequently, both French and Anglo-American approaches to pragmatics take their point of departure in the sense of language as *parole*. Language was no longer merely an issue of structure (see: Zienkowski and Angermüller forthcoming). It was considered in terms of a series of intersubjective processes, actions, and strategies deployed by speakers and hearers. As such, interlocutors are always involved in a negotiation wherein the assessment of one another’s communications and intentions is at stake (Gumperz 1982: 153).

Pragmatics also emerged as a reaction against certain Cartesian and structuralist theses posited by Noam Chomsky. The ethnographer and anthropological linguist Charles Briggs points out that contemporary linguistic pragmatics constitutes a reaction against the idealist features of Chomsky’s perspective on language and subjectivity (Briggs 1997: 451):

“While its roots certainly run much deeper, pragmatics was formed in part by a reaction against Chomsky’s foundational fiction: ‘linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-hearer in a completely homogeneous speech community (1965:3)’ (Briggs 1997: 451).

Briggs continues and draws an interesting parallel between Chomsky and de Saussure: *“If marginalizing context, dialogue, interaction, and history was the prime issue here, we could just as easily decry the power of Ferdinand de Saussure’s (1959[1916]) Course in General Linguistics in marginalizing the study of what he called parole for half a century” (Briggs 1997: 451).* Nevertheless, it might be argued that there is a pragmatic dimension to Chomsky’s *transformational grammar*. Chomsky’s language user is called the *speaker-hearer* and is endowed with a tacit knowledge of language (grammar) and some appropriateness conditions of language use. According to Chomsky, he or she possesses both grammatical and pragmatic knowledge: *“the first may be represented cognitively as a set of syntactic (and morphological) rules of a language; the second as a set of rules (or principles) specifying the appropriate conditions of language use” (Kopytko 2000: 792).* Chomsky thus distinguished between the way individual language users go about their language in everyday life on the one hand, and a speaker-hearer’s abstract competence which can be defined as his or her knowledge of the language and its rules. His distinction does not only exhibit Cartesian overtones, it is also possible to identify a strong structuralist theme (Mey 1998: 722):

“If this opposition is kept as a valid one, the study of language can simply be divided into two largely independent parts: one a description of its structure (as dealt with in the classical descriptions or grammars), the other a description of its use (to be taken care of by pragmatics) (see Language as a Social Reality)” (Mey 1998: 722)

Chomsky draws a direct parallel between syntactic processes and thought (another feature of structuralism) and argues that we should distinguish between two levels of syntactic structure: *“a deep or underlying structure consisting of abstract entities, and a surfaces structure which reflects the linear ordering of morphemic elements” (Gumperz 1982: 17).* In addition, he believes that *“the structure of language is determined by the structure of the human mind and that the universality of certain properties characteristic of language is evidence that at least this part of human nature is common to all members of the species, regardless of their race or class and their undoubted differences in intellect, personality and physical attributes” (Lyons 1970: 15).* Chomsky thus takes an instrumental view of language that exhibits an interesting mixture of structuralist and Cartesian premises. In contrast with most contemporary pragmaticians, he claims that it is possible to distinguish between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence:

“For purposes of inquiry and exposition, we may proceed to distinguish ‘grammatical competence’ from ‘pragmatic competence’, restricting the first to the knowledge of form and meaning and the second to knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use, in conformity with various purposes. Thus we may think of language as an instrument that can be put to use. The grammar of the language characterizes the instrument, determining intrinsic physical and semantic properties of every sentence. The grammar thus expresses grammatical competence. A system of rules and principles constituting pragmatic competence determines how the tool can effectively be put to use”. (Chomsky 1980 cited in: Verschueren 2009: 8)

Verschueren points out that many pragmaticians would disagree with this component view of language since *“[...] language is not a ‘thing’ which leads an independent and unchanging life once it has been ‘made’. It requires constant adaptations to different purposes and circumstances of use.” (Verschueren 2009).* Pragmaticians are highly sensitive with respect to reified concepts of language since they tend to investigate language in terms of intersubjective processes and actions. As a result, pragmatic researchers of various sorts tend to de-reify the things we consider discourse to be (Zienkowski 2011: 7-8). Gumperz points out that the relevance of generative grammar is quite limited with respect to the study of verbal interaction since it deals with *“language at a level of abstraction which is too general to account for situated interpretation” (Gumperz 1982: 19).* Chomsky holds that theory construction must precede empirical investigation and that the linguist’s main task is to test

hypotheses with respect to basic theory . His idealist and universalist claims with respect to grammar and language users and theory formation goes against the grain of the emic orientations of many anthropologists and ethnographers. Emic researchers advocate a form of analysis in which native perceptions of significance are taken into account in the analysis of the social phenomena under investigation (Gumperz 1982: 17-21). They tend to be highly critical with respect to theories with universalist pretensions.

Anthropological linguists that started to advocate ethnographic methods on a large-scale from the 1950's on. As we will see, they came to take issue with a number of assumptions that function at least implicitly in Chomsky's account of language and the subject. These include that "(a) *human speech behavior can be described in terms of a discrete set of grammatical systems which, although they build on a universal grammatical base, nevertheless constitute structurally distinct entities which are coterminous with particular languages or dialects; (b) grammaticality judgements elicited in special interview situations reveal the basic signalling mechanisms that serve to convey meaning in human interaction; (c) the role of language in human communication can be reduced to the signalling of referential of lexical meaning and grammatical relations; (d) understanding messages is a matter of unidirectional, bottom up interpretive processes which begin with the perception of sound and then proceed in turn to words, phrases and sentences*" (Gumperz 1982: 20).

We have not investigated all of these aspects of Chomsky's theory. However, it suffices to note that these theoretical presuppositions were problematic to many ethnographers who rejected assumptions about that supported the idea of uniform grammatical systems and human minds (Gumperz 1982: 22-25).

Interestingly, Louise Cummings draws a parallel between Noam Chomsky's study of generative grammar on the one hand, and Habermas' universal pragmatics on the other: "*Habermas extends to a study of communication the type of analysis that is pursued by Chomsky in relation to grammar*". Both perspectives share the presupposition that a speaker's linguistic competence can be studied in isolation from his linguistic performance in a particular occasion (Cummings 2005: 199-200). However, both perspectives also share some strong Cartesian presuppositions. Chomsky maintains that children possess an inborn knowledge of the universal principles governing the structure of human language. According to him, these principles are part of what we call the 'mind'. Moreover, he holds that these principles structure the mode of operation of the brain in a way that is highly compatible with Cartesian and other rationalist ideas (Lyons 1970: 106). Lyons explains Chomsky's relationship to Descartes as follows:

"Many philosophers, and most notably perhaps Descartes, have drawn a very sharp distinction between 'body' and 'mind'; and they have claimed that the physiological functions and operations of the 'body', unlike the workings of the 'mind', are subject to the same 'mechanical', or 'physical', laws as the rest of the 'material' world. Chomsky's position is, however, somewhat different. Like Descartes and other 'mentalists', he believes that human behaviour is, in part at least undetermined by external stimuli or internal physiological states: he is thus opposed to 'mechanism' (or 'physicism', in the usual sense). On the other hand, he differs from Descartes and most philosophers who would normal be called 'mentalist' in that he does not subscribe to the ultimate irreducibility of the distinction between 'body' and 'mind'." (Lyons 1970: 107)

We already noticed how pragmatics as a perspective "*goes far beyond the idealized properties of the Cartesian model, leading us straight to a non-Cartesian pragmatics*" (Kopytko 2000: 791). In a similar vein, early and late pragmatists emphasised the fact that we should study the empirical self and not some abstract Cartesian hypothesis. Moreover, poststructuralist authors of various sorts have always advocated the historical contingency and overdetermination of any type of subjectivity. For these reasons, I will not consider Chomsky's transformational grammar as a pragmatic perspective on language use even though we have to admit that his theoretical propositions also pertain to the question of linguistic performance. Also, it is interesting to note that Habermas' and Chomsky's focus on the universal features of language, thought, discourse, and communication, leads them to numerous

conflicts with pragmatic, pragmatist, *and* poststructuralist authors. For instance, the debate between Chomsky and Foucault is indicative of a tension between humanist vs anti-humanist and Cartesian vs anti-Cartesian theoretical postulates.

French linguistic pragmatics I: contextualising enunciative linguistics

French discourse analysis was initially a quantitative structuralist enterprise based on Althusserian principles established by Marxist pioneers such as Michel Pêcheux (see: Angermüller ; Hak and Helsloot 1995; G. Williams 1999). During the sixties, analysts working in this field were mostly interested in discourse in terms of “*an organized corpus of linguistic material, especially written texts*”. This approach thus contrasts significantly with the type of discourse analysis as developed in the Anglo-American debate, where the influence of pragmatism and analytical philosophy ensured a consideration of discourse in terms of organised symbolic conversational interaction (Angermüller: 102).

However, it is probably less well-known that “*since the late 1970’s the French debate on discourse has been increasingly dominated by pragmatics*”. This pragmatic turn was characterized by an abandonment of the Saussurean opposition between *langue* and *parole* in favour of *énonciation* and *énoncé* (Angermüller 2006: 1). Enunciative linguistics thus constitutes merely one strand of French discourse analysis. It is a variation that has many intellectual sources (see: Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011; Nerlich and Clarke 1994, 1996; G. Williams 1999). However, for current purposes, it suffices to deal with enunciative linguistics as a formative tradition for contemporary linguistic pragmatics. As such, I will not present an overview of the various phases in the development of this approach to language use. Rather, I will highlight some of the most relevant authors and ideas that may help us to arrive at an understanding of linguistic pragmatics as an interpretive functionalist approach to discourse.

The notion of *énonciation* refers to the act of producing an utterance whereas the notion of *énoncé* refers to the product of an act of uttering. The abandonment of the opposition between *langue* and *parole* in favour of the distinction between *énonciation* and *énoncé* was indicative of rising pragmatic concerns in French linguistics. The French pragmatic turn is characterized by the development of a multiplicity of concepts designating the fact that there is always a subject involved in the practice of *énonciation* or enunciation. This subject is conceived in different terms depending on the particularities of the enunciative theoretical framework. Nevertheless, the type of subjectivity involved is always of a heterogeneous and decentered nature (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 71-72). For the moment it should be noted that authors active in this field write about locutors, enunciators, speakers, or utterers (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 71-72). Todorov recognises the proliferation of terminologies at the beginning of the seventies and clarifies these notions as follows:

“*Les jargons ayant tendance à se multiplier à ce stade des recherches, fixons dès à présent le sens de quelques termes simples et essentiels: allocution = énonciation d’un discours adressé à quelqu’un; locuteur = celui qui énonce; allocutaire = celui à qui s’adresse le discours; interlocuteur = l’un des participants d’une allocution (indifféremment lequel).*” (Todorov 1970: 4)

The French linguistic pragmatician Emile Benveniste was among the first to refuse the *langue* / *parole* distinction on the basis of the idea that “*nothing is in language that has not been before in discourse*” (Benveniste 1974 quoted in: Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 81). In his landmark article on the formal apparatus of enunciation (*L’appareil formel de l’énonciation*), he states that “*before enunciation, language is nothing but the possibility of language*”⁴⁰. At the same time, “*after the enunciation, language is effected in an instance of discourse that emanates from a locutor, as an*

⁴⁰ “*Avant l’énonciation, la langue n’est que la possibilité de la langue*” (Benveniste 1970: 14)

auditory form that reaches a listener and that incites another enunciation in response”⁴¹. This may seem a lot like stating the obvious. However, things become more complicated if one takes a look at the theoretical postulates that accompany these statements. In addition to this act of uttering, the process of enunciation also involves a process of appropriation. The locutor appropriates the formal apparatus of the language and indexically positions him- or herself through a variety of procedures towards the other. At the same time, Benveniste points out that any enunciation is – implicitly or explicitly – also an allocution in the sense that it posits an allocutor (*allocutaire*) (Benveniste 1970: 14).

French enunciative linguistics developed out of the Saussurian tradition and out of traditional approaches to grammar, whereas the Anglo-American tradition was more heavily influenced by analytical philosophy and logic (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 71). Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that Benveniste’s theory of enunciation entertains discrete but explicit links with Anglo-American philosophic pragmatism and ordinary language philosophy. Benveniste was also influenced by Jakobson’s functionalist approach to language in his attempt to develop a theory of meaning that would be both structural and functional. Benveniste wished to overcome the split between a linguistics of language and a linguistics of parole. It is in this sense, that he would come to find support in the pragmatism of Peirce and Morris, but also in the analytical philosophy of people such as Austin (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 286-87). In addition to Roman Jakobson, Mikhail Bakhtin and Michel Foucault should be mentioned as important theorists whose work has informed the development of enunciative linguistics (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 81). I will touch upon the impact of Jakobson and Bakhtin further on. For the moment, it suffices to briefly focus on the Foucaultian contribution to enunciation theory.

We already noticed that Foucault defined the basic unit of discourse – the statement or *énoncé* – as an enunciative function that relates various discursive and non-discursive aspects of reality with one another (Foucault 1969: 119-20). In spite of the similarity in terminology, it should be pointed out that the Foucaultian statement or *énoncé* should be distinguished from the strictly linguistic *énoncé* as conceptualized by Benveniste. In an interview with the French discourse analyst Dominique Maingueneau, Johannes Angermüller asks what the problem of enunciation is about and why it was picked up by many discourse analysts in the seventies (Maingueneau and Angermüller 2007). Interestingly, he also asks to what extent Foucault can be considered as a precursor of enunciation theory. Maingueneau responds as follows:

“As I said, Foucault’s approach has largely benefitted from the pragmatic and enunciative turn which has taken place in linguistics and the entire social and human sciences. The structuralist conception of language and texts has turned out to be of limited compatibility regarding the reflection on the social inscriptions of discourse. Originally, the work on enunciation was done by linguists (Charles Bally, Emile Benveniste, Roman Jakobson, Antoine Culioli and others), who were not interested in discourse analysis at all, but just wanted to improve the understanding of the way natural languages work. They studied phenomena like deictical elements (particularly linguistic pronouns: “I”, “you”, “we” ...), modalities, verbal tenses, reported speech, etc. Pragmatic currents (John L. Austin, John Searle, Paul Grice etc.) by contrast were mainly interested in the philosophy of language. But both of them have contributed to the elaboration of powerful instruments for the analysis of discursive practices. As Foucault underlines, “the order of discourse”, is situated on the unstable border between language as a system (langue) and social practices. Whatever can give consistency to the study of this order of discourse is, therefore useful, and particularly notions like speech acts, genres of discourse, enunciation, polyphony, textual coherence, etc., which imply a notion of language as cooperative activity rather than monological representation, as was the case in the dominant tradition of Western philosophy of language, in which rhetoric was separated from logic.” (Maingueneau and Angermüller 2007)

⁴¹ “Après l’énonciation, la langue est effectuée en un instance de discours, qui émane d’un locuteur, forme sonore qui atteint un auditeur et qui suscite une autre énonciation en retour” (Benveniste 1970: 14)

Maingueneau's work can be described as an attempt to bring these pragmatist, French linguistic pragmatic and poststructuralist perspectives together in a coherent framework (see: Maingueneau 1991). For current purposes, it is important to retain the idea that Foucault's notion of the statement as an enunciative modality is not reducible to the linguistic functions of enunciation discussed by Benveniste. On the other hand, Angermüller argues that within the French context, it is Michel Foucault who breaks with the model of discourse deployed by structuralist Marxist linguists such as Michel Pêcheux. Even though Foucault's notion of discursive statements or enunciative modalities is not reducible to a linguistic phenomenon, Foucault devotes significant attention to the socio-historical aspects of discourse. To Foucault, the *énoncé* (understood as a discursive function) emerges out of situated discursive practices. Nevertheless, he gives hardly any hints as to how a linguistic analysis of utterances might look like (Angermüller: 105-09). This brings us once again to the poststructuralist methodological deficit discussed in previous chapters.

We already noticed how according to Sbisà, pragmatics has been mostly under the influence of analytic philosophy throughout the 20th century and thus tends to think about speakers and hearers in terms of individuals endowed with individual minds. Even though this might be true for many Anglo-American approaches to linguistic pragmatics, this is definitely not the case for the linguistics of enunciation. French enunciative linguistics is and always has been an explicitly anti-Cartesian and anti-humanist type of pragmatics. It is a theory of subjectivity and discourse with numerous links to various types of poststructuralist – most notably Lacanian and Foucaultian – thought. But what is even more pressing, is the fact that enunciative linguistics provides us with fine-grained linguistic tools to investigate the micro-processes or techniques that allow selves to relate themselves to relevant aspects of context. Also, it provides us with a set of tools that allows us to investigate the specific ways in which discourses are interpretively deployed. Lastly, it enables a linguistic analysis of the way multiple aspects of a sense of self and coherence are intersubjectively established.

French linguistic pragmatics II: function and indexicality in the work of Roman Jakobson and Emile Benveniste

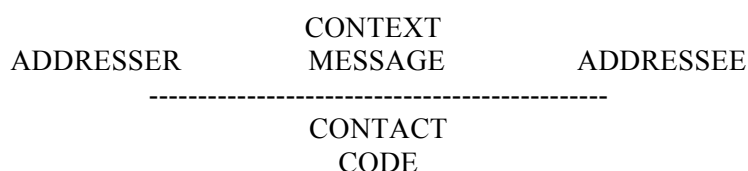
Both pragmatist and poststructuralist accounts of self and subjectivity begin with a problematisation of our usage of pronouns. The same goes for the poststructuralist form of linguistic pragmatics that we encounter in the work of the French theorists of enunciation such as Emile Benveniste, Oswald Ducrot, or Jacqueline Authier-Revuz. Considering the similarities between contemporary French and Anglo-American accounts of discourse, context, and indexicality, it is useful to underscore that Benveniste's work should be understood in relation to Roman Jakobson's writings. It is not my intention to discuss Jakobson's status as a structuralist or as a poststructuralist. I merely want to introduce some of his pragmatic ideas that impacted upon the development of French enunciative linguistics.

Being the head of the Prague school of linguistics, Jakobson went beyond Saussure by looking at the act of speaking from an intentional, interactional, and functional point of view. (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 280). After his encounter with Peirce's work on the sign in the early fifties, Jakobson would come to emphasise the importance of context in the interpretation of signs (Chandler 2002: 34-35). He would also grow sensitive to the importance of the Peircian notion of indexicality. These pragmatic interests culminated in his 1957 article on *Shifters, verbal categories and the Russian verb* (see: Jakobson 1971) and in his 1960 article on *Linguistics and poetics* (see: Jakobson 2003a). The influence of de Saussure and Peirce can also be observed in his 1971 article on *Two aspects of language and two types of aphasic disturbances* (Jakobson 2003b).

Jakobson argued that there are six basic functions of communication that should be adequately performed in order for messages to be exchanged. These functions are referential, poetic, emotive, phatic, metalingual and connative. They “vary in their relative importance and expressive salience within a given speech situation, but are always present in the situation”. Every communication is

therefore characterized by a polyphony of functions that are simultaneously performed (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 258). Jakobson provides us with the following explanatory scheme (Jakobson 2003a):

“Language must be investigated in all the variety of its functions. Before discussing the poetic function we must define its place among the other functions of language. An outline of these functions demands a concise survey of the constitutive factors in any speech event, in any act of verbal communication. The ADDRESSER sends as MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE. To be operative the message requires a context referred to (“referent” in another, somewhat ambiguous, nomenclature), seizable by the addressee, and neither verbal or capable of being verbalized; a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and decoder of the message); and, finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication. All these factors inalienably involved in verbal communication may be schematized as follows:



This model of communication is obviously based on a conduit metaphor of language. It is therefore important to point out that this metaphor was not introduced in order to advocate a simplistic encoding/decoding model of language. Rather, it was a scheme developed to clarify the idea that *“the verbal structure of a message depends primarily on the predominant function”*. The meaning of a message will vary according to specific aspects or functions of communication we orient ourselves to. In Jakobson’s scheme this means the following: an orientation towards (non-textual) context implies an orientation towards the referential, denotative or cognitive functions of language. An orientation towards the emotive function of communication implies a focus on the addresser’s attitude towards what he or she is speaking about. Likewise, if one focuses on the conative function, one orients oneself to the addressee. Jakobson refers to Malinowski when he describes the phatic function of communication which implies an orientation to communication as a means to establish interpersonal contact regardless of the information conveyed. There is also a metalingual function that enables us to check whether addresser and addressee make use of the same code. This function is performed when we use language to talk about our language. Lastly, Jakobson identifies a poetic function of communication. When we speak we use some words and not others. Jakobson explains this function in Saussurean terminology: *“The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination”* (Jakobson 2003a: 88-92). It has to do with the flexible form / function relationships that are temporarily fixed when we make communicative choices.

Jakobson’s functional view of language is also observable in his work on shifters. According to him, any linguistic code contains a particular class of grammatical units which may be called shifters. These include pronouns and other indexical signs whose meaning cannot be defined without a reference to the message. Jakobson continues and explains how shifters function (Jakobson 1971: 131-32):

“Their semiotic nature was discussed by Burks in his study on Peirce’s classification of signs into symbols, indices, and icons. According to Peirce, a symbol (e.g. the English word red) is associated with the represented object by a conventional rule, while an index (e.g. the act of pointing) is in existential relation with the object it represents. Shifters combine both functions and belong therefore to the class of INDEXICAL SYMBOLS. As a striking example Burks cites the personal pronoun. I means the person uttering I. Thus on the one hand, the sign I cannot represent its object without being associated with the latter “by a conventional rule”, and in different codes the same meaning is assigned to different sequences such as I, ego, Ich, ja etc.: consequently I is a symbol. On the other hand, the sign I cannot represent its object without “being in existential relation” with this

object: the word I designating the utterer is existentially related to his utterance, and hence functions as an index (cf. Benveniste).” (Jakobson 1971: 131-32)

The reference to Benveniste at the end of the quote above is quite ironic if one considers that it was Jakobson who became famous for his theory of shifters even though he did not go much beyond Benveniste. Nevertheless, it is Jakobson’s article on shifters such as deictics and pronouns that has been heralded as the beginning of modern linguistic pragmatics and as the origin of a thoroughly anthropological pragmatics in the US. It is also interesting to note that Jakobson had read Benveniste’s 1956 article on pronouns – an article that appeared in a volume published in honour of Jakobson’s work (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 282-83).

French linguistic pragmatics III: Subjectivity and polyphony as marked in discourse

French enunciative pragmatics is a decidedly anti-Cartesian enterprise. This becomes obvious when we take a look at the way subjectivity relates to language according to Benveniste. He writes that it is in and through language that man constitutes him or herself as a subject. The link with the pronominal system will become obvious if one considers Benveniste’s definition of subjectivity⁴²:

“The « subjectivity » we are discussing here is the locutor’s capacity to posit himself as « subject ». It is not defined by the feeling which everybody experiences of being himself, but as the psychic unity that transcends the totality of the actual experiences it assembles and that makes the permanence of consciousness” (Benveniste 1974: 259)

This unity is achieved through the usage of and the subjection to the pronominal system. Glyn Williams points out that the establishment of coherent social identities indexed through pronouns such as *I* or *you* became a central concern to French linguistics (G. Williams 1999). Even though this emphasis on unity might be thought of as a Cartesian argument, I think Benveniste’s notion of subjectivity should be understood in terms of a unity that is paradoxically constituted in and through the pronominal system. But however it should be understood, Benveniste’s approach would allow for an explicit anti-Cartesian theory of enunciation in the work of Oswald Ducrot and other scholars of polyphony.

In an argument that seems to parallel Lacan’s writings, Benveniste states that self-awareness is not possible without the contrasts provided by the usage of the system of pronouns: *“La polarité des personnes, telle est dans le langage la condition fondamentale, dont le procès de communications, dont nous sommes parti, n’est qu’une conséquence toute pragmatique”*. He continues and argues that this way of thinking undermines ancient antinomies between the self and the other, or between self and society – an argument that we also find among the American pragmatists. Benveniste argues for a view of subjectivity that is fundamentally intersubjective. With respect to the function of pronouns in the constitution of self-awareness and / or subjectivity, he writes the following (Benveniste 1974: 262):

“Les pronoms personnels sont le premier point d’appui pour cette mise au jour de la subjectivité dans le langage. De ces pronoms dependent leur tour d’autres classes de pronoms, qui partagent le meme statut. Ce sont les indicateurs de la deixis, démonstratifs, adverbes, adjectifs, qui organisent les relations spatiales et temporelles autour du « sujet » pris comme repère: « ceci, ici, maintenant », et leurs nombreuses correlations « cela, hier, l’an dernier, demain », etc. Ils on en

⁴² *“La « subjectivité » dont nous traitons ici est la capacité du locuteur à se poser comme « sujet ». Elle se définit, non par le sentiment que chacun éprouve d’être lui-même (ce sentiment, dans la mesure où l’on peut en faire état, n’est qu’un reflet), mais comme l’unité psychique qui transcende la totalité des expériences vécues qu’elle assemble, et qui assure la permanence de conscience”* (Benveniste 1974: 259).

commun ce trait de se définir seulement par rapport à l'instance de discours où ils sont produits, c'est-à-dire sous la dépendance du je qui s'y énonce". (Benveniste 1974: 262)

To Benveniste, *I* thus refers to the locutor and to the individual speech act in which this pronoun is articulated or enunciated. We already noted that he considers enunciation to involve an appropriation of the formal apparatus of language. The speaking subject thus resorts to specific linguistic signs to establish his position indexically. This apparatus is used in such a way that we leave traces or markers (*indicateurs*) of our subjectivity and of the context of enunciation in our language use. This means that language use contributes to creating specific relations between interlocutors. Benveniste points out that the individual act of speaking inserts the speaker into his speech act. Throughout this positioning, the speaker relates him or herself to social, spatial, and temporal aspects of (discursive) reality while inscribing the other in his discourse throughout this process (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 82).

Shifters and other phenomena related to deixis show their object rather than saying it. They refer to a context of enunciation in which one has to engage oneself in order to understand the resulting énoncé (Angermüller: 119). Kerbrat-Orecchioni summarises Benveniste's project as:

"the search for linguistic procedures (shifters, modalizers, evaluative terms et.) through which the speaker leaves his imprint in the utterance, inscribes himself (implicitly or explicitly) into the message and positions himself in relation to it (the problem of 'enunciative distance'). Thus, it is necessary to prove and describe the units (of whatever nature and level they may be) as the traces of inscription that the subject of enunciation leaves in the utterance." (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980: Angermüller: 119)

When confronted with indexical expressions such as pronouns, hearers or readers are forced to go and look for relevant aspects of the context of enunciation if they wish to understand the text. If we combine this insight with the enunciative linguistics of Ducrot, it becomes possible to arrive at an enunciative linguistics that accounts for the way selves relate themselves to relevant aspects of context in and through discourse (see also: Angermüller 2010).

The speaking subject that leaves marks of his or her subjectivity in the text should not be thought of as a centered and unified subject. Quite the contrary. Williams points out that it was Culioli who removed the last traces of the transcendental ego from Benveniste's work *"by developing the issue of decentering the subject. In a sense this move derived from Lacan's theory of the unconscious, which gave evident support to the idea of positionality that is necessary in order to achieve meaningful communication between speaking subjects"*. If we state that French enunciative linguistics, constitutes an anti-Cartesian enterprise, it is so in the sense that French pragmaticians attempt to investigate the subject *"without falling into the trap of the rational subject directing signification via her/his rational intentions* (G. Williams 1999: 182-83). This goes especially for the polyphonic theories of enunciation that followed in the wake of Benveniste's work developed by authors such as Ducrot.

Oswald Ducrot developed his theory of enunciative polyphony in order to contest the views held by structuralists and students of generative grammar with respect to the supposed unity of the subject. He was inspired by the Bakhtinian notion of dialogism but it should be pointed out that Ducrot was first and foremost interested in the way dialogism and the derivate concept of polyphony functioned at the level of the linguistic énoncé or utterance (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 89). Bakhtin rejected the Saussurean idea that meaning is to be located in an abstract language (*langue*) opposed to *parole*. (Weir 1998: 1053). According to Eddy Roulet, the Bakhtinian notion of polyphony should be understood as a case of dialogism in the broad sense of the term: as an instance of multi-voiced discourse (Roulet 2011: 209).

Roulet provides us with a useful overview of the various ways in which Bakhtin deploys the notion of dialogism: (1) it may refer to the constant interplay between socio-ideological languages in discourse and society – a phenomenon he also labels as dialogic heteroglossia; (2) it may refer to the fact that

any discourse is related by a multiplicity of dialogical threads to all existing discourses of the same type on the same subject – this is what we today call intertextuality; (3) it refers to the fact that all discourses can be viewed as reactions to preceding discourses and anticipations to further discourses – this is dialogism in the narrow sense of the term; and (4) the notion may also indicate the idea that discourse of other persons occupies an important place in the discourse or even in the utterances of any speaker. This fourth type of dialogism is the phenomenon that Ducrot chose to call polyphony (Roulet 2011: 209).

Following Bakhtin, Ducrot rejects the notion of the unity of the speaking subject through his embracement of the Bakhtinian metaphor of polyphony. Within his framework, polyphony became the most fundamental principle of meaning, enunciation, semantics, and textual structure in general (Anscombe 2009: 13). Ducrot's first objective is to analyze how an utterance indicates the superposition of different voices in a text – hence polyphony. He therefore distinguishes three entities: (1) the speaking subject who is the empirical being who is the physical agent of the utterance; (2) the locutor, speaker or *locuteur* who can say *I* and who is the author of the illocutionary acts. The locutor is the discursive entity who is considered to be responsible for the production of the *énoncé* or utterance. Lastly there is (3) the enunciator or *énonciateur* who is the discursive being that corresponds to a certain point of view that does not necessarily correspond to the point of view of the speaker. For instance, such a disjunction can be observed when locutors articulate direct or indirect reported speech (Anscombe 2009: 16-22; Roulet 2011: 212).

Ducrot's polyphonic approach to linguistics is a theory of split subjectivity which is quite compatible with poststructuralist and pragmatist accounts of subjectivity discussed in the preceding sections. This becomes clear when we look at the work of Jacqueline Authier-Revuz who steps into Ducrot's polyphonic footsteps and relies to a great extent on the Bakhtinian concept of polyphony. Interestingly, she also links up with Jacques Lacan and his conception of the split subject. She makes a useful distinction between constitutive heterogeneity and constitutive heterogeneity:

“The constitutive heterogeneity is that of the unconsciousness and the way it traces itself in language: therefore the subject is an effect of language, divided, split, decentralized; the subject cannot be a center, but what is central is the encounter of the subject with the other (Authier-Revuz 1984: 101). However, it is the shown heterogeneity that allows a linguist to see how the Other is inscribed in the discourse. In other words, these are the phenomena found on the metadiscursive or metalinguistic level in which certain types of linguistic forms encode the presence of otherness.” (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 90-91)

Authier-Revuz's constitutive heterogeneity is obviously of the Lacanian kind. On the other hand, the shown heterogeneity of the subject is one of the main objects of investigation in enunciative / polyphonic linguistics. In order to conclude this section on the inscription of subjectivity in and through language, it is useful to take a brief look at some of the linguistic phenomena that are useful to an analysis of discourse. We already noted how an analysis of shifters or indexicals may sensitise us to the split nature of subjectivity and discourse. However, we may also investigate phenomena as varied as negation, reported speech, intertextuality, metadiscourses and irony in order to investigate how voices of others are rearticulated in language use (Maingueneau 1991: 127-51).

We will illustrate how these phenomena generate and mark subjectivity in and through language use in the empirical chapters of this book. For now, I would like to end this section on enunciative linguistics as a formative tradition for contemporary linguistic pragmatics by pointing out that theories of the split subject are not restricted to continental poststructuralist philosophy. In this sense, it is interesting to quote Angermüller who draws an analogy between an author such as Goffman, and the authors we have discussed in the preceding chapters (Angermüller 2008: 6):

“In literary criticism, you may have heard of intertextuality – Julia Kristeva's notion, inspired by the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, that in texts there is a plurality of criss-crossing texts, you may have heard of the Lacanian theory of the split subject according to which we cannot

... speak without letting the Other speak with us, you may have heard of Erving Goffman who suggested that rather than being one single source, the actor be divided into at least three different instances: author, principal, and animator. These quite different strands have in common one point: to call into question the notion of the speaking subject, a unified source whose meaning finds expression in the text. Against this strong program of subjectivism, the theory of polyphony advances the idea that by means of certain markers texts orchestrate a multitude of voices.” (Angermüller 2008: 6)

Subjectivity may be marked with varying degrees of implicitness and explicitness in discourse. For instance, the meaning and function of the pronoun ‘you’ and the special qualifier ‘this’ in an utterance such as ‘you simply can’t do this’, can only make sense if we are provided with some markers that indicate some of the relevant aspects of reality required for interpretation. These aspects may be marked indexically in preceding or following discourse (words, topics, intonation, ...), in non-verbal aspects of communication (e.g. gaze, pointing, ...), or in any other aspect of communication that provides relevant indexical parameters (Zienkowski forthcoming). We will go into this matter during our discussion of the notions of context, structure, and function in linguistic pragmatic approaches to discourse.

Linguistic pragmatics as an heir to pragmatism and behaviourism

The pragmatic turn in linguistics was severely interrupted at the end of the fifties by the Chomskyan revolution (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 149). However, as the pragmatic protest gained momentum, pragmatist themes were re-discovered. This becomes evident when we take a look at the emergence of two sociological and anthropological tendencies that came to be associated with pragmatics during the seventies and eighties of the last century:

*“First the anthropologically oriented **ethnography of communication** which, from its first formulations (as in Gumperz and Hymes eds 1972) through all its further developments, whether simply under the label of **sociolinguistics** (e.g. Hymes 1974) or more specifically **interactional linguistics** (e.g. Gumperz 1982), has remained an attempt – sometimes more and sometimes less successful – to study language use in context, taking into account the full complexity of grammar, personality, social structure and cultural patterns, without lifting these different aspects out of the pattern of speech activity itself. Second, there was the sociological tradition of **ethnomethodology**, initiated by Garfinkel (see Garfinkel 1967), which produced the ever-widening field of **conversation analysis** (e.g. Sacks et al. 1974; Atkinson and Heritage eds 1984 [...])” (Verschueren 1999: 257)*

The attack on the Chomskyan model of generative grammar was led by researchers who became increasingly aware of the various functions that may be performed by contextualised language use. These authors included people such as John Gumperz and Dell Hymes who are key figures in the establishment of interactional linguistics and in the ethnography of communication. Moreover, Høye points out that linguistic anthropologists or anthropological linguists (the terms are often used interchangeably) share the following points of view (Høye 2006: 963):

“language is more than a system of structures with communicative functions; language needs to be seen in relation to its users and thus as a societally embedded, meaning-making resource which constantly meshes with its ever-changing social and cultural contexts of use. The view that context is not just ‘out there’ as some static entity, a backdrop, as it were, to the activity of communication is important. Context is dynamic: ‘it is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest sense, that enable the participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions of the interaction become intelligible’ Mey (2001:39)” (Høye 2006: 963)

The dynamic and interactional conceptualisation of context is of fundamental importance to the pragmatic perspective. We have repeatedly claimed that linguistic pragmatics provides us with an adequate account of how subjects reflexively position themselves with respect to relevant aspects of

context that are generated in and through interaction. We will explore this pragmatic understanding of context in the next section. For now, it suffices to highlight the fact that it is very difficult to draw a strict boundary between linguistic pragmatics on the one hand and linguistic anthropology or anthropological linguistics on the other. Foley even goes as far as to state that the line between pragmatics and anthropology is “*impossible to draw at present*” (Foley 1997: 29; Høye 2006: 964).

The mutual feeling of sympathy between many linguistic anthropologists and linguistic pragmatists can be explained with reference to their shared interest in the empirically observable aspects of interaction. The move away from the Chomskyan tradition in linguistics was paralleled by an increasing criticism of Parsonian structuralist functionalism in social theory. Garfinkel developed his ethnomethodological approach as a reaction against what he considered to be a deterministic approach to human action. Other objections concentrated on Parson's inability to explain how actors share knowledge of the actual situation and communicate with one another (Jaspers 2010: 2-9).

Ethnomethodology may be defined as a study of daily interactions, rituals and routines and the rationalities involved. It is interested in the implicit rules we deploy in our daily practices (Buiks et al. 1980: 136-42). What is important in relation to pragmatics, is that ethnomethodology “*consequently acted as a muse in the development of Sacks's enthusiastically followed 'conversation analysis' or 'C.A. (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1978), and it was also foundational to the development of a cognitive, discourse based sociology which was interested in the interrelation of interactional sense-making procedure and social organization*” (Jaspers 2010: 9-10).

Linguistic pragmatics and anthropology are also connected through their respective affinities to American pragmatism and behaviourism. Verschueren points out that Gumperz' interactional sociolinguistics “*can be said to be heir to, or to have developed in conjunction with, the ethnography of speaking, ethnomethodology, microethnography, symbolic interactionism, and cognitive anthropology (with Batesonian influences)*” (Verschueren 2010: 169). The development of symbolic interactionism is particularly telling in this respect. It is an interpretive and interactional sociological approach that is grounded in the work of the pragmatist George Herbert Mead. Even though Mead labeled his pragmatist approach *social behaviorism* (see also: Mead 1967: 1-47), the sociological approach he initiated is usually labeled as *symbolic interactionism* (see also: Watson 2010). This term was proposed by Herbert Blumer who proposed a sociological approach based on the principles of Mead and Cooley. Symbolic interactionism thus accepts at least three presuppositions from pragmatism: human action is based on meanings; these meanings are established through social interaction; and they are used and changed in the course of interpretive interaction itself. In order to illustrate the difficulties in separating the development of these sociological, anthropological and linguistic approaches to interaction, it is useful to point out that Goffman's work was informed by the symbolic interactionist insights of Blumer and by the pragmatist thought of Mead. It should therefore not come as a surprise that Goffman and Garfinkel were friends who were familiar with one another's work (Buiks et al. 1980: 130-37).

British functionalism and contextualism as a predecessor to pragmatics

Lastly, it is important to introduce British contextualism and functionalism as developed by people such as Malinowski and Firth as a formative tradition to pragmatics. This approach to language use will prove to be particularly relevant to our discussion of the notions of context, structure, and function in contemporary linguistic pragmatics. Authors such as Robins, Langendoen, Schmidt, Nerlich, Clarke, Récanati, Senft, and Verschueren usually consider Malinowski and Firth as a precursors to Austin and Wittgenstein (Korta 2007: 1647):

“*It is interesting to observe that the Oxford philosophers have maintained an outlook on semantics that bears great resemblance to that of Malinowski, Firth and their linguistic followers, although there does not seem to have been much exchange between these two groups*” (Langendoen 1968 cited in: Korta 2007: 1647).

Moreover, Verschueren points out that Morris' rediscovery of the language user was paralleled and had a direct link with the discovery of the human actor in relation to language, culture and social behaviour in the work of authors such as Mead and anthropologists such as Malinowski (Verschueren 2009: 4). The type of functionalism that we encounter in Verschueren's holistic approach to pragmatics bears strong resemblances to Malinowski's concept of function. Moreover, there are strong parallels between Malinowski's notion of *context of the situation* and the notion of context we will argue for in the upcoming chapters (Verschueren 1999: 75):

"Exactly as in the reality of spoken or written languages a word without linguistic context is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself, so in the reality of a spoken living tongue, the utterance has no meaning except in the context of situation" (Malinowski 1923 quoted in: Verschueren 1999: 75).

Bronislaw Malinowski is one of the founding fathers of social anthropology, ethnography, and anthropological linguistics. He argued that an anthropologist must be able to know the group of people he or she is studying from within – a procedure which involves learning the native language. Korta points out that Malinowski's interest in studying language stemmed from his need to understand, to describe, and to translate the language of the Melanesian tribes of Eastern New Guinea and the Trobriand Islands where he did much of his fieldwork. Here, he faced significant problems when he tried to write the grammars of the languages he studied (Korta 2007: 1647-48). He soon reached the insight that grammar can only be studied in relation to meaning and that meaning can only be studied in relation to the context of situation (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 320):

"[I]n all our grammatical distinctions we have always led back to meaning. Thus, in dealing with the grammatical character of the various formatives, we had to keep their meaning constantly before us. [...] But the analysis of meaning again led us often to ethnographic descriptions. When defining the meaning and function of several of the formatives, we had to make excursions into ethnography, describe customs, and state social conditions. Thus linguistics without ethnography would fare as badly as ethnography would without the light thrown on it by language." (Malinowski 1920 cited in: Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 320)

Nerlich and Clarke point out that Malinowski first equated meaning with pragmatic function in his analysis of magic put forward in his *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. In this book, he developed a view of language in which words are no longer receptacles of thought but where thought rather depends on language and ultimately on action. Malinowski distinguished various functions of language: *"the active use of language to co-ordinate actions and make things happen, the narrative use of language, which is ultimately derived from action, and the ritual use of language, which includes phatic language use and creates the ties of human society"* (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 324). The link with Jakobson should now be obvious (Sidnell 2009a: 125-28).

The notion of function as deployed in contemporary linguistic pragmatics shares a lot of features with Malinowski's functionalism. For instance, the pragmatician Verschueren emphasises that the way he deploys the notion of function should not be confused with a *functionalism of the system* associated with linguistic structuralism or with the type of *structuralist functionalism* that we find in sociology. He explains how pragmatics always emphasises the functional relatedness of language with other facets of human life. In this sense, pragmatics should ultimately deal with the *"functioning of language in actual contexts of use"* (Verschueren 1999: 9-10). The parallels with Malinowski become obvious when we note that Malinowski dropped the Saussurian distinction between *langue* and *parole*. To him, there is only language use. As a consequence, Malinowski also dissociated himself from the type of structuralist functionalism associated with Durkheim and Mauss (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 332). It is useful to quote Nerlich and Clarke:

"Just as Malinowski rejected collectivism and preferred individualism in sociology, he would also remain an individualist in the field of linguistics, dismissing the Saussurian claim that linguistics

should study first and foremost la langue as a social and thus collective fact. Much later, having come under the spell of behaviourism, Malinowski would write: "in one way, the whole substance of my theory of culture [...] consists in reducing Durkheimian theory to terms of behaviouristic psychology" (Malinowski 1935, II:236)." (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 319)

However, the type of behaviouristic psychology advocated by Malinowski was not the behaviourism that dominated American psychology for nearly forty years between 1915 and 1955. One of the most outspoken proponents of the latter type of behaviourism describes this approach as follows (Brown 1997: 8-9):

"Psychology, as the baviorist views it, (a) is a purely experimental branch of natural science; (b) its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior; (c) introspection forms no essential part of its methods; and (d) it recognizes no dividing line between man and a brute" (Watson 1913 cited in: Brown 1997: 8-9)

Whereas the type of behaviourism advocated by psychologists such as Watson, Skinner and Hull aims to be a strictly positivist science that actually constituted a reaction against the work of the early pragmatists, Malinowski's argument for a behaviouristic psychology was borrowed from the type of pragmatism that Mead called social behaviourism (Brown 1997: 7-14; see also Mead 1967; Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 326-27). Malinowski reinterpreted the notion of function as posited by structuralist functionalist sociologists such as Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown on the basis of insights that he borrowed from William James. This led Malinowski to equate the notion of function with effect or purpose. Nerlich and Clarke rephrased the resulting approach to meaning as follows: *"Just as meaning is the function of a word, that is, the effect it produces in context, so the function of a custom or institution is the effect it produces"*. James and Malinowski both stressed the relation between function and biological or social needs. It is also interesting to note that Malinowski also incorporated insights from Dewey and Mead in his later work (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 326-28).

Malinowski's ideas contextualism and functionalism would also be advocated by his colleague Firth who even went as far to equate English functionalism with pragmatism and behaviourism, a suggestion that would make most behaviourist psychologists shiver:

"Philosophically, the functional method is pragmatism, and this philosophy and a behaviouristic psychology will provide the guiding principles of the future science of linguistics." (Nerlich and Clarke 1996: 328)

To Malinowski language is to be considered first and foremost as a mode of action that performs various functions. He challenges the idea of language as a countersign of thought and thus attacks the representational view of language in a way that reminds one of the work of Wittgenstein and Austin. He also claims that language should also be interpreted in the context of the situation. As always, the question is what we should understand by context. Korta points out that *"what is most impressive about Malinowski's notion of "context of the situation" is that it is not only an anticipation of some themes in Austin's speech-act theory, but also of most contextual phenomena studies in pragmatics in general"*. These phenomena include: the physical setting of the utterance and the gestures of the speaker; the kind of context that would be considered to provide the referents for indexicals; the speech previous to and after the utterance; the activity in which the speech is embedded as well as all sorts of implicit meanings and rhetorical relations between sentences; the total cultural setting of the utterance that helps explain how certain perlocutionary effects are achieved and how conversational implicatures are generated (Korta 2007: 1650-52).

Conclusions with respect to the formative traditions of linguistic pragmatics

The pragmatic turn that followed in the wake of the pragmatic dam-burst involves an intersubjective and process-based notion of language use in which the idea of indexical meaning plays an important role. The pragmatic turn is an aggregate concept that designates those metaphorical ways of conceptualizing language use that allow us to highlight the process based nature of the intersubjective, contextual, functional, and interpretive acts we perform when we talk, write, and engage ourselves in politics. The various pragmatic frameworks mentioned above are characterized by a great variety of metaphors that highlight various aspects of our language use. The formative traditions of pragmatics have generated notions of language use which have been conceptualized by means of metaphors such as: games and family resemblances (Wittgenstein); performance (Austin and Goffman); logic (Grice); voice, dialogue, polyphony (Benveniste, Anscombe, Ducrot, Authier-Revuz); conduit metaphors (Jakobson) and so on. All of these approaches constitute attempts to de-reify the static and abstract notions of language that we find in structuralist and Cartesian approaches to language.

In various ways, these investigations into language use are metapragmatic accounts. All theorising about language is ultimately language about language. During our problematisation of self and subjectivity in pragmatist and poststructuralist thought, we have repeatedly argued that linguistic pragmatic approaches can provide us with conceptual tools to investigate the specific ways in which discourse is interpretively deployed. I claimed that this approach can provide us with concepts and methods that allow for an empirical investigation of how individuals relate their subjectivity and discourse to relevant aspects of context. Moreover, I stated that a linguistic pragmatic investigation of discourse allows for an investigation of the interpretive logics that provide coherence between seemingly contradictory statements produced by social actors. It would also allow us to consider the self as an attempt to achieve a sense of coherence in spite of its radical multiplicity. Taking the linguistic pragmatic perspective into account when empirically investigating politics and subjectivity as articulated in discourse can help us to overcome the methodological deficit in pragmatist and poststructuralist thought. The various metaphorical notions of discourse articulated in the formative traditions of linguistic pragmatics can be integrated in a holistic pragmatic perspective on the way in which the context, structure and functions of language use are related to one another and to issues related to subjectivity. The resulting pragmatic perspective will provide us with an account of subjectivity that allows us to investigate our political and metapragmatic awareness in such a way that the desiderata of the required perspective are met.

c) (Re-) articulating the contexts, structures and functions of language use

Throughout the previous chapters, I have raised high expectations with respect to the linguistic pragmatic perspective and its potential for analysing abstract categories such as self, community, and politics as articulated in the interviews I conducted. It is useful to return to the notion of articulation defined as *(the result of) a performative practice that establishes a relative fixation between a semiotic form and its function in such a way that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. Articulatory practices are fundamentally political and are fundamental to the process of hegemonising a particular discourse.* In the previous sections, I mentioned that I prefer to think of articulation in terms of a relative fixation between semiotic forms and functions rather than considering it in terms of a relative fixation between purely differential discursive elements. However, I merely hinted at the fact that this idea grew out of a rearticulation of linguistic pragmatics with the poststructuralist perspectives on discourse and subjectivity.

It is possible to claim that Laclau and Mouffe initiated a theorisation that elaborated on the common usage of articulation in terms of a connection. The notion of articulation as a performative practice was borrowed from Judith Butler's account of performativity. In this second sense, the definition above represents an operationalization of the notion of articulation as developed within the spheres of artistic expression. However, in spite of the interesting insights developed within poststructuralist perspectives on discourse, subjectivity and politics, these perspectives did not provide us with

adequate means for an empirical analysis of articulatory practices. At several points in this book, I have argued that this problem is largely due to the fact that most poststructuralist perspectives do not explain how *linguistic* articulations *function* with respect to context and meaning generation. Put differently, the phonological etymological sense of articulation has remained undertheorised for far too long.

The pragmatic perspective outlined below provides us with an account of *how* we articulate the various forms and functions of discourse with one another. Three notions will prove to be of particular importance: metapragmatic awareness, indexicality, and context. Throughout this presentation of pragmatics as a perspective that provides us with an account of how we articulate ourselves in relation to relevant aspects of the context, structure, and functions of language use, I will introduce the last elements that enable us to empirically investigate the large-scale interpretive processes that provide coherence between seemingly contradictory statements produced by social actors as well as between the various aspects of one's sense of self as articulated in discourse. Moreover, we will see how a perspective that allows for an analysis of metapragmatic awareness as marked in discourse, holds great promise for the analysis of political subjectivity. The resulting pragmatic outlook provides us with an interpretive functionalist account of context that enriches and modifies the theories of articulation, subjectivity, and politics as presented above. As such, it provides us with a way out of the methodological deficits that haunt so many poststructuralist and pragmatist accounts of self, subjectivity and discourse.

If we consider pragmatics as an interdisciplinary perspective or turn informed by a multiplicity of process and action oriented, intersubjective, functional, interpretive, and reflexive perspectives on language use, the question remains what an integrated or holistic perspective might look like. The approach below can be presented as an attempt to answer the two basic questions of pragmatics: "*What is it to use language*" and "*What does language do for human beings, or what do human beings do for themselves by using language*" (Verschueren 2009: 19). In other words, pragmatic investigations of language should provide us with an account of the empirical self in relation to discourse. Or in poststructuralist terms, they should provide us with an account of the various linguistic technologies we deploy in order to performatively and interpretively establish our subjectivities.

In my attempt to answer these questions, I will start by focussing on the double-edged issue of *making communicative choices and the variable structures of language*. I will then discuss discourse in terms of *negotiated language use* in order to introduce the concept of *language use as an adaptation to communicative needs*. These subsections enable us to articulate a linguistic pragmatic perspective on *indexical contextualisation processes and contextualisation cues*. Moreover, they allow us to address the issue of *marking metapragmatic or metalinguistic awareness in discourse*. We will see that the resulting perspective is not without consequences for the relation between *pragmatics, context, and critique*. There is an important political dimension which is quite compatible with the theories of politics articulated by pragmatist and poststructuralist authors. I will thus present the last building blocks for the interpretive functionalist approach to discourse, politics, subjectivity, and the self outlined in the next chapter. These building blocks include definitions of form, function, context, contextualisation, entextualisation, structure, indexicality, performance, performativity, and metapragmatic awareness that are compatible with both pragmatist, pragmatic, and poststructuralist perspectives.

Making communicative choices from the variable structures of language

Using language involves making choices. According to Verschueren, these choices are made simultaneously at every level of linguistic structure with varying degrees of awareness (see also: Verschueren 2004). When we speak, we select a language, an intonation pattern, words and sounds. We also make syntactic and strategic choices. A lot of this happens simultaneously. For instance, by

choosing to talk in an academic genre, options with respect to word choice become available that would not be accepted in other contexts. Moreover, speakers do not merely choose linguistic *forms*. They also choose strategies to achieve certain ends. For instance, if one chooses a strategy such as deference, one will have to make simultaneous choices at various levels of language use, including language, style, terms of address, lexicon, and so on. Choice-making does not always involve a conscious act. The processes involved in language use may be articulated with varying degrees of awareness. Choices are made both in producing and interpreting utterances. It should also be noted that language users have no freedom of choice between choosing and not choosing, “*except at the level where he or she can decide either to use language or to remain silent (the latter being as meaningful as the former under certain circumstances)*”. Moreover, it is important to realise that “*as a rule, choices are not equivalent*” to one another. Lastly, we should note that choices evoke or carry along their alternatives (Verschueren 1999: 55-59).

If language use involves making choices with varying degrees of awareness, we should ask ourselves what determines our range of choices. What kind of options do we have and to what extent can these be analysed in terms of structures? Verschueren discusses the problem of choice-making and the structure(s) of language with reference to the concept of variability. The notion of linguistic variation was originally developed in the field of quantitative sociolinguistics but can be found in a multiplicity of linguistic fields of study (see: Fried et al. 2010; Gumperz 1982: 23-29). Interestingly, Mirjam Fried points out that the development of research interests into linguistic variation parallels the development of linguistics as a whole:

“[...] *the modern history of diachronic and variationist discipline(s) reflects the field’s journey through individual domains, as research at different times has tended to zero in on different aspects of linguistic structure: from the early interesting sounds, morphological structure, and word etymologies as manifestations of speaker-independent systems to gradual inclusion of syntactic patterning in texts to, most recently, incorporating patterns of language use and the speaker’s role in language change.*” (Fried 2010: 1)

Verschueren’s concept of variability should be interpreted as part of this last development. He defines variability as “*the property of language which defines the range of possibilities from which choices can be made*”. This range of choices is anything but static or stable: “*at any given moment in the course of interaction, a choice may rule out alternatives or create new ones for the current purposes of the exchange*”. Variability thus involves choices with respect to every level of structure. For instance, the use of a particular language, genre, sentence structure, word, sound, prosodic form, or strategy alters the range of possibilities for consequent choice making (Verschueren 1999: 58-59). In this sense, Verschueren’s approach to variability is closely related to that of John Gumperz who rejected the sociolinguistic approach to variation developed by William Labov (Gumperz 1982: 23). Gumperz presents his own approach as follows

“*During the last few years a new sociolinguistic research paradigm has developed which rejects Saussure’s and Chomsky’s assumptions about the uniformity of grammatical systems. To account for the empirical facts of speech diversity, the theory distinguishes between individual variations and social variability. Social variability is regarded as an inherent property of linguistic systems which must be incorporated into grammatical rules.*” (Gumperz 1982: 24)

Put differently, Gumperz claims that the principle of variability functions at the level of choices structurally available to us and at the level of the specific ways in which we use language (Gumperz 1982: 24-29). The fact that linguistic pragmatics constitutes a poststructuralist perspective on language use does not entail that pragmaticians wish to avoid the notion of structure altogether. However, it is important to realise that whenever pragmaticians talk about so-called *things* such as a phonetic, syntactic, or narrative structure, they are very much aware of the fact that they are reifying a set of complex processes. The structures these authors write about have nothing to do with the closed and centered totalities criticised by poststructuralist authors such as Laclau, Mouffe, Torfing, Howarth, or Glynos. On the contrary, the concept of variability does not allow for an analysis of language as a

static and/or closed totality. In fact, this is the very reason why Verschueren prefers to write about structure in terms of a set of *structural objects of adaptability*. He defines this concept as follows:

“Any (combination of) element(s) at any layer or level of linguistic organisation or form at which choices can be made, *constitutes a structural object of adaptability or, for short, an element of ‘structure’*. Thus, languages, codes, and styles are objects of adaptability albeit at a high level of structuring. So are all utterance-building ingredients, from sounds, over morphemes, words, clauses, sentences and propositions all the way to supra-sentential units. Also utterances and utterance clusters (from the exclamation “Ouch” to a full conversation or an entire novel) fit in here, as well as utterance-building principles such as coherence, relevance, information structuring, foregrounding/backgrounding, and the like. Usually, choices are not isolated, but rather part of an integrated process of choice-making that interrelates phenomena at different structural levels” (Verschueren 2008: 18)

Frank Brisard and Jef Verschueren thus propose to replace the notion of language as a fixed, monolithic, and/or synchronic system by a notion of language “*in which the very experience with language leads to the formation of a massive collection of heterogeneous constructions, each and every one of them shaped by its structural adaptation to particular contexts of language use (Langacker 1987)*”. As such, they conclude that linguistic structure does not pre-exist language use but that it is actually brought by the ongoing pressures of language use itself (Verschueren and Brisard 2009: 29).

In the remainder of this book, we will use *the notion of structure in order to designate the range of potential options available to the discursive practices of a particular actor. Any structure is always a reification of a multiplicity of interrelated intersubjective processes. In this sense, structures are basically structurations which may be defined as the result of a (re)production of rules and resources* (see also: Giddens 1990: 68-73) by means of linguistic, social and /or political discursive practices.

Discourse as negotiated language use

Variability alone does not provide us with a coherent framework for analysing language use. As a principle, it is fundamentally interwoven with the concepts of negotiability and adaptability. These three principles are “*fundamentally inseparable*” (Verschueren 2009: 20). Verschueren proposes to define negotiability as follows:

“*Negotiability is the property of language responsible for the fact that choices are not made mechanically or according to strict rules or fixed form-function relationships, but rather on the basis of highly flexible principles and strategies.*” (Verschueren 1999: 59)

My definition of articulation in terms of a relative fixation between semiotic forms and functions is directly derived from the concept of negotiability. The various structural objects of adaptability may be used and interpreted in a variety of ways. Put differently, they may perform a multiplicity of communicative functions. This brings us to the notions of form and function as deployed in the linguistic pragmatic perspective proposed by Verschueren.

Echoing the behaviourist and pragmatist concerns discussed above, Verschueren argues that pragmatics should be considered as “*a general cognitive, social and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behavior*” (Verschueren 1999: 7). We already noted that his approach to discourse draws on the type of functionalism that we find in the work of Malinowski. Interestingly, Verschueren points out that his approach is both interpretive *and* functionalist even though he is fully aware of the fact that there is a tension between both notions in standard sociological theory:

“In the social sciences, a functionalist approach is usually contrasted with an interpretive approach, the former being associated with an emphasis on relatively mechanical processes (in the tradition of Parsonian sociology which posits functions as the links between relatively stable structural categories), the latter with ‘meaning’ (in a tradition leaning towards Winch, with Goffman’s symbolic interactionism and Gaffman’s ethnomethodology as just two of the representatives)” (Verschueren 2009: 19)

We will go into the details of interpretive functionalism as a heuristic for linguistic pragmatics in the sections on context and contextualisation. For now we should note that Verschueren does not think of meaning as a stable counterpart to a linguistic form. There is no one-to-one relationship between semiotic forms and their functions. Neither is meaning considered in terms of a (post-) structuralist play of differential signification. As we will see, the notion of indexicality is key to understand the relationship between semiotic forms and their functions. We will go into this during our discussion of the pragmatic notions of context and contextualisation. For the moment however, it is sufficient to emphasise that the principle of negotiability involves indeterminacy in the choice making of both the language producer and the interpreter. Choices, once made can be permanently renegotiated, both at the production and at the interpretation side of the process (Verschueren 1999: 58-61).

Verschueren does not provide us with definitions of either form or function. However, it is possible to come up with the following two definitions that are characteristic of his usage of these words. Interestingly, these definitions are also highly compatible with most of the poststructuralist and pragmatist theories of articulation and subjectivity discussed in the previous chapters. I propose to consider *semiotic form as (the result of) a performance or articulatory practice which is positively observable for interlocutors. Semiotic forms provide us with the means to orient ourselves to and to establish relevant aspects of context or imagined common ground necessary for a meaningful interpretation of intersubjective processes.* The concept of function should thereby be thought of as *flexible and temporally established relationship which establishes a context by means of indexical processes of meaning generation.* As such, articulations – in all senses of the word – can be thought of as locally produced fixations of forms and functions. These relative fixations of meaning are always negotiable and open to contestation.

Language use as an adaptation to communicative needs

If language use is characterized by shifting form-function relationships and choices that can be permanently renegotiated, it is necessary to ask how it is still possible for a language to be used successfully for purposes of communication. This is where the notion of *adaptability* comes in. Verschueren proposes to define adaptability as follows:

“the property of language which enables human beings to make negotiable linguistic choices from a variable range of possibilities in such a way as to approach points of satisfaction for communicative needs” (Verschueren 1999: 62).

There are basically two ways of conceptualizing the notion of adaptation which are relevant to our current discussion. On the one hand, it is possible to consider language development as biological and cultural adaptation to changing contextual and environmental conditions. On the other hand, it is also possible to ask how language can be used in order to adapt ourselves and our communications in such a way as to fulfil the communicative needs we articulate for ourselves and for others (see: Verschueren and Brisard 2009: 39). Verschueren’s concept of needs can be conflated with his notion of function. It is a very broad category that should not be thought of in terms of true and false needs, but rather in terms of the subjectively experienced needs that arise in specific speech events, language games, or contexts.

There are more caveats to be made with respect to the concept of adaptability to communicative needs. First of all, Verschueren points out that all language use is communicative, even if we merely use language in order to communicate with ourselves. Communication should not be thought of as a process that is either expressive, intentional, communicative. The notion of negotiability and the instability of form/function relationships precludes such an option. Secondly, *communicative needs* mostly arise in context and can therefore be quite specific. Thirdly, the fact that points of satisfaction can be *approached* does not preclude the possibility of serious non- or miscommunication. Lastly, adaptability is multi-directional. Even though language use may be adapted and negotiated in function of specific communicative needs, there is also another side to the coin. Once choices are made, circumstances alter as well. Put differently, once a choice has been made, it becomes part of the context. Verschueren provides an example of a choice for a system of solidarity politeness (*tu*, first name, etc.) as opposed to a system of deference politeness (*vous*, family name, title, etc.). According to him, the choice is typically based on closeness between the interlocutors. In a situation where such closeness is absent and where one nevertheless chooses for an informal type of address, a return to more formal forms can only be made for special reasons and will carry extra meaning; “Typically, either playfulness or antagonism would be involved” (Verschueren 1999: 62).

Taking these caveats into account, it should be noted that the notion of adaptability provides us with a framework to account for the various ways in which we relate *structural objects of adaptability* (e.g. sounds, gestures, contextualisation cues, speech act verbs, narratives) to relevant aspects of context. According to Verschueren, the medium through which the process of adaptability operates is Vygotski’s *mind in society*. Once again echoing early pragmatist concerns, Verschueren refuses to consider the duality between mind and society in dichotomous terms (Verschueren 1999: 173-75):

“With Vygotsky, from whose work on developmental psychology the clumsy term ‘mind in society’ is borrowed, I am strongly convinced that any serious pragmatic theory must reject a strict opposition between society and cognition”

At this point, it is important to emphasise the strong parallels between this notion of the mind in society as a medium of adaptability on the one hand, and my proposed definition of the self in terms of a *reification of the processes which allow an individual body to reflexively position and/or articulate itself as a coherent and whole mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social, and (inter)textual aspects of contextual reality*. According to Verschueren, the basic function of the mind in society consists in making choices between structurally available objects of adaptability with relevant contextual correlates. Throughout this process, meaning is generated in order to adapt ourselves meaningful ways to the (communicative) needs that are implicitly or explicitly articulated by interlocutors with respect to the contextual correlates at hand. This does not mean that Verschueren’s *mind in society* is a closed and centered totality. In his perspective, the mind is first and foremost to be analysed in terms of linguistic and non-linguistic *processes* as marked in discourse. Moreover, he argues for a type of discourse analysis that takes the multiplicity of voices, roles and associated functions of subjects into account (see: Verschueren 1999: 77-91). In this sense, Kopytko is right to consider Verschueren’s work to be implicitly anti-Cartesian (see: Kopytko 2000). In the upcoming section, we will see what this means for a linguistic pragmatic analysis of contextualised language use and subjectivity.

Indexical contextualisation processes and contextualisation cues

Below, we will discuss how structural objects of adaptability can be related to contextual correlates of adaptability. Put differently, the upcoming section focuses on the way linguistic and other semiotic forms are related to relevant aspects of context in and through language use. This entails a discussion of four metaphors of context: context as articulation, context as a bucket, context as a yellow brick road, and context as lines of vision. It also involves a discussion of the notions of indexicality, deixis, and contextualisation cues. All of this will be discussed as we go. However, it should be noted that any

linguistic pragmatic understanding of context also involves a discussion of metalinguistic or metapragmatic awareness. Considering the importance of this type of awareness to contextualisation processes, I choose to treat this topic separately.

Peter Auer provides us with an overview of five pre-theoretical but intuitively plausible notions of context. The notion may be used to refer to: the linguistic context or co-text of an *énoncé*; the non-linguistic sense-data in the surroundings of the linguistic activity or the situation in a physical sense of the word; the features of the social situation; the features of the participants' common background knowledge other than the linguistic, physical and social context; and/or to the channel or medium of communication. He notes that in principle, all aspects of reality can constitute a context for linguistic events. For this reason, he argues that *"the more interesting question surely is how this 'becoming-a-context-for-something' is accomplished"* (Auer 2009: 91,95). Usually, the notion of context is thought of in terms of one of two metaphors: context as a bucket vs context as a yellow brick road. The more traditional view is the bucket-view of context (Heritage and Clayman 2010: 21-22). John Heritage and Steven Clayman describe the associated ideas as follows:

"the traditional view of the relationship between interaction and its context is what we term the "bucket theory" of context. The dominant image of this relationship is of a container that "contains" interactions as a bucket contains water. In general the bucket theory assumes that interaction accommodates to fit the context rather as water does the bucket. At any rate the bucket is not significantly altered by the interactions it contains. It is easy to see how this image arises and seems so compelling. If we consider an institutional setting like a university lecture theatre, the participants – professors, students, teaching assistants, etc. – enter the institutional space and behave in accordance with the norms appropriate to a lecture. The lecture hall, like the bucket, contains the actions and it does not seem to be affected by them. This image of a situation containing its appropriate actions is a dominant one in many forms of structural theorising in the social sciences, but it starts to appear profoundly misleading as soon as we encounter actions that depart in any way from the norm." (Heritage and Clayman 2010: 21)

Pragmaticians are usually more interested in analysing the way in which contexts are used, invoked, inferred, presupposed, or constructed by language users in the production and interpretation of linguistic utterances than in an analysis of some supposedly language independent structure that merely surrounds the utterance (Auer 2009). In this sense, the pragmatic notion of context rather resembles the yellow brick road metaphor advocated by conversation analysts such as Heritage and Clayman:

"Our alternative to the bucket theory is summed up by an unforgettable image associated with the Beatles' Yellow Submarine movie. In this image, the Beatles are walking along, and as they step forward a yellow brick road (like the one in The Wizard of Oz) materializes and are travelling on. Applying this image to interaction, the view we will take is that social context is never independent of actions (Duranti & Goodwin 1992). To the contrary, persons, are continuously creating, maintaining, or altering the social circumstances in which they are placed – regardless of how massively, even oppressively, "predefined" those notions appear to be – and they do so in and through the actions they perform." (Heritage and Clayman 2010: 21)

Even though the yellow brick road metaphor highlights many pragmatic sensibilities, it does not tell us *how something becomes a context for something else*. In order to understand this process, we have to introduce the notions of indexicality and deixis. In the chapter on articulation, we noted how Laclau recognises the impossibility to attribute closed boundaries to a context and that we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation in which *"contexts have to be defined by their limits, and yet these limits are impossible to fix"*. At first sight, this view is quite compatible with the pragmatic take on context. However, for Laclau, the solution to fixing boundaries lies in a relative fixation of meaning that is achieved through articulatory practices in which various signifieds are connected to one another in chains of equivalence and difference. The resulting imaginary assumption supposedly enables us *"to fix (to close within itself) a transient context"* that provides us with the very conditions for meaning,

politics, subjectivity, and hegemony (Butler and Laclau 2004: 335). We also noted that the Essex framework does not provide us with a discussion of how these limits and partial fixations can be realised in empirically observable discourse. In this respect, I argued that one of the main obstacles to overcoming the methodological deficit of poststructuralist discourse theory and analysis is the result of an inadequate account of how context is (re)produced through empirically observable discourse. I also suggested that the linguistic pragmatic concept of indexicality offers us a way out of this deficit.

The term ‘deixis’ is derived from the Greek word for pointing. Levinson explains that it “*refers to a particular way in which the interpretation of certain expressions (‘deictics’ or ‘indexicals’) is dependent on the context in which they are produced or interpreted*” (S. Levinson 1998: 200). Jack Sidnell agrees with Levinson that a great many if not all linguistic forms depend for their interpretations on some properties of the extralinguistic context: “*rather than a characteristic of particular isolable forms, indexicality is a general characteristic of language and interaction*” (Sidnell 2009b: 114). Nevertheless, there are certain categories of linguistic forms that are more often associated with the deictic function than others. Benveniste listed a number of linguistic phenomena or structural objects of adaptability that position the subject deictically: adverbs, adjectives, pronouns, and so on. According to him, such phenomena play a great role in the constitution of subjectivity in and through language use. He emphasised that through their usage of indexicals, speaking subjects position themselves with respect to a multiplicity of contextual correlates as more or less coherent wholes (Benveniste 1974: 262). We also noted that Jakobson’s shifters and other phenomena related to deixis function by showing their objects rather than by mentioning them explicitly (Angermüller: 119). Because of their vagueness (Auer 2009: 96-97), indexicals such as *here, there, now, then, I, you, he, my, ours, or us*, force us to go and look for relevant aspects of the context of enunciation if we wish to understand the text or utterance at hand (see also: Angermüller 2010; Auer 2009: 96-97).

Whereas French pragmatic approaches may be said to emphasise the impact of using indexicals on the speaking subject, Anglo-American approaches to discourse have put more emphasis on the way deixis functions in relation to context. However, both phenomena are fundamentally intertwined. This compatibility is not a matter of mere coincidence. It is a direct consequence of a shared historical reference: Jakobson’s functionalist approach to language use. Jon Pressman explains how Jakobson’s ideas have informed the work of his student Silverstein. In turn, Jakobsonian functionalism turned out to be a key feature of Silverstein’s ethnographic students Charles Briggs and Greg Urban (Pressman 1994: 363):

“Silverstein’s approach warrants attention insofar as he has integrated theoretical claims laid out by Jakobson in his 1957 and 1960 papers. Silverstein’s formulation of pragmatics synthesizes Jakobson’s 1957 notion of speech indexicality with his 1960 functional diagram of the speech event, two concepts Jakobson never himself connected. Further, Silverstein’s (1985b) article presents his integration in ethnolinguistic context, and both Briggs and Urban rely on this approach in their own studies.” (Pressman 1994: 363)

Many of the authors mentioned throughout our discussion of linguistic pragmatics have been influenced by the work of one or more of these authors. Pressman lists the following ethnolinguistic authors: “*Benveniste, Boas, Bauman, Friedrich, Gumperz, Hymes, Kurylowicz, Newman, Sapir, Sebeok, Sherzer, Voegelin, and Whorf, among many others [...]*” (Pressman 1994: 464). The various accounts of context developed in contemporary ethnographically oriented forms of pragmatics are thus very much influenced by Jakobson’s – and consequently Malinowski’s – functionalism. Put simply, all of these authors agree in one way or another that one of the primary functions of language is of an indexical nature.

Below, I will provide arguments for a definition of indexicality in terms of a *semiotic process of generating meaning by means of contextualisation cues that point to spatial, temporal, social, and /or (inter)textual coordinates of reality*. In a similar vein, *indexical expressions or indexicals may be defined as those aspects of language use which serve as contextualisation cues in order to point to specific coordinates in spatial, temporal, social or (inter)textual reality*. Indexicals may be linguistic

or non-linguistic. They function at the linguistic level of morphemes, words, or word groups (e.g. pronouns, anaphora, nouns) by triggering inferential contextualisation processes. However, it is also possible to argue that the principle of indexicality is operative at every structural and contextual level of language use. Contextualisation processes may be described with reference to the work of authors such as Jakobson, Gumperz, Silverstein, Bauman, Briggs and Verschueren.

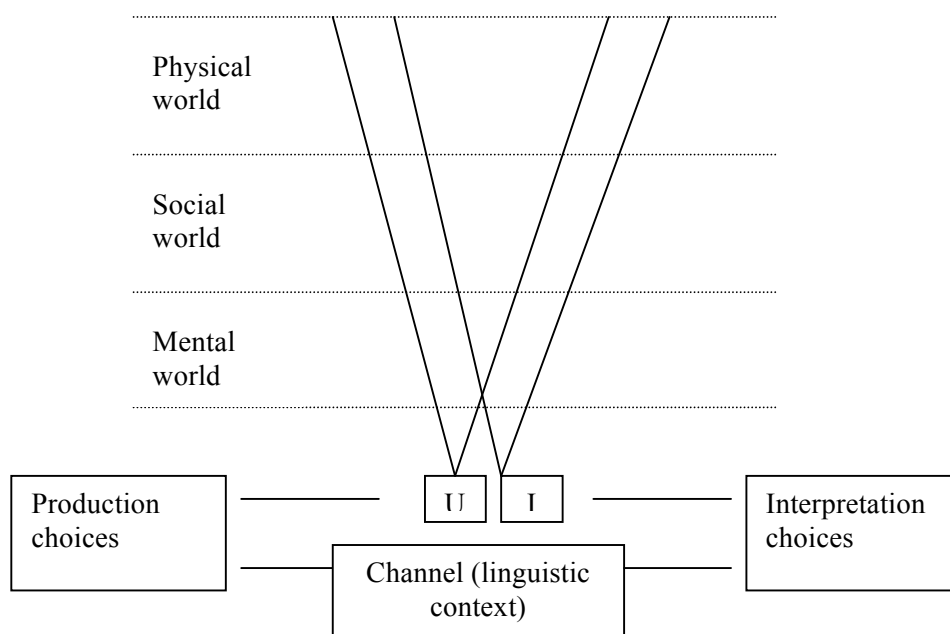
Peter Auer defines the concept of contextualisation as comprising “*all activities by participants which make relevant, maintain, revise, cancel ... any aspect of context which, in turn, is responsible for the interpretation of an utterance in its particular locus of occurrence*” (Auer 1992: 4). This notion of context heavily draws upon the work of John Gumperz who – contrary to many of structuralist authors – suggested a flexible notion of context that is continually reshaped in time and that is fundamentally reflexive (Auer 1992: 21). In an interview with Carlo Prevignano and Aldo Di Luzio, Gumperz described his long-term research program on contextualisation processes and contextualisation cues since the publication of his *Discourse strategies* (Gumperz 1982) as follows:

“I have proposed the notions of contextualization cues and contextualization processes as a way of accounting for the functioning of linguistic signs in these inferential processes [of speakers, listeners, and audience members]. Contextualization cues are a class of what pragmatics have called indexical signs, that serve to retrieve the contextual presuppositions conversationalists rely on in making sense of what they see and hear in interactive encounters. They are pure indexicals in that they have no propositional content. That is, in contrast to other indexicals like pronouns or discourse markers, they signal only relationally and cannot be assigned context-free lexical meanings. Yet they play a major role in transforming what linguists refer to as discursive structures into goal-oriented forms of action. A main aim of my current work on discourse and conversation is to show how indexical signs, including prosody, code- and style-switching and formulaic expressions, interact with symbolic (i.e. grammatical and lexical) signs, sequential ordering of exchanges, cultural and other relevant background knowledge to constitute social action.” (Prevignano and di Luzio 2003: 8)

In the definition above, Gumperz makes a distinction between pure indexicals and other indexicals. As we will see, not all authors make this distinction. For the moment, it suffices to note that according to Gumperz, context is not simply out there. Rather, it is the result of the outcome of participants’ joint efforts to make it available. According to him, there are “*surface features of message form by which speaker’s signal and listeners interpret what the activity is, how semantic content is to be understood and how each sentence relates to what precedes or follows*” (Gumperz 1982). This definition of contextualisation cues highlights the importance of establishing a relevant context for interpretation throughout interaction. More specifically, it is key to understanding the very nature of conversational inference. Gumperz notes that “*one indirectly or implicitly indicates how an utterance is to be interpreted and illustrates how one has interpreted another’s utterance through verbal and nonverbal responses, and it is the nature of these responses rather than the independently determined meaning or truth value of individual utterances alone that governs the evaluation of intent*” (Gumperz 1982: 154). For this reason, Gumperz defines conversational inference as “*the situated or context-bound process of interpretation, by means of which participants in an exchange assess others’ intentions, and on which they base their responses*” (Gumperz 1982: 153).

Auer points out that generally speaking, one might argue that contextualisation cues are all the form-related means by which participants contextualise language. However, he also notes that we may ask “*if and to what degree a context is amenable to and dependent on strategies of contextualisation*”. According to him, “*in some cases context is “brought along” and merely has to be indexed in the interaction in order to become (or remain) relevant, whereas in others, context emerges only as a consequence of interactants’ contextualization work, i.e. it is “brought about exclusively”*” (Auer 1992: 26). Verschueren does not favour such a strict distinction. He prefers to talk about context in terms of *contextual correlates of adaptability* while noting that the concept of Gumperz’ contextualisation cues may be generalized “*to any linguistic trace of a contextualization process*” (Verschueren 1999: 112). My own definitions of indexicality and context formulated above rely upon Verschueren’s broad reading of Gumperz’ work.

We already considered three metaphors of context: context as articulation; context as a bucket; and context as a yellow brick road. Verschueren developed his own metaphor in order to deal with this issue. He prefers to think of the *contextual correlates of adaptability* by means of the metaphor of *lines of vision* that emanate from the positions of the interlocutors of communicative events. These lines of vision cut through the mental, the social, the physical, and the linguistic worlds of the interlocutors U (utterer) and I (interpreter):



Verschueren considers this way of conceptualizing context useful since it graphically represents the basic fact that utterer and interpreter (unless they coincide) inhabit different worlds. Furthermore, it illustrates how even a shift of perspective can change the way the world looks like according to the participants of a specific language game or speech event. Also, in spite of the partial overlap between these lines of vision, elements of common background knowledge of participants may look different because perspective always differs, at least slightly: “*Common ground, in other words, is almost never really common.*” (Verschueren 1999: 77).

The establishment of common ground always involves a process of fantasmatic imagination in the Essex sense of the word. This means that the main function of fantasy is not to provide subjects, interlocutors or language users with a false picture of the world, “*but to ensure that the radical contingency of social reality – and the political dimension of a practice more specifically – remains in the background*” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 145). We use discourse in order to paradoxically articulate ourselves in relation to ourselves and to the contextual correlates of adaptability that we relate ourselves to socially, mentally, physically, and linguistically. The paradox consists of the fact that the linguistic forms themselves are (re)produced within and through these contextual correlates of adaptability. In this sense, Verschueren’s world is not ‘given’ in any objectivist sense of the word.

Verschueren’s notion of context implies that basically everything *can* function as a correlate of adaptability (Verschueren 1999: 76-77). However, this does not mean that one has to fear context as an “*uncontrollable, ever-widening, extralinguistic background*”. According to Verschueren, such views are based on a misguided view of context as purely a reality *out there*. It is therefore important to note that the figure above is first and foremost introduced to symbolize the *positioning* of language users. This positioning imposes restrictions on the type and amount of world that can be used as

building material for the context generating processes of the participants in a communicative context. Verschueren adds that the inadequacy of the visual representation of the *lines of vision metaphor* lies in the fact that similar lines should extend into the world of linguistic context as well. He insists that “*in fact, contexts are generated in language use, and thereby restricted in various ways*”. Not all possible ingredients of a speech event show up as contextually relevant elements for an interaction between interlocutors in relation to what is (or ought to be) *out there*. Relevant context is always (re)negotiated through the dynamics of discourse (Verschueren 1999: 109-10). In this sense, one of the most important functions of language use consists in defining the boundaries one must impose on relevant context defined in terms of imagined common ground.

For now, we can conclude that within Verschueren’s linguistic pragmatic framework, context is not a vague notion. On the contrary; “*context contributes to clarity by being subject to negotiation, uptake or rejection, acceptance of uptake or renegotiation, and so on*”. Put differently; “*contextual interpretations are actively signalled and/or used, and it is this fact that makes them most useful in linguistic analysis, because it is what makes them traceable*” (Verschueren 1999: 11). Verschueren explicitly states that aspects of the physical, the social and the mental world get *activated* through choice-making practices (Verschueren 1999: 83-87). In the following subsections, I will therefore work with a notion of context that can be defined as *the flexible and temporal (result of a) discursive contextualization process that contributes to interactional clarity and/or to the establishment of an imagined common ground by means of indexical meaning generation*.

Marking metapragmatic or metalinguistic awareness in discourse

The time has come to consider the specific linguistic tools that may be used to mark relevant aspects of subjectivity, reflexive awareness, and relations to contextual correlates of adaptability in discourse. These three phenomena are fundamentally intertwined. Verschueren notes that “*reflexive awareness [...] is no less than the single most important prerequisite for communication as we know it*” (Verschueren 2004: 53). Throughout the discussion of notions such as metapragmatics and metalinguistics, we will see why this is the case. Following Verschueren, I will argue that any notion of context should take the issue of metapragmatic, metalinguistic, or reflexive awareness into account. I will also argue that a metapragmatic account of language use and context is of fundamental importance to issues of subjectivity and interpretation. Metapragmatic awareness may be marked or unmarked in linguistic utterances.

The pragmatic perspective forces researchers to focus on the way processes of meaning generation are marked in discourse. More specifically, researchers investigate how language users establish relevant (aspects of) context through various intersubjective strategies and practices (see: Zienkowski et al. forthcoming). I already pointed to the centrality of the principle of indexicality to pragmatic accounts of discourse. Indexicals may be linguistic or non-linguistic. In either case, they indicate that we should engage in an interpretive contextualisation process. Interlocutors guide one another through this process by deictically pointing at variables along the mental, physical, and social context that we should take into account when engaging in discursive production and interpretation. The pointers that allow us to do this are called indexicals. The point of reference from which the relevant mental, social, physical, or linguistic dimension is looked at, is called the deictic center. As we noticed before, these contextual variables have no absolute value. Verschueren points out that “*even to determine the deictic center, the point of reference from which the dimension is looked at, information is needed about the deictic context*” (Verschueren 1999: 18).

There are several types of deixis that will prove to be useful for analytical purposes. These include: spatial deixis; social deixis; person deixis; and discourse deixis (Cummings 2005: 22-29; Huang 2007: 136-74; S. C. Levinson 1983: 68-94; S. Levinson 1998: 202-04; Verschueren 1999: 18-22). With respect to the issue of subjectivity, the notion of person deixis is especially relevant. Person deixis “*allows to distinguish between a speaking subject (first person, the deictic center in face to face*

communication), *an addressee (second person)* and *others (third person)*” (Verschueren 1999: 78). However, it is equally important to realize that person deixis is not restricted to an identification of utterers and interpreters. Not only interlocutors, but a whole range of subjective functions such as participant roles (Huang 2007: 136), voices (Angermüller, 2005, 2006; Anscombre 2009; Maingueneau and Angermüller 2007; Roulet 2011), identities (Blommaert 2005: 212-13; S. d'Hondt 2002) or subject positions (Maeße 2010: 112-14; Wetherell 1998: 369) may be indexically marked in discourse by linguistic forms that are lopped together under the term person deixis. These forms typically include the elements of the pronominal system and conjugated verbs. However, it is also possible to consider markings of gender and honorific distinctions in terms of discourse deixis (S. Levinson 1998: 202).

Verschueren points out that “*social deixis anchors language into its immediate interactional context of use*”. He also notes that it usually involves person deixis. Small shifts in the deictic perspective articulated in discourse may lead to shifting boundaries between *you*, *me*, *us*, and *them* (Verschueren 1999: 20). The notions of social and attitudinal deixis are also used in order to designate those “*indexical expressions which signal aspects of social status and/or forms of respect, whether or not grounded in ‘objective’ status*” (Verschueren 1999: 21). There are many linguistic forms that may perform such functions. The usage of pronouns of respect such as the French *vous* index a difference in social status. In some languages such as Korean, Japanese or Javanese, it is possible to signal degrees of respect to the addressee by making marked choices between lexical and grammatical items. Levinson points out that in such languages, it is impossible to say almost anything without encoding the relative social status of speaker to addressee in language. However, he also points out that “*perhaps all languages have distinguishable formality levels or genres that serve in a Peircian sense to index the social gravity of the context of the utterance*” (S. Levinson 1998: 204). In this Peircian sense, basically any linguistic form may indicate a relevant aspect of social status depending on the context of utterance.

Temporal deixis indicates the speaker’s temporal relation to the context of the utterance he or she articulates. The function of speaker may or may not coincide with subjective functions such as voice, participant role, and so on. Forms that may be used in order to indicate this relationship to context, include deictic adverbs of time such as *now* and *then*, but also lexicalized deictic names of days such as *Monday* or *year*, and all manifestations of verb tense (Huang 2007: 144-48). Like any other form of deixis, temporal deixis can not be taken at face value (Verschueren 1999: 18-19). For instance, the meaning of *today* may be very different in sentences such as *It is very nice weather today* and *today we can enjoy all the benefits of globalisation*. Not only does the meaning of a notion such as *today* vary with the point of time in which a speaker produces the utterance, it may also refer to longer or smaller stretches in time (the time of utterance or the entire 24 hours that make up a day) (see also: Cummings 2005: 24-25). As with all indexicals, a significant amount of vagueness is involved.

A fourth type of deixis is of a spatial nature. Spatial deixis functions in a similar vein as time deixis. References to place can be absolute or relative. Absolute references locate an object or a person in a specific longitude and latitude whereas relational references locate people in places relative to each other and the speaker. Cummings points out that “*in the same way that the time deictic expression ‘now’ can refer to smaller or larger periods of time from the point of utterance, the place deictic term ‘here’ can refer to the location of the speaker or to locations at various distances from the speaker*”. She also notes that the same linguistic expressions that function spatially in one context may function temporally in another. This goes both for demonstrative pronouns such as *this* and *that* as for motion verbs as *to come* or *to go* (Cummings 2005: 26-27).

Last but not least, we should mention discourse deixis. Some degree of reflexivity is always involved in language use. Discourse deixis is a phenomenon that allows us to empirically investigate the reflexive awareness of language users with respect to their own discourse and the discourse of others. Verschueren points out that “*discourse deixis is involved whenever a form of expression points at earlier, simultaneous, or following discourse*” (Verschueren 1999: 21). Quite often, it is difficult to distinguish discourse deixis from spatial and temporal deixis since discourse unfolds both in time and

space. Moreover, time is often conceptualized in spatial terms (S. Levinson 1998: 204). For instance, if I state that I will discuss the critical function of metapragmatic awareness *in the next subsection*, this statement can only be interpreted properly when one takes the discursive, temporal, and spatial contextual correlates of adaptability into account.

Discourse deixis can take many forms. Discourse is often self-referential but it may also refer to future statements. This can be exemplified with reference to a variety of markers of textual cohesion such as: conjunctions (e.g. *and*); anaphora (terms referring to the same entity as some other term prior in the discourse – e.g. *which, these, that*); anticipatory references (e.g. *as we will see*); exemplifications; explanations; logical relations (e.g. conclusions); highlighting by means of quotation marks or italics; contrasts; comparisons; substitutions; and so on. However, discourse deixis also functions at an intertextual level. Texts may position themselves in relation to other texts, language games, speech events, or activity types (Verschueren 1999: 104-08). Moreover, even though Verschueren does not extend the notion of intertextuality to imply direct and indirect reported speech, it should be noted that it is perfectly feasible to do so (see: Slembrouck 2011). In fact, considering the anti-Cartesian perspective I have been arguing for, it should not come as a surprise that I prefer to take the Bakhtinian and polyphonic notion of intertextuality into account.

It should be clear by now that the various deictic functions mentioned above play an important role in the establishment and relative fixation of contextual boundaries for interpretation. We have now arrived at the point where we may *define contextualisation processes in terms of the (the result of) a (meta)pragmatic process which triggers interpretive efforts whereby spatial, temporal, social and/or (inter)textual co-ordinates of reality are indexed by interactants in order to contribute to interactional clarity and/or to an imagined common ground*. In order to fully understand this definition, one concept remains to be clarified: the notion of metapragmatic or metalinguistic awareness.

The phenomena discussed under the header of metapragmatics also figure in research on metalinguistics (Jaworski et al. 2004) or metapragmatics (Bublitz and Hubler 2007; Caffi 1998; Verschueren 2004). There is no consensus with respect to the delineation of these terms. I prefer to take a pragmatic stance with respect to the usage of these concepts. Blommaert points out that “*every discourse simultaneously says something in itself (e.g. it describes a particular state of affairs ‘out there’) and about itself, about how that discourse should be interpreted, situated in relation to context, social relations, and so on. Such indexical levels can also be called ‘metalinguistic’ (i.e. about linguistic structure) or ‘metapragmatic’ (i.e. about forms of usage of language)*” (Blommaert 2005: 253). All deictic functions mentioned above are to a certain extent of a metapragmatic or metalinguistic nature. However, Blommaert’s definition highlights just one of three senses of metapragmatics.

In addition to metapragmatics as defined by Blommaert, the notion may refer to the theoretical debate on pragmatics defined as a scientific discipline or perspective – irrespective of the specific definition given to this discipline. Moreover, metapragmatics may refer to the conditions that make speaker’s language use possible and effective. In this sense, it refers to “*the investigation of that area of the speaker’s competence which reflects the judgments of appropriateness on one’s own and other people’s communicative behaviour*”. Caffi points out that “*This metapragmatics deals with the ‘know-how’ regarding the control and planning of, as well as feedback on, the ongoing interaction*” (Caffi 1998: 581). This sense is closely related to a particular view on language use described as “*the adaptable and negotiable making of linguistic choices, both in production and in interpretation, from variable (and constantly varying) range of options in an interactive effort at generating meaning*” (Verschueren 2004: 57).

The study of the metapragmatic aspects of language use involves a study of metapragmatic awareness. In this sense, metapragmatics is “*concerned with linguistic traces of a speaker’s awareness of the processes he or she is involved in*” (Verschueren 2009: 22). Even though we do not have any direct access to the awareness of others and in spite of the fact that awareness is not measurable, reflexive or metapragmatic awareness leaves traces in language use (Verschueren 2004: 59).

Verschueren points out that: “... *language users know more or less what they are doing when using language. Self-monitoring, at whatever level of salience, is always going on. It is this aspect of language use in relation to the medium of adaptability [Vygotski’s ‘mind in society’] that I call reflexive or metapragmatic awareness. [...] Studying this type of awareness is crucial to an understanding of verbal behaviour because, like any other form of socialisation, language use is always interpreted, in the sense that the actors involved attach meaning to it, so that the actors’ interpretations become part and parcel of what needs to be described and explained*” (Verschueren 2004: 444-45). Reflexive awareness can be marked in discourse by means of a range of linguistic forms that can be placed under the heading of metapragmatic markers.

Almost all researchers in the field of pragmatics agree that metapragmatic markers are functional entities. This means that a variety of linguistic forms may perform a metapragmatic function. Even though there is a metapragmatic dimension to all language use, potential indicators of metapragmatic awareness include “*all of Jakobson’s ‘shifters’, Gumperz’s ‘contextualization cues’ (such as instances of code switching), anything ever discussed under the labels ‘discourse markers / particles’ or ‘pragmatic markers / particles’ (such as anyway, actually, undoubtedly, I guess, you know, etc.), ‘sentence adverbs’ (such as frankly, regrettably), hedges (such as sort of, in a sense), instances of ‘mention’ vs ‘use’ (again as already suggested in Jakobson), as well as direct quotations, reported speech, and more implicitly embedded ‘voices’*” (Verschueren 2004: 446).

Metapragmatic awareness may be marked explicitly by means of metapragmatic markers or may be left largely implicit in discourse (Hübler and Bublitz 2007). An important caveat to be made is that it is impossible to achieve either full explicitness or full implicitness by means of language use (Verschueren 1999: 26-36). Several authors have developed typologies of metapragmatic or metalinguistic markers and their multiplicity of functions: Ken Hyland did so from a pragmatic and text-linguistic perspective (Hyland 2005); Wolfram and Bublitz took an explicit pragmatic stance (Bublitz and Hubler 2007); and Eun-Jo Noh framed the various forms and functions of metalinguistic markers within the framework of relevance theory (Noh 2000). However, I am not so much concerned with particular typologies as I am with the ways in which the concept of metapragmatic language use may help us to understand how an author or speaker marks his or her subjectivity in language use. Nevertheless, it is useful to take a look at Verschueren’s overview of explicit and implicit metalinguistic, metadiscursive or metapragmatic markers (Verschueren 2004: 61):

Explicit metalanguage	Implicit metalanguage
- metapragmatic descriptions (e.g. by means of metapragmatic lexical items such as speech act verbs or performative verbs) - self-referential expressions - discourse markers / particles or pragmatic markers / particles - sentence adverbs - hedges - explicit intertextual links - quoted and reported speech - ‘mention’ (vs. ‘use’) - some ‘shifters’ (e.g. some evidentials) - some ‘contextualization cues’ (many of the above can be included in this category)	- most ‘shifters’: - o deictic expressions (pronouns, tense, etc.) - o aspect - o mood and modality - o (some) evidentials - many ‘contextualization cues’ (e.g. prosodic patterns, code switching, etc.) - implicit ‘voices’ - (proper names, i.e. Jakobson’s C/C, which may not be fully treatable on a par with the other metalinguistic phenomena)

Metapragmatic processes may be left to function in implicit ways. For instance, through marked transitions in register or dialect, a speaker may index a shift in relevant aspects of his or her subjectivity within the context of a conversation. A speaker may address a party that has just entered a conversational setting by merely pointing his gaze towards the newcomer. Every aspect of language

performs an indexical function, since it provides pointers towards the various aspects of reality we need to take into account in order to understand the communications at hand. On the other hand, a speaker's metapragmatic awareness may be articulated explicitly as well.

All of the markers identified above perform both pragmatic and metapragmatic functions. However, an investigation of the metapragmatic dimension of pronouns, shifters and so on, forces one to consider the interpretive processes involved when using such linguistic elements. More specifically, it forces one to take those interpretive processes into account which are marked. Subjectivity may be marked with varying degrees of implicitness and explicitness in discourse. For instance, the meaning and function of the pronoun 'you' and the special qualifier 'this' in an utterance such as 'you simply can't do this', can only make sense if we are provided with some markers that indicate some of the relevant aspects of reality required for interpretation. These aspects may be marked indexically in preceding or following discourse (words, topics, intonation, ...), in non-verbal aspects of communication (e.g. gaze, pointing, ...), or any other aspect of communication that provides relevant indexical parameters.

In French linguistic pragmatics this can be exemplified with reference to the work of Emile Benveniste. Angermüller points out that Benveniste considers utterances to function thanks to a whole series of particles that deictically point towards the contexts of utterance. Pronouns, adverbs and adjectives such as 'me', 'here', and 'now' that render person, place and time visible, are particularly important in this respect. Angermüller points out that *"according to Benveniste, these particles and their derivatives constitute a system – the 'formal apparatus of the utterance' through which subjectivity is inscribed into language. Texts are subjective insofar they operate with the formal traces of the utterances (marqueurs) and thus resort to the context of utterance"* (Angermüller 2007a: 8)⁴³. In this sense, there is a significant conceptual overlap between enunciative markers and markers of metapragmatic awareness (see: Angermüller 2005; Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011).

Even though Angermüller tends to focus on the French tradition in linguistic pragmatics (especially polyphonic theories of enunciation) he emphasises that in Anglo-Saxon pragmatics too, there has been an increasing insistence on the idea that texts do not have an inherent meaning that emanates from a single unified subject who merely expresses him- or herself in a text. Angermüller points out that in addition to French polyphonic theory there is a whole range of linguistically oriented perspectives that take the multiplicity of subjectivity into account (Angermüller 2008: 6; Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011). On the other hand, the multiplicity of voices and meanings that may potentially be inferred from texts is limited by the operation of various interpretive rules that are triggered when we are confronted with various types of discursive markers. These markers *"show their objects by pointing to them in enunciation rather than by rendering a given signification"* (Angermüller 2005: 9). As we will see, they are especially important when we wish to determine how (self-) interpretations and or subjectivities are constituted in and through actual language use.

However one may define subjectivity, it is crucial to point out that it involves at least some degree of awareness. This principle allows us to think of multiplicity within a more or less coherent individual. Put differently, it allows us to think of the self as an exercise in balancing on the edge between coherence and a multiple personality disorder. It is useful to recall Donald E. Hall's observation that *"we may have numerous discrete identities of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc ... and a subjectivity that is comprised of all of those facets, as well as our own imperfect awareness of our selves"* (D. E. Hall 2004: 134). As we will see, an investigation of the metapragmatic aspects of language use allows us to investigate the associated self-interpretations empirically. Even though we have no direct access to our own awareness or to the awareness of others, we do have access to a language that may indicate relevant aspects of our own awareness of the discursive processes we are involved in, as well as one's subjective stance towards a multiplicity of social and discursive

⁴³ *"diese Partikel und ihre Derivate bilden nach Benveniste ein System – den 'formalen Apparat der Äußerung', über den die Subjectivität in die Sprache eingelassen ist. Texte sind demnach 'subjektiv' als sie mit den formalen Abdrücken der Äußerung (marqueurs) operieren und den Äußerungskontext zugreifen"* (Angermüller 2007: 8)

phenomena articulated in discourse. As such, metapragmatic markers allow for an empirical analysis of the self defined as a *reification of the processes which allow an individual body to (reflectively) position itself as a coherent and whole mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social and (inter)textual aspects of (contextual) reality*.

(Meta)pragmatics, context, and critique

Throughout my discussion of the concepts of ⟨politics⟩, ⟨identity⟩, and ⟨community⟩ as deployed by my respondents, I pointed out that my respondents exhibited a significant degree of metapragmatic awareness with respect to the way such abstract categories are deployed in scientific and political discourse. They frequently made use of hedges, boosters and other markers of metapragmatic awareness in order to respectively distance themselves or identify themselves with respect to particular usages of these terms. I also suggested that metapragmatic awareness is constitutive for political awareness. My respondents proved to be very much aware of the normativity of particular implicit and explicit definitions of ⟨politics⟩, ⟨community⟩ and ⟨identity⟩. Some modes of politics were granted legitimacy, whereas others were ethically disqualified. Without the ability to mark metapragmatic awareness in discourse, it is hard to see how a critique of hegemonic conceptualisations of socio-political categories could be articulated.

The notion of metapragmatic awareness also proved to be relevant with respect to the multiplicity of voices that respondents (re-)articulate in their discourse. More specifically, it is of key importance to the process whereby one distinguishes between one's own discourse(s) and the discourse(s) of others. This principle is intertwined with the fact that metapragmatic awareness allows individuals to distinguish their interpretively established sense of being a coherent self on the one hand, and the multiplicity of subject positions, roles, identities, or any other functional entities that one positively, partially, or negatively identifies oneself with in a particular context. A pragmatic approach to the self, to politics and to subjectivity should allow us to address some of the problematics posed by the methodological deficits of poststructuralist and pragmatist thought. As we will see, it allows for an empirical investigation of self and politics as well as for an investigation of the interpretive logics deployed by subjects when they relate themselves to themselves and to relevant aspects of their physical, social, mental, and/or inter(textual) realities.

Since the various pragmatist, poststructuralist, and linguistic pragmatic accounts of discourse discussed within the context of this book also constitute a form of metapragmatic discourse, we need to ask ourselves how the metapragmatic and political awareness of respondents can be (re)articulated without running the risk of overpowering the voices and meanings as interpreted by the interviewees themselves. In this respect, I will argue that the (meta-) pragmatic account of awareness and context outlined above provides us with a way to *go through the self-interpretations of subjects by analysing their subjective interpretations as marked in discourse*. Deictic markers of context and metapragmatic awareness allow us to investigate the traces of interpretive processes. These traces guide us through the intersubjective process of interpretation and inference. As such, the theory of context and metapragmatic awareness as developed in linguistic pragmatic accounts of discourse and subjectivity is not without political implications. I will use the remainder of this section to discuss the relation between pragmatics, contextualisation processes, and critique.

Hübler and Bublitz point out that metapragmatic performances serve as a means of commenting on and interfering with ongoing discourse or text (Hübler and Bublitz 2007: 6). Such performances are fundamental to the articulation of social and textual critique. Moreover, there is a social function that needs to be mentioned. Hyland considers metadiscourse as the deployment of linguistic tokens in order to guide or direct a reader through a text so both the text and the writer's stance is understood. Metapragmatic markers perform various communicative functions defined in terms of communicative purposes for language users. Hyland emphasises that such "*functional analyses recognize that a comprehensive and pragmatically grounded description of any text must involve attending to the use*

of language in relation to its surrounding co-text and the purpose of the writer in creating a text as a whole". (Hyland 2005: 18, 24). Considering the multiplicity of reflexive and social functions of metapragmatic discourse, it is safe to assume that it performs a key function in the articulation of political subjectivities and discourses.

Theoretical and empirical accounts of context and metapragmatic awareness are not without implications for (an analysis of) the possibility of critique. This can be exemplified with respect to an interesting tension between some proponents of conversation analysis (CA) on the one hand (see: Schegloff 1997; Schegloff 1998, 1999b, 1999a), and some critical discourse analysts (CDA) on the other hand (see: Billig 1999b; Billig 1999a; Wetherell 1998). I agree with Van Dijk that the debate between Schegloff and Billig should not be framed as a false dichotomy between critical discourse analysis and conversation analysis. Van Dijk points out that CDA and CA share many criteria and aims and should not be thought of as fundamentally incompatible perspectives (Van Dijk 1999: 459-60):

"Both have a special interest in naturally occurring text or talk, acknowledge the context-dependency of discourse, recognize the relevance of an interactional dimension of language, attend to sequential phenomena in text or talk and, in general, examine order and organization of expression, meaning and action at several levels of analysis. Few analysts in both fields reject basic functional principles that claim that discourse and its structures are accomplished as specific social acts – that is, to get things done in social contexts. And (in my view regrettably so), both CDA and CA generally ignore the cognitive basis of discourse and interaction."

Considering this list of similarities, it makes sense to think of both approaches as being branded by the pragmatic turn in the study of language (see: Zienkowski 2011). Nevertheless, the debate between Schegloff and Billig is also indicative of a tension between two different approaches to what context is and to what contextual correlates should be taken into account in (critical) analyses of discourse. Van Dijk puts it as follows:

"[...] contextualization is generally attended to quite differently in CA than in CDA. Thus in CA, in principle, no contextual categories (such as power or gender) are postulated a priori in order to understand or explain ongoing talk unless these are (made) relevant, as such and in the interaction, by the participants themselves. In CDA, on the other hand, which does not have the same history of challenging the tenets of macro-sociology, the application of contextualization criteria is less strict. There is no hesitation in examining text and context separately, and once a feature of context has been observed, postulated or otherwise identified, CDA may be used to explore whether and how such a feature affects or is affected by, structures of text and talk." (Van Dijk 1999)

Abstract notions such as power, control, and discrimination, are very important to CDA. In line with the research program formulated by Norman Fairclough (see: Fairclough 1992; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Fairclough and Chouliaraki 1999; Fairclough 2003) – another key figure in CDA – Ruth Wodak provides us with the following definition of critical discourse analysis:

"CDA might thus be defined as being fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control when these are manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use (or in discourse). Most critical discourse analysts would thus endorse Habermas's claim that "language is also a medium of domination and social force". It serves to legitimize relations of organized power. In so far as the legitimizations of power relations, ..., are not articulated, ..., language is also ideological" (Wodak 2011: 53)

It should be noted however, that Wodak's reference to the work of Habermas is quite exceptional. Most of the times, the take on power within CDA is heavily informed by the poststructuralist approach to power developed by authors such as Foucault (see: Fairclough 1992; Fairclough and Wodak 1997),

Laclau and Mouffe (see: Fairclough and Chouliaraki 1999). But whatever the theoretical point of reference, conversation analysts tend to be very critical with respect to researchers who import categories into an analysis of discourse whereby interlocutors do not use these categories themselves. It is useful to take a look at what Schegloff has to say in reply to Margaret Wetherell (see: Wetherell 1998) about this issue:

“[...] Wetherell asks whether ‘a descriptive analysis [...] guided by Foucault’s concept of genealogy [...] [would] count as importing theorists’ preoccupations [whether] ‘Schegloff’s boundary line [would] be breached if [...] we attempted to develop a feminist commentary ...’? (p.402) Who knows? If approached in the spirit of these questions, probably so, because the questions appear to be prompted in the first instance by readings of Foucault and the concerns of feminist commentary, not by observable features of the participants’ talk and conduct.” (Schegloff 1998: 414)

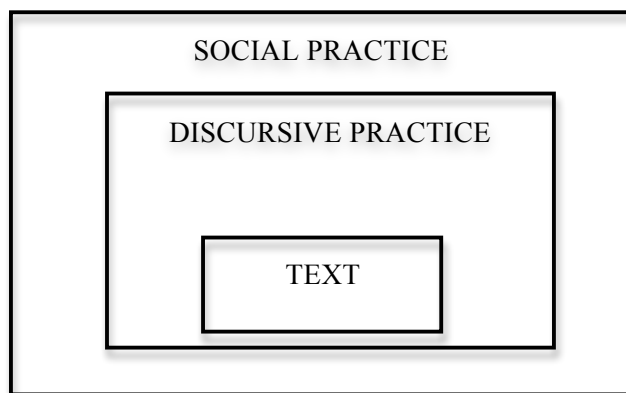
Schegloff goes on and argues that *“what is needed is not readings in critical theory, but observations – noticings – about people’s conduct in the world and the practices by which they are engendered and understood”* (Schegloff 1998: 414). Put differently, Schegloff’s stance is informed by a similar concern I articulated earlier in this book: *how do we (re)articulate the voices of respondents without over-powering the locally generated meanings in the process*. We already noted that the rearticulation of my research title was informed by the fact that my respondents metapragmatically commented on common usages of notions such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨politics⟩ and ⟨community⟩ in political and scientific discourse. These concepts were not always accepted as useful categories for describing their subjectively experienced realities. However, it should also be noted that the principle of (re-) articulation implies that as soon as we recontextualise any utterance, we are also altering its meaning. This is a consequence of the instability of form-function relationships in language use. Simply sticking to the categories used by respondents in the description and explanation of interactions does not change anything about this basic principle. Neither does a refusal to use analytical categories that are not necessarily used or even familiar to research subjects.

The production of scientific discourse is in principle a highly disciplined practice of (re)articulation. I agree with Schegloff in the sense that we should not solely base our problematisations on social scientific categories such as *genealogy*, *communities*, *self-techniques*, or *articulations*. The empirical phenomena that we encounter should be recognized in their complexity and heterogeneity. As such, the rearticulation of this research project was heavily informed by the language use deployed by my respondents. As we noticed before, my research project evolved from a problematisation in terms of Islamic political identities towards a research on political subjectivity; from a vague ensemble of allochthons, Moroccans, Maghrebi and Muslims to an analysis of the discourse of public activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background in Flanders. Moreover, the object of study was no longer a unified community but a complex intertextual network of people discursively constructing their political engagement with reference to a great variety of concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices and myself.

Of course, one might argue that I merely replaced one set of problematic categories by another set. However, the rearticulated working title is more functional with respect to my attempt to relate to the voices of my respondents in such a way that the basic functions and communicative needs articulated by them remained intact. These communicative performances include: their problematisation of abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, ⟨ethnicity⟩, ⟨identity⟩, ⟨self⟩ and ⟨politics⟩; their attempts ⟨to ask critical questions⟩; their ⟨search for authenticity⟩ and ⟨identity⟩; their concern with discourses in which ⟨one reduces a person to a headscarf or to a piece of his identity that makes him⟩ ⟨a Muslim⟩; and many other communicative needs performed and articulated in and through their discourse.

As such, I agree with pragmatic and pragmatically oriented authors such as Jan Blommaert, Jef Verschueren, James Collins, Monica Heller, Ben Rampton, and Stef Slembrouck who do not refrain from using notions such as power, ideology, or hegemony, but who use these notions reflexively in dialogue with the empirical data at hand (see: Blommaert et al. 2001, 2003). Their focus on empirical

data and their reflexive awareness with respect to the way they use academic categories leads them to a critique of the notion of context as deployed in many variants of critical discourse analysis and conversation analysis. Blommaert notes that the debate between Schegloff, Wetherell and Billig is ultimately about context and critique. In CDA, context is often taken to constitute a mere background for the discourse under investigation in spite of CDA acknowledgements that “*discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned*” (Blommaert 2001: 14). Quite often, we are dealing with a notion of context as a container. This can be exemplified with reference to Fairclough’s schematical presentation of what he calls a *three-dimensional conception of discourse* (Fairclough 1992: 73):



Blommaert sympathizes strongly “*with the aims set by CDA*”. Nevertheless, he finds himself disfavoured the way contextual parameters are integrated in a great deal of CDA research. Since the contextual situatedness is so crucial to CDA analyses, the issue of context becomes especially pressing (Blommaert 2001: 15). In a manner that is reminiscent of Schegloff’s criticism, Blommaert points out that:

“a lot of a priori contextualization goes on in work qualified as CDA which I find objectionable. Thus, in much CDA work, a priori statements on power relations are used as perspectives on discourse (e.g. ‘power is bad’, ‘politicians are manipulators’, ‘media are ideology reproducing machines’), and social-theoretical concepts and categories are being used in off-hand and seemingly self-evident ways (e.g. ‘power’, ‘institutions’, also ‘the leading groups in society’, ‘business’ and so on). This leads to highly simplified models of social structures and patterns of interaction” (Blommaert 2001: 15)

In spite of the fact that Norman Fairclough explicitly subscribes to a Foucaultian notion of power in his theoretical framework, many CDA authors tend to focus on merely one form of power in their analyses: the rather dominating juridico-discursive variant. This is obviously a very selective and narrow reading of Foucault’s writings on power. Eric Grillo notes that in most discourse analyses power is implicitly and/or explicitly understood as “*the exertion of some kind of action or influence upon people’s behaviour and thoughts*”. Moreover, discourse is taken to pertain to power in so far as “*there are social and cognitive constraints which determine its frame as well as its contents*” and in so far as “*discursive practices, to the largest extent, amount to taking part in power relations*” (Grillo 2005: 4). Grillo considers such accounts of power to be both partial and oversimplified. He points out that power is also operative in ethical and participatory or dialogical forms of interaction that can actually be *empowering* (Grillo 2005: 31).

The implicitly or explicitly articulated container view of context and the rather restrictive view on power are inter-related. Blommaert’s concern with the a-priori formulated theoretical postulations with respect to notions such as power in many CDA publications is therefore paralleled with an argument against what he calls *prima facie ethnographies*. He refers to a paper by Ruth Wodak on critical discourse analysis and the study of doctor-patient interaction. In her paper, Wodak provides us with a set of contextual parameters without specifying where this crucial ethnographic information comes from (Blommaert 2001: 15-16):

“For an understanding of the context, it is important to realize that the out-patients’ ward has very low status and prestige in relation to the rest of the hospital. It is a type of outpost and ... serves as a training ground for young doctors, which results in inexperienced insiders working where experienced ones are arguably most necessary. Hierarchy, knowledge, experience and gender are interlinked in a strange and unique way in the outpatient’s ward ...” (Wodak 1997: 179)

The problem with this type of contextualisation is that such a priori contextualisations are taken for granted in the remainder of the analysis. The source of this type of information is often referred to as on-site observation and interviewing without an explicit discussion of the procedures: *“analysis starts as soon as the data ‘are there’”* – an additional problem being that analysis is often restricted to exemplification of a priori postulated empirical and theoretical claims (Blommaert 2001: 16). The resulting predictability of findings is also one of the objections raised by authors such as Verschueren (Verschueren 2001), and Slembrouck (Slembrouck 2001).

In contrast to many CDA authors, conversation analysts consider context as a yellow brick road rather than as a bucket (Heritage and Clayman 2010: 21-22). Schegloff even recognizes the fundamentally indexical nature of context generation (Schegloff 1998: 413). However, to most conversation analysts, context is established solely through interaction. Blommaert rephrases Schegloff’s CA approach to context as follows:

“The option taken by Schegloff is clear: ‘interaction’ is equated with (single utterance) ‘context’. Automatically, in term of CA’s research agenda, the relevant context for talking participants is idealized as being the unique interaction, and social roles and functions (including ‘distal’ elements such as institutional or political-ideological elements) are only ‘relevant’ in as far as they are ‘procedurally consequential’, i.e. in as far as they actually show up demonstrably in the interactional practices” (Blommaert 2001: 19)

To Schegloff, social structure is produced in (single utterances of) interaction. Blommaert finds it hard to subscribe to this reductive notion of context and argues that any type of analysis involves recontextualisation processes. Discourses are lifted out of context and placed into others. Doing so, metapragmatic qualifications are added to it. He notes that in spite of the fact that conversation analytical accounts of discourse are a case in point, *“CA – or at least the brand of CA discussed here – fails to recognize even the existence of the entextualization practices it applies to text, insisting instead on an isomorphy between ‘original text-and-context’ and ‘analytic text-and-context’*. He goes on and deplores the fact that this type of CA denies *“the metapragmatic framing involved in all analysis”* (Blommaert 2001: 18). The entextualisation practices that researchers deploy are a characteristic of all discourse. The pragmatically oriented ethnographic anthropologists Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs define entextualisation processes as follows:

“the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit – a text – that can be lifted out of its interactional setting. A text then, from this vantage point, is discourse rendered decontextualizable. Entextualization may well incorporate aspects of context such that the resultant text carries elements of its history of use with it. Basic to the process of entextualization is the reflexive capacity of discourse, the capacity it shares with all systems of signification ‘to turn back upon itself, to become an object to itself, to refer to itself’ (Babcock 1984, 1980)” (R. Bauman and Briggs 1990: 73)

Briggs and Bauman consider entextualisation processes to be metalinguistic and poetic performances in a Jakobsonian sense. They consider linguistic discourse in terms of performance – i.e. *“a specially marked, artful way of speaking that sets up or represents a special interpretive frame within which the art of speaking is to be understood”* (R. Bauman and Briggs 1990: 73). De- and recontextualisations of texts are therefore two aspects of the same process through which the frames, the forms, the functions, the indexical relations, and structures of texts may be transformed through linguistic performance. As such, they point out that de- and recontextualisation of a text always involves an act of control (R.

Bauman and Briggs 1990: 75-76). Bauman and Briggs go on and considers what this means with respect to power:

“To decontextualize and recontextualize a text is thus an act of control, and in regard to the differential exercise of such control the issue of social power arises. More specifically, we may recognize differential access to texts, differential legitimacy in claims to and use of texts, differential competence in the use of texts, and differential values attaching to various types of texts. All of these elements, let us emphasise, are culturally constructed, socially constituted, and sustained by ideologies, and they accordingly may vary cross-culturally” (R. Bauman and Briggs 1990: 76)

The link between metapragmatic (en- / de- / and re-) contextualisation processes and ideology is of fundamental importance to the pragmatic notion of critique. In the following sections, I will consider the concept of *performativity as referring to the acts performed by means of the stylization of the body through acts of linguistic and/or non-linguistic performance*. This definition is both compatible with poststructuralist and linguistic accounts of performativity (see: Butler 1999: xv). In a similar vein, I will reserve the more concrete *notion of performance to highlight the material aspects of a form-function relationship that may serve as an index that allows us to generate meaningful relations between our discourse, ourselves, and aspects of our mental, physical, social, and discursive context*. If we consider critique as a label for those practices directed at challenging (the presuppositions of) established power relationships in specific contexts, it should become obvious why metapragmatics is so relevant to questions of ideology, hegemony and critique.

In contrast with the rather abstract notions of ideology that we may encounter in poststructuralist or (post-) Marxist theory, the linguistic pragmatic notion of context considers ideology as a specific set of functions associated with language use. For instance, Jef Verschueren defines ideology as *“any constellation of fundamental or commonsensical and often normative, beliefs and ideas related to some aspect(s) of social reality”*. He distinguishes between ideology and hegemony. In a Bakhtinian argument, he points out that *“rhetorically constructed or supported ideological webs serve the purpose of framing, validating or legitimating attitudes and actions in the domain to which they are applicable”*. These activities take place in discursive environments characterized by heteroglossia or polyphony. He emphasises that society is characterized by *“a constant interplay between different socio-ideological languages competing for dominance or hegemony”* (Verschueren 1999: 238). Hegemony, is thus the gambit of any socio-political struggle. It is a status that an ideological idea, relationship, or concept may or may not achieve. The practical implications of this view on reflexivity, context, and discourse for the empirical analysis of political discourse will be presented and illustrated in the upcoming chapter on interpretive functionalism. For now, it suffices to conclude by emphasizing that reflexive or metapragmatic awareness is constitutive of political awareness because it enables us to challenge the indexical ways in which we position ourselves in relation to ourselves, in relations to others, and in relation to other relevant aspects of (socio-political) reality.

d) Pragmatics as an interpretive functionalist perspective

Linguistic pragmatics provides us with a range of concepts that allow us to counter the problematics related to poststructuralist and pragmatist concepts of discourse, self and politics as presented throughout this book. These problematics include: the methodological deficit haunting both pragmatist and poststructuralist perspectives on discourse, politics and subjectivity; the problems of cohesion and coherence associated with the empirical self; the issue of context generation and contextual boundaries; the problematic of the empirical investigation of power relationships, hegemonies and the relative fixation of meaning; the trap of overpowering the political voices and discourses of respondents when (re)articulated in a book on minority political engagement; and the question of research into the metapragmatic and political aspects of awareness.

Throughout an exploration of *the problematic (inter)disciplinary historiography* and the various resulting *concepts of pragmatics*, as well as through an exploration of the most important formative traditions for linguistic pragmatics and of the associated concepts, I have introduced most of the elements required to develop a heuristic for the empirical analysis of political subjectivities, engagements and discourses. The type of functionalism that we find in the linguistic approaches discussed above, is very much compatible with interpretive accounts of self, discourse and politics that we find in poststructuralist and pragmatist approaches discussed in previous chapters. Throughout the previous chapters and sections, I have extensively argued that we should study the empirical self and not some abstract Cartesian hypothesis. One of the ways to do this, is by investigating the way we relate ourselves to ourselves, to others, and to other contextual correlates of adaptability, in and through contextualised language use. The interpretive functionalist view on language use takes an intersubjective and process-based notion of indexical meaning and context generation as a starting point for analysis.

The claim that we cannot investigate interpretation on the basis of decontextualised claims about the nature of language is based on the idea that we guide one another through our interpretive processes by marking, constructing, and evaluating our interpretative and communicative goals in and through discourse (see: Gumperz 1982; Gumperz 1992b). Interestingly, the pragmatic take on interpretation outlined above does not rely upon a hermeneutics of recovery aimed at retrieving or reconstructing the meanings of social actors as they were originally intended. The principle of negotiability renders such an endeavour void of purpose. Neither are we dealing with a hermeneutics of suspicion that seeks to uncover the true underlying meanings of texts and actions deliberately concealed by ideological practices or discourses (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 64-65; Howarth 2000: 128). Rather, the pragmatic notion of interpretation and understanding offers us the means to empirically investigate the critical logics of explanation theorised by Howarth and Glynos. It allows for an analysis of the metapragmatic self-interpretations and criticism of social actors.

The similarities between French and Anglo-American pragmatic approaches to understanding and interpretation are sometimes quite striking. As someone who is heavily influenced by French enunciative pragmatics as well as by poststructuralist theories of discourse, Johannes Angermüller argues for a poststructuralist research program that starts with an empirical analysis of texts. Such an approach would have to take the complex organisation of research data into account and needs to render the formal organisation of empirical discursive data visible (Angermüller 2010: 78). In order to account for the radical heterogeneity of texts, he resorts to the metaphorical analysis of discourse in terms of voice and polyphony as developed in French enunciative pragmatics (see: Angermüller, 2005, 2006, 2007a, 2008, 2010; Zienkowski and Angermüller forthcoming). Angermüller summarises the resulting perspective on meaning as follows:

“Texts are no containers of some meaningful content that can be read off from their surface but they orient the interpretive activity of their readers in view of the wider social context which they need to construct. Against hermeneutic approaches in the social sciences, the question is not what the text means, for it can mean very different things to different readers, but rather how we can account for the rules that organize contextualization processes in which readers construct the major subject positions of a discourse from the polyphonic play of voices that is formally reflected by the markers. With this insistence on the fragile construction of subjectivity, the analysis rejoins poststructuralist social theory asking how actors and their social relations are constructed in discursive practices which may or may not take place in a face-to-face situation.” (Angermüller forthcoming: 8)

For these reasons, Angermüller warns us that “*meaning*” – in the sense of a hermeneutics of recovery and/or suspicion – “*is not what you’re really looking for*” (Angermüller 2008: 2). In line with the French pragmatic tradition, he points out that the orientation of the interpretive activities of interlocutors is an indexical process. By means of enunciative or metalinguistic markers, texts let their readers look for relevant contexts of enunciation and force them to relate specific utterances to more abstract and situation-transcending discourses in a society (Angermüller 2010: 79). This does not mean that *anything goes* in interpretive processes:

“[...] while texts can be understood in many different ways by different readers, they cannot be interpreted in whatever way. Texts have a certain meaning potential. They define a certain framework in which interpretation has to take place. Therefore, interpretation needs to follow certain rules that the discourse participants need to follow if they wish to understand what is meant. In short, there are linguistic constraints on interpretation” (Angermüller 2008: 5)

We find a similar take on context, interpretation, and understanding in Anglo-American pragmatic approaches to discourse. This can be exemplified with reference to the work of John Gumperz. He explicitly states that *“[...] the notion of contextualization must be understood with reference to a theory of interpretation [...]”*. This theory is based on three basic assumptions: (1) situated interpretations of utterances always involve inferences made within the context of an interactive exchange. The nature of this exchange is always constrained both by what is said and by how it is interpreted; (2) Inferencing is presupposition based and therefore suggestive rather than assertive. Gumperz writes that *“it involves hypothesis-like tentative assessments of communicative intent, that is, the listener’s interpretation of what the speaker seeks to convey, in roughly illocutionary terms. These assessments can be validated only in relation to other background assumptions, and not in terms of absolute truth value”*. Thirdly (3), even though background assumptions build on extralinguistic knowledge of the world, *“in any conversation this knowledge is reinterpreted as part of the process of conversing so that it is interactively thus ultimately socially constructed”*. For this reason, interpretation is always *“ecologically constrained by considerations of sequencing, conversational management, and negotiation of meaning, and since sequencing is by its very nature an interactive process, they are cooperatively made and validated”* (Gumperz 1992a: 230).

With respect to the interpretive functionalist heuristic that will be outlined in the next chapter, it is important to point out that contextualisation cues always function relationally. They have no context-independent meanings. Situated interpretations of phenomena such as prosody (e.g. stress, accenting, intonation, register shifts), paralinguistic signs (e.g. tempo, pausing, hesitation, overlap, tone of voice), code choice (e.g. at the level of phonetic, phonological, or morphosyntactic options); and the choice of lexical forms or formulaic expressions (e.g. metaphoric expressions, opening and closing routines), are *“intrinsically context-bound and cannot be analysed apart from the verbal sequences in which they are embedded”* (Gumperz 1992a: 230). Consequently, the pragmatic study of interpretive processes, involves an analysis of the functional relationships between the semiotic forms articulated in specific speech events or language games. More specifically, *an interpretive functionalist analysis involves an investigation of the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction, and to the metapragmatic positioning of the interlocutors and voices involved in the speech event under investigation.*

Even though we now have practically all the elements required to understand what I mean by interpretive functionalism, the effectiveness of this type of heuristic will have to be evaluated with reference to its usage. This interpretive functionalist approach to discourse, self and politics, is only useful if it allows us to interpret the various functions of the discourse under investigation in a more functional way.

2.3 An interpretive functionalist approach to discourse, the public sphere, politics and the self

In this chapter, I will present and illustrate an interpretive functionalist perspective for analysing discourse, politics, the public sphere, and the self. Such a perspective allows for an analysis *of the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction, and to the metapragmatic positioning of the interlocutors and voices involved in the speech event under investigation*. It provides us with linguistic and conceptual tools for an investigation of contradicting theoretical models that may or may not make use of similar abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, ⟨politics⟩, or ⟨integration⟩. Since these abstract categories are the object of public debate, we need to clarify the relationship between publicly accessible data and interviews with respect to the public realm.

I will argue for a conceptualisation of a *debate defined in terms of a public dialogic or multilogic intertextual network in which a variety of subject positions are activated in a political struggle over the impossible fixation of empty signifiers that supposedly define a specific discursive element (e.g. a subject position, a policy domain, a political practice, a norm, a value)*. In this sense, it is important to emphasise that the way we conceptualize the *public* is not without implications. Whenever we talk about a public sphere or a public domain, we are deploying a metaphor in order to spatially conceptualize the democratic practices that (re)articulate the relations between the social and the political. I will therefore argue for *a notion of the public sphere that takes its metaphorical character into account*.

This notion of publicness is grounded in pragmatist, poststructuralist and linguistic pragmatic insights. Public debates and public spheres are reproduced through a myriad of language games, speech events, and all sorts of (institutional) interaction. On the one hand, an interpretive functionalist approach to public language use requires one to take this complexity into account. On the other hand, one cannot investigate everything. Focusing on the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction, and to the metapragmatic positioning of interlocutors and voices involved in the speech events and debates under investigation, we need to restrict our focus. For this reason, I will exemplify some key interpretive functionalist principles with reference to the ways in which my interviewees dealt with the concept of ⟨integration⟩.

A thorough understanding of the way intellectuals and activists use integration-related lexical items requires some contextual knowledge with respect to the problematic of integration as developed in academic and political discourse. For this reason, it is useful to consider the various ways in which the concept of ⟨integration⟩ is usually deployed within such contexts. This requires us to discuss issues as varied as migration, integration, diversity, ethnicity, allochthony, and autochthony. Doing so, I will focus first and foremost on the way ⟨integration⟩ is interpreted by mainstream Flemish actors. Nevertheless, this requires us to pay attention to other European and American notions of ⟨integration⟩ as well.

The applicability of an interpretive functionalist approach for analysing abstract categories will be demonstrated with reference to the way my respondents articulated the notion of ⟨integration⟩. As we will see, an understanding of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic usages of this concept is of fundamental importance to understand the Flemish minority debate. However, it should also be pointed out that the political subjectivities of my respondents cannot be analysed with respect to this concept alone. Taking this caveat into account, this chapter serves a three-fold purpose: it allows for a contextualisation of the notions of self, politics, and the public sphere that will be discussed in the upcoming chapter; (2) it demonstrates the effectiveness of an interpretive functionalist heuristic for

empirically analysing abstract scientific and political categories; and (3) it allows the reader to get a first impression of some key features of hegemonic discourse about minorities in Flanders, Belgium.

This chapter provides us with a context and with a set of tools that may be used to analyse the specific ways in which abstract notions function in relation to one's sense of self and in relation to one's sense of politics. It will clear the ground for a discussion and illustration of the way we may empirically investigate large-scale interpretive processes that provide coherence between seemingly contradictory statements produced by social actors. A subjectively experienced sense of coherence may or may not be marked in discourse. When marked, language allows us to investigate the particular ways subjects distinguish between the multiple aspects of their (sense of) self, and the sense of coherence that is subjectively experienced, articulated and co-constructed in communication.

2.3.1 Discourse in the public sphere

Critical analyses of discourse tend to focus on publicly available data that we may encounter on television, on the internet, in magazines, in newspapers, and in other media. More specifically, there is a tendency to investigate the ideological meanings people may or may not generate while consuming or producing the associated media messages. The analyses presented below are somewhat different in this respect. The main object of investigation is not mass media discourse but discourse that is interactively generated in open-ended in-depth interviews. Since these interviews are supposed to shed some light on the minority debate in Flanders, we need to ask ourselves what it means to produce, to consume, and to investigate discourse *in a public sphere*. As we will see, this spatial conceptualization of discursive practices is not without potential pitfalls.

During my discussion of the empirical reasons for rearticulating the working title of this book, I frequently made use of the notion of the public. For instance, I explained how I came to be interested in the activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background who articulated their voices in the public sphere. Moreover, I wrote that these people articulated themselves with reference to an enormous array of subject positions, roles, identities, or voices in order to explain their relationships to various modes of politics, engagements, practices, and institutions in the public sphere. Also, I suggested that my initial usage of terms such as <Islamic political identities> or <community> entailed a lot of presuppositions that are quite hegemonic in the Flemish public sphere. We already saw how the discourse of my respondents prompted me to rearticulate this research project significantly.

I also discussed the concept of the public within the context of a discussion of notions such as politics and democracy as articulated in the pragmatist approaches of Rorty and Habermas. We noticed how Habermas uses the notion of the public sphere in order to designate a specific type of institutionalised interaction that can only be established through the participation of individual citizens (Habermas 1989: 102). Habermas's public sphere is constitutive of and constituted by a public opinion that should be established through a power-free dialogue aimed at mutual understanding or *Verständigung* (Bernstein 2010: 172). He developed a theory of universal pragmatics in order to establish an account of how this democratic sphere may be established through rational and intersubjective discursive practices (Cummings 2005: 200). Even though his theory of the public realm is pragmatist in the sense that it emphasises the intersubjective dimension of democratic politics and communication, it is decidedly not pragmatist because of its lack of empirical reflection. I suggested that an integration of linguistic pragmatic, poststructuralist and pragmatist insights would allow us to develop a more empirical approach to public discourse.

Richard Rorty objected to the decontextualised and universalist understanding of reason and democracy constitutive of Habermas's notion of the public sphere. Rorty is neither willing nor able to develop a universalist account of democracy. According to him, Habermas's theory of democratic communicative action was flawed since it does not rest upon an analysis of rationality, but rather on an analysis of shared beliefs with respect to rationality. In a decidedly pragmatist argument, Rorty

claims that democratic action requires not so much a theory of truth and notions like universal validity. Rather, it requires a variety of practices and pragmatic moves aimed at persuading people to broaden the range of their commitments to others and to build a more inclusive community (see: Mouffe 1996b). However, we also noticed that Rorty has been criticised by Mouffe for not grasping the crucial role of conflict as a central and integrative function in pluralist societies. Moreover, Critchley takes issue with Rorty's strict distinction between: (1) the private as mode of being concerned with "*idiosyncratic projects of self-overcoming*", with self-creation and the pursuit of autonomy; and (2) the public as "*having to do with the suffering of other human beings*". He considers this type of dichotomy to be theoretically unsound (Critchley 1996: 21-25). My empirical observations with respect to the mutually constitutive relationships between particular senses of self and preferred modes of politics do not support such a distinction either.

Accepting the criticisms formulated by Critchley and Mouffe, I will present my interpretive functionalist approach to the public sphere below. This presentation consists of a discussion of: (a) the public sphere as a spatial metaphor; and (b) a consideration of the public sphere and ideological language use. I will also discuss how these considerations impact upon the matter of (c) investigating data in and through the public sphere. These discussions will prepare the floor for an outline and illustration of an interpretive functionalist heuristic for analysing political engagement and discourse in the next two chapters.

a) The public sphere as a spatial metaphor

In the subsections below, I will briefly focus on *Foucaultian, sociological and pragmatic critiques on Habermas's public sphere*. Nevertheless, keeping these critiques in mind, I believe there are good reasons for *retaining the concept of the public sphere as a useful metaphor* for an interpretive and functionalist analysis of large-scale socio-political debates.

Foucaultian, sociological, and pragmatic critiques of Habermas's public sphere

The notion of publicly available data or data produced in the public sphere relies upon a metaphor that allows us to conceptualize specific types of discursive practices in spatial terms. Metaphoric language use always involves highlighting certain meanings at the expense of others (Goatly 1997: 66-77; G. Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 10-13). This principle can be exemplified with respect to the use of a whole range of spatial metaphors that characterise Habermas's definition of the public sphere:

"By '*the public sphere*' we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body" (Habermas 1989: 102)

Habermas thus writes about a 'realm', about 'access', and about a 'sphere' 'in which people assemble' to form a unified 'public body'. However, no one has ever *seen* a public sphere. At best, we have seen rooms and spaces (e.g. a public building, the parliament) in which so-called public debates are being held. However, the socio-political concept of the public cannot be reduced to mere spatial coordinates. Nevertheless, this spatial conceptualization enables Habermas to sketch a societal topography wherein the public sphere occupies an intermediate space between the realms of the state and the private sphere.

We already noticed that Habermas considers the public sphere to be constitutive of a public opinion generated through a power-free dialogue. As such, we are not merely dealing with a public in terms of an audience, but with a specific type of institutionalized participatory interaction. According to Habermas, concerns that originate in the private sphere of social labour and commodity exchange can

be articulated in the public sphere by means of a *herrschaftsfreie Kommunikation* in the form of a public opinion. According to him, it is this type of public opinion that allows a democratic state to accommodate to its civil needs (Habermas 1989: 102-03). Habermas's public sphere is the sphere of civil society whose institutional core consists of voluntary organisations that position themselves – at least partially – outside of the spheres of the economy and the state. Examples include churches, cultural associations, sports clubs, independent media, grassroots initiatives, political parties, unions, and so on (Habermas 1992: 453).

Bent Flyvbjerg diametrically opposes Habermas's thought in opposition to Foucault's theorisation of discourse and power. According to him, the relationship between both authors is indicative of a typically modern tension between consensus- and conflict-based models of communication. More specifically, it is the normative character of Habermas's universal pragmatics that generates a whole lot of criticism (Flyvbjerg 1998: 211-12). Within the context of our current discussion, three types of critique are relevant: a poststructuralist critique related to the issue of power; a critique formulated from the perspective of researchers who investigate the social and political practices and discourses of minorities; and a critique that emanates from pragmatically oriented perspectives on the public sphere.

In contrast to Habermas, authors such as Nietzsche, Foucault and Derrida claim that communication can not be conceptualized as taking place outside of power relations. From Foucault's point of view, power does not emanate from a single institution or a single type of institutionalized practices such as *the* public sphere, but out of a whole complex of discursive and non-discursive practices and institutions. All of his metaphors of power emphasise the heterogeneous nature of power technologies. Consequently, if one investigates democratic or emancipatory discursive practices, it is impossible to rely upon a single procedural and rational way of communicating that supposedly characterizes the entire public sphere. According to Flyvbjerg, the fact that Habermas considers man essentially to be a *homo democraticus*, explains the fact that: “Habermas ... continues to disregard the particular problems relating to identity and cultural divisions as well as the non-discursive ways of safeguarding reason that are being developed by so-called minority groups and new social movements” (Flyvbjerg 1998: 2). The problems experienced by minorities in finding access to and in finding adequate ways to articulate themselves in relation to the dominant public sphere are analytically irrelevant from a Habermasian point of view: the particularities of minority subject position(s) in society should be irrelevant in an account of how democracy should work in the public sphere.

A second set of critiques directed at Habermas's framework has been formulated by researchers who investigate the social and political practices and discourses of minorities. For instance, feminist researchers have pointed out that *the personal is political* and that a strict distinction between the private and the public is untenable. This critique is not merely applicable to Habermas, it is also relevant with respect to Rorty's political philosophy. Moreover, Norman Fairclough and Lilie Chouliaraki point out that research into new social movements provides us with evidence that a social topography in terms of multiple public spheres might be more suitable for sociological research than the unified concept developed by Habermas (Fairclough and Chouliaraki 1999: 137). Not all public spheres are equally visible or accessible. For instance, within the context of research into migration, authors write about hidden (see: Melucci 1989) or alternative (see: Calhoun 1992; Fraser 1992) public spheres. In her research about mosques in the Belgian city of Ghent, Meryem Kanmaz follows Pnina Werbner in using the concept of diasporic public spaces (Kanzmaz 2007: 59-60). Werbner describes such spaces as follows:

“a series of interconnected spaces in which the pleasures and predicaments of diaspora are debated and celebrated” (Werbner 2002: 15)

“(...) it shares with that alternative sphere a sense of opening up a space for dissenting and emancipatory discourses, outside and beyond the official, national public sphere, of being the locus for the mobilisation in the social movements” (Werbner 2002: 15)

Like all public spheres, diasporic public spaces are maintained through specific performative practices. According to Werbner, such practices are constitutive of ideological practices whereby limits, networks, voices, and discourses can be articulated with one another (Kanmaz 2007: 60). As such, there are no *formal* differences between diasporic and dominant public spaces. The dominant public sphere is also maintained by discursive and non-discursive practices and also characterized by imbalances of power. Moreover, neither sphere is accessible or transparent to everyone. On the other hand, the multiplicity of public spheres is characterized by a huge diversity with respect to the types of performances, practices, and discourses that provide them with their particularities. Consequently, if one does not possess the appropriate amounts and types of social, cultural, economic or social capital to position oneself within a specific public sphere, this will impact upon the accessibility to public spheres constituted by public institutions such as mosques, the academic circuit, or the media.

A third set of critiques can be formulated from the perspective of Goffmanian sociology and linguistics. Goffman's perspective allows for an empirical study of the concrete interactions that constitute what Habermas might call the public sphere. As such, Goffman's work can be said to constitute an implicit critique of Habermas's normative approach. Srikant Sarangi points out that there are significant differences between Goffman and Habermas with respect to their thought on the public sphere. Habermas tends to think of the public in terms of a metaphorical space whereas Goffman's approach is more literal with respect to this issue. The public spaces discussed by Goffman always have specific co-ordinates. He always deals with public encounters between real people in concrete situations. To him, public interaction should always be analysed in terms of situated interaction. At first sight, there are strong parallels between the Goffmanian notion of gathering and the Habermasian focus on *Verständigung*. However, Sarangi warns us not to smooth over the differences all too readily. Habermas's ideal-typical approach on rational argumentation as a constitutive feature of the public sphere does not accommodate for an analysis of the various aspects of selfhood that impact upon our socio-political positioning in (semi-)public interaction. Put differently, the impact of the pragmatist and pragmatic empirical self upon public interaction is not taken into account in the Habermasian framework. The essence of the Goffmanian critique may therefore be said to be of a methodological nature (Goffman 1963: 3, 22; Sarangi 2011: 252-54).

Retaining the concept of the public sphere as a useful metaphor

No matter how we conceptualize the public sphere, it is important to retain the idea that we are dealing with a metaphor. This metaphor allows us to problematise issues related to the access to and boundaries of public interactions. It allows us to consider issues related to the in- and exclusion of specific social groups from particular types of institutionalized interaction. It is important to emphasise that such metaphorical language use implies a reification of a whole set of language games characterized by a heterogeneity that should not be ignored in empirical analysis. Public spheres do not pre-exist interaction. They are (re)produced through a variety of performative and discursive practices. In this sense, they are not unlike Benedict Anderson's imagined communities in which "*members will never know most of their fellow-members, or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion*" (Anderson 1983: 6). The same might be said of the notion of public(s) in the sense of a collection of individuals.

Writing from the point of view of a pragmatic and socio-linguistic perspective, Susan Gal and Kathryn Woolard argue that the notion of a public "*need not even rely on the idea of a concrete readership or spectatorship, but rather on the projection or imagination of groups or subjectivities in print or other mass media*" (Gal and Woolard 1995: 135). I fully subscribe to the idea that publics and public spheres are effects of discursive imaginations or projections. In this context, imagination should be thought of in terms of *(a result of) a process of a mental conceptualisation including a sense of seeing what does not exist yet or anymore, as well as what is not plainly visible* (see also: R. Williams 1983). Moreover, I agree that there is a need to pragmatically investigate such discursive processes by

focusing on the discursive functions discussed in the chapters on linguistic pragmatics. It is worth quoting Gal and Woolard in this respect:

“The process by which such projection occurs seems closely related to a very general semiotic property of language that is present as much in face to face as in other communication: the possibility of decontextualization and strategic recontextualization of linguistic voices and genres to create images of continuity and discontinuity with times, places and people not present in the immediate interaction. Goffman’s (1979) notion of footing, Gumperz’s (1982) contextualization cues, and Bakhtin’s (1981) voicing all address this property. As Briggs and Bauman (1992) have pointed out, the gap between an earlier context and the recontextualization can be denied or highlighted, with different effects.” (Gal and Woolard 1995: 135)

Taking this last citation as a point of departure, I would like to extend the notion of publicness beyond Gal and Woolard by arguing that publics are not constructed in mass media contexts alone. They are also effected in a variety of language games in which people challenge a variety of socio-political relations between actors, institutions, discourses and/or practices. In this sense, publics and public spheres are rearticulated by people in settings ranging from internet fora and digital social networks to social science interviews.

Considering these caveats with respect to the imagined nature of publics and the public sphere, I will retain the notion of publicness in order to metaphorically designate those democratic practices that (re)articulate the relations between the social and the political. My conceptualization of the public sphere is therefore heavily informed by the principle of a *primacy of politics*. As we noticed before, this principle forces one to think of politics as the organizing principle for the constitution of all social relations. Throughout my discussion of the (re)articulated research title, I highlighted my empirical reasons for retaining this category. However, the concept is also relevant with respect to my conceptualization of the public sphere.

We already noticed how the *primacy of politics* is based on the idea that the social and the political are basically two sides of the same idealized coin. It implies a notion of the political as a category that designates those discursive practices and institutions whose contingency is being problematised by social actors in the public sphere. On the other hand, the category of the social may be used in order to designate those discursive practices which are so heavily institutionalized or hegemonised that their contingency remains unquestioned and unproblematic to most members of an imagined community. Whether a subjectivity, discourse, or practice rather belongs to ‘the social’ or to ‘the political’ depends on the extent to which it is sedimented or challenged by the practices and discourses of social actors. As such, both categories function as reifications that can never be fully realized. They should be thought of in terms of a continuum between ideals. For this reason, it is more useful to talk about processes of socialisation or sedimentation on the one hand, and processes of politicisation or (re-) activation of the contingencies in social life on the other hand (see Torfing 1999: 69-70).

As such, the social may be defined as *an analytical category that designates discursive practices that are heavily institutionalized, hegemonised and unproblematic to most actors within a public sphere*. In a similar vein, the political may be described as *an analytical category that designates those discursive practices, institutions and relations whose contingency is highlighted by actors within a public sphere*. The associated problematisations obviously involve practices whereby social actors articulate themselves, their practices, and their discourses to one another. For this reason, the principle of the *primacy of politics* bears particular relevance to concepts such as public sphere(s) or political engagement. Consequently, political engagement may be defined as *a practice of discursive (rearticulation) of social patterns in a public sphere through imagined collective action*. As social actors organise themselves and develop discursive practices to call particular configurations between discourses, power relations between social actors, and performative practices into question, debates emerge.

Whole intertextual networks in which individuals activate a multiplicity of subject positions emerge as people engage themselves in a political struggle over the impossible fixation of specific discursive elements. Such elements may include: empty signifiers or abstract categories such as ⟨community⟩, ⟨identity⟩, ⟨democracy⟩, or ⟨integration⟩; legitimate forms of ⟨politics⟩ in general; and semiotic elements that index particular subject positions by means of spatial (e.g. the West), social (e.g. Muslim, Belgian), temporal (e.g. post-modern, medieval), or discursive forms of deixis. In addition, semiotic elements and functions related to values, practices, and policy domains may all form objects of political debates.

Jan Blommaert points out that in liberal theory, debates are usually considered to be points of entrance for civil society into policy making. Nevertheless, this common and prototypical conceptualisation of debates curtails the fact that *“it is hard to provide conclusive criteria for identifying them, both in terms of discourse event-type (identities of participants, genres, time-span, setting etc.) as in terms of their relation to the outcome of decision-making procedures”*. Blommaert thus proposes to define debates in terms of struggles in which struggle is waged over and between various texts and metatexts. The strategies involved entail a multiplicity of contextualisation strategies in which the social relationships of the actors involved (policy makers, oppositional parties, the public(s), the media) are characterized by asymmetries in textual authority. Struggle is waged over the (space allowed for) gaining control over legitimate interpretations (Blommaert 2005: 185-86).

I would like to conclude this section by emphasising the importance of approaching large-scale social debates in terms of complex discursive and intertextual networks of people constructing their political engagement with reference to a variety of concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices, and one another. Also, I propose a definition of debate in terms of *a public dialogic or multilogic intertextual network in which a variety of subject positions are activated in a political struggle over the impossible fixation of empty signifiers that supposedly define a specific discursive element (e.g. a subject position, a policy domain, a political practice, a norm, a value)*. Public spheres and socio-political debates find themselves at the same level of analysis. Moreover, they find themselves in a mutually constitutive relationship.

Within such debates, actors position themselves as selves in a variety of language games by means of a variety of discursive processes that have been described by various authors in terms of (mis)recognition, interpellation, effects of the lack generated through the mirror stage, performances, articulations, practices, self-techniques, power-related strategies, and so on. A great deal of this positioning is of an indexical nature. Fortunately, people leave deictic traces in their socio-political discourse that allow interpreters to trace the large-scale interpretive processes that provide coherence between seemingly isolated and potentially contradictory individualised utterances.

b) the public sphere and ideological dimension of language use

An interpretive functionalist approach to the public sphere(s) and to the society-wide debates and large-scale interpretive processes that inform them, requires an investigation of the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction, and to the metapragmatic positioning of the interlocutors and voices involved in the speech events and language games under investigation. Ideological and hegemonic functions of language are particularly important in this respect.

In the sections below, I will articulate a notion of ideology that is compatible with both pragmatic, pragmatist, and poststructuralist insights. This requires an introduction of key concepts of *ideology in socio-political theory and everyday language use*. I will then move on to provide some arguments to move towards a more pragmatic type of ideology research that is characterized by the interpretive functionalist principles I have articulated throughout this book. In the course of these subsections, I will put forward my preferred definitions of the public sphere, ideology, and hegemony.

Ideology in socio-political theory and everyday language use

All critical approaches to discourse involve a model of ideological and/or hegemonic language use. This goes especially for Marxist linguistics (see: Luke 1998; Minnini 1999), political linguistics (see: Blommaert and Bulcaen 1997), critical discourse analysis (see: Fairclough 1992; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Fairclough and Chouliaraki 1999; Van Dijk 1998; Wodak and Meyer 2001; Wodak 2011), macropragmatics (see: Mey 1994; Verschueren 1999), and poststructuralist discourse theory (see: Glynos and Howarth 2007; Howarth et al. 2000; Howarth 2004; Torfing 1999). However, if we are to clarify the ideological functions of language use, we need to be clear about what we mean by ideology. I will argue that ideology may serve as an umbrella term for a variety of socio-political functions that have been theorised in a variety of ways. These functions share a family resemblance in the sense that they all impact upon the way in which (un-)equal power relations are being (re)produced in various socio-political settings. The specific ways in which this happens cannot be generalised beyond the specific speech events under investigation. This is a direct consequence of the fact that there are no one-to-one relationships between semiotic forms and their functions.

In popular discourse, the notion of ideology may carry both positive and negative connotations that can be traced back to a conflict between the French *ideologues* and Napoleon Bonaparte. The ideologues considered ideology to be a science of ideas that should be distinguished from both abstract metaphysics and everyday superstitions. In this sense, ideology was used in epistemology and in linguistic theory from 1796 until the nineteenth century (Gouhier 1970: 10-12; R. Williams 1983: 153-54). As a science of ideas, ideology claimed to be nothing less than the science that would explain all other sciences. Ideology thus carried a positive connotation in which an understanding of the way in which erroneous patterns of ideas could be avoided by means of a study of the way in which human beings arrange the sensations they get from external objects. It was meant to be a study of the origin of ideas (Hawkes 1996: 60-61). Ideologues such as Destutt de Tracy wished to base the French post-revolutionary social organisation upon ideological knowledge with respect to the physiological and psychological organisation of the human being (see also: Van Dijk 1998: 1-4).

A different sense of ideology was popularized by Napoleon Bonaparte who recognized that this early conceptualisation of ideology involved a challenge to all types of authoritative knowledge, including his own. Napoleon's attack on authors such as Destutt de Tracy in terms of dreamers and windbags, was not informed by a lack of political relevance he attached to the doctrine of the ideologues, but by his fear for a permanent revolution that an application of ideological ideas would involve (Hawkes 1996: 61). Nevertheless, his strategy of disqualifying ideology as an abstract, impractical, and fanatical theory would have a great impact on the further development of the word (R. Williams 1983: 154).

Today, the notion of ideology is probably associated first and foremost with Marxist thought. Raymond Williams notes that there is some direct continuity between the pejorative sense of ideology as it has been used by nineteenth century conservative thinkers and the pejorative sense popularized by Marx and Engels. In their writings, ideology is described in terms of a failure to recognize that ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of dominant material relationships in a given society. In this pejorative Marxist sense, ideology functions as an upside-down version of reality. It is a veil, a false consciousness, or an illusion. On the other hand, it should be recognized that in *The German ideology*, Marx deployed a more neutral notion of ideology (Kumar 2005; R. Williams 1983: 36). Here, ideology refers to "[...] *the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic – in short, ideological – forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out*" (Marx 1859 cited in: R. Williams 1983: 156). Here, ideology functions as a form of consciousness and not as a mere illusion.

Williams points out that the pejorative and the more 'neutral' notions of ideology are very difficult to reconcile. Even though the distinction between Marxism as science and Marxism as ideology has been controversial to many Marxists, the distinction between ideology (in terms of speculative systems) and science (in terms of demonstrated facts) is quite commonplace. Moreover, Williams points out that in popular argument, the notion of ideology is still used in the sense given by Napoleon:

"Sensible people rely on EXPERIENCE (q.v.), or have a philosophy; silly people rely on ideology. In this sense ideology, now as in Napoleon, is mainly a term of abuse" (R. Williams 1983: 156-57).

The tension between these two notions of ideology is also present in the work of Althusser discussed in previous chapters. We already noted an ambiguity in Althusser's writings on ideology. This ambiguity can now be traced back to the history of the word. On the one hand, Althusser considers man to be an ideological animal by nature for which it is impossible to place itself outside ideology. On the other hand, following a structuralist objectifying line of argumentation, he maintains that Marxism should be scientific and opposed to ideology. As such, he argued for a non-ideological version of psychoanalysis that would allow for a Marxist account of subjectivity (see Althusser 1964: 149-52; 1971b: 141; G. Williams 1999: 67-70).

The notion of ideology that I argue for is not of the pejorative type. Rather, it is a descriptive label to designate a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic functions of communication that share a set of family resemblances: all of these functions impact upon the way in which (un-)equal power relations are being (re)produced in various socio-political settings. Following a broad evolution in social and semiotic theory, I wish to move *"from the analysis of ideologies as dominant and distorting systems of ideas to a definition of ideologies as material discourse practices both shaped by and shaping the social and economic domains"* (Luke 1998: 367). Authors responsible for this shift in perspective include Bakhtin, Voloshinov, Gramsci, Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe. In various ways, they argue against a view of ideology as a form of false consciousness. As such, their arguments support the interpretive functionalist approach I am arguing for.

Gramsci's contribution to a less pejorative notion of ideology lies in his thorough elaboration on ideology as the terrain *"on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle"* and in his notion of hegemony. He explains how ideology must be seen as a battlefield, as a continuous struggle. As with Althusser, ideology is constitutive of subjectivity. However, Gramsci also emphasises the importance of analysing ideology in terms of a material and ideological practice. Ideologies appear as common sense in organic ideologies that form the basis of all world views and political alliances. Moreover, ideologies are practical in the sense that they form the basis of all sorts of social practices and institutions that we find at the level of civil society. Mouffe points out that Gramsci anticipated Althusser in several respects (Mouffe 1979: 185-88). However, Gramsci's most important contribution to the development of ideology critique lies in a new conception of hegemony.

The notion of hegemony initially referred to types of policy expressing or aimed at relations of political predominance, usually within the context of discussions about international politics between states. Gramsci's notion of hegemony is broader. It entails relationships of leadership and dominance across the social, the political, the cultural and the ideological domains of society. However, it also designates a process of achieving consensus across dominant and subordinated classes. The struggle for hegemony thus takes place on a broad front that includes all institutions of civil society (Fairclough 1992: 92). In this sense, hegemony is ultimately about achieving moral and intellectual leadership. It is about the creation of a collective will. In Mouffe's reading, this implies a practice of rearticulation:

"[...] Gramsci indicates extremely clearly that intellectual and moral reform does not consist in making a clean sweep of the existing world-view and in replacing it with a completely new and already formulated one. Rather, it consists in a process of transformation (aimed at producing a new form) and of rearticulation of existing ideological elements. According to him, an ideological system

consists in a particular type of articulation of ideological elements to which a certain 'relative weight' is attributed. The objective of ideological struggle is not to reject the system and all its elements but to rearticulate it, to break it down into its basic elements and then to sift through past conceptions to see which ones, with some changes of content, can serve to express the new situation. Once this is done the chosen elements are finally rearticulated into another system." (Mouffe 1979: 191-92)

Gramsci thus stressed the importance of the human subject's active participation in the hegemonic rule by consent (Luke 1998: 367). He insists that a class that wishes to become hegemonic has to nationalise itself in the sense that a successful hegemony is one which manages to create a 'collective national-popular will'. It has to (re)present itself as representative of the general interest. Mouffe notes that this is why ideological elements expressing the national-popular are often at the center of hegemonic struggle (Mouffe 1979: 194-95). Hegemony is both practice, ideology, and strategy. It may be described as a central function of ideological discourse and practice. The Gramscian notion of hegemony has been integrated in the Essex approach to discourse and subjectivity (Howarth 2000: 88-92; Howarth et al. 2000: 14-15; Torfing 1999: 15-34). This can be exemplified with reference to the Jacob Torfing who defines hegemony as :

"The achievement of a moral, intellectual and political leadership through the expansion of a discourse that partially fixes meaning around nodal points. Hegemony involves more than passive consensus and more than legitimate actions. It involves the expansion of a particular discourse of norms, values, views, and perceptions through persuasive rearticulations of the world" (Torfing 1999: 302).

Hegemonic claims may therefore be defined as *attempts by socio-political actors aimed at a fixation of the socio-political meaning of discursive elements in a reductive, totalising, and universalist way (including the meanings associated with subjectivities, subject positions, statements, narratives, and other dimensions of discursive reality) for all imagined social actors.*

It is important to note that the impossibility of non-ideological perceptions and understandings was also refused by Marxist linguists such as Bakhtin and Voloshinov. Their anti-formalist critique of nineteenth-century European linguistics entailed a view of language and semiosis as embedded in a concrete social reality characterized by an ideological environment (Luke 1998: 366). Their relevance for an interpretive functionalist approach to ideological debates lies in the fact that they emphasised the material character of ideology as it exists in language, text, and discourse. To them, language use is not merely explicable with reference to a creative autonomous speaker or writer. They too, maintained that the subject is constituted in and through language use. The heteroglossic or polyphonic view of the text is especially relevant in this respect. It entails that ideologies can be analysed by investigating the way in which social actors metapragmatically position a multiplicity of socio-political voices to one another throughout their discourse.

"All texts are 'heteroglossic' expressions of other voices and texts, genres, and social contexts (Bakhtin 1982). Nonetheless, this does not prevent 'the ruling class ... [trying] to impart a supraclass, eternal character to the ideological sign' (Voloshinov 1973:23), closing down its polyphonic semantic possibilities and making it 'unaccentual'."

Ideology is described in terms of a reductive type of interpretation and language use which is nevertheless impossible to avoid all together.

I would like to conclude this section on ideology with a brief note on Foucault's stance on ideology. Foucault never uses the notion of ideology. We already noticed that his work can be considered in terms of an attempt to abandon the futile quest for hidden meanings of texts and discourses. Foucault was a materialist *pur sang* in this respect. Moreover, it is for this reason that he had "*no great liking for interpretation*" (Foucault 1969: 222-24) and that he was sceptical of the so-called scientific Marxism advocated by Althusser. This critical stance also implied a rejection of the false-

consciousness notion of ideology which was dominant at the time and place in which Foucault lived and wrote. It is useful to quote Foucault at length on the topic of ideology:

“The notion of ideology appears to me to be difficult to make use of, for three reasons. The first is that, like it or not, it always stands in virtual opposition to something else that is supposed to count as truth. Now, I believe that the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that which, in a discourse, falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category; rather, it consists in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses that, in themselves, are neither true nor false. The second drawback is that the concept of ideology refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject. Thirdly, ideology stands in a secondary position relative to something that functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant, and so on. For these three reasons, I think that this is a notion that cannot be used without circumspection.” (Foucault 1976b: 119)

Foucault thus reacted against the rather restrictive notion of ideology that evolved out of Napoleon’s critique of the ideologues. However, considering the alternative concepts of ideology developed by authors such as Gramsci, Bakhtin, Laclau and Mouffe, Foucault’s critique of the notion of ideology is less relevant today than it used to be in the 1960s. One might even claim that Foucault’s notion of discourse is quite compatible with the more neutral definitions of ideology written down by Marx in *The German ideology* (see: Kumar 2005). The notion of ideology as a type of common sense or ground on which we move as socio-political actors does not necessarily stand in opposition to truth. With respect to Foucault’s second critique, we should note that Foucault’s various theorisations of power and discourse all deal with the issue of subjectivity. As we noticed before, his critique is first and foremost centered on the concept of a unified and centered subject and not so much on the polyphonic and heteroglossic empirical notion of the self advocated in this book. Thirdly, the type of economism that Foucault rejects has been vigorously refused by neomarxists such as Gramsci and by postmarxists such as Laclau and Mouffe. Their theories are decidedly anti-economist and refuse to reduce (ideological) discourse to an epiphenomenon of economic relationships. If we bear these caveats in mind, it is perfectly understandable why both CDA and Essex authors have a tendency to articulate the notion of ideology with a Foucaultian understanding of discourse and subjectivity.

Towards pragmatic ideology research

Neo- and postmarxist approaches to ideology exhibit a high degree of abstraction. Once again, we seem to be confronted with a methodological deficit between socio-political theory and linguistics. Luke points out that *“a gap remains between macrosocial theories and microlinguistic analyses”* of ideology (Luke 1998: 367). This gap is first and foremost of a methodological nature.

Based on the approaches discussed above, we might describe ideology in terms of *an umbrella term for the totalizing and reductive functions of discourse that involve a practical non-recognition of the contingent and precarious character of discursively constructed aspects of reality*. Moreover, it should be noted that *ideology functions through the establishment of identities with a totalizing horizon with universalist pretensions* (Torfing 1999: 302). *The ideological function of language impacts upon the way in which (un-)equal power relations are being (re)produced in various socio-political settings. As such, the ideological function of discourse is constitutive of our (im)perfect forms of socio-political awareness and subjectivity*. In spite of its conceptual richness, this type of definition does not provide us with any hints with respect to the specific ways in which ideological functions may be marked in discourse. I will therefore argue for a conceptualisation of ideology in terms of a (meta)pragmatic function of language use. This argument will clear the ground for an empirical approach to ideology research.

Luke notes that *“the task of connecting ideology with language, of joining macrosocial theory with close textual analysis of spoken and written texts may require new hybrids of linguistics, critical*

sociology, feminist and discourse theory” (Luke 1998: 367). My own articulation of linguistic pragmatic, poststructuralist, and pragmatist theory and analysis should be framed in these terms. A great deal of commendable work has already been done by authors who position themselves in fields such as critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology. Most of this work is highly compatible with my own views on ideology, subjectivity and discourse. However, two caveats need to be made.

Like Blommaert and Verschueren, I sympathise strongly with the aims and ideas articulated by CDA. Nevertheless, I also disfavour the way in which contextual parameters – including ideological ones – are integrated in a great deal of CDA-related research. This has already been discussed in the section on the concept of critique in linguistic pragmatics (see also: Blommaert 2001; Verschueren 2001). A second caveat relates to a common CDA view in which power and domination are equated and put in direct opposition to emancipatory discursive practices. This can be exemplified with reference to the work of Norman Fairclough.

Fairclough’s conceptualisation of ideology relies heavily on Althusser’s and Gramsci’s insights. Moreover, he explicitly acknowledges the parallels between his own view on ideology and the concept of articulation as developed by Laclau and Mouffe in *Hegemony and socialist strategy* (Fairclough 1992: 86-94). He describes ideologies as follows:

“I shall understand ideologies to be significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities) which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination.” (Fairclough 1992: 87)

According to Fairclough, ideologies “*arise in societies characterized by relations of domination on the basis of class, gender, cultural group, and so forth, and in so far as human beings are capable of transcending such societies, they are capable of transcending ideology*” (Fairclough 1992: 91). He is quite aware of the fact that his domination-centered definition differs from a more ‘neutral’ definition of ideology such as that of Teun van Dijk who defines ideologies as “*the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group*”. Moreover, “*ideologies allow people, as group members, to organize the multitude of social beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, for them, and to act accordingly*” (Fairclough and Chouliaraki 1999: 27; Van Dijk 1998: 8). In contrast to Van Dijk, Fairclough’s approach is framed in terms of an attempt to counter discursive effects of mystification and misrecognition. A similar false consciousness view is also prevalent in the work of Ruth Wodak who writes that approaches such as critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis seek to create awareness in agents of how they are deceived about their own needs and interests (Wodak and Meyer 2001: 10).

The pragmatic and poststructuralist conceptualisation of ideology I advocate diverges from definitions that reduce the notion of ideology to a matter of domination. Following Foucault, I distinguish between domination and power. Whereas relationships of dominance or violence close off possibilities, the exercise of power can be thought of as a governmental conduct in which possibilities are managed in specific ways. In this sense, a master-slave relationship is not a power relationship, but a relationship of domination (Foucault 1982c: 340).

Whereas power relationships in their various forms are constitutive of our socio-political forms of life, relationships of dominance can and should be contested wherever possible. In this sense, I follow Eric Grillo who points out that power is also operative in ethical and participatory or dialogical forms of interaction. Grillo argues that such types of interaction can actually be *empowering*. Similar arguments can be found in the work of pragmatists such as Blommaert and Verschueren (Blommaert 2005: 31-37; Grillo 2005: 31; Verschueren 2011: 10-11). Verschueren notes that the methodological and conceptual problems related to a reduction of the notion of ideology to relationships of domination are fundamentally intertwined:

“[...] *there are good reasons not to restrict social relations in the public sphere a priori to relations of domination for the purposes of ideology research. For one thing, at the theoretical level, powerless and dominated groups may – and usually do – have their ideologies too. Moreover, there is a good methodological reason. Whether patterns of meaning bear on social issues or on social relations, is a matter of relatively straightforward observation. But what functions are served by that meaning in relation to social patterns – the establishment and sustenance of domination being one such function – is an entirely empirical issue that can, at best, be decided upon only through completion of the analysis.*” (Verschuieren 2011: 10)

Verschuieren concludes that a conceptualization of ideology in terms of domination should not serve as a starting point for analysis (Verschuieren 2011: 10). Rather, the multiplicity of ideological discursive functions should be investigated in all their material forms.

Throughout the chapters and sections on linguistic pragmatics, I argued that the pragmatic perspective provides us with an account of how we articulate the various forms and functions of discourse with one another. Linguistic pragmatic notions of context, indexicality, and metapragmatic awareness are of particular importance in this respect. Since these notions allow us to investigate the specific ways in which the self reflectively positions itself as an individual and coherent mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social, and (intertextual) aspects of reality, the same notions can be used to investigate the ideological and hegemonic function(s) of language use. The associated type of interpretive functionalism forces us to investigate large-scale social debates in the public sphere from an intersubjective and process-based perspective.

I also pointed out that there is a link between (en- / de- and re-) contextualisation processes and ideology. In contrast to the rather abstract notions discussed above, the linguistic pragmatic notion of ideology implies a view of context as a specific set of functions associated with language use. Below, I will conclude my discussion of ideology and hegemony by amending my preferred definition of ideology with a pragmatic touch. As such, ideology may be described in Verschuieren’s terms as “*a constellation of fundamental or commonsensical, and often normative beliefs and ideas related to some aspect(s) of (social) ‘reality’*. It functions as reflexive processes of validating, framing or legitimating attitudes”. Furthermore, “*ideology functions in an environment characterized by heteroglossia, the constant interplay between different socio-ideological languages struggling for hegemony*” (Verschuieren 1999: 238).

The heteroglossic nature of ideological processes leads us to a discussion of the final two properties of a pragmatic and poststructuralist approach to ideology. First of all, it implies that ideologies are not fully coherent and integrated sets of ideas. This point has been most forcefully advanced in discursive psychology. Here, the notion of ideological dilemma was developed by authors such as Michael Billig (see: Billig et al. 1988) in order to challenge the Marxist view that “*ideologies were integrated and coherent sets of ideas that served to represent the domination of the ruling sections of society as natural or inevitable*”. Billig did not deny that such forms of ideology could exist, but he emphasised that lived ideologies, in the sense of *common sense* ideologies, are quite often inconsistent, fragmented, and contradictory (Edley 2001: 202-03). We already saw some examples of such contradictions in the chapter on the empirical observations that led me to rearticulate the working title of this research project. For instance, Samira Azabar articulated various notions of <community> throughout our interview. Sometimes she used this notion very reflectively using hedges and other discourse markers, at other times she used the notion in rather objectifying terms. Billig’s point is that this sort of seemingly contradictory language use is actually quite common and functional in everyday reasoning. Contrary to many other commentators, Billig and his co-authors do not write such ideological language use off as faulty or unreliable. Rather, they argue that “*the indeterminacy of lived ideologies makes them wonderfully rich and flexible resources for social interaction and every-day sense-making*” (Edley 2001: 202-03). Billig emphasises the productive functionality of contradictory ideological statements as follows:

“If ideologies did not contain contrary themes, they would not provide the resources for common-sense thinking, for thinking involves dialogic discussion, or the counter-positioning of contrary themes, which can both appear in their way to be reasonable. In discussions, one can hear people jostling with the contrary themes of common-sense. This is particularly so when the topics are explicitly ideological. Thus, those making racist remarks often assert their own lack of prejudice, even as they make their racist utterances.” (Billig 1997: 218)

Interestingly, Billig’s concept of ideology fits Verschueren’s concept of discourse as a negotiable adaptation to communicative needs. This also explains why Verschueren warns us against reified notions of ideology. He points out that ideologies are seldomly clearly delineated, except perhaps in their most reasoned and purposefully constructed manifestations. Great political ideologies such as communism or liberalism may be cases in point. He therefore considers it safer *“to speak of ideology and ideological meaning rather than to run the risk of reification by using the plural ‘ideologies’ or the countable singular ‘an ideology’”* (Verschueren 2011: 11).

The second and final implication of the heteroglossic function of ideology is connected to the concept of indexicality. Since the notions of indexicality and context are fundamentally intertwined, and since ideology is first and foremost a function of discourse vis à vis socio-political relationships, an investigation of the indexical function of language use allows for an empirical investigation of ideology and hegemony. Authors such as Chilton, Blommaert, and Verschueren have raised a similar point. Even though Chilton hardly ever uses the notion of ideology, he does point out that political discourse can only function by relating one’s position and/or self to an external reality by means of spatial, temporal, and social indexicals: *“[...] political discourse rests on the intersection of several deictic dimensions. These are cognitive dimensions, tapped by language-in-use”*. Considering the approach to subjectivity and self outlined in the previous chapters, it should not come as a surprise that I also subscribe to Chilton’s observation that all of this is relevant to an analysis of both politics and the self since *“identity unfolds in discourse by positioning others on the axes of space, time and rightness, presuming the centrality and fixity of the self”* (Chilton 2004: 204-05).

Blommaert explicitly links the notion of ideology to the question of indexical language use. In order to articulate both concepts, he borrows and modifies Silverstein’s notion of *orders of indexicality* (see: Silverstein 2003). We already noticed that the indexical function(s) of language use allow(s) us to orient ourselves to relevant aspects of contextual reality. Put differently, they allow us to generate context throughout the process of interaction. Blommaert amends this view of indexicality by insisting that these orientations are far from random. They are ordered by various socio-political institutions that reduce the multiplicity of interpretive options by generating a normative and hierarchical ranking of preferred interpretations. In order to clarify his argument, Blommaert draws on Foucault (Blommaert 2005: 73-78):

“Much in the sense of Foucault’s (1982) ‘orders of discourse’, we have to conceive of indexicalities as organised in ‘regimes’ which invoke matters of ownership and control and allow and enable judgements, inclusion and exclusion, positive or negative sanctioning, and so forth.” (Blommaert 2005: 74)

The indexical nature of language use enables us to functionally relate signs to wider social and cultural orders. This is why indexicality and ideology are fundamentally intertwined. However, it should be noted that this ideological ‘ordering’ should not be thought of in terms of domination. Blommaert’s point is that the same utterances and gestures can mean different things in different environments. An utterance such as ‘yes sir’ means something very different when uttered within the context of a workplace environment, than when it is uttered as a response to a request from your wife. In both cases, the language user orients himself to different centering institutions. For this reason, ideologies allow us to articulate a variety of meanings (Blommaert 2005: 172-75). Consequently, ideology allows for creativity as well as for domination:

“[...] *ideology as part of meaningfulness comprises conscious, planned, creative activity as well as unintentional reproduction of ‘determined’ meanings. It also comprises processes at various levels ranging from the individual to the world system, passing through different degrees of awareness, speed and capacity of development, and capacity to create innovative practices. In other words, it simultaneously comprises ‘particular’ as well as ‘total’, or ‘established’ as well as ‘behavioural’ ideologies, but they operate at different levels, offer different opportunities for people, and are of a different order in analysis. And hegemony may lie not so much in a single, unified set of ideological elements, but in connections between various sets.*” (Blommaert 2005: 174)

Blommaert’s view on ideology and hegemony is very much compatible with the interpretive functionalist perspective on political subjectivity outlined above. It allows for an approach to ideological language use in the public sphere that takes the possibility of various degrees of metapragmatic awareness into account. It is also relevant for my conceptualisation of public debates and the public sphere. This will be amply exemplified during my discussion of the notion of (integration) as articulated by my interviewees.

c) Investigating data in and through the public sphere

The analysis of large-scale socio-political debates involves an analysis of the way in which ideological interpretations of reality are marked in discourse. Considering the principle of non-fixity between linguistic forms and functions, and considering the multiplicity of language games and speech events that are lopped together under the metaphor of the public sphere, we need to ask ourselves *how* individual utterances may be indicative of ideological interpretive processes. How do we relate the multiplicity of statements that we may find on the internet, in chat-rooms, in editorials, in newspapers, in magazines, on television, on the street, in transcriptions, and in interviews of various types to *the* public sphere, to *the* public debate, to *the* public opinion? In order to answer these questions, a few remarks need to be made with respect to the nature of publicly available data.

In the following subsections, I will not be focussing on each of these discursive genres separately. However, considering the type of data I have been working with, I do think it is important to discuss the relationship between elicited (e.g. data generated during interviews or focus groups) *and publicly accessible types of discourse* (e.g. television broadcasts, political speeches, or newspaper articles). It is particularly difficult to distinguish clearly between both types of discourse on the basis of a notion of publicness as outlined above. I will therefore introduce the notion of *interview data as being constitutive of the public sphere*. Lastly, I will present the reader with *some notes on transcription and translation issues*. All of this is important since interview data form the basis of most of the investigations presented below. Many of the arguments presented in the upcoming subsections are based on Verschueren’s pragmatic guidelines for empirical ideology research (Verschueren 2011), on Gubrium and Holstein’s poststructuralist perspective on interviewing and the public sphere (Gubrium and Holstein 2003d), and on the metaphorical notion of the public sphere outlined above.

Publicly accessible data

In his *Engaging with language use and ideology*, Jef Verschueren provides us with a set of general principles and practical guidelines for doing empirical ideology research based on pragmatic principles. Within this framework, the notion of ideology bears on aspects of social reality, and more specifically on “*social relations in the sphere of publicness, i.e. the public positioning of people in relation to each other, usually involving the level of (perceived groups)*” (Verschueren 2011: 9). The type of positioning involved entails both linguistic and non-linguistic practices. However, if we are to investigate the interpretive aspects of ideology and not merely its socio-political effects, language use is the most tangible tool at our disposal (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 26).

Verschueren's emphasis on doing *empirical* ideology research is informed by a number of concerns. First of all, he considers much early work in critical linguistics to be disturbing because of the extent to which biases were allowed into the analysis, and because of its tendency to present rather predictable findings. He also directs some of his criticisms to Fairclough's way of doing discourse analysis. Even though Verschueren explicitly agrees that researchers cannot and should not avoid evaluation, and even though he agrees that not all socio-political discourses are equally acceptable, beneficial, or good (Verschueren 2001: 60-63), he also emphasises that such evaluations should be informed by a rigorous empirical analysis of textual data. Verschueren identifies a two-fold methodological gap in the work of authors such as Fairclough and Chouliaraki. The first gap refers to the lack of methodological rigour with respect to heuristic steps that allow these authors to move from mere description to interpretation of the textual data under investigation. The second gap deals with the fact that nothing is said about the empirical observations that allow researchers to link interpreted data to socio-political theory (Fairclough and Chouliaraki 1999; Verschueren 2001: 68-69).

Informed by these frustrations and by a concern to separate interpretation from mere speculation (Verschueren 1999: 244), Verschueren has developed a set of guidelines and procedures that should allow researchers to empirically and critically substantiate the discourse analytical claims they make (Verschueren 2011). It should not come as a surprise that I fully subscribe to this type of empirical research. It is fully consistent with my plea to analyse the empirical self as it articulates itself with respect to itself and with respect to others in the public sphere. Moreover, I believe that Verschueren's guidelines provide a useful heuristic for any researcher who is committed to taking the self-interpretations articulated by his or her research subjects into account. As such, his approach is a powerful tool for those who wish to avoid overpowering the voices of the research subjects he or she investigates.

Verschueren notes that some rules have to be taken into account when dealing with publicly accessible data for doing empirical ideology research. His first rule of engagement deals with the formulation of researchable questions – i.e. *“questions to which answers can be given supported with empirical evidence and susceptible to counter screening”*. Asking himself what criteria should count as valid evidence for empirical ideology research, he arrives at his second rule of engagement (Verschueren 2011: 23):

“Before an aspect of meaning can be seen as an ingredient of ideology, it should emerge coherently from the data, both in terms of conceptual connectedness with other aspects of meaning and in terms of patterns of recurrence or absence.” (Verschueren 2011: 23)

Verschueren explicitly states that this second rule does not suggest that ideologies are fully coherent entities. Quite the contrary, he aligns himself with Foucault who sought to investigate discursive formations in terms of multiple dimensions or sets of oppositions whose levels and roles must be described. To Verschueren, coherence merely refers to *systematically observable conceptual connections between aspects of meaning* (Verschueren 2011: 25-26). Put differently, we are looking for systematically occurring patterns at the linguistic level of articulation.

Verschueren's second rule of engagement has a significant impact on the way in which we should conceptualize and collect public discourse. Four sub-rules follow: (1) the types of data must be varied horizontally and vertically; (2) an appropriate amount of data is required; (3) whatever is found throughout a wide corpus should also be recoverable in (at least a number of) individual instances of discourse; and (4) the quality of the data must be carefully evaluated in view of the precise research goal. I will briefly touch upon each of these sub-rules in order to discuss the nature of the relationship between individualised language use and public opinion(s) expressed in the public sphere (Verschueren 2011: 21-48).

We already noticed that socio-political debates and public spheres should be conceptualized in terms of intertextual networks. It should therefore not come as a surprise that the principles of intertextuality and hegemony are closely related. Fairclough points out that “[...] *one can also conceptualize*

intertextual processes and processes of contesting and restructuring orders of discourse as processes of hegemonic struggle in the sphere of discourse, which have effects upon, as well as being effected by, hegemonic struggle in the wider sense” (Fairclough 1992: 103; Slembrouck 2011: 161). It is because of this intertextual dimension of ideological language use that Verschueren emphasises the importance of studying a variety of discursive genres. He considers this horizontal variation of data to be important because of the following reasons:

“Restricting one’s investigation to only one specific genre could not lead to generalized conclusions bearing on a wider society, as one might be confronted exclusively with genre-specific idiosyncrasies. It is not until patterns can be found that recur across different genres that general conclusions can be drawn. This does not mean that genre-specific studies would be uninteresting for ideology research; but in those cases, the narrower scope of one’s research results must be specified very clearly.” (Verschueren 2011: 26)

In their own research on the Flemish minority debate, Blommaert and Verschueren deployed this principle by focusing on policy statements, mainstream reporting, social-scientific research reports, and police training program aimed at helping officers to deal with minorities and migrants (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992, 1998; Verschueren 2011: 26). In my own research, I did not include such a wide variety of data. I obviously relied on a great deal of genres (research reports, theoretical works, newspaper articles, websites, ...) in order to prepare and in order to interpret my interviews. Nevertheless, my analyses focus first and foremost on the linguistic material generated through the interviews I conducted. I agree with Verschueren that this restriction with respect to the horizontal variation of my data set, impacts upon the kind of claims I can make. For this reason, I will devote specific attention to the genre of interview data in the following subsection.

The requirement that data should be varied along a vertical axis is more crucial. The pragmatic perspective of Verschueren entails a view of language use in terms of an adaptation to communicative needs. When using language, we make choices out of a range of options provided by the structure of language. Consequently, the ideological function of language use potentially involves an analysis of the choices language users make between the objects provided by various structural layers of adaptability – i.e. word patterns, presupposition-carrying constructions, language games, narratives, and so on. These structures constitute the vertical axis of Verschueren’s data set (Verschueren 1999: 246-48). The ideological function of language use may be performed in unconscious as well as in highly motivated ways. Empirical analysis of ideology should allow researchers to investigate both types of discourse. We already noted that the pragmatic perspective allows for a notion of language use in which individuals monitor their speech activities with varying degrees of awareness. They may or may not mark their metapragmatic awareness in discourse. Verschueren highlights the implications of this principle for his approach to empirical ideology research:

“When restricting one’s analysis to one structural level (say, word choice), one might, without knowing, be stuck to a level that happens to be carefully monitored, thus distorting the picture of ingredients of ideology that, in this case, may only look like they are taken for granted and get carried along in the discourse while in fact they are inserted purposefully. This risk is avoided by varying the levels of analysis throughout the corpus under investigation.” (Verschueren 2011: 27)

The second rule of engagement that should allow us to identify aspects of meaning as ingredients of ideology relates to the question of collecting an appropriate amount of data. Verschueren notes that an evaluation of the question whether this requirement has been met depends on the research question(s) at hand. Even though he does seem to favour a large and varied data set for his qualitative analyses, he also acknowledges that a large corpus may entail its own pitfalls. In this respect, Verschueren points out that large collections of data could lead one *“to piece together an ideology of one’s own choosing on the basis of bits of ‘evidence’ picked up from quite unconnected fragments of discourse, as long as there is enough discourse to play around with”* (Verschueren 2011: 28-29). He tries to counter such a strategy by articulating a third rule of engagement.

Verschueren emphasises that “*whatever is found throughout a wide corpus should also be recoverable in (at least a number of) individual instances of discourse*”. This third rule of engagement is of key importance if one wishes to minimise the risk of ideology construction taking over from doing genuine empirical ideology research (Verschueren 2011: 29). For this reason, it should be possible to find (fragments of) texts or spoken discourse that exemplify the large-scale ideological processes and interpretations that structure the socio-political debate under investigation. This is not to say that ideology research should work on the basis of anecdotic evidence. Ideological patterns can only be identified if they vary along the horizontal and vertical axes of the corpus under investigation. Verschueren’s third rule of engagement is therefore quite relevant for case study research. It highlights the importance of looking at detailed instances of language use as well as large-scale structures that provide individuals with a range of communicative options.

I completely agree with Bent Flyvbjerg who passionately argues for a revalorisation of the power of example. Flyvbjerg revises several misunderstandings about case-study research (Flyvbjerg 2001: 66-87). He points out that human beings do not generally use predictive theories and universals in order to learn. Rather, the biased, noisy, and fallible context-dependent knowledge in the form of examples and experiences is the more common route for knowledge (Flyvbjerg 2001: 73). One can often generalize on the basis of single cases. Nevertheless, Flyvbjerg deplores the fact that “*formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas “the power of the good example” is underestimated*” (Flyvbjerg 2001: 77). Case studies contain a greater bias towards falsification of preconceived notions than towards verification (Flyvbjerg 2001: 84). Flyvbjerg acknowledges the fact that it may be difficult to summarise case studies, but points out that “*the problems in summarizing case studies, however, are due more often to the properties of the reality studied than to the case study as a research method*”. Also, “*often it is not desirable to summarize and generalize case studies. Good studies should be read in their entirety*” (Flyvbjerg 2001: 86). An interpretive functionalist approach to discourse entails a concept of exemplification in which textual and other data may index a multiplicity of interpretive and socio-political processes.

Lastly, Verschueren emphasises that the quality of data should be carefully evaluated in view of the precise research goal. We already noted that a notion of articulation conceptualized in terms of a research practice involves a Foucaultian concept of problematisation – so does the type of interpretive functionalism I will present below. Verschueren’s last rules of engagement should remind researchers to stick to a goal-oriented or question-driven approach. An evaluation of the quality of data may involve linguistic, temporal, and social considerations. Moreover, issues related to the degree of detail and coverage as well as the intended audience have to be taken into account.

The question how we should relate the utterances and the voices that constitute concrete speech events to large-scale socio-political debates can now be answered. Based on a polyphonic and heteroglossic theory of enunciation, it is possible to claim that all empirically observable utterances – no matter in what genre they are generated – entail an implicit or explicit articulation of subject positions. Subject positions may be defined as *relatively fixed positions in semiotic space that are established by means of spatial, temporal, social and/or (inter)textual forms of deixis*. Moreover, *subject positions are associated with institutional(ized) practices*. In principle, individuals may thus (partially and/or strategically) identify their selves with any subject position that can be generated in and through discourse.

The Bakhtinian voices that we encounter in enunciative and dialogical approaches to discourse may be considered in terms of *analytical categories that point to the simultaneous articulation of (i) a subject (position) in a discursive performance; to (ii) a subject (position) in the world outside the text; and of (iii) the deictical connection between (i) and (ii)*. Consequently, all types of socio-political discourse are marked by various contextualisation cues, indexicals, and other metapragmatic aspects of language use, that allow us to systematically relate the implicit and explicit voices and subject positions articulated by language users to large-scale public debates in the public sphere(s) that constitute our socio-political realities.

Interview data as constitutive for the public sphere(s)

The principles outlined above apply to all sets of public data. Nevertheless, considering the centrality of interview data to this research project, the particularities of the relationship between interview data and the public sphere remain to be discussed. Below, I will outline a perspective on the social-scientific interview that is compatible with both poststructuralist, pragmatist, and linguistic pragmatic perspectives on discourse, subjectivity, and the public sphere. This entails a discussion of the interview in terms of its technological, articulatory, and pragmatic aspects. Interview data can be described in the following terms:

Interview data are interactively co-constructed in an institutionalised articulatory practice that functions as a technology of the self. It allows interviewees to position themselves in relation to themselves, in relation to an (imagined) public sphere and in relation to the (imagined) entities that populate it. These relationships may be metonymic and/or antagonistic. As such, the interview is a potential site for contestation and / or (re)production of existing socio-political relationships in a co-constructed public sphere.

Like any other speech event, interviews may be described in terms of articulatory practices. However, they are particularly interesting within the context of a discussion of the relationship between the self and the public sphere(s). In terms of a method for securing knowledge, the interview is a relatively new invention. This is not to say that asking and answering questions is a new phenomenon, but it is only after World War II, that individuals became accustomed to the standardised interview survey. More specifically, they became accustomed to a speech event or language game in which they could offer “*information and opinions that had no immediate bearing on their lives and social relations*” to complete strangers. Moreover, “*individuals could forthrightly add their thoughts and feelings to the mix of “public opinion”*.” (Gubrium and Holstein 2003c: 22).

At first sight, the interview may seem to be an unproblematic and transparent activity with clearly defined roles for interviewers and interviewees. Interviewees are conceptualized as rather passive vessels of answers, or as repositories of facts, feelings, and experiences. As such, “*they hold the answers to demographic questions, such as age, gender, race, occupation and socio-economic status*”. Also, they “*contain information about social network, including household composition, friendship groups, circles of care, and other relationships*”. Interviewees are considered to possess *a priori* opinions and knowledge that can be extracted by researchers as long as the latter stick closely by a set of pre-defined rules. These rules should ensure the neutrality and authenticity of the interaction and are meant to avoid bias and contamination of the research results (Gubrium and Holstein 2003c: 30-32).

Interestingly, the classic description of the ideal interview situation exhibits strong parallels with the type of democratic interaction advocated by Jürgen Habermas. The poststructuralist, pragmatist, and linguistic pragmatic critiques directed at this perspective are therefore also applicable to the traditional conceptualisation of the interview. Following Foucault, Gubrium and Holstein consider the traditional interview to be one of the most important 20th century technologies of the self. It attributes a typically modern aura of scientific and/or journalistic objectivity to the very concept of individuality. Moreover, the modern interview is not merely constitutive for a particular type of subjectivity, it also contributes to a rather Habermasian notion of the public sphere and public opinion (Gubrium and Holstein 2003c: 24-26):

“‘Scientific surveillance’ such as psychological testing, case assessments, and of course, individual interviews of all kinds have created the experiencing and informing respondent we now take for granted. The category of ‘the person’ now identifies the self-reflective constituents of society (see Carrithers, Collins and Lukes 1985; Lidz 1976); if we want to know what the social world is like, we now ask its individual inhabitants. The individual interview on a personal scale and the social

survey on the societal level serve as democratizing agents, giving voice to individuals and in the process, formulating 'public' opinion." (Gubrium and Holstein 2003c: 26)

This public opinion is exactly the type of reification that has been criticised by pragmatically oriented authors such as Jan Blommaert and Charles Briggs. Briggs was among the first pragmatists to systematically criticise modern social-scientific interview practices (see: Briggs 1986). His work is in accordance with Grimshaw who emphasised the language-ideological dimension of interview practices, and with the work of Aaron Cicourel who investigated the indexical form/function relationships that occur in social scientific interviewing (Briggs 2009: 203-04). From a pragmatic perspective that takes the complexity of dialogic contextualisation processes into account (R. Bauman and Briggs 1990; Briggs 2009: 206-07), Briggs concludes that *"once the pragmatic complexity of interview data is recognized, the assumptions that underlie such notions as bias, distortion, reliability, and validity becomes apparent"* (Briggs 2009: 204).

The pragmatic critique of the traditional interview constitutes a challenge to individualistic ideologies of culture and to referentialist theories of language (Briggs 2009: 209). It also constitutes a challenge to the Cartesian model of the self that underlies it. Nevertheless, criticising the traditional social-scientific interview does not necessarily entail an outright rejection of interview practices as a means of gathering knowledge about the social world as such. Like Gubrium and Holstein, Briggs considers the Foucaultian notion of the interview to be quite relevant in the light of this discussion. He notes that the traditional interview functions in terms of a technology:

"... a 'technology' that invents both notions of individual subjectivities and collective social and political patterns and then obscures the operation of this process beneath notions of objectivity and science – or, in the case of journalistic and television interviews, of insight and art" (Briggs 2003: 245)

Fortunately, poststructuralist, pragmatist, and pragmatic concerns are increasingly being recognized in discussions of interview practices. A useful overview of the way in which these sensibilities have reshaped the way we should conceptualize and perform interviews can be found in Gubrium and Holstein's *Postmodern interviewing* (Gubrium and Holstein 2003d). The editors summarise the impact of these perspectives as follows:

"Interview roles are less clear than they once were; in some cases they are even exchanged to promote new opportunities for understanding the shape and evolutions of selves and experience. Standardized representation has given way to representational invention, where the dividing line between fact and fiction becomes blurred to encourage richer understanding. Reflexivity, poetics, and power are the watchwords as the interview process is refracted through the lenses of language, knowledge, culture, and difference." (Gubrium and Holstein 2003b: 3)

Gubrium and Holstein present us with a perspective that is fully consistent with their affirmative reaction to the crisis of the self in postmodern times. We already noticed how these authors combine poststructuralist authors such as Lyotard, Wittgenstein and Foucault with authors such as James, Cooley, and Mead in order to affirm the relevance of the self in the postmodern condition. However, their poststructuralist and pragmatist insights also entail that no single account of the self will do. In their search for a more empirical approach to the self, Gubrium and Holstein extensively rely on interactional modes of investigation (Gubrium and Holstein 2003d). They also draw out the implications of their approach to subjectivity for the practice of performing and analysing interviews. In contrast to those who implicitly reduce respondents to passive subjects that function as vessels of opinions, attitudes, experiences, and knowledge that are to be mined by researchers, they propose an active approach to interviewing.

The methodology of active interviewing is highly compatible with interpretive functionalist principles. The practice of active interviewing helps us to consider interview data in a way that allows researchers to empirically distinguish between the interactively constructed but not necessarily overlapping

interpretive frameworks of the interviewer and the interviewee (Gubrium and Holstein 2003a). Moreover, it allows us to empirically recognise the active and co-constructed way in which interviewer and interviewee generate and mark their metapragmatic awareness in discourse. It also allows for a methodologically sound basis to investigate the way in which individuals articulate a multiplicity of possibly contradicting subject positions, as well as for the sense of coherence that is intersubjectively experienced, articulated, and co-constructed in discourse. It acknowledges the fact that interviews are not merely constitutive of a sense of self, but also constitutive of the way individuals relate themselves to the public sphere in and through various articulatory practices.

Gubrium and Holstein propose to consider the interview in terms of an active, unavoidably collaborative, interpretive and discursive effort. Such a perspective entails that one devotes at least as much attention to achieving an understanding of *how* these meanings are generated, as to what individuals are talking about (Gubrium and Holstein 2003a: 60). If one starts from a perspective where subjects always exhibit some degree of awareness of what they are doing when they are involved in discourse, the traditional relationship between interviewer and interviewee needs to be rearticulated:

“Where standardized approaches to interviewing attempt to strip the interview of all but the most neutral stimuli (but see Holstein and Gubrium 1995 for a discussion of the inevitable failure of these attempts), the consciously active interviewer intentionally provokes responses by indicating – even suggesting narrative positions, resources, orientations, and precedents. In the broadest sense, the interviewer attempts to activate the respondents’ stock of knowledge (Schutz 1967) and bring it to bear on the discussion at hand in ways that are appropriate to the research agenda”. (Gubrium and Holstein 2003a: 75)

As such, the interviewer may encourage the interviewee to shift positions in order to alternate perspectives and stocks of knowledge. He or she abandons the quest for authentic answers (Gubrium and Holstein 2003a: 77). The active interviewer considers the various discursive functions that the co-constructed discourse may have vis à vis the topic(s) under discussion. Such an approach impacts upon the type of data that are being generated, as well as on the way these data can be analysed.

Gubrium and Holstein emphasise that an analysis of active interviews should show the dynamic inter-relatedness of the *whats* and the *hows* of communication. The focus should be as much on the assembly process as on what is assembled (Gubrium and Holstein 2003a: 79). Also, the multiple subject positions that may be activated throughout the interaction should be taken into account. This goes for both the interviewer and the interviewee: *“the active subject behind the interviewer thus becomes a necessary, practical counterpart to the active subject behind the respondent”* (Gubrium and Holstein 2003c: 33). Of course, this is not to say that there is some Cartesian puppeteer behind our subjectivity. This becomes clear when Gubrium and Holstein explicitly refer to the importance of analysing subject positions and voices along with the double-edged question of ownership and empowerment (Gubrium and Holstein 2003c: 35-42).

At this point, it is useful to recall some preliminary observations I made with respect to the usage of abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨politics⟩, and ⟨community⟩. One of the main issues raised at the beginning of this book, dealt with the multiplicity of voices that one could observe in more or less coherent individuals. Seeking for an integrated framework that could account for this phenomenon, I engaged in a discussion of the various poststructuralist, pragmatist and linguistic pragmatic reactions to the concept of the Cartesian self. Also, I argued in favour of a notion of the self in terms of a reification of the processes which allow an individual body to (reflectively) position itself as a coherent and whole mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social and (inter)textual aspects of (contextual) reality. The type of positioning involved in the articulation of the self in relation to reality is of an indexical nature. As such, it can be described by means of the Bakhtinian metaphor of voice through various modes of enunciative analysis.

To Gubrium and Holstein, the issue of voice is important since it *“references the subject position that is taken for granted behind speech”*. They continue and claim that *“voice works at the level of*

everyday life, whereas subject positions are what we imagined to be their operating standpoints” (Gubrium and Holstein 2003c: 39). Considering the pragmatic, pragmatist and poststructuralist insights outlined above, I largely agree. However, I would like to emphasise the importance of indexical processes to the implicit and explicit articulation of subject positions or voices. In the following chapters, *I will consider subject positions in terms of relatively fixed positions in semiotic space. These subject positions are established by means of spatial, temporal, social and / or (inter)textual forms of deixis. Subject positions are associated with institutional(ized) practices. An individual may (partially) identify his or her self with any subject position that is generated throughout discursive practice.*

In accordance with the above definition of subject positions, I would like to argue that *the notion of voice functions as an analytical category which points to the simultaneous articulation of: (1) a subject (position) in a discursive performance; (2) a subject (position) in the world outside the text; and of (3) the deictical connection between (1) and (2).* Gubrium and Holstein are fully aware of the fact that both interviewer and interviewee continually shift between subject positions as the interview process proceeds. These shifts are not always made explicitly. Moreover, this shifting is a process that hinges upon reflexivity with respect to one’s own sense of self and with respect to the perception of the other participant – interviewer and/or interviewee – engaged in the interview (Ellis and Berger 2003: 160-65; Gubrium and Holstein 2003c: 39-40). Consequently, an interpretive functionalist analysis of metapragmatic markers will prove to be quite useful for a detailed analysis of this process (see: Zienkowski forthcoming).

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of an active approach to interviewing relates to the question of empowerment. At the very beginning of this book, I pointed out that many of my respondents displayed a high degree of (metapragmatic) awareness of the fact that they entered into an unequal situation, asking for clear agreements with respect to my usage of their discourse and their names within the context of this research project. These concerns were indicative of the political dimension of the social-scientific interviews I conducted. Such speech events can therefore be conceptualized in terms of interactively established sites that enable participants to (re)articulate a multiplicity of socio-political positionings and engagements. Since political engagement involves a rearticulation of socio-political patterns in a public sphere through (imagined) collective action, the interview can be constitutive of the public sphere as well as of the political engagement of the actors involved.

Charles Briggs points out that interviews are usually designed to produce information that will be recontextualised in books, articles, reports, media productions, and so on. Interviews thus serve as media or language games that provide the institutions of the nation state with representations of its marginalised populations. He points out that throughout this process, the possibility of constructing a minority voice that merely confirms the hegemonic status quo becomes acute (Briggs 2003: 244). Hence, the dubious honour of being a popular topic of social scientific research.

Like any other technology, the interview can be used for bad as well as for good. Gubrium and Holstein point to its emancipatory or empowering potential. Their point is not that interviewers should seek to liberate or rearticulate a so-called authentic voice. Rather, the active interview promotes an approach that forces interviewers to “*provide respondents with the opportunity to convey [their] stories to us [interviewers] on their own terms rather than deploy predesignated categories or other structured formats for doing so*” (Gubrium and Holstein 2003c: 36). Put differently, when researchers recontextualise or rearticulate interview data, it is important that one devotes attention to the *how* as well as to the *what* of this process. A sensitivity with respect to the self-interpretations of research subjects should go hand in hand with an analysis of the relationship between the forms and functions of the discourse that interviewer and interviewee co-establish.

In a Foucaultian argument, Charles Briggs points out that the power of interviewers over interviewees does not merely lie in the control they exert upon the interaction itself, but also in their ability to use the interview as a setting geared to creating a field for the circulation of discourse. The power-related

processes involved are often rendered invisible in order to seem unbiased or neutral. This involves various decontextualisations. Briggs refers to Atkinson and Silverman (Briggs 2003: 248):

“Atkinson and Silverman (1997) observe that even many critical, revisionist approaches to interviewing attempt to empower individuals to create biographical, authentic voices, thereby reifying an individual and confessional approach to discourse that is also promoted by corporate media. The indexical signs that point, as it were, to the embedding of this process in larger social and material structures are thus largely erased.” (Briggs 2003: 248)

The issue of empowerment and the question who owns the voice(s) rearticulated in interview contexts is especially poignant to the question of minority discourse. Without a significant degree of metapragmatic awareness with respect to the way researchers deploy their categories, they run a serious risk of overpowering the voices and subject positions from where their interviewees speak. Briggs aptly illustrates this point as follows:

“By conducting interviews among, say, African Americans, or asserting that X percentage of survey respondents are Latinos, researchers can project the sense that “minorities” are included in national conversations about politics, economics, medicine, education, or whatnot – even when significant (and currently growing) barriers limit the participation of people of colour in the institutions that regulate these domains. By the same token, by classifying respondents as members of racialized groups, researchers can create a synecdochic logic that suggests that an Asian American, for example is speaking as an Asian American and is representing all Asian Americans, thereby confirming a sense of people of colour as one-sided subjects. These practices also project interviews as capable of including racialized subordinated voices in a seemingly equal position within national conversations.” (Briggs 2003: 249)

Put differently, researchers permanently run the risk of creating an image of the public sphere that is not in sync with the self-representations and interpretations as articulated by the interviewees themselves. My own interviewees proved to be very much aware of the dangers that Briggs warns us about. It is for this very reason that I have been searching for a way of tackling interview data so that the voices of my respondents may be rearticulated in an empowering rather than in a dominating way. I believe that the type of interpretive functionalism presented above and below, will allow me to do exactly this.

Some notes on transcription and translation issues

The data presented below result from a series of (re)articulations. First of all, there are the Dutch audio-recordings of the interviews I conducted with intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background who (used to) engage themselves in the Flemish public sphere. These data have been transcribed in a rather loose way. Within pragmatic approaches to discourse, it is quite usual to follow a strict set of guidelines. For instance, Jefferson's transcript notation is quite popular in CA and in other linguistically oriented approaches (Atkinson and Heritage 1999). Another popular and rigorous transcription system has been developed by John Gumperz (Gumperz and Berenz 1993). Such notation systems have been used in conversation analysis, in discourse analysis, and in ethnomethodological research for some time. Romero, O'Connell and Kowal note that *“all of them attempt to include more detail (e.g., prosodic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic features) than is permitted by the use of the basic Roman alphabet for verbal content only”* (Romero et al. 2002: 620). In principle, transcriptions may mark any aspect of communication in an ongoing interaction. In practice, researchers are forced to take a very limited number of communicative dimensions into account.

My Dutch transcriptions are relatively detailed compared to standard sociological transcriptions. They indicate pauses and include as many discourse markers as possible. Moreover, I did not use

punctuation marks since these impacted severely on the way the discourse of my respondents was structured. My transcriptions do not come close to the level of detail that is achieved in conversation analytic studies of discourse. For instance, overlapping voices are not marked even though overlap plays a significant role in the organisation of turns and topic control. Neither have I transcribed rises in intonation or other prosodic features of language use. I fully recognize the usefulness of transcription systems that do take such features into account. Nevertheless, I have allowed myself to follow a more intuitive approach in which I tried to stick as closely to the original formulations as possible, restricting myself to an accurate transcription of the lexical items articulated in the interaction. Where necessary, I will explain where changes in tonality or tempo may indicate forms of reported speech or where they perform other (meta)pragmatic functions.

In order to mark forms of reported speech in the translated excerpts, I used double quotation marks. As such, quotation marks may be indicative of a variety of discursive forms, including micro-pauses, changes in intonation, tempo and speed of pronunciation, volume, and so on. In all of these instances, changes in communicative style make particular statements salient. Quite often, there is significant redundancy involved. Not one, but various strategies are deployed in order to hedge some of the rearticulated statements. This may be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below. At a certain point, one of my respondents rearticulated and criticised a statement made by a Flemish politician. The excerpt below will be discussed in detail in one of the upcoming sections on <integration>. For the moment, it suffices to note how this respondent explicitly and implicitly marked the fact that he was reporting someone else's speech.

Issam Z rearticulates a statement made by Minister Vandenbroucke who said on a television broadcast of the news magazine *Ter Zake* that <multilingualism is zerolingualism>. First of all, Issam distances himself from this comment by metapragmatically commenting that this is <not> his <sentence> and that it is <literally> quoted from *Ter Zake*. This intertextual reference functions as an evidential. Also, he announced Vandenbroecke's statement by using a speech act verb - <he says> - that allowed him to distinguish his own voice from that of the politician.

IZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) He says that explicitly eh he says that in *Ter Zake* ... "multilingualism ... is zerolingualism". That is not my sentence eh, it comes literally from *Ter Zake* one year ago. Not even a year ago. And that is ... diversity then. What diversity did I see on the left with Patrick Janssens? ... I am flabbergasted that one still dares to use the term diversity.

excerpt 31 – 03/09/2007

Nevertheless, it should also be noted that there are a lot of (meta)pragmatic markers of polyphony which have not been transcribed in the excerpt above. For instance, Issam puts stress on *multi* and on *zero* in <multilingualism is zerolingualism>. Also, he uses micro-pauses, brief silences that also function in a way that makes Vandenbroecke's statement more salient to the hearer. These pauses are located immediately after <multilingualism> and <zerolingualism>. In the transcription, I used three dots: ... in order to mark some of these silences. The full stop behind the last quotation mark, constitutes an interpretation for a silence introduced by Issam as well. Unfortunately, the combination of a data set that exceeds 1500 pages of relatively rough transcription, with a limited amount of time, did not allow me to transcribe these data in a more accurate way. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that quotation marks always indicate forms of reported speech which are either marked by discourse markers such as <like>, by metapragmatic comments and/or speech act verbs, or by contextualisation cues such as prosodic changes in pitch, intonation and/or volume. Single quotation marks indicate physical and/or verbal emphasis.

All transcriptions are based on implicit or explicit theories that ideologically position language users and texts in relation to one another and in relation to the world. Acknowledgement of this fact dates back to Ochs's article on *Transcription as theory* (Ochs 1999; Romero et al. 2002). Lapadat and Lindsay emphasise the importance of making these theories and models explicit. They consider this to be important since "*the processes of collecting, transforming, and analysing language interaction data are in themselves theoretical, they have implications for the interpretations and theories that can be*

drawn from the data (Bloom 1993; Gumperz and Berenz 1993; Mishler and Huberman 1991)” (Lapadat and Lindsay 1999: 66). Moreover, Lapadat and Lindsay point out that the primary difficulties surrounding transcription as methodology have to do with big questions about issues such as the nature of reality and how to represent it, about issues of relationships between talk and meaning, and so on. This leads them to the following conclusion:

“Transcription has been employed in a number of different disciplines for various research purposes, each placing different demands on the methodology; yet, the largely unexamined presupposition that a transcript provides a one-to-one match with the “reality” of the communicative event and the quest for standard conventions have obscured the understanding of transcription as an interpretive act and its inherent flexibility within the research process” (Lapadat and Lindsay 1999: 82)

I fully agree with the fact that any transcription involves theoretical and interpretive processes. Labeling my own transcription system as rather loose or intuitive should not obscure this fact. An interpretive functionalist framework that relies on a multi-dimensional concept of articulation, based on pragmatist, pragmatic, and poststructuralist insights, has informed every single step of this research project. Since my heuristic for investigating the political subjectivities and discourses of my respondents relies first and foremost on a detailed analysis of articulated subject positions, topics, and words, I did not require a transcription system as detailed as that of Gumperz or Jefferson. On the other hand, I was confronted with ethical and political issues related to the rearticulation of the voice(s) of my respondents. The socio-political problem of voice has been aptly summarised by Cindy Bird (Bird 2005: 227-28):

“Those researchers who desire to present the voice of the participant must wrestle with this issue while they knowingly write the research as their own product. When representing an oral voice in written form, the transcriber becomes the channel of that voice. Because the transcriber is not that voice, any act of transcription becomes an interpretive act, as Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) proposed” (Bird 2005: 228)

Considering the close links and resemblances between academic and political discourse on minority politics, and considering the polyphonic perspective on enunciation and/or articulation, I chose to use the symbols < and > in order to mark whether the voices of my interviewees were consciously (re)articulated or not. They are tools that allow me to differentiate between my own analyses and the analyses made by my interviewees. At times these will overlap, at other times they will differ. My point for raising this issue here, lies in the fact that this too, is a type of transcription, and like any other transcription, it is soaked in theory as well as in practice.

In line with the pragmatic arguments outlined above, transcriptions should be thought of as indexes that help us to organize the complexity of interactional data⁴⁴. As such, the practice of transcription may either highlight features of the text that would otherwise go unnoticed, or obscure features that will be forgotten and/or erased as soon as the transcription process is completed. Transcription is a double edged sword. As oral discourse is being rearticulated into written discourse, a multiplicity of discursive forms and functions are being altered. Researchers should therefore be as vigilant as possible with respect to the processes and alterations involved – not losing track of the fact that what should be investigated, are not so much the transcriptions, as the oral data on which they are based.

An additional and often neglected problem is posed by the issue of translation. I translated my transcriptions into English. Consequently, there are additional problems to be raised. Pirjo Nikander points out that *“translating data extracts is not merely a question of ‘adopting’ or ‘following’ a ‘transcription technique’ but rather includes a range of practical and ideological questions*

⁴⁴ I would like to thank Janus Mortensen and Hartmut Haberland of the Calpiu research center for this useful formulation presented at the 2011 IPrA conference in Manchester during a lecture called *From transcript sharing to data sharing: consequences for societal pragmatics*.

concerning the level of detail chosen in the transcription, and of the way in which the translations are physically presented in print.” (Nikander 2008: 226). Nikander notes that the theoretical and analytical choices made throughout the translation process are usually hidden from the reader. As such, one might claim that translations violate the principle of “*validity through transparency and access*” (Nikander 2008: 227). For this reason, I chose to include the original excerpts in an index at the end of this book. Nevertheless, I agree with Nikander that translation remains “*an indirectly controlled guess*” (Nikander 2008: 229). Consequently, I will have to ask my readers for a certain degree of faith in my ability to translate the Dutch discourse of my respondents in such a way that the main socio-political functions of their discourse – as articulated in the original speech event – are retained in my English translation.

2.3.2 The problematic of integration in academic and political discourse

The concept of integration is one of the key notions structuring the academic and political discourse about minorities in Flanders since the middle of the 1980s. It shares a similar status with notions such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, and ⟨politics⟩, since it does not belong to the exclusive domain of either academic or political discourse. Also, the notion of integration popped up in a great deal of the interviews I conducted. At times, I introduced the notion myself, but in most cases interviewees articulated the concept first. Usually, they displayed a high degree of metapragmatic and political awareness with respect to the problems associated with the hegemonic usage of the word. Nevertheless, most of my interviewees seem to make do with the concept of integration. However, this does not mean that integration is as central to their self-awareness and political subjectivity as one may expect.

There are several reasons for problematising the notion of integration in academic as well as in political discourse. Some of these reasons can be traced back to the discourse of my respondents. Other reasons have to do with the centrality of the notion in mainstream political discourse. Almost every Flemish person I met throughout my Phd project seems to have an opinion about integration-related issues. When people asked me what I did for a living, I usually told them that my Phd was about the political discourse, the world-views and the self-images of intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders. This almost inevitably led to questions, remarks, comments, and political discourse about the (non-) integrated status of Muslim, Moroccan and/or Turkish individuals and/or communities in Flanders.

Research into mainstream political and scientific discourse about so-called guest-workers, migrants, minorities, and/or allochthons confirms the centrality of the integration concept within the Flemish public debate. Along with my own ethnographic and discourse analytical observations, this prompted me to problematise the notion of integration as used in the dominant public sphere as well as in academic discourse. This should allow for a better understanding of the way my respondents articulated this notion. Moreover, it allows me to introduce some sociologic data with respect to the social, educational, and economic status of the Moroccan minority in Flanders. In turn, this will allow the reader to contextualise my own analyses in a more accurate way. The notion of integration is also a thankful object of investigation in order to introduce my interpretive functionalist heuristic. Such a heuristic requires a rearticulation of existing concepts into a problematic.

The problematic constructed below is based on: a problematisation of the relationship between political and academic discourse; the polyphonic and polysemic usage of an abstract category such as integration; and on the various theoretical and methodological issues articulated in the previous chapters. Below, I will first provide a brief account of (a) integration on the crossroad between science and politics. I will then move on to provide the reader with (b) a brief sociology of Moroccan migration and integration in Flanders. These sections allow for a better contextualisation of the discourse produced by my interviewees. Lastly, I will summarise the (c) core features of the problematic of integration. All of this clears the ground for my interpretive functionalist analysis of the way my respondents articulated integration-related lexical items within the context of the interviews I conducted.

a) Integration on the crossroads between science and politics

In the upcoming subsections I will explore the conceptual and political problems of integration. I will start by discussing differences between the concepts of *integration* and *assimilation* in Europe and in the US. This will lead us to a discussion of *integration as a paradoxical problem of social order and/or social cohesion*. The linguistic possibilities offered by these concepts will be explored in a

subsection on the *pragmatic usage of the abstract category of integration in Flemish sociological and hegemonic discourse*. Before we move on to discuss *Flemish integration policies*, it is important to provide a brief outline of the *Moroccan migration(s) to Flanders, Belgium*. After our discussion of Flemish integration policies, we need to discuss the process of *importing (the notion of) allochthons into Flanders*. Also, it is important to present the reader with *some notes on related concepts* such as *diversity, participation, and citizenship*. Lastly, I will conclude this section by focusing on some key aspects of the Flemish *debates on integration*. It is useful to keep in mind that this section functions first and foremost within the context of a research strategy of problematisation. As such, I do not claim exhaustiveness.

I will not provide the reader with an extensive overview of sociologic literature on integration. The domain is vast, and a useful overview of the American literature on assimilation, and the European literature on integration already exist (Hesters 2011: 39-65). Nevertheless, I do consider it to be important to highlight some of the dominant tensions and meanings associated with the concept of integration in European and Flemish sociology.

Integration and assimilation in European and American sociology

In her overview of European and American scholarship on immigrant incorporation, Delphine Hesters points out that both geographically anchored traditions use different concepts to discuss similar phenomena. Whereas notions such as race and assimilation are central in American sociological theory and research, these concepts are virtually absent in the European domain (Hesters 2011: 54). Hesters depicts the American approach as follows:

“Even though alternative terms like integration, adaptation and incorporation have appeared in the academic literature (Brubaker 2001: 534), assimilation has always been the lead concept in American theories of immigrant incorporation. Given the long history in the American academia, keeping the concept on the agenda has been considered valuable, even though it has strongly been contested, mainly due to its conflation with normative programs aiming for full absorption of immigrant minorities (cf. supra).” (Hesters 2011: 54)

Another central concept in American sociology is race, a notion that has been banned from European academic and political vocabulary after the Nazi appropriation of the word (Hesters 2011: 55). The term has been so intertwined with Nazi discursive practices that the concept is generally considered taboo in both academic and political discourse (Yanow and van der Haar forthcoming: 1-2). Hesters wonders to what extent this taboo has been politically and/or academically fortunate. She notes that in spite of the predominance of culturalist discourses about ethnicity and culture (see also: Maly 2007d), (perceived) phenotypical differences still play a crucial role in European exclusionary – or racist – practices (Hesters 2011: 55). She summarises her argument as follows:

“by distinguishing between race and ethnicity as ‘phenotypically different’ and ‘culturally different’ groups, we may be better equipped to trace and distinguish between different processes of ‘othering’ that are also taking place in European societies” (Hesters 2011: 55)

In addition, it should be noted that other concepts currently perform similar functions in exclusionary modes of European politics. This will become evident during my discussion of the Flemish discourse about allochthons and autochthons. Nevertheless, before we go into this aspect of the integration debate, it is useful to point out why the notion of assimilation is virtually absent from European sociology.

“In the European science, however, assimilation has effectively been dismissed because of its normative associations and integration has become the lead concept. Integration stands for incorporation of immigrants without fully erasing their cultural heritage and suggests that adaptation

should be made by both immigrants and the host societies (Witte 1993: 16-17). Integration has also been the main notion in European politics, hence the common ground for the dialogue between politics and social sciences.” (Hesters 2011: 54)

However, the fact that there is a common vocabulary shared by politicians, academics, intellectuals, and activists, in Flanders does not imply that we are dealing with a power-free dialogue or debate. A common vocabulary does not necessarily entail the establishment of a common ground. It is useful to recall the pragmatic insight that common ground is never really common. As we will see, the notion of integration as deployed in a great deal of contemporary European sociology is not always compatible with the way this concept is used within policy documents and practices. Also, there are significant differences between mainstream hegemonic discourse about integration on the one hand, and the way in which this concept is being deployed in European sociology and policy.

Integration as a paradoxical problem of social order and/or social cohesion

Sociologically speaking, the concept of integration is related to the problem of social order and/or social cohesion (Schinkel 2008: 111-82; Van den Eede et al. 2009: 17-22). In spite of the fact that integration is debated by politicians, philosophers, and citizens, and in spite of the fact that it constitutes an important object of investigation for sociologists, the notion is very much neglected as a systematic object of reflection. Especially the long and complex history of the implicit presuppositions that lie at the basis of contemporary thought about society and integration deserve more attention. In this sense, Schinkel claims that those involved in the debate hardly ever emancipate themselves from common sense thinking about the term (Schinkel 2008: 131).

I am less pessimistic than Schinkel. Since the early 1990s (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992, 1998), many publications have problematised the concept of integration as deployed in public debates (Arnaut et al. 2009: 22-23; Maly 2007c: 113; Vandepierre 2009). Also, the multiplicity of sociological definitions is increasingly being recognized by researchers, activists, politicians, and intellectuals involved in these discussions (Alsulaiman 1998; Entzinger 1998; Foblets and Hubeau 1997a; Talhaoui 1998; Van den Broeck and Foblets 2002b). Moreover, many of my interviewees displayed a very high degree of metapragmatic awareness with respect to how this notion may be articulated. Nevertheless, I agree with Schinkel that in many cases, some key presuppositions are left unquestioned in mainstream discourse and research about this issue. I also agree that the problematic of integration can be traced back to the historically overdetermined way in which we have come to conceptualize societal order.

In an argument that echoes concerns raised by Ernesto Laclau about the impossibility of society, Schinkel points out that sociology was founded on a set of organic metaphors and on an associated set of organicist ideas (Schinkel 2008: 77-113). As we noticed before, Laclau considers society in terms of an object that can only be known and created through articulatory and polysemic practices aimed at a fixation of particular understandings of what society ought to mean. It only exists as a unified object in and through the multiplicity of paradoxical attempts to constitute itself (Laclau 1990: 92). According to Schinkel, sociology has played a very important role in this respect. As an emergent discipline influenced by organicist thought, it actually invented society as an integrated object of investigation:

“Sociology occupied itself with the relationships between institutions that were part of society, as well as with the relations between individuals and the whole. This relationship was thought of as institutionally determined. Along with the emergence of society as an organism, the problem of its organisation remains central to social philosophy and sociology. The integration of the social whole involved the insertion of its parts.” (Schinkel 2008: 111-12)⁴⁵

⁴⁵ “De sociologie hield zich bezig met de relaties tussen instituties die onderdeel waren van de samenleving of de maatschappij, alsmede met de relatie tussen individuen en geheel. Die relatie werd als institutioneel vormgegeven gedacht. Met het ontstaan van de maatschappij als organisme blijft in de sociale filosofie en de

Many sociologists have become quite critical with respect to explicit biological metaphors and metaphors of the body. Nevertheless, a number of somatic presuppositions about society remain central to mainstream sociology and to integration research in particular. Consequently, the notion of society often functions as an aggregate concept for everything social. Such a concept is based on the presupposition of a whole that is constituted by parts that may be integrated or not with varying degrees of success. Also, mainstream sociology often operates on the basis of the presupposition that individual people constitute the smallest parts of society. Consequently, integration supposedly takes place at this individual level. Lastly, there is a normative aspect involved. Schinkel argues that elements of organicistic teleology have survived in the form of an implicit valuation of unity and stability of the whole in mainstream sociological theory (Schinkel 2008: 111-13). As we noticed before, this type of thinking about unity has been thoroughly criticised by poststructuralist authors such as Foucault and Laclau (Foucault 1969: 23-33; Laclau 1990).

Van den Eede, Wets, and Levrau (Van den Eede et al. 2009) provide us with a very useful overview of existing literature on the notion of integration. They point out that integration may function as: a meta-term to designate an entire debate; a strategy; a policy option; or as an over-arching term to designate a multiplicity of integration strategies. They note that integration may involve a variety of individual, social, or policy related actors. Also, it is important to point out that integration may refer to a process as well as to a goal or to a product – the establishment of an integrated society and/or an integrated individual or group. According to them, the process of integration involves the development of social cohesion (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 5). They define integration as follows:

“[...] we consider integration as one among many diversification strategies aimed at dealing with (ethnic-cultural) diversity and at creating a (new) form of social cohesion at the individual as well as on the policy level. The term “diversification strategies” refers to the whole of strategies or processes to deal with (ethnic-cultural) diversity in a society and to maintain social cohesion. We also emphasise the processual aspect of integration. As a policy strategy, we consider integration first and foremost as a way of safeguarding a process that is at the same time part of the process itself.” (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 6)⁴⁶

This being said, the authors emphasise that they do not advocate any form of homogeneity (see Blommaert and Verschueren 1992; Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 117-47)⁴⁷, but rather a *“sharing of something in common”*. To them, integration – i.e. the establishment of social cohesion – is *“a social constructivist process whereby people create meanings in dialogue and conflict”*. Because of this, a form of relative and momentary stability that enables society to develop itself, is the most one can hope for. (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 22-23).

In spite of the fact that I consider the approach of Van den Eede and his co-authors to be among the most carefully conceptualized notions of integration in the Flemish landscape, Schinkel’s critique remains relevant. Even though Van den Eede, Wets, and Levrau are very much aware of the various

sociologie het probleem van de organisatie daarvan bestaan. De integratie van dat sociale geheel betrof de invoering van de delen ervan.” (Schinkel 2008: 111-112)

⁴⁶ *“In deze nota benaderen we integratie als één van de mogelijke diversiteitsstrategieën, zowel tussen individuen en groepen enerzijds als op beleidsmatig vlak anderzijds, om met de (etnisch-culturele) diversiteit om te gaan en om een (nieuwe) vorm van sociale cohesie te creëren. De term “diversiteitsstrategieën” verwijst naar het geheel van strategieën of processen om met de (etnisch-culturele) diversiteit in de samenleving om te gaan en om sociale cohesie te bewaren. Verder leggen we de nadruk op het procesmatige aspect van integratie. Integratie als beleidsstrategie, beschouwen we in de eerste plaats als een uitdrukking van een procesbegeleiding dat tevens deel uitmaakt van het proces zelf.”* (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 6)

⁴⁷ Blommaert and Verschueren present a detailed pragmatic analysis and critique of homogeneity in *Het Belgische migrantendebat* and in *Debating diversity*. They describe homogeneity as a set of ideological discourse(s) that rest on *“the idea that the ideal society should be as homogeneous as possible”* (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 117).

meanings of the term, and even though they explicitly ask questions with respect to the nature of social cohesion, the concept of society itself remains implicit:

“By explicitly articulating social cohesion as the goal of the integration process, we emphasise first and foremost the importance of establishing a sufficiently strong bond between the various ethnic-cultural groups in society.” (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 18)⁴⁸

The authors claim that both too much and too little social cohesion are problematic to a society. Writing from a systemic functionalist perspective, they emphasise that a balanced system should accommodate for conflict and for diversity. The type of cohesion involved should enable people to exercise their autonomy and free choice. Likewise, a shortage of social cohesion may lead to a *“disintegration of society”* (Van den Eede et al. 2009). However, the idea of a disintegrated society rests upon the organicist legacy described above. According to Schinkel, this legacy introduces two productive paradoxes in contemporary thought on integration.

The first paradox is constituted by the idea that society lacks the order it is supposed to be based on. At the same time, the order one desires is always conceptualized from the perspective of an idealised and unified whole. This leads to a paradoxical situation for sociologists who have to deal with the triplet integration / society / order:

“Because who questions the orderliness ‘society’, nevertheless refers to ‘society’ and attributes to it some kind of unity! And: those who consider just how ordered society actually is, still have to posit a certain unity that can consequently be questioned with respect to its order” (Schinkel 2008: 123-24)⁴⁹

The second paradox enables one to establish an idealised image of society. This image may be depicted as follows: *“society is itself by not being itself”*. As societies typically negate their mortality, all ‘diseases’ and/or dysfunctions are merely temporal disruptions and/or obstacles to the establishment and full realisation of societies as fully integrated wholes (Schinkel 2008: 124-25).

Schinkel notes that from a sociological perspective, the problem of integration related order in the Netherlands – and this holds for Flanders as well – pertains first and foremost to the relation between migrants and society even though this relationship is also problematised with respect to ex-convicts, criminals, psychiatric patients, women, homosexuals, the unemployed, the sick, elders, or people who are not able to use computers. Schinkel argues that through its self-obsession with a paradoxical non- or disintegration, society has become a hypochondric phenomenon. A complete integration of individuals, groups, and society, is thereby considered as the ultimate ideal of health (Schinkel 2008: 136-38). As such:

“[...] the problem of ‘integration’ is the problem of the organicistic mode of thought. It is a way of thinking that is always situated within the framework of a whole that is challenged by co-ordination problems with respect to its (potential) parts.” (Schinkel 2008: 137)⁵⁰

All of this leads to a paradoxical situation in which a multiplicity of groups and/or individuals are considered to find themselves outside of society – hence the need for them to be integrated – while

⁴⁸ *“Door sociale cohesie expliciet als doelstelling van het integratieproces te duiden, benadrukken we in de eerste plaats het belang van het installeren van een voldoende sterke bindingskracht tussen de verschillende etnisch-culturele groepen in de samenleving.”* (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 18)

⁴⁹ *“Want wie ‘de maatschappij’ op haar orde bevraagt, verwijst toch naar ‘de maatschappij’ en kent daar een zekere eenheid aan toe! En: wie beziet hoe geordend ‘de maatschappij’ nu eigenlijk wel niet is, moet toch een object met en zekere eenheid poneren dat dan vervolgens op zijn ordening bevraagd wordt.”* (Schinkel 2008: 123-124)

⁵⁰ *“[...] het probleem van ‘integratie’ [is] het centrale probleem van het organicistische denkschema [...]. Het is een denken dat zich altijd afspeelt binnen de kaders van een geheel, dat een coördinatieprobleem ten aanzien van (potentiële) delen heeft.”* (Schinkel 2008: 137)

they simultaneously find themselves within society. The borders of society are thus internal to the social system itself (Schinkel 2008: 281-84). Similar arguments have been raised within the Essex approach to politics and subjectivity (Laclau 1990). Also, linguistic pragmaticians such as Blommaert and Verschueren have articulated similar arguments with respect to the Belgian / Flemish migrant debate: the objects of integration are always placed implicitly on the outside of the metaphorical boundary that constitutes society (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 112).

Schinkel provides an interesting metaphor in order to describe this phenomenon. According to him, the principle of integration functions as a mode of auto-vampirism. He states that “*all good intended attempts to realise a better integration of the n-th generation of migrants reproduce a functional separation ...*”. We are dealing with a form of auto-vampirism since the migrants or allochthons involved (see further) do not find themselves outside of society in any empirical sense of the word. Society basically excludes certain parts of itself and then aims to (re)integrate them. Society thus ultimately feeds upon itself. Moreover, vampires create other vampires, and integration as used in mainstream discourse is therefore ultimately a phenomenon of sociological assimilation. The problem, however, is that we cannot think a disintegrated person sociologically since destruction, deviance, criminality, being dependent on welfare, or being involved in the black market, are all aspects of social reality (Schinkel 2008: 154, 309-10).

Pragmatic usage of the abstract category of integration in Flemish sociological and hegemonic discourse

It is useful to take a look at the linguistic possibilities offered by the notion of integration and the restrictive hegemonic usage of the word. In their 1998 work, Blommaert and Verschueren pointed out that integration refers both to “*the political goodwill of the Belgians to accommodate foreigners, and to the position which migrants should eventually occupy in society*” (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 111). Unfortunately, both the road to hell and the contemporary road to racism in Flanders are paved with good intentions (see Arnaut and Ceuppens 2009: 44). This can be exemplified with respect to the restrictive usage of the verb *to integrate* in Flemish hegemonic discourse.

A first observation relates to the fact that the Dutch verb *integreren* (English: to integrate) is both a transitive and an intransitive verb. It is transitive in the sense that it can be used with a subject which is the agent that makes a patient undergo an action. For instance, it would be possible to state that *Jan integrates Mohamed*. However, such an utterance hardly ever occurs in mainstream discourse. A focus on an intentionality directed at plural and generalized subjects and direct objects precludes such usage. In mainstream discourse, utterances such as *We want to integrate the migrants* or *Allochthons do not want to integrate themselves* are far more common. According to Blommaert and Verschueren, this articulation of a will is indicative of the programmatic nature of the concept of integration. Secondly, it should be noted that the verb to integrate is a process verb that indicates a movement from the outside to the inside. The Latin *integer* means literally *to complete*. Integration thus functions as a boundary concept. This implies that the objects of integration are always placed implicitly on the outside of the boundary that constitutes society (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 112-15).

A third restrictive usage of the notion of integration is related to the fact that it is commonly used as a reflexive process verb in the following three contexts; in stipulating the conditions of acceptance such as in *if they only would integrate themselves*; in reproaches such as *they do not want to integrate themselves*; or in the assignment of duties such as *they have to integrate themselves* (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 112-13). Responsibility for a vague process is thus systematically deferred to those who find themselves on the imaginary outside of society – i.e. successively guest workers, migrants, allochthons, Moroccans, Arabs, Turks, and/or Muslims. Schinkel described this phenomenon as the deindividualising individualisation of integration. When a Moroccan or an allochthon is accused of not being integrated and when his culture is involved in the explanation for his situation, responsibility is extended to the group that shares his culture. What starts as a process of individuation ends in a

process of de-individuation. Mainstream usage of the concept of integration thus leads us away from the sociological idea wherein integration is a process of society as a whole (Schinkel 2008: 155-58).

There is a significant difference between the vague usage of the notion of integration in mainstream or hegemonic political discourse in Flanders on the one hand (Blommaert 2005: 189), and the way in which the concept is being deployed in integration research. This difference touches upon the question of the various dimensions and indicators of integration. I agree with Schinkel that even when sociologists do consider explicit definitions of integration, they tend to confuse and conflate integration with a limited set of indicators at the level of the individual throughout their investigations. In sociological literature and research, it has become common practice to define integration by means of a number of *indicators* such as language competences, religious affiliations, educational level, professional status, and so on. In this respect, it is crucial to note that these indicators all pertain to the individual level of the migrants, allochthons, or psychiatric patients involved. (Schinkel 2008: 139-41, 62-65). Schinkel reaches the conclusion that:

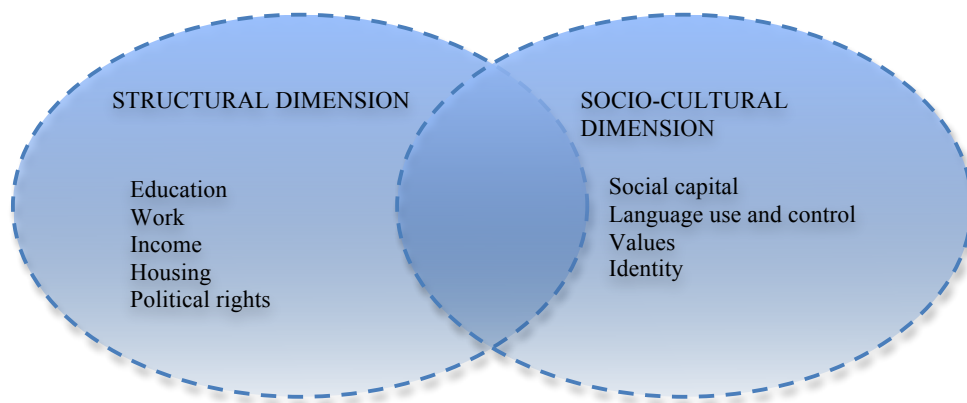
“Only a lack of sociological reflexivity and the appropriation of existing integration ideals that should never be taken as a point of departure for sociological research, derived from policy and from politics, can lead to the conclusion that it is migrants who are not integrated in all these cases.” (Schinkel 2008: 165)⁵¹

I do not consider sociological research on integration to be inherently bad or dysfunctional. Rather, I wish to emphasise that the value-loaded connotations of integration in mainstream political discourse do not allow for an unreflexive usage of the term. Especially the deferral of responsibility of integration to individual migrants is a common feature of hegemonic usage of the term. Allochthons such as Moroccans and Turks are expected to reduce the socio-cultural distance towards autochthon Flemish by speaking Dutch, by participating in autochthon civil society, by subscribing to local norms and values. Supposedly, this should reduce fear and negative attitudes on the part of the Flemish population (van Craen et al. 2007: 287).

In their book *Beyond us and them* (Dutch: *Voorbij wij en zij*), Van Craen, Vancluysen, and Ackaert describe what they call the *integration paradox*. They compare a number of socio-cultural indicators of integration between three groups living in former mining cities of Genk and Houthalen-Eekeren: Moroccan allochthons; Turkish allochthons; and autochthons (van Craen et al. 2007: 287). The authors acknowledge that the concept of integration is an “*essentially contested concept*” and explicitly state that they will not even attempt to come up with a definition. Nevertheless, they do adopt a distinction between socio-cultural integration and structural integration made by Penninx and Vermeulen (see Vermeulen and Penninx 1994).

Whereas the concept of structural integration refers to the socio-economic position of ethnic and cultural minorities, the notion of socio-cultural integration refers to “*the measure in which minorities distinguish themselves from the society in which they live*” (van Craen et al. 2007: 4). The indicators for measuring the socio-cultural and the structural dimensions of integration are more concrete. They synthesise existing literature on indicators and dimensions of integration (see: Choenni 1992; Esser 2006; Veenman 1994) into the following scheme:

⁵¹ “*Alleen een gebrek aan sociologische reflexiviteit en een overnemen van bestaande [integratie]idealen in beleid en politiek die een socioloog juist nooit aan de basis van zijn of haar onderzoek mag leggen, kan leiden tot de conclusie dat het, in al die gevallen, de migranten zijn die [niet geïntegreerd] zijn.*” (Schinkel 2008: 164)



Van Craen, Ackaert, and Vanclyusen point out that there are some significant differences in the integration processes of Turkish and Moroccan allochthons:

“Turkish allochthons orient themselves more to their ‘own’ media, they have more friends in their own community, they are more often engaged in small talk with neighbors of their own community, and they often use their mother tongue (Turkish). Moroccan allochthons speak Dutch more often, they participate more in autochthon civil society, they have a more positive image of autochthons, and consider themselves more Belgian.” (van Craen et al. 2007: 287)⁵²

Van Craen, Vanclyusen and Ackaert note that according to dominant ideas concerning integration, one should expect that these differences would amount to a more positive attitude among autochthons towards Moroccan allochthons than towards Turkish allochthons. However, the opposite seems to be the case. Their autochthon respondents have developed an image of Moroccan allochthons that is a lot more negative than their image of Turkish allochthons. Moreover, this negative perception is mirrored by the fact that Moroccan allochthons report more personal experiences of discrimination than Turkish allochthons. On the basis of existing literature, the authors formulate a number of hypotheses that might account for this integration paradox. However, neither differences with respect to education, socio-economic status, opinions, attitudes, or differences with respect to involvement in criminality have a sufficiently solid explanatory status (van Craen et al. 2007: 287-90).

One dimension that is not looked at by Van Craen and his co-authors relates to differences in terms of socio-political positioning in the public sphere. Analysing the political opportunity structures (Kanmaz 2007: 340-42; see also: Sunier 1996)⁵³ for the mobilisation strategies of Moroccan and Turkish Muslims in Flanders, Meryem Kanmaz points out that the differential treatment and perception of Moroccan and Turkish allochthons can be related to the relatively high degree of political visibility of the Moroccan minority in Flanders (Kanmaz 2007: 357-58). During key events in the Flemish minority debate, it is mainly Moroccan intellectuals, politicians, organisations, and activists who articulated their voices in the public sphere:

⁵² *“Turkse allochtonen richten zich sterker op hun ‘eigen’ media, hebben meer vrienden in de eigen gemeenschap, doen vaker een babbeltje met burens uit de eigen gemeenschap en gebruiken vaker hun moedertaal (het Turks). Marokkaanse allochtonen spreken vaker Nederlands, participeren meer aan het autochtone verenigingsleven, hebben een positiever beeld van autochtonen en voelen zich meer Belg.”* (Van Craen et al. 2007: 287)

⁵³ Meryem Kanmaz favors a broad notion of POS (political opportunity structures). A political opportunity structure may refer to the contextual circumstances that account for collective action and mobilisation of groups in the public sphere. In her analysis of the POS that account for Muslim mobilisation strategies in the Flemish city of Ghent, she emphasises the importance of taking both structural, discursive, cultural, and political dimensions into account: the structural dimension refers to aspects of law and legislation; the political dimension refers to existing political power relationships in the political field; and the ideological dimension refers to the presuppositions and motivations used by actors to justify and develop their actions.

“Trigger events of recent years thus constituted concrete reasons to express concerns and to exert influence on political agendas and perceptions. As such, the debate that would later be labeled as the ‘bankruptcy’ of integration, was held by young Maghrebian / Arabophonic intellectuals such as Fraihi, Abou Jahjah and Talhaoui. Interventions in this debate that lasted for several months from the Turkish community were neglectable – except for interventions of members of parliament such as Kaçar and Pehlivan who reacted from the position of their political function. From the Turkish communities themselves and from [Turkish] civil society, there was no response. The reader edited by Foblets and Van den Broeck (Van den Broeck and Foblets 2002b) after this debate contained only one contribution to this recent debate from the Turkish communities. Also, shortly after the attacks of 9/11, Belgian Maghrebian intellectuals reacted with a written intervention on the events and on the culpabilisation of Maghrebian Muslim communities (Bousetta 2003). After the murder on Joe van Holsbeek Maghrebian intellectuals and spokespersons such as Mohamed Chakkar, Fouad Ahidar entered the limelight in order to make an analysis of the ‘problem with Moroccan youngsters’ (Maly and El Sghiar 2004)” (Kanmaz 2007: 357)⁵⁴

With respect to the ideological dimension of the political opportunity structures for Moroccan or Maghrebian political mobilisation, Kanmaz points out that negative and hostile public image of this minority, seems to stimulate action and mobilisation (Kanmaz 2007: 357). Nevertheless, Fadil and Kanmaz also point out that both the Flemish left and the Flemish right are usually very critical with respect to minority political engagements. Especially identity political movements such as the Arab European League are often considered to be leftist and/or Islamic equivalents of the far right. Consequently, fundamental political critiques with respect to notions such as racism, citizenship, and integration articulated by minorities are usually overlooked by both conservative and progressive political parties (Fadil and Kanmaz 2009: 115-17). As such, the integration paradox may not be as paradoxical as it may seem at first sight.

On Moroccan migration(s) to Flanders, Belgium

Like many other European countries, Belgium has never defined itself as an immigration country. For a long time, migration was accepted and organized in order to accommodate for economic and demographic needs in times of shortage. When faced with an economic crisis, entrance for new immigrants was restricted (Hesters 2011: 17). Most immigration flows between World War I and World War II originated in neighbouring countries. Belgium also took in workers from Central and Southern Europe. Poland and Italy were especially important in this respect (Timmerman et al. 2003: 1065). For current purposes, it is useful to take a look at Moroccan migration to Belgium.

At the beginning of the 1960s, the Belgian census only reported 461 Moroccans residing in the country. This population is the remnant of an earlier migration during the twenties and thirties as well as the result of a small flow of Moroccan immigration in the wake of World War II. Almost a quarter of these 461 people were born in Belgium. This micro-community was geographically located in the industrial regions of Wallonia. The Flemish city of Antwerp hosted only 10 Moroccans in 1961

⁵⁴ *“De trigger-events van de laatste jaren vormden dan ook een concrete aanleiding om met hun bezwaren naar buiten te treden en op die manier invloed te verwerven op de politieke agenda’s en de perceptie. Zo werd het debat dat achteraf het ‘failliet’ van de integratie werd genoemd, gevoerd door jonge Maghrebijnse / Arabofone intellectuelen zoals Fraihi, Abu Jahjah en Talhaoui. Tussenkomen in dit debat vanuit de Turkse gemeenschappen, dat toch verscheidene maanden heeft geduurd, waren verwaarloosbaar – op de tussenkomen van parlementsleden Kaçar en Pehlivan na, die reageerden vanuit hun politieke functie. Vanuit de Turkse gemeenschappen zelf en het uitgebreide verenigingsleven kwam echter geen reactie. De bundel die Foblets & Van den Broeck na het debat samenstelden (2002) telt slechts één bijdrage aan het recente debat van de Turkse gemeenschappen. Ook kort na de aanslagen van 9/11 reageerden Belgische Maghrebijnse intellectuelen met een schriftelijke tussenkomst op de gebeurtenissen en de culpabilisering van de Maghrebijnse moslimgemeenschappen (Bousetta 2003). Na de moord op Joe van Holsbeek traden Maghrebijnse intellectuelen/woordvoerders zoals Mohamed Chakkar, Fouad Ahidar in de schijnwerpers om een analyse te maken van ‘het probleem met Marokkaanse jongeren’ (Maly & El Sghiar 2004).” (Kanmaz 2007: 357)*

according to the national census (Bousetta 2001: 72-73). This situation would change dramatically after the signing of a bilateral migration treaty between the Belgian and the Moroccan government in 1964 (Timmerman et al. 2003: 1066-67).

While Europe was in need of a cheap and flexible labour-force, Morocco was able and willing to provide it. The Moroccan government sought to relieve its labour market by an artificial decrease of unemployment by emigration. It also hoped that the remittances of Moroccan workers would contribute to its economic development. Moreover, Moroccan policy sought to harvest the newly acquired qualifications and professional skills of Moroccan emigrants after their return to the country of origin. Politically speaking, emigration was interesting as well. Faced with powerful rebellion and protest movements that agitated the Moroccan Rif region during 1957 and 1958, the Moroccan political elite used the exportation of a large segment of the domestic labour force as an instrument for reducing internal socio-political tensions (Bousetta 2001: 75-76).

During the sixties, there was an increasing demand for cheap labour in Belgium. French and Italian migration to Belgium continued, but the biggest migration flows of the early sixties are of Spanish, Turkish, and Moroccan origin (Eggerickx 2006: 33-34). With respect to Moroccan migration, it is worth noting that in absolute terms, it had no equivalent in earlier periods. Bousetta notes out that the Belgian population multiplied with a factor slightly below one hundred between 1961 and 1974: from 461 to over 40 000 people. Similar dynamics occurred in the Netherlands and in France (Bousetta 2001: 77). Today, Moroccans and Turks constitute the two largest non-European migrant groups in Belgium. This is a direct consequence of the immigration processes initiated in the sixties, as well as of the family formation and reunification policies established since the seventies. Even though a migration stop was initiated in 1974, migration from Morocco to Belgium never stopped. This is due to policies of family reunification and formation (Timmerman et al. 2003: 1067).

Today, Belgium contains about 250 000 inhabitants with a Moroccan nationality and people with the Belgian nationality who used to (only) have the Moroccan nationality. This means that Moroccans now form the largest ethnic minority group in Belgium. In 2001, about 126 000 people of Moroccan origin lived in Brussels, constituting 13% of the overall population of the Belgian capital. Hesters points out that only Belgians of origin constitute a larger group with 522 000 inhabitants living in Brussels. In Antwerp – the major Flemish (Dutch-speaking) city of Belgium – the situation is quite different. Here, Moroccans constitute a minority in a city with a clear Flemish majority. At the beginning of 2011, the total population of so-called allochthons (see further) amounts to 32% out of 492 000 inhabitants. It is estimated that about 8% of the Antwerp population holds the Moroccan nationality (Hesters 2011: 27-29).

As a consequence of family constitution and reunification processes, the average age dropped quickly in cities such as Brussels and Antwerp because of the high birth rates in these new families during the eighties. The increase of the number of youngsters with a foreign origin impacted on many Brussels and Antwerp schools who were suddenly faced with a very different student population. This impacted significantly on the visibility of these migrated groups. In addition, Andrea Rea points out that the high degree of public awareness vis-à-vis the presence of Moroccan and Turkish migrants and their children can be attributed to the relatively new introduction of Islamic cultural and religious performances in the Belgian public sphere. She goes on and notes that during the communal elections of 1982 there was not a single democratic political party who did not exhibit some form of political and/or institutional racism. Her remarks bring us full circle to the question of integration (Rea 2006: 189-90). She characterizes the discourse about Moroccans and Turks during the eighties as follows:

“The chief victims of these racist discourses and practices are Moroccans and Turks. During this period, a great deal of discourses attempted to make a distinction between ‘integrateable’ and ‘non-integrateable’ immigrants. Cultural difference is being used in order to justify the impossibility

of migrant integration. One often talks about integration and about the surplus of immigrants and about the need to send some of them back to their country of origin” (Rea 2006: 190)⁵⁵

The image of Moroccan migration to Belgium outlined above is a rough depiction of the most general features of this process. I will provide more information on the educational, economic, and socio-political situation of the Moroccan minority in Flanders as we go. However, the reader should keep in mind that this book is not a book about Moroccan immigration. It is a book about the way intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background articulate a preferred sense of self and politics throughout their public engagements. As we will see, the people I interviewed often lack the stereotypical features of the Moroccan migrant and/or allochthon. More specifically, they often hold more (forms of) cultural, social, economic, and/or symbolic capital than the average migrant described in the socio-demographic accounts above and below.

On Flemish integration policies

Belgian policies of integration originated as a reaction against the electoral success of the *Vlaams Blok* (VB) on the *black Sunday* of October 9, 1988 when the extremist right-wing political party became the third party in Antwerp. The resulting political shockwave resonated through the entire Belgian political spectrum and was a direct incentive for the establishment of the Royal Commissariat for Migration Policy (KCM). Many other *black Sundays* would follow. Standpoints would polarise and the VB would continually and successfully position itself as the underdog that articulates the voice of the common man with respect to so-called traditional parties and migrants (Van den Broeck 2002: 16, 33).

As a response to the first *black Sunday*, two Royal Commissioners for Migration Policy were appointed. As such, a period of more coherent regional policy frameworks for integration was initiated. At the city level, Antwerp decision makers would try to bring administration closer to the citizens by decentralising municipal administration at the neighbourhood level through ‘neighbourhood offices’ (Bousetta 2001: 232-33). These should close the metaphorical *gap* between the citizen and (local) government that supposedly accounted for the increasing popularity of the extreme right. Also, various non-governmental initiatives were initiated to express the indignation felt by the VB electoral success. People signed petitions, engaged in symbolic actions, and think tanks

⁵⁵ “*De voornaamste slachtoffers van deze racistische betogen en praktijken zijn de Marokkanen en de Turken. Tijdens deze periode zijn er heel wat betogen die een onderscheid trachten te maken tussen de “integreerbare” immigranten en de ‘niet-integreerbare’.* Het culturele verschil wordt gebruikt om de onmogelijkheid tot integratie van immigranten te verrechtvaardigen. Men spreekt heel dikwijls over integratie en over het overschot aan immigranten en dat sommigen terug naar hun land moeten worden gestuurd” (Rea 2006: 190)

were erected. Three initiatives proved to be more durable than others: Hand in Hand⁵⁶; Charta 91⁵⁷; and Objectief 479 917⁵⁸ (Stouthuysen 1995: 85-88).

From a policy perspective, it is important to focus on the *Koninklijk Commissariaat voor het Migrantenbeleid* (KCM) (English: Royal Commissariat for Migration Policy) and on its successor, the *Centrum voor Gelijke Kansen en Racisme* (CGKR) (English: Center for Equal Opportunities and Racism). Belgian integration policies took shape during the period 1989-1993. The hallmark of this period was the establishment of the KCM (Blommaert 2005: 188). This is not to say that Belgian integration policies originated out of the blue. Martens distinguishes six phases in Belgian integration policy: (1) a phase between 1945 and 1960 characterised by a period where labour unions played an important role with respect to foreign – especially Italian – economic integration; during a second phase (2) between 1960 and 1970, two initiatives were taken. On the one hand, provincial *onthaaldiensten* or *welcoming services* were created. On the other hand, communal councils for migrants were erected. These councils constituted a provisional solution for the lack of political representation of migrants at the municipal level (Martens 1997: 64-69).

After the state reform of 1974, the Belgian federal government would continue to be responsible for granting or refusing access to the territory. However, issues related to employment, spatial organisation, and urban development now became responsibilities of the political entities of the Flemish, Brussels, and Wallonian *Gewesten*, whereas so-called personal matters related to issues of education, health, culture and recreation, would become central preoccupations of the Flemish, Wallonian, and German *Communities*. This reorganisation would lead to different orientations with respect to integration- and migration policy in the regions of Brussels, Wallonia, and Flanders. A third (3) phase was initiated: Flemish integration policies and discourses would increasingly emphasise the necessity for migrants to speak Dutch. This discourse is paralleled by an emphasis put on the importance of retaining one's own (allochthon and autochthon) identity and values. From this moment on, Flemish and Wallonian integration and migration policies would evolve in different directions. In the French speaking region, policy tends to emphasise the improvement of the position of young migrants on the labour market and on combating racism in education and in job recruitment. In contrast to Flanders, employment remains the key strategy for integration in Wallonia (Martens 1997: 65-66).

Things become trickier during the eighties. A fourth phase (4) of integration policy is initiated when a law is voted to facilitate the granting of Belgian nationality for migrants in 1984. From this moment on, third generation migrants would automatically acquire the Belgian nationality. First and second

⁵⁶ *Hand in Hand* (English: *Hand in Hand*) is a movement that describes itself as an “organisation of the worker's-, Peace-, Third and Fourth World-, Environmental-, Youth-, Senior-, and Women's movements”. Socialist and christian-democratic unions (ABVV and ACV), as well as initiatives such as *Broederlijk Delen*, *Artsen zonder Grenzen*, *de Bond Beter Leefmilieu*, *de Katholieke Jeugdraad*, *het Vrouwenoverlegkomitee*, *de Federatie Werkgroepen Homofilie*, en *het Vlaams Centrum voor de Integratie van Migranten* (VCIM), were involved. *Hand in Hand* organised various campaigns. These include: the *cordon-sanitaire* action whereby municipal electoral candidates were asked to refuse the possibility of a coalition with the extreme right VB. It also scanned the political programs of all political parties for racist messages (Stouthuysen 1994: 86-87). Since the early nineties, the organisation launched several anti-racist campaigns: see http://www.vaka-handinhand.org/ns/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=26.

⁵⁷ *Charta 91* started as a movement of concerned citizens – mainly intellectuals and artists. This progressive think tank reflected on questions relating to anti-racism, tolerance, and problems related to democratic organisation in general. Nevertheless, the organisation was also involved in forms of political action. For instance, it conceptualized the *cordon-sanitaire* campaign that was later adopted by *Hand in Hand* (Stouthuysen 1994: 87). For more information, see: <http://www.charta91.be/>.

⁵⁸ *Objectief 479 971* (English: Objective 479 971) is a movement for equal rights for Belgians and migrants. It sought to collect as many signatures for a petition supporting this goal, as the number of votes won by the VB on November 24, 1991. In the end, the organisation managed to collect a million signatures. However, the political impact of this petition was limited because of the close links with the Marxist-leninist party PvdA (*Partij van de Arbeid*). Throughout the 1990s, Objectief would increasingly focus on questions relating to the acquisition of Belgian nationality (Stouthuysen 1994: 87-88). For more information see: <http://www.allrights.be/nl>.

generation migrants however, are now required to demonstrate their *will to integrate* (Martens 1997: 67). This precondition to integration had to be ascertained through an individual interview made by municipal police officers on behalf of the judiciary. Since local police is dependent on the mayor, this principle gave municipalities the informal possibility to influence naturalisation either in a liberal or in a restrictive sense. In 1991 and in 1994, the Belgian nationality law would be modified in a more liberal sense. The most substantial reform took place in 1999. The law was simplified in such a way that Belgian nationality may be obtained upon request after three years of residence. For those who could prove seven years of uninterrupted stay, nationality should be provided upon request after a simple screening of criminal records by the judiciary (Bousetta 2001: 118-19). The law of 1984 with respect to Belgian nationality constituted an answer to the question of political participation of migrants. The acquisition of the Belgian nationality thus became a precondition for equal political rights for (children of) migrants (Rea 2006: 192).

During this fourth phase of Belgian integration policy, a *will-to-integrate*-like rationale characterized the governmental approach to migrant organisations. Migrant socio-cultural organisations were not entitled to any form of subsidy unless they can show an orientation towards integration. As we will see, by definition, religious (read: Islamic) orientations will be disqualified on the basis of this criterion (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 114-15).

The start of the fifth phase of Flemish / Belgian integration policy is marked by the establishment of the KCM in 1989. The ensuing institutionalisation of integration and/or migration policies was a response to right-wing extremist electoral successes, as well as a response to the 1991 riots / protests of so-called allochthon youngsters in Brussels (Rea 2006: 192). The task of the KCM was to investigate the so-called migrant problem, and to formulate policy recommendations to solve it. The KCM thus problematised the category of migrants. Doing so, it subdivided this aggregate group into guest workers, migrants, allochthons, and minorities. Each of these target groups represents a specific stage in the integration process. Fauzaya Talhaoui points out that:

“[...] one is first a foreign guest worker, refugee, or asylum seeker; then one becomes a migrant: a migrant is a guest worker but is at the same time a ‘whole person’ (whatever that is supposed to mean!) with a culture, a theology or religion; then one becomes an allochthon who is described as a person with a different socio-cultural origin but who has also developed certain ties with the guest country; in the end these allochthons can disappear into the autochthon population or, if they fail to do so, constitute an ‘ethnic minority’, characterized by a socio-economically disadvantaged position.” (Talhaoui 1998: 75-76)⁵⁹

The first KCM report (see: P. d'Hondt 1989) is arguably the most important document published by the organisation. It is a three-volume oeuvre that would serve as a blueprint for what was to become the official Belgian approach to migration and integration related affairs. Blommaert argues that the most crucial fragment of the report is the KCM definition of integration (Blommaert 2005: 188; see also: P. d'Hondt 1989: 38-39):

The proposals . . . that will follow, will be inspired by a concept of integration, which simultaneously

1. Starts from the notion of ‘insertion’, using the following criteria:
 - a assimilation where the public order so demands
 - b a consistent promotion of an optimal insertion according to the guiding social principles that are the basis of the culture of the host country and that revolve around ‘modernity’, ‘emancipation’ and ‘full-fledged pluralism’ in the sense given by a modern western state.

⁵⁹ *“[...] men is eerst vreemde arbeidskracht, vluchteling of asielzoeker; vervolgens wordt men migrant: een migrant is een arbeider maar tegelijkertijd een ‘gehele mens’ (wat dat ook moge betekenen!) met een cultuur, een levensbeschouwing of een godsdienst; daarna wordt men allochtoon wat beschreven wordt als een persoon met een verschillende sociaal-culturele achterstands- en achterstellingspositie.” (Talhaoui 1998: 75-76)*

- c unambiguous respect for cultural diversity-as-mutual-enrichment in the other domains;
- 2. And which is accompanied by a promotion of the structural involvement of minorities in the activities and the objectives of the authorities.

Blommaert points out that this formula has been adopted in the migrant policies of multiple governments since 1989. In spite of a heated debate concerning such a concept (see: Boussetta 2003; Foblets and Hubeau 1997b; Van den Broeck and Foblets 2002b), the above definition has never been officially revised or revoked. Quite the contrary, it has been retained in the final report of the KCM in 1993. Moreover, the CGKR adopted this definition without criticism. Neither its practical usefulness, nor its relevance with respect to combating racism was called into question by the KCM's successor (Blommaert 2005: 189; Martens 1997: 68; Talhaoui 1998: 76-77).

The CGKR was established by law in 1993. As an institution, it inherited two main functions of the KCM: to stimulate equal opportunities and to combat all forms of distinction, exclusion, and limitation on the basis of criteria stipulated in the anti-racism law. In order to carry out its double mission, the CGKR was enabled to carry out studies and research. It was also granted the possibility to advise the government with respect to its legislation on topics of discrimination, racism, and equal opportunities. It could formulate recommendations to private persons, institutions, and governments on the basis of its studies. Moreover, it is important to point out that the CGKR collects complaints with respect to racism and discrimination. As such, it provides council about one's rights and obligations. It can also file complaints against organisations who may have breached the anti-racism law (Vlierinck 2010: 104-08).

In 1994, the anti-racism law was amended as part of the same package of legislation that established the CGKR. Its area of application was broadened. Also, the minimum penalty for breaching this law was – depending on the particularities of the case – doubled, tripled or even quadrupled. Moreover, a new definition of discrimination was formulated:

“All forms of distinction, exclusion, limitation, or preference, that are meant to, or that may effect the annulation, the corruption, or the limitation of exercising on the basis of equality, the recognition, the enjoyment, or the practice, of human rights and fundamental political, economic, social, cultural, or other freedoms of social life.” (Vlierinck 2010: 108-09)⁶⁰

In parliament, there was a general consensus that problems of racism and xenophobia were becoming increasingly important in political life. Even though the establishment of the CGKR and the parallel revision of the anti-racism law were the subject of parliamentary debate, there was a high degree of consensus that legislative measures needed to be taken (Vlierinck 2010: 113-16).

Martens points out that the establishment and the activities of the CGKR should be analysed in the context of a sixth phase of integration policy. By the end of the eighties, policy had come to reject the idea of a categorical approach towards the deprived situation of many migrants in Belgium. Policy makers came to realise that poverty constitutes one of the main obstacles for realising full citizenship (Dutch: *burgerschap*) among both allochthons and autochthons. It thus refused to treat migrants in a separate policy framework. Rather, they are being treated within the context of combating poverty. This policy has booked positive results in many cities. However, as long as migrants are not granted full political participation, they are forced to present themselves as socio-economically underprivileged groups in order to be taken seriously by government institutions. Martens notes that this may not be the best way to exercise one's citizenship. He also notes that the activities of the CGKR tend to follow a similar non-categorical approach. The organisation has developed a lot of

⁶⁰ “[E]lke vorm van onderscheid, uitsluiting, beperking of voorkeur, die tot doel heeft of ten gevolge heeft of kan hebben dat de erkenning, het genot of de uitoefening op voet van gelijkheid van de rechten van de mens en de fundamentele vrijheden op politiek, economisch, sociaal of cultureel terrein of op andere terreinen van het maatschappelijk leven, wordt tenietgedaan, aangetast of beperkt.” (Vlierinck 2010: 109-109)

initiatives combating racism and xenophobia. However, it remains silent with respect to controversial issues such as voting rights and government support for Islamic organisations (Martens 1997: 69).

The last phase of Flemish integration policy discussed by Albert Martens signals the advent of a more categorical approach towards the integration of ethnic-cultural minorities in Flanders. After many hesitations, provisional settlements, the establishment of subsidised integration centers and so on, it became possible for so-called socio-cultural (read: non-religious) organisations of migrant communities to be recognized and subsidised after a decision of the Flemish government in 1993. Nevertheless, Martens notes that these subsidies are conditional (Martens 1997: 70):

“Only those migrant organisations that originated in the migrant community, largely supported by volunteers, that can testify to a democratic organisation, are eligible for subsidies. Put differently: the various socio-cultural activities, organised within the framework of (particularly Islamic) organisations, will not be subsidised by the government. And if one realises that Islam has been a recognized religion in Belgium since 1974 (just like Catholicism, Judaism, Protestantism, and the Greek-Orthodox Church) but the executive decisions are still not there, it becomes obvious to anyone that Muslims do not enjoy equal opportunities for exercising their religion.” (Martens 1997: 70)⁶¹

The year 1993 thus marks the start of a more co-ordinated integration policy. In 1998, the Flemish government issued a *decree with respect to the Flemish policy with regard to ethnic-cultural minorities* (Dutch: *decreet inzage het Vlaams beleid ten aanzien van etnisch-culturele minderheden*). This decree marked a choice for a so-called inclusive policy. This involves an integral approach whereby several ministries are responsible for realising minority related policy goals. In order to avoid overlapping responsibilities and contradictions, minority policy will henceforth be co-ordinated by two institutions: a co-ordinating commission and a co-ordinating Minister (Verhoeven et al. 2003: 14-15). The inter-departmental commission for ethnic and cultural minorities (ICEM) (Dutch: Interdepartementale Commissie Etnisch-Culturele Minderheden) is the co-ordinating organisation. It is the successor of the interdepartmental commission for migrants (ICM) (Dutch: interdepartementale Commissie Migranten). Its target groups include allochthons, refugees, and people who live in mobile homes (Dutch: woonwagenbewoners). Two policy domains closely related to Flemish minority policy include the policy domains of urban poverty, as well as the policy domain of equal opportunities. The latter is explicitly oriented towards holebi's, physically and mentally disabled people, and allochthons (Verhoeven et al. 2003: 18-21).

In order to understand the various statements articulated in the Flemish minority and/or integration debates, one needs to understand what is meant by the *integration sector*. Verhoeven, Anthierens, Neudt, and Martens define this sector as follows:

“The categorical sector (better known as the ‘integration sector’) refers to the network of centers and services financed by the Flemish government in order to execute minority policy on the terrain.” (Verhoeven et al. 2003: 22).

As such, the term *integration sector* does not refer to socio-cultural or religious organisations established by minorities themselves. It refers to a hierarchically organised system of Flemish, provincial, and local integration centers and services. At the Flemish level, the integration sector is embodied by the so-called *Crosspoint for Integration and Migration* (Crosspoint I-M) (Dutch:

⁶¹ “Enkel de migrantenorganisaties die ontstaan zijn uit de migrantengemeenschap, groteneels gedragen door vrijwilligers, en die van een democratische werking kunnen getuigen, komen voor subsidiëring in aanmerking. In duidelijke taal: de verschillende sociaal-culturele activiteiten, die in het kielzog van godsdienstige organisaties (vooral Islamitische) tot stand komen, zullen door de overheid niet worden gesubsidieerd. En als men weet dat sinds 1974 de Islam als godsdienst in België erkend is (zoals het katholicisme, het Jodendom, het protestantisme en de Grieks-orthodoxe Kerk), maar dat sinds twintig jaar de uitvoeringsbesluiten nog altijd op zich laten wachten, is het voor iedereen duidelijk dat de Moslims geen gelijke godsdienstbelevingskansen genieten.” (Martens 1997: 70)

Kruispunt Migratie en Integratie). It succeeded the Flemish Minority Center (VMC) (Dutch: Vlaams Minderheden Centrum) in 2011. In turn, the VMC was the successor of the Flemish Center for Migrants (VCIM) (Dutch: Vlaams Centrum voor Migranten) in 1999. VCIM was established in 1991 and inherited its functions from the Flemish Deliberative Commission for Migrants (VOCOM) (Dutch: Vlaamse Overleg Commissie Migranten). The VOCOM was an initiative created as early as 1974. It was meant to co-ordinate local initiatives and funding policies for immigrant associations (Bousetta 2001: 127; Kruispunt M-I 2011; Verhoeven et al. 2003: 22).

Since my interviews were conducted at the time of the VMC, it is worth looking into the goals and tasks of this organisation. Recognising the ethnic-cultural diversity present in Flanders and in Brussels, the VMC set itself the following goals: it aimed to foster the development of a society where basic rights and equal opportunities can be ensured for everyone; in collaboration with governments, with the minority sector, and with the organisations of ethnic-cultural minorities, the VMC stimulated, supported and guarded an active minority policy at the relevant levels of society. As such, the VMC functioned as an information center with its own library and publications. It also provided advice and legal support for policy related questions. Moreover, it developed basic and specialised trainings for people involved in the integration sector. The VMC also collected signals from the ethnic-cultural minority sector in order to present these concerns at governmental councils and workshops (Verhoeven et al. 2003: 22-23). The Kruispunt M-I would inherit all of these functions (Kruispunt M-I 2009)⁶².

The VMC and its successor Kruispunt M-I provide(d) support for the provincial and local integration centers. Flanders and Brussels count eight integration centers: one for each province, one for the Brussels *Gewest*, one in the city of Ghent, and one in the city of Antwerp. In the minority decree of 1998, an integration center was defined as “*a provincial or local center recognized and subsidised by the Flemish government with the task to stimulate, to support, and to guard the execution of the Flemish minority policy*” (Verhoeven et al. 2003: 24)⁶³. The eight regional integration centers should be supported by 33 local integration centers. These *integration centers* should not be confused with the communal *integration services*. The latter are defined by the minority decree of 1998 as services of municipal governments consisting out of one or more members of personnel. In 2003, the Flemish government counted 25 integration services. In 2011, there are 34 cities with such a service. The integration services are also supported by the VMC / Kruispunt M-I (Kruispunt M-I 2011).

Fortunately, the Flemish integration- and migration debates are not the sole concern of governmental institutions. A last set of players that need to be discussed within the context of an overview of the Flemish integration policies, are the so-called self-organisations of ethnic and cultural minorities. Hassan Bousetta points out that finding legitimate representatives among ethnic minority communities has always been a central concern for Flemish policy makers. It was this preoccupation that resulted in

⁶² The *Kruispunt Migratie-Integratie* inherited all of the functions of the VMC and its responsibilities were broadened. The *Kruispunt M-I* was established by the *Integration decree* (Dutch: integratiedecreet) issued by the Flemish government in 2009. This Flemish law replaced the *Minority decree* (Dutch: minderhedendecreet) of 1998. The *Kruispunt* functions first and foremost as a center for expertise that co-ordinates the activities of the various integration centers. It supports the welcoming services for migrants and it hosts a cell that supports social interpreters and translators. Migration is understood as a permanent phenomenon that requires decisions at various policy domains. It defines integration as “*shared citizenship for everyone: ‘new arrivals’, ‘old arrivals’, new and old Flemings and Bruxellois*”. In turn, the acquisition of citizenship is understood in terms of a process called *inburgering*. The goal of *inburgering* is “*to better equip people with a history of migration in order to let them take up a role in our society (Flanders and Brussels). The primary trajectory of citizenship stimulates self-sufficiency of people with a migration history and thus augments the chances for shared citizenship. Secondary inburgering consists of the policy stimulates the accessibility of the provisions offered by society for the inburgeraars [those who are engaged in the practice of *inburgeren* or the process of becoming a citizen].*” (Kruispunt M-I 2009: 3-5, 11).

⁶³ “*een door de Vlaamse overheid erkend en gesubsidieerd provinciaal of lokaal centrum dat als opdracht heeft de uitvoering van het Vlaams minderhedenbeleid te stimuleren, te ondersteunen en te bewaken*” (Verhoeven et al. 2003: 24)

the establishment of the VOCOM in 1974 and in the subsequent establishment of its successors. It also led to the 1982 establishment of a regional consultative council for migrants: the Flemish High Council for Migrants (Dutch: de Vlaamse Hoge Raad voor Migranten). Since 1995, so-called allochthon associations could organise themselves according to their cultural affiliations in overarching federations. However, it was only in 1996, that the Flemish government actually decided to implement a new policy aimed at supporting immigrant self-organisations. In 1996, a law was passed that enabled structural funding of migrant self-organisations (Bousetta 2001: 30-31; Verhoeven et al. 2003).

Nevertheless, funding of migrant self-organisations was contingent upon a number of conditions. According to Bousetta, the most important one is that these organisations had to organise themselves within federations that have to be active in at least two provinces. Such officially recognized umbrella organisations are responsible for channelling funds to their local associations (Bousetta 2001: 129-30). It should also be noted that the 1998 minority decree allowed for the possibility of establishing a forum that should facilitate communication with the target groups of the integration policies. In 1999, the Flemish government recognized the *Forum for organisations of ethnic-cultural minorities* (Dutch: Forum van organisaties van etnisch-culturele minderheden). In 2000, the Minority Forum (Dutch: *Minderhedenforum*) was established. In 2011, its members include 13 federations of immigrant self-organisations. The Forum also hosts other umbrella organisations with at least ten member associations that can testify to at least one year of structural activity. Moreover, it includes co-opted individuals whose participation guarantees the involvement of one or more sub-groups of the ethnic-cultural minorities in Flanders (Verhoeven et al. 2003: 28-29)⁶⁴.

There is a lot more to be said about Flemish integration policies and about the landscape of integration-related civil society organisations. However, this book is first and foremost a book about the self-interpretations of intellectuals and activists engaged in Flemish minority politics. I will therefore restrict myself to this brief overview. Its function lies first and foremost in providing the reader with some useful co-ordinates that allow for an understanding of the Flemish discourse about integration. When more information is required with respect to the institutional features of Flemish minority politics, I will provide this information *ad hoc*. I will provide a brief account of the general features of the integration debate in the upcoming sections. However, before I can do so, it remains for me to shed some light on the concepts of *allochthons* and *autochthons*.

Importing (the notion of) allochthons into Flanders

Etymologically speaking, the word allochthon - (Dutch: allochtoon) – derives from the Greek *allos* (other), and *chton* (country, land or earth) (Yanow and van der Haar forthcoming: 17). Flemish contemporary use of the notion is borrowed from migration related policy in the Netherlands. As such, the notion has been slightly modified (D. Jacobs and Rea 2006: 21). Since the concept of race is taboo in Belgium as well as in the Netherlands, the objects and/or subjects that are expected to integrate themselves have evolved over time from guest workers, over migrants, to allochthons. Concepts such as allochthon, autochthon, and integration, are used in similar ways in both regions (Arnaut and Ceuppens 2009: 32-36; Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 47-50; D. Jacobs and Rea 2006; Maly 2007e; Schinkel 2008: 143-51).

⁶⁴ Members of the Forum in 2011: Associazioni cristiane Lavoratori Internazionale Vlaanderen (ACLI-Vlaanderen); Associazioni Internazionali Federate (A.I.F.); Federatie van Marokkaanse Democratische Organisaties (FMDO); Federatie van Marokkaanse Verenigingen (FMV); Federatie van Vooruitstrevende Verenigingen (CDF); Federatie Wereldvrouwen; Federatie van Zelforganisaties in Vlaanderen (FZO-VL); Federation of Anglophone Africans in Belgium (FAAB); Internationaal Comité (IC); Latijns-Amerikaanse Federatie (LAF); Ons Leven (Vereniging van Woonwagbewoners); Platform van de Afrikaanse Gemeenschappen; Solidariteit (Platform van Russisch sprekkenden); Raad van Afrikaanse Gemeenschappen in Europa/België VZW (RVDAGE); Turkse Unie van België; Unie van Turkse Verenigingen (UTV); and expert new arrivals.

An allochthon is someone who has not been born in the country or who has at least one parent of foreign origin irrespective of one's current nationality. The category of autochthon refers to supposedly ethnic Flemish, Belgian, or Netherlands citizens. Policy and official statistics in the Netherlands also distinguish between so-called Western and non-Western allochthons. These subcategories do not refer to a geographic East or West but to a resemblance with the Netherlands that is described in socio-economic and cultural terms by the NIS (Netherlands Institute for Statistics) (Dutch: Nederlands Instituut for Statistiek). Consequently, an individual whose parents have been born in Japan but who has nevertheless a Dutch nationality is considered to be a Western allochthon, whereas an individual with a Turkish or Moroccan background is considered to be Eastern. There is a considerable degree of arbitrariness involved with respect to the inclusion and/or exclusion of ethnic categories (Yanow and van der Haar forthcoming: 2-3; 19-24).

The Netherlands concept of allochthony has been imported in migration and integration related policy of the Dutch-speaking political institutions of Flanders. The following modifications have been made: (1) the generational criterion is extended to the third generation; (2) the weaker socio-economic position that inspired the Dutch category of non-Western allochthons becomes an integral element of the Flemish official definition of allochthony; and (3) the definition is bestowed with a clearer cultural dimension. In the minority decree of 1998, the notion is described as follows: *"by allochthons we understand all persons who are legally residing in Belgium and simultaneously fulfil the following conditions, whether they possess the Belgian nationality or not: (a) have at least one parent or grand-parent which is born outside of Belgium, (b) find themselves in a disfavoured position because of their ethnic origin or their weak socio-economic position"* (D. Jacobs and Rea 2006: 15-18). It is also interesting to note that at that the KCM (Royal Commissioner for Migration) defined ethnic minorities as groups of allochthons, going back to one particular country of origin (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 105).

The notion of allochthony is not only to be found in minority studies and in policy documents. It has proliferated across a variety of genres and across a variety of media. It is now used in everyday language use about minorities, migrants, diversity and integration (D. Jacobs and Rea 2006: 21). In spite of the resulting polysemy, certain connotations have become hegemonic. Research published in 1998 showed that at the time, the notion of allochthony had undergone a process of semantic narrowing and associative widening from migrant to Arab, and Muslim. It showed an overall picture in which the supposedly wider notion of *allochthon* inherited the negative associations previously attached to the notion of *migrant*. Both notions were used to refer almost exclusively to people of Moroccan or Turkish descent in Flanders. Blommaert and Verschueren pointed out that *"the incorporation of other groups of foreigners into the category remains rare and only occurs for very specific rhetorical and argumentative purposes"* (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 48-52).

The usage of integration related notions in the Netherlands and in Flanders is characterized by a high degree of parallel development. In a first phase, so-called guest workers were encouraged to retain their own culture and not to disappear into the countries of immigration. This phase is closely associated with the need for industrial workers during the fifties (Netherlands) and the sixties (Belgium). A second phase was initiated by a rising awareness of the fact that large groups of *guest workers* would not return to their country of origin. At this point, integration and emancipation of migrants were considered to be group processes. Economically, this second phase is characterized by the de-industrialisation processes of the seventies and eighties. Since the late nineties however, it is possible to identify a culturalist phase wherein pluralism and multiculturalism are heavily called into question. The main objects of integration in public discourse have become *allochthons* in both the Netherlands and in Flanders (Arnaut and Ceuppens 2009: 32-36; Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 47-50; D. Jacobs and Rea 2006; Maly 2007e; Schinkel 2008: 143-51).

Since the end of the nineties, the cultural dimension of integration has become ever more salient in Flemish discourse. The category of culture has become constitutive for the distinction between allochthons and autochthons. This process entailed a shift from so-called biological racism to what is

sometimes referred to as cultural racism. According to Etienne Balibar (see: Balibar 1991) and Martin Barker (see: Barker 1981), neo-racism turns culturalist and relativistic arguments developed by anthropologists such as Lévi-Strauss, Sapir, Whorf, Hall, Mead, and Benedict against the advocates of so-called multicultural and/or intercultural society (Schinkel 2008: 312-13). Willem Schinkel summarises Balibar's notion of neo-racism as follows:

“One presupposes: ‘yes there are different cultures, and those cultures are fundamentally alien to one another. They are incompatible and should therefore not be mixed’. Whereas racism criticises the mixture of ‘races’, neo-racism directs its criticism at the mixing of cultures. Whereas racism is linked to the presupposed ‘first nature’ of man, new racism links up with his ‘second nature’ or ‘culture’.” (Schinkel 2008: 313)⁶⁵

As such, Schinkel concludes that the notion of racism no longer captures the full complexity of contemporary inclusions and exclusions in the minority and integration debates. Nevertheless, he does acknowledge that *culturalism* has become a “*functional equivalent of racism*” (Schinkel 2008: 313).

In contemporary sociology, it is common practice to consider culture as a product of processes and meanings that are being generated through discourse and practice (Van den Eede et al. 2009). Nevertheless, a series of workshops organised by the intercultural platform Kif Kif (Kif Kif 2011)⁶⁶ lead me and other authors to conclude that reified culturalist notions of culture flourish in the Flemish public sphere. Our conclusions have been written down in the book *Cultu(u)r(en)politiek* (Maly 2007e). The title of this book translates as *culture(s) (and) politics*. *Culturenpolitiek* is basically a conjunction of two nouns (*cultuur* and *politiek*) that is hard to translate directly into English since the Dutch conjunction *en* (English: and) also functions as a plural suffix. The concept of *cultu(u)r(en)politiek* thus conveys the idea of a multiplicity of cultures. In our book, we used the term to characterize the specific ways in which the notion of culture (implicitly) lies at the basis of Flemish debates on allochthons, autochthons, and integration.

Ico Maly describes *Culturenpolitiek* as a discourse or as a rhetoric in which the category of culture functions as a popular explanation for social, economical, and political inequalities. It refers to a “*political-rhetorical exercise that directs one’s gaze away from systematic analyses, the socio-economic dimension of societal problems, power, and power relations*” (Maly 2007a: 183). He continues and explains how a “*cultural logic*” has become “*a very powerful interpretive framework*” and “*discourse about reality*” since the fall of the Berlin wall. Moreover, “*Culture politics* (Dutch:

⁶⁵ “*In wat Balibar neo-racisme noemt, wordt het culturalistische argument omgekeerd. Er wordt in verondersteld: ‘ja, er zijn verschillende culturen, en die culturen zijn wezensvreemd aan elkaar. Ze zijn incompatibel en moeten dus niet gemengd worden’. Waar racisme aansluit bij de veronderstelde ‘eerste natuur’ van de mens, sluit het nieuwe racisme aan bij de ‘tweede natuur’, ofwel bij de ‘cultuur’”* (Schinkel 2008: 313)

⁶⁶ Kif Kif started out as the personal website of philosopher Tarik Fraihi in 2001. This site contained a number of public opinion articles about Flemish integration politics. In 2003, the website became an interactive platform for anti-racism. This platform was recognized as a socio-cultural movement by the Flemish government in 2006. The movement presents itself explicitly as a democratic, anti-racist, leftist, progressive, pluralist, inter-cultural, anti-essentialist, and critical project. It criticises racism as “*an ideology of social inequality based on a supposedly deviant group identity*”. The organisation enjoys a high profile in the Flemish minority-, integration-, and / or diversity debates. The intellectual profiles of the contributors are often inspired on neo-marxist and/or poststructuralist insights. References to Gramsci, Fairclough, and Foucault can be found in many publications of its activists. However, Kif Kif is not merely an intellectual platform. This NGO has also organised: job-fairs and socio-cultural talent fairs for so-called allochthons; trainings for aspiring journalists; and media-watch workshops based on critical discourse analysis. In addition, its activists organise and participate in socio-political debates concerning the interwoven problematics of citizenship, inter- or multicultural society, poverty, culture, and identity (Kif Kif 2011). Personally, I have organised the project *Lead your Opinion!* for aspiring public intellectuals and activists interested in Kif Kif related problematics. Also, I have collaborated on the book *Cultu(u)r(en)politiek*, co-edited the book *Het Rijden van de Geesten* with Ico Maly, and organised a workshop in critical discourse analysis. For purposes of clarity, I wish to emphasise that I fully subscribe to the mission statement of this organisation. I consider their approach to be compatible with the insights articulated within the context of this book. For more information see: www.kifkif.be.

culturenpolitiek) entails a bipolar political discourse that elevates culture to the driving force of the world" (Maly 2007d: 243). In addition to this explanative dimension, the discourse of culture politics also entails the idea of cultures as reified objects that are able to clash and collide (see also Hawkes 1996: 110; Verschuere 2011: 178)⁶⁷.

As such, this type of culturalism is not restricted to Flanders and the Netherlands alone. A similar logic may be found in a book such as Huntington's *Clash of civilizations* (Huntington 1998; Maly 2007b). The logic of culturalisation forces certain cultural identities and characteristics upon individuals in a top-down movement. It involves a view of one's own culture as being hierarchically superior to the culture of others. Moreover, cultural relativism is explicitly renounced (Schinkel 2008: 317). Culturalist discourses produce essentialist group identities and may inform various socio-political mobilisation strategies.

Culturalist logics have proved to be useful at both international and local levels of politics. At an international level, one may refer to the Gulf War, to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, or to the attacks of 9/11. In all of these cases, military actions have been legitimised in terms of norms, values and culture. Oil, occupation, political, and /or strategic interests were left out of the explicatory picture. Within the Flemish context, culturalism has informed policies of citizenship, immigration, diversity, safety, education, housing, and of course, integration. At this level, the logic of culturalism is observable in the idea that inequalities between allochthons and autochthons should be first and foremost explained with reference to problematic cultural practices of migrants and their children (Maly 2007d: 243-46; Verschuere 2002; Zienkowski and Maly 2007: 52-53). It should also be noted that the Flemish culturalisation of the migrant took the form of a process of islamisation. During the nineties, the idea that Islam threatened Flemish as well as European norms and values proliferated throughout society. Moreover, Islam seemed to pose a problem with respect to the integration of minorities, migrants, allochthons, and/or new citizens into a supposedly homogenous society (Blommaert 2006: 209-10).

Initially, the notion of allochthony was used in order to avoid the negative connotations acquired by words such as *guest workers*, *migrants*, and their children. As such, it originally functioned as an euphemism for the prototypical foreigner in mainstream political discourse. However, already in 1993, Blommaert and Verschuere noted an associative widening and a semantic narrowing from migrant to Arab and Muslim. There also proved to be a free variation between ethnic markers such as Moroccan or Maghrebi within this associative network – usually without any link to anthropological reality. Today, the concept is still being used in every-day language use. However, Blommaert and Verschuere were correct in their suspicion that the negative connotations previously associated with *migrants* and *guest workers*, would be transferred to the category of allochthons (Blommaert and Verschuere 1998: 48).

Some notes on related concepts: diversity, participation, and citizenship

The notions of integration and allochthony have never functioned in isolation of other abstract categories. The meanings of signifiers such as identity, allochthon, minority, community, nation, state, multiculturalism, and / or interculturalism are fundamentally intertwined in a great deal of political and social-scientific discourses. All of these concepts have been articulated in the most diverse contexts and settings with the notion of integration. They are fuzzy, abstract, and vague. For some people, they function as synonyms. For others, they represent completely different forms of politics and subjectivity. Consequently, it is impossible to provide an extensive overview of all the abstract notions that have been articulated with the notion of integration in recent history. Nevertheless, it is useful to briefly introduce the concepts of diversity, participation, and citizenship in the light of the upcoming analyses.

⁶⁷ Reification: the pragmatic treatment of abstractions and/or processes as if they were things, or of subjective phenomena as if they were objective realities (e.g. Huntington's *clash of civilizations*).

Hubeau and Foblets note that the link between citizenship (Dutch: *burgerschap*) and migration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Belgium. Until the middle of the nineties, an articulation of both notions could only be found in pamphlets and propaganda of the Flemish liberals. The most notable liberal articulation of these concepts can be found in Guy Verhofstadt's 1991 and 1992 versions of the *Burgermanifesten* (English: *Citizen Manifests*) (Verhofstadt 1991, 1992). Here, citizenship and *inburgering* (the process of becoming a citizen) are conceptualized in an assimilationist way. The emphasis is on respect of so-called new citizens for majority values and norms. Since the late nineties, the notions of citizenship and *inburgering* have become quite popular in Flemish policy related discourses (Foblets and Hubeau 1997a: 21-22, 27-28). Contemporary sociologic and political questions related to citizenship can be summarised as follows:

“What notion of citizenship do we use when we talk about integration? What form of citizenship do we expect from new arrivals and allochthons? What form of citizenship do we expect from autochthons? Do we allow for the possibility to participate and to create equal opportunities? Or do we opt for a clearly active notion of citizenship? To what extent may new arrivals and allochthons keep and develop their own loyalties? How can they express their loyalty towards the various autochthon networks and communities?” (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 29)⁶⁸

The idea of *inburgering* implies that one integrates *in-to* a status of *burgerschap* or citizenship. It implies a metaphorical movement as well as a practice. In this respect, Hubeau and Foblets emphasise the importance of distinguishing between formal and material notions of citizenship. The formal notions are based on a discourse of rights and obligations. It does not take material and unequal opportunities between ethnic, cultural, or social groups into account. Material conceptualisations of citizenship imply concrete questions such as: what does the achievement of citizenship mean with respect to education, labour, housing, and/or political participation. As such, whenever citizenship is put forward as an abstract goal of integration policies, it is important not to lose sight of the material aspects of integration. Some authors have argued that the concept of *citizenship* functions as a new notion of integration (Foblets and Hubeau 1997a: 27-28). However, I am rather inclined to follow Jan Blommaert on this issue.

Blommaert argues that a shift from a discourse about integration to a discourse about *inburgering* implies a theoretical shift from collective perspectives on integration to individual trajectories of integration. In welfare-states, citizenship used to be defined with reference to one's participation in a system of collective provisions and services. However, as the state gives way to neoliberal modes of government the citizen as the bearer of unalienable rights and obligations gives way to a *homo economicus*. The neoliberal citizen no longer automatically enjoys democratic rights and obligations. According to Blommaert, civil rights have to be earned and to be consumed in the neoliberal order of things. As such, the obligations are first and foremost economic. Within such a neoliberal and governmental logic, rights and obligations are increasingly being made dependent on one's economic contributions to the nation-state (Blommaert 2010b).

On a less pessimistic note, one should note that within the Flemish context, citizenship no longer simply refers to an acquisition of the Belgian nationality. Certain rights have been granted to migrants on the basis of their country of residence, rather than on the basis of their nationality or origin. Socio-economic rights were granted within the context of the welfare state that still exist today. Also, certain political rights such as communal voting rights have been granted to migrants in Belgium and in the Netherlands (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 31). Nevertheless, various voices in the Flemish minority

⁶⁸ *“Welke opvatting over burgerschap hanteren we als we over integratie praten? Welke vorm van burgerschap verwachten we van nieuwkomers en allochtonen? Welke vorm van burgerschap verwachten we van autochtonen? Gaan we uit van een mogelijkheid om te participeren en van het creëren van gelijke kansen? Of kiezen we voor een duidelijke actieve invulling van burgerschap? In welke mate mogen nieuwkomers en allochtonen eigen loyaliteiten behouden of ontwikkelen? Hoe kunnen zij hun loyaliteit uiten ten opzichte van de verschillende autochtone netwerken en gemeenschappen?”* (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 29)

debate argue for a more inclusive notion of citizenship (Fadil and Kanmaz 2009). Jan Blommaert does not want to dispense with the notion of citizenship either. He prefers to rearticulate the concept as follows:

“An anti-crisis policy that is going to cut into the welfare state generates all sorts of questions concerning integration: social, economic, and cultural integration, and integration as a problem for the entire society. How do I remain ‘integrated’ as someone who is entitled to a pension? As a single mother? As a long-term unemployed person? As a chronically ill individual? Whoever examines these questions critically, will note that they imply the same presuppositions as the citizenship related questions we ask about allochthons. The notion of ‘citizen’ is central to every model of society, it always constitutes its anthropological dimension, and it should therefore always be carefully analysed.” (Blommaert 2010b: 8)⁶⁹

Even though I do not believe that the notion of citizenship has been important to every society in the course of human history, I definitely agree that it is one of the most important notions in contemporary debates on integration, migration, and democracy in Flanders, Belgium.

The Flemish discourse on integration is also intertwined with the notion of diversity. Van den Eede, Wets and Levrau conceptualize diversity strategies as the whole of strategies and processes used in order to deal with ethnic and cultural diversity in a society, while simultaneously maintaining social cohesion (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 6). Diversity management was first developed in the context of multinational companies in order to manage their multinational and multicultural workforce. However, the concept was adopted within the context of equal opportunities policy in Flemish public administration. Sarah Scheepers notes that the original arguments for adopting this management strategy in public administration were mainly economic. Nevertheless, there was also an ethical argument involved: *“a diverse workforce would make state bureaucracies more representative of the general population, and guarantee a more democratic service delivery”* (Scheepers 2011: 27-28).

Scheepers notes that there are basically two models of equal opportunity. The liberal variant emphasises the importance of fair procedures with respect to the selection and assessment of employees. They should be judged on their merits and competences. On the other hand, the radical approach emphasises affirmative action, positive discrimination and the redistribution of jobs and resources in favour of disadvantaged groups. According to this view, the meritocratic liberal model functions as an ideology. In liberal organisation literature, diversity is often used in order to discuss the benefits of variety in workforce attributes. As such, it may refer to differences in skills, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, age, education, and so on. The underlying idea is that an explicit valuation of people's differences enables them to work their full potential in a more effective way. The management focus on individual enablement implies a shift away from policies directed at groups such as women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, who are often the target of discriminatory practices (Scheepers 2011: 29-33). With respect to diversity management on Flemish public administration, Sarah Scheepers notes that:

“However, DM [diversity management] does not have as its main goal the emancipation of certain target groups. Although people are encouraged to increase their competencies, flexibility and employability, in the end they remain personally responsible for their own success or failure. Thus, DM can be empowering for successful employees; it is not concerned with anti-discrimination or the emancipation of disadvantaged groups.” (Scheepers 2011: 43)

⁶⁹ *“Een anti-crisis beleid dat sterk gaat snoeien in de welvaartstaat roept allerhande vragen inzake integratie op: sociale, economische en culturele integratie, en integratie als probleem voor de hele samenleving. Hoe blijf ik ‘geïntegreerd’ als pensioengerechtigde? Als ongehuwde moeder? Als langdurig werkloze? Wie deze vragen kritisch onderzoekt zal merken dat ze precies dezelfde vooronderstellingen oproepen als meer ‘ingeburgerde’ vragen die we voor allochtonen stellen. Het begrip ‘burger’ is centraal in ieder maatschappijmodel, het is er steeds de antropologische dimensie van, en het moet dan ook steeds zorgvuldig geanalyseerd worden”* (Blommaert 2010: 8)

In addition to the concepts of diversity and citizenship, there is the question of participation. One of the most popular Dutch dictionaries describes participation as taking part in (parts of) social life. In Flemish political discourse, one often distinguishes between active participation and passive participation. In a similar vein, there are debates on active pluralism, and on active citizenship. Whereas passive participation implies the mere consumption of services, active participation involves taking part in socio-cultural and political civil society organisations. Van den Eede, Wets and Levrau note that the concept of participation has a double meaning within the context of discourses on integration. On the one hand, the Flemish government articulates participation as a goal of integration policy. On the other hand, the notion of participation is often used to designate strategies and/or means to realise integration (Van den Eede et al. 2009: 31).

As I noticed before, there are many more abstract categories that have been articulated within the context of discussions on integration, minorities, and democracy. For current purposes however, this brief introduction will have to suffice. Notions such as emancipation, empowerment, and/or active pluralism are definitely relevant as well. However, the meaning of such abstract categories can only be analysed if one takes the indexically marked aspects of their articulation in concrete language use into account. I will analyse the specific ways in which my respondents articulated such abstract concepts with the notion of integration in the context of the interviews we conducted. If necessary, I will provide more information as we go. For now, I will conclude this introduction into the problematic of integration, by a brief exploration of the debate on integration as it was articulated in the Flemish public sphere.

Debates on integration

It should be clear by now that, like the concepts of ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, and ⟨politics⟩, the notion of integration does not belong exclusively to the domain of scientific investigation. In fact, one of the earliest systematic critiques of the notion was articulated in an academic book by Jan Blommaert and Verschueren (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992). It constitutes one of the rare examples of a Flemish academic publication that actually challenged and fuelled a debate in the Flemish public sphere. A great deal of my interviewees referred to this book. To this day, it continues to play an important role in contemporary critiques of integration.

In their linguistic pragmatic analysis of the Belgian migrant debate (see: Blommaert and Verschueren 1992), Verschueren and Blommaert argued that mainstream discourse about migration and integration during the eighties and nineties was based on “*the idea that the ideal society should be as uniform or homogeneous as possible*”. Even though this idea often remains implicit in mainstream discourse on migration and integration, Blommaert and Verschueren demonstrate that homogeneity figures systematically in the images Belgians have of themselves and of others (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 117). If one wishes to understand the debate about the *bankruptcy of integration* (Dutch: *het failliet van de integratie*) or *multiculturalism* in Flanders, it is important to have a good idea about how *Het Belgische migrantendebat* was received. The authors note that this book was met with mixed feelings:

“*The publication of Het Belgische Migrantendebat (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992) – especially because of its mediatised conclusion that the extreme right and the tolerant majority, represented in their purest forms by Vlaams Blok and KCM, ‘think in the same way’ (a simplified way of saying that diversity, which is completely rejected by the extreme right, is not fundamentally accepted by the tolerant majority either) – caused a major controversy which then became an integral part of the debate.*” (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 141)

The study of Blommaert and Verschueren was met with mixed responses by the so-called autochthon tolerant majority in Flanders. Nevertheless, according to the authors, there was a pattern to these responses:

“the further one moved away from centres of power and authority (i.e. among more ‘marginal’ political movements on the left and the publications associated with them, or social scientists with an openly critical attitude towards society) the more favourable the reactions were, the main reservation being that the analysis stayed too close to the investigated discourse and did not go deeply into socio-economic determinants of minority-majority relationships.” (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 141)

After the mediatisation of the conclusions of *Het Belgische migrantendebat*, the KCM broke contact with the authors. Also, they were reproached on deontological grounds by a famous Belgian sociologist. According to Blommaert and Verschueren, most authoritative institutions and publications either avoided the issues raised by their analyses or evaluated them negatively. Negative judgements took roughly two forms: on the one hand, attempts were made to associate the authors and their writings with either the extreme right or with the extreme left. Their plea for diversity was either interpreted as a plea for some sort of apartheid system, or as some sort of Marxist discourse (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 141-42).

A second series of critiques was of a methodological nature. The authors were accused of having dealt with fragmentary data. As such, they supposedly based their conclusions on shaky and unscientific grounds. Moreover, their linguistic pragmatic emphasis on implicit meanings was labeled as intellectually dishonest. Lastly, they were accused of establishing an exaggerated homogeneous picture of autochthon Flanders (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 142-43). With respect to this last accusation, the authors respond as follows:

“In what may be one of the worst distortions of our methodology, Van Eekert and Van Herck (1993) claimed that our approach was itself responsible for the finding that the same basic ideas could be found throughout the migrant debate: our approach was supposed not to allow for differences in ideology as soon as the same language was used. Again, this misses the point completely. While using language, it is perfectly possible to talk about the migrant issue and even about ‘problems’ in a manner that reveals, at the level of implicit meaning and presuppositions, a fundamentally positive attitude towards diversity.” (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 143)

In his own analysis of the debates on integration, multiculturalism, and diversity, Bob van den Broeck subscribes to the idea that people tend to evaluate their own actions in a normative way. He explicitly agrees with Blommaert and Verschueren that this often leads to forms of exclusion and frustration as soon as one experiences normative dissonance. However, van den Broeck is not exactly an outright fan of Blommaert and Verschueren. He claims that their research has stigmatised most autochthons as homogenising racists. According to him, it has led to a paralysation of leftist criticism with respect to multiculturalism (Van den Broeck 2002: 15).

Some of the discourse analytical techniques and arguments put forward by Blommaert and Verschueren are now commonly deployed by leftist progressive intellectuals and activists involved in the minority debate. Interestingly, Van den Broeck notes that such strategies are often used in discussions on *“the integration of allochthons”* :

“This rather vague concept provides an excellent opportunity to turn the problem around: often, the response to the claim that ‘the other’ should simply integrate himself, is countered with the question what someone needs to do in order to be considered integrated. Another common reply consists of a nuancation of the internal degree of integration: whoever formulates criticism with respect to the equality of men and women in the Muslim tradition is told that this equality has not been realised fully in the Western world either.” (Van den Broeck 2002: 22)

Van den Broeck notes that opponents of the integration concept find powerful allies in Blommaert and Verschueren since these authors emphasise the vagueness of the integration concept and its

exclusionary function with respect to the distinction between so-called allochthons and autochthons (Van den Broeck 2002: 22).

It should be noted that the far right has appropriated the notion of integration as well. In this context, the first part of the KCM 1989 definition of integration is accepted (assimilation to law and order), and the other aspects are left out of the equation. Also, the far right tends to use the category of integration in an ironic way. To be sure, according to the VB doctrine, integration is fundamentally impossible (Blommaert 2005: 196-98). VB politicians such as Filip De Winter claim that allowing people to wear Islamic headscarves in public functions and in schools constitutes an admission of the fact that “*integration is an illusion*” (De Winter 1993 cited in: Blommaert 2005: 200). Blommaert notes that right wing rhetoric on integration often leads to embarrassing peaces of discourse since many politicians of other political parties find it hard to object to such criticism. According to Blommaert, many of them basically agree with Dewinter’s initial assumptions (Blommaert 2005: 200-01):

“[...] *that wearing a scarf signifies sympathy for islamic fundamentalism, and that islamic fundamentalism is an obstacle to the integration of Muslim migrants in Belgium. As we have seen above, the authors of the concept of integration themselves are less than clear with regard to how Islam fitted into the picture of integration, and they themselves raised (and thus legitimated) doubts about the ‘integration-enhancing’ potential of Islam. The right wing exploits this element in the space of allowed interpretations and uses it to construct its own coherent, but radically different concept of integration.*” (Blommaert 2005: 200-01)

Voices of the extreme right thus articulate a chain of equivalence in which Islamic practices such as wearing headscarves are equated with Islamic fundamentalism as well as with an anti-integration stance (Blommaert 2005: 201).

Nevertheless, an important caveat needs to be made with respect to Flemish critiques on integration related notions. The debate can not be reduced to a dichotomous choice *pro* or *contra* integration. What is at stake is *how* integration related concepts are to be used. *How* are they (en)textualised and contextualised? More specifically, one needs to ask what type of articulations are functional with respect to the democratic, social, economic, cultural, and educational emancipation of allochthons, autochthons, minorities, majorities, migrants, and / or other objects and subjects of the debate(s) at hand. When debating and analysing integration related notions, one needs to ask oneself what usages allow for empowerment and what usages tend to (re)produce and/ or legitimise relationships of domination. I have repeatedly argued that metapragmatic awareness is constitutive for political awareness and subjectivity. For this reason, I am inclined to disagree with Van den Broeck when he claims that the arguments put forward by Blommaert and Verschueren have limited the possibility of critique and debate. Surely, the debate has become complex and perhaps even circular. But it has also fuelled civil political engagements of various kinds.

Lastly, it should be noted that the debate about the *bankruptcy of integration* does not only refer to a conceptual critique of the signifier *integration*. It also refers to a debate about the feasibility of multicultural or intercultural society (Van den Broeck and Foblets 2002a: 10). Moreover, in some cases, it is framed as a debate about the institutional organisation of the *integration sector* or *industry*. In this respect, Tarik Fraihi calculated that only 5% of the € 10.114.055,81 of the welfare budget meant for the integration sector flows to allochthon organisations. Moreover, in 2001, not a single euro of the € 11.115.208 budget for the policy of *inburgering* found its way to these so-called *self-organisations* (Fraihi 2002: 105; Van den Broeck 2002: 31).

Fraihi noted that Flemish integration policies were established without allochthon involvement during the late eighties and early nineties. As such, he calls the effectiveness of the integration industry – i.e. the KCM/CGKR as well as the various *integration centers* – into question. This is not merely an issue of finances. According to Fraihi the institutions of the *integration sector* often hinder emancipatory and participatory processes (see: Fraihi 2000b; Fraihi 2000a). Fraihi also argued against a strict separation between (1) self-organisations dependent on money meant for the policy domain of culture-

related issues, and (2) integration centers dependent on money meant for the policy domain of welfare: “as if allochthons have nothing to do with the environment, with traffic, with media, with development policies ...”. He claimed that it is impossible to reduce allochthon civil society to cultural issues since many of these organisations are also concerned with well-being related problems. It should also be noted that Fraihi’s critique of the *integration industry* goes hand in hand with an argument for the recognition and involvement of allochthon organisations in the making and execution of Flemish policies (Fraihi 2002: 104-05).

The bankruptcy of the integration industry has also been declared by the Dyab Abou Jahjah and the AEL (Arab European League). In 2002, Jahjah (re)articulated the demands of his organisation with respect to integration policies as follows:

“We demand that one deals firmly with racism and discrimination of all minorities. According to us, the integration sector can no longer function as such. It has to be given another function and another mission. Perhaps this sector could focus on new arrivals and refugees. Resources that have been put aside for the so-called ‘stimulation of integration’ belong to the self-organisations of migrants. They can use them more efficiently to promote the equal participation and emancipation of their own community.” (Jahjah 2002: 119)⁷⁰

It should therefore not come as a surprise that the proclaimed *bankruptcy of integration* is at least as polysemic as the notion of integration itself. Also, it should be noted that the idea of the *bankruptcy of integration* is fundamentally intertwined with the *bankruptcy of multicultural society*. In October 2010, the German chancellor Angela Merkel proclaimed that multiculturalism had failed in Germany. She explicitly acknowledged the country’s dependency on labour migration but emphasised the importance of cultural integration. David Cameron, Nikolas Sarkozy, as well as the Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme would respond by subscribing to Merkel’s analysis (Hesters 2011: 22-23).

More than ten years after the critiques of Tarik Fraihi and the AEL, a group of professors, writers, and people involved in civil society would respond to the eulogy of multiculturalism in the Flemish newspaper *De Morgen* by metapragmatically the multicultural *debate* as being *bankrupt*. Emphasising the circularity of this debate, the authors link Merkel’s statements to the Flemish debate on integration (Abicht et al. 2011):

“Nowhere do we hear a self-critical voice, on the contrary, the accompanying discourse is still the same: ‘migrants should adapt themselves culturally’. The presuppositions of this debate and the accompanying policy constitute the core of the bankruptcy of integration policies. It is about time to fully subscribe to a real acceptance of diversity, to construct a structural policy of anti-racism, and to develop a powerful socio-economic policy.” (Abicht et al. 2011)⁷¹

As such, the article criticises the “*culturalisation of the other*” that leads to the “*abnormalisation of (children of) migrants*”, “*racism*”, and “*exclusion*” (Abicht et al. 2011). Fraihi’s call for an integration policy directed against existing economic, cultural, social, and / or political inequalities thus remains relevant after more than twenty years of debating integration.

⁷⁰ “Wij vragen daarbij om racisme en discriminatie naar alle mminderheden toe hard aan te pakken. De integratiesector kan voor ons niet meer als dusdanig fungeren. Zij moet een andere functie en missie krijgen. Eventueel kan men zich in deze sector toespitsen op de opvang van nieuwkomers en vluchtelingen. Middelen die tot nu toe voor de zogenaamde ‘bevordering van integratie’ waren voorzien, behoren toe aan de zelforganisaties van migranten. Zij kunnen er veel doeltreffender mee werken aan een evenwaardige participatie en emancipatie van hun eigen gemeenschap.” (Jahjah 2002: 119)

⁷¹ “Nergens horen we echter een zelfkritische stem, integendeel, het bijbehorende discours is nog steeds hetzelfde: ‘de migranten moeten zich cultureel aanpassen’. Net de uitgangspunten van dat debat en het bijhorende beleid zijn de kern van het failliet van het integratiebeleid. Het is hoog tijd om in te zetten op een echte aanvaarding van diversiteit, om een structureel antiracismebeleid op te bouwen en een daadkrachtig sociaaleconomisch beleid uit te werken.” (Abicht et al. 2011)

d) **A brief sociology of Moroccan migration and integration in Flanders**

Even though this book is not about the integration of a supposedly unified Moroccan community, it is useful to take a look at some of the inequalities that many so-called Moroccan allochthons are confronted with. We already noted that sociological integration research tends to focus on indicators of integration such as competences, religious affiliations, political rights, educational levels, attitudes, values, social capital, and so on. It is not my intention to judge to what extent such indicators are useful for evaluating the integrated status of individuals and/or groups with a Moroccan or allochthon background. Nevertheless, I do consider it to be useful to provide the reader with a brief diachronic impression of the sociologic situation in which many people with a Moroccan background find themselves.

The sections below are meant to contextualise some of the statements made by my interviewees. In this respect, it is important to emphasise that the socio-economic profiles of my respondents are relatively atypical in terms of their professional status, their social and cultural capital, and their level of education. This being said, I do not want to suggest that the sociological research results presented below are *necessarily* relevant to the political engagements, discourses, and subjectivities of my respondents. I merely want to allow my readers to articulate sociologic literature on topics that are often considered to be indicators of integration, with the discourse of my respondents when *they* make implicit and/or explicit claims about the sociologic situation of minorities in Flanders.

Below, I will limit myself to a characterisation of the period in which my interviews were conducted. I already provided the reader with a brief historical overview of Moroccan migration to Flanders. I will take the period 2007-2008 as a point of orientation. The resulting picture is rather synchronic. However, when my interviewees indicate that other historical, political, or sociological facts need to be taken into consideration for a proper understanding of their discourse, I will provide additional information *ad hoc*. For current purposes however, I will limit myself to a rough description of contemporary sociologic research into the social, economic, educational, media-related and political situation of so-called allochthons with a Moroccan background in Flanders.

Identity formation and socio-economic profiles

Recent research into the socio-demographic properties of people with a Moroccan background shows that the profile of the community (or communities) is becoming more diverse with respect to marital status, the number of children, and family patterns (bachelors, cohabiters, single parent families, ...). The report *Belgian Moroccans: a double identity in development* (Dutch: *Belgische Marokkanen: een dubbele identiteit in ontwikkeling*) also shows that ties with Morocco are quite strong. In 2009, 84,4% of the Belgian Moroccans had a partner of Moroccan descent. Moreover, only 8,5% had married an autochthon. The fact that about 60% owns real estate in Morocco, while only 30% has invested in Belgian real estate, along with many other observations, lead the authors of this report to conclude that a mixed identity is developing across various generations of Moroccan Belgians (Saaf et al. 2009: 13).

However, the fact that the socio-demographic image of the Belgian / Moroccan communities is evolving in a multiplicity of directions does not mean that there are no general tendencies to be discerned. In addition to the development of a so-called double identity⁷², the report shows that over 53% of Belgian Moroccans lives with an income below the poverty line. Moreover, most working Belgian Moroccans finds themselves in a precarious position on the labour market. A cyclic pattern of inter-generational poverty is emerging. This goes especially for Belgian Moroccans living in the

⁷² We already noticed how the notion of identity may be taken to mean various things to various people. The concept of double identity is not always compatible with the statements made by my interviewees. Nevertheless, this notion is quite popular in social-scientific research.

deprived areas of big cities (Zemni 2010: 8). In this respect, it is worth noting that research conducted in 2005 shows that: 50% of the people with a Moroccan origin lived in Brussels; 33% lived in Flanders; and 17% lived in Wallonia (Hesters 2011: 28-29).

We already noticed that Flemish political discourse about minorities is often characterized by culturalist ideas. This type of discourse tends to explain problems of criminality and macho behaviour in terms of religious and/or cultural differences. Nevertheless, sociologic research shows that the precarious socio-economic status of Belgian Moroccans is a far more efficient indicator for predicting deviant behaviour. Also, the report *Belgian Moroccans: a double identity in development* confirmed that spatial segregation of minorities increases the chances of misbehaviour (Zemni 2010). As we will see, culturalist ways of problematising migrants, allochthons, Muslims, and/or Belgian Moroccans, are systematically challenged by sociologic research.

In order to understand the current socio-demographic situation of the Moroccan communities in Belgium, it is important to highlight what is meant by first, second, and third generation migrants. In sociological literature, the second generation is usually defined as “*the immigrants’ children who were born in the host society of their parents*”. Sometimes the notion of 1.5 generation is used in order to designate children who were born abroad but who were raised in their new host country (Hesters 2011: 39). Whereas the first generation – the so-called guest workers – was integrated in the Belgian / Flemish labour market of the sixties and the seventies, this is not the case for subsequent generations. As the jobs of guest workers disappeared because of structural changes in the economy, next generations of allochthons and new arrivals often did not possess the required qualifications for many jobs. Today, almost half of the families living in poverty in Belgium has foreign roots (Van Robaeys et al. 2007: 15). With respect to the second generation, Timmerman, Vanderwaeren and Crul note that:

“As in the case of their Belgian peers, the educational and labor-market opportunities of second-generation youngsters are determined by their social, economic and cultural capital. Because of their sociohistorical background of immigration from relatively underdeveloped areas, this capital is often insufficient to participate adequately in Western society.” (Timmerman et al. 2003: 1068-69)

Research shows that all groups with a non-Belgian background living in the country are confronted with a heightened risk to live in poverty. This includes people with a Moroccan or with a Turkish background. About half of them can be labeled as being poor. Research conducted in 2007 shows that 25% of the people with a Moroccan background have an income of less than € 500 per month. Moreover, 67,9% of these people haven an income that can be categorised among the lowest 20% of incomes in Belgium. Lastly, 37,7 % indicated that their income was inadequate to their needs. The vulnerability of minorities with a foreign background is fundamentally intertwined with their position and trajectory in and through the labour market, the educational system, social networks, and so on (Van Robaeys et al. 2007: 26-29, 113).

Today, the precarious position of allochthons on the Flemish labour market is generally recognized. On the one hand, there is a high level of unemployment and a limited participation in the labour market. On the other hand, allochthons are concentrated in the lower segments of remuneration, and they tend to be employed in a limited number of sectors (Martens and Verhoeven 2006: 265-70). Hesters notes that both unemployment rates and sectors of employment show clear tendencies along the lines of ethnic descent. In both cases, Moroccans and Turks are lagging behind people with other ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds. With respect to Moroccans, it is worth noting that they are often employed below the level of their educational qualifications (Hesters 2011: 33). They tend to be concentrated in sectors such as interim-labour, cleaning companies, agricultural, and industrial sectors. Figures of 1997 showed that almost all Moroccan and Turkish men worked as labourers. It should also be noted that allochthons of Moroccan and Turkish descent are the most vulnerable groups during times of economic crisis (Martens and Verhoeven 2006: 272-78).

Hesters provides us with an overview of studies that have tried to measure labour-related discrimination in Flanders. For instance, the VDAB (the Flemish public employment services) noticed

that employers less often click through to CV's of possible candidates for jobs that hold foreign names in their database of unemployed people. Moreover, the ILO (International Labour Organisation) conducted experiments with job applicants who displayed different ethnic backgrounds applying for the same jobs. The study proved the occurrence of discrimination in the three Belgian regions: in Flanders the overall rate of discrimination was 39%; in the Brussels region it constituted 34%; and in Wallonia 27%. Martens and his co-authors reached similar conclusions. Also, it should be noted that recent research shows that both in Antwerp and in Brussels around 66% of the men and 50% of the women of Moroccan descent reported discrimination experiences on the work floor and/or during their search for work. Moreover, more than 10% claims that they experience such discriminations on a regularly or often (Hesters 2011: 33).

The reproduction of inequality in Flemish education

Belgium has two institutionally independent educational systems that rank differently in international rankings. Research conducted in 2006 shows that Belgian autochthon pupils reach a higher than average score among OESO countries for mathematics and sciences. Belgium ranks eight in this respect. However, if one splits the data of the Dutch and the French speaking networks, Flemish (Dutch-speaking) autochthon students rank third and French speaking autochthon students rank 25th. Similar rankings can be observed with respect to reading skills (Hesters 2011: 30).

Unfortunately, allochthon students score about equally bad in both networks (D. Jacobs et al. 2009: 6-7). Even though the proportion of Turkish and Moroccan students successfully moving into higher education is rising, an educational gap between these groups of allochthons and Belgian autochthons remains (Timmerman et al. 2003: 1073-78). In fact, the average scores of so-called allochthon pupils in Belgium are among the lowest of the OESO countries (Hesters 2011: 30; see also: KBS 2006). Moreover, of all industrialised countries, Belgium has the largest gap of educational achievements between autochthons and allochthons of the second generation (D. Jacobs et al. 2009: 6). With respect to Moroccans of the second generation, Hesters provides us with the following list of observations derived from the TIES project (see also: Vandezande et al. 2008):

“Generally speaking, the respondents of Moroccan descent clearly have lower chances of educational success. More often than the youngsters of Belgian descent, they double a year in primary and/or secondary school, more often they quit school without finishing their degrees and more often the members of the Moroccan second generation are overrepresented in the vocational educational track (BSO). This last trend of ‘ethnic stratification’ in the educational tracks is more outspoken in Antwerp than in Brussels (Vandezande et al. 2008: 24).” (Hesters 2011: 30)

However, The ethnic stratification of educational tracks should not be interpreted as a mere consequence of cultural, ethnic, and/or religious backgrounds. Research has repeatedly shown that Belgian schools tend to reproduce socio-economic inequality at the level of educational achievement (D. Jacobs et al. 2009: 85). When the socio-economic resources of the parents are taken into account, the effect of ethnicity on final educational attainment is no longer significant (Hesters 2011: 31). Even though the socio-economic situation of the family has a great influence on the educational trajectories of children, it does not explain everything. The language spoken at home, as well as the type of education one chooses for, also widen the gap between allochthon and autochthon students (D. Jacobs et al. 2009: 85).

But even if one takes socio-economic factors, variables related to the language spoken at home, and the types of schools (general education, technical education, or professional education) into account, there are still unexplained discrepancies. In this respect, it should be noted that the Belgian educational system is characterized by a high degree of ethnic-cultural segregation. This segregation is often both socio-economic and ethnic-cultural (D. Jacobs et al. 2009: 85-87). As such, it has been shown that the degree of success at primary school depends on the nature of the school in question. Allochthon

students who went to a school with few immigrant children reported that they had received much help and support from their teachers. So-called *concentration schools* (i.e. schools with a high proportion of immigrant pupils) have a negative effect on the school careers of second-generation children. These children often end up in vocational training (Timmerman et al. 2003: 1075-76).

In 2002, Timmerman, Hermans and Hoornaert noted that the allochthon youngsters often lag behind with respect to the access, the trajectory, and the validation of their trajectories in secondary education (Timmerman et al. 2002). Even though the number of Turkish and Moroccan students successfully moving on to higher education is rising, the drop-out rate among Moroccan and Turkish students in higher education is still significantly higher than among other students (Timmerman et al. 2003: 1078). Delphine Hesters provides us with the following summary of 2008 research results pertaining to the ethnic stratification of Belgian, Antwerp, and Brussels education (Hesters 2011: 30; see also: Vandezande et al. 2008):

“With regard to the highest diploma earned by respondents 17% of the men and 13% of the women have a diploma of primary school as their highest degree. For the Moroccan second generation, these numbers are respectively 20% and 25%. In Brussels, 19% of the men and 18% of the women of Belgian descent (only) reached primary school level, as compared to 27% and 25% of the second-generation members of Moroccan descent. At the high end of the educational spectrum, 38% of the Belgian men and 47% of the Belgian women living in Antwerp reached a diploma of higher education (professional or university), while only 7% of the men and 13% of the women of Moroccan descent reached the same levels. In Brussels the difference is less extreme, even though still large: 35% of the Belgian men and 57% of the Belgian women achieved higher education as compared to 25% and 30% of the Moroccan men and women respectively (Vandezande et al. 2008: 8-9)” (Hesters 2011: 30)

In spite of these alarming figures, Flemish and Francophone educational policies explicitly value the role of schools as agents that should facilitate integration, socialisation, and equality of opportunities. On the other hand, problems with respect to racism and discrimination in education are systematically ignored. Since the nineties, there have been attempts at positive discrimination at the level of basic and secondary education. Extra resources were provided for schools with a high concentration of so-called foreign students and for students facing a disadvantaged socio-economic situation. However, this type of positive discrimination was carried out on the basis of a security related logic. According to Nouria Ouali, problems related to absence at school, delinquency, violence, drugs, disadvantaged socio-economic and ethnic groups, have fuelled processes of stigmatisation. She argues that Belgian schools are faced with the following paradox. Schools are bound to make a selection of students in order to satisfy the requirements of a demanding system of production, but at the same time, they are prompted to counter the marginalising effects of such a selection (Ouali 2006: 257-60).

Notes on ethnic, cultural, and religious identifications

The Flemish debates on integration, diversity, and / or citizenship involve a problematisation of ethnic, cultural, and religious identifications of minorities. Even though this book does not focus on the identification processes of the Moroccan population as a whole, it may be useful to distinguish some patterns identified in other research.

A survey conducted in 2002 shows that 70% of the members of the Moroccan second generation in Brussels and Antwerp identified both with the category ‘Belgian’ and with the category ‘Moroccan’. Moreover, 21% only picked the label ‘Moroccan’ and not the label ‘Belgian’. Hesters notes that only 5% opted for the ‘Belgian’ category and 4% did not pick any of the categories provided in the survey (Hesters 2011: 36). An emergence of so-called hyphenated, mixed and/or multiple identities in the Belgian-Moroccan communities is noted in more recent research as well (Saaf et al. 2009: 14). Nevertheless, I will not use the terminology of mixed and hyphenated identities. The specific

configurations of identities, labels, and/or subject positions and the associated concepts of self articulated by my interviewees cannot always be described in these terms. Moreover, not all ethnic, cultural, social, political and/or religious identities my respondents identify with in positive, negative, or partial ways remain relevant throughout the entire interview. The way individuals articulate their sense of self and sense of others is overdetermined by large-scale interpretive processes and by their degree of contextual awareness. Moreover, I do not wish to project concepts of the self upon the discourse of my interviewees. This being said, it is useful to present some additional data with respect to Moroccan-Belgian identification processes in the public sphere(s).

Research on attitudes with regard to acculturation attitudes of youngsters with a Moroccan background with an average age of 18 years in the Flemish cities of Antwerp and Mechelen pointed out that they “*preferred both cultural maintenance and contact with native Belgians*”. Moreover 13% preferred cultural maintenance and not too much contact with Belgians, whereas 3% preferred contact with native Belgians and no cultural maintenance. Other research points out that feelings of attachment with respect to Moroccan culture as an attitude in favour of cultural maintenance is slightly lower among younger generations and among the higher educated (Hesters 2011: 36). But as we noticed before, there may very well be an integration paradox involved (see: van Craen et al. 2007: 287-90). If so, this might explain the potential positive effect with respect to the perception of these minorities among the majority population.

Religion is another aspect of identification processes among Belgian Moroccans that needs to be discussed. Even though there are great differences in the way Islam is practiced, religion seems to function as a common point of reference in the identification processes of many Moroccan Belgians. In fact, religious beliefs have been strengthened among 45% of the Belgian Moroccans. At the same time, a secular, individual, and tolerant European Islam that considers Christianity to be its equal is emerging in Belgium (Saaf et al. 2009: 14). It should also be emphasised that Islam is by no means a unified set of beliefs, practices, institutions, texts, and / or interpretations.

The variety in ways of dealing with the textual, practical, and institutional sources of religious authority by second generation Maghrebi in Belgium has been examined by Nadia Fadil. Her work shows that the religious trajectories of both orthodox and non-orthodox Muslims are cultivated in radically different manners. Fadil also demonstrates that liberal and practical concerns with the self and with Modern life can be found in the religious trajectories and interpretations of all the people she interviewed. Her corpus also included voices of people who consider themselves to be atheist Muslims who identify themselves with an Islamic cultural tradition but who do not express any religious beliefs (Fadil 2008a: 341-43). As such, Islam does not only function as a religion, but also as an element of ethnic identity construction. This latter process can be described as an ethnicisation of Islam. Moreover, research conducted by Meryem Kanmaz shows that Islam is increasingly being detached from homeland identities among people with Moroccan and Maghrebi backgrounds in Belgium (Hesters 2011: 37; Kanmaz 2007: 126).

Since religious and theological concerns were hardly articulated within the context of my interviews, I will not elaborate on these aspects of identity formation. I do not claim that Islam is unimportant to my interviewees. Neither do I claim that Islam is interpreted in the same way by everyone I interviewed. Rather, my interviews focused first and foremost on the socio-political analyses and engagements of my respondents. Within this context, it was mostly the problematisation of Islam as a unified threat to Western societies that was being criticised. Theological arguments are very rare in my corpus. Hesters notes that the Moroccan community is traditionally situated in a Maleki Sunnite Islam which is traversed by diverse Sunni tendencies. She also notes that a small number of Shi’I converts can be found in Antwerp and Brussels (Hesters 2011: 37). However, none of these aspects of identity construction were highlighted during my interviews.

With respect to ethnic aspects of identity, it is useful to note a clear preference for non-mixed marriages (Saaf et al. 2009: 15). In the year 2004, 40,35% of the second generation of Moroccan men, and 48,8% of the generation in between (born abroad but raised in Belgium) were married with female

migrants of the first generation. Moreover, 51,1% of Belgian Moroccan women of this generation married male Moroccan newcomers. Among the second generation, this percentage is 49,3%. This means that the number of marriages with a partner from the country of origin has risen from 41,4% before 1979 to 65,4% of the marriages between 2000 and 2003. The number of mixed marriages is lowest in the province of Antwerp and highest in the province of West-Flanders (Lodewyckx and Marynissen 2006: 36-37). The main reason for this search for a partner in the country of origin lies in the expectations with respect to potential partners in the country of residence and in the country of origin. Within the Moroccan communities in Belgium, boys and girls have rather stereotypical images of each other. Boys are supposedly socially derailed and girls are supposedly too emancipated. The search for a marital partner abroad is therefore often motivated differently among women and men (Timmerman 2006: 10-14).

It goes without saying that the stereotypical images that fuel these marital patterns frequently lead to marital tensions and stress (see: Van der Heyden 2006). Taking the figures with respect to marital practices into account, it is interesting to note that 80% of the Belgian Moroccans has social relationships with autochthon Belgians. Research also identifies a sense of openness with respect to Belgian culture, even though Belgian Moroccans frequently visit Moroccan cultural locations as well. The same research also identifies a lack of visits to and from friends and family. This evolution is paralleled by a process of increasing reliance on the nuclear family (Saaf et al. 2009: 15).

Lastly, it is useful to consider some aspects with respect to language use among people with a Moroccan background in Flanders. Hegemonic conceptualisations of Flemish identity are frequently marked by a language ideology that values specific variants of Dutch. Language issues figure prominently in Flemish minority debates. Jürgen Jaspers notes that the acquisition of Flemish linguistic rights in the 19th and 20th centuries were based on a Herderian logic of linguistic identity. However, within a context characterised by a growing visibility of ethnic and linguistic minorities, Flemish notions of identity based on a monolingual concept of socio-political self-determination is called into question. Nevertheless, in mainstream discourse about minorities, language issues figure prominently. Jaspers mentions some salient aspects of the language ideological practices so-called allochthons are confronted with (Jaspers 2005: 280-81).

“Obligatory citizenship and language courses for newcomers (and moral incentives for Belgian citizens from Moroccan or Turkish descent to participate in them), a heavy emphasis on the knowledge of Dutch, and an active ignoring or abnormalizing of the presence of other languages on Flemish territory all serve to re-legitimise the obviousness of a Flemish monolingual representation. This is often supported by what might be called an ‘underdog discourse’, that reproduces the idea of linguistic oppression and the need for continuous Flemish-nationalist action: in the same way as Dutch was once threatened by French in Belgium, it would now be besieged by EU-multilingualism, globalization, and the growing international outlook and appeal of Brussels – all of this in spite of the firm consolidation of Dutch within Brussels, Belgium, and the EU.” (Jaspers 2005: 281)

The Flemish sensitivity with respect to language issues is also informed by a late 19th century policy decision to favour standard Dutch over Flemish. Efforts were undertaken to construct a so-called authentic and pure form of Dutch that was supposedly “‘placed in safe-keeping’ in the Netherlands”. Today, prominent institutions such as the Flemish public broadcasting corporation still value standard Dutch over other variants. This type of hierarchisation also impacts on representations of language in other institutions and on the way the integration of minorities is evaluated (Jaspers 2005: 281-82). It is a common idiom in Flanders to claim that the least a migrant can do to integrate him- or herself, is to learn the language. The language designated is usually a standard or localised variant of Dutch.

In spite of the centrality of the Flemish language to mainstream notions of Flemish identity, there is hardly any reliable research on the knowledge of Dutch among Belgian Moroccans. Research on integration takes language competences into account, but mostly in the form of self-evaluations. Surveys investigated in 2007 and in 2009 indicated that 37% of Flemish Moroccans consider themselves able to understand and to speak Dutch (very) well. About 30% claims the same about

writing and reading Dutch. However, a quarter refused to answer these language-related questions. Moreover, Vancluysen, Van Craen, and Ackaert point out that survey research is not the best way to measure language skills. Oral and written language tests could provide us with more reliable results (Vancluysen et al. 2010: 14-15). Nevertheless, in a discussion of data collected in 2008, these authors point out that 67% of the Moroccan allochthons who participated in this survey understand most of the information in Dutch letters and other correspondence. 23% claims to understand very little. 70% claims to be able to understand oral discourse (very) well. The results also show that 32% of the Moroccan allochthons hardly or never talks Dutch. 53% claims to speak the language on a daily basis (Vancluysen et al. 2010: 39).

Notes on minorities in Flemish media and in politics

Both media and politics involve issues of representation. Minorities are severely under-represented in the political system as well as in Flemish media. As we will see, the socio-political engagements of the people I interviewed were frequently triggered by feelings of (mis)recognition. Stereotypical interpellations that did not conform to their preferred sense of self played a big role in this respect (see: 3.3.1). As such, party politics and media practices often impacted on the subjectivities of my respondents in direct and indirect ways. In both cases, issues of representation are at stake.

Research shows that Belgian Moroccans have little faith in Flemish media. This lack of trust is informed by the way youngsters of Moroccan descent and Islamic extremism are represented. Nevertheless, 67,7% watches Flemish channels on a daily basis. Only 4% claims not to watch Belgian television at all. 37,4 % watches Moroccan television on a daily basis, and 17% never watches Moroccan broadcasts. Radio is less popular among Moroccan Belgians but they listen more frequently to Belgian than to Moroccan channels. There is almost no attention for the Moroccan press whereas about 31% claims to read three to five Belgian newspapers every week (Saaf et al. 2009: 130-34). It is useful to consider these figures with respect to media usage and the lack of trust in Flemish media in relation to Belgian attitudes with respect to multiculturalism.

In 2009, one Belgian out of three considered himself or herself to be sceptical with respect to interculturalism. 10% expressed an outright negative attitude towards ethnic minorities. Another research conducted in the same period showed that 46% of Flemish voters have a negative attitude with respect to Muslims. De Ridder notes that these numbers become quite interesting if we realise that this attitude does not emerge out of negative experiences with ethnic or cultural minorities. In fact, Belgians and Flemings who frequently interact with minority members are rather positive towards people with different backgrounds. The explanative factor for these observations lies in the fact that media representations are more likely to impact on attitudes if there is no way to counter these attitudes on the basis of (inter)personal experience (De Ridder 2010: 11).

Minority members are under-represented in many media formats. There are positive evolutions with respect to the representation of these people in sport programs, in shows, and in cultural programs. However, the way minorities are represented in hard-core journalism is far more negative and impacts severely upon attitudes with respect to intercultural societies (De Ridder 2010: 12-13). Discourse analyses conducted during a workshop series organised by Kif Kif demonstrate severe polarising, essentialising, and culturalising tendencies in a variety of media genres (Maly 2007e). Similar tendencies can be observed in other countries as well (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Said 1981; Sunier 2005). Middle class values and networks of media workers can explain part of the processes involved (De Ridder 2010: 42, 53). Other factors include the post-9/11 climate, and the increasingly competitive logics of both public and private media organisations (Maly 2007d: 243-44).

The combined under- and (mis)representation of minorities in Flemish media and politics frequently triggers feelings of (mis)recognition. With respect to politics, I will be quite brief since my empirical analyses focus on the way intellectuals and activists conceptualise their socio-political engagements.

For this reason, political relationships and analyses will be discussed as we go. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that a recent survey among Belgian Moroccans indicates that Flemish Moroccans show less interest in Belgian politics than Moroccans living in the regions of Brussels and Wallonia. 42% of the Belgian Moroccans indicate that they have no affinity with any political party. A low level of education is an explanative factor for this lack of interest. Among those who do feel related to Belgian political parties, research conducted in 2009 indicates a majority who sympathises with socialist parties such as the PS and the SPa (45,2%). The environmentalist parties Ecolo and Groen follow with 13,4%. The next in line are social democratic parties such as CDH and CD&V (4,3%). The liberal parties MR and VLD follow with 3,8%. Left-wing communist (PTB and PvdA) and right-wing nationalist parties (FNB and VB) score both 1,1% in this survey. For some reason, the Flemish nationalist N-VA is not mentioned at all. It should be emphasised that these numbers do not necessarily indicate official party-political membership (Saaf et al. 2009).

It should also be noted that Flanders does not have any political parties that specifically represent ethnic, cultural, or religious minorities. In May 2003, the Flemish Marxist-Leninist PvdA and the Arab European League participated in parliamentary elections with a common list under the name RESIST. This combined list gained 10 059 votes in the province of Antwerp. The AEL admitted a 'small defeat', and soon after the elections, the AEL would leave RESIST and form a party of its own. This party was called MDP (Moslim-Democratische Partij, i.e. *Muslim-Democratic Party*). However, this project scored worse than RESIST and was disbanded in 2004 (D. Jacobs 2005: 104). Nevertheless, many of the people I interviewed refer to the AEL as an important factor in the development of their political awareness. This also goes for many people who criticised this organisation on specific political points of interest. In conformity with the figures above, it should be noticed that the vast majority of the people I interviewed indicated left-wing sympathies.

e) core features of the problematic of integration

Integration related discourse cannot be reduced to a single problem or issue. The category of integration is used by a variety of governmental, non-governmental, and scientific actors in order to discuss a multiplicity of policies and sociologic phenomena. The notion functions at the crossroads of scientific and political discourse. Moreover, it can not be analysed in isolation of other abstract and vague categories such as diversity, participation, allochthony, and / or autochthony. Interestingly, the problems and paradoxes described above have not lead to an abandonment of the concept. If anything, they have contributed to a very productive discourse: it has formed policy; it has generated various vocabularies; and it obviously impacts on the subjectivity of a variety of socio-political actors.

I already indicated that my interviewees display a high degree of metapragmatic and political awareness with respect to the category of integration. Many of them seem to make do with this notion in the same fashion as they seem to make do with other problematic categories such as <community>, <politics>, or <identity>. However, the fact that marginal and mainstream actors use a similar vocabulary does not necessarily imply that we are dealing with a power-free dialogue or debate. Neither does it mean that their voices all function within an all-encompassing hegemony. A new vocabulary does not need to imply that one thinks outside of the box. Neither does the usage of old concepts necessarily imply that one can not *use* these notions innovatively. The problematic sketched above has therefore lead me to ask the question *how* my respondents *use* the category of integration in their discourse.

Meryem Kanmaz noted that Moroccan intellectuals, politicians, organisations, and activists articulated their voices during key events in the Flemish minority debate. This also goes for the debate about the (bankruptcy of) integration. As we noticed before, this debate is not so much a debate *pro* or *contra* integration, as it is a debate about *how* integration related concepts, practices, and policies are to be used. These questions are fundamentally intertwined with the question how integration-related definitions and texts need to be (en)textualised and contextualised. From an ethical point of view, one

needs to ask what type of articulations are functional with respect to the emancipation of the various entities that constitute our societies. What usages of integration-related lexical items allow for empowerment of allochthons, autochthons, minorities, majorities, migrants and / or other objects of the discussion? What usages tend to (re)produce and / or legitimise unequal power relationships of domination? Such questions lie at the core of the problematic of integration. Below, I will present an interpretive functionalist analysis of the way my respondents have used the notion of integration.

2.3.3 Minority usage of the notion of integration

The interpretive functionalist heuristic for analysing political discourse and subjectivity constitutes my answer to the methodological deficits that haunt pragmatist and poststructuralist thought and analysis. It is based on a multi-layered concept of articulation that may be defined as:

(the result of) a performative practice that establishes a relative fixation between a semiotic form and its function in such a way that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. Articulatory practices are fundamentally political and are fundamental to the process of hegemonising a political discourse or practice. They are also of key importance to an analysis of the development and communication of a sense of self.

The notion of articulation may refer to a theory, to a methodology, to a model of subjectivity, to a socio-political practice, and/or to a (linguistic) performance. The various ways in which the notion is deployed within this interpretive functionalist approach to politics, discourse and subjectivity, is tied to the concept's complex etymological history.

I have repeatedly argued that the interpretive functionalist approach I am arguing for involves an investigation of the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction and to the metapragmatic positioning of the interlocutors and voices involved in the speech event under investigation. This means that there is still a multiplicity of options left with respect to the way in which such an approach can be operationalised. As I mentioned before, I am no proponent of a uniform toolbox for analysis. Quite the contrary. The fact that there is no one to one relationship between semiotic forms and their functions, entails that it is impossible to grasp the complexity of a socio-semiotic phenomenon by investigating a strictly delineated set of linguistic or other semiotic forms. Nevertheless, I am convinced that we are in need of a more systematic approach that investigates the linguistic or phonological dimension of articulation as well.

Even though poststructuralist discourse theorists have recently acknowledged the methodological deficit that haunts their approach, and even though they have started to consider articulation in terms of a methodology (Glynos and Howarth 2007; Howarth 2005; Torfing 2005), their approach still lacks a detailed account of how to deal with the linguistic and textual data that provide the raw material for any empirical investigation of discourse, politics, and subjectivity. I have argued that the major obstacle for developing a detailed linguistic theory of articulation can be traced back to the fact that the Essex approach has no way of determining what relevant context is. It has no theory of indexicality and metapragmatic awareness.

The integrated approach outlined above, as well as the illustrations and case studies that will be presented below, involve a heuristic that links notions such as articulation, subjectivity, politics, hegemony, and logic, to linguistic pragmatic concepts such as speech acts, cohesion, coherence, voice, metaphor, metonymy, (en-, de-, and re) contextualisation (cues), metapragmatic language use, and deixis. As such, interpretive functionalism does not provide a rigid methodology that can be applied to any number of cases. Rather, it presents researchers with a heuristic that can be adapted to meet the needs of a multiplicity of investigations, focusing on the multi-dimensional particularities of a linguistic performance.

Below, I will provide the reader with a general idea of what an interpretive functionalist approach might look like. The analysis of the way my respondents used the notion of (integration) was developed within the context of an exploratory study. The study did not merely explore the various meanings if (integration) generated throughout the interviews. It also functioned as a test-case for the heuristic I was developing. Below, I will first (a) present the reader with some of the heuristic considerations that informed this analysis. I will then move on to a discussion of (b) the usage of

⟨integration⟩ by intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders. Lastly, I will conclude this chapter by (c) a preliminary evaluation of the interpretive functionalist heuristic.

a) Some heuristic considerations

The research presented below is based on research results obtained within the context of an exploratory study into the political discourse of my respondents. The notion of ⟨integration⟩ is one of the most powerful discursive elements structuring the debate about minorities in Flanders. For this reason, the usage of this concept by intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background serves as a useful entry point into the analysis of their political subjectivity. In spite of the various critiques directed at mainstream usage of the word, my respondents choose to recontextualise the notion in such a way that it becomes a powerful tool for critique. I will illustrate this in the upcoming section. For now, it only remains for me to raise some issues related to the *articulation of a problematic* and to the double-edged issue of *data selection and the articulation of functional research questions*.

On the articulation of a problematic

The practice of establishing relevant contextual boundaries for the purpose of discourse analysis starts with the articulation of a problematic. But we also noted that the problematic of integration can not be reduced to a single problem or issue. This can be explained with reference to the literature discussed above, but it can also be exemplified with reference to the excerpts discussed below. My interviewees often problematised the paradoxical, vague, and politicised usage of ⟨integration⟩ in mainstream discourse. Nevertheless, those who criticise dominant interpretations of ⟨integration⟩ related concepts and policies tend to occupy rather marginal positions in the debate. For this reason, I became interested in the way activists and intellectuals with a Moroccan background use the notion. One may therefore claim that the problematic articulated in collaboration with my respondents centers around the problematic capacity of an abstract category such as ⟨integration⟩ to structure political debates in the public sphere, as well as individual subjectivities and / or senses of self.

The problematisation of a specific category of political discourse is one of the most important and tricky contextualisation strategies a researcher may perform. It involves practices of downplaying or emitting other categories and notions that may be more central to the subjectivity and discourse of the respondents. This was definitely the case in my analysis of the way my interviewees deployed ⟨integration⟩ related words and concepts. As I mentioned before, my interviews focused first and foremost on the following themes or topics: the development of political points of interest; the development of political engagements; the development of political thought: the sources of inspiration for political engagement and thought; and the reasons for participating in the interview.

My open-ended interview questions allowed my interviewees to discuss a wide variety of topics. As such, the interviews were not meant to be interviews about ⟨integration⟩. Nevertheless, the notion did pop up in a great deal of the interactions. Within the context of my active interviews, I sometimes introduced the notion myself, but most of the time, my interviewees would articulate the notion first. A paper, a chapter, or a book devoted to the usage of integration related notions by my interviewees may therefore give the false impression that the concept is more central to their political subjectivities and discourses than it actually is. It should therefore be realised that the topics raised within the context of these interviews dealt with issues as diverse as personal experiences and frustrations in the Flemish field of civil society organisations, globalisation related phenomena, and/or international conflicts.

The discourse of my interviewees includes systemic analyses as well as personal anecdotes. They criticise individual activists, intellectuals, politicians and / or political parties, as well as largely

hegemonised social practices and discourses. Talk about integration constitutes merely one of the topics raised in this context. The fascinating complexity of the interviews would therefore be grossly reduced if I would claim that the discourse of my respondents boils down to issues of integration. However, taking the centrality of the notion of integration in mainstream discourse into account, I do consider it useful to rearticulate the voices of my respondents with respect to this issue. On the other hand, it is important to move beyond issues of integration by doing justice to the complex analyses and discourses of my respondents. For this reason, I will amend my discussion of integration-related notions as used by my interviewees with a series of case-studies. These case studies will allow for a more nuanced analysis of the large-scale interpretive processes and discourses deployed by my respondents in the context of my interviews.

The articulation of a problematic determines to a large extent what aspects of linguistic and non-linguistic context should be taken into account. However, the researcher should not lose sight of the complexity of the discourse under investigation. For this reason, it is important to get to know your data thoroughly (see also: Verschueren 2011). Choices with respect to the selective treatment of data need to be made with as much of the data in mind as possible. For this reason, I opted to transcribe the interviews myself. This was a time-consuming process, but it allows for a more thorough understanding of the data under investigation. It should also be noticed that other genres of data were relevant to this research as well. Even though my analyses are based on transcriptions, I read as much online newspaper articles and websites in which the names of my interviewees popped up as possible. Quite often, this impacted upon the questions I asked, as well as on the way I interpreted the responses of my respondents.

Data selection and functional research questions

An interpretive functionalist heuristic may focus on any linguistic form as a point of departure for analysing discourse. Moreover, these forms may find themselves at any structural layer of adaptability. One may focus on choices with respect to: language; dialect; genre; narrative or argumentative structure and style; sentence structure; word choice; intonation; prosody; and so on. However, metapragmatic awareness is always limited. Language users can not take all aspects of linguistic choice-making into account. This goes for ordinary language users as well as for trained discourse analysts. Consequently, it is useful to limit oneself to an investigation of a limited set of linguistic phenomena as the focal point for analysis. I have opted to use integration related lemma as an entry point into my data set. Choices made at one structural level of adaptability involve choices at other levels as well. Consequently, this research strategy does not need to imply an unreflexive neglect of other features of discourse and / or context.

The research results presented below are based on 26 interviews conducted with 24 people. Most of these respondents have a Moroccan background. It should also be noted that my snow-ball method has led me to construct a corpus that contains interviews with people who are active in so-called socio-cultural civil society. Most of my interviewees are – or have been – engaged in various organisations, political parties, and / or public administrations. Representatives of organisations such as (associations related to) mosques who primarily deal with religious issues are prominently absent from my corpus. My respondents were not selected on the basis of gender, age, generation, or religion. The only variables taken into account throughout the selection process were their Moroccan background (even though I did make exceptions for certain prominent figures in the debate), and their public socio-political engagement. I started my search for interviewees in Antwerp but many of them have studied or worked in other Flemish cities as well. The geographical area of my investigation is therefore restricted to Flanders.

Thematically and institutionally speaking, my respondents are engaged and interested in a multiplicity of projects. I talked to people who are active in federations of migrant self-organisations (FMV, PAJ), in socio-cultural organisations (Safina, AMV, SAMV, MSC Ahlan), student organisations (Student

Focus, VIP), feminist organisations (Vrouwenstem Plus, BOEH), political parties (VLD, SPa, Spirit!, MDP), integration services (DIA), and activist civil society organisations (Kif Kif, AEL, BOEH). All interviews were conducted and transcribed in the period between 2006 and 2009. The transcriptions have been inserted in a software program for qualitative analysis called NVIVO. In addition, I collected publicly accessible material in the Mediargus database. This database contains articles of Flemish newspapers since 1998. I performed the following Boolean search: “name respondent” AND (integratie* OR geïntegreerd* OR integreren). In addition, I performed a similar search in Google. These data were inserted in NVIVO as well. Since I was interested in the way my respondents functionally used <integration> related lexical items, I performed an automatic search in NVIVO for a context of 100 words surrounding every occurrence of the Dutch lemma *integratie**, *geïntegreerd**, or *integreren*. Of course, this random context of 100 words merely served to provide me with a first impression of the context in which integration related words were uttered. Whenever necessary, I broadened or narrowed the textual environment required for analysis and interpretation. It should also be kept in mind that I read every interview at least four times in its entirety.

Throughout my analyses, I was interested in roughly three types of functional relationships. These relationships pertained to statements on integration on the one hand, and to the subject positions one positively, negatively, or partially identified oneself with. I was also interested in the way my respondents used the notion of integration while discussing evolutions they discerned in society. Also, the functional relations between <integration> related statements and statements about the practices and discourses of other actors in society, were part of my research interest. All of these points of interest focus on issues of voice and polyphony.

All of this resulted in rather practical questions such as: *What function does the articulation of the word <integration sector> perform in relation to the various voices (re)articulated by the interviewees.* Since every type utterance simultaneously performs a multiplicity of functions and since not all functions of discourse are marked explicitly in discourse, one needs to go through the self-interpretations of the individual under investigation when answering such a question. As we noticed before, metapragmatic discourse is particularly relevant in this respect. What do respondents mean when they talk about integration related concepts? Integration related lemma took the following forms: <integration>; <to integrate oneself>; <integration services>; <integration centers>; <the integration sector>; <integration policy>; <politics of integration>; <degree of integration>; <integration process>; <integration project>; <problematic of integration>; a <pattern of integration related expectations>; <integration story>; <integration discourse>; an <Association for Integration and Participation> (Dutch: *Vereniging voor Integratie en Participatie* (VIP)); and the Antwerp Service for Integration (Dutch: *Dienst Integratie Antwerpen* (DIA)). Moreover, issues related to <bankruptcy of integration> were discussed as well. According to some of my respondents there was <too much integration at this moment>. Others put forward alternative interpretations of integration by discussing mosques as <integrating places>⁷³.

The signifier <integration> thus performs a variety of functions in the discourse of my respondents. These functions are generated in relation to discursive practices at various levels of discourse. This implies that one has to pay attention to the linguistic forms that impact upon the utterances in which integration related lemma occur. These include metaphors, metonymies and various contextualisation cues and narratives. Considering the wide variety of linguistic performances that can be found in my corpus, it is virtually impossible to select one particular set of forms used by all interviewees. In some cases, it is virtually impossible to understand the usage of integration related words without analysing

⁷³ In Dutch, these integration related lexical items read as follows: <integratie>; <zich integreren>; <integratiediensten>; <integratiecentra>; <integratiesector>; <integratiebeleid>; <integratiepolitiek>; <integratiegraad>; <integratieproces>; <integratieproject>; <integratieproblematiek>; <integratieverwachtingspatroon>; <integratieverhaal>; <integratiediscours>; <Vereniging voor Integratie en Participatie>; <het Vlaams Centrum voor Integratie van Migranten>; <Dienst Integratie Antwerpen>; <integratie heeft gefaald>; <failliet van de integratie>; <teveel integratie op dit ogenblik>; or <integrerende plekken>.

various forms of reported speech. In other cases, one needs to pay attention to metaphors and / or metapragmatic comments.

All of these integration related articulations have been analysed on the basis of functional research questions. In a following phase, the usages of integration related lexical items by myself as well as by my 24 interviewees were compared to one another. The various (in)compatible and/or overlapping articulations of the integration concept will be discussed in terms of a series of tensions between conflicting understandings of integration. However, before we do so, it is important to point out that one single individual may deploy the notion of integration in seemingly contradictory ways. Shift with respect to the evaluation of integration related discourses and practices occur depending on the subject positions respondents identify themselves with. These shifts impact directly upon the articulated notions of integration.

b) The usage of <integration> by intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background in Flanders

The analyses of abstract categories such as <politics>, <community> and <identity> showed that interviewees tend to shift between subject positions as they shift between topics. Interviewees highlight different aspects of their sense of self as other aspects of contextual reality are being made relevant throughout the interaction. The interactional self-technique of the interview is well-suited for this kind of discursive positioning. It allows interviewees to articulate their own voice(s) with other voices in the public sphere. This also goes for the way my respondents deploy the notion of <integration> within the context of interviews about political engagement. It is useful to illustrate this principle with respect to the case of Issam Z in the subsection on *Shifting subject positions and shifting notions of integration*.

The other subsections contain analyses of integration related lexical items organised around a series of tensions. As such, I will discuss and illustrate the functional relationship between *integration and the imagination of social ontology*. The meaning of integration is also linked to issues of *imagination and representation*. Whether one considers *integration* in terms of *a natural phenomenon* or in terms of *an institutional process* is also of significant importance to an adequate understanding of the way my respondents deploy the notion of <integration>. And as one may have come to expect on the basis of the literature above, there is a difference between *the failure of the integration process* and *the failing of integration policy*. Moreover, integration can be framed *as an accomplishment* or *as an unfinished process*. Lastly, I will point out that the meaning of the signifier integration is also dependent on the point of reference. This will be discussed in a subsection on *indexing the location of integration*.

Shifting subject positions and shifting notions of integration

Issam Z is one of the first people I interviewed within the context of this book. He has been active in the Arab-European League (AEL) and uses words such as <integration>, <integration policy>, and <integration trajectory>. The analysis shows that these words perform very different functions with respect to his socio-political positioning. I was the one who first introduced the notion of integration by presenting Issam with a preliminary analysis. I remarked that I had <the impression> that even though there was hardly any <political engagement> among Moroccan immigrants in Flanders before <the nineties> and <the emergence of the AEL>, the establishment of the <FMV>, and the development of <integration policy>, there must have been political <opinions> and <convictions> circulating before this period. Issam confirms this historical contextualisation and acknowledges that <there definitely must have been> political <opinions> before the nineties. According to him, such political orientations used to be focused on <Morocco>, rather than on <Antwerp>.

IZ: Yes, definitely, there definitely have to have been opinions. But the question is about what eh. That sort of people who were here in Antwerp thirty years ago, whether they already had opinions about here in Antwerp, I have some reservations about that. I think they were mainly occupied with politics in Morocco.

excerpt 32 – 03/09/2007

According to Issam, minority <activism in Flanders really started with the AEL>. Earlier on, he pointed out that BOEH can be considered a spin-off of the AEL. For this reason, I wondered whether he noticed any non-AEL related forms of activism. As a response to my question, Issam first problematises the notion of an <integration trajectory>. He notes that there used to be some <activism> by referring to the <communist> <loner> <Tarik Fraihi> and then goes on to critically discuss the activities of the <praiseworthy website> of <Kif Kif>. He recommends me to <go and take a look at one of their activities>. At the time, I already participated in a media-watch workshop that would result in the book *Cultu(u)r(en)politiek*. Since I wanted to know what he thought about this type of activity, I asked him whether his criticism was directed at initiatives such as <media-watch> related <workshops>.

IZ: My impression is that activism among Moroccans here in Flanders really started with the AEL and then ...

JZ: and also movements independent of the AEL or ...

IZ: A little bit. For instance Tarik Fraihi but ... to what extent can you call that activism? But definitely before the AEL there was Tarik Fraihi who tried to get things moving with texts ... but then again, he was rather communist and he also profiled himself like that ... but he was a loner. And from the AEL on, he really chose for another way. And in the mean time ... take Kif Kif for instance eh, ... a praiseworthy website and so on ... but you should go and take a look at one of their activities, you should go ...

JZ: I went there once, to media-watch, small workshops. But yeah it was with about four people that we wrote about something. I don't know if this is what you meant ...

excerpt 33 – 03/09/2007

It is within a consequent discussion of Kif Kif related activities, that Issam first talks about an <integration trajectory>. Below, we can see how he deploys the spatial metaphor of a trajectory in order to characterize a shift from (an orientation to) the subject positions of street boys to those of the elite. Even though he metapragmatically remarks that this is <not a reproach> but a mere observation, he states that activities such as musical events organized by Kif Kif are <very elitist> happenings. They are <elitist> in the sense that they appeal to basically two categories of subject positions: <progressive Flemings> who want to <broaden> their <world view>; and <allochthons who made it> and who <have a job>.

Earlier on, Issam described how the lack of political awareness among Moroccans is related to <a lack of schooled people> <in the Moroccan community in general>. He explained how the AEL could count on <street boys> at moments of <tension>, enabling the organisation to mobilize a significant number of people during protests <in the street>. However, he also gives voice to feelings of disappointment while explaining that <at a certain moment> one needs to translate this energy <into a systematic and structured organisation where you can count on people with respect to engagement as well as finances>. According to him, this never happened. As a response to Issam's remark that Kif Kif basically interpellates <progressive Flemings> and <allochthons that made it>, I acknowledged that I did not notice any <street boys> at such activities. It is at this point that Issam uses the notion of <integration trajectory>.

IZ: well yes ... that sort of activities or perhaps rather something where ... a musical evening for instance you should go and see what sort of people participate in that. It is a very elitist happening. This is not a reproach but I merely observe that the people who come to that sort of thing are either

progressive Flemings who are like “I want to broaden my ... my world view” or ‘allochthons’ who made it between quotation marks eh

JZ: yes

IZ: to us having made it means when you have a job you made it eh ... that sort of people who only have a weak personal link with ...

JZ: I can't say I see any street boys there so yes

JZ: yes voila ... but ... if we talk about problems of allochthons, problems of integration, problems of connecting to society, then it is not about that one per cent not even that who has a nice job, it is about the street boys. That is why I have considerable doubts about the activism of Kif Kif. To me it seems rather like ... the reward for a kind of integration trajectory. But I don't see any real activism in Flanders today eh ... BOEH is the most activist thing I see.

excerpt 34 – 03/09/2007

In the last lines of the excerpt above, Issam acknowledges my inference. We can also observe how he uses the notion of a ⟨trajectory⟩ as a spatial metaphor in order to describe a process of integration whereby one moves away from an interpellation of street boy-related subject positions towards modes of so-called activism that appeal to an elite consisting of ⟨progressive⟩ autochthons and ⟨allochthons that made it⟩. Interestingly, Issam Z hedges having ⟨made it⟩ and defines this accomplishment in terms of participation in the labour market. Unfortunately, groups who ⟨made it⟩ tend to get out of touch with the problems ⟨street boys⟩ are facing.

Also, it should be noted that Issam's ironical usage of the category of ⟨integration⟩ can only be understood if one takes his notion of ⟨activism⟩ into account. His ⟨considerable doubts⟩ with respect to the ⟨activism of Kif Kif⟩ deserve closer examination. As is often the case, abstract categories such as integration can not be adequately understood without an understanding of the other abstract – and potentially empty – signifiers it is articulated with. To Issam, the notions of ⟨activism⟩ and ⟨integration⟩ are closely intertwined. An ⟨integration trajectory⟩ gains legitimacy as it appeals to the socio-economically defined subject position of ⟨street boys⟩. This is one of the reasons why Issam claims that the AEL practices a more ⟨real⟩ activism than an organisation such as Kif Kif.

A second articulation of the notion of integration occurred during a discussion of his positioning with respect to the ⟨left⟩ and the ⟨right⟩. At that point, I asked him whether he was talking about the ⟨debate about integration policy⟩. Acknowledging this, he went on to claim that both the ⟨left⟩ and the ⟨right⟩ are guilty of the ⟨bankruptcy of this situation⟩ and the associated problem of ⟨exclusion⟩. According to Issam Z, the debate has become so polarized at a certain point that the mere mentioning of the AEL lead to shut-down of all discussion. In the excerpt below, Issam grants the notion of ⟨integration⟩ a very different status than in the excerpts above. Here, he articulates ⟨integration⟩ in terms of a commendable and legitimate socio-political goal.

IZ: ... there are some issues ... with respect to some issues I agree with ... with the right. I agree with people such as Bart de Wever there are some aspects ... where I really agree with him because the left ... is at least as much to blame for this how shall I put it for the bankruptcy of this situation Because of some sort of desire to do good, or because of some sort of will to be progressive, they have never wanted to talk about a problem such as exclusion. On the other hand they never made an issue or at least a lot less than the right for instance out of Moroccans and Muslims. But I think that they too are under the influence of a number of cliché images and mechanisms of exclusion and one has never ... wanted to talk about that. And one has to credit the right for the fact that they want a debate about it. But Flanders simply hasn't held the debate yet ... Flanders has, how shall I put it, nipped it all off in the bud.

JZ: The debate about its own integration policy or that sort of stuff?

IZ: Yes ... yes ... very quickly the edge was taken off ... whereas in the Netherlands ... today still eh it it's incredible ... That is really a proof of integration that one has people ... Muslims Moroccans who can give their opinion and who can be assertive and who appear on television ... who who can express their individuality without needing the help of someone else ...

excerpt 35 – 03/09/2007

In the excerpt above, Issam claims that the ⟨debate⟩ about ⟨integration policy⟩ was ⟨nipped in the bud⟩. This analysis makes it possible for him to identify himself partly with right wing politicians when they complain about the ⟨bankruptcy of this situation⟩. However, this identification with the right is not maintained throughout his discourse. Elsewhere, Issam subscribes to Tarik Fraihi's analysis of the integration sector. His positioning with respect to organisations such as Kif Kif or with respect to intellectuals such as the ⟨communist⟩ Fraihi shifts depending on the subject at hand. It should also be noted that Issam's positive evaluation of the situation ⟨in the Netherlands⟩ sheds some light on his preferred notion of ⟨integration⟩. The excerpt above illustrates that to him, a successful integration involves one's ability to publicly express one's ethnic and cultural individuality as ⟨Muslims⟩ and/or as ⟨Moroccans⟩.

At third notion of ⟨integration⟩ is articulated by Issam Z when he criticizes the notion of ⟨diversity⟩ as it is being used by politicians such as the Minister of Education Frank Vandenbroecke and the Antwerp Mayor Patrick Janssens. Z rearticulates and criticizes Vandenbroecke's statement that ⟨multilingualism is zerolinguism⟩ and that children should be discouraged to speak any other language than Dutch in schools. With respect to the Antwerp Mayor, Z deplores the ⟨headscarf ban that discourages diversity⟩. He metapragmatically articulates his critique and states that he is ⟨flabbergasted that one still dares to use the term diversity⟩.

IZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) He says that explicitly eh he says that in *Ter Zake* ... "multilingualism is zerolinguism". That is not my sentence eh, it comes literally from *Ter Zake* one year ago. Not even a year ago. And that is ... diversity then. What diversity did I see on the left with Patrick Janssens? ... I am flabbergasted that one still dares to use the term diversity.

excerpt 36 – 03/09/2007

At that point, I noticed that the notion of ⟨integration policy⟩ was being replaced by the concept of ⟨diversity policy⟩ in the Antwerp context. Issam acknowledged this but claimed that the latter notion is merely ⟨a cover for the same policy⟩. He continues and talks about the refusal to use the Arab language as a ⟨lever⟩ or as a ⟨positive element⟩ in education.

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) It is only recently being used eh. In the sense that Antwerp is going to change the name from integration policy to diversity policy.

IZ: Yes, but it is a cover for the same politics. Diversity as far as I have understood it, implies that there is some room for a certain variety. The only thing I have seen from the SPa thus far is a ban on headscarves that discourages diversity. Of course, I understand what Patrick Janssens is doing. He says like there are a lot of Antwerp people who take offense with that, so if you want to make yourself acceptable as a Moroccan, take that headscarf of. I think this is a very dangerous reasoning. I don't think this is the right way. I rather think that you have to help the Flemish to get used [to it]. Try [to involve] more people with a headscarf who are assertive, who master Dutch well. Try to involve people like that because they are going to disrupt that image of backwardness or of not being honest or of whatever. Try to involve Arabic as a language in education. I don't say that ... education should be Arabic but incorporate it as a positive element, as a lever.

excerpt 37 – 02/09/2007

To Issam, ⟨assimilation⟩ boils down to a non-desirable form of ⟨integration⟩. According to him, the concept of ⟨assimilation⟩ is applicable to the diversity and integration policies of both the left and the right in Flanders. In both cases we are dealing with the integration / assimilation of Moroccan communities as well as with the integration / assimilation of individuals within these communities. An

analysis of the following excerpt shows that Issam's implicit distinction between legitimate and illegitimate forms of integration is based on a particular conceptualization of <activism>. He explains that assimilation occurs when groups become so marginalized that they do not engage themselves in any form of <political struggle>. In turn, this lack of <political struggle> leads people to turn away from their Islamic and Arabic practices and norms. Issam thus establishes a mutually constitutive relationship between political activism and a mode of subjectivity in which individuals are able to articulate cultural and religious aspects of their individuality. This happens when Issam discusses the relationship between <parents> and youngsters in the Moroccan community on the one hand, and public institutions such as schools on the other hand. According to him, assimilated – i.e. non-activist – religious parents and children run the risk of becoming <trapped in a net> that brings them <into conflict with themselves>.

IZ: ... They get trapped in a net. They don't wage a political struggle. For instance, they are going to ... their own daughters can't wear a headscarf in school any more. You can't explain to me how someone who has been educated with a headscarf at home and who goes to school and experiences a hostile environment over there, or at least hostile in so far as the headscarf is concerned, ... that is someone who will definitely wind up in some sort of inner struggle. Puberty is already hard enough and that comes on top of it. To what extent someone gets out of that unharmed ... I have my reservations about that. A lot of parents mistakenly believe, and this is understandable somehow, one does not have a lot of skills, like "if I only raise them according to Islamic norms everything will turn out fine" ... that is bullshit of course. You are more outside than at home. And also, the impact of outside ... that's way bigger eh ... Education has an enormous impact on the way you think. So a lot of people will get into conflict with themselves by noting that their children are taking a different turn and will not be as Muslim-friendly as they would like to think. And in the mean time society has evolved. Perhaps a ban on headscarves within two or three years. I feel like when you keep aloof of society, what are you doing to yourself. What do you learn in order to play a certain role in society. That is also something one has never understood with respect to the AEL. The AEL ... there is no other organisation that has tried as hard [as the AEL] to involve Moroccans in the social debate. Exactly in order to play a meaningful role in that society. And I consider assimilation to be a kind of languishment in the margin, uhm, that first generation, perhaps that second generation manages to keep on doing that, but the third won't and will simply dissolve into the majority. Nobody wants marginalisation eh.

JZ: so marginalisation is linked to assimilation so to say

IZ: Well... firstly, my parents and perhaps my generation is still marginalised, but if in the end, there does not emerge a political consciousness, a social activism whereby your role in society ...

JZ: a socio-economic role?

IZ: that's right, whereby you start to play a role in society, guarding your individuality, if you don't do that, in the long run ...

excerpt 38 – 03/09/2007

It should be clear by now that <activism> is not merely the criterion that distinguishes a preferred mode of integration from assimilation, but that it also functions as an important self-technique constitutive for Issam's preferred mode of individuality or subjectivity.

Whereas the notion of <integration trajectory> is being used metaphorically to conceptualize a movement from the subject position of street boy to a more advantageous socio-economic position, this trajectory often implies a deplorable loss of <connection> with one's cultural and religious individuality and community. This is why Issam questions the type of activism of organisations such as Kif Kif. He evaluates a lack of <activism> negatively. In this sense, <a reward for an integration trajectory> is not an unequivocally positive matter. In fact, it has great implications for the way Issam establishes a moral geography of civil society organisations such as BOEH, Kif Kif and AEL. To Issam, <assimilation> as a form of <integration> minus a form of <activism> that interpellates the <street boys> who have not <made it>.

We should also conclude that depending on the problematised topic (i.e. ⟨integration policy⟩, ⟨integration trajectory⟩, or ⟨integration⟩), Issam (re)articulates a variety of voices in the public sphere; The articulation of these voices in his discourses is not merely referential, it also determines his own practices of positioning. What aspects of his subjectivity are highlighted, is very clearly contextually determined. More specifically, Issam's political positioning with respect to the ⟨left⟩ and the ⟨right⟩ sides of the political spectrum was marked throughout his discussion of the ⟨integration policy⟩ and the ⟨integration debate⟩. On the other hand, ⟨cultural⟩ and ⟨religious⟩ aspects of selfhood were problematised by Issam while discussing the relationship between ⟨assimilation⟩, ⟨diversity⟩ and ⟨integration⟩. In both cases, this links up with his – former – identity as an AEL activist. Such positional shifts occur in every interview. This case study thus functions as a warning with respect to the upcoming analyses. Individuals may deploy different notions of integration within the context of a single speech event.

Integration and the imagination of social ontology

The functions performed by articulating integration related concepts vary according to the specific ways in which individuals discursively imagine and construct their reality. Differences with respect to these imaginary worlds do not only pertain to the type of voices and subjectivities populating a particular world-view, but also to the way such voices and subjectivities are being generated. Respondents always deploy implicit and/or explicit presuppositions with respect to the nature of social reality. This may be exemplified by contrasting the world views as well as the notions of ⟨integration⟩ deployed by Hicham el Mzairh and Najib Chakouh.

At the time of the interview, Hicham el Mzairh engaged himself within the context of the Flemish liberal political party Open VLD (Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats) (Dutch: Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten). In the period following our interview, he would change his party political membership to the socialist SPa⁷⁴. His migration from Morocco to Flanders involved a political turn from a socialist orientation to a liberal orientation. Najib Chakouh is born and raised in Flanders. Since the nineties, he has been active within the framework of the ⟨student organisation⟩ ⟨Talaba⟩, in the ⟨integration sector⟩, and in various other civil society organisations. At the time of the interview, he was also chairman for Kif Kif. This is still the case today. Whereas the liberal politician Hicham el Mzairh describes a world view in which the basic units of analysis are individuals, Najib Chakouh presents a world-view in which metaphors of fluidity play an important role.

At a certain point in the interview, Hicham explains to me that he was ⟨shocked⟩ by the ⟨conceptions of religion⟩ and by the ⟨closedness of some⟩ Moroccan migrants in Flanders. When I asked him to elaborate, he explained to me that the problem is not inherently religious. Rather, he presents an analysis in which religious and cultural ⟨seclusion⟩ is a direct result of a situation in which Moroccan migrants are ⟨confronted with an other that wants to assimilate them⟩.

HEM: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) ... I feel like, but it has evolved in the mean time as well, ... eh, since the sixties and seventies, the workers who have left Morocco ..., Morocco has evolved ... modernized ... but ... those who left Morocco ... with a certain Islamic conception, with certain traditions of course

JZ: mmh

⁷⁴ Upon reading my analysis of our interview, Hicham asked me to contextualise the statements he made as a VLD member. He is currently engaged in the SPa where he considers his potential impact with respect to diversity related issues to be bigger than in the VLD. Even though he explained to me that there were many VLD members who were sympathetic to his concerns, his personal impact was rather limited in this context. His philosophical approach to liberalism (see further) allows him to rearticulate his engagement within an SPa context in the period following our interview.

HEM: and they arrive here and are being confronted with an Other that wants to assimilate them

JZ: mmh (this excerpt continues below)

excerpt 39 – 20/05/2008

Hicham metapragmatically notes that the Other who wishes to assimilate Moroccan migrants does not always distinguish between integration and assimilation. According to him, the parties that attack these migrant groups in this assimilatory way, thus paradoxically trigger a defensive reaction. Even though he does not mention them explicitly, contextual knowledge allows for the inference that he is talking about the right wing VB. In the excerpt below, we see a first indication of the importance of spatial metaphors to Hicham's preferred mode of subjectivity. He deplores that the defensive reaction of many migrants leads them to withdraw themselves in such a way that they are not open to change. Quite the contrary, they remain stuck with a tradition, mentality, or culture that hinders the freedom of the individual.

HEM: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt below) So ... and sometimes they don't make uhm don't uhm ... make a distinction between integration and assimilation. Because you have the big parties that that that ... I don't even need to name them but there are certain parties who don't do anything but ... attack those groups ... How do these groups react? They withdraw themselves because they defend themselves against anything ...

JZ: mmh

HEM: then they want ... they are not open to change or anything like that

JZ: mmh

HEM: and then they are stuck with that mentality or that culture and they remain stuck with the culture their fathers brought along from their country of origin

JZ: mmh

HEM: so the culture of the sixties the tradition of the sixties or seventies in Morocco

JZ: yes ... yes ...

HEM: so they get shocked themselves when they return to Morocco on a holiday and they return like ah Morocco it's no longer Islamic. These days there are women with short skirts and Moroccan women in disco's. ... How is that possible ... and that is how ... that freedom of the individual is ... how shall I put it ... you encounter it less over here ... among those groups.

excerpt 40 – 20/05/2008

Interestingly, the seclusion Hicham is talking about is not merely religious. In the excerpt below, he clarifies his metaphor of closure and confinement by stating that this process involves an orientation to issues such as work, family, and speaking one's own language. It also involves a lack of knowledge with respect to what is going on in the countries wherein they reside.

HEM: that confinement ... I notice that one only occupies oneself with one's work with one's family ... that one uses one's uhm language in one's environment ... they don't know anything about uhm what is going on in the countries wherein they reside.

excerpt 41 – 20/05/2008

All of this has great implications for the particular way in which Hicham conceptualises and articulates his notion of integration. To him, the process of integration is realised through the development of individual freedom. In the excerpt below, he problematises hegemonic notions of the term by rearticulating two antagonistic voices in his own discourse. Through a form of reported

speech, he wonders how one may <cherish> the <positive things in other cultures> and in <the heritage> one brings along in the process of migration. He wonders how one may tackle the dialogue between migrant <groups> and people who wish to <integrate> them in an assimilatory way. Doing so, he establishes a polyphonic dialogue between two groups claiming to be <right> in a pedantic way. To him, the only way out of this scenario, implies developing a type of <freedom> that gives <youngsters> the <instruments> they require to <make their own choices on life>.

HEM: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) When you want to integrate them ... When do you cherish ... uhm positive things in other cultures? ... That freedom to choose for yourself how you deal with that and ... and getting that heritage from the culture you brought along ... so that you don't get stuck in some sort of uhm community ... and close yourself off and live with your own culture and only wave that flag like "we are right" And that other who says like "we are right and you should change everything ... we have seen the light and follow us ... you should integrate yourselves" so ... that really is a vicious circle of uhm ... division on the one hand and on the other hand superiority I would say of one group and ... and with the other group there is a feeling of inferiority and the wish to defend ... and they do defend that's also ... just so uhm ... I think I just uhm ... experienced some things and that's my personal conclusion ... it's like ... the more that ... that freedom is realised ... the more ... those those uhm those youngsters in schools uhm can be armed with certain instruments to ... make their own choices in life ... the more free they will be ... the more free they become from those those currents that one calls community ... and the more contact you will have between individuals of various descent ...

excerpt 42 – 20/05/2008

In the excerpt above, the verb to <integrate> occurs within the context of a description of the public sphere in terms of an antagonistic us / them discourse between two Others. Both types of voices do not distinguish between <integration> and <assimilation>. Hicham claimed that the <solution> to this <viscous circle> is provided by <liberalism>. Nevertheless, it should be noted that he provides the notion of <liberalism> with a very specific definition. This can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below.

HEM: Not the liberalism of uhm ... of the companies not the liberalism of the rich ... or the liberalism that that the Fleming is confronted with here ... by the Flemish progressives uhm ... ex-patriots who are actually nationalists ... with certain far-right inclinations on the one hand ... and on the other hand there are the parties that I am sort of belonging to, where there is a big lobby of uhm companies and where there is is uhm uhm a big lobby of uhm entrepreneurs. ... That party has also uhm ... in the beginning and and well ... for for many years ... waved the flag of the defender of the ... of the ... of the interests of entrepreneurs and the rich And in between there is the ... liberalism as as uhm ... as an ideology ... that rather ... defends ... the freedom of the individual ... that introduces the individual to its own freedom ... to its own ... to the power that is within a single individual ... that liberalism is lost in Belgium.

excerpt 43 – 20/05/2008

In the excerpt above, Hicham El Mzairh claims that the <ideology> of <liberalism> that <introduces the individual to its own freedom> and <power> is <lost in Belgium>. In this sense, he grants <ideology> a positive connotation by linking it to criteria such as <individualism>. This usage of the term <ideology> comes pretty close to the Gramscian concept introduced above. His preferred mode of liberalism impacts upon the way he evaluates various social and political actors and subjectivities. According to him, organisation should be based on the fact that one shares a <same background> or <profession>. Such forms of association are entirely legitimate according to Hicham. He disqualifies associations that emerge as a response to oppose oneself <against the Other>. According to him, identities and associations should be based on a recognition of individual freedom and power. He explains that organisation should never occur <at the expense of another group>. The type of political organisation that suits his <liberal> and <democratic> ideology best, is the <party>. This can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below.

HEM: You have to associate yourself in order to favour available choices ... and the best way to do this in democracies ... in order not to take advantage of another group ... is to associate oneself with a party. Why not? ... Or found a party if that is possible within a democratic framework ... Why not? ... And then try to uhm defend your standpoints ...

excerpt 44 – 20/05/2008

A ⟨liberal⟩ interpretation of ⟨integration⟩ and of politics in general provides Hicham with a way out of the vicious circle of polarisation, exclusion and ⟨confinement⟩ that he associates with types of politics that conflate the notions of ⟨integration⟩ and ⟨assimilation⟩. Issam thus disqualifies the assimilatory concept of integration. However, he does believe in the pragmatic value of a ⟨liberal⟩ articulation of this notion. This involves individual freedom with respect to dominant ⟨convictions⟩ and practices of ⟨seclusion⟩ he observes in the Moroccan communities. The image of the public sphere that Hicham articulates in this interview is characterized by a tension between groups who seclude themselves on the basis of religious and cultural discourses and practices when confronted with an Other that wants to assimilate them. He contrasts this situation starkly with a more desirable scenario in which individuals engage themselves socially and politically through the medium of the political party.

Najib Chakouh articulates a very different notion of society. He used the metaphor of a ⟨blob⟩⁷⁵ and of ⟨plasticine⟩⁷⁶ in order to conceptualize the structure of society. These metaphors allow him to criticise another mode of thinking that he intertextually links with the work of the statistician ⟨Quetelet⟩. Chakouh associates the work of ⟨Quetelet⟩ with a view of the world conceptualized in terms of a ⟨closet⟩ in which it is possible to establish clearly delineated boundaries that can be used to classify people. To Najib, the ontological structure of society can not be adequately conceptualized by a metaphor that emphasises the possibility of establishing clearly delineated boundaries.

NC: Quetelet

JZ: yes I don't think I know him actually

NC: Quetelet statistician one of the first that ...

JZ: yeah I'm not that much into quantitative

NC: (laughs) ah yes yes ... Quetelet Q U E T E L E T (spells it out) ... well that's what I've been told eh I never checked it myself either ... to put people into squares ... and then you have the world as a closet ... "You are talking about" "ah" ... "should we" ... "ow" ... "Greeks" open the locker ... "migrant" open the locker ... there is seemingly a locker for everything even though it isn't so ... For me it's more like I explained it back then eh ... like a blob ... (this excerpt continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 45 – 03/06/2008

The excerpt above continues in the excerpt below. Najib presents us with a viscous image of the world. Highlighting the fact that he studied criminology, he presents us with his alternative to the type of world-view associated with Quetelet.

NC: It's like well during my lessons in critical criminology I said like do I have to like ... I said you are like holding it [the blob] and it is something an object so society is like that but ... everything changes with the smallest movement and suddenly that blob does a thing of its own ... it seems like chaos. I say "if you are very simple-minded it may seem like chaos but I say there is order to it" ... Why? Because that blob has a certain cohesion and and everything is well like connected ... I say and that's why from

⁷⁵ The blob is a classic science fiction movie in which an amorphous slimy goo eats everything on its path. This knowledge led me to contextualise Najib's statement in a way he did not expect. However, his metaphor holds in spite of our initially different entextualisation and/or contextualisations.

⁷⁶ Plasticine is an all-boised non-drying clay that is used as a popular children's toy. In Dutch, the term is often used to refer to the type of the brand Play Doh.

the moment you push here it affects all sorts of things eh... and that's how I see the world as well eh that's why I said back then [the world is like] a wheelwork that's that's also the case according to me yes ... this is something solid eh but a blob that's well ... you know such a

JZ: yes yes it's more like

NC: yes it's a rather plastic kind of thing or a kind of blubber like status

JZ: I haven't seen the movie yet but uhm (laughs)

NC: (laughs) I haven't seen the movie yet either but it has nothing to do with the movie (laughs) yes shit uhm ... yeah but you know what I mean don't you

JZ: yes I can see ...

NC: Children also have that kind of

JZ: plasticine

NC: yes like plasticine but even looser

JZ: slime

NC: yeah that slimy stuff and that's actually that's society well that's how I look at society eh And as you give a little push here or if you try to do that (uses his finger to prod into a fictive object in his hands) ... then everything pops out of it everywhere on all sides and you can see that happening in all things ... you can try to suppress and push push push ... but at a certain moment ... kaboom

excerpt 46 – 03/06/2008

Even though Najib did not articulate the notion of integration within the immediate discussion of these metaphorical world-views (i.e. the world as a <closet> or <locker>; the world as a <blob> or as a pile of <plasticine> or <slime>; the world as a <wheelwork>), his viscous world view explains why he opts to position himself very carefully with respect to integration related labels and subject positions throughout his discourse. We will discuss Najib's use of the notion of <integration> in one of the upcoming subsections. For now, it suffices to note that he regularly uses hedges in order to distance himself from what he (implicitly) considers to be hegemonic understandings of key concepts in the migration-, integration-, and/or diversity debate(s). His viscous conceptualisation of society does not allow for an unreflexive usage of categories. His reluctance to use labels is most clearly expressed when he talks about the main objects of integration policy. Najib marks his metapragmatic awareness of the problematic nature of such terms by physically or discursively hedging notions such as <allochthon> or <integration>.

It should be noted that neither Hicham nor Najib throw the notion of <integration> over board. Nevertheless, there are significant differences with respect to the way they problematise the concept. Najib evaluates non-party political forms of organisation more positively than the liberal Hicham. On the other hand, Najib is very critical with respect to the way the liberal Minister Marino Keulen approached the <integration sector>. Marino Keulen was Minister of *Inburgering* between 2003 and 2009.

NC: ... you know liberals as little government as possible .. as much the uhm individual level or subcontracting as possible ... So yes that is basically the ground line eh and if you know that's in there you feel that it echoes everywhere ... So what are they going to do "all that social sector stuff throw it out of the door" ... they are right ... to a certain extent ... but not just like that (enacts a disdainful facial expression and throws a fictive object away while uttering a sound <poof>)... No, first make sure that there is another way of funding and so on and so on ...

excerpt 47 – 03/06/2008

We will go into Najib's critique of the ⟨integration sector⟩ later on. For the moment it is sufficient to note that he grants the ⟨liberals⟩ a point: ⟨they are right⟩ in wanting to do away with the ⟨integration sector⟩. But not in an unreflexive manner. First, one has to make sure that the objectives of the sector can be realised in another way. As we will see, Najib will elaborate on this point later in the interview.

Integration between imagination and representation

Concepts of ⟨integration⟩ are always based on some sort of implicitly or explicitly articulated imagination of social space. We already noticed how my interviewees rearticulate voices they perceive to be active in the debate about integration in the public sphere. However, space and voice are not the only dimensions relevant for an adequate understanding of how political awareness about abstract categories comes about. Visual metaphors and images are at least as important to issues of ⟨integration⟩. This especially goes for contexts wherein the concept of ⟨integration⟩ is linked to issues of ⟨image formation⟩⁷⁷.

Let us start with an example that illustrates the impact of mainstream media discourse on the reproduction of dominant discourses about ⟨integration⟩. All of my respondents problematised issues of media, representation and/or imagination at some point. Below, I will focus on the cases of Karima Adouiri, Nadia Fadil, Amane X, and Abdellatif Akhandaf. In different ways, they all analyse and criticise processes with respect to the imagination and the representation of minorities and diversity in the public sphere. As we will see, these analyses and critiques impact upon the way they deploy the category of ⟨integration⟩.

A first case in point is provided by Karima Adouiri. At the time of the interview, Karima was working as a public servant in the city of Lier. I contacted her because someone told me that she used to engage herself for the Action Committee Muslim Women (Dutch: Actiecomité Moslim Vrouwen (AMV)). Karima also engaged herself for the Association of Mosques and Islamic Associations of Antwerp (Dutch: Unie der Moskeeën en Islamitische Verenigingen van Antwerpen (UMIVA)). In preparation for the interview, I examined the AMV website. A great deal of the articles on this site dealt with issues related to the headscarf. Throughout the interview, Karima repeatedly addressed this issue as well. However, she also stated that the AMV did not intend to ⟨focus that exclusively on the headscarf⟩. She emphasised that she has not got ⟨any problems⟩ with ⟨the headscarf⟩ it herself. It should be noted that she wears one herself. When I asked her what issues she would have liked to talk about instead, she raised a feminist agenda shared with other feminist organisations such as the VOK (Dutch: Vrouwen Overleg Komitee) (i.e. ⟨differences in wages⟩ between men and women and the ⟨double work-load for women⟩). However, she also raised some issues that are more specific to Moroccan and Muslim women in Flanders. These issues have to do with ⟨discrimination on the labour market⟩ and with problems in the Flemish educational system.

JZ: so you are being addressed about that [the headscarf] and all of that but earlier on you also said that when you started with AMV that it was initially not your intention to focus that exclusively on the headscarf

KA: no, indeed, but that is the thing one always gets back to

JZ: mmh

⁷⁷ The Dutch noun ⟨beeldvorming⟩ is difficult to translate into English. It may be translated as ⟨image formation⟩, as ⟨representation⟩, and/or as ⟨picturing⟩. In some cases, I think it may also be translated as ⟨imagination⟩ in Anderson's sense of the word – i.e. in a subjective sense that is not reducible to mere fantasy. Considering the importance of visual metaphors in Abdellatif Akhandaf's discourse, I have opted to translate ⟨beeldvorming⟩ as ⟨image formation⟩

KA: because I don't need to talk about the headscarf I don't have any problems with it ... for the AMV

JZ: Because what would you have liked to focus on if things turned out differently?

KA: Actually, we wanted to focus on the position of women in Flanders and reinforce that. Establish contacts within one's own community with other women's movements. We were like "it is a luxury that you can discuss about differences in wages". For us as well we want to fight for that as well and that is what we did with the VOK⁷⁸. They had a different list of priorities, they talked about unequal wages, they talked about the double work load for women, they talked about very important things that we supported as well. But we were like "education that is totally going the wrong way, discrimination on the labour market those are problems we want to see dealt with". But they always came back to the headscarf like "yes but that headscarf is in the way". (this excerpt continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 48 – 28/08/2007

In the last lines of the excerpt above, Karima explained how ⟨they⟩ always came back on the headscarf. She changed her pitch of voice and rearticulated a voice she encounters in the public sphere when she starts to address the issues she would prefer to discuss: ⟨yes yes but that headscarf is in the way⟩. Below, Karima explains how the AMV was constantly being interpellated on the basis of headscarf-related issues. The excerpt starts with a small misunderstanding. I initially thought that ⟨they⟩ referred to the feminists of the VOK. But apparently, Karima's frustration with respect to the systematic interpellations on the basis of the headscarf are first and foremost directed at political institutions and the media. This can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below.

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) From feminist organisations as well?

KA: nononono from ... if you contest these things uhm ... from the Minister from the media it always rebounds like yes ... and always questions about that headscarf. Very often one did not know us ... until something happened with respect to the headscarf and then all of a sudden one puts a microphone under our noses and then we were important enough to hear uhm what we do and who we are. But as long as we cried like "let us work on the real issues, the socio-economic deprivation of the communities, the fact that the unemployment figures are so high, the fact that the flow to higher education is so dire, all of these problems have to do with the position of women as well. Emancipation, integration, has to do with work and schooling and education and development" but ... that was not picked up by anyone ... and then one keeps on [saying] like "yes but if you would take off that headscarf then you would find work" yes ... and then you are back at go. (this excerpt continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 49 – 28/08/2007

In the excerpt above, Karima points out that the socio-political points of interest of the AMV were not recognized by ⟨the media⟩ unless the AMV was prepared to discuss the ⟨headscarf⟩ first. In this context, it is interesting to note that Karima associates ⟨emancipation⟩ with ⟨integration⟩. Moreover, she narrows the meaning of both concepts by metapragmatically defining them as having ⟨to do with work and schooling and education and development⟩ - and not with the headscarf as such. Unfortunately, this principle ⟨was not picked up by anyone⟩ in the media. Quite the contrary. Karima emphasises this point by rearticulating a media related voice that ⟨keeps on⟩ saying like ⟨yes but if you would take off that headscarf then you would find work⟩.

At that point, I was struck by the paradoxical situation organisations such as the AMV seem to be confronted with. I therefore asked Karima if she was not ⟨afraid⟩ that this would lead to ⟨even more⟩ attention being devoted to the ⟨headscarf⟩. She acknowledges this concern and goes on to claim that the AMV ⟨asked⟩ herself ⟨that question as well⟩. Faced with this potential self-fulfilling prophecy that puts the head-scarf at the center of discussions on integration and emancipation, the women of AMV

⁷⁸ The VOK (Vrouwen Overleg Komitee, i.e. Women's Consultation Committee) is a feminist organisation.

concluded that they could not simply let the issue slide. According to Karima, too many things are happening that ⟨are not acceptable⟩ and can not be condoned.

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) of course ... no but ... well if for instance that discussion like uhm ... well so that theme of headscarf issues if that is being picked up by say the FMV and that sort of thing

KA: yes

JZ: aren't you afraid that even more uhm attention will be ...

KA: that's how it is

JZ: because these organisations are dealing with education and I think they are busy developing a respectable projects around that

KA: yes that's true ... and I understand [what you're saying] because we asked ourselves that question as well. Because the longer we are discussing this, the longer we get stuck with that headscarf, but on the other side ... we can't let it go because things are happening which are not acceptable and because we are like "if we remain silent about this it seems like we agree" ...

excerpt 50 – 28/08/2007

The example of Karima Adouiri illustrates the problematic relationship between minority activism and mainstream media. However, the relationship between integration and representation also impacts on other images we are confronted with in our intersubjectively experienced world-views. For instance, Amane X who worked as a public servant for the Antwerp Integration Service (Dutch: Dienst Integratie Antwerpen (DIA)), explains how generations of people are connected to one another through the dreams they pass on to each other. According to her, ⟨dreams⟩ of ⟨older generations⟩ are often passed on to ⟨younger generations⟩. She suggests that ⟨you could base an entire integration policy on this simple argument⟩. The danger of ignoring this principle lies first and foremost in feelings of ⟨bitterness⟩ that will be passed on when these ⟨dreams⟩ are not realised.

AX: I strongly believe in the transferability of dreams from older generations to younger generations. I believe strongly in that and I think that everyone, every pedagogue will say that as well. How often have boys become doctors because it was a dream of their daddy to become doctor? You could base an entire integration policy on this simple argument. Because if you know that it is the case that generations are connected like that, then this also tells you something about the importance of making sure that the first generation can grow old here in a good way. Because otherwise everything is lost. Because the second generation will then try to realise the dreams of their parents. Not only by doing the job daddy or mum dreamt about, or by following the education their parents dreamt about, but also by stuff such as where to grow old. And some will dream and it will always remain a dream ... yes ... and there are two consequences to that: bitterness you'll have a big unhappy group who is embittered because their dream was never realized, or people who adapt themselves, that also happens eh, like that dream did not turn into reality no problem I'll deal with it like this, very healthy, but I don't think we can allow this to happen. I don't think this is a good thing. (this turn continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 51 – 04/10/2007

Amane X continues her argument below. Here, she articulates the notion of ⟨integration⟩ in at least two ways. According to her, the legitimacy of ⟨integration⟩ and ⟨diversity⟩ related policies largely depends on the extent to which one accommodates for the ⟨expectations⟩ and for the ⟨image⟩ one has about how to grow ⟨old in a respectable way⟩. It is interesting to note that Amane tries to illustrate her argument by referring to the interaction of the interview itself. She presumes that I would probably have ⟨an image⟩ of her that involves her growing old without a headscarf. During the interview, she was not wearing any sort of Islamic clothing. However, according to her ⟨expectation⟩, ⟨there is not a hair⟩ on her ⟨head⟩ ⟨that thinks about growing old without a headscarf⟩. It is hard to decide whether this is really the case since Amane has hedged her statement as a hypothesis.

But she nevertheless discursively succeeds in establishing a link between what she thinks my expectations might be and what she considers to be one of the main problems of ⟨diversity⟩ and ⟨integration⟩ related policies. The ⟨images⟩ discussed by Amane pertain to (future) socio-political relationships in the public sphere. As her comments on my own supposed expectations illustrate, the lack of attention for such ⟨images⟩ in ⟨diversity⟩ and ⟨integration⟩ policies pertains to both the images of the majority as to the ⟨images⟩ and ⟨expectations⟩ that are passed on between various ⟨generations⟩ of migrants and their children.

AX: (This turn is a continuation of the turn above) I think that to us as a society and for everyone eh, whether this is a society in diversity or just people among one another, but also on the institutional level, I don't think it is healthy that we see this happening and don't do anything about it. That we never translate this into action. I understand and I can only present arguments to make sure that the other sees this too: that in an integration policy, in a diversity policy, one not only needs to take current needs and values into account, but also and especially the expectations of people. There is too often an expectation like ... (turns to me and addresses me in a more conversational tone) you see me sitting here on a chair and I guarantee that your image about me and about how I will grow old does not include a headscarf. In my image about how I will grow old whether ... whether this is really the case or not it does not matter, these expectations are there but are not being articulated ... in my expectation there is not a hair on my head that thinks about growing old without a headscarf. One day I will wear the headscarf because it makes me trigger an association of growing old in a respectable way. Islam and culture aside, merely a woman, that does a 'watergolfke'⁷⁹ with the hairdresser every week, perhaps that's a familiar image to you, but maybe eh ...

excerpt 52 – 04/10/2007

A third creative articulation of ⟨integration⟩ can be found in the interview I conducted with Nadia Fadil. Nadia is a sociologist who wrote a PhD about religious trajectories among Muslim women From a Foucaultian perspective (see: Fadil 2008a). She is also a public intellectual who as engaged herself in a variety of civil society organisations including Kif Kif, the AEL and SAMV (Support Center for Allochthon Girls and Women) (Dutch: Steunpunt Allochtone Meisjes en Vrouwen). She links the notion of integration with Benedict Anderson's concept of ⟨imagined community⟩. At a certain point, she explains how she was on a ⟨religious trip⟩ when she was about sixteen years old. Within this context, she told me how this lead to some tensions with respect to her family located on what she calls the ⟨margin⟩ of the ⟨imagined⟩ Islamic ⟨community⟩.

NF: (laughs) uhm ... religion is a general framework ... a part of culture no less. So uhm we have been sent to the mosque and stuff like that but ... our daddy does not pray so that means that as a family you already are ... living at the margin of the community because uhm you don't visit one of the most important integrating places and that's the mosque ... you basically spend your holidays uhm at home and it's not as if you really have a strong connection with the rest of the imaginary community and uhm ... so for me becoming religious constituted a kind of resistance and and rebellion a kind of legitimate rebellion euhm I remember that at a certain moment he told me "if you start to wear a headscarf then" uhm (laughs) "I won't appear in public with you anymore" and (laughs)

excerpt 53 – 22/08/2008

In the excerpt above, the ⟨mosque⟩ is described as one of the ⟨most important integrating places⟩. This is a unique articulation of the concept of integration among the interviews I conducted. Nadia thus attributes the space of the mosque some sort of integrating agency. In this utterance, the deictic center of the verb to integrate is no longer constituted by a hegemonic actor, by a dominant social group (e.g. autochthons), by a sovereign liberal subject, or by a government. Rather, it lies in what one may call a diasporic public space that is established by means of a number of Islamic religious and cultural

⁷⁹ A ⟨watergolfke⟩ is an Antwerp dialect word for a hair-cut that involves artificial curling. Amane uses the term in order to construct a stereotypical image of the way in which elder – Antwerp – women mark their dignity at a certain age. The code-switch to the Antwerp dialect (through the diminutive ⟨ke⟩) performs an important indexical function.

practices such as prayer and certain festivities. It is safe to assume that the sociologist Nadia Fadil is familiar with Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined communities. Even though she did not refer to this author explicitly, the usage of this term indexically establishes the relevance of her sociologic subjectivity. Fadil's alternative interpretation of Anderson's concept can also be linked to her search for ⟨alternative fora⟩ and spaces to hold ⟨the debate⟩.

NF: ... actually when I was with Kif Kif ... I was there first and foremost in order to create a kind of alternative forum where the minority question could be charted in a different way ... or where the debate could be held ... But I absolutely believe that we need this. Not only Kif Kif, but also different forums in order to ... contra fora well not contra fora but, well, alternative fora ... Alternative fora where you can uhm ... hold these debates in a different way. Also, more more sensitive themes that are immediately hi-jacked in the public debate by this actor or that actor, they can be put to the fore as well ... but also by doing on collective history writing ... the collective ... the the presence the ... well ... to write our history but writing not only literally writing but also imagining uhm ... cultural productions uhm ... really ... making the presence ... visible in all sorts of ways ... through images through texts ... musically on all ... and by making that diversity in stories and trajectories visible so that it does not ... But at the same time, ... to me it is very important that if I do this that it is not without engagement.

excerpt 54 – 22/08/2008

The fact that Nadia's involvement and support for ⟨alternative fora⟩ ⟨is not without engagement⟩ pertains to earlier and later statements that the discourse deployed in these fora should be an ⟨anti-racist⟩ discourse. It should also be a ⟨class discourse⟩ enabling a ⟨class analysis⟩. According to Nadia, the strategic choice for the public spaces wherein debates are held impacts upon the themes, the positions, the voices, the analyses, as well as on the communities that can be discursively and performatively established.

One last case in which the link between ⟨integration⟩ and issues related to ⟨representation⟩ is clearly articulated can be found in the interview I conducted with Abdellatif Akhandaf who – like Amane – works at the integration service of Antwerp called DIA. Abdellatif's engagement for DIA and for other initiatives such as ⟨Borgerhout Beter Bekeken⟩⁸⁰ are based on a concern with respect to the relationship between ⟨representation⟩ and ⟨integration⟩. Earlier on, he explained that his political points of interest largely revolve around the question ⟨how⟩ to ⟨make sure⟩ that the diversity and the visible presence of ⟨allochthons⟩ in Antwerp becomes ⟨normal⟩. Abdellatif thus frames his socio-political engagements as acts that are meant to stimulate the normalisation of diversity. It is within this context, that he claims that ⟨twenty thirty years ago one always presupposed like if people reside here long enough integration will happen automatically and uhm ... that's not true⟩. In the excerpt below, he provides us with an explanation.

AA: Actually that does not make sense. The bigger a group is the more social control you get uhm the more ... uhm ... there is uhm negative representation uhm. That is why the bigger a group becomes the more events there will be and this is normal uhm on a statistical level uhm ... we also note that media pick up on that. Positive issues are not are not

JZ: interesting?

AA: they are not interesting enough uhm uhm so it will not even be read. People are not asking for that either.

excerpt 55 – Summer 2008

⁸⁰ “Borgerhout Beter Bekeken” was an initiative of people living in Borgerhout – an Antwerp district that acquired the nickname ‘Borgerokko’ (a conflation of ‘Borgerhout’ and ‘Morocco’). Especially during the eighties and nineties, Borgerokko was often associated with criminality and with migration-related problems. The initiative “Borgerhout Beter Bekeken” aimed to express a more positive image of Borgerhout. Abdellatif frames this initiative as an initiative aimed at ⟨consultation⟩ between ⟨allochthons⟩ who ⟨were called guest workers⟩ at the time on the one hand, and ⟨autochthons⟩ on the other. Borgerhout was meant ⟨to create a positive image of Borgerhout⟩.

Abdellatif Akhandaf does not only problematise the selection criteria of the ⟨media⟩, he also points out that the issue of ⟨integration⟩ is linked to ⟨pictures⟩ he sees ⟨in the street⟩. These ⟨pictures⟩ pertain to the heightened visibility and presence of ⟨allochthons⟩ in Flemish urban environments. He goes on and explains how a combination of such ⟨pictures⟩ or images with a lack of ⟨contact⟩ between ⟨people⟩ belonging to different ⟨communities⟩ leads to ⟨feelings of insecurity⟩ that trigger a negative mode of identity development. Abdellatif's preferred mode of identity implies a process whereby one develops one's identity on the basis of ⟨self-confidence⟩. According to him, this would provide a solid base for more interaction, and consequently, for more ⟨integration⟩. This point can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below.

JZ: So you really see like a connection between that insecurity and identity development

AA: yes ... yes ... it is intertwined. Why? If you are self-confident in a society, in a society where you feel safe, you will also uhm broaden your identity, you will relish, you will take a taste from the other.

JZ: mmh

AA: and because of that you will also become more flexible uhm in the development of your own identity, and later on, you will be open to innovation

JZ : mmh

AA: uhm ... [if you]close yourself off or if you are slowed down by your own community

JZ: mmh

AA: social control and supervision and so on yes then you will close yourself off and everything becomes threatening ... all innovation

JZ: mmh

AA: of the other communities of the other culture will be blocked and will be perceived as being negative as threatening and uhm ... strong identities will be created within the particularity of that group or of that community

JZ: mmh

AA: and in the long run that is well ... uhm it leads to a confront a confronta uhm ... while twenty thirty years ago one always presupposed like if people only reside here long enough integration will happen automatically and uhm ... that's not true.

excerpt 56 – Summer 2008

Abdellatif's concept of integration entails an important communicative, representational and imaginative dimension that can be found in the discourse of many other respondents as well. It should also be noted that the idea of an ⟨identity development⟩ on the basis of one's ⟨particularity⟩ may remind one of Hicham el Mzairh's more liberal notion of the subject. But whereas Hicham's preferred mode of ⟨integration⟩ was based on a concept of individual ⟨freedom⟩, Abdellatif puts more emphasis on the communitarian roots of one's self-image. This can be exemplified when Abdellatif Akhandaf starts to discuss policy with respect to ⟨religion⟩ and ⟨Islam⟩. According to him, ⟨Islam⟩ is ⟨purposefully not supported⟩ leading to a situation in which there is ⟨no recognition⟩ of one's ⟨individuality as a person⟩, ⟨as a community⟩, and ⟨as an individual⟩. Once again, the usage of abstract categories is linked to issues of subjectivity and (mis)recognition. This becomes especially clear in the excerpt below:

AA: (this is a continuation of an ongoing turn) there is no full recognition of your individuality as a

person as a community, as an individual, ... with all your cultural and your religious uhm heritage. So that influences the uhm character ... also with respect to communication. If we say like “integration will happen automatically”, no, it will not happen automatically because certain messages certain reflections will be passed on from parents to children. If parents do not feel involved and feel unappreciated and unrecognized with respect to a particular part of their being, well you will reflect and transfer this to your child.

excerpt 57 – Summer 2008

Because of this perspective on ⟨identity development⟩ and misrecognition, Abdellatif evaluates the role of government apparatuses and his own subject position as a civil servant in a similar vein as Amane X. The excerpt below is taken from the interview with Abdellatif.

AA: And that is where uhm where we well where we sometimes miss the point Also, from the perspective of education I think ... uhm education is not yet fully attuned to to uhm reality. Especially in Antwerp.

excerpt 58 – 04/10/2007

In all of the discourses rearticulated above, the relationship between representations and images in the public sphere has been problematised in similar as well as in diverging ways. As such, the examples not only illustrate that the overdetermined meaning of ⟨integration⟩ related lemma is influenced by the spatial, temporal and polyphonic, aspects of reality, but also by one’s subjective evaluation of the images one is faced with in public interaction. Also, the excerpts exemplify the importance of understanding an individual’s preferred sense of self. In turn, this allows for an understanding of the ethical and socio-political projects people are engaged in.

Integration as a natural phenomenon vs integration as a political and institutional process

Another aspect of ⟨integration⟩ pertains to the question whether we are talking about a natural phenomenon or about a strategic and/or institutional process. It is probably useful to stick with the case of Abdellatif Akhandaf a little bit longer. We already noticed how according to Abdellatif, ⟨integration⟩ does not happen ⟨automatically⟩. According to him, this can be largely explained with reference to processes related to the visual ⟨representation⟩ of diversity in the public sphere. Abdellatif considers integration to be something that needs to be actively stimulated and promoted by governmental institutions as well as by individuals who engage themselves in such a project. According to him, the realisation of ⟨integration⟩ does not only depend on the way one evaluates the ⟨pictures⟩ encountered in the public sphere, but also on the self-techniques individuals deploy in order to establish ⟨self-confidence⟩. As long as identity formation is based on ⟨feelings of insecurity⟩ and on a lack of social ⟨contacts⟩ and interactions, ⟨integration⟩ will remain nothing but a mirage. The alternative subjectivity preferred by Abdellatif involves a form of identity construction based on ⟨self-confidence⟩. In this respect, the following quotation is quite interesting. The idea that ⟨integration⟩ does not happen ⟨automatically⟩ motivates his professional engagement for the governmental service DIA.

AA: what will happen then well you will uhm you will ... pull up your defences and that’s why I say like we are not we are not ready to uhm we are not open to diversity we are not open to integration ...

JZ: ah ok

AA: And and there are some things you can’t do as a government from the top down but you have to put them in motion in order to make it possible.

excerpt 59 – Summer 2008

According to Abdellatif, governmental institutions have to play an important facilitating role with respect to ⟨integration⟩. He explains this by claiming that processes of ⟨integration⟩ and ⟨migration⟩ can also be described in terms of an ⟨experiential process⟩ that involves ⟨both groups⟩. These ⟨groups⟩ pertain to allochthons and autochthons. Abdellatif also points out that the pace of the ⟨integration process⟩ depends to a large extent on size of the ⟨differences⟩. He explains this as follows.

AA: ... the uhm the migration from uhm ... from uhm well ... uhm Latin America and so on ... there the integration process will take less time. Why? Simply because the difference are ... smaller ... uhm. The differences are smaller uhm The resistance to integrate oneself is smaller because there are a lot of similarities uhm So growing towards one another intertwining with one another, will be accomplished within decennia uhm within one decennium. But where the differences are big with respect to skin

JZ: with respect to what?

AA: with respect to skin or with respect to values and norms or religion and religious differences ... those differences are too big and the integration process and the process of acceptance, the migration process is really about an experiential process uhm an experiential process of both groups uhm ... There it will take longer. One (somebody interrupts our conversation) ...

excerpt 60 – Summer 2008

Nevertheless, according to Abdellatif Akhandaf, there are some ⟨differences⟩ that the government does not recognise in its current policies. These differences pertain first and foremost to ⟨religion⟩. He also claims that this category of religious differences is taboo within civil society. He argues that the misrecognition of association on the basis of religion on the part of the government leads to a misrecognition of an ⟨important⟩ part of one's ⟨being⟩. Implicitly, he argues that governmental institutions are mis-interpreting what ⟨integration⟩ and the ⟨interpretation process⟩ ought to mean. According to Abdellatif, this brings us full circle to the ⟨negative⟩ types of identity formation he discussed before. On the basis of the excerpt below, we can conclude that Abdellatif Akhandaf considers ⟨integration⟩ to be a process of experience and imagination. The rate of success of this process is dependent on a specific dynamic between individuals and their communities, media, and government(s). In this sense, his preferred mode of ⟨integration⟩ entails a variety of strategic and institutionalised processes.

AA: We can talk about emancipation we can talk about culture but we cannot talk about religion ... even though religion is part of their of their being. So it was always taboo especially ... we do support culture we do support cultural activities we support uhm and we finance uhm culture. But one has to remain silent about religion ... and this led to a damper on the and it lead to reluctance with respect to integration uhm within the integration ...

JZ: In civil society?

AA: In civil society yes ... uhm one also looked with with with uhm ... one looked with distrust at a great deal of allochthon associations and also at the umbrellas [the federations of migrant self-organisations] like “no disrespect you can do your thing specifically about culture and uhm euhm about getting to know one another and about dialogue and so on” but uhm what is really important ...

excerpt 61 – Summer 2008

Other respondents tended to emphasise ⟨integration⟩ as a more or less natural or normal social phenomenon. This obviously leads to a down-playing of the role of governmental integration policies. In order to illustrate this point, it is useful to return to the interview I conducted with Najib Chakouh. Referring to Tarik Fraihi, the founding father of Kif Kif, who declared the bankruptcy of the Flemish integration policies, Najib presents his own view on integration. In line with his reluctance to compartmentalise identities and communities, and in agreement with his viscous conceptualisation of the world in terms of a ⟨blob⟩ or in terms of ⟨plasticine⟩, he provides the following analysis.

NC: we are tired of the fact that way too much is [done] ‘for us’ .. but not ‘by us’ ... and if we are talking about uhm ... about uhm Tarik uhm well I don’t know if I quote him literally but uhm ‘the bankruptcy of integration politics’ yes ... then ... that piece yes ... but that does not mean that integration does not happen ... integration happens anyway

JZ: mmh

NC: So I mean I uhm I once said something and that made people very silent especially people in the field of the social sector ... I said “what we are doing right now, from a historical perspective, this is lost time ... because in the long run ... it will solve itself ...”

JZ: mmh

NC: You can see that with respect to all sort of things ... even with respect to those who are most oppressed ... in the long run there will be a light [at the end of the tunnel] ... of course there will always remain some points of struggle uhm or some issues that need help but I mean ...

JZ: Why are you occupying yourself with it anyway then?

NC: So you make sure that everything keeps on going in that direction

excerpt 62 – 03/06/2008

Making sure that ⟨integration⟩ keeps on going ⟨in that direction⟩ somewhat resembles the point made by Abdellatif Akhandaf. Nevertheless, there is a tension between the way both interviewees articulate the concept of articulation with practices of government related practices and policies. Both criticise current policies . But whereas Najib states that ⟨integration⟩ happens ⟨anyway⟩, Abdellatif claims that it does not happen ⟨automatically⟩. For this reason, the latter attributes an important role for the government as a counter-weight for the dominant ⟨pictures⟩ that are being distributed in public urban and mediatised spheres.

The failure of integration processes vs the failing of integration policies

The question of critique with respect to the institutional aspects of ⟨integration⟩ is also repeatedly articulated by respondents by discussing the ⟨bankruptcy of integration⟩. But even here, there is considerable room for interpretation and debate. In the excerpt above, Najib Chakouh intertextually referred to Tarik Fraihi’s critique on the integration sector. However, Najib’s reference to ⟨the bankruptcy of integration politics⟩ does not imply a failure of ⟨integration⟩ as a process. From his perspective, ⟨integration happens anyway⟩. Interestingly, the intertextual reference to Tarik Fraihi activates Najib’s subject position as an activist / chairman involved in the intercultural platform Kif Kif. In the excerpt below, we can see what happens next.

NC: That goes without saying ... but we are not meek eh we are no tree-huggers as they put it ... so uhm well if we say ‘bankruptcy of integration’ ... it’s like that eh ... I am [involved] in Samenlevingsopbouw⁸¹ ... the board of directors Well the first thing I, well in different words, I said to the team co-ordinator of Borgerhout, I said like “sorry but uhm you are busy for fifteen years and I don’t see any difference” ... “oh that that’s not true and we uhm” ... I say “some Moroccan women who are knitting somewhere upstairs in a group on an attic ... I don’t see what you are stimulating that way. Of course, they might like that but those groups will probably have changed a lot

⁸¹ There are several ways to translate the noun ‘samenlevingsopbouw’: society construction or society building; (the) construction of society; (the) building of society. The organisation called ⟨Samenlevingsopbouw⟩ aims to organise socially vulnerable groups. It aims to improve the quality of living together in villages, cities, and neighborhoods by collaborating with interest groups, with volunteers, with social workers and with policy makers. See also: http://www.samenlevingsopbouw.be/site/portal.php?page=portal_inleidingstekst .

by now, from the beginning until now” ... I say with respect to social work well A face like that (Najib puts on a shocked facial expression) of course but still I said it and I don’t care.

excerpt 63 – 17/06/2008

The (we) Najib talks about in the first few lines of the excerpt above, refers to those who criticise the (bankruptcy of integration). More specifically, he is talking about people associated with Kif Kif. The excerpt above also illustrates that his statements about the (bankruptcy of integration) should be understood within the context of a more general evaluation of the so-called integration sector. As a whole, he labels the (integration sector) as (white), (paternalistic), and (meek). The notion of meekness thus functions in a similar vein as the concept of activism in Issam Z’s discourse. In both cases, we are dealing with criteria that serve as a means to categorise the landscape of Flemish civil society organisations involved in the integration debate. The excerpt below shows how Najib emphasises the similarities between (Kif Kif) and the (AEL).

NC: And that’s why I say that everyone has his merits eh ... uhm ... this may seem like I don’t want to articulate an opinion on this but I see positive and negative things in any action eh ... I mean even even take for instance something that many people in the field, to put it bluntly, approached negatively. When we are talking about the AEL ... as well ... because I mean like eighty percent did correspond. He [Dyab Abou Jahjah] used to be an old pall eh but for instance ... I think it was very positive what happened and even now I think they are still needed. To put it bluntly, purely selfish, for the benefit of Kif Kif ... but that’s a purely selfish perspective. Why? Because they allow us to come to the fore. “That can be played like this”, “then it can be played like that”, “then it can be played like this”. You can play it like this: one is radical and that one is less radical ...

JZ: mmh

NC: But yeah all of these are ... techniques you can ... find out or play with on a strategical level eh. (this excerpt continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 64 – 17/06/2008

Even though Najib recognises the (merits) of everyone involved, he does categorise the main actors in the debate on a continuum of radicalism in which the (meek) (integration sector) is ranked below the AEL, Kif Kif, and the FMV of Mohamed Chakkar. The (strategical) game of positioning civil society organisations on an axis of radicalism is also an ethical issue. Even though most actors involved in the debate have their (merits), it should be noted that the criterion of radicalism allows Najib to rank various actors in the debate on a continuum between radicalism and meekness. In this sense, (the integration sector), ranks just above the liberal policy of the Minister for *Inburgering* Marino Keulen. On the other hand, it ranks below more (radical) organisations such as the (AEL) and (Kif Kif).

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) And with respect to what do you consider it to be more radical for instance ...

NC: their their their ... their demands and performances eh I mean uhm he does this and he does that ... a lot of very a lot less diplomatic And Kif Kif is not exactly weak eh I mean it’s also reasonably [radical] but not until that level. And for instance Chakkar is even less [radical] then Kif Kif I think ... well on that level at least.

JZ: yes yes

NC: While the integration sector well it’s meek eh, it’s like with its tail between its legs, tree-hugging and sweating in the heat ... and not daring to say anything ...

JZ: mmh ...

NC: The policy of Keulen [liberal Minister of *Inburgering*] for instance ... I don’t call that a policy eh ...

excerpt 65 – 17/06/2008

Note that Najib's description of the radical character of the AEL is entirely based on metapragmatic evaluations of the AEL communicative style. Kif Kif is more ⟨diplomatic⟩ than the ⟨AEL⟩ but dears ⟨to say⟩ more about integration related issues than the FMV of Mohamed Chakkar and than the ⟨integration sector⟩ as a whole. Nevertheless, all of these actors have their ⟨merits⟩, except for the integration ⟨policy⟩ of Keulen. Najib does not even want to ⟨call⟩ it a ⟨policy⟩. His characterization of Flemish civil society organisations involved in the minority debate boils down to an issue of boldness and assertiveness in communication. All of this also impacts on the way he rearticulates Tarik Fraihi's ⟨bankruptcy of integration⟩. He notes that there are very different ways in which this concept can be interpreted:

NC: I think that at any rate there are different interpretations concerning the bankruptcy of integration eh but ... I think I think I think that this might be one of the reasons why Keulen is like this. Because he thinks "well yes see that [the bankruptcy of integration] has been put to the fore and I kind of like that and you know if it suits my purposes" ... But people forget that my purposes are put between quotation marks ... And his purposes consist in eliminating everything so to say ... the individual is important ...

excerpt 66 – 17/06/2008

We already noted what Najib's alternative to Keulen's liberal concept of integration looks like. His viscous view of man and society involves a perspective wherein communities deserve a more prominent role than in ⟨liberal⟩ ⟨ideology⟩. Nevertheless, at a certain point Najib does label his own position with respect to the ⟨struggle⟩ of ⟨minorities⟩ as being ⟨liberal⟩. However, this liberalism is ⟨not political⟩ but rather philosophical. To him, this means that it is possible for individuals to obstruct the ⟨wheelwork⟩ of society at specific points in time.

With respect to the issue at hand, we should conclude that both ⟨integration⟩ and ⟨the bankruptcy of integration⟩ function as empty signifiers over which political and discursive struggles are being waged. This can be proven to be the case by contrasting the various ways my respondents use these concepts. For instance, Ahmed Zizaoui, involved in the Antwerp successor of DIA called Atlas⁸² associates the claim that ⟨integration has failed⟩ with right-wing voices in the public sphere. This can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below.

AZ: ... Of course, it's also true that on the other hand, if you go somewhere where a lot of people are really really oriented towards the right eh, like "the stuff that has happened thus far is not enough" ... "integration has failed" and so on, "it is about time that they all start to speak Dutch" and so on. Yesterday there was a screening of eh I told you about *My Story* [Dutch: *Mijn Verhaal*]. Very good very interesting and at the very end someone says like "yes I think we really don't uhm I think it is really no option that we have to make sure that the personnel of ... our institutions eh institutions for old people ... knows the language of those people. ... Because if I go abroad I have to speak that language as well" and so on ... well (this excerpt continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 67 – 15/05/2008

The film *My Story* is a documentary in which film maker Mohammed Ihkan recorded the stories of two Moroccan migrants of the first generation who came to Belgium during the sixties. This film was screened at various locations and was often followed by a subsequent public discussion. Ahmed Zizaoui attended one of these screenings and discussions in which the issue of Islamic homes for the elderly was raised. In the excerpt above, Ahmed problematised the statements made by a member of the audience. This discussion functions as an example of ⟨people⟩ who are ⟨really really oriented towards the right⟩. He even provides us with a summary of statements associated with such a far right subject position: ⟨the stuff that has happened thus far is not enough⟩; ⟨integration has failed⟩; and ⟨it is about time that they all start to speak Dutch⟩.

⁸² DIA changed its name to *Atlas: house for diversity and inburgering*. The concept of inburgering is hard to translate in English. A more detailed account of concepts such as integration, diversity and *inburgering* will be provided in subchapter 2.3.2.

In order to understand what Ahmed does in the excerpt above, it is important to understand how the left-right metaphor functions with respect to his preferred mode of analysis and socio-political positioning. Ahmed pointed out that he was ⟨initially oriented to the left⟩ whereas he later made a ⟨turn to the right⟩. However, he also emphasises that he now occupies a ⟨centered⟩, ⟨objective⟩, and ⟨realist⟩ attitude that should not be confused with ⟨racism⟩. He explains that ⟨a lot of allochthons⟩ and a lot of his ⟨colleagues⟩ at Atlas ⟨are too much in that leftist corner⟩. Even though he does ⟨not want them to sit in the rightist corner⟩ either, he would prefer a situation in which they would ⟨look⟩ ⟨with an objective⟩ perspectives to ⟨existing problems⟩ such as homophobia and racism among minorities. He also explicitly rejects the idea that this form ⟨objective⟩ of criticism constitutes a form of ⟨racist⟩ discourse. Ahmed's position with respect to the statement that ⟨integration has failed⟩ should be understood with the this ethical and political topography in mind.

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) And was that question also directed at that same person again?

AZ: yes yes yes indeed eh because there was a moderator and stuff ... and then I say like ... if you have that mentality in spite of the fact that if you ... look at the context well how should you consider things in their context eh. People have come to here and did not receive, did not get the opportunity to follow lessons in Dutch and who are now too old and have never done anything but work work work. And now they are retired and growing old and you can't expect those people to actually study Dutch. ... Especially not if we are dealing with illiterates eh so uhm In part I think that people who have such ah well such a vision or such a mentality and who make such remarks ... well they are really already too far in that rightist corner ... they are like ... "so many things go wrong and there is so much going wrong and it is about time that" ... and so on. So yeah really they they... they put the threshold rather close. At the same time, you might say that from a leftist perspective, one is almost entirely without threshold eh like "those allochthons they can ... do nothing wrong", from their point of view.

excerpt 68 – 15/05/2008

To Ahmed Zizaoui, taking a ⟨central⟩ position in the political spectrum between ⟨left⟩ and ⟨right⟩, implies a discursive strategy of analysing social phenomena and conflicts between various groups and individuals by putting things in the right ⟨context⟩. This can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt above. He disqualifies the ⟨really really right⟩ remark with respect to the unacceptability of Islamic homes of the elderly in which elders would be addressed in their native tongues, by emphasising that one has ⟨to look at the context⟩. Since Ahmed does not consider this person to take contextual parameters concerning the illiterate and educational status of first generation migrants into account, he considers this to be ⟨already too far in that rightist corner⟩. One may therefore infer, that Ahmed's own ⟨turn to the right⟩ was halted by what he considers to be ⟨objective⟩ practices of contextualisation. This explains why Ahmed disqualifies right wing statements such as ⟨integration has failed⟩. It also explains why he is able to associate himself with Tarik Fraihi who he considers to make a ⟨good analysis⟩ with respect to ⟨society⟩ as well as with respect to the migrant ⟨communities⟩.

One may conclude that notion of the ⟨failure⟩ or ⟨bankruptcy⟩ of integration is constitutive for a wide range of socio-political positions. Its character as an empty signifier can be exemplified with reference to the way Ahmed Zizaoui and Najib Chakouh discuss the notion and with respect to the way they respectively rearticulate ⟨liberal⟩ and ⟨really really right⟩ voices in the debate on ⟨integration⟩. Explicit and implicit distinctions between the way people use concepts of integration can be found in the majority of the interviews I conducted.

Integration as an accomplishment vs integration as an unfinished process

Another tension one may observe among the notions of integration articulated within the Flemish public sphere pertains to the status of integration. One might claim that part of the discussion about

⟨integration⟩ revolves around the question whether we are dealing with an accomplished fact or with an ⟨unfinished process⟩. The attribution of both temporal qualifications hinges upon semantic and (meta)pragmatic widenings and narrowings of the meanings attached to this concept. In most of the analyses that have been presented thus far, integration is conceptualized as an ongoing process. In this respect, it is interesting to consider the way in which the chairman of the Federation for Moroccan Associations (FMV), Mohamed Chakkar, uses the concept. In a 2005 article titled *Integration is outdated*, published in the newspaper *Gazet van Antwerpen*, he claims that ⟨integration policy⟩ has been the most ⟨harmful policy⟩ that ⟨ever been conducted⟩. Moreover, he considers the ⟨call for integration⟩ to be a an ⟨outdated⟩ ⟨political⟩ phenomenon that ⟨has led to confusion in a thousand heads⟩. Nevertheless, he does not simply throw the concept overboard:

“We are no migrants any more. Whether autochthons like it or not, we are part of this society. Integration policy constitutes the most harmful policy that has ever been conducted. It is mainly a political concept. It has created confusion in a thousand heads. To most Flemish people integration equals assimilation. They say: “become like us”. That implies that they neither say that you can stay nor leave. No, you keep on standing at the front door. In the mean time we have a fourth generation of youngsters of a Moroccan origin. So, can one still talk about integration? I prefer to talk about societal integration. Everybody should get a real opportunity in society. People of another origin or with another sexual orientation should be accepted as they are. Contemporary society happens to be diverse. This is in contrast to assimilation, because this means pure discrimination” (Chakkar cited in: Concentra 2007)⁸³

Mohamed Chakkar thus places the responsibility for ⟨integration⟩ on society as a whole. On the other hand, he explicitly asks whether one can ⟨still talk about integration⟩ in a context that includes the presence of a ⟨fourth generation of youngsters with a Moroccan origin⟩. In this sense, he suggests that ⟨integration⟩ is a process that is outdated and/or already accomplished. There seems to be a tension between both concepts and it is fair to say that this tension results out of an implicit dialogue between mainstream and alternative voices in the debate about integration. The outdated notion of integration pertains to the ⟨call for integration⟩ in which the concept is equated with ⟨assimilation⟩. On the other hand, Chakkar’s call for ⟨societal integration⟩ implies that we are dealing with an unfinished process. It is within this context, that he discusses the role of the ⟨allochthon⟩ associations with respect to ⟨integration⟩ and ⟨emancipation⟩.

The chairman of the Federation for Moroccan Associations (FMV) challenges the idea suggested in the header of the article that ⟨allochthon associations⟩ are ⟨falling back on their community too extensively⟩. He refutes this idea by claiming that ⟨the government underestimates the value of our associations⟩.

“The associations do not provide the solution for the high degree of unemployment among allochthons, for the educational gap, and for racism in real-estate”, says Chakkar. “They do constitute the emancipatory engine of the community. You discover the needs of the community and try to put them on the political agenda. It is also a struggle for independence. We inform, sensitise, and attribute responsibility to people. We point out that they should take up their responsibility. Not only

⁸³ "Wij zijn geen migranten meer. Of de autochtonen het nu willen of niet, maar wij zijn een deel van deze samenleving. Het integratiebeleid is het meest schadelijke beleid dat er ooit werd gevoerd. Het is vooral een politiek begrip. Het zorgde voor verwarring in 10.000 hoofden. Bij de meeste Vlaamse mensen staat integratie gelijk aan assimilatie. Ze zeggen: 'Wordt zoals wij'. Daarmee zeggen ze niet dat je mag blijven of moet weggaan. Neen, je blijft aan de voordeur staan. We zijn ondertussen al aan de vierde generatie van jongeren van Marokkaanse origine. Dan kan je toch nog moeilijk over integratie praten? Ik spreek liever over maatschappelijke integratie. Iedereen hoort een volwaardige kans te krijgen in de maatschappij. Mensen van een andere origine of een andere geaardheid moeten worden geaccepteerd zoals ze zijn. De huidige samenleving is nu eenmaal divers. Dit in tegenstelling tot assimilatie, want dat is pure discriminatie." (Chakkar cited in: Concentra 2007)

at home, but also outside, in their street and in their neighbourhood.” (Chakkar cited in: Concentra 2007)⁸⁴

Chakkar thus implicitly narrows the notion of integration to issues related to (unemployment), education, and (racism). The (solution) as well as the (responsibility) of these problems can not be put on the shoulders of so-called (allochthon organisations). Whereas he puts the responsibility for (integration) on society as a whole, the task of the (associations) consists in practices of sensibilisation, information, and responsabilisation.

It is possible to contrast Chakkar’s usage of the concept of integration in this article with the way Mohamed Bouziani uses the notion. Bouziani is involved in *Imane* (Initiative Moroccan Networks) (Dutch: Initiatief Marokkaanse Netwerken). He is quite explicit in his claim that (integration) has been realised. He too, is able to make this claim by narrowing the meaning of integration. The notion is articulated within the context of a discussion of migrant voting rights. Bouziani describes the document migrants who wish to vote are required to sign as follows:

MB: ... it was a way of ... of saying like “well, you need to sign and it is a sort of declaration in which you declare that you are actually integrating yourself and [that you] respect the law, Belgian law”, blabla, and so on ...

excerpt 69 – 14/09/2007

Even though Mohamed Bouziani does accept the idea that integration involves adherence to Belgian laws, he criticises the implicit criminalisation of migrants. By narrowing the concept of (integration) to an adherence to (Belgian laws), Mohamed is able to consider (integration) as an accomplished fact. He uses the example of his father who makes an effort (to be in order) with respect to his administration:

MB: So most of the Moroccans here are people who really follow their laws very well. I notice this with my father. Whenever he gets a letter in his mailbox, he will be the first to go to the postal office, to pick it up, because you never know. Traffic taxes are always paid. In other words, he gives up on his other budgets in order to pay for government business, in order to be in order. (this turn continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 70 – 14/09/2007

By metapragmatically defining (integration) as a matter of respecting (Belgian law) and paying Belgian (taxes), Mohamed implicitly suggests that (integration is an accomplished fact). It is within this context, that he suggests an interesting problematic for me to investigate.

MB: (this turn is a continuation of het excerpt above) ... investigate it ... for instance nobody makes a study about this eh. Whether people of allochthon origin attach importance to government documents, to getting themselves in order, to comply with, and so on And not just in order to receive money but also in order to pay. I think such acts go without saying and it should be mentioned as a recognition because these people do ... because if one does not give a damn bout it eh like “those laws and those appeals ...”. But no, a Moroccan or an autochthon from Moroccan descent are really people who occupy themselves with being in order as much as possible ... of course you have people who are say like marginalised it’s like there everywhere a small ... who do not feel Moroccan not Belgian ... that’s the case too and we are not going to deny this but the majority ... fortunately the majority are people who apply the laws and customs ...

⁸⁴ "De verenigingen bieden niet de oplossing voor de hoge werkloosheid bij allochtonen, de leerachterstand en het racisme op de woningmarkt", zegt Chakkar. "Wel vormen ze de emancipatorische motor van de gemeenschap. Je ontdekt de noden van de gemeenschap en je probeert die op de politieke agenda te plaatsen. Het is ook een ontvoogdingsstrijd. We informeren, sensibiliseren en responsabiliseren de mensen. We wijzen ze erop dat ze hun verantwoordelijkheid moeten opnemen. Niet alleen thuis, maar ook voor hun deur, in de straat en de wijk." (Chakkar cited in: Concentra 2007)

excerpt 71 – 14/09/2007

Other narrowings of the meaning of ⟨integration⟩ have similar effects. For instance, Bilal Benyaich of the intercultural platform Kif Kif defines integration economically. This can be exemplified with respect to the following quotation.

“Integration only starts if one has a job. Culture becomes twice as important if you are not doing well economically, and in turn, that culture will be used by others as an explanation for the economical deprivation. This is an upside-down argument. First things first: first the socio-economical, then ethics.” (Benyaich cited in: Henneman and Bervoet 2008)⁸⁵

Benyaich’s ⟨economical⟩ definition of ⟨integration⟩ allows him to claim that we are dealing with an ongoing process. It is also interesting to note, that this definition of ⟨integration⟩ is used against culturalist modes of explaining the economy-related phenomena that are usually captured under the heading of ⟨integration⟩.

One last innovative example of the way the concept of ⟨integration⟩ may be used, is provided by Amane X. We already discussed Amane’s argument that ⟨integration policy⟩ should take the ⟨dreams⟩, the ⟨images⟩, and the ⟨expectations⟩ of various generations of allochthons and autochthons into account. It is within this context, that she talks about a feeling of ⟨disappointment⟩ experienced by ⟨allochthons⟩ as well as by autochthon ⟨institutions⟩.

AX: The disappointment ... the disappointment in the integration discourse and in the pattern of expectations with respect to integration ... among themselves not in policy ... perhaps also in policy but also with respect to their own expectations ... the disappointment of their parents the disappointment of the speed in which institutions adapted themselves. As much as the equally righteous disappointment of institutions with respect to allochthons like “come on that goes really slowly” ... but if anything evolves slowly, it is human mentality, the human mind of the homo sapiens ...

excerpt 72 – 04/10/2007

As a consequence of this two-sided ⟨disappointment⟩, Amane distinguishes a process of ⟨falling back⟩ on one’s ⟨pattern of values⟩. A little bit further down, she argues that these feelings of disappointment lead people to ⟨fall back⟩ on their own ⟨symbols⟩ and ⟨history⟩. At that point, I articulated my surprise by commenting that I nevertheless felt that many of my interviewees displayed a large degree of ⟨openness⟩ with respect to me and my questions. This comment was based on a faulty inference that Amane’s metaphor of ⟨falling back⟩ implied some sort of exclusionary mechanism. She responds as follows:

AX: Oh but of course. Everybody likes to do that, absolutely Falling back, I am not even talking about falling back to one’s own community and not having any contact with Flemish any more ... Quite the contrary. They are Flemish eh ... but falling back to ...

JZ: a pattern of values

AX: to a certain pattern of values for instance yes, to certain forms of engagement yes, to certain niches of engagement. Not so much integrative, but perhaps the common experience of a common culture, of a common link and not so much that bridge any more ... you see? They are Flemish eh, don’t forget that eh, contacts with health insurance providers, contacts with the school, the neighbours All of that developed positively and that has a lot to do with going to school and [the fact that the knowledge of] Dutch has increased ... absolutely ... of course. But falling back ‘to’ means to discover your own warm

⁸⁵ “De integratie begint pas bij het hebben van werk. Cultuur wordt dubbel zo belangrijk als je het economisch niet goed hebt, waarna die cultuur dan weer door anderen als reden wordt aangegrepen voor economische achterstand. Dat is de omgekeerde redenering. First thing’s first: eerst het sociaal-economische, dan de ethiek.” (Benyaich cited in: Henneman and Bervoet 2008)

nest and in all openness that you are displaying every day ... [the practice of] falling back 'to' is triggered because of the integration process. Like okay, I don't want to lose myself, I want to retain a piece and enjoy that ... Perhaps there has been an evolution of always being focused on the other, with other cultures, and so on and. And too little with ...

excerpt 73 – 04/10/2007

To Amane, ⟨falling back⟩ does not necessarily imply social exclusion. It pertains first and foremost to a desire ⟨to discover your own warm nest⟩ ⟨in all openness⟩. The search for this warmth is a metaphor for the performance of specific cultural practices such as cultural festivals, such as ⟨enjoying the Ramadan and Iftar together⟩, and so on. It is within this context, that Amina evaluates this whole situation as a consequence of an excess of ⟨integration⟩. Interestingly, the ⟨warmth⟩ provided by the ⟨nest⟩ and practices of ⟨falling back⟩ are fundamentally intertwined with the process of ⟨integration⟩. This can be exemplified with reference to the Amane's statement below.

AX: Perhaps there is too much integration at this moment, and that's all right, and so one looks for warm nests, and that's okay too eh ... those two ... seem to exist.

excerpt 74 – 04/10/2007

Amane thus frames ⟨integration⟩ as an interactional practice that is established on a ⟨daily⟩ basis. But this should not obscure the fact that many people are facing feelings of ⟨disappointment⟩ with respect to ⟨integration politics⟩ and with respect to ⟨integration policy⟩. According to Amane, such feelings push people to discover the ⟨warmth⟩ of one's own ⟨history⟩, ⟨symbols⟩, and ⟨values⟩.

Indexing the location of integration

One last aspect of the various ways in which my interviewees deploy the notion of integration, pertains to the various spatial and institutional locations in which the process is linguistically embedded. What aspects of spatial and / or socio-political reality are indexed in their political discourse? In the majority of the examples above, processes of ⟨integration⟩ are situated in an interactional, in a Dutch-speaking, and/or in a Flemish context. But there are also other spatial aspects of reality that are relevant to the way concepts of ⟨integration⟩ are (meta)pragmatically articulated. It is useful to refer once more to the interview I conducted with Amane X. As we noticed before, she articulates the two-sided ⟨disappointment⟩ of ⟨allochthons⟩ and autochthon ⟨institutions⟩ with the ⟨slow⟩ pace of ⟨integration⟩ related processes. According to her, this pace is fundamentally intertwined with human nature. She also links this observation with the process of ⟨European unification⟩.

In mainstream political discourse, ⟨European unification⟩ is often referred to in terms of European 'integration'. Nevertheless, one hardly ever links the issue of European integration to the problematic of integrating migrants or allochthons. Nadia Fadil, who talked about ⟨mosques⟩ as ⟨integrating places⟩, and who described her political engagement as a search for ⟨alternative fora⟩ where one can hold the ⟨integration debate⟩, does articulate the problematic in European terms. She wonders how the ⟨minority question⟩ can be ⟨inscribed⟩ in a broader European and international framework. Consequently, the question becomes: ⟨what is the imaginary community of Europe⟩ and ⟨how do we make sure that migrants are going to be a part of this⟩. It is useful to quote her at length. Nadia's references to the European context and to the context ⟨outside of Europe⟩ are implicitly intertwined with her theory of imagined communities.

NF: ... but yes I would say that the minority question kind of remains the most important ... the most important framework. But but the minority question as well, more and more, to me, the current challenge is "how can I, from my position here, establish links with ... with Europe, outside of Europe uhm go beyond uhm Eurocentric uhm activism" because uhm ... Well, this is rather specific because I just returned from Morocco and well then you are kind of like "here in Europe" ... It is not that I am

going to relativise problems here, but it is more like well, it becomes ever more difficult to be active only here, and to realise at the same time, that the center wherein you live is partly responsible for the exploitation that uhm ... occurs elsewhere in the world. And that is well that is well, why I can't just try to ... strive for some cosmetic interventions in Europe Because in the end, that is what it's all about. If you compare it to what happens elsewhere in the world ... uhm ... so actually yes ... to go for your own position here without uhm caring about uhm well ... I think that if minorities have something to offer it is exactly this diasporic transnational point of view and uhm ... And uhm I haven't made up my mind about that because it's not as if I am against Europe eh I am also part of Europe, but it's uhm , and at the same time ... yeah well I haven't made my mind up about how I can succeed in being simultaneously active in Europe and in positioning my place as a minority in Europe, in the uhm representation, in the identity formation of Europe, in order to ... inscribe the minority question there, in a manifest way. Because I think that is what constitutes the struggle In addition to exclusion and discrimination and all of that, the struggle is fundamentally about ... what is the imaginary community of Europe and how do we make sure that those migrants will become a part of this and not be considered as allochthons or as outsiders any more. ... So, that is one thing but on the other hand, there is also uhm a continuous responsibility we have in Europe towards other parts of the world as being people who are also partly coming from the non-Western [region] to uhm ... yeah I don't know, to criticise the hypocrisy.

excerpt 75 – 22/08/2008

In the last lines of the excerpt above, Nadia Fadil claims that ⟨we⟩, ⟨being people who are⟩ ⟨partly coming from the non-Western⟩ region, carry a ⟨responsibility⟩. The pronoun ⟨we⟩ is indexed by spatial references to ⟨Europe⟩ as well as to ⟨non-Western⟩ parts of the globe. This ⟨responsibility⟩ is relevant to various issues politicised by Nadia. According to her, an ⟨imagined community⟩ requires ⟨integrating⟩ ⟨places⟩ or institutions. This does not only seem to be the case with respect to mosques and the Moroccan community. It is also relevant to the question of how to position oneself and to claim a ⟨place as a minority in Europe⟩ in order to undermine a metaphorical inside / outside distinction in which ⟨allochthons⟩ are seen as ⟨outsiders⟩.

It is also interesting to see how Karim Hassoun – as chairman of the AEL – disqualifies voices who reproach the AEL for ⟨importing conflicts⟩ from abroad into Belgium, ⟨Flanders⟩, and / or ⟨Antwerp⟩. Even though Karim does not articulate the notion of ⟨integration⟩ in the excerpt below, he did point out that ⟨integration politics, the integration discourse of old was actually intended to realise an assimilation politics⟩. It is useful to take a look at the way in which Karim uses spatial co-ordinates and metaphors in order to generate particular interpretations of values such as ⟨justice⟩ and/or ⟨justness⟩. It also illustrates how notions such as ⟨Islamic identity⟩ and ⟨cultural identity⟩ are being used in order to articulate international themes with issues raised in the Flemish and Belgian public spheres.

KH: ... the themes we are dealing with are basically islamophobia and the battle against assimilation ... well what also concerns us as AEL is how the international context, the context of uhm Palestine, the Arabic world, uhm the occupation of Iraq. So that also concerns us and that has nothing to do with what one has always accused us of like we ... “import conflicts that have nothing to do with Flanders or Belgian or Antwerp” or whatever. That is nonsense. First of all, every organisation or every person may uhm devote oneself for a theme or devote oneself to justness or justice wherever on this planet. If there is injustice in Uzbekistan, then I have the right to make an issue out of that over here. Palestine, I have the right to make an issue out of it. And on the other side, we are also children of the nation. I may have been born here, but my connection to the Arabic world is very close and a lot of Moroccans or Arabs have that connection as well, that bond with the home country, with Morocco and in extension with the Arabic world and with the Palestinian struggle. One person out of an identitarian factor, culturally, eh like “I feel like an Arab, I feel connected with the people that is being oppressed over there”, another out of an Islamic identity like “those are Muslims that are being butchered there. And no one talks about that, or if one does talk about that, one talks about it in terms of ‘terrorists’ or ‘Osama bin Laden’ and ‘attacks’ and ‘danger’ and whatever and” ... So that thematic concerns us as well, and and our political mobilisation is dealing with that over here as well.

excerpt 76 – 26/02/2008

The excerpt above thus constitutes a plea for universal values such as ⟨justice⟩ and ⟨justness⟩ based on a political engagement that is established through particular interests and through a subjectively experienced ⟨connection⟩ or ⟨bond⟩. Such spatial metaphors allow Karim to conceptualize socio-political relationships with groups of people living in other parts of the world. Spatial references to ⟨Palestine⟩, to the ⟨Arabic world⟩, and to ⟨Morocco⟩, thus perform a socio-political indexical function as well. They allow Karim to undermine traditional distinction between national and international conflicts. By using an empty signifier such as ⟨justice⟩, the legitimacy of articulating a ⟨connection⟩ between local, national, and international issues, is reinforced.

It is possible to identify an analogy between Nadia Fadil's quest for an ⟨imaginary community⟩ that transcends the Flemish, national, and ⟨European⟩ context, and Karim Hassoun's refusal of the idea that the politics of the AEL involves a practice of ⟨importing conflicts⟩. Both world views go against the grain of a concept of integration that is imagined either nationally or internationally. This being said, not all intellectuals and activists I talked to, deploy a notion of ⟨integration⟩ that involves an articulation of international, national, and local problematics. An example is in order. Even though the activist student Samira Azabar evaluated the AEL positively with respect to the way this organisation addressed the issue of ⟨integration⟩, she resists the way the AEL articulates international issues in its discourse.

SA: I said like well ... "there are some aspects I do consider to be positive with respect to the AEL" ... especially because of the fact that they have raised [the issue of] integration and raised ... a lot of important issues. But they were actually first and foremost a counter weight for the Vlaams Belang I think. ... They were the far left whereas Vlaams Belang basically was the far right They also raised some issues like for instance those small incidents when someone got beaten by an autochthon and ... that way they kind of tried to incite the allochthons. And I did not consider it to be relevant to say like "this is important" . I also said like "perhaps there are more important issues than say Hezbollah or the stuff the Palestinians are doing, that we could raise here, in order to help or to support the allochthons and the Muslims here in Belgium" but ... One did not really listen to that so it was not that important to them ...

JZ: you mean the international [dimension]?

SA: Yes exactly. I basically thought that uhm you have to hold your own ground ... before you raise international issues ...

excerpt 77 – 16/09/2007

In the excerpt above, Samira illustrates her point by arguing that the average ⟨sixteen year old allochthon⟩ knows all sorts of stuff about ⟨Palestine⟩ and ⟨Israel⟩ from the ⟨independence until today⟩. But she also points out that his or her knowledge about the political situation ⟨over here⟩ is way more limited. This distinction between ⟨there⟩ and ⟨here⟩ is relevant to Samira's understanding of integration. The issues that have to be dealt with ⟨here⟩ include issues related to the ⟨headscarf⟩, ⟨mosques⟩, ⟨subsidies⟩, and so on. It is also interesting to note that her orientation to local or national political issues ⟨here⟩ partly emerges from her ⟨faith⟩. This can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below. Especially policies related to mosques and headscarves touch her personally and politically. It is within this context that she provides us with the following clarification.

SA: My faith pushes me to engage myself with respect to, actually it is kind of weird and ehm you might probably call that contradictory uhm because it does not correspond to faith but But faith actually stimulates us to engage yourself and to integrate. And how do you do that most efficiently? By always going into discussion with those who are basically ... the government. And I consider this to be very important so that is why I choose to or why I am in favour of the idea that there is a certain organisation ... it does not matter whether it carries a religious label or not But basically, it is kind of important that there is an organisation that ... raises certain issues related to faith and that are quite important to us ...

excerpt 78 – 16/09/2007

In the excerpt above, Samira explains that her ⟨faith⟩ pushes her ⟨to integrate⟩ herself. She does this by ⟨always going into discussion with those who are basically ... the government⟩. Upon reading my analysis a few years after our interview, Samira asked me to add that her engagement is basically a struggle against injustice and for solidarity, waged at a local level. This does not mean that she considers international politics to be irrelevant, but local politics limits her more with respect to her particular sense of self. According to her, local politics is also more influential with respect to everyday practices of minorities in Belgium.

It is also interesting to note that I first met Samira during a lecture of Bob Van Den Broeck at the University of Antwerp. During the discussion at the end of this lecture, Samira asked him a series of critical questions in the auditorium. We already noted how Karim Hassoun legitimised his political position with respect to ⟨Israel⟩ and ⟨Palestine⟩ through a culturally defined ⟨identity⟩, ⟨link⟩ and ⟨bond⟩, and by its articulation to universal values such as ⟨justice⟩ and ⟨justness⟩. On the other hand, Samira Azabar's religious subjectivity draws her attention to more local issues. Her criticisms and remarks are first and foremost directed at national and at local levels of politics. This explains her evaluation of the Flemish green party discussed within the context of the chapters on the abstract category of ⟨community⟩.

SA: I think that is just great. That is the image of a party ... that is able to advocate diversity including integration ... and can say like "look, we are working together with other communities over here and we can actually go for ... a calm harmonious community here in Antwerp". But I think that other parties including the VLD and the SPa are not so much ... because they kind of use allochthons as figureheads in order for them to grab votes instead of really ... instead of believing in a community whereby communities can calmly live next to each other.

excerpt 79 – 16/09/2007

The meaning of a category such as ⟨integration⟩ is established through various forms of deixis. One of these indexical relations is of a spatial nature. The process of contextualisation often relies on spatial references. These may be rather literal, but we also use spatial metaphors and metonymies to articulate our relations to socio-political and spatial co-ordinates in the world. Subject positions may be linked to concrete spatial coordinates, but within the context of political discourse, they often imply socio-political 'positions' within a metaphorical public sphere as well.

⟨Integration⟩ in a politicised and polyphonic public space

The analyses above demonstrate that the articulation of integration related concepts gives rise to a great variety of identifications. Interviewees articulated statements about ⟨integration⟩ from various positions in the discursive field. They frequently hedged statements made by and made about so-called allochthons and autochthons. Quite often, an analysis of other identities proved to be more relevant and illuminating in order to understand the way these individuals constructed a sense of ⟨integration⟩. In the excerpts discussed above, my respondents positively identified themselves with subject positions such as radicals, liberals, activists, and so on. In this respect, it is important to note that their subjectivity as Muslims is rarely discussed within the context of discussions on integration. And even when they did discuss their Islamic identity, this usually happened during a critique of mainstream interpellations on the basis of this concept. Most of the time, the topic of Islamic religion, culture, and/or identity is raised within the context of criticising hegemonic ideas and representations about Muslims.

In the excerpts above, we noted how my interviewees marked other voices involved in the public debate about ⟨integration⟩, ⟨diversity⟩, and/or ⟨assimilation⟩ by using a variety of contextualisation cues. They lowered their voices, marked the discourse of others by physically hedging certain statements, and/or used discourse markers such as ⟨like⟩ in order to distinguish their own statements

about this issue, from statements made by their socio-political adversaries. In addition to such instances of direct reported speech, they frequently used metapragmatic descriptions and speech act verbs in order to articulate their critique.

The concept of integration thus functions in a politicised polyphonic space. This goes for the speech event of the interview, as well as for the multiplicity of language games that we tend to call the public sphere. In fact, the discourse of my respondents can only be understood if one considers the indexical and intertextual links between their statements, and statements made in other settings, through voices articulated by other individuals and groups. The processes that have led to the vagueness associated with mainstream usage of the signifier (integration) are marked in the discourse of my respondents. As such, their metapragmatic comments shed a critical light on what they consider to be problematic articulations of this concept. In this respect, my interviews often functioned as speech events constitutive for a metaphorical public sphere and/or debate.

In the excerpt below, we can see how Mohamed Chakkar discusses the relationship between his Federation for Moroccan Associations (FMV) and Youssef Souissi's VOEM (Association for the Development and Emancipation of Muslims). Upon reading my analysis, Mohamed Chakkar asked me to emphasise that his comments should on the organisations and people he mentions should not be interpreted in judgemental terms. He recognises the legitimacy and importance of the work of all the people mentioned below.

Both the FMV and the VOEM are based in Antwerp and have been established as umbrella organisations in the wake of the minority decree. Nevertheless, their organisational structure differs, and many of my interviewees problematised the relation between the (chairmen of both) organisations. I frequently noticed that people tended to discuss this conflict in terms of a conflict or clash between personalities or ego's. I told Souissi that I often heard (stories) about, and (explanations) of the (conflict between the umbrellas) in terms of (conflicts of personality) between him and (Youssef Souissi). Chakkar responds as follows.

MC: No uhm ... that that look ... it's often like that's one of the strategies, that uhm ... If you can't win, then you will personalize. And that is uhm ... I never held a grudge against Youssef as a person, but I am, we are, ... The distance between VOEM and the FMV is so big that that, ... being a Moroccan is not sufficient to collaborate ... And we differ thoroughly in terms of vision. ... And then they say like "Chakkar" and we know one another for a long time and this and that ... "and Chakkar and Youssef did not do that" ... I said to my colleagues like, and some of them tried it, ... I said like "if I am in the way, then go and collaborate with them, I leave it up to you". Ikoubaan tried that, uhm back then Abou Jahjah tried it as well, uhm Saida tried it ... It doesn't work, it's like, ... yes, ... it's like if I would ask you, what is your education?

JZ: Uhm communication sciences and then international politics

MC: Politics. Then then it's like if I would ask you "could you go and collaborate with uhm ... uhm ... a a a" yeah I don't know a researcher about about DNA or something totally ... Then you would say like "yeah it is a student but that's not enough" ... one is occupied with totally different stuff uhm uhm ... Uhm we know one another but in order to collaborate ... He is working with DNA and and and I don't know ... but I am occupying myself with politics, society, the social that that that then. Then I think "I don't know anything about the body, I don't know how" (laughs) uhm ... that's basically it ... and one personalizes that like uhm ... "FMDO and VOEM and FMV uhm they struggle for 'power' over the Moroccan community". Yeah then I can't believe my ears like ... pff 'power' ... 'power' 'power', we (laughs) that's also something they say "power" ...

excerpt 80 – 27/06/2008

In the excerpt above, Mohamed Chakkar proves to be aware of this fact. He acknowledges the lack of collaboration but normalises this fact. In this respect, it is interesting to note that Chakkar draws an analogy with my identity as a political scientist. As I would find it difficult (to collaborate) with researchers investigating (DNA)- related topics, he finds it difficult to collaborate with the (VOEM) or

with the ⟨FMDO⟩ (Federation of Moroccan Democratic Organisations)⁸⁶. Chakkar thus normalises the lack of collaboration. His references to ⟨Saïda⟩, ⟨Abou Jahjah⟩ and ⟨Ikoubaan⟩ discredit the idea that the conflict is based on personal issues.

The excerpt below takes place a few turns later in the interaction. The interaction constitutes a response to my question ⟨how⟩ he would ⟨describe⟩ the ⟨differences in vision⟩. Referring to discussions held in the Antwerp Migrant Council during the nineties, Chakkar continues to normalise the conflicts between ⟨two Moroccans⟩. He recalls a ⟨discussion⟩ held at the ⟨Migrant Council⟩ and disqualifies the voices of those who deplore the fact that there are ⟨two umbrellas, two Moroccans⟩ who ⟨don't agree⟩ with respect to issues related to ⟨education⟩, ⟨unemployment⟩ and / or the ⟨integration sector⟩.

MC: ... look among among among the Flemings or among the We are sitting around a table. You are chairing. Here is Youssef and here am I. ... I am here and uhm it's about uhm ... the integration sector ... and we disagree ... then it's like "you see ... they don't agree eh" ... yeah ... come on I mean it's about education and two Moroccans sometimes have an opposed vision. Yes, that might be a pity, but there is nothing you can do about it anyway. And and it's so and, [you should] be aware [of the fact that], we had some heavy debates within the city, in the Migrant Council for instance, where we did not find common ground. There was a discussion, intense at times, and then one starts to say like "they don't agree. Those are two umbrellas, two Moroccans, and they don't agree". That is really difficult ... and then we say like "yes ... perhaps it's a pity that we don't agree, that our visions are not the same, but well yeah, that just happens to be the political game. And we have a rather radical standpoint with respect to education and unemployment, and we are in favour of quota and and VOEM is not in favour of quota. But I don't blame them for it.

excerpt 81 – 27/06/2008

Some of my interviewees explicitly politicised the interaction of the interview setting itself. This can be exemplified with reference to Amane X's comments on my ⟨image⟩ of her growing older without a ⟨headscarf⟩. She thus established an indexical link between processes she observed in the public sphere and the ongoing processes related to the practice of interviewing. In this context, Mohamed Chakkar. Chakkar referred to my subjectivity as a researcher in order to normalise conflicts and disagreements between himself and Youssef Souissi. A refusal to recognise the disagreements between individual Moroccans and / or their organisations implies a misrecognition of the ⟨political game⟩ and of the various political subject positions that ⟨Moroccans⟩ may occupy in the debate. With respect to the relation of the interview setting and an integrated public sphere, it is interesting to conclude with a statement articulated by Najib Chakouh.

NC: But actually we have already come a long way with respect to integration. But people don't reflect on that The fact that I am sitting here together with you is an extreme form of integration

excerpt 82 – 17/06/2008

Najib claims that his presence in our interview setting constitutes ⟨an extreme form of integration⟩. A natural process that, according to him, will happen happens ⟨anyway⟩.

c) A preliminary evaluation of an interpretive and functionalist heuristic for analysing abstract categories

The analyses presented above, constitute an example of how one may analyse individual utterances about the large-scale socio-political debates on integration. They exemplify how an interpretive

⁸⁶ The FMDO has changed its name from Federatie Marokkaanse Democratische Organisaties (i.e. Federation Moroccan Democratic Organisations) to Federatie Mondiale Democratische Organisaties (i.e. Federation Global Democratic Organisations). This name change designates an increasing focus on interculturality and an associated expansion of its target groups. For more information, see: http://www.fmdo.be/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=2 .

functionalist approach may be deployed in an analysis of abstract categories that may be used in contradictory ways by a single individual as well as by a variety of socio-political actors. The example of ⟨integration⟩ is one case in point, but it is definitely possible to make a similar case for issues related to ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, or ⟨politics⟩. These concepts are entextualised in a variety of academic and political discourses. They are the weapons of political struggle and constitute a desirable prize for actors interested in the rearticulation of social relations in the public sphere. The ultimate gambit of this struggle lies in the hegemonisation and relative fixation of one's own definition of reality.

My interpretive and functionalist approach for analysing debates in the public sphere requires first and foremost a framework that allows us to functionally relate discursive elements articulated by language users to one another, as well as to a series of functional research questions. I have rearticulated the *énoncés* uttered by my interviewees with the subject positions and voices they implicitly and explicitly activated when discussing ⟨integration⟩ related topics. Throughout this process, various notions of integration were implicitly and explicitly articulated. My interviewees marked other voices in their discourse by means of metapragmatic descriptions, by discourse markers such as ⟨like⟩, and/or by (meta)pragmatically marking other voices through shifts in intonation, volume, and tempo. An analysis of this polyphonic play in which respondents rearticulate what they consider to be socio-political relationships in the public sphere allows one to analyse the – possibly contradictory – meanings of integration articulated by a single language user.

The second requirement of the desired perspective implies that one takes the self-interpretations of language users into account when analysing the way they rearticulate socio-political relationships and categories in their discourse. We already noted how an analysis of metapragmatic markers provides us with an empirical entry point into the interpretive world of the language user. Nevertheless, in the excerpts above, I have first and foremost focused on one particular set of categories related to the notion of ⟨integration⟩. The various criticisms articulated by my respondents allow us to (re)construct the problematic of ⟨integration⟩ in the Flemish public sphere. In some cases, we could observe how the notion of integration was linked to a preferred sense of self and to a preferred sense of politics. Nevertheless, in order to understand the self-interpretations of many respondents, it is important to take a more holistic approach to their discourse by taking the entire interview into account. As I mentioned before, a restricted focus on their discussion of ⟨integration⟩ tends to downplay other issues and analyses that may be more central to their sense of self and to their sense of politics. Some case-studies are therefore in order.

The third requirement articulated in previous chapters, pertains to the question how one may distinguish one's own analyses from the analyses performed by one's respondents. I have tried to avoid overpowering the voices of my interviewees by using rearticulations markers. This allowed me to demonstrate the various ways in which the ⟨integration⟩ related concepts function in relation to modes of governmentality advocated and criticised by my interviewees. One might claim that ⟨integration⟩ – whatever definition one attaches to it – designates a conduct of conduct. It is a debate about how one should relate oneself to oneself, to others, to practices, to values, and to norms. In this sense, it is a debate about the configuration particular type of power relationship between various actors and/or subjects in society. The ethical question boils down to the question whether the resulting governmental practices and policies function first and foremost in emancipating and/or in dominating ways.

The excerpts above contain numerous examples of how the call for integration interpellates so-called allochthons and autochthons. Many of my respondents criticised and / or hedged what they consider to be hegemonic uses of the term. In this sense, the debate about ⟨integration⟩ constitutes a struggle for particular forms of recognition. Consider Issam Z's preferred mode of integration which involves a type of ⟨activism⟩ that appeals to and/or interpellates ⟨street boys⟩. Also, consider his definition of integration as a ⟨languishment in the margin⟩ whereby one simply dissolves ⟨into the majority⟩. Hicham el Mzairh presented us with an analysis where Moroccan migrants do not recognise their

home country any more and ⟨get shocked themselves⟩ when they are confronted with contemporary cultural practices in Morocco. Moreover, a great deal of the forms of reported speech discussed in the excerpts above, are basically rearticulations of processes of (mis)recognition between allochthons and autochthons in Flanders. Consider Najib Chakouh's discussions about ⟨Quetelet⟩'s ⟨locker⟩ metaphor and his alternative viscous image of society. Even Karima Adouiri's discussion of the relationship between the AMV and the media deals with the fact that AMV discourse was not being recognized in mainstream media unless they were willing to problematise their Islamic identity as well. In fact, the very core of the integration paradox centers around the problematic of (mis)recognition. This explains why all critique of integration related concepts and practices involves a critique of related forms of subjectivity as well.

Fourthly, an interpretive functionalist heuristic should allow us to discuss socio-political debates in terms of complex discursive and intertextual networks. Within these networks, people construct their engagement with reference to a variety of contradicting concepts, texts, individuals, organisations, practices and myself. We already noted that this is somewhat problematical. Even though the notion of ⟨integration⟩ constitutes one of the most important concepts structuring the discourse about minorities in Flanders, it never functions in isolation of other abstract categories such as ⟨diversity⟩, ⟨community⟩, ⟨identity⟩, ⟨pluralism⟩, ⟨emancipation⟩, ⟨allochthons⟩, or ⟨autochthons⟩. We are dealing with an entire field of empty signifiers whose meaning can only be understood if one takes their concrete usage into account. Only those analytic procedures who take the indexical process of entextualisation into account, are able to clarify the variety of contextualised meanings generated while using this term. In fact, this is the only way to arrive at an empirical analysis of the way individuals interpretively use such abstract categories.

The problematic of articulating a variety of abstract categories to one another and to concrete contexts of utterance, brings us to the fifth interpretive functionalist requirement. The approach should enable us to empirically investigate the large-scale interpretive processes allowing individuals to create coherence between seemingly contradictory statements produced by social actors. We already gave a partial answer to this question. Part of this coherence is established by means of metapragmatic markers. However, as we will see in the next chapter, it is also possible to identify patterns in the usage of metapragmatic markers by individual language users. Together, these patterns are often indicative of a logic as described by David Howarth and Jason Glynos. As we will see, such logics are constitutive for subjectivity, as well as for the discursive articulation of objects, practices, concepts, subject positions with one another. The partial fixation of meaning, context and subjectivity always involves the creation of some sense of coherence. Even though the excerpts can be used to illustrate such processes, it is more useful to discuss the issue of interpretive logic with reference to the case studies presented below. The ensuing analyses will demonstrate the need as well as the feasibility of distinguishing between the multiple aspects of a sense of self, and the sense of coherence that is nevertheless (inter)subjectively experienced, articulated and co-constructed in discourse.

3 An interpretive functionalist approach for analysing political engagement

Throughout this book, I have been arguing for an interpretive and functionalist approach to discourse, politics, and the self. Such an approach is compatible with poststructuralist, pragmatist, and linguistic pragmatic theory and analysis. An interpretive and functionalist heuristic for discourse analysis involves an investigation of the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction, and to the metapragmatic positionings of the interlocutors and voices involved in the speech event under investigation.

Political engagement can be defined as a practice of discursive (re)articulation of social patterns in a public sphere through imagined collective action. An interpretive functionalist approach to political engagement therefore requires an analysis of the way in which individuals challenge dominant interpretations of abstract categories that supposedly define our reality. A close analysis of the way intellectuals and activists involved in the Flemish minority debates deal with such categories allows us to reconstruct the way the minority debate is being held by the very people these debates are supposedly about. Taking the metapragmatic and political awareness of my interviewees into account, I hope to shed a critical light on the public debate in general.

In the excerpts below, I will discuss a number of case studies by means of an interpretive and functionalist approach to political engagement. After an exemplification and outline of my heuristic (see: 3.1), I will highlight the way large-scale socio-political debates are interpreted and criticised by some of my respondents (see: 3.2). Doing so, I will conceptualise the notion of *logic* as a particular interpretive configuration of subject positions, statements, practices, and contextual parameters constitutive for one's sense of self and sense of others. As such, I will also discuss the specific ways in which individuals may link a preferred sense of self with a preferred mode of politics (see: 3.3).

3.1 Heuristic

In the subchapters below, I will first and foremost introduce the way I have been dealing with my respondents, interviews, and transcriptions (see: 3.1.1). My interpretive and functionalist heuristic required me to organise my data according to functional parameters. After some remarks on the coding process in general (see: 3.1.2), I will discuss the specific ways in which I have coded (sub)topics (see: 3.1.3) and subject positions (see: 3.1.4). I will then move on to emphasise the importance of functional research questions to an interpretive and functionalist heuristic (see: 3.1.5). The resulting approach will be illustrated with reference to an interview conducted with professor Sami Zemni (see: 3.1.6).

3.1.1 Respondents, interviews, and transcriptions

The data presented below are derived from interviews conducted with Sami Zemni, Nadia Fadil, Zohra Othman, Youssef Souissi, Nadia Babazia, Naima Charkaoui, Karim Hassoun, Brahim Harchaoui, Abdellatif Akhandaf, Najib Chakouh, and Hicham el Mzairh. These interviews have been analysed as case studies according to a pattern that will be outlined below. I do not claim that these people are representative voices for a so-called Moroccan and/or Islamic community in Flanders. Neither do they claim such a thing themselves. It is therefore not my intention to produce statements on the nature of some supposedly homogeneous minority public opinion. Quite the contrary.

The critiques and analyses presented by my interviewees are quite diverse. They are indicative of various statements, discourses, practices, and processes that are constitutive of the public sphere(s) in which they move. As such, the statements produced within the context of these interviews point at semiotic tensions in the socio-political engagements of my interviewees. These tensions can only be understood against a background of co-constructed and hegemonic discourses that are (re)articulated by myself and my respondents throughout the speech event of the interview.

Even though some interviewees produce utterances on the basis of positive identifications with ethnic, cultural, national, and/or religious subject positions, none of these identifications proved to be static. Many of them stated explicitly that they did not speak on behalf of an organisation, a specific group, and/or some homogenous community. But as we have noticed, it is hard to generalize in this respect. Especially if one takes forms of reported speech into account. Many interviewees talked about the organisations they are or have been involved in. And even when they rearticulated voices of one's own and others organisations, such discourse is usually hedged by a great deal of metapragmatic language use.

I relied on newspapers and other public media in combination with a snow-ball method in order to find my respondents. This resulted in an over-representation of people engaged within so-called socio-cultural organisations. This is an important caveat. As I mentioned before, representatives of organisations such as (associations related to) mosques who primarily deal with religious issues are prominently absent from my corpus. This is not to say that such people do not hold political opinions. As Nadia Fadil and Meryem Kanmaz have demonstrated within the context of their PhD's, religious organisations and aspects of one's sense of self may exert a significant influence on one's socio-political subjectivity (see: Fadil 2008a; Fadil and Kanmaz 2009; Kanmaz 2007).

During a discussion of a subtopic coded as 'alliances and differences between civil society organisations in Antwerp', Nadia Fadil points out that one of the reasons for the lack of ⟨collaboration⟩ between the so-called socio-cultural organisations and the ⟨Islamic circuit⟩ are constituted by ⟨ideological⟩ differences that are usually not ⟨named as such⟩. In the excerpt below, Nadia refers to JVI, but it should be noted that she discussed many other organisations as well. JVI is an acronym for Youngsters for Islam (Dutch: Jongeren voor Islam). This organisation has been labeled as a salafist, fundamentalist, extremist, and Islamist organisation in mainstream media (e.g. Bossche 2008; Cattebeke 2008). However, the organisation publicly refused such labels (JVI 2009). I do not wish to pass judgement on this organisation considering the fact that I did not talk to any of its members. Neither do I claim that JVI is representative of Muslim subjectivity in general. My point is merely that many of my interviewees described tensions and differences between various civil society organisations. In this respect, the excerpt below is a case in point.

According to Nadia Fadil, one set of reasons for the lack of ⟨collaboration⟩ between socio-cultural and organisations and the ⟨Islamic circuit⟩ is constituted by ⟨ideological differences⟩ that are not ⟨named as such⟩. These differences may be ⟨religious⟩ or ⟨political⟩. Interestingly, with respect to ⟨JVI⟩, she claims, that their mode of ⟨politics⟩ is ⟨a type of personal uhm ... personal politics between quotation marks⟩ that takes place through ⟨the reshaping⟩ of one's self. It is useful to recall that Nadia Fadil analysed the religious subjectivities of Flemish Maghrebian women in terms of Foucaultian technologies of the self (Fadil 2008a).

In the excerpt below, Nadia distinguishes between two types of governmentality. On the one hand, there is the ⟨citizenship⟩ based mode of politics associated with ⟨FMV⟩ and other ⟨socio-cultural⟩ organisations. Earlier in the interview, she explained how this citizenship-based discourse is also one of the key features of AEL discourse. On the other hand, there is a type of ⟨religious⟩ ⟨politics⟩ that may be ⟨actualized⟩ by ⟨reshaping⟩ and modelling one's (sense of) ⟨self⟩ and one's ⟨life⟩ in line with the example of the ⟨prophet⟩. This may result in the establishment of a ⟨community of believers⟩ that functions as an independent ⟨circuit⟩ vis-à-vis the ⟨socio-cultural⟩ organisations. Except for

⟨exceptional⟩ cases such as the racist Antwerp murders by ⟨Hans van Themsche⟩ in 2006, there is little ⟨collaboration⟩ between both types of organisation.

NF: Yes .. yes yes they don't go to each others' activities eh ...

JZ: Like the religious and the socio-cultural ...

NF: Yes, they don't visit one another very often ... unless something really happens with respect to, you know, ... with respect to the murder of uhm that assassination by Hans van Themsche Then there really was a very broad collaboration between various I think JVI also joined in back then ... but that is rather exceptional.

JZ: And do you think there is a reason for that or ...

NF: Ideological differences ... but these are not named as such ...

JZ: Like ...

NF: uhm religious differences ...

JZ: oh religious yeah ok

NF: and political differences ... for instance, concerning JVI ... they are a lot less involved in citizenship issues and so on. They are really uhm involved in uhm the type of uhm the type of personal uhm ... personal politics between quotation marks I don't think they are apolitical. They are also very political, but it is actualized by the reshaping of of uhm one's uhm yourself. The reshaping of ... life in accordance with the prophet, to follow the life according to the principles of And out of that, there does emerge ... you can construct a certain community of believers So that is a very different way of doing politics than uhm take FMV for instance So I really think ideological differences But I would, well, according to me it can be named like that. That way it becomes visible, [the fact] that there are differences in the community Also for that youngster ... because it's not that obvious you know ... who thinks "yeah we're all the same and there is just one Islam and there are ...", while that's not the case eh.

excerpt 83 – 22/08/2008

All of my interviewees categorized the field of civil society organisations in one way or another. We already noticed how Issam Z used the criterion of ⟨activism⟩ in order to distinguish between various forms of socio-political engagement. In a similar vein, the notion of radicalism was important to Najib Chakouh. However, the distinction between organisations dealing first and foremost with religious issues on the one hand, and so-called socio-cultural or ethnic organisations on the other hand, was articulated by various respondents. This distinction does not merely apply to controversial organisations such as JVI. The following excerpt shows part of a discussion that has been coded under the subtopic 'different attitudes towards integration and diversity among cultural and religious civil society organisations'.

In the following two excerpts, Abdellatif explains how ⟨mosques⟩ ⟨only want⟩ to work on ⟨themes⟩ that include the ⟨element⟩ of ⟨religion⟩. Both the ⟨government⟩ and socio-cultural ⟨civil society⟩ ⟨do not know how to deal with⟩ ⟨religion⟩. According to Abdellatif, the ensuing distrust and distance created a ⟨feeling⟩ that may be expressed through a form of imagined reported speech associated with the mosques: ⟨“the government does not want to support us even though Islam has been [officially] recognized ... okay ... so leave us alone, we will keep to ourselves”, and that is how that became two separate ... uhm two worlds⟩. We already noted how Abdellatif deplores the misrecognition of religion based organisations by the ⟨government⟩. According to him, such a process of misrecognition

implies a misrecognition of an ⟨important⟩ part of one's ⟨being⟩ as well (see: excerpt 61)⁸⁷. Abdellatif points out that people involved in the world of ⟨mosques⟩ are very much aware of this differential treatment.

AA: (this excerpt is part of an ongoing turn). Mosques started to uhm ... file their administration to apply for a recognition in a later phase uhm ... and they fell by the wayside uhm. Because of that, an even greater displeasure was created and that is also what it was called in the mosques and and by Muslims in general like “you see, organisations that specifically deal with cultural workshops, henna, meetings, and so on, they are being recognized and that is what the government wants. And one wants to remain silent about [a] religion that is regarded like a stepson or as a stepdaughter or something like that who has never been uhm recognized” uhm So that is still very much alive within the mosques. (this turn continues in het excerpt below)

excerpt 84 – Summer 2008

In the excerpt above, Abdellatif uses a form of reported speech in order to express the ⟨feeling⟩ of non-recognition experienced by mosques. Below, Abdellatif explains the difficulties experienced by socio-cultural ⟨civil society⟩ organisations in finding ⟨access⟩ to the ⟨mosques⟩. According to him, feelings of non-recognition on behalf of the mosques, as well as an ignorance with respect to the question ⟨how to deal⟩ ⟨with religion⟩ on behalf of socio-cultural civil society and the ⟨government⟩, has led to the development of ⟨two separate⟩ ⟨worlds⟩.

AA: Uhm ... on the other hand ... mosques are not that easily accessible simply because of the fact that they ... uhm ... are structured in such a way that its board members are older men of the uhm first generation who speak little or no Dutch. It is difficult for civil society to gain access there, also because they remain kind of aloof One does not know how to deal with ... with religion like ... “how far can we go, can we make the step towards uhm, or where can we involve them more, uhm what themes, because mosques only want to work on themes that involve the element of religion” and so on. So uhm one did not find access and mosques felt like “the government does not want to support us even though Islam has been [officially] recognized ... okay ... so leave us alone, we are doing our thing”, and that is how it became two separate ... uhm two worlds.

excerpt 85 – Summer 2008

I do not know to what extent the separation of these two worlds is a sociologic fact. The results of my snow-ball method seem to confirm that the mosque related network differs from network of activists and intellectuals I explored while preparing this book. Disregarding the sociologic status of Abdellatif's claims, the intellectuals and activists I talked to are and have been predominantly active in the field of so-called socio-cultural civil society. This is not to say that these people do not visit the mosque. Neither does it mean that these people did not consider themselves to be Muslims. Quite the contrary. I merely wish to point out that the organisational basis of their socio-political engagement usually lies elsewhere. As such, the voices of socio-cultural civil society are definitely over-represented in this book.

Because of practical constraints, I was forced to focus on a limited number of case-studies. I therefore made a difficult and – at times rather arbitrary – selection. Consequently, the interviews with Mohammed Ihkan, Abdel W, Amane X, Abied Alsulaiman, Bilal Benyaich, Mohamed Chakkar, Fauzaya Talhaoui, Issam Z, Fatima Y, Karima Adouiri, Mohamed el Khalfioui, Mohammed Bouziani, Najim Einauan, Samira Bendadi, Soumia el Majdoub, Abdelhay ben Abdellah, and Keltoum Belorf do not figure explicitly in the upcoming chapter. I humbly apologize for this. These people have contributed just as much to my understanding of the Flemish minority debates as those who are explicitly mentioned in the upcoming chapter.

⁸⁷ Within this context, the notion of recognition is used in two ways. On the one hand, we are dealing with an interactive process of interpellation. On the other hand, the mosque-related voice reported by Abdellatif Akhandaf points out that Islam has been officially recognized as one of the official Belgian religions.

Lastly, it should be noted that the analyses below are based on a conceptualization of the interview as outlined in previous chapters. Interview data are considered to be the result of co-constructed articulatory practices that may function as technologies of the self. Such interview practices allow interlocutors to position themselves in relation to themselves, in relation to an (imagined) public sphere, and in relation to the (imagined) entities that populate it. As such, the interview is a potential site for contesting and reproducing socio-political relationships in a large-scale public debate. My perspective on transcription and translation has been outlined in the subsection *some notes on transcription and translation issues*.

3.1.2 On coding in general

An interpretive functionalist approach to discourse and subjectivity implies that one analyzes the various ways in which interlocutors functionally relate discursive elements to one another. It also implies a research practice in which one articulates new relationships between one's own theoretical framework and the analyses and self-interpretations of the statements under investigation. In order to achieve this, a coding system is a useful tool.

I have opted for a systematic approach for analysing the discourse of my respondents. The qualitative software program NVIVO allowed me to organize large amounts of text. All case studies have been coded with respect to subject positions and topics. Each interviewee has been treated in a separate NVIVO project. This means that almost all interviewees received their own coding tree and analysis. Notable exceptions are Brahim Harchaoui and Karim Hassoun who participated in a double interview as AEL activists. Also, whenever multiple interviews were conducted with a single individual – i.e. in the case of Najib Chakouh, and in the case of Youssef Souissi – these interviews were coded together.

NVIVO allows a researcher to code specific segments of text under labels which are called *nodes* (see: Gibbs 2007: 31-46). As we will see, I have coded my interviews under two broad categories of nodes: subject positions and (sub)topics. Brahm Gibbs describes NVIVO based nodes as follows:

“A node in NVIVO is a way of bringing together ideas, thoughts and definitions about your data, along with selected passages of text. Passages of text from one or more documents are connected to a node because they are examples of the idea or concept it represents. This process is called coding the text at a node. This brings together passages of text that are about the same thing or indicate similar ideas, concepts, actions, descriptions, and so on.” (Gibbs 2007: 31)

Put differently, coding a text with respect to specific categories of nodes allows a researcher to articulate transcriptions and other textual data with his or her own concepts. The notion *in vivo* stems from grounded theory (Gibbs 2007: 34). This approach is based on inductive coding. The idea is to ground your analysis in your data in such a way that understanding emerges out of the text. One might call this a bottom-up approach to analysis. Strauss and Corbin – the originators of this approach – recommend using the actual phrasings of the discourse under investigation for coding purposes. Such a process is called *in vivo* coding (Russell Bernard 2000: 444).

The principle of (re)articulation as a research strategy goes against the idea of knowledge as the result of a mere bottom-up process. But it also entails that one should take the self-interpretations of subjects into account when analysing socio-political processes. Some of these self-interpretations are marked in discourse. In fact, language use is probably the communicative strategy which enables us to mark these self-interpretations most explicitly. Of course, this does not imply that language users always say – or know – what they mean. Nevertheless, self-interpretations are frequently marked in political discourse. *In vivo* coding is therefore a useful first step in any form of discourse analysis that takes the issue of self-interpretation into account. In fact, Brahm Gibbs argues that NVIVO allows for a mix of data-driven and concept-driven approaches (Gibbs 2007: 59). Put differently, it allows for a systematic interpretive and functional articulation of research data with concepts used by the researcher him- or

herself. I have opted to code subject positions and discourse topics while sticking as closely as possible to the original wordings articulated in the interview setting.

In addition to subject positions and (sub)topics, I coded two sets of lexical items. First, I performed an automatic search for politics related lexical items by performing the following Boolean search on the original Dutch data set: “politi* AND gedepol* AND depol*”. The words that popped up in my search results were then automatically coded as politics related lexical items. Secondly, I performed a similar procedure with respect to lexical items related to the notion of publicness. The results of the Boolean search for “publiek*” were also automatically coded under the heading of public related lexical items. As we will see, these procedures were of key importance with respect to the formulation of the interpretive functionalist heuristic and the functional research questions outlined below.

Lastly, it should be noted that NVIVO allows a researcher to construct a hierarchy between nodes. Coding trees are useful tools for easy reference, as well as for analytical purposes. A researcher may use this qualitative software program in order to organize the multiplicity of codings. As we will see, I have grouped the various concrete topics under the parent-node ‘subtopics’. In addition, I have coded the various subject positions articulated by myself and by my respondents under the header of subject positions. This will be exemplified in the following subsections with reference to the case of Sami Zemni.

3.1.3 The coding process: (sub)topics

The interviews that have been incorporated in the upcoming chapters have all been coded in terms of topics and in terms of subtopics. The nodes falling under the parent node 'discourse topics' allowed me to identify big segments of discourse with a high degree of textual cohesion. They also provide a brief description what the text under discussion is about.

Cohesion and coherence refer to two aspects of meaning generation that are based on relations of connectedness. These relationships may or may not be linguistically encoded. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between both concepts (Bublitz 2011: 37). Cohesion is a semantic notion referring to “*relations of meaning that exist within the text*” (Halliday and Hassan 1976 cited in: Bublitz 2011: 38) and that “*enables one part of the text to function as the context for another*” (Halliday and Hassan 1989 cited in: Bublitz 2011: 38). It is a function of discourse that may be marked by means of various linguistic forms: conjunctions (e.g. *and*); anaphora (terms referring to the same entity as some other term prior in the discourse – e.g. *which, these, that*); anticipatory references (e.g. *as we will see*); exemplifications; explanations; logical relations (e.g. conclusions); highlighting by means of quotation marks or italics; contrasts; comparisons; substitutions; and so on (Verschuere 1999: 104-08). Cohesion is usually an important condition for interpretively establishing coherence.

Bublitz describes coherence as the result of a cognitive process that structures discourse in a meaningful whole. Coherence is an outcome of the language user’s Gestalt creating power. In this sense, it is not texts that cohere, but people who (interactively) make texts cohere. The identification of discourse topics and the various procedures for handling them (introducing, changing, shifting, and digressing from topics) are prevalent and strong means of (re)creating conceptual coherence (Bublitz 2011: 45-46).

I frequently wrote about coherence within the context of this book. My description of the self in terms of *a reification of the processes allowing an individual body to reflectively position itself as a more or less coherent and whole mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social and (inter)textual aspects of contextual reality*, is a case in point. I do not claim that the multiple aspects of an individual’s sense of self always cohere across all contexts. Such a thing is simply impossible. Nevertheless, I do maintain that the discursive articulation of a sense of self goes hand in hand with a process of establishing discursive coherence. The voices and subject positions my respondents partially, positively, and/or

negatively identify themselves with, are frequently activated and de-activated as topics shift.

Topics are negotiated through a process of topic development. The notion of topic development refers to the diachronic and interactive dimension of articulating a discourse topic. It involves various strategies of (sub)topic initiation, (sub)topic introduction, and (sub)topic discontinuation (Abu-Akel 2002: 1791; Wanska and Bedrosian 1985). It is useful to distinguish between local topics (of sentences, utterances, and short discourse segments) and discourse topics including extended stretches of discourse. I have restricted myself to a coding of discourse topics. These are expressible as noun phrases and may consist of multiple levels of subtopics. Key lexical items in the discourse itself are indicative of the topic (Watson Todd 2005: 94). Put differently, the text itself should express what it is about (Lambrecht 1994: 117; van Knippenvelt 1998: 1026-27; Verschueren 1999: 139).

An overview of the discourse topics coded for a single individual provides a rough idea of the main topics that have been discussed within the interview context. Such an overview allows for easy reference. Moreover, it allows for a systematic analysis of the way subject positions, and politics related lexical items are articulated with one another, across a variety of shifting topics. However, the actual analysis involves an articulation of functional relationships between semiotic elements at various levels of abstraction. Below, I have included an overview of the discourse topics coded for the interview conducted with Sami Zemni.

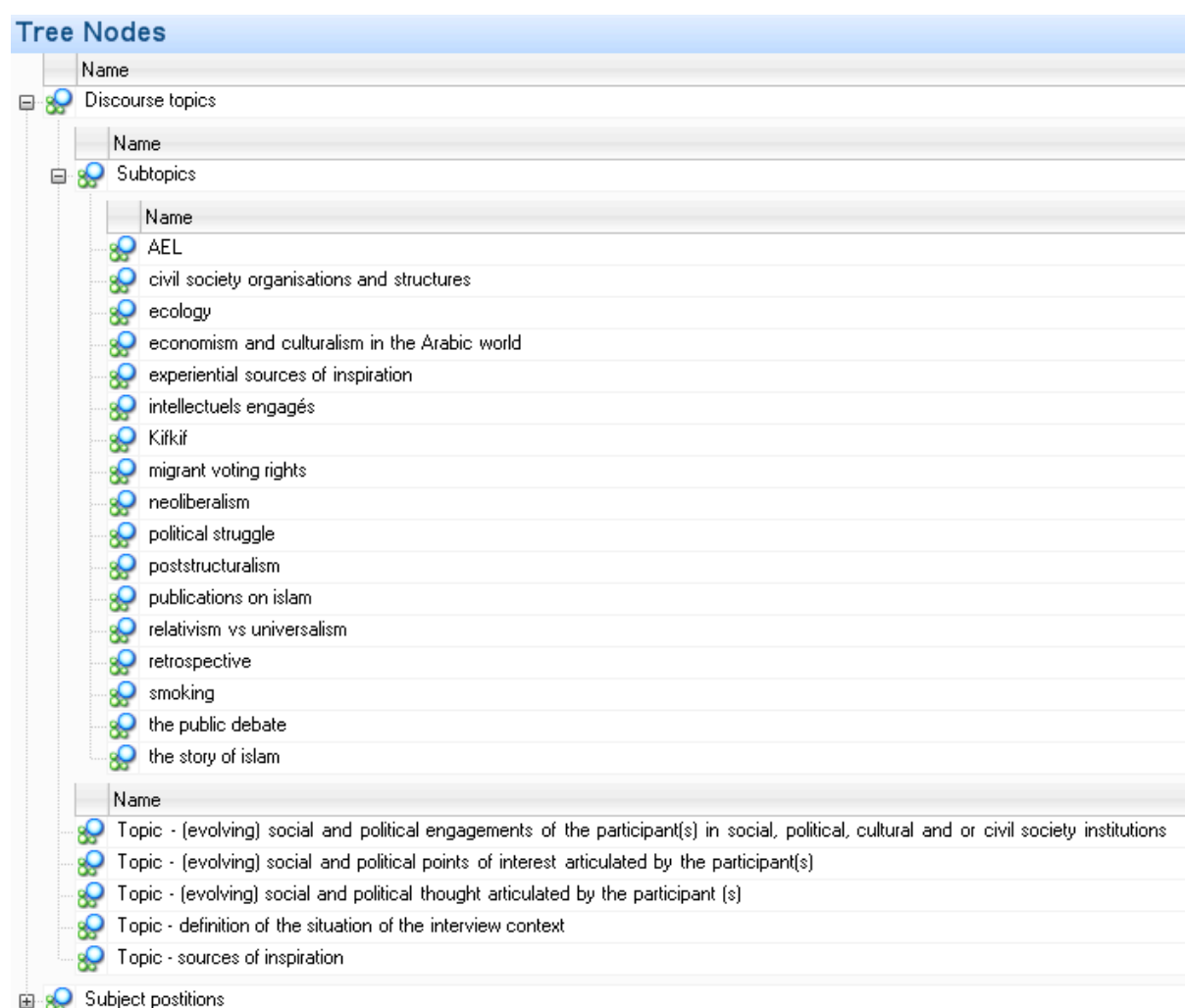


Image 1: screenshot of coded topics and subtopics for the interview conducted with professor Sami Zemni

I distinguished between topics and subtopics. The topic-nodes refer to the five points of interest that I

sought to address in the interviews: the development of political points of interest; the development of socio-political engagements; the development of political thought; the sources of inspiration for political engagement and thought; and the specific ways in which the interview situation is defined by means of metapragmatic comments. Sometimes my interviewees initiated these topics themselves as the interaction developed, but I frequently introduced these themes myself as well. Whereas the labels of the subtopics coded in the interview are always grounded in the text itself, I resorted to a rather top-down approach with respect to the coding of topics. In combination, an articulation of topic and subtopic gives the reader a rough idea of what the excerpt is about.

Topics often overlap one another. For instance, it is possible to discuss the evolution of one's political thought while one is discussing one's political points of interests and/or one's socio-political engagements as well. Moreover, it is possible to discuss a particular organisation in order to discuss a more abstract principle such as integration. In spite of this common fact, I chose to code only one topic and one subtopic at the same time. This pragmatic reduction of the complex nature of discourse allows for an easy identification of big segments of text that display a high degree of cohesion and – possibly – coherence.

3.1.4 The coding process: subject positions

In the preceding chapters, subject positions have been defined as relatively fixed positions in discursive space which are established by means of spatial, temporal, social, and /or (inter)textual forms of deixis. They are associated with institutionalised practices and may be indexed by means of a multiplicity of linguistic forms. Subject positions are functions of language use.

The analyses of the various ways in which my respondents deal with abstract categories such as <community>, <identity> and <politics> showed that individuals tend to highlight different aspects of their sense of self as they discuss different aspects of their contextual reality. I also demonstrated that seemingly contradictory statements become less contradictory if one realizes that an individual may occupy different subject positions as (s)he generates utterances.

Put differently, as other topics enter the discussion, other aspects of one's subjectivity tend to be articulated. Subject positions are therefore variable entities (Foucault 1969: 107). In more pragmatic terms, one might claim that they are indexed by linguistic forms that are subject to principles and practices of negotiability, adaptability, and variability (Verschueren 1999: 58-71). For these reasons, an individual's subjectivity can never be reduced to a single subject position or to a single voice. For purposes of interpretation and analysis however, we need to ask what an individual refers to while (s)he uses labels and pronouns such as <I>, <me>, <you>, <yours>, <them>, or <theirs>. Below, I will briefly discuss how I have coded my data with respect to subject positions.

The child nodes of the parent node *subject position* do not code subjectivity, interpretive logics, or notions of self. Subject positions find themselves at a lower level of abstraction. They are derived from a bottom-up analysis of the textual material and stick closely to the original formulation. As such, the child nodes of the parent node 'subject positions' code linguistic forms that explicitly or implicitly index points of orientation for establishing a sense of self as well as a sense of others. This may be exemplified with reference to the excerpts discussed in this subsection. These excerpts have been taken from an interview conducted with professor Sami Zemni. He leads and co-ordinates the Middle East and North Africa Research Group (MENARG) at the University of Ghent. His area of expertise is politics within the Middle East and North Africa region, with special reference to political Islam. He focuses mainly on developments in Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, democratization in the Arab world as well as conflict in the Arab world. He also writes on issues of migration, integration, racism and Islamophobia. In order to interpret the following excerpts in an adequate way, it is useful to get ahead of myself, and to present a general picture resulting from an overall analysis of the interview.

Throughout the interview I conducted with Sami Zemni, a great deal of his discourse focused on his engagement in, as well as on his relation with a variety of civil society organisations. Zemni frequently expressed feelings of ambivalence with respect to ⟨formally joining⟩ such institutions on the one hand, and with respect to his position as an ⟨academic⟩ in a mass mediated ⟨public sphere⟩ on the other hand. Nevertheless, Zemni manages to establish a high degree of cohesion between accepted, ambiguous and / or rejected subject positions by means of a trope in which he regularly expresses ⟨discomfort⟩ or ⟨scruple⟩. In fact, one might argue that this trope constitutes an interpretive logic of ambivalence that is constitutive of his socio-political subjectivity. This will be exemplified in more detail in the upcoming subsection. For now, I would like to focus on the issue of coding subject positions.

As we noticed before, individuals may partially, positively, and negatively identify themselves with any (type of) subject position. It should therefore be emphasised that the mere coding of a subject position does not necessarily imply that the individual positively identifies his or her self with this position in a positive way. For instance, a discussion of right wing politicians involves a positioning vis à vis their position in the debate. It does not necessarily imply that one considers oneself to fall within this category. Also, if an interviewee discusses his or her own position as ⟨volunteer⟩ for a particular civil society organisation, this does not necessarily entail that one (always) is or (always) has occupied this subject position. Neither does it necessarily imply an unchanging normative attitude towards such a position. Taking these caveats into account, it is useful to take a look at my interaction with Sami Zemni in the excerpt below.

JZ: mmh ... you mean when you were still studying or ...
 SZ: yes
 JZ: or ok
 SZ: is that I always had some scruples to formally join ... organisations mmh institutions and so on formally
 JZ: mmh
 SZ: so I was active as a mmh student ... as a volunteer or sometimes a bit bit bit more involved to put it like that with mmh ... a while within the activity of Amnesty International of the University of Ghent because it had an important third world operation
 JZ: yes ... yes
 SZ: but I never formally joined
 JZ: mmh
 SZ: the same with respect to all kinds of ... political movements which situated themselves on the left side both green and red

excerpt 86 – 06/04/2009

Several subject positions are activated within this brief excerpt. Some of them are explicitly mentioned in the text: e.g. ⟨student⟩ or ⟨volunteer⟩ for civil society ⟨organisations⟩. Such subject positions are associated with institutional(ised) practices. On a more implicit level, adjectives such as ⟨left⟩, ⟨green⟩ and ⟨red⟩ are used to index particular ⟨political movements⟩, i.e. a type of institutionalized practices. The adjectives ⟨left⟩, ⟨green⟩ and ⟨red⟩ implicitly index the following subject positions: leftist, environmentalist, and socialist. These linguistic forms have been coded as such. However, an understanding of the relationship between Zemni's preferred sense of self and politics *vis à vis* these subject positions, requires an analysis of Zemni's ⟨scruple⟩ to formally join ⟨political movements⟩, civil society organisations, and other ⟨structures⟩. A mere listing of subject positions will not suffice.

At other times, subject positions may be even more implicit. They are not always accorded detailed spatial, temporal, social and or (inter)textual deictic co-ordinates. A lack of explicitness might be strategically exploited by interactants to meet particular communicative needs. Nevertheless, a positively identified (implicit or explicit) subject position can be shown to have at least some deictic characteristics. Without them, any link between linguistic and non-linguistic context would prove to be impossible. If one uses an underdetermined pronoun in order to position oneself, some extra co-ordinates are required for an interlocutor to establish an interpretive link between one's own

statements and the statements of other voices in the debate at large. I will only code those subject positions that are marked by discursive elements that function as contextualisation cues in the discourse under investigation.

It is not unusual for an interview to contain between one hundred and two hundred subject positions. For this reason, a visual representation of the coding tree is not included in this subsection. Nevertheless, an overview of the nodes coded under the parent node of subject positions in the interview conducted with Sami Zemni can be found in Table 1 in the Appendix. It should be noted that not all of these subject positions require close analysis. As we will see, I will discuss first and foremost those positionings that can be shown to be relevant with respect to the concepts of politics, the public sphere, and the self, as articulated by my interviewees.

3.1.5 Functional research questions

I have defined political engagement in terms of *a practice of discursive (re)articulation of social patterns by means of (imagined) collective action*. The upcoming analyses will focus on a limited number of case studies in order to discuss the various modes of political engagement articulated by my respondents. Most of these interviewees are Flemish intellectuals and activists with a Moroccan background. Professor Sami Zemni is a notable exception. He has a Tunisian / Flemish background. Nevertheless, considering the organisations he was involved in, and considering the fact that many of my interviewees referred to him as someone I should talk to, I consider it to be useful to illustrate my interpretive functionalist heuristic with reference to this interview.

We already noted that individuals may differentiate between preferred and disavowed modes of politics. We also noticed how these modes of politics were nevertheless compatible with the Essex notion of politics. In all cases discussed in previous chapters, the notion of <politics> refers to implicitly or explicitly to a problematisation of socio-political relationships between actors, practices, and voices in the public sphere. In fact, it is basically impossible to consider specific individuals, practices, discourses, or institutions as being <apolitical> without – implicitly or explicitly – narrowing this abstract category down to a specific mode of politics. As I noticed before, whenever my respondents or myself used the category of the <apolitical>, this category is either used or criticised as a short-hand for a particular mode of politics. This also goes for practices, discourses, and individuals who are described as being <not political> or as having <no political> awareness.

At this point, I am first and foremost interested in the way my interviewees construct their political engagement, as more or less coherent selves, by means of a rearticulation of socio-political relationships, within the interview context. For this reason, it is important not to lose sight of the relationship between the speech event of the interview and the interactive establishment of the public sphere. The interview can be thought of as a site in which participants may (re)articulate a multiplicity of socio-political positionings and engagements. Moreover, if these engagements involve a rearticulation of socio-political patterns through imagined collective action, the interview is constitutive for the public sphere, as well as for the political engagement of the actors involved.

In order to investigate the particularities of the various modes of politics that have been expressed throughout my interviews, I have designed a set of functional research questions. As I noticed with respect to my investigation of the abstract category of <integration>, it is useful to limit oneself to an investigation of a limited number of linguistic phenomena as a focal point for analysis. Within the present context, I am first and foremost interested in the way my respondents construct a preferred sense of self and socio-political engagement in relation to <politics> and <public> related lexical items. I therefore designed the following procedure.

First of all, all instances of politics related lexical items were identified by means of the following Boolean search: “politi* AND gedepol* AND depol*”. I then investigated every politics related

lexical item on the basis of the following research question: (1) *What function does this politics related lexical item perform in relation to the (sub)topic under discussion? And how does this particular articulation function with respect to the way politics related lexical items have been used in other topical contexts?* Linking particular usages of the notion of ⟨politics⟩ with shifting subtopics, allows us to take the dynamic aspects of meaning generation into account.

Secondly, ⟨politics⟩ related lexical items were linked to the subject positions my interviewees positively, negatively, or partially identified themselves with. The following research question was therefore formulated: (2) *What function does this politics related lexical item perform in relation to the (sub)topics under discussion? And how does this particular articulation function with respect to subject positions the respondent has positively, negatively, or partially identified him-or herself with in previous and following stretches of discourse.* These questions allowed me to relate particular notions of politics to particular aspects of a respondents sense of self and sense of others.

Thirdly, it was important to identify the specific ways in which my interviewees used notions of publicness and debate. For instance, Zemni talked about a ⟨public sphere⟩ and about ⟨room for debate⟩. An analysis of these concepts in relation to the concrete topics under discussion, and in relation to the subject positions and voices rearticulated within these contexts, allowed me to reconstruct the way my respondents interpret large-scale socio-political discourses, practices, and processes. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that not all of my interviewees literally talked about debates, public spheres, or public opinions. For this reason, I resorted to my own definitions as well.

I defined the concept of debate in terms of *a public dialogic or multilogic intertextual network in which a variety of subject positions are activated in a political struggle over the impossible fixation of empty signifiers. These signifiers supposedly define a specific discursive element such as a subject position, a policy domain, a political practice, a norm, a value, or an abstract category.* Moreover, the public sphere was described in terms of *a spatial metaphor that functions as a reification for a multiplicity of interactional practices through which socio-political relationships are rearticulated. Public spheres do not pre-exist interaction and are not unlike Benedict Anderson's imagined communities in which most members will never actually meet one another.*

These definitions allowed me to formulate a third and a fourth research question in spite of the fact that not all of my respondents used the categories related to the notion of publicness and /or debate. They allowed me to investigate (3) how the various subtopics function with respect to the actors and processes constitutive of the public sphere and / or the public debate as depicted by my respondents. Moreover, I asked myself (4) how my interviewees functionally relate the multiplicity of subject positions indexed by the voices they distinguish in the public sphere to one another. Lastly (5), I investigated the particular ways in which my respondents related their selves to themselves and to others. I devoted particular attention to the interpretive logics deployed and to the way they link preferred modes of politics to a preferred sense of self.

3.1.6 An interpretive functionalist approach to the interview conducted with Sami Zemni

The five research questions articulated above will be answered and illustrated in a series of illustrated case-studies. The structure of these documents was based on the five research questions mentioned above. This similarity in structure allows for a comparison of the various concepts of political engagement discussed by my interviewees. In the upcoming subsections, I will illustrate the results of this approach with reference to the case of Sami Zemni. Considering the fact that Zemni refused a strict spatial and conceptual distinction between a ⟨the public sphere⟩, ⟨politics⟩, ⟨the private⟩ and ⟨the state⟩, I will not treat his usage of ⟨politics⟩ related lexical items in isolation of his discourse on the ⟨public debate⟩.

SZ: The idea of a public sphere [located] between the political and the private, that is uhm, well between the state and the uhm ... I don't buy that ... politics is to a great extent well ... the public sphere

excerpt 87 – 06/04/2009

In the following subsections, I will focus on (a) Sami Zemni's feelings of ambivalence towards a variety of organisational and narrative structures. Upon reading my analyses a few years after we conducted our interview, Sami Zemni acknowledged these feelings and subscribed to my analysis. However, he also pointed out that these feelings were characteristic of a particular period in his life. Even though feelings of ambivalence were definitely there, these feelings are not necessarily permanent. In this sense, it is worth noting that Sami Zemni addressed many of the themes discussed during our interview in his book *Het Islam Debat* (i.e., *The Islam Debate*) (see: Zemni 2009). My analysis of Zemni's doubts and feelings of ambivalence as expressed within the context of our interview will lead us to a discussion of problems related to (b) translating difficult texts into political practice. Thirdly, we will focus on Zemni's (c) preferred and disavowed modes of politics.

a) An ambivalence towards structures

Throughout a discussion of the history of his political engagements, Sami Zemni raised three important subtopics: the subtopic 'civil society organisations and structures'; a problematic coded as 'the public debate'; and a discussion of his engagement in the context of 'Kif Kif'. Interestingly, as Zemni switches between these topics, he manages to create topical cohesion and to trigger a sense of coherence on my part by articulating a feeling of ambivalence with respect to his engagements and associated subject positions. Paradoxically, his doubts, questions, and uncertainties with respect to his position(s) in the public sphere(s), allow him to create a more or less coherent socio-political subjectivity that will be discussed in the following subsections.

Organisational structures

Professor Zemni explained that his ⟨engagement⟩ started at the ⟨university⟩ as he started to wonder ⟨how society works and how it could work better⟩. He associates this type of ⟨engagement⟩ with organisations such as, ⟨KWERPS⟩ and ⟨Amnesty⟩. Zemni also mentioned the Ghent based student organisation ⟨Politeia⟩ even though he does relativise the amount of ⟨engagement⟩ in this rather classic organisation. Furthermore, he explained how he was approached by various political parties who were looking for ⟨an allochthon who was uhm well articulate well (laughs) articulate in Dutch⟩ and associated with the ⟨university⟩ in a period where such people were ⟨spread thinly⟩ ⟨in the social sciences at large⟩. After a stay in France, Zemni returned to Belgium in 1994 in order to work at the university of Ghent. That is when he became involved in AGI (Academics for Equal Treatment of Islam) and FOGI (Forum for Equal Treatment and Interaction).

Zemni describes ⟨AGI⟩ as ⟨a kind of⟩ ⟨positioning of a group of intellectuals⟩ in the form of a ⟨petition⟩. According to him, AGI thus realized ⟨one of the first feats of arms in the dossier⟩ about ⟨migration⟩, ⟨allochthons⟩, and ⟨Islam⟩. Upon his return from France, he became involved as ⟨chairman⟩ in ⟨FOGI⟩. In the excerpt below, he describes the goals as well as the members of FOGI.

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn). And in '95, when I was back uhm, I also went to the founding meeting because in the end, I was always seated in the boards of executives, and then I also became chairman during the FOGI years And uhm who was in there? It was basically a group that wanted to bring together a group of uhm ... secular and mostly rather atheistic humanist professors with Muslims.

JZ: mmh

SZ: and then I mean real Muslims not ... a bad word eh but allochthons uhm, they searched and they found [them], mostly in the Ghent region, ... with people who wanted to profile themselves as Muslim in the public sphere

JZ: mmh

SZ: and thus we established an organisation that consisted of uhm ... Herman de Ley, Jan Blommaert, Sami Zemni, Piet Saey, and also Youssef Souissi uhm ... Who else was there in the beginning eh ... and also a bunch of people who are sometimes less famous and so on The intention was to well, equal treatment and interaction eh. A kind of opposition against ... even back then we considered the way in which the word integration was uhm described. It was of course the uhm, how shall I put it, the heyday of uhm the first Black Sunday, the Hand in Hand campaign, and so on, so uhm

JZ: mmh

SZ: I think, I think that we also thought that we went beyond mere Hand in Hand which was a good initiative, and which most subscribed to as well, but it [FOGI] went further in the sense of “we are going to talk with Muslims as well” ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: “and we are going to interact with them so to say”

excerpt 88 – 06/04/2009

In the wake of the interaction above, Zemni explained how the FOGI was established as kind of institutional ⟨interface⟩ between officials of the city of Ghent, and ⟨real Muslims⟩ who were prepared to position themselves as such in the ⟨public sphere⟩. He claims that after a while, the city of Ghent started to bypass the FOGI in order to communicate directly with these people on issues such as the organisation of the Muslim religious festivities and so on. Consequently, the organisation ⟨was officially shut down as a non-profit structure⟩ - which was a socio-political victory on its own. In the excerpt below, we can see how a subtopic shift occurs. Zemni moves from a discussion of ‘civil society organisations and structures’ to a discussion of ‘the public debate’. We can observe an interesting ⟨tension⟩ and ambivalence in Zemni’s self-interpretation.

SZ: So so that was uhm well, to me, that was an organisation I was a member of. And why do I say ‘was’? Because FOGI was officially shut down as a non-profit structure, so it does not exist any more. Uhm, at the same time, I, well, I was at the university back then, ... and then I started to realize that at any rate, I would hardly ever become a member of organisations and that my engagement would be oriented toward the scientific, the academic, the intellectual.

JZ: mmh

SZ: But even there, I always experienced mixed feelings about it ... because I always felt a tension between uhm ... the positionings with respect to social standpoints, uhm political ideas, and uhm the rather analytical background

JZ: mmh

SZ: I think there is a tension between those, and ... well sometimes uhm ... sometimes it ... sometimes it doesn’t fit, I have to say, and because of that I don’t like to be uhm captured by too many structures And I slowly came to realize that, because, as far as I can be the judge of this ... and this may be a bit arrogant if I am going to put it this way, but this is how I experienced it back then, ... between say 95 and 96 and let’s say uhm 2001, I felt isolated symbolically Back then, I had no knowledge of other allochthons, except for Meryem Kanmaz who I met in 98 99, because we had written a research proposal ... about those mosques, got the grant and announced vacancies, and she proved to be the best candidate.

JZ: mmh yes

SZ: Uhm so uhm she started to work at the university then. And as far as I knew, she was the only other allochthon, if I may use that word one more time, that was kind of, partly, dealing with similar issues, and with whom I could talk about that.

excerpt 89 – 06/04/2009

The excerpt above is quite important for a number of reasons. First of all, there is the notion of ⟨structure⟩ which is deployed with a negative connotation. Zemni expresses a wish not ⟨to be captured by too many structures⟩. Nevertheless, even though he came to realize that he would ⟨hardly ever become a member of organisations⟩ after his engagement for FOGI, he also explains how he experienced ⟨mixed feelings⟩ associated with his position as scientist, academic, and intellectual. Interestingly, this ⟨tension⟩ emanates from the various ⟨positionings⟩ with respect to ⟨standpoints⟩ and ⟨positionings⟩ in the public sphere on the one hand, and the more ⟨analytical background⟩ offered by the university. Even though he heavily hedges this statement, Zemni concludes his discussion of this ⟨tension⟩ between academic and political subject positions by giving voice to a feeling of being ⟨symbolically isolated⟩ as an ⟨allochthon⟩ within the academic context.

The narrative structures of the debate

If we are to understand Sami Zemni's political subjectivity as well as his preferred mode of politics, it is important to consider his critiques on ⟨the structure of the societal debate⟩. The excerpt below is coded under the subtopic 'the public debate'. Within this context, Zemni identifies an ⟨ideological structure⟩ that characterizes ⟨the structure of the societal debate⟩ about Islam, migration, racism, and allochthons. His position with respect to this ⟨structure⟩ constitutes the ⟨red thread⟩ of his ⟨engagement⟩. In this respect, an understanding of the ⟨structure⟩ of the public ⟨debate⟩ and the ⟨public sphere⟩ as imagined by Sami Zemni is key to arrive at an understanding of his political subjectivity.

SZ: Because, the fact that Muslims fall back onto their own identity has to do with the fact that education, the unions, sports, and so on have largely failed. And that is a societal issue. Not ... not so much an issue of people, because that is something that uhm ... many people do not want to understand, like, I think that Jan Blommaert, when he says like "Flanders is racist", it's not because ... x number of people are racist We are not dealing with an ideological structure that is used to [legitimate] the behaviour of bad individuals So uhm, ... that has always been kind of the red thread throughout all of my engagement. But perhaps, because of that I uhm ... occupy less standpoints with respect to Islam in in the last two years, because I thought that uhm ... yes ... uhm Because of the structure of the societal debate at the moment you didn't have or you don't have the chance to do your thing in the media in order to show that it [Muslims falling back onto their own identity] has to do with other issues [than Islam]

excerpt 90 – 06/04/2009

In the excerpt above, Zemni claims that ⟨the fact that Muslims fall back onto their own identity⟩ is a consequence of the ⟨structure of the societal debate⟩ which is characterized by a particular type of racism as analysed by ⟨Jan Blommaert⟩. This means that ⟨we are not dealing with an ideological structure⟩ that is designed to legitimize ⟨bad⟩ behaviour of ⟨individuals⟩. Rather, we are dealing with a structural feature of a large-scale socio-political debate.

Zemni uses two strategies in order to characterize the ⟨structure of the societal debate⟩. On the one hand, the ⟨debate⟩ is characterized by two stories: ⟨a story about Islam⟩ and ⟨a story about the left⟩. On the other hand, changing practices of media workers, have made it almost impossible for Zemni to come up with an alternative story as an ⟨*intellectuel engagé*⟩ in mainstream ⟨media⟩. Let us begin with an analysis of the way in which Sami Zemni claims to be ⟨dragged into⟩ or ⟨sucked into⟩ the ⟨story about Islam⟩. Below, we can observe how this ⟨story⟩ has paradoxically infused his own socio-political

and intellectual engagements with a ⟨reasonable⟩ degree of ⟨consistency⟩. Nevertheless, Zemni also wonders whether he hasn't been ⟨sucked into that story⟩ ⟨too much⟩.

SZ: Well, I have to say that ... according to me, ... or the way I see it personally, there is a reasonable consistency to it. There is always a red thread to it. But what did happen in the last few years ... a little bit because of everything that happened eh, like what I just said about being dragged into the debate and so on, and also 9/11 ... so you get sucked too much into ... too much into that story about Islam eh. (the interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 91 – 06/04/2009

There are several ways to interpret Zemni's metaphor of being ⟨sucked into⟩ the ⟨the story about Islam⟩. On the one hand, it is possible to claim that this process implies that he is being ⟨dragged into⟩ the position of a narrator who tells a story about Islam in the public sphere. On the other hand, one could interpret this statement as a metaphor for a process whereby Zemni is being attributed a role in the ⟨story about Islam⟩ himself. As we will see, both processes are simultaneously at work. This can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below.

JZ: Mmh

SZ: Uhm but of course, the problem is that when it is *bon ton* to ... to bash Islam and I don't know ... then you cannot deploy their discourse about Islam against them By the way, I always knew that the entire debate about "Islam this" and "Islam that", you can ... uhm uhm With every religion you can legitimate uhm an inquisition as well as a liberation. So, you can do that with Islam as well. I therefore always considered it simplistic to say "Bin Laden has nothing to do with Islam", but I consider it even more simplistic to say that Bin Laden equals Islam ... uhm to put it in an over-simplified way But perhaps I went along with with with that ... for too long.

JZ: mmh

SZ: Because in the end, what happened. The one

JZ: went along with ...

SZ: with always going along with that, with always taking up the defence of Islam

excerpt 92 – 06/04/2009

Zemni seems to deplore the fact that he ⟨went along⟩ with ⟨taking up the defence of Islam⟩ in a public debate in which it is ⟨*bon ton*⟩ to participate in Islam bashing and in equating terrorism with Islam. In the excerpt above, he distinguishes between two voices in the public debate. On the one hand, there are the voices of those who completely dissociate ⟨Islam⟩ and ⟨Bin Laden⟩, on the other hand, there are those who create a chain of equivalence between both signifiers. Both voices are metapragmatically disqualified by Zemni by labeling them as ⟨simplistic⟩. Nevertheless, he also acknowledges having been allied with the first type of voice ⟨for too long⟩.

As we will see, Sami Zemni considers such a defensive position to be undesirable because it does not allow one to challenge ⟨neoliberal⟩ processes of culturalisation. Moreover, the more emphasis one puts on the problematisation of Islam, the less one can say about more important economic, social, and political issues related to the minority debate(s)⁸⁸. For the moment however, it is important to focus on another ⟨story⟩ that is constitutive of the public sphere as imagined by Sami Zemni: a ⟨story about⟩ the

⁸⁸ Upon reading my analysis at the end of 2011, Sami Zemni sent me an email containing some of his ideas written down in a digital notebook after our interview. He shared some of these notes in order to shed some extra light on my analyses. One of these notes can be translated as follows: "... the obsession with Islam is not a psychological deviation, but rather a symptom of the gradual loss of politics and ideas on how to live together. To talk about Islam means to be silent about many other things. It usually acquits us from the responsibility to explain and contextualise the real causes of social problems".

⟨left⟩ who is ⟨no longer capable of embodying the universal⟩ because of its entrapment in ⟨cultural relativism⟩.

The ⟨story⟩ about ⟨the left⟩ also has two protagonists Zemni cannot identify himself with. On the one hand, there are those who claim that ⟨“our culture is superior” and so on⟩. Such people are associated with the right wing ⟨Vlaams Belang⟩ icon ⟨Filip De Winter⟩, as well as with people who ⟨until recently⟩ belonged to the ⟨left⟩ such as ⟨Wim van Rooy⟩ (see: Carpentier 2011; H. Jacobs 2011; Van Rooy and Van Rooy 2010)⁸⁹ and ⟨Benno Barnard⟩ (see: Blommaert 2010a; GVA 2010; Said 1981)⁹⁰ who have come to ⟨say exactly the same⟩ things as the far right. On the other hand, Zemni partly identifies himself with those who criticize the ⟨left⟩ for not being able ⟨to embody the universal⟩ anymore. This is supposedly due to an entrapment of ⟨the left⟩ in ⟨cultural relativism⟩. Even though he does ⟨not completely agree with this critique⟩, he acknowledges that there is ⟨some truth⟩ to such statements. In the excerpt below, Zemni wonders how one has to deal with the ⟨story about Islam⟩ ⟨as a progressive⟩ individual.

SZ: (this is a continuation of an ongoing turn) How should you deal with this as a progressive so to say? ... I kind of think that the result of all of this [talk about Islam] is that ... the left has missed the boat. And what you see happening right now is that people on the left, ... or who until recently belonged to the left are moving to the right on a massive scale eh Including Wim van Rooy and Benno Barnard who ... people who did not have anything to do with the Vlaams Belang but who are saying exactly the same things. If they say like “Filip De Winter is right”, that is literally what Wim van Rooy said in an interview in Knack”, yes, ... what should one say to that ... eh? Because then he no longer belongs to the left according to me And uhm ... I have always been someone who, when there is a lot of criticism, you should uhm ... read and analyse very closely what they are actually saying. And uhm, for the last year, I have occupied myself with that a lot Especially that story about ... “the left is no longer capable of embodying the universal because they got ensnared in cultural relativism eh ... where all uhm cultures are equal” ... and so on. And of course, there are those of the Vlaams Belang, and even a number of others who are not Vlaams Belang who say “culture ... our culture is superior” and so on. But there are also many people ... with whom I can have a discussion ... even though they have

⁸⁹ Wim van Rooy (°1947) and his son Sam van Rooy (°1985) co-edited a book called *De Islam: kritische essays over een politieke religie* (English: *Islam: critical essays about a political religion*). Wim van Rooy describes himself as “a veteran of ‘68” and frames his work on Islam as a type of “ideology critique” (H. Jacobs 2011). The book has been hailed as a very “critical” work by some, and has been labeled as “Islamophobia collected” by others (Carpentier 2011). Personally, I agree with Zemni’s analysis as well as with the idea that this book constitutes an illustrated guide of contemporary culturalist discourse on Islam in Flanders and in the Netherlands. The political philosopher Bleri Lleshi points out that Sam and Wim van Rooy take a very one-sided stance with respect to Islam as all fundamentalists do (Carpentier 2011). I reached similar conclusions after having attended a debate between Wim van Rooy and Ico Maly in *De Groene Waterman*, on 12/10/2009, in Antwerp, Belgium. Sam van Rooy was kicked out of Geert Wilders’ Dutch populist party PVV after commenting on a movie on youtube. The movie contained images of some Muslim women walking by, dressed in burkas. On facebook, he wrote the following comment: “Suddenly that scum passed by. So I decided to film them right away. Or should I consider it to be normal that my peace and quiet in Scheveningen is spoiled by that type of imported backwardness out of the islamic sandbox?” (Carpentier 2011). Note that Geert Wilders’ PVV is a decidedly anti-islamic party. The PVV chairman was an important source of inspiration for the terrorist Breivik who quoted Wilders 31 times in his Manifesto (see: <http://www.dewereldmorgen.be/sites/default/files/attachments/2011/07/25/60739170-2083-a-european-declaration-of-independence.pdf>).

⁹⁰ On 31/03/2010, the writer Benno Barnard was invited by the non-confessional service of the University of Antwerp in order to give a lecture titled *Long live God. Away with Allah* (Dutch; Lang leve God. Weg met Allah). This lecture was interrupted by a group of Muslims who reportedly shouted “Allahoe Akbar” (English: God is Great). The extremist Muslim website of *Sharia 4 Belgium* called on Muslims to come to this lecture, and to respond to “this provocation” by Barnard. According to Benno Barnard, it was only due to the presence of his own body guards and of the police, that he did not end up in a hospital after this lecture (GVA 2010). Barnard framed this incident as a breach of free speech and democratic principles. According to Jan Blommaert, Barnard’s response is indicative of the way Muslims have been represented in Flanders throughout the last decades. In this sense, the men of *Sharia 4 Belgium* are depicted as so-called typical Muslims – i.e. “guys who are either against free speech, who avoid or obstruct public debate, and who rob someone of his democratic right to speak”. According to Blommaert, little has changed since Edward Said published his critique of the way Muslims are represented in Western media in *Covering Islam* (Blommaert 2010a; Said 1981). The moderate Muslim is still considered to be an exception – if considered at all. Benno Barnard was also present at the presentation of *De Islam: kritische essays* by Wim and Sam van Rooy at Flanders’ biggest book fair (*de boekenbeurs*) in 2010.

different opinions, but nevertheless do not think that we are superior, or that this culture should be superior to other cultures.

JZ: mmh

SZ: but who do think that you should still be able to take a universal standpoint and not get bogged down in ... a relativism that justifies no matter what, and so on ...

JZ: mmh (this exchange continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 93 – 06/04/2009

It may be useful to get ahead of myself. The excerpt above continues in the excerpt below. Zemni partly agrees with the ⟨story⟩ that is being told about ⟨the left⟩. In this context, he explains how he ⟨grew up in an academic world⟩ characterized by ⟨post-colonialism⟩, ⟨deconstruction⟩, and ⟨poststructuralism⟩. Even though he does not reject these perspectives, he does problematise the relationship between ⟨certain difficult writings⟩ and ⟨political standpoints in reality⟩. When Zemni claimed that there was ⟨some truth⟩ to ⟨the story about the left⟩ being entrapped in ⟨cultural relativism⟩, this is what he referred to.

SZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) and even though I do not completely agree with this type of criticism, there is some truth to it, in the sense that I too ... grew up in an academic world that was ... for a long time ... uhm well When I ... started to study and started to read and so on ... I think those were the heydays of ... of post-colonialism, of Derrida, of the rediscovery of Foucault ... of deconstruction ... new versions of poststructuralism and so on. I know you are dealing with that eh ...

JZ: (laughs) mmh

SZ: and somewhere I do think this uhm ... has gone too far somehow ... in the sense that ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: I still think there is a lot of interesting stuff in there. It's not like I am going to reject all of that all of a sudden, but it is a fact that I have been dissatisfied for a long time ... with respect to the translation of certain difficult writings into ... into uhm determinations of political standpoints in reality.

excerpt 94 – 06/04/2009

I will go into the issue of ⟨relativism⟩ in more detail in the upcoming sections. This is important since a great deal of Zemni's ambivalence with respect to socio-political positionings is informed by his relationship vis à vis authors associated with ⟨deconstruction⟩, ⟨poststructuralism⟩ and ⟨relativism⟩. For the moment however, I want to focus on one last aspect of Zemni's critical attitude with respect to ⟨structures⟩ and civil society in general.

A preference for platforms to position oneself

Zemni is critical with respect to narrative ⟨structures⟩ that tend to entrap him in certain subject positions, and which stimulate him to (re)produce certain culturalising discourses. He is also quite critical with respect to various forms of civil society organisations. His feelings of ambivalence with respect to the ways in which he may position himself as an intellectual and / or as a member of specific civil society organisations is heavily informed by an overlap between academic and other public contexts and interpellations. Nevertheless, there are some forms of socio-political engagement that appeal more to him than others. This can be exemplified with reference to the way he articulates his relationship towards ⟨Kif Kif⟩.

We already noted how Zemni used the notion of ⟨structure⟩ as a synonym for ⟨organisation⟩. In the excerpt below, he explains how he is able to ⟨distinguish⟩ the ⟨organisation⟩ and his self within the context of ⟨Kif Kif⟩. In fact, for this reason, Zemni does not like to call ⟨Kif Kif⟩ an organisation – a category which he associates with dangerous ⟨structures⟩. He prefers to label Kif Kif as a ⟨platform⟩ or a ⟨network⟩.

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) Engagement in Kif Kif has always appealed to me, because over there uhm, I could distinguish between the organisation and myself eh. So uhm ... uhm, Kif Kif was not an organisation. It is rather like a network or something. It is rather a platform where all sorts of things were possible, within certain limits of course

JZ: yes

SZ: And uhm that appealed to me because I knew that a multiplicity of standpoints was possible because I, well ... with those other organisations there was always the problem like ... “How long do you stay with an organisation where you think that this or that does not completely align with your own ideas?”.

excerpt 95 – 06/04/2009

In the excerpt below, we can detect some other reasons why ⟨engagement⟩ within the context of ⟨Kif Kif⟩ has always ⟨appealed⟩ to Sami Zemni. Even though he ended up seating in the board of executives of this ⟨platform⟩, he never felt like having to identify himself completely with this ⟨network⟩. According to Zemni, Kif Kif distinguished between ⟨broad principles⟩ where people should subscribe themselves to in order to associate themselves with this ⟨network⟩, and ⟨standpoints⟩ with respect to concrete issues. With respect to these ⟨standpoints⟩, individuals can individually decide whether or not to position themselves publically. In response to my remark that I nevertheless encountered a variety of ⟨opinion articles⟩ written by Kif Kif members, Zemni notes ⟨in most cases⟩, these articles are signed with individual ⟨names⟩, and not with the name of the ⟨organisation⟩ itself. The excerpt below shows how he may or may not decide to subscribe to such public positionings.

SZ: uhm ... true, but in most cases, uhm, there were names under it [the opinion article].

JZ: yes

SZ: and never on behalf of Kif Kif and ‘that is what everyone within Kif Kif should think’ ... you either signed or you did not sign ... and uhm ... some will say “yeah okay but if you list all of them in a row since 2000 and if you take a look at who signs what, you could deduct” No, sometimes it is also because of practical considerations. For instance, I was away for half a year because of my research abroad, and honestly speaking, I wasn’t involved with Kif Kif then.

JZ: I see

SZ: But uhm, that is what it kind of boils down to uhm. The idea of like “we are going to write a piece about uhm [Minister] Keulen, about free speech” and then it gets sent around ... and especially Danny [Neudt] used to give it a first shot and then it was like “yes are you going to sign this or not?”. And yes uhm then you see that [text] coming along eh and you go from point to point whereupon you say like “I subscribe to this ... and also to that”. I did that personally like “I am only speaking for myself and not for others within Kif Kif” ... I read it and I commented when I considered this to be necessary. And suppose that ... it circulates and uhm ... one does not take my comment into account ... then I took a decision to uhm, a similar deliberation as I tried to explain earlier ... “should an organisation that is wrong in this respect” ... “no” So if I was like “yeah, I agree for ninety per cent but I would put it differently, and I am not talking about a comma or something but something that is kind of

JZ: yes yes ok

SZ: but then I said “no”. When I said “yes okay, actually I agree for ninety per cent”, then I did sign it anyway.

b) Translating poststructuralist writings into political action

We already noted that Zemni felt a certain degree of dissatisfaction with post-colonial, poststructuralist, and deconstructivist thought. This dissatisfaction pertains first and foremost to the extent to which these writings can be translated into public standpoints with respect to the various stories that dominate the public sphere. The excerpts below demonstrate the close relationship between Zemni's intellectual and socio-political positionings. The intertextual references to poststructuralist and deconstructivist authors function deictically with respect to Zemni's socio-political sense of self and sense others. Moreover, they shed an interesting light on the tensions and ambivalences he experiences with respect to the structures and stories that characterize the public sphere as he depicts it.

Translating difficult texts into political practice

Zemni's spatial metaphor of a ⟨platform⟩ as a good ⟨basis⟩ to engage oneself upon does not merely apply to networks such as Kif Kif. It also pertains to his intellectual sources of inspiration. During our discussion of excerpt 94, we already noticed that Zemni problematised the issue of translating the writings of ⟨Foucault⟩ and ⟨Derrida⟩ into ⟨determinations of political standpoints in reality⟩. The interaction below immediately follows upon the interaction in excerpt 94. Zemni continues and explains that he considers such writings to constitute a ⟨bad platform to define social action⟩.

JZ: mmh

SZ: I thought that was a very, I think that is a very bad platform to define social action.

JZ: yes

SZ: And of course, one might respond, many do, ... I sometimes talk about it with Ico [Maly] eh like "it is about reclaiming hegemony" and and "another discourse" and so on ... and all of that is okay, but it still remains difficult to ... answer firmly and correctly to attacks coming from the right ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: So, it is similar to my [relation to] social activism eh ... so I, I read that [poststructuralist and deconstructivist] literature, and I considered it to be interesting and so on, but at the same time, I wasn't completely happy with it ... It's still a bit like that to me

JZ: Not happy with that with that ... so uhm ...

SZ: well, so I ...

JZ: that type of theory? (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 97 – 06/04/2009

Even though Zemni does not entirely agree with the right wing ⟨story⟩ about the left being entrapped in ⟨relativism⟩, he does consider many poststructuralist and deconstructivist writings to constitute a rather ⟨bad platform⟩ on the basis of which one might engage oneself politically. Interestingly, Zemni rearticulates the voice of ⟨Ico⟩ Maly who is the current coordinator of Kif Kif. He rearticulates Maly's left-wing stance towards ⟨social activism⟩ as follows: ⟨"It is about reclaiming hegemony"⟩⁹¹ and about

⁹¹ I often talked to Ico Maly about these issues myself. Ico is heavily influenced by a Gramscian notion of hegemony which he combines with a notion of discourse that takes both Foucaultian and linguistic pragmatic approaches to the ideological and

developing <“another discourse”>. Nevertheless, Zemni remains critical with respect to the question what <difficult> deconstructivist and poststructuralist <writings> can be used in order to achieve these goals. In the excerpt below, he responds to my question whether he is dissatisfied with <that type of theory> in general, by articulating his relationship towards Edward <Said> and his <acolytes>.

SZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) For instance, I am a very big fan of [Edward] Said, but a lot of people categorize Said within poststructuralism and so on. And indeed, he is a linguist, he is a linguist, he occupied himself with language and you name it, that's true. But he did not belong at all to that group of ... let us call them relativists for the time being, and I don't mean that in a simplistic sense like the rightists always use it today So, I remain a big fan of Said, but it is true that many of his ... 'acolytes' ..., according to me, wrote all sorts of ... incredibly complicated pieces, that, according to me, do not provide a solid basis for social action any more

JZ: yes

SZ: uhm ... and that is a difficult situation at the moment because you uhm ... uhm ... if you reach that conclusion, one quickly kind of moves towards the right, I think. But I don't do that.

excerpt 98 – 06/04/2009

On the one hand, Zemni does not distance himself from <Said>'s linguistic and discursive perspective. He explicitly positions himself as a <fan> and refuses to categorize Said among <that group of> <relativists> (Meeks 2003; Said 1981, 2005; B. Turner 2004)⁹². On the other hand, he metapragmatically evaluates the writings of <Said>'s <acolytes> in terms of <incredibly complicated pieces> that <do not provide a solid basis for social action>. Note the spatial metaphor he uses in order to evaluate their work. Without such a <basis>, without an intellectual <platform> for socio-political positioning, one becomes prone to feelings of ambivalence.

Intellectual impostors vs Intellectuels engagés

Sami Zemni explicitly discussed the position of the <intellectuel engagé>, a position he associates with Jean-Paul <Sartre>. He introduced this notion while discussing Sartre's ability to use the theoretical construct of <Marxist humanism> <as a platform> for his <public engagement> (see: Young 2006; Zemni 2009: 13-19)⁹³. As Zemni puts it in the excerpt below, this <platform> <enabled him to take a shot at it>.

hegemonic functions of language into account. The work of Jan Blommaert and Jef Verschueren figures very prominently in his approach to language and society.

⁹² The book *Orientalism* launched Edward Said's intellectual career. In this book, he explicitly acknowledges his debt to Michel Foucault. However, he also emphasises that in contrast to Foucault, he does believe in the deciding influence of individual writers may exert on a discourse such as *Orientalism* (Said 2005, 50). Said describes orientalism as a discourse based on an ontologic and epistemological dichotomy between the *Orient* and the *Occident* (Said 2005, 27). His book is both a description and a critique of orientalist ideas, notions, and practices that have survived until this day. As Zemni points out, Said may be labeled as a <linguist> in the sense that he was part and parcel of what we may call a linguistic or discursive turn in social and sciences. As such, he contributed to disciplines as diverse as literary theory, the history of ideas, music, the sociology of intellectuals, and political analysis. Islam was a continuous point of interest to Said. But it should also be noted that Said's interest in this topic was closely connected to other issues such as the role of the intellectual in the public sphere. To Said, critical intellectuals should be involved in “*the creation and the critique of borders – physical, national, cultural and spiritual*” (B. Turner 2004, 173-174). Said was a prominent critic of Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (Meeks 2003, 137). He explicitly wrote about the role of the intellectual implies going beyond the suffering of particular nations and cultures. Intellectuals should explore the universal aspects of human suffering and oppression in order “*to universalize the crisis, to give greater scope to what a particular race or nation suffered, to associate that experience with the suffering of others*” (Said 1994 cited in B. Turner 2004, 174).

⁹³ Sartre emphasised the systematic nature of colonial practice(s) and discourse(s). His approach is closely related to the Marxism of the anti-colonial movements. As such, it articulated the universal principles of Marxism with the local conditions in (post-) colonial contexts. Interestingly, Sartre's emphasis on colonialism as a system went hand in hand with an affirmation of the significance of individual subjective experience (Young 2006, xix-xxi). Sartre acknowledges that Western humanism and human rights discourse in general “*had worked by excluding a majority of the world's population from the category of the human*”. However, contrary to anti-humanists such as Althusser, Sartre refused to do away with the concept of humanism altogether. Quite the contrary, he attempted “*to articulate a new anti-racist humanism, which would be*

SZ: yes, there he [the waiter] is but uhm, I'm going to signal him ... you know, if you read Sartre again eh ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: uhm

JZ: I only read a few articles in 'Colonialism and neocolonialism', but that's not really philosophical ...

SZ: Yes, what is Sartre eh ... ?

JZ: Yeah it's all sorts of things eh, but uhm yes, I don't know what you were about to say

SZ: well ... if you read that that ... his type of public engagement eh, the ... *intellectuels engagés* that he introduced, and so on ... you see you see ... [signals waiter and addresses him] Sir ... [addresses me again] he had that Marxist humanism that functioned as a platform eh ... [the waiter is standing next to us] ... yes, I'd like coke zero please.

excerpt 99 – 06/04/2009

It is important to emphasise that Zemni's admiration for Sartre's ⟨platform⟩ is not directed at the latter's ⟨Marxist humanism⟩ as such, but at the fact that Sartre was able to develop a theoretical ⟨platform⟩ that could function as a basis for his intellectual and political ⟨engagement⟩. Such platforms allow one to bring ⟨writing⟩ and ⟨social activism⟩ into a relationship of ⟨symbiosis⟩.

JZ: [addressing the waiter] and I'd like a bitter lemon please ...

SZ: that uhm enabled him to take a shot at it

JZ: sorry what did he?

SZ: a Marxist humanism

JZ: yes yes

SZ: as a basis to uhm get his social activism and his writing into a symbiosis. Of course, today that does not resonate that well anymore because it has become way more difficult to uhm ... pick an issue, a cause ... for yourself.

JZ: mmh

SZ: But uhm, ... according to me, that has largely been ... undone by uhm ... well ... poststructuralism at large eh ... from Lévi-Strauss over Foucault and certainly Derrida. But honestly speaking, I never understood Derrida ... and certainly not when he made his switch from not saying anything about politics for years, he goes to to America, and all of a sudden he begins about politics, and then, well ...

excerpt 100 – 06/04/2009

inclusive rather than exclusive, and which would be the product of those who formed the majority of its new totality" (Young 2006, xvii). Young points out that even though Lévi-Strauss' and Althusser's critiques of Sartre "*enabled the later postcolonial deconstruction of the ethnocentric premises of European philosophy, it was Sartre's work, particularly of the 1940's, that was most influential on postwar French anti-colonial intellectuals*" such as Césaire, Fanon, and Memmi (Young 2006, xxiii). Interestingly, in his book on the debate about Islam, Sami Zemni argues for the figure of an intellectual engaged in a practice of humanist critique. This type of humanism is never finished. It involves a view of history that includes other perspectives than those of Western man. It involves a plea against types of universalism that consider forms of diversity to be deviations. It is a plea against unidimensional and homogenising thought. At the same time, Zemni describes this type of humanism as a plea against relativism. Consequently, Zemni's humanist critic is someone who builds intellectual bridges without shying away from potential conflict with majorities and/or minorities (Zemni 2009: 13-19).

As we can see in the last turn of the excerpt above, Zemni attributes the difficulty of achieving a symbiotic relationship between one's theoretical writings on the one hand and (social activism) on the other hand, for a large part to writers such as Derrida. As a case in point, he provides me with an illustration. He problematises Baudrillard's *The Gulf War did not take place* (see: Baudrillard 1995)⁹⁴. Doing so, he wonders how one should explain the title of this book to (an Iraqi refugee) (in Jordan) for whom this matter was anything but a set of mediated (simulations) (see: Baudrillard 1994). He concludes by remarking that such situations leave him with (a sour feeling).

Zemni repeatedly provided the notion of (engagement) with a very positive connotation. The issue was never whether one should engage oneself or not, but what (platforms) allow one to position oneself in a public sphere, without getting trapped in its organisational and narrative (structures). The same goes for philosophy and theory. Zemni is therefore keen to point out that he does not like to idolize thinkers. He explicitly mentions the work of (Mark Lilla) and his book *The reckless mind* (see: Lilla 2001) which he describes as a study about the question why (brilliant minds) have made (wrong political choices) at particular points in history. He emphasised that Lilla wrote about (the interaction between) the (oeuvre) of these authors and their (political standpoints). Zemni is dealing with similar issues.

The figure of the *intellectuel engagé* appeals to Zemni. In contrast, there is the figure of the poststructuralist *intellectual impostor* who has been thoroughly criticised by (Jean Bricmont) and (Alain Sokal). In the excerpt below, Zemni explains that (even though) he does (not) (agree with everything) these authors write, he does acknowledge that they do have (a point) in their (*Intellectual Impostures*) (see: Sokal and Bricmont 1997). Sokal and Bricmont are famous for their critique of poststructuralist and postmodern jargon and for what is known as Sokal's famous hoax in the journal *Social Text* (see: Flyvbjerg 2001: 1; Sokal 1996a, 1996b; Sokal and Bricmont 1997)⁹⁵.

Below, Zemni once again talks about the difficulties involved in (translating) poststructuralist thought. In this context, he refers to (Derrida) as well as to (Homi Bhabha)'s work on (intertextuality) (see:

⁹⁴ *The Gulf War did not take place* is a compilation of three essays written by Jean Baudrillard. These articles were originally published in the French newspaper *Libération* (Baudrillard 1995). Stephen Pfohl provides us with a book review that summarises some of the key themes addressed by Baudrillard. Baudrillard did not question the horror of the event that we came to call the first Gulf War. But he did wonder whether 'war' was still a useful term to describe this event: "promotional, speculative, virtual: this war no longer corresponds to Clausewitz's formula of politics pursued by other means" (Baudrillard quoted in Pfohl 1997). In order to understand Baudrillard's statement, we have to link these articles to his criticism of hyper reality. According to him, we are becoming increasingly immersed in an endlessly mediated and symbolic deterrence of images and simulations. These make it ever more difficult to contact the real. Note the Lacanian overtones here. Pfohl paraphrases Baudrillard as follows: "No matter how deadly its violence, this campaign operated more to deter contact with the 'real' exigencies of history, than – as would be the case with a 'real war' – to open history to the agonistic challenge of enemies pitted in general economic struggle with one another". Pfohl criticizes Baudrillard for his rather "hyperbolic language and sweeping terms". As such, he makes a point quite similar to Zemni: "The situated complexities and contradictions of Western people's lived reactions to conflicts within the oil-rich Persian Gulf is not well served by such homogenizing language. Nor will Baudrillard's exhortation to oppose the simulated illusions of media 'realism' by becoming 'more virtual than the events themselves' be hailed by many critics as a meaningful strategy of activist resistance" (Pfohl 1997, 139-141).

⁹⁵ In 1996, the mathematical physicist Alain Sokal sent the bogus article *Transgressing the boundaries: towards a hermeneutics of quantum gravity* to the journal *Social Text* (see: Sokal 1996a). As soon as this parody of postmodern and poststructuralist discourse was published, Sokal revealed his hoax in the journal *Lingua Franca* in an article called *A physicist experiments with cultural studies*. In this second publication, Sokal asked himself the following question: "Would a leading North American journal of cultural studies – whose editorial collective includes such luminaries as Fredric Jameson and Andrew Ross – publish an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors' ideological preconceptions?". He also explains the procedure he used in order to write this text. Sokal was motivated by both intellectual and political reasons. Intellectually, his article constitutes a charge against "a particular kind of nonsense and sloppy thinking: one that denies the existence of objective realities, or (when challenged) admits their existence but downplays their political relevance". Politically, Sokal points out that his anger is triggered by the fact that "most (though not all) of this silliness is emanating from the self-proclaimed left" he considers to turn towards "obscuritism" in "one or another form of epistemic pluralism" (Sokal 1996 b, 4). For more information on the hoax, see Sokal's website: <http://www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/index.html>. In collaboration with Jean Bricmont, Sokal would outline his critique in a more systematic way (Sokal and Bricmont 1997).

Bhabha 1994)⁹⁶. And even though he hedges his statement and explicitly articulates his respect with regard to ⟨intelligent people such as Homi Bhabha⟩, he wonders to what extent one can link their work ⟨with concrete issues⟩. Put differently, Zemni's feelings of ambiguity with respect to positioning oneself as an intellectual in the public sphere partly result from problems related to translating ⟨difficult⟩ relativist, poststructuralist, deconstructive, and post-colonial writings into political ⟨engagement⟩.

SZ: yes yes Jean Bricmont, and actually, if I am not mistaken, the article was just Jean Bricmont ... but the book intellectual impostors was written together with Sokal And that kind of did change some things for me Uhm, not that I agreed with everything, but still, I said like "damned, he has a point", and sometimes when I read, I think like that.

JZ: mmh

SZ: uhm ... an accumulation of issues that are being described like "it's all very beautiful, at times it's almost poetical sometimes"

JZ: mmh

SZ: I've never understood Derrida, I admit that but ... when you read him it all seems fine but let's just try to translate this to ... uhm, imagine a person in the street who says "Could you summarise that for me? What does he want to say with that exactly?"

JZ: yes

SZ: and I always had a problem with that, and according to me, that balance is sometimes lost. And in some pieces I read by Homi Bhabha for instance, about the post-colonial situation and intertextuality, then I think like, well, I almost don't dare to say it because ... of course I feel very humble with respect to such intelligent people as Homi Bhabha, but sometimes I also think like "am I not understanding this very well?" ... or maybe I kind of fail to link it to concrete issues.

excerpt 101 – 06/04/2009

We can conclude this subsection by noting that the various intertextual references to ⟨Said⟩, ⟨Bhabha⟩, ⟨Sartre⟩, ⟨Foucault⟩, ⟨Derrida⟩, ⟨Sokal⟩, and ⟨Bricmont⟩ do not merely imply an intellectual stance. By deictically pointing to these authors in the context of a discussion of ⟨relativism⟩, and by linking these authors to an evaluation of his own preferred mode of ⟨engagement⟩, Zemni articulates a self-critical attitude towards his own subject position as an ⟨intellectuel engagé⟩.

c) Preferred and disavowed modes of politics

Throughout my discussion of ⟨politics⟩ as an abstract category at the beginning of this book, I have pointed out that individuals may articulate various modes of politics within the context of a single interview. In the sections below, I would like to explore the way these various modes of politics may

⁹⁶ Homi Bhabha is a post-colonial writer who is probably most famous for his book *The location of culture*. Within this book, Bhabha challenges a multiplicity of aspects related to cultural boundaries. His writings are heavily laced with references to thinkers such as Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, Ernesto Laclau, and Chantal Mouffe. His notion of intertextuality is borrowed from Bakhtin and Kristeva. In the context of *The location of culture*, he notes that "Culture is heimlich, with its disciplinary generalizations, its mimetic narratives, its homologous empty time, its seriality, its progress, its customs and coherence. But cultural authority is also unheimlich, for to be distinctive, signficatory, influential and identifiable, it has to be translated, disseminated, differentiated, interdisciplinary, intertextual, international, and inter-racial" (Bhabha 1994, 195). He also explains how "in the moment of liberatory struggle, the Algerian people destroy the continuities and constancies of the nationalist tradition which provided a safeguard against colonial cultural imposition. They are now free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference" (Bhabha 1994, 55). Differently put: "Cultural diversity is also the represenation of a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations, safe in the Utopian-ism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity" (Bhabha 1994, 50).

be interpretively linked to one another. As we will see, individuals may deploy different modes of politics by articulating subject positions, practices, discourses, and institutions to one another according to a variety of logics. This happens by systematic choices made at various levels of linguistic structure. These interpretive logics allow my interviewees to position themselves in a more or less coherent manner with respect to spatial, temporal, social, and intertextual aspects of their contextual reality. In order to illustrate this principle, I will stick to the case of Sami Zemni. A more comparative approach will be presented in the upcoming chapters.

A young academic allochthon in the public sphere?

It may be useful to return to Sami Zemni's feeling of being ⟨symbolically⟩ ⟨isolated⟩ as an ⟨allochthon⟩ in the Flemish context of the late nineties. Between 1998 and 2001, he hardly knew any ⟨other allochthons⟩ working on similar points of interest within his university (see: excerpt 89). The excerpt below immediately follows Zemni's remark that Meryem Kanmaz was ⟨the only other⟩ so-called ⟨allochthon⟩ ⟨with whom⟩ he ⟨could talk⟩ about his intellectual and social ⟨engagements⟩. Below, he explains how he felt like having been ⟨abused⟩ by the ⟨media⟩ who contacted him whenever ⟨something happened with Muslims⟩ in Flanders. Interestingly, he also rearticulates a media-related voice in order to problematise a media logic characterized by a need for people who can reduce complex problematics to ⟨a one liner or two⟩.

SZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of excerpt 89) so I kind of uhm ended up in that debate ... without always realizing very well myself ... not that I want to justify myself for that, but when I look back [at the period 1998-2001], I definitely would have dealt with the media ... which ... well ... evidently abused me as a green leaf back then, in a completely different manner.

JZ: mmh

SZ: I am still behind the things I said. That's not the point but ...

JZ: Could you give me an example, or could you talk a bit about ...

SZ: Well, look, the the the uhm continuous uhm. As soon as something happened with Muslims, one had to make a phone call to me, uhm because one thought like "he can put it in a one liner or two" and and uhm "he has something to say" and so on But I never dared to occupy a position of my own, in the sense that I could not, ... neither through through language, nor through ... outside of the interview to uhm try to ... change the format.

excerpt 102 – 06/04/2009

As a response to my enquiry for an illustration of the way Zemni was ⟨abused⟩ by the ⟨media⟩, he mentioned the fact that media workers tended to contact him as soon as ⟨Muslims⟩ were problematised in the ⟨public sphere⟩. His own discursive ability to produce ⟨one liners⟩ seemed to fit their needs. Unfortunately, the interpellations by media workers, as well as the ⟨format⟩ in which he was expected to articulate his voice, did not allow him ⟨to occupy a position of his own⟩. Put differently, the media function as a very bad platform for Zemni's preferred mode of socio-political and intellectual engagement.

In the excerpt below, we can see how Zemni was interpellated into a particular set of subject positions by mainstream ⟨media⟩. As such, he explicitly rearticulates his experiences with the Flemish mass media from the perspective of ⟨a young allochthon in the public sphere⟩. Note the fact that he hedged the notion of allochthony almost every time he used it throughout the interview. The following excerpt was coded under the subtopic 'the public sphere'. We can see how Zemni was allowed less and less time to voice his ⟨one liners⟩. Ultimately, he would reach the conclusion that he did not ⟨want to be a part of this anymore⟩.

SZ: I really experienced that

JZ: yes

SZ: as a young ... yes, a young allochthon in the public sphere ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: like “Okay, you can say something”, but once in a while they said like “Stop, we are going to record it once again, it is a bit too long, could you make it a bit shorter?”. But even then, I still had the impression like “Okay, I can say something here”, until, ... I experienced it myself, 32 seconds I was supposed to be able to produce a one liner for some programme ... and that tape was recorded four to five times ... because then I reached sixty seconds, and then I reached fifty seconds And then, it was somewhere at the end of the nineties or at the beginning of 2000, when I started to realize like “I do not want to be a part of this anymore”.

JZ: yes

SZ: And then I started to figure a lot less in the media, a lot less in the media And especially during the last year I completely remained aloof, also because of a number of other reasons, and these are not merely media related. (this turn continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 103 – 06/04/2009

Elsewhere, Sami Zemni argued that ⟨the media in Flanders started to change very quickly⟩ at the turn of the century. As a student, he used to have ⟨the impression⟩ that newspaper articles about international issues were characterized by a certain degree of ⟨nuance⟩ and ⟨vision⟩. Unfortunately, ⟨by the end of the nineties⟩ ⟨redactions for foreign correspondence were practically shut down⟩ in Flanders. According to him, articles were increasingly being reduced to ⟨bricolages⟩ of international press agencies such as ⟨AFP⟩ and ⟨Reuters⟩. He argued that this has led to a simplification of standpoints. Moreover, these changes in the Flemish ⟨media⟩ were accompanied with a process of linguistic impoverishment. Zemni claims that one currently needs a mere ⟨500 to 600 words⟩ ⟨in order to understand a news paper⟩, whereas the required vocabulary still numbered ⟨900 to 1000⟩ words merely ⟨ten years ago⟩.

In the last lines of the excerpt above, Zemni hints at the fact that there is another set of ⟨reasons⟩ for him to remain ⟨aloof⟩ with respect to the media. In addition to the mass mediated interview ⟨format⟩ of the televised interview that allowed him a very limited amount of time for articulating his standpoints, he notes a change in the ⟨public debate⟩ after 9/11. This change highlights ⟨another side to that tension with the academic⟩ context, and is directly related to the way Sami Zemni is being publicly addressed or interpellated. In the excerpt below, Zemni claims that before ⟨9/11⟩, he was treated in the same way as ⟨Jan Janssens⟩⁹⁷ when making controversial statements in ⟨the public sphere⟩. ⟨After 9/11 that was no longer the case⟩.

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) Because there is another side to that tension with the academic ... uhm ... uhm ... because of the fact that I used to uhm, presumably because of uhm, yes well in in ... before before 9/11 times eh

JZ: mmh

SZ: young, or younger, I'll put it that way uhm perhaps that I thought about it less .. but ... the public debate was different, if when you said something that people did not like to hear or something ...

JZ: mmh

⁹⁷ The first name Jan, as well as the last name Janssens, are both stereotypical Flemish names. Zemni uses them to index a relationship towards the public sphere that is unproblematic in ethnic, cultural, and religious terms.

SZ: then I might receive a letter of an uhm e-mail, event though that was not so common back then, ... with a remark, a question ... uhm and most of all

JZ: you received those

SZ: I yes, ... because I ...

JZ: ah okay

SZ: but most of the times it was something like “yes mister Zemni, what you said over there, yes this and that and this”. And I always used to, I am always open to that But at that moment, I was simply a doctoral student at the University of Ghent uhm ... just like Jan Jansens, and after 9/11 that was no longer the case ...

excerpt 104 – 06/04/2009

Zemni distinguishes between two phases in the ⟨public debate⟩ by metapragmatically distinguishing between two sets of discursive practices. Whereas debates and analyses in the media tended to be characterized by a certain degree of ⟨nuance⟩ and ⟨vision⟩ during his studies, things started to change very quickly at the turn of the century. The time he was allowed to articulate himself, as well as the variety of ⟨words⟩ used by journalists, were severely restricted. Moreover, whereas people used to respond to things they did not like, with a ⟨question⟩ or a ⟨remark⟩, addressed to a ⟨doctoral student⟩. Both the nature of the speech acts and the type of interpellations directed at Zemni, would change dramatically.

Before ⟨9/11⟩ Zemni claims that the questions and remarks he was confronted with in the public sphere interpellated him into an academic subject position and not into the position of a ⟨missionary ... of the Moroccan Islamists⟩ who hides his ⟨true intensions⟩ behind an academic ⟨smokescreen⟩. In the excerpt below, he claims that ⟨slander⟩ and ⟨character assassination⟩ became common practice in the ⟨debate⟩ after ⟨9/11⟩. According to him, this does not merely apply to ⟨Vlaams Belang⟩ activists, but also to ⟨people⟩ for whom ⟨an opinion constitutes an argument and for whom every opinion is equally valid⟩.

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) I mean, there are open letters circulating on the internet about me where I am considered in terms of some kind of missionary ... of Moroccan Islamists, even though I have Tunisian roots, apparently they know all about that. This sort of stuff whereby they are going to consider everything I say ... as a smokescreen behind which I supposedly hide my true intensions.

JZ: yes yes ... yes

SZ: Okay, if this would come from the Vlaams Belang, then you could still contextualise it and laugh with it but is uhm ... this really falls hard on me ... it comes from environments of people who simply belong to that generation of people who think that uhm ... an opinion constitutes an argument and for whom every opinion is equally valid, and that you should just ... well uhm one, a character assassination, uhm ... should commit slander as part and parcel of an honest public discussion.

JZ: mmh

SZ: That really hurts me. Honestly speaking, I regret this a lot, and on top of that, it it it is uhm well also a reflection of a disappointment Perhaps I was a bit too naïve about that, but uhm ... well ... uhm, ... I am convinced that I am reproached things that my colleagues Carl De Vos and Rik Coolsaet will never be accused of.

excerpt 105 – 06/04/2009

Below, Zemni compares the way he is being treated with the way his colleagues are being addressed by the media. Even though other professors who regularly voice opinions on (international) politics in

the Flemish media such as Rik Coolsaet and Carl De Vos are also being <attacked> <from the right corner>, they are not being attacked <in an identitarian way>. Put differently, they are not being interpellated on the basis of ethnic, cultural, and/or religious subject positions they supposedly occupy. As we will see in the upcoming chapters, such issues of (mis)recognition often trigger strong emotional reactions among my respondents. As Zemni puts it, interpellations in the form of accusations that hurtled him lead to feelings of <disappointment>. This goes especially for accusations of being a <traitor> or not being (sufficiently) <integrated>⁹⁸.

SZ: And of course, we sometimes talk about that eh. Rik Coolsaet also gets attacked for this and that, certainly from the right corner But never in a way that ... in an identitarian way, so to say.

JZ: Yes

SZ: you see, one is never going to reproach him for being a traitor, for being badly integrated, ... that sort of stuff

JZ; yes yes

SZ: and of course, that is a severe disappointment, but I really don't feel up to it anymore.

JZ: mmh

SZ: to well, I mean, if I have to prove that I am integrated and all of that ... I have left that behind me a long time ago ...

excerpt 106 – 06/04/2009

Economic, culturalist, and neoliberal logics

There are at least two modes of politics and socio-political positioning that define professor Zemni's preferred mode of engagement in a negative way. These modes of politics can be discussed in terms of three interpretive logics: *a neoliberal logic*; *a culturalist logic*, and an *economic logic*. Zemni disqualifies discourses as well as socio-political practices characterised by these logics. An interpretive logic is operative when language users articulate subject positions, abstract categories, discourse(s), and practices with one another. Throughout their political discourse, my interviewees tend to criticise socio-political logics that negatively define their preferred mode of engagement, while simultaneously articulating interpretive logics constitutive of their preferred sense of self and politics.

In the first lines of the excerpt below, we can observe how Zemni initiates a topic shift from a discussion of the subtopic 'relativism vs universalism' to a discussion of 'neoliberalism'. The subtopic 'neoliberalism' is part of a general argument in which Zemni tries to go beyond the stories that are being told about <Islam> and about <the left> in the public sphere. It should also be noted that the excerpt below is a continuation of excerpt 98. Within that excerpt, he argued that the <incredibly complicated pieces> written by poststructuralists <do not provide a solid basis for social action any more>, and that this has led to a <difficult situation> that prompts people to move <towards the right>. In the excerpt below, Zemni explains why he did not move towards the right himself.

⁹⁸ In a personal note on *Het Islam Debat* (i.e. *The Islam Debate*), professor Zemni explained some of the reasons why he wrote this book to me (see: Zemni 2009). The combination of public criticism directed at his person and the lack of public self-critique with respect to discourse about Islam prompted him to react by means of this publication. Nevertheless, he also points out that he considers it to be more useful to write about the perverse effects of neoliberalism and current developments in international relations. He reframes the interventions of people such as Tarik Fraihi, Nadia Fadil and himself, with respect to issues such as migration, Islam, and asylum at the end of the nineties, in terms of an appeal for tolerance and dialogue. This should not be interpreted as a soft way of dealing with these issues. Rather, in a context of polarisation, war, violence, and hatred, he considers this to be the only alternative. Referring to the work of Chantal Mouffe, he points out that dialogue should not be misunderstood as a form of conflict-free interaction.

SZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of an ongoing turn) because I still believe that one should not throw out the baby with the bathwater ... Also, well, according to me, and also according to many others I think, Lévi-Strauss did not write his poststructuralism, his respect for other cultures, ... going into other cultures in order to understand them better, in order to conclude like uhm “it’s all the same” and so on. No, [he wrote it] in order to understand better what happened elsewhere But uhm ... I do think that one of the consequences was, that because of that, a tendency was initiated And because of that, we have been insufficiently occupied with economics, with neoliberalism which impacted on basically everything from the eighties on, but with respect to Flanders perhaps mostly from the nineties on On media structures as well as on the public debate Yes, it is simply a farce.

JZ: mmh

excerpt 107 – 06/04/2009

The excerpt above is important for a number of reasons. Zemni warns us not to throw the baby (i.e. the type of poststructuralism that contributes to an understanding of other cultures) out with the bathwater (i.e. complicated texts that foster a type of relativism that equates all cultural practices). He argues that ⟨we⟩ (i.e. academics) have been focusing too much on cultural aspects of reality as a consequence of a ⟨tendency⟩ initiated by authors such as ⟨Lévi-Strauss⟩. In turn, ⟨we have been insufficiently occupied with economics⟩ and with ⟨neoliberalism⟩ in particular. Below, Zemni explains how ⟨neoliberalism⟩ has influenced ⟨media structures⟩ as well as ⟨the public debate⟩ in general. The excerpt below is a continuation of the excerpt above. Zemni starts by illustrating the impact of ⟨neoliberalism⟩ on the media with reference to ⟨politicians⟩ who ⟨have to make a fool of themselves⟩. He specifically refers to ⟨Bart de Wever⟩, a very popular Flemish nationalist who appeared in all sorts of popular television programs in the period before the federal elections of 2010.

SZ: I uhm, I am still quite young but sometimes ... my wife laughs at me for being a grumpy old man already

JZ: (laughs)

SZ: because I can get irritated, that’s a fact, we Not a day goes by before we have to watch some program either ... an amusement program or a talk show where politicians have to make a fool of themselves May I kiss you⁹⁹ madam Minister uhm, ... De Wever in The smartest human¹⁰⁰. De Wever, you can’t get rid of him on television He does not appear in the news anymore, but he does appear in all sorts of other programs ... (this turn continues in the excerpt below).

excerpt 108 – 06/04/2009

In his attempt to move away from dominant stories that are being told ⟨about Islam⟩ and about ⟨the left⟩, Zemni links contemporary ⟨racism⟩ with the fact that ⟨many Muslims⟩ are falling back on ⟨fundamentalist⟩, ⟨conservative⟩, and ⟨reactionary⟩ versions of ⟨Islam⟩. He does so by contextualising both processes as reactions against ⟨neoliberalism⟩. In the excerpt below, we can see how he draws an analogy between ⟨everyday⟩ ⟨cultural⟩ ⟨racism⟩ and certain Islamic reflexes.

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of the last turn in the excerpt above) and because of that, what I always, or what I am currently trying to do, or trying to do, or starting to focus on, is that according to me, the problematic of Islam ... may be traced back to a visceral anti-Islamic feeling that might have existed and still exists in Europe ... which constitutes a minority Just like the biological racists in our country. It is more about an everyday racism which is cultural rather than like “people belong to” [races] ... I mean theories of race and so on eh But that these ... according to me all of this has to do a lot with uhm ... with neoliberalism Also, the fact that many Muslims ... fall back on Islam

⁹⁹ *May I kiss you?* (Dutch: *Mag ik u kussen?*) is a Flemish television show in which three male candidates have to verbally seduce a female guest in a talk show by outwitting one another. The goal is to be granted a kiss at the end of the episode.

¹⁰⁰ *The smartest human* (Dutch: *De slimste mens*) is Flanders’ most popular televised quiz. Flemish celebrities enter a competition in which they are quizzed with respect to their general knowledge. Bart De Wever’s popularity boosted after his participation in this contest in 2009. His participation became a political issue on its own. See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkaROfGAUn8> .

and not simply 'the' Islam, but yes, also on fundamentalist versions or certain conservative, ... reactionary versions of it, has a lot to do with it [neoliberalism].

excerpt 109 – 06/04/2009

In the following excerpt, we can observe how Zemni links ⟨neoliberalism⟩ and the ⟨free market⟩. According to him, this either leads to a society consisting of ⟨atomized⟩ individuals floating around ⟨freely⟩ in society, or to communitarian reflexes. He also points out that a ⟨community⟩ is often ⟨easily embedded in a religious tradition⟩. Zemni's point is that the overemphasised cultural dimension of societal conflict has led to a neglect of economical issues by the leftist side of the political spectrum. What is needed is a critique of the evolving neoliberal structure of society. On the other hand, Zemni is keen to emphasise that it does not make sense to claim that ⟨it's all the fault of neoliberalism⟩. Such a unicausal explanation goes against the grain of his preferred mode of political analysis. What is at stake is the practice of establishing ⟨political, economic,⟩ and ⟨social⟩ order in general.

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of the turn discussed in the excerpt above) and you can see that very well in America In America, neoliberalism ... or simply the free market, and does one have to say like "it's all the fault of neoliberalism". No. Evidently, it's not as simple as that. In the end it is about your political, economic, social order ... and in America one has pushed the principles of the free market so far, that what remains, is an atomized individual that kind of floats freely around. One has only one possibility left and that is the community, and a community is very easily embedded in a religious tradition eh, and that is what you see with Muslims ... since 9/11 and because of the pressure coming from from from everywhere, also because of the economic order and so on Because the fact that Muslims fall back onto themselves has to do with the fact that education, the unions, sports, and so on, have partly failed in that respect, ... and that [problem] lies with society ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: and not so much with people

excerpt 110 – 06/04/2009

Zemni wishes to link cultural aspects of social problems to other dimensions of social problematics. Doing so, he refuses to reduce these problems by resorting to ⟨economic determinism⟩ and to strategies of ⟨culturalisation⟩. The excerpt below is coded under the subtopic 'public debate'. Here, we can observe how Zemni grants a ⟨place⟩ to ⟨the cultural, the human⟩, and the ⟨identitarian⟩ aspects of reality in his analysis of socio-political problems. Even though he does not wish to return to the ⟨economic determinism⟩ of ⟨vulgar Marxism⟩. Also, the ⟨culturalisation⟩ of social problems related to issues such as ⟨poverty⟩ and ⟨unemployment⟩ has gone ⟨way too far⟩. For this reason, Zemni argues for a critique that also focuses on the ⟨economic⟩ aspects of ⟨neoliberalism⟩.

SZ: I think that the struggle for people, for emancipation, lies elsewhere. Nevertheless ... there is still that ... the cultural, the human, the identitarian, should also be granted a certain place [in the analysis],

JZ: mmh

SZ: so I definitely don't want to return to the times of vulgar Marxism or something like that, or I don't know, to economic determinism.

JZ: mmh

SZ: But I do think that it [the cultural, the human, the identitarian] is going way too far ...

JZ: mmh ...

SZ: That is basically the point And because of that, it is not always a good thing to, ... suppose that well uhm ... the fact that uhm ... that unemployment strikes Muslims much harder than others, the fact that poverty and so on is ... is uhm ... being culturalised, even though we really should be dealing with a socio-political question.

JZ: mmh

SZ: And it is difficult to oppose that, if you don't use the same framework in which this is being posited ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: the culturalisation of these issues is really a deplorable fact

JZ: yes ...

excerpt 111 – 06/04/2009

We may conclude this subsection by noting that there is a logic to Zemni's critical discourse. In fact, there are several logics that negatively define his preferred mode of socio-political engagement. On the one hand, there is a *logic of culturalisation* that characterizes the ⟨story about Islam⟩ as well as explanations of problems related to ⟨poverty⟩ and ⟨unemployment⟩. Zemni interpretively links this logic to: subject positions of particular ⟨poststructuralists⟩; to particular discursive genres including ⟨difficult⟩ texts which are difficult to ⟨translate⟩ into political ⟨engagement⟩; to practices of ⟨cultural⟩ ⟨racism⟩ in Flanders, as well as to practices of Muslims falling back onto their ⟨community⟩. This logic of culturalisation explains why Zemni was being interpellated into ethnic, cultural and /or religious subject positions by other actors in the public sphere.

Secondly, Zemni's identification and critique of ⟨neoliberalism⟩ may be described in terms of a *neoliberal logic* characterizing the public sphere. According to Zemni, this logic is one of the factors that explain the culturalising discourses and practices he is confronted with in the public debate. He links neoliberal practices and discourses with ⟨the principles of the free market⟩. According to Zemni, these neoliberal principles permit only three modes of subjectivity. One may become ⟨an atomized individual that kind of floats freely around⟩; one may be tempted by ⟨cultural racism⟩; or one may fall back onto a ⟨community⟩ which is often ⟨embedded in a religious tradition⟩. In addition to these neoliberal and culturalist logics, Zemni refuses *vulgar Marxist logics of economism*. As such, he does not seek to reduce socio-political problems by means of ⟨economic determinism⟩.

A legitimate political community vs strategies of depoliticisation

The process of criticizing the actors, practices, and discourses constitutive of various modes of politics, subjectivity, and public interaction, involves a process of naming. As such, the logics of the processes criticised by my interviewees, paradoxically define their own political subjectivity as well. Throughout our interview, Sami Zemni articulated a number of explicit definitions of what ⟨politics⟩ ought to mean. As we will see, his preferred mode of politics is not characterized by the culturalist, economist, and neoliberal logics identified above. Below, Zemni explicitly discusses the main ethical consideration constitutive of his preferred mode of ⟨political engagement⟩. The excerpt below is coded under the subtopic 'political struggle'.

SZ: So uhm ... I therefore consider this to be a global struggle. That's why I am currently kind of active in the Vooruit Groep¹⁰¹, I kind of follow up on that, not that I am a co-writer [of public statements made by the Vooruit Groep], also due to a lack of time and stuff, but uhm ...

¹⁰¹ *De Vooruit Groep* is named after *De Vooruit* (English: *The Forward*) in Ghent. *De Vooruit* used to be a party center and cultural meeting place of the socialist worker movement in Ghent. It contained a ball room, a movie theatre, and so on (see: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentse_Vooruit). After WW II, the building went derelict, but was given a second life in 1982 as a cultural center, officially disconnected from the socialist party (see: <http://vooruit.be/>). The mission statement of the *Vooruit Groep* reads as follows: "*the Vooruit Groep is progressive and leftist. We are convinced that peoples financial and material resources determine their socio-cultural capacities. We therefore plead for a policy that functions with a maximal redistributive effect, and that supports and empowers less fortunate and marginalised groups in society. By means of*

JZ: mmh

SZ: How do we conceptualize a community in the year 2009 ... which is not based on uhm, on uhm, on nationalism, not based on a particular conceptualization of religion and so on ... ?

JZ: mmh ... Then, what should it be based on, according to you?

SZ: (laughs) ... politics ... I think the answer lies there, even though I am sometimes starting to doubt that as well, because of course, politics is a system where certain rules apply ...

JZ: politics in the sense of ...

SZ: What connects person a to person b, who happen to live on the same territory ... ? The N-VA¹⁰² would say “language eh”

JZ: mmh

SZ: uhm and I don't know, the Vlaams Belang [would say] “culture, our values” and so on and I don't know ..., and the liberals are kind of moving towards that as well eh “freedom, democracy” and so forth But you don't solve anything with that, that's just ... that's just woolgathering. I think the problems that arise are also How are you going to make sure ... that uhm people who live somewhere actually have something to say about the future of the place where they live eh ...?

JZ: mmh

SZ: uhm, as much democracy as possible. And then the question becomes “on what ... on what level does one deal with these issues in the best way?”

JZ: yes

SZ: And I think that one should be very flexible in this respect. There are certain uhm ... well, I think it may be necessary to decentralize in certain respects, ... to uhm, make cities and municipalities more important, and with respect to other issues, I think it is more important to strengthen Europe.

excerpt 112 – 06/04/2009

In the excerpt above, Zemni argues that the legitimacy of a ⟨political community⟩ - and the political process of articulating such a community – depends on the extent to which people are able to exercise control over ⟨the future of the place where they live⟩. According to him, this is what defines ⟨politics⟩ and ⟨democracy⟩. Of course, the question remains at what ⟨level⟩ such control should be exercised, and what ⟨level⟩ of governance is best suited for dealing with one's socio-political reality. But whatever type of politics one is advocating, Zemni disqualifies modes of politics based on ⟨woolgathering⟩. In this respect, he uses three forms of reported speech in order to disqualify the modes of politics advocated by ⟨the N-VA⟩, the ⟨Vlaams Belang⟩, and the ⟨liberals⟩. More specifically, he disqualifies the particular ways in which these politicians tend to define the ⟨political community⟩ (i.e. by means of reference to a common ⟨language⟩, or to abstract categories such as ⟨norms⟩, ⟨values⟩, ⟨freedom⟩ and ⟨democracy⟩).

According to Zemni, one of the biggest contemporary problems with respect to the consolidation, realization, and/or articulation of a legitimate ⟨political community⟩, lies in an inverse process of ⟨depoliticisation⟩. Even though he criticised various modes of politics characterized by economist,

articles, debate, and action, we try to stimulate the reconstruction of a leftist democratic oppositional force in Belgium. We believe that solidarity between Wallonia and Flanders can reinforce the leftist project. Within this framework we also feel connected to Brussels as a cosmopolitan city with a great cultural diversity and melting pot of languages.” See also: <http://vooruitgroep.wikidot.com/>.

¹⁰² N-VA (New Flemish Alliance) (Dutch: Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie): a popular right-wing and conservative Flemish nationalist party chaired by Bart De Wever.

culturalist, and / or neoliberal logics, the greatest threat to his preferred mode of political engagement lies in discursive practices that lead to ⟨a complete depoliticisation⟩. As a case in point, he refers to the depoliticising statements made by spin doctor Noël Slangen regarding a controversial infrastructural Antwerp project called *De Lange Wapper*¹⁰³. Zemni considers this discussion to be indicative of a wider problematic related to processes of (de)politicisation in which the articulation of a collective will by individual citizens is completely ignored.

SZ: because what they just did well ... and well ... they are not going to come up with that bullshit like “the gap between the citizen and politics is really kind of big”

JZ: (laughs)

SZ: I am really glad that it is about an issue like this for a change ...

JZ: Yes, it's rather concrete ... the problem is being discussed in a rather concrete way.

excerpt 113 – 06/04/2009

The framing of civil protest against the construction of a bridge over the Antwerp river as a result of a metaphorical ⟨gap⟩ between citizens and the sphere of ⟨politics⟩ is illegitimate according to Zemni. In the excerpt below, he argues that one should either ⟨involve⟩ the ⟨citizen in policy⟩, or ⟨stop with the theatre⟩ in which one provides ⟨citizens⟩ with the ⟨illusion⟩ of involvement.

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) you either really involve the citizen into policy ... or you stop the theatre ... and well ... that is something that has become very obvious with that *Wapper* eh.

JZ: yes

SZ: no but how much was it that Slangen got?

JZ: wait a minute ... I don't know

SZ: the only conclusion they came up with was “it was bad communication”

JZ: yes yes

SZ: no one, not even the journalist dared to ask the question, ... “yes but mister Slangen ... might it not have been the case that people simply did not ... want that [*Lange Wapper*]?”

JZ: yes yes ... yes

SZ: no ... “one has communicated badly, we were not able to convince them”, so this means that ‘communication’ boils down to shoving it down the throat of the people

JZ: yes

SZ: but in such a way that they would have to accept it ... good communication means convincing people ...

JZ: yes

SZ: they literally said this eh ... it's ridiculous

¹⁰³ Since 2005, various Antwerp activists and organisations (see: <http://www.ademloos.be/> and <http://www.stratengeneraal.be/ondernemingen/oosterweel.htm>) have campaigned for an alternative to the *Lange Wapper*. The *Lange Wapper* would be a bridge across the Antwerp river called the *Schelde*. Since 2005, various local action committees have campaigned against this project. Ultimately, their activism resulted in a referendum held among the Antwerp population in 2009. The *Lange Wapper* trajectory was declined in favor of an alternative trajectory running below the *Schelde* (see: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lange_Wapperbrug).

JZ: yes, I have noticed that argument as well, I noticed it a few times

SZ: one has communicated badly

JZ: mmh

SZ: this is a complete depoliticisation eh (this turn continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 114 – 06/04/2009

The excerpt above shows that Zemni relates ⟨depoliticisation⟩ to a denial of the agency and imaginative power of ⟨citizens⟩ who attempt to exert some (political) control over their own environment. Metapragmatically labeling the results of the referendum as a consequence of ⟨bad communication⟩ undermines the very idea of citizenship. Zemni's point is not that other ⟨rationalities⟩ and ⟨interests⟩ are illegitimate. But a political discourse that disqualifies the democratic vote of individual citizens goes against the grain of his preferred mode of politics. In the excerpts below, we can see how he articulates a preferred mode of subjectivity and politics.

According to Sami Zemni, political standpoints may be advocated from the perspective of multiple ⟨rationalities⟩. According to him, this is the very nature of ⟨politics⟩. He argues that ⟨politics⟩ ⟨is about the art of the possible⟩, about ⟨making decisions⟩, and about ⟨dreaming about what society we want to become⟩. This definition links up with our own definition of politics in terms of a category which designates discursive practices, institutions, and relations, whose contingency is highlighted by actors in the public sphere. Moreover, Zemni defines his preferred mode of politics in terms of an ⟨art⟩, an idea that emphasises individuality in a way that reminds one of Foucault who asked himself whether everyone's life should not be a work of art (see: Foucault and Dreyfus 1983: 261). We seem to be dealing with a type of subjectivity in which ethics and aesthetics are articulated and performed simultaneously.

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of the excerpt above) so that brings me to my 'politicisation' which is basically ... that's politics, I understand very well that from the perspective of certain rationalities, a Lange Wapper is necessary ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: I understand this very well, and that's difficult eh, ... but that is politics eh.

JZ: mmh

SZ: It is about the art of the possible and and [about] making decisions and [about] dreaming about what society we want to become.

excerpt 115 – 06/04/2009

Sami Zemni's definition of ⟨politics⟩ is quite compatible with the Essex principle of the primacy of politics. There is an antagonistic dimension to it, as well as an emphasis on the necessity of making contingent choices¹⁰⁴. A few turns further along our interaction, Zemni states that ⟨politics⟩ can be defined as ⟨the collision of particular interests⟩. Even interests who are framed as ⟨general interests⟩ can be reduced to ⟨particular interests⟩. In this sense, ⟨politics⟩ is ⟨about making a choices⟩. But considering Zemni's reflections on ⟨political engagement⟩, we need to realize that the ultimate

¹⁰⁴ Sami Zemni's intellectual notebook contains a passage in which he explicitly refers to Chantal Mouffe. In this context, he explains that instead of looking for a future utopia characterised by harmony and consensus, one should acknowledge conflict in democratic action. He writes that only the continuous articulation and consideration of individual rights and issues of sovereignty may provide an antidote for the impoverishment of democracy. According to him, the liberal search for democratic consensus by authors such as Rawls, Habermas, and Dworkin involves a misrecognition of conflicts of interest. As such, the struggle of contemporary Muslims constitutes a test for our democracy.

question is what narrative and organisational ⟨platforms⟩ should be used as a ⟨basis⟩ to make these choices.

SZ: But that is what it's all about eh The general interest has always been a particular interest, and it's [about] the collision of particular interests eh, in politics it's about making a choice between those.

excerpt 116 – 06/04/2009

In the excerpt below, Sami Zemni provides with one last suggestion for a possible basis for establishing a legitimate ⟨political community⟩. According to him, ⟨one cannot return to a political community based on language, culture⟩, or ⟨some homogenous concept of being together⟩. This should not come as a surprise considering his references to authors such as Blommaert and Foucault who have criticised various forms of homogeneity throughout their careers. He asks himself the rhetorical question ⟨what binds us?⟩. Put differently, how do we articulate our selves to one another?

According to Zemni, the common denominator for establishing a legitimate ⟨political community⟩ should be sought in public interaction itself. It is through the pragmatic practice of addressing ⟨each other as equals⟩ in ⟨the public debate⟩ that we may articulate a bond with one another. This principle is constitutive of Zemni's preferred mode of politics. Moreover, it informs his critique of depoliticising statements made by spin doctors such as ⟨Noël Slangen⟩. Nevertheless, in the excerpt below, Zemni also introduces a problematic which is key to our understanding of the ⟨public debate⟩: the issue of ⟨power⟩.

SZ: Yes, ... yes, ... So I think that's the future, one cannot return to a political community based on language, culture, or or or some other homogeneous concept of being together, ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: But what binds us? The fact that we are entering the public debate together, ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: and address each other as equals.

JZ: yes

SZ: Of course, the problem is that one, ... because I don't believe in this, and this is the main problem of course, like, well, you write about that as well, you did so in Habermas' concept of public communication is one without, ... where the, ... concept of power is almost completely uhm ... lacking eh,

JZ: mmh

SZ: and of course, that's a big problem.

excerpt 117 – 06/04/2009

Before we met, I sent professor Zemni some work in progress about the usage of ⟨integration⟩ by my respondents. This working paper contained an outline of my perspective on the interview, on public interaction, as well as the research results that have been presented in this book. Zemni was thus very much aware of the way I approach these issues. In the excerpt above, he marks his awareness of the fact that I am familiar with the problems related to ⟨Habermas's concept of public communication⟩ where the ⟨concept of power is almost completely⟩ ⟨lacking⟩. Even though he argued for a ⟨political community⟩ based on ⟨public debate⟩ in which we interpellate one another ⟨as equals⟩, he disqualifies Habermas' approach to this issue. Zemni does not ⟨believe⟩ in an analysis of public interaction that does not take ⟨the concept of power⟩ into account. In this respect, it is interesting to note that he deploys a Foucaultian notion of governmentality in his academic work (see: Zemni 2007b, 2007a).

We may conclude that Zemni's preferred mode of politics is characterized by a set of interpretive logics that positively define his preferred mode of ⟨political engagement⟩. Zemni marked a great deal of large-scale interpretive processes throughout this interview. One of his main means of doing so, was the regular usage of spatial metaphors. His discussion of the need for a narrative, theoretical, and organisational ⟨platform⟩ or ⟨basis⟩ allowed him to articulate various topics and political points of interest to one another. In turn, this allowed for a sense of coherence being established on my part. Within the context of this interview, Zemni's preferred mode of political subjectivity can be said to function by means of a *spatial logic of mobility*. He was very much concerned with ⟨positionings⟩. He does not want to be ⟨sucked into⟩ narrative ⟨structures⟩ such as ⟨the story about Islam⟩ or ⟨the story about the left⟩. It is also useful to recall his reluctance with respect to ⟨being captured by too many⟩ organisational ⟨structures⟩.

Zemni's feelings of ambivalence partly result from interpellations that do not conform to the subject positions he positively identifies himself with. These interpellations conflict with his preferred mode of political subjectivity, involving an ability to distinguish between oneself and the organisation one is involved in. But they also pin him down into narrative ⟨structures⟩ characterized by *culturalist, economist, and neoliberal logics*. On the other hand, these feelings of ambivalence are reinforced by the academic and political spaces in which he positions himself. Conflicting *logics of relativism* and *universalism* inform the two-sided subject position of the *intellectuel engagé*.

There are probably many more logics that can be identified with respect to the interaction I conducted with Sami Zemni. For current purposes however, I think these will suffice. As we will see, all of my interviewees deploy large-scale interpretive processes that may be described in terms of interpretive logics. As I will discuss their most important logics in the upcoming chapters, it remains for me to emphasise that one should distinguish between the logics that negatively define an individual's preferred sense of self and others, and logics that are constitutive of the political practices and processes they oppose.

3.2 Large-scale socio-political debates in the public sphere

Throughout this book, I argued for a type of interpretive functionalism that is able to account for large-scale processes in the public sphere, as well as for large-scale interpretive processes individuals deploy in order to construct their socio-political engagements. Part of this plea is informed by a need to take the self-interpretations of individuals into account when constructing critical explanations for socio-political phenomena. Within the context of this book, such large-scale processes are described in terms of *logics*. However, before we go on, it is important to articulate some caveats with respect to the concept of *social logic* as conceptualized by David Howarth and Jason Glynos.

We already noticed how Glynos and Howarth distinguish between three sets of logics: political logics of equivalence and difference; social logics; and fantasmatic logics. The logics of equivalence and difference are very abstract principles that respectively simplify and complicate socio-political space and subjectivity. The fantasmatic logic functions through a non-recognition of the contingency of our social realities. On the one hand, it ensures that the political dimension of our social reality remains in the background. On the other hand, it can provide support for many of our political projects and choices, because it allows us to engage ourselves in attempts to achieve a full realization of ideals such as equality, democracy, and / or justice. Both sets of logics can be shown to operate in the discourse of my respondents.

In addition to political and fantasmatic logics, Howarth and Glynos introduced the idea of a social logic. This was done as part of an attempt to overcome the methodological deficit of poststructuralist thought. Social logics are relatively concrete. For instance, the authors analyse the notion of the *logic of the market* in terms of a set of heterogeneous practices, subject positions, discourses:

“Now consider ‘the logic of the market’. Clearly, the way we conceptualize the market depends on whether it is a supermarket, a market in energy supply, a market in educational goods, and so on. In other words, the meaning of expressions such as ‘the efficient allocation of resources’, ‘fair price’ or ‘supply and demand’ depends on the way we understand the key actors and terms associated with the specific paradigm we have adopted. There is a clear relational network at stake here which the concept of a logic must try to capture and name. Crucial in this respect is the way actors themselves interpret their roles and activities.” (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 136)

Howarth and Glynos add that the logic of the market consists of: a set of subject positions (e.g. buyers and sellers); objects (e.g. commodities and means of exchange) and a system of relations that articulates objects and subjects with one another (e.g. a well functioning legal system). Moreover, the concept of logic captures the conditions that makes the continued operation of these practices, discourses, and subject positions possible (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 136).

Even though I largely subscribe to their view of logics, my concern with overcoming the methodological deficit that haunts poststructuralist as well as pragmatist modes of analysis forces me to make some caveats with respect to their approach of social logics. The authors rightly point out that social logics are reconstructed and named by the the analyst (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 136). But researchers are not the only subjects analysing their socio-political contexts. Interviewer and interviewee co-construct a discourse through which they may articulate a critical stance towards socio-political processes and entities. Moreover, my respondents use various metapragmatic strategies in order to distinguish between what they consider to be legitimate and illegitimate discourses, subjectivities, organisations, and practices.

With reference to my discussion of the interview conducted with Sami Zemni, it should be noted that I was the person who named neoliberal, culturalist, and economist logics. Zemni did not use the notion of logic at all. Nevertheless, my identification of these logics highlighted patterns of cohesion – and arguably coherence – in Zemni’s discourse. It would be possible to reframe previous analyses in terms of a set of logics. For instance, Issam Z’s statement that practices of ⟨assimilation⟩ bring individuals ⟨into conflict with themselves⟩ is arguably informed by two interpretive logics: a disavowed *assimilationist logic of integration* on the one hand, and a preferred *activist logic of integration* on the other hand.

It is hard to distinguish between an individual’s self-interpretations and the social logics (s)he may observe in reality. As I have demonstrated with respect to Sami Zemni, the social processes identified by an individual – the logics that are supposedly operative in society – paradoxically constitute one’s sense of self as well. Nevertheless, interpretive logics can be used both to objectify the subjectivities of others, as well as to objectify one’s sense of self. For this reason, I will not talk about social logics in the upcoming chapters.

I prefer to discuss the large-scale interpretive processes marked in the discourse of my interviewees in terms of interpretive logics that positively or negatively define their sense of self and sense of others. They also structure their preferred and disavowed modes of politics. The identification of processes in large-scale socio-political debates boils down to the question of how an individual may articulate his or her sense of self in relation to an intertextual network in which a variety of subject positions are activated, in a political struggle over the meaning of specific practices, categories, discourses, and institutions. I define the concept of logic as follows:

Logics are large-scale interpretive patterns informing a preferred mode of subjectivity. They are particular interpretive configurations of functional relationships between subject positions, statements, practices, (sub)topics, or any other aspects relevant to an understanding of self and other. In order to identify and name such logics, one needs to go through the self-interpretations of subjects as marked in discourse

It goes without saying that my interviewees articulated their relationship to the public sphere in a variety of ways. Doing so, they may rely on similar categories that may be used in different ways. Comparing case studies is therefore a tricky thing to do. One quickly runs the risk of projecting meanings generated in one case onto another. Put differently, the danger of overpowering the discourse of one's respondents is lurking around the corner. I will therefore restrict myself to a contrastive approach. More specifically, I will focus on the logics that provide coherence to the processes my respondents distinguish in the public sphere(s).

I will start with a discussion of the interview conducted with AEL activists Karim Hassoun and Brahim Harchaoui. Within this context, we can see how interpretive logics of assimilation and integration characterise their political subjectivities 3.2.1. I will then move on to discuss some alternative interpretations of the public sphere in which the concepts of integration and assimilation are discussed less explicitly (see: 3.2.2). More specifically I will focus on Youssef Souissi's discourse on show politics and on Naima Charkaoui's discourse on essentialism, relativism, and paternalism in the Flemish public sphere.

3.2.1 The case of Karim Hassoun and Brahim Harchaoui: logics of integration and assimilation in AEL discourse

Throughout the preceding chapters, I have devoted considerable attention to the notion of integration. We noticed how this concept gave rise to a variety of identification processes and statements about one's relationship towards the public sphere. Within the current context, I will not reframe the various tensions between the usage of integration related concepts by my respondents in terms of logics. It should suffice to recall that many interviewees metapragmatically distinguished their own usage of the word ⟨integration⟩, from the way this concept is being deployed by their socio-political opponents.

Nevertheless, it would be possible to analyze how these preferred and disavowed notions of ⟨integration⟩ function within the large-scale interpretive logics of my respondents. For current purposes, I will restrict myself to a discussion of a logic of assimilation as articulated and criticised in the interview conducted with AEL chairman Karim Hassoun and AEL member Brahim Harchaoui. Considering the fact that criticism of mainstream usage of the concept of ⟨integration⟩ constitutes one of the key elements of AEL discourse, it should not come as a surprise that this critique performs an important function with respect to their preferred mode of political subjectivity.

In this respect, it is useful to recall that the political struggle of former AEL activist Issam Z could be described as a struggle over a particular concept of ⟨identity⟩ or ⟨individuality⟩ whereby ethnic and religious markers such as ⟨Muslim⟩, ⟨Moroccan⟩, or ⟨Berber⟩, are merely part of the ⟨cultural heritage⟩ an ⟨individual⟩ may carry along. To Issam, the main issue is not to be apologetical with respect to one's ⟨individuality⟩ or ⟨identity⟩. A similar link between a preferred mode of subjectivity and a preferred mode of politics can be observed in the discourse of Karim Hassoun and Brahim Harchaoui. Below, I will discuss this preferred mode of subjectivity in order to pinpoint the function of the *logic of assimilation* articulated and criticised by these interviewees.

a) Islamophobia and assimilation

At the very beginning of my interaction with Karim Hassoun, I asked him what ⟨political themes⟩ are of interest to ⟨the AEL⟩ ⟨today⟩. According to him, the main ⟨themes⟩ addressed by the AEL can be summarised as ⟨Islamophobia and the battle against discrimination⟩. As we noticed before, he will also label the ⟨international context⟩ as an important point of interest. The interaction below is coded under the subtopic 'Islamophobia and assimilation'. The close articulation of both problematics is no coincidence. This can be explained with reference to the excerpt below.

KH: The current, the contemporary themes? Well, ... the theme that is currently quite salient, especially during the last few months ... is uhm, the theme, it's a rather ... uhm ... a religious theme to some, and an identitarian theme to others. It's about the headscarf among Muslim women.

excerpt 118 – 26/02/2008

In the excerpt above, Karim Hassoun distinguishes between two ways in which the ⟨headscarf⟩ issue might be framed. Whereas some people consider this to be a ⟨religious⟩ issue, others consider it to be an ⟨identitarian⟩ topic of interest. AEL discourse grants legitimacy to both contextualisations, as well as to both types of subjectivity. As such, Karim and Brahim explicitly argue for the right ⟨to show⟩ that one is a ⟨Muslim⟩ and / or an ⟨Arab⟩. But they do not do this on the basis of a religious discourse. As Karim puts it: ⟨we are no theologians⟩, ⟨we are not a religious organisation⟩ but a ⟨social⟩ and ⟨political movement⟩. Moreover: ⟨we don't use a religious dogma to establish our ideology⟩.

Even though the AEL advocates the right to position oneself as a Muslim in the public sphere, Karim Hassoun admits that his organisation used to attract people who ⟨wanted to⟩ ⟨push⟩ the AEL ⟨board⟩ to take take on ⟨standpoints with respect to religion⟩ as well. Such people wanted ⟨to motivate everything religiously⟩. According to Karim, the AEL refusal to do so ⟨disappointed⟩ them. Consequently, they either ⟨left⟩ the organisation, or ⟨stayed⟩ and developed their ⟨political awareness⟩ in the AEL sense of the word. Brahim Harchaoui is an example of someone who stayed. Karim emphasises that whenever individual AEL members such as former chairman ⟨Dyab⟩ Abou Jahjah took standpoints with respect to religious issues, they should speak on their own behalf. Below, Karim explicitly frames the AEL as a ⟨secular⟩ organisation.

KH: I ... or the AEL never had the pretension to say like “we are going to speak on behalf of Muslims” We are secular So, we don't take standpoints with respect to religion or religious matters ...” . We merely say ... “Freedom of religion is fundamental

JZ: Mmh

KH: for Christians, for Jews, for Muslims, as well as for non-believers. Freedom for non-believers. And everyone should be allowed space in order to be able [to exercise] his religion” uhm.

BH: and also, for instance, the headscarf, we defend it on the basis of a democratic principle and not on the basis of an Islamic principle, not from an Islamic principle,

KH: not from an Islamic principle

BH: even though my daughter does not wear a headscarf. And I will never force her to wear a headscarf, she should decide that on her own.

KH: and with me as well, for instance ... my wife should decide that for herself ... and even with respect to my own wife uhm ... I prefer to see her without [a headscarf] over seeing her with [a headscarf], but well, when she decides at a certain point like “I want to wear it” (laughs), “ok, so be it”. So, within the organisation there are people who believe in it, who believe in it absolutely, and there are people who do not have any complexes about this, who do believe in it but who say like ... “that's not a priority”. And there are those who say like “I don't believe this at all”. There are people within the AEL who do not believe this at all.

BH: yes, who are agnostic and and not religious

KH: and so

BH: those people are in the AEL as well, and then we get accused like “fanatics” and “Al Qaeda” and “hate-Islam”

excerpt 119 – 26/02/2008

In the excerpt above, Karim and Brahim claim that there is a lot of diversity with respect to peoples religious orientations within the AEL. Brahim therefore explicitly disqualifies accusations by which AEL members are being labeled as ⟨fanatics⟩ who wield a ⟨hate-Islam⟩, and who can be associated with ⟨Al Qaeda⟩. At this point, it should be noted that Brahim's and Karim's concept of secularism does not rule out religious identifications. They explicitly reject a concept of ⟨secularism⟩ based on a strictly ⟨atheist neutrality⟩ principle. According to Karim, ⟨being secular does not involve a strict separation⟩ of a ⟨pious⟩ mode of subjectivity. Rather, it provides ⟨space⟩ for ⟨religious⟩ people to organize themselves. In this sense, ⟨secularism⟩ should provide ⟨religions⟩ with ⟨a place in society⟩.

It goes without saying that this interpretation of ⟨secularism⟩ is at odds with the dominant interpretation of this notion ⟨in Europe⟩ where it is being ⟨interpreted⟩ and ⟨depicted⟩ by means of an ⟨atheist⟩ ⟨neutrality⟩ principle. Karim states that ⟨secularism is exactly the opposite⟩. It implies that one addresses the government like this: ⟨do not get involved with that, give them the space, but do not involve yourself as a government, it is none of your business⟩. This is what the ⟨separation of Church and State⟩ means to Brahim as well. Elsewhere, Karim highlighted the links between ⟨AEL⟩ and ⟨BOEH⟩. In the excerpt below, he emphasised that a critique of the debate surrounding the ⟨headscarf⟩ should go hand in hand with a critique of the ⟨politics of assimilation⟩.

KH: These days, every municipal council wants a ban in order to follow this trend. It has become fashionable to include a ban of the headscarf at helpdesks in one's regulations. And of course, this is not a stand-alone issue, its frame consists of a certain type of politics, and this is the type of politics that AEL has been trying to highlight, to unmask, for years. It is a politics that is meant to assimilate minorities into Flemish or into Belgian society, [and it is meant] to smooth over the differences that exist among different communities within the country, in order to arrive at a, well, apparently, a uniformity. They always claim that this isn't the case, but if you look at the policies, and at the rhetoric, and at the agenda, the points that are being put on the agenda with respect to minority policy, and so on, then you cannot do anything but conclude that one wants to conduct a politics of assimilation where Muslims should try not to show that they are Muslims, where Arabs should try not to show they are Arabs, not speaking the language publicly in schools, ...

excerpt 120 – 26/02/2008

Karim defines this ⟨politics of assimilation⟩ as a type of ⟨politics⟩ that aims ⟨to smooth over the differences⟩ ⟨among different communities within the country⟩. Contrary to ⟨claims⟩ of the opposite, the finality of this type of ⟨politics⟩ lies in the achievement of ⟨uniformity⟩. According to Karim, one is being prompted ⟨not to show⟩ that one is a Muslim or an Arab in the public sphere. We are therefore dealing with a type of ⟨politics⟩ that is defined by its goal of restricting the public performance of religious, ethnic, cultural, and / or identitarian aspects of one's subjectivity.

Whereas the ⟨politics of assimilation⟩ used to be a ⟨social thing⟩, it has now become a ⟨political policy⟩ that is in correspondence with the policies advocated by the right wing ⟨Vlaams Belang⟩. According to Karim, ⟨right wing forces⟩, ⟨tendencies⟩, and ⟨reflexes⟩ in ⟨Flanders⟩ prompted ⟨political parties⟩ to ⟨appropriate⟩ the VB agenda. He illustrates this point with reference to the ⟨ban on headscarves⟩ advocated by the Antwerp socialist mayor ⟨Patrick Janssens⟩. To Karim, this ⟨ban⟩ illustrates that ⟨right wing discourse⟩ and ⟨policy⟩ have been ⟨appropriated⟩ by ⟨leftist parties⟩ as well. Even though the rising electoral success of the VB in Antwerp was halted by the Antwerp socialists in 2006, Karim explains this success with reference to the adoption of a ⟨right wing⟩ ⟨agenda⟩ and ⟨policy⟩ by the left.

KH: ... it used to be simply a a ... a social thing and now it has become a political policy. So what one wished for in schools and so on has been gradually translated into a policy, one has linked a policy to that, and what kind of policy? ... Vlaams Belang has tried for years to ... stand on the sidelines and to conduct opposition But in reality, its agenda is being gradually adopted, because regrettably, this agenda is popular in Flanders. Especially in Flanders, in Flanders there are uhm, right wing powers, there are right wing tendencies, there are right wing reflexes among the people. And that's successful, when political parties adopt that [right wing agenda] you will see that their number of votes will rise in

numbers. Look at Antwerp. Antwerp, Patrick Janssens has promised a ban on the headscarf, it's in his book, and the elections were a success. He won a lot of votes from the other oppositional parties, also from parties that were within his administration. But he also succeeded in stopping the Vlaams Belang for the first time, even though they claim like "we have grown in Flanders", in Antwerp they stagnated, and in some places they actually declined. That has to do with the right wing discourse that was adopted, and also with the right wing policy that has been adopted by leftist parties So, ... the themes we are dealing with are basically Islamophobia and the battle against discrimination

excerpt 121 – 26/02/2008

Karim Hassoun concludes this subtopic by stating that ⟨the themes we deal with are basically Islamophobia and the battle against assimilation⟩. Shortly thereafter, he will also mention the ⟨international⟩ as a political point of interest of the ⟨AEL⟩. We already discussed this in a previous section.

b) Political awareness and the politics of assimilation

The focus on ⟨assimilation⟩ and ⟨integration⟩ as political points of interest for the ⟨AEL⟩ is closely connected with AEL attempts to raise ⟨political awareness⟩. As we will see, this notion is quite important to the preferred mode of political subjectivity promoted by the AEL.

During a subtopic coded under the node 'AEL as a catalyst for political awareness', Karim argued that the ⟨minorities⟩ and ⟨communities⟩ have become ⟨way more politically aware⟩. They have become ⟨more critical with respect to society⟩ and more interested in ⟨politics⟩. According to Karim, this rise in political awareness goes hand in hand with a realisation that the AEL analyses with respect to the ⟨politics of assimilation⟩ and ⟨Islamophobia⟩ were basically correct. It should be noted that many of my respondents praised the AEL for its contribution to the public debate in terms of raising ⟨political awareness⟩ among Moroccan and Turkish minorities in Flanders. My interviewees may be positive and / or negative with respect to AEL strategies, tactics, and goals, but they tend to agree with respect to this issue. I mentioned this observation to Karim. It is useful to take a look at his response in the excerpt below.

JZ: I have to say, many people well, many of the people I talked to thus far, when the AEL is mentioned, that is an analysis they are making, like um, with respect to the development of political awareness, no matter whether they are pro AEL, disregarding that standpoint, I often hear a lot of positive things about the issues you put on the agenda.

KH: That's our experience as well. I wouldn't say this if I wouldn't have sensed that myself, well, we have ... we have been sort of a catalyst

JZ: mmh

KH: of political awareness of minorities, so we fed it, we have sown some seeds into the earth so to say, and these have started to grow, they have started to blossom and now I am not going to say that all of this is because of us, but ... I can ... I don't have to be modest, I don't want to boast about this or anything like that, but, I can permit myself to say that the AEL has played an important role, here in Flanders and in the Netherlands ... with respect to the development of awareness, political awareness, of minorities. And the facts, the policy has demonstrated that they are indeed evolving to a more right wing politics, not only a discourse, but also a politics, towards a more ... a repressive policy with respect to minorities and an Islamophobic policy ... Uhm, a policy that, ... is basically more of a ... something like a deterrent for the modal white Fleming with regard to that headscarfed Muslima, or for that Muslim with a beard. And of course, in the long run, that is not any longer, ... They would be complete idiots if they would not realize like "we are degenerating instead of evolving in a positive sense". I don't know, [addressing Brahim] Brahim, would you like to ...

BH: [addressing me] Well, he said all the important things ... perhaps I could respond to the next question ...

excerpt 122 – 26/02/2008

In the excerpt above, Karim describes the ⟨AEL⟩ in terms of ⟨a catalyst of political awareness⟩. The object of this awareness is constituted by the ⟨right wing⟩ ⟨politics of assimilation⟩ and ⟨Islamophobia⟩ we discussed earlier. It is also closely related to an analysis of ⟨the international⟩. This awareness of the rise of Islamophobic and assimilatory ⟨discourse⟩ and ⟨policy⟩ in Flanders leads one to realise that ⟨"we are degenerating instead of evolving in a positive sense"⟩. Following my suggestion, Karim emphasises that the ⟨AEL has played an important role⟩ with respect to ⟨the development of this awareness⟩. One might claim that an ⟨awareness⟩ of the *assimilatory logic* of mainstream politics constitutes an important aspect of the preferred mode of political engagement within the context of the AEL.

Karim Hassoun attributes a very positive connotation to the notion of ⟨political awareness⟩. Nevertheless, the AEL type of ⟨awareness⟩ and activism was very much ⟨criminalised⟩ by mainstream ⟨media⟩ and ⟨politicians⟩. He points out that the Belgian Prime Minister labeled the ⟨AEL⟩ as a ⟨criminal organisation⟩ ⟨in parliament⟩. In addition, Brahim Harchaoui adds that the AEL was supposedly ⟨a branch of Al Qaeda⟩, that the organisation was ⟨associated with paedophilia⟩, and categorised as a ⟨private militia⟩. At that point, I admitted that I was very much influenced by this type of representation myself. In fact, my criminal ⟨image⟩ of the ⟨AEL⟩ only started to change as my ⟨research⟩ evolved. As a response to this confession, Karim categorises the multiplicity of allegations directed at the AEL as a series of ⟨political acts⟩. It goes without saying that these ⟨political acts⟩ (i.e. these false accusations) are antagonistic to the type of ⟨political awareness⟩ advocated by the AEL.

Karim Hassoun and Brahim Harchaoui consider ⟨politicians⟩, as well as the ⟨media⟩ in general, to be accountable for the criminalisation of their organisation. The practices of the media functioned basically ⟨as a policy of like "criminalise them as much as possible"⟩. According to Karim, the last thing that ⟨politics⟩ wants – i.e. mainstream politicians – is ⟨an allochthon with a political awareness⟩ who makes conscious electoral choices. Even though traditional politicians do not want ⟨conscious autochthon voters either⟩, they mostly ⟨fear⟩ a ⟨minority that starts to claim its rights and becomes aware of oppression, of systematic exclusion, and that forces the government to take measures against that⟩.

KH: And when you understand all of this, when you put everything together, and when you consider how the media have dealt with us, the way they reported about us on the basis of rumours, lies, incomplete information, copying and pasting between interviews, and so on, then you realize that it is a kind of tandem, it is very similar, it is basically a policy of like "criminalise them as much as possible". Because the thing they fear the most is an allochthon with a political awareness who chooses consciously, not an allochthon who just nods along, who says like "yes, the socialists mean well for the people". "vote, good good person". Like our parents used to, they don't know anything about it, but hey said like "the socialists are good". Today, they will say "no, the socialists are not good". "Why?". "Because of these and these and these and these reasons they are not doing well, and this and that and that has to change, and if we don't see things changing in the next few years, then we are going to punish them because of that". And that is something that politics does not want. Absolutely not. On the contrary, politics does not want conscious voters. It does not want conscious autochthon voters either, but definitely no minority that starts to claim its rights and becomes aware of oppression, of systematic exclusion, and that forces the government to take measures against that.

excerpt 123 – 26/02/2008

Before we go on to discuss the link between the *logic of assimilation* and the preferred set of self-techniques advocated by Karim Hassoun and Brahim Harchaoui, I would like to emphasise that they problematised other actors and processes within the public sphere as well. For instance, both of them explicitly labeled the AEL as a ⟨leftist⟩ and ⟨anti-capitalist⟩ organisation that opposes ⟨neoliberal

politics) and (the capitalist system). Moreover, Brahim explicitly labels the AEL as belonging to an (Arab nationalist current). They also emphasised that the AEL is an (anti-Zionist) movement. For current purposes, we will not go into these aspects of their political subjectivity. My main focus remains on the link between a preferred mode of political engagement and the logic of assimilation that characterises the Flemish public sphere according to these interviewees.

c) Staying true to oneself

If mainstream politics is characterised by a *logic of assimilation*, the (oppression) and (systematic exclusion) criticised by Karim, pertains first and foremost to the oppression of a particular type of subjectivity. During a discussion of the subtopic ‘accomplishments of the AEL – political awareness, being true to oneself, and higher education’, Karim once again stresses the importance of (political awareness). He states that (an apolitical community) is (the last thing you want in a society that represses you). For this reason, the *logic of assimilation* that characterises mainstream (politics) should be contrasted with the preferred mode of self articulated by Karim Hassoun.

In the excerpt below, Karim explains the (goal) he pursues in personal terms. He outlines his vision of an ideal (society) where children will not have to ask themselves in what way they should (out) themselves. Put differently, he wants his (son) to (grow up) in a society where he will not be approached with (suspicion). He also wants him to be free of the resulting (identity) related (complexes) one develops in an unhealthy socio-political (environment). Of course, the question is what a (healthy) identity development looks like. Interestingly, it is not simply a matter of (balancing) (identities). Merely (balancing) between one’s (identities) leaves one with (questions) and do not allow one to find (satisfaction) in one’s life.

KH: Hopefully, I hope that within a couple of years, my son can grow up in a society where your children, as well as the children of others, can deal with one another without looking at each other with suspicion, standing in front of each other without complexes, so that my son will not have any complexes about his identity. Like, “should I out myself as an allochthon, should I out myself as an Arab, should I out myself as a Muslim, or should I keep that to myself. I want my son to become a good person, someone who feels well in the environment wherein he lives, ... and who can, ... behave in a healthy way within that environment. Someone who is ... balancing between different identities and who does not know whether he is fish or fowl ... uhm ... will ultimately ...

BH: have to deal with questions and ...

KH: never never uhm find satisfaction in uhm ... in his life So he will always be left with questions and never dare to position himself in a concrete way, but always leave political discussions, decisions to be taken by others in his name ... and we think that Then we get people who think for themselves, stand up for themselves, and don’t have any complexes about themselves, who do not want to be forced to renounce their uhm, their individuality in order to belong. On the contrary, take an attitude like “I belong in spite of the fact that I am different” And uhm ... as long as I am able ... and motivated, can motivate myself, I will go for it ...

excerpt 124 – 26/02/2008

Brahim Harchaoui briefly intervened and completed one of Karim’s sentences. According to Brahim, someone who is neither (fish) nor (fowl) will be confronted with (questions). Such metapragmatic remarks with respect to social processes are quite common within the context of my interviews. Karim picks up on Brahim’s suggestion and points out that the (questions) one is faced with in an unhealthy socio-political (environment) lead to feelings of insecurity. People who are constantly engaged in a delicate act of (balancing) will (never dare to position) themselves (in a concrete way). Also, they will (always leave political discussions) and (decisions) up to others. Karim explicitly states that his engagement is meant to foster a type of subjectivity that allows people to (think) and to (stand up for

themselves) without (complexes). Such people (do not want to be forced to renounce their) (individuality in order to belong). On the contrary, they are able to generate the following statement: (“I belong in spite of the fact that I am different”).

Ultimately, the need to develop one’s (political awareness) is fundamentally linked to the question how to (stay true) to yourself. In addition to an ability to perform one’s ethnic, cultural, and / or religious identities publicly, in an unproblematic way, the required set of self-techniques requires an articulation of citizenship, as well as a practice of (education). In the excerpt below, all of these interpretive processes are marked. Karim highlights the importance of (education), but notes that (those who) (remain true to themselves) and who do not renounce their (Arab), (Berber), and/or (Muslim) subject positions, will still find it quite difficult to find a job. Nevertheless, (education) in combination with a certain degree of (political awareness) is indispensable in order to (remain true) to oneself in the Flemish public sphere.

KH: ... but those who uhm ... remain true to themselves, they uhm ...

JZ: remain true to themselves?

KH: remain true to themselves and who say like “look, I am a citizen of Flanders, I may be uhm ... culturally a little bit Flemish, but I am uhm still Arab, or Berber, or whatever as well, Moroccan, simply culturally, and I want to show that, I am also a Muslim and I want to show that”, it’s difficult for them to find a job in spite of the fact that they are schooled for it. And that has demoralising effect. But today, you see that in spite of the importance they attach to higher education ... the more ... politically conscious a community becomes, the more people belonging to that community will start to occupy themselves with education. And in the end, education translates into more opportunities in a society that you like. You have to arm yourself with the weapons available to you, at that moment. Walking around without a degree is a fiasco.

excerpt 125 – 26/02/2008

In the second turn of the excerpt above, Karim Hassoun articulates the type of statement that performatively establishes the type of subjectivity advocated by the AEL. As we can see, this statement involves positive identifications with the subject position of a Flemish (citizen) who can (culturally) relate to (Arab), (Berber), and / or (Moroccan) subject positions as well. Such cultural identifications may be informed in terms of religion and / or identity, but in both cases, they should be related to an affirmation of one’s (citizenship) as well.

Personally, I agree with Karim with respect to the link between (education) and (political awareness). In the excerpt below, I voiced some of my observations by noting how (striking) it is (how many) among the (few) people who (actually finish higher education within the Moroccan communities) (engage themselves) with respect to issues related to (education), (politics), (participation), and (awareness). This can be observed in the excerpt below. Karim agrees and emphasises that these issues are (fundamentally linked) to one another.

JZ: It strikes me as well. I think, when I go talking to people in organisations, even though these are mostly young people and all of that ... they are always If you know how many people ultimately, well, how few actually finish higher education within the Moroccan communities ... it really stands out like ... how many among those few who engage themselves ... I think ... you can see this very clearly like ... education ... politics ... participation and awareness

KH: absolutely, absolutely, because it is fundamentally linked to that eh ...

JZ: Yes, and also, these people also try to stimulate education themselves eh, like, I don’t know, like Student Focus and so on

KH: yes

excerpt 126 – 26/02/2008

We can conclude our discussion of the preferred sense of self and sense of politics as articulated by Karim, by referring to an interaction between my two interviewees. At a certain point, Karim describes Brahim as a ⟨top product⟩ of ⟨first quality⟩ delivered by the ⟨AEL⟩. Brahim did not object.

KH: But he really is, absolutely, a top product, first quality AEL

BH: you're my teacher (laughs)

JZ: teacher, in what sense ... (laughs)

KH: No, I'm serious, he really is, he is

BH: yes (laughs)

excerpt 127 – 26/02/2008

After this interaction, Karim went on and explained how ⟨politicised⟩ Brahim has become. Moreover, ⟨at a certain moment ... we even had trouble keeping up with him⟩. Brahim was ⟨constantly busy⟩ ⟨gathering information⟩. In this sense, Brahim is ⟨the ideal example of someone who has evolved from Brahim from Antwerp from the Marinistreet to yes, Brahim, a board member of the AEL⟩. Brahim responds by pointing out that ⟨Karim⟩ Hassoun, ⟨Dyab⟩ Abou Jahjah, as well as ⟨others within the AEL⟩ ⟨motivated⟩ him to pursue higher education. Even though I did not focus that much on Brahim, I would like to point out that he talked a lot about ⟨international⟩ issues such as ⟨Palestine⟩ and ⟨the Middle East⟩. These issues are also constitutive of the type of political subjectivity advocated by the AEL.

In conclusion, the type of politics opposed by Karim Hassoun and Brahim Harchaoui may be described as being characterised by a *logic of assimilation*. This logic articulates certain notions of ⟨neutrality⟩ and ⟨secularism⟩ with one another. It involves various practices that function in order to ⟨smooth over the differences⟩ ⟨among different communities within the country⟩. The ultimate goal being the achievement of ⟨uniformity⟩. A multiplicity of socio-political actors are thus placed within a more or less coherent semiotic network that negatively defines the preferred mode of subjectivity and politics articulated by Karim Hassoun and Brahim Harchaoui. As such, this *logic of assimilation* is detrimental to any attempt to stay true to oneself.

3.2.2 Alternative interpretations of the public sphere

Even though many of my interviewees criticised hegemonic usage of concepts such as integration and articulation, critique does not involve an oppositional attitude to hegemonic statements and practices alone. If we seek to understand large-scale interpretive processes, we need to consider how individuals creatively articulate a variety of abstract categories with each other. In order to demonstrate that critique involves a creative set of (re)articulations, I will introduce the cases of Youssef Souissi and Naima Charkaoui. In both cases, we are dealing with discourses that cannot be understood with reference to integration and assimilation alone.

a) The case of Youssef Souissi: show politics and a logic of interests

Almost every respondent urged me to talk to people such as Mohamed Chakkar, Youssef Souissi, and Mohamed Ikoubaan. When I first called Youssef Souissi, he refused this interview and said that if I wanted to write about ⟨politics⟩, I should talk to the FMV of Mohamed Chakkar. Nevertheless, after having been introduced to Youssef by Najib Chakouh, Mohamed decided to agree on two interviews.

People such as Youssef Souissi and Mohamed Chakkar have played an important role in the development of the Flemish landscape of civil society organisations. Below, I will focus on the case of Youssef Souissi who is currently chairman of VOEM (Vereniging voor Ontwikkeling en Emancipatie van Moslims) (English: Association for the Development and Emancipation of Muslims). Youssef has also been active in the socialist teachers union *ACOD Onderwijs*.

With respect to the analyses below, it is useful to note that Youssef Souissi's political subjectivity cannot be described with reference to subject positions and topics that have been articulated within the context of ⟨politics⟩ related lexical items alone. Within the context of these two interviews, Youssef constructed his ⟨engagement⟩ first and foremost around a series of interpretive logics informing a ⟨dialogic⟩, ⟨pragmatic⟩, and ⟨humane⟩ concept of fighting ⟨injustice⟩.

Souissi's utopia of a humane society as an antidote to show politics

Before we move on to discuss what processes are going wrong in the Flemish and international public sphere(s) according to Youssef Souissi, it is useful to take a brief look at the way he imagines what an ideal society should look like. Throughout our first interview, he sketches a ⟨utopia⟩ by means of a description of a ⟨humane⟩ mode of politics that is antagonistic to the type of ⟨show politics⟩ he considers to be prevalent in contemporary Flanders. As we will see, ⟨show politics⟩ is characterized by a *logic of individual interests*. A more *humane logic* informing social and political ⟨engagements⟩ is required according to Souissi. In the excerpt below, he distinguishes between the ⟨utopia⟩ of a ⟨humane society⟩ on the one hand, and an ⟨artificial⟩ or ⟨mechanic⟩ ⟨society⟩ on the other hand.

YS: ... This is the illness of society today, on the societal level, on the social level, on the ethical level, ... two always hold the cards, the same rights. They are, ... police, ... power, police, army, and so on, ... and the bank These are the two or three ...

JZ: and uhm

YS: that work with a long-term perspective So, banks, taxes, and so on, that work with a long-term policy And ... and order, law enforcement eh.

JZ: yes

JZ: Every politician will say to you like "Ah, but that is what we need in society, and the rest does not count, it is in the interest of society". That's right, but to me that's an artificial society That's a mechanic society and not a humane society. A humane society requires those two but, ... one or two things can become superfluous, when it's no longer required to demonstrate one's power, when we are able to live with each other without money, ... without exchange and so on, ... Why not? Why should I exploit you ... and you exploit me? Then we will be standing with drawn [knives in front of each another] Of course, this is a utopia I am talking about, but ever more, society removes itself from this utopia, and I would like to get ever more close to this utopia

excerpt 128 – 09/02/2009

In the excerpt above, Souissi explains that these days, only ⟨two or three⟩ institutions are able to ensure ⟨long-term⟩ ⟨order⟩. These include ⟨banks⟩, the institutions of ⟨law enforcement⟩, and the ⟨military⟩. Even though he considers ⟨order⟩ and ⟨long-term policy⟩ to be necessary, these are not sufficient conditions to guarantee a ⟨humane politics⟩. Youssef Souissi metapragmatically comments that he is describing ⟨a utopia⟩, highlighting his awareness of the fact that this ⟨humane society⟩ characterised by a ⟨humane politics⟩ functions as an ideal. Unfortunately ⟨society⟩ as a whole is moving away from this ⟨utopia⟩, whereas he would like to come closer to this ideal.

At this point, one should ask what a more ⟨humane politics⟩ constitutive of a more ⟨humane society⟩ would look like. In addition to a ⟨long term⟩ perspective, and an ability to guarantee ⟨order⟩, this type of ⟨politics⟩ should be characterised by taking a genuine ⟨interest into one another⟩. Unfortunately, this interpersonal dimension of the more ⟨humane society⟩ Souissi argues for is ⟨overshadowed⟩ by performances and ⟨rituals⟩ that are meant ⟨to show⟩ that one is still ⟨human⟩. In this context, Youssef Souissi wonders whether occasional visits by people practicing a variety of religions (rabbis, imams, bishops) to one another's institutions are motivated by a genuine ⟨interest in each other⟩. He does so by labeling such visits in terms of performances and ⟨rituals⟩. Elsewhere, Souissi will accuse politicians of practicing a similar type of ⟨show politics⟩.

YS: living together in a society ... involves consistency eh ... it's not ... one domain and not the rest eh ... so there uhm ... are ... supplements ... improvements to be made at various levels, and not just on one level, not just on one level, but at different levels. So, it's this consistency that should be enabled ... and the driving force should not be merely ... order ... and interests Order and interests are required, but in addition to that, one requires taking an interest in each other Human life is necessary

JZ: yes, hence the human

YS: and this is being overshadowed. Once in a while there's a performance by a bishop, there's a performance by an imam, there's a performance by a rabbi, there's a performance like "OK, we are going to visit a mosque", or "we are going to uhm organize a tea moment in order to show that we are still human"

JZ: but then that's ...

YS: these are rituals, rituals that basically ... maintain these two other forces,

JZ: yes

YS: instead of turning this around.

excerpt 129 – 09/02/2009

The excerpt above also highlights another aspect of the ⟨humane⟩ mode of interaction and politics that Souissi argues for. According to him, ⟨living together in a society⟩ involves that one takes one takes the ⟨consistency⟩ of society into account. This entails that policy domains related to and motivated by concerns of ⟨order⟩ and personal ⟨interests⟩ should not be posited as finalities. According to Souissi, the performances by bishops, by imams, and by rabbis support the interests of the ⟨two or three⟩ ⟨forces⟩ or policy domains that he discussed earlier. According to him, taking the ⟨consistency⟩ of ⟨society⟩ into account, the current situation should be turned ⟨around⟩. Souissi's ⟨utopia⟩ is based on a ⟨humane⟩ type of interaction and politics.

At the beginning of our first interview, Youssef told me that he used to be active in a variety of organisations and projects. He referred to ⟨neighbourhood committees⟩, to a ⟨work group Palestine⟩, to a demonstration against the ⟨70 point⟩ programme of the Vlaams Blok, and to his activities as a ⟨teacher⟩ within the framework of the socialist educational union ⟨ACOD⟩. He emphasised that he did not end up in these projects by coincidence. Rather, he developed an ⟨awareness⟩ of ⟨injustice⟩ that prompted him to ⟨engage⟩ himself in society. Confronted with ⟨injustices⟩ of all kinds, Souissi could not remain ⟨silent⟩, and went ⟨searching for people to do something⟩ about this ⟨together⟩. At that point, I asked him whether he could give me some ⟨examples⟩ of the ⟨injustices⟩ he perceives. He responds to this question in the excerpt below. In line with his rather holistic concern with society and with his plea for a ⟨humane⟩ mode of ⟨politics⟩, this concern pertains simultaneously to the ⟨societal⟩, the ⟨administrative⟩, the ⟨political⟩, the ⟨economic⟩, the ⟨ethical⟩, and the ⟨social⟩ levels of reality.

JZ: And uhm Concerning these injustices you perceived uhm ... could you give some examples like ...

YS: both on the societal, administrative, political, uhm ... economic uhm, and ethical level, as well as on the ethical level, the social level ...

excerpt 130 – 09/02/2009

Youssef did not provide any specifics. His discourse remains relatively abstract at this point, but it highlights the importance of the concept of ⟨injustice⟩ to his ⟨engagement⟩. Moreover, it allows him to articulate a world-view in which a multiplicity of socio-political dimensions are fundamentally intertwined with one another. Below, we can see how he constructs a universalist stance with respect to the ⟨injustices⟩ that ail our ⟨society⟩, ⟨here⟩ and ⟨elsewhere⟩.

YS: Yes ... that's society eh Here as well as elsewhere ... awareness ... when that happens yes, ... of course the drawback is that you sometimes have to suffer because of that awareness eh, that's part of the deal.

JZ: yes yes, not that (laughs), of course, that always goes together eh. But ... yes .. uhm But if you, ... between all these, ... all these different engagements, where do you see ... ? Do you see a red thread running through all of that? Or is that uhm ... uhm ...

YS: injustice

JZ: injustice

YS: ... injustice ... has to be eliminated ...

JZ: yes

YS: wherever ... against whomever

excerpt 131 – 09/02/2009

I would like to conclude this subsection on Youssef Souissi's utopical vision for society, by discussing ⟨show politics⟩ as one of the main obstacles to his preferred mode of engagement. This mode of politics is characterised by a *logic of individual interests*.

Concluding a discussion of his engagement within the framework of local action committees in the wake of Black Sunday, he explained to me how difficult it was to come up with an alternative story at the ⟨level of the neighbourhood⟩ in the wake of the first electoral victory of the Vlaams Belang. He uses a form of reported speech to rearticulate the voice of ⟨media people⟩ and ⟨right wing propagandists⟩ who used to claim that ⟨“something's going wrong in society”⟩ and that one is in need of ⟨“a police state”⟩ and of more ⟨“control”⟩ ⟨“in order to stop this invasion of foreigners”⟩. He explains that this context prompted ⟨us⟩ to organise ⟨socio-cultural activities⟩, ⟨soccer⟩ games, and ⟨exchanges⟩. At that point, I inferred that the neighbourhood committees he was involved in were meant to ⟨deal with⟩ issues related to ⟨representation⟩. Souissi agrees and goes on in the following excerpt. Note his usage of the concept ⟨show politics⟩.

JZ: Yes ... so, then it [Youssef Souissi's engagement at the level of the neighbourhood] was also meant to kind of ... deal with representation

YS: Absolutely, absolutely ... absolutely . Whereas right now, it's still taboo in certain regions to say like “we are going to organize an open house event in the mosque” ... and ...

JZ: Then or now?

YS: Now ... that's still the case in certain regions today and some want to ... put on a show that there is pluralism, that there is It has become fashionable, whereas it should be fashion nor taboo ... it should simply be a normal thing to do.

JZ: yes

YS: So that's the case ... in Antwerp. Whenever one wants to do something fancy ...

JZ: mmh

YS: "Let's visit a mosque, and then I will arrive as the alderman, or as the mayor, or as this, or as that", and so on ... and that is show politics ...

JZ: mmh

YS: ... it's a fashion ...

JZ: yes

YS: that does not change anything content-wise about the situation.

JZ: mmh

YS: Sometimes it even makes it worse, in other regions, where it's still taboo, and where this will probably not change anything with respect to the situation, it will make the situation even worse because it's still taboo.

excerpt 132 – 00/02/2009

The ⟨situation⟩ described above is characterised by ⟨show politics⟩. Prompting him to be more specific, I asked Youssef what he meant by ⟨‘the situation’⟩ and whether this has something to do with ⟨access⟩ to institutions such as ⟨the temple⟩, ⟨the synagogue⟩, ⟨the church⟩, or ⟨the mosque⟩. In the excerpt below, this inference proves to be correct. Souissi goes on and points out that having ⟨access⟩ to these places ⟨without one necessarily being initiated⟩ ⟨should be a normal thing⟩. Putting on an exceptional ⟨show⟩ when such ⟨access⟩ is granted, thus amounts to a ⟨show politics⟩ that is counter-productive to Souissi's ⟨utopia⟩.

JZ: and what's 'the situation' then?

YS: the middle, the middle way should be like ... you don't have to put on a show, you don't have to make a taboo of it either ... it should simply be a plain and normal thing Not just the mosques, also the synagogue, also the temple, also the associations, also uhm, also uhm ... the Buddhist temple, and also uhm ... the church and uhm other things ...

JZ: so there would be access or uhm

YS: so there would be access, so that things can happen there without one necessarily having to be initiated or excommunicated It should be a normal thing.

excerpt 133 – 09/02/2009

The ideal situation of open ⟨access⟩ is contrasted with a problematic contemporary situation where people and institutions are motivated by a *logic of individual interests*. This can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below. According to Souissi, ⟨one wants to make people believe that they have an interest in a particular type of politics and policy⟩. Nevertheless, this type of politics and policy is intangible. Souissi uses the metaphor of ⟨floating⟩ ⟨dreams⟩ and ⟨clouds⟩ in order to make his point. In the excerpt below, he distinguishes performances of intangible ⟨pluralism⟩ from his preferred type of political engagement. He states that his ⟨motivation⟩ is not informed by personal interests, but by the interests of ⟨groups of people⟩. He does not want to speak on their behalf, but he does attempt ⟨to give⟩

⟨those who have been pressed into a corner⟩ ⟨a voice⟩. His own engagements are aimed at making sure that such people people ⟨have a place in society⟩.

YS: If they have an interest in that ... then they will let go of their principle And that is what has been happening during the last twenty years in Flanders One wants people to believe that they have an interest in a certain type of politics, in a particular direction, in a particular policy

JZ: yes

YS: And one observes ... that all of this were dreams, clouds ... [grasps at imaginary clouds with his hand] ... clouds ... that are ...

JZ: that aren't tangible

YS: floating ... keep on floating Of course, there are some who might have realized something in the short run, but on their personal behalf, individually, and not ... as a community. My motivation is not individual but ... community ... groups of people ... not the individual

JZ: and to give those groups of people uhm ... a voice

YS: Yes ... yes ... so they may have a place in society Mostly those who are left behind, those who have been pressed into a corner ... uhm ... I was one of the few teachers in the eighties and nineties who invited Regine Beer in class, in order to talk to little kids, boys until ten years old, in order to talk about the concentration camps.

excerpt 134 – 09/02/2009

In the last lines of the excerpt above, Youssef mentions that he ⟨was one of the few teachers⟩ during the ⟨eighties and nineties⟩ who invited holocaust survivor Regine Beers in his ⟨class⟩ ⟨in order to talk about the concentration camps⟩. Whereas the relevance of these lessons within the context of a ⟨class about Islam⟩ was initially called into question by ⟨the school⟩, Souissi claims that such practices are now common place. But once again, he warns us that ⟨some people are making a fashion out of this⟩ by treating such themes in a way that ⟨is going to return their virginity to them⟩.

JZ: Who did you invite?

YS: Regine Beer, the mother of Stefan Blommaert

JZ: ah yes

YS: and back then, the reaction of the school was like ... “Why are you going to talk about concentration camps during a class about Islam?” And now it has become fashionably, now it has almost become an obligation, whereas according to me, it should not be an obligation either It shouldn't be fashionable, ... but it should not be forgotten either.

JZ: Mmh ... yes Why did you consider it to be important to ...

YS: Because it's kind of part of the memory of Flemish culture eh It's in there eh, ... in history eh But without overemphasizing it, and without forgetting it eh It's a fact that should be stated Whereas some people are making a fashion out of it ... eh ...

JZ: yes ...

YS: or an item that is ... going to return their virginity to them. Whereas it's...

JZ: Because then, one should not think about it any more?

YS: ... (long silence) ... good make-up for a political policy that is unstable

JZ: This political policy then, what would you like to ... well, how would you like to see things differently?

YS: more human

excerpt 135 – 09/02/2009

The excerpt above allows us to tie everything together. According to Souissi, the ⟨motivation⟩ behind many pluralist practices is often too intangible to contribute to a more ⟨human⟩ society. As such, these practices often constitute nothing more but a ⟨show⟩ or ⟨performance⟩. He uses the metaphor of ⟨make-up⟩ in order to highlight the artificial function of such practices. Souissi's point is not that visits to ⟨mosques⟩ or ⟨churches⟩ should not take place. Quite the contrary. Neither does he claim that the relevance of lessons about ⟨the holocaust⟩ should be downplayed. But he does argue that such practices should not be practiced in order to ⟨return⟩ to a status of ⟨virginity⟩ or innocence. Rather, they should be part of a more ⟨humane⟩ politics that is effective ⟨in the long run⟩.

Evacuating the logic of dialogism out of Flanders

The interviews I conducted with Youssef Souissi demonstrate that public spheres may also *lack* a particular logic. In the Essex approach to discourse, ideology is characterised by a fullness-yet-to-come. The full realisation of this fullness is usually characterised by a Lacanian *lack*, as well as by an obstacle that is to be overcome (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 147-48; Laclau and Zac 1994: 35). Put differently, ideological discourse involves an orientation towards a utopian future that functions as an ideal. We already noticed that Souissi's preferred mode of politics is hindered by a *logic of individual interest*. But there is another problem characteristic to Souissi's depiction of the public sphere. According to him, there is a ⟨duality⟩ ⟨that has been evacuated in Flanders⟩.

The ⟨duality⟩ Souissi talks about can be described in terms of a logic. According to him, people should confront their responsibility with respect to processes and events they are involved in. They should also confront ⟨bad things⟩ within themselves. In the excerpt below, he uses the metaphor of a ⟨mirror⟩ that Flemish people refuse to face in order to avoid feelings of ⟨guilt⟩. Even though he hedges his account by pointing out that he is exaggerating, he also point out that he means what he says when I start to smile at his suggestion that ⟨every Fleming⟩ should visit a ⟨psychiatrist⟩.

YS: You see ... ? So, that's the duality ... that has been evacuated in Flanders ... exactly ... in order not to have to look at oneself in the mirror ... and that is exactly what is happening right now with that headscarf problematic ... those who reproach ... not because they are racist ... well, I am exaggerating eh ...

JZ: those who, the ban on the headscarf uhm ?

YS: yes voila ... but simply because some of those people consider themselves as ... having no values ... who say like ... "I have ... given up ... my values, my norms".

JZ: mmh

YS: given up, ... and they shouldn't give that up

JZ: yes ...

YS: So, ... they attach, they are going to be difficult in order to still,

JZ: yes

YS: You see ... ? That's guilt Every Fleming should go see a psychiatrist, really.

JZ: (smiles)

YS: I am serious eh

excerpt 136 – 18/02/2009

The excerpt above is indicative of a logic that structures Souissi's preferred mode of subjectivity, but which is lacking in contemporary Flanders. Souissi would prefer a public sphere characterised by what we may call a *logic of dialogism* or *dialectics*. This logic functions both implicitly and explicitly in Souissi's discourse. In the excerpt above, this *logic of dialogism* informs Souissi's description of Flanders in terms of a lacking ⟨duality⟩. The resulting lack of critical self-reflection is conceptualized through the metaphor of a ⟨mirror⟩ one refuses to look at, and in terms of Souissi's recommendation to visit a ⟨psychiatrist⟩.

Youssef claims that contemporary right wing discourse about ⟨norms and values⟩ can be traced back to feelings of ⟨guilt⟩. In Flanders, the ⟨ban on the headscarf⟩ is often advocated in terms of a need for Muslims to adapt oneself to local ⟨norms and values⟩. Nevertheless, Souissi argues that this ⟨ban⟩ is not necessarily a consequence of racism. Rather, it is informed by feelings of ⟨guilt⟩ that spring from a loss of one's own ⟨norms and values⟩. In this sense, the confrontation with others, presents us with a ⟨mirror⟩ most Flemings don't want to look at. This is the ⟨duality⟩ ⟨that has been evacuated in Flanders⟩.

Throughout the interview, Youssef frequently highlighted the importance of interaction. In the excerpt below, I admit to Souissi that his ⟨mirror⟩ metaphor parallels my own framework to a certain degree. I explicitly stated that I would like to treat the ⟨interaction⟩ established throughout my interviews in terms of a ⟨mirror⟩ for ⟨society⟩, taking the various ⟨standpoints⟩ and ⟨metaphors⟩ used by people into account. Also, I stated that I was first and foremost interested in what these interactions can tell me about ⟨society as a whole⟩.

JZ: It's kind of funny that you should say that, because that's how I conceptualise this research myself. I am like, throughout these conversations, throughout these interviews, ... I rather consider these conversations as ... throughout this interaction, it is basically nothing if not a mirror for society itself, these conversations.

YS: Absolutely.

JZ: Including, of course, the various standpoints, and the various ... metaphors people use in order to explain things,

YS: Yes.

JZ: and so on, also when it clashes.

YS: yes

JZ: You see? Because, ... they often ask me like "so, you do research about minorities eh", but what really interests me is what this says about society as a whole.

excerpt 137 – 18/02/2009

Souissi responds to this metapragmatic description of the relationship between ⟨interaction⟩, my research, and the Flemish public sphere, by describing his preferred mode of communication. As we can see in the excerpt below, Souissi is no proponent of frictionless communication. He values conflict and ⟨clashes⟩ with people. According to him, it is through a confrontation between discourses that ⟨clash⟩ that he is able to deduct that his conversational partners mean well with him. No matter whether ⟨standpoints⟩ converge, this type of interaction guarantees that his discourse has ⟨penetrated⟩ an other, who does not remain ⟨indifferent⟩ in response.

YS: Exactly, exactly As far as I'm concerned, if there is no clash, then you go looking for a clash. It's only when I have a clash, that I am sure that I am faced with someone who is serious

JZ: yes ...

YS: It's only when I am faced with someone who clashes with what I am telling him, that I'm sure that his person means well with me

JZ: yes ...

YS: because that person has heard and reacted ... what I have said has penetrated ...

JZ: yes, I can imagine that

YS: you see what I mean?

JZ: yes

YS: it's only at that moment that I'm sure "that's someone who is honest" Even if one does not accept my standpoints eh ..., does not agree, ... I may not like you and so on but OK ..., then I am sure that this is not someone who remains indifferent.

excerpt 138 – 18/02/2009

The excerpt below immediately follows the excerpt above. Souissi rearticulates the voice of someone who opts for the <flight forward>: <"if I start to talk about it"> (i.e. the <injustices> discussed by Souissi), <then I will have to see myself in the mirror>. Souissi's notion of <dialogue> resembles the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism. This explains why his statements are so compatible with the pragmatic and poststructuralist frameworks outlined in previous chapters. Below, Youssef rearticulates the voice of those who refuse to confront oneself and opt for a <flight forward>. Also note the last lines of this excerpt. Here, he marks his awareness of the fact that one's sense of self is closely linked to one's awareness of others.

YS: Yes ... and that's the problem ... uhm ... in Belgium and in Flanders, in in the world, but there are other reasons as well eh.

JZ: and do you feel like the most important problem to be indifference or ...

YS: a flight forward ... a flight forward, "I don't want to, I don't want to talk about it."

JZ: OK

YS: "because if I start to talk about it ... then I will have to see myself in the mirror, so ... I am going to flee forward."

JZ: yes

YS: "I am going to flee, because what happens to you ...

JZ: yes

YS: I'd rather not see that"

JZ: mmh

YS: "because I know that this might happen to me as well ... and I don't want to see that ..."

excerpt 139 – 18/02/2009

This refusal to deal with one's own problems is informed by a logic of particular interests, as well as by a lacking *logic of dialogism* or *dialectics*. It structures a variety of issues problematised by Youssef Souissi. According to him, the resulting ⟨cowardice⟩ and ⟨egoism⟩ explains why we do not confront issues such as the export of our ⟨waste⟩ to third world countries such as ⟨Cameroon⟩. Moreover, these logics account for the way the ⟨headscarf⟩ is being problematised in Flanders. They also impact on his approach to ⟨racism⟩.

During our discussion of the subtopic 'racism', Souissi claims that the ⟨anti-racism movement⟩ has ⟨lost terrain⟩ in Flanders. According to him, this can partly be explained with reference to the ⟨intangible⟩ nature of this movement. Flemish anti-racism starts from the idea that people are inherently ⟨good⟩, whereas Souissi argues that there are bad things in every individual and that one needs to be ⟨aware⟩ of this. One needs to ⟨fight⟩ against this dark side. Put differently, the fight against racism should go hand in hand with an acknowledgment of the bad things that we may encounter within ourselves. Put differently, a successful battle against racism requires us to face ourselves in the ⟨mirror⟩ by taking a genuine interest in the other.

YS: That's basically the reason why the anti-racist movement has ... to put it in French, in a vaniteuse way ... eh

JZ: vaniteuse

YS: vaniteuse eh ... a kind of naïve [moves his arms and hands as if he is trying to grab something]

JZ intangible

YS: yes ... has lost terrain Because one starts from ... the goodness of people You have to be good, and because of that you shouldn't be a racist No. Within you, there are things that are not good, within me as well, and I have to be aware of this, you have to fight these things.

JZ: mmh

YS: I don't have to show my good side, no, my good side is not what I need to show. People should observe this for themselves.

JZ: yes

YS: I don't have to show that I have to work on my bad side, not on my good side I don't have to adorn my good side in order to show it.

excerpt 140 – 18/02/2009

Note Souissi's usage of the verb ⟨to show⟩ in the excerpt above. Throughout our discussion of ⟨show politics⟩, this verb has acquired an association with a mode of subjectivity informed by a *logic of individual interests*. It is also associated with public displays of ⟨pluralism⟩ that are not informed by a genuine interest to enter into dialogue with one another. One might say that Souissi's plea ⟨to work⟩ on one's ⟨bad side⟩ implies ethical work in a Foucaultian sense of the word. It implies a strategy of confrontation with regard to oneself, as well as with regard to another.

Making room for the dialectics of dissent

The lack of ⟨dialogue⟩ in Flanders motivates Souissi to make room for a dialectics of dissent. He articulates a great deal of spatial metaphors that are interpretively linked by a *logic of closure* and an opposite *logic of disclosure* in his discourse. As we will see, this happens quite frequently in the interviews I conducted. Nevertheless, depending on the contexts in which these spatial metaphors are being articulated, a great variety of meaning emerges. Within this subsection, I will explore how these

metaphors and logics function with respect to Souissi's preferred and disavowed modes of politics. Let us first take a look at the way Youssef conceptualises the notion of <dialectic>.

The excerpt below immediately follows an interaction where Youssef points out that he was involved in negotiations that resulted in the official appointment of hundreds of people teaching Islam in Flemish schools. As we can see below, he explains how these negotiations involved <dialectic>, <discussion> and <pragmatism>. This dialectic and pragmatist attitude allowed him to make demands on behalf of the socialist Union he was involved in. He highlights the pragmatic, dialogic, and / or dialectic dimension of his engagement by noting that the ACOD ONDERWIJS is a <syndical organisation where God is basically non-existent>. Nevertheless, this organisation allowed him <to take a standpoint> towards various politicians.

YS: ... but there has been a a a dialectic, a pragmatism, a discussion, that started within a syndical organisation [slams his fist on the table], towards that recognition [by the government of people teaching Islam in Flemish schools] ...

JZ: yes

YS: a syndical organisation where God is basically non-existent ...

JZ: yes ...

YS: where I am free to take a standpoint in order to shut the door to Minister Van den Bossche ... with my syndical card eh ... to say like it's like this or nothing ... also, to negotiate with Cools about the language problematic and so on, and also with regard to Marleen Vanderpoorten, one of my best friends, uhm, to to stand up for that, and to say like "this is what we want to achieve".

excerpt 141 – 18/02/2009

As we can see in the excerpt above, Youssef Souissi associates concepts such as <pragmatism> and <dialectic> with practices of negotiation and public positioning. Put differently, these notions function on the same level of abstraction as his concept of <dialogue>. On the one hand, they refer to concrete interactions. On the other hand, they simultaneously function as important values to his preferred mode of politics and interaction. Interestingly, Youssef also mentioned that it is possible to <keep dialectics alive> by strategically remaining silent. For current purposes however, it is important to emphasise that his engagement is oriented towards a concrete realisation of abstract categories such as <dialectics>, <dialogue> and <pragmatism>. It is through an interactional realisation of these principles, that he wishes to combat social <inequality>. In order to achieve this, one needs to make room for a dialectics of dissent.

During a debate organised by Kif Kif in the *Zuiderpershuis* in Antwerp, Youssef Souissi identified himself as a Muslim. The debate was titled *Islam: a house with many chambers*. The participants included PvdA politician Zohra Othman, Mohamed el Omari of the group *Divers en Actief* (English: *Divers en Actief*), Bilal Benyaich (Kif Kif), and Youssef Souissi. The debate was moderated by sociologist Meryem Kanmaz. The official communication advertising the debate read as follows: "*In the debate 'Islam, a house with many chambers', we bring together various approaches and religious beliefs, in order to debate the schools, the perceptions, and issues within Islam. Because, one person is more strict in his interpretation than another. More specifically, the debate will be about the place of youngsters in contemporary Islam*"¹⁰⁵. On the basis of this *communiqué*, I expected a discourse

105 This debate took place in the international arts center Het Zuiderpershuis in Antwerp, Belgium. The Dutch *communiqué* reads as follows: "*Tijdens het debat 'Islam, een huis met veel kamers' brengen we verschillende denkrichtingen en geloofsovertuigingen samen om te debatteren over de leer, de percepties en de knelpunten binnen de Islam. Immers, de één houdt er een striktere interpretatie op na dan de ander. Meer specifiek zal het debat vooral gaan over de plaats van de jongeren in de hedendaagse Islam*". For more information see: http://www.zuiderpershuis.be/events.php?lang=NL&id=675&parent=3&cat_id= .

exploring the religious diversity within Islam. I was therefore surprised that Youssef Souissi refused most religious labels and that the debate drifted of to other themes and topics (e.g. racism, education, religious radicalism, discrimination, and allochthony).

In the excerpt below, I confronted Youssef with these observations. He agrees with my description of him resisting practices of ⟨labeling⟩. He metaphorically conceptualises these practices in terms of parking ⟨people⟩ in a ⟨parking lot⟩. As such, the ⟨expansion⟩ of ⟨space⟩ is stopped. They are put in neat little boxes. Spatial metaphors such as these perform social and interpretive functions. It is possible to identify a pattern in Youssef's usage of these metaphors. This pattern allows us to identify a *spatial logic of disclosure* that structures his preferred mode of subjectivity. It provides an ethical imperative to confront others in a dialogic or dialectic way.

JZ: This is something else I was asking myself ... among other things, I remember this debate over there in the uhm ... the Zuiderpershuis uhm, with Zohra Othman and

YS: yes ... yes...

JZ: 'Islam, a house with many chambers' or something

YS: yes ... yes yes (laughs)

JZ: and yes, I would like to ask you some questions about this, but I was reminded of this because of something you just said You just said that the problem is basically like there is a problem with respect to the opening of people's minds And on the other hand, I kind of had the impression during this debate that you uhm ... you resisted labeling and uhm labels that were being put on you very strongly, and also uhm the ...

YS: yes yes yes ... yes ... if you practice labeling, then you stop, then you stop that space ...

JZ: like between groups and so on ...

YS: yes, then you stop this space. From the moment that you label it, you get a ghetto, a parking lot, ... you park people there en then you stop this space ... that that that expansion stops ...

JZ: yes

YS: because you cannot cross that border here ...

excerpt 142 – 18/02/2009

Spatial metaphors such as those in the excerpt above pop up regularly throughout the interview. For instance, he told me that ⟨you don't have any room⟩ to articulate ⟨dissent⟩ in Flemish media: ⟨the biggest problem of Flanders is that there is no dissent⟩. Moreover he sates that it is important ⟨to create space if that space is not available⟩. Youssef points out that both minds and societies can be open or closed. In order to realise the type of ⟨pragmatism⟩ and ⟨dialectics⟩ he is arguing for, a certain degree of open mindedness is required. In the excerpt below, Youssef metonymically states that Flanders is faced with ⟨a choice⟩. Either, the Flemish decide to live in ⟨a ghetto⟩, or they choose to open up their ⟨minds⟩. A ⟨choice⟩ for the first option will transform ⟨Flanders⟩ into a ⟨desert country⟩ where ⟨old people⟩ will stay ⟨against their will⟩, and where everybody will follow an individual trajectory. The other option will allow ⟨Flanders⟩ to ⟨blossom⟩.

YS: Flanders ... has a choice ... to live as a ghetto ... and then it will be a desert country within fifteen years You go one way and I go

JZ: mmh

YS: another way. And then you will have old people who remain here against their will because they have nowhere else to go ...

JZ: yes

YS: either it chooses an opening ... in the mind, not in terms of borders eh, this [points at his head] has to open eh ...

JZ: yes

YS: the minds, not narrow but ... larger And then it can blossom incredibly, incredibly ...

excerpt 143 – 18/02/2009

One might conclude that Souissi's preferred mode of subjectivity is characterized by a *logic of disclosure* that functions in a dichotomous relationship with a *logic of closure*. This logic of disclosure works in tandem with a *logic of dialogism* and / or *dialectics*. Both of them are important to the humane mode of politics Souissi argues for.

A pragmatic, holistic, and humane political subjectivity

Considering the analyses presented above, it is possible to characterise Youssef Souissi's preferred mode of politics in terms of a pragmatic, holistic, and humane subjectivity. The notion of ⟨pragmatism⟩ enables Youssef to establish a high degree of interpretive coherence between the various practices, institutions, and subject positions, constitutive for his ⟨engagement⟩. His preferred mode of politics is first and foremost conceptualized in terms of pragmatist, holistic, and humane processes and interactions.

Souissi's ⟨pragmatism⟩ does not merely imply a pragmatic stance towards a variety of secular civil society organisations, it also implies a pragmatic stance towards his subject position as a Muslim. Within the context of his engagement for the ⟨ACOD⟩, this means a flexible stance towards ⟨politics⟩ and ⟨religion⟩. As we can see in the excerpt below, it also involves a flexible attitude with respect to his sources of inspiration.

YS: I am not a philosopher, I am a pragmatician I say like "I take little bit of philosophy, a little bit of ... politics, a little bit of religion, a little bit of [slams his fist on the table] reality, ... and a bit of self-brewed ideas".

excerpt 144 – 18/02/2009

As such, Souissi's pragmatic attitude links up with a holistic approach to politics and reality. Souissi frequently refused to make a clear cut distinction between injustices taking place abroad and injustices that are taking place at the local Antwerp and Flemish levels. His dialogic approach to reality does not allow him to do so. It is also useful to recall that Youssef likes to take ⟨the consistency⟩ of society into account. Consequently, he argued that one should face ⟨injustices⟩ on the ⟨social⟩, the ⟨ethical⟩, the ⟨political⟩, the ⟨administrative⟩, as well as on the ⟨economic⟩ levels of ⟨society⟩. People and organisations who do not take this holistic perspective on society into account tend to be practice a type of ⟨show politics⟩ characterised by a logic of individual interest. A ⟨humane⟩ mode of politics requires a holistic perspective.

At the time of the interview, Youssef Souissi was the chairman of the Association for Development and Emancipation of Muslims (VOEM) (Dutch: Vereniging voor Ontwikkeling en Emancipatie van Moslims). It is therefore useful to take a look at the way Souissi describes this organisation. During a discussion of the subtopic 'VOEM', he invited me to an event called *Muslims aan het Woord* (English: *Muslims taking the floor* or *Muslims Speaking*).

They flyer for this event states Muslim organisations keep an ⟨open house event⟩ with lectures, workshops, food, and drinks¹⁰⁶. Showing me this flyer, he explains that ⟨every Muslim organisation can put up its booth⟩ over there. As such, everyone is enabled to ⟨out⟩ himself as a ⟨Muslim⟩

YS: voila ... the park, open, and everyone, every Muslim organisation can put up its booth there

JZ: yes

YS: from the preacher ... from the preacher to the jihadist ... Everything that's present in Antwerp is welcome ... Those who want to show themselves ... It is an outing ... We are not going to out ourselves as gays, as homos, as ... No, we are going to out ourselves as Muslims ... period.

excerpt 145 – 18/02/2009

In the last turn of the excerpt above, Youssef frames this event in terms of an ⟨outing⟩. As such, he highlights its emancipatory character. This type of ⟨outing⟩ is connected to Souissi's preferred mode of ⟨engagement⟩. As such, it functions as a space for interaction, dialogue, and the opening-up of individual minds.

Interestingly, the organisational structure of VOEM also corresponds to Souissi's preferred mode of engagement. VOEM is the successor of the ⟨Association for Islam Teachers in Flanders⟩. In the excerpt below, Souissi emphasises that his organisation is based on ⟨ethical⟩ grounds. For this reason, the organisation did not have to refer to a specific nationality or to an international point of reference such as the Federation for Moroccan Organisations (FMV). Also, Youssef did not really like the notion of a ⟨federation⟩, even though this organisation is legally labeled as a federation as stipulated in the minority decree.

YS: our segment of ... of work is basically uhm ... an ethical starting point ... uhm ... neither nationality, ... nor descent, ... has a meaning ... So, that's why we don't even have to stress the international.

JZ: yes ... because it's already in there ...

YS: We don't have to be a committee ... we .. it's even philosophical ... it goes deep ... We never wanted to ... to label our organisation as a federation ...

JZ: mmh

YS: even though legally speaking, we are considered to be a federation.

excerpt 146 – 18/02/2009

The ⟨ethics⟩ that inform Souissi's engagement within VOEM, and within the public sphere in general, have been discussed throughout the preceding subsections. Interestingly, these principles also account for the specific way in which VOEM is organised. Youssef had a considerable say in the development of the minority decree. He explains how the decree was developed in such a way to allow for an official recognition of his organisation. In contrast to the FMV, VOEM does not consist of member associations. Its basic organisational units are thematically oriented ⟨cores⟩. These are usually ⟨individuals⟩ working on a particular ⟨themes⟩ and ⟨activities⟩. He emphasises that these ⟨cores⟩ are ⟨individuals⟩ and ⟨citizens⟩ that may be involved in a variety of projects.

Souissi's VOEM can therefore be said to interpellate people on the basis of Islamic subjectivity, as well as on their individuality and citizenship. Its organisational structure, as well as the multiplicity of ⟨themes⟩ and ⟨topics⟩, this organisation wants to deal with, correspond to the ⟨humane politics⟩ Souissi has been advocating throughout our interviews.

¹⁰⁶ see:

http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale_zaken/SZ_Wijkwerk/projecten/0900054_zinindestad_moslim_A5.pdf

b) The case of Naima Charkaoui: logics of essentialism, relativism, and paternalism

The interview conducted with Naima Charkaoui provides us with an illustration of the way interpretive logics do not function in isolation. Naima is co-ordinator of the Minority Forum. This organisation functions as a link between official governmental institutions on the one hand, and the federations of ethnic and cultural minorities on the other hand. The organisation was established in 2000 as a result of the 1998 minority decree (Verhoeven et al. 2003: 28-29).

Even though Naima articulates her own unique perspective on issues and concepts related to ⟨emancipation⟩, ⟨democracy⟩, ⟨allochthons⟩, ⟨autochthons⟩, ⟨minorities⟩, and ⟨politics⟩, we can also observe how part of her discourse is informed by large-scale discussions and debates. The processes of recognition and misrecognition discussed by Naima play an important role in the way she gives meaning to her engagement within the context of the Minority Forum. As such, her engagement is antagonistic to a *patronizing logic* that informs a great deal of discourses and practices that objectify minorities and allochthons in Flanders.

In this respect, it is important to consider how the ⟨lessons of Sami Zemni⟩ impacted on her socio-political subjectivity and interpretations. As such, the interview with Naima Charkaoui allows us to highlight the many intertextual and deictic links that structure debates in the public sphere. Through an articulation of Zemni's discourse on relativism, essentialism, and culture with her own personal and professional experiences, Naima is able to articulate a ⟨critical⟩ and ⟨pragmatic⟩ stance towards the ⟨political game⟩.

Recognition and misrecognition in the Minority Forum

When asked about her social and political points of interest, Naima Charkaoui mentioned a variety of topics and themes. These included issues related to ⟨human rights⟩, ⟨North-South relationships⟩, ⟨minorities in society⟩, ⟨integration⟩, ⟨current affairs⟩, ⟨ecology⟩, ⟨education⟩, and ⟨mobility⟩. Within the context of the Minority Forum, three ⟨allochthon themes⟩ are particularly important: ⟨employment⟩, ⟨education⟩, and ⟨media⟩. Note that culture related issues are not foregrounded in this respect.

In the excerpt below, Naima explains why a job in the Minority Forum ⟨appealed⟩ to her. She states that her ⟨background⟩ played an important role in her decision to apply for the function of co-ordinator of the Forum. As we will see, the ⟨emancipatory⟩ and ⟨bottom-up⟩ approach of this organisation provides a strong alternative to the ⟨patronizing attitude⟩ or ⟨logic⟩ that negatively defines her preferred mode of political engagement. It is therefore important to take a closer look at the way Naima describes the practices and philosophies of the organisation she coordinates.

NC: Well ... yes, on the one hand I kind of simply rolled into it, in the sense of like, I just graduated and I was looking for a job, and I noticed this vacancy, and it appealed to me. And of course, the question is ... this does not appeal to you by coincidence,

JZ: no no

NC: that type of job. So uhm yes, I think it's kind of logical, because of my personal background, that the thematic of ... minorities in society and the chances they may or may not get ... uhm, appealed to me very strongly, from an early age. And because of this, I'm concerned with this, ...

JZ: mmh

NC: not always that consciously, but nevertheless you're kind of like, ... Well, if you keep track of current affairs with respect to these issues, it's often like "Come on, why doesn't it just work?" (laughs), "Why is it so difficult?"

JZ: (laughs)

NC: uhm, so I think, I think that this is kind of the red thread one can distinguish, like yes, a theme that comes from my personal background, that I simply consider to be very important. And because of that, you're also like "yes, if I can work on that, and definitely ...". Well, the Minority Forum also appealed to me because there's really this emancipatory aspect to it, you can really participate in the debate ...

JZ: mmh

NC: from the bottom up, on the basis of the people themselves, and not ... on the basis of an institution that works from the top down, with this patronizing attitude.

excerpt 147 – 29/04/2009

In the next subsection, I will devote more attention to this ⟨patronizing attitude⟩ and to the associated political ⟨logic⟩. For the moment, I will restrict myself to a discussion of the way Naima Charkaoui describes the ⟨role⟩ of the Minority Forum within the Flemish public sphere. Within this context, she raises issues of ⟨representation⟩, ⟨participation⟩, and ⟨advocacy of interests⟩.

Naima's decision to apply for a job with the *Minority Forum* can be explained in terms of a process of recognition and misrecognition. From an Althusserian point of view, the process of ideological (mis)recognition involves a process of intersubjective and institutional *hailing*. In this respect, it is useful to take a look at the way she metapragmatically problematises various appeals and hailings in the public sphere.

On the one hand, Naima states that she did not ⟨recognise⟩ herself in the so-called representatives whose voices were rearticulated in ⟨current affairs⟩. As we can see in the excerpt below, the ⟨bottom up⟩ approach of the Minority Forum allows people with a ⟨mandate⟩ given by a ⟨group⟩ to ⟨speak for themselves⟩, an approach that really ⟨appealed to⟩ her. On the other hand, the vacancy at the forum appealed to her subject position as a graduate in ⟨political sciences⟩. Note the high density of speech act verbs and the polyphonic play of meaning in the excerpts below.

NC: uhm ... and also, yes what really appealed to me in the Forum, I think I would have not have applied that quickly for another organisation in this, in this sector. The fact that uhm ... yes, as I said before eh, really 'from the minorities themselves'.

JZ: mmh

NC: and that was like 'wow, wow'. So, ... also because if you followed current affairs, it was always so frustrating that all of the time, everyone talked about allochthons, and you are like "Yes but ... let people uhm ... speak for themselves, and do not present the nearest person as a representative,

JZ: yes

NC: whereas you don't recognize yourself in it [in the discourse of such people] Rather, real people, who have a mandate from the group, ... uhm, like from the bottom up, from the associations", that really appealed to me uhm And also, they [the Minority Forum] are also focused on policy, well, I, I actually studied political sciences, and how does it feel to Well, I think that pure fieldwork ... would be something that I would find quite difficult, or that I would be unable to do for a long time.

excerpt 148 – 29/04/2009

In the excerpt below, Naima focuses on the role of the Minority Forum in the public ⟨debate⟩. She does not ⟨agree⟩ with ⟨people who basically think that civil society organisations⟩ ⟨should not take on

... the role of a representative, of advocating interests). However, others believe such a role to be ⟨normal⟩ and ⟨complementary⟩. Naima points out that the ⟨voices⟩ of ⟨civil society organisations⟩ are ⟨complementary⟩ to those of politicians who speak ⟨on behalf of⟩ their party.

According to her, ⟨civil society organisations⟩ are usually more ⟨free⟩ ⟨to translate⟩ the ⟨complex⟩ ⟨message⟩ about ⟨what lives among people⟩ in terms of policy. She rearticulates her own voice, as well as the voice of the Minority Forum, as follows: “we are a big umbrella, we represent a large group”. Nevertheless, she emphasises that the Forum allows for disagreement and ⟨debate⟩: ⟨that’s democracy as well (laughs) eh⟩.

NC: There are people who basically think that civil society organisations basically should not take on ... the role of a representative, of advocating interests. I don’t agree, but well, at least they are [laughs] consistent.

JZ: [laughs] yes, yes, ok

NC: But there are also those who think that civil society organisations, that this is normal, and a way for allochthon organisations to, well It’s a different point of view than the point of view of politics, but I think that both voices are complementary. Because in the end, a politician is elected, but well, he also speaks on behalf of his party eh.

JZ: mmh

NC: well, he does not simply speak, he speaks on behalf of his voters, so there is a mixture of [interests] I have the impression that civil society organisations are sometimes more free ...

JZ: mmh

NC: to translate what lives among the people, ... uhm, ... however complex the message might be ...

JZ: mmh

NC: And, ... I don’t know,... we are relatively clear in that respect, like “look, yes, we are, we are a big umbrella, we represent a large group”

JZ: mmh

NC: Don’t think, there are always issues where subgroups will disagree and and, ... they are free to participate in the debate as well, to say like “yes, we are more radical in that respect, and we don’t agree with this or with that”

JZ: yes

NC: That’s also, well, ... that’s democracy as well (laughs) eh

excerpt 149 – 29/04/2009

Mere ⟨representation⟩ and ⟨advocacy of interests⟩ do not suffice, according to Naima. She emphasises that the Forum aims ⟨to influence policy⟩. In the excerpt below, she explains how the organisation has become a ⟨partner⟩ that is being ⟨asked⟩ by the ⟨press⟩ and by the ⟨government⟩ to ⟨think⟩ and to ⟨converse⟩ with them. At the same time, she notes that this does not necessarily lead to an adoption of the ⟨recommendations⟩ of the Forum. As a case in point, she argues that one has to choose one’s battles. Whereas the Forum was not able to ⟨stop⟩ the policy of ⟨obligatory *inburgering*⟩, she notes that it is possible to achieve ⟨small victories⟩ with respect to the main ⟨themes⟩ of the Forum.

NC: ... well, I think that during this period, the Forum, as an organisation, has gone undergone an evolution ...

JZ: mmh

NC: with respect to how we deal with things, how we try to participate in the debate, how we try to influence the the the uhm, decision making process ...

JZ: We have grown in that respect, we really evolved from an actor that, well, ... almost didn't exist, ...

JZ: mmh

NC: I think that both in terms of press and government, we were standing on the sidelines, always being frustrated about us not being involved Nevertheless, we evolved to a partner that is increasingly being asked to think along and to converse Of course, ... that does not mean that they are going to adopt our recommendations just like that (laughs). I wish.

JZ: (laughs)

NC: That, well, ... that remains difficult, but we, we do weigh more on Sometimes you do can, ... achieve small victories like "OK, the ... the the uhm. There is a big issue we don't agree upon, but nevertheless, we were able to add this point" ... well, we also learned to look for issues where you did not ... well, of course, we couldn't stop the obligatory *inburgering* (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 150 – 29/04/2009

In the excerpt below, I explicitly asked Naima what such <issues> might be. Interestingly, the <allochthon themes> of the Minority Forum include very general concerns such as <employment>, <education>, and <media>¹⁰⁷. The Forum tries to <get a stronger foothold into regular policy> with respect to these <dossiers>.

JZ: (this interaction is a continuation of the excerpt above) mmh

NC: that was, that was, ... a big current. Everybody wanted that But there are also issues where you can ... well, where one doesn't really know, or that one has never reflected upon,

JZ: mmh

NC: there you can try to change a number of things ...

JZ: What would be an example of the themes that you would like to, well, that, as an organisation, you would like to do something about uhm ... change, or well, these points for instance ...

NC: well ... yes, the big themes are employment, education, and partly, to me, media And then there are a number of other themes that replace one another constantly. There are those three But every individual issue is so complex uhm In order to say like "this and this", well, we have whole series of recommendations about those, but we do try to ... get a stronger foothold into regular policy.

excerpt 151 – 29/04/2009

At this point, it is useful to briefly reflect on the structure of the Minority Forum. Considering the fact that many of my interviewees refused to speak on behalf of a supposedly homogenous community, we have to ask ourselves whose interests should be advocated by the Forum. For this reason, I asked Naima Charkaoui what she meant by with the notion of <participation>. Concepts such as <representation>, <democracy>, <advocating interests>, and <participation> are closely intertwined in Naima's discourse. They practically function as synonyms with respect to one another.

¹⁰⁷ It should be noted that explicitly labeling the <themes> of the minority Forum as <allochthon themes> is an ironical way of inscribing minorities into the problematics of the larger society. These problematics include issues such as <employment>, <education>, and <media>, issues that are relevant to the lives of all citizens.

JZ: well uhm ... when you talk about 'participation of the members', do you refer to the participation of the umbrella associations, or are you talking about the participation of individuals who uhm ...

NC: individuals ... yes

JZ: who, well, belong to minorities? Well, I don't know uhm

NC: The whole, the whole group [of the minority Forum] has sort of a hierarchical structure. There are the federations and [their respective] member organisations, and then there are individuals.

JZ: mmh

NC: Uhm, well, our philosophy is "we are the Forum for Ethnic-Cultural Minorities, and we are a civil society organisation, so we work first and foremost within civil society, through organisations, because they are able to speak on behalf of a larger group But with respect to participation, we also want to involve as many people as possible". Hence, many activities, such as the Open Forum Day

JZ: yes

NC: are really open to everybody uhm And I do think that we are a fairly open organisation.

excerpt 152 – 29/04/2009

Naima answers my question by highlighting the hierarchic structure of the Forum. Its members are ⟨federations⟩ of ethnic and cultural associations. But ⟨individuals⟩ are important as well. Note that she does not talk about communities. The ⟨larger group⟩ thus consists of ⟨individuals⟩ and ⟨organisations who can speak on behalf⟩ their members. In this sense, Naima labels the Forum as ⟨a fairly open organisation⟩.

Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the ⟨civil society organisations⟩ who are members of the Forum represent the voices of a ⟨larger group⟩, Naima acknowledges that those who represent the ⟨federations⟩ are not officially ⟨recognised⟩ by the government to ⟨work⟩ on the ⟨advocacy of interests⟩, on taking public ⟨standpoints⟩, or on ⟨policy⟩ issues. Officially, these federations of civil society organisations are supposed to restrict their activities to ⟨socio-cultural work⟩ in support of their own member organisations. In this sense, these organisations are still looking for a ⟨role⟩ and attempt to strike a ⟨balance⟩.

Naima emphasised that the Forum does not ⟨want a monopoly on the debate⟩. But she does ⟨want one to weigh the voices⟩ in the public sphere, and that one realizes that the Minority Forum rearticulates the voice of a large group. Such a realisation would pre-empt the possibility of giving ⟨the floor⟩ to ⟨some allochthon⟩ who happens to disagree on the topic under discussion. These topics include ⟨education⟩, ⟨employment⟩, and the representation of minorities by the ⟨media⟩.

JZ: We don't want a monopoly on the debate

JZ: mmh

NC: But we do want one to weigh the voices, and that one realizes like "yes, look, the Forum speaks on behalf of a large group.

JZ: mmh

NC: and well, that means something uhm ... means something, and one cannot simply shove this under the table by bringing some allochthon to the fore, and by saying like "yes but this one", who does not (smiles) does not agree

JZ: mmh

NC: And that's something that used to happen more frequently, whereas now ... well, we do notice that the things we say ... that we don't (laughs) make things up, that these things do emanate from somewhere

excerpt 153 – 29/04/2009

A patronizing logic

The ⟨emancipatory⟩ project of the Minority Forum as conceptualized by Naima Charkaoui is antagonistic to a *patronizing logic* that informs a great deal of interactions and practices in the Flemish public sphere. This ⟨logic⟩ is not informed by a malicious attitude, but by ⟨naïve⟩ and ⟨patronizing⟩ good intentions on behalf of ⟨autochthons⟩. Through an identification of this ⟨logic⟩, Naima is able to draw a parallel between the way ⟨autochthons⟩ approach ⟨allochthons⟩ in Flanders, and the way she used to think about the Third World as a child.

Naima's perspective on ⟨North-South relationships⟩ has changed over time. She explains that she ⟨might have become a little bit more desperate (laughs) with respect to the impact you can have over there⟩. As a child, she wanted to work within this ⟨sector⟩ ⟨at any cost⟩. However, her ⟨positioning⟩ with respect to this engagement changed as she started to realise that ⟨the difference⟩ she could make ⟨over there⟩ would be ⟨infinitely more small then the difference you could make if you work in⟩ ⟨a sector⟩ whose ⟨context⟩ you know well. She explains how her ⟨competences⟩ as a ⟨political scientist⟩ do not provide her with the ⟨expertise⟩ required in the Southern hemisphere. She continues her argumentation in the excerpt below.

NC: Well, I think that we often kind of like uhm ... take a superior attitude. Like, well, people who come over here have to inburger themselves for ten years so to speak, before they become entitled to, to, to, no matter what.

JZ: mmh

NC: But we are going to tell them over there how they should manage things, because we .. we don't need to know the language in advance, we can manage with English and French, and they should simply make an effort. We don't need to know how a society like that functions, what its values and norms are. We ... we don't have to know any of that. We can simply be dropped over there, and, and help them ...

JZ: mmh

NC: and and this, this logic, I really, also because of my job here [at the Minority Forum], I think,

JZ: mmh

NC: because you see how important it is to stick as closely as possible to ... reality. Something like that [Naima's childhood dream to help people in the South], well no, that was actually a naïve idea I had, ... ha, "as if they would be needing me over there", so to speak.

excerpt 154 – 29/04/2009

In the excerpt above, Naima Charkaoui literally describes the rationality informing ⟨superior⟩ and ⟨patronizing⟩ attitudes in terms of a ⟨logic⟩ that structures statements about migrants and about Third World support. On the one hand, ⟨people⟩ who migrate to Flanders are expected to be involved in a process of *inburgering* that will take ⟨years⟩. This process is commonly framed in terms of learning the local language (Flemish), and in terms of an adaptation to Flemish, Belgian, and / or European norms and values. On the other hand, ⟨we⟩ don't seem to require any knowledge about the way Third

World societies function, about local ⟨values and norms⟩, and ⟨we⟩ don't even need ⟨to know the language in advance⟩. She ironically notes that ⟨we can simply be dropped over there⟩ ⟨and help them⟩.

Naima Charkaoui implicitly acknowledges that the ⟨logic⟩ that structures such statements has also informed her childhood dream to help people living in the ⟨South⟩. Two things led her to change her opinion about this. On the one hand, her ⟨studies⟩ impacted significantly on her world view, on the other hand, her ⟨job⟩ at the Forum made her realise that it is ⟨important⟩ ⟨to stick as closely as possible⟩ to reality. In the next subsection, we will see what Naima meant by this. For the moment, it is important to emphasise that she repeatedly articulated the problematic of patronizing attitudes towards the ⟨South⟩ and towards ⟨allochthons⟩ and ⟨minorities⟩ in Flanders with one another. Her shift in ⟨positioning⟩ with respect to this double edged problematic was informed by her ⟨studies⟩ as well as by her experiences in the Forum itself. According to Naima, both stances involve ⟨basically ... the same attitude⟩. In the excerpt below, I asked her where she thinks ⟨this attitude⟩ ⟨comes from⟩.

JZ: Where do you think this attitude kind of comes from ...? Well, like, these people who have sort of a patronizing ...

NC: oh, ... I often think it's simply naivety.

JZ: mmh

NC: Well, they're, I say say like "patronizing", but they're really people who mean very well eh

JZ: mmh

NC: Just now, I once again had to read eighty applications for a vacancy of staff member ...

JZ: mmh

NC: yes, I really can get irritated about this but, ... at the same time, I do know like "well okay, these are ... people who just graduated, you have to give them a chance". But on the other hand, you you often see things like "I want to help people", ... "ok, great, you're coming to help us", like, like, with an aura of "I'm going to help you" Whereas you can see on a CV like "well, ok, you still have a lot to learn about this".

excerpt 155 – 29/04/2009

In the excerpt above, Naima Charkaoui demonstrates how this *logic of patronization* structures mundane interactional practices such as job applications. Even though many applicants who wish to work for the forum ⟨mean very well⟩, Naima distinguishes a patronizing logic structuring their motivation to work for the minority Forum. The excerpt below is a continuation of the excerpt above. Here, she rearticulates the voice of applicants who ⟨have travelled all around the world⟩ and who consider themselves to be ⟨suitable for working at the Forum⟩ because of their experience with ⟨strange cultures⟩. Unfortunately, this ⟨logic⟩ leads such people to a ⟨wrong assessment⟩ of the issues the Forum is dealing with. As such, this *logic patronization* is closely intertwined with the *essentialist*, *relativist*, and *culturalist* logics that we will discuss in the next subsection.

NC: There's also the other extreme like "yes I uhm ... I have travelled all around the world, I finished a training period over there, I wrote a paper about it over there, really in all the corners of the world so, ... I am suitable for working at the Forum" Because what is the logic? They have been in touch with strange cultures, so ... they immediately know ...

JZ: mmh

NC: And then I think, "come on, that's such a wrong assessment of ... of what we are really, well actually, we don't work on culture

JZ: mmh

NC: Perhaps, we will, we might do something about it. Culture is always interwoven in it, but, ... we don't work on strange cultures. We deal with real policy issues. It's the same thing like applying at a union.

JZ: mmh (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 156 – 29/04/2009

People who have ⟨travelled all around the world⟩, as well as people who simply ⟨mean well⟩ and who want ⟨to help⟩ ⟨minorities⟩ and/or ⟨allochthons⟩ may therefore develop similar ⟨patronizing⟩ attitudes. Also, in both cases, they trigger an inverse process of ideological interpellation whereby ⟨you really feel like being pushed into that exotic role again⟩. In the excerpt below, we can see how Naima refuses this type of interpellation, the associated process of labeling, and the ⟨patronizing⟩ attitude that goes along with it. She also articulates a preferred mode of address and/or interpellation: ⟨you really want to be approached as⟩ ⟨a human being⟩, ⟨as a citizen who may⟩ be a member of a ⟨group⟩ ⟨dealing with social exclusion⟩, but who nevertheless ⟨wants to change something about these themes⟩ him- or herself.

NC: (this excerpt is a continuation of the interaction above) Uhm, So, ... and I consider that to be sort of patronizing Then you really feel like being pushed into that exotic role again, ...

JZ: mmh

NC: sort of an exotic object in society, like “ah, yes, we are going to help these strange ... people, other cultures, and ... and this”, whereas you really want to be approached as as ... a human being, as a citizen who may [come] ... from a group ... that is dealing with social exclusion, who wants to change something about these themes

JZ: mmh

NC: But most of the time it really is pure naivety eh. And, and, ... this does not always makes them uhm ... potentially bad staff members, but you do have to give them this chance, and ...

JZ: yes yes

NC: and then I think that by working here, they may develop another perspective, like “yeah, okay, not all of them are losers, what do you know ...” (laughs)

excerpt 157 – 29/04/2009

Culturalist and essentialist logics

Even though the *patronizing logic* identified above is partially based on ⟨naivety⟩, it should also be noted that this ⟨naivety⟩ does not originate out of nowhere. It results from an unreflective stance with respect to a dominant culturalist ideology informed by a tension between *essentialist* and *relativist logics*. In the excerpts below, Naima explicitly refers to her former professor, Sami Zemni, who discussed these interpretive processes as well.

As such, we can demonstrate that the interpretive logics that structure the discourse and interpretive practices of my interviewees, are no mere individual constructs. Large-scale social debates and personal interpretive processes are fundamentally intertwined. Public debates function as networks in which people, practices, and discourses are deictically and intertextually articulated with one another. During a discussion of the subtopic ‘essentialism and relativism’, Naima Charkaoui points out that ⟨the lessons of Sami Zemni⟩ provided her with a ⟨framework⟩ that allowed her to rise above her

feelings of discomfort with respect to the way the ⟨the relationship between⟩ ⟨cultures⟩ was being problematised in the academic, as well as in the mediated world.

In the excerpt below, she highlights the impact of her ⟨studies⟩ on the development of her socio-political thought. She explicitly mentions the lessons of Sami Zemni that allowed her to tackle the debate about ⟨the Other⟩ in terms of a ⟨discussion⟩ between ⟨essentialists⟩ and ⟨relativists⟩. Even though Naima felt that there was something wrong with the way ⟨themes⟩ such as ⟨integration⟩, the ⟨North-South⟩ problematic were being discussed by academics and by media, this framework allowed her to rise above her own ⟨subjective⟩ feelings.

NC: uhm something that kind of, with respect to ... well North South, and integration, basically the relationship between ... between cultures ... there uhm, my studies were quite important, because there, ... I was taught a framework, within political sciences For instance, I recall the lessons of Sami Zemni.

JZ: (laughs) yes yes ... I interviewed him just last week ...

NC: yes (laughs)

JZ: or no, a few weeks back, yes

NC: yes .. well, there were so many things that I did feel, like “oh no, something isn’t right, and, and ... in the way ... themes were kind of .. approached.

JZ mmh

NC: scientifically, but definitely within the media as well, ... And then you were taught a framework about well, all these discussions about the Other, and and the discussions, what do you call that again ...? Culture, uhm yes, the cultural relativists, and the other extreme, the essentialists. Essentialism and so on. (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 158 – 29/04/2009

In the excerpt below, Naima emphasises that Zemni’s ⟨framework⟩ allowed her to objectify ⟨things⟩ she ⟨felt⟩ ⟨for so long⟩, but she ⟨couldn’t get a hold of⟩. These bodily descriptions in terms of feeling occur in many of my interviews and will be treated in the next chapter as having a logic of their own. Many of my respondents voiced feelings of discomfort and uncertainty that were often overcome by an articulation of one’s own experiences with an intellectual framework. Such frameworks allow them to objectify experiences that often result from interpellations that were incompatible with their preferred mode of ethics and subjectivity. Without such frameworks, individuals often become quite uncertain with respect to their position in relation to public discourses and actors that function in an objectifying way.

In the excerpt below, Naima provides us with a case in point. She explains how she started to wonder whether her feelings of discomfort with respect to public representation of minority issues weren’t ⟨too subjective⟩ as a result of these themes being ⟨too close⟩ to her ⟨heart⟩. She also explains how Zemni’s framework impacted on her subjectivity. It allowed her ⟨to look at something⟩, ⟨to distance⟩ herself, and to ⟨think about it more ... rationally⟩. As such, she was enabled to utter different statements than mere feelings of discomfort.

JZ: (this interaction is a continuation of the excerpt above) Mmh ...

NC: and uhm Well, it was quite interesting to, things that you ... felt for so long, but couldn’t get a hold of exactly, and where you start to think like “okay it’s probably just me, I’m probably too subjective, or it might be too close to my heart”, that you are taught such a framework,

JZ: mmh

NC: in order to look at something, but you can also use it to distance yourself from it, and think about it more ... rationally, instead of just saying like “mmh, I don’t seem to feel good about this”.

excerpt 159 – 29/04/2009

Still within the context of our discussion of ‘essentialism and relativism’, Naima Charkaoui illustrated her changing perspective on the ⟨Middle East⟩. I asked Naima ⟨what sort of things⟩ made her ⟨feel⟩ bad. She answered by arguing that mediatised analyses of ⟨the Middle East⟩ often highlight ⟨Islam⟩ as ⟨the explanative factor for everything (laughs) that happens over there⟩. As such, ⟨Islam⟩ is ⟨very often⟩ held accountable for the ⟨social⟩, the ⟨political⟩, as well as the ⟨economic developments⟩ that take place over there. The excerpt below, immediately follows this criticism.

NC: and then you have a feeling like, “well, that’s just weird, okay, I’m not a specialist, but I have been there, and I don’t have the impression that this or that”. Okay, Islam is important, ... you feel like, there, there, there is something not right, that does not correspond to my experiences, but yes, if the specialists say so, well, then you are kind of left with this friction ...

JZ: mmh

NC: and then you’re taught this framework about well yes, how certain elements are effectively being represented, and ... and about how people and groups are basically being essentialised to the Islam eh, something that’s hundreds of years old, and that is, ... placed on a pedestal, frozen, and “voila, this is it, this is it, Islam is like this, like this, and like this, and because of this, that, that, and that”.

JZ: mmh

NC: and all elements that ... that basically prove the opposite, are kind of ...

JZ: mmh

NC: cast aside But yes, I can’t put this into words that well, it has been such a long time (laughs), I think (laughs)

JZ: no, but I think it’s quite clear, ...

NC: yes ... voila, but you are a scientist as well, so you know (laughs)

excerpt 160 – 29/04/2009

In the excerpt above, Naima explains how the representation of certain ⟨elements⟩ in the ⟨Middle East⟩ essentialises ⟨people⟩ as well as ⟨groups⟩ to a single and unified ⟨Islam⟩. As such, ⟨the Islam⟩ is ⟨frozen⟩ in time, and ⟨placed on a pedestal⟩, as the prime mover behind all sorts of socio-political events. At the same time, ⟨elements⟩ that provide support to other analyses, are ⟨cast aside⟩. The subtopic ‘essentialism and relativism’ develops further.

Even though a framing of the ⟨debate⟩ in terms of a discussion between the ⟨extreme⟩ positions of ⟨relativists⟩ and ⟨essentialists⟩ allowed Naima to tackle her political points of interest in a more ⟨rational⟩ way, she likes to approach this ⟨framework⟩ with a ⟨critical⟩ attitude. Note the many correspondences with the way Sami Zemni articulated his stance toward the tension between essentialism and relativism himself. Naima considers herself to be ⟨critical⟩ towards Edward ⟨Said⟩, as well as to those who like to ⟨frame⟩ the debate in terms of ⟨essentialists⟩ on the one side, and ⟨relativists who relativise everything⟩ on the other side.

The tensions between ⟨relativists⟩ and ⟨essentialists⟩ are ultimately of a political nature. They resonate both in the academic world and in the public sphere in general. According to Naima, the issues that suffer most under these ⟨absolute⟩ stances, include issues such as ⟨arranged marriages⟩ and ⟨repression of women⟩ among minorities. In this context, she explains how people on ⟨the left⟩ side of the political

spectre are asking the Forum <to break> these <taboos>. She also explains how the <group> of people working in the Forum tends to respond to such questions by relativising this issue on the basis of their <knowledge> of these problematics. In turn, accusations of <relativism> follow. In the excerpt below, Naima advocates a <critical> and <pragmatic> attitude with respect to relativism and taboo.

NC: And then you are kind of like pushed into this corner, like ... “you, you are relativists, you relativise everything, to you, everything should be possible because of ‘culture’ ”. And that’s why, well, I just want to say, let’s be a little bit critical ... critical, or at least pragmatic, like that you’re like “come on, ... let’s just take a look at reality, and not be too pompous and and lose ourselves in big theories.

JZ: yes yes

NC: you have to consider like “what are things like”. And I basically feel like this is an attitude that lives among a great deal of allochthons. Like, “okay, what’s the problem and what can we do about this problem” ... but don’t forget that this problem is not the only aspect to our ... to our lives, just like ... alcoholism does not equate Flemish culture.

JZ: yes

NC: even though sometimes, it’s an aspect, or an excess of it, but ...

excerpt 161 – 29/04/2009

In the excerpt above, Naima argues for a <critical> and <pragmatic> stance with respect to concrete issues. Looking <at reality>, she warns against losing oneself in <big theories> that lead people to accuse one another of relativism. She also claims that this <pragmatic> <attitude> <lives among a great deal of allochthons>. Such an attitude prevents people to reduce a whole <culture> to a specific problem. Just as <arranged marriages> may be <an aspect> or even <an excess> of certain cultures, one cannot reduce <Flemish culture> to a problem of <alcoholism>.

The logic of the political game

There is one last logic that I would like to discuss. At a certain point in the interview, I asked Naima if she was able to distinguish some general evolutions in the debate about <minority issues> in Flanders. At that point, she starts to problematise an ‘increasing rigour and shift to the right’ in public <discourse> and in <policy>. According to her, this general evolution is closely intertwined with an increasing emphasis that is being put on <duties> in the <rights and obligations> collocation that circulates in Flemish discourse about <allochthons>.

NC: well, of course, there’s this increasing rigour ... or shift to the right as it is sometimes called, but this is a shift to the right in general, in policy as well as in the discourse like ... from basically ... a vision on rights, rights and duties of course, to basically a vision on duties, and perhaps also rights (laughs), so well ... you do see ...

JZ: How does this [process] manifest itself according to you?

NC: How?

JZ: How does this [process] manifest itself according to you?

NC: the entire discussion about inburgering

JZ: mmh

NC: uhm ... well ... we, we were not fundamentally against *inburgering*, even back then it was really, it was really a political game. ... There just had to be an obligation, because the voter needed to hear, ... you know, “we are going to oblige these allochthons”,

JZ: mmh

NC: it [*inburgering* policy] was basically only [designed] for new arrivals, but to the voter it’s all the same ...

excerpt 162 – 29/04/2009

In the excerpt above, Naima introduces the notion of a ⟨political game⟩. As we will see, this ⟨game⟩ has a ⟨logic⟩ that is very similar to the patronizing logic identified above. It is a discursive game that involves a discourse about ⟨allochthons⟩ performed on behalf of the Flemish autochthon ⟨voter⟩. According to Naima, the ⟨increasing rigour⟩ and ⟨shift to the right⟩ in Flemish ⟨policy⟩ and ⟨discourse⟩ is observable in the ⟨discussion about *inburgering*⟩.

Nevertheless, Naima also claims that the Minority Forum was ⟨not fundamentally against *inburgering*⟩. She acknowledges that there are some groups who might benefit an ⟨obligation⟩ to follow *inburgering* classes. However, the problem is that the ⟨game⟩ did not involve a ⟨discussion⟩ with the minorities themselves. This is entirely consistent with the logic of patronization as problematised by Naima. Moreover, Naima argues that one should have worked with incentives to follow the *inburgering* ⟨classes⟩ organized by the government. Unfortunately, the ⟨political game⟩ led to an ⟨unequal⟩ ⟨treatment⟩ of ⟨citizens⟩. According to her, it is unthinkable that one would ⟨oblige⟩ ⟨Flemish⟩ ⟨citizens⟩ in the same way. As such, a different ⟨logic⟩ is applied to both groups of ⟨citizens⟩. These last remarks can be exemplified with reference to the excerpt below.

NC: According to us, this is not an ... equal treatment of citizens, because we know all too well that with respect to Flemings, one would never ... consider introducing an obligation to do something, immediately, out of the blue, ...

JZ: mmh

NC: that one would force individuals to follow certain courses without any guarantees that these courses will even be there. Even if you sort of ... delay it, but especially without having any guarantees that these will be good courses, adjusted to uhm ... uhm ... Well, that’s just ... Well, I simply think that one does not deploy the same logic if it’s about uhm, if it’s about uhm ... other citizens.

excerpt 163 – 29/04/2009

Naima Charkaoui elaborates on the nature of the ⟨political game⟩ in the excerpt below. As we can see, it involves a performative practice of ⟨showing one’s muscles⟩. It also involves the articulation of statements that objectify ⟨allochthons⟩ in a logic that emphasises ⟨obligations⟩ over ⟨rights⟩. Allochthons are expected to ⟨prove⟩ they ⟨can speak Dutch⟩, and required to follow courses. In principle, this policy of ⟨*inburgering*⟩ is directed first and foremost at ⟨new arrivals⟩. But as Naima remarked before, the ⟨voter⟩ does not distinguish ⟨allochthons⟩ from people who just arrived in the country. Consequently, ⟨allochthons⟩ are pushed into ⟨being allochthon⟩ by an unequal treatment informed by the ⟨logic⟩ of the ⟨political game⟩.

NC: and yes, to us, that’s sort of a political game, like ... just showing one’s muscles, and saying like “look, ... allochthons don’t get off easily anymore eh, ... social housing code, we are going to oblige them ... and perhaps, within the framework of legislation on nationality and residence, we should also, ...”. And after a while, you think like “How many times should an allochthon prove that he can speak Dutch, and that he ... wants to integrate? And what do you do with people who, in spite of all these courses, ... who, who simply started too late, in order to ... Come on, you, you are always thrown back to to, ... coming from somewhere else, and ... having to prove that ... I think this is a detrimental

evolution in society, I really think that you uhm ... partly push allochthons back in their being allochthon.

excerpt 164 – 29/04/2009

Considering the fact that the ⟨political game⟩ is practiced upon allochthons for the benefit of autochthon voters, it is important to consider Naima's metapragmatic comments on the concept of allochthony. Within the context of a discussion on 'minorities in society', Naima explained to me how people in her ⟨environment⟩ sometimes make ⟨stupid⟩ and ⟨denigrating⟩ ⟨statements about Moroccans and so on⟩. These things ⟨touch⟩ her personally. As a case in point, she provides me with an illustration of the way she was called into an allochthon subject position when she was still in ⟨high school⟩ during the first ⟨Gulf War⟩.

NC: You know, I thought I could automatically count on a certain amount of uhm ... interest and respect. And apparently, there are moments when, well, I'll give you an example, because these anecdotes that make you think may be interesting to you ...

JZ: Yes, yes, mmh ...

NC: When I was in high school, the [first] Gulf War had broken out, uhm, against Saddam Hussein And there was this friend in my class, Ok well, ... of course she was only fourteen or sixteen, ... who said "well, are you [plural] on the side of Saddam Hussein, or on our side...". And to me, this was so, I was so touched by this, because I was like ... "Come on, how come you ask this question? Because you are Come on, Saddam Houssein was a real dictator, and all of that, and human rights?". And it was so weird that she even asked this questions, like ... well, I thought this was kind of alienating, because you have this feeling I, I was almost the only, I was the only allochthon, I think, in my entire school, and definitely in my class

JZ: mmh

NC: Yes, you, you usually don't think about this, but there are moments when you are faced with a mirror, like, "to us you are still this ...".

excerpt 165 – 29/04/2009

The ⟨anecdote⟩ above provides us with an illustration where Naima positively identifies herself as ⟨allochthon⟩ in the context of her old high school. But this positive identification is a direct result of an interpellation by one of her class mates who wonders whether Naima was ⟨on the side of Saddam Hussein⟩, or not. Interestingly, Naima uses the metaphor of a ⟨mirror⟩, to conceptualise this process. This ⟨mirror⟩ confronts her with an allochthon image of herself, a process which is quite ⟨alienating⟩ and ⟨touches⟩ her personally.

However, the fact that such interpellations work at certain ⟨moments⟩, does not imply that Naima is uncritical with respect to the label of allochthony. Quite the contrary. She even notes that there is a ⟨positive⟩ side to it as well, since this type of speech event leads to focus on ⟨one's identity⟩, and to ask oneself questions such as ⟨where do I come from⟩. Nevertheless, allochthony remains a very problematic concept in many situations.

The excerpt below is coded under the subtopic 'allochthons, autochthons, and minorities'. Naima notes that a lot of people do not want to be ⟨labeled⟩ as ⟨allochthons⟩. She is also reluctant to use the notion herself. As we noticed before, her preferred subject positions are those of a ⟨Flemish citizen⟩ that may have particular link with a particular ⟨group⟩. Nevertheless, she articulated the notion of allochthony at various points in the interview. I therefore suggested that she simply needed ⟨a label⟩.

Affirming my suggestion, Naima acknowledges that the construction of a ⟨social⟩ or ⟨emancipatory movement⟩ involves a ⟨difficult act of balancing⟩. On the one hand, there is the wish to set up a ⟨social movement⟩, on the other hand, there is ⟨no term that everyone agrees upon⟩. As such, the excerpt

below constitutes an important ⟨caveat⟩ with respect to her claim that it is important to involve as many ⟨allochthons⟩ as possible in the ⟨emancipatory movement⟩ she argues for.

NC: ... With this caveat, because the word ‘allochthons’ is always so sensitive ... that we realize that many people don’t want to be ... labeled as allochthons, and who do not identify themselves with this, who do not want to engage themselves on this basis. And this is their right If you’re from allochthon descent, but concerning everything else, you want to be approached as such, then this is your right, and then you should simply do this, and yes, ...

JZ: yes

NC: So, in this sense, ... well, I don’t want to uhm keep on labeling people as allochthons myself (laughs), but yes

JZ: mmh

NC: Of course, it’s a difficult act of balancing eh. Because, ... there is inequality, and you want a social movement, but there is no ... no term that everyone agrees upon like “this is a good term”

excerpt 166 – 29/04/2009

Still within the context of the subtopic ‘allochthons, autochthons, and minorities’, Naima explains how ⟨we⟩, at the Minority Forum, ⟨try to avoid⟩ the notion of ⟨allochthon⟩. Nevertheless, this concept ⟨is articulated faster⟩ than any other notion. When asked why the Forum is called the ⟨Minority Forum⟩ instead of the ⟨Allochthon Forum⟩, she states that this is a result of the minority decree in 1998. However, personally she prefers the notion of ⟨minority⟩ as well. In the excerpt below, Naima provides us with a spatial metaphor that explains this preference. She explains how she ⟨collaborated on the ⟨2001⟩ ⟨report⟩ of the ⟨Forum⟩. This document included ⟨conclusions⟩ and ⟨recommendations⟩ with respect to issues such as ⟨integration⟩, ⟨education⟩, ⟨youngsters⟩, and ⟨media⟩. Within this context, she advocated the choice for the label ⟨minorities⟩ as follows.

NC: We also motivated this in our, well, ... the first publication on which I collaborated, the report of the Forum in 2001. It included conclusions, and it contained in a nutshell, a vision, well, this is a big word, but two pages with kind of ... ‘what is integration’, and so on. About education, youngster, and media, recommendations And back then, the motivation was Well, I was saying, ... I proposed this, and they agreed (laughs) uhm ... like “look, minorities are within, within society eh, you are within uhm ... you have society at large, and within, there are minorities, ethnic-cultural minorities, and other minorities as well Whereas, ‘allochthon’ ... rather points to difference, to somewhere else, and then you get an image ... ”. Well, I often compare it like, you have a, a house and ... those ethnic-cultural minorities are within this house.

JZ: mmh

NC: And allochthons, that’s kind of an outbuilding ... they are not in there, they still have to join, so ...

excerpt 167 – 29/04/2009

Whereas the notion of ⟨‘allochthon’⟩ deictically points to ⟨somewhere else⟩, minorities are located ⟨within society⟩. She uses spatial construction metaphors of buildings and outbuildings to highlight the exclusions involved in using the concept of allochthony, and the inclusions involved in using the notion of ⟨minority⟩. Nevertheless, Naima is quite aware of the fact that the concept of ⟨minority⟩ has its drawbacks as well. She argues that the concept is ⟨sometimes associated⟩ with being less powerful, but ⟨there are powerful minorities as well⟩. To her, the greatest benefit of this notion lies in the fact that it allows for a more ⟨inclusive vision⟩.

3.3 Articulating a preferred sense of self with a preferred mode of politics

In order to analyse why a preferred sense of self is always linked to a preferred mode of politics in the discourse of the intellectuals and activists I talked to, it is useful to investigate the logics of self-interpretation articulated by my respondents. Whereas subchapter 3.3.1 will focus on the functions of (mis)recognition with respect to the political awareness of my interviewees, subchapter 3.3.2 will focus on the preferred modes of socio-political engagement. I will exemplify the principles involved with reference to the cases of PVDA politician Zohra Othman and of sociologist / activist Nadia Fadil. These are the final analyses presented in this book. They have been selected on the basis of the fact that these interactions exemplify the vast majority of processes problematised in this book.

3.3.1 Logics of self-interpretation

In the upcoming subsections, I will focus on the double edged issue of (a) recognition and misrecognition. I will also focus on (b) the specific ways in which people deal with the feelings involved. Doing so, I will focus on a particular set of logics that allows people to individualise themselves in a critical manner. All large-scale interpretive logics are logics of self-interpretation, but there are some interpretive and discursive patterns that seem to be of particular importance to the development of political awareness and engagement. Such logics often emerge as interpretive reactions to feelings of misrecognition and perform key functions with respect to an individual's sense of self and sense of other(s).

a) On recognition and misrecognition

All of my interviewees implicitly or explicitly framed the development of their political awareness and / or engagement in terms of a reaction against interpellations that did not conform to their preferred sense of self and / or politics. As such, the process of ideological (mis)recognition is a metapragmatic phenomenon. It involves a critical interpretation of specific speech events, speech acts, and language games. Many of the excerpts discussed in the preceding chapters contain polyphonic rearticulations of interpellations my interviewees considered to be problematic. Some of them explicitly stated that they did not <recognise> themselves in the way they are addressed, labeled, and objectified by individuals and by institutions such as the <media> or by <politics> in general. Others expressed feelings of discomfort and ambivalence when describing such encounters.

It should also be noted that misrecognition often occurs in situations where contextual frameworks clash. Individuals switch between subject positions as they highlight different aspects of contextual reality. As such, they may identify themselves with particular ethnic, cultural, religious, and / or political subject positions when discussing a particular topic such as education. If interlocutors misrecognise subject positions relevant to the utterance of particular statements, this often triggers an emotional response. Interlocutors who are able to frame these responses by means of a metapragmatic analysis of the speech event, are able to politicise the interaction itself. Once again, metapragmatic awareness proves to be a precondition for the development of political awareness. Some examples may be in order.

In the excerpts below, I will start with a brief summary of some *explicit problematisations of recognition* articulated by my interviewees. This will allow me to discuss the way processes of misrecognition may impact on the subjective experience of public interactions by my interviewees. More specifically, I will focus on the discourse of Nadia Babazia, who explained why she gets *tired* of certain *everyday interpellations*. Lastly, I will focus on the link between *recognition, feelings, and emotions* with reference to the case of Abdellatif Akhandaf.

Explicit problematisations of recognition

It is useful to recall some explicit problematisations of the process of (mis)recognition. For instance, we noticed how Naima Charkaoui did not <recognise> herself in the discourse <about allochthons> in Flemish <current affairs>. Often, such representations did not confirm to her own experiences and to her preferred sense of self. Interestingly, she also used the notion of <recognition> in order to explain her feelings towards people she admires. First of all, there are the <pioneers> of minority civil society. She mentions Tarik Fraihi whom she characterises as one of the first people in Flanders <who opened their mouths with very critical analyses>. His <ability> to <speaking> up is something she looks up to. She praised Sami Zemni as <an expert>, and Mohamed Chakkar as someone with a lot of <experience>. Members of the board of the Minority Forum are lauded for their long term <persistence>. She also praises Nadia Fadil and Meryem Kanmaz for their <intelligence> and discursive capacities.

In the excerpt below, Naima Charkaoui explains how a <feeling of recognition> <attracts> her to <these people>. She contextualises this statement by highlighting the fact that she <grew up> in an <almost completely autochthon environment> where she did not have many <soul mates> with whom she could discuss her ideas. In this respect, it is useful to recall Naima's story about being one of the only <allochthons> in her former <high school>. At the time when the first Gulf War broke out, she was asked by one of her friends on whose side she was on. To put it in Zemni's terms, she used to feel symbolically isolated as an allochthon teenager. This <alienating> experience can be linked to Naima's remarks on <recognition> below. Misrecognition and feelings of alienation are closely intertwined.

NC: yes ... I think that it is mostly a feeling of recognition that attracts me to these people ... whereas for a long time ... I had the feeling that I was alone with a number of ideas, because I never really, ... I didn't have like, you know, I ... I grew up in, in an ... almost completely autochthon environment ...

JZ: mmh

NC: and I didn't have any soul mates in that respect You, you look at things and you have a number of ideas about this, but in the end, you have nobody to check these [ideas] ...

JZ: mmh

NC: and then, in my job, I did, but ... uhm But these are people about whom you think like ... "they can put it so nicely into words", so you feel like "wow, this is what I always kind of meant" ...

JZ: mmh

NC: But it's not as if you ... really get new ideas here ...

JZ: yes

NC: Sometimes, there are things that make you think like "ah, yes" ... that's certainly true with respect to Nadia [Fadil], but she, she looks at things from a very ... theoretical perspective, and then that's new to me ... and then I am like "yes, I hadn't looked at it this way" But it's not so much the ideas that I remember, but rather like "wow, wow, that's how I would like to put it myself". It is ... well, that feeling of recognition is really quite important, so you don't feel like you're on your own.

excerpt 168 – 29/04/2009

Even though Naima's feelings of <recognition> are triggered by the discourse of people such as Nadia Fadil, Meryem Kanmaz, Tarik Fraihi, Mohamed Chakkar, Mohamed el Omari, and Saïd el Majdoub, she values the <feeling> of not being <on your own> over remembering the exact <ideas>. Naima admires people such as <Nadia> Fadil who are able to confront her with new <theoretical> perspectives, but it is rather the <feeling of recognition>, then the <ideas> themselves, that are important to her.

Naima also experienced feelings of recognition with respect to ⟨great personalities⟩ such as ⟨Martin Luther King⟩ and ⟨Nelson Mandela⟩ whose ⟨capacity⟩ ⟨to lead⟩ ⟨emancipation movements⟩ and ⟨to negotiate⟩ with ⟨those in power⟩ appeals to her. She notes that the struggle against ⟨white dominance⟩ in the US and the struggle in ⟨South Africa⟩ are ⟨two movements⟩ wherein ⟨you can recognise yourself⟩. Put differently, these types of socio-political discourse and engagement correspond to her preferred mode of socio-political engagement, as well as to her preferred sense of self. It goes without saying that this process of recognition is fuelled by the interpretive logics identified in the analyses above. The articulatory and emancipatory practices of the Forum function as a useful alternative to the *patronizing logic* that informs the ⟨political game⟩. As such, it is quite understandable why people who are able to articulate their position in the minority debate, trigger feelings of ⟨recognition⟩.

Interpellation and (mis)recognition are processes that have an intersubjective, as well as an institutional side to them. Public institutions such as media and governments are very important in this respect. This may be illustrated with reference to Abdellatif Akhandaf who argued that ⟨Islam⟩ and Islamic organisations such as mosques are not sufficiently supported by the government. According to him, this implies that ⟨there is no full recognition of your individuality as a person as a community, as an individual, ... with all your cultural and your religious uhm heritage⟩. Similar points have been raised by other respondents as well.

Getting tired of everyday interpellations

The process of (mis)recognition is a metapragmatic phenomenon. It is based on the way we evaluate one another's forms of address. As such, interpellation is a process that has been described in detail in pragmatist writings. We are confronted with hundreds of interpellations every day. And we constantly interpellate people ourselves. The million dollar question is therefore how to address one another in ways that are emancipating rather than dominating. How do we provide one another with sufficient interpretive space to articulate each other's sense of self in empowering ways? As we can see in the excerpts below, certain types of ⟨questions⟩ can be experienced as being physically exhausting.

The excerpts below are derived from an interview I conducted with Nadia Babazia. At the time of this interaction, Nadia was engaged within SAMV (Support Center for Allochthon Girls and Women). On its tenth anniversary on December 12th 2011, the organisation changed its name to *Ella: kenniscentrum gender en etniciteit* (English: *Ella: knowledge center gender and ethnicity*)¹⁰⁸. The chairwoman of SAMV / Ella, Imane Bouzarmat provided an argumentation for this name change during a speech celebrating the ten year anniversary of SAMV, and the birth of Ella, in Flemish Parliament. Before I go on to discuss Nadia Babazia's engagement within SAMV, it is useful to introduce this organisation with reference to this speech (Bouzarmat 2010).

Imane Bouzarmat described the name change of SAMV to Ella as “*a statement*”. The decision for a name change was informed by general socio-political evolutions in the public sphere, as well as by an increasing focus on what SAMV members describe as “*the internal debate*”. Imane Bouzarmat explained how SAMV was established in order to support “*the emancipation process of allochthon girls and women*”, defining emancipation in terms of a “*broadening of options*”. From its inception, SAMV aimed to combine “*a gender and ethnicity oriented approach*”. In this respect, the organisation sought to position itself as an alternative for regular feminist organisations who focussed mostly on gender, and for an “*allochthon civil society*” that considers ethnicity to be the most important explanative factor for inequality (Bouzarmat 2010).

¹⁰⁸ The Ella homepage can be found at <http://www.ellavzw.be/>. Imane Bouzarmat's speech can be found at: <http://www.ellavzw.be/pers/speech-10-jaar-samv/>. Also, a youtube movie used to promote the name change from SAMV to Ella can be watched at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uM_gfGEMcPM.

On a practical level, SAMV organised workshops, protest actions, and debates. Also, the organisation sought to inform women of their rights and possibilities in society. Networking and support used to be central principles. SAMV developed folders about marriage and family law in Belgium, Turkey, and Morocco. Since 2004, the organisation started to work with allochthon youngsters. It developed educative games about sexuality, role patterns and relationships. Another interesting project involved a play based on women's stories about sexuality, forced marriages, divorce, and virginity. This way, SAMV developed a new focus and strategy, described in terms of an orientation towards "*the internal debate*" (Bouzarmat 2010).

Imane Bouzarmat explained how "*the internal debate*" involves a discussion of topics such as: partner choice; marital migrations; pre-marital, intercultural and inter-religious relationships; and homosexuality. As such, the internal debate is relevant to boys and men as well. She also noted that SAMV was increasingly being faced with challenges of racism and Islamophobia after 9/11 (Bouzarmat 2010). Moreover, she described the shifting focus on the internal debate in the following terms:

"Whereas during the first five years, SAMV focused mostly on individual empowerment of allochthon women by means of various methods and courses, from 2006 on, SAMV developed a new track. Because, with respect to sensitive gender issues, 'taboo themes', and traditions that obstruct or hinder individual emancipation, the individual and communal levels are fundamentally intertwined. It is difficult to break certain taboos on your own, if there is no support within the community. We therefore never suggest only one solution or model. Rather, we want to stimulate people to think independently, to be critical with respect to common opinions / convictions within one's own community, and to make their own choices." (Bouzarmat 2010)¹⁰⁹

The name change of SAMV to Ella is informed by these evolutions and considerations. The organisation has come to focus on boys and men as well. The notion of allochthony is refused on the grounds that this concept is used by a "*white majority in order to distinguish itself from ethnic minorities*" (Bouzarmat 2010).

Within the context of our interview, Nadia Babazia discussed her ⟨job⟩ at SAMV in terms of an ⟨engagement⟩ with and within the ⟨internal debate⟩. Nadia distinguished between three different ⟨worlds⟩ through which she travels. These worlds include: the ⟨SAMV⟩ ⟨environment⟩; a ⟨Flemish⟩, ⟨Belgian⟩, ⟨white⟩ ⟨environment⟩; and the ⟨environment⟩ provided by her ⟨family⟩. She uses these spatial metaphors in order to distinguish between three types of interpellations that are characteristic of three sets of speech events and discursive practices.

In the excerpt below, Nadia distinguishes between her ⟨close friends⟩ on the one hand, and the ⟨friends⟩ and ⟨people⟩ she grew up with in Wuustwezel on the other hand. She explains how she shares a ⟨common ground⟩ with her ⟨close friends⟩ and how she doesn't ⟨have to explain everything all of the time⟩. At the same time, Nadia wonders whether her friends in ⟨Wuustwezel⟩ ⟨can relate⟩ to the topics she and her SAMV friends are dealing with. Nadia explicitly states that she does not engage in ⟨minority discussions⟩ with her ⟨Wuustwezel⟩ friends. With them, she has ⟨other topics⟩ to discuss.

NB: Yes uhm, I think there are like the ... well, my close friends ... and there are the more ... well, I grew up in Wuustwezel, so, people from over there uhm. I think that within my circle of friends, we all are more or less on the same track There, I can really, to us it's kind of a common ground in order

¹⁰⁹ Dutch: "Terwijl SAMV de eerste vijf jaar vooral aan individuele empowerment van allochtone vrouwen werkte via diverse methodieken, vormingen, ... ontwikkelde SAMV vanaf 2006 een nieuw spoor. Want als het gaat over heikele genderkwesties, 'taboethema's' of tradities die de individuele emancipatie belemmeren of bemoeilijken, zijn het individuele en het gemeenschapsniveau onlosmakelijk verbonden. In je eentje kan je immers moeilijk bepaalde taboes doorbreken, zolang daarvoor geen draagvlak is binnen de gemeenschap. Met het intern debat wilde SAMV aan een draagvlak werken en ruimte creëren voor uiteenlopende meningen en oplossingen. We schuiven daarom nooit één oplossing/model naar voor. Wel willen we mensen stimuleren om zelfstandig te denken, kritisch te durven zijn naar bepaalde gangbare meningen/overtuigingen in de eigen gemeenschap en eigen keuzes te maken." (Bouzarmat 2010)

to ... be among one another, and everybody is doing his own thing, but you don't have to explain everything all of the time. Whereas, well, with friends from Wuustwezel (sights), it's kind of different. You have other connections with them Also, I don't know if they always, ... everyone has developed in a certain way eh, after their studies, if they can always ... relate to the things I am dealing with, or if Well, they don't say that explicitly eh, that they cannot relate, eh, but they are rather Flemish eh. Well, so, so I, ... with them, I am not going to have these minority discussions ... with them, I have other ...

JZ: yes, other

NB: other topics (laughs). But I do think that uhm, ... because I have been raised in a very Flemish environment ... and uhm ... well for instance, my physician can really say to me like, ... because I still go to my physician in Wuustwezel, ... like uhm "well, I really think it's nice what you're doing, you can play a very important role within your community", but ... in such a paternalistic, mothering way Whereas I don't want to, well, I do want to play a role for my community, but not in the way she means it She has like this image of women like "those women are being repressed", and yes, ... you know, as if you ... as if you are liberating them or something, whereas I Well, I do not consider this to be my role. I do not want to deal with my community in this way, ... They give another meaning to it

JZ: Yes

NB: I think they may all be quite enthusiastic about uhm, about what I'm doing eh, but I think they give it another meaning

excerpt 169 – 11/06/2008

The excerpt above indicates that people in Nadia Babazia's ⟨Flemish environment⟩ tend to give another meaning to her engagement in SAMV than the one she prefers. Even though people such as her ⟨physician⟩ in Wuustwezel may be ⟨enthusiastic⟩ about the ⟨role⟩ she plays with respect to her ⟨community⟩, Nadia suspects they interpret this ⟨role⟩ in a rather ⟨paternalistic⟩ or ⟨mothering⟩ way. She does not consider it to be her ⟨role⟩ to liberate ⟨women⟩ in this particular way. To Nadia, this type of interaction and interpellation is quite ⟨exhausting⟩. She states this explicitly in one of the excerpts below. But she also sighs frequently when discussing speech events and interactions within other ⟨Flemish⟩ or ⟨Belgian⟩ context.

Feelings of misrecognition can be quite ⟨exhaustive⟩. They are often reactions against interpellations that backfire. In many cases, such feelings are triggered when faced with incitements to discourse that do not provide the interpretive space required to articulate a preferred sense of self. In the excerpt below, Nadia explains how she became aware of ⟨differences⟩ with respect to the way Moroccan and Belgian boys and girls were being treated within their family contexts. This happened when Nadia was about ⟨fifteen⟩ or ⟨sixteen⟩ years old, when her friends started ⟨to party⟩, a situation that prompted her to discuss these issues with her ⟨father⟩. Searching ⟨for arguments⟩ that might ⟨catch on⟩ with her parents, she started to read the work of ⟨Fatima Mernissi⟩¹¹⁰, a Moroccan sociologist who argues that the Koran does not justify an unequal treatment of men and women.

NB: Well, I grew up in Wuustwezel, so ... we were practically the only Moroccan family over there, so in my youth I wasn't really uhm, ... well, I was confronted with my being Moroccan, but I found myself in a very Belgian environment, and uhm Well, all of a sudden you are fifteen, sixteen, and then your friends start to party, and that was kind of difficult at home, even though I was allowed a lot. But nevertheless, it was kind of a ... difficult issue. And then it was like "a girl cannot marry a Belgian boy, but a boy may marry a Belgian girl if she's Christian or Jewish ...". Well, all sorts of differences emerged, and I had a lot of conversations about this, especially with my father, and Well, you search for arguments that can also, ... catch on with them. And then, then yes, ... like Fatima Mernissi, she also looks at this from the perspective of the Koran, and so on, and then you can enter into a

¹¹⁰ Fatima Mernissi is a Moroccan sociologist. She is also a well-known Islamic feminist. An overview of her publications can be found at her personal website: <http://www.mernissi.net/> .

discussion about this, more easily. And that's kind of uhm ... well where I started to, ... And I still feel this today, in my job, that you ... you're very much involved, also because it's about yourself Well, we work with allochthon women, and it's about emancipation and that sort of stuff, but Well, partly it's also about ourselves, and sometimes it's rather difficult to draw the line like "this is just my job" It's very close to uhm ... one another. But that's also what's so nice about it, I don't want something that's simply ..., well without engagement, or about a theme that does not really uhm ...

JZ: touch you (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 170 – 11/06/2008

In the excerpt above, Nadia links her personal experiences within the context of her family with her ⟨job⟩ at SAMV. This job is not merely about the ⟨emancipation⟩ of ⟨allochthon women⟩. Nadia also explains how this job is ⟨about ourselves⟩. Elsewhere, she states that the ⟨themes⟩ of the ⟨Support Center⟩ are very ⟨close⟩ to her ⟨skin⟩. In this sense, ⟨it's rather difficult to draw the line⟩ between her ⟨job⟩ and her self. Both are ⟨very close⟩ to one another. Questions asked by people who cannot really ⟨relate⟩ to the particular ways in which these themes are being discussed within the context of SAMV inform forms of address wherein Nadia cannot recognise herself – an ⟨exhaustive⟩ process.

In the excerpt below, Nadia sighs while rearticulating the ⟨questions⟩ she was ⟨confronted with⟩ in another ⟨white environment⟩. During her job at the ⟨Support Center⟩, she took ⟨an apprenticeship⟩ at the Flemish public broadcasting network VRT. More specifically, she worked on a popular Flemish soap opera called *Thuis* (English: *Home*). Here, she was confronted with speech acts that called her into the subject position of an Islamic girl, inciting her to talk about these aspects of her identity. Nadia sighs when rearticulating the questions she was asked at the VRT. At SAMV however, one has ⟨passed this stage⟩. Here, she does not ⟨get this sort of questions for days⟩.

NB: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) No, because, when I was working at the Support Center, I also took ... an apprenticeship at the VRT, a diversity thing, well, you could go and work with a program, and uhm ...

JZ: Isn't that what Nadia [Fadil] did as well?

NB: yes, Nadia [Fadil] did that as well, she was [an apprentice] at the news, and I was [an apprentice] at entertainment I was at *Thuis*, ... the soap, and yes, that was a lot of fun, but still, within this white environment, you are once again confronted with all these questions (sighs), "Well, what about this Ramadan?", and "Girls?", and "Did you ever have to wear a headscarf?". So you get all these questions once again. And well, within the Support Center, we have really passed this stage. Well, we simply do our jobs, I don't get this sort of questions for days and yes, ... It implied a lot less engagement with respect to content, it was kind of, I did like it, ... but that personal engagement was not deep enough in order to I was offered a full-time, but (sighs), I was like, "I am not ready at the Support Center yet, I still want to ... work about these themes". And I still would like to work in the media, but yes, ... on my themes, not merely, ...

excerpt 171 – 11/06/2008

Each of Nadia's ⟨worlds⟩ is characterised by a different approach to her ⟨engagement⟩. Her ⟨white⟩, ⟨Flemish⟩, or ⟨Belgian⟩ ⟨environment⟩ tends to take a ⟨paternalistic⟩ or ⟨mothering⟩ attitude, interpellating her in ways that do not conform to her preferred sense of self. Even though Nadia Babazia liked her ⟨apprenticeship⟩ at the ⟨VRT⟩, this job required ⟨a lot less engagement with respect to content⟩. To Nadia, it is important to be involved in a job that allows her to focus on her ⟨themes⟩. These themes include issues related to ⟨diversity⟩, and to relationships between ⟨women⟩, ⟨men⟩, and ⟨youngsters⟩. Within the SAMV ⟨environment⟩, the nature of this engagement is not called into question. Her family is supportive of her ⟨engagement⟩ within SAMV, even though ⟨clashes⟩ between both contexts may occur.

At several points in the interview, Nadia wondered about my interviewing style. She noted that I did not have a closed set of questions. As such, she considered the interview to be ⟨kind of interesting⟩.

This made me wonder what she expected the interview would be like, and whether she often participated in ⟨interviews⟩. In the excerpt below, Nadia explains how SAMV receives ⟨a great deal of requests⟩ from ⟨researchers⟩ and other interviewers. She also states that ⟨sometimes, you do get tired of always explaining this⟩. Nadia prefers a mode of communication in which ⟨basic⟩ ⟨identity⟩ ⟨questions⟩ do not have to be asked.

NB: wow, yes, ... in that case, good luck ... I thought it was kind of interesting, ... I didn't know what to expect (laughs)

JZ: Oh, what did you expect then?

JZ: Well, I didn't know very well. I only knew, I was due to make an appointment for so long, and now it finally happened uhm ...

JZ: and do you do many interviews or uhm

NB: well, yes, we get a great deal of requests, it's really uhm ...

JZ: by researchers as well?

NB: all sorts, yes, and sometimes it's rather ... well yes ... sometimes, sometimes you do get tired of always explaining this. And I liked it like right now, that it wasn't just about this aspect. Well, it went a step further, like well, "Why do you engage yourself?", so you don't have to talk that much, well, you do have to talk about yourself of course, but not ... well, I don't know, the basics, the basic identity ...

JZ: What do you consider to be basic?

NB: well, ... I don't know, like "Do you feel Moroccan or Belgian?", and "How about you being a Muslim", you know ... And you can really get quite exhausted after such a conversation. It's like "shit, yes, uhm how does this work again", and you think like "shit, that's not what I am working on at all", or "this is what I am working on", and that's so, ... well, sometimes, very exhausting, and then you're like ... "should I still do this sort of thing?"

excerpt 172 – 11/06/2008

A mere discussion of the ⟨basics⟩, leaves Nadia ⟨quite exhausted⟩. In her engagement, she does not ask herself questions such as ⟨"Do you feel Moroccan or Belgian"⟩. The fact that these identities do not mutually exclude one another goes without saying. Elsewhere, Nadia framed her strategy to deal with ethnic modes of being as follows: ⟨You look for your own road between being Moroccan and being Belgian, and you try to make your mixture out that⟩. Note the spatial metaphor in this statement. Nadia prefers to work on other issues than on these ⟨basic⟩ questions. It is therefore interesting to note that she considered this interview to go ⟨a step further⟩ by focusing on the nature of her ⟨engagement⟩ rather than on ⟨basic⟩ and ⟨exhausting⟩ questions of ⟨identity⟩. The same goes for her ⟨engagement⟩ within the context of ⟨SAMV⟩.

Nadia is first and foremost interested in the ⟨gender issue when it is linked to minorities⟩. Within the context of SAMV, she worked with a ⟨mosque⟩ and with ⟨women⟩ on a project about the ⟨education of girls and boys⟩. Other projects focused on ⟨youngsters⟩. For instance, at the time of the interview, she was preparing a play with ⟨Moroccan boys⟩ in which they can articulate ⟨their perspective on girls⟩, ⟨women⟩, and ⟨relationships⟩. She also created a folder that contained ⟨positive stories⟩ about people who followed higher education. The excerpt below allows us to link the various spatial metaphors articulated above with Nadia's preferred sense of self.

NB: Exactly ... uhm ... and yes, I once did a project about uhm ... higher education. I collaborated with uhm ... allochthon student organisations, like, talks with youngsters.

JZ: Student Focus?

NB: Student Focus over here, and then we made a folder with rather positive stories of people who started to study, and about how that went, and Yes, I really this this type of projects is great, it's really like, ... well, ... well, ... in spite of the fact that it's sometimes just a side-project within the Support Center. But because I consider it to be so important myself, ... and sometimes there is room, within the Support Center, to emphasise your own highlights. And of course, it's fun to work on ... on such themes uhm Because I feel like it's not because I ... my trajectory went reasonably well, that I don't want to be ... a bridge to others or, I don't know. Well, somehow, I consider this to be my responsibility ...

JZ: And where do you think this comes from?

NB: Well, I don't know, it's, it's, well, ... it's a feeling, I don't know, It's a feeling I have, like ... "it is sort of my community ... I don't want to separate from it", or something. I do want to be able to do my own thing. And, ... probably, ... I don't know what the Moroccan community, ... well, some will agree with some things and others won't, but I , ... I do think it's important to ... have a connection with it, and if possible, to bring a positive energy, ...

JZ: in it

NB into it (laughs), yes, and especially with regard to youngsters.

excerpt 173 – 11/06/2008

Nadia explicitly stated that she wants to be ⟨a bridge to others⟩. As such, she does not want ⟨to separate⟩ from her ⟨community⟩. Rather, she wants to retain ⟨a connection⟩, articulating herself with this community, bringing ⟨positive energy⟩ into the ⟨internal debate⟩. Nadia's conceptualises her ⟨engagement⟩ in terms of these spatial metaphors. In fact, her usage of such metaphors is so consistent, that it is possible to identify a *logic of rapprochement* that characterises her preferred sense of self. It also structures her ⟨engagement⟩ with respect to the internal debate. As such, it is interesting to note that the SAMV approach to ⟨emancipation⟩ differs from the approach taken by traditional ⟨Flemish feminist organisations⟩.

According to Nadia Babazia, there are significant differences with respect to the way ⟨so-called allochthon and autochthon⟩ organisations give ⟨meaning to emancipation⟩. According to Nadia, the concept of an emancipatory process with a ⟨headscarf⟩ is not acceptable to the older generation of feminists. But there is also a ⟨younger generation of feminists⟩ engaged in SAMV and in organisations such as FC Poppesnor, for whom ⟨freedom of choice is central⟩. Nadia refuses to define ⟨emancipation⟩ and ⟨participation⟩ on behalf of others. This explains why she labels statements made by her ⟨physician⟩ as ⟨paternalistic⟩. In contrast to traditional feminist approaches, the SAMV approach allows for a variety of ⟨trajectories⟩ and interpretations of ⟨emancipation⟩.

This is not to say that the ⟨internal debate⟩ constitutes an unproblematic venture. The contexts of the three ⟨worlds⟩ through which Nadia moves ⟨clash⟩ at times. This can be observed in the excerpt below.

NB: On the Support Center we are like "yes, we have to stimulate the internal debate about role patterns, we have to stimulate it, men and women, and", well, you know the theoretical ideas about that But in the evening you go home, and, and, I have a husband at home (laughs), and, and it's not ... well, it clashes at times. Sometimes you can, well, you are within your own little world, and then you are confronted sometimes, often, with well, "what is it really like in the community" You know what I mean? Sometimes we can go on a weekend with the entire general assembly of the Support Center, and then we are all like "we want this and that, and this and that", after that, everyone comes home, ... and, and you too, have to manage, how to give meaning to your emancipation.

JZ: On a personal level?

NB: On a personal level, yes, ... And sometimes, ... well, sometimes, this is how I, with respect to my environment eh, how I deal with it I don't know if this is a complete answer to

JZ: yes yes, but

NB: yeah, sometimes it can kind of clash.

excerpt 174 – 11/06/2008

The <clash> between the various contexts through which Nadia moves is informed by a <clash> between <the theoretical ideas> articulated within SAMV on the one hand, and the <reality> of the family context on the other hand. Sometimes, Nadia experiences this <clash> on a <personal level>. According to her, it has become quite <difficult> for <Moroccan families> <to realise> a <traditional family structure>. She notes that <people are searching for their position> within the <family structure>. This search involves an exploration of what it means <to be a woman> and of what it means <to be a man>. Nadia's emancipatory <goals> with respect to the <internal debate> as discussed within the SAMV context, sometimes <clash> with the <reality> of her family relationships. She notes that <the discourse about emancipation> is sometimes resisted in the family environment, because it requires a <repositioning> of <both men and women>.

Recognition, feelings, and emotions

Nadia Babazia repeatedly emphasised how tired she got from <questions> and interactions based on a misrecognition of her preferred sense of self and <engagement>. Moreover, Naima Charkaoui problematised the <feeling of recognition> in a very explicit way. But if we take a closer look at those interviewees who explicitly discussed their engagement in personal terms, intuitive feelings prove to be of fundamental importance to their preferred modes of political engagement and subjectivity. This can be exemplified with reference to many excerpts discussed in previous chapters.

Former AEL activist Issam Z explained how he felt like he had to give up his <individuality>. At fourteen years old, he felt that <something is not right>. Some respondents emphasised that processes such as integration and politics are fundamentally intertwined with emotions and feelings. For instance, Amane X discussed the feelings of <disappointment> among individual <allochthons>, as well as among autochthon <institutions> with respect to the integration process. Faulty interpellations may lead to feelings of ambiguity such as in the case of Sami Zemni. Feelings of <cowardice> and <guilt> lie at the basis of the Flemish refusal to look at oneself in the <mirror>, according to Youssef Souissi. And on a more implicit level, Karim Hassoun argued that feelings of misrecognition impede people's ability to stay true to themselves.

Identifications are fundamentally intertwined with feelings and emotions for a very simple reason. All abstract categories may pragmatically function as *values*. People *value* abstract notions such as <identity>, <politics>, <community>, <Flanders>, <Islam>, <freedom>, <choice>, <democracy>, and / or <Europe>. They do so by articulating potentially empty signifiers with concrete experiences of their own, providing them with individual and social meanings and values, according to large-scale interpretive logics. When the legitimacy of such identifications is called into question, when one's basic interpretive categories are being challenged, this is easily experienced as an attack on one's values. Political debates are among the most emotionally challenging speech events, because they provide us with a setting where the legitimacy of our most valued abstractions may be called into question by means of a vast array of speech acts.

I would like to conclude this section on interpellation and misrecognition with reference to an example taken from my interview with Abdellatif Akhandaf. Abdellatif attributes an important role to governmental institutions with respect to his preferred mode of <integration>. According to him,

integration does not occur ⟨automatically⟩. And it will definitely not occur as long ⟨there is no full recognition of your individuality as a person, as a community, as an individual, ... with all your cultural⟩ and ⟨religious⟩ ⟨heritage⟩. However, a full recognition of one's individuality may also imply a recognition of one's institutional subject position and one's preferred mode of engagement. This can be exemplified with reference to some excerpts coded under the subtopic 'Abdellatif's actions during riots and demonstrations in Antwerp'.

During our discussion of this subtopic, Abdellatif Akhandaf got visibly emotional. As we will see, this reaction can be explained in terms of a (mis)recognition of his engagement within the context of the governmental institution DIA (English: Integration Service Antwerp). However, in order to understand his reaction, it is important to take a look at his concept of ⟨government⟩. We already noticed that Abdellatif considers ⟨integration⟩ to be a process that should be stimulated by the ⟨government⟩. Abdellatif's notion of ⟨government⟩ is quite inclusive and holistic. This can be exemplified with reference to the following statement: ⟨as a government service, as an integration service⟩, ⟨you⟩ ⟨continually⟩ attempt to ⟨consider society, the whole⟩, and to look for a ⟨positive⟩ or ⟨surplus value⟩ when a ⟨negative⟩ event occurs. At one point, Abdellatif remarked that processes of misrecognition and feelings of distrust make sure that people do not consider themselves to be ⟨part of this society⟩. More specifically, a person who enters into a negative mode of identity development as problematised by Abdellatif, ⟨doesn't realise that⟩ ⟨he is part of the government⟩. According to him, governments need to ensure dialogue and interaction among groups and individuals in society.

Considering the fact that Abdellatif Akhandaf frequently identifies himself as a ⟨civil servant⟩ working for a ⟨government⟩ or ⟨integration service⟩, these are very important statements. As we will see, a misrecognition of this holistic governmentality, triggers a great deal of emotional distress for Abdellatif. It puts him in a ⟨a weak position⟩, on a ⟨thin line⟩, when interacting with various ⟨interest groups⟩ that do not consider him to be ⟨part of us⟩.

During our discussion of 'Abdellatif's actions during riots and demonstrations in Antwerp', he explained to me how he dealt with the ⟨news⟩ that a Flemish toddler called Luna Drowart, and her Malinesian nanny Oulematu Niangadou were murdered in the Antwerp city center by Hans van Themsche on May, 11th, 2006. Van Themsche also wounded a Turkish woman called Songül Koç. This racist killing spree was stopped by a police officer who shot van Themsche in his belly. The killer was captured and brought to justice. At the time of these events, Abdellatif Akhandaf worked as a civil servant at the Antwerp Integration Service called DIA. In the excerpt below, he tells me about his actions in the evening following these murders. He had to act fast and started by summoning various stakeholders and interest groups.

AA: ... So, by the evening, you know what has happened. You have to keep ahead of the facts, to summon a number of partners, the umbrella's, ... Okay, what are we going to do? Uhm, well, the umbrellas, the associations, will evidently want to take it to the streets, and then it will be like "we against", well, "we are the victims, the allochthons are the victims". Whereas, as a government service, as an integration service, you continually look for a, for a, ... try to consider society, the whole, uhm you try to ... uhm create something positive, a surplus value, out of something which is negative uhm So, to us, from the beginning, it was very important ... that ... it was clear that everyone would be a victim, and not just the allochthons Not only the African, not only the Turkish, but also the Flemish, so it has to If something will happen in the streets, it has to be clear that it is supported by everyone. So, from the beginning, we had to make sure that civil society went along ... and that was not easy.

JZ: not easy?

AA: No.

JZ: You mean, autochthon civil society? Uhm ... (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 175 – Summer 2008

In the excerpt above, Abdellatif explains how he anticipated a reaction whereby ⟨umbrellas⟩ - i.e. the federations of minority civil society organisations – could position themselves as ⟨victims⟩ of racism: ⟨“the allochthons are the victims”⟩. However, in line with his holistic view on society, Abdellatif aimed to frame the events of May 11th, 2006 in a way that victimized the entire society. To him, ⟨it was very important⟩ that ⟨everyone would be a victim⟩, ⟨not just the allochthons⟩. Moreover, if demonstrations were to be organized ⟨in the streets⟩ of Antwerp, these demonstrations should be performed as such. For this reason, it was important for Abdellatif Akhandaf to make sure that ⟨autochthon civil society⟩ went along as well.

In the excerpt below, he explains why the process of involving allochthon as well as autochthon civil society in the preparation of this ⟨demonstration⟩ was ⟨not easy⟩. As a government institution, DIA did not want to ⟨wait until the very last moment⟩. Abdellatif argued that in order to avoid a lacking Flemish presence ⟨on the streets⟩ during such a ⟨demonstration⟩, ⟨we have to make sure that from the beginning autochthon civil society would be present⟩. He also pointed out that ⟨we⟩ (i.e. the integration service DIA) invited ⟨*Samenlevingsopbouw*⟩ (SOB), ⟨de Acht⟩, and ⟨the umbrellas⟩ to help as well. This allowed for ⟨a call⟩ to be launched in the ⟨channels⟩ of each of these organisations.

AA: Yes, so uhm Why? Uhm, ... uhm, if we would wait until the very last moment to, civil society, or if we would wait until the very last moment of the demonstration, until the application was filed like “we want to get on the streets, we want to organize a demonstration”, then we know there will be a minimal presence of Flemish ... yes So, we have to make sure that from the beginning of the the organisation, uhm that autochthon civil society would be present, so uhm, we have uhm ...

JZ: mmh

AA: yes uhm, asked them both like uhm “are you prepared to get together in order to think along, to help with organizing, uhm. And that’s why, ... and then Opbouwwerk, De Acht, and then the umbrella’s. And this way, they got together a number of times and because of that, uhm, ... from the very beginning, uhm ... a call was launched in one’s own, in one’s own channels. Uhm, also, something that I considered to be important, was that with respect to uhm, to security, uhm ... that it would be a reflection of everyone, and I have organized this, ...

JZ: yes

AA: uhm, uhm, ... so that ... like ... the image in the front is a reflection of the image on the back ... I always get a lump in my throat (smiles)

JZ: a lump

AA: a lump in my throat when I uhm talk about ...

JZ: Really?

AA: Yes, it’s a ... well, it remains an emotional ...

JZ: and ... where does this, where does this ...

AA: Emotions.

JZ: and because of the uhm, the events ...?

excerpt 176 – Summer 2008

Abdellatif Akhandaf also explained that ⟨security⟩ needed to be a ⟨reflection of everyone⟩. All groups should be represented. As such, ⟨security⟩ should involve both allochthon and autochthon organisations. He metaphorically argued that he wanted ⟨the image on the front⟩ to be ⟨a reflection of the image on the back⟩. At that point, Abdellatif’s eyes went moist, and his voice broke. Noting my

surprise, he explains that he ⟨always⟩ gets ⟨a lump⟩ in his ⟨throat⟩ when he speaks about this. Interestingly, this reaction is not simply a response to ⟨the events⟩ of May, 11th 2006.

Abdellatif Akhandaf clarified his emotional response in the excerpt below. His response is a reaction to the process of ⟨preparing⟩ ⟨the demonstration⟩. Some of the ⟨people⟩ he dealt with drew a metonymic link between him and ⟨the government⟩. On its own, this does not constitute a problem. However, within the context of ⟨demonstrations⟩, ⟨one sees you as a government⟩, ⟨one basically sees you as the adversary⟩ ⟨who has let it come this far⟩. Abdellatif goes on and explains that this situation put him ⟨in a very unstable position⟩. At that point, I asked him whether it were the ⟨reproaches⟩ of being responsible for the events that bothered him. He acknowledged this, and used a spatial metaphor in order to emphasise that as a government, ⟨we really walk a thin line⟩, providing ⟨facilities⟩ for a demonstration, but at the same time being held accountable for the events one is angry about.

AA: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) No uhm, uhm, the demonstration. But also the [process of] preparing uhm The sensitivity, you have to keep every detail in mind uhm, uhm, in order to ... to achieve your goal. Uhm, because it depends on the people, with whom you have to deal. Especially as a government, you're not uhm, ... one sees you as ... one sees you as a government, especially when there are demonstrations, one basically sees you as the adversary, uhm, you are the one who uhm ...

JZ: has allowed it to escalate

AA: Yes. The one who has let it come this far. So you're always in a very unstable position, and at the same time you want to, ... move something, you want to offer uhm ... opportunities, you want to trigger evolutions and processes, that's ... uhm

JZ: is it because you get reproaches addressed to you or uhm

AA: Yes. Yes yes, of course, so uhm, we really walk a thin line. Uhm, very subtly, in the backstage, you work the different ... interest groups The African umbrella, the Turkish umbrella, the Moroccan umbrella, uhm, ... the youngsters, and then also the opbouwwerk, the city, in order to join, in order to allow for a number of facilities, uhm for instance, the boulevard, on the boulevard, that there will be megaphones, uhm

JZ: so that there will be facilities

AA: uhm yes ... (this excerpt continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 177 – Summer 2008

In the excerpt below, we can see how Abdellatif's ⟨emotional⟩ response is a reaction to a type of interaction and interpellation that does not confirm to his preferred mode of self and politics. I admitted to Abdellatif that I was ⟨surprised⟩ by his emotions. In order to make sure that I understood him correctly, I asked him whether his feelings were triggered because he felt ⟨caught in between⟩. Apparently, this inference was correct. Abdellatif decided to elaborate: ⟨because you're caught in between⟩, ⟨because⟩ ⟨you want to do good for everyone⟩. Put differently, it is Abdellatif's positive identification with a holistic mode of government that is not being recognized.

It goes without saying that interactions based on the idea that ⟨you're the government⟩, occupying a subject position that is no ⟨'part of us'⟩, goes against the grain of his preferred mode of politics and ⟨government⟩. The ⟨thin rope⟩ that Abdellatif walks as a civil servant who engages himself for a governmental policy that aims to consider society ⟨as a whole⟩, requires him to balance between allochthon and autochthon subject positions, concerns, and discourses. Simultaneously, it requires him to balance between the concerns of civil society organisations and governmental concerns. Interpellations that do not recognize this delicate act of balancing imply a misrecognition of his

preferred mode of subjectivity: ⟨one cannot always understand you⟩. And at such moments, Abdellatif experiences a feeling of ⟨loneliness⟩.

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) because uhm, ... well, I am kind of surprised by this, this emotion, uhm

AA: yes ... it's ...

JZ: well, and is it because you're caught in between? The most difficult thing? Or uhm

AA: yes, you're caught in between because ... you're uhm ...

JZ: or is there something else that makes it so hard?

AA: No uhm, well, because you're, you're caught in between, because you uhm You want to do good for everyone, uhm, and it is not always ... perceived like that. From the perspective of the allochthons you're seen like uhm, well, you're the government, you belong to the other party, uhm from the government, you're not always considered to be ... ' part of us' uhm, well, ... Apparently that's typically human So, ... one cannot always understand you uhm, and ... that's not easy. And because of that, you always walk a thin line, and, ... you don't have a scenario, uhm, so, you're, you're lonely at that moment ... and the result is very uhm ... uhm It's either on or off, it's uhm, ... it's quite demanding

excerpt 178 – Summer 2008

b) Coping with feelings of misrecognition

The intellectuals and activists with whom I conducted my interviews exhibit a great deal of symbolic and cultural capital throughout their interaction(s). These forms of capital allow them to strategically position themselves in relation to the public sphere and in relation to the debates that structure it. Most of my interviewees hold academic degrees and are able to link their social positions with complex theoretical analyses. Others have developed similar forms of capital by extending their networks in Flemish civil society. As such, it is possible to analyse the various ways in which they deal with processes of interpellation they consider to be problematic.

The political awareness of my respondents was often triggered by ⟨feelings⟩ and by personal experiences. They often framed these experiences in physical terms. Nevertheless, most interviewees indicated that the next stage(s) of the development of their political awareness occurred after an appropriation of concepts and ideas that find themselves at a relatively high level of abstraction. Such notions were derived from people they met, from books they read, and from conclusions they drew with respect to their personal experiences.

Interestingly, it is possible to identify a number of discursive patterns that can be found across a variety of interviews. Many of my interviewees use a combination of visual, spatial, and enunciative metaphors to objectify their experiences in such a manner that they are able to deal with them in a critical way. As we will see, these metaphorical patterns can be described in terms of *visual and tactile logics of embodiment*, in terms of *spatial logics*; and in terms of *logics of enunciation*.

I do not suggest that all of my interviewees articulate identical discourses. None of them does. Rather, there are similarities in the way they deal with feelings of misrecognition. I will provide some illustrations in the subsections below. An account of the way such logics interact with other large-scale interpretive processes will be presented by means of a discussion of the remaining two case-studies of this book.

Visual and tactile logics of embodiment

The development of political awareness is often triggered by feelings of misrecognition. It is therefore interesting to note that many respondents use a multiplicity of body metaphors emphasising the physical aspect of this experience. In many cases, the usage of such metaphors is sufficiently systematic in order to identify one or two *logics of embodiment*: a *visual logic of embodiment* and a *tactile logic of embodiment*. By deploying such interpretive logics, my interviewees are able to articulate a relatively high degree of coherence in the way they articulate their sense of self with a multiplicity of subject positions, practices, statements, and discourses, circulating in the public sphere(s). The interview conducted with Naima Charkaoui provides us with a case in point.

In Naima's narrative on the development of her political engagement, feelings of misrecognition precede insight and theoretical analysis. She uses a multiplicity of subtle body metaphors throughout her discussion of the subtopic 'essentialism vs relativism'. Before she studied with professor Sami Zemni, Naima felt that <something> wasn't <right> with respect to the way minority related <themes> were being approached in the <media>. She voiced feelings of discomfort and uncertainty that were only overcome after the adoption of an intellectual framework that allowed her to identify tensions between essentialist and relativist positions in the public sphere.

Before this happened, she <couldn't get a hold of> this problematic. It was only after Zemni's lessons that <things> she <felt for so long> became more tangible. Naima notes that before these lessons, <you feel like> <there is something not right>. She literally states that her confrontation with so-called expert discourse on minority issues or <allochthon themes> did <not correspond> to her <experiences>, a situation that leaves her with a sense of <friction>. As such, there is a *tactile logic* structuring the description of her early political awareness. This sort of logic can be discerned in many interviews, at points where my interviewees decide to provide me with a more personal account of their developing political awareness.

In Naima's case, this *tactile logic of embodiment* is closely intertwined with a *visual logic of embodiment*. Both logics work in tandem in order to articulate her developing sense of politics and self. Still within the same context of 'essentialism vs relativism', Naima explained how Zemni's lessons about the <other>, about <cultural relativists>, and about <essentialists>, gave her a <framework> that allowed her to <look at> the issues that had been worrying her for years in a more <rational> way. This allowed her to formulate a different reaction than a mere expression of discomfort such as in the following utterance: <"mmh, I don't seem to feel good about this">. Put differently, the <framework> provided by Zemni, provided her with a new way of looking at things.

The visual logic of embodiment characterising Naima Charkaoui's developing political awareness is closely intertwined with a capacity <to distance> herself from the themes <close> to her <heart>, and to treat them in a more <rational> way. All of a sudden, it became possible to <get a hold> of the mechanisms and processes of interpellation she was involved in. Naima <felt> that something as wrong with <expert> discourse, but it is only after the acquisition of this newly acquired gaze or perspective that she gains more control over the way she positions herself with respect to such issues. Naima described her preferred mode of subjectivity as being characterised by a <critical> and <pragmatic> attitude. She want to <look at reality> without losing herself in big theories.

Even though <insight> is very important to Naima, her feelings remain important to her political engagement. To her, <feeling> <injustice> and <inequality> is more primal than rationally <seeing> what is going on. She stated that she always was <rather on the sensitive side>. Moreover, through her engagement, and as a result of her studies, she became <increasingly sensitive> to the <increasing complexity> of <themes> and issues related to minority politics. Naima's <critical> attitude with respect to a framing of the minority debate in terms of a dichotomous debate between <essentialists> and <relativists> can therefore be explained with reference to the operation of *visual* and *tactile logics of*

embodiment. The associated interpretive processes perform an important function in the way Naima copes with feelings of misrecognition.

Spatial logics

Another set of logics that seems to structure the discourses and interpretive processes of my respondents is of a spatial nature. *Spatial logics* take roughly two forms. On the one hand, there are *logics of closure* and *disclosure*. On the other hand, there are *logics of isolation* and *rapprochement*. Both logics frequently overlap. All of my interviewees use spatial metaphors in order to position themselves with respect to a variety of actors, institutions, and practices in the public sphere. Discourse about social relationships is often articulated in spatial terms. This goes for political as well as for academic genres. As I demonstrated before, the very concept of the public sphere rests on a spatial metaphor that designates a particular set of socio-political language games.

I have already identified a *logic of closure* and a *logic of disclosure* during my discussion of the interview with Youssef Souissi. Souissi identified a lack of ⟨dialogue⟩ in Flanders and framed his engagement as an attempt to make room for the dialectics of dissent. As such, metaphors of closure were used metapragmatically in order to categorise discursive practices of ⟨labeling⟩. Souissi's preferred mode of politics and engagement is characterised by a logic of disclosure associated with dialogical and dialectic practices. As such, Youssef Souissi argues that the Fleming is faced with a ⟨choice⟩: he either ⟨chooses an opening⟩ ⟨in the mind⟩ that will allow ⟨Flanders⟩ to ⟨blossom⟩, or he chooses for a mental closure that will force him to live in a mental ⟨ghetto⟩. His discourse is heavily laced with spatial metaphors that allow him to articulate his interpretation of processes in the public sphere in a systematic way.

The interview with Nadia Babazia provides us with a nice example of a *spatial logic of rapprochement* fuelling an interviewee's preferred sense of politics and sense of self. Nadia's preferred mode of subjectivity is characterised by a *spatial logic* that allows her to switch between various ⟨worlds⟩ and ⟨environments⟩ while maintaining a high degree of interpretive coherence. It is useful to recall that she would like to be a ⟨bridge for others⟩, connecting the interactional settings wherein she moves. She emphasised the difficulty of drawing ⟨a line⟩ between her self and her job. Moreover, she looks for a ⟨road⟩ between a ⟨Moroccan⟩ and a ⟨Belgian⟩ way of being. Nadia's job at SAMV allows her to perform these functions in accordance with an interpretive *logic of rapprochement*. As such, this *spatial logic* informs her preferred mode of ⟨engagement⟩.

All of my interviewees used spatial metaphors in order to articulate an analysis of processes constitutive of the public sphere(s) in which they engage themselves. For instance, Karim Hassoun criticised the notion of ⟨importing conflicts⟩. Hicham el Mzairh argued that a confrontation between migrants and people who want to assimilate them leads to ⟨withdraw themselves⟩ in such a way that ⟨they are not open to change⟩. They ⟨remain stuck⟩ within ⟨a tradition⟩, ⟨mentality⟩, or ⟨culture⟩ that hinders the ⟨freedom of the individual⟩. Moreover, Amame X argued that ⟨Flemish⟩ ⟨allochthons⟩ are ⟨falling back 'to'⟩ one's own ⟨nest⟩ in response in a situation where there may even be ⟨too much integration⟩. As such, spatial metaphors perform an important function with respect to the way people deal with (an analysis of) feelings of misrecognition.

Enunciative logics

Lastly, there are systematic patterns in the way people metapragmatically deal with voices, concepts, and discourse(s) that are relevant to their preferred mode of political engagement, and to their analysis of the public sphere(s) in general. Such patterns can be described in terms of an *enunciative logic* that

provides cohesion in the way people mark their political awareness in discourse. As such, they allow for an intersubjectively established sense of coherence.

In order to illustrate the principle of an enunciative logic, it is useful to return to the case of Nadia Babazia. We already noticed how Nadia distinguished between three sets of language games by means of spatial metaphors such as ⟨worlds⟩ and environments. A closer analysis of the SAMV ⟨environment⟩, the family ⟨environment⟩ that is partially located in the ⟨internal debate⟩, and the ⟨white⟩, ⟨Flemish⟩, and ⟨Belgian⟩ ⟨environment⟩, shows that these ⟨worlds⟩ are characterized by different enunciative logics.

On the one hand, Nadia links SAMV statements, subject positions, and discourse(s) to one another by means of a *polysemic enunciative logic* that is part of her preferred mode of ⟨engagement⟩. On the other hand, she characterizes interactions in the ⟨white⟩ and ⟨Flemish⟩ public sphere as being informed by a very different approach to ⟨emancipation⟩ and ⟨participation⟩. One might say that statements about Nadia's identity and engagement in ⟨white⟩ and ⟨Flemish⟩ environments are characterised by a *monosemic logic of enunciation*.

We already noticed how Nadia refused to define ⟨emancipation⟩ and ⟨participation⟩ on behalf of others. SAMV and the ⟨younger generation⟩ of ⟨feminists⟩ refuse to do so as well. The logic informing Nadia's approach to minority and gender related themes is quite different from the logic informing the discourse of her physician and her co-workers at the VRT. The physician's ⟨paternalistic⟩ and ⟨mothering⟩ comments about Nadia's engagement, and the ⟨questions⟩ asked at the VRT involve rather narrow definitions of concepts such as ⟨engagement⟩, ⟨emancipation⟩, and ⟨participation⟩. Nadia Babazia is quite aware of the fact that the political tensions between individuals and organisations in the public sphere are to a large extent informed by different interpretations of abstract categories such as ⟨emancipation⟩ and ⟨participation⟩.

The enunciative logic informing the dominant mode of discourse in a particular context also informs the prevailing interpellations and forms of address. Speech acts such as ⟨exhausting⟩ and ⟨basic⟩ ⟨identity⟩ related ⟨questions⟩ are not asked at the ⟨Support Center⟩. An individual's ability to identify large-scale enunciative strategies by means of metapragmatic language use correlates with his or her awareness of a preferred mode of interaction, politics, and self. I will provide more examples of such enunciative logics in the upcoming case studies. For now, it should suffice to note that individuals may engage in a multiplicity of interpretive processes in order cope with feelings of misrecognition.

Throughout this book, I have argued for an analysis of the self in terms of a reification of the processes that allow an individual to articulate his or her self as a more or less coherent mind/body in relation to social, spatial, and (inter)textual aspects of reality. Such a concept of selfhood can only be established when it is possible to identify large-scale interpretive logics that structure one's metapragmatic awareness of the various contexts through which one moves.

3.3.2 Preferred modes of socio-political engagement

The chapters below contain two final case studies. The analyses of these interviews provide two sets of illustrations of the principles explored throughout this book. Below, I will discuss the cases of (a) Zohra Othman, and (b) Nadia Fadil. Whereas the focus of my analysis of the interview conducted with Zohra Othman will focus on the issue of establishing cohesion and coherence through a large-scale deployment of specific sets of metapragmatic markers, my analysis of the interview conducted with Nadia Fadil will focus on the possibility of analysing activism as a technology of the self.

Many other interpretive processes introduced in the preceding chapters, subchapters, sections, and subsections, will be identified along the way. As such, both analyses demonstrate how a preferred mode of socio-political engagement is fundamentally intertwined with a preferred mode of subjectivity. Moreover, both interviews illustrate how a political sense of self may evolve over time up to the point where one may wonder whether one is dealing with a different type of subjectivity altogether.

a) Establishing a coherent sense of self: the case of Zohra Othman

The interview conducted with Zohra Othman exemplifies how interpretive logics may be marked in discourse, contributing to an intersubjective establishment of a coherent sense of self and sense of politics. Zohra is a politician involved in the Antwerp Marxist-Leninist party PvdA. She works as a lawyer for *Progress Lawyers Network*, an organisation with decidedly leftist sympathies¹¹¹. I met Zohra after a debate called *Islam: a house with many chambers*. During a fund raiser called *Gaza on my mind*, I asked her whether I could interview her. The money collected during this event was meant for the *Al Awda hospital of the Union of Health Work Committees in Gaza*¹¹². Zohra's engagements and political points of interest are oriented to Antwerp, to Flemish and to Belgian issues, but also to international problematics of poverty, war, and inequality.

The subtopics discussed during our interview are quite diverse. We talked about her evolving political thought and political engagement, throughout discussions of 'Gaza', 'injustice', 'Iraq and Palestine', 'Marxism', and 'the debate about Islam'. We also discussed issues related to 'the economic' and 'the international' dimensions of society. Other discourse topics included 'racism and systemic failure', 'Resist!', 'racism and the law', and the 'PvdA'. This list is not extensive, but it provides a first glimpse at the diversity of topics and positionings articulated within the context of our interview. In the subsections below, I will focus on the ways in which Zohra manages to establish a great deal of interpretive coherence, by marking a set of interpretive logics in her discourse.

As with many interviewees, the development of Zohra's political awareness was preceded by a ⟨feeling of⟩ ⟨injustice⟩. Throughout the development of her political awareness, she came to focus on three themes: ⟨racism⟩, ⟨the economic⟩, and ⟨the international⟩. As she became more aware of these problematics, she became ⟨more and more engaged⟩, up to the point where she ⟨actively participated⟩ in the elections.

¹¹¹ *Progress Lawyers Network* is a network of progressive law firms in the Belgian cities of Antwerp, Ghent, and Brussels. The network consists of lawyers, students, academics, and human rights activists, who deal with family law, criminal law, immigration law, and family law. The network is based on an analysis of increasing poverty and repression: "more and more people are becoming victims of a system where profits are central". Moreover: "the project is aimed at guaranteeing the best possible defense for the victims of contemporary society and for those who strive for change". Special attention goes to concerns related to social and syndical rights, the right to engage in social action, human rights, racism, equal opportunities for refugees and immigrants. Doing so, *Progress Lawyers Network* aims to link individual defense to a battle for the rights of larger groups of people. The manifesto of this organisation can be read at <http://www.progresslaw.net/index.php?pg=45>.

¹¹² The fund raiser *Gaza on My Mind* was organised at the *Zuiderpershuis* in Antwerp, Belgium.

ZO: and then uhm ... before I actually participated ... in the elections of '99 uhm, I also had the opportunity, and this is the international aspect, the third thing that was added to it, ... so, it really was like first racism, then the economic situation of workers, and then the international, uhm, I had the opportunity to travel to Iraq back then.

excerpt 179 – 04/02/2009

Zohra Othman distinguishes between three phases in the development of her socio-political awareness. As student, she grew concerned with ⟨racism⟩ and engaged herself for *Objectief*. During this phase, she was also concerned with the first Gulf War in Iraq and other ⟨international⟩ problematics. The limited political impact of *Objectief* would breach her trust in the ⟨bourgeois parties⟩. This was when she met Raf Jespers, a lawyer who she describes as an ⟨engaged⟩ person who was ⟨politically active⟩ with the ⟨*Partij van de Arbeid*⟩ (PvdA). In a third phase, Zohra Othman became active within the ⟨PvdA⟩ herself. At roughly the same time, her interest in the ⟨international⟩ came back into focus. Zohra puts different emphases on her political points of interest and engagements throughout these three stages. As we will see, each phase is characterized by a particular configuration of interpretive logics.

Zohra Othman allows for a high degree of interpretive coherence by marking *tactile and visual logics of embodiment*. An important set of interpretive processes that negatively define her preferred mode of engagement can be described in terms of a *systemic logic* that structures her critique of *capitalism*. Moreover, there is a spatial logic observable in the way she articulates her sense of self with the local and international spaces wherein she engages herself. This can be observed in the subsection on *dark rooms in Zohra's inner center*. Lastly, I will focus on the way Zohra Othman's preferred modes of politics and subjectivity are intertwined with the way she evaluates developments within the PvdA itself in a subsection called *lessons learned from Resist!*.

Tactile and visual logics of embodiment

Zohra Othman uses a number of visual metaphors in order to highlight the interpretive links between experiences and events that have been important to the development of her political awareness. The functions of these metaphors may be described in terms of a *visual logic of embodiment*. As with many other interviewees, this logic is preceded by a *tactile logic of embodiment* that functions on a more intuitive level.

The excerpt below is coded under the subtopic 'injustice(s) and engagement(s)'. This subtopic follows a discussion of 'Marxism' as an important framework for Zohra Othman's political engagement. Below, she responds to my remark that ⟨even though⟩ many of my interviewees ⟨have rather leftist sympathies⟩, I rarely meet people who ⟨have⟩ actually ⟨read⟩ the works of ⟨Marx⟩ and ⟨Lenin⟩ as Zohra did. Below, she reacts with a general assessment of the way people develop their socio-political engagement.

ZO: Yes, but I have ... well, I recognize this A great deal of people who are [politically] engaged are Actually, it always starts with a gut feeling, with a feeling of injustice. One sees things ... and encounters things, so one says like "this cannot be", and one starts to uhm I think that this has to be present first. I think there always has to be ... a spontaneous indignation first But I was lucky that this spontaneous indignation simultaneously triggered a search for answers, like "there's so much going on, and this cannot be", and you studied, studied at college, but no one tells you "well, ... the system functions like this, and that's why ... you have these excesses, or these ...". And uhm, ... well, by meeting [politically] engaged people who said like "but you should read that, and you should read this, and you should read that", and that's what I did.

excerpt 180 – 04/02/2009

According to Zohra, ⟨engagement⟩ ⟨always starts⟩ with a ⟨spontaneous indignation⟩, with a ⟨gut feeling⟩ that the current situation ⟨cannot be⟩ right. This is how her own ⟨engagement⟩ developed as well. In the excerpt below, she explains how her ⟨feeling of injustice⟩ ⟨did not originate in a Marxist education⟩ but in religiously inspired ⟨values that were passed along⟩ by her parents. Zohra ironically states that she does not consider an unequivocal renouncement of religion on the basis of Marxist principles to be ⟨dialectic⟩. According to her, the dichotomy between ⟨Marxism⟩ and ⟨faith⟩ constitutes a ⟨false opposition⟩, since her own ⟨engagement⟩, as well as the ⟨engagement⟩ of many others is driven by an ⟨education⟩ grounded in ⟨faith⟩.

ZO: Well, I uhm ... I have become a Marxist, but I was actually uhm ... raised ... in uhm ... in a Muslim family, and I consider this to be an important part of me. Because, ... when I, uhm ... this, well, this spontaneous indignation, or this feeling of injustice I have, did not originate in a Marxist education, but in uhm ... my education at home, and uhm ... these are basically values that were passed along by my parents, through their religion, and these are things I carry along. And to say like “I am going to renounce faith, because it does not amount to anything good” ... well ... in my particular case, I don’t consider this, I don’t consider this to be dialectic

JZ: (laughs)

ZO: (laughs) well, to say it with a Marxist term It does not make any sense either, it’s uhm I think, ... if you look around you, there are many people who uhm Their engagement, my engagement, has become more strong due to Marxism, but my engagement did not originate ... in a Marxist education. And I think this is important, because there are many people who are driven by their education, by their faith, ... to do things, and [who] want to change things in the world. And uhm, ... that’s why sometimes, I consider this to be ... a false opposition.

excerpt 181 – 04/02/2009

Elsewhere, Zohra Othman distinguished between the ⟨role⟩ played by ⟨organised⟩ ⟨religion⟩ on the ⟨macro level⟩ of social history, and its function for individuals who choose to ⟨engage⟩ themselves in a meaningful ways within the public sphere. Renouncing religion on the personal level because of religion related problems on the ⟨macro level⟩ is a ⟨bridge too far⟩ according to her. In the excerpt above, she considers herself to be ⟨lucky⟩ for the fact that her ⟨feeling of injustice⟩ coincided with a quest for ⟨answers⟩. As we will see, Zohra found her ⟨answers⟩ ⟨in Marxism⟩.

I will go into Zohra Othman’s analysis of the ⟨capitalist⟩ ⟨system⟩ in the upcoming subsections. However, for current purposes, I will restrict myself to an exploration of the interpretive processes that enabled her to find the ⟨answers⟩ she was looking for. As we will see, the Marxist theoretical framework allows her to articulate the problematics related to ⟨racism⟩, to ⟨the economic⟩, and to ⟨the international⟩ aspects of ⟨inequality⟩ with one another, in a systematic way. At this point however, it is important to emphasise the visual metaphors that allowed Zohra to establish a sense of coherence between the various contexts wherein she engaged herself.

It is useful to take a look at the way she articulates her experiences as a ⟨lawyer⟩ with the experiences of her ⟨clients⟩ and of her ⟨family⟩. Zohra explained to me how she grew up in ⟨a protected environment⟩ ⟨in the sense⟩ that she was ⟨always the only⟩ person ⟨of Moroccan descent in Belgian groups⟩. As a student, she focused on ⟨the debate⟩ about migrant ⟨voting rights⟩. But when she ⟨started to work as a lawyer⟩, her ⟨eyes really opened⟩. As we will see, this visual metaphor indicates an increasing awareness of the way her personal experiences can be linked to large-scale socio-political processes that can be explained with reference to the ⟨logic⟩ of ⟨the⟩ ⟨capitalist⟩ ⟨system⟩.

During the second year of her apprenticeship, Zohra was ⟨consulted by parents whose child was refused at a school⟩. She explains how during the eighties ⟨concentration schools⟩¹¹³ popped up in

¹¹³ The notion of concentration schools refers to schools with a high concentration of allochthons in the student population. In popular discourse, these schools have a bad reputation.

neighbourhoods with a lot of ⟨Moroccan families⟩. As a reaction, many ⟨white parents⟩ ⟨moved away⟩. According to Zohra Othman, the ⟨executive board⟩ of a particular school in the Antwerp municipality ⟨Deurne⟩ developed a strategy to counter these processes. In the excerpt below, she argues that ⟨children⟩ ⟨who were⟩ already ⟨enrolled⟩, but who did not fit the ⟨pedagogical project⟩ of this school were referred to ⟨special education⟩¹¹⁴.

ZO: So, afterwards, these children, the only way to get rid of these children who were enrolled but who did not fit into the pedagogical project, proved to be a relegation to ... special education. So, this was really well, ... I have, ... well, ... you can't imagine how you feel then, ... These parents come to you, and yes, you feel related with them, because, well ... these are Moroccan parents, these are families, ... Well yes, it's as if this is ... a family in which you grew up yourself, and then you think like "come on, ... this, this cannot be", and then uhm, the film starts to play When we were little, my eldest sister, fortunately she escaped this because she is very intelligent, ... she was also simply referred to professional education, because one thought, well, she was fit for tailoring, and for nothing else.

excerpt 182 – 04/02/2009

In the excerpt above, Zohra emphasises her emotional response when confronted with the case of her clients. She recognised herself in the situation of these ⟨parents⟩ whose children were recommended to follow an educational track that did not correspond to the children's capacities. She explains how the family that consulted her was very much like the ⟨family⟩ she ⟨grew up in⟩ herself. In order to emphasise the similarities between the story of her clients and her own family related experiences, she uses the visual metaphor of a ⟨film⟩ that starts to play. The movie or ⟨film⟩ she describes is a ⟨film⟩ recorded in her childhood.

Zohra goes on and explains how her sister addressed her parents about Zohra's education, asking them not to repeat their ⟨mistake⟩ with ⟨the next⟩ child. In the excerpt below, Zohra once again uses a movie metaphor in order to emphasise the analogies and parallels between her family experiences and the situation of her clients. She explains how her sister was recommended to follow an educational track that did not correspond to her capacities. Her sister ⟨was also⟩ ⟨referred to professional education⟩ and considered to be ⟨fit for tailoring⟩ and for ⟨nothing else⟩. In the excerpt below, Zohra goes on and explains how seeing this ⟨film⟩ enables her to ⟨see how the system works with respect to⟩ ⟨poor people⟩ and with respect to people who occupy a ⟨disadvantaged position⟩ in general.

ZO: She was, she simply did not fit in tailoring, she was simply ... very intelligent. And so, that film starts to play, and then you think like, yes, ... even though you always felt protected yourself, ... you do start to see how the system works with respect to sort of, poor people And then we instituted legal proceedings, uhm, against that school, uhm, for refusing these children We have ... lost this trial, ... but okay, the result is that these children did not wind up in special education. And of course, the most outrageous part is that, five years old, ... well, ... normally speaking you can only, you can't see at that moment,

JZ: you can't make

ZO: that decision, so this was really, ... well, robbing these children of every opportunity to develop themselves at their own level, ... and taking advantage of well, ... the disadvantaged position of these parents who were They were more outraged because of the fact like "yes, but our children are enrolled here ...".

JZ: yes

¹¹⁴ In Flanders, the notion of *special education* (Dutch: *buitengewoon onderwijs*) refers to a type of education for children who are unable to participate in the regular educational circuits because of learning difficulties, behavioural problems, physical, mental, or sensory disabilities.

ZO: “and why do they suddenly have to go to another school, why can’t they simply finish their third year of kindergarten” eh

JZ: yes, of course

ZO: and uhm, yes, this was therefore very uhm confronting. But it was, ... well, I think that if I wouldn’t have become a lawyer, then, then, you don’t experience uhm ... such things, and uhm, ... well racism eh, racism eh, constantly, ... you can’t do much about this ... as a lawyer.

excerpt 183 – 04/02/2009

The ⟨system⟩ operates on ⟨poor⟩ and ⟨disadvantaged⟩ people. For this reason, Zohra was not confronted with issues such as ⟨racism⟩ in any direct way herself. Nevertheless, in the last turn of the excerpt above, we can see how her subject position as a lawyer does confront her with issues of ⟨racism⟩ on a regular basis.

The interview continues in the excerpt below. People ⟨drop by⟩ in her office with complaints about ⟨racism⟩. Nevertheless, they wonder ⟨what’s the use⟩ of doing ⟨something about it⟩. These doubts trigger an association with Zohra’s doubts about the effectiveness of the ⟨anti-racism law⟩. As a student, Zohra was very much involved with this issue. Back then, she already expected that ⟨“that law is not going to change anything on the ground”⟩. The ⟨cosmetic⟩ nature of this ⟨law⟩ is confirmed in her ⟨practice⟩ as a lawyer. These realisations constitute an important basis for her ⟨engagement⟩.

JZ: But people do drop by with this, or ... ?

ZO: Yes, ... people talk about that uhm, ... yes (sighs), people do drop by with this, but after a while, people also are like “but if we are going to do something about it, what’s the use eh”

JZ: mmh

ZO: and then, this was, well, ... I link this back to that racism law ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: years before this, you were like, ... simply because of a feeling, like “yeah, that law is not going to change anything on the ground”. And then you are confronted with practice, and you see like “yes, ... it actually is a cosmetic, a cosmetic measure, and ... a fig leaf used in order to say like “yes, but, the anti-racism law”. But in practice, ... It did not amount to much, uhm So, this is sort of the beginning of my engagement And then, uhm ... later, the economic aspect was added to that uhm In fact, also sort of because of my background, because my father, uhm worked as a guest worker in very ... uhm ... well, hard ... circumstances.

JZ: You mean, here in Belgium?

excerpt 184 – 04/02/2009

Visual and tactile logics of embodiment are important to an individual’s sense of self. In this sense, the simultaneously function as logics of personalization. They allow individuals to objectify themselves, their experiences, and their insights, with a high degree of metapragmatic and political awareness. As such, we are dealing with important discursive self-techniques in the Foucaultian sense of the term.

In the last lines of the excerpt above, Zohra explains how ⟨later⟩, the ⟨economic aspect⟩ became important to her ⟨engagement⟩ as well. From a very early age, Zohra realized that she did not want the ⟨life⟩ of her parents for herself. In the excerpt below, she explains how ⟨you⟩ ⟨experience this⟩ economic ⟨reality as a child⟩. Zohra thus shifts from a discussion of ‘racism’ to a discussion of ‘the economic’.

ZO: Here in Belgium eh, and uhm, ... well, how should I put it, ... You do experience this reality as a child, like your father has to work hard, and Well, I always thought it was ... very unfortunate (laughs) that he had to do ... hard, and dirty, and filthy work, and ... he was always very tired because of this, and ... this impacted on family life. When he came home, well, then he was tired, and wanted to sleep, and he wanted peace and quiet ... and uhm But because of this, my mother was saddled with all the care for the family. And ... yes, as a child, these are situations that, ... I often As a child, I often told myself like ... “this life, I don’t want this for myself in the future ...”

JZ: mmh (this excerpt continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 185 – 04/02/2009

The excerpt below contains a number of visual metaphors. Zohra explains how her confrontation with (the reality of people) who have to do the same sort of (work) as her father did, prompted her to (open up) her (eyes) (again). Her subject position as (an intellectual) (automatically) provided her with (a better life). However, as she came to occupy this (position), the harsh (reality) of (the economic) faded into the background of her political awareness. This changed as she became engaged within PvdA (politics), as she started to talk to (workers) and their (delegations), being faced with their (working conditions).

ZO: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) and that is, well, uhm, that kind of stuck with me Of course, when you start studying and so on, you start to lead your own life, and then you sort of forget. Well, the studies open many doors, and you get to know a lot of different people, you get to know other situations

JZ: yes, and you probably see more differences, like ... how different it can ...

ZO: yes ... yes ... yes And you almost automatically roll into ... even though it isn’t automatic, but you sort of roll into, basically automatically, in a better life eh In the life of an intellectual (laughs)

JZ: (laughs)

ZO: and uhm ... yes, you forget, well you don’t really forget, but it sort of fades into the background ...

JZ: you mean the background of ‘home’

ZO: yes, like there are people who ... well, there is still the reality of people today, who, well, who have to do such work. And then uhm, ... yes, I came into contact with the ... with unions, and syndicates, and I went to a factory, ...

JZ: through your job or uhm

ZO: uhm, no, uhm, through politics, ... and uhm .. well, then your eyes open up again eh

excerpt 186 – 04/02/2009

A little bit further down the interview, Zohra Othman elaborates on 'the economic'. Here, we can see how she articulates the problematics of (the economic) and (racism) with one another. She explains how (everything) came (back) to her as she was confronted with factory (workers) and their (delegations). Zohra confirms my inference that she saw her (father again), and explains how these experiences allowed her to (link) all of this with her early concerns with (racism), with (racism) and (discrimination) in the educational system, and with the (reality) of the (economic) that she lost (sight of), from her perspective as an (intellectual) leading a (better life).

ZO: And then, little by little, ... I rolled into it. And then I went along ... to a number of uhm factories, and talked to workers, and their delegations, ... yes, ... And then, well, the working conditions of these people, then you think like (sighs) ... and then, everything comes ...

JZ: mmh ... and then you see your father again

ZO: everything comes back yes ... and then you make this link with racism of old, with this discrimination of the school that you, through your practice And then, by going back to the factories, ... there is a part of reality that you lose sight of, from the position of an intellectual

JZ: mmh

ZO: that comes back to you, and then, ... then I thought like ... “it’s not only with respect to racism, but also with respect to ... the economic side that there’s a lot that isn’t right” eh ... and then, ... little by little

JZ: (laughs)

ZO: more and more (laughs), I got engaged ... and then, ... well, the international aspect was added to it

excerpt 187 – 04/02/2009

The tactile logic of embodiment is characteristic of Zohra’s subjectivity as a ⟨child⟩ in a Moroccan family. It structures her feelings towards the ⟨economic side⟩ and towards ⟨racism⟩. Moreover, it prompts a ⟨search for answers⟩ and a series of statements such as ⟨this cannot be⟩. However, it should be noted that the practices, subject positions, and statements articulated by this tactile logic of embodiment are relatively limited. As Zohra opened her ⟨eyes⟩ to the way the ⟨system⟩ operates, a whole set of interpretive possibilities emerges.

Visual logics of embodiment become more important as Zohra starts to work as a ⟨lawyer⟩, and as she becomes involved in PvdA ⟨politics⟩. Zohra explained in detail how her professional occupation opened her ⟨yes⟩ in a ⟨confronting⟩ way. Moreover, during her ⟨confrontation⟩ with the toddler case, a ⟨film⟩ started to ⟨play⟩, triggering a flashback wherein she saw herself in relation to her family during her childhood years. The visual metaphors enabled her to articulate the story of her clients with her own experiences as a child in her family. Interestingly, Zohra remarked that I could not ⟨imagine how that feels⟩.

Visual metaphors play an important role in intersubjective processes of (mis)recognition. Moreover, they function in a way that enables Zohra to mark her awareness of large-scale socio-political processes in society. As such, these visual metaphors and logics of embodiment allow her to articulate her own subject positions (e.g. lawyer, daughter, PvdA politician), with those of others (e.g. father, mother, sister, worker, Muslim) in a critical and reflexive way. It also allows her to articulate her own practices (related to her professional and political activities) with those of others (family members, clients, and workers). Nevertheless, an analysis of Zohra’s political subjectivity as marked within the context of this interview would not be complete without a discussion of her critiques on the ⟨logic⟩ of the ⟨capitalist⟩ ⟨system⟩.

On the systemic logic of capitalism

The time has come to consider what Zohra Othman means by ⟨the system⟩. As we noticed before, Zohra’s feelings of injustice prompted her to go on a quest for ⟨answers⟩. Interestingly, she did not find these ⟨answers⟩ ⟨at college⟩. There was ⟨no one⟩ who explained the workings of ⟨the system⟩ and its ⟨excesses⟩ to her. Rather, the politically ⟨engaged⟩ people she met recommended her to read certain books. This way, Zohra managed to ⟨give a more rational explanation⟩ to the ⟨national⟩ and ⟨international⟩ ⟨injustices⟩.

The interaction below develops in response to my question whether she was enabled to do so by literature she read, or by talking to people she met. As we can see, Zohra learned about ⟨Marx⟩ and

about ⟨political economy⟩ through ⟨self study⟩ since these approaches were hardly ⟨taught at the university⟩ where she studied.

ZO: no, no, through self study ... Well, then I, well, you also studied at the university eh, so you know that Marx isn't (laughs)

JZ: (laughs) yes, yes, very popular at the university of Antwerp (laughs)

ZO: (laughs) being taught at the university.

JZ: No, I was, well, ... actually, I was sort of shocked when I started at the University of Antwerp, because I studied at the VUB [Free University of Brussels]

ZO: yes

JZ: and uhm, I studied communication sciences over there. But communication sciences over there is uhm, well, it does involve some cultural studies, but you're also taught political economy

ZO: and not over here eh

JZ: and here, that isn't the case, no. Because last year, I sometimes follow extra courses, I followed a course in political philosophy, and at a certain point, this professor says

ZO: and then you get Marx in two sentences eh

JZ: yes, Marx, ... it was a bit more elaborate, it was also about the Frankfurter Schule

ZO: yes yes yes

JZ: Adorno, Horkheimer, and so on ... But yes, ... very limited, and definitely not the socio-economic analysis but rather the cultural aspects of ... Marxist thought. But anyway, this professor told me like "yes, over here, ... there is not a single curriculum ... for over ten years, because once they did so, [they did] teach political economy" ... And yes, I was really amazed about this.

ZO: well, they do teach political economy eh, Keynes.

excerpt 188 – 04/02/2009

In consistency with the principles of the active interview, I considered it to be useful to highlight my own knowledge of political economy. Political economic frameworks analyse socio-economic systems as processes grounded in political decisions. As such, they oppose frameworks that consider the economy in terms of natural and objective laws and processes. By making my own stance with respect to political economy more explicit, Zohra and I were able to make more reliable interpretations of each other's discourse.

A great deal of political economy is of (neo-) Marxist stock. During my training in communication sciences at the Free University of Brussels (VUB), I was taught a course on the *political economy of communication* based on the work of Vincent Mosco (see: Mosco 1996). In other courses, frequent references to political economy were made as well. For this reason, I was quite surprised that no courses on Marxism or on political economy in general were being taught at the university of Antwerp¹¹⁵. In this sense, I was able to confirm that Marx did not seem to be very ⟨popular⟩ at the University of Antwerp where Zohra studied and where I work on my PhD. Interestingly, Zohra points

¹¹⁵ According to my professor in political philosophy at the University of Antwerp, the decision to stop teaching political economy and Marxist thought as separate courses at this university was taken in response to the fall of the Soviet system. The bankruptcy of this type of politics called the legitimacy of its theoretical postulates into question. Personally, I am convinced that a proper understanding of Western history and politics cannot be achieved by an understanding of liberal ideas alone. It also requires an understanding of (neo) and (post) Marxist political economic frameworks.

out that ⟨they do teach political economy⟩ at the University of Antwerp, be it the variant advocated by ⟨Keynes⟩.

Zohra Othman continues and explained to me that she ⟨read⟩ ⟨political economy⟩ as described by ⟨Marx himself⟩. More specifically, she studied his ⟨theory of surplus value⟩, an aspect of the ⟨economy⟩ one never talks about according to her. She also studied ⟨Lenin⟩'s writings on ⟨the role of the state⟩, on the ⟨revolution⟩, and on ⟨the history⟩ of the ⟨Soviet Union⟩. However, at this point, I would like to explore the way in which Zohra's confrontation with ⟨Marxism⟩ provided her with the ⟨answers⟩ that allowed her to ⟨see⟩ the way ⟨the system⟩ functions with respect to ⟨racism⟩ and with respect to ⟨international⟩ and ⟨economic⟩ injustices and inequalities.

As we will see, there is a *systemic logic* associated with ⟨capitalism⟩ and ⟨imperialism⟩ that defines Zohra Othman's preferred mode of politics in a negative way. Simultaneously, she interprets and articulates many aspects of her reality in systemic terms. As such, it is possible to identify an interpretive *systemic logic* that enables her to articulate a variety of problematics in a coherent way. On a discursive level, this interpretive logic is articulated by means of several reifications. For instance, Zohra talks about how ⟨imperialism basically used racism in order to⟩ ⟨colonise other continents⟩ by means of a discourse about ⟨civilisation⟩. This can be illustrated with reference to the excerpt below.

ZO: So, before, it was more like, ... the spontaneous feeling like "something's not right"

JZ: mmh

ZO: and uhm, then I basically, ... uhm ... well, found answers ... in Marxism ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: so, in the, I, well, to me, ... Marxism, it gives me, uhm ... answers about, about many things that ... that go ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: uhm wrong. Uhm, yes, for instance, [about] imperialism and [about] how imperialism basically used racism in order to uhm ... eh, [about] how the, well, the West to put it like this, started to colonise other continents, informed by ...

JZ: yes

ZO: by an idea like "they are uncivilized, and we,

JZ: superior

ZO: are going to (laughs) bring civilisation. In order to introduce the image of uncivilized cultures ... so yes, ... you probably know about this eh ...

JZ: yes (laughs)

excerpt 189 – 04/02/2009

In the last lines of this excerpt, Zohra remarks that I ⟨probably know about⟩ this type of analysis. Since Zohra's ideas on culture, politics, and religion corresponds to a great extent to the points raised in the book *Cultu(u)r(en)politiek*, I acknowledged that I knew what she meant¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁶ At the beginning of our interview, Zohra asked me whether I already wrote something. I mentioned my publication in *Cultu(u)r(en)politiek*. Zohra knew this book and admitted that she actually ⟨voted⟩ for this book within the framework of the *Groene Waterman Prijs*. The book won this award issued by the alternative book store *de Groene Waterman*. See also Ico

In order to illustrate her point, Zohra provided me with an ⟨anecdote⟩ that illustrated the way ⟨racism⟩ was ⟨used⟩. She told me the story about ⟨the first black⟩ ⟨pilots⟩ of the ⟨American army⟩ who were invited at ⟨Obama⟩'s ⟨inauguration⟩ as President of the USA. She read an article about this in a Flemish newspaper and explains to me how these men ⟨were filled with emotions⟩. The article also mentioned the existence of an official communication of the American ⟨Ministry of Defence⟩ that prohibited ⟨black people⟩ of ⟨participating in the pilot exams because their brains⟩ were supposedly ⟨not resistant to the G-forces⟩ pilots may have to experience. In the excerpt below, Zohra explains how her ⟨seven year old boy⟩ reacted as she read him this story. Even though her boy ⟨spontaneously⟩ criticised this racist idea, she points out that this sort of ⟨theories⟩ and ⟨ideas⟩ have been used by ⟨imperialism⟩ and by ⟨the West⟩ ⟨in order to install racism for a period⟩ of over ⟨two hundred years⟩. Consequently, one does not simply do away with this sort of absurdities.

ZO: and I, I, I was reading this. I have a seven year old boy and he says like ... “well come on, they don't have brains, those who write this.”

JZ: (laughs)

ZO: (laughs) and then I think, it felt so good, that he said this so spontaneously

JZ: yes ... yes ...

ZO: But nevertheless, these are the theories and the ideas that well, ... imperialism, or the West has been using in order to install racism for a period of two hundred years or longer ... and you don't simply [Zohra makes a swiping gesture with her right arm]

JZ: erase this

excerpt 190 – 04/02/2009

According to Zohra, such imperialist and racist ideas continue to resonate in Belgium as well. More specifically, ⟨racism⟩ supports a ⟨politics of pitting people against⟩ ⟨each other⟩. Moreover, this type of ⟨politics⟩ implies an ⟨economy⟩ that ⟨pits people against each other⟩ ⟨in order to prevent⟩ the establishment of ⟨a strong group⟩ of migrants and employees ⟨that stands up for common interests⟩. According to Zohra, this logic explains why ⟨racism appears⟩ ⟨in Belgium⟩.

ZO: erase this. So, it kind of uhm ... lasts, and then uhm But more concretely, ... in Belgium, I think that it's also uhm ... well, a politics of pitting people against ... each other, in order to prevent, ... for instance, with respect to labour, ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: uhm ... one basically ... says to employees like, “well”, the idea like “well, there are migrants who make you lose your job, and who create poor working conditions”, and so on. Whereas that poor migrant probably makes even less money, and has probably even less work. So you see it's the economy that pits people against each other exactly ... in order to prevent that they ... become a strong group that stands up for common interests, and ... well, ... I don't know if, ... you know what I mean, don't you?

JZ: yes, yes

ZO: So, it has basically given me an answer, like, ... “why does racism appears ... in Belgium”, and then you sort of see the, ... the broad outlines.

excerpt 191 – 04/02/2009

Zohra Othman's discourse about the <system> is characterised by a lot of reifications. As such, there seems to be a certain degree of instrumentality involved: the <economy> <pits people against each other> in order to prevent the articulation of <common interests>. For this reason, I wondered to what extent Zohra considered this racist and imperialist <politics> to be a <conscious politics>. In the excerpt below, Zohra considers the question of <consciousness> or salience to be of little relevance. She literally states that this type of politics is <a logical consequence> of the <economic system> or <model> <wherein we live>.

According to Zohra, the <economic system> is goal oriented. It is <established> in order <to make maximal profits> <at the expense of people> and their <working conditions>. Moreover, <it's the economy who organizes things in such a way that one population group> <is pitted against> <another>. According to her, these processes characterize the economic <crisis> as well. Zohra concludes her argumentation about the logic of the system by repeating that <Marxism> gave her <answers> to deal with these issues on the <national> as well as on the <international level>.

JZ: Do you think this is a conscious politics? Or do you think about this differently?

ZO: Well, conscious or non-conscious? I think it doesn't really matter whether it's conscious or unconscious. It's rather a ... a ... well, a logical consequence of the ... the uhm ... the model wherein we live. So, this, ... this economic system wherein we live, which is established in order to uhm ... to make maximal profits. And this maximal profit has to be achieved at the expense of people, at the expense of working conditions, ... And uhm, well, ... if you see that it's the same companies that uhm, well, in India, or in uhm, in Africa, produce, ... well, [that] let people work for minimal wages, [who] say over here like "yes, it's those people who take your work away" Nothing impedes them from offering these people (laughs) the same

JZ: no, (laughs)

ZO: working conditions, or work environment, so that no one has steal jobs from, well, you know, ...

JZ: yes yes,

ZO: they are the ones who, well, it's the economy that organizes things in such a way that one population group ... is pitted against ... another. And well, you can sort of see this in the crisis as well This protectionism, and uhm, ... Well you see it in the ...

JZ: the uhm ... nationalistic protectionism?

ZO: it, it, it, yes, in Belgium, it is played, ... well, with GM against Germany and, ... and then you think like, "something isn't right here", well

JZ: no

ZO: well, it's not uhm So, uhm, ... Marxism gives me answers uhm ... uhm, to this. And on the international level it's obvious that uhm, ... that it's always about strategical interests, eh.

excerpt 192 – 04/02/2009

As a case in point, Zohra continues and provides me with an illustration of the way economic interests preside over people's, worker's and / or migrant's interests in (inter)national politics. She argues that the regime in <Saudi Arabia> is not <so much better> then the regime of <Saddam> Hussein. According to her, the main reason for the US intervention in Iraq was <oil>. In order to emphasise the perfidity of the Saudi Arabian regime, she tells me about her father's <hadj> to Mekka.

A few years back, her <father> was <shocked> by the way thieves were being treated at the end point of his religious <pilgrimage> to Mekka. Saudi Arabia counts <many> <employees> <from the Filipines> who <have to work> <in terrible conditions>. Many of them succumb to <poverty> in this <rich country>.

Consequently, ⟨small crime flourishes⟩ during the ⟨*hadj*⟩. Zohra's father saw how a person who was caught pick pocketing was ⟨beaten and mistreated by four or five soldiers⟩ before they ⟨cut of his hand⟩. She concludes that such ⟨injustice⟩ is even more salient on the level of ⟨international politics⟩ then on the ⟨national⟩ level. But with reference to her Marxist framework, she has learned to link these things together in a systematic and systemic way.

When asked whether she could distinguish ⟨evolutions⟩ ⟨in society⟩ with respect to ⟨racism⟩, Zohra claims that things have become ⟨worse⟩. She points out that ⟨racism⟩ used to be a ⟨taboo⟩ in Flanders, whereas it has become common practice to ⟨openly displays⟩ one's racist tendencies. According to her, ⟨racism⟩ is ⟨more frequently expressed⟩ these days. She refers to the Antwerp murders by ⟨Hans van Themsche⟩ as ⟨the most horrible manifestation⟩ of late. In the excerpt below, we can see how Zohra links this incident with her systemic analysis.

ZO: I think it's all getting worse. Well, it's not Well, I, I do think it has gotten worse. Whereas it used to be something that was sort of taboo, there used to be racism, but nobody dared to say he was racist, even though people did think like "yes, but I", uhm These days, one openly displays uhm, ... it's a lot more frequently expressed. I think ... the most horrible manifestation, in Antwerp, has been Hans van Themsche And I hope this will be all. But I think this has to do with uhm, ... well, the way I see it, ... the more a system gets into a crisis ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: the more it resorts to ... well ... to weap, well, to weapons such as racism in order to divide people more and more, and [in order to] pit people against each other ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: uhm ... so that the ones who are really responsible for the crisis, ... or, or, in order to avoid that people realise that the crisis is actually caused by the system itself, and not because, ... not because one person is black, and the other one is yellow. This, this

JZ: mmh

ZO this simply does not cause the crisis The crisis simply lies in the organisation of the economic system.

JZ: mmh

ZO: So, I think, yes. It has gotten worse. Also, I think the Gulf War did not improve racism, and what happened with 9/11 has also, ...

JZ: you mean the last Gulf War, or?

ZO: uhm, yes, the whole period basically. And yes, September 11th has also boosted uhm, ... uhm ... Islamophobia. So yes, I do think, ... I do think it has gotten worse, even though I ... also feel like, but this is just a feeling, uhm ... that ... that we are at a turning point.

excerpt 193 – 04/02/2009

In the excerpt above, Zohra Othman frames the murders by ⟨Hans van Themsche⟩ as an excess of a ⟨system⟩ in ⟨crisis⟩. She literally states that ⟨the more a system gets into a crisis⟩, ⟨the more it resorts to⟩ ⟨weapons such as racism in order to divide people⟩. Once again, there seems to be some sort of logical instrumentality in Zohra's reasoning. She criticises the system in systemic terms, pointing out that the real ⟨crisis⟩ has nothing to do with race. Rather, ⟨the crisis⟩ ⟨lies in the organisation of the economic system⟩ itself. It should be noticed that Zohra's concept of ⟨racism⟩ does not only refer to discrimination(s) on the basis of skin colour. The concept also designates contemporary expressions of ⟨Islamophobia⟩ that have escalated after ⟨September 11th⟩.

We may conclude that Zohra defines her preferred mode of ⟨politics⟩ with reference to a capitalist or imperialist ⟨economy⟩ and ⟨politics⟩ that ⟨pits people against each other⟩. Zohra uses a Marxist-Leninist trope by using a great deal of reifications, describing processes in terms of objects with specific goals and functions. The racist ⟨politics⟩ of divide and conquer are a ⟨logical consequence⟩ of the ⟨economic system wherein we live⟩. Zohra thus deploys a ⟨systemic⟩ or ⟨Marxist-Leninist⟩ interpretive logic in order to objectify the processes that trigger her feelings of ⟨injustice⟩ and ⟨inequality⟩. As such, she is able to objectify the logic of the capitalist system itself.

The systemic interpretive logic structuring Zohra's critical stance towards ⟨imperialism⟩ and ⟨capitalism⟩ allows her to articulate a variety of objects (e.g. reified processes such as ⟨racism⟩, ⟨capitalism⟩, or ⟨politics⟩ with a variety of subject positions (e.g. worker, father, daughter, Moroccan, Muslim, migrant, imperialist, employer, employee), practices (e.g. ⟨setting people against one another⟩, standing up ⟨for common interests⟩), and statements (e.g. ⟨“they are uncivilized”⟩) with one another in a rather coherent way. However, it should also be noticed that Zohra acknowledged a ⟨feeling⟩ of being at a ⟨turning point⟩ in history. As we will see, this ⟨feeling⟩ pertains to the possibility of an alternative to the ⟨politics⟩ of the ⟨system⟩.

Dark rooms in the inner center

In 1999, Zohra Othman was offered an ⟨opportunity to travel to Iraq⟩. Over there, she was faced with ⟨ordinary people⟩ and ⟨children⟩ who suffered under ⟨the embargo⟩ imposed by the UN. Because of ⟨the embargo⟩, ⟨doctors⟩ working ⟨in hospitals⟩ did not have any ⟨means to cure⟩ or ⟨treat⟩ ⟨people⟩ suffering from ⟨cancer⟩ as a consequence of contamination with ⟨depleted uranium⟩ used in bombs during the first Gulf War. One of the doctors working in the hospital visited by Zohra's ⟨delegation⟩ told her he didn't even have ⟨morphine⟩ to administer to his patients. He had nothing to offer but ⟨sugar⟩ for ⟨psychological⟩ effect. Zohra also visited a ⟨bomb shelter⟩ ⟨for Iraqi civilians⟩ that was ⟨scorched black⟩ on the inside after a bomb hit the structure. Within this ⟨shelter⟩, she saw ⟨handprints⟩ and ⟨shadows⟩ of people who were burned alive.

In the excerpt below, Zohra explains how this confrontation with ⟨the international⟩ brings her ⟨full circle⟩. This metaphor refers to the narrative structure of the interview on her political points of interest. As such, this metapragmatic comment allows her to emphasise the high degree of coherence between the various subtopics discussed throughout our interview. Of course, the visual and tactile logics of embodiment, as well as Zohra's critique on the logic of the ⟨system⟩ have contributed to this high degree of coherence as well. Below, Zohra explains how ⟨what happens⟩ ⟨in the world⟩ at large, and ⟨what happens⟩ in the local context of ⟨Antwerp⟩, strengthens her ⟨engagement⟩. Spatial metaphors prove to be very important to her sense of self as articulated within the context of our interaction.

The narrative ⟨circle⟩ established throughout Zohra's narratives on ⟨racism⟩, the ⟨economy⟩, and the ⟨international⟩ also functions as a way to articulate a political subjectivity characterised by a permeable inside / outside distinction. ⟨In the face of so much injustice⟩, Zohra is unable to do ⟨nothing⟩. She explains there is ⟨a little room⟩ in her ⟨inner center⟩. This ⟨room⟩ has a ⟨door⟩ that ⟨opens occasionally⟩. Thinking about issues such as ⟨Gaza⟩ and ⟨Iraq⟩, ⟨emotions⟩ may enter this ⟨dark⟩ place. Zohra explains that she sometimes makes sure that this room remains ⟨shut⟩. But at the same time, she wants ⟨to do something in order to make that room ... more comfortable⟩. Her socio-political engagements play an important part in this process.

ZO: so that's basically the third thing, I think we have come full circle. So, basically, throughout the years, and throughout, ... well, ... what happens in the world, what happens ... in uhm, ... well, ... in Antwerp (laughs), it basically uhm ... well, made my engagement stronger, and uhm But still, you

sometimes feel powerless in the face of so much injustice. But it also makes me unable to simply stay at home ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: knowing that all of this is going on, and doing nothing.

JZ: Staying at home isn't exactly what you have been doing eh (laughs)

JZ: Well, fortunately, there are times when (laughs)

JZ: you're going to Iraq, to Gaza, ... uhm ...

ZO: Yes Yes, I also think, well, it's (sighs) being able to do something ... gives me ... it's like ... an ointment on the wound, it's really uhm, ... I was thinking about it this morning because of what happens in Gaza and in Iraq today, I think, ... Well, you can't (sighs) think about it all the time, but still, ... There's a little room in ... in your inner center ... and its door ... opens occasionally.

JZ: mmh

ZO: and then you sort of allow for ... these emotions. But sometimes, I also have to keep this door, well, shut, and then But it's still there, this little room is always there, and Well, I just think, ... you want to do something in order to make that room ... more comfortable. It's sort of a dark ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: well, a dark ...

JZ: sort of a dark little hole (smiles) (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 194 – 04/02/2009

Zohra's self-interpretation in terms of ⟨a little⟩ ⟨dark⟩ ⟨room⟩ located in her ⟨inner center⟩ allows her to articulate a link between her sense of self and her sense of others. In the excerpt below, Zohra explains how ⟨dark times⟩ are always ⟨followed by better times⟩. There is a correspondence between the ⟨dark⟩ place at the core of her sense of self, and the darkness she observes in the outside world. As such, there is no way of maintaining a strict inside / outside distinction. Fortunately, this also means that doing things in the outside world impacts on the amount of light that may enter one's sense of self.

ZO: (this interaction is a continuation of the excerpt above) Yes. But you want to make it more comfortable, you want to, you want to, ... Well, you want to do something. Yesterday, I talked to someone who said like "if we can do something, we all gave money, but ...", and I said like "yes, sometimes giving money, ... is the only thing you can do". But well, if there's something ... you can [do] ... well, it makes everything more bearable. Not that I want to have the pretence like ... "I am going to change everything", but nevertheless, you ... can contribute, and take little steps, ... changing the situation, and uhm, ... if you look back into history, it's always the case that ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: dark times are followed by better times, and these better times do not emerge out of nowhere, but because of people ... because of the power of people who organize themselves, and, and do things for others, ... And well, yes, I think that what happened in the United States with Obama, ... I think the most moving thing of all, is all of those people, ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: who have been silent under Bush, and who, ... Well, because of everything that happens in the world, this, this overwhelms people, and it leads people to, well, pessimism, "nothing's ever going to change, and everything will remain the same". Today, you see that people, ... that there's so much

hope, that people really want to, ... that it doesn't remain like this, that it changes, and I think, I, ... well

JZ: it gives hope

ZO: hope, yes, it's like, ... "OK, there are many of us who want things to be different, and if we persevere, and don't shy away in our little corners, then something's going to change" Yes, ... It's basically because of this, ... for these millions of people over there and over here ...

excerpt 195 – 04/02/2009

In the excerpt above, Zohra also provides us with an account of her preferred mode of politics. According to her, ⟨dark times⟩ are not overcome by accident. Rather, they are overcome by ⟨the power of people who organize themselves⟩, doing ⟨things for others⟩. As such, we can see that Zohra's preferred mode of political subjectivity involves a collective political practice of people uniting themselves, advocating ⟨common interests⟩. As a case in point, she refers to the campaign that put President Obama into office. The ⟨pessimism⟩ and ⟨silence⟩ under the ⟨Bush⟩ administration gave way to ⟨hope⟩ and to a subjectivity based on the realization that ⟨there are many of us who want things to be different⟩. As long as we don't ⟨shy away in our little corners⟩, ⟨change⟩ can be realized.

During a subtopic coded as 'working on the road for a better environment', Zohra acknowledged that one may ⟨feel small⟩ ⟨and insignificant⟩, ⟨as if⟩ it's ⟨you⟩ ⟨against⟩ ⟨everyone else⟩. Nevertheless, she taught herself ⟨not to think like this⟩. At that point, I asked Zohra whether such thoughts constitute ⟨another little room⟩ in her inner center. Interestingly, she flatly denies this suggestion by emphasizing that such feelings of insignificance and loneliness do not correspond to reality. She notes that ⟨there are many people⟩ who ⟨go on⟩ ⟨every day⟩ in ways that may not always be ⟨visible⟩ to the naked eye. But there are also ⟨moments⟩ of collective performance.

ZO: Yes, I just wanted to say that, ... yes, of course you feel small, and, ... and insignificant, ... as if you're alone ... against ... everyone else. But, ... I have learned myself to ... not to think this (laughs)

JZ: (laughs) that's another little room uhm

ZO: No. Because, this simply isn't true There are many people who, ... each of them in their own domain, ... go on, ... every day. And yes, this isn't always visible But there are moments where you can see this, and then I think, well, ... "they're there", and yes, ...

excerpt 196 – 04/02/2009

When asked for some illustrations of such ⟨moments⟩, Zohra mentions a variety of events. These included an ⟨anti-war demonstration⟩ where ⟨many people⟩ ⟨took to the streets⟩. Moreover, the ⟨referendum⟩ organized with respect to the construction of a bridge over the Antwerp river called the *Scheldt* is another case in point. She also refers to the anti-racist *0110 Concerts* that were organized in Antwerp as a response to Hans van Themsche's racist killing spree. After a brief discussion of these public manifestations of collective socio-political engagement, Zohra acknowledges that these sort of events do not ⟨happen every day⟩. In the excerpt below, we can catch another glimpse at Zohra's preferred mode of political engagement.

ZO: ... and something like this can't happen every day ...

JZ: no, no,

ZO: but it is possible because there are people ... who keep on ...

JZ: yes

ZO: picking up their engagement very quietly. And then, all of a sudden, there is a moment when, ... when it's being outed.

JZ: when it's being expressed

ZO: Yes. And then, and then, ... this makes you persevere as well eh, "come on", ... this is what I think about instead of thinking about Of course, often, it's often a futile fight, but there's always a moment when uhm ...

JZ: that isn't the case

ZO: no, when you can [fight] against uhm ... and when things change nevertheless ... so ...

excerpt 197 – 04/02/2009

In the excerpt above, Zohra Othman points out that collective socio-political performances such as the *0110 Concerts* are only ⟨possible⟩ because there are many ⟨people⟩ who pick up their ⟨engagement⟩ in ⟨silence⟩. Even though many fights may seem ⟨futile⟩, she believes that there will always come ⟨a moment⟩ when ⟨change⟩ becomes possible. Such moments of collective performance and action allow for light to shine into Zohra's ⟨inner center⟩. Making the world a better place makes her ⟨inner center⟩ more ⟨comfortable⟩ as well.

Lessons learned from Resist

There is one last aspect of Zohra Othman's political subjectivity we need to consider. Zohra is a politician who engages herself for the Party of Labour (PvdA). In this subsection, I will discuss the way she describes her engagement within the context of this Marxist party. As we will see, the interpretive logics and political points of interest identified in the subsections above, are also observable in the way Zohra describes the relationship between the Arab European League (AEL), Resist, and the PvdA.

The Marxist-Leninist PvdA and the Arab European League (AEL) joined forces during the federal parliamentary elections of 2003. This joint project was called *Resist*. Within this context, Zohra Othman and Dyab Abou Jahjah co-authored a book articulating their respective political projects with one other (Othman and Jahjah 2003)¹¹⁷. In this respect, it should be noticed that there are many parallels between the discourse(s) of the AEL activists discussed within the context of this book, and the analyses made by Zohra Othman. For current purposes however, I would like to explore the way Zohra articulates a narrative on the rise and fall of the Resist project. As we will see, she draws a number of lessons that impact on the way she evaluates PvdA political practices and discourse(s).

In the excerpt below, Zohra explains how the PvdA and the ⟨AEL⟩ joined forces after some earlier collaborations on ⟨Palestine⟩ and on the ⟨war in Iraq⟩. Even though she considers the AEL to be an ⟨organisation⟩ that ⟨triggered⟩ a ⟨positive⟩ ⟨dynamic⟩ among ⟨young migrants⟩. She favours the fact that this organisation contributed to a ⟨political awakening⟩ involving an articulation of ⟨political demands⟩ among migrant youngsters. Nevertheless, the collaboration of the ⟨AEL⟩ and the ⟨Party of Labour⟩ in the ⟨Resist⟩ project didn't ⟨take flight⟩. In the excerpt below, Zohra Othman analyses the reasons for this electoral failure.

ZO: well, ... and uhm, ... well, then there were the elections of 2003, or 2004, I think, ... We basically decided, because of the collaboration with respect to Palestine, with respect to the war in Iraq, ... to go to the elections together, uhm, the Party of Labour and the AEL. And uhm, ... not as a cartel, bit simply a new, a new list, ... Resist. And what memories or feelings did that leave me with? At any rate, there was an enormous dynamic, triggered among young migrants, both boys and girls Uhm, ... Also, uhm, well, ... the desire for change, the desire for ... uhm, ... well, ... that something would finally

¹¹⁷ See: http://www.epo.be/boekenportaal/boekinfo_boek.php?isbn=9789064453038 . For an overview of the electoral results of the Resist project, see: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabisch-Europese_Liga .

happen, that would uhm... make the situation for migrants in Belgium more liveable And uhm, ... well, ... very much engaged. So, [it was] also, ... an awakening, uhm, also a political awakening. So they organized themselves, and uhm, ... and well, an organisation they considered to be theirs, with political demands, ... And I thought, well, I thought this was ... I thought this was very positive Uhm, ... But this Resist [project] didn't really uhm ... take flight Uhm, a great deal of our constituency, of the Party of Labour has uhm, ... pulled out because of this This basically confronted us with uhm ... the uhm obstinacy of racist thought ... within our own constituency, workers, ... uhm, ... This was the other side of the coin. It was was very sobering, and uhm, ... Well, I really had some difficulties with this, uhm The notion of young migrants who are claiming their rights, sort of after the example of, ... the American civil rights movement, ... uhm, ... was met with so much resistance. This was really, uhm, ... a very hard, a bitter pill to swallow, ... Uhm, ... (this turn continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 198 – 04/02/2009

In the excerpt above, Zohra explains how the lack of electoral results under the banner of Resist <confronted> her party with the <obstinacy of racist thought> among <workers> and among the traditional <constituency> of the <Party of Labour>. Moreover, she admits that she found this lesson a <bitter pill to swallow>. Zohra describes the <young migrants> whose names figured on the list of <Resist> as people who were <claiming their rights> in the image of <the American civil rights movement>. The fact that their participation on this list <was met with so much resistance> forced her and her party to re-evaluate the way the PvdA interpellates it's <constituency>.

The <Resist> project was meant to interpellate both <workers> and <migrants>. In the excerpt below, Zohra Othman explains how someone once told her that the <Party of Labour> should not <profile> itself too strongly with respect to <migration issues>. According to this man, the strength of the <PvdA> with respect to <socio-economic issues> is <downplayed> by profiling itself as a <migrant's party> instead of as a <worker's party>. Zohra remarks that even though <it took> her <a long time>, <Resist> made her <realize> that the <PvdA> actually <tried to> <force> it's <constituency> to become <anti-racist> advocates of <equal rights>.

ZO: (this turn is a continuation of the last turn in the excerpt above) But, it did make me kind of realize that uhm, ... something someone told me when I participated in the elections, ... who said like, ... “you know, the function of the Party of Labour, ... is basically, ... to profile itself as ...”

JZ: During the elections of Resist?

ZO: No, no, before that. Someone who told me this before uhm, Resist. I think during the elections before.

JZ: OK OK

ZO: And he told me like, well, ... “do you know what the problem of the Party of Labour is? You have to profile yourself less as ...”, and of course, there's this discussion about uhm migrants, how do you profile yourself as a party? But this was a Moroccan who told me this, who said like “you should profile yourself less with respect to uhm migration issues and ... [as] a party that advocates the rights of migrants, but more as a labour party, so, uhm, with respect to socio-economic issues you are very strong. But this is simply downplayed every time the image of a migrant party pops up. And if you, ... if you, ... if you would profile yourself more with respect to this, ... you will have the possibility to, you will open the door to those who favour you, not because of the ... the economic ... demands. Uhm, you can pull them along in the, well, in the battle for equal rights and so on”. And so, uhm, ... and Well, it took me a long (laughs) time, but Resist ... made me realize that we basically ... tried to make ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: uhm

JZ: tried to ...

ZO: tried to ... force our constituency ... to see like “you have to be ... anti-racist, and you have to advocate equal rights, ... otherwise, well, ...”, that it doesn’t work like this ...

excerpt 199 – 04/02/2009

I wondered whether Zohra’s analysis of the Resist initiative entailed consequences for the PvdA relation towards its potential voters. In the excerpt below, we can see her response to my question about the way the PvdA responded to the disappointing results of the Resist initiative. Below, Zohra highlights the lessons she and the other party members learned. After ⟨several congresses⟩ and a lot of ⟨discussion⟩, ⟨the party decided⟩ to re-establish the link with ⟨the workers⟩ and with the ⟨labour movements⟩. Put differently, priorities shifted. Within the framework of the Resist project, ⟨migrants⟩ and their ⟨organisations⟩ were considered to be the main ⟨driving force for change⟩. This involved a strong emphasis put on ⟨the international aspect⟩ of inequality and a focus on ⟨imperialism⟩. After Resist, the ⟨party decided⟩ to rearticulate its ⟨link⟩ with ⟨workers⟩ and their ⟨movements⟩. Put differently, the emphasis shifted towards the ⟨economic⟩ and to ⟨Marx⟩.

ZO: Well, uhm, we have, ... yes yes, we have, ... Well, the lesson to be learned is uhm. There has been a long discussion, but because of this, there has been ... a renewal ... uhm ... of the party, in the sense that there have been several congresses and uhm, ... the party decided to uhm, ... to re-establish the link with the workers and with the labour movements. This is the ... the primary task ... of our party. Well, this is a priority. Whereas with Resist, the first [priority was], well, ... the international aspect eh, the, ... against war, against imperialism. We basically started to, how shall I put this, uhm, to consider migrants, or migrant organisations as uhm, ... the driving force for change ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: and uhm, ... well, after long discussions, we simply returned to uhm, to, to Marx. (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 200 – 04/02/2009

Zohra’s main political points of interest include ⟨racism⟩, ⟨the economic⟩, and ⟨the international⟩. This explains why the failure of ⟨Resist⟩ was so difficult to deal with. Nevertheless, her party had to rearticulate its project. As such, one might say that the PvdA – AEL alliance did not manage to hail workers in its project. As such, ⟨racist thought⟩ dislocated Resist and PvdA identity as interpreted by Zohra. In the excerpt below, she explains how the consequent return to ⟨Marx⟩ changed things in a ⟨positive way⟩. It is interesting to note that the rearticulated PvdA project is characterized by many of the logics discussed in previous sections.

In the excerpt below, we can see what the rearticulated PvdA identity looks like. Zohra rearticulates ⟨Marx⟩’s voice by claiming that ⟨the working class⟩ is ⟨the driving force⟩ for ⟨change⟩, ⟨no matter whether⟩ these workers ⟨happen to be migrants or Belgians⟩. Put differently, as long as worker’s interests are at stake, it isn’t necessary to interpellate people on the basis of their descent or ethnicity. This principle is quite consistent with the interpretive logics identified in the subsections above. Zohra goes on and explains that PvdA priorities shifted towards the ⟨concerns⟩ of ⟨working people⟩. This implies a reinforcement of the ⟨links with the unions⟩, as well as with ⟨working people⟩ and their ⟨delegates⟩. It involves ⟨taking their concerns at heart⟩ and articulating ⟨political demands⟩ along with ⟨alternatives⟩.

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) mmh

ZO: who says like “the driving force for ... for change, is the working class, no matter whether they happen to be migrants or Belgians, it’s the working class”. And so, well, ... you have to, well, we had to return to our basis, to the core of uhm, ... well, of our existence, of our reason for existence. And since then, ... a lot has changed in a positive way, so uhm, ...

JZ: you mean the reason for existence of the PvdA?

ZO: Yes. So, as a worker's party, we really had to return to uhm, ... Well, this is a priority. And uhm, everything we do, we are a small party, so we can't permit ourselves to uhm ... waste our energy eh, but we have to focus. So, uhm, the most important thing is, well, reinforcing the links with the unions, and uhm, with the ordinary, well, with working people, the delegates, ... taking their concerns at heart, and, and, well, go for it. Instead of uhm, ... well, ... merely making political demands that are ... correct, making demands that are being supported by a great deal of people eh ... Uhm, well, how shall I put this? Uhm, for instance, ... uhm, ... And proposing alternatives, for instance, well, ... The best example is Dirk van Duppen with his kiwi model eh.

JZ: yes

ZO: So uhm, ... he, ... accuses the big pharma-industry which makes a great deal of uhm ... a great deal of profit at the expense of people's health ... It's not merely [a matter of] uhm accusing like "the pharma-industry makes so much profit, and it's simply normal that they contribute to", but [it's also a matter of] exposing the system behind it, ... so people can reach their own conclusions like "yes, ... actually, it is sort of outrageous". But not merely up to the point where people consider this to be outrageous, but also proposing an alternative they can support themselves.

excerpt 201 – 04/02/2009

As can be observed in the last turn above, the alternative public health care system that privileges the usage of cheaper generic drugs - the kiwi model¹¹⁸ - is considered to be indicative of the rearticulated relationship of the PvdA to its potential voters. The strategy of the PvdA now consists in ⟨exposing the system⟩ behind pharmaceutical ⟨profits⟩. Zohra explains how ⟨people can reach their own conclusions⟩ with respect to the ⟨outrageous⟩ nature of the ⟨system⟩.

In the excerpt below, Zohra Othman explains that the ⟨PvdA⟩ would never have tried anything like this. She notes that it's previous discursive strategy mainly involved ⟨shouting slogans like "look how unjust this system is"⟩. One needs to propose an ⟨alternative⟩ as well. The kiwi model is a case in point. Elsewhere, Zohra claims that the same political strategy is being followed with respect to the excessive profits made by the biggest energy provider in Belgium. She also claims that this renewed strategy has led to ⟨an opening towards the party⟩ among various socio-political actors.

ZO: ... well, this is something, before Resist, we would never have done anything like this. Because we basically, well, ... to put it in a disrespectful way, [we] were shouting slogans like "look how unjust this system is". "Well, ... OK, the system is unjust, so what eh" ...

JZ: yes yes

ZO: and this is uhm ... well, something which has changed.

excerpt 202 – 04/02/2009

According to Zohra, the PvdA no longer advocates ⟨demands⟩ that people may consider to be ⟨utopian⟩ or unfeasible. Rather, her party has come to articulate demands with respect to ⟨very concrete issues⟩ that have an impact on the ⟨daily lives⟩ of many people. Bold and absolute statements such as ⟨the only solution is socialism⟩ are disqualified in favour of a struggle for more concrete achievements. Zohra Othman concludes her narrative on the rise and fall of Resist by emphasizing that the ⟨renewal⟩ and strengthening of the PvdA is a direct result of this collaborative project.

¹¹⁸ The Kiwi model is a system that guarantees the reimbursement of the cheapest generic variant of a drug by health care services. This model has been introduced in Belgium after a debate following the publication of a book by Dirk van Duppen on the excessively high prices of pharmaceutical drugs. In 2005 a slimmed down version of this New Zealand model was adopted in Belgian health care with respect to a limited number of drugs. See also: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiwimodel>. The PvdA perspective on the Kiwi model can be found at this webpage: <http://www.pvda.be/wie-zijn-we/programma/medicamenten-aan-halve-prijs-kiwi-model.html>.

ZO: because we are no longer that isolated, exactly because we don't make these ... demands, where people say like "that's utopian", or "we don't like this", or "that isn't feasible", anymore. But [rather], very concrete issues that can mean ... a great deal for people in their daily lives And uhm Whereas we used to say things like "well, the only solution is socialism" (laughs), these days we will say like "no, well, ... there are things that you can realize even though we are a small party, ... on a daily basis, for people"

JZ: yes

ZO: So, this is basically, well, the result of Resist, so uhm, ...

JZ: yes

ZO: As a party we were forced to face the, well, ... we really walked into a door And I think we have become stronger because of this.

excerpt 203 – 04/02/2009

The renewed PvdA identity is characterised by the preferred mode of politics Zohra implicitly and explicitly argued for throughout this interview. As such, it is characterized by an analysis of socio-political injustices in systemic terms. It is also characterised by a logic of collective performance that leaves room for individuality as well as for a collective advocacy of interests. Moreover, whereas pre-Resist PvdA merely shouted (slogans) about the injustice of the (system), a strategy of collective action and performance is now enabled. There seems to be no significant inconsistency between the tactile and visual logics of embodiment that characterise Zohra's discourse and subjectivity either. Neither does it conflict with her preferred sense of self.

b) Activism as a technology of the self: the case of Nadia Fadil

Socio-political engagement may be described in terms of a public rearticulation of social patterns through imagined collective action. As such, activism is a specific mode of interaction intended to challenge and install socio-political forms of life. Such practices imply a reflexive stance to one's own discourse(s) and practice(s), as well as to the practice(s) and discourse(s) of other actors in the public sphere. Put differently, they require a metapragmatic attitude. Consequently, a preferred mode of activism or engagement is always linked with a preferred mode of subjectivity and a preferred sense of self.

At several points in this book, I quoted the interview conducted with Nadia Fadil. Nadia is a sociologist who wrote a PhD entitled *Submitting to God, submitting to the self: secular and religious trajectories of second generation Maghrebi in Belgium* (Fadil 2008a). She studied the relationship between self and God as interpreted by 57 interviewees. Doing so, Nadia used a Foucaultian framework, investigating secularity in terms of a "governmentality". Focusing on individual narratives, she explored various modes of "subjectivation" articulated by her interviewees, in order to allow for a "de-essentialised understanding of subjectivity and agency" (Fadil 2008a: 341-43). In this respect, our academic frameworks overlap to a great extent. This can be exemplified with reference to a quote taken from Foucault's *What is Enlightenment* (Foucault 1984a) that precedes the conclusion to her PhD.

"The critical ontology of ourselves must be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating, it must be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them." (Foucault 1984a cited in Fadil 2008a: 341-43)

Nadia Fadil and I first met while she was still working on her PhD. Professor Foblets recommended me to talk to her in preparation of my own PhD project. As I recall, she was the first person with whom I had a long conversation on Foucault, Laclau, Mouffe, and Butler. Her insights have impacted on my own approach to minority politics, as well as on the way I have come to deal with poststructuralist thought within the context of this book. Lastly, I think it is fair to say that Nadia is sort of a celebrity in the field of minority civil society organisations in Flanders. Within this context she is known for her activities as an activist and intellectual who publicly positions herself with respect to the issues discussed in the subsections below. Nadia has been involved in organisations as varied as Kif Kif, AEL, and SAMV.

As we will see, Nadia Fadil is quite aware of the fact that her political sense of self has been evolving for a long time. Subjectivities change and her awareness of this fact is marked in many ways within the context of our interview. Nadia's political subjectivity and her concept of activism evolve along with the way she interprets her engagements and socio-political realities. In this sense, activism may be described in terms of a technology of the self. In order to illustrate this point, I will first focus on her comments on *minority activism and the structure of life*. I will then discuss the way she expresses her subjectivity in spatial terms in a subsection on *the crossroads of different worlds*. This will clear the ground for a discussion of the visual logics that inform Nadia's sense of self in a subsection on *eye openers and shifting subjectivities*. The last subsection of this case study contains an analysis of Nadia's preferred and disavowed modes of politics as expressed within the context of our interview.

Minority activism and the structure of life

Activism and socio-political engagement can be described in terms of ethics. I agree with Nadia Fadil and with Michel Foucault that any investigation into the nature of the self requires an analysis of the limits imposed on us. I also agree that such investigations should involve an awareness of the philosophical and historical dimensions of these limits. Their suggestion that we should experiment in going beyond such limitations bears relevance to both politics and the self (Foucault 1884a cited in Fadil 2008a: 341-43). I would like to add that that this sort of political awareness and critique implies a high degree of metapragmatic awareness.

In the excerpt below, Nadia Fadil metapragmatically describes the ⟨minority question⟩ as ⟨the big umbrella term wherein⟩ she acts. She also notes that ⟨being active⟩ constitutes ⟨the red thread⟩ of the last ⟨five to six years⟩ of her ⟨life⟩. Moreover, she explains that she wants ⟨to keep it this way⟩ since ⟨activism⟩ ⟨gives⟩ an ⟨important framework⟩ and ⟨structure⟩ to ⟨life⟩, as well as a sense of direction. To Nadia, ⟨being active⟩ is not merely an issue of ⟨contributing⟩. Rather, ⟨being active⟩ is something she gets ⟨personal meaning from⟩. In the upcoming subsections, I will argue that Nadia's ⟨activism⟩ can be described as an important technology informing her sense of self. The associated discursive performances and techniques inform a preferred mode of subjectivity intertwined with a preferred mode of politics.

JZ: Uhm ... well, I don't know, perhaps we should simply start with the issues that are of particular interest to you, or that appeal to you

NF: At this moment, what themes ...? Well, uhm, it's kind of difficult to Well, the minority question has been entertaining me for quite some time. So, I think that this is sort of the big umbrella term under which I act Uhm, yes, during the last years, I have been less active. So, it's also like, I am currently in a kind of ... break, a phase of contemplation like "OK, in what way do I uhm, ... want to be active?". Because being active really is the red thread throughout the last five to six years, ... and I want to keep it this way because it sort of gives you an important uhm ... an important framework for life, and, and a structure to life like 'where you're headed'. So, it's more than merely contributing. It's also something you get personal meaning from But yes, I would say that the minority question sort of remains the most important ... the most important framework.

excerpt 204 – 22/08/2008

Within the context of a discussion of ‘alliances and differences between civil society organisations in Antwerp’, Nadia Fadil explained how religious organisations such as ⟨JVI⟩ can be said to practice a ⟨religious⟩ ⟨politics⟩ that may be ⟨actualized⟩ by ⟨reshaping⟩ and modelling one’s sense of ⟨self⟩ and one’s ⟨life⟩ in accordance with the example of the ⟨prophet⟩ (see: excerpt 83). Throughout her PhD, she argued that religious practices may function as self-techniques informing a range of particular subjectivities. In excerpt 75, Nadia elaborates on her engagement with respect to the ⟨minority question⟩. She articulates this issue as follows: ⟨what is the imaginary community of Europe⟩ and ⟨how do we make sure that migrants are going to be a part of this⟩. She argues that ⟨minorities⟩ offer a ⟨diasporic point of view⟩ with respect to processes of ⟨exploitation⟩ within and outside of Europe. With respect to herself, she wonders: ⟨how can I, from my position here, establish links with ... with Europe, outside of Europe⟩ in order to ⟨go beyond⟩ ⟨Eurocentric⟩ ⟨activism⟩.

Even though she admits having been on a ⟨religious trip⟩ when she was about ⟨sixteen⟩ years old, it is not Islam but a notion of ⟨activism⟩ within the framework of the ⟨minority question⟩ that informs her political awareness as marked within the context of our interview. In excerpt 53, Nadia explained how ⟨becoming religious constituted a kind of resistance⟩ and ⟨legitimate rebellion⟩ against her family who lived ⟨at the margin⟩ of the ⟨imagined community⟩. In the excerpt below, she responds to my question whether ⟨religious aspects⟩ ⟨played a role⟩ in the development of her political awareness. She explains how Islam constituted the ⟨first⟩ ⟨alternative framework⟩ that allowed her to develop a ⟨contra discourse⟩ with reference to her own background. As such, ⟨Islam⟩ constituted merely the ⟨first⟩ framework wherein she got ⟨politicised⟩.

NF: Uhm The religious, the religious has played a role in the sense that it, within my personal story has uhm ... caused Islam to become a part of my identity But at the same time, it didn’t, in the sense that this is the first identity framework wherein I have been politicised. Well, when I was sixteen, [I was on] this religious trip. At college, I discovered Tariq Ramadan So, to me this was, and then, meeting the Islamists So, to me, the Islamic framework was the first ... alternative framework ... that allows you to develop sort of a contra discourse on the basis of your own references Uhm And that’s why I am still open to people who emancipate themselves through Islam today. It has [played] an important role, [and exerted] an important force, ... But I personally feel that, throughout the years, that I sort of, ... I haven’t come back on this, but I increasingly Islam, Islam has become, to me, increasingly, a different way of experiencing Islam, ... and not the orthodox way. And [I feel] that my framework is not merely Muslim, but is first and foremost an ethnic framework, rather Maghrebian, Arabic. These are things that have come to the foreground So, the identitarian framework, Islam as an identitarian framework is definitely still, ... But not in the same way It’s definitely there, in the geopolitical struggle. So, ... when Islam is being attacked, I will position myself as a Muslim Uhm, I am a Muslim, uhm, ... in uhm, when it’s about, well, Islamophobic issues, and so on Uhm, ... But personally, I would dare to say that at this moment, it plays a less central ... role. It’s rather the ethnic, and ethnic in the broad sense, like, not merely Maghrebian, but rather Arabic, Arabic as a geopolitical area, as a cultural area of reference that is very complex and very diverse As a really pro-Palestinian, like a classical Arabic, well, not a classical Arabic nationalism, but sort of a post-Arabic nationalism (laughs), an Arabic post-nationalism

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⟨Islam⟩ remains an important point of reference to Nadia, even though it ⟨plays a less central⟩ ⟨role⟩ to her preferred mode of politics and activism than it used to. In the excerpt above, she explicitly identifies herself as ⟨a Muslim⟩. However, her ⟨way of experiencing Islam⟩ isn’t of the ⟨orthodox⟩ type. She explicitly frames her Islamic subjectivity in terms of an ⟨ethnic⟩, ⟨Maghrebian⟩, and ⟨Arabic⟩ framework. I will go into the distinction between Islam as a religion and Islam as an ethnic and/or cultural framework in one of the upcoming subsections. This doesn’t mean that Islam isn’t important anymore. Rather, Nadia prefers to frame her ⟨activism⟩ within a more general framework about the role of ⟨minorities⟩ in society. In this respect, she positions herself ⟨as a Muslim⟩ ⟨when Islam is being attacked⟩ within the context of the ⟨geopolitical struggle⟩ against ⟨Islamophobia⟩.

As we will see, Nadia Fadil gradually developed a ⟨politicised⟩ and ⟨structural framework⟩ aimed at reinforcing the legitimacy of ⟨politicised⟩ minority subject positions within Flemish, Belgian, and/or European public spheres. This ⟨politicised⟩ ⟨minority perspective⟩ implies that one does not ⟨let go⟩ of this ⟨minority perspective at any point⟩. The voices articulated from this ⟨perspective⟩ emanate from ⟨anti-colonial⟩, ⟨anti-racist⟩, and ⟨minority⟩ subject positions. Moreover, Nadia's preferred mode of subjectivity involves a positive identification with the concept of citizenship.

The gaze that emanates from the resulting ⟨politicised⟩ ⟨minority perspective⟩ is directed at the creation of ⟨alternative spaces⟩. In excerpt 54, Nadia framed her engagement for ⟨Kif Kif⟩ in terms of an attempt ⟨to create a kind of alternative forum where the minority question could be charted in a different way⟩. Her search for ⟨alternative fora⟩ where ⟨debates⟩ can be held, goes hand in hand with a concern for performatively establishing ⟨the presence⟩ of ⟨minorities⟩ in various modes of public interaction. It pertains to the ⟨writing⟩ of a ⟨collective history⟩ of minorities in European contexts and to the visibility of this ⟨presence⟩ in various sorts of ⟨cultural productions⟩. She also suggests that this should happen by means of ⟨images⟩, ⟨texts⟩, music, and ⟨cultural productions⟩ that make the ⟨stories and trajectories⟩ of minorities ⟨visible⟩ in society. Moreover, this search should be informed by ⟨an engagement⟩ involving a ⟨class analysis⟩.

On the crossroads of different worlds

Enunciative, visual, and spatial metaphors play an important role in the way Nadia creates a rather coherent story about the development of her political points of interest. These metaphors perform multiple functions with respect to the way she articulates minority related subject positions with each other. At this point, I will briefly focus on a *spatial logic of mobility* characterizing Nadia's preferred mode of subjectivity as marked within the context of this interview.

Nadia Fadil's attempts to construct and to find ⟨alternative fora⟩ and ⟨spaces⟩ involve a search for alternative modes of interaction. They also involve an attempt ⟨to grant legitimacy to the fact that there are different worlds shaping you⟩. Note that the development of an associated ⟨legitimate discourse⟩ should allow for ⟨a breathing space in order to make your own combinations⟩ of ethnic and other identity markers, indexing a multiplicity of ⟨worlds⟩ relevant to one's sense of self. At this point however, it seems as if the lack of ⟨fora⟩ with sufficient ⟨breathing space⟩ forces one to choose between ⟨integrated⟩ and ⟨assimilated⟩ subject positions, a dichotomous choice that does not conform to Nadia's preferred mode of minority politics. All of this can be observed in Nadia's first turn in the excerpt below.

NF: ... these different worlds that shape us I think it's, I think it's important to [develop] a legitimate discourse about this, also in order to, ... in order to grant legitimacy to the fact that there are different worlds shaping you And this doesn't mean you're assimilated. It doesn't mean that you're segregated either, but it simply ... it grants you some breathing space in order to make your own combinations out of this, and uhm But yes, so, uhm

JZ: This is sort of connected with Well, it seems to be connected to, and feel free to correct me, ... with this email you sent me some time ago, also this,

NF: mmh

JZ: this interaction back then

NF: yes

JZ: concerning this book about uhm, ... well, uhm, about uhm, the migration debate, ... or the integration debate

NF: yes yes

JZ: and everything surrounding this, uhm, ... do you consider this to be part of something like that, activities, such as creating a, ... a story for instance, to be [part of] uhm ... this alternative space you are talking about?

NF: Uhm, like, what I say about shedding light on these different worlds and so on?

JZ: yes

NF: Yes, definitely.

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In the excerpt above, I was reminded of an (e-mail) Nadia once sent me. This message contained a forwarded (interaction) between various intellectuals and activists discussing the potential publication of a book about the (migration) and / or the (integration debate). Considering her earlier statements, I wondered whether Nadia interpreted this project in terms of an attempt to create the type of (discourse) and (space) she is fighting for. Apparently, my inference was correct. In excerpt 54, she distinguished between three ways to construct such (spaces). First of all, (alternative) (fora) and institutions such as (Kif Kif) and SAMV should allow for a mapping of the (minority question). They should also provide sufficient room for debating (sensitive issues) that get (hi-jacked) by right wing actors who position themselves in mainstream public debates. Secondly, a practice of collective historiography is required, highlighting the role of minorities in European development. Thirdly, this minority (presence) should be imagined by means of (cultural productions), (images), (texts), and (music).

The resulting play of positioning is characterized by a high degree of mobility. It involves a freedom to shift between (worlds) and subject (positions) as other contextual aspects of reality become relevant. For this reason, it is possible to identify a *spatial logic of mobility* informing Nadia Fadil's preferred mode of political subjectivity. The associated set of interpretations allows her to grant legitimacy to the fact that (there are different worlds shaping you). But it also impacts on the way she describes her own position(s) with respect to other actors involved in the minority debate. In the excerpts below, I will illustrate this with reference to the way she talks about the various (crossroads) where she finds herself.

Nadia Fadil uses the spatial metaphor of (crossroads) in order to highlight the socio-political points of reference that are most salient to her political sense of self. In the excerpt below, she explains that she seeks (to shed some light) on (the internal diversity) among (Muslims) without turning this (diversity) (against itself). Making this (diversity) (visible), (picking up one's voice), and engaging oneself in a (global anti-colonial), and (anti-capitalist) struggle are the (issues) that provide key socio-political coordinates for Nadia Fadil's socio-political orientation. These themes and topics constitute the points of reference for orienting herself with respect to the (crossroads where) she finds herself. Depending on the particularities of the (moment), one of these themes may (gain priority) above another.

NF: ... De facto, there's a great deal of diversity, but there is only a limited legitimacy to render this diversity ... visible, to chart it. And this is one of the reasons why I wrote my dissertation on secular Muslims Because this way, I wanted to ... shed some light ... upon this reality. So, if there is another theme that concerns me, but this is really on a micro level, it's the uhm, ... to make it possible to discuss the internal diversity, ... to shed some light in such a way that it doesn't uhm, ... well, so it isn't turned against itself. Because this is often problematic. If something does happen to reach the public forum, this often happens in a rather ... a polarizing way, like there are secular Muslims who argue against Islam, and uhm, they do not, uhm, that doesn't help us to move forward, so to say. ... So, well, ... the minority question, in the sense of anti-racism, making minority issues visible, and writing about them, by picking up one's voice, uhm, ... The global anti-colonial, anti-capitalist struggle, uhm,

and then, ... and then, well, the internal ... issues, these are basically the different crossroads where I find myself and which I consider to be important, and which once in a while, depending on the moment, gain priority above one another.

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The <crossroads> where Nadia positions herself can also be linked to the various <worlds> that <shape> her sense of self. The excerpt below is part of a response to my question whether she considers herself to be <an exception> with respect to the type of <perspectives> she deploys. As a response, she explains how she currently finds herself in a phase where she wants <to be able to> articulate her own <voice> and <story>. Nevertheless, she does not consider this story to be exceptional. She explains how <we> (i.e. second generation migrants active in civil society organisations such as <AEL>, <Kif Kif>, and the <Support Center> for Allochthon Girls and Women) are all located <on these crossroads>.

NF: So, AEL, Kif Kif, the Support Center, ... I was active in all of these movements, ... relatively active, sometimes active in a central capacity, sometimes not But I always had a kind of cautious and restrained ... position. So, I mostly learned, and absorbed everything I saw And I think I'm currently in a phase where I do want to do ... sort of want to be able to do my own thing, picking up my own voice, and my own story, ... And why do I say that I don't think that we're exceptions? I think we're all sort of on these crossroads This is what is specific to our generation, to all people by the way eh, but, ... in our case, and here I'm talking about second generation migrants who experienced a particular period wherein ... a kind of geopolitical shift has occurred in the nineties, establishing itself, and crystallising itself at the beginning of 2000, wherein Islam became an object of discussion, and because of this, your own position and your own identity as well. And because of this, we're all sort of on the same crossroads, without knowing how we have to bring all of this together, ... in a narrative, ... all these different identities we carry along as a woman, as a migrant, as a Maghrebien, as a daughter, or even uhm, as uhm, as well, yes, as an Arab, as a post-colonial, as uhm, ... all of these things. And, and, well, ... you might think like "I'm the only one who's concerned about this", but I don't think this is the case. I think everybody, ... in one way or another, is concerned with this. But it's never put like this because there is no framework in order to And this is why you, ... why everyone has to be able to do this on his own, ... which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Because you do get ... differences. But I feel like, in the end, most people decide upon ... make a choice, either a choice for an Islamic framework, or a choice for another framework Because it, well, gives you sort of an umbrella term that allows you to ... capture ... all the different things you're concerned with. But, ... I think it's important that we, ... in addition to this framework, offer other frameworks as well. Exactly in order to imagine, ... these various experiences, ... these different worlds that shape us I don't think I'm an exception, I think uhm, and also this class dynamic, because this is also an important dynamic that concerns me ever more. (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

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We all move between different worlds, spaces, narratives, and subject positions. Nevertheless, Nadia points out that there is a particularity to the way the <second generation> of <migrants> in Flanders <experienced> it's relation towards the <different worlds> that <shape> them. They grew up in a time where <Islam became an object of discussion>. As such, one's <position> and <identity> was being destabilized as well. In the excerpt above, Nadia argues that this <second generation> finds itself <on the same crossroads> <without knowing> how to articulate it's <different identities> with one another into a coherent <narrative>.

The lack of a common <framework> or <narrative> potentially allows for a great diversity in possible choices. According to Nadia, most people opt for a <framework> that provides them with an <umbrella term> that allows them to articulate their identities with one other. In this sense, one might opt for an <Islamic framework>, but Nadia considers it to be important to <offer other frameworks as well>. The ultimate goal being the creation of a space that allows for a visualization of the <various experiences> acquired in the <different worlds that shape us>. As she noticed before, the <umbrella term> most relevant to her sense of politics is the <minority question>. Nevertheless, in the last lines of the excerpt above, Nadia stated that she became increasingly concerned with the dynamics of <class> as well. It is

therefore interesting to note that Nadia Fadil's <class analysis> is also characterized by a *spatial logic of mobility*.

I decided to ask Nadia to elaborate on her increasing concerns with <class> dynamics. The excerpt below is a continuation of the excerpt above. She responds with an elaborate analysis, articulating her personal experiences with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of <capital>¹¹⁹, <habitus> and distinction¹²⁰. This enables her to discuss the minority issue in terms of <social mobility>. Even though this spatial metaphor constitutes a rather conventional discursive pattern in contemporary sociology, it allows Nadia to highlight the <class> related dimension of the <different worlds> that <shape> her. As such, my question initiated a topic shift from a discussion of 'the crossroads of the second generation' to a discussion of 'class dynamics and social mobility'. Nevertheless, both problematics are intimately intertwined in Nadia Fadil's analysis.

In the excerpt below, Nadia explains that upward <social mobility> means that <one increasingly starts to belong to a middle class>. Nevertheless, her own feelings with respect to the associated middle class position are rather ambiguous. Coming from a <working class> <family>, she does not consider the <cultural> and <leisure> related practices of the <white> <middle class> to be <self evident>. Her own social mobility involved an increasing awareness of the <ease> <with which certain people> move in <upper middle class> <circles> connected to the <cultural> and <academic> public spheres.

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) How do you mean?

NF: So, social mobility, the fact that one increasingly starts to belong to a middle class. And that one, this middle class basically, well, you're very much aware of ... of the consequences of your social mobility. Like, ... you're in, ... you end up pretty quickly in a white environment For instance, the entire cultural sector. If you do something leisure wise, like occupying yourself with art, this is very intimidating to me, going to the theatre or something There, you meet people for whom, well, for whom this is home, but to me, this isn't the case at all I usually don't know anything about it, so you feel, ... or, or, well, a type of general knowledge where you, you feel like "well, it's because you're ... coming from a working class that you're, ... not equipped with all of these things, that you're not as well read, and that you're definitely not, ... not", well, all these things, they're not self-evident, ... and

¹¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu distinguished between *cultural*, *social*, *economic* and *symbolic capital*. Together, these forms of capital determine the place an individual may occupy in a specific social *field*. It also determines his or her *habitus*. Cultural capital pertains to sets attitudes with respect to learning, to cultural products such (e.g. books and films), and to its institutional variants (e.g. degrees). Social capital is a notion that designates the whole of potential resources available to an individual located in a network of relationships of mutual recognition and support. It pertains to the benefits of group membership. Economic capital is capital that can be turned into money at any given point. In specific contexts these forms of capital can be exchanged with each other. Symbolic capital is important as well. It pertains to the capacity of people to exert an influence on their world by influencing the representation of their reality. It provides individuals and groups with the symbolic power to determine what sort of habitus should function as the norm in a particular social field. For instance, Bourdieu argued that within the education system, middle class norms supporting a middle class habitus tend to prevail (Clycq 2009: 76-77).

¹²⁰ In her Phd, Nadia Fadil clarifies her relation towards Pierre Boudieu's *La Distinction* (1979) and his concept of *habitus* as follows: "he not only demonstrates the correlation which exists between class patterns and cultural consumption, but he also examines how certain cultural practices – and how they are consumed – act as distinctive habits, i.e. practices which enact boundaries and distinguish between different (inferior and superior) social groups. A distinctive culture is thus not only cultivated throughout the consumption of artistic or intellectual artefacts, but also in how these artefacts are consumed, the rationale accompanying certain aesthetic acquisitions, in sum: the cultural habitus of a particular group. Relativising or downplaying the expensive price of a particular artefact to underline its excellent quality, or discounting the time one spends in finding a rare antiquity – which he nicely describes as a 'potlatch of time' [potlatch de temps] alluding to the observation that 'having little time' also operates as a distinction – are just some of the distinctive strategies Bourdieu describes, and which are used by an 'old' bourgeoisie to distinguish itself from other groups (2003: 320). My primary interest in this mechanism of distinction lies less with the homology between cultural consumption patterns and class – a homology which has also been sharply criticised (see Vanderstichele, 2008), but more in the distinctive effects of cultural habits in the cultivation of boundaries between different 'groups'." (Fadil 2008: 319-320). In her analysis of the religious trajectories of second generation Maghrebi in Belgium, she also relies on Sabah Mahmood's usage of the concept of habitus interpreted in terms of an ethical conduct practiced upon "one's self, one's body, one's affectivity, and will" (Fadil 2008: 226).

you're not equipped with uhm, the type of cultural background And uhm, you're very much aware of, well, a certain, ... ease, with which certain people move in certain circles, ... be it in the academic, or in To me, this still isn't self evident. So, these are rather small things, ... but it has to do with social mobility, and there is, well, ... a kind of uncertainty with respect to this, and, ... Well, in the white story, it happens frequently that people get absorbed by this social mobility A friend of mine, her father comes from a poor background, and if you see him now, ... you wouldn't think so. He comes from a poor family, ... His habitus, his way of talking is so upper middle class, ... Well, by now, in my case, that's probably the case as well eh, but ... he distances himself completely from uhm, you know, *La distinction*, really ... really hard, doing anything to locate himself in this bourgeois ... context. Reading the right books, going to the right performances, to, ... Whereas I have refused to do so for a very long time. Because, I was like "I am not going to be absorbed by ... this upper middle class". But I notice that I have sort of become like "well, there is some interesting stuff going on over there, and I can, ... It's not because I am going to a performance, that I'll suddenly be absorbed by this upper middle class ...".

JZ: Like you're assimilated or?

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In the excerpt above, Nadia Fadil gives voice to feelings of ⟨uncertainty⟩ she experienced when confronted with the ⟨self evident⟩ ways in which people move in ⟨upper middle class⟩ circles. Part of this uneasiness is triggered by a reluctance to be ⟨absorbed by this social mobility⟩ and ⟨the white story⟩ associated with it. As a case in point, Nadia tells me about a friend's father. Using the terminology of Bourdieu's ⟨*La distinction*⟩, she explains how this man's ⟨habitus⟩, including his ⟨way of talking⟩, the literature he reads, as well as the plays he visits, has become ⟨upper middle class⟩. According to her, this person was ⟨absorbed⟩ by an upward mobility towards an ⟨upper middle class⟩ subject position up to the point where ⟨you wouldn't think⟩ that this person comes from ⟨a poor family⟩ anymore.

Nadia's own stance with respect to practices and discourses constitutive of such an ⟨upper middle class⟩ ⟨habitus⟩ are rather ambivalent. Even though she acknowledges that ⟨there is some interesting stuff going on over there⟩, her initial reaction consisted in an outright refusal to be ⟨absorbed by⟩ this ⟨class⟩. As such, she admits having acquired a ⟨middle class⟩ ⟨habitus⟩ as well, but in contrast to this man, she refuses to distance herself from working class subject positions. As we noticed before, Nadia refuses to let go of the ⟨minority perspective⟩ in her socio-political analyses. In the last lines of the excerpt above, I asked her whether her refusal to be ⟨absorbed⟩ by the ⟨upper middle class⟩ could be interpreted in terms of assimilation. She confirms this and elaborates on the ambivalent feelings of ⟨uncertainty⟩ she shares with ⟨many of⟩ her ⟨Moroccan friends⟩.

Nadia considers herself to be ⟨lucky⟩ for ⟨having had the opportunity to experience⟩ this ⟨social mobility⟩ within the framework of a ⟨collective dynamic⟩. She explains how her encounters with people such as ⟨Nadia Babazia⟩ and with people such as ⟨Said el Majdoub⟩ who ⟨co-founded⟩ the intercultural student organisation Student Focus offered an opportunity to share feelings of ⟨uncertainty⟩ and ⟨uneasiness⟩. This collective aspect is exemplified with reference to the fact that Nadia and her friends sort of ⟨conquered⟩ a ⟨little Moroccan corner⟩ in one of the public meeting places of the university of Antwerp. This meeting place is quite close to my own working place at the university, and I frequently ⟨noticed⟩ that people engaged within the context of Student Focus frequently hang out over there.

NF: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) Yes. Like these codes, class related codes Uhm, ... but these are, this social, this story of social mobility, I think this isn't, to me, ... I sometimes really wonder, well, I was lucky, for having had the opportunity to experience a ... collective dynamic. Because, when I got into college, there were rather many, well, rather many, ... there was a group of Moroccans And it's so funny, ... when I first arrived at college, I was resolved like "I don't want to get in touch with Moroccans" And a week later I met Nadia Babazia who has become one of my best friends by now (laughs).

JZ: yes.

NF: And six months later,

JZ: you mean Babazia? Actually, ... I should go and talk to her.

NF: She's, well, yes. But, six months later, we conquered this little Moroccan corner in UFSIA, (laughs), at the Agora, there were these cube-like stairs, and we always got together to eat, from TW, from, ... So, a little bit like Student Focus avant la lettre, ... And it's also out of this that, ...

JZ: Well, I also noticed this. You can really see these people there, ... they hang out with one another quite frequently

NF: Yes, indeed, that's uhm, ... Because, Said el Majdoub used to be in our little group as well, ... and all these different people who co-founded Student Focus, ... But, I was wondering, ... well, we were able to sort of experience this, this social mobility You know, this is something I really share with many of my Moroccan friends, like, I'm, ... You know, it touches you, like, a friend of mine who is uhm, ... sales manager with an international firm, she has dinners with her clients, and so on, and these are also, uhm, well, people from uhm, from the world of sports, ships, ... and so on. And there's always a kind of uneasiness that you have to confront, a sort of ease that is not self evident, and you notice that you can share this with each other, ... a kind of uncertainty in these social contacts (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 210 – 22/08/2008

In order to grasp the importance of this *interpretive logic of mobility* to Nadia's preferred mode of minority politics, it is important to consider one more excerpt. As we can see in the excerpt below, the <uncertainty> Nadia talks about is first and foremost a <class bound uncertainty>. She explicitly refuses to frame her analysis in terms of ethnicity, knowing that it is <simply> <about class>. Note that the spatial metaphors of <crossroads> and <worlds> pop up again. The <crossroads> where Nadia finds herself, the position between the <different worlds> that shape her, cannot be located with mere ethnic coordinates. Even though her <friends might interpret> their uncertainties in <ethnic> terms, Nadia does not.

JZ: (this interaction is a continuation of the excerpt above) A class bound uncertainty.

NF: Yes, indeed, ... a social, an insecurity, I analyse this in terms of class eh, not ethnically, because, I know that this simply is about class

JZ: Yes. Yes, I can, because, I can imagine you could also consider it to be an ethnic

NF: Indeed Of course, there's ethnic stuff all over it eh, but I consider his first and foremost, and by the way, this tells you more about me than about well,

JZ: yes yes, but okay

NF: but, ... Whereas my friends might interpret this in rather ethnic terms, ... but to me, it's a crossroads. It really isn't uhm, ... And uhm, you can share this with each other, and I'm glad that I can do this, this social mobility, ... little, subtle psychological uncertainties, mechanisms, ... that you can somehow bear this with ... other people. You know? Whereas the priorities, whereas other people are concerned with building [a home] and all of that (laugh) what the fuck (laughs), ...

excerpt 211 – 22/08/2008

The <subtle psychological uncertainties> and <mechanisms> involved in the movement of upward <social mobility> can be endured with the support of <other people>. Nevertheless, Nadia is not inclined <to share> <family> and <leisure> related experiences with most of her peers. Notable exceptions being <colleagues> she considers to be <friends>. Elsewhere, Nadia literally interpreted the feelings associated with this upward social mobility as a response to a lack of <recognition> with middle class norms. For

this reason, she is inclined to keep her ⟨distance⟩ from most ⟨middle class⟩ peers by restricting conversational topics to ⟨politics⟩ and ⟨work⟩.

Interestingly, Nadia contrasts the story of her own upward social mobility that took place in the context of a ⟨collective dynamic⟩ with the stories of the ⟨generation that preceded⟩ her and her Moroccan friends. She explains how these people ⟨were alone at college⟩. Whereas she was able to establish ⟨a network⟩ of ⟨Maghrebians⟩ who followed higher education, knowing that these people were ⟨going through the same sort of thing⟩. Sticking to Bourdieu's terminology, she explains how upward social mobility and the establishment of networks involves leisure related activities that allow for an accumulation of ⟨cultural⟩ and ⟨social⟩ ⟨capital⟩. According to her, it is the lack of these forms of capital that ⟨makes one feel insecure⟩ when confronted with colleagues talking about ⟨the latest play or the latest concert⟩. The *spatial logic of mobility* informing Nadia's current political subjectivity allows her to identify a pattern between a multiplicity of public interactions in which subject positions related to class, ethnicity, and politics in general, can be articulated with one another with a relatively high degree of coherence.

Eye openers and shifting subjectivities

I have frequently argued that the self should be analysed in terms of a reification of those processes that allow an individual body to (reflectively) position itself as a more or less coherent and whole mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social, and (inter)textual aspects of reality. Throughout the case studies discussed in previous chapters, I have sought to demonstrate the indexical and interpretive functions of the processes involved. At this point, it remains for me to highlight some aspects of reflexivity.

Studying the self in terms of a reification does not rule out the possibility that individuals may be aware of themselves as being processual entities. This can be exemplified with reference to the case of Nadia Fadil who distinguishes several phases in her socio-political development. She uses the visual metaphor of eye openers in order to mark a set of experiences that impacted upon the way she relates her self to processes in the public sphere. These experiences forced her to ⟨open⟩ her ⟨eyes⟩ to aspects of contextual reality. They also prompted her to rearticulate her sense of self. Nevertheless, the pronominal system simultaneously allows for a pragmatic point of reference, an imagined point of orientation that is very real in its subjective consequences.

The logics structuring Nadia Fadil's sense of self did not originate out of nowhere. At the time of our interview, Nadia positioned herself in a ⟨phase of contemplation⟩. But if we take a look at the way she describes the development of her political points of interest and engagements, it is possible to distinguish several phases in the development of her political subjectivity. At the same time, Nadia frequently marks her metapragmatic awareness of this fact throughout our interview. Visual metaphors play an important role in this respect.

Nadia's current socio-political analysis, her preferred mode of politics, as well as her preferred sense of self, result from a series of eye openers. We already noticed how she experienced a ⟨religious trip⟩ during her teens. As a teen, Nadia read the work of sociologist ⟨Fatima Mernissi⟩ after which she considered the ⟨headscarf⟩ ⟨issue⟩ to be ⟨settled⟩. Nevertheless, as she left high school, her view on issues related to gender, ethnicity, religion, and minorities would undergo some significant changes. Even though ⟨Islam⟩ was the ⟨first alternative framework⟩ that allowed her to develop a ⟨contra discourse⟩, her experiences as a college student would provide her with a series of eye openers that would prove to be at least as important to her current stance with respect to the ⟨minority question⟩.

Before going to college, Nadia's ⟨relationship to the Maghrebian community⟩ was limited to her ⟨contacts⟩ with ⟨Moroccan girls⟩ on Saturday within the context of a local neighbourhood project in

⟨Borgerhout⟩. But even in this context, Nadia did not always evaluate these ⟨contacts⟩ in ⟨positive⟩ terms. She explains how she ⟨read⟩ a lot and how she was raised by ⟨rather strict parents⟩. In the excerpt below, she describes herself as a ⟨rather secluded child⟩. She also explains how she left high school with a rather ⟨mainstream discourse⟩, being ⟨rather white⟩ and ⟨racist⟩ with respect to her ⟨ideas⟩. The excerpt below provides an account of the first two eye openers that dislocated this ⟨mainstream⟩ subjectivity.

Nadia Fadil's first ⟨eye opener⟩ is provided by ⟨sociology⟩. Her studies allowed her to look at the ⟨minority question from the point of view of a socio-economic narrative⟩. The sociologic ⟨paradigm⟩ enabled her to make ⟨more structural analyses⟩. Nadia's eye openers always involve a process of recontextualisation. They force her to rearticulate previous experiences and analyses and prompt her to reposition herself, throwing her gaze over aspects of reality she might have been previously unaware of. As such, Nadia Fadil's eye openers resemble Jef Verschueren's concept of *lines of vision*. According to Verschueren, people use discourse in order to cast the gaze of their awareness over aspects of reality in order to establish an imagined ground throughout interaction. Nadia's discourse on the various eye openers that informed the development of her political awareness demonstrates that this principle also pertains to the way individuals relate their selves to themselves.

NF: ... Well, at any rate, I was always a rather secluded ... child I never really had a lot of friends in school, during puberty either And uhm, so, well, actually, my relation towards Moroccan friends was not always very positive, ... neither with Flemish friends in general eh And, and by the time I got into college, I was, yes, I would dare to say that I was rather white with respect to my ideas, ... in the sense that I, well, with respect to the minority question and the problematic of integration, I wasn't that much In this respect, I was in a rather mainstream discourse about this And how did this start to change? Actually, it started to change with my thesis ... my Master's thesis, well, my education in sociology was basically quite important. Because, well, unavoidably, ... you start to look at this minority question from the point of view of a socio-economic narrative, so basically, you can use this paradigm in order to make more structural analyses So, this has been a first important ... eye opener to me. And then, secondly, there's my thesis, because of which I started to interview Moroccan girls, ... contacting them, not just from a conflict situation, ... but also, ... By interviewing them, ... you discover, well, these are different stories eh, ... you start to realize that they basically grew up in a very different environment. You grew up like, ... rather protected, well, rather, rather white, racist as well, ... but at that moment you don't frame it like this. I remember, when I was about fourteen or sixteen, ... one of the secretaries, when I told her that some friends of mine were going to come over, I was one of the few Moroccan girls at school, ... the Sint Jozefinstituut, ... When I told this secretary that some friends of mine, from my neighbourhood were coming over, she told me like "okay, but preferably not too many, uhm, Moroccans, because otherwise we might get too many Moroccans over here". And well, at that moment, you're thinking like "okay, sure". You actually understand this (laughs). You don't rebel eh, because you know, you think like, "well, my parents have ... enrolled me in a school where there weren't too many Moroccans, so you know, ... you grow up with the idea like, ...

JZ: this was really a conscious choice to

NF: Yes, yes, yes, yes. Because uhm, ... they didn't want us to get onto a bad track eh. To them, this implies avoiding a school, a concentration school, because uhm, ... you're not going to study over there, you're not going to advance eh Which is true of course, but this has nothing to do with being Moroccan, it has everything to do with the socio-economic story eh, but But you go along with, like I said, I was really in a mainstream framework. And at a certain moment, I started to uhm, conduct an interview. I recall this very clearly, I wanted to interview a girl that didn't want to be interviewed at all. And I didn't understand I was like "come on, I am Moroccan, and uhm, I am going to write a thesis about us, and uhm, ...". And, and, I told her this, actually, I was sort of affronted, and she was basically, well, very pissed off because of me being affronted, rightly so She thought I was very arrogant, and uhm, ... she told this to her brother. And I was basically, well, I was put out of balance because of this. (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 212 – 22/08/2008

The ⟨second eye opener⟩ discussed by Nadia Fadil is also related to her academic experiences. Within the context of her ⟨thesis⟩, Nadia sought ⟨to interview Moroccan girls⟩. In the excerpt above, she explains how her interviews confronted her with different ⟨stories⟩, triggering a realization that these girls often grew up in environments different to her own. Nadia provides us with a contrasting anecdote. She recalls an interaction with a secretary who worked at her high school. When she was ⟨about fourteen or sixteen⟩ years old, she told this woman that ⟨some⟩ friends of her neighbourhood were ⟨coming over⟩ to her school. The ⟨secretary responded⟩ that this was fine but also voiced a concern for ⟨too many Moroccans⟩. At the time, Nadia consider this to be normal and did not ⟨rebel⟩. She went along with this ⟨mainstream framework⟩ and explained how her parents deliberately refused to send her to a ⟨concentration school⟩. However, she also points out that the lack of advancement in such schools should not be explained with reference to ⟨being Moroccan⟩ but with reference to a ⟨socio-economic story⟩.

In the last lines of the excerpt above, Nadia returns to the issue of the interviews conducted within the context of her ⟨thesis⟩. When one of her potential respondents refused to participate in an interview, Nadia felt ⟨affronted⟩. Her would-be interviewee noticed this and complained to her brother about Nadia's arrogance. In the excerpt below, we can see how Nadia started to ⟨think⟩ about the ⟨grounds⟩ on which she could ⟨claim⟩ this girl. As such, she became aware of her ⟨powerful position⟩ as an interviewer able to make ⟨self evident⟩ claims upon other people. Nevertheless, this particular interaction, along with the different ⟨stories about racism⟩ and ⟨discrimination⟩ she encountered, triggered a reconsideration of her ⟨own position⟩. In turn, this increasing awareness of her own ⟨powerful position⟩ with respect to this potential interviewee would lead her towards ⟨literature about identity construction⟩ and new ⟨eye openers⟩.

JZ: (this interaction is a continuation of the excerpt above) This was someone who knew you as well, outside of the .

NF: I knew her brother.

JZ: oh, OK.

NF: But she was wearing a headscarf, and I absolutely wanted to talk with headscarfed girls, and uhm, ... and, this was, ... to me, this was really, well, uhm, ... "On what grounds?", well, yes, it really made me think And, well, I don't remember what this this did to me, but at any rate, I started to look at these girls in a different way. Perhaps, I also started to realize, to realize what powerful position you have, ... by basically taking interviews, by a sort of self-evident, a self-evident claim. And then you start to question your own position as well, these different stories, stories about racism, discrimination, uhm, ... At that point I really started to dig into literature about identity construction within cultural studies. So, these have all been significant eye openers to me. Uhm, Blommaert and Verschueren, to me, this was really ... *Het [Belgische] migrantendebat*¹²¹ was really one of my ideological eye openers And uhm, well, you start to look at your own story in a different way, and to realize from what position you're speaking, and that there are many things you simply didn't experience, so you don't necessarily have to presuppose you have the right to speak And I'm really glad I experienced this. This really shaped me in a fundamental way.

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In the excerpt above, we can see how the work of Blommaert and Verschueren constituted one of Nadia Fadil's ⟨ideological eye openers⟩ forcing her ⟨to look at⟩ her ⟨own story in a different way⟩, forcing her to become aware of her enunciative ⟨position⟩, destabilizing her presupposed ⟨right to speak⟩ about minority related issues in the way(s) she used to. Highlighting the impact of these intersubjectively established eye openers, Nadia notes that these experiences ⟨shaped⟩ her ⟨in a fundamental way⟩. This last remark exemplifies how public interactions may impact on our sense of self. A little bit further down the interview, she also mentions ⟨Foucault⟩ and the ⟨poststructuralist

¹²¹ This book has been reworked and translated into English as *Debating diversity* (Blommaert and Verschueren1998).

framework) in general as an (eye opener) that helped her (understand) that the positions taken in the minority debate do not depend on one being a (good) (person), but rather, on (power relations) and on (certain ideas that become hegemonic).

All of the eye openers discussed in this subsection highlight Nadia's increasing awareness of processes in the public sphere. Throughout the interview, she deploys the concepts of publicness, (debate), (forum), and (space) in rather synonymous ways. Nadia frequently problematises public processes with reference to specific speech events (e.g. the interaction with the secretary at her school). As such, her concept of publicness seems to correspond to my definition the public sphere in terms of a metaphor that allows us to imagine and to reify a multiplicity of interactional practices through which socio-political relationships are (re)articulated. In a similar vein, her notion of debate seems to be compatible with my definition in terms of a public or multilogic intertextual network in which a variety of subject positions are activated in a struggle over the meaning(s) of empty signifiers.

The following two excerpts are coded under the node 'eye opener: Nadia Yassin and the power of the media'. After her studies in sociology, Nadia Fadil decided to study (anthropology). In this context, she (left for Morocco) in order to conduct (interviews) with people involved in (secular) (women's movements). Nadia explains how she initially intended to focus on (leftist) and (secular) organisations dealing with the Mudawana (see: Foblets 2008; Zoglin 2009)¹²², considering the (Islamists) as (adversaries). Nevertheless, as she started to read (Moroccan newspaper articles) about the (Mudawana), she noticed a series of (interviews) with (Nadia Yassine), (one of the figureheads) (of the biggest Islamist faction in Morocco). More specifically, she (considered) Yassine's discourse about (antiglobalisation and anticapitalism) to be rather (recognisable). In the excerpt below, we can see how these considerations prompted Nadia to contact Yassine, a decision that would open up her eyes with respect to the (power of the media).

NF: and then, shortly thereafter, there was uhm, ... uhm ..., there was uhm, ... wait, what happened then ...? I went to Morocco, yes I, during my studies, after sociology, I studied anthropology, I went to Morocco I stayed there for two months, during those months I took interviews with both secular and Islamist ... women's movements. But up to that point, I wasn't really active, eh, really, I wasn't active in any organisations, ... And uhm, ... and especially, ... well, I left for Morocco with the determination to, well, to write a thesis about, well, about the work of women's movements and the Mudawana. So, yes, I contacted the official women's movements, ... these are all leftist secular ... organisations, ... or at least, not explicitly Islamist, so to say, ... And only when, well, at no point, I thought like "well, maybe, I should talk about the Islamists", because those were the adversaries in my mind And uhm, and well, at a certain point, I could, uhm, because the Belgian embassy granted me access to its newspaper records, ... I was able to, well, ... to look into and to read all newspaper articles about the reform of the Mudawana.

JZ: Moroccan newspaper articles?

NF: Yes Yes, the ones written in French And, and, back then, there were frequently interviews with Nadia Yassine. Nadia Yassine, that's uhm, one of the members of the biggest Islamist faction of Morocco ... one of the figureheads. And uhm, what she said, basically, I didn't consider it to be bad at all

JZ: You interviewed her?

¹²² The new Moroccan family code is commonly referred to as the Moudawana. The adoption of a new family code in 2004 was hailed as a significant step towards equal rights for men and women who have the Moroccan nationality. The Moudawana governs matters such as marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance. The 2004 reforms have sparked a public dialogue on gender equality in Moroccan families (Zoglin 2009: 964-965). Both the new and the old family codes are grounded in Islamic principles. For a detailed overview of the legal aspects regarding this reform see: (Foblets 2008). For an analysis of the events leading to the 2004 reform along with a preliminary analysis of its impact upon the Moroccan population see: (Zoglin 2009). In Flanders, SAMV has launched a project ...

NF: So, I, I ... read those articles, read those interviews, and it was all about antiglobalisation and anticapitalism and stuff I basically considered to be very recognisable And uhm, at a certain point, I did some interviews with a number of journalists, and back then, they recommended me to contact Nadia Yassine I got her contact information and then, I met her a few times, ...

JZ: Yes (this excerpt continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 214 – 22/08/2008

In the excerpt below, Nadia Fadil explains how her encounters with Nadia Yassine provided her with ⟨another eye opener⟩. The excerpt is laced with sociologic concepts such as ⟨subaltern voices⟩, hegemony, the ⟨power of discourse⟩, and ⟨moral consensus⟩. As ⟨sociology⟩ provided Nadia Fadil with a more ⟨structural framework⟩, she was able to analyse ⟨the power of the media⟩ in ⟨structural⟩ terms. More specifically, she explains she ⟨felt and saw⟩ the ⟨power⟩ ⟨of a particular representation⟩ of ⟨Islamism⟩ in mainstream ⟨media⟩. According to her, there was a significant ⟨gap⟩ between what she ⟨read⟩ and what she ⟨heard⟩ in Morocco.

Nevertheless, this ⟨eye opener⟩ would not be complete without an account of Nadia's interaction with her supervisor as she came back from Morocco, ⟨impressed by Nadia Yassine⟩. Upon her return, Nadia Fadil's supervisor wondered whether Yassin wouldn't ⟨perform a two-sided discourse⟩. According to Fadil, this interaction exemplified ⟨the power of discourse⟩ and particular representations. She argues that ⟨certain subaltern voices⟩ ⟨don't get any credit⟩ or ⟨legitimacy⟩ in a particular ⟨Eurocentric⟩, ⟨hegemonic⟩, and ⟨normative⟩ constellation. As such, she became aware of a ⟨moral consensus with respect to certain people⟩ and ⟨certain movements⟩.

NF: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) And to me, this was another eye opener, because it makes you realize uhm, that we don't consider the extent your view on things is influenced by a particular representation, by You basically start to realize, the power of the media, basically. This was the first time, I felt and saw the power of the media and of a particular representation, ...

JZ: You mean the representation of Islamism?

NF: The gap that existed, yes, between what I read and what I heard at the spot, and, and the people I talked to, and the image that you were ... presented with. And I remember coming back, and my supervisor at the time, ... I was completely impressed by Nadia Yassine, and she [Nadia Fadil's supervisor] asked me like, "Yes, but wouldn't she [Nadia Yassine] perform a two-sided discourse?", and then you're like come on, why? Well, then you realize how, ... how, how, how powerful the power of discourse is, and that counter discourse, counter discourse, it basically, ... Well, certain subaltern voices, uhm, don't get any credit, no legitimacy And even if they get some forum, they are not taken seriously. [You start to realize] to what extent the Eurocentric, how hegemonic, and how normative things have become, and even in the smallest of conversations eh, people don't believe you if you tell them things, and tell them a different story, a different story. [You start to realise] there's a kind of moral consensus with respect to certain people, with respect to certain movements, ... And to me, this was, ...

JZ: How do you mean? For instance,

NF: Moral consensus? So, for instance, Nadia Yassine, when I mentioned her name with other people, there was always a rejection, always negative, and I didn't understand. And after a while, you start to think like "Well, am I the one who is allowing herself to be manipulated?", you know ...? Because, this is the image, the impression you're presented with, as if you're this naïve, ignorant brat, and uhm, and uhm, as if they must be [right].

excerpt 215 – 22/08/2008

In the last lines of the excerpt above, we can see how this ⟨moral consensus⟩ with respect to people such as Nadia Yassine and with respect to groups such as the ⟨Islamists⟩ in general, made her wonder if she was the one being ⟨naïve and ignorant⟩. Nevertheless, after the completion of her thesis, Nadia

was confronted with a ⟨déjà vu⟩. After a brief holiday, she came back to Flanders where the ⟨AEL story⟩ was quickly developing. It is within this context, that Nadia would perform her ⟨first act of activism⟩. Before her journey to Morocco in 2002, Nadia knew about the ⟨AEL⟩ but ⟨didn't feel addressed⟩ by this project. In the excerpt below, we can see how this started to change.

NF: ... And then, this was in August, there was this Knack interview where Arabic as a fourth national language was singled out And ever since, things continued to go crescendo And when I came back, there was one public opinion article after another, and I didn't understand this at all So, I basically copied all opinion articles, I remember, this was in October, I went to the library of the social sciences, ... copied all the newspapers that appeared back then, read all the interviews, ... and I didn't understand what happened I was like, "what the fuck", and I had this feeling of déjà vu with respect to the Islamists, ... I was like "shit, the same thing is happening all over again" And also, because, well, you know what's going on, all these associations that are being made eh, Al Qaeda is being mentioned, terrorism is being mentioned, ... As soon as this happens, you basically know, ... I realized like okay, ... "a particular discourse, which is powerful, with respect to certain persons is being generated". And also, I read Blommaert and Verschueren, associative expansion, all these chains of associations, ... So, well, yes, I was like "what the fuck is going on", and then, ... uhm, there was the arrest of Dyab, ... And shortly after this, I still remember I came home in the evening, and I put on the late night news cast, ... and what I heard back then was beyond my imagination. I thought like, ... "How did we get here? It's almost like a state of emergency", ... if you heard the politicians back then. I was like "this cannot be", and the day after, I went to Leuven, Dany Neudt was still working at our faculty, ... He was like "this isn't okay, we should do something" And this is when we wrote this open letter

excerpt 216 – 22/08/2008

Nadia's feeling of ⟨déjà vu⟩ was triggered after reading a series of ⟨public opinion⟩ articles that appeared in Flemish newspapers after an interview with Dyab Abou Jahjah in the weekly *Knack* (De Ceulaer and Piryns 2002; De Ceulaer 2002)¹²³. Nadia identified a parallel in the way the AEL was being treated by mainstream media and the way the ⟨Islamist⟩ were being treated in Morocco. She explicitly refers to the work of ⟨Blommaert and Verschueren⟩ on associations. In both cases, associations with ⟨Al Qaeda⟩ and ⟨terrorism⟩ were being made. Upon seeing a late night news cast on the AEL, Nadia decided to write her first public opinion article in response to what she ironically calls a ⟨state of emergency⟩. In the excerpt below, we can see that she considers this to be her ⟨first act of activism⟩ (see: De Witte et al. 2002; Fadil et al. 2002)¹²⁴.

¹²³ In a 2002 interview conducted with two journalists of the weekly *Knack*, Dyab Abou Jahjah argued that problems concerning issues of education, housing, employment, and discrimination should be the main concerns of the AEL. He also suggested that "*if ones seeks to be consistent with international law, one needs to recognize Arabic as a fourth official language*". Even though he amended this statement by noting that the AEL never considered this to be "*an issue*" or "*a priority*", this statement was picked up by many commentators and politicians who vigorously denounced such a policy. In this context, it should be noticed that the ability to speak standard variants of Dutch is key to Flemish hegemonic language ideologies.

¹²⁴ The open letter Nadia refers to was signed by academics such as Dirk Jacobs, Axel Marx, Herman De Ley, Jan Blommaert, and Meryem Kanmaz. It was explicitly directed at "*all policy makers*" within the context of the Antwerp riots in the wake of the murder on Mohamed Achrak. It was also a reaction to the Belgian parliamentary discussion of November, 28th, 2002. During these discussions, Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt applauded the zero tolerance policy of the Antwerp police with respect to the ensuing riots. According to him, "*the League wants to terrorise the city*" and "*tries to outmanouver the police in order to gain control over certain Antwerp neighborhoods, in order to continue its criminal activities*". The Minister of Interior Antoine Duquesne stated that "*If the legal arsenal of the Antwerp prosecution should prove to be insufficient in order to act against the AEL, then I will personally take the lead in adapting the law*". MP Marc van Peel suggested to take legislative measures in order to outlaw the AEL who was deemed responsible for these riots. The open letter signed by Nadia Fadil condemned the riots of November 26th and November 27th. It also stated that a mere condemnation would not solve anything. The text framed these riots as symptoms of frustrations resulting from years of missed opportunities and exclusions. It constituted a call for "*structural solutions*" for "*societal problems such as poverty and discrimination*". The article labeled Abou Jahjah and the AEL as catalysts. The conclusion read as follows: "*The debate should not be simply about Abou Jahjah and the AEL, who are merely catalysts of an increasing resentment. The debate should be about a future society where autochthons and allochthons, young and old, men and women, are given a fully fledged place that allows them to take their responsibility. As citizens, we have a right to this debate, and it is about time that the right framework should be set.*" (Fadil et al. 2002).

JZ: I didn't know Dany worked at the faculty of uhm

NF: social sciences. Yes yes yes, with Albert Martens. He investigated minority organisations, yes.

JZ: Ah yes, I heard about something like this, yes, ...

NF: And, and then we wrote an open letter, in hindsight, this was my first act of activism, uhm, ... Back then, we thought like, "We'll quickly put this on a mailing list, well, send it around", and all of a sudden we got, well, I don't know exactly how many, hundreds of signatures of academics across various Flemish universities, and also, it ... it made the headlines eh. De Morgen used it as an exclusive, and uhm, well, back then, I think, ... I think, to me, this was basically the trigger. This was my trigger, AEL was the trigger, because there were many things that had been piling up So, my thesis, 9/11, the framework, ... and basically the fact that Islam was increasingly being subject to discussion, ... going to Morocco, getting in touch with the Islamists, ... the representation, the gap between the representation in Western media and the reality on the ground, ... and then, coming back, ...

excerpt 217 – 22/08/2008

In the excerpt above, Nadia provides us with a summary of the various eye openers that had been ⟨piling up⟩. As such, the events surrounding the representation of the AEL and its chairman Dyab Abou Jahjah constituted merely the ⟨trigger⟩ that prompted her to engage herself within the context of the ⟨minority question⟩. A little bit further down the interview, she explains that these were the years during which the ⟨minority framework⟩ became the ⟨dominant perspective⟩ in her world view in terms of a ⟨politicised⟩ and ⟨structural framework⟩, making sure not to let go of this perspective at any point. The various eye openers discussed by Nadia all impact upon her attitudes with respect to politics and activism causing her to reflectively shift and adapt her subjectivity in relation to the public sphere.

Preferred and disavowed modes of politics

The time has come to focus on Nadia Fadil's preferred and disavowed modes of politics. Most points relevant to this issue have already been discussed in the subsections above. However, in order to understand how Nadia's sense of self informs the analyses articulated within the context of our interview, it is important to realise that her sense of politics evolved since her ⟨first act of activism⟩.

It goes without saying that Nadia's preferred mode of activism is characterised by the interpretive logics identified above. As such, her preferred mode of politics involves an ability to articulate one's position on the ⟨crossroads⟩ of life with reference to an interpretive logic of mobility that impacts on the way she conceptualizes class, ethnicity, and culture. It also involves an increasing awareness of various aspects of the public sphere discussed in terms of a series of eye openers. Ultimately, these eye openers inform a mode of engagement that provides Nadia with an ⟨important framework⟩ and ⟨structure⟩ to life. The associated spatial and visual logics allows her to analyse the ⟨minority question⟩ in correspondence with a preferred mode of ethics and politics.

In most excerpts discussed above, Nadia's notion of ⟨activism⟩ is closely intertwined with her usage of politics related lexical items. But there are significant exceptions. She refused the type of political mobilisation associated with the subject position of an emerging bourgeois elite within the Moroccan community of Antwerp. Her main objection to the associated type of subjectivity lies in the lack of class-awareness associated with this position (see also excerpts 209, 210, 211). In the excerpt below, Nadia does not claim that this type of subjectivity is completely apolitical. Even though the ⟨type of politicisation⟩ involved is characterised by a critique of ⟨racism⟩ and a ⟨community oriented⟩ attitude, it also involves lack of awareness with respect to one's own ⟨bourgeois position⟩. According to her, this lack of awareness is marked by a concern with one's own ⟨reputation⟩ which was supposedly being threatened by youngsters associated with the ⟨AEL⟩.

NF: because, what, what I'm starting to notice right now, and this is kind of bothering me, there's this emerging sort of elite within the Maghrebian community in Antwerp, ... which is really becoming rather bourgeois, and it is characterised by ... a type of politicisation in the sense of, well, about racism, and about community, and very community oriented ...

JZ: You're talking about a political elite or uhm?

NF: No, in general, in general But who are also politicised because. But they have no choice because they're continuously being confronted with Islam bashing and stuff. They are very much aware of these problematics, about the headscarf for instance, ... uhm, about reinforcing the community, and all of this But they are not making a class analysis at all, and [they] are completely unaware of their own bourgeois position. So, for instance, you can notice this by the fact that they are going to ... distance themselves with respect to the youngsters on the streets. They're sort of like For instance, with respect to the AEL story, I sometimes noticed these bourgeois reflexes and, and reactions as well ... these really bothered me. Like "well, they [youngsters associated with the AEL] are [dragging down] our reputation" And also, well, a kind of self-celebrating discourse like "we have to make it for our community", but [they] don't make any class analysis at all, and [they] are also buying uhm, stocks, uhm, you know (laughs), becoming really rich, something I'm not opposed to, uhm, I don't consider this to be bad at all, uhm

JZ: bad

NF: bad at all, because we *need* money (laughs), but But, well, it is really goes with this liberal discourse eh. And well, this really bothers me (laughs)

JZ: (laughs)

NF: So, well, you know, this soft, this soft charity uhm, the sort of thing we also see among the Americans, like this soft uhm charity, foundation-like stuff, uhm, Rotary-like uhm, ... political mobilisation, and so on

excerpt 218 – 22/08/2008

Nadia is especially bothered by the ⟨liberal discourse⟩ she associates with the bourgeois attitude of a part of the rising ⟨elite⟩ of the ⟨Maghrebian community⟩ in Flanders. She explicitly states that she is not so much bothered by the fact that these people are starting to make ⟨money⟩. Rather, she criticises a type of ⟨political mobilisation⟩ associated with ⟨soft⟩ ⟨charity⟩-like initiatives that do not involve the type of ⟨structural analysis⟩ she argues for.

It should also be noted that Nadia rejects a mode of politics that pits minority civil society organisations against each other. This can be exemplified with reference to a public manifesto published the day after the trial against Abou Jahjah and Ahmed Azzuz on May 25th 2008. This manifesto was entitled *Wij behoren tot de AEL generatie* (i.e., *We belong to the AEL generation*). It was signed by a number of intellectuals and activists who "*do not speak on behalf of a movement, organisation, or party*". Rather, the "*men and women*" who signed this manifesto underscore the fact that they have become "*self-aware and politicised citizens*" influenced by "*the ideas of the AEL and the ensuing debate*" in one way or another. The text is a plea for "*equal citizenship and full inclusion*", ideals that are "*not self evident*" but that "*require a struggle*". Moreover, the text explicitly frames the trial of Abou Jahjah and Ahmed Azzuz as "*a struggle of a generation that no longer wants to be the passive object*" of "*its history*", "*its present*", and "*its future*" (Fadil 2008b). This manifesto was signed by some of the people I interviewed, including Hicham el Mzairh¹²⁵, Nadia Babazia, Keltoum Belorf¹²⁶, and Nadia Fadil herself.

¹²⁵ During our interview and during our discussion upon reading my analyses, Hicham el Mzairh remarked that part of his political engagement was a response against the type of political mobilisation advocated by the AEL. Even though he grants legitimacy to the AEL project, and even though he does not agree with all of the analyses put forward by the AEL, he does recognise their importance with respect to the development of his own political awareness.

¹²⁶ For pragmatic reasons, I did not include any excerpts of my interview with Keltoum Belorf in this interview. The absence of her discourse in my work should not be interpreted as a judgement of her ideas on my part. At the time of our interview,

Nadia's text on the AEL generation thus emphasised the democratic legitimacy of the AEL project. The excerpt below constitutes a response to an interaction in which I noted Hicham el Mzairh's name among the people who signed her text. Nadia responds to my remark by framing her text as an attempt to link ⟨personal stories⟩ such as Hicham's with a ⟨collective historiography⟩. In this context, she also emphasises the importance of not abandoning ⟨any movement⟩ – including organisations as varied as the ⟨AEL⟩ and the ⟨federations⟩ of minority civil society organisations – in this project. In this sense, Nadia considers it to be important to ⟨reclaim them all⟩.

NF: yes yes yes, indeed And uhm, ... So, well, I thought it was very important to this movement. Because, these are all personal stories I know. Personal stories about, ... really, ... financial problems, about, ... about about suffering, being really discriminated, and And that's the least you can do. So, in the first place it's [about this sort of thing]. But at the same time, I considered it to be important to to our collective historiography, that we do not abandon any movement in the collective struggle we wage All movements that have contributed to our ... emancipation, we [should] reclaim them all, they're all okay, we should And, and, to me, this [the AEL] was also part of this collective historiography of ...

JZ: that's also, and that's also why you wrote in your email about the federations and so on¹²⁷, ...

NF: Yes, indeed. Who are the agents who, who contributed, and, and who were important? And we should ... recognise them all, ... their place, giving them a place [in this historiography]. So, to me, ... this is basically what I'm uhm doing right now. I also started a book project with another friend, Meryem Kanmaz and Fouad Gandoul, and this is also about the various political trajectories, we want to question various people Something essay-like, with pictures and prose, and also, for instance, asking Rachida Lamrabet to write something So, well, there is a kind of visibility related to minorities that is starting to emerge. It's important that we, well, I want to help to uhm, ... establish this visibility. It only happens if you do something eh. So, I want to help to shape this visibility, and uhm, that's basically the thing ... I focused on. And I'm also increasingly taking into account who I am, what position I occupy And the thing I can do best, what I do best, is writing and talking (laughs)

JZ: (laughs)

NF: and eating (laughs), and especially writing. Well, I, I'm not an activist who's going to establish an organisation, or, well, I can help, I think the link with organisations is very important because this feeds into you. But, but you shouldn't expect this from me, and uhm, the thing I do best, with, with an 'academic' role between quotation marks, ... the best thing you can do, you are best positioned to contribute by bringing people together, linking contacts, and playing a kind of facilitating role Well, this is basically what I prefer to do. And, and, and also, trying to create more spaces. But, ... but well, ... this is, ... so, yes, we'll see how that's going to evolve further. But I do consider it to be important to make a mark in the public forum, to grant more visibility with respect to the things that are happening, at this moment

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In the excerpt above, Nadia Fadil mentions an embryonic book project in which a variety of people would comment on their ⟨political trajectories⟩. In alignment with her earlier plea to increase the ⟨visibility⟩ of minorities by means of a variety of modalities including ⟨images⟩ and ⟨texts⟩, she imagines this project as an ⟨essay-like⟩ publication that includes both ⟨pictures⟩ and ⟨prose⟩. She explains how her own engagement can be interpreted as an attempt ⟨to help to shape⟩ the ⟨visibility⟩ of individual ⟨political trajectories⟩. Moreover, she points out that this process also involves a

Keltoum Belorf worked for the Belgian website of Indymedia, and later for *De Wereld Morgen* (i.e., *The World Tomorrow*). As the Belgian website of Indymedia was shut down, a new initiative called *De Wereld Morgen* was started. For more information, see <http://www.dewereldmorgen.be/>. Keltoum currently works for this new initiative.

¹²⁷ Nadia once sent me an email concerning an initiative to write a book on the various political engagements and organisations that have played a role in the rising political awareness of minorities in Flanders. Within this context, she explicitly emphasised the importance of including government funded organisations such as the federations of minority civil society organisations as well.

consideration of questions with respect to her own sense of self, and with respect to ⟨the position⟩ she occupies.

In the excerpt above, Nadia explains that ⟨writing⟩ is an important part of her preferred mode of ⟨activism⟩. Even though she emphasizes the importance of her links to various ⟨organisations⟩, she also values her ⟨academic role⟩. This ⟨role⟩ provides her with a position that enables her to link various ⟨people⟩ and ⟨organisations⟩. Put differently, it involves a capacity to articulate a variety of socio-political agents, narratives, interests, and discourses with each other. Throughout this process, Nadia aims to contribute to the establishment of ⟨more⟩ discursive ⟨spaces⟩ in which such articulations are granted legitimacy as well as ⟨visibility⟩.

At the beginning of this subsection, I argued that Nadia's sense of politics has evolved since her ⟨first act of activism⟩. The outline of her engagement as discussed above is the result of a series of critical rearticulations of her relationship with respect to the public sphere. One aspect of this relation remains to be discussed. In excerpt 208, Nadia pointed out that she used to be active in organizations as varied as ⟨Kif Kif⟩, SAMV, and the ⟨AEL⟩. This last organization is especially important. The way the AEL was represented in mainstream media not only triggered her public engagement, her engagement with respect to this organization also functioned as a ⟨political⟩ ⟨education⟩ with respect to the way ⟨discourse⟩ may impact upon ⟨personal relationships⟩.

Within the context of a subtopic coded as 'AEL and personal identity – the dissociation of ethnicity and culture', Nadia explained how this organization enabled her to dissociate the notions of ⟨ethnicity⟩ and ⟨culture⟩. According to her, the question of ⟨ethnicity⟩ ultimately boils down to the question ⟨how you name yourself in the public sphere⟩ and ⟨how you position yourself with respect to a certain genealogy⟩. This ⟨genealogy⟩ includes a narrative relationship to one's cultural heritage, but it cannot be reduced to ⟨culture⟩. This is one of the major lessons Nadia learned in the AEL. Another lesson was provided by the way this organization was treated by mainstream media and politics, and by the way these processes impacted upon some of her ⟨relationships⟩ to people who knew she was involved with the AEL at the time. This second lesson is discussed in the excerpt below.

NF: ... it shows, it made me realise that, that certain discourses are more powerful than, than personal relationships. Well, ... if [personal] bonds are very strong this may not necessarily be the case, but you, ... Well, [it showed me] that the personal is really political, that the political can really become personal, that discourse can even corrupt personal relationships It uhm, ... [showed me] how they [discourses] can influence thoughts, how they [can influence] the positionings of people, ... people who are all supposedly critical and independent, and no one is exempted from this [principle]. And uhm, well, I'm not easily impressed by people who claim they are critical intellectuals or anything like that any more. You know ... ? I don't really believe this story any more. Myself included I really realise that we are very much shaped by what we see, and by our context, and by what we read, and no one stands apart in this And uhm, and well, it's really, [at the AEL] you could see this from the front row, so I am very glad I was able to experience something like this It's really an education, a very important education.

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In the excerpt above, Nadia metapragmatically comments on the relationship between ⟨power⟩, ⟨discourse⟩, and ⟨politics⟩. To her, the AEL experience demonstrated how discourse and the power relationships it generates ⟨can even corrupt personal relationships⟩. Moreover, it may even influence the ⟨thoughts⟩ of people who consider themselves to be ⟨critical intellectuals⟩ such as herself. As such, Nadia displays a high degree of metapragmatic awareness with respect to the way in which discursive and political contexts may shape individuals. In alignment with her Foucaultian framework, her statements underscore the fact that power and discourse function as technologies of the self, for better or for worse. In this sense, her experiences and analyses with respect to the AEL provided her with an ⟨important education⟩.

The lessons drawn on the basis of her analysis of AEL related events may have been useful to Nadia, they also triggered feelings of ⟨distrust⟩ and an oppositional attitude with respect to the ⟨establishment⟩. She explicitly refers to the criminalizing statements made by prime Minister Guy ⟨Verhofstadt⟩ during the parliamentary discussion about the presupposed responsibility of the AEL for the riots following the murder of Mohamed Achrak. Below, Nadia explains how during such events, ⟨power becomes visible in a naked way⟩. As such, the AEL story contributed to her awareness of ⟨the so-called border-zone⟩ of the ⟨democracy⟩ she grew up in. We noticed before how the various eye-openers discussed by Nadia basically functioned as dislocations for the world-views she held up to that point. In the excerpt below, she highlights the fact that such dislocations also imply an emotional response. More specifically, feelings of ⟨distrust⟩ with respect to ⟨media⟩, to ⟨politics⟩, and to ⟨the establishment⟩ in general were triggered.

NF: what the AEL meant to me is that even with respect to one's own institutions over here, ... that you basically see the so-called border-zone of the democracy wherein you find yourself for the first time ... that power becomes visible in a naked way, and that it's not about the well-being of everyone, but really strictly about the conservation [of power] And uhm, ... And yes, it's a kind of fundamental crisis [of trust] ... in everything associated with the establishment ... I think it basically boils down to that [A crisis of trust] in the media, in politics, as well as in the legal system You start to question these things fundamentally, and you realise that in the end, everything's a story about power relationships. And, and, ... this does not mean that it is [about individual] *people*. So, I think this is when I realised this In the years after that, this insight really translated itself into a kind of anti-attitude on my part, like, like uhm ... distrust, a real distrust.

JZ: With respect to?

NF: With respect to the establishment, with respect to everything Whereas today, I wouldn't say I am in a better phase yet, but I ... still have this distrust, I still don't trust it, but I do make a distinction between people

excerpt 221 – 22/08/2008

Even though Nadia still acknowledges feelings of ⟨distrust⟩ intertwined with her current subjectivity, she also acknowledges the advent of a new ⟨phase⟩ in her socio-political awareness. In the excerpt below, we can see an outline of the associated sense of politics. Gradually, Nadia came ⟨to see the humanity of things⟩. Referring to the moment of our interview, she explains how she is ⟨now able to frame⟩ her previous confrontations with ⟨power⟩ and the associated play of ⟨interests⟩. Even though she still acknowledges the relevance of the various societal logics criticized in the excerpts above, she highlights the fact that she does not consider everything in ⟨mechanic⟩, ⟨automatic⟩, and ⟨abstract⟩ terms anymore. This is also one of the reasons why she is ⟨increasingly taking into account⟩ ⟨who⟩ she is when making her analyses (see excerpt 219). Her own ⟨humanity⟩ as well as those of others are becoming more central to her preferred mode of subjectivity and politics.

NF: but, but, you start to, the humanity, in the end it's like this, you simply start to see the humanity of things It's not all mechanic, and automatic, and abstract any more In the last instance, it also has to do with interests and with, this also plays a big role, ... [but] now I am able to frame all of this, whereas five years ago, I wasn't able to frame this at all. To me, it was like, well, it was really shocking, it really was. I was distressed by it all. Because, well, you grow up with this story, ... "you are in Western Europe, in a democracy, ... in a haven of, of, of well-being" But basically, it isn't that different, and you realise ever more that it is isn't really that different with respect to other non-European countries the only difference is that the West is prosperous, ... they have money and because of that they can pay for their facilities But merely looking at, at, at, thought on uhm power, or about the well-being of the population, and things like this, ... it isn't any more developed than other countries. It is evident that you would have more facilities in Morocco if people were able to afford them, and of course, the doctor would like to treat everyone, treat everyone free of charge , ... but unfortunately you're in a system where the doctor can hardly afford for drugs himself. So, if you don't by your own medicine, he cannot treat you, it's as simple as that That's really tough, but that's the way it is. But fundamentally, there's no difference This is basically the insight that makes you re-

think, ... this entire story about ... 'first world', 'third world', 'white', 'underdeveloped countries' and 'developed', ... you start to question all of these paradigms you grew up with, ... and this is basically what happened between my ... twenty-two and twenty-five, perhaps twenty-six years of age. I started to question all these paradigms I grew up with. (laughs)

excerpt 222 – 22/08/2008

From her current position, Nadia is able to reframe her subjectivity as it developed during her AEL years. As such, the associated mode of ⟨activism⟩ is marked by an ⟨anti-attitude⟩ on her part. This reflective position also allows her to comment upon the way her ⟨activism⟩ evolved during the years following her ⟨first act of activism⟩. She comments that these years were marked by a critical examination of the ⟨paradigms she grew up with⟩. The critique of these ⟨paradigms⟩ involves an analysis and an increasing awareness of the way ⟨power⟩ functions. It also involves a variety of large-scale interpretive logics that inform a mode of ⟨activism⟩ that functions as a technology that shapes her sense of self, as well as her sense of others. These logics can be described in terms of the *spatial logic of mobility* discussed before. The various visual metaphors that allow her to articulate her changing political subjectivity may be described in terms of a *visual logic of embodiment*.

There are many other large-scale interpretive logics that could be identified. All of these logics allow Nadia to identify a range of associated processes in the public sphere. As such, these processes negatively identify her sense of self. Her ⟨activism⟩ can be analysed in terms of a reaction against *societal logics of segregation, criminalization, discrimination, and / or consent*. The identification of either logic involves a high degree of critical and metapragmatic awareness. But whatever societal processes may be marked in Nadia's discourse, it is probably useful to conclude our discussion of this interview with an interpretive and political logic she argues for. It should therefore be emphasized that Nadia Fadil's preferred mode of subjectivity is marked an *enunciative logic of inscription* or *articulation* in which the concerns, the perspectives, and the interests of minorities are articulated with and within the various imagined public spheres in which we find ourselves.

Conclusions

This book is a road map. It is a log of a journey that started about five years ago. And even though a map should never be mistaken for the territory, I hope it allows readers to orient themselves with respect to the theoretical and methodological problems that haunt poststructuralist, linguistic pragmatic, and pragmatist approaches to discourse, to the self, and to politics. I also hope it provides some points of orientation for those researchers who wish to develop a useful heuristic for analysing complex socio-political debates and / or large-scale interpretive processes.

On the one hand, this book provides an interpretive and functionalist approach to political engagement. More specifically it investigates the discourse of intellectuals and activists with – mostly – Moroccan backgrounds in Flanders. On the other hand, it deals with a set of problems that are far more general. It addresses questions related to the nature of the self, to the way we construct contexts, to the various strategies we deploy in order to generate meaning, and to the relationships between academic and socio-political modes of speech. It is a book about awareness and selfhood, and about the question how to analyse these things empirically. As such, I hope that my work will be useful to readers who ask themselves similar questions. I also hope that the various case studies presented in this book exemplify the pragmatic value of an interpretive and functionalist approach to political engagement.

I will not use this conclusion to summarise what has been said in other chapters. I would rather take this opportunity to shed some light on issues left implicit throughout this book. These issues pertain to a set of conceptual relationships between values, abstract categories, and processes of misrecognition. They also pertain to the question of how to delineate large-scale socio-political debates and interpretive processes.

At the heart of the minority debate lies a problematic of contextualisation. How do we delineate a debate? What language games are involved? Where do its boundaries lie? And how are these boundaries established? Is it about diversity, about migration, about difference? Or is it about participation, about pluralism, and about globalisation? What topics and what voices provide debates with consistency, if there is such a thing? All of these questions touch upon the issue of how to establish relevant context. How do we fix meaning and how do we establish an imagined common ground? What strategies do we use in order to establish a sense of coherence with respect to the multiplicity of practices and discourses that inform our sense of self and sense of others? I have argued that contextual boundaries are flexible and abstract things established through negotiated interaction. Nevertheless, my emphasis on contextualisation should not be mistaken for a variant of value-free relativism.

If the problematic of contextualisation lies at the heart of the minority debate, so do ethnic labels and abstract categories such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨community⟩, ⟨culture⟩, ⟨politics⟩, ⟨integration⟩, ⟨religion⟩, ⟨nationality⟩, and ⟨citizenship⟩. This is not a coincidence. All abstract categories potentially function as values. As such, they are valued in positive and negative ways by the people who deploy them. We use these categories in order to make sense of our world, both in academic and in political discourse. We value these notions to the extent that we can link them with concrete narratives, practices, and experiences. They acquire meaning as they are put in functional and interpretive relationships with subject positions one may or may not positively identify with. Values are meaningful to the extent that we are able to inscribe them in large-scale interpretive logics that inform our sense of self and sense of others.

It is a folk wisdom that money and politics are two topics that should be avoided in order to guarantee civil interaction among friends and family. Both topics involve *values*, and in both cases, we tend to forget that we value our world in different ways. A non-recognition of each other's usage of abstract

categories can easily be mistaken for a non-recognition of one's system of values. Consequently, few discourse topics can rival discourse about politics and its associated values with respect to its capacity to make an emotional appeal to our sense of self. A lack of awareness with respect to the way interlocutors contextualise socio-political categories is a good way to trigger feelings of misrecognition. This principle is by no means limited to the minority debate or to the discourse of the activists and intellectuals I talked to within the context of this research project. My study of the way my interviewees use abstract categories in order to describe their engagements is indicative of some basic principles characteristic of political language games in general.

If we take a look at the way my respondents discussed feelings of (mis)recognition in explicit and implicit ways, it should be clear that these feelings are triggered by conflicting contextual boundaries. They occur as people are called into subject positions that conflict with their preferred sense of self in specific contexts. Even though I defined context as a flexible and temporal (result of a) discursive process of contextualisation that contributes to interactional clarity and / or to the establishment of common ground, it is equally important to stress the fact that all context is imagined. Once again, this statement should not be mistaken as a relativist slogan. The power to exert control over the definition of context determines the discursive ground on which one moves. A lack of control over the establishment of an imagined common ground is a fertile condition for the (re)production of unequal and anti-emancipatory socio-political relationships. These principles are not limited to the minority debate either, but I do think they are more salient to people within this context.

Identifications with particular ethnic, cultural, religious, and political categories (e.g. Moroccan, liberal, Marxist, Flemish, Arab) always involve identifications with potentially empty signifiers. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that such labels are not necessarily empty to concrete individuals. In fact, a non-recognition of the personal value attached to these categories frequently leads to emotional turmoil. This is why socio-political debates in which our basic interpretive categories are called into question, may well be among the most emotionally challenging speech events. My interviewees exhibited a very high degree of metapragmatic awareness with respect to the usage of such categories. They frequently used linguistic and non-linguistic hedges when using such terms. Moreover, most of them articulated complex theories in order to give meaning to themselves and to their (preferred) sense of politics. A great deal of their socio-political critiques challenged hegemonic understandings of terms such as <culture>, <identity>, <integration>, and <politics>.

All participants of an interactional setting share a responsibility to delineate contextual boundaries in emancipating ways. They share a responsibility to allow each other sufficient room for interpretation, especially where a preferred sense of self is at stake. When this freedom to articulate one's own interpretive frameworks is limited, processes of misrecognition are triggered easily. This can be problematic to the extent that people are forced into identifications that are not functional to their preferred mode of subjectivity. Feelings of alienation are bound to follow. As my analyses demonstrate, processes of misrecognition are rather common among people involved in the Flemish minority debates. This makes sense, since the power to establish contextual boundaries for socio-political interaction is not always distributed equally.

Fortunately, human beings have a powerful set of tools at their disposal to deal with feelings of (mis)recognition. These tools include empathy, theory, and metapragmatic awareness. Empathy allows us to identify ourselves emotionally with others. But without the ability to frame one's particular experiences at a higher level of abstraction, we run the risk of being reduced to mere bodies entrapped in a never-ending emotional chain of stimuli and responses. The more we become aware of the way abstract categories and values function with respect to politics as well as with respect to our sense of self, the more free we will become with respect to the interpretive constraints others project upon us, and vice versa. For this reason, I believe education and theory are invaluable to any mode of informed citizenship. A critical awareness of the socio-political hegemonies that surround us cannot be achieved without these values.

The discourse of my interviewees was marked by a high degree of metapragmatic and political awareness. This observation led to a variety of questions. How can we analyse a multiplicity of contradicting explanative models in which similar abstract categories are being used? All of my interviewees used concepts such as ⟨identity⟩, ⟨culture⟩ and ⟨politics⟩, the very notions that structure the humanities. How do such signifiers function in relation to the self and in relation to one's preferred mode of politics? How does one avoid overpowering the voices of one's respondents if one uses the same categories as an analyst? Moreover, to what extent is it possible to analyse a debate in terms of a large-scale intertextual network in which people construct their political engagements with reference to a multiplicity of concepts, texts, organisations, practices, and each other? And how do we investigate the large-scale interpretive processes of the people structuring the debates under investigation?

Throughout this book, I have argued for an interpretive and functionalist approach to discourse and subjectivity as a useful way to deal with these questions. I have identified the commonalities between various linguistic pragmatic, pragmatist, and poststructuralist approaches to politics and the self. All of these approaches are pragmatic and poststructuralist to the extent that they emphasise the process-based, intersubjective, and indexical functions of language and subjectivity. The various theories of discourse and subjectivity discussed in this book can be framed as theories of articulation. They all focus on the way we establish relationships between semiotic forms and their functions. For these reasons, I argued in favour of an interpretive and functionalist approach to discourse that involves an investigation of the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction, and to the metapragmatic positioning of the interlocutors and voices involved in the speech events under investigation.

As I argued before, doing research on minorities is a precarious and hazardous thing to do. It is especially precarious and hazardous for minority members themselves, since they run the risk of becoming objects of scientific control. An important part of my motivation to construct an interpretive and functionalist heuristic for analysing political engagement was informed by a need to reduce the risk of overpowering the voices of my interviewees. Even though I obviously objectified the discourse of my respondents, and even though I used a great deal of theoretical concepts my interviewees were not aware of, I hope to have rearticulated their discourse(s) in such a way that their words remain functional with respect to their preferred sense of self and sense of politics. At the same time, my analyses were meant to provide an additional perspective to the discourse under investigation.

The risk of projecting my own values, my own frameworks, and my own explanations upon the words of my interviewees is probably most tangible in this section of my book. How does one summarize a large-scale interpretive process of an individual? How does one summarize the various relationships people articulate with respect to themselves, with respect to each other, and with respect to concepts and practices constitutive of a large-scale public debate? What conclusions can be drawn without constructing a stereotypical image of the average intellectual or activist with a Moroccan background in Flanders? I hope my interpretive and functionalist research questions allow for a way to reduce such risks by going through the self-interpretations of the interviewees themselves. This involves an analysis of the ways in which people mark their metapragmatic awareness in discourse.

All of my interviewees exhibited a high degree of critical awareness structured by large-scale interpretive logics. Depending on their conceptual frameworks, their analyses varied in correspondence with their preferred modes of politics and self. I do not consider it to be my task to cast a normative judgement on the analyses made by my respondents. Rather, I have sought to rearticulate the structure of the minority debate(s) from the perspective of my interviewees. As such, this book is an investigation of the various ways in which intellectuals and activists – not Moroccans or any ethnic or religious group – give meaning to their social and political engagements. It is about the way we manage to make our selves and our political projects understood as more or less coherent wholes in spite of the complexities of discourse.

The effectiveness of my interpretive and functionalist heuristic has to be evaluated with reference to its practical value. It is useful to the extent that it allows for a holistic mode of analysis that takes the reflexive, inter-subjective, and process-based aspects of selfhood and politics into account. All of the interviewees cited in this book have read my analyses of their statements. They also provided me with feedback and comments. It is therefore fair to say that my approach has enabled me to rearticulate their voices in such a way that they were able to recognise themselves in my writings. But the ultimate evaluation of the effectiveness of the heuristic outlined in this book has to be made by people who were not involved in the speech events under investigation. It is upon the readers of this book to cast judgement upon the pragmatic value of my work.

GLOSSARY

This glossary contains concepts as used by the author of this PhD project. The definitions included in this list do not necessarily overlap with implicit or explicit definitions of these concepts as used by the participants whose voices are included in this document. This list is meant to clarify the analyses performed by the author of this work.

- Adaptability: “*the property of language which enables human beings to make negotiable linguistic choices from a variable range of possibilities in such a way as to approach points of satisfaction for communicative needs*” (Verschueren 2003: 62) which are contextually established.
- Articulation: (the result of) a performative practice that establishes a relative fixation between a semiotic form and its function in such a way that its identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. Processes of articulation perform key functions in relation to the process of hegemonising a particular discourse or practice. An understanding of articulatory principles is also important to an investigation of the development and performance of a sense of self. Articulatory principles function at all levels of discursive structure and practice (see: Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 113; Torfing 1999: 298; Zienkowski forthcoming).
- Coherence: the result of a cognitive process that structures discourse into a structured and meaningful whole. Coherence is an outcome of the language user’s *Gestalt* creating power. It is not texts that cohere but people who (interactively) make texts cohere. Discourse topic and the various procedures of handling it (introducing, changing, shifting, digressing from it) are prevalent and strong means of (re-)creating coherence (see: Bublitz 2011).
- Cohesion: A semantic concept which refers to “*to relations of meaning that exist within the text*” (Halliday and Hassan 1976: 4 cited in Bublitz 2011) and “*enable one part of the text to function as the context for another*” (Halliday and Hasan 1989: 489 cited in Bublitz 2011). Hence, cohesion is normally a sufficient condition for coherence because it serves as a powerful and suggestive guideline for the hearer’s/reader’s interpretation. Nevertheless, cohesion is neither a sufficient nor a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of coherence (see: Bublitz 2011).
- Context: the flexible and temporal (result of a) discursive contextualisation process that contributes to interactional clarity and/or to the establishment of an imagined common ground by means of indexical processes of meaning generation and/or construction.
- Contextualisation: (the result of) a (meta)pragmatic process which triggers interpretive efforts whereby spatial, temporal, social and/or (inter)textual coordinates of reality are indexed by interactants in order to contribute to interactional clarity and/or to an imagined common ground (see also: R. Bauman and Briggs 1990: 1990; Blommaert 2005: 251; Verschueren 1999: 77).
- Contextualisation cue: a linguistic or non-linguistic form which triggers a contextualisation process by means of indexical processes of inference and interpretation.
- Debate: a public dialogic or multilogic intertextual network in which a variety of subject positions are activated in a political struggle over the impossible fixation empty signifiers that supposedly define a specific discursive element (e.g. a subject position, a policy domain, a political practice, a norm, a value).

- Discourse: any spoken or written variety of language use (Verschueren 1999: 50). The boundaries of discourse are as fluid as the contextualisation strategies that define them. It is therefore possible to treat discourse as an empirical set of data, generated in a specific speech event or language game (e.g. a doctor / patient interaction; a set of newspaper articles; an interview), as well as in terms of a reified set of functional statements about reality (e.g. neoliberal discourse; medical discourse; postmodern discourse). From an interpretive and functionalist point of view, it is important to highlight the nature of the contextual boundaries projected upon these data.
- Empty signifier: A signifier that is so over-coded with meanings that it means everything and nothing at the same time (see also: Laclau 1994b: 44-45; Torfing 1999: 301). Empty signifiers are the topical objects of hegemonic struggle in public debate and in political praxis. They are abstract categories that frequently function as normative values. As such, they are often intertwined with an individual's preferred sense of self, as well as with his or her preferred mode of politics.
- Engagement (political): a practice of discursive (re)articulation of social patterns in a public sphere through imagined collective action
- Entextualisation: (the result of) a process of "*rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit – a text – that can be lifted out of its interactional setting. ... Entextualization may well incorporate aspects of context, such that the resultant text carries elements of its history of use within it*". The principle of entextualisation highlights the detachability of discourse in relation to context. Simultaneously, it implies processes of decontextualisation and recontextualisation (R. Bauman and Briggs 1990: 73-74).
- Form: (the result of) a performance or articulatory practice which is positively observable for interlocutors. Semiotic forms provide us with the means to orient ourselves to and to establish relevant aspects of context or imagined common ground necessary for a meaningful interpretation of intersubjective processes.
- Function: a flexible and temporally established relationship which establishes a context by means of indexical processes of meaning generation.
- Hedging: A hedge make messages indeterminate and convey inexactitude in order to mitigate or reduce the strength of the assertions that speakers or writers make. They highlight the fuzziness, vagueness, emptiness, or polysemy. A hedge may affect the truth-conditions of a proposition (e.g. 'sort of'; 'about'; 'roughly'). It may also introduce fuzziness in the relationship of the speaker's commitment to the propositional content of what is conveyed. A hedge may thus function as an approximator or as a shielding device protecting the speaker from potentially risky claims or other speech acts that might violate conversational maxims. They are the opposite of boosters that emphasises what one believes to be correct and indicate metapragmatic awareness of the normativity of what one is saying (see Hyland 2000: 179; McLaren-Hankin 2008: 639; Verschueren 1999: 193; 2011: 179)
- Ideology: an umbrella term for the totalizing and reductive functions of discourse that involve a practical non-recognition of the contingent and precarious character of discursively constructed aspects of reality. Ideology may function through the establishment of identities as part of a totalizing horizon with universalist pretensions (see: Torfing 1999: 302). It impacts upon the way in which (un-)equal power relations are (re)produced in various socio-political settings. Ideology is an important aspect of our (im)perfect forms of socio-political and (meta)pragmatic awareness. It may be observed in reflexive processes of validating, framing or legitimating attitudes and norms. The ideological function of language use operates in an environment characterized by heteroglossia, the constant interplay between different socio-ideological languages struggling for hegemony (see: Verschueren 1999: 238). A description of

the ideological function of discourse involves an analysis of the way socio-political difference is established. It also involves an analysis of indexical contextualisation processes.

- Imagination: (a result of) a process of mental conceptualisation including a sense of seeing what does not exist anymore, as well as what is not (yet) plainly visible (see also: R. Williams 1983).
- Imagined community: a community in which “*the members will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion*” (Anderson 1983: 6).
- Hailing: the process whereby an individual is addressed in a way that triggers an interactional and ideological response of recognition (see: Althusser 1971a: 48).
- Hegemony: Hegemony is a particular status that a discourse, a practice, a social agent, or an ideology aims to achieve. The notion refers to “*the achievement of a moral, intellectual and political leadership through the expansion of a discourse that partially fixes meaning around nodal points. Hegemony involves more than passive consensus and more than legitimate actions. It involves the expansion of a particular discourse of norms, values, views, and perceptions*” (Torring 1999: 302). It involves persuasive rearticulations of discursive reality.
- Hegemonic claim: a claim by a socio-political actor aimed at a fixation of the socio-political meaning of discursive elements in a reductive, totalising, and universalist way (including the meanings associated with subjectivities, subject positions, statements, narratives, and other dimensions of discursive reality) for all imagined social actors.
- Indexicality / deixis: A semiotic process of generating meaning by means of contextualisation cues that point at spatial, temporal, social and/or (inter)textual coordinates of reality.
- Indexicals / indexical expressions: the aspects of language use which serve as contextualisation cues in order to point at specific locations in spatial, temporal, social or (inter)textual reality. Indexicals or indexical expressions usually function at the linguistic level of morphemes, words or word groups (e.g. pronouns, anaphora, nouns).
- Interpellation: the discursive process whereby individuals are hailed into specific subject positions and corresponding ideologies (see: Althusser 1971a: 48).
- Interpretive functionalism: an approach to discourse that involves an investigation of the functional relatedness of linguistic forms to one another, to the practice(s) of interaction, and to the metapragmatic positioning of the interlocutors and voices involved in the speech event under investigation.
- Intertextuality: “*the property of texts being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth*”. The intertextual may be latent or manifest (Fairclough 1992: 85, 104), i.e. marked metapragmatically or not.
- Interview data: data that are interactively co-constructed in an institutionalised articulatory practice that functions as a technology of the self. It allows interviewees to position themselves in relation to themselves, in relation to an (imagined) public sphere and in relation to the (imagined) entities that populate it. These relationships may be metonymic and/or antagonistic. As such, the interview is a potential site for contestation and / or (re)production of existing socio-political relationships in a co-constructed public sphere.

- Logic: At the most abstract level, the concept of logic refers to “*the rules governing a practice, institution or system of relations between objects, and secondly to the kinds of entities (and their relations) presupposed by the operation of such rules*” (Howarth 2004: 323). Logics are large-scale interpretive patterns informing a preferred mode of subjectivity. They are particular interpretive configurations of functional relationships between subject positions, statements, practices, (sub)topics, or any other aspects relevant to an understanding of self and other. In order to identify and name such logics, one needs to go through the self-interpretations of subjects as marked in discourse.
- Maximum variety sampling: a strategy for generating data that seeks to maximise heterogeneity in the sample. The purpose of maximum variety sampling is to find as heterogeneous a sample as possible. This method is useful when seeking to identify patterns and commonalities which exist across otherwise divergent individuals (see Morse 1994 cited in Powell 1997: 148).
- Meaning construction: meaningful functioning of language which involves a high degree of salience of the language users. The degree of salience may or may not be marked metapragmatically in discourse (see: Verschueren 1999: 8).
- Meaning generation: meaningful functioning of language which does not necessarily involve a high degree of salience and agency on the part of language users. The degree of salience may or may not be marked metapragmatically in discourse (see: Verschueren 1999: 8).
- Metadiscourse: “*Every discourse simultaneously says something in itself (e.g. it describes a particular state of affairs ‘out there’) and about itself, about how that discourse should be interpreted, situated in relation to context, social relations, and so on. Such indexical levels can also be called ‘metalinguistic’ (i.e. about linguistic structure) or ‘metapragmatic’ (i.e. about forms of usage of language)*” (Blommaert 2005: 253).
- Metaphor: a semiotic link between two senses of a lexical item based on a relationship of difference (Geeraerts 1998: 586). It involves mapping one conceptual domain over a different domain (G. Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Metaphors highlight certain meanings while downplaying others. They can function as categorisation devices but also play an important function with respect to creating a coherent relation to one’s sense of self and sense of others (see also: McMullen and Conway 1996).
- Metapragmatics: “*the systematic study of the metalevel, where indicators of reflexive awareness are to be found in the actual choice-making that constitutes language use, is the proper domain of what is usually called metapragmatics*” (Verschueren 1999: 188). The development of one’s metapragmatic awareness with respect to public language use is a necessary condition for the development of one’s political awareness.
- Metapragmatic awareness: a mental awareness of the way an aspect discourse is being used. Like any other reflexive process related to language use, metapragmatic awareness may or may not be marked explicitly in discourse (see: Verschueren 1999: 187-88).
- Metapragmatic marker: a discursive (linguistic or non-linguistic) item that marks mental awareness of the way an aspect of discourse is (or should be) used. Metapragmatic markers are functional entities. Examples of linguistic items with a metapragmatic function include: metapragmatic descriptions, self-referential expressions, discourse markers, particles, sentence adverbs, most shifters (including deictic expressions such as pronouns and tenses), many contextualisation cues (such as prosodic patterns and code-switching), as well as implicit voices functioning in discourse (see also: Verschueren 2004).

- Metonymy: a semiotic link between two meaningful elements whose relationship is one of contiguity rather than similarity (as is the case in metaphor). This contiguity may refer to associations in spatial, temporal, physical, or causal domains. Metonymies come in various forms. They may use a part for a whole; a spatial location for what is located there; a period of time for what happens in that period, for the people that live then, or for what it produces; or a material for the product made from it. It should be noted that all of these relations may be reversed in metonymy – e.g. a whole for a part. This list is far from exhaustive. Metonymy plays an important role in the construction of stereotypes and political discourse since it allows a member of a category to stand for the category itself. (see Chantrill and Scott Mio 1996; Geeraerts 1998; Panther and Radden 2005)
- Negotiability: “... *the property of language responsible for the fact that choices are not made mechanically or according to strict rules or fixed form-function relationships, but rather, on the basis of highly flexible principles and strategies*” (Verschueren 1999: 59). These strategies are highly flexible since negotiability implies indeterminacy in the choice making of both the language producer and the interpreter. Choices, once made can be permanently renegotiated, both at the production and at the interpretation side of the process (Verschueren 1999: 59-61).
- Performance: The connection between forms and functions of signs implies an act or performance that generates the material aspect of a sign. Intersubjectively established signs may therefore serve as an indexes for aspects of interpretive, mental, physical and social reality.
- Performativity refers to the acts performed by means of the stylization of the body in the act of a linguistic or non-linguistic performance (see: Butler 1999: xv).
- Political (the): an analytical category that designates those discursive practices, institutions and relations whose contingency is highlighted by actors within a public sphere.
- Political engagement: a practice of discursive (re)articulation of social patterns in a public sphere by means of imagined collective action.
- Power: Like any other technology, power is a functional relationship that may be deployed in emancipating as well as in dominating ways. Power can be described as “*the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable ... it is the name one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society*” (Foucault 1976a: 93). From an interpretive functionalist point of view, any investigation into power should involve the following questions: *Which (discursive) practices empower what sort of actors, and what (discursive) practices tend to (re)produce and / or legitimize relationships of domination ?*
- Power relationship: a relationship between social elements (e.g. groups, discourses, individuals, subject positions) which is characterized by unequal access to social, cultural, economic or symbolic capital. The configuration of the flows of capital and the corresponding power relationships in (post)modernity are pervasive. They can be both productive and repressive (see: Clycq 2008: 76-77; Foucault 1976a: 92-102).
- Pragmatics: “*the study of linguistic phenomena from the point of view of their usage properties and processes*” (Verschueren 1999: 1). In linguistics, the pragmatic turn involves an increasing emphasis put on the intersubjective, contextual, functional, and interpretive acts we perform when we talk and write.
- Public sphere (the): a spatial metaphor that functions as a reification for a multiplicity of interactional practices through which socio-political relationships can be rearticulated. Public

spheres do not pre-exist interaction and are not unlike Benedict Anderson's imagined communities in which most members will never actually meet each other.

- Reification: the pragmatic treatment of abstractions and/or processes as if they were things, or of subjective phenomena as if they were objective realities (e.g. Huntington's *clash of civilizations*) (see: Hawkes 1996: 110; Verschueren 1999: 178).
- Reported speech: a (re)articulation of discourse generated at a prior occasion, possibly originating from another language user. Direct reported speech occurs when someone refers to another speech situation and (claims to) convey(s) the original speaker's exact words. It implies the articulation of two deictic centers or perspectives – that of the interaction one refers to and that of the current communicative situation (e.g., He looked at her furiously and said 'Why can't you stop it? Really! Why do you go on with this comedy). Indirect reported speech has only one deictic center: that of the actional communicative situation. The point of view of the reported utterance and the report is the same (e.g. He looked at her furiously and asked her why she could not stop it, and why she continued with the comedy). Quasi direct reported speech implies reference to two deictic centers without an explicit reference to another speaker or speech event (e.g. Why couldn't she stop it? Really! Why did she go on with this comedy?) (see: Coulmas 1998: 778-79; Holt 2009).
- Salience: a property of a mental process which designates the degree to which one is reflexively conscious with respect to the process in question. Metapragmatic awareness or salience with respect to language use may or may not be marked by a variety of indexical metapragmatic markers (see: Verschueren 1999: 199).
- Self: a reification of the processes that allow an individual body to (reflectively) position itself as a more or less coherent and whole mind/body in relation to spatial, temporal, social and (inter)textual aspects of (contextual) reality.
- Self-technique: a praxis constitutive for the reification processes informing a particular sense of self. It allows an individual to act upon his or her self, shaping this self throughout the process.
- Speech act: what one does when using language. Austin distinguished between three aspects of speech acts: locutions or acts *of* saying something (the uttering of a string of sounds containing a proposition); illocutions or what is done *in* saying something (e.g. making a promise, issuing a command); and perlocutions or what is done *by* saying something (e.g. I make you believe me, I make you do something) (see: Verschueren 1999: 22-23). Speech acts may or may not be marked by metapragmatic markers of indexicality.
- Subjectivity: an analytical category designating the imperfect awareness we have of aspects, processes, and practices constitutive of our sense of self. Subjectivities can be described with reference to large-scale interpretive logics that articulate subject positions, discourses, and practices to each other. Every subjectivity and every sense of self is potentially characterized by contradictory logics.
- Subject position: a relatively fixed position in semiotic space established by means of spatial, temporal, social and/or (inter)textual forms of deixis. Subject positions are associated with institutional(ised) practices. An individual may (partially) identify his or her self with any subject position that is generated throughout discourse. Every voice and enunciation involves a discursive position from which this utterance is produced. This position may or may not be marked in discourse.
- Social (the): an analytical category that designates discursive practices that are heavily institutionalized, hegemonised and unproblematic to most actors within a public sphere

- Statement: a function of discourse that cannot be reduced to structural criteria. “...*this is because it is not in itself a unit, but a function that cuts across a domain of structures and possible unities, and which reveals them, with concrete contents in time and space.*” (Foucault 1976a: 97-98). The statement is always related to an implicit or explicit enunciation of subject positions.
- Structure: a flexible and temporal analytical category which designates the range of potential options for (discursive) practice for a particular actor, and which is the result of a process of structuration.
- Structuration: (the result of) the (re)production of rules and resources by means of social and/or political practice(s) (see also: Giddens 1990).
- Text: any instance of written discourse (including interview transcriptions).
- Topic: it is useful to make a distinction between local topics (of sentences, utterances, and short discourse segments) and discourse topics (of more extended stretches of discourse). Discourse topics are expressible as noun phrases. It may consist of multiple levels of subtopics. Key lexical items in discourse can be indicative of a topic (Watson Todd 2005: 94). Discourse topics play a crucial role in the establishment of coherence.
- Topic development: the diachronic and interactive dimension of the articulation of a discourse topic. This development can take a variety of forms: (e.g.) (sub)topic initiation, (sub)topic (re)introduction, and/or (sub)topic discontinuation (see also: Wanska and Bedrosian 1985).
- Variability: “*the property of language which defines the range of possibilities from which choices can be made*”. This range of choices cannot be seen as anything static or stable. For instance, “*at any given moment in the course of interaction, a choice may rule out alternatives or create new ones for the current purposes of the exchange*”. Variability involves choices with respect to every level of structure (Verschueren 1999: 56-59). For instance, the use of a particular language, genre, sentence structure, word, sound, prosodic form or strategy alters the range of possibilities for choice-making.
- Voice: the notion of voice functions as an analytical category which points to the simultaneous articulation of: (1) a subject (position) in a discursive performance; (2) a subject (position) in the world outside the text; and of (3) the deictical connection between (1) and (2)

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APPENDIX

BW: en hoe noemt de titel van uw doctoraatsthesis

JZ: uh ja uh de oorspronkelijke titel maar daar ben ik eigenlijk niet meer zo voor te vinden die heet geloof ik zelfs Islamitische politieke identiteiten in uh

BW: oei

JZ: in Vlaanderen ik weet het

BW: (lacht)

JZ: En ik ben der ook compleet van en ik wil der ook compleet van af stappen

BW: Jaja 't bestaat zelfs niet (lacht) 't bestaat niet

JZ: Nee 't is daarmee ... die indruk allez die indruk had ik ook ...

BW: Er is zelfs geen geen Marokkaanse identiteit of Belgische identiteit allez (lacht)

excerpt 1

JZ: Nee daar kom ik ook meer en meer achter ik heb dus als ik de titel zou mogen wijzigen zou ik in alle geval dat Islamitische willen schrappen ... ook omdat als ik met die mensen spreek eigenlijk ... soms wordt Islam als politieke topic eigenlijk besproken soms wel in die gesprekken maar dat is zeker niet het enige wat er aan bod komt of uh ook heel vaak niet 't belangrijkste of het uhm ...

BW: Neen ... spijtig dat dat er een aantal heethoofden dat als belangrijkste element naar voor schuiven en daardoor dat de publieke opinie uiteindelijk een verkeerd beeld krijgt van de rest van de gemeenschap

JZ: Ja

BW: Maar de 't grootste deel van de gemeenschap uh is is kan kan gelovig zijn kan kan Islamiet zijn kan kan maar gaat daarvoor geen uh oorlog aan (lacht) of of of euh

JZ: Nee 't is daarmee de titel ik weet die wekt al direct de indruk van dat dat

BW: 't zijn echt een paar heethoofden ja ja

JZ: In die zin dus euh maar dat is in alle geval niet de bedoeling dat ik dat op die manier zou willen uitwerken euh

BW: Ja

JZ: Dus euh wat dat voor mij eigenlijk uiteindelijk is dat begonnen toen was dat nog niet zo afgebakend euh euh uiteindelijk is het eerder iets van dat ik ga vooral spreken met mensen van een Marokkaanse achtergrond dat wel maar dus inderdaad die engageren zich ook op zo veel verschillende manieren eigenlijk dat euh ... ja de topics en zo verder die aan bod komen en ook de manier waarop dat ze spreken over politiek dat varieert enorm natuurlijk he dus uhm ... en dat wil ik dus eigenlijk vooral ...

excerpt 2

IZ: Jarenlang leeft ge met het idee van een soort van ... dat idee van vechten voor uw eigenheid heb ik altijd wel gehad. Maar iemand die daar zo een heldere kijk op had en die daar zo scherp in kon zijn en zo ... geen zever ... die heel scherp kon stellen van het zit zo en het zit zo. Dat is heel fantastisch om dat mee te maken.

JZ: En wat was je gevoel daarvoor dan?

IZ: Ja, mijn gevoel daarvoor was ... ge bent 13/14 jaar en dan begint dat. Je voelt dat er iets niet klopt, je bent helemaal anders en je voelt aan de andere kant is er een druk om te zijn zoals zij en moet je je eigenheid opgeven om mee te gaan in de ... moppen over Marokkanen, in een zekere levensvisie, in een zekere levensstijl mee te

gaan. En ik heb me daar heel vroeg - tegen afgezet is misschien niet het juiste woord – maar mijn manier om daarmee om te gaan, ik had al heel vroeg moslim-zijn ontdekt en ik begon heel veel te lezen over Islam. En daar kreeg ik voor het eerst een ander beeld van de Islam dan wat je heel de tijd hoort, toen al hè, ik spreek over '95-96.

JZ: Hoe oud ben je eigenlijk?

IZ: 28, ik was dus 14/15 toen ik daarover begon te lezen. Alles wat ik dan begon te lezen over de Islam gaf me dan een soort van zelfwaarde eigenlijk he. Pas op, we hebben hier een geschiedenis gehad waar je best wel fier op kan zijn. Waar best wel heel wat positieve aspecten aan verbonden zijn. Dat is een beschaving met een mooie cultuur, dat heeft heel wat teweeg gebracht. En mijn manier van daar toen mee om te gaan ... als ge ergens expliciet in de verdrukking wordt geduwd als zijnde achterlijk of cultureel achtergesteld ... dat was om dat naar voren te brengen. Maar wat ik heb kunnen leren dankzij de AEL is dat je dat ook niet nodig hebt. Je hoeft niet heel vroom te zijn om een eigenheid te hebben. (this turn continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 3

IZ: (this turn is a continuation of the turn above) En daar zo een heel duidelijke splitsing tussen van 'ik kan moslim zijn en ik kan daar fier op zijn' maar ik kan ook moslim zijn omwille van mijn cultuur. En dat was toch iets wat je voortdurend ... wat ik zag. Ik had bijvoorbeeld een vriend in Leuven en die was heel strikt bezig met Islam. En op een gegeven moment kwam die weer in een geloofscrisis en dat heeft hem dermate doen ontsporen, die raakte daar niet meer uit, die voelde zich wel moslim, maar tegelijkertijd die Vlaamse samenleving die een hele stempel op hem heeft gedrukt en die raakte daar gewoon niet meer uit. Ik denk dat de AEL daar echt een antwoord op had kunnen geven van 'kijk, het is normaal dat als je hier studeert dat je begint na te denken, dat je kritische vragen begint te stellen en dat je geloof daar onderuit kan gaan maar dat je een onderscheid moet kunnen maken tussen je eigenheid identiteit, daarbovenop vroomheid, geloof, heb je dat, dan heb je dat mooi meegenomen, maar het is niet omdat je je geloof verliest, dat je dan helemaal in onmin moet gaan leven met je cultuur en met je godsdienst. En dat zie je bij heel veel allochtonen vandaag de dag he. Vandaag zie je heel veel allochtonen – dat is mijn mening daarover – als je ziet dat inderdaad heel veel moslims geloviger worden, dan is dat een zoeken naar eigenheid, een zoeken naar identiteit, een zoeken naar een plaats die je kan veroveren in deze samenleving. Een eigen plaats zonder dat je veel van jezelf moet gaan opgeven. Maar de vraag is natuurlijk ... het is een beetje jammer dat je daarvoor een geloof nodig hebt. Waarom kan het niet zonder meer, waarom kan je niet gewoon met je eigenheid als identiteit

excerpt 4

IZ: Wat bedoel je met identiteit?

IZ: Ja, gewoon als Marokkaan en gewoon leven in een samenleving, een maatschappij waar mensen u gewoon nemen gelijk ge zijt.

JZ: Waarom denk je dat dat soort van individuele identiteitsontwikkeling minder aantrekt dan ...

IZ: Omdat je wordt verdrukt. Juist omwille van je Marokkaans zijn heb je dan in deze samenleving. Welke keuze heb je dan nog?

JZ: En is het dan Marokkaan zijn of moslim zijn of een combinatie ... ?

IZ: Een combinatie, ik denk niet dat je dat zo heel strikt van mekaar kan scheiden. Marokkaan zijn betekent voor een stuk Arabisch of Berbers spreken, ik ben daar niet zo voor om daar een grens ... Wat ik wel weet is dat bij de strekking van moslims die vroom zijn, dat zij altijd zullen proberen de scheiding te maken van 'je hebt aan de ene kant de traditionele Islam, maar wij zijn anders, wij zijn moderne moslims, wij zijn een vernieuwde Islam ...'

JZ: Wat zien ze dan zelf als de traditionele Islam?

IZ: Wel, de Islam van hun ouders uit Marokko, mensen die geen opleiding hebben gehad, die hun Islam maar hebben gekregen van hun ouders en de dorpsimam. 'maar we zijn niet zo, we zijn moderner' en dat moet dan een soort van legitimatie zijn voor hun moslim-zijn. Wat ik echt bullshit vind. Want je geeft weer toe aan hetzelfde mechanisme want je bent weer anders en je zult toch je best moeten doen, je zult toch moeten afkomen met iets waarmee je laat zien dat je toch beschaafd bent. En hun manier is om te zeggen van 'kijk we grijpen terug naar de fundamenteën van de Islam en als je daar gaat kijken dan zijn daar toch een aantal wetenschappelijke argumenten en dat wordt bevestigd door de wetenschap. Ik vind dat een stap te veel. Het blijft een soort van mea culpa dat je doet. De ander die vraagt van je bent niet goed genoeg en kom maar met iets af. Terwijl ik iets heb van of je nu moslim bent of niet, of je dat actief beleeft of niet, je bent wie je bent, met een culturele bagage ... naar mijn idee was dat de strijd van de AEL.

excerpt 5

NE: Mijn job en de job van al mijn collega's is dagelijks door uhm ... pakken vooroordelen heen waden en proberen er toch iets van te maken (lacht)

JZ: Mmh

NE: Ik hoor van uhm beleidsmakers en van journalisten en van politici van allochtone jeugdwerking van allez waar is dat goed voor ge sluit u op in jullie eigen identiteit waarom gaat gij gewoon niet bij de scouts en de chiro

JZ: Mmh

NE: Dan denk ik van allez jom word eens wakker (lacht) die zijn daar niet welkom dat is niet aangepast aan hen ... dat is dat is een evolutie dus als het over heel dat thema integratie gaat ... zit men denk ik in Vlaanderen met een identiteitscrisis ...

JZ: Mmh

excerpt 6

NE: Men zit hier met een schizofreen fenomeen men zegt van wij willen integratie bevorderen maar men wil assimilatie

JZ: Mmh

NE: Men noemt het integratie maar de maatregelen die men voorstelt zijn assimilatie ... het beeld dat men ophangt bij nieuwe inburgeraars en bij allochtonen die aangespoord worden om zich te integreren is totaal niet realistisch

JZ: Mmh

NE: Als ge gewoon kijkt naar wat er leeft in de maatschappij het beeld van de publieke opinie ... jij komt hier naar België ... leer Nederlands ... volg een inburgeringscursus en alle deuren staan voor u open en ge wordt gelijkgesteld je hebt he alle kansen die al je landgenoten ook he al die landgenoten hier in België hebben ... dat is niet zo ... tuurlijk het is goed dat men zich inburgert he (lacht) daar heb ik geen probleem mee maar we moeten ook niet doen he alsof iemand die en inburgeringscursus doet of he die zijn kinderen aanspoort om een goeie opleiding te volgen of vlot Nederlands spreekt actief is in de vereniging of vriendelijk is tegenover zijn burens netjes op tijd zijn belastingen buiten zetten het huisvuil op de juiste dagen buiten zetten ... dat die niet wordt gediscrimineerd (lacht) ...

JZ: Jaja

NE: Of dat die he niet eh zich niet aangesproken wordt euh aangesproken voelt door die negatieve verhalen en door door heel die perceptie daar rond ... dus ik denk dat Vlaanderen op dat vlak met zichzelf in het reine moet komen ... (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 7

JZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) Mmh

NE: We hebben het ook gemerkt we kennen de geschiedenis van Vlaanderen ook natuurlijk he ik bedoel euh Vlaanderen is nooit met zichzelf in het reine gekomen uhm wat betreft de collaboratie en da's al ik weet niet hoe lang geleden maar men moet misschien ook met zichzelf in het reine komen of het veranderende het beeld het steeds veranderende beeld het Vlaanderen van nu is niet meer het Vlaanderen van Louis Paul Boon en de Kappellekesbaan eh we zitten hier niet meer in de jaren stillekes ...

JZ: Mmh

NE: Vroeger had men daar een eenduidig beeld rond he in de jaren '50 ja nen Belg dat was nen Vlaming of ne Franstalige (lacht)

JZ: Mmh

NE: Nu nen Belg dat kan iemand zijn met allochtone roots dat kan iemand he dat kan ... het de definities die men hanteert en het geromantiseerde of het geïdealiseerde beeld dat men bij zichzelf heeft over de Vlaming he of de hard werkende Vlaming of de Belg is niet aangepast aan de hedendaagse realiteit en daar alleen al wringt het voor een stuk het schoentje ... als sommige politici zeggen van wij gaan voor de hard werkende Vlaming dan voelen heel wat hard werkende allochtone Vlamingen zich daardoor niet aangesproken hoor ...

JZ: Ja met dat communautaire ook (lacht)

NE: Ja we staan daar vol verbazing naar te kijken (lacht) he maar dat zijn landgenoten he hetzelfde bloed he euh ze lusten mekaar niet dat geeft dan te denken wat zullen ze over ons denken dan ... goed ik weet het is genuanceerder dan dat zelf zie ik het ook euh zo niet heb ik ook wel een aantal ideeën van Vlaams euh van de Vlaamse beweging die ik wel kan appreciëren maar ik zeg het heeft te maken met perceptie ... als men praat over van he voor alle Vlamingen hardwerkende Vlamingen dan herkennen allochtonen zich daar niet vaak in he

JZ: Mmh

NE: Als men in het nieuws heeft over ons land dan ziet men dat vaak zo niet maar men herkent zich heel duidelijk in allochtonen hebben die en die problemen allochtonen moeten verantwoordelijkheid nemen allochtonen moeten conclusies trekken ... en dat maakt het heel moeilijk er is geen dialoog er is een kloof er zijn aanzetten sommige partijen nemen initiatieven sommige organisaties en groepen nemen initiatieven om bruggen te slaan maar het is niet altijd wat het zou moeten zijn of het is ook niet wat het zou kunnen zijn dat potentieel is niet ten volle aangeboord en dat is ook nodig om een dialoog te hebben tussen verschillende gemeenschappen. En allochtonen voelen zich opgejaagd. Men heeft onderzoek gedaan naar het onveiligheidsgevoel van de Vlaming. Men moet eens dringend onderzoek doen naar het onveiligheidsgevoel bij allochtonen.

excerpt 8

NE: Ge moet eens kijken naar het nieuws ... een moslimman he ... men heeft een hele nieuwe woordenschat uitgebouwd men neemt het predicaat moslim en dan neemt men een doorsnee Vlaams woord en dan koppelt men dat aan soms voor de fun zijn ik er zelf een aantal aan het bedenken he een moslimhuisdier he je kan dat met vanalles combineren ... een moslimman ... en het is echt gewoon bedroevend het is intriestig ... beeld je in dat men in de andere landen (lacht) in Oost Afrika dat men spreekt van een Christenland he dat roept dat doet denken aan (lacht) de kruistochten ... een moslimvrouw ... een moslimrestaurant een moslimkeuken een moslimreis een moslimhuis een moslimorganisatie ik zeg het the sky is the limit een moslimhoofddoek ge kunt dat met vanalles combineren en telkens zoomt men daarop in en focust men daarop

JZ: Mmh

NE: En herleidt men he uhm hoe heet dat nu weeral ... een *pars pro toto* he ... men herleidt het persoon tot het hoofddoekje of tot een stukje van zijn identiteit dat hem maakt ... uhm wat dat hem tot moslim maakt he alsof uhm iedereen die ik ken die in de christelijke traditie is grootgebracht of zelfs deels praktiserend is men voortdurend aanspreekt als christen en aanspreekt op zijn christelijke of katholieke identiteit uhm ... of dat men vrouwen voortdurend aanspreekt op hun geslacht he of uhm of holebi's op hun geardeid dus het is het is het is gewoon absurd maar het is blijkbaar een teken des tijds ...

excerpt 9

BB: maar goed ... over sommige zaken kunt ge het niet hebben ... anderzijds ... we leven ook in een zeer individuele of individualistische samenleving we moeten ons niet ... niet denken dat allochtonen ... dat dat een bepaalde community is he dat is imagined ook ... dat is een community die gemaakt is via taal het woord allochtoon creëert een gemeenschap maar die zien mekaar niet als gemeenschap een allochtoon kan vanalles zijn he en zelfs moslims ... de moslimgemeenschap bestaat niet in België he die heeft nooit bestaan ... dat is iets wat gecreëerd is van bovenuit ... dat merkt ge vooral in Europa want ... er bestonden geen Islamitische structuren die zijn gemaakt in het leven geroepen geweest waardoor ... het is een self-fulfilling prophecy die creëren een Islamitische gemeenschap die is hier niet de facto de Islam is een zeer protestantse godsdienst in feite het is een zeer individuele godsdienst snapt ge ... dus die organisatie voor ... maar dat zal wel komen dat begint he met amateuristische lobbygroepen zoals de AEL en zo wel zelforganisatie dat is positief dat zijn jongere amateuristen maar dat gaat nog komen ... in Nederland is men een pak verder in Frankrijk ook ... goed ... hij die daar belang bij heeft moet dat belang publiek verdedigen.

excerpt 10

MI: (Lacht) ja maar dan heb ik efkes in het verzekering gewerkt en heb ik ook ergens ja als euh juridisch consultant ook gewerkt maar dan bleek na een tijd dat mijn ding niet was (lacht) maar ik heb wel eigenlijk heel veel daaraan gehad aan die studies rechten en dan ja da's ook de reden waarom ik nu terug eigenlijk naar mijn eigenlijke passie teruggegaan ben kunst en cultuur ... en vanuit kunst en cultuur uhm dan denk ik dat eigenlijk uhm ... ook een instrument is om de ... omdat in een clichéwoord te zeggen de dialoog he de verstandhouding tussen culturen tussen gemeenschappen enzovoort op een andere manier aan bod te laten komen dan via uhm via debat en politiek debat omdat er binnen uhm politiek debat politiek meestal eigenlijk polariserend he tegenstrijdige meningen enzovoort in kunst zit is 't ook maar het is op een andere manier op iets meer fijn maar meer iets op een originele manier uh ... dus eigenlijk wanneer eigenlijk een kunstenaar uit Marokko dus hier in uh het Muhka het museum voor hedendaagse kunst over Marokko dat is totaal iets anders dan wanneer wij eigenlijk een debat zouden houden

over de moderniteit in Marokko bij wijze van spreken uhm ... dus 't is eigenlijk wat dat mij een beetje met een beetje zo met uh ja ... uh passioneert zo hoe de kunstenaars he de kunstenaars die meestal zijn voor op hun tijd (lacht)

excerpt 11

JZ: Wat ik aan de meeste mensen vraag eigenlijk, is of dat ze, om te beginnen, welke dingen, waar ze zich op politiek vlak mee bezig houden in het algemeen he

SA: Ja

JZ: dus of er bepaalde onderwerpen zijn die dat, waar – ik weet niet – je ge u feller mee bezig houdt dan met anderen, ...

SA: Ja, bij ons was het dan vooral, ik heb ook in een aantal verenigingen zelf gezeten, dat was vooral de integratie van de zogezegd de Marokkaanse gemeenschap dat altijd een heuse, ja, discussie voortbracht. En dat was eigenlijk vooral dat ons interesseerde, dat was ook altijd in groep omdat wij ons het meest tot // dat *

excerpt 12

JZ: En zie je dat dan een beetje, allez als ge naar de evolutie kijkt van hoe het debat wat geëvolueerd is sinds dat ge u daarmee bezig houdt (.) in welke richting hebt ge het gevoel dat dat uitgaat?

SA: Wel ik zie niet echt een positieve evolutie wat betreft het politieke debatten die gaande waren (.) uhm in de eerste plaats kont ge wel zeggen van kijk zo niet (.) ge treedt dan in discussie met zogezegde partijen die daar wel iets aan kunnen doen (hh) maar uiteindelijk blijft het besluit hetzelfde // =

JZ: mm

SA: = dat was ook de discussie dat ik had met mijnheer Van den Broecke, uiteindelijk had 'm ook gezegd van ja kijk we zijn de integratiedienst wij staan zogezegd aan de kant van de Marokkanen Turken en andere allochtone gemeenschappen // (hh)

JZ: Mmh

SA: maar uiteindelijk als ge kijkt naar de beslissingen die daaruit werden getrokken of althans de maatregelen die werden getroffen dan hadde dat gevoel totaal niet (.)

JZ: mmh

SA: dan was het eigenlijk gewoon een dekmantel om te zeggen van 'kijk, jullie hebben ook wel inspraak jullie kunnen ook doen en zeggen wat jullie willen (.) en het gaat dan niet enkel over hoofddoek het gaat ook over andere zaken uh van milieu tot belastingen toe (hh)

excerpt 13

SA: Ja* er moest eerst de overheid daar tussenkomen om is na te gaan of ge wel geschikt waart en dan is even te bekijken of ge u wel kandidaat moogt stellen (.) uhm de Marokkanen voelden zich zeker een beetje gekrenkt ook uhm qua vrijheid omdat ze niet mochten kiezen uhm van ok, ik wil een kandidaat nemen zoals 'm is en dan mag 'm waarschijnlijk een beetje radicaal overkomen ten opzichte van de overheid maar de overheid moet zich niet bezig houden met godsdienstige zaken en daar was dan die tweestrijd weer (.) aan de ene kant hadden ze wel gelijk maar aan de andere kant kon het moeilijk omwille van het klimaat dat aanwezig was (.) 11 september en dergelijke dus ge zat wel uiteindelijk vast (.) en als ge dan zegt van volledige vrijheid (.) die is zo volledig niet (.) uhm ik denk dat er meestal wordt gesproken over de democratie (.) is ook niet aanwezig want ge moogt niet kiezen wie dat ge wilt (.) er wordt eerst een selectie = dat wordt niet gedaan bij andere partijen (.) ze kiezen zelf wie ze naar voren brengen en dan mogen de leden stemmen (.) er wordt geen dossier naar boven gehaald om te zeggen van kijk, zullen we eens even nagaan of dat ze in de gevangenis hebben gezeten (hh) of zullen we eens nagaan of ze bepaalde connecties hebben met bendes dat wordt volledig niet gedaan (hh) maar bij dan de Marokkaanse en Turkse gemeenschap werd dat wel volledig gedaan moesten vervolgens een hele screening ondergaan (hh) en toen hadden zij zoiets van ok (.)

JZ: en was dat bij de Turkse minder(?) of

SA: Ik vond dat bij de Turkse minder ja. Maar dat was vooral (.) ik weet niet waarom dat dat komt maar ik denk dat Marokkanen vooral worden aangevallen als er iets negatiefs gebeurt en de Turken minder (hh) en dat komt vooral doordat de Turkse gemeenschap iets minder open is dan de Marokkaanse gemeenschap en dan ziet ge er veel minder van (.) ik bedoel wij komen daarvoor uit als er bepaalde dingen zijn we houden dan ook discussies en we vinden dat maar al te goed als wij aanhoord willen worden door andere partijen (hh) daar de Turken toch iets meer gereserveerd zijn op dat vlak waarbij ze zeggen van kijk dit is jullie leefwereld de algemene leefwereld en dit is dan onze leefwereld (hh) en dus dan op vooral ook ik denk dat er toch wel een aantal Turken zijn die minder met de hoofddoek rondlopen of minder uitgesproken meningen hebben en die zich meer on the low houden dan de Marokkaanse gemeenschap en uiteindelijk wordt ge daar ook wel op afgerekend als ze zeggen van kijk ge hebt een te grote mond (.) uiteindelijk komt de overheid dan meer tussen (.) dan moogt ge op zich zo gezegd door de overheid zelve niet meer klagen want ge hebt er zelf achter gezocht (.)

excerpt 14

SA: (this excerpt is a continuation of an ongoing turn) Groen dat vond ik gewoon (.hh) ik denk dat Groen een van de partijen is waar ik mij wel uh politiek geëngageerd zou voelen (.) ook al is het een autochtone partij en autochtone bestuurders (.) een voorzitter op zich hebben zij wel bepaalde zaken waaronder het milieu waar ik helemaal honderd procent voor kan geven waarbij zij ook zeggen van ja kijk de hoofddoek is voor ons geen probleem (.hh) jullie zijn mensen zoals geen anderen ofdat jullie een hoofddoek dragen of niet dat kan voor ons op zich voor ons geen probleem vormen (.hh) dus ik zou mij in zulk een partij wel zien (.) zelfs actief aan mee zien deelnemen (.hh) en wie weet waar dat ze het uh waar dat ze hoe ver dat ze het gaan schoppen voor mij is dat natuurlijk dan al goed meegenomen (.) dus (.) ik vind dat op zich gewoon fantastisch dat is nu het evenbeeld van een partij (.hh) dat diversiteit naar voren kan brengen waaronder ook integratie (.) en eigenlijk kan zeggen van kijk wij werken hier samen met andere gemeenschappen en wij kunnen wel gaan (.hh) voor een rustige harmonieuze gemeenschap zoals ze het hier noemen in Antwerpen maar ik denk dat dat in andere partijen waaronder de VLD en SPa minder kan (.) omdat zij eerder allochtonen gebruiken als een boegbeeld (.hh) zodat ze stemmen zouden injuven in plaats van eigenlijk echt (.) dat ze geloven in een gemeenschap waarbij de gemeenschappen rustig kunnen samenleven naast elkaar (.)

excerpt 15

JZ: En zoudt ge zo ver gaan allez stel dat ik dat nu zou interpreteren als een politiek project is dat is dat ... lijkt u dat legitiem om zoiets te zeggen ... want ...

MI: Boh politiek ik denk dat bijna alles politiek is he (lacht)

JZ: Ja ik vroeg me dat af ja ik zie dat ook zo maar ik vroeg me af of dat ge 't ermee eens waart

MI: Neen ik ... ik vind dat .. neen ik doe dat niet omdat dat eigenlijk een uhm ja in eerste instantie ik bedoelde dat ik doe het omdat ik het mooi vind he omdat ik zelf eigenlijk gepassioneerd ben door die dingen he door die verhalen van die kunstenaars dat is de eerste eigenlijk denk ik beweegreden en ik denk dat dat in tweede instantie is dat inderdaad om eigenlijk een leemte te vullen die eigenlijk in euh in kunstlandschap eigenlijk is ... dus op zich ja .. dat heeft wel een ... het ontstaan eigenlijk van euh van van die werking ... is ook mee ingegeven door eigenlijk een politieke zou ik zeggen he ... uhm achtergrond beweegreden maar dat is niet ... de essentie ... de essentie gaat het eigenlijk over kunstenaars die iets kunnen vertellen ... over over zichzelf over uh hun land over hun situatie enzovoort he ... maar .. het raakt binnen de context de politieke constellatie waarin dat wij zitten heeft dat ook altijd een politiek

JZ: inderdaad

MI: denk ik lading maar dat is niet essentieel aan het project ... dus niet euh

JZ: neen ik vroeg me gewoon af hoe dat ge daar zelf tegenover staat ... (this turn continues but a topic shift occurs)

excerpt 16

JZ: misschien kunnen we misschien best beginnen met eum, met bijvoorbeeld hoe dat jij nu, misschien vandaag, wat jou op politiek vlak een beetje bezig houdt. Wat dat jij misschien ...

MI: je spreekt eigenlijk veel over politiek he, je spreekt over veel politiek maar ...

JZ: ... wat dat ik als politiek zie is heel breed eigenlijk , allez, voor mij persoonlijk dus he, ik bedoel eigenlijk eerder zo de, ja, dingen die op maatschappelijk vlak, euh, ja, hoe zal ik het zeggen. Ik heb daar een, ja, ik heb daar een bepaald idee van, maar het gaat over, voor mij wanneer ik over politiek spreek is eerder van de euh, in principe kan alles politiek zijn...

MI: ehe

JZ: ... de vraag is wat dat mensen de moeite vinden om maatschappelijk aan te kaarten, zo...

MI: ehe

JZ: ... daar zie ik politiek in.

excerpt 17

ja, ja, ja. Maar wat zie jij bijvoorbeeld in mij? Heel belangrijk is, je kiest toch ook de personen he...

JZ: ja, wel, ...

MI: ... met wie je gaat praten he? vrouwen en mannen, en euh, je komt niet zomaar aan, aan, aan de gewone mens, alle, gewone mens, ik bedoel, de modale, euh, jan met de pet, he, je gaat naar mensen die iets met, met, met de maatschappij, of die iets gedaan hebben of, of, of ergens in een structuur werken of, of, of

JZ: ja, maar de reden waarom dat ik aan jou had eigenlijk dat was eigenlijk vooral om te beginnen met die reportage...

MI: ja

JZ: ... die je had gemaakt, dacht ik ook, ja dat doet die ook niet zomaar, euh, alle, ik ging er toch vanuit, euh, alle, als je om te beginnen inderdaad gewoon naar mainstream tv kijkt enzoverder...

MI: ja

JZ: ... dat soort euh, thema's, als die thema's al aan bod komen zijn zo, worden zo kort en zo compact belicht dat zo een hele reportage, waar wel veel tijd en energie in zal kruipen neem ik aan, dat dat toch van een zeker engagement op de een of andere manier getuigt. Vermoedde ik he, ik weet niet of dat ge dat zelf ook zo ziet. Maar, euh, zo kwam dat bij mij over.

MI: ja, dat is zeker, euh, euh, zeker niet vergist, eum, maar mijn engagement is eigenlijk een hele kleine engagement, want ik zelf ...

JZ: ehe

MI: dat is mijn mening, euh, waarom, omdat er eigenlijk alles ... over verteld is, over gezegd. Alles is natuurlijk ook heel veel, he tussen haakjes, maar er is, er wordt over geschreven, er wordt over gebabbeld, maar ik wou, of wil, een, een, een mening. En dat is, weet ge mijn verhaal is eigenlijk een mening geven, mijn mening in de zin van het maken van die film, dat is mijn mening, op zich, voor mij ...

excerpt 18

MI: ... ja, ja, ik spreek over mezelf natuurlijk, eum, eenmaal begonnen is er geen houden aan, is er geen, ja, stoppen aan, dat, dat gaat niet. Documentaire maken, ik wil documentaire maken, documentaires, reportages maken, van de sociale omgang, de mensen, hun verhaal, euh, enzovoort, want ik vind zelf dat ik via deze bijdrage mij nuttig kan maken, daar gaat het allemaal om en nuttig maken maak, voor, euh, voor de gemeenschap. Euh, voor alle gemeenschappen die hier zijn, en dat is mijn overtuiging, dat is mijn politieke opvatting als je over politiek spreekt. Dat is mijn politiek, want ik heb eigenlijk geen richting, ik heb geen kleur in politiek, vandaag, euh, kan ik op SPa stemmen, morgen op Groen!, euh, overmorgen op euh, liberalen, ja, voor mij is de persoon die belangrijk is of die iets gedaan heeft daar ga ik op stemmen, niet om, om, om politieke kleur te hebben, ik heb geen politieke kleur, ja, dat is, dat is ook mijn, ja, politiek is voor de mensen zijn. Dat is het, voor de mensen zijn, zo veel informatie geven, wij zijn heel blij dat er nu een educatief pakket wordt gevormd, euh, dat maakt deel uit eigenlijk van de film. De film is een onderdeel van dat educatief project en we gaan die proberen brengen in verschillende scholen want de scholen, ook voor hun leerlingen, ja meerwaarde heeft, de geschiedenis van de eerste generatie Marokkanen is onbekend. Is totaal, daar wordt niet over gesproken, en toch, de meeste, in de meeste scholen zitten toch relatief, zeker hier in 't Antwerpse, relatief veel Marokkaanse kinderen, ja. En die kinderen kennen hun afkomst niet. Ja, dat sta nergens in boeken geschreven, dat kunde niet terug vinden. Wie zijn wij? Ja, Marokkanen, maar hoe zijn wij hier geraakt? En wat is er gebeurd vroeger? Enzovoort, ja, dat weten wij niet.

excerpt 19

MC: (this is a continuation of an ongoing turn) kijk doorsnee Marokkanen zijn niet zo politiek bewust die hebben echt veel gemeen met de Vlamingen echt veel gemeen ... ge kunt niet zeggen apolitiek maar oh politiek allemaal ... zeveraars ... nu kennen wij een redelijk grote aanhang maar dat heeft lang geduurd hoor

JZ: mmh

MC: dat is politiek laat me gerust jonge ...

JZ: Zien ze FMV bijvoorbeeld ook als politiek dan ...

MC: Ja ... politiek van uhm totdat ze hier komen hun dochter of zoon met school ook krijgen we heel veel gevallen van echt uhm ... een vraag van de leerkrachten of allochtone leerlingen ... en dan zeggen ja ge moet opkomen voor uw ... voor uw kinderen he ... en ge moet u organiseren en en doe iets rond 't onderwijs enzovoorts enzovoort en dat lukt best goed en dan kunnen we zeggen gelijk nu we zijn met de vrijwilligers denk ik met honderd man begonnen en nu kennen we tegen de duizend ... mensen die erop afkomen en dat zijn allemaal leden ... daar zeg ik het verenigingsleven groeit en bloeit en dat is belangrijk ... dat is belangrijk want zo kunt ge zo groepsgewijze emancipatie ... ik geloof niet zo direct zo niet in pure individuele emancipatie maar dat is zo ne dat dat ik vond dat een beetje te liberaal ... terwijl individuen die moeten we plaatsen binnen de groep maar dat liberale gedachte leidt soms tot egoïstische uhm en dat hebben de Marokkanen gemeen met de Vlamingen Marokkanen zijn in wezen eigenlijk allemaal individualisten ...

excerpt 20

NF: ja ...ja ja die gaan ook niet naar elkaars activiteiten he ...

JZ: dus de religieuze en de socio culturele

NF: Ja die gaan ook niet naar elkaar veel naar elkaar ... tenzij dat er echt iets gebeurt zoals weet ge rond ... rond de moord uhm van uhm die aanslag van Hans van Themsche ... toen is er echt wel een heel brede samenwerking geweest tussen verschillende ... ik denk dat JVI toen ook mee gedaan heeft ... maar het is vrij uitzonderlijk

JZ: En ziet ge daar een reden voor of ...

NF: Ideologische verschillen ... maar die niet als dusdanig worden benoemd ..

JZ: Zoals ...

NF: Uhm religieuze verschillen ...

JZ: Ah religieuze ja ok

NF: En politieke verschilpunten ... bijvoorbeeld als het over JVI gaat ... die zijn veel minder met burgerschapskwesties en zo bezig die zijn echt uhm met uhm met uhm het soort van het soort van persoonlijke uhm ... persoonlijke politiek tussen aanhalingstekens ... ik denk niet dat die apolitiek zijn die zijn ook heel politiek maar het passeert via uhm het hervormen van van hun eigen dinges van van van uzelf het hervormen van ... het het leven in lijn van de profeet het leven volgen dus de principes van ... en daaruit vloeit wel ... daarrond een bepaalde gemeenschap community of believers ... opbouwen dus dat is een heel andere manier van aan politiek doen ... dan dan uhm pakt nu dinges een FMV onder andere ... dus ik denk echt ideologische verschillen ... maar ik zou het allez van mij mag het ook benoemd worden hoor dan dan is het ook gewoon dan is het zichtbaar dat er verschillen bestaan in de gemeenschap ... ook voor de ook voor de jongere die ... allez want dat is niet vanzelfsprekend hoor ... denkt ja we zijn allemaal hetzelfde en der is maar een Islam en der zijn ... terwijl dat dat niet is he.

excerpt 21

MEK: da's een verwijt dat hij vaak krijgt ... en dus ... uhm ah als ge als ge kritische mensen daar ... religieuze mensen die toch een beetje kritisch denken dan begrijpen ze ja ik zeg ja ge hoeft toch niet religieus te zijn om actief te zijn ... ah ja ... ge kunt maar de gewone de mensen binnen onze gemeenschappen die kan niet uhm ...

JZ: die zijn daar ...

MEK: ja religieus denken is uhm is uhm ...

JZ: religieus apolitiek dan bedoelt ge of uhm ...

MEK: religieus apolitiek maar ja ... wat is wat is politiek dat is allemaal relatief he

JZ: ja daarmee dat is zo ...

MEK: het feit dat ge gewoon zegt hier in België tegenwoordig ik ben moslim is al een politiek statement he

JZ: mmh

MEK: dus wat is apolitiek

JZ: (lacht)

excerpt 22

MEK: (lacht) dus uhm ja ... mijn motto is ook ik zeg dat ook tegen Karim Hassoun en zo ik zeg alles is politiek ... alles is politiek ... mijn oom zegt ja ik heb mijn religie is Islam of ik ben Marokkaan is al een politieke statement want uhm ge zit in een politiek klimaat he ge zegt ik ben ne Marokkaan ... ik ben een Belg een Vlaming ah waarom zegt gij niet Belg of Vlaming of ... en dat is een politieke statement he maar uhm ik weet wat ge bedoelt apolitiek in de zin van ja activisme

JZ: Georganiseerd of of activisme of

MEK: Activisme ja ... onze gemeenschap is niet actief zo uhm is niet hier in België is niet uhm ... is niet uhm politiek actief of bewust of uhm ... ik denk dat dat generaties alle twee generaties gaat duren voordat dat ... de AEL heeft de eerste stap gezet he en uhm maar uhm ... het is nog maar een eerste stap he dus

JZ: Jaja

MEK: De tweede en derde stap moeten nog gezet worden dus uhm maar politiek actief is onze gemeenschap niet ...

excerpt 23

JZ: dus ik hanteer dan ook ... een brede definitie van politiek eigenlijk zo ...

AA: ja ja ja ja dat is mooi

JZ: ja uhm ... ja uhm ... ik was aan het denken want ja ge waart bezig eigenlijk over dus dat ge

AA: dus politiek feitelijk heeft nooit mij geboeid uhm ... echt echt politieke ... want ik ben in die zaken uhm ja ... uhm passief ik sta passief ten opzichte van politiek ik geloof niet in politiek ... ik vind dat ja ... politieke agenda's uhm ... ik herinner ... verschillen ... ik weet dat in het westen politiek anders is dan dan in het Oosten het Oosten ... uhm of de Arabische wereld waar uhm uhm uhm staatshoofden regeringen ... uhm ja anders aan de macht komen dan het Westen zij het via staatsgrepen of via ... uhm ... ja uhm ... erfelijke opvolging enzovoort het zijn regimes die ... altijd aan de macht blijven tot ... dat zij sterven of de koning sterft en de president sterft enzovoort ... dus er is geen he politiek engagement leidt tot niks in die wereld ... dus als je je politiek gaat engageren ... kun je het systeem niet gunstig beïnvloeden of veranderen of zo

JZ: ja

AA: dus je hebt geen inspraak in heel dat proces ... nu politiek in het westen heeft dat uhm niet ... wel die mogelijkheid ge kunt inspraak hebben en ge participeert in de politiek en ik ga daar meedraaien ... in hoeverre je uhm dat kunt wijzigen is een andere zaak maar je je je ... ge kunt inspraak tot op zeker niveau hebben in de politiek ... uhm in de States de States worden door een instituut geregeerd niet door een persoon maar toch hebben we nu iemand als Obama aan de macht dus ...

JZ: hoe bedoelt ge met een instituut

AA: ja het is het Amerikaanse instituut dat regeert niet uhm ... ge hebt twee partijen

JZ: ah op die manier

AA: die het spel uhm uhm ... uhm domineren je hebt waarschijnlijk onzichtbare krachten ook lobbyen achter de schermen die ook mee mee uhm mee bepalen enzovoort dus ... en uhm ... niettemin laat het systeem ook mogelijkheden toe waar waar inspraak effectief mogelijk is en uhm ... in West Europa zeker ook en uhm ... uhm politiek heeft een zin hier ... en in die wereld heeft het geen zin dus in die wereld heb ik het nooit uhm ... boeiend gevonden ... uhm ... hier wel maar ... ik heb die roeping niet om aan politiek te doen maar uhm ... en vandaar dat ik altijd zo een beetje uhm passief tegenover politiek sta

excerpt 24

AA: uhm ik geloof wel in ... zaken die uhm maatschappelijk en intellectuele bewegingen die mensen kunnen uhm ... uhm ... beter helpen evolueren ontwikkelen ...

JZ: mmh

AA: vandaar dus die lessen die wij toen georganiseerd hebben in Safina en lezingen voordrachten ... uhm allochtone studenten toen in ... '93 gegroepeerd in die studenten Talaba probeerde daar initiatieven te organiseren en ...

JZ: mmh

AA: een voorbeeldfunctie ook naar andere allochtone scholieren te spelen enzovoort ... we hebben die toen ... naar scholen gestuurd om daar wat zich voor te stellen aan leerlingen en daar ... uhm ... goed al die dingen hebben wel ... ik dacht dat die zaken of ik vind dat die zaken op den duur meer rendabel zijn dan ... uhm ... dan bijvoorbeeld de integratiesector die mijn inziens volledig achterhaald is ... en geen enkel bestaansrecht meer heeft

JZ: ja

AA: uhm ... met de jaren uhm ... ging dus uhm nu in 2004 evalueren in 2000 evalueren die dingen he en niet meer de maatschappelijk en zo maar wel ... probeer je ... op een groter schaal iets te doen uhm ... en vandaar dus die vereniging ... want in 2004 hebben we een vereniging gesticht ... uhm ... om alle vertalers die uit en in het Arabisch vertalen over heel de wereld te groeperen in een vereniging ...

JZ: mmh

AA: die vereniging was een reactie op een uhm ... de verslag van ... even concentreren uhm ... verslag van ... de de Education Center van de Verenigde Naties toen ... die ... het vertaalproces in de wereld in cijfers uit uhm gebracht ... en toen uhm de Arabische wereld toen bleek dat de Arabische wereld met al zijn uhm ... ja ... potentieel ... veel minder vertaalt op jaarbasis ... dan Griekenland ...

JZ: ja

AA: Griekenland dan spreken we over tien miljoen mensen

JZ: mmh

AA: dus uhm ja ... men heeft Griekenland genomen omdat het een van de minst ontwikkelde Europese landen op zeker ogenblik was ook he ...

JZ: mmh

AA: 't is natuurlijk wat moeilijk Duitsland of België te doen maar ... Griekenland ... en uhm ... de Arabische wereld 400 miljoen met groot potentieel aan lezers en zo ... dus dat het veel minder is en dat is dus nefast aan ...

JZ: mmh

AA: bij ons was daar de reactie op van ... uhm ... dat ... de politieke orde in die wereld is ... is niet meer van deze wereld ... dus de politieke orde in de Arabische wereld ...

JZ: mmh

AA: is voor een stuk middeleeuws

JZ: mmh

AA: voor een stuk ... dictatuur bezeten door ... veiligheid ... en alle middelen gaan naar veiligheid ... en vertalen of ... gedachten uiten tussen met de rest van de wereld dat dat ... komt niet op hun prioriteitenlijst te staan ... en uhm ... de intellectuelen in die wereld kunnen niet op de staat zelf rekenen om dat te doen ... de Arabische wereld beseft nu dat dat nodig is maar ... als de staat geen begroting voor maakt dan kunnen ze dat ook niet uhm ... dat eigenlijk de verantwoordelijkheid om dat te veranderen rust bij de Arabische intelligentsia in ... het buitenland

excerpt 25

JZ: ja het is terug aan het opnemen he ... ja wacht waar waren wij gebleven ... ge waart bezig geweest over die vertaal uhm die vertaalactiviteiten

AA: ja inderdaad dus die ... ondertussen zouden wij ... wat lobbyen ... en wij hebben permanent dus ... de Arabische uhm ... uhm ... ja ministeries van onderwijs van dingen aan de kaak gesteld ook ... op alle grote niveaus

dus ... we zijn op een zeker ogenblik een plaag geworden voor die wereld en nu zien we wel dat er daar initiatieven op dat gebied ... beginnen te komen vooral de golfstaten ... men maakt budgetten ...

JZ: ja

AA: voor ... het vertalen van Europese talen in het Arabisch en omgekeerd ... om het om een geestelijke uitwisseling te realiseren ... om een beetje de ... het uhm isotrope uhm ... zo denken ... dat nu dat extreem denken over een heleboel andere zaken te doorbreken door ... frisse ideeën van ... elders in de wereld ... want die Arabische wereld is al een tijdje ... op zich teruggeplooid ... door ... de politieke orde ...

JZ: mmh

AA: die het uhm ...

JZ: beknot

AA: beknot ja ... dat is een uitdaging een engagement dat ik aanga ... en uhm wij hebben ondertussen aan de vereniging bestaat vijf jaar ... wij hebben een website en het wordt uhm ... ondertussen werken wij aan projecten vertaalprojecten ...

JZ: mmh ...

excerpt 26

JZ: ja ik zal het eens bekijken in alle geval ... want uhm zo zoals het mij nu lijkt he uhm ... alle dus ... bent ge dan eigenlijk geëvolueerd eigenlijk van uhm ... alle hebt ge eigenlijk zo wat periodes gehad zo waarin uw engagement wat ... verplaatst is zo wat he ... dus van enerzijds uhm ... engagementen dan gericht op Antwerpen in de zin van migrantenraad uhm ... uhm ... in lokalere contexten eigenlijk zo wat naar ... dan eigenlijk meer die culturele insteek zo die dat dan wat meer gericht is op ... communicatie

AA: ja

JZ: tussen de Arabische en de Westerse wereld zo he ... uhm maar wat ik mij ook afvraag is uhm ... op een bepaald moment ... want ge bent natuurlijk ook niet altijd ... van meet af aan actief geweest hier in die in die lokale context en ik vraag mij dan af wat maakte... dat ge op een bepaald moment dan wel besloten hebt van bijvoorbeeld voor uhm ik zeg maar iets uhm Safina of voor de migrantenraad ... wat dan gemaakt heeft dat ge daar dan toch mee begonnen bent op een bepaald moment

AA: het is een uhm ... ja ... het toeval ... om eerlijk te zijn daarin het toeval ... want ik heb uhm ik ben uhm ... toen ik in '90 afstudeerde hier in uhm Gent ... begon ik les te geven ...

excerpt 27

JZ: ... als ge zo van uw inspiratiebronnen zou moeten spreken of ik neem aan dat ge zijt nu ergens en ge hebt ja bepaalde standpunten en bepaalde uhm standpunten en zo verder en uhm ... wat is volgens u dan wat heeft volgens u de grootste impact volgens u gehad op vlak van de manier waarop ge nu denkt zo ... alle ik bedoel qua boeken of personen of euh ...

HEM: ... ja uhm ... mijn in mijn ganse opleiding op zich heeft euh heeft bij mij een impact gehad voor mijn manier van denken maar mijn grootste inspiratiebron is de Islam zelf uhm ... ja de de de centrale figuur daar is de profeet Mohammed he uhm ik heb daar heel veel inspiratie uit gehaald en kracht ... uhm vooral ... uhm door 't feit dat ... 't woord gewoon Islam zelf betekent heeft twee betekenissen of bevat twee woorden een is salaam en twee is istislam? Een is salaam salaam betekent vrede en in die vrede zit ook heel hard dat woordje verdraagzaamheid ... en 't is daaruit dat ik dat heel hard heb geleerd en ook ja en uhm istislam is overgave naar God nu God vraagt van u om te kunnen leven met mensen heel letterlijk in de Koran mensen niet moslims mensen en dus dat heeft mij zoiets gegeven van ik moet mij wel openstellen ook tegenover anderen en ik moet daar ook heel wat zaken uit leren en bijvoorbeeld 't verhaal van de profeet Mohammed dat ja een Hadith zegt men dan een gezegde van de profeet is dat hij een Joodse buurman had en die Joodse buurman uhm die uhm ... die ja die die wou niets van de profeet hebben dus die gooide elke morgen afval voor zijn deur en de profeet uh heeft altijd met heel veel geduld dat afval gewoon opgeruimd en gewoon weggegooid en nooit niks gezegd tegen hem ... tot een bepaalde dag dat hij weer met zijn borstel buiten komt voor te vegen zag hij geen afval tweede dag weer geen afval derde dag geen afval ... tja der klopt iets niet ... dus hij is gaan aankloppen bij die Joodse buurman en de zoon deed open en hij zegt ja ik heb gemerkt dat uw vader geen afval bij mij heeft gooid hoe komt dat en dan zegt hij van ja euh ik heb dat ... ja hij zei em mijn vader is ziek hij is echt heel erg ziek en daarom hij kan niet opstaan en zo en hij zo ah zou ge naar uw vader willen gaan en vragen of ik hem mag bezoeken want dat is een plicht ook in onze godsdienst dat als

iemand ziek is dat je die gaat bezoeken en hij zei ja ok ik ga het vragen hij heeft het gevraagd en hij mocht binnen ... en hij kwam binnen en die Joodse buurman stond zo versteld van hem van ja maar ik heb u toch altijd heel slecht behandeld en toch kom je hier binnen hij zegt ja ge bent een mens en ik respecteer u ge hebt misschien een andere mening maar dat betekent niet dat ik u daarom zal moeten haten of zo integendeel ik zal ik ben heel verdraagzaam tegenover u en sindsdien zijn ze heel goeie vrienden geworden

JZ: Ja

excerpt 28

FY: Het is een maatschappelijk euh ... een maatschappelijke roep zou ik het misschien durven noemen van uhm ... u sluit hier euh door een maatregel in te voeren maakt u het leven van een minderheid heel moeilijk ... een minderheid die heel graag haar steentje wil bijdragen aan de maatschappij maar wordt uitgesloten zo bijvoorbeeld ons standpunt is euhm over wat de hoofddoek betreft euh de hoofddoek verbieden is hetzelfde als de hoofddoek verplichten en we zijn tegen alle beide we geloven in die vrije keuze dat die vrouw dat zelf kiest he en daar was ook onze slogan heeft toen met de postercampagne was hoofddoek of niet de vrouw beslist en dus Baas Over Eigen Hoofd da's de naam van ook echt puur van een feministisch gegeven van vroeger Baas Over Eigen Buik ... hebben wij gezegd nee nee nu Baas over Eigen Hoofd he ik verkies wat in mijn hoofd is en hoe ik dat ook wil uiten maar ik kan ook neutraal zijn in mijn functioneren door euh door gewoon heel vriendelijk te zijn en gewoon mijn taak te doen.

excerpt 29

JZ: En hoe reageert ge er dan bijvoorbeeld op als ge zoiet letterlijk in uw gezicht te horen krijgt allez ja ja wat zegt ge

FY: Jajajajaj ... ik probeer dat wel he te delegiti ik zeg van ja maar dat is niet waar 't klopt niet en maar ik zie dat heel gemakkelijk aan mensen waar ge een redelijke dialoog mee kunt voeren en anderen niet en bij mensen waarvan ik zie van dat is verspilde tijd daar steek ik mijn energie echt niet in dan ga ik gewoon weg euh nu wat wij ook hadden is vanuit een standje ook op zo'n Ramadan markt ... daar hebt u mij ook eens ontmoet he (lacht)

JZ: Jajaja, daar hebt ge uw kaartje gegeven

FY: Ja daar heb ik mijn kaartje gegeven en op de Ramadan markt kwamen ook heel veel mensen zeggen van ik ben hiermee tegen he wat dat jullie doen en wij zijn het er niet mee akkoord en en ja ge moet dat maar gewoon uitdoen en en wat is me dat voor iets en ik weet niet wat allemaal en euhm ... en dan ja hebben wij dat proberen uit te leggen maar vindt u dat dan wel niet erg dat wij gewoon niet mogen participeren omdat u vindt dat ik met mijn hoofddoek u in de weg sta of zo want u zegt tegen mij da's precies als dat ge zegt tegen ne zwarte van ja ge zijt zwart ik zie u niet graag en maakt dat ge weg zijt ik zeg dat is hetzelfde signaal dat ge aan ons geeft he ... ja maar die hoofddoek kunt ge uitdoen die zwarte kleur niet en natuurlijk en zo ja ik vind dat echt erg ... ik vind ik heb er niks tegen he zeggen ze altijd ik heb niks tegen uwen hoofddoek maar als ge achter een loket staat en ge moet mij bedienen dan heb ik liever dat ge hem niet opzet ... dat is precies een hoed die dat ge op en af kunt zetten ja en men beseft niet dat daar echt een identiteit en een religiebeleving aan gekoppeld is he ...

excerpt 30

IZ: Die zegt dat expliciet he, die zegt dat in ter zake "meertaligheid is zerotaligheid". Dat is niet mijn zin he, die komt letterlijk en zuiver van een jaar geleden op ter zake. Nog geen jaar geleden. Dat is dan diversiteit. Wat ik heb gezien van diversiteit van links bij Patrick Janssens... maar ik sta verstomd he dat men de term diversiteit nog durft te gebruiken.

excerpt 31

IZ: Ja, zeker, er zullen zeker meningen geweest zijn. Alleen is de vraag over wat he. Dat soort mensen die dus dertig jaar geleden hier in Antwerpen waren of die al meningen hebben gehad over hier in Antwerpen. Ik heb daar zo mijn vragen bij. Ik denk dat die vooral bezig waren met politiek in Marokko.

excerpt 32

IZ: Mijn indruk is dat het activisme bij Marokkanen hier in Vlaanderen echt begonnen is met de AEL en dan ...

JZ: En ook strekkingen onafhankelijk van de AEL of ...

IZ: Een heel klein beetje bijvoorbeeld Tarik Fraihi maar ... in hoeverre kan je dat nog activisme noemen. Maar zeker voor de AEL had je Tarik Fraihi die met teksten probeerde beweging ... maar hij was dan eerder communistisch getint en hij profileerde zich ook zo ... maar dat was een alleenzaat. En vanaf de AEL heeft hij echt gekozen voor een andere weg. En intussen ... neem nu bijvoorbeeld kifkif he, een lovenswaardige website en zo ... maar je moet eens gaan kijken naar een van hun activiteiten, je moet eens gaan ...

JZ: Ik ben een keer eens geweest, naar mediawatch, kleine workshops, maar dat was inderdaad maar met vier mensen dat we zo over iets schreven. Maar ik weet niet of je dit bedoelde ...

excerpt 33

IZ: Awel, ja ... dat soort activiteiten of misschien eerder iets waar ... een een muziekavond bijvoorbeeld, en dan moet je eens gaan kijken naar wat voor volk dat daarop af komen. Dat is een heel elitaire bedoening. Dat is geen verwijt, maar ik stel alleen vast dat de mensen die daarnaar toe komen heel progressieve Vlamingen zijn die zoiets hebben van ik wil mijn ... mijn wereldbeeld verruimen ofwel zijn dat allochtonen die het hebben gemaakt gemaakt tussen aanhalingstekens he

JZ: Ja

IZ: voor ons is gemaakt als ge een job hebt hebt ge het gemaakt he ... dat soort mensen en die zelf nog weinig binding hebben...

JZ: Ik zie inderdaad niet direct streetboys allez ja

IZ: ja voilà ... maar ... als we vandaag spreken van problemen rond allochtonen, problemen rond integratie, problemen rond de aansluiting met de samenleving, dan gaat het niet over die één procent zelfs niet die een mooie job heeft, het gaat over die streetboys. Daarom dat ik heel wat twijfels heb omtrent het activisme van kifkif. Mij lijkt dat eerder ... de bekroning voor een soort van integratietraject. Maar ik zie vandaag voor Vlaanderen ook niet echt een activisme he ... BOEH is het meest activistische wat ik zie.

excerpt 34

IZ: ... er zijn een aantal zaken ... ik ben het met een aantal zaken ben ik het ... met rechts ben ik het eens het met mensen zoals Bart de Wever er zijn een aantal aspecten ... waar hem echt gelijk geef want links ... heeft minstens even veel schuld aan het aan het hoe zal ik het zeggen het failliet van deze situatie ... zij hebben ook vanuit een soort van goed willen zijn een soort van progressief willen zijn hebben zij nooit willen praten over een probleem zoals uitsluiting ... hebben zij ook anderzijds hebben zij nooit ook nooit een punt gemaakt of veel minder dan bijvoorbeeld rechts van Marokkanen en van moslims ... maar ik denk ook zij zijn evenzeer onderhevig aan een soort aan een aantal het zijn clichébeelden en uitsluitingsmechanismen en men heeft daar nooit ... over willen praten wat je rechts minstens moet nageven is dat is dat ze daar een debat over willen ... en ik heb het gevoel dat dat debat gebeurd is in Nederland en nog steeds aan de gang is ... maar Vlaanderen heeft dat debat gewoon nog niet gehad Vlaanderen heeft dat allemaal heel snel hoe zal ik het zeggen in de kiem gesmoord

JZ: Het debat omtrent zijn eigen integratiebeleid of dat soort dingen

IZ: Ja ... ja ... heel snel is dat ontkracht ... terwijl in Nederland ... vandaag nog altijd he da's ongelooflijk... dat is pas een bewijs van integratie dat je mensen hebt ... Moslims Marokkanen die een eigen mening kunnen geven die daar hun die dat assertief zijn die op tv kunnen komen, die die hun eigenheid kunnen uitdragen zonder dat ze hulp nodig hebben van iemand anders ...

excerpt 35

IZ: Die zegt dat expliciet he, die zegt dat in ter zake "meertaligheid is zerotaligheid". Dat is niet mijn zin he, die komt letterlijk en zuiver van een jaar geleden op ter zake. Nog geen jaar geleden. Dat is dan diversiteit. Wat ik heb gezien van diversiteit van links bij Patrick Janssens... maar ik sta verstomd he dat men de term diversiteit nog durft te gebruiken.

excerpt 36

JZ: Hij wordt ook nog maar net gebruikt he. In de zin van Antwerpen gaat de naam nu veranderen van integratiebeleid naar diversiteitsbeleid.

IZ: Ja, maar het is een dekmantel voor dezelfde politiek. Diversiteit voor zover ik begrepen heb, houdt in dat er plaats is voor een zeker verscheidenheid. Het enige wat ik heb gezien van de SPA is een hoofddoekenverbod dat de verscheidenheid ontmoedigt. Natuurlijk, ik begrijp wel wat Patrick Janssens daarmee doet. Hij zegt van kijk 'er zijn heel veel Antwerpenaren die zich daaraan storen, dus voor u als Marokkaan aanvaardbaar te maken, zet die hoofddoek af'. Ik vind dat een heel gevaarlijke redenering. Ik denk niet dat dat de juiste manier is. Ik denk juist dat je Vlamingen moet helpen te wennen. Probeer meer mensen met een hoofddoek die assertief zijn, die goed Nederlands kunnen. Probeer meer van dat soort mensen binnen te krijgen want die gaan dat beeld van achterlijkheid of van niet eerlijk zijn of van weet ik veel wat, ontkrachten. Probeer in het onderwijs Arabisch als taal te betrekken. Ik zeg niet dat dat ... dat er onderwijs moet zijn in het Arabisch, maar betrek het als een positief element, als een hefboom.

excerpt 37

IZ: ... Ze geraken gevangen in een net ze voeren geen politieke strijd ... ze gaan bijvoorbeeld ... hun eigen dochters mogen geen hoofddoek meer dragen naar de school mij ga je niet uitleggen dat iemand die opgevoed is met een hoofddoek thuis en die gaat naar school en die ervaart daar een vijandig regime of toch een vijandige houding als het gaat over de hoofddoek ... dat is iemand die garanti in een soort van innerlijke strijd komt ... de puberteit is al moeilijk genoeg en dat komt er dan nog bij en in hoeverre iemand daar ongeschonden uitkomt ... ik heb daar mijn vragen bij. Heel veel ouders maken de misvatting – ergens ook begrijpelijk, men heeft niet veel vaardigheden – van als ik ze maar thuis volgens Islamnormen opvoed, komt het allemaal wel goed ... dat is natuurlijk dikke zever, ge zijt meer buiten dan thuis. En bovendien, de impact van wat je buiten ... dat is veel groter he. Onderwijs heeft een enorme impact op hoe je denkt. Dus heel veel van die mensen zullen botsen op zichzelf door te zien dat hun kinderen een andere weg op zullen gaan en niet meer zo moslim-vriendelijk zullen zijn als ze zullen denken. En ondertussen is die samenleving geëvolueerd – misschien binnen 2/3 jaar een hoofddoekenverbod. Ik heb het gevoel dat ook wanneer ge u afzijdig houdt voor de samenleving – welke vaardigheden doet ge uzelf aan. Wat leer je om in die samenleving een zekere rol te spelen. Dat is ook iets wat men niet begrepen heeft van de AEL. De AEL ... er is geen enkele andere organisatie die zoveel geprobeerd heeft om Marokkanen te betrekken in het maatschappelijke debat om juist een rol van betekenis te spelen in die samenleving. En ik zie assimilatie in die zin dat men verkommert in de marge, uhm, die eerste generatie, misschien de tweede generatie houdt het nog een beetje vol, maar de derde generatie niet meer, en die gaat gewoon op in de meerderheid. Niemand wil marginalisatie he.

JZ: Dus marginalisering is gekoppeld aan assimilatie om het zo te zeggen

IZ: Wel, één, mijn ouders en misschien mijn generatie is nog altijd gemarginaliseerd, maar als daar uiteindelijk geen politiek bewustzijn, maatschappelijk activisme bij komt waardoor je een rol in de samenleving ...

JZ: Een sociaaleconomische rol?

IZ: Dat is juist, waardoor je een rol in die samenleving gaat spelen, die eigenheid bewakend, als je dat niet doet, op termijn ...

excerpt 38

HEM: neen door de ... door ten eerste mee gedreven door die geslotenheid van bepaalde mensen ... uhm ik heb het gevoel dat maar ook het is ondertussen geëvolueerd ... he sinds de jaren zestig en de jaren zeventig die arbeiders die arbeiders die Marokko verlaten hebben ... Marokko is eigenlijk geëvolueerd ... gemoderniseerd ... maar ... die mensen zijn vertrokken in Marokko ... met een bepaalde Islamitische opvatting met bepaalde tradities natuurlijk

JZ: mmh

HEM: en zij komen hier terecht en ze worden geconfronteerd met een ander die hem wil assimileren ...

JZ: mmh

excerpt 39

HEM: dus ... en soms maken ze geen gebruik allez geen uhm onderscheid tussen integratie assimilatie want ge hebt de grote partijen die die die ... ik hoef die zelfs niet te noemen maar ge hebt bepaalde partijen die niks anders doen dan ... die groepen groepen aan te vallen ... wat doen die groepen die trekken zich terug want die verdedigen zich tegen alles ...

JZ: mmh

HEM: dan willen ze ... dan zijn ze niet open voor verandering of wat dan ook ...

JZ: mmh

HEM: en dan blijven ze met die mentaliteit of die cultuur dan blijven ze met die cultuur zitten die hun vaders meegebracht hebben uit hun land van afkomst

JZ: mmh

HEM: dus cultuur van de jaren '60 de tradities van de jaren '60 of '70 in Marokko ...

JZ: ja ... ja ...

HEM: dus die worden zelfs gechoqueerd als zij terug gaan naar op vakantie naar Marokko en dan komen zij hier terug van ah Marokko da's niet meer die Islamitische maar der der lopen daar vrouwen met uhm met korte rokkes en Marokkaanse vrouwen in discotheken ... hoe kan dat nu ... en zo wordt dat ... die vrijheid van het individu ... is ... hoe kan ik dat zeggen dat dat komt ge hier minder tegen ... bij die groepen ...

excerpt 40

HEM: die geslotenheid ... ik merk men houdt zich enkel bezig met zijn werk met zijn gezinnetje ... dat men zijn uhm zijn taal gebruikt in zijn omgeving ... ze weten niks over de uhm wat er gaande is in de in de landen waar zij verblijven.

excerpt 41

HEM: ... uhm wanneer dat ge die wilt integreren ... wanneer koester je ... uhm positieve zaken in de andere culturen ... die vrijheid om zelf te kiezen hoe je daar mee omgaat en ... en die bagage krijgen ... van de cultuur die je meegebracht hebt ... dat die niet blijft steken in een soort uhm gemeenschap ... en zich af te sluiten van en leven met eigen cultuur en alleen maar met die vlag zwaaien van wij hebben gelijk ... en een ander die ook weer zegt van wij hebben gelijk en jullie moeten alles veranderen ... wij hebben het licht gezien en volg ons ... je moet jullie integreren dus ... da's eigenlijk een vicieuze cirkel van uhm ... verdelingen aan de ene kant en van aan de andere kant de superioriteit zal ik zeggen van die ene groep de ene groep dan ... en bij de andere groep weer uhm een gevoel van inferioriteit en willen verdedigen ... en zij verdedigen da's ook ... rechtvaardig dus uhm ... denk ik ik heb gewoon uhm ... verschillende zaken meegemaakt waar en dat is eigenlijk mijn persoonlijke uhm ... persoonlijke ... conclusie ... da's eigenlijk ... hoe meer dat die ... dat die vrijheid er komt ... hoe meer ... eigenlijk dat die die uhm die die jongeren ... van school uhm gewapend worden met bepaalde instrumenten om zelf ... keuzes te maken in het leven ... hoe vrijer dat zij uhm ... hoe vrijer dat zij worden van die van die die strekkingen uhm die de gemeenschap noemt ... en hoe meer contact dat ge krijgt tussen mensen van verschillende afkomst ...

excerpt 42

HEM: niet het liberalisme van de uhm van de bedrijven niet het liberalisme van de rijken ... of liberalisme waar waarmee de Vlaming hier mee geconfronteerd wordt van de ene kant ... van de Vlaamse Progressieven uhm de expatriots? die eigenlijk meer nationalist zijn ... met bepaalde trekkingen van extreem rechts ... en aan de andere kant heb je natuurlijk ook veeleer partijen waar ik toe behoor ... waar dat je een grote lobby van uhm bedrijven staat waar een groot lobby van van uhm van uhm zelfstandigen bestaat ... die partij heeft ook uhm ... in het begin en en alle ... voor voor lange jaren ... met de vlag gezwaaid van verdediger van de ... van de ... van de belangen van de zelfstandigen van de rijken ... en daartussen is die ... liberalisme als als uhm ... als ideologie ... die eigenlijk de ... vrijheid van de individu uhm ... verdedigt ... de individu kennis maken met zijn eigen vrijheid ... met zijn uhm ... met met kracht die daarbinnen zit in één individu ... die liberalisme is hier zoek in België ...

excerpt 43

HEM: Ge moet uzelf verenigen om voor keuzes er zijn ... en de beste manier in democratieën eigenlijk de democratische manier ... om geen profijt te trekken ten koste van een andere groep ... is eigenlijk zich aansluiten bij een partij waarom niet ... of richt zelf een partij op als dat in de democratische grenzen ligt ... waarom niet ... en probeer dan uw standpunten maar uhm te verdedigen ...

excerpt 44

NC: Quetelet

JZ: Ja die ken ik zelfs niet denk ik

NC: Quételet statisticus een van de eersten die zo ...

JZ: Ja ik ben niet zo into kwantitatieve

NC: (lacht) ah ja ja ... Quételet Q U E T E L E T ... allez dat is mij gezegd geweest he ik heb het ook niet nagecheckt ... om mensen in vakjes te steken ... en dan hebt ge de wereld als kast ... en ge hebt erover en ... ah moeten wij ... oeh ... Grieken kastje open ... migrantje kastje open ... allez zo overal zo precies een kastje terwijl dat niet is ... voor mij is dat echt zo ik heb dat toen zo uitgelegd he ... als the blob ...

excerpt 45

NC: Da's zo enfin in de lessen van kritische criminologie heb ik gezegd van moet ik zie dat zo ... ik zeg ge hebt dat vast en dat is iets wel een gegeven dus de samenleving is dat wel maar ... met de minste beweging verandert er vanalles en die blob gaat ineens een eigen dinget ... dat lijkt chaos ... ik zeg als ge heel simpel van geest bent lijkt dat chaos maar ik zeg er zit daar orde in ... waarom om dat die blob een bepaalde cohesie en en met elkaar allez zo ... een wetenschappelijke gedeelte ... ik zeg en daarom van de moment dat gij hier duwt heeft dat effect op vanalle dinget he ... en zo zie ik de wereld ook he dus al die het is daarom dat ik zeg daarstraks dat raderwerk dat bij mij dat is ook zo he ja ... euh het is iets hard he maar zo een blob ... ge kent dat zo ne ...

JZ: Ja da's zo meer

NC: Ja da's zo redelijke plastiekachtige dinget allez zo nen blubby-achtige toestand

JZ: Ik heb de film nog niet gezien maar uhm (lacht)

NC: (lacht) Ik heb de film ook nog niet gezien het heeft niks met de film te maken (lacht) ja shit ... ja ge weet wat ik bedoel he

JZ: Ja neen ik kan het beeld wel ...

NC: Kinderen hebben dat zo van die

JZ: Plasticine

NC: Ja zo plasticine maar nog lossier

JZ: Slijm

NC: Ja dat slijmerige dinget en da's eigenlijk da's de samenleving allez zo bezie ik de samenleving he ... en met dat ge daarmee een klein drukske hier op geeft of daar of ge probeert dat te dinget ... dan springt dat langs andere kanten uit en ge ziet dat met alle dinget ... ge kunt dat zo onder de knoet houden drukken drukken drukken ... op een bepaald moment (knaageluid)

excerpt 46

NC: ... ge weet liberalen zo weinig mogelijk overheid ... zo veel mogelijk uhm individuele niveau of uitbesteding dus ... ja die zijn eigenlijk dat is zo de basisgedachte he en als ge weet dat dat erin zit voelt ge ook dat dat er overal wat doorkomt ... dus wat gaan zij doen al dat sociale sector gedoe de deur uit ... ze hebben gelijk ... op een bepaald niveau ... maar niet zomaar pfft (gooit een fictief object weg terwijl hij een hautaine gezichtsuitdrukking aanneemt) ... neen zorgen dat er iets anders is op een andere betoelaging misschien en zo verder en zo verder meer ...

excerpt 47

JZ: allez ge wordt daar dan zo op aangesproken en zo maar daarstraks zeit ge ok dat toen ge met uhm toen ge met AMV begon zo dat het aanvankelijk niet de bedoeling was om zo exclusief op die hoofddoek te focussen

KA: Neen, effectief maar dat is hetgene waar dat men steeds op terug komt

JZ: mmh

KA: Want ik hoef het niet over die hoofddoek te hebben ik heb er geen problemen mee ... vanuit het AMV

JZ: Want waar wilden jullie dan bijvoorbeeld nog graag op focussen als dat anders was gelopen

KA: Wij wilden eigenlijk vooral bezig zijn met de positie van de vrouw in Vlaanderen en die versterken. Binnen de eigen gemeenschap contact leggen met andere vrouwenbewegingen. Wij hadden zoiets van dat is een luxe dat ge kunt discussiëren over een verschil in lonen. Voor ons ook want wij willen daar mee voor strijden, en we hebben dat ook gedaan met het VOK, zij hadden een ander prioriteitenlijstje zij hadden het over ongelijke lonen en zij hadden over dubbele werklast voor vrouwen, zij hadden het over heel belangrijke dingen waar wij mee achter stonden, maar wij hadden zoiets van 'onderwijs dat bij ons volledig scheef loopt, discriminatie op de arbeidsmarkt' dat zijn de problemen die dat wij aangepakt willen zien. Maar zij bleven altijd terugkomen op die hoofddoek, zo van 'ja maarden hoofddoek staat in de weg'.

excerpt 48

JZ: Ook vanuit feministische organisaties?

KA: Neeneenee vanuit ... als ge die dingen aanklaagt uhm vanuit ja vanuit de minister vanuit de media, krijgt ge dat steeds teruggekaatst van ja maar, ... en steeds terug vragen over die hoofddoek. Heel vaak kende men ons niet ... tot er iets gebeurde rond de hoofddoek en dan kregen we ineens een micro onder onze neus gestopt en dan waren we wel belangrijk genoeg om uhm te horen wat dat we deden en wie dat we zijn. Maar al die tijd dat we hebben geroepen van laat ons werken aan de werkelijke problemen, de sociaal-economische achterstelling van de gemeenschappen, het feit dat die werkloosheidscijfers hoger liggen, het feit dat de doorstroming naar het hoger onderwijs zo schrijnend is, al die problemen die dat ook te maken hebben met de positie van de vrouwen. Emancipatie, integratie heeft met werk en onderwijs en vorming en ontwikkeling te maken maar ... dat vond dan geen gehoor ... En dan bleef men terug 'ja maar die hoofddoek als ge die zou afzetten dan zou je wel werk vinden' ja ... en dan zijt ge terug bij af he.

excerpt 49

JZ: tuurlijk ... neen want ... allez maar als dan zo bijvoorbeeld zo die discussie zo uhm ... dus allez dus dat thema van de hoofddoektoestanden zo als dat nu wordt overgenomen door bijvoorbeeld het FMV en door dat soort dingen

KA: ja

JZ: hebt ge dan geen schrik dat dan nog meer de uhm de aandacht ...

KA: dat is zo

JZ: want die organisaties zijn toch bezig met onderwijs en zijn geloof ik toch bezig daar een redelijke werking rond uit te bouwen he ...

KA: Ja da's waar... ik begrijp het wel, want we hebben ons zelf die vraag ook gesteld, want hoe langer we daar zelf bij blijven stilstaan, hoe meer we blijven plakken bij die hoofddoek uhm maar langst de andere kant ... kunnen we dat niet laten omdat er dingen gebeuren die niet aanvaardbaar zijn omdat we zoiets hebben van als we daarover zwijgen lijkt het alsof we toestemmen ...

excerpt 50

AX: Ik geloof heel sterk in de overdraagbaarheid van dromen van oudere generaties naar jongere generaties. Ik geloof daar heel sterk in en ik denk iedereen, elke pedagoog zegt dat ook. Hoe vaak zijn jongens dokter geworden omdat dat een droom was van de papa om dokter te worden. Alleen al vanuit deze simpele redenering zou ge een heel integratiebeleid kunnen enten. Want als ge weet dat dat zo is, dat generaties ook zo met elkaar verbonden zijn, dan zegt dat ook iets van hoe belangrijk het is om ervoor te zorgen dat de eerste generatie hier goed oud kan worden. Want anders is het foutu. Want dan gaat die tweede generatie proberen de dromen te realiseren van hun ouders. Niet alleen door de droomjob te doen waarvan de papa of de mama droomde, of de droomopleiding te doen, maar ook over aspecten als waar oud worden. En sommigen zullen dromen en het zal nog altijd blijven bij dromen, ... ja ... en dan heb je twee gevolgen daaraan verbonden, verbittering, en dan zit ge met een heel grote ongelukkige groep die verbitterd is want de droom is niet uitgekomen, of mensen die zich daaraan aanpassen, dat gebeurt ook he, 'ah ja, die droom is niet uitgekomen, geen probleem, ik ga er zo mee om', heel gezond, maar ik denk dat we ons dat niet kunnen permitteren. Ik denk dat dat niet goed is. (this turn continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 51

AX: (This turn is a continuation of the turn above) Ik denk dat het voor ons als maatschappij en voor iedereen he, of dat nu de samenleving in diversiteit is, gewoon mensen onder elkaar, maar ook in het institutionele, ik denk dat het niet gezond is, dat we dat zien en daar niets mee doen, en dat we dat nooit vertalen naar acties. Ik begrijp dat en ik kan alleen maar een argument aanbrengen om ervoor te zorgen dat de ander dat ook ziet; dat; in een integratiebeleid, in een diversiteitsbeleid rekening moet gehouden worden, niet alleen met de huidige normen en waarden, maar vooral met de verwachtingen van mensen. Er is teveel een verwachting ... u ziet mij vandaag hier op een stoel zitten, ik geef je op een blaadje dat in jouw beeld over mij en hoe ik oud zal worden er eentje is grotendeels zonder hoofddoek. In mijn beeld, hoe ik oud zal worden, ja, ... want of dat nu realiteit is of niet, dat doet er niet toe, maar die verwachtingen zijn er, worden niet uitgesproken ... in mijn verwachting is er geen haar op mijn hoofd die eraan denkt om oud te worden zonder hoofddoek. Ooit ga ik de hoofddoek dragen omdat dat bij mij een associatie creëert van waardig oud worden. Laat staan van Islam, laat staan cultuur, gewoon een vrouw, gaat die een watergolfke doen bij de coiffeur elke week, zoals dat misschien bij u een vertrouwd beeld is, misschien, maar gewoon misschien he ...

excerpt 52

NF: (lacht) uhm ... godsdienst is een algemeen kader ... onderdeel van de cultuur maar zonder meer dus uhm we zijn ook wel naar de moskee gestuurd en zo van die zaken maar ... ons papa die bidt niet dus dat betekent dat ge als familie al ... aan de marge van de gemeenschap leeft omdat een van de belangrijkste integrerende plekken niet bezoekt da's de moskee ... de feestdagen brengt ge eigenlijk uhm thuis door en het is niet dat ge der echt een sterke band mee hebt met de rest van de imaginaire gemeenschap en uhm ... en dus voor mij was eigenlijk ja religieus worden was een soort van verzet en en rebellie een soort van gelegitimeerde rebellie euh ik herinner mij dat dat uhm dat hij op een bepaald moment tegen mij zei als ge de hoofddoek begint te dragen dan uhm (lacht) kom ik niet meer met u naar buiten en (lacht)

excerpt 53

NF: ... eigenlijk toen dat ik bij Kifkif ... zat ik in eerste instantie was het vooral daar om om een soort alternatief forum te creëren waar dat het minderhedenvraagstuk op een andere manier kon kon in kaart worden gebracht ... of of het debat kon worden gevoerd ... maar ik geloof absoluut dat wij dat nodig hebben niet alleen Kifkif maar ook andere fora echt ... om tegen fora allez niet tegen-fora maar ja alternatieve fora ... alternatieve fora waar dat ge ... uhm die debatten op een andere manier kunt voeren ook meer uhm gevoelige thema's aan bod kunt laten komen die in het publiek debat eigenlijk onmiddellijk worden gehijackt door deze of gene ... maar ook voor aan de collectieve geschiedschrijving te doen ... de collectieve ... de de aanwezigheid de de allez onze geschiedenis schrijven maar schrijven niet alleen letterlijk schrijven maar ook verbeelden uhm ... culturele producties uhm echt de de de de aanwezigheid ... uhm ... beeldmatig tekstmatig ... muzikaal op alle ... via alle mogelijke middelen zichtbaar maken ... en .. en en ook die diversiteit aan verhalen en trajecten ook zichtbaar maken zodat het niet ... maar tegelijkertijd ... voor mij is het wel belangrijk dat het niet een vrijblijvende allez als ik het doe is het niet alleen vrijblijvend

excerpt 54

AA: eigenlijk het klopt niet hoe groter de groep is hoe meer sociale controle uhm hoe meer ... uhm ... der uhm negatieve beeldvorming uhm is waarom hoe groter de groep hoe hoe uhm uhm hoe meer gebeurtenissen der zijn dat is evident uhm gewoon cijfermatig uhm ... uhm ... we merken ook dat de media daarop inspeelt positieve uhm zaken da's niet da's niet ... (JZ: interessant) ... da's niet interessant genoeg uhm uhm dus dat wordt ook niet dat wordt zelfs niet gelezen mensen zoeken der ook niet naar ...'

excerpt 55

JZ: Dus ge ziet echt zo een verband tussen die onveiligheid en identiteitsontwikkeling

AA: Ja ... ja ... het gaat samen waarom uhm als ge zelfzeker zijt in een samenleving in een samenleving waarin dat ge u veilig voelt gaat ge ook uw identiteit uhm verbreden gaat ge uw gaat ge snoepen gaat ge proeven van de ander

JZ: Mmh

AA: Waardoor dat ge ook losser gaat staan uhm in het ontwikkelen van uw eigen identi en later staat ge open voor vernieuwing ja ...

JZ: Mmh

AA: Uhm ... schermt ge u af of wordt ge afgeremd door uw eigen gemeenschap

JZ: Mmh

AA: Sociale controle en toezicht en dergelijk ja dan dan dan sluit ge u ook af en alles is alles bedreigend ... elke vernieuwing

JZ: Mmh

AA: Van de andere gemeenschappen van de andere cultuur worden afgesloten en worden als negatief als bedreigend overgekomen en uhm ... worden er sterke identiteiten gecreëerd binnen de eigenheid van die groep van die gemeenschap

JZ: Mmh

AA: En op termijn is dat ja .. uhm raakt het tot een confron confronta uhm ... terwijl men ging der altijd van uit zo twintig dertig jaar geleden van integratie komt wel vanzelf als mensen maar lang genoeg hier zijn en uhm dat klopt niet

excerpt 56

AA: volledige volwaardige erkenning van uw eigenheid als persoon als als gemeenschap als individu ... met uw culturele en uw religieuze en euh bagage dus dat heeft invloed op uhm karakter ... ook over communicatie uhm als we zeggen van integratie komt wel vanzelf op termijn neen dat komt niet vanzelf want bepaalde boodschappen bepaalde reflecties worden doorgegeven van ouders aan kinderen als ouders zich niet betrokken voelen niet gewaardeerd niet erkend worden in een deel in een bepaalde deel van hun zijn ja spiegelt dat over brengt ge dat over aan uw kind ..' .

excerpt 57

AA: En daar uhm missen we soms alle missen we missen we de bal ... ook vanuit onderwijs vanuit de onderwijs denk ik van (haalt adem in) uhm het onderwijs is nog niet volledig uhm uhm afgestemd op op uhm de realiteit zeker in Antwerpen

excerpt 58

AA: wat gebeurt er nu ge gaat uh ge ge gaat ... steeds in een verdediging en daarom zeg ik van we staan niet we zijn niet klaar om uhm we staan niet open voor diversiteit we staan niet open voor integratie ...

JZ: Ah ok

AA: En en dat kunt ge sommige dingen kunt ge niet vanuit de overheid van bovenuit maar moeten wel in gang zetten om te mogelijk om 't mogelijk te maken ...

excerpt 59

AA: ... het uhm het migratie uit uhm ... uit uhm ja ... uhm Latijns Amerika en zo verder ... daar zal de integratieproces veel korter duren ... waarom omdat gewoon de verschillen ... kleiner zijn ... uhm ... de verschillen zijn kleiner uhm de ... uhm ... de weerstand om u te integreren te integreren is minder omdat er heel veel gelijkenissen zijn uhm ... dus uhm het naar mekaar toegroeien het in mekaar toegroeien zal ... binnen decennia uhm in één in één decennium uhm volgroeid zijn ... daar waar verschillen groot zijn of wel huidverschillen ...

JZ: Op wat vlak

AA: Ofwel huidverschillen of waarden en normen of religie en religieuze verschillen ... die verschillen zijn te groot waardoor de integratieproces en de aanvaardingsproces eigenlijk het migratieproces gaat over ervaringsproces uhm ervaringsproces door beide groepen uhm daar ... duurt het veel langer uhm een men ... (iemand van de balie spreekt Abdellatif aan korte interactie volgt)

excerpt 60

AA: we kunnen het hebben over emancipatie we kunnen hebben over cultuur maar we kunnen het niet hebben over religie ... terwijl religie een onderdeel is van hun van hun zijn dus het was altijd taboe vooral ook euhm wij ondersteunen wel cultuur we ondersteunen wel culturele activiteiten we ondersteunen euhm en we financieren uhm cultuur en religie daar moet over gezwezen worden en ... dat bracht bracht steeds een domper op de en brengt bracht terughoudendheid met zich mee bij 't integratie uhm binnen in de integratie

JZ: In 't verenigingseven

AA: in 't verenigingsleven ja ... uhm ... en werd er ook zo met met met uhm ... wantrouwen gekeken gekeken naar heel wat allochtone verenigingen en ook naar koepels van allemaal goed en wel maar jullie mogen en jullie kunnen wel jullie ding doen specifiek rond cultuur en euhm euhm rond ontmoeten en dialoog en zo verder maar euhm wat ... belangrijk is

excerpt 61

NC: we zijn het beu dat er veel te veel nog over ons ... maar niet door ons wordt gedaan ... als we dan spreken over uhm om het om Tarik uhm allez ik weet niet of ik hem letterlijk citeer maar het failliet van de integratiepolitiek ja ... dan ... dat stukske dan wel ... maar dat wil niet zeggen dat integratie niet gebeurt ... integratie gebeurt sowieso

JZ: Mmh

NC: Dus ik bedoel ik uhm ik heb ooit iets gezegd en dan heb ik mensen zwaar doen verstommen zeker mensen uit het sociale sectorveld ... ik zeg waar wij nu mee bezig zijn is eigenlijk in tijdsperspectief verloren tijd ... omdat ge op termijn ... dat zich dat sowieso gaat uitklaren ...

JZ: Mmh

NC: Dat ziet ge voor vanalles en nog wat ... zelfs de meest onderdrukten ... op termijn komt daar lichtpunt ... natuurlijk zullen er altijd een aantal strijdzaken uhm of een aantal zaken daarmee geholpen worden maar ik bedoel ...

JZ: Waarom houdt ge u daar dan toch mee bezig

NC: Omdat ge der voor zorgt dat dat in die richting blijft gaan

excerpt 62

NC: Da's vanzelfsprekend .. maar we zijn niet mak he we zijn geen geitewollensokkendragers zoals ze zeggen ... zoals uhm allez als wij zeggen failliet van integratie ... dat is zo he ... ik zit in de samenlevingsopbouw ... de raad van bestuur ... ja het eerste wat ik ja in andere woorden dat ik zei om de om de team coördinator van Borgerhout ik zeg sorry maar euh ge zijt hier al vijftien jaar bezig ik zie geen verschil ... oh da's niet waar en wij uhm ... ik zeg wat Marokkaanse vrouwen die daar ergens boven in een zoldergroepke ergens samen zitten en wat zitten te breien ... ik zeg ik weet niet wat ge daar vooruit mee haalt tuurlijk die gaan dat misschien plezant vinden ik zeg maar die gaan niet blijven die groepen zullen ook niet blijven die groepen zullen ondertussen ook al heel fel veranderd zijn van in het begin tot en met nu ... ik zeg dat is wel qua opbouwwerk ja ... zo'n bakkes natuurlijk maar ja ik heb het dan gezegd het interesseert mij niet ...

excerpt 63

NC: En het is daarom dat ik zeg iedereen heeft zijn verdienste he ... uhm ... dat is precies alsof ik wil daar geen mening op plakken of 't een of 't ander maar in elke actie zie ik positieve maar zie ik ook negatieve dingen he ... ik bedoel zelfs allez ik zeg zo maar iets waar veel mensen op het veld om het cru te zeggen uhm negatief benaderen als het gaat over AEL ... ik ook ... een ding vind ik daar want ik bedoel van tachtig procent kwam wel overeen want dat is ne vroegere maat geweest ook he maar bijvoorbeeld dat ... ik vind dat heel positief wat er is geweest en zelfs nu vind ik dat die der nog altijd moeten zijn ... en om het cru te zeggen puur egoïstisch voor het goed doen van Kifkif ... allez maar dat is puur egoïstisch bekeken waarom hun hun dingen maakt dat wij iets meer kunnen gelden zeggen allez dat kan dat kan zo gespeeld worden dan kan het zo gespeeld worden dan kunt ge het zo spelen van dat is de radicale en dat is de minder radicale ...

JZ: Mmh

NC: Maar ja dat is dan allemaal ... techniekskes die ge kunt ... uitdokteren of bespelen op strategisch niveau he ...
excerpt 64

JZ: En op wat vlak ziet ge dat meer of minder radicale bijvoorbeeld ... allez waarin uit zich dat

NC: Hun hun hun ... hun eisen en veruiterlijkingen he ik bedoel uhm maar hij doet dit en hij doet dat ... veel zeer correcte heel dingies veel minder diplomatisch ... en Kifkif is niet de zwakste he ik bedoel die is ook redelijk maar niet tot dat niveau ... en bijvoorbeeld Chakkar is ook nog iets minder dan Kifkif vind ik ... allez als het nu op dat niveau zit

JZ: Jaja

NC:: Terwijl dat de integratiesector ja da's mak he da's de staart tussen de benen geitewollen sokken dragend en aan het zweten in de hitte ... en niks durven zeggen ...

JZ: Mmh ...

NC: Het beleid van Keulen ... bijvoorbeeld ik noem dat geen beleid he ik zag het al van ver aankomen he ik heb het al verteld he met uhm

excerpt 65

NC: Ik denk dat er zijn sowieso verschillende interpretaties he als het gaat over het failliet van de integratie he maar ... ik denk dat dat ik denk dat dat misschien mede een punt zou zal zijn waarom dat Keulen nu op die manier is omdat die denkt van ja zie dat is gebracht geweest en ik vind dat wel goed en zie weet ge wat als het maar in mijn kraam past he ... maar dat vergeten de mensen he dat staat tussen haakjes als het in mijn kraam past ... en zijn kraam is alles elimineren om het cru te zeggen ... het individu is belangrijk ...

excerpt 66

AZ: ... 't zal zijn dat je ook natuurlijk ook langs den andere kant he dat je ergens naartoe gaat en en waar dat mensen inderdaad wel heel heel rechts georiënteerd zijn he en dit en dat en het geen dat er gebeurd is is niet voldoende ... integratie heeft gefaald enzovoort en het wordt nu stillekes aan tijd dat ze allemaal Nederlands spreken enzovoort gisteren was er de vertoning he ik heb het u gezegd he rond Mijn Verhaal heel goed heel boeiend en helemaal op het einde zegt er iemand van ja ik vind dat we dat eigenlijk niet uh ik vind dat dat eigenlijk niet kan dat wij in onze instellingen he ouderlingen instellingen ... dat wij voor personeel moeten zorgen die de taal van de mensen kent ... want als ik naar 't buitenland ga dan moet ik toch ook wel he die taal spreken enzovoort ... ja

excerpt 67

JZ: En was die vraag ook weer gericht aan aan diezelfde mijnheer

AZ: Ja ja ja inderdaad he want der was ne moderator enzovoort ... en dan zeg ik van ja ik bedoel ... als je met die mentaliteit zit en ondanks het feit als je dan ... bekijkt van de context van ja hoe dat je moet zaken in de context bekijken he mensen die naar hier gekomen zijn en niet de gelegenheid hebben gekregen en gehad om Nederlandse les te volgen en die nu oud worden en niks gedaan hebben dan werken werken werken en nu op pensioen zijn en oud worden kan je niet van die mensen verwachten dat zij effectief dan Nederlands gaan studeren ... en zeker niet wanneer dat het gaat om analfabeten he dus uhm ... voor een stuk denk ik van mensen die met allez met met die visie of met die ingesteldheid zitten en zulke opmerkingen geven ... ja die zitten eigenlijk al teveel eigenlijk in in de rechtse hoek ... die eigenlijk zoiets hebben van ... der gaat zoveel verkeerd he der gaat zoveel verkeerd he en dat wordt nu zo is stillekes aan tijd ... enzovoort dus echt ja zij zij ... zij stellen korter eigenlijk de grenzen terwijl dat je zou kunnen zeggen dat vanuit de linkse hoek dat men der eigenlijk bijna grenzeloos is he zo van ja die allochtonen die kunnen ... in hun ogen niks verkeerd doen he ...

excerpt 68

MB: ... dat was ook zo een soort, om te zeggen van ja, ge moet tekenen, en dat is een soort verklaring waarin je verklaart dat je je wel degelijk integreert en de wetten, Belgische wetten, blabla, respecteert en zo voort, ...

excerpt 69

MB: Dus de meeste Marokkanen hier zijn mensen die echt hun wetten heel goed toepassen. Ik zie het maar aan mijn vader. Die moet maar een brief in de bus krijgen, dat is de eerste die daarmee naar de post gaat, afhaalt, want ja, ge weet maar nooit, verkeersbelasting wordt altijd heel goed uitbetaald, die laat met andere woorden van zijn budgetten vallen om overheidszaakjes te betalen, om in orde te zijn.

excerpt 70

MB: ... onderzoekt dat maar ... hoeveel bijvoorbeeld daar wordt dan geen studie van gemaakt he bijvoorbeeld mensen van allochtone origine of zij belang hechten aan overheidsdocumenten zich in orde brengen zich schikken enzovoort ... en niet alleen maar om geld te ontvangen maar ook om geld te betalen en ik vind dat ook een vanzelfsprekende daad en dat mag ook als erkenning naar voren gebracht worden omdat die mensen wel degelijk ... want iemand die zijn voeten daaraan veegt he gewoon van die wetten aan die oproepingen ... maar neen een Marokkaan of een autochtoon van Marokkaanse origine zijn dus echt mensen die zich daar fel mee bezighouden om met zoveel mogelijk in orde te blijven ... natuurlijk heb je mensen die zeg maar gemarginaliseerd zijn dat heb je overal dat is een kleine Die dus zich niet Marokkaan niet Belg ... dat heb je ook en dat gaan we niet ontkennen maar het gros ... het meeste gelukkig zijn mensen die de wetten gewoontes toepassen ...

excerpt 71

AA: De ontgoocheling ... de ontgoocheling in het integratiediscours en het integratie verwachtingspatroon ... bij henzelf niet in het beleid ... misschien ook het beleid maar ook hun eigen verwachtingen... de ontgoocheling ook van hun ouders de ontgoocheling van de snelheid waarmee instellingen zich hebben aangepast net zoals die ontgoocheling even terecht is van instellingen ten aanzien van allochtonen van allez dat gaat nogal eens traag ... maar als iets traag evolueert dan is het wel de menselijke mentaliteit het menselijke brein van de homo sapiens ...

excerpt 72

AX: Oh maar natuurlijk iedereen doet dat graag absoluut dat terugplooiën daar heb ik het zelfs nog niet eens over het terugplooiën van de eigen groep en geen contact meer met Vlamingen ... integendeel zelfs het zijn Vlamingen he ... maar terugplooiën naar ...

JZ: een waardepatroon

AX: naar een bepaald waardepatroon bijvoorbeeld ja naar bepaalde vormen van engagement ja naar bepaalde niche kiezen van engagement, niet zozeer het integratieve maar misschien het samen beleven van een gemeenschappelijke cultuur, van een gemeenschappelijke binding en niet meer de brug ... verstaat ge? Het zijn Vlamingen he vergeet dat niet he de contacten met de mutualiteiten de contacten met de school de bureaus ... dat is allemaal positief verlopen en dat heeft vooral te maken met hier naar school gaan en de Nederlandse taal die toegenomen is ... absoluut ... tuurlijk maar terugplooiën naar is je eigen nestwarmte proberen te ontdekken in al die openheid die gij die dag tentoon spreidt ... het signaal van terugplooiën naar juist dankzij een integratieproces is gekomen van goed ik wil me niet kwijt ik wil mijn stukje behouden ik wil daar genieten ... misschien is er een evolutie geweest van altijd met de ander bezig te zijn, met andere culturen of andere ... en zo voorts, en te weinig met ...

excerpt 73

AX: misschien is er teveel integratie op dit ogenblik, en dat is allemaal wel goed en dus zoekt men naar nestwarmte, en dat mag ook he, die twee ... lijken te bestaan

excerpt 74

NF: ... maar ja ik zou zeggen het minderhedenvraagstuk blijft nog altijd wel een beetje het belangrijkste ... het belangrijkste kader maar maar minderhedenvraagstuk dat ook probeert hoe langer hoe meer voor mij is de uitdaging op dit moment hoe kan ik vanuit mijn positie hier ook linken leggen met ... met Europa buiten Europa uhm het Eurocentrisch uhm activisme een beetje voorbijgaan want uhm ... of ja allez dat is ook weer heel specifiek omdat ik nu net terug kom uit Marokko en ja dat ge dan ook zoiets hebt van hier in Europa ... het is het is niet dat ik problemen hier ga relativeren maar het is meer dat ge ja hoe langer hoe meer het moeilijk hebt om gewoon hier actief te zijn en tegelijkertijd te beseffen dat het dat het centrum waarin dat ge actief bent ook deels mee

verantwoordelijk is voor de uitbuiting die zich elders in de wereld uhm ... die daar plaatsvinden en dat ik ja dat ik echt niet gewoon kan proberen ... wat cosmetische ingrepen in Europa na te streven ... want uiteindelijk daar gaat het om als ge het vergelijkt met wat er elders in de wereld gebeurt ... uhm ... dus eigenlijk ja voor uw eigen positie hier gaan maar dan euh u niks aantrekken van uhm allez ik denk als minderheden een bepaalde bijdragen te leveren hebben dan is het juist die diasporische transnationale invalshoek en uhm ... en ik ben daar nog niet echt uit want het is niet dat ik tegen Europa ben of zo he ik ben ook deel van Europa maar 't is 't is uhm en tegelijkertijd ... ja allez ik ben er nog niet echt uit hoe dat ik erin kan slagen om én in Europa actief te zijn en en mijn plaats als minderheid in Europa toch deels in de politieke geschiedschrijving een plaats te geven in de in de uhm beeldvorming in de identiteitsbepaling van Europa om daar ... minderhedenvraagstuk echt op een manifeste manier in te schrijven want dat is dan denk ik de strijd ... naast uitsluiting en discriminatie en al die zaken maar fundamenteel gaat het over ... wat is de imaginaire gemeenschap van Europa en hoe zorgen we ervoor dat die migranten daar ook deel van gaan uitmaken en dat die niet meer als allochtoon of als outsiders worden gezien ... dus dat is een eerste deel maar anderzijds ook ja continu uhm de de de verantwoordelijkheid die wij hebben vanuit Europa naar de andere delen van de wereld als zijnde ook deels mensen die vanuit het niet-Westen komen ... uhm ... een beetje ja ik weet het niet de hypocrisie aanklagen ...

excerpt 75

KH: ... de thema's ja die wij behandelen is eigenlijk islamofobie en de strijd tegen assimilatie uhm ... ja, wat dat ons als AEL ook vooral bezig houdt is de internationale context dus de context van uhm van Palestina, de Arabische wereld, uhm de bezetting van Irak, dus dat houdt ons ook bezig en dat heeft niks te maken want men heeft ons altijd beschuldigd van wij ... 'importeren conflicten die niets te maken hebben met Vlaanderen of België of Antwerpen of wat dan ook', dat is onzin, ten eerste mag elke organisatie of elke persoon uhm voor een thema ijveren of voor gerechtigheid of voor rechtvaardigheid ijveren waar dan ook op deze planeet. Als er onrecht is in Oezbekistan dan heb ik het recht om hierover een punt van te maken. Palestina heb ik het recht om hierover een punt van te maken. En langs den andere kant zijn we ook kinderen van die natie, ik ben hier wel geboren maar mijn verbondenheid met de Arabische wereld is heel nauw en heel veel Marokkanen of Arabieren hebben die band ook, die hebben die band met het thuisland, met Marokko en en in het verlengde van het Arabische wereld met de Palestijnse strijd. De ene vanuit een identitaire factor, cultureel, he van 'ik voel me Arabier en ik voel me verbonden met het volk dat daar onderdrukt wordt', de andere vanuit een Islamitische identiteit van 'dat zijn moslims dat daar afgeslacht worden en daar uhm daar praat niemand over of als men daarover praat dan praat men daarover in termen van 'terroristen of Osama bin Laden en aanslagen en gevaar en wat nog allemaal en ... vanuit dus die thematiek houdt ons ook bezig en ons politiek bewegen is daar ook mee bezig hier dus ...

excerpt 76

SA: Ik heb ook gezegd van ja kijk "der zijn wel bepaalde aspecten die ik positief vind aan de AEL" ... vooral omwille van het feit dat ze de integratie naar voren hebben gehaald en ook wel heel belangrijke punten ... naar boven hebben gehaald maar zij waren eigenlijk vooral een tegenpunt van het Vlaams Belang vond ik ... zij waren extreem links daar waar Vlaams Belang eigenlijk extreem rechts waren ... zij haalden ook bepaalde zaken naar voren bijvoorbeeld van die kleine gevallen als iemand die neergeslagen werd door een autochtoon en ... trachtten ze op die manier toch een beetje de allochtonen op te hitsen vond ik ook totaal ook niet relevant om te zeggen van ja kijk "dat is belangrijk" ... op zich heb ik ook gezegd van "kijk er zijn misschien wel belangrijkere punten dan bijvoorbeeld de Hezbollah of de Palestijnen wat ze allemaal uitvoeren, die wij hier ter sprake kunnen brengen om de allochtonen en de moslims hier in België verder te helpen of althans verder te ondersteunen" maar ... daar werd niet echt naar oren gegeven dus het was ook niet zo belangrijk voor hen ...

JZ: het internationale bedoel je dat

SA: Ja voilà ik vond op zich uhm in de eerste plaats dat je zelf een positie moet kunnen behalen ... om het over internationale issues te hebben ...

excerpt 76

SA: mijn geloof mij aanspoort om mij meer te engageren tot die dat is eigenlijk vrij raar en uh zoudt ge waarschijnlijk wel tegendraads kunnen noemen uhm omdat het volledig niet overeenstrekt met het geloof (.) maant ons eigenlijk aan (.hh) om u te engageren en u te integreren en hoe doet ge dat het best(?) (.) door steeds in discussie te treden met zij die eigenlijk (.) het bestuur zijn (.) En ik vind dat op zich heel belangrijk (.) daarmee dat ik er ook voor opteer of dat ik ervoor ben dat er een bepaalde organisaties is (.) het maakt niet uit of het een religieuze embleem heeft of niet (.) maar op zich, dat het toch wel een bepaalde organisatie is die (.) bepaalde zaken van het geloof naar voren kan halen die vrij belangrijk zijn voor ons (.hh)

excerpt 78

SA: ik vind dat op zich gewoon fantastisch dat is nu het evenbeeld van een partij ... dat diversiteit naar voren kan brengen waaronder ook integratie ... en eigenlijk kan zeggen van kijk wij werken hier samen met andere gemeenschappen en wij kunnen wel gaan ... voor een rustige harmonieuze gemeenschap in Antwerpen maar ik denk dat andere partijen waaronder de VLD en SPa dat veel minder kan ... omdat zij eerder allochtonen gebruiken als boegbeeld zodat ze stemmen zouden inrijven in plaats van eigenlijk echt ... dat ze geloven in een gemeenschap waarbij de gemeenschappen rustig kunnen samenleven naast elkaar ...

excerpt 79

MC: Neen uhm ... dat dat kijk ... dat is dikwijls zo niet da's ook een van de strategieën als uhm ... Als ge 't niet kunt halen dan gaat ge personaliseren. En dat is uhm ... en ik heb tegen Youssef als persoon nooit iets gehad maar ik wij zijn ... De afstand tussen VOEM en de FMV is zodanig groot dat dat uhm ... Marokkaan zijn is niet genoeg om samen te werken ... En we verschillen grondig van visie. ... En ja dan zeggen ze van Chakkar en we kennen mekaar allang en dit en dat ... en Chakkar en Youssef hebben dat niet gedaan. ... Ik heb tegen de collega's gezegd en er hebben verschillende dat geprobeerd ... ik zeg "als ik in de weg sta ga met hen samenwerken ik laat het open". Ikoubaan heeft dat geprobeerd uhm in den tijd Abou Jahjah heeft 't nog geprobeerd uhm Saïda heeft het geprob ... dat gaat niet dat is zo ... ja ... dat is een uhm dat is als ik aan jou zou vragen. Wat is ... Wat is jou opleiding?

JZ: Uhm communicatiewetenschappen en dan internationale politiek

MC: Politiek dan is dat dat ik u vraag "zou ge kunnen gaan samenwerken met uhm ... uhm ... een een een" ja weet ik veel een een onderzoeker rond rond DNA of zoiets totaal uit ... ja dat ge zegt van "ja 't is wel ne student maar dat is niet genoeg" ... men is met totaal andere dingen bezig uhm uhm ... Uhm we kennen we mekaar maar gaan samenwerken hij zit met DNA en en en en weet ik veel ... maar ik zit met politiek maatschappij sociaal bezig dat dat dan dan. Dan denk ik "ik ken niks van 't lichaam ik weet niet hoe" (lacht) uhm ... dat is eigenlijk een beetje ... en men personaliseert dat men zegt ook zo van uhm ... "FMDO en VOEM en FMV uhm die vechten om de 'macht' rond de Marokkaanse gemeenschap". Ja dan val ik toch wel echt van mijn stoel zo ... pff macht ... 'macht' 'macht' wij (lacht) dat is ook dat is ook wat nog gezegd wordt macht ...

excerpt 80

MC: ... Kijk dat dat bij de Vlamingen of bij de ... Wij zitten rond de tafel. Gij zit de vergadering voor. Hier zit Youssef hier zit ik. ... Ik zit hier en uhm dat gaat uhm ... over de integratiesector ... en wij verschillen van mening ... dan zo "ja se ... die komen niet overeen he" ... ja ... hei zeg ... Ik bedoel dat gaat over onderwijs en twee Marokkanen die hebben soms tegengestelde visie. Ja da's spijtig misschien maar dat is zo daar kunt ge toch niks aan doen. En en dat is zo en dan dan begint pas op we hebben heftige debatten gevoerd binnen 't stad in bijvoorbeeld de Migrantenraad waar we mekaars visie niet vonden. Dat was een discussie en dan soms af en toe eens heftig en dan begint men te zeggen "die komen niet overeen. Dat zijn twee koepels twee Marokkanen die komen niet overeen". Da's moeilijk hoor ... en dan zeggen we "ja ... spijtig misschien dat we niet overeenkomen dat de visies niet hetzelfde zijn maar ja dat is nu eenmaal een politiek spel". En wij hebben nogal een radicaal standpunt als het gaat over onderwijs en werkloosheid en wij zijn voor quota en en VOEM is niet voor quota. Maar ik verwijt hun dat niet.

excerpt 81

NC: maar eigenlijk zijn we al heel ver als het gaat over integratie maar mensen staan daar niet bij stil ... het feit dat ik hier samen zit met u is een zeer extreme vorm van integratie ...

excerpt 82

NF: ja ...ja ja die gaan ook niet naar elkaars activiteiten he ...

JZ: dus de religieuze en de socio culturele

NF: Ja die gaan ook niet naar elkaar veel naar elkaar ... tenzij dat er echt iets gebeurt zoals weet ge rond ... rond de moord uhm van uhm die aanslag van Hans van Themsche ... toen is er echt wel een heel brede samenwerking geweest tussen verschillende ... ik denk dat JVI toen ook mee gedaan heeft ... maar het is vrij uitzonderlijk

JZ: En ziet ge daar een reden voor of ...

NF: Ideologische verschillen ... maar die niet als dusdanig worden benoemd ..

JZ: Zoals ...

NF: Uhm religieuze verschillen ...

JZ: Ah religieuze ja ok

NF: En politieke verschilpunten ... bijvoorbeeld als het over JVI gaat ... die zijn veel minder met burgerschapskwesties en zo bezig die zijn echt uhm met uhm met uhm het soort van het soort van persoonlijke uhm ... persoonlijke politiek tussen aanhalingstekens ... ik denk niet dat die apolitiek zijn die zijn ook heel politiek maar het passeert via uhm het hervormen van van hun eigen dinges van van van uzelf het hervormen van ... het het leven in lijn van de profeet het leven volgen dus de principes van ... en daaruit vloeit wel ... daarrond een bepaalde gemeenschap community of believers ... opbouwen dus dat is een heel andere manier van aan politiek doen ... dan dan uhm pakt nu dinges een FMV onder ander ... dus ik denk echt ideologische verschillen ... maar ik zou het allez van mij mag het ook benoemd worden hoor dan dan is het ook gewoon dan is het zichtbaar dat er verschillen bestaan in de gemeenschap ... ook voor de ook voor de jongere die ... allez want dat is niet vanzelfsprekend hoor ... denkt ja we zijn allemaal hetzelfde en der is maar een Islam en der zijn ... terwijl dat dat niet is he

excerpt 83

SZ: maar ... uhm een een vraag die ik mij toen al stelde is eigenlijk nooit weggegaan is dat ik eigenlijk

JZ: mmh toen ge zelf nog studeerde bedoelt ge of

SZ: ja

JZ: of ok

SZ: is dat ik altijd toch wel enige schroom heb gehad om formeel bij ... organisaties uhm instituten en dergelijke formeel toe te treden

JZ: mmh

SZ: dus ik was uhm als student actief ... als vrijwilliger of soms wat wat wat dichter laat ons zeggen bij uhm ... een tijdje nog de werking van Amnesty International van de Universiteit Gent omdat die een belangrijke derde wereld werking had

JZ: ja .. ja

SZ: maar ik ben daar nooit formeel echt lid van geworden

JZ: mmh

SZ: hetzelfde voor allerlei ... politieke bewegingen die zich uhm toen al links situeerden zowel groene als rode ...

excerpt 86

AA: (dit excerpt is onderdeel van een lopende turn) Moskeeën zijn pas in een latere fase uhm ... uhm ... hun administratie beginnen op te stellen om een erkenningsaanvraag en zijn uit de boot euh gevallen. Waardoor nog een groter uhm ongenoegen gecreëerd wordt en ook zo benoemd werd in moskeeën en en bij de moslims in het algemeen van "ja kijk organisaties die specifiek bezig zijn met cultuurworkshops henna's ontmoetingen en dergelijke die worden erkend en dat is wat de overheid wil. En men wil zwijgen over religie en die wordt als een stiefzoon als een stiefdochter of wat dan ook beschouwd die is nooit niet erkend erkend euhm geworden" uhm ... Dus dat leeft nog altijd binnen de moskeeën.

excerpt 84

Wat euhm ... wat wel zo is, uhm ... uhm uhm, moskeeën zijn weinig toegankelijk omwille gewoon van het feit dat ze ... uhm ... dat ze zo gestructureerd zijn dat dat bestuurders dat dat oudere eerste generatie uhm mannen die geen of weinig of geen Nederlands kunnen. Uhm 't middenveld geraakt daar moeilijk binnen gewoon ook omdat ze zo wat afstandelijk ... men weet niet om te gaan met ... met religie uhm van ... "hoe ver mogen we gaan, mogen we

wel de stap zetten uhm of waarvoor kunnen we ze uhm beter uhm betrekken uhm welke thema's want moskeeën willen enkel rond thema's waar 't element 't element religie uhm religie voorkomt" en zo verder. Dus uhm men vond daar geen toegang en moskeeën hadden zo het gevoel van "de overheid wilt ons niet ondersteunen terwijl Islam wel erkend is ... goed ... dus laat ons met rust we zijn met ons ding bezig", en zo werden dat twee gescheiden uhm twee werelden.

excerpt 85

JZ: mmh toen ge zelf nog studeerde bedoelt ge of

SZ: ja

JZ: of ok

SZ: is dat ik altijd toch wel enige schroom heb gehad om formeel bij ... organisaties uhm instituten en dergelijke formeel toe te treden

JZ: mmh

SZ: dus ik was uhm als student actief ... als vrijwilliger of soms wat wat wat dichter laat ons zeggen bij uhm ... een tijdje nog de werking van Amnesty International van de Universiteit Gent omdat die een belangrijke derde wereld werking had

JZ: ja .. ja

SZ: maar ik ben daar nooit formeel echt lid van geworden

JZ: mmh

SZ: hetzelfde voor allerlei ... politieke bewegingen die zich uhm toen al links situeerden zowel groene als rode ...

excerpt 86

SZ: De idee van de publieke sfeer tussen de politiek en de privé dat is uhm dat alle tussen de staat en de uhm ... daar geloof ik niks van ... de politiek is voor een groot stuk alle tussen de publieke sfeer

excerpt 87

SZ: dus Herman de Ley had me geschreven en tegen dat ik terug kwam was de idee van een AGI uitgegroeid van kunnen we daar niet ... breder mee gaan ... naar een FOGI ... een Forum voor Gelijkheid en Interactie en daar uhm

JZ: ja ... en wat is het verschil

SZ: oh het verschil was groot het AGI was gewoon een soort van van standpuntbepaling van een groep intellectuelen die dan een petitie is geworden daar hebben honderden mensen op ingeschreven uhm ... ik denk dat dat een van de eerste wapenfeiten is geweest in dat hele dossier rond uhm ... uhm ... rond migratie allochtonen Islam die ... hoe zou ik het zeggen uhm ... uit een groep van intellectuelen kwam die die niet meer met alleen de klassieke thema's wouden bezig zijn ... en eigenlijk ben ik toen benaderd geweest ik was pas net terug uit Frankrijk dus dat was da's 94 AGI 94 95 begonnen ze daarover te babbelen en in 95 als ik terug was uhm ben ik ook naar de stichtingsvergadering geweest want uiteindelijk heb ik altijd in de raden van bestuur gezeten ben ook voorzitter geworden gedurende de jaren van FOGI ... en uhm wie zat daarin dat was eigenlijk een groep waarvan een waarvan een aantal uhm ... seculiere en vooral eigenlijk atheïstische humanistische professoren samen brengen met moslims

JZ: mmh

SZ: en dan bedoel ik echt moslims niet ... een slecht woord he maar allochtonen uhm ze zochten en ze hebben ook gevonden in het Gentse vooral ... uhm met mensen die zich eigenlijk als moslim in de publieke sfeer wilden profileren

JZ: mmh

SZ: en dus hebben we zo een organisatie gesticht die bestond uhm ... Herman de Ley Jan Blommaert Sami Zemni Piet Saey en dan ook Youssef Souissi uhm ... wie zat daar nog allemaal in het begin he ... en nog zo een resem van van mensen die soms ook wat minder bekend en dergelijke ... de bedoeling was dus ja gelijkberechtiging en interactie he dus een soort van tegenkanting tegen ... toen al toen we vonden dat het woord integratie was uhm was omschreven of werd omschreven het was ook natuurlijk de de uhm hoe zou ik het zeggen de nadagen van de uhm van de eerste zwarte zondag de Hand in Hand campagne en zo dus uhm

JZ: mmh

SZ: ik denk ik denk dat we toen ook vonden dat we verder gingen dan gewoon Hand in Hand dat zeer goed was en dat de meesten van ons ook hadden ondertekend maar dat uhm dat we verder gingen in de zin van we gaan ook met moslims praten ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: en we gaan daar ook mee interageren als het ware

excerpt 88

SZ: dus dus dat was een uhm allez voor mij een organisatie waar dat ik lid van was. En waarom zeg ik 'was'? Omdat het FOGI ook officieel is opgedoekt als VZW structuur dus die bestaat niet meer. Uhm tegelijkertijd heb ik dan ja ik zat op de universiteit ... en dan ben ik heel snel beginnen inzien dat ik sowieso heel weinig lid zou worden van organisaties en dat mijn engagement zich vooral op dat wetenschappelijke academische intellectuele zou zou bevinden.

JZ: mmh

SZ: Maar ook daar heb ik altijd een ik heb daar altijd een dubbel gevoel bij gehad ... omdat ik altijd een spanning voelde tussen de uhm ... de standpuntbepalingen over over uhm de maatschappelijke standpuntbepalingen, uhm politieke ideeën, en uhm de meer analytische achtergrond ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: Ik vind dat daar een spanning tussen zit, en ... ja soms uhm ... soms zit die ... soms zit dat verkeerd moet ik zeggen, waardoor ik mij niet graag door al te veel structuren laat uhm laat uhm vangen ... En dat is bij mij ... traag duidelijk geworden omdat ik voor zover dat ik daar over kan oordelen ... en dat is misschien een beetje arrogant als ik het zo ga zeggen maar zo voelde ik het toen ... Tussen ongeveer 95 96 en laat ons zeggen uhm symbolisch 2001 voelde ik mij ook zeer geïsoleerd ... Ik had toen geen weet van andere allochtonen, buiten in 98 99 heb ik Meryem Kanmaz leren kennen omdat wij een onderzoeksvoorstel hadden uitgeschreven ... over die moskeeën, dat hadden gekregen, en sollicitaties hadden gedaan en zij kwam daar als beste uit.

JZ: mmh ja

SZ: Uhm dus uhm zij was dan beginnen werken aan de unief he. En bij mijn weten was dat de enigste andere allochtoon als ik dat woord nog ne keer mag gebruiken die zo wat met de zelfde zaken bezig was voor een stuk, met wie ik daarover kon praten.

excerpt 89

SZ: Want het feit dat moslims zoveel terugvallen op zichzelf heeft ook te maken met het feit dat het onderwijs, de vakbonden, de sport en zo gefaald hebben voor een groot stuk. En dat ligt bij de maatschappij. Niet ... niet zozeer bij de mensen, want dat is uhm iets wat ook ... velen ook niet willen begrijpen dat is, ik denk Jan Blommaert als die zegt van "Vlaanderen is racistisch" is dat niet omdat ... x aantal mensen racistisch zijn ... Het gaat hier niet over een ideologische structuur die heerst om om slecht gedrag van individuen die stout zijn ... Dus uhm ... dat uhm dat is zo altijd een beetje de rode draad geweest door door al mijn engagement maar misschien dat ik uhm ... daardoor de laatste twee jaar zo wat minder standpunt inneem over de Islam of zo omdat ik vond dat dat uhm ... ja ... uhm ... te ... door door de structuur van het maatschappelijke debat momenteel had je of heb je niet de kans om in de media uw ei kwijt te kunnen om aan te tonen dat het iets te maken heeft met andere zaken ...

excerpt 90

SZ: goh ik moet zeggen dat ... volgens mij ... of zoals ik het voor mezelf zie zit er een redelijke consistentie in en zit er altijd een rode draad in maar wat dat er wel gebeurd is de laatste jaren ... een beetje door uhm door wat dat er

allemaal gebeurd is he van van wat dat ik daarnet vertelde ook meegesleurd worden in het debat en zo en ook 9/11 ... dat je dus iets te veel meegezo ... iets te veel meegezogen werd in dat verhaal over de Islam he ...

excerpt 91

JZ: mmh

SZ: uhm maar het probleem is natuurlijk als het uhm als het bon ton is om ... om op de Islam te bashen en weet ik veel en zo ... dan kunt ge die hun discours over de Islam daar niet tegen wenden ... ik heb altijd geweten trouwens het hele debat over Islam dit of Islam dat ge kunt uhm ... uhm ... met elke religie kunt ge uhm een inquisitie en een bevrijding goedspreken dus ge kunt dat ook met de Islam dus ik heb het altijd simplistisch gevonden om te zeggen Bin Laden heeft niks te maken met de Islam maar ik heb ik vind het nog simplistischer om te zeggen dat Bin Laden is gelijk aan de Islam ... uhm om het een beetje ongenueanceerd te zeggen ... maar ik ben daar misschien ook wat te lang mee ... mee mee mee ... mee voortgegaan

JZ: mmh

SZ: want uiteindelijk wat er gebeurd is degene

JZ: en te lang voortgegaan met ...

SZ: met daarin mee te gaan met altijd de verdediging van de Islam op te nemen ...

excerpt 92

SZ: (this is a continuation of an ongoing turn) Hoe ga je zo te zeggen als als progressief daarmee om? ... Het resultaat ervan is denk ik toch wel ergens dat uhm ... dat links de trein heeft gemist en wat ge dan nu ziet gebeuren is dat mensen van links ... of toch tot voor kort van links massaal naar rechts tot extreem rechts gaan he Gaande van Wim van Rooy over nen Benno Barnard die ... mensen die volgens mij eigenlijk echt niks te maken hadden met het Vlaams Belang maar nu wel hetzelfde zeggen. Als ze zeggen van he "Filip de Winter heeft gelijk", dat is letterlijk wat Wim van Rooy gezegd heeft in een interview in de Knack, ja Wat moet je daar dan nog op zeggen ... he? Want dan is die niet meer van links volgens mij En uhm ... ik ben altijd wel iemand geweest dat als er zo veel kritiek komt ... dat je je moet uhm ... mmh ... zeer goed ne keer lezen en analyseren wat ze eigenlijk zeggen. En uhm, het laatste jaar heb ik me daar veel mee bezig gehouden Vooral dat verhaal over ... "links is niet meer in staat om het universele te belichamen want ze zijn verstrengeld geraakt in cultureel relativisme he ... waarbij dat uhm alle culturen gelijk zijn" ... en dit en dat. En natuurlijk heb je dan degenen van Vlaams Belang en zelfs ook tal van anderen die geen Vlaams Belang zijn die zeggen "cultuur ... onze cultuur is superieur" en dergelijke. Maar je hebt ook heel veel mensen ... met wie dat ik uhm kan discuten, ook al heb ik andere meningen, maar die niet daarom vinden dat wij superieur of dat deze cultuur superieur zou zijn aan andere culturen

JZ: mmh

SZ: maar die wel vinden dat je toch nog altijd wel een universeel standpunt moet kunnen innemen en niet kunnen verzanden in ... relativisme dat alles zomaar wat goedpraat en dergelijke meer zo ...

JZ: mmh (this exchange continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 93

SZ: (this excerpt is a continuation of the excerpt above) en ook al ben ik het niet helemaal eens met die kritiek er zit er daar wel iets van juistheid in in die zin dat ik zelf ook ... opgegroeid ben in een academische wereld die nogal ... heel lang ... uhm allez of als ik ... begon te studeren en begon te lezen en dergelijke ... dan dan was het echt zo de hoogdagen denk ik van de uhm ... ja van het uhm ... van het postkolonialisme van Derrida uhm herontdekking van Foucault uhm ... deconstructivisme ... nieuwe versies van het poststructuralisme en dergelijke. Ik weet dat jij daar mee bezig zijt he ...

JZ: (lacht) mmh

SZ: en ik denk dat dit ergens inderdaad uhm ... voor een stuk te ver is gegaan ... in de zin van ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: ik denk dat daar nog altijd heel veel heel interessante dingen in zitten en zo het is niet dat ik dat ineens allemaal zo zou verwerpen maar het is wel waar dat ik heel lang op mijn honger bleef ... bij de vertaling van bepaalde van die moeilijke geschriften dan ... naar uhm politieke standpuntbepalingen in de werkelijkheid

excerpt 94

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) Het engagement in kifikif heeft me altijd zeer aangesproken omdat ik daar ook uhm het verschil kon maken tussen de organisatie en mezelf he. Dus uhm ... uhm, kifikif was geen organisatie. Het is eerder gelijk een netwerk of zo. Het is eerder een platform waar dat er allerlei zaken mogelijk waren, binnen bepaalde grenzen natuurlijk ...

JZ: ja

SZ: En uhm dat uhm dat zinde mij wel omdat ik dan wist dat er ook een veelheid aan standpunten mogelijk is omdat ik dat ja ... bij die andere organisaties was er altijd een probleem van ... "hoe lang blijf je dan bij een organisatie waarvan je vindt dat dit of dat niet helemaal strookt met uw opvatting?" ...

excerpt 95

SZ: uhm ... jawel maar in de meeste gevallen uhm stonden daar de namen allez onder ...

JZ: ja

SZ: en dat was nooit namens kifikif en dat is nu wat iedereen binnen kifikif moet denken ... ofwel tekende je ofwel tekende je niets ... en uhm ... sommigen zouden kunnen zeggen van ja als ge ze ne keer allemaal op een rijtje zet sinds het jaar 2000 en ge kijkt naar wie tekent wat dat ge daaruit zou kunnen afleiden ... neen soms is het ook puur praktisch ... ik was ook bijvoorbeeld soms een half jaar weg voor mijn onderzoek in het buitenland en dan was ik niet bezig met kifikif eerlijk gezegd

JZ: ja zo

SZ: maar uhm daarop komt het wel een beetje neer uhm het idee van "we schrijven een stuk over uhm Keulen over vrije meningsuiting" en dat wordt dan rondgestuurd ... en vooral Danny gaf dan zo ne voorzet en dan is er zoiets van "ja kijk onderteken je dit wel of niet" en ja en uhm dan zie je dat passeren natuurlijk he dus je gaat van punt tot punt mee op de punten waarvan je zegt van "daar sta ik achter ... en ook daar" Wat dat ik deed persoonlijk dan en nu spreek ik alleen maar over mezelf en niet over de anderen binnen kifikif ... ik las dat ik uhm gaf commentaar ... als ik dat nodig vond en uhm stel dat dan ... als dat rond gaat uhm ... bij mijn opmerking geen rekening werd gehouden ... dan nam ik een beslissing uhm dezelfde afweging als dat ik daarmee uhm ... probeerde duidelijk te maken van moet ik een organisatie die dat fout zijn op dat punt dan ... neen ... dus als ik zoiets had van ja ik ben hier negentig procent mee akkoord en in dit zou ik een beetje anders zetten en dan heb ik het echt niet over ne komma of zo maar iets dat wel toch he

JZ: ja ja ok

SZ: maar dan dan zeg ik neen als ik als ik zei van ja ok ik ben daar eigenlijk voor negentig procent mee akkoord dan tekende ik dat toch ...

excerpt 96

JZ: mmh

SZ: ik vond dat heel ik vind dat een heel slecht platform eigenlijk om aan maatschappelijke actie bepaling te doen ...

JZ: ja

SZ: en natuurlijk kunt ge dan antwoorden en dat doen velen ... met Ico heb ik het daar dan soms over he dat het gaat om hegemonie terug te winnen en een ander discours en dit en dat en zo ... en dat is allemaal wel goed en wel maar het blijft wel heel moeilijk om ... kordaat en goed te antwoorden op de aanvallen die van rechts komen ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: dus daar had ik altijd ook hetzelfde voor als met mijn maatschappelijke actie he ... dus ik ik las dat ik vond dat

interessant en zo maar tegelijkertijd was ik daar ook niet honderd procent gelukkig mee ... ik heb dat nog altijd een beetje

JZ: niet gelukkig met de met de ... dus uhm ...

SZ: wel die dus ik ben ...

JZ: die theorievorm

excerpt 97

SZ: ik ben bijvoorbeeld ne hele grote fan van Said maar veel mensen steken Said in poststructuralisme en dergelijke en inderdaad da's nen taal nen linguïst dat is ne linguïst hij was met taal bezig en uhm noem maar op dat is wel waar maar hij behoorde helemaal niet tot die groep van ... laten we ze eventjes relativisten noemen en dat bedoel ik niet zo simplistisch zoals rechtsen dat nu altijd maar gebruiken ... dus ik ik blijf ne grote fan van Said maar dat is wel waar dat veel van zijn ... acolieten ... volgens mij daar allerlei ... ongelooflijk ingewikkelde stukken hebben geschreven die volgens mij geen echte goede basis meer zijn om aan maatschappelijke actie te doen ...

JZ: ja

SZ: uhm ... en dat is momenteel een moeilijke situatie omdat je dus uhm ... uhm ... als ge tot die conclusie komt dan schuift ge nogal snel naar rechts op denk ik ...

JZ: (lacht)

SZ: maar ik doe dat niet

excerpt 98

SZ: ja daar staat hij [de ober] maar uhm ik ga hem een teken doen ... weet ge als ge zo Sartre terug leest he ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: uhm ...

JZ: ik heb alleen maar colonialism and neocolonialism daar een paar artikeltjes uit gelezen maar dat is zo niet echt filosofische ...

SZ: ja Sartre wat is dat eigenlijk he ...

JZ: ja da's vanalles he maar uhm maar ja zeg maar ik weet niet wat ge daarvan wilt zeggen

SZ: awel ... als ge dan zo leest de de ... zijn soort van publiek engagement he zijn ... intellectuels engagés dat hij zo lanceerde en dergelijke ... ge ziet ge ziet ... (gebaart naar ober) ... mijnheer ... die ... die had ook een marxistisch humanisme dat als platform diende he ... (ober staat bij ons) ... ja voor mij graag een cola zéro alstublieft

excerpt 99

JZ: en voor mij graag een bitter lemon alstublieft ...

SZ: die uhm die hem in staat stelde om er tegen aan te gaan

JZ: uhm sorry wat had hij

SZ: een marxistisch humanisme

JZ: jajajaja

SZ: als basis he om zo uhm zijn zijn maatschappelijke actie en zijn schrijven in symbiose te brengen natuurlijk heeft dat vandaag niet meer echt zo dezelfde resonantie maar omdat het ook nu veel moeilijker is ... om uw uhm ... om uw zaken les causes ... te kiezen

JZ: mmh

SZ: maar uhm ... dat is volgens mij voor een groot stuk ... te veel teniet gedaan door uhm ... ja ... poststructuralisme breed gezien he van Lévi-Strauss naar Foucault en zeker Derrida maar Derrida heb ik nooit begrepen eerlijk gezegd en en ... zeker niet als hij dan zijne switch maakte dus jarenlang niks over politiek zeggen hij gaat naar Amerika hij begint ineens over politiek en dan ja ...

excerpt 100

SZ: ja ja Jean Bricmont en eigenlijk als ik me niet vergis het artikel was alleen Jean Bricmont ... maar het boek intellectual impostors was met Sokal samen ... en dat heeft dat heeft bij mij toch wel het een en ander teweeg gebracht ... uhm niet dat ik er ook alles mee akkoord was maar dat ik toch zeg verdomme hij heeft wel een punt en soms als ik dat lees heb ik dat nu nog altijd

JZ: mmh

SZ: uhm ... een opeenstapeling van zaken worden beschreven van dat is allemaal zeer schoon dat is bijna poëtisch soms

JZ: mmh

SZ: Derrida heb ik nooit begrepen dat geef ik toe maar ... ge leest dat dan en dat is allemaal zeer goed en wel maar laten we dat nu gewoon ne keer vertalen naar ... uhm stel dat er ne mens is in de straat en die zegt van kunt ge mij nu ne keer samenvatten wat dat gij nu juist wilt zeggen daarmee

JZ: mmh

SZ: da's al veel moeilijker laat staan dat je een maatschappelijk echt relevant discours daarop kunt ontwikkelen ...

JZ: ja

SZ: en daar heb ik altijd uhm een een probleem mee gehad en volgens mij is die balans soms veel te veel doorgeslaan en bij sommigen alle die ... sommige stukken die ik gelezen heb van Homi Bhabha bijvoorbeeld over postcolonial situation intertextuality dat ik zo denk van ... en alle ik durf dat niet al te veel zeggen omdat ... want ik voel me natuurlijk nietig ten opzichte van zo'n intelligente mensen als Homi Bhabha maar ook omdat ik soms denk van begrijp ik het niet echt goed ... of slaag ik er niet in een verband te leggen met met concrete zaken of zo ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: en uhm ... maar toch ja ... toch denk ik ergens van het is omdat er ergens wel ne alle ... een groter probleem is

excerpt 101

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) dus ik ben zo een beetje in dat debat uhm gedwarfeld ... zonder dat ik het altijd altijd even goed wist ... niet dat ik mij daarvoor wil goed praten maar als ik nu terug kijk zou ik zeker bepaalde zaken helemaal anders aangepakt hebben met de media ... die mij ... ja toen uhm misbruikt hebben als een groen blaadje natuurlijk he

JZ: mmh

SZ: ik sta nog altijd achter de zaken die ik gezegd heb hoor daarover gaat het niet maar ...

JZ: kunt ge daar een voorbeeldje van geven of wilt ge daar wat rond

SZ: goh ja zo de de de uhm de continue uhm vanaf dat er iets was met moslims dan moest er gebeld worden naar naar mij uhm omdat men vond van hij kan het wel zeggen in een one liner of twee en en uhm hij heeft wel iets te zeggen en dergelijke ... maar ik durfde nooit mijn eigenste stelling te nemen in de zin van ik kon niet ... of ... noch door door taal noch door uhm ... buiten het interview iets te proberen te uhm ... het format te veranderen ...

excerpt 102

SZ: dat heb ik gewoonweg meegemaakt

JZ: ja

SZ: als jonge ... ja jonge allochtoon in de publieke sfeer dan ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: van ok ge moogt iets zeggen maar af en toe werd dan gezegd van stop we gaan dat nog een keer opnemen het is iets te lang kunt ge dat een klein beetje korter doen ... maar dan had ik nog altijd wel de indruk van ok hier kan ik iets zeggen tot ... ik heb het zelf meegemaakt op 32 seconden ... dat ik een one liner voor een of ander programma moest uhm moest kunnen doen ... en die tape werd dan vier vijf keer opgenomen ... omdat ik dan ne keer aan zestig zat en dan ne keer aan vijftig ... en toen toen is bij mij dat was ergens in eind jaren '90 of begin jaren 2000 is echt uhm is echt beginnen dagen van hier wil ik niet meer mee mee doen

JZ: ja

SZ: dan ben ik ook veel minder in de media gekomen, ben ik ook veel minder in de media gekomen, ... en zeker in het laatste jaar heb ik me helemaal afzijdig gehouden ook om tal van andere redenen en dat had niet alleen te maken met de media.

excerpt 103

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) Want dat is dan de andere kant die spanning met het academische ... dat is uhm ... uhm ... door het feit dat ik vroeger waarschijnlijk door uhm ja in in in ... voor voor 9/11 tijden he

JZ: mmh

SZ: dat ik misschien ook jong was of jonger ik zal het zo zeggen ... uhm misschien minder aan dacht ... maar ... het publieke debat was anders als je dan iets zei dat anderen niet graag hoorden of zo ...

JZ:

mmh

SZ: dan kon ik een brief krijgen uhm of in een email hoewel dat nog niet zo courant was ... met een uhm opmerking een vraag ... uhm en en vooral ...

JZ: die dat gij gij krijgt ...

SZ: ik ja ... omdat ik ja ja ja ...

JZ: ah ok

SZ: maar dat meestal de teneur was van ja mijnheer Zemni wat dat je daar gezegd heb ja dit en dat dit en dat waar dat ik altijd voor openstond en voor open sta ... maar ik was gewoon op dat moment nen doctorandus aan de Universiteit van Gent uhm ... zoals Jan Jansens maar na na 9/11 niet meer ...

excerpt 104

SZ (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) ik bedoel er circuleren open brieven op het internet over mij waarbij ik gezien wordt als een soort van missionaris ... van de Marokkaanse Islamisten ook al heb ik Tunesische roots dat weten ze dan blijkbaar allemaal en zo van die toestanden waarbij ze dus gewoon alles wat ik zeg continu ... zien als een rookscherm waarachter ik mijn ware intenties zou hebben

JZ: jajaja

SZ: nu goed als dat van het Vlaams Belang zou komen dan kan je daar nog ergens een plaats aan geven en mee lachen maar het is uhm ... het valt mij echt persoonlijk zwaar ... dat dat komt uit milieus van mensen die gewoon ook behoren tot die generatie van mensen die denken dat uhm ... een mening een argument is en dat elke mening gelijkwaardig is en dat je dan maar gewoon ... alle iemand een karaktermoord uhm ... uhm laster eerroof moet plegen als onderdeel van een eerlijke publieke discussie

JZ: mmh

SZ: dat valt mij vree zwaar eerlijk gezegd ik vind dat dat heel erg is plus ook het het het uh het is ook een

weerspiegeling van een ontgoocheling ... misschien dat ik er iets te naïef in was maar euhm ... ja ... uhm ... ik ben ervan overtuigd dat ik dingen naar mijn hoofd krijg geslingerd die collega's Karel de Vos en Rik Coolsaet nooit zullen krijgen.

excerpt 105

SZ: en wij praten daar soms over en natuurlijk he Rik Coolsaet wordt ook vaak aangevallen dit en dat en zeker uit rechtse hoek ... maar nooit op een manier ... op een identitaire manier ik zal het zo zeggen

JZ: ja

SZ: he men gaat hem nooit iets verwijten als landverrader als slecht geïntegreerd als ... van die zaken

JZ: jaja

SZ: en da's natuurlijk een zware ontgoocheling maar ik heb daar echt geen zin meer in

JZ: mmh

SZ: om allez ik bedoel als ik moet gaan bewijzen dat ik geïntegreerd ben en van die toestanden ... dat heb ik echt al wel lang lang geleden gehad ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: en soms kan ik het ook niet meer opbrengen soms weet ik dat mensen het echt niet slecht bedoelen en en je kan het mensen ook niet altijd kwalijk nemen dat ze niet alle informatie hebben en dit of dat en zo maar uhm pfft ...

excerpt 106

(this excerpt is a continuation of an ongoing turn) omdat ik nog altijd geloof dat je het kind niet met het badwater moet gaan weggooien Ook, allez, volgens mij, en ook volgens veel anderen denk ik, heeft Levi-Strauss zijn poststructuralisme, zijn respect voor andere culturen, ... in andere culturen gaan om ze beter te begrijpen niet geschreven om dan te zeggen van uhm "het is allemaal eerder" en zo. Neen, maar om beter te begrijpen wat dat er elders gebeurde Uhm maar ... ik denk dat het wel een van de gevolgen is geweest daardoor dat er zo een tendens op gang is gekomen Maar daardoor zijn we ook veel te weinig bezig geweest met economie, met het neoliberalisme die al sinds het begin van de jaren '80 maar voor Vlaanderen misschien vooral in de jaren '90 een enorme impact heeft op eigenlijk alles ... Van de mediastructuren tot het publieke debat Ja, het is het is het is een farce gewoon

JZ: mmh

excerpt 107

SZ: ik uhm ik ben nog vree jong maar soms ... lacht mijn vrouw met mij dat ik nen grumpy old man ben al

JZ: (lacht)

SZ: omdat ik mij dus zo kan opjagen da's een feit dat we Daar gaat genen dag voorbij of we moeten kijken naar een programma een een ... ofwel een preprogramma of een praatprogramma waar dat politici zich moeten zich belachelijk maken Mag ik je kussen mevrouw de minister uhm ... de Wever in de slimste mens de Wever die is gewoon niet van het scherm te branden Hij komt niet meer in het nieuws maar hij komt in allerlei andere programma's... (this turn continues in the excerpt below).

excerpt 108

SZ: en het is daarmee wat dat ik altijd of wat ik nu een beetje probeer te doen ... of meer probeer te doen of meer aandacht voor probeer te hebben, dat is dat volgens mij de problematiek van de Islam ... misschien wel terug gaat ook op een visceeraal anti-Islam gevoel dat misschien al wel bestond en bestaat in Europa ... dat dat een minderheid is ... net als de biologisch racisten in ons land Het is veel meer alledaags racisme dat cultureel is dan dan echt zo "de mensen die behoren tot" ... ik bedoel rassentheorieën en zo he Maar dat die ... dat dat allemaal volgens mij ook wel veel te maken heeft met uhm ... met het neoliberalisme Ook het feit dat veel moslims ... terug grijpen naar de Islam en niet alleen zomaar 'de' Islam maar ook wel inderdaad fundamentalistische versies daarvan

of toch zekere conservatieve ... reactionaire behoudsgezinde versies daarvan heeft daar ook mee te maken (this turn continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 109

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of the turn discussed in the excerpt above) ... en ge ziet dat zeer goed in Amerika ... in Amerika heeft neoliberalisme ... of gewoon de vrije markt en moet ge dan dan zo zeggen van "ja het is allemaal de schuld van het neoliberalisme" neen zo simpel is het uiteraard niet het gaat over uw politieke, economische, sociale ordening ... en in Amerika heeft men dat zo ver doorgeduwd de principes van de vrije markt dat wat blijft er dan over inderdaad een geatomiseerd individu dat los uhm zo wat wat rondzweeft als het ware. Men heeft nog maar een een mogelijkheid nog en dat is de community en de community is heel snel ingebed in een religieuze traditie he en dat is wat je ziet bij moslims ook ... sinds 9/11 door de druk van van van overal door de ook door de economische ordening en zo ... want het feit dat moslims zo veel terugvallen op zichzelf heeft te maken dat het onderwijs de vakbonden de sport en zo faalt daar ook voor een stuk ... en dat ligt bij de maatschappij ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: niet zozeer de mensen

excerpt 110

SZ: Ik denk dat de strijd voor mensen de emancipatie ook elders ligt alhoewel ... ge hebt ook nog altijd dat ... het culturele het menselijke dus het identitaire ergens ook een zekere plaats moet krijgen ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: dus ik wil zeker niet terug naar de tijden van het vulgaire marxisme of zo of weet ik veel of het economisch determinisme

JZ: mmh

SZ: maar ik vind dat het soms veel te veel doorslaat ...

JZ: mmh ...

SZ: dat is het eigenlijk ... dus vandaar ook dat je niet altijd goed doet stel dat ... alle uhm ... het feit dat uhm ... dat dat de werkloosheid bij de moslims veel meer toeslaat dan bij anderen het feit dat uhm armoede en dergelijke uhm is ... is is uhm ... wordt geculturaliseerd terwijl het eigenlijk over een sociaal politiek vraagstuk zou moeten gaan

JZ: mmh

SZ: en dat is heel moeilijk om daar tegen in te gaan als ge als ge niet datzelfde denkkader gebruikt waarin dat het wordt gegeven he ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: de culturalisering van die zaken is echt een slecht feit

JZ: ja ...

excerpt 111

SZ: dus uhm ... Die strijd zie ik dan ook global. Vandaar dat ik ook wel zo nu met die Vooruit groep zo actief ben, ik volg dat wel, niet dat ik daaraan mee schrijf, ook gebrek aan tijd en al maar uhm ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: Hoe bedenken we een politieke gemeenschap anno 2009 ... die niet gebaseerd is op uhm op uhm op nationalisme, die niet gebaseerd is op een bepaalde conceptie van religie of zo ...

JZ: mmh ... waarop is die volgens u dan wel gebaseerd ...

SZ: (lacht) ... politiek ... denk ik ik denk dat daar het antwoord ligt alhoewel ik daar soms ook wel over twijfel want de politiek is natuurlijk wel een systeem waar er speciale spelregels gelden ...

JZ: want politiek in de zin van ...

SZ: Wat verbindt een persoon a met een persoon b die toevallig op eenzelfde grondgebied wonen ... ? De NVA zou zeggen "de taal he"

JZ: mmh

SZ: uhm en weet ik veel het Vlaams Belang "de cultuur onze waarden" en zo en weet ik veel ... en de liberalen gaan er eigenlijk ook naartoe he "de vrijheid de democratie" en dit en dat en zo Maar daar los je niks mee op, dat is gewoon, ... dat is dat is wollig taalgebruik. Ik denk dat de problemen die dat zich nu stellen da's ook Hoe ga je er inderdaad voor zorgen ... dat uhm mensen die ergens wonen ook daadwerkelijk iets te zeggen hebben over de toekomst van de plek waar ze wonen he ...?

JZ: mmh

SZ: Uhm, zo veel mogelijk democratie. En dan is de vraag "op welk ... op welk niveau pak je die zaken best aan?"

JZ: ja

SZ: en daar moet je heel flexibel in zijn denk ik. Der zijn bepaalde uhm ... allez of het is noodzakelijk denk ik om op sommige punten te decentraliseren ... uhm, en steden en gemeenten bijvoorbeeld belangrijker te maken, en op andere punten denk ik dat het heel veel belangrijker is om Europa te versterken.

excerpt 112

SZ: want wat dat ze nu gedaan allez ... en allez ... ze gaan dan ook niet moeten afkomen hun gezeik van de kloof tussen de burger en de politiek is toch wel groot (hoog stemmetje) ...

JZ: (lacht)

SZ: allez ik ben ne keer blij dat het over zo'n dossier gaat ...

JZ: ja dat het echt gewoon concreet ... het probleem echt ook concreet bediscussieerd wordt

excerpt 113

SZ: (this turn is a continuation of an ongoing turn) ofwel moet je de burger inderdaad wel betrekken bij het beleid maar dan echt ... ofwel houd je op met de pantomime ... en allez ... dat is wat dat er nu wel heel duidelijk is geworden met dienen Wapper he ...

JZ: ja ...

SZ: neen maar hoeveel was het dat de Slangen had gekregen ...

JZ: wacht effe ... dat weet ik niet meer

SZ: het enige wat dat ze daaruit besluiten is er is slecht gecommuniceerd ...

JZ: jajajaja

SZ: niemand zelfs de journalist niet die durfde de vraag te stellen ... ja maar mijnheer Slangen ... was het misschien niet zo dat de mensen dat gewoon niet ... wilden .. he

JZ: jaja ... ja

SZ: neen ... er is slecht gecommuniceerd we hebben ze niet kunnen overtuigen dus dat betekent dus dat communicatie over zo het kwam derop neer dat ge het door de strot hamert van de mensen

JZ: ja

SZ: maar op een manier dat ze blijkbaar zouden moeten aanvaarden ... goede communicatie is mensen overtuigen ...

JZ: ja

SZ: dat hebben ze letterlijk gezegd eigenlijk he ... dat is belachelijk

JZ: ja dat argument komt vaak terug he dat is mij ook al een paar keer opgevallen ...

SZ: der is slecht gecommuniceerd ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: dat is een complete depolitisering he (this turn continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 114

SZ: dus ik kom terug bij mijn 'politisering' die in feite ... dat is een politiek, ik begrijp zeer goed dat vanuit een bepaalde ... rationaliteiten, dat een Lange Wapper nodig is ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: Ik begrijp dat ook zeer goed en dat is moeilijk he, ... uhm, ... maar dat is juist de politiek he.

JZ: mmh

SZ: Het gaat om de kunst van het mogelijke en en beslissingen te nemen en te dromen over welke maatschappij willen we naartoe.

excerpt 115

SZ: Maar daarover gaat het hè dat dat Het algemene belang is altijd particulier belang geweest, en het is de botsing van deze particuliere belangen he, in de politiek gaat erom om daar een keuze in te nemen.

excerpt 116

SZ: Ja, ... ja, ... Dus ik denk dat daar de de de toekomst ligt, dat je niet meer kunt gaan naar een politieke gemeenschap die gebaseerd is op taal, op cultuur, op op op een of ander homogeen begrip van het samen zijn, ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: maar op wat bindt er ons? Het feit dat we samen het publieke debat betreden, ...

JZ: mmh

SZ: en elkaar als gelijken kunnen ... spreken.

JZ: ja

SZ: Het probleem daarbij natuurlijk is dat je, ... want daar geloof ik niet in, en dat is het grote probleem natuurlijk, da's, allez gij schrijft dat ook trouwens, gij doet dat in Habermas zijn idee van publieke communicatie is er een zonder, ... waar dat het ... concept macht bijna compleet uhm ... in ontbreekt hè.

JZ: mmh

SZ: en dat is het grote probleem natuurlijk he ...

excerpt 117

KH: De huidige, de hedendaagse thema's? Wel ... het thema dat vooral in het oog springt, de laatste maanden vooral ... is uhm, het thema, het is meer een ... een uhm ... religieus thema voor sommigen en een identitair thema voor anderen, en dat gaat over de hoofddoek bij de moslimvrouwen.

excerpt 118

KH: ik ... of AEL heeft nooit de pretentie gehad om te zeggen van wij praten namens de moslims ... wij zijn seculier ... dus wij nemen geen standpunten in met betrekking tot religie of religieuze materie ... wij zeggen alleen maar ... vrijheid van religie primeert ...

JZ: Mmh

KH: voor zowel christenen joden als moslims als niet-gelovigen of vrijheid van niet-geloven en iedereen moet de ruimte krijgen om zijn zijn religie te kunnen uh

BH: en ook bijvoorbeeld de hoofddoek dat verdedigen wij vanuit een democratisch principe en niet vanuit een Islamitisch principe niet vanuit Islamprincipe

KH; niet vanuit Islamitisch principe

BH: hoewel mijn dochter draagt geen hoofddoek ik ga haar ook nooit opleggen van een hoofddoek te dragen dat moet zij zelf weten

KH: en bij mij ook bijvoorbeeld ... mijn vrouw moet dat zelf weten ... en ik heb zelfs tegen tegen mijn eigen echtgenote uh ... ik zie haar liever zonder dan met maar ja bon als zij op een dag zegt van ik wil die dragen (lacht) ok so be it dus binnen de organisatie zijn er mensen die daar wel in geloven absoluut in geloven en zijn er mensen die daar geen complexen over hebben die dat daar misschien in geloven maar zeggen van zeg ... da's niet de prioriteit en er zijn er mee die zeggen van ik geloof dat helemaal niet en er zijn mensen die daar absoluut niet in geloven in de AEL

BH: ja die agnost zijn en en niet religieus zijn

KH: en dus

BH: die mensen zitten ook in de AEL en en wij werden dan beschuldigd van van fanatici en Al Qaeda en haat-Islam en

excerpt 119

KH: Elk gemeentebestuur wil nu een verbod perse om de trend te volgen, het is mode nu om een verbod van de hoofddoek aan de loket in uw reglement op te nemen en natuurlijk dat staat niet op zichzelf dat thema, dat kadert binnen een bepaalde politiek en het is die bepaalde politiek die AEL al jaren uhm tracht te benadrukken, te ontmaskeren, het is een politiek die uhm als doel heeft om de minderheden te assimileren in de Vlaamse of de Belgische maatschappij om om die de verschillen die er bestaan tussen verschillende gemeenschappen in het land om die zo zo goed mogelijk weg te vlakken om uiteindelijk te komen tot een, ja blijkbaar eenheidsworst, ze beweren altijd dat dat niet de bedoeling is maar als ge kijkt naar het beleid en naar de retoriek en en en uhm en de agendapunten de punten die op de agenda worden gezet naar aanleiding van minderhedenbeleid enzovoort enzovoort, dan kan je niet anders dan constateren dat men een en assimilatiepolitiek wil voeren waarbij dat moslims zo weinig mogelijk mogen laten zien dat ze moslim zijn, waarin Arabieren zo weinig mogelijk laten zien dat ze Arabieren zijn, dus de taal niet openbaar spreken in scholen, ik ken dat al sinds dat ik zelf nog school liep, dat men zei tegen ons van wij bijvoorbeeld onderling geen Arabisch mochten praten he op de scholen of dit of dat, of dat op de speelplaatsen, op de speelplaatsen, ik heb het nu niet over de les, over de lessen kan ik zeggen van het is de les, er moet wel les gegeven worden in het Nederlands, als ge iets zegt moet iedereen het verstaan tijdens de les en tijdens de les is er geen plaats om over andere zaken te nemen dan eigenlijk over de thema van de les, maar ook op de speelkoer werden Turkse jongeren aangemaand door leerkrachten, vroeger al, ik praat hier nu over vijftien jaar geleden en langer he, uhm, om Nederlands te praten. Wij werden aangemaand om Nederlands te praten uhm je werd daarover aangesproken als men hoorde dat je een vreemde taal aan het spreken was, dus dat is ook niet iets wat de laatste jaar begonnen is he, dat is ook iets dat wij in onze kinderjaren hebben meegemaakt

excerpt 120

KH: ... vroeger was dat gewoon een, een, ... en sociaal iets en nu is dat een politiek beleid geworden. Dus eigenlijk hetgeen dat dat men wenste in scholen enzovoort heeft zich eigenlijk nu vertaald naar een beleid en is men daar beleid rond aan te naaien en een beleid van wat eigenlijk wat ... Vlaams Belang jaren al probeert door uhm ... aan de zijlijn te roepen en oppositie te voeren, ... maar eigenlijk haar agenda wordt beetje bij beetje overgenomen omdat die agenda spijtig genoeg populair is in Vlaanderen, vooral in Vlaanderen, in Vlaanderen heb je uhm, rechtse krachten, heb je rechtse neigingen, heb je rechtse reflexen bij de bij de mensen en en dat slaat aan, als politieke partijen dat overnemen slaat dat aan en zien ze dat hun stemmen in aantal stijgt. Kijk naar Antwerpen. Antwerpen, Patrick Janssens heeft een hoofddoekverbod beloofd, stond in zijn boek, en succes was de

verkiezingen, hij heeft veel stemmen ook van de andere oppositiepartijen, ook van andere partijen die dat in het bestuur mee zaten maar hij heeft ook uhm voor het eerst het Vlaams Belang een halt toe geroepen ook al zeggen ze van we zijn in Vlaanderen gestegen, in Antwerpen zijn ze gestagneerd tot op bepaalde plaatsen zelfs gedaald, dat heeft te maken met die rechtse discours die overgenomen is ook, en rechtse beleid die is overgenomen door de linkse partijen ... dus ... de thema's ja die wij behandelen is eigenlijk Islamofobie en de strijd tegen assimilatie uhm ...

excerpt 121

Ik moet zeggen dat ik ook veel mensen al allez, van de mensen die ik tot nu toe gesproken heb, wanneer de AEL aan bod komt, dat dat wel vaak een analyse is die dat ze maken eigenlijk, van uhm, kwestie van politieke bewustwording, los van hoe ze dan de, pro AEL zijn, los van dat standpunt dan, hoor ik heel vaak wel heel wat positieve dat dat jullie dingen aangekaart hebben

KH: Dat is ook onze ervaring, ik zou dat niet zeggen als ik dat zelf niet zou aangevoeld hebben, allez, we hebben ... we zijn een soort katalysator geweest

JZ: Mmh

KH: Van van het politiek bewustzijn van de minderheden dus we hebben dat gevoeld, we hebben de graantjes laten we zeggen in de aarde gestrooid en die zijn beginnen groeien, die zijn beginnen bloeien en nu ... ik ga niet zeggen dat dat allemaal dankzij ons is maar ... ik mag ... ik hoeft niet ... bescheiden te zijn, ik wil daarom niet over stoeven of wat dan ook maar ik mag toch, ik kan me permitteren om te zeggen dat AEL een zeer belangrijke rol heeft gespeeld hier in Vlaanderen en in Nederland ... voor de bewustwording, politieke bewustwording van minderheden en de feiten, het beleid, heeft zelf aangetoond dat ze inderdaad aan het evolueren waren naar een meer rechtser politiek, niet alleen een discours, maar ook een politiek, en naar een meer ... een repressiever beleid ten aanzien van minderheden en een islamofob beleid ... uhm, een beleid dat ... eigenlijk meer uhm ... iets is van afschrikking van de modale blanke Vlaming voor die uhm de gehooftdekte moslima of die moslim met een baard en ... uiteraard op lange termijn, dat is niet meer, 't zou 't zouden volkomen idioten moeten zijn om dat niet te beseffen van kijk we zijn aan het degenereren in plaats van in de positieve zin aan het evolueren. Ik weet niet, Brahim, wilt gij nog ...

BH: ja, hij heeft al de belangrijke dingen ... misschien voor een volgende vraag dat ik kan reageren

excerpt 122

KH: En en als ge dat allemaal begrijpt en als ge dat allemaal op een rijtje plaatst en ge plaatst op een rijtje hoe dat de media ons heeft aangepakt en de manier waarop ze ons hebben, over ons bericht hebben bericht hebben gegeven op basis van geruchten, leugens, onvolledige informatie, knippen en plakken van interviews enzovoort, dan kan je niet, dan zie je dat dat een soort tandem is, dat dat gelijklopend is en dat dat eigenlijk beleid is van criminaliseer hen zo veel mogelijk want het het wat ze het meeste vrezen is een allochtoon met een politiek bewustzijn een allochtoon die waarvoor hij kies en die bewust kiest en geen allochtoon die maar ja knikt en zegt van ja ja die socialisten die hebben het goed voor met mensen, stem maar, goed goed mens, zoals onze ouders vroeger, kennen daar niks van maar zeiden ze de socialisten zijn goed ja dan gaan ze vandaag de dag zeggen van neen, de socialisten zijn niet goed, waarom, om die en die en die en die en die en die redenen, om die en die en die en die en die redenen zijn ze niet goed bezig en dat en dat en dat moet veranderen en als we dat niet deze komende vier jaar zien veranderen dan gaan we hen daarop afstraffen en dat is wat de politiek niet wil, absoluut niet wil, integendeel, de politiek wil absoluut geen bewuste kiezers, ook geen bewuste autochtone kiezers, neem dat van mij aan, die hebben veel liever kuddevee, stemvee he, die hebben echt geen bewuste kiezers nodig maar in geen geval een minderheid dat zijn rechten begint op te eisen en bewust wordt van de onderdrukking, van de systematische uitsluiting en dat de overheid dwingt om maatregelen daarin te treffen

JZ: Mmh

KH: Om hen tegemoet te komen om hen te erkennen als burgers van de staat ... en ... dat is denk ik ...

excerpt 123

KH: hopelijk ik hoop dat mijn dat mijn zoon binnen dit en een aantal jaar kan opgroeien in een maatschappij waarin dat uw kinderen en andermans kinderen op een deftige manier met elkaar kunnen omgaan zonder argwanend tegenover elkaar te staan zonder complexen tegenover elkaar staan dat mijn zoon geen complexen heeft over zijn identiteit van moet ik mij nu outen als als allochtoon moet ik mij nu outen als Arabier, moet ik mij nu outen als moslim of moet ik dat voor mijn eigen houden, ik wil dat mijn zoon, voor mij een gezonde mens is iemand die zich goed voelt in de omgeving waarin hij leeft ... en die zich ook ... goed gezond kan gedragen in die

omgeving en iemand die ... aan het aan het balanceren is tussen verschillende identiteiten en niet weet die dat noch mossel noch vis is ... uhm ... die gaat uiteindelijk ...

BH: met vragen te kampen krijgen en ...

KH: nooit nooit uhm voldoening vinden in uhm ... in zijn leven ... dus dan altijd met vragen blijven zitten en nooit concreet voor zijn eigen positie durven nemen maar altijd beslissingen politieke beslissingen door anderen laten nemen voor hem ... en wij vinden dat ... dan komen we tot mensen die dat voor zichzelf denken voor zichzelf uh opkomen en geen complexen hebben over zichzelf en niet gedwongen willen worden om uhm hun eigenheid te verloochenen om erbij te horen integendeel, ik hoor erbij ondanks het feit dat ik anders ben, die attitude gaan aannemen ... en uhm ... zolang dat ik nog kan ... en gemotiveerd mezelf kan motiveren naar voor dan dan ga ik ervoor ...

excerpt 124

KH: ... maar zie die uhm ... true to themselves blijven, die uhm...

JZ: zichzelf trouw blijven ?

KH: zichzelf trouw blijven en die zeggen van neen, kijk ik ben inderdaad een burger van Vlaanderen, ik ben misschien uhm ... een cultureel een beetje Vlaming maar ik ben ook uhm nog altijd Arabier of Berber of wat dan ook, Marokkaan gewoon cultureel, en ik wil ook tonen, ik ben ook moslim en ik wil ook tonen, die raken heel moeilijk aan een job ondanks dat ze er wel voor geschoold zijn en dat werkt demotiverend, maar vandaag de dag zie je ondanks dat dat ze belang hechten aan hogere studies ... hoe ... politiek bewuster een gemeenschap, hoe meer mensen van die gemeenschap zich ook gaan bezig houden met studies en studies gaat zich uiteindelijk vertalen tot meer kansen in een maatschappij dat u aanstaat gaat ge, moet ge u bewapenen, uw wapen op dat moment, ongewapend rondlopen zonder diploma is een fiasco.

excerpt 125

JZ: Het valt bij mij ook enorm op vind ik als ik met mensen ga spreken in organisaties, ook al zijn dat jongere mensen en zo ... het zijn altijd ... als ge weet hoeveel mensen dat er uiteindelijk, alle, hoe weinig dat er eigenlijk hogere studies afmaken eigenlijk binnen de Marokkaanse gemeenschappen ... valt t op van ... hoeveel van die weinigen zich engageren eigenlijk ... vind ik wel ... en dan zie je wel heel duidelijk dus dat ... het onderwijs ... politiek ... participatie en bewustzijn ..

KH: Absoluut absoluut, want dat is daar onlosmakelijk aan verbonden he ...

JZ: Ja en dat die mensen ook effectief zelf ook onderwijs proberen te stimuleren he, zo, ik weet niet zoals Studentfocus en zo verder uh

KH: ja

excerpt 126

KH: Maar hij is echt absoluut een topproduct first quality AEL

BH: gij leraar van mij (lacht)

JZ: Leraar hoezo voor ... (lacht)

KH: neen ik meen dat echt hij is echt, hij is

BH: ja (lacht)

excerpt 127

YS: ... Dat is de kwaal van de samenleving momenteel, op maatschappelijk vlak, op sociaal vlak, op ethisch vlak, ... blijven twee altijd dezelfde kaart houden, dezelfde rechten houden. Dat is, ... politie, ... dus macht eigenlijk, macht, politie, leger en zo, ... en bank Dat zijn de twee of drie ...

JZ: En uhm ...

YS: die langdurig werken Dus de banken, belastinggeld enzovoort, die beleidsmatig op lange termijn werken En ... de orde de ordehandhaving he.

JZ: Ja

YS: Elke politiekeer gaat je zeggen "ah maar dat is wat we nodig hebben in de samenleving en de rest telt niet, dat is in het belang van de samenleving". Dat klopt, maar voor mij is dat een kunstmatige samenleving Dat is een machinale samenleving en geen menselijke samenleving. Een menselijke samenleving is, die twee zijn nodig maar, ... een of de ander kan overbodig worden wanneer dat dat niet nodig is om macht te vertonen. Wanneer dat wij kunnen met elkaar leven zonder geld, ... zonder een uitwisseling enzovoort, ... Waarom niet? Waarom moet ik u uitbuiten en jij ... of jij mij uitbuiten ... ? Dan zijn we met getrokken getrokken dingen Natuurlijk, dat is een utopie wat ik nu vertel, maar de samenleving gaat hoe langer hoe verder van die utopie, en ik zou graag hoe langer hoe meer dichterbij die utopie

excerpt 128

YS: maatschappelijk samenleven ... dat is een samenhang he ... dat is niet een ... een domein en de rest niet he ... dus dat uhm ... zijn ... aanvullingen ... verbeteringen die moeten gebeuren op verschillende niveaus niet alleen op een niveau niet alleen op een domein maar op verschillende niveaus dus dat is die samenhang moet kunnen ... alleen zijn drijfkracht mag niet alleen ... orde ... en belang zijn ... orde en belang zijn nodig maar daarnaast is ook interesse voor mekaar nodig ... het menselijk leven is nodig

JZ: ja vandaar dat menselijke

YS: en die wordt overschaduwd en af en toe heb je een vertoning van een bisschop heb je een vertoning van een iman heb je een vertoning van een rabbijn heb je een vertoning van ok we gaan een moskee bezoeken of we gaan uhm een td houden om te tonen dat we toch nog menselijk zijn ...

JZ: maar dat is dan een keer ...

YS: dat is een ritualiteiten ritualiteiten die eigenlijk die twee andere machten ... in stand houden

JZ: ja ...

YS: in plaats van om te werpen ...

excerpt 129

JZ: en uhm ... wat betreft die onrechtvaardigheden die dat ge dan zag zo uhm ... kunt ge daar wat voorbeelden van ...

YS: zowel maatschappelijk administratief als politiek als uhm ... economisch uhm als op ethiek vlak als op ethisch vlak als op sociaal vlak ...

excerpt 130

ja ... da's de samenleving he ... of hier of ergens anders ... een bewustwording ... wanneer dat gebeurt ja .. het nadeel is dat ge natuurlijk soms moet lijden voor dat bewustzijn he dat hoort erbij he

JZ: ja ja neen dat (lach) dat gaat natuurlijk altijd samen natuurlijk he ... want ... ja ... uhm ... want als ge dan ... doorheen al die ... al die verschillende engagementen dan eigenlijk waar dat ge ... ziet ge daar een rode draad in zo of is dat uhm ... uhm ...

YS: onrechtvaardigheid ...

JZ: onrechtvaardigheid

YS: ...onrechtvaardigheid ... moet weggewerkt worden ...

JZ: ja

YS: waar dan ook ... tegen wie dan ook ...

excerpt 131

JZ: ja ... dus dan is dat zo ook voor de beeldvorming ook wat ... wat aan te pakken

YS: absoluut absoluut ... absoluut ...terwijl dat is nu bepaalde in bepaalde streken nog altijd taboe om te zeggen we gaan een open deur organiseren in de moskee ... en ...

JZ: en toen of nu

YS: nu ... zijn nog altijd in bepaalde streken is dat en nu en sommigen die willen een een ... een show laten zien dat er pluralisme dat er ... dat is de mode geworden terwijl dat dat eigenlijk het mag niet de mode zijn nog taboe zijn ... het moet gewoon de normale zaak moeten zijn

JZ: ja

YS: dus heb je in ... in in Antwerpen heb je voor dat men eigenlijk als men iets sjiek moet doen ...

JZ: mmh

YS: we gaan organiseren bezoeken aan moskee dan kom ik als schepen of als burgemeester of als dit en dat en zo voort ... en dat is een showpolitiek ...

JZ: mmh

YS: ... dat is een mode ...

JZ: ja ...

YS: die inhoudelijk niks verandert aan de situatie ...

JZ: mmh

YS: erger soms ze nog maakt en andere streken waar dat eigenlijk nog altijd taboe is waar eigenlijk ook niks verandert aan de situatie dat maakt de situatie nog erger omdat dat nog altijd taboe is

excerpt 132

JZ: en wat is de situatie dan

YS: de midden de middenweg moet zijn van ... je hoeft daarvoor geen show te voeren je hoeft daarvoor ook geen taboe daarvan te maken ... dat moet gewoon een doodgewoon normale zaak ... niet alleen de moskeeën ook de synagoog ook de tempel ook de verenigingen ook uhm ook uhm ... de boeddhistische tempel en ook uhm ... de kerk en uhm en uhm andere zaken ...

JZ: dat er toegang is tot of uhm ...

YS: dat er toegang is dat er zaken daarin kunnen gebeuren zonder dat dat per se ingewijd of uitgewijd moet worden zo ... een doodgewone normale zaak moet dat kunnen zijn

excerpt 133

YS: als zij een belang daarbij kunnen halen ... dan gaan zij hun principe laten vallen ... en dat is wat er gebeurt de laatste twintig jaar in Vlaanderen ... men wil de mensen doen dromen dat zij een belang hebben bij een bepaalde politiek bij een bepaalde richting bij een bepaalde besluitvorming ...

JZ: ja ...

YS: en men stelt vast ... dat er eigenlijk allemaal dromen waren allemaal wolken ... (gebaart) ... wolken ... die ...

JZ: die niet tastbaar zijn ...

YS: blijven ... blijven drijven ... tuurlijk heb je sommigen die op korte termijn misschien wat iets wat gerealiseerd hebben maar dan op persoonlijke titel individueel en niet ... als gemeenschap ... mijn drijfkracht is niet individueel maar ... gemeenschap ... groepen mensen ... niet een persoon ...

JZ: en die groepen mensen uhm ... wat stem te geven

YS: ja ... ja .. dat zijn een plaats hebben in de samenleving ... en meestal dat zijn degenen die achtergesteld zijn degenen die in de in de verdrukkingshoekjes worden geraakt ... uhm ... ik was een van de weinig leerkrachten die in de jaren '80 jaren '90 Regine Beer in de klas kreeg voor die kleutertjes en met met jongens tot tien jaar om over de concentratiekampen te praten

excerpt 134

JZ: wie krijgt ge daarin

YS: Regine Beer de moeder van Stefan Blommaert

JZ: ah ja

YS: en uhm dan was de reactie van de school van ... wat wat wat ga je het in de les Islam hebben over uhm over concentratiekampen ... en nu is dat de mode geworden nu is dat bijna een verplichting bijna geworden terwijl dat voor mij het mag geen verplichting zijn ... het mag geen mode zijn ... maar het mag ook niet vergeten worden he ...

JZ: mmh ... ja ... waarom vond ge dat belangrijk om dat ...

YS: omdat omdat eigenlijk daar zit een soort van geheugen van de Vlaamse cultuur he ... zit daarin he ... in de geschiedenis he ... maar zonder dat op te hemelen noch te vergeten he ... dat is een feit en dat moet gezegd worden ... terwijl dat sommige mensen nu maken daarvan een een mode ... he ...

JZ: ja ...

YS: of een item die eigenlijk uhm ... hun hun maagdelijkheid gaat teruggeven doordat zij ook terwijl dat ...

JZ: omdat men er dan niet verder over moet nadenken zo ...

YS: ... (kijkt mij even woordeloos aan) ... een goeie schmink voor een politiek beleid dat wankel is ...

JZ: wat zou ge aan dat aan dat politiek beleid dan graag ... alle hoe zou ge dat graag anders zien bijvoorbeeld ...

YS: meer menselijker

excerpt 135

YS: snapt ge ... dus dat is die dualiteit ... die dat men in Vlaanderen heeft geëvacueerd ... juist ... om zichzelf niet in de spiegel te moeten kijken ... en dat is exact wat nu bezig is wat die hoofddoek problematiek betreft ... degenen die dat verwijten ... niet omdat ze racist zijn ... alle ik overdrijf he ...

JZ: degenen die dat het hoofddoekenverbod uhm

YS: ja voila ... maar gewoon omdat sommigen van die mensen zien zichzelf ... als ... waardeloos ... zeggen kijk ... ik heb mijn waarden ik heb mijn normen ik heb mijn ... opgegeven ...

JZ: mmh

YS: opgegeven ... en die moeten dat niet opgeven ...

JZ: ja ...

YS: dus ... die hechten zo zo moeilijk gaan ze doen om toch ...

JZ: ja ...

YS: versta je ... dat is schuldgevoel ... elke Vlaming moet bij een psychiater passeren echt waar

JZ: (glimlacht)

YS: ik meen wat ik zeg he

excerpt 136

JZ: neen want het is grappig dat ge dat zegt want dat is ook hoe ik dat onderzoek zelf ook opvat ik heb zoiets van doorheen die gesprekken doorheen die interviews eigenlijk zo ... zie ik dat eigenlijk meer als gesprekken die dat uhm ... doorheen die interactie dat dat eigenlijk ook gewoon niet meer is eigenlijk dan een spiegel voor de maatschappij zelf eigenlijk die gesprekken

YS: absoluut

JZ: inclusief dan natuurlijk die verschillende standpunten en die verschillende ... metaforen die mensen gebruiken om dingen uit te leggen

YS: ja

JZ: en weet ik veel wat allemaal ook wanneer dat botst

YS: ja

JZ: want dus he want ... vaak vragen ze me dat van ja ge doet een onderzoek naar minderheden maar wat dat mij eigenlijk vooral interesseert is wat dat dat eigenlijk zegt over die maatschappij in haar geheel

excerpt 137

YS: absoluut absoluut ... wat mij betreft als er geen botsing is dan zoek je een botsing het is pas wanneer ik een botsing heb dat ik weet dat ik met iemand die dat meent ...

JZ: ja ...

YS: het is pas wanneer dat ik iemand heb die botst tegen wat ik aan het vertellen ben dan weet ik dat die persoon dat met mij goed meent

JZ: ja ...

YS: omdat die mens dat gehoord heeft en gereageerd ... dat heeft doorgedrongen wat ik gezegd heb ...

JZ: neen daar kan ik goed inkomen ...

YS: snapt ge wat ik bedoel ...

JZ: ja

YS: pas op dat moment weet ik da's iemand die eerlijk ... ook als je mijn standpunten niet neemt he ... niet akkoord ... ik kan u niet graag hebben enzovoort maar ok ... dan weet ik dat dat iemand is die niet onverschillig blijft ...

JZ: neeneene daar kan ik uhm ... dat snap ik inderdaad wel ...

excerpt 138

ja ... en dat is dat is de probleem ... uhm ... in België en in Vlaanderen in in de wereld maar daar zijn nog andere redenen he ...

JZ: hebt ge het gevoel dat dat dat het voornaamste probleem dan onverschilligheid is dan of of ...

YS: een vlucht vooruit ... een vlucht vooruit ik wil ik wil niet daarover hebben

JZ: ok

YS: omdat als ik daarover begin ... dan ga ik mezelf zien in de spiegel dus ... ik ga vooruit ik ga vluchten ...

JZ: ja

YS: ik ga vluchten want wat met u gebeurt ...

JZ: ja

YS: ik heb liever dat niet gezien hebben ...

JZ: mmh

YS: want ik weet dat dat misschien met mij ook kan gebeuren ... en ik wil dat niet zien ...

excerpt 139

YS: dat is de reden waarom het anti-racisme beweging eigenlijk uhm ... op zijn Frans een vaniteuse manier ... he

JZ: vaniteus

YS: vaniteus he ... op een soort naïeve (beweegt met armen) op een

JZ: ontastbaar

YS: ja ... eigenlijk terrein verloren heeft ... volledig omdat men vertrekt vanuit ... de goedheid van de mensen ... omdat je goed moet zijn moet je niet racist zijn ... neeeen ... in u zitten zaken die niet goed zijn in mij ook ... die moet ik daarvan bewust zijn die moet ge bekampen

JZ: mmh

YS: ik moet niet mijn goede kant laten zien neen mijn goede kant moet ik niet laten zien dat moeten de mensen zelf vaststellen

JZ: ja

YS: Ik moet die niet laten zien Ik moet weken aan mijn slechtste kant, niet aan mijn goede kant ... mijn goede kant hoef ik niet te versieren om het te laten zien.

excerpt 140

YS: ... maar dat is dat is een een een dialectiek een pragmatisme een discussie die daar geweest is dat vanuit een vakbond vanuit een syndicale werking (vuist op tafel) gekomen naar die erkenning ...

JZ: ja

YS: een syndicale werking waar eigenlijk God onbestaande is ...

JZ: ja ...

YS: waar ik vrijgeleide krijg om standpunt in te nemen om met minister Vandenbosche de deur tegen zijn neus te klappen ... met mijn syndicaal kaartje he ... om te zeggen van het is dat of niks uhm ... om om om met Cools ook te onderhandelen over taalproblematiek over dingetjes en zo over ook met met Marleen Vanderpoorte een van mijn beste vriendinnen uhm om om daarvoor naar voor te komen om te zeggen van kijk dat is dat is wat wij willen realiseren

excerpt 141

JZ: dat vroeg ik mij dan ook af ... ik herinner me onder andere dat debat daar in uhm ... uhm het Zuiderpershuis zo uhm met Zohra Othman en

YS: ja .. ja ...

JZ: Islam een huis met vele kamers zo

YS: ja ... jaja (lacht)

JZ: en ik ja ik wou er nog andere dingen over vragen maar iets wat me ook deed denken aan iets wat dat ge daarjuist zei ... daarjuist zei je van ja het probleem is zo een beetje van dat er een probleem is in de opening van geesten van mensen ... en langs de andere kant had ik de indruk in dat debat dat ge uhm ... uhm u ook heel fel verzette eigenlijk tegen tegenover labeling en euh en labels die dat erop geplakt werden en zoverder en ook uhm het het

YS: jaja ja ... ja ... als ge de labeling doet dan stop je dan stop je die ruimte ...

JZ: ja van tussen groepen dan effectief zo ...

YS: ja dan stop je die ruimte van het moment dat je een etiket plakt dan heb je een getto dan heb je een parking ... je parkeert de mensen daar dan stopt die ruimte ... die die die verruiming stopt ...

JZ: ja

YS: ja want je mag hier die grens niet over ...

excerpt 142

YS: Vlaanderen ... heeft een keuze ... of als getto te leven ... en dan is dat ... binnen een vijftiental jaren ... een woestijnland ... gij gaat ergens anders ik ga ergens anders

JZ: mmh

YS: ergens anders en dan heb je bejaarde mensen die tegen hun zin blijven omdat ze nergens kunnen gaan ...

JZ: ja

YS: of of kiest zijn naar kiest zij voor een opening ... in de geest en en niet in de grenzen he hier moet dat open he (wijst naar hoofd) ...

JZ: ja

YS: he de geesten niet meer klein he ... ruimer ... en dan kan zij ongelooflijk ongelooflijk bloeien ... ongelooflijk bloeien ...

excerpt 143

YS: ik ben geen filosoof ik ben een pragmaticus ... dan zeg ik ik neem een beetje van de filosofie een beetje van de ... politiek een beetje van de godsdienst een beetje van de (boenkt op tafel) realiteit ... een beetje van zelfgekookte ideeën ...

excerpt 144

YS: voilà ... de park open en iedereen elke moslimorganisatie kan haar standje daar opzetten

JZ: ja

YS: van de predikant ... van de predikant tot de jihadist ... alles wat in Antwerpen aanwezig is is welkom ... degene die zich wil laten zien ... dat is een outing ... we gaan ons niet outen als gays als homo's als ... neen wij outen ons als moslims ... punt

excerpt 145

YS: ... onze segment van ... van werken is eigenlijk uhm ... een ethisch vertrekpunt waar ... uhm ... wij noch met nationaliteit ... noch ... het oorsprong ... een betekenis heeft ... dus vandaar zelfs dat begrip internationaal ... hoeven we niet te beklemtonen ...

JZ: ja ... omdat het er gewoon al is ...

YS: wij hoeven geen comité te zijn ... wij ... da's zelfs filosofisch ... diepgaande ... hebben wij nooit willen ... over ons ons werking als federatie noemen ...

JZ: mmh

YS: terwijl dat wij wettelijk beschouwd worden als een federatie ...

excerpt 146

NC: goh ... ja aan een kant ben ik er ook zomaar ingevallen in de zin van ik was afgestudeerd ik zocht een job en ik zag die vacature en dat sprak mij aan dan is de vraag natuurlijk ... dat spreekt u ook niet toevallig aan

JZ: neeneenee

NC: dat soort job dus uhm ja ik denk dat het ergens logisch is vanuit mijn persoonlijke achtergrond dat de thematiek van ... minderheden in de samenleving en de kansen die ze al dan niet krijgen ... uhm dat mij dat al van jongsaf aan enorm heeft aangesproken en vandaar dat ik daarmee bezig ben ...

JZ:mmh

NC: niet altijd zo bewust maar dat ge toch zoiets hebt van ... ja dat ge dat dat ge de actualiteit daarover volgt en dat ge zo vaak iets hebt van allez waarom gaat dat nu niet (lacht) waarom is dat nu zo moeilijk

JZ: (lacht)

NC: uhm dus ik denk dat dat een beetje in die lijn te vinden is van ja een thema van dat vanuit mijn persoonlijke achtergrond gewoon dat ik enorm belangrijk vind en waardoor dat ge dan ook zoiets hebt van ja als ik daar rond kan werken en zeker ... allez het minderhedenforum trok mij ook enorm aan omdat ge daar echt met dat emancipatorische zit dat ge echt van onderuit vanuit de mensen zelf ...

JZ: mmh

NC: uhm wilt deelnemen aan het debat en niet ... niet vanuit een instelling die van boven naar beneden die die zo met een betuttelende houding dus ...

excerpt 147

NC: uhm ... en dan ja wat dan mij dan echt in het Forum aansprak ik denk dat ik misschien minder rap voor gesolliciteerd zou hebben voor een andere organisatie in die in die sector is het feit dat uhm ... uhm ja dat heb ik daarnet gezegd he dat het echt vanuit de minderheden zelf

JZ: mmh

NC: dat was zo van wow wow en dus ... omdat ook vaak als ge de actualiteit volgde dan was dat zo frustrerend dat er dan altijd maar overal over allochtonen werd gepraat en dat ge zoiets hebt van ja maar ... laat die mensen ook zelf ... uhm mee spreken en niet de eerste de beste die wordt opgevoerd als vertegenwoordiger

JZ: ja

NC: terwijl dat ge u der totaal niet in herkent ... maar echt mensen die die hebben een mandaat van de groep ... uhm zodat van onderuit vanuit die verenigingen dat sprak mij enorm uhm ... aan ook bezig zijn met beleid ja ik ik was dus eigenlijk ook politieke gedaan en hoe dat nu voelt om ... allez ik denk dat puur veldwerk ...iets zou geweest zijn waar ik het moeilijker mee of wat dat ik niet zo lang had kunnen doen ...

excerpt 148

NC: ge hebt mensen die gewoon vinden dat middenveldorganisaties eigenlijk geen ... vertegenwoordigende of belangenbehartigende rol mogen opnemen ik ben het er niet mee eens maar bon die zijn tenminste (lacht) consequent

JZ: (lacht) jaja ok

NC: maar ge hebt er ook die vinden dat middenveldorganisaties dat dat normaal is en een manier voor allochtone organisatie dus daar ... het is een andere invalshoek dan vanuit de politiek maar ik vind dat die stemmen complementair zijn want uiteindelijk een politicus is wel verkozen maar ja die spreekt ook voor zijn partij he

JZ: mmh

NC: allez die spreekt ook niet gewoon maar voor zijn kiezers dus ge zit daar ook met een vermenging ... ik heb de indruk dat middenveldorganisaties soms toch meer de handen vrij hebben ...

JZ: mmh

NC: om te vertolken wat leeft er bij de mensen ... uhm ... hoe complex dat die boodschap soms is ...

JZ: mmh

NC: en ... ik weet het niet en ... wij zijn daar ook wel redelijk klaar in van kijk ja wij zijn wij zijn een grote koepel wij vertegenwoordigen een brede groep ...

JZ: mmh

NC: Denk niet dat er altijd dingen kunnen zijn waarvan deelgroepen het niet mee eens zijn en ... zij zijn vrij om daar ook deel te nemen aan het debat om te zeggen van ja kijk wij gaan daar verder in en we zijn het daar niet mee eens of dit of dat ...

JZ: ja

NC: dat is ook allez ... dat is ook democratie (lacht) he

excerpt 149

NC: ... allez ik denk dat het forum toch in die die periode ook als organisatie een evolutie heeft doorgemaakt

JZ: mmh

NC: van hoe dat we de dingen aanpakken hoe dat we proberen deel te nemen aan het debat hoe dat we proberen de de de uhm de besluitvorming te beïnvloeden ...

JZ: mmh

NC: dat we daarin toch ook gegroeid zijn dat we van een actor die echt ja ... bijna niet bestond ...

JZ: mmh

NC: denk ik zowel in de pers als naar de overheid toe was dat altijd een beetje aan de zijlijn en dan gefrustreerd zijn dat we niet betrokken waren ... zijn we toch geëvolueerd naar een partner die steeds meer gevraagd wordt om mee te denken om mee te spreken ... 't is natuurlijk ... dat wilt daarom nog niet zeggen dat ze onze aanbevelingen zomaar overnemen (lacht) was dat maar zo

JZ: (lacht)

NC: dat allez ... dat blijft moeilijk maar we we kunnen toch meer wegen ... soms kunt ge dan ja ... kleinere overwinningskes boeken dat ge zegt van ja ok de ... de de uhm der is een groot punt waar dat we het niet mee eens zijn maar we hebben der toch dat puntje kunnen aan toevoegen of der kunnen bij zetten of dat we toch ... allez we hebben ook leren zoeken gewoon naar punten waar dat ge niet ... allez de verplichte inburgering hebben we natuurlijk niet kunnen tegenhouden

excerpt 150

JZ: mmh

NC: dat was dat was ... de grote stroom iedereen wou wou dat ... maar der zijn ook dossiers waar dat men eigenlijk ... ja het zelf niet goed weet of dat men nooit bij stilgestaan heeft

JZ: mmh

NC: en als ge daar dan kunt proberen een aantal dingen te veranderen ...

JZ: wat zijn zo wat bijvoorbeeld van die thema's waar ge graag allez waar ge als organisatie dan graag iets aan zou willen uhm ... veranderen of allez of een aantal van die punten bijvoorbeeld ...

NC: goh ... ja de grote thema's zijn werk onderwijs en deels voor mij media ... en dan een aantal andere thema's die wisselen dan constant er zijn wel die drie ... maar elk dossier is op zich zo complex uhm ... om nu zo te zeggen van dit en dat allez we hebben er zo hele reeksen aanbevelingen rond maar wat we wel proberen ... is om steeds meer zo een voet binnen te krijgen in het reguliere beleid.

excerpt 151

JZ: ja uhm ... als ge het hebt dan zo over participatie van de achterban hebt ge het dan in eerste instantie over de participatie van die koepelverenigingen of hebt ge het over participatie van van individuen die uhm ...

NC: individuen ... ja

JZ: die allez van tot minderheden behoren allez ik weet niet uhm

NC: de hele de hele groep heeft wel een beetje een getrapte structuur ge hebt dan federaties en lidorganisaties dan hebt ge individuen

JZ: mmh

NC: uhm nu onze filosofie is we zijn het forum voor etnische culturele minderheden en we zijn een middenveldorganisatie dus we werken in eerste instantie via het middenveld via de organisaties omdat die ook voor een bredere groep kunnen spreken ... maar op participatie willen we ook zo veel mogelijk mensen gewoon betrekken vandaar dat veel van onze activiteiten zoals Open Forumdag

JZ: Ja

NC: die zijn echt open voor iedereen ... uhm ... en ik denk dat we toch een redelijk open organisatie zijn

excerpt 152

NC: We willen geen monopolie op het debat ...

JZ: mmh

NC: maar we willen wel dat dat er wordt gewogen in de stemmen dat men beseft van ja kijk het forum spreekt voor een brede groep en

JZ: mmh

NC: en ja dat wil ook iets uhm ... iets zeggen en men kan dat niet gewoon van tafel schuiven door enen allochtoon naar voor te schuiven en te zeggen van ja maar die het daar niet (glimlacht) niet mee eens ...

JZ: mmh

NC: en dat wordt allez dat werd in het verleden nog meer gedaan dan nu terwijl nu ... allez wij zien dat toch wel dat wat wij zeggen niet gewoon ... dat wij dat niet (lacht) gewoon uit onze duim zuigen dat dat echt wel van ergens komt

excerpt 153

NC: allez ik denk dat wij toch vaak zo'n beetje uhm ... een superieure houding hebben zo van allez mensen die naar hier komen moeten zich eerst tien jaar inburgeren bij wijze van spreken voordat ze in aanmerking komen voor voor wat dan ook

JZ: mmh

NC: maar wij gaan dat hen daar wel ne keer gaan zeggen hoe dat ze dingen moeten doen want wij ... wij hoeven de taal niet op voorhand te kennen we gaan ons dan zo wel met het Engels en het Frans redden en ze moeten maar

moeite doen wij hoeven niet te weten hoe dat de samenleving in mekaar zit hoe dat de waarden en normen wij ... wij hoeven dat allemaal niet te weten wij kunnen daar gewoon gedropt worden en en hen helpen ...

JZ: mmh

NC: en en zo die die logica daar heb ik nu echt ook ook door mijn werk hier denk ik

JZ: mmh

NC: doordat ge ziet hoe belangrijk dat het is om zo dicht mogelijk bij ... de realiteit te staan echt zoiets van ja neen da's eigenlijk dat was eigenlijk een naïeve gedachte van mij ... ha dat ze mij daar nodig hadden bij wijze van spreken

excerpt 154

JZ: Vanwaar denkt ge dat die houding zo wat komt ... allezo van die mensen die zowat een betuttelende ...

NC: goh ... ik denk vaak gewoon aan naïviteit ..

JZ: mmh

NC: allezo dat zijn maar ik zeg dan wel betuttelend maar dat zijn echt wel mensen vaak van heel goede wil he

JZ: mmh

NC: ik heb nu weer tachtig sollicitaties moeten lezen voor een functie van beleidsmedewerker ...

JZ: mmh

NC: ja ik kan mij daar echt vaak aan ergeren maar ... tegelijkertijd weet ik ook van ja ok dat zijn ... pas afgestudeerden ge moet die een kans geven maar aan de andere kant ziet ge vaak van ja ik wil mensen helpen ... ja ok fantastisch komt ge ons helpen zo zo met zo een aura van ik kom u helpen .. terwijl dat ge op een CV ziet van ja ok ge hebt hier eigenlijk nog enorm veel te leren

excerpt 155

NC: om zo het andere extreem van ja ik uhm ... ik ben al in heel de wereld geweest ik heb een stage gedaan daar ik heb een een paper geschreven daar echt in alle hoeken van de wereld dus ... ik ben geschikt om bij het forum te werken ... want wat is de logica he ze hebben met vreemde culturen in aanraking gekomen dus ... he ze weten direct ...

JZ: ja

NC: en dan denk ik allezo zo'n verkeerde inschatting van ... van wat dat wij eigenlijk allezo eigenlijk werken wij niet rond cultuur ...

JZ: mmh

NC: misschien zullen we kunnen daar wel iets rond doen de cultuur zit er altijd wel in verweven maar ... we werken niet rond vreemde culturen we wat wij werken rond echte beleidsthema's dat is hetzelfde als bij een vakbond gaan solliciteren

JZ: mmh

excerpt 156

uhm dus ... en dat vind ik dan betuttelend of zo ... allezo dan dan voelt ge u zo weer geduwd in die rol van exotisch ...

JZ: mmh

NC: exotisch ding zo in de maatschappij van ah ja we gaan die vreemde ... mensen helpen andere culturen en ... en dit en dat terwijl dat ge eigenlijk ook wilt benaderd worden als als ... mens als burger die wel ... vanuit ne groep ... die te maken heeft met maatschappelijke uitsluiting rond die rond die thema's iets wil veranderen ...

JZ: mmh

NC: maar da's echt meestal is dat pure naïviteit he en en ... het zijn daarom ook niet altijd uhm ... potentieel slechte medewerkers maar ge moet ze dan wel dat bod geven en ...

JZ: jaja

NC: en ik denk dan door hier te werken kunnen ze wel een andere visie hebben van ah ja ok het zijn toch niet allemaal sukkelaars tiens ... (lacht)

excerpt 157

NC: uhm wat dat mij op vlak van zo ... ja Noord Zuid en integratie zo eigenlijk meer de verhouding tussen ... tussen culturen dan ... uhm daar waren mijn studies wel belangrijk omdat ik daar ... een een denkkader kreeg dat was dan politieke wetenschappen ... bijvoorbeeld de lessen van Sami Zemni die herinner ik me

JZ: (lacht) ja ja ... die heb ik vorige week nog geïnterviewd ...

NC: ja (lacht)

JZ: of neen een paar werken terug ja

NC: ja ... awel der waren zo veel dingen die ik zo wel aanvoelde van ah neen der klopt iets niet en en ... en zo de manier waarop zo ... thema's worden benaderd ...

JZ: mmh

NC: wetenschappelijk maar zeker ook in de media ... en daar kreeg kreeg je dan zo een denkkader over ja heel de discussies over de Ander en en de ja de de discussies tussen hoe noemde dat nu weer ... cultuur uhm ja de cultuurrelativisten en dan het andere uiterste de essentialisten het essentialisme en dit en dat

excerpt 158

JZ: mmh

NC: en uhm ... allez dat was wel interessant om zo dingen die ge zo lang ... aanvoelt maar precies niet kan vastpakken en dat ge denkt van ja dat zal wel aan mij liggen ik ben zeker te subjectief of dat ligt mij te nauw aan het hart dat ge dan toch uhm zo een een kader krijgt

JZ: mmh

NC: om om die ergens te te bekijken maar der ook daarmee kunt ge der ook een stuk afstand van nemen en meer ... rationeel over na over nadenken dan gewoon zeggen van mmh ik voel me daar precies niet goed bij

excerpt 159

NC: en dan heb je zo het gevoel van ja dat is toch raar ja ok ik ben geen specialiste maar ik ben er wel geweest en ik heb niet de indruk ja dit en dat ok Islam is belangrijk ... ge voelt zo van ... der der der klopt dat komt precies niet overeen met mijn ervaring maar ja als de specialisten het zeggen wat allez ja dan zit ge daar zo mee gewrongen ...

JZ: mmh

NC: en dan krijgt ge zo het kader van ja hoe dat hoe dat bepaalde elementen dan effectief worden weergegeven en ... hoe dat mensen en groepen echt worden geëssentialiseerd tot de Islam he een ding van zoveel zoveel honderden jaren oud al die dan ... wordt op een voetstuk geplaatst bevroren en voilà dat is het dat is het dan de Islam is zo zo en zo dat maakt dat dat dat dat ...

JZ: mmh

NC: en alle elementen die ... die eigenlijk het tegendeel bewijzen worden dan een beetje ... aan de kant

JZ: mmh

NC: geschoven ... allez ja ik kan het niet zo goed onder woorden brengen het is ook al lang geleden (lacht) denk ik (lacht)

JZ: ja maar ik vind ik vind het wel duidelijk hoor

NC: ja ... voilà maar jij zijt ook wetenschapper dus ge weet ook wel (lacht)

JZ: (lacht) ja ja ja ...

excerpt 160

NC: En ge wordt dan een beetje in een hoek geduwd van ... jullie jullie zijn relativisten jullie relativeren alles voor jullie moet alles kunnen omwille van de cultuur En daarmee ... allez daarmee wil ik zeggen met een beetje kritisch ... kritisch en of toch minstens pragmatisch dat ge gewoon zoiets hebt van kom ... laat ons toch ook gewoon naar de realiteit kijken en ook niet te hoogdravend en en ons verliezen in te grote theorieën

JZ: jaja

NC: ge moet gewoon nog zien van hoe zijn de dingen en ik heb eigenlijk het gevoel dat dat een houding is die bij die bij heel veel allochtonen gewoon leeft van ok wat wat is het probleem wat kunnen we doen aan het probleem maar ... maar vergeet niet dat het probleem niet het enige aspect is van ... van ons leven zoals dat ... alcoholisme niet gelijk staat aan de Vlaamse cultuur ...

JZ: ja

NC: wel ja 't is terwijl soms is dat er een aspect van of een uitwas van maar ...

excerpt 161

NC: ja ge ziet ge hebt natuurlijk die verstrenging ... of verrechtsing soms ook genoemd maar ook verstrenging in het algemeen in het beleid dan en ook in de discours van ... van toch meer ... een visie op rechten recht en plichten natuurlijk naar eerder een visie op plichten en eventueel ook nog rechten (lacht) zo allez ... ge ziet toch ...

JZ: hoe uit zich dat volgens u

NC: hoe

JZ: hoe uit zich dat volgens u

NC: heel de discussie rond inburgering ...

JZ: mmh

NC: uhm ... nu ... wij wij waren niet absoluut tegen een verplichte inburgering, al in die tijd was dat ook echt, dat was ook echt een politiek spel. ... Der moest en zou een verplichting komen want de kiezer moest horen ... he we gaan die allochtonen hier eens verplichten,

excerpt 162

NC: ... voor ons is dat eigenlijk geen ... gelijkwaardige behandeling van burgers omdat we goed genoeg weten van Vlamingen zou men nooit ... overwegen om direct de verplichting out of the blue in te voeren voor iets ...

JZ: mmh

NC: dat ge individuen echt verplicht om bepaalde cursussen te volgen zonder dat ge al garanties hebt dat die cursussen der gaan zijn zelfs als ge daar een een ... soort uitstel op zet maar zonder vooral ook dat ge garanties hebt dat die cursussen goed zijn en gepast zijn voor uhm ... uhm ... allez ja dat dat is toch ... ja ik vind dat gewoon niet een zelfde logica als dat mijn hanteert voor als het over uhm als het over uhm ... andere burgers gaat ...

excerpt 163

NC: en daar ja voor ons is dat een beetje een politiek spel van gewoon ... die spierballen te rollen en te zeggen van kijk eens ... allochtonen nu komen ze er niet meer makkelijk vanaf he ... sociale wooncode we gaan ze nog eens ne keer verplichten ... en misschien he moeten we het in het kader van de nationaliteitswetgeving en van de verblijfswetgeving en misschien moeten we toch ook nog ne keer daar en op den duur ... hebt ge zoiets van ja hoeveel keer moet moet nen allochtoon eigenlijk bewijzen dat hij Nederlands kan en dat hij ... wil integreren en wat doet ge met mensen die ondanks zoveel cursussen ... ja sorry die die gewoon der te laat aan begonnen zijn waarschijnlijk om ooit nog ... en allez ge ge wordt zo terug altijd maar terug geworpen op op ... uw van elders komen en ... moeten bewijzen dat en ... ik vind dat een nefaste evolutie in de samenleving ik denk dat ge daarmee echt uhm ... allochtonen ook voor een stuk terug duwt in hun allochtoon zijn ...

excerpt 164

NC: ik dacht he dat dat ik kon rekenen automatisch op toch een zekere uhm ... interesse en respect en blijkbaar zijn er momenten waarbij dat ge allez ik geef dan een voorbeeld want dat is misschien interessant voor u zo die anekdotes die u aan het denken zetten

JZ: ja ja mmh...

NC: toen dat ik in het middelbaar zat dan was dan was de Golfoorlog uhm uitgebroken tegen Saddam Houssein ... en dan was er zo een vriendinnetje in mijn klas ok ja ... da's natuurlijk maar veertien of zestien jaar ... die zei van ja en staan jullie nu eigenlijk aan de kant van Saddam Houssein of van ons ... en dat was zo voor mij zo ik was daardoor geraakt omdat ik zoiets had van ... allez hoe komt die vraag nu bij op want ja ge zijt ... allez Saddam Houssein dat was echt de dictator en dit en dat en mensenrechten en dat was zo raar dat die gewoon de vraag stelde van ... allez ik vond dat ik vond dat vrij zo bevreemdend omdat ge zo het gevoel hebt ... ik ik was bijna de enigste ik was de enigste allochtoon denk ik bijna in heel mijn school en zeker in mijn klas ...

JZ: mmh

NC: ja ge ge ja ge staat daar meestal niet bij stil en dan zijn er momenten waar dat ge zo een spiegel voorkrijgt van ja maar voor ons zijt ge nog altijd wel die ...

excerpt 165

NC: ... met die kanttkening want dat woord allochtonen ligt altijd gevoelig en zo ... dat we ook beseffen dat veel mensen niet op als allochtonen willen ... gelabeld worden en daar ook geen enkele ... identificatie hebben en zich daar niet op willen engageren en dan is dat ook hun goed recht ... zoiets van als gij nu van allochtone origine zijt maar ... voor de rest wilt gij echt alleen maar als Vlaamse burger worden benaderd en u alleen maar as such inzetten dan is dat uw goed recht en dan moet ge dat maar dan moet ge dat maar doen en ja ...

JZ: ja

NC: dus in die zin ... allez ja ik wil ook niet zelf uhm (lacht) mensen telkens maar als allochtonen labelen maar ja ...

JZ: mmh

NC: 't is natuurlijk een ...

JZ: ge hebt een term nodig ... mmh

NC: ja da's ook een moeilijke evenwichtsoefening he want ... er is ongelijkheid ge wilt een maatschappelijke beweging maar ge hebt genen ... geen term waarvan iedereen echt zoiets heeft van dat is een goeie term ...

excerpt 166

NC: We dan ook gemotiveerd in ons ja ... eerste publicatie waaraan dat ik meegewerkt heb een verslagboek van het Forum in 2001 daar waren zo conclusies bij en daar stond er dan zo in een notendop een visie allez ja da's een groot woord zo twee pagina's met zo een beetje ... wat is integratie en zo en dan rond onderwijs ja jongeren en media aanbevelingen ... en de motivatie toen was ... enfin wou ik zeggen ... ik heb dat toen als voorstel gegeven en ze waren het daarmee eens maar (lacht) uhm ... van kijk ja minderheden zitten in in de samenleving he ge zit uhm ... ge hebt de brede samenleving en daarbinnen hebt ge minderheden etnisch culturele minderheden ook andere minderheden ... terwijl allochtoon ... verwijst zo meer naar anders van elders en dan hebt ge zo meer het

beeld ... allez ik vergelijk dat vaak met ge hebt een huis en en ... die etnisch culturele minderheden zitten in dat huis

JZ: mmh

NC: en allochtonen dat is precies een bijbouwsel zo ... en die zitten daar niet in die moeten nog bijkomen zo ...

excerpt 167

NC: ja ... ik denk dat bij die mensen vooral zo een gevoel van herkenning is die mij aantrekt ... wat dat ik lang mij ... zo het gevoel had dat ik alleen stond in een aantal ideeën omdat ik zo nooit ... ik had zo geen ja weet ge ik ... ik groeide op in in eigenlijk een ... bijna volledig autochtone omgeving ...

JZ: mmh

NC: en ik had zo geen soulmates op dat vlak ... ge ge kijkt naar de dingen ge hebt daar een aantal ideeën over maar uiteindelijk hebt ge zo niemand om zo mee af te toetsen ...

JZ: mmh

NC: en dan met in met in 't werk dan wel maar ... uhm ... maar dat zijn zo wel mensen waarvan dat ge ... die het ook zo goed kunnen verwoorden dat ge zo echt het gevoel hebt van ja wow dat bedoelde ik altijd zo ...

JZ: mmh

NC: maar maar niet zo echt dat ge ... ja der echt nieuwe ideeën uithaalt ...

JZ: ja

NC: soms zo wel dingen die u aan het denken zetten van ah ja ... da's waar zeker van Nadia maar die die bekijkt dingen al vaak vanuit een heel ... theoretisch kader en dat is dan voor mij nieuw ... en dan heb ik iets van ja zo had ik het nog niet bekeken ... maar het zijn zo minder de ideeën die blijven hangen maar eerder zo van ja wow wow zo had ik het ook wel willen kunnen zeggen zo maar de het ... allez dat gevoel van herkenning is ook wel belangrijk dat ge zo niet het gevoel hebt dat alleen staat ...

excerpt 168

NB: Ja uhm goh ja ik denk dat ge daar ge hebt dan zo de zo ... ja mijn vriendinnen hechte vriendinnen ... ge hebt dat en dan zo meer ... ja ik ben in Wuustwezel opgegroeid he dus met mensen van daar uhm ... ja ik denk in mijn vriendenkring en zo dat wij zo allemaal wel een beetje op hetzelfde spoor zitten ... dat ik mij daarin zo wel dat dat is voor ons ook wel een beetje ne voedingsbodem ze om zo wat ... onder elkaar te zijn, en zo iedereen is zo met zijn dinges bezig maar eigenlijk moet zo alles niet altijd uitleggen terwijl als ge ja zo met vrienden van Wuustwezel (zucht) of zo dan dat is toch wel anders daar vindt ge wel andere verbindingen mee ... ik weet ook niet of die ook altijd ... allez iedereen is op een bepaalde manier geëvolueerd he na de studies of dat die zich altijd ... kunnen vinden in de dingen waarom dat ik mee bezig ben of zo dat ... allez dat wordt niet expliciet gezegd dat die hun niet kunnen vinden he maar dat zijn meer Vlamingen he allez dat is uhm ... allez dat dat dat ge ... met hen ga ik zo niet die hele minderheden discussies voeren ... met hen heb ik dan andere ...

JZ: Ja, andere

NB: Andere topics (lacht) . Allez maar ik denk wel dat at ... want ik ben uhm in een heel Vlaamse omgeving opgevoed ... en uhm ... ja die dat dat bijvoorbeeld onze dokter die kwam dan echt zo tegen mij zeggen ... want ik ga nog altijd in Wuustwezel naar de dokter ... van uhm ja ik vind dat echt tof waar gij mee bezig zijt allez ge kunt een heel belangrijke rol spelen in uw gemeenschap maar ... op zo'n zo'n paternalistische bemoederende manier ... terwijl dat ik zo niet allez ik wil wel een rol spelen voor mijn gemeenschap maar niet, niet op de manier dat zij bedoelt ... zij heeft dan zo het beeld van ja die vrouwen worden onderdrukt en ja ... weet ge en dat ge zo ... dat ge die aan het bevrijden zijt of zo terwijl dat ik ... allez dat zie ik helemaal niet als mijn rol of op die manier wil ik niet per se met mijn gemeenschap zijn zo ... ja die vullen dat zo anders in ...

JZ: Ja

NB: Ik denk dat die op zich ook allemaal wel enthousiast zijn over uhm over over wat ik doe he maar ik denk dat die der een andere betekenis aan geven ...

excerpt 169

NB: allez ik ben opgegroeid in Wuustwezel dus ... wij waren daar wij zijn bijna het enige Marokkaanse gezin dus ik ben in mijn jeugd niet echt uhm ... allez ik ben wel geconfronteerd met mijn Marokkaans zijn maar ik was in een heel Belgische omgeving en uhm ... ja ineens zijt ge dan vijftien zestien en dan ineens uw vriendinnen beginnen uit te gaan en was dat toch moeilijk thuis alhoewel dat ik van thuis heel veel mocht maar dat was dan toch een ... moeilijk issue en dat was dan zo van ja een meisje en dat mag niet met een Belgische jongen trouwen en een jongen mag wel met een Belgisch meisje trouwen als ze christelijk of Joods is ... allez en dan kwamen er allerlei verschillen boven en ik had er dan heel veel gesprekken over vooral met mijn vader en ... ja ge zoekt dan naar argumenten die dan ook zo ... bij hen kunnen aanslaan en dan ja dan dan ... zo zoals Fatima Mernissi en die bekijkt dat ook vanuit de Koran en zo en dan kunt ge zo wel daar beter in discussie gaan daar rond ... en ja daar is 't toch wel uhm ... ja toch wel begonnen allez ja dat ik zo ... en dat voel ik nu nog altijd wel in mijn job dat ge ... dat ge zo heel betrokken zijt omdat dat ook over uzelf gaat ... allez wij werken met allochtone vrouwen en het gaat over emancipatie en zo van die toestanden maar ... ja voor een deel gaat het ook over onszelf en soms is dat wel moeilijk om die lijn te trekken van dat is gewoon mijn job ... maar ja dat zit heel dicht euh op elkaar maar ja dat is ook het leuke allez ja ik wil ook wel niet graag gewoon iets ... ja zo vrijblijvend of zo rond een thema dat me niet echt euh ...

JZ: dat u niet echt raakt

excerpt 170

NB: neen want ik heb ook wel tijdens dat ik op het steunpunt werkte heb ik zo een ... stage gedaan bij de VRT zo'n diversiteitstoestand allez dan mocht ge zo bij een programma gaan werken en uhm

JZ: is dat ook niet wat Nadia gedaan

NB: ja Nadia heeft dat ook gedaan die zat bij het nieuws ik zat bij uhm ja ik zat bij entertainment ... ik zat bij thuis ... de soap en ja dat was heel leuk ze maar dan wordt ge zo toch terug geconfronteerd in zo'n in zo'n blanke omgeving met al die vragen (zuchtend) ja hoe zit dat nu he die Ramadan en meisjes en hebt ge ooit een hoofddoek moeten dragen allez dan krijgt ge al die vragen zo terug en ja in het steunpunt zijn we echt wel voorbij dat stadium ... allez we doen gewoon ons werk allez ik krijg dagen niet dat soort vragen en ja ... dan was dat toch een stuk vrijblijvender naar inhoud toe allez dat was zo ik deed dat wel graag ... maar ja toch niet dat persoonlijk engagement zat er toch niet diep genoeg in om ... want ik had dan een fulltime aangeboden gekregen maar pfft ik had ja zoiets van ja ik ben nog niet klaar op het Steunpunt allez ik wil nog meer ... der rond die thema's werken en ik zou nog wel graag in de media werken maar ja ... rond mijn thema's niet gewoon ...

excerpt 171

NB: ja amai ... nog veel succes dan uhm ... ik vond het wel interessant eigenlijk zo ... allez ik wist niet wat ik moest verwachten (lacht)

JZ: ah wat had ge dan verwacht

NB: ja ik wist het niet goed ik wist alleen ja ik moest al zo lang afspreken en nu is het er eindelijk van gekomen uhm ...

JZ: en hebt ge hebt ge het ge veel interviews dan zo of uhm

NB: ja ik uhm wij krijgen kei veel vragen da's echt uhm ...

JZ: ook onderzoekers

NB: allerhande ja en soms is dat ook wel ... allez ja ... soms soms zijt ge ook wel moe om dat altijd uit te leggen en dat vond ik nu leuk dat het zo niet over dat aspect ging allez het ging zo ne stap verder van ah ja waarom engageert ge u en dat ge niet zo veel allez ja ge moet wel over uzelf praten natuurlijk maar niet zo de ... ja ik weet niet de basics de basic identiteit ...

JZ: wat ziet ge dan als basic zo

NB: ja ... ja ik weet niet voelt ge u Marokkaans of Belgisch en hoe is uw moslim zijn weet ge ... en uit zo een gesprek kunt ge soms echt heel moe uitkomen of uhm hebt ge zo ja shit hoe zat dat nu en dan krijgt ge zo soms van die vragen en denkt ge van ah shit daar ben ik helemaal niet mee bezig of daar juist weer wel en dat is zo ... ja soms heel vermoeiend dat ge soms zoiets hebt van ja ... zou ik dat nu nog wel doen uhm

excerpt 172

NB: 't is dat ... uhm ... ja en ik heb ook zo ooit een project gehad rond uhm verder studeren en dan uhm heb ik zo samengewerkt met allochtone studentenorganisaties en dat was dan zo gesprekken met jongeren

JZ: Studentfocus

NB: Studentfocus hier en dan hebben we zo een brochure gesprekken met zo wat meer positieve verhalen van mensen die zijn gaan verder studeren en hoe dat gelopen is en ... ja zo'n projecten vind ik wel echt zo ja super leuk allez ja dat is dan echt zo van ... ja ... allez ook al is dat soms een zijproject van het steunpunt maar ja omdat ik dat zelf dat zo wel heel belangrijk vind ... en is er de ruimte wel binnen het Steunpunt om zo wel soms om uw eigen accenten te leggen en dat is wel leuk natuurlijk om te werken ... om rond zo'n thema's dan uhm ... omdat ik zo het gevoel heb van ja het is niet omdat ik het ... mijn parcours redelijk goed gelopen is dat ik niet voor de anderen ... een brug wil zijn of of ik weet niet of dat allez ik vind dat wel mijn verantwoordelijkheid zo ergens ...

JZ: En van waar komt dat dan denkt ge

NB: Ja ik weet niet dat dat ja ... dat is een gevoel ik weet niet dat ik toch zo het gevoel heb van ja ... dat is toch wel mijn gemeenschap ... ik wil der niet los van komen of zo allez ik wil wel mijn eigen ding kunnen doen en ... waarschijnlijk ... ik weet dat niet wat dat niet wat de Marokkaanse gemeen allez sommigen zullen het wel eens zijn met sommige dingen en anderen niet maar ik ... ik vind dat wel belangrijk om daar ... nen link mee te hebben en om om om als het kan der positieve energie ...

JZ: In te steken

NB: Te brengen (lacht) ja en vooral naar jongeren toe ja

excerpt 173

NB: Op het steunpunt dat wij dan zo bezig zijn van ja we moeten het interne debat rond rolpatronen we moeten dat voeden we moeten dat voeden mannen en vrouwen en ja allez zo he weet ge zo de theoretische ideeën daar rond ... maar 's avonds komt ge ook wel thuis en en heb ik een man thuis (lacht) en en is dat ook niet ... allez clasht dat ook wel allez soms kunt ge zo wel ja ... zit ge zo wel in uw eigen wereldje en wordt ge soms toch wel geconfronteerd allez soms vaak geconfronteerd met ja hoe zit het nu eigenlijk echt in de gemeenschap ... allez weet ge wat ik zo bedoel soms kunnen wij ook zo op visieweekend gaan met heel de algemene vergadering van het steunpunt en dan zitten wij daar allemaal zo van we willen dat en dat en dat ... wel daarna komt iedereen thuis ... en en en moet het ook maar managen hoe dat ge hoe dat ge uw emancipatie invult ...

JZ: Op persoonlijk vlak dan

NB: Op persoonlijk vlak dan ja ... ja da's zo soms ... allez dat is zo hoe hoe dat ik met mijn omgeving he hoe dat ik daarmee omga ... ik weet niet of ik daarmee volledig antwoord

JZ: Neenee maar ..

NB: Ja soms kan dat zo wel clashen

excerpt 174

AA: ... dus tegen de avond toe weet ge wat er is gebeurd ge moet de feiten voor zijn een aantal gesprekspartners de koepels uhm samenroepen goed wat gaan we wat gaan we doen uhm ja die koepels die verenigingen die willen natuurlijk op straat komen en dan wordt het uhm wij tegen ja wij zijn de slachtoffers de allochtonen zijn de slachtoffers gij als overheidsdienst als integratiedienst zoekt continu naar een naar een ... houden rekening met samenleving met het geheel uhm ge probeert ... uhm iets uhm dat negatief is iets positiefs uhm meerwaarde van te maken uhm ... dus vanaf 't begin was het was het voor ons belangrijk uhm ... dat ... duidelijk was dat iedereen slachtoffer zou zijn van dit en en niet alleen de allochtonen ... niet alleen de Afrikaanse niet alleen de Turkse maar ook de Vlaamse dus het moet hier ... als er iets op straat komt dan moet het uhm duidelijk zijn dat het gedragen is door iedereen dus wij moesten vanaf het begin ervoor zorgen dat het middenveld mee was ... en dat was niet gemakkelijk

JZ: Niet gemakkelijk

AA: Neen

JZ: Ge bedoelt het autochtone middenveld uhm ...

excerpt 175

AA: Ja, dus uhm ... waarom uhm ... uhm als we pas op het einde het middenveld of pas op het einde als ze eenmaal de betoging als ze eenmaal uhm een aanvraag werd ingediend van wij willen op straat komen wij willen uhm betoging organiseren een aanvraag vanuit allochtonen dan weten we van der is een minimale aanwezigheid van Vlamingen ... ja ... dus moesten we dervoor zorgen vanaf het begin bij de organisatie al uhm het autochtone middenveld al bij aanwezig was dus uhm we hebben dan de uhm ... uhm ...

JZ: mmh

AA: Ja uhm samen ook gevraagd van uhm zijn jullie bereid om samen te komen om na te denken mee te helpen organiseren, uhm en vandaar, en ... dan opbouwwerk, de Acht, en dan de koepels. En op die manier zijn ze dan een aantal keer samengekomen waardoor het vanaf het begin uhm ... vanaf het begin uhm ... een oproep werd gelanceerd in de eigen in de eigen via de eigen kanalen uhm wat wel voor mij belangrijk was dat ook binnen de uhm de security uhm ... dat een weerspiegeling was van iedereen, en dat heb ik georganiseerd, ...

JZ: Ja

AA: Uhm uhm ... om ... uhm 't zo ... een beeld vanvoor een weerspiegeling is van het beeld vanachter ... ik krijg elke keer een brok (glimlacht)

JZ: Een brok

AA: Een brok in mijn keel als ik erover uhm

JZ: Serieus

AA: Ja da's een ... ja 't blijft een emotionele ...

JZ: En ... vanwaar die of vanwaar die ...

AA: Emoties

JZ: En vanwege het euh de gebeurtenissen ...

excerpt 176

AA: Neen uhm uhm de betoging maar ook zo het ernaar toe werken uhm De gevoeligheid dat ge al op elk detail moet letten uhm uhm om ... om uw uhm om uw doelstelling te bereiken uhm. omdat het afhangt van mensen uhm uhm met wie ge daar hoe ge daar zit zeker als overheid wordt ge niet uhm ... men ziet jou als ... als overheid ziet men jou zeker als wanneer dat er betogingen zijn ziet men jou eigenlijk als de tegenpartij uhm gij zijt degene die dit uhm ...

JZ: Die 't heeft laten escaleren

AA: Ja die 't zover heeft laten komen dus ge zit altijd in zo een hele wankel positie tegelijkertijd wilt ge ... iets in beweging brengen wilt ge uhm ... kansen bieden wilt ge evoluties wilt ge processen teweeg brengen da's zo ... uhm

JZ: en omdat ge dan verwijten naar u toe krijgt of uhm

AA: ja, jaja natuurlijk dus uhm we wandelen echt zo op een slappe koord uhm heel subtiel bewerkt ge ook zo in de coulissen verschillende ... belangenbehar belangen uhm behartigers ... de Afrikaanse koepel de Turkse koepel de Marokkaanse koepel uhm ... de jongeren daarna om toch weer die security uhm het uhm het opbouwwerk de Stad om toch maar mee in te gaan om toch maar mee uhm mee een aantal faciliteiten uhm mogelijk te maken uhm bijvoorbeeld de boulevard op de boulevardplaats dat er megafoons uhm dat er uhm ...

JZ: dus eigenlijk dat er faciliteiten zijn

AA: uhm ja ...

excerpt 177

JZ: want da's uhm allez ik verschiet er gewoon van van die emotie dan zo uhm

AA: ja ... 't is ...

JZ: ja en is dat dan omdat ge juist daartussen staat dat het moeilijk is of uhm

AA: ja ge zit er tussen omdat ... ge zijt uhm ...

JZ: of is er iets anders dat het moeilijk maakt

AA: neen uhm goh omdat ge omdat ge der tussen zit omdat ge ... uhm ... ge wilt voor iedereen goed doen ge wilt uhm en het wordt niet altijd ... zo gezien ook vanuit uhm allochtonen word ge gezien als uhm ja ge zijt van de overheid ge zijt van de andere partij uhm vanuit de overheid wordt ge niet altijd als ... als deel van ons gezien uhm ja ... da's eigen blijkbaar aan mensen uhm ... dus ... men kan jou niet altijd vatten uhm en ... da's niet gemakkelijk daarom loop je altijd op een slappe koord terwijl dat de gebeurtenissen op zich maken der voor dat ge op een slappe koord loopt en ... en ge hebt geen ... geen draaiboek euhm dus dus ge ge zijt eenzaam op dat moment ... uhm en en de de ... de resultaat is heel is heel uhm ... uhm ... het is derop of deraf 't is 't is uhm ... ge stelt heel veel eisen

excerpt 178

ZO: en dan uhm ... voor dat ik eigenlijk op de verkiezingen ... op de lijst ben gaan staan van de verkiezingen van 99 uhm ... heb ik dan ook nog de gelegenheid gehad want da's dan het internationale aspect dat is dan het derde dat erbij ge ... dus het is echt zo eerst racisme dan economische situatie van de arbeiders en dan internationaal euhm heb ik dan de kans ge gehad om naar Irak te reizen

excerpt 179

ZO: ja maar ik ben ... allez ik ken dat wel ... heel veel mensen die geëngageerd zijn die zijn eigenlijk het begint altijd met een buikgevoel met een onrechtvaardigheidsgevoel dat men dingen ziet ... en tegenkomt en dat men zegt ja van dit kan niet en men begint uhm ... ik denk wel dat moet er eerst zijn allez ik denk dat er eerst altijd ... de spontane verontwaardiging moet zijn ... maar ik heb het geluk gehad dat die spontane verontwaardiging ook tegelijkertijd de zoektocht naar antwoorden ... heeft ... veroorzaakt van ja maar ... er gebeuren zoveel dingen en dat kan niet en ge ge hebt dan gestudeerd ge hebt dan aan de universiteit gestudeerd maar niemand die zegt ja ... het systeem zit zo in elkaar en daarom ... hebt ge ja hebt ge die excessen of hebt ge die ... en uhm ... ja door dan eigenlijk bij bij geëngageerde mensen euh terecht te komen en gezegd van ja maar ge moet dat lezen en ge moet dat lezen en ge moet dat lezen en ik heb dat dan ook gedaan ...

excerpt 180

ZO: goh ik ben uhm ... ik ben marxist geworden maar ik ben wel uhm ... opgegroeid ... in een uhm ... in een moslim uhm gezin en ik vind dat een belangrijk deel van mezelf omdat ... als ik uhm ... dat uhm ... ja die spontane verontwaardiging of dat onrechtvaardigheidsgevoel heb dan is dat niet vanuit een marxistische opvoeding maar vanuit uhm ... mijn thuisopvoeding en uhm ... dat zijn toch wel waarden zijn meegegeven vanuit mijn ouders vanuit hun geloof en uhm dus ja dat zijn toch wel zaken die ik meedraag en om nu te zeggen van ja ik ik zweer het geloof af want dat brengt niets dan slechts ... allez ... in mijn concreet geval ik vind dat niet ik vind dat niet dialectisch

JZ: (lacht)

ZO: (lacht) allez om het met een marxistische term te zeggen ... dat klopt ook gewoon niet het is uhm ... ik denk dat ... als ge rondom u kijkt dat er heel veel mensen uhm ... hun engagement mijn engagement is sterker geworden door het marxisme maar mijn engagement was er niet is er niet gekomen ... door een marxistische opvoeding ... en ik uhm ik vind dat belangrijk omdat er zo heel veel mensen zijn die vanuit hun opvoeding vanuit hun geloof ... dingen doen en dingen willen veranderen in de wereld en uhm ... daarom vind ik dat ... soms een valse tegenstelling.

excerpt 181

ZO: dus eigenlijk achteraf bleek dat die kinderen dat de enige manier om die kinderen van die sch die waren ingeschreven en niet pasten in het pedagogisch project om die weg te krijgen was doorverwijzing naar ... bijzonder onderwijs dus dat was werkelijk alleez ... ik heb dat ... alleez ... ja ge kunt u dat niet voorstellen hoe dat ge u dan voelt ... ja die ouders komen bij u ja ge voelt u daarmee verwant want ja alleez ... dat zijn Marokkaanse ouders dat zijn families ... alleez ja dat is zo alsof dat dat ... ja een gezin is waar ge zelf bent in opgegroeid he en dan denkt ge van ja alleez ... dit dit kan toch niet en dan uhm begint de film zo te draaien ... toen wij klein waren en mijn oudste zus maar gelukkig is die eraan ontsnapt omdat die heel intelligent ... is die uhm die is ook in den tijd gewoon doorverwezen naar het beroepsonderwijs omdat men vond ja bon die was goed voor snid en naad en voor niks anders.

excerpt 182

ZO: Zij was zij paste gewoon niet in snit en naad zij was gewoon ... heel intelligent en dus die film begint dan te draaien en dan denkt ge van ja ... ook al hebt ge uzelf altijd beschermd gevoeld en ... toch begint ge zo te zien van hoe dat het systeem werkt ten opzichte van ja de kansarme ook mensen wel ... en dan hebben we een proces gevoerd uhm tegen die school uhm voor de weigering van die kinderen ... wij zijn dat proces dan ... verloren ... maar uhm bon het resultaat is wel dat die kinderen niet in het bijzonder onderwijs zijn geraakt en het meest schandalige was natuurlijk dat op vijf jarige leeftijd ... alleez ... normaal ziet ge dat pas kunt ge dat niet dan

JZ: kunt ge die beslissing

ZO: nemen dus dat was echt ... alleez die kinderen elke kans ontnemen om zich te ontwikkelen op hun eigen niveau ... en misbruik maken van ja ... de achterstelling van de ouders die dan eigenlijk minder ... ja ze waren meer geschandaliseerd van gewoon van het feit van ja maar onze kinderen zijn hier ingeschreven ...

JZ: ja

ZO: en waarom moeten die nu naar een andere school waarom mogen die nu gewoon de derde kleuterklas niet afmaken he

JZ: ja natuurlijk

ZO: en euh ja dat was dan ook euh heel euh confronterend maar dat was ... ja ik denk dat als ik nu geen advocaat was geworden dan dan dan maakt ge zo'n dingen euhm ... zaken niet mee en uhm ... ja racisme he racisme he heel de tijd euh ... waar dat ge eigenlijk als advocaat eigenlijk heel weinig ... tegen kunt doen ...

excerpt 183

JZ: maar mensen komen daar dan wel mee langs dan of ...

ZO: ja ... mensen vertellen dat euhm ... ja pff mensen komen daarmee langs maar mensen hebben ook zoiets van ja ... op den duur is er zoiets van ja maar als we der iets tegen gaan doen wat gaat dat dan uithalen he

JZ: mmh

ZO: en dan was dat alleez ja ... dat koppel ik dan eigenlijk terug aan die racismewet ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: dat ge dan weet dat ge jaren dervoor hebt ... gewoon vanuit een aanvoelen van ja die wet gaat niks veranderen op het terrein dat ge dan met de praktijk wordt geconfronteerd en ziet van ja ... dat is inderdaad een doekje een doekje voor het bloeden en ... een schaamlap om te zeggen van ja maar he ... antiracismewet maar in de praktijk ... kwam daar dan niet veel van uhm ... ja dat is zo wat het begin van mijn engagement ... dan uhm ... uhm ... later is eigenlijk ook het uhm ... het economische daarbij gekomen uhm ... ook vanuit mijn achtergrond eigenlijk omdat mijn vader uhm als gastarbeider heeft gewerkt in zeer ... uhm ... ja harde ... omstandigheden ...

JZ: hier in België dan

excerpt 184

ZO: hier in België he en uhm ... ja hoe moet ik het zeggen ... je beleeft die realiteit wel als kind zo dat ge dat uw vader zo hard werk moet doen en ... ja ik vond dat altijd wel ... heel erg (lacht) dat die zo ... hard en vuil en vies werk en ... hij was der ook altijd heel moe van en ... dat had ook weerslag op het gezinsleven als hij dan thuis was

ja dan was hij moe en hij wil dan gaan slapen en hij wilde dan rust ... en uhm ... maar dat maakte dat mijn moeder eigenlijk voor de ganse zorg van het gezin uhm ... opdraaide en ... ja dat zijn toch zo situaties die u als kind ... ik heb mij dikwijls ... als kind heb ik mij dikwijls voorgehouden van ... dit leven dat wil ik zelf later nooit ...

excerpt 185

ZO: en dat vond ik wel euhm allez dat uhm is mij wel bijgebleven ... als ge dan natuurlijk gaat studeren en zo dan begint ge uw eigen leven te hebben en dan vergeet ge zo wel allez de studies doen veel deuren opengaan ge leert andere mensen kennen ge leert andere situaties kennen

JZ: ja en ge ziet dan waarschijnlijk ook meer verschillen van ... hoe dat het ook anders ...

Zo: ja ... ja ... ja ... en ge rolt eigenlijk in een automatisch bijna ... hoewel dat het niet automatisch is maar ge rolt eigenlijk automatisch in een beter leven he ... in een in een leven van een intellectueel (lacht)

JZ: (lacht)

ZO: en euhm ... ja ge vergeet eigenlijk ja niet echt vergeten maar dat gaat zo dat verdwijnt zo naar de achtergrond ...

JZ: uw achtergrond van thuis dan bedoelt ge ...

ZO: ja dat er mensen zijn die ... dat er ja dat er nog altijd de realiteit is van de mensen van vandaag dat die ja dat die zo'n werk moeten doen en dan euhm ... ja ben ik zo euhm in contact gekomen met de ... met vakbonden en syndicalen en ja dan eens meegegaan naar een fabriek ...

JZ: via uw werk dan of uhm

ZO: uhm neen uhm via politiek eh ... en euhm ... ja dan ... dan gaan uw ogen terug open he

excerpt 186

ZO: En dan eigenlijk stilletjes aan ... ben ik er zo ingerold en dan ja meegegaan ... naar een aantal euhm fabrieken en dan met arbeiders en die delegaties gesproken ... ja ... en ja dan de arbeidsomstandigheden van die mensen dat ge denkt van (zucht) ... en toen kwam weer

JZ: mmh ... en dan ziet ge dat ook bij uw vader en

ZO: alles terug ja zo ... en dan legt ge die link met dat racisme van vroeger van die uitsluiting van school dat ge dan door uw praktijk en dan ... ja door terug naar de fabrieken eigenlijk ... te gaan ... en allez komt een deel van de realiteit dat ge dan uit het oog verliest vanuit die positie als intellectueel ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: ook terug en dan ... ja dan dacht ik van ... dat is niet alleen op 't vlak van racisme maar ook op ... op 't economisch vlak veel dat niet klopt he ... en ... en dan eigenlijk ja ... stilletjes aan ...

JZ: (lacht)

ZO: meer en meer (lacht) geëngageerd geraakt ... en dan ... ja is eigenlijk de internationale aspect erbij gekomen

excerpt 187

ZO: neen neen via zelfstudie ... ja neen ik heb dan zelf uhm ja ge hebt ook aan de unief gezeten he dus ge zult weten dat Marx niet echt (lacht)

JZ: (lacht) jajaja aan de UA niet populair is he (lacht)

ZO: (lacht) aan de universiteit wordt gedoceerd

JZ: neen ik was daar euhm allez ... ik was daar eigenlijk zelfs een beetje gechoqueerd door toen ik hier in Antwerpen terecht kwam want ik heb aan de VUB gestudeerd

ZO: ja

JZ: en uhm ik heb daar communicatiewetenschappen gedaan maar communicatiewetenschappen daar dat is een uhm ... ja dat is zo wat cultural studies maar ook politieke economie krijgt ge daar bijvoorbeeld

ZO: en hier is dat niet he

JZ: en hier is is dat niet neen want ik heb hier vorig jaar een vak ik volg soms vakjes bij ik had een vak politieke filosofie bij gedaan en euhm op een bepaald moment zegt die prof

ZO: en dan krijgt ge Marx en dan krijgt ge twee zinnen he

JZ: ja Marx ... het was ietske meer het was een beetje Frankfurter Schule ook wel zo

ZO: jajajaja

JZ: Adorno Horkheimer en zo ... maar inderdaad ... heel beperkt en zeker niet die socio-economische analyse dan was het meer de culturele aspecten van ... van het marxistisch denken maar dus uhm die prof zei toen tegen mij van ja hier wordt in geen enkele ... uhm richting eigenlijk sinds meer dan tien jaar ... want ooit is het wel zo geweest politieke economie gegeven ... en en ja ik was daar echt verstoeld van

ZO: Ja der wordt wel politieke economie gegeven he maar Keynes

excerpt 188

ZO: ja dus wat dat vroeger eigenlijk meer zo ... het spontaan gevoel was van der klopt hier iets niet

JZ: mmh

ZO: euh heb ik dan eigenlijk wel ... uhm ... ja antwoorden gevonden ... in het marxisme ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: dus in de ik ik allez voor mij ... geeft het me geeft het marxisme uhm ... antwoorden over ... veel zaken die ... verkeerd ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: euh lopen euh ja bijvoorbeeld het imperialisme en hoe het imperialisme eigenlijk het racisme heeft gebruikt om uhm andere ... he hoe dat euh ja het Westen om het dan zo te zeggen andere werelddelen is gaan koloniseren vanuit ...

JZ: ja

ZO: vanuit de opvatting van ja die zijn onbeschaafd en wij

JZ: superieur

ZO: gaan (lacht) de beschaving brengen en dus ja om dan het beeld van de onbeschaafde culturen ... ingang te doen vinden allez ja bon ... ge zult het wel weten he ...

JZ: ja (lacht)

excerpt 189

ZO: en ik ik ik was dat zo aan het voorlezen en ik heb een zoontje van zeven jaar en die zegt zo van ... ja zeg die hebben zelf geen hersenen degenen die dat schrijven

JZ: (lacht)

ZO: (lacht) en dan denk ik dat deed zo deugd dat dat er zo spontaan uit kwam

JZ: ja ... ja. ...

ZO: ja maar dat zijn wel de theorieën en de ideeën waar dat eigenlijk ja ... het imperialisme of of het Westen volop gebruik heeft gemaakt om het racisme natuurlijk te installeren gewoon gedurende ... twee honderd jaar of of langer en dan ... ja alle dat doet ge niet zomaar (veegt over tafel)

JZ: met een gommeke weg

excerpt 190

ZO: met met een gommeke weg dus dat blijft dan eigenlijk wel ... wel voort euhm ... duren en dan euhm ... ja maar dan concreet ... in België denk ik dat het gewoon ... ja ook een politiek is van mensen tegen elkaar ... opzetten ... en de mensen verdelen om te verhinderen dat er ... bijvoorbeeld op het vlak van uhm van arbeid he ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: euhm ... dat men eigenlijk ... tegen werknemers zegt he dus het idee van ja en het zijn migranten die ervoor zorgen dat ge uw werk kwijt geraakt he en dat ge slechte werkomstandigheden en dergelijke meer ... terwijl dat die arme migrant waarschijnlijk nog minder verdient nog minder werk heeft en dat ge dus ziet dat het de economie is die dat de mensen tegen elkaar uitspeelt juist ... om te verhinderen dat het dat het een ... een hechte groep is die opkomt voor gemeenschappelijke belangen en ... alle ... ik weet niet of dat het ... je begrijpt wel wat ik bedoel he

JZ: jajaja

ZO: dus dat dat dus dat dat eigenlijk wel een antwoord heeft gegeven van ja ... hoe komt het nu eigenlijk ineens dat racisme zo opduiken in ... in België en dan euhm en dan dan ziet ge zo wel een beetje ... euhm de grote lijnen.

excerpt 191

JZ: denkt ge dat dat dan een bewust politiek is dan of ziet ge het op een andere manier

ZO: ja bewust of niet bewust ik denk dat dat eigenlijk niet van belang is of dat dat bewust is of niet bewust maar dat dat eigenlijk een euhm ... een uhm ... ja een logisch gevolg is van ... het uhm ... het model waarin dat wij leven he dus dat ... dat ... het economisch systeem waarin dat wij leven dat er opgericht is om ... uhm ... maximale winst te maken en dat die maximale winst moet gehaald worden ten koste van mensen uhm ten koste van arbeidsomstandigheden ... en uhm ja alle ... als ge ziet dat dezelfde bedrijven zijn die uhm ja in India of in of in uhm of in Afrika uhm produceren tegen ... alle mensen laten werken tegen hongerlonen om dan hier te zeggen van ja het zijn die mensen die uw werk afpakken ja ... niets belet hen om dan aan die mensen dezelfde (lacht) zelfde

JZ: neen (lacht)

ZO: arbeidsvoorwaarden of arbeidsomstandigheden te geven zodanig dat niemand het werk afpakt van die alle ja ik bedoel he ...

JZ: jaja

ZO: het zijn wel zij die het alle het is wel de economie die het zodanig organiseert dat de ene bevolkingsgroep tegen de andere ... wordt opgezet he ... en alle ge ziet dat nu eigenlijk ook een beetje met de crisis ... ja dat protectionisme en uhm ... alle dat ge ziet in de

JZ: het euh ... nationaal protectionisme dan

ZO: dat dat dat ja in België wordt dat uitge ... alle met GM tegen Duitsland en ... en dat ge dan denkt van ja der klopt hier toch iets niet he alle ...

JZ: neen

ZO: alle 't zijn niet uhm ... dus uhm alle dat het marxisme voor mij wel antwoorden geeft uhm ... uhm ja daarop he en dan op internationaal vlak dan is het evident dat het uhm ... dat het altijd om strategische belangen gaat he

excerpt 192

ZO: ik vind dat het allemaal erger wordt alle het is niet ... ja ik ik vind wel dat het erger is geworden waar dat het vroeger dan nog eigenlijk iets was van taboe he en dat ge ja racisme was er wel maar niemand durfde zeggen dat ie

racist was of is en terwijl dat de mensen wel zo dachten van ja maar ja ik euhm ... de want nu komt men er openlijk voor uit uhm ... uhm het het ... het uit zich ook veel meer uhm alleen ik denk ... de meest erge uiting dan in Antwerpen is toch wel uhm Hans van Themsche ... geweest en ik hoop dan dat dat er bij blijft maar ik denk dat dat ook gewoon te maken heeft met uhm ... allez hoe dat ik het zie is dat ... hoe meer dat het systeem in crisis geraakt ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: hoe meer dat het teruggrijpt ook naar ... ja ... naar wa allez naar wapens zoals racisme om de mensen meer en meer te verdelen en op te zetten tegen elkaar ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: uhm ... om eigenlijk de echte verantwoordelijken van de crisis of of of te verhinderen ... dat mensen zien dat eigenlijk dat dat de crisis veroorzaakt wordt door het systeem zelf en niet dat ... niet omdat de ene bruin is en de andere geel dat dat

JZ: mmh

ZO: dat is gewoon niet de oorzaak van de crisis ... de crisis ligt gewoon in de organisatie van het economisch systeem

JZ: mmh

ZO: en dus ik denk ja uhm het is erger geworden ook met de Golfoorlog heeft zeker ook geen goed gedaan denk ik euh aan racisme wat er dan gebeurd is met elf september heeft het ook nog

JZ: de laatste golfoorlog bedoelt ge dan of

Zo: euh ja gans de periode en ja elf september heeft ook een boost gegeven aan het uhm ... uhm ... aan de Islamofobie en de en dus ja ik vind het wel ... ik vind het wel erger geworden alhoewel dat ik ... wel het gevoel heb maar dat is maar een gevoel uhm ... dat ... dat we wel op een keerpunt zitten

excerpt 193

ZO: ja dat is dan eigenlijk het derde en ik denk allez dat daarmee een beetje de cirkel rond is dus eigenlijk doorheen de jaren en doorheen ... ja ... hetgeen dat gebeurt in de wereld hetgeen wat gebeurt ... in euhm ... ja ... in Antwerpen (lacht) ... dat dat eigenlijk uhm ... ja alleen maar mijn engagement euhm sterker heeft gemaakt en uhm ... wat dat niet ... uhm ... wegneemt dat ge u soms machteloos voelt ten opzichte van zo veel onrecht maar ... dat maakt gewoon dat je dat ik dat ik niet gewoon thuis kan blijven zitten en ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: en weten dat dat allemaal gebeurt en niks doen

JZ: thuis zitten dat doet ge zo precies echt wel niet echt he (lacht)

ZO: ja der zijn wel periodes dat dat gelukkig (lacht)

JZ: allez ge gaat dan naar Irak naar Gaza ... uhm ...

ZO: ja ... ja ik vind dat ook allez dat is zo (zucht) om iets kunnen doen ... dat geeft mij zo ... da's zo ... een beetje zelf op de wonde da's zo echt euhm ... ik moest daar vanmorgen nog aan denken omdat wat er nu gebeurt in Gaza en Irak en zo ik vind dat ... ja ge kunt er niet (zucht) permanent aan denken maar toch is dat zoiets ... ja da's zo een kamertje allez in ... het binnenste van u ... waarvan dat de deur dan ... af en toe open gaat

JZ: mmh

ZO: en dat ge zo die emoties ... toelaat ... maar soms moet ik dat deurtje ook gewoon dicht houden allez dichthouden en dan ... maar dat is er wel dat kamertje is er wel altijd en ... ja ik vind gewoon ... ge wilt iets doen om dat kamertje ... aangenamer te maken da's zo een donker ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: ja een donker ...

JZ: een donker holletje zo (glimlacht)
excerpt 194

ZO: ja maar ge wilt dat aangenamer maken ge wilt dat ge wilt dat ... ja ge wilt iets doen en allez ik sprak gisteren ook met iemand en die zei van ja als we iets kunnen doen we hebben allemaal geld gegeven maar ... ik zeg ja soms is geld geven ... het enige dat ge kunt doen maar allez ja als er iets ... dat ge ... ja dat maakt het allemaal ... draaglijker ... niet dat ge de pretentie wilt hebben ik ga het allemaal veranderen maar toch dat ge ... iets kunt bijdragen en kleine stapkes kunt zetten ... in het veranderen van de situatie en uhm ... als ge terug kijkt in de geschiedenis is het wel altijd zo dat ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: ... dat op de donkere periode toch altijd betere perioden komen en dat die dat die betere periode er niet vanzelf is gekomen maar dat dat door de mensen ... door de kracht van mensen doordat ze zich organiseren en en dingen doen voor anderen ... en uhm ja ik vind ook nu wat dat er in de Verenigde Staten is gebeurd met Obama ... vind ik zo het meest ontroerende vind ik al die mensen ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: die jarenlang eigenlijk onder Bush hebben gezwezen en die daar allez door al wat dat er gebeurt in de wereld dat dat dat verplettert ook de mensen dat geeft de mensen ook ja pessimisme en er gaat nooit iets veranderen en het zal altijd hetzelfde blijven dat ge nu ziet dat de mensen ... dat er zoveel hoop is dat mensen echt wel willen ... dat het niet zo blijft dat het verandert en dat vind ik ... ja allez

JZ: 't is ook hoopgevend

ZO: hoopvol ja dat geeft dan zo weer ... ok we zijn met heel veel die het anders willen en als we volhouden en niet elk in ons hoekje kruipen dan gaat er wel iets veranderen ... ja ... 't is eigenlijk ja ... daarvoor ... voor die miljoenen mensen ginder en hier en ...

excerpt 195

ZO: ja ik wou nog zeggen van ... ja ge voelt u soms natuurlijk wel klein en ... en nietig en ... alsof dat ge alleen bent ... tegen ... de rest maar ... ja ik heb mij ik heb geleerd van dat ... van dat niet te denken (lacht)

JZ: (lacht) da's een apart kamertje nog uhm

ZO: neen want dat is gewoon niet waar ... er zijn heel veel mensen die elk op hun terrein ... elke dag ... voort timmeren en ... ja dat is niet altijd zichtbaar en ... maar er zijn zo momenten dat ge dat dan wel ziet en dan denk ik ja allez ... ze ze zijn er en ja ...

excerpt 196

ZO: ... en zoiets kan natuurlijk niet elke dag ...

JZ: neeneen

ZO: maar zoiets kan omdat er elke dag mensen zijn ... die blijven ...

JZ: ja

ZO: hun engagement opnemen heel stilletjes en dan ineens is er zo een moment dat ... dat het dat het geout wordt

JZ: dat het tot uiting komt

ZO: ja en dan en dan ... dat zorgt ervoor dat ge voortdoet he en allez ... daar denk ik dan aan ... in plaats van te denken aan ... ge vecht natuurlijk tegen de bierkaai dikwijls maar der komt altijd een moment dat uhm ...

JZ: dat dat niet zo is

ZO: neen dat ge op kunt tegen uhm ... en dat er toch dingen veranderen ... dus ...

excerpt 197

ZO: ja ... en uhm ... ja dan dan waren het verkiezingen denk ik in 2003 of 2004 ... en dan eigenlijk vanuit de samenwerking rond Palestina rond uhm rond de oorlog in Irak hadden we dan ... uhm beslist om uhm samen naar de verkiezingen te trekken euh Partij van de Arbeid en AEL en uhm ... niet in Kartelvorm maar gewoon een nieuwe een nieuwe lijst ... Resist euhm ... welke herinneringen of uhm allez gevoelens dat ik eraan overhoud uhm ... het was in ieder geval zo dat er een enorme dynamiek onder uhm de jonge migranten heeft teweeg gebracht zowel jongens als meisjes ... uhm ... ook uhm ja ... de drang naar verandering de drang naar ... uhm ... ja ... dat er eindelijk iets zou komen dat euhm ... dat de situatie voor uhm migranten in België leefbaarder zou maken ... en uhm ... ja ... heel geëngageerd ook dus eigenlijk een uhm ... ja een ontwaken uhm maar ook een politiek ontwaken dus dat ze zich organiseerden en uhm ... en ja en hun organisatie die ze dan als de hunne beschouwden en uhm met politieke eisen ... en en dat vond ik allez dat vond ik heel uhm ... dat vond ik heel positief ... uhm ... ja die Resist is dan eigenlijk uhm ... niet van de grond gekomen ... uhm heel veel van ons achterban van de partij van de arbeid is op uhm ... is daarop afgehaakt ... uhm ... wat ons eigenlijk dan geconfronteerd heeft met uhm ... met uhm de hardnekkigheid van het racistische gedachtegoed ... binnen ons eigen kiespubliek en dat arbeiders ... uhm ... dat was dan de keerzijde van de medaille dat was eigenlijk heel ontnuchterend en uhm ... ja ik heb het daar heel moeilijk mee gehad uhm ... ja de idee dat jongere migranten dat die opkwamen voor hun rechten eigenlijk een beetje naar uhm het voorbeeld van ... de Amerikaanse burgerrechtenbeweging ... uhm ... dat dat hier op zoveel verzet uhm stuitte dat was echt uhm ... ja een harde een harde pil om te slikken ... uhm ... maar dat heeft mij eigenlijk een beetje doen inzien dat uhm ... iets wat dat iemand mij al veel vroeger had gezegd toen ik opkwam met de verkiezingen ... die zei van ja ... weet ge de rol van de Partij van de Arbeid ... is eigenlijk ... zo zo zich te profileren als ...

excerpt 198

JZ: met die verkiezingen van Resist

ZO: neeneen dervoor dervoor maar dat was iemand die mij dat had gezegd voor uhm Resist ik denk in een verkiezingen ervoor of zo

JZ: ok ok

ZO: en die had gezegd tegen mij van ja ... weet ge wat het probleem is van de Partij van de Arbeid ge moet u minder profileren ... da's ook een ganse discussie natuurlijk over uhm migranten en hoe profileert ge u als partij maar dat was een dat was een Marokkaan die mij dat zei die zei van ge moet u minder profileren rond uhm migrantenthema's en ... een partij die opkomt voor de rechten van de migranten maar veel meer opkomen als arbeiderspartij dus echt euhm op sociaal-economische thema's waar dat jullie heel sterk in zijn maar dat wordt gewoon weggedrukt omdat elke keer terug dat imago van migrantenpartij de kop op steekt en wanneer dat ge ... dat ge ... dat ge eigenlijk u meer daar rond profileert ... hebt ge de mogelijkheid om dan opent ge de deur om ook voor degenen die dan voor jullie niet zijn omwille van ... de economische ... eisen ... uhm kunt ge ze meetrekken naar uhm ja ook de strijd voor gelijke rechten en zo uhm ... en ... ja dat heeft mij lang (lacht) gekost maar met Resist ... heeft mij dat eigenlijk doen inzien dat met Resist wij eigenlijk een beetje ja ... met uhm ... met de harde hand ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: uhm ...

JZ: probeerden ...

ZO: hebben ja ... ons kiespubliek ... willen doen inzien van ja maar ge moet ... anti-racist zijn en ge moet opkomen voor gelijke rechten ... en anders ja dan ... dat dat zo niet werkt ...

excerpt 199

ZO: ja euh wij hebben ... jaja wij hebben ... allez de les daaruit euh is dat euhm een lange discussie is geweest maar daaruit is de vernieuwing ... uhm ... van de partij uit gekomen ... in die zin dat er verschillende congressen zijn geweest en dat euh ... dat de partij heeft beslist van uhm ... terug uhm de band met de met de arbeiders en met de arbeidersbewegingen dat die ... de eerste taak is ... voor onze partij allez dat die prioritair is ... daar waar wij bij Resist eigenlijk het eerste ja ... het internationale aspect he dus de ... de de tegen de oorlog tegen het imperialisme en uhm ... en eigenlijk zijn we ... ja hoe moet ge het zeggen ... uhm ... de migranten of de de organisaties van migranten zijn gaan beschouwen als euhm ... als de dragende kracht voor verandering ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: en uhm ... ja en na lange discussies en we hebben gewoon teruggegrepen naar uhm naar naar Marx
excerpt 200

JZ: mmh

ZO: die zegt ja de dragende kracht voor ... voor veranderingen zijn de is de werkende klasse of dat dat nu migranten of Belgen zijn maar het is de werkende klasse en dus ja ... ge moet terug allez we moesten gewoon terug naar de basis naar de kern van uhm ... van ja van ons bestaan allez van onze bestaansreden en sindsdien ... is er heel wat veranderd in positieve zin dus uhm ...

JZ: van het bestaansrecht van de PvdA bedoelt ge dan

ZO: ja allez dus als arbeiderspartij dus dat we echt terug euh ... ja dat dat is prioritair en uhm alles wat dat we doen we zijn een kleine partij dus we kunnen ons niet veroorloven van uhm ... van onze krachten te verspillen he maar ons te concentreren en dus uhm het belangrijkste is ja de banden met de vakbonden terug aanhalen en uhm met met met de gewone ja de mensen op de werkvloer de delegees ... hun hun bekommernissen ter harte nemen en en ja daar ook voor gaan uhm ... ook in plaats van uhm ... ja gewoon ... politieke eisen naar voor te schuiven die ... correct ... zijn ... uhm eisen naar voor te schuiven die gedragen worden door heel veel mensen he ... uhm ... ja hoe zal ik het nu zeggen uhm bijvoorbeeld ... uhm ... en alternatieven naar voor te schuiven bijvoorbeeld allez ... het beste voorbeeld is Dirk van Duppen met zijn kiwimodel he

JZ: ja

ZO: dus uhm ... waarin hij ... de grote farma-industrie aanklaagt die inderdaad met heel veel uhm ... heel veel winsten op uhm kap van de gezondheid van de mensen ... uhm is het niet alleen maar dat aanklagen van ja en de farma-industrie maakt zoveel winst en het is normaal dat ze bijdragen maar eigenlijk heel het systeem dat daarachter zit blootleggen ... waardoor dat de mensen zelf tot de conclusie komen van ja ... het is eigenlijk wel schandalig zonder zelf te zeggen van ja het is schandalig ja zie ze doen dat dat ge eigenlijk het systeem blootlegt en dat de mensen eigenlijk zelf tot de conclusie komen van ja dat is inderdaad schandalig maar niet alleen komen tot het punt waarbij dat de mensen het schandalig vinden maar ook een alternatief voorstellen dat ze zelf uhm waar ze zelf ook kunnen achterstaan ...

excerpt 201

ZO: ... allez dat is iets dat voor Resist zoiets hadden we nooit gedaan allez dat we gewoon eigenlijk ja ... om het oneerbiedig te zeggen slogans roepen van kijk eens hoe onrechtvaardig het systeem is ... ja ... ok ja het systeem is onrechtvaardig en dan he ...

JZ: jaja

ZO: en dat is wel uhm ... ja iets dat veranderd is ik ben nu aan het denken op economisch vlak ... ah ja bijvoorbeeld ook uhm ... energie ...

JZ: mmh

ZO: dus uhm ja ge hebt nu heel veel discussie over de koopkracht van de mensen ... de ganse discussie over Electrabel die eigenlijk winsten opstrijken ja onterecht he van op afgeb afbetaalde centrales allez afgeschreven centrales en dat ze daar dan toch ... heel wat discussie over uhm geweest en hebben we dat ook voorgelegd aan aan heel veel mensen en dan uiteindelijk is daar uit voortgekomen dat uhm ... een zeer concrete eis is dat de zowel voor de koopkracht als uhm ... voor energie dat de mensen 21% betalen op energietaks en dan hebben we de eis naar voren geschoven van 6% BTW op energie en uhm ja dat is overgenomen door vakbewegingen en andere organisaties dus dat ... in die zin is het wel ... leuk nu ...

JZ: dat ge wat resultaten ziet of uhm

ZO: ja ... dat er opening naar de partij is

JZ: ah ok op die manier

excerpt 202

ZO: dat we niet meer zo geïsoleerd zijn juist omdat we niet meer zo van die eisen ... naar voor schuiven waarvan de mensen zeggen van ja da's utopisch of dat zien we niet zitten of da's niet haalbaar maar heel concrete zaken die ook grote veranderingen ... kunnen betekenen voor de mensen hun dagelijkse leven ... en uhm ... daar waar we vroeger ook wel eens durfden zeggen van ja de enige oplossing is het socialisme (lacht) gaan we zeggen ja neen allez ... er zijn dingen die ge gewoon kunt realiseren ook al zijn we een kleine partij uhm ... dagdagelijks voor de mensen ...

JZ: ja ...

Zo: dus dat is eigenlijk allez als resultaat van Resist dus uhm ...

JZ: ja

ZO: we zijn toen als partij met de neus op de fei allez echt met ons gezicht tegen de deur gelopen ... en ik denk dat we daar uhm sterker uit zijn gekomen

excerpt 203

JZ: Uhm ... ja ik weet niet anders zullen we misschien gewoon beginnen met wat dat de thema's zijn gewoon die bij u bijvoorbeeld ja die ... u meer interesseren of momenteel boeien bijvoorbeeld

NF: op dit moment bezighouden, welke thematieken ... goh uhm het is een beetje moeilijk om daar zo ... allez het minderhedenvraagstuk houdt mij al een tijdje uhm bezig dus ik denk dat dat zo een beetje de grote paraplu term is waarbinnen ik ageer ... uhm ja ik ben de laatste jaren wat minder actief geweest dus voor mij is het ook zo ik denk dat ik nu meer in een soort van ... een retraite bezinningsfase zit van van ok hoe wil ik uhm ... terug actief zijn want allez actief zijn is echt wel een rode draad geweest in mijn laatste vijf jaren geweest en zes jaar ... en ik wil dat wel zo houden want dat geeft wel ergens een uhm een belangrijke ... een belangrijk kader aan het leven en een structuur aan het leven van waar ge naartoe gaat dus het is meer dan enkel een bijdrage leveren het is ook waar ge zelf persoonlijk zin uit haalt ... maar ja ik zou zeggen het minderhedenvraagstuk blijft nog altijd wel een beetje het belangrijkste

excerpt 204

NF: euh ... het religieuze het religieuze heeft bij mij een rol gespeeld in de zin dat het in mijn persoonlijk verhaal uhm ... uhm .. dervoor heeft gezorgd dat Islam een deel van mijn identiteit is geworden ... maar ook tegelijkertijd ook weer niet en in de zin het is de eerste identitair kader waardoorheen ik gepolitiseerd ben geraakt ... allez toen dat ik zestien was die religieuze trip toen dat ik op de unief was heb ik Tarik Ramadan ontdekt ... dus dat was echt voor mij dan de Islamisten in contact gekomen dus ... het het Islamitisch kader was voor mij het eerste ... alternatieve kader ... dat eigenlijk u toelaat om een soort van tegendiscours te ontwikkelen vanuit uw eigen referenties ... uhm ... en vandaar dat ik nu nog altijd volledig open sta voor mensen die die langs Islam zich emanciperen dat heeft een belangrijke rol en een belangrijke kracht ... maar maar ik voel voor mijzelf dat ja doorheen de jaren dat ik daar toch wel ... niet van ben teruggekomen maar dat ik nu ... meer een meer een dat Islam een andere manier van Islam beleven voor mij ook meer is geworden ... en niet niet de orthodoxe manier en dat mijn kader niet alleen moslim is maar vooral ook het etnisch kader meer Maghrebijns Arabisch dat zijn de zaken die eigenlijk meer op de voorgrond zijn gekomen ... dus het identitair kader Islam als identitair kader is er zeker nog altijd ... maar niet op dezelfde manier het is er absoluut ... in de geopolitieke strijd dus ... wanneer dat Islam wordt aangevallen dan dan dan positioneer ik mij als moslim .. uhm ik ben ook moslim umh .. in uhm als het over uhm ja allez heel de Islamofobe kwesties en zo gaat ... uhm ... maar persoonlijk zou ik durven zeggen dat het op dit moment minder centraal ... een rol speelt uhm ... dat het meer het etnische is en het etnische in de brede zin niet alleen Maghrebijns maar echt wel Arabisch en Arabisch als een geopolitiek gebied als een cultureel referentiegebied dat zelf ook heel complex en divers in elkaar zit ... als een pro Palestijnse echt wel het klassieke Arabisch allez niet het klassiek Arabisch nationalisme maar een soort van post-Arabisch nationalisme (lacht) Arabisch postnationalisme ...

excerpt 205

NF: neen echt die verschillende werelden die ons voeden ... ik denk dat ik denk dat het belangrijk is om daar een legitiem discours ook om ... om legitimiteit te geven aan het feit dat er verschillende werelden u ook voeden ... en dat dat niet betekent dat ge geassimileerd zijt of dat dat niet betekent dat ge gesegregeerd zijt maar dat dat gewoon ... dat dat ook een een een ademruimte geeft om daar ook uw eigen combinaties van te kunnen maken en uhm ... maar ja dus uhm ..

JZ: Dat hangt ook een beetje samen met ... allez dat lijkt me zo samen te hangen he en ge moogt me corrigeren ... met die mail die ge me een tijdje terug had doorgestuurd ook zo

NF: Mmh

JZ: die interactie dat er was zo

NF: ja

JZ: naar aanleiding van dat boek daar uhm over uhm ... als uhm over uhm migratiedebat ... of integratiedebat

NF: jaja

JZ: en alles wat daarmee te maken had zo uhm ... ziet ge dat ook als een onderdeel van zoiets zo'n activiteiten als het creëren van een ... van een verhaal bijvoorbeeld van uhm ... die alternatieve ruimte waar dat ge het over hebt

NF: uhm van wat ik zeg die verschillende werelden belichten en zo

JZ: ja

NF: ja absoluut

excerpt 206

NF: ... der is een heel grote diversiteit de facto maar der is een heel beperkte legitimiteit om die diversiteit ... zichtbaar te maken en in kaart te brengen en dat is ook een van de redenen waarom ik in mijn proefschrift ook over seculiere moslims heb gedaan ... om dat ik op die manier ook wel die realiteit ... wou belichten ... en uhm ... en dus als er een ander thema is dat mij wel bezig houdt maar dat is echt wel op micro-schaal dat is dat is uhm de dingen ... umh de bespreekbaar maken van van de interne diversiteit en ... dat op zo'n manier belichten dat het niet ... uhm ... in het allez dat dat niet tegen elkaar wordt uitgespeeld want dat is vaak het probleem als het al het publiek forum bereikt dan is het vaak ... op een polariserende manier van dan hebt ge seculiere moslims die tegen de Islam iets zeggen en uhm en ja dat ze totaal niet uhm allez uhm dat helpt zeker niet de zaak vooruit zal ik maar zeggen ... dus ja ... het minderhedenvraagstuk in de zin van antiracisme uhm minderhedenkwesties zichtbaar maken en derover te schrijven door uhm een stem op te nemen uhm ... de .. globale antiekoloniale antikapitalistische strijd ... uhm en dan uhm ... en dan ja de dingen de interne ... kwesties ... dat zijn zo wat die verschillende kruispunten denk ik waartussen ik mij begeef en die ik belangrijk vind en die af en toe afhankelijk van de moment ... dan meer prioriteit krijgen boven de andere ...

excerpt 207

NF: en dus AEL kifikif het Steunpunt ... ik was in al die verschillende bewegingen actief ... vrij actief centraal actief of niet ... maar ik had wel altijd een een afwachtende en terughoudende ... positie dus ik leerde vooral ik absorbeerde vooral alles wat dat ik zag ... en ik denk dat ik nu meer in een fase zit waarin dat ik wel ... meer mijn eigen ding willen kunnen doen en meer mijn eigen stem opnemen en meer mijn eigen verhaal ... en waarom zeg ik dat ik niet denk dat wij een uitzondering ben ik denk dat wij allemaal een beetje in die kruispunten zitten ... dat dat eigen is aan onze generatie en aan alle mensen trouwens he maar ... in ons geval en dan heb ik het over tweede generatie migranten die nu ook een bepaalde periode hebben meegemaakt waarin dat ... ja een soort van geopolitieke shift is gebeurd ... is in de jaren '90 heeft die zich geseteld en begin 2000 heeft die zich uitgekristalliseerd ... waarin Islam ook is ter discussie is gesteld geweest en daardoor ook uw eigen positie en uw eigen identiteit ... en daarom dat we allemaal een beetje in die kruispunten zitten maar dat we niet goed weten hoe we dat allemaal moeten samenbrengen of ... een verhaal moeten kunnen geven ... al die verschillende identiteiten die wij dragen als vrouw als migrant als Maghrebijnse als als dochter van of zelfs uhm ... als uhm als ja als Arabisch als als postkoloniaal als uhm ... al die zaken en .. en en dat ja ... dat ge kunt denken ik ben de enige die daarmee bezig is maar ik denk dat niet ik denk dat iedereen daar wel ... op een of andere manier in kruispunten zit maar dat dat gewoon niet wordt verteld dat er geen kader voor bestaat om dat ... en vandaar dat ge dan ... iedereen dat op zijn eigen moet kunnen ... en wat op zich niet slecht is want ge krijgt dan wel ... verschil maar ik heb het gevoel dat de meeste mensen dan wel uiteindelijk wel voor een keuze maken ... een keuze maken zij het een keuze voor een Islamitisch kader zij het een keuze voor een ander kader ... omdat dat ja een soort van paraplueterm geeft en u toelaat om al die ... verschillende dingen waar dat ge mee bezig zijt ... te omvatten maar ... ik denk dat het belangrijk is dat wij ... naast dat kader ook andere kaders bieden en dat we juist die verschillende ervaringen ... die verschillende werelden die ons voeden ... dat we dat meer een beeld geven en dat we dat meer uhm ... ik denk zeker niet dat ik een uitzondering ben ik denk uhm en ook die klassendynamiek want dat is ook wel een belangrijke dynamiek die mij ook steeds vaker ... bezighoudt dus ...

JZ: hoe bedoelt ge

NF: dus sociale mobiliteit het feit dat ge hoe langer hoe meer bij een middenklasse begint te behoren en dat ge ook die middenklasse eigenlijk ja ... u heel goed bewust zijt van van van ... van de gevolgen van uw sociale mobiliteit dat ge ... ge zit in ... ge komt heel snel terecht in een witte omgeving ... bijvoorbeeld heel die culturele sector als ge iets van vrije tijd wilt doen of met kunst of zo bezig zijt dat is heel intimiderend voor mij om naar een theater te gaan of naar een dinges ... ge komt daar in contact met mensen voor wie ja voor wie dat dat een thuishaven is maar voor mij is dat totaal niet ... ik ken daar meestal niks van dus ge voelt ook ... of of ja een soort van algemene kennis waarvan dat ge het gevoel hebt van ja het is omdat ge ... van een arbeidersklasse komt dat ge ... al die zaken niet mee hebt en dat ge niet zo belezen zijt en dat ge dat allemaal niet ... niet alle da's niet vanzelfsprekend al die al die al die zaken ... en uhm het soort van van culturele bagage niet meekrijgt ... en uhm en ge zijt u daar heel hard van bewust van van ja ook een bepaalde ... vanzelfsprekendheid waarmee dat sommige mensen zich in bepaalde kringen bewegen ... of zij het in het academische of zij het in ... dat dat voor mij toch nog altijd niet vanzelfsprekend is dus dat zijn zo meer kleine dinges ... maar dat heeft met sociale mobiliteit te maken en dat is ja ... een soort van onzekerheid die ge daartegenover hebt en ... ja in het witte verhaal wat dat er vaak gebeurt is dat de mensen volledig opgaan in die sociale mobiliteit ... een vriendin van mij haar vader komt van een kansarme achtergrond en als ge die nu ziet ... ge zou totaal niet zeggen dat die van een kansarme familie komt ... zijn habitus zijn manier van praten is zo hogere middenklasse ... alle bij mij is dat ook waarschijnlijk ondertussen he maar ... hij distantieert zich ook volledig van uhm weet ge La distinction echt ... keihard en dan echt alles doen om volledig in die burgerlijke ... context zitten ook de juiste boeken lezen naar de juiste voorstellingen gaan naar de dinges ... terwijl ik dat heel lang heb geweigerd omdat ik zoiets had van ik ga niet opgeslorpt worden door ... die hogere middenklasse maar dat ik toch el zoiets heb van ja der zijn toch wel boeiende dinges die gebeuren en ik mag dat ... het is niet omdat ik een toneelstuk ga meepikken dat ik ineens wordt opgeslorpt door die hogere middenklasse ...

JZ: dat ge geassimileerd zijt of

excerpt 209

NF: ja en zo van die codes en klassecodes ... uhm ... maar ja dat zijn heel die sociale het verhaal van de sociale mobiliteit ik denk dat dat niet ... zeker voor ik vraag me echt soms af alle ik heb nog het geluk dat ik dat nog heb kunnen maken in een soort van ... collectieve dynamiek want toen dat ik ... op de unief ben terecht gekomen waren der vrij veel andere alle vrij veel ... was er een groepke andere Marokkanen .. en zo 't is grappig ... toen dat ik op de unief kwam de eerste had ik mezelf voorgenomen ik wil niet met Marokkanen in contact komen ... en dan de week later ontmoet ik Nadia Babazia die ondertussen een van mijn beste vriendinnen is (lacht)

JZ: ja

NF: en zes maanden na de feiten

JZ: bedoelt ge Babazia eigenlijk ... die moet ik nog eens spreken

NF: ze is ja maar zes maanden na de feiten hadden wij ondertussen een Marokkaans hoekske ingepalmd in den UFSIA (lacht) was het den Agora hadden wij zo de blokken kwamen wij altijd samen om te eten uit TW uit dinges ... dus een beetje Studentfocus avant la lettre ... het is van daaruit ook dat ...

JZ: ja ik zie dat ook effectief ge ziet daar ook effectief die mensen ... die trekken ook heel veel met mekaar op ...

NF: ja inderdaad dat is uhm ... want Said El Majdoub zat toen ook in ons groepke ... en al die verschillende mensen die toen ook Studentfocus mee hebben opgericht ... en uhm maar ik vraag het mij af ... alle wij hebben zo een beetje ook die sociale mobiliteit kunnen meemaken ... alle dat dat heb ik heel hard van al mijn Marokkaanse vriendinnen dat ik zo ... weet ge dat ge zo pakt zoals een vriendin van mij die is uhm ... sales manager bij een internationale firma maar die moet dan ook vaak gaan eten met haar klanten en toestanden en dat zijn ook uhm ja mensen uit uhm uit de sportwereld uit de schepen ... en en toestanden .. en dat is altijd der is een soort van schroom waar dat ge u overheen moet zetten een soort van aisance die niet vanzelfsprekend is en ja ge merkt dat ge toch dat met elkaar kunt delen ... een soort van onzekerheid in die sociale contacten ...

excerpt 210

JZ: een klassegebonden onzekerheid

NF: ja inderdaad ... een sociale een onzekerheid ik analyseer dat als klasse he ik ga niet de etnische want ik weet dat dat heel hard klasse is ...

JZ: ja ja ik kan me omdat ik me kan voorstellen dat ge dat ook anders als etnisch of zo kunt

NF: inderdaad ... natuurlijk het is overgoten door etnische dinges maar ik bekijk dat in eerste instantie wat trouwens ook meer zegt over mij dan dat dat allez ja

JZ: ja ja nee ja ok

NF: maar ... maar terwijl mijn vriendinnen misschien ook meer in etnische termen zal vertalen ... maar voor mij is het een kruispunt 't is echt niet uhm ... en uhm en dat ge dat dan ook met elkaar kunt delen en ik ben wel blij dat ik dat kan dat zo die sociale mobiliteit ... kleine subtiele psychologische onzekerheden mechanismes ... dat ge dat toch wel ergens kunt uhm ... kunt dragen met andere mensen ... uhm of of weet ge waar de prioriteiten waar dat andere mensen mee bezig zijn en bouwen en al die dinges en (lacht) what the fuck (lacht)

excerpt 211

NF: ... allez ik was sowieso een vrij teruggetrokken ... kind ... ook op school en zo ik heb nooit echt veel vriendinnen gehad toen ik puber was ... en uhm en dus ja de de verhouding naar de Marokkaanse vriendinnen was eigenlijk niet altijd heel positief ... en uhm en ook naar Vlaamse vriendinnen in het algemeen he ... en en tegen dat ik naar de unief ga ging was ik ja had ik was ik vrij wit in mijn denken zou ik het soms durven zeggen ... in den zin dat ik ja allez in heel de migratiekwesitie en integratieproblematiek dat ik mij daar ook niet te veel ... in dat kader vrij mainstream discours rond die kwestie zat ... en hoe is dat dan beginnen veranderen dat is eigenlijk met mijn thesis veranderd ... met mijn licentiaatsthesis allez met de opleiding sociologie daar eigenlijk wel vrij belangrijk omdat ja dan .. sowieso heel dat minderheidsvraagstuk vanuit een sociaal economisch verhaal begint te bekijken ... dus dat dat ge eigenlijk met dat paradigma eigenlijk meer structurele analyses maken ... dus dat is een eerste belangrijke ... eye opener voor mij geweest en dan ten tweede is is mijn thesis waar dat ik effectief Marokkaanse meisjes ben beginnen interviewen ... en niet gewoon vanuit een conflictsituatie ... tot hen ... met hen contact had maar ook door hen te interviewen ... en dan ontdekt ge ja zijn het andere verhalen he .. en dan beseft ge dat ge eigenlijk ja in een heel andere omgeving vaak. Gij zijt opgegroeid van ... vrij beschermd allez vrij vrij wit ook racistisch ... maar ja op dat moment kadert ge dat dan niet ik herinner mij dat toen ik zestien was of veertien of zoiets ... dat een van de secretaresses dat ik zei ja dat vriendinnen van mij gingen komen ik was een van de weinige Marokkaanse meisjes op school ... het Sint Jozefinstituut ... dat ik aan die van het secretariaat zei dat er een aantal vriendinnen bij ons op school van bij mij in de wijk gingen komen en dat ze tegen mij zei van ja maar best niet te veel uhm Marokkanen want anders krijgen we hier teveel Marokkanen en uhm ja dan op dat moment denkt ge van ja ok ja neen inderdaad ge snapt dat wel (lacht) zelfs niet dat ge daartegen in opstand komt he weet ge want ge denkt inderdaad van ja allez mijn ouders hebben ook ... ingeschreven in een school waar dat er niet teveel Marokkanen waren weet ge dus ... ge groeit ook op met het idee van ...

JZ: da's echt was een bewuste keuze om

NF: jajajaja want uhm ... ze wilden vooral niet dat wij op het slechte pad geraakten he en voor hen da's een school een concentratieschool best vooral vermijden want uhm ... dan gaat ge niet studeren en niet verder geraken he ... wat dat natuurlijk ook klopt maar het heeft niet niet met het Marokkaans zijn te maken het heeft alles met het sociaal economisch verhaal te maken he maar ... maar dus ja ge zit eigenlijk mee vanuit ik zeg het ik zat echt in een mainstream kader en dan op een bepaald moment heb ik dan uhm ben ik een interview beginnen afnemen ik herinner mij heel goed dat ik een meisje wilde interviewen die eigenlijk helemaal niet wilde geïnterviewd worden en ik snapte dat niet ... ik had zoiets van allez ik ben Marokkaanse en uhm ik ga hier een thesis schrijven over over ons en uhm ... en en ik zei dat ook tegen haar ik was eigenlijk een beetje verontwaardigd en en zij was eigenlijk ja heel pissed dat ik zo verontwaardigd en terecht ... en ze vond mij heel arrogant en uhm ... ze zei dat dan ook tegen mijn broer en ik vond dat eigenlijk ja ik was daar eigenlijk niet goed van ... (this interaction continues in the excerpt below)

excerpt 212

(this interaction is a continuation of the excerpt above) het was iemand dat ge ook kende buiten de

NF: ik kende haar broer

JZ: ah ok

NF: maar zij droeg ook een hoofddoek en ik wou absoluut meisjes spreken met een hoofddoek en uhm ... en en ja dat was ... dat was voor mij echt wel ja inderdaad euhm met welke pretentie alle ja dat heeft mij echt wel tot

denken toe gezet ... en ja ik weet niet hoe dat dat bij mij heeft losgemaakt maar alleszins vanaf dan ben ik die meisjes op een andere manier beginnen bekijken dan ook gaan beseffen misschien ook wel gaan beseffen welke machtspositie ge ook hebt ... door eigenlijk interviews af te nemen en door een soort van van evidentie een evidente claim en dan begint ge ook uw eigen positie in vraag te stellen en ook die verschillende verhalen verhalen van racisme discriminatie uhm ... ook toen ben ik mij echt serieus beginnen inlezen in literatuur rond identiteitsvorming binnen cultural studies dus dat zijn allemaal serieuze eye openers voor mij geweest uhm Blommaert en Verschueren dat was voor mij toen echt wel ... het migrantendebat was toen echt wel een van mijn ideologische eye openers geweest ... en uhm en ja dan begint ge echt wel het verhaal anders te bekijken en ook veel meer te beseffen van waar dat ge zelf ook spreekt en dat ge eigenlijk ook heel veel zaken ook gewoon niet hebt meegemaakt en dat ge dan daar ook niet per se recht van spreken moet denken te hebben ... en ik ben alle ik ben heel blij dat ik dat heb meegemaakt dat heeft mij echt wel op een fundamentele manier hervormd ...

excerpt 213

NF: ... en dan is er kort daarna was er uhm dinges ... uhm ... was er uhm ... wacht wat was er dan ... dan ben ik naar Marokko gegaan ja ... dan ben ik tussen al mijn studies na sociologie heb ik antropologie gedaan dan ben ik naar Marokko gegaan ... ben ik daar twee maanden gezeten die maanden heb ik interviews afgenomen met zowel seculiere als Islamistische ... vrouwenbeweging maar tot dan was ik echt niet actief he dat was echt ik was niet actief in organisaties ... en uhm ... en vooral ... alle ik was naar Marokko vertrokken ook met de vooronderstelling van ja een thesis over alle een werk het werk over uhm over de vrouwenbewegingen en de Mudawana en dus ja ik had dan met de officiële vrouwenbewegingen contact opgenomen ... dat zijn allemaal linkse seculiere ... organisaties ... of alleszins niet expliciet Islamistisch ik zal het zo zeggen ... en het is pas eigenlijk ja op geen enkel moment heb ik bedacht van ja misschien zou ik over de Islamisten kunnen spreken want dat waren eigenlijk de tegenstanders in mijn hoofd ... en uhm en ja op een bepaalde moment ben ik dan uhm mocht ik via de ambassade van België die dan toegang gaf tot hun krantenarchief ... en heb ik dan eigenlijk dan ja ... alle dinges krantenartikels die over de hervorming van de Mudawana kunnen bekijken inlezen

JZ: Marokkaanse krantenartikels dan

NF: Ja ... ja die in het Frans waren geschreven ... en en toen en toen waren der regelmatig interviews met Nadia Yassine Nadia Yassine dat is uhm een van de leden van de grootste Islamistische fracties van Marokko ... boegbeelden en uhm en eigenlijk wat dat zij zei vond ik helemaal niet slecht ...

JZ: Gij hebt haar geïnterviewd

NF: Dus ik ik had ... die artikels gelezen die interviews gelezen en het ging heel hard over antiglobalisering en antikapitalisme en dinges die ik eigenlijk heel herkenbaar vond ... en uhm en op een bepaald moment ben ik dan met een aantal journalisten interviews afgenomen en zij hebben mij toen aangeraden om zeker met Nadia Yassine contact op te nemen .. ik heb haar gegevens dan ook gekregen en dan heb ik die een paar keer ontmoet ...

JZ: Ja

excerpt 214

NF: En dat was voor mij een andere eye opener want dat doet u beseffen uhm dat we niet stilstaan bij hoe hard uw kijk op zaken beïnvloed is door een bepaalde beeldvorming door ... ge beseft ge begint de kracht van de media eigenlijk dat was voor de eerste keer dat ik de kracht van de media en van bepaalde beeldvorming voor de eerste keer voelde en zag ...

JZ: Ge bedoelt dan de beeldvorming over het Islamisme

NF: De kloof die dat bestond inderdaad tussen wat ik las en wat ik hoorde ter plekke en en de mensen waarmee ik sprak en het beeld dat ge daar dan van ... van kreeg en ik herinner mij dat ik terugkwam en dat toen mijn toenmalige promotor ... ik was volledig onder de indruk van Nadia Yassine en ze vroeg mij van ja maar zou zij geen dubbel discours hebben en ... dat ge denkt van (nadruk) alle waarom ... alle dat ge beseft hoe ... hoe hoe hoe krachtig de macht van discours is en van tegendiscours en van tegendiscours en dat eigenlijk ja bepaalde sub subalterne stemmen uhm bijna geen krediet of geen legitimiteit krijgen ... en als ze al een bepaald forum krijgen dat dat dat ze niet au serieus worden genomen en dat is niet ja dat dat niet krediet wordt gegeven ... en hoe hard het eurocentrisch hoe hoe hegemonisch en hoe hoe normatief het is geworden en en alles in alles wat dat ge bekijkt in alles en tot in het kleinste gesprek he dat mensen u niet geloven als ge dinges zit te vertellen en dan een ander verhaal met een ander verhaal afkomt dat er een soort van morele consensus is rond bepaalde mensen rond bepaalde bewegingen ... en dat was voor mij ...

JZ: hoe bedoelt ge bijvoorbeeld

NF: Morele consensus dus bijvoorbeeld Nadia Yassine als ik haar naam bij andere mensen liet vallen was dat altijd afwijzend en altijd negatief en ik begreep dat dan niet en dan op den duur begint ge ook te denken ja ben ik dan degene die zich laat manipuleren weet ge ... want dat is dan het beeld dat de indruk die dat ge krijgt dat ge zelf de naïeve onwetende onwetend wicht bent en uhm en uhm en dat zij het dan wel ...

excerpt 215

NF: ... en toen in augustus was dat Knack interview geweest waar dat Arabisch als vierde landstaal werd uitgepikt ... en sindsdien was het eigenlijk ja altijd crescendo gegaan ... en toen dat ik terug kwam was het echt ja het ene opiniestuk na het ander en ik begreep er niks van ... dus ik heb eigenlijk gewoon alle opiniestukken... gekopieerd ik herinner het mij nog dat was in oktober ik ben naar de bibliotheek gegaan sociale wetenschappen ... alle kranten die dat er toen verschenen waren gekopieerd alle interviews gelezen ... en ik begreep niet wat dat er gebeurd was ... ik had zoiets van what the fuck is going on en ik had een déjà vu gevoel maar dan een déjà vu gevoel met de Islamisten ... en ik had zoiets van shit het is hier weer hetzelfde aan het gebeuren ... en dan ook ja want want ja ge weet dat dan ook aan de hand van alle associaties die dat er bij worden gehaald he Al Qaeda wordt er bij gehaald terrorisme wordt erbij gehaald ... van zodra dat dat gebeurt weet ge dat er eigenlijk ... toen had ik wel het besef van ok ... der der begint wel der vormt zich een bepaald discours rond rond bepaalde figuren die dat krachtig is en ik had dan ook he Blommaert en Verschueren associatieve verruiming en al die ketenen van associaties ... en dus ja toen toen had ik zoiets van what the fuck is going on en toen ... uhm was er uhm dinges de arrestatie van uhm van Dyab ... en kort daarna en ik weet nog dat ik toen uhm ... 's avonds thuis kwam en dat ik het laatavond journaal had opgezet en toen het parlementaire debat verslagen van het parlementaire debat op het laatavond journaal had gezien ... en wat ik toen had gehoord tartte al mijn verbeelding dat ik dacht van ... waar zijn wij beland dit is precies een state of emergency ... als ge die politici van toen bezig hoorde ik had zoiets van dit kan niet en dan ben ik 's anderdaags naar Leuven gegaan en Danny Neudt werkte toen nog bij ons in de faculteit ... hij had zoiets van dat kan niet we moeten iets doen ... en toen hebben wij die open brief geschreven ...

excerpt 216

JZ: Ik wist niet dat Dany op de faculteit van uhm

NF: Sociale wetenschappen jajajaja bij Albert Martens die heeft onderzoek gedaan rond minderhedenorganisaties ja ...

JZ: Ah ja ik had ook al zoiets gehoord ja ...

NF: En en toen hebben we een open brief geschreven en dat was mijn eerste daad van activisme achteraf gezien uhm ... dat was toen allez toen dachten we van we gaan dat efkes op ne mailing list zetten allez rondsturen dan kregen we ineens ja ik weet niet hoeveel honderden handtekeningen van academici over verschillende Vlaamse universiteiten en dat was toen ook ... dat had toen de kop gehaald he de Morgen had daar dan mee uitgepakt en uhm ja toen denk ik ... ik denk dat toen echt wel voor mij de trigger dat was voor mij de trigger AEL was voor mij de trigger want er waren van alle zaken die zich hadden opgebouwd ... dus vanuit mijn thesis 9/11 het kader ... en eigenlijk het feit dat eigenlijk Islam hoe langer hoe meer ter discussie werd gesteld ... naar Marokko gaan met de Islamisten in contact komen ... de beeldvorming de de kloof tussen de beeldvorming in de Westerse media en de realiteit on the ground ... en dan terugkomen ...

excerpt 217

NF: want wat wat dat ik nu zo een beetje merk wat dat mij wel stoort is dat dat ge een soort van elite begint te krijgen binnen de Maghrebijnse gemeenschap in Antwerpen ... maar die zo ja echt wel verburgerlijkt is aan het worden en die wel een soort van ... politisering met zich meedraagt in de zin van ja rond racisme en rond eigen gemeenschap en heel communautair ...

JZ: spreekt ge dan over de politieke elite of uhm

NF: neen in het algemeen in het algemeen ... maar die ook gepolitiseerd zijn maar dat niet anders kunnen omdat ze constant uhm islambashing en toestanden over zich krijgen maar dus rond die problematieken heel erg bewust zijn rond de hoofddoek bijvoorbeeld ... uhm rond de gemeenschap versterken en al die dinges ... maar totaal niet de klasse analyse maken en totaal niet bewust zijn van hun eigen burgerlijke positie dus bijvoorbeeld dat merkt ge dan ook aan het feit dat ze zich gaan ... distantiëren van de van de jongeren op straat da's uhm dat ze ook zoiets gaan hebben van ... bijvoorbeeld naar het AEL verhaal heb ik ook soms van die burgerlijke trekskes en en reacties ... gezien dat ik die mij echt wel stoorden van ja en ze maken onze reputatie toch maar ... dus uhm ... en dan ja een soort van zelf celebrerend discours van ja wij moeten het doen voor onze gemeenschap waar maar totaal geen

klasse analyse maken en zelf dan ook uhm ja keihard uhm dinges aandelen kopen keihard uhm weet ge (lacht) keihard rijk worden waar dat ik totaal niet slecht uhm tegen be tegen ben euh

JZ: tegen bent

NF: tegen ben want we hebben geld nodig (lacht) maar ... maar ja echt wel dat gaat gepaard met zo'n liberaal discours he en ja dat stoort mij echt (lacht)

JZ: (lacht)

NF: zo ja zo dat soft kent ge dat zo van dat soft charity uhm wat dat we ook bij de Amerikanen terugvinden zo van dat soft euh charity foundation achtige dinges uhm rotary achtige uhm ... politieke mobilisatie enzovoorts ...

excerpt 218

NF: jajaja inderdaad ... en uhm ... dus allez ik vond het heel belangrijk om om om die beweging want dat zijn ook allemaal persoonlijke verhalen die ik ken persoonlijke verhalen van ... echt wel ... financiële problemen van ... van van van van afzien van echt wel uitgesloten zijn en ... en da's het minste dat ge kunt doen dus dat is het eerste maar tegelijkertijd ook omdat ik het belangrijk vond in onze collectieve geschiedschrijving in de collectieve strijd die dat we voeren dat we geen enkele beweging in de steek laten dat we ... alle bewegingen die hebben bijgedragen tot onze .. emancipatie dat we die allemaal reclaimen en dat we die allemaal ok dat we die allemaal ... en dat was voor mij een onderdeel van die collectieve geschiedschrijving van ...

JZ: da's ook en da's ook waarom dat ge in die mail ook schreef zo van inderdaad de federaties en zo verder ...

NF: ja inderdaad wie zijn de actoren die die hebben toegedragen en en die belangrijk waren en en dat we die allemaal moeten moeten ... allez hun plaats moeten erkennen en hun plaats moeten geven dus dat is voor mij ... iets dat ik nu eigenlijk uhm aan het doen ben ik ben nu ook begonnen aan een boekproject met een andere vriendin een andere vriend Meryem Kanmaz en Fouad Gandoul en dat gaat ook over die verschillende politieke trajecten waarin dat we die verschillende politieke trajecten waar dat we verschillende ... een aantal mensen willen vragen om hun politiek traject neer te pennen en dat kan allez we willen daar wel een mooie bundel van maken ... zo wat essay achtig en met foto's proza en dan ook bijvoorbeeld Rachida Lamrabet vragen iets te schrijven ... zo allez der begint een soort van van van zichtbaarheid te komen van de minderheid da's belangrijk dat we allez de ik wil dat mee uhm ... of of ik wil die zichtbaarheid te komen allez het komt ook doordat ge het doet he dus ik wil die zichtbaarheid mee vorm geven en uhm dat is eigenlijk hetgeen uhm ... waar ik op let en ik begin ook steeds meer rekening te houden met met wie ik ben met wat ik doe welke positie ik heb ... en wat ik het beste kan doen en wat ik het beste kan doen is schrijven en praten (lacht)

JZ: (lacht)

NF: En eten (lacht) en vooral dat schrijven ja ik ik ben niet een activist die een organisatie in elkaar gaat steken of uhm allez ik kan wel meedoen ik vind die band met de organisaties wel belangrijk omdat dat u voedt maar maar het is niet van mij dat ge dat moet verwachten en uhm dus ja dat is hetgene dat ik het beste kan doen als als en ook vanuit de rol van academica tussen aanhalingstekens ... dat ge dat dan ook het beste kunt doen dat ge het best geplaatst zijt om daartoe bij te dragen en mensen bij elkaar te brengen en contacten bij elkaar te brengen zo een soort van faciliterende rol ... allez dat is eigenlijk hetgeen dat ik het liefste doe en en en ook meer ruimtes proberen te creëren maar ... maar ja ... dat is uhm ... dus ja we zullen wel zien hoe dat dat verder evolueert maar ik vind dat wel belangrijk om dat op dit moment uhm mee die mee die stempel te nemen en mee in een in het publieke forum toch meer zichtbaarheid te geven aan wat er aan het gebeuren is ...

excerpt 219

NF: ... het toont het heeft mij laten zien dat dat dat bepaalde discourses krachtiger zijn dan dan persoonlijke verhoudingen allez ... als de banden heel sterk zijn dan is dat dan ook weer niet per se het geval maar dat ge ... ja dat het persoonlijke echt politiek allez dat het politieke echt persoonlijk kan worden dat discours echt zelfs persoonlijke banden kunnen aantasten ... da's uhm ... hoe dat ze hoe dat ze denkbeelden kunnen beïnvloeden hoe dat ze opstellingen van mensen ... mensen die zogezegd allemaal kritisch en onafhankelijk en uhm maar dat niemand daarvan gevrijwaard is en uhm en uhm allez ik ben niet snel nog onder de indruk van mensen die dat die dat zeggen dat ze kritische intellectuelen of zo zijn he ... allez ik geloof dat verhaal echt niet en mezelf inbegrepen he ... ik besef heel hard dat wij heel hard gevormd worden door wat we zien en onze context en door wat we lezen en dat niemand daar los van staat ... en uhm ... en ja allez dat is ja echt van op de eerste rij kunt ge dat zien ... dus dat is echt wel allez daar ben ik super blij omdat ik dat heb meegemaakt ... het is echt een leerschool het is echt een superbelangrijke leerschool

excerpt 220

NF: wat de AEL voor mij heeft betekent is is dat ge zelfs uw eigen instellingen hier ... dat ge de de de grens eigenlijk de grenszone van van de democratie zagezegd waarin dat ge zit dat ge die voor de eerste keer ziet ... dat eigenlijk macht echt op een naakte manier zichtbaar wordt en dat het niet meer gaat om het welzijn gaat van iedereen maar dat het inderdaad echt puur gaat om dat behoud ... en uhm ... en ja dat is een soort van van fundamentele crisis ... in in in in alles wat wat het establishment is ... ik denk dat het daarop neerkomt ... zowel de media zowel de politiek zowel het rechtssysteem ... dat ge al die zaken fundamenteel in vraag gaat stellen en dat ge beseft dat ze dat het uiteindelijk ook allemaal een verhaal van machtsverhoudingen is ... en en en dat wil niet zeggen dat de mensen en dus in die zin ik denk dat toen dat inzicht is gekomen ... dat inzicht heeft zich in de jaren ... nadien vertaald echt wel in een soort van van anti-houding van mijne kant door van van van uhm ... wantrouwen ... echt wantrouwen

JZ: Ten aanzien van

NF: Ten aanzien van het establishment ten aanzien van alles ... terwijl dat ik nu zou zeggen dan ben ik nog niet in een betere fase maar dat ik ... nog altijd dat wantrouwen heb ik vertrouw het nog altijd niet maar dat ik wel een onderscheid maak tussen de mensen

excerpt 221

NF: maar maar ge begint de menselijkheid dat is het uiteindelijk ge begint de menselijkheid ook gewoon van de zaken te zien ... het is niet meer allemaal mechanistisch en automatisch en abstract ... uiteindelijk heeft het ook allemaal met belangen en met met alle dat speelt ook heel hard mee en en ... nu heb ik dat wel allemaal meer een plaats kunnen geven terwijl dat ik dat vijf jaar geleden allemaal geen plaats kon geven dat was voor mij van ... ja dat was echt choquerend dat was echt ja ik was daar niet goed van want ja ge groeit op met het verhaal ... ge zit in West Europa in een democratie ... in een haven van van van welzijn ... maar fundamenteel verschilt dat niet en ge beseft hoe langer hoe meer dat het fundamenteel niet hard verschilt van andere niet-Westerse landen ... het enige verschil is dat het Westen welvarend is ... en dat ze geld hebben en daardoor inderdaad voorzieningen kunnen betalen ... maar puur en alleen naar naar naar machts euhm ... denken over macht of naar naar uhm naar het welzijn van de bevolking en toestanden ... da's niet meer ontwikkeld dan andere euh landen ... natuurlijk dat mensen ... et het het beter voor elkaar zouden hebben als ze het zich konden veroorloven ... natuurlijk dat ge meer voorzieningen zou hebben ... in Marokko als als mensen het ook konden betalen en natuurlijk dat den dokter ook heel graag iedereen zou willen behandelen en gratis zou willen behandelen ... maar ja ge zit in een systeem waarin dat de dokter zelf amper medicijnen kan kopen dus ja als gij uw medicijnen niet koopt dan kan die u niet verzorgen zo zit dat zo is dat ... dat is kei hard maar zo simpel is dat maar fundamenteel verschilt dat niet ... alle dat is zo meer het inzicht dat ge denkt van ... heel dat verhaal van ... first world third world en ontwikkelingsland en ontwikkelde ... dat ge heel die paradigma's waarin dat ge zijt opgegroeid fundamenteel in vraag gaat stellen ... en dat is uiteindelijk wat dat er wat dat er tussen mijn ... 22 en 25 is gebeurd denk ik 26 dat ik al die paradigma's waar dat ik mee ben opgegroeid in vraag ben gaan stellen (lacht)

excerpt 222

SUBJECT POSITIONS	SUBJECT POSITIONS - CHILD NODES
academic or intellectual	
Allochthon	
Atheist	
autochthon	
autocrat	
bourgeois	
Chairman of FOGI	
christian	
citizens entitled to a vote	
civil servant	
communist	
conservative	

deconstructivist	
democrat	
discourse analyst	
doctor (medical)	
economic determinist	
fascist	
formal member of political movement(s)	
fundamentalist	
gender - daughter	
gender - father	
gender - girl	
gender - husband	
gender - man	
gender - mother	
gender - son	
gender - wife	
gender - woman	
GRAF	
humanist	
illuminatus	
intellectuel engagé	
islamic reformist	
Islamist	
jew	
king	
leftist postition in the ideological field	
liberal	
lid KWERPS	
linguist	
manager	
marketeer	
marxist	
media worker	
middle class	
migrant	
Muslim	
nationalist	
neoconservative	
neoliberal position in the ideological field	
NLP practitioner	
pious	
Type	Name
politician	politician (s) - VLD
politician	politician(s) - Agalev

politician	politician(s) - AK party
politician	politician(s) - CD&V
politician	politician(s) - Democratic Party
politician	politician(s) - Groen!
politician	politician(s) - Lijst Dedecker
politician	politician(s) - NVA
politician	politician(s) - PJD
politician	politician(s) - PKS
politician	politician(s) - PvdA (Nederland)
politician	politician(s) - Republican Party
politician	politician(s) - Vlaams Belang
politician	politicians(s) - socialist
position in a network or platform in civil society	
position in civil society institution(s)	
Type	Name
position in civil society institution(s)	formal member of civil societ institutions
position in civil society institution(s)	member of the executive board of civil society institutions
position in civil society institution(s)	pioneer of civil society organisation(s) and institution(s)
position in civil society institution(s)	volunteer for civil society institutions
Type	Name
place related subject position	place - America
place related subject position	place - Aix en Provence
place related subject position	place - Algeria
place related subject position	place - Antwerp
place related subject position	place - Arabic world
place related subject position	place - athlete
place related subject position	place - Belgium
place related subject position	place - China
place related subject position	place - city
place related subject position	place - Egypt
place related subject position	place - England
place related subject position	place - Europe
place related subject position	place - Flanders
place related subject position	place - France
place related subject position	place - Gaza
place related subject position	place - Ghent
place related subject position	place - Indonesia
place related subject position	place - Iran
place related subject position	place - Iraq
place related subject position	place - Israël

place related subject position	place - Jordan
place related subject position	place - Kempen
place related subject position	place - La Gomera
place related subject position	place - Merelbeke
place related subject position	place - Middle East
place related subject position	place - Morocco
place related subject position	place - Netherland
place related subject position	place - North Africa
place related subject position	place - Pakistan
place related subject position	place - Palestine
place related subject position	place - Paris
place related subject position	place - Ramallah
place related subject position	place - Roeselaere
place related subject position	place - Saudi Arabia
place related subject position	place - Swath Valley
place related subject position	place - the West
place related subject position	place - third world
place related subject position	place - Tunesia
place related subject position	place - Turkey
place related subject position	place - underspecified
place related subject position	place - village
place related subject position	place - Washington
place related subject position	place - World
post-colonialist	
post-modernist	
poststructuralist	
president	
progressive	
publisher	
racist	
radical	
reactionary	
realist	
relativist	
revolutionary	
rightist position in the ideological field	
secularist	
socialist	
student	
taliban	
teacher	
terrorist	
theologist	
therapist	

union member(s)	
universalist	
worker	

Table 1