

NOM : DERJ

Prénom : Adnane

Matricule : S114969

Filière d'études: Master en Sociologie, FS Immigration Studies (double diplomation OUT)

Mémoire

Football 'Supporterism' and the Integration of Migrants into Belgian Society: Belonging to Standard de Liege Community

Promoteur : Marco Martiniello
Lecteur : Ricard Zapata-Barrero
Lectrice : Alissia Raziano

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D) Introduction

Since its creation in 1830, Belgium has always been a country of immigration. The integration of migrants into Belgian society has been part of the agenda of most political parties since the end of the 1980s. However, opinions on how to integrate migrants divide Belgian society, and the answers provided by the authorities still need to be improved (Martiniello, 2017). The integration of migrants is a topic that has been covered by a large amount of researchers in Europe who have used different approaches to the phenomenon (Martiniello & Rath, 2014). Some authors have pointed out the need to give more importance to leisure activities when researching this process (see Horolets, 2012; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009).

As a big fan of football with interests in migration studies and integration, I wished to find an underexplored subject which combined those topics for my master thesis. When I went through the existing literature dealing with integration and football, I encountered several sociological researches dealing with the role the practice of football can play in migrants' integration (see Bradbury, 2011; Block & Gibbs, 2017). These researches rely on the idea that practicing football can permit to increase migrants' cultural and social capital which consequently facilitates their integration. However, from my wish to bring a personal contribution to sociological research on integration, I took the decision to cover the impact of football on integration from a different and underexplored angle.

Indeed, the impact of football practice on integration was already tackled by sociologists, but when I read their research I soon came to realise that none of them had really focused on the ability of football supporterism¹ to influence migrants' integrational process. I do not underestimate the value of publications on the ability of football supporterism to influence migrants' identity, sense of belonging and integration (see Martiniello & Boucher, 2018; Knijnik, 2015; Stone, 2017). However, they have used other methods and focused on other populations than what I understood was worth researching. For example, Martiniello & Boucher analysed the impact of the increasing attractiveness of Belgian national football team on migrants' identity and sense of belonging through a visual approach based on observation (2018); Stone dealt with football's ability to impact refugees and asylum seekers' sense of belonging in UK through in depth interviews but only tackles football supporterism in a small section of his report (2017); and Knijnik relies on his personal integrational process as a Brazilian migrant football fan in Canada and uses the autoethnographic method of storytelling (2015).

Therefore, I consider my research to be exploratory because to my knowledge I am the first to have conducted semi-structured interviews with migrants regardless of their administrative status when analysing football club supporterism's influence on integration.

¹ Understand football fandom for now, I will explain its exact meaning in the theoretical framework.

I decided to focus this study on the supporters of Standard de Liege (Belgium). The antifascist and antiracist ideology of their supporter groups and the context of super-diversity in the city enabled me to focus on a context I consider favourable for significant findings regarding integration.

When I designed my research, I relied on theoretical frameworks of the concept of integration. First, the theory of Agger & Strang (2008) provided me several core domains considered as important to integrate in a new society. They divided them in three categories:

- The markers and means of integration which are access to employment, healthcare, education and housing.
- The social connections which are social links, social bonding and social bridging. The last one refers to connections tied between migrants and other communities. This aspect will be a primary focus for this study which in this case concerns migrants' connection with native supporters.
- The facilitators to integration which are cultural and language knowledge but also safety and stability. Stability was not retained for this study as I will detail later.

Then, in order to evaluate the impact of supporterism on integration, I will rely on the four dimensions of integration tackled by Heckman which are: social integration, cultural integration, structural integration and identificational integration (2001). From this understanding, the current study seeks to understand if football supporterism can impact migrants' social, cultural, structural and/or identificational integration in Belgium.

The specific characteristics of the migrants was also an important matter to take into account such as their administrative status, origin country or their age when they settled in Belgium as they may impact their integrational process (Spencer & Cooper, 2006). Beyond migration related characteristics, it was also important to differentiate them regarding their practice of supporterism in order to understand if it had an influence on supporterism's impact on integration. For this purpose I relied on the typology provided by Fillis & Mackay which is based on supporters' level of loyalty and responds to the following appellations: situational fan, devoted fan, kids, 12th man and professional fans.

The methodology I decided to use to gather information about supporterism's influence on migrants' integration was qualitative. It mainly relied on semi-structured interviews conducted with thirteen migrants supporting Standard de Liege. In order to be complete about some elements related to the context of grouped supporterism in Standard de Liege I also conducted one collective and one individual semi-directed interview with important members or former members of two supporter groups of the club (the Ultras Inferno and the Hell-Side). With the same purpose, I also conducted two participative

observations before, during and after the game with the Ultras Inferno within the stadium and in their installation (the Cosa SL). An exploratory interview with the expert Sebastien Louis was also conducted in order to improve my understanding of the term supporterism.

I first use a theoretical framework to introduce the concept of integration and the different aspects related to it which I retained for this study. I define the concept of supporterism and its various forms, and explain how it impacts migrants' feeling of belonging to a community. Then, I introduce my methodology, research question and the main hypotheses retained for this paper through a schematic representation. I take this opportunity to reflect on ethical issues: I am myself a supporter of Standard de Liege and hence need to consider issues of reflexivity in this research. Thereafter, my findings start with the contextualization of my case study that I partly consider as results because some information about the supporter groups taking part to this study were gathered during the field study. I introduce the reader to super-diversity in Belgium and more specifically in Liege but also to the football club "Standard de Liege" and to the two supporter groups to which some of the participants belong (or belonged) to (the Hell-Side and the Ultras Inferno). The antifacist and antiracist networks the Ultras Inferno belong to and two particular gathering places for supporters of Standard de Liege (the Cosa SL and the Fan Coaching) are also introduced in this section. I then proceed to the main findings of my research, which led me to design the 'Migrant Supporter Sphere of Integration'. Finally, I summarize the main findings of this study in the conclusion.

II) Theoretical Framework

1. The Integrational Process

1.1 Framing the Concept of Integration

The concept of integration has a long history and is nowadays extensively exploited by a large number of academics and the general public. Integration is a process that has been explored by the Chicago School of Urban Sociology, when its members researched the lived experiences of newcomers in host societies in the first half of the 20th century. Since then, research on integration has become more popular in academia (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). The rise of publications based on empirical research and its theorisation increased dramatically since the early 2000s, and this wave brought new and very different conceptions of the dynamics that are part of the process (Spencer & Cooper, 2006). Over time, diverse perspectives and concepts on integration have emerged, and to this day, there is no consensus on what the term encompasses. "Integration" lacks a universal definition, theory or model and generates controversy and heated debates among academics (Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec, 2002). There are diverse and diverging approaches and concepts attached to process by which newcomers 'integrate' into a host society or community. The variety of concepts and approaches reflects the multiple academic

disciplines interested in the process: research methods and analyses from anthropology, sociology, economy, political sciences and human geography deal with this subject but use different methods of data collection and analyses, seek different purposes and intend to reach different audiences (Spencer & Cooper, 2006). Moreover, the very diversified existing profiles of migrants do not help to overcome the difficulties encountered by scholars in their attempts to find a unifying definition of integration. Meanwhile, the varying national historical, political and migratory context worldwide has led to different perceptions and interpretations of this process (Council of Europe, 1997). Several authors also argue for using other words than ‘integration’ to describe this process by which migrant ‘outsiders’ integrate into a host community, making them ‘insiders’: some use the term ‘assimilation’, ‘incorporation’ or ‘inclusion’ (Martiniello & Rath, 2014).

As Spencer and Cooper explained, “Integration is a normative term, definitions of which reflect differing perspectives on the desired end goal: the optimal relationship between migrants and the host society” (2006, p.14). This situation (and the previous limits exposed in this section) led to one of the major debates about the process assimilated to the term “integration”. On the one hand, a part of the literature approaches this phenomenon as a one-way process by which migrants have to adapt themselves to the society they have landed, the host society being under no obligation to make any effort to adapt to the newcomers who have migrated into its territory (Spencer & Cooper, 2006). From this perspective, migrants have to conform to the set of norms and values advocated by the majority of the population/society and, consequently, have to abandon some of their cultural habits and replace them with those of the host society (Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas, 2016). On the other hand, some authors perceive integration as a two-way process, where both migrants and the host society need to adapt to the current situation in order to facilitate the process of integration (Spencer & Cooper, 2006). In this case, the newcomers do not specifically have to abandon the cultural habits they inherited from their home country in order to fit in the host country (Zhou, 1997). As explained by Zhou, in this approach, “premigration cultural attributes (...) are not assumed to be inferior traits which should necessarily be absorbed by the core culture of the host society (...) these primordial characteristics constantly interact with the host society to reshape and reinvent themselves” (1997, p.981). The first position can be referred to as an assimilationist approach of integration, while the second relies on a multiculturalist approach (Zhou, 1997). These models are often described in opposition to each other and are referred to as the ‘assimilationist’ versus ‘multiculturalist’ models.

I first intended to use the European Union theorisation of ‘integration’ for my dissertation. It acknowledges an approach that is closer to the multiculturalist than the assimilationist model, as it considers integration as “a two-way process in which neither group need give up their cultural identity but in which both add a shared dimension to that identity” (Bijl & Verweij, 2012, p.34). However, this approach does not encompass all the existing processes involved in the integration of migrants. I believe

that the definition is too general and incomplete for that purpose (even if I consider the foundations of the multiculturalist approach interesting for studying integration). This is why there is one other point I find important to mention and to consider while handling such a controversial and multidimensional concept. In my opinion, a significant limitation of some theories concerning this subject is that they consider integration as a linear process. This logically implies that there are some very specific and more recommended ways by which one can succeed into the integrational process than others (for example, by swapping one's cultural habits for those of the settlement society). However, Lindo reminds us that "the complex interplay of cultururation, identification, social status and concrete interaction patterns of individuals may produce many different "outcomes", much more varied in fact than a more or less linear shift from "immigrant" to "host" ways of doing things"(2005, p.11). In the previous lines, Lindo highlights the polysemous aspect of integration. Even if the integration process presupposes a distinction between an 'insider' and an 'outsider', the basis of this distinction can be diverse. Indeed, if it can result from skin color or nationality, it can also arise from cultural identity or religious beliefs (Martiniello & Bousetta, 2011).

Therefore, as a manner to escape from any definition which would presuppose one manner to integrate over another, I decided to focus my attention on a theorisation which goes out of the classical distinction between the multiculturalist and the assimilationist models. This definition emanates from Rea and Tripier, who consider integration as "the acquisition of a social, economic and political position within the new national space" (2003, p.5). It permits us to avoid any interpretation of "how integration takes (or should take) place?" while answering the question "What is integration?". It is important to mention that the acquisition of the positions highlighted by Rea and Tripier may not happen at the same moment with the same intensity and through the same means. Moreover, as integration is not a linear nor a unidirectional process, it is important to not consider it as something which, once reached, will unavoidably remain forever. Therefore, we have to acknowledge that it is possible to be integrated at a certain moment and then to regress in this process for various reasons (Martiniello, 2006). We will see later through the case of Bruno that this development makes a lot of sense. It also remain crucial to take in consideration that migrants' different trajectories is influenced by personal characteristic such as their legal status or their age (Spencer & Cooper, 2006).

One clarification remains important to be mentioned regarding the understanding of Rea & Tripier's definition of integration in this study. Indeed, their understanding of integration acknowledges that it takes place in a "national space" but recently some academics tackled the need to approach integration on a local basis (Brokert & Caponio, 2010). This development relies on the findings that most migrants in Europe settle in cities (Penninx, Kraal, Martiniello, & Vertovec, 2004). Their concentration in some districts questions some issues regarding their integration such as their convergence in disadvantaged neighbourhood but also the social cohesion of the cities. In front of those problematic, the management

and concrete power of local authorities was clearly questioned (Penninx, Kraal, Martiniello & Vertovec, 2004). Besides this aspect, it is obvious that migrants' integration are influenced by local predisposition such as the employment rate, the importance of political participation or the presence of local associations in the city of settlement (Martiniello, 2006). From this development we can acknowledge that "The integration (or participation) process first empirically develops locally" (Martiniello, 2006, p.6). We will see in this study that local integration has a particular relevance regarding migrants' feeling of belonging to a community.

Some authors have focused their research on identifying some core dimensions or levels of integration in order to identify the sectors which are the most important for measuring a migrant's level of integration. In the next section, I briefly introduce some of the core theories dealing with the dimensions of the integrational process. More specifically, I will highlight the theories from Heckman and from Agger and Strang, which were retained for this work.

1.2 Identifying Integration's Main Dimensions

1.2.1 Literature Review

Most of the authors dealing with integration put in place or borrow some theories framing the many dimensions of the integrational process. These dimensions can be very broadly defined as sectors "in which people may (or may not) become an accepted part of society" (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016, p. 14). However, as was the case for defining integration, diverging theories exist on the subject.

From Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas's definition of integration's dimension, it is possible to draw on the theory of Entzinger. He highlights three dimensions of this process: the legal-political, the socio-economic and the cultural-religious dimensions of integration (Entzinger, 2000). The first dimension tackles the legal status of migrants, i.e. their right of residence on the territory but also migrants' political rights. It is important to mention that migrants who have not been legally authorised to reside in the host country (sometimes referred to as 'illegal migrants') who would not be integrated on this first dimension still may be integrated on the other two (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). The second dimension, socio-economic, deals with the facilities or constraints migrants encounter as far as their social and economic positions as residents are concerned. In this dimension, the author proposes to look more closely at how migrants can access areas, which are essential for any resident: healthcare, work, housing and education. The last (cultural-religious) dimension includes the practices, reactions and perceptions of both migrants and the host society regarding diversity (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). In some instances, the integration of migrants may lead to the general acceptance of cultural or religious differences. When this is the case, this acceptance will lead to a more or less pluralistic system of society. On the contrary, the opposite situation leads society closer to a mono-cultural or religious society, where migrants

are required to adapt (those two extreme cases can be put in parallel with the multiculturalist and assimilationist models of integration which I discussed earlier). Overall, it is important to note that most of the situations will tend to be more nuanced than the two extremes described above and will be located somewhere in between those positions. For example, some of the cultural habits which migrants inherited from their home countries will be accepted only if confined to the private sphere, while others aspects of their cultural-religious heritage will also be accepted in the public sphere (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016).

There are a number of other various interpretations of integration's dimensions. I decided to retain the theory from Heckmann for the simple reason that I find it very clear and detailed (in comparison with Etzinger's works). Heckmann distinguishes four dimensions to the integrational process. The first one is called structural integration and is related to a migrant's access to rights, status, position and membership as provided by the main institutions of the host society (in relation to housing, citizenship, education, and so forth). The second dimension, cultural integration, is closely related to the changes in the attitude and behaviour of migrants regarding the cultural habits in the country of settlement (but it concerns changes inside the host society too, since Heckmann approaches integration as a mutually interactive process, which can be put in parallel with the multiculturalist approach of integration). This cultural dimension is also considered by the author to be a "precondition of participation" (Heckmann & Al., 2001, p. 9). The relationships of migrants in the new society and their feelings of membership are assimilated to what he calls 'social integration' which encompasses their daily social experiences in the private sphere, including friendship or participation in voluntary activities through associations by example. The last dimension delves more deeply into the feelings of belonging from a subjective perspective, in which national or ethnic identification takes place. As a result, Heckmann calls it "identificational integration" (Heckmann & Al., 2001).

1.2.2 Core Domains of Integration

Ager & Strang's conceptualisation of the process of integration is composed of 10 core domains of integration, with each of them divided into four sub-sections. These domains have the purpose to draw boundaries between different sectors of integration, which can be useful to understand more deeply this process and also to evaluate the integration of refugees on different level of analysis. In my opinion, this theory, which focusses originally on the specific situation of refugees, can also be applied to a wider population of migrants regarding different aspects (which I will explain in the following section) – i.e. out of their 10 domains, some can be applied to research not focussed specifically on refugees. I will now detail the core domains that I have selected for this project and will briefly refer to those that I have deemed not appropriate in order to explain the reasons which led me to this decision.

1.2.2.1 Markers and Means

The first sub-section of Ager and Strang's domains contains "markers and means" of integration. They are presented by the authors as indicators of integration on the one side, and also as tools for migrants to successfully achieve the process of integration on the other. The four domains which belong to this sub-section are, respectively: housing, education, employment and health (Ager & Strang, 2008). From a broader perspective, Ager and Strang attest that "employment has consistently been identified as a factor influencing many relevant issues, including promoting economic independence, meeting members of the host society, providing opportunity to develop language skills, restoring self-esteem and encouraging self-reliance" (2008, p.170). I believe that all the issues enounced here are essential to the (successful) settlement of any individual in a new society, and thus, in my opinion, access to employment is an appropriate and valid domain to understand and evaluate a migrant's integration. Access to housing can also be applied to most of migrants' lived experience, as it first provides the individual with the possibility to literally 'feel at home'. Moreover, accommodation is also often cited in wider social inclusion theories (for example, regarding homelessness) because it offers the possibility for individuals to connect with neighbours and also to find their marks in a specific location (in the case of migrants, in the 'new' country). Nevertheless, the simple fact of having a place to live does not automatically facilitate the process of integration: the quality of the environment also needs to be considered. There is another important aspect of housing: the representation the individuals concerned make of it (Agger & Strang, 2008). For example, a refugee in Germany explains: "The difference between a house and a home is the difference between a place to stay and a place to live" (Dutch Refugee Council/ECRE, 2001, as cited in Agger & Strang, 2008). I find this sentence particularly revealing because we must remember that 'feeling at home' in the private sphere facilitates one's capacity to project oneself into a future, hence to 'settle' in a community and "know" how important it would be to feel integrated. Access to healthcare is also an important domain to evaluate. Of course, in the case of migrants, their administrative status will dictate the level of healthcare they are able to access in the host country, but overall, it is an essential aspect of their integration. Indeed, being able to maintain a good physical and mental health partly depends on access to healthcare, and an individual in a good health has more opportunity to play an active role in society (Agger & Strang, 2008). Finally, access to education provides migrants with the possibility of having better access to employment but also to encounter the host society's community, which is, in my view, a very important matter regarding migrants' integration into a new society.

1.2.2.2 Social Connections and the Concept of Social Capital

In their work on integration, Ager and Strang emphasise the importance of social connection in the integrational process, more specifically at the local level. They conceive integration as a two-way process and describe it as "a process of mutual accommodation" (2008, p. 177). From this point, they

plead for the importance of social connection, which they consider a way to diminish conflict between differing communities while they assimilate a situation of “toleration” between different groups as reflecting integration. They go further by highlighting in their research that most of the people they have interviewed (being refugees or not) considered “‘belonging’ as the ultimate mark of living in an integrated community” (Ager & Strang, 2008, p.178).

Before clarifying how they distinguish different possible forms of social connection, it is important to note that Ager and Strang based their theory on Putnam’s work on the notion of social capital. This concept has been used extensively by academic and, according to Putnam’s writing, the term has been interpreted differently by at least six different authors during the 20th century (Putnam, 2000). One of the most widespread approaches of this concept originates from Bourdieu, who defines social capital as:

“The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition - or in other words, to membership in a group - which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51).

Thus, his understanding of social capital is related to belonging to a group within which everyone supports each other and shares a ‘common capital’, mainly based on trust. Individuals in this group benefit from this social capital, which is owned by every member of the group (Cleland, Doidge, Millward & Widdop, 2018). The main idea behind this concept is that the “social network has value”, and this concept can be compared to the terms of ‘human and physical capital’ since its main purpose is to highlight the idea that “social contacts affect the productivity of individuals too”, just like human or physical capital does (Putnam, 2000, p.19). Putnam explains that “social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000, p.19).

Even if the main ideas behind the concept of social capital look very similar between those two authors, a main point of conflict occurs once each author introduces the main components he has selected to illustrate his respective visions of reality. On one side, Putnam emphasises three main elements of social capital: norms and moral obligations, social values (with trust as a core component) and social network (focussing mainly on voluntary associations). On the other hand, Bourdieu stresses that there are three dimensions of capital: economic, cultural and social capital (Martti Siisiäinen, 2000).

Of all the social capital theories described here, I have retained the analysis of Bourdieu for this project because his approach stresses the influence of each form of capital (social, economic and cultural) on each other (Bourdieu, 1986). Even if this work will mainly focus on social capital, the two other forms

of capital highlighted by Bourdieu remain interesting for this research regarding their potential influence on social capital (and inversely). This potential influence will be partly analysed through some of the domains covered in this section (such as access to employment for economic capital or language and cultural knowledge for cultural capital; this last domain will be introduced at the end of this section). Bourdieu's understanding was also interesting for this research because he stresses the idea that the volume of social capital of an individual depends on the size of the network of connection accessible to him/her but also on the volume of the different forms of capital detained by the persons he or she is connected with (Bourdieu, 1986). Even if social capital cannot be reduced only to the volume of economic and cultural capital detained by the person concerned or by the people he or she is connected with, social capital cannot be considered as totally independent of it either "because the exchanges instituting mutual acknowledgment presuppose the reacknowledgment of a minimum of objective homogeneity, and because it exerts a multiplier effect on the capital he possesses in his own right" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 21). He also considers that the profit (for the individual) resulting from those relations are made possible through a common basis which is solidarity (Bourdieu, 1986). This aspect will be interesting regarding this research, as we will see later in the analytical discussion. Another point I find interesting to mention in Bourdieu's theory is the institutionalisation of social capital, which can for example take place by giving a name to the group concerned (like supporter groups). He also stresses the need of investment for durable and useful relationships; this investment relies on obligations (institutionalised or not) regarding the other members of the group. As Häuberer explains: "Endless exchanges or relation labor are necessary to transform exchanged things into signs of mutual recognition" (2011, p. 38). This aspect can be put in parallel with the way of going of some supporter groups which base their organisation on a meritocracy (we will see it in the description of the different forms of collective supporterism present in Europe).

Now that this point has been clarified, the three forms retained by Ager and Strang to differentiate social connections (and considered as core domains of integration) are the following: social bonds (illustrating the link which are made among people belonging to the same community - for instance, links related to nationality, religion or ethnicity); social links (i.e. contacts with the state and its institutions); and social bridging, relating to contacts between a person and other communities (Ager & Strang, 2008). The last of those three domains, social bridging, is one of the central components of my analysis. I place great importance on social connections between migrants and the host community when considering integration, and demonstrate how it has major impact on migrants' integration. I believe that social connection is of paramount importance in the process of integration of migrants overall, so that it does not solely applies to the 'refugee' category of migrants; it is obvious that anyone moving from one country to another needs to make contact with people (inter alia, with natives) in the host society, as this can have a strong positive effect on the process of integration (this will be discussed in further detail in the findings).

1.2.2.3 Facilitators to Integration

Ager and Strang also identify two core domains which they label “facilitators” to integration and which are understood as “removing ‘barriers’ to integration” (2008, p.177). They are respectively named by the authors as “Language and Cultural Knowledge” and “Safety and Stability” (Ager & Strang, 2008, p.182-183). In the current study, it appears logical we will analyse them separately (at the exception of stability I decided not to retain for this research).

At first, learning the language of the host society is one of the most influential aspects to consider when examining migrants’ integrational processes. Indeed, it has a strong influence on most of the domains already highlighted in this section as it strongly influences the understanding of crucial information for progressing in the integrational process. It can be a barrier if it is not known by the individuals concerned, as it can be a facilitator as long as the basics of the language are known (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Secondly, knowledge of the host society’s culture is another facilitator for integration; this knowledge helps the migrant to experience social bridging more comfortably as well. As an example, a native interviewed by Ager and Strang in Pollokshaws (UK) working with refugees explained through his own experience how social connection can be easier when some cultural traits and practices are well known by both migrants and natives: “They left a lot of litter and I said, ‘well we can’t . . . they don’t understand (...) So I spoke to one or two of them and said, ‘please tidy up’, and they did” (Ager & Strang, 2008, p.183). The appropriate way to express questions or ideas can change from one culture to another, and as the integration is depicted here as a two-way process, both migrants’ and natives’ knowledge of each other’s culture is an important tool that facilitates the integrational process. I found the next example more significant; it refers the words of a refugee interviewed by Agger and Strang. He explained that the culture in the UK was different from his own, which was highly respectful of age: “My problem was (...) with the children . . . My culture is really, really different (...) whether the older person is wrong or right you do not talk back . . . you do not disrespect. (...) I honestly do not know what to do about it” (2008, p. 183). These examples highlight that if people are aware of cultural differences among countries of origin and of settlement, both migrants and natives are able to adapt and start to reshape and reinvent together some of their cultural attributes and practices. As I underlined in my introduction on the concept of integration, approaching integration as a two-way process remains interesting for studying integration, even if the definition I retained for this study is not based on the distinction between a ‘one-way’ versus ‘two-way’ process. It is clear from this first category of facilitators that the capacity of each migrant to benefit from these ‘barrier removers’ will vary from one individual to another, depending on their background and knowledge of both cultural and linguistic aspects.

Ager and Strang's findings point to the importance of safety and stability. They explain that one of the first preoccupations among refugees settling in the UK was living in a peaceful environment and avoiding problems. The refugees they interviewed also expressed the idea that if they do not feel safe, they do not feel integrated. The feeling of being physically and/or verbally threatened or not was one of their biggest fears and was a criterion to determine whether a place is safe or not (Ager & Strang, 2008). It is important to be aware that this research is not focussed on refugees, so the migrants interviewed will have different understandings of what amounts to fear or represents a safe place, and this will be taken into account. The field study will help us to determine more clearly whether or not safety represents a facilitator of the integration of migrants in our case.

As far as stability is concerned, I understand that Ager and Strang's approach is too specific to be applied to my study on migrants as their first focus deals with stability in terms of the fear of being sent back to the home country or to lose friends who could be expelled. They argue that the social bonding (with people from the same community) is usually at risk because of the irregular status of some refugees (Ager & Strang, 2008). As the study will deal with migrants (and not only refugees), it is not appropriate to apply their notion of stability, which is determined by the uncertain administrative status of migrants seeking asylum in the UK.

Finally, Ager and Strang write on the notion of citizenship and rights they describe as "foundations" of integration. I have opted not to take this domain into account for measuring the relations between football supporterism and integration: this would require a deeper analysis and re-orient this research towards the wide debate on access to citizenship. This is outside of the realm of this research and is not the purpose of this paper. Moreover, it is unlikely that football supporterism has a direct impact on migrants' access to citizenship. This is the reason why the political dimension of integration mentioned by Rea and Tripier in the definition of integration will not be covered during this research (but remains an important component of integration).

2. Football Supporterism and its Implications

2.1 Finding a Clear Concept

Before linking the support for a football team and the process of integration, it is important to define the term which will be employed in this work to describe the phenomenon of supporting a football team. Most of the literature on football supporters uses the term "football fandom", which Ben Porat defined as "a strong affiliation to a football club" (Ben Porat, 2010, p. 280). The main problem with this definition is that it does not provide us with tools to measure when the affiliation can be considered as "strong" or not. The strength of the affiliation is, therefore, entirely subjective. Moreover, as Toledo

explains, we cannot quantify or measure football fandom (Knijnik, 2015). Since football fandom cannot be measured and the term “strong” is too ambiguous, the definition of Ben Porat is too limited to be used in this work.

Knijnik refers to fandom as “a systematic commitment and substantial effort and time that a particular group engages with in an activity during their leisure time” (2015, p.35). From this definition, fandom is understood as a collective action which happens during a leisure time, necessitates a certain effort and is time consuming. However, it still includes a very unclear notion of intensity which is confusing, as the term “substantial” is wide and can be interpreted in many ways. This is why I have decided not to use the concept of football fandom: it is not clear enough and does not encompass the various profiles found among football fans. However, I will use some of the arguments developed by authors who researched football fandom related to the dynamics of supporting a football team.

I have opted for the concept of “*supporterism*” to refer to the action of supporting a football team. I have discovered this term in the works of French academics (see Bromberger, 1995; Mignon, 1998; Lestrelin, 2010; Louis, 2017). It was then important to find a clear definition of this term which was appropriate to my study. Patrick Mignon, defines a supporter as “the one who invests time and money in supporting its team and who remains loyal to the team, regardless of its performance” (Mignon, 1998, p. 68), in opposition to spectators who remain passive. Supporters consider the latter as ‘cold’ (Mignon, 1998). I have decided not to refer to this definition because it only concerns persons who go to the stadium. In my opinion, this is not the exclusive way to support a football team: support can be expressed through various practices with different levels of commitment (I will discuss this in the following sections of this chapter). In other words, supporting a football team does not necessarily imply attending games in a stadium. Therefore, I have decided not to retain Mignon’s definition for this study.

In the book *Football et Identités*, written by De Waelle and Husting, supporterism refers to “a set of partisan practices which overlay various attributes”² (2008, p. 42). I have chosen to rely on this definition because it does not include any unclear notion of intensity, as in the definition previously introduced. This definition is very interesting regarding my development: supporterism cannot be reduced only to the practice of the most engaged supporters. Supporting a football team can be expressed through a very wide set of practices, and my intention by selecting this definition is to be able to make it fit with the diverse profiles who support a football club (in this case, Standard de Liege). In order not to lack clarity for the framing of this concept, it will be completed by a typology of supporters I will introduce later. This will permit to determine the “set of partisan practices” and their “various attributes” in the context of football.

² Original sentence: *Le supportérisme désigne un ensemble de pratiques partisans aux attributs variés.*

A final note should be made about the use of this concept: the word is my own translation from the French term *supportérisme*, which I have translated into English because I could not find an English translation of the French word in reliable sources.

2.2 Supporterism as a Leisure Activity

We can conclude from Knijnik's definition of football fandom that supporting a football team is a leisure activity (2015). Horolets refers to "leisure time" in opposition to work, and explains it through the following sentence: "While work is disciplined time, leisure is free time (...) This time is used to recover from work: to sleep, cater for basic bodily functions and socialize" (2012, p. 2). Therefore, supporterism's definition has to be understood in the context of leisure. Leisure time is a salient component of the dynamics of inclusion and, in the case of migrants, integration.

Indeed, leisure time is a context in which migrants can find space to interact but also to build (or re-build) social networks and connections with people in the host country. These social networks may involve people belonging to their 'original' cultural community or not (Stack & Iwasaki, 2009). These processes can be understood as social bonding and bridging, previously highlighted as essential components in the process leading to a successful integration. One of the main strengths of leisure time regarding integration is that it provides situations in which stress is almost absent. Additionally, hierarchy is rarely a central characteristic of leisure, in opposition to other daily activities in which one must engage, such as seeking employment (or working), dealing with housing or handling administrative procedures. As such, leisure facilitates "positive inter-ethnic and inter-racial interaction" (Horolets, 2012, p. 5). Moreover, through their participation in leisure activities in the host country, migrants can develop feelings of belonging to a group in the host society (Horolets, 2012). In the context of leisure, I will look more specifically at the dynamics of supporterism.

2.3 Supporterism and the Feeling of Belonging through Interaction

Being supporter of a football team has a strong potential of creating interactions between individuals from very different backgrounds through their passion for football and for their clubs (Cleland & Al., 2018). Consequently, supporterism may have an impact on the social capital of individuals who interact in terms of football: it creates or reinforces a sense of belonging/attachment to a group that was encountered through supporterism.

According to Stone, there are three ways through which the consumption of professional football can increase asylum seekers' and refugees' feelings of belonging to the host country's community: talking football, watching football and doing football (2013).

Firstly, “talking football” is the fact of exchanging about the sport through a simple conversation, and all the possible aspects related to it. From a migrant’s point of view, the main limitation of talking football is that it presumes knowledge of the language spoken in the settlement country. However, one of the many advantages is that it allows a migrant supporter to easily engage in conversation with strangers because being a supporter or a fan of football provides a common interest to the migrant and the local fans. Besides, football has the advantage of being an easy topic of conversation that does not touch sensitive subjects. It provides migrants an escape from the burden of difficulties they have to face in their daily lives and usually occupies their minds, such as claiming asylum, finding accommodation and employment, organising family reunification, and the like. Moreover, it enables the individuals in this particular interaction to feel on an equal level of power, regardless of their social or administrative status. This is often not the case in the daily interactions of a migrant with individuals and institutions within the host country’s community (Stone, 2013).

Stone refers to the second way of consuming football as “watching football” – be it in the stadium or on television in a bar with other people. Even if those contexts are different, attending a game together creates a “communal togetherness (...) that connects people across space and time” (Stone, 2013, p.65). Football supporters are usually easily identifiable (wearing the shirt or the colour of the team they support). Some supporters claim that this is an important aspect of their social identity and sense of community (Knijnik, 2015). It provides the individuals with the possibility to feel a sense of belonging to a community, and this feeling becomes stronger through the emotions experienced and expressed together during the game(s), such as clapping, cheering, celebrating or being disappointed. Nevertheless, if watching football with other people is exceptional or rare, it almost certainly may not have a concrete long term effect on the feeling of belonging to a particular group. For this effect to be concrete and stand in the long term, the experience of watching football requires a certain constancy and repetition in time (Stone, 2013).

The last way to consume football that can increase migrant’s sense of belonging is called “doing football”. It is more related to indicators that allow us to understand if the consumption of professional football through the support of a team located in the host country impacted refugees’ or asylum seekers’ sense of belonging (Stone, 2013). Stone explains that “football can impact a sense of belonging (...) if it is an important part of one’s constructed self-identity” (2013, p. 70). In this case, the main indicator is the presence of the process of ‘othering’ wherein individuals create barriers between their own group and an outsider, and begin to use ‘us’ versus ‘them’ terminology. In some cases, this self-identity constructed through the club supported makes the team become a way to project an individual’s own success in their sportive results. The club then becomes a symbol, which can offer access to successful experiences (winning). The feeling of togetherness which can be felt predominantly takes place at a subconscious level; it may be ephemeral but can be more persistent through the repetition of the experience (Stone, 2013).

I want to reiterate that this section is based on some literature dealing with refugees and asylum seekers; this is why only the aspects that I believe are applicable to a wider migrant population have been retained in order to build a coherent approach. In this case, I consider that social connection and feeling of belonging remain important for the integration of any individual moving from one country to another. I have already developed this idea in the previous section dealing with social connections, so I do not find necessary to discuss this further here.

2.4 Typology of Football Supporters

The previous section explained how supporterism can reinforce the sense of belonging to a community through different channels. I will now explore in more detail the different practices by which supporters express and live their support for a football team. Firstly, I will look into practices which can be observed for any supporter at an individual level; afterward, I will expand on individuals who belong to a larger movement with specific collective practices inside and outside the stadium. The typology, based on individual practices, will allow us to categorise every supporter encountered during the field study regarding his level of loyalty to the club. It will then be possible to observe whether this same level influences the repercussions that supporterism can have on integration. The typology based on collective practices has the purpose to understand the differences in terms of value, organisation and practices in the different types of supporter groups encountered during this study.

2.4.1 At the Individual Level

There are a number of theories describing supporters' typology in the academic literature, with varied interests and domains. One of the most encountered in the literature on the subject is Giulianotti, who is one of the most authoritative writers on the subject. He makes a distinction between supporters, followers, fans and flaneurs (Giulianotti, 2002). I have not retained his model for my work: since the term "supporter" describes one of his four categories and I use the term "supporterism", it could lead to confusion. Moreover, the terms "fan" and "supporter" (both present in Giulianotti's theory) are sometimes used as synonyms and other times refer to different (sometimes opposite) definitions, depending on the author (Crawford, 2003). The purpose here is not to make a clear distinction between those two concepts, which I think overlap in their meaning, as it is possible to fit in both definitions of fandom and supporterism (which remain very unclear in the current literature) but to make distinctions between differing lived experiences of supporterism.

Fillis and Mackay have built what they call "fan-community spectrum", which has the purpose to distinguish different levels of supporter's loyalty (2014, p. 342). The first category of fans is called

“situational fans” and refers to supporters who “feel that football and the club are not a big priority in life, with match attendance depending on time, money, and location” (Fillis & Mackay, 2014, p. 342). They name the second one “kids”: this category refers to “new young fans whose support is developing and who still lack understanding of the history and traditions of the club” (Fillis & Mackay, 2014, p. 343). On the next level, “*devoted fans* display loyalty towards the club, characterized by regular attendance at games and wearing club colours” while “12th men” are “very vocal in support of the club, and use of songs is particularly evident. They have characteristics of the devoted fan, but through their display of team colours and banners, they aim to motivate the team” (Fillis & Mackay, p. 343). Finally, professional fans “have greatest impact by showing increasing support for the club outside match day, even sacrificing time and money to contribute towards the running of different organizations within the fan community” (Fillis & Mackay, 2014, p. 343).

It is important to be aware that no typology of supporter is perfect nor a perfect reflection of reality, and that some categories may overlap on some points (as ‘devoted fan’ and ‘12th man’). Every supporter approaches supporterism in a different manner, and the way to draw a typology depends on the main criteria that have been selected to define it. In the case of Fillis and Mackay, loyalty was the main criterion: it is mainly related to stadium attendance, vocal or visual support, and time accorded to this activity. Moreover, belonging to one of the different categories also has an evolutionary character, as individuals are not static and their relations with the football clubs they support may change over time. Therefore, Fillis and Mackay’s theorisation provides a basic categorisation, which gives us a broad overview of the practices of every supporter encountered. In order to have a clear approximation of the interviewees’ lived experiences, they will be assigned to a category only if they fit all the criteria listed in the category in question. Some other specificities of the supporters interviewed will be detailed in the findings (when needed) in order to be clear about their manners to practice and understand supporterism. The mere fact of wearing a club’s colours will not be considered as a prerequisite to be labelled under a category because not all the categories rely on this distinction in the previous definitions, and also because – in my opinion – wearing a club’s colours cannot be interpreted as a significant indicator of loyalty (as opposed to other indicators such as the frequency of game attendance; time accorded to the practice of supporterism; or the vocal support of the team).

2.4.2 Main Forms of Collective Football Supporterism in Europe

It is important to provide a clear distinction between the two most widespread models of collective supporterism in Europe. Public debates, the media and academic literature oftentimes do not distinguish between these two forms, i.e. between hooliganism and the Ultras movement, which both deal with supporters who regularly practice supporterism in groups – or at least upon every game of their clubs,

inside and outside of the stadium. It is worthwhile noting that these two forms of supporterism introduce a dimension that was not tackled in the typology of Fillis and Mackay: the perception of violence and physical confrontation with other supporter groups as a more or less important component of supporterism.

2.4.2.1 Hooliganism

The first form of collective football supporterism is hooliganism. This term is being used to cover different forms of collective supporterism in academic circles and the media; it lacks precision as it has emerged as much from academic sources as from political sources' or media's varying interpretations. Nevertheless, the unanimous common characteristic emanating from these sources is the idea of "fights between groups of males (these groups occasionally includes females), who share a common allegiance to opposing football clubs" (Dunning, Murphy, Waddington & Astrinakis, 2002, p. 2). As we have seen during past international tournaments, this can also apply to groups belonging to opposing national football teams (see Henry & Quinio, 1998; L'Équipe, 2016). Beyond this feature, it also encompasses other various acts of violence (such as fights with the police or degradation or acts of vandalism) perpetrated by football supporter groups, which sometimes have ideological overtones or overtly embrace ideologies or using their supporterism as a form of protest. Some are linked to the management of the football clubs, others to racist movements or political ideologies. Hooligans do not limit their sphere of action to the stadium and its surroundings, but they also perform collectively in public places as pubs, clubs, bus, stations, and the like (Dunning & Al., 2002). The acts of violence involving football supporters is not a recent phenomenon; it had been observed in the mid-1880s in England and in the early 20th century in Italy (Louis, 2017). However, not every act of violence involving football supporters can be assimilated to the phenomenon of hooliganism. Hooliganism relies on organised and regularly grouped violent actions, and occasional and spontaneous acts of violence (inter alia, related to the result of a game or arbitral decisions) should not always be associated with this movement (Bodin, Robèn & Héas, 2005).

Hooliganism as a specific phenomenon started to develop in Great Britain in the early 1960s, with such behaviours generalising during the 1966–1967 season of the English championship (Louis, 2017). In order to understand it, I will now provide a very brief explanation of the main spheres which influenced its emergence. First of all, hooliganism was influenced by several more or less violent and juvenile cultures (or sub-cultures) linked to the domain of music which appeared in the United Kingdom about a decade before hooliganism, such as the 'skinheads', 'teddy boys', 'mods' or 'punks' movements (see definitions in the glossary, except for 'punks' because I could not find a clear definition of this movement from reliable sources). Their access to the stadium was facilitated by the creation of "ends" (stands located behind the goal where the tickets were cheaper), which permitted the "juvenilization" (Bromberger, Havot & Mariotinni, 1995, p. 217) and socio-economic diversification of the audience (Bodin & Al., 2005). The

evolution of the different forms of new violent cultures were mainly influenced by the socio-economic crisis that Great Britain faced between 1970 and 1980 and the ultra-liberal policies of Margaret Thatcher, which had major impact on the living conditions of the working class and most disadvantaged groups in society. This situation led to the increase of violent protests over the country. This time also saw the proliferation of xenophobic and racist ideologies. These were already present in hooligan groups and in some of the cultures mentioned above, even if that context reinforced the presence of those characteristics in the hooligan movement (Bodin & Al., 2005). These factors contributed to the settlement of Hooligans in the sphere of football, which allowed it to spread all over Europe (C4, 2016).

It is important to mention that, like the (sub)cultures that influenced it, hooliganism developed its own cultural traits, including specific symbols, dress codes and rituals (hooliganism can be considered as a mix of other juvenile cultures' characteristics of this period, enriched by specificities related to football). However, over time, hooliganism diversified and evolved in terms of followers and main characteristics. The purpose of this work is not to analyse hooliganism into detail, but it is nonetheless important to underline here that there is no clear and universal definition of this movement, which is way too diverse in its present forms to be confined into one understanding. This section has only touched its main aspects. However, a crucial characteristic which permits us to distinguish hooligans from any other forms or culture of violence still must be mentioned. Indeed, beyond their relation to violence, hooligans also motivate their teams through vocal support and provocative slogans during the games (Bromberger & Al., 1995). As far as ritualised support in the football stadium is concerned, hooligans support 'their' teams during a game attendance with singing, as opposed to the deployment and waving of flags, banners or other visual animations. This behaviour distinguishes hooligans from ultras, the other most widespread form of organised collective supporterism in Europe and whose characteristics I will describe in the following section. It is important to be aware that the hooligan movement was highly repressed during the last decades, and its presence in professional football stadium and abroad had almost disappeared. The practice changed, as some of them now meet in remote locations due to the measures of security and video watching developed in the previous years. It has strongly diminished the exposure of this phenomenon (even it has not totally disappeared).

This section on hooliganism would not be complete without a mention, however brief, of its emergence outside the British Isles (including in Belgium) under the form of 'sides'. The term 'siders' makes reference to the 'sides', understood in central Europe as a synonym of 'sector' (Berteau, 2013). It can be understood as a derivation of the 'ends' parts of the stadiums, where tickets were sold at discounted prices (which I have mentioned earlier in this section). The 'sides' term was most commonly used by groups of supporters which emerged in Belgium and Holland during the 1980s under the influence of British hooliganism and which presented more or less to the same characteristics. They were joined in

Belgium during the mid-1990s by another form of group-organised supporterism whose roots can be traced back to the 1970s in Italy and respond to the appellation 'Ultras' (Berteau, 2013).

2.4.2.2 The Ultras Movement and its Points of Distinction with Hooliganism

The Ultras movement was born in Italy at the turn of the 1970s and spread throughout the country during the following decade (BoreMBERGER & Al., 1995). It was not the first form of collective football supporterism in the country: the presence of *tifosi* in football stadiums could already be attested since 1920. The word *tifosi* is an extension of the term *tifo*, which was used during the same period to designate the "enthusiasm of supporters for their team" (Louis, 2017, p.26). This neologism gave rise to two others: *tifoso*, which refers to the supporter, and *tifoseria*, referring to all the followers of a same team (Louis, 2017). The first group of tifosi (plural form of *tifoso*) was created in 1928 in Bari (called *Ordine de Galletto*) and was quickly followed by others. This period can be characterised by the first forms of visual organised support for a team by a group through the exhibition of various kinds of banners or flags, which were originally scarce but gained in generality and sophistication during the following decades. By the 1950s, the tifosi gained in organisation: they started with a meeting at the time, a bar or a restaurant where they organised the travel for away games or for the making of banners, flags, and so forth. This meeting place also hosted sportive event and parties. These places were also considered as meeting places for the supporters of the same clubs in order to centralise the most fervent ones. The *tifoso* also started to be considered by clubs' owners as serious interlocutors and were accorded some facilities (such as privileged access to tickets for away games). Their meeting places were also locations where players or owners of the clubs came to celebrate important events linked to the supporter groups, and some extensions of those groups also emerged out of the country with the purpose for Italian immigrants to meet and share their common passion for the team they supported (Louis, 2017).

The emergence of the Ultras movement can be considered to be a result of the evolution of, on the one hand, the practices and characteristics of supporter associations which were already present in Italian stadiums, but also, on the other hand, as a result of the influence of hooliganism which had appeared in Great Britain a few years before. The first time a supporter group in Italy used the term "Ultras" took place in Genoa by supporters of the Sampdoria during the season 1969-1970. However, we can consider that the first ultras group was formed in 1968: it was "La Fossa dei Leoni" from the club AC Milan (Kassimeris, 2011). Indeed, this group distinguished itself from the others through characteristics such as the size and graphic design of their animations; their position in the stand located behind the goal called *curva* (more or less synonym of the British "ends", but within the Italian context); the very young composition of their members; and also by the fact that they did not conform the club's norms. These practices were quickly adopted by other groups throughout the country that, in turn, refreshed and gave a bigger proportion to the tifo (Louis, 2017).

As explained by Kassimeris, “In Italy, football culture and fanaticism are clearly defined by as much political as geographical terms” (2011, p. 681). Indeed, there is a strong and medieval rivalry between the North and South regions of Italy. This North-South rivalry is still alive today; it has been and still is an important feature of the rivalry between supporter groups in the country. Moreover, the Italian context of the 70s made space for the population to affirm their political ideology; strong tensions between the right and left wings had repercussions on the way a majority of ultras defined themselves. Indeed, their position for one side or another was clearly represented in their logos, flags, banners, songs and so forth. It led to violent opposition between them, physically but also through other forms, such as aggressive singing or displaying of banners (Kassimeris, 2011). This political aspect is still very present today in a large majority of ultras groups all over the world, and more specifically in Europe (as we will see later with the case of Ultras Inferno in the section dedicated to the context). The increase of right-wing ultras in Italy was mainly influenced by the strong waves of external migration arriving in the country and the success of right-wing parties such as Lega Nord in the late 80s (Kassimeris, 2011).

The influence of hooliganism on the development of the movement cannot be underestimated, as between 1969 and 1974, many teams from England played against Italian ones. The behaviour of the English fans fascinated some of the ultras pioneers, to the point that some members of *Brigate Gialloblu* (a group of ultras from the club Hellas Verona) flew to London in 1976 to meet the hooligans of Chelsea in order to learn from their organisation and practices (regarding violence, singings, dress code and so forth). At the same time, many English flags were present in the crowd of ultras; it was considered as sign of rebellion, and many of the emerging groups used English words in their names (Louis, 2017).

Nevertheless, both models can be first distinguished in terms of social composition of their members (for example, in Italy, the working class was not as much represented as in hooligan groups) but more significantly in their relation with violence. On one side, for the hooligans, the physical confrontation with supporters from the rival team constitutes their principal characteristic, sphere of action and purpose (Louis, 2017). For some of them, it is more important to win the fight against the other hooligans than the victory of the team on the field (this was, inter alia, confirmed by Jack during our interview, see Appendix 4.11). On the other side, the ultras’ relationship with violence is significantly more nuanced; some of them will enjoy and even plan meetings with rival team’s supporters in order to fight while others clearly reject violence (we can find both within the same group). As a summarised idea of the violent aspect within the Ultras movement, we can say that they seek more recognition for the quality of their passion and animations in the crowd than for their violent actions, even if it may strongly vary from one group to another (Bromberger & Al., 1995).

A last point of distinction between those two movements is the presence of a hierarchy. If on the side of the hooligans no information permits us to attest to any clear hierarchy for most of them (this information was confirmed during the interview of Jo, see Appendix 4.12), it is not the same for the Ultras. Indeed, during the development of the tifosi groups, a certain hierarchy already could be observed with the presence of what was called at that time a *capo-popolo* (nowadays shortened to the term *capo*). The *capo* is the member of the ultras group who throws the singings to the whole group and is considered as the “chief of the people” (Louis, 2017, p. 26); this could already be observed by 1930. The organisation of ultras groups became more and more clear through the years, and a major distinction between its members can first be made on their seniority. The older and most active members occupy higher grades: for instance, the ‘chief’ (more usually referred to as president) is an important and well-known figure in the stand. He ensures the relationship with the president of the club they support but is also known by the rival groups. The same criteria are retained to designate the *capo* (mostly designated by his peers), the members in charge of the administration or finance of the group or the spokesman. On the other side, the less experimented and younger members will be in charge of less important and exposed tasks. The purpose here is not to describe the clear hierarchy of any supporter group (which may vary greatly from one to another) but it is important to be aware of this distinction, as in the ultras group, the hierarchical structure is mainly based on a meritocratic system where the amount of involvement within the group is the main criterion retained to assign a role to everyone (Louis, 2017).

It is relevant to indicate as well that both movements see the stadium (more specifically a stand or a section of it) as a territory which can be divided regarding the different groups of the same club (Bromberger, 1995). It also has to be defended from the other supporter groups’ intrusion; this aspect is more present for hooligans when they fight inside the stadium. In this case, the purpose is partly to conquer rival’s territory (Dunning & Al., 2002). There are other aspects which could be explored regarding the representation supporter groups make of the stadium. Nevertheless, they are not relevant for the current paper, with the exception of the fact that the groups emanating from both models consider the stadium as a territory. Then, certain sections of Standard de Liege stadium can be approached as a place which somehow ‘belongs’ to the groups to which some of the interviewees are affiliated. We will discover later in the context how the Ultras Inferno claim their antiracist and antifascist ideology in their stand we can consider as ‘their territory’.

Finally, it is important to understand that since their emergence, those two forms of collective supporterism have both influenced each other. It has resulted in the strong diversification in practices, values, organisation or purposes of supporter groups in Europe and all around the world. In my opinion, there is no universal theory which can encompass the characteristics of all hooligans or ultras groups. This is why the specificities of the two supporter groups whose members have been interviewed for this research will be detailed in the context.

III) Research Questions & Methodology

1. Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the possible impacts of football supporterism on a sample of migrants in Belgium, with a specific focus on the city of Liege and the supporters of Standard de Liege. In order to define the term ‘migrant’, the current study relies on the understanding that a migrant is “any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence” (International Organization for Migration, n.d.). I decided to refer to the term ‘migrant’ and not ‘immigrant’ because the latter only applies to “non-nationals” who “move into a country for the purpose of settlement” (International Organization for Migration, 2011, p. 49); and this definition does not apply to all the interviewees who took part in this study (two are Belgian citizens but did not grow up in Belgium and one did not migrate with the purpose to settle).

This dissertation relies on two research questions. These questions should allow us to look objectively at the dynamics between migrants’ support for a football team and their integration in Belgian society. The first question is closed and introduces the purpose of this research, as it only examines whether the link between supporterism and integration can be observed through the data collected on the field. It takes the following form: “Can football supporterism influence migrants’ social, cultural, structural and/or identificational integration in Belgium?”. I decided to start from a closed question in order to not presuppose an influence between supporterism and integration. Therefore, the only hypothesis related to this question is: football supporterism can impact the integration of migrants in Belgium through the support of Standard de Liege.

If this link can be asserted during my field study, I will mainly focus on a sub-question which will seek to analyse in more detail the impact(s) that football supporterism can have on the integrational process regarding the different domains highlighted in Ager and Strang’s theorisation and their implications on the four dimensions of integration from Heckman. I will then try to answer to the following question: “How can football supporterism influence migrants’ social, cultural, structural and/or identificational integration in Belgium?”. The core domains of Ager and Strang and the dimensions of Heckman will not be the only theoretical bases related to this question. Indeed, the typology of supporters from Fillis and Mackay will be an essential tool for understanding whether the level of loyalty of a migrant supporter (regarding the club he supports) impacts the ability of supporterism to influence integration. One hypothesis underlying this research is that the impact of supporterism on integration varies strongly depending on the profiles of migrants: firstly, regarding their administrative status and their age when they arrived in Belgium, because those different characteristics may influence their needs regarding the different domains and dimensions of integration. Secondly, their practice of supporterism (based on loyalty in this case) and their affiliation

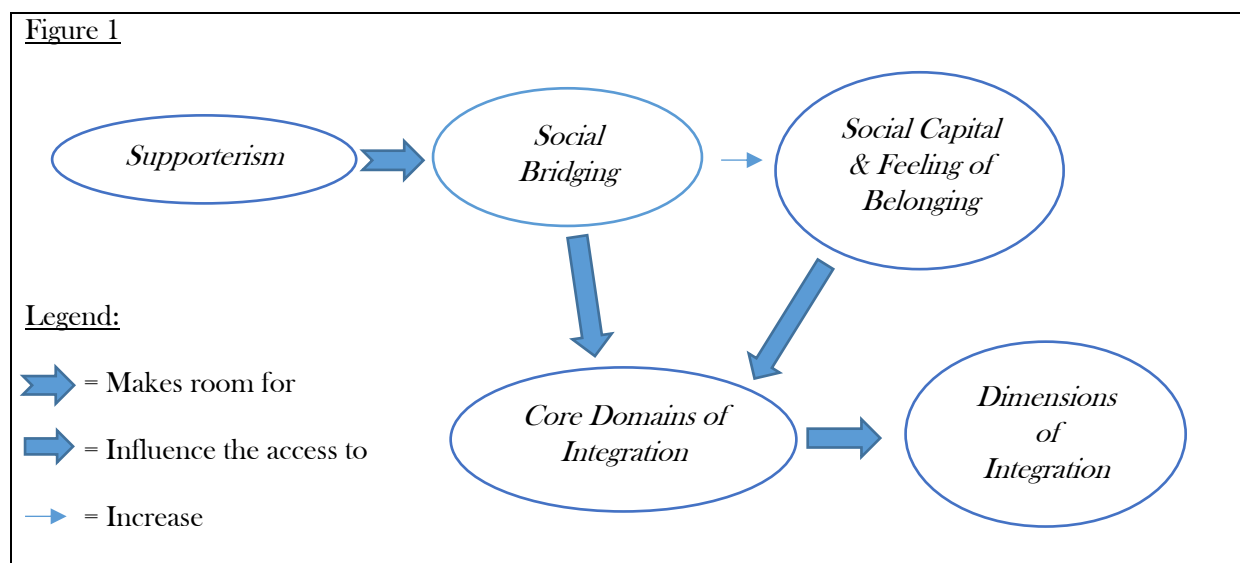
(or not) to a supporter group. For example, we may observe that the more migrants prove loyalty to their team through their practices of supporterism, the more they will tie strong affinities with other supporters and therefore increase their social capital and feeling of belonging to a community through supporterism.

The core of my development is based on the ability of leisure activities (in this case, football supporterism) to increase individuals' social capital. It relies on the idea that most of the social connections tied by a migrant in the context of supporterism of Standard de Liege will take place with natives for the simple reason that the majority of Standard de Liege supporters are natives. This is why I choose to take a particular attention to social bridging. Moreover, I consider that social bridging can play a crucial role for migrants' integration because it allows them to discover and learn about the society of settlement and its main features, like learning the local language or the main cultural practices. Nevertheless, social bonding must not be put aside as it may occur through supporterism as well and have repercussions on integration. We will see through the analysis of my findings if it can be confirmed or not.

Figure 1 represents the links I seek to observe between the different dynamics retained for this research. It starts from supporterism that I consider as potentially making room for social bridging. During the analysis, it will be important to establish in which case supporterism makes room for social bridging (or not) by taking into account various variables such as: loyalty in terms of practices of supporterism, personal features but also contextual predispositions such as super-diversity or the ideological orientation of the supporter groups of Standard de Liege (I will detail the context in the first section of my findings). Then, social bridging can be considered as a manner to increase social capital through durable relationships. Therefore, if social bridging takes place, it may logically imply an augmentation of social capital for the individuals concerned. In the case of durable relationships, it may also increase individuals' feeling of belonging to a community, as explained by Stone (2013). The next step of my development relies on the impacts that supporterism (more specifically, social bridging through supporterism) may have on the different domains of integration (and extensively on the dimensions of integration). We can distinguish two paths through which it may happen: first, the only social bridging (without a concrete effect on social capital and feeling of belonging) may influence those dimensions without the presence of durable relationship. For instance, a supporter may encounter another only once and share about the cultural traditions of the region or some aspects of the language spoken. In this case, we can suppose that the influence on integration will be weak but still exists. In a second stance, if social bridging leads to durable relationship between migrants and natives (which increases migrants' social capital and feeling of belonging to a group) it may lead to stronger and more durable effects on integration's domains. The direct relationship between social bridging and those domains also reflects another idea: as social bridging is a part of one of the domains of integration, I find it logical to wonder from this figure if social bridging influences social bridging. We will see through the findings if it is the case. The last step will permit us to determine the repercussions that supporterism's influence on the domains of integration can have

regarding the dimensions of integration. Most of the connections between the elements of Figure 1 are defined as ‘influence’. This choice emanates from my wish to not presuppose that those influences are positive as they can be negative. This is why I decided not to refer to appellations such as “facilitates the access to”.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that Figure 1 does not represent a linear process, which happens in any circumstances. It has to be understood as a synthetisation of the main impacts that supporterism may have on the integrational process of migrants and the different steps through which this influence may pass. The findings of this research will permit us to complete and bring correction to this figure, which was a starting point for going through my field study.



2. Methodology

I have used qualitative research methods to answer my research questions. Several authors have already attempted to define qualitative method by extracting its main components (see Barbour, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Flick, 2009). One of its main characteristics is that this approach is interpretative and analyses the manner people understand several dynamics attached to their lived experiences (Snape & Spencer, 2003). As explained by Bryman, “The way in which people being studied understand and interpret their social reality is one of the central motifs of qualitative research” (1988, p. 8). This type of method can also be defined by opposition to quantitative methodology which relies on the counting of empirical data: “By the term ‘qualitative research’ we mean any types of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11). Qualitative methodologies are particularly oriented towards research dealing with subject requiring a deep understanding and contextualisation of complex phenomena (Snape & Spencer, 2003). As we could observe earlier, the dynamics surrounding the process of integration are complex and require a deep

understanding of every interviewee's personal experience. This phenomenon cannot be quantified and can evolve over time. Therefore, I do not consider quantitative methods as appropriate to this study. I find it more logical to use a qualitative method which seeks to go deeper in the understanding of complex social phenomena.

This research relies mostly on semi-structured interviews, which is a fundamental technique of data gathering in qualitative migration research in Europe (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2018). As explained by Fedyuk & Zentai, comparing to structured interview:

“Semi-structured interviews precondition a more open interview outline, which is often guided by the research interest or a particular topic of enquiry. Here, the interviewer ensures that respondents remain close to the topic, but often leaves enough space for the interviewee to open up the discussion and introduce connected topics, thus making it more exploratory in nature and cooperative in terms of knowledge production” (2018, p. 173).

I decided to rely on this method in order to allow respondents to bring new elements to take into account and, which may have been omitted when reviewing academic literature on the subject. As I wanted “to provide a structure that is flexible enough for interviewees to be able to raise questions and concerns in their own words and from their own perspectives” (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 19) on one side, but also to keep under control the direction the interview was taking, I found semi-structured interviews truly appropriate. Moreover, as I will detail later in this section, some interviews (3) had the purpose to provide information about the contextualisation of my subject and theoretical framework. It was then of importance to let the interviewee bring new information I do not know about or I could have omitted while going through the literature on the subject. This idea can be simply summarised by Latour's words referring to a situation which “render(s) objects able to object” (2000, p. 10). Indeed, the information which is extracted during the interviews is considered as the result of a co-production which involves both the researcher and the interviewee (Mason, 2002). This aspect permitted me to leave space for the interviewee to bring new ideas and an unexpected direction to the exchange while staying under my control. For applying this approach, my interview guide contains mainly open-ended questions (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). In order to permit flexibility and to prevent me from asking a question which was already covered by the respondent, I divided my interview guides by thematic and added key words³ which indicated to me the information I had to extract for each of those thematic (see the interview guides in Appendix 2). As I already mentioned, all my interviews did not have the same purpose and dealt with

³ Key words were only used for migrants' interviews because a lot of precise information had to be gathered.

different profiles; this is why I will now explain those distinctions through the explanation of interviewees' main characteristics.

First of all, the majority (13 out of 16) of the semi-structured interviews took place with migrant men who support Standard de Liege in order to understand if their practice of supporterism influenced their integration in Belgium. The legal situation and story of every migrant was different, as migration usually results from combinations of different factors (Gavray, Casman, Adam & Jarfi 2018). In order to give an overview of the different profiles encountered, here are some of the different administrative status claimed by the different interviewees: asylum seeker, (political) refugee, European citizen, internationally mobile student, undocumented migrant, regular migrant and Belgian citizen. We can see that those profiles are very diverse, and in my opinion, it is important to keep those categories distinct because they all reflect specific attributes. A definition of each category can be found in the glossary, at the exception of 'Belgian citizen' I do not consider necessary to define and 'regular migrant' which lacks of clear definition. Indeed, to my knowledge the exact term 'regular migrant' has never been defined from reliable sources. This is why I will refer in the glossary to 'regular migration'. I have chosen to refer to 'regular migrant' instead of 'legal migrant' because the latter is based on the distinction between 'legal' and 'illegal' migrants which has a particularly negative connotation for individuals who cross borders "unlawfully" (Perowska, 2016, p. 187). It is also worth noting that the appellation 'regular migrant' is very wide comparing to the previously mentioned administrative status of the interviewees; it is only based on the lawfulness of migration, with no specific characteristic attached to it. Therefore, this category may overlap some of the others because European/Belgian citizens, internationally mobile students and refugees can all be considered as regular migrants. I had to keep this category because the only interviewee who defined himself as regular migrant did it for the simple reason that he was too young to know about his status but could attest that he was migrating in Belgium lawfully. The difference between regular and irregular migrants will be an important distinction to take into account during the findings of this research. Indeed, it is obvious that irregular migrants do have a highly restricted access to a wide range of institutions providing certain services (such as healthcare, employment or housing) comparing to regular migrants; they consequently face more difficulties to integrate. I will go into the details of migrants' personal experiences in the findings when necessary in order to understand how it may have impacted the influence of supporterism on their integration.

I have given preference to interviews in quiet areas (as they needed to be recorded): I was invited by 11 of the (migrant) interviewees to conduct the interview in their homes. I interviewed two others through Skype because they were out of the country. Dealing only with men may be a limitation of this sample, even if the majority of the population that can be found at football games in Belgian stadiums is male (even if there are indicators that this situation may tend to be about to shift [Rédaction 7sur7, 2010]). Moreover, finding migrants who agreed to be interviewed was already difficult, and due to small number

of women in the stadium, finding migrant woman was a difficult task. Presumably, the input of even a single female participant would have had a major impact on this work. It is worth noting that the majority of migrants I sought to recruit for this research were recommended by supporter organisations, people I met at the stadium or I already knew before my research. Some interviewees in turn recommended more, so out of the 25 potential candidates I contacted, I ended up with interviewing 13 supporters, all of them males. I took care to ask to several people/organisations if they knew about migrant supporters of Standard de Liege in order to not be subjected to the influence of eventual “gatekeeper” on my sample (Webster, Lewis & Brown, 2014, p. 90).

Apart from gender, I have managed to gather a sample that is diverse in terms of age, administrative status, and practice of supporterism (their detailed profiles and a brief summary of the main findings regarding the impact of supporterism on their integration can be found in Appendix 1.1). Indeed, participants belonged different generations (from 24 to 55 years old at the moment of the interview), and the onset of their supporterism took place at different stages of their lives (during their childhood, teenage years or as adults). The period studied encompasses more or less 25 years and led to a significant diversification in practice of supporterism but also in terms of context. In order to frame the different characteristics of every migrant encountered, the table in Appendix 1.1 includes indication about the evolution of their administrative status in bracket. The same method was used to differentiate their practice of supporterism, and when we could observe distinct period in terms of practices of supporterism, the period studied was underlined. Regarding the typology of football supporters previously detailed, we can observe a wide diversity of profiles interviewed (every category is represented in my sample). I considered this aspect as a *sine qua non* condition for conducting my field study, as my hypotheses stress the possible influence of the loyalty (in terms of supporterism practices) to a local football team in the receiving country on migrant’s integration.

Besides migrants’ interviews, I have conducted one collective interview, using the same semi-structured approach but this time with a very different purpose. Indeed, the literature about the history of the different supporter groups involved in this study (the Ultras Inferno and the Hell-Side) and their networks (Rebel Ultras and Alerta Network) is very scarce. Thus, I have conducted additional interviews with individuals able to enlighten me on the history of their movement, their core values, their main aims and organisational structures. The information gathered during this interview had the purpose to complete contextual information I found important to mention for this research. I have therefore met a former spokesperson of Ultras Inferno (the group does not give interviews to medias anymore and communicates only through its Facebook page) and also met a member of both Hell-Side and Ultras Inferno who maintains strong connections with Alerta Network (of which the Ultras Inferno are members). I decided to opt for a collective interview because both interviewees could bring me different information and complete each other’s knowledge.

After this interview, the two respondents advised me to contact a former member of the Hell-Side who had co-founded the Cosa SL (which is the meeting place of the Ultras Inferno). Thanks to this interview, I was able to include in my context a section dedicated to the gathering place most of the Ultras Inferno members frequent. As a result, I have interviewed three members (or former members) of the two supporter groups to which some migrants I interviewed belonged. Two interview guides (one for the collective interview and one for the individual one) were required to look for information on the context; they can be found in Appendix 2.2 and 2.3. Information about the context was also gathered during the interview of some migrants (even if it was not the primary goal) because their affiliation to supporter groups or to associations dealing with supporterism permitted them to provide me additional information dealing with the establishment of Fan Coaching (which I will introduce later) or the evolution of Ultras Inferno and Hell-Side's ideology.

Regarding the interviews of both migrant and non-migrant population, I decided to be very careful on the question of anonymity. For the migrant population, I thought it important to presuppose that some of them may be considered as a 'vulnerable population'. From Moore and Miller's definition, "vulnerable persons include persons who are, individually or as part of a group, stigmatised, excluded or have limited control over their lives, to maintain independence and to self-determine" (1999, p. 1034). Therefore, I tried to provide the interviewees a context which made them feel safe about eventual personal concerns or apprehension. In order to pursue this purpose, I introduced the objectives and subject of this research to every participant. I also explained to them how the information gathered would be presented in the final paper: I explained the interview would be recorded and transcribed in the final paper (if they agreed). This step is very important in order to let the person determine the potential risks and decide whether he wanted to contribute to the research or not (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2012). It is worth mentioning that even if all the interviewees agreed that I insert full transcription of their interviews on this work, I made the decision not to do it. This decision emanates from a long reflection which allowed me to understand that it would put at risk their anonymity and that some of their point of view regarding information which are not relevant for this research may lead to conflicts between different supporter group members. Therefore, my intention is to protect participants from harm which is an important matter regarding ethical issues in qualitative researches (Lewis, 2003).

When I met the persons who accepted to take part to my research, I started by asking them to choose a name of substitution to respect their anonymity. I found this approach very useful, as beyond the question of anonymity, it permitted us to engage in conversation during our first 'physical' meeting through a very safe subject which allowed me to soften the atmosphere. Before and after the interview, I insisted on the interviewee's right to ask me not to mention some parts of the interview. They had access to the transcription of the interview and gave me their agreement to publish it. Only one of them asked me not

to mention one of his answers; therefore, I did not rely on his answer for my analysis. For all those reasons, the respect of confidentiality and anonymity were made very clear to the participants (Lewis, 2003), even if a large majority told me it was not necessary. It is worth noting that I applied the same approach for non-migrant participants I do not consider as vulnerable. All of them said they had no problem for revealing their real name, but not revealing the name of participants is a standard approach in qualitative research I consider important (Van Liempt & Bilger, 2012). I thought it was safer and more coherent to keep this method for all interviewees (at the exception of Sébastien Louis, whom I will now introduce).

I have also conducted an exploratory interview with Sébastien Louis, a French Doctor in Contemporary History specialised in the question of radical supporterism in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia. He teaches Contemporary History and Sociology at the European School Luxembourg and published *Le Phénomène ultras en Italie* in 2006 and *Ultras, les autres protagonistes du football* in 2017. Both of the books cover the Ultras movement in Italy. The purpose of this interview was primarily to question him about the term ‘supporterism’. From there, I sought his opinion on theoretical notions linked to supporterism, i.e. its typology and the potential outcomes of supporterism dynamics. Because the term supporterism is absent in the English literature, I found his expertise on the subject very helpful for framing this concept, and therefore approached it with better clarity when designing this research (the full transcription of the interview can be found in Appendix 5).

Two participative observations were also conducted inside and outside of the stadium: on the 3rd of August 2018 at the occasion of the first home game of Standard de Liege for the season 2018–2019 and also on the 7th of the same month at the occasion of a game against the Ajax Amsterdam in the context of preliminary round for accessing to the Champions League. The purpose of conducting participative observation is to complete information regarding the context within which some interaction between migrants and natives may occur. As Boccagni and Schrooten explain:

“What sets participant observation apart from all other ways of doing research (...) is an embodied and extended presence in the social world of those being studied. Social life as it is being lived, rather than only as it is reported by informants” (2018, p. 212).

I wanted to perceive what some of my interviewees were speaking about but also to add details to my understanding of the context (for example the average representation of Caucasian, distinct elements making understandable that diversity was welcomed or just the way people behave between each other). I do not consider those two observations as primordial for this research but just as providing interesting complements to my reflection on the subject. It was also the occasion to confirm, overturn or nuance some information collected during the interviews. It gave me the opportunity to speak with other important members of the Ultras Inferno as well, in order to collect additional information on their movement. I

considered the observation as participative because I sought to immerse in the Ultras Inferno vision of supporterism during those two days: I first went to their local before the game and sang while I was following the game in their bloc, I waved flags and behaved as all members in this section of the stadium do. After and before the game, I went to the Cosa SL and took part to celebrations or discussed on various subjects (including integration through supporterism). I have myself attended this stadium as a football supporter for many years (as I will explain in the next section). During these two matches, I was an observer aiming to contribute to academic knowledge on the subject of supporterism and integration: I realised my perspective was different because I was here to gather information, and noticed how I had not paid attention to some details in the past. Regarding all the elements I have just enounced, I experienced during this part of the field study the following actions participative observation may include, referring on this list provided by Mason: “You will be variously involved in observing, participating, interrogating, listening, communicating, as well as a range of other forms of being, doing and thinking” (2002, p. 4).

Finally, the consultation of various academic sources was important to identify the most relevant concepts to draw the theoretical map through which my research question was built. They also provided me strong bases for settling the context, which was enriched through statistical information collected via academic sources, websites of official Belgian entities (at both national and regional level), football clubs and supporter associations. In a least measure, press articles from various medias (mostly Belgian) served to complete the information collected through the other types of sources and a documentary about the Hell-Side allowed me to exemplify one aspect of my context.

3. Personal Ethical Issues

Reflexivity is an important epistemological issue for evaluating the relevance of findings in qualitative research (Iosifides, 2018). Snape and Spencer explain that “it is (...) important that researchers provide as much information, as possible, in terms of both technical details of conduct and potential bias, so that others can scrutinise the 'objectivity' of the investigation” (2003, p. 20). This is why I need to clarify my position: I am an active supporter of Standard de Liege and have attended practically all their home games in the stand that is occupied by Ultras Inferno and Hell-Side since I was 12 years old. I own a member card of the Ultras Inferno but have never participated in their activities. I always take a seat more or less 10 metres away from the bloc where the ultras group is located (it corresponds to the place formerly occupied by the Hell-Side, whose presence in the stadium is now very scarce). Of course, this position may have repercussions on my neutrality; I am a supporter of Standard de Liege, I sing during the games and develop a strong feeling of attachment and belonging to the club and its community. From Fillis and Mackay’s typology of supporters, I would define myself as a 12th man.

Nevertheless, I perceive this aspect as a contribution to this paper. Indeed, on the one hand, it allowed me to adopt the position of ‘insider’ and to not impact people’s behaviours on the field (Bray, 2008). This position also facilitated the finding of migrants who support the Standard de Liege and are affiliated to a supporter group. Indeed, it gave me a certain legitimacy to the eyes of Ultras Inferno and Hell-Side members I contacted to provide me participants for interviews or to share their knowledge about Standard de Liege supporterism. I do not think a researcher who never frequented their stand would have had that much positive and enthusiastic response for the same requests. Most of supporter groups are not very enthusiastic about the idea to share with media (as mentioned previously) or with researchers. This aspect also allowed me to be directed to the persons who detained specific knowledge about the precise information I was looking for. For example, when I introduced my project and asked to the former Ultras Inferno spokesman for an interview, he already knew my face because of my regular attendance to the stadium and accepted my request. Then, he advised me to also interview Jack because he knew more about Alerta Network and the Hell-Side. Moreover, Achermann explains that “marginalised persons rarely express their view towards outsiders and “experts” often only have selective knowledge about their lives” (2009, p. 57). From the perspective of supporterism practices, some of the interviewees can be considered as marginal because they acknowledge violence as a component of supporterism. Therefore, it is not an easy task to convince them to share about their personal experience. In this case, the contacts I already tied with members of both groups, and the knowledge I built through my attendance to the games gave me a certain legitimacy that outsiders do not have. It allowed me to have a better understanding of some specific words or expressions relative to supporterism which are not well-known by people who never gained interest in supporter groups or did not experience supporterism in contact with them (Bonnier & Tollhurst, 2002). This situation also allowed me to understand some references to the club’s history or to previous events involving supporter groups of Standard de Liege and to redirect the interview or to exemplify some of my questions by making reference to it.

On the other hand, I also felt like an ‘outsider’ while I conducted my participative observation and my interviews. Indeed, I did not go to the Cosa SL during one year and did not know more than 10 people there before asking for more information for my research. Moreover, as I never take a seat with the ultras group but sit ten metres away from them, I experienced what can be considered as an immersion into their supporterism practice. I realised at that moment how strong was the distinction between a 12th Man and a professional fan. I did not feel as close as I thought I would be; their investment and practices during the game were more expressive than mine. It allowed me to keep a certain distance and to not identify myself with their practice of supporterism. However, I did not feel one of the problems outsiders can feel when they conduct participative observation, which is to feel intimidated by the situation (McCurdy & Uldam, 2014). I am used to being very close to the ultras, and even if I saw that their practice of supporterism differed from mine, I was more surprised than intimidated by this situation, and it allowed me to observe the situation with more distance than I thought before starting my field study.

IV) Empirical Findings and Analytical Discussion

1. Contextualisation

It is essential to describe the context where the dynamics observed during the field study took place before moving through the analysis of the results collected. For this reason, this section will seek to highlight the history and main characteristics of Liege and Belgium and of the football club “Standard de Liege”: its supporter groups and some of the places and networks that are relevant for the current research. Moreover, I consider a part of my context as findings because some information regarding Ultras Inferno, Hell-Side, Alerta Network and Rebel Ultras were collected through interviews. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that information about Standard de Liege and super-diversity were mainly extracted from academic sources. In addition to these academic sources, the official website and Facebook pages of the different supporter organisations were consulted because it is almost the only written sources available dealing with their main purpose, values and history.

1.1 Understanding Diversity through Vertovec’s Conceptualisation

In order to describe the current and past history related to migration in Belgium and in Liege, I decided to use the concept of super-diversity introduced by Vertovec in 2007. Vertovec introduced this concept in order to describe the new, highly fragmented and complex diversity that could now be observed in the United Kingdom (Vertovec, 2007). It opposes the new, numerous multi-origin small groups of migrants living in the UK to the (past) conception of migrants originating from diverse, but large and coherent, groups (Vertovec, 2007). My understanding is that Vertovec’s observations of UK society in 2007 can be transposed to the situation now prevailing in parts of Belgium, including Liege. The term ‘diversity’ has been widely used by academics, often in reference to either country of origin or ethnicity. This unidimensional conception seems to ignore several other factors of comparison between individuals through which diversity can be observed in present day communities (Vertovec, 2007). His approach is even more relevant in the current context of migration, where we can observe some shifts in the nature of migration leading to what different authors have referred to as a process of “diversification of diversity” (Holinger, 1995; Martiniello, 2004). His development allows researchers to break with what was tackled by Zapata-Barrero as an “ethnicity primacy rule” (2019, p. 351). As a consequence, this dynamic encompasses different variables, such as the administrative status of migrants; their access to certain rights or facilities; their past experiences on the labour market but also their age, gender, spatial distribution and the dynamics which can emerge from mixed areas (Vertovec, 2009). As explained by Vertovec, super-diversity seeks to underline that “in addition to more people now migrating from more places, significant new conjunctions and interactions of variables have arisen through patterns of immigration (...) over the

past decade; their outcomes surpass the ways (...) that we usually understand diversity” (2007, p.1025). As my approach attempts to apply this conceptualisation to the context of Belgium and Liege, I will only focus on the variables retained by Vertovec. I also personally believe that they are the most relevant for studying the integration process of migrants.

1.1.1 Overview of Super-Diversity and Migration in Belgium

Belgium is a federal state of 11.376.070 inhabitants (Statbel, 2018). Regardless of its small size and population (its territory covers barely 30,528 km²), I believe that its society prime example of super-diversity. Despite its modest size, Belgium counts three official languages (French, Flemish and German). The repartition of the population by language spoken corresponds to geographical areas and can be represented statistically as follows: the Flemish Region represents a large majority (57,5%) of the total population, where the official language is Flemish; the Walloon Region (32%) uses French as first language, while in the Brussels-Capital region both languages are spoken (10,5%). The German community represent a very small minority (0,68%) of the country’s population and is located on a territory that is officially recognised as being part of the Walloon region (Statbel, 2018). In order to make those numbers understandable for everyone, it is important to note that with the federalisation of the country in 1993, the country has been divided between three regions (which are socio-economic entities), and three communities (Flemish, French and German speaking) which are recognised as cultural and linguistic entities (Martiniello, 2017). These division have not facilitated the unity of the country, and tensions have always existed between Flemish and Walloon communities. This conflict is still very present nowadays, with the result of recent elections showing an important part of Flemish residents willing to intensify the process of federalisation. The “New Flemish Alliance”, the party that collected the highest percentage of votes during the last federal election (20,3% for the whole population with 32,4% in Flanders [Blaise, Demertzis, Faniel, Istasse & Pitseys, 2014]), went as far as calling for the secession of the country and openly aims (in the long term) to declare the independence of Flanders (Martiniello, 2017). As a result of federalisation, diversification of diversity has occurred within Belgian linguistic communities, which were traditionally considered to be relatively homogenous groups, and new forms of collective identities have emerged and developed. New claims of regional and cultural identity have surfaced. For example, a sizeable proportion of Brussels residents do not want to be classified along linguistic lines, i.e. do not want to be considered to be either Flemish nor French speaking but foremost inhabitants of Brussels, a multicultural and multilingual city (M. Martiniello & N. Perrin, 2009). I will not go into further details of this complex situation. However, it is important to keep this tension in mind when approaching the more specific context of communities related to the football club Standard de Liege, as I will explain later.

If we look at diversity within Belgium population along the traditional lines of country of origin or ethnic background, Belgium has, since its creation in 1830, been a country of immigration. The country

has not experienced a negative migratory balance since the end of the 1980s, while this rate increased from 42.239 to 44.536 between 2016 and 2017 (Statbel, 2018). Presently, 11,7% of the total inhabitants of the country were not born as Belgian citizens, and migrants have contributed to 75% of the demographic growth in 2017 (Statbel, 2018). It is important to note that irregular migrants are not represented in those statistics, which makes us think that their impact on the demography of the country and their presence is probably even stronger. My aim here is not to give an exhaustive history of immigration in Belgium, but to outline episodes which are relevant to current research. I will start by briefly describing the migratory movements to Belgium that occurred after World War I. At that time, migrant workers (mostly originating from neighbouring countries) flocked into the country in order to fill a lack of workers. This wave was soon to be followed by a second one, consisting of migrants originating from Italy and Poland. During the crisis of the 1930s, immigrant flows were restricted by the Belgian state that had decided to slow down the recruitment of foreigner workers. In 1933, Belgium enacted the first legislation concerning migrant workers (Lafleur, Martiniello & Rea, 2015).

After World War II, the need for workers (principally in the coal mines) pushed the Belgian government to sign bilateral conventions with several countries, starting with Italy in 1946 (this convention provided for the migration of 50.000 Italian workers to Belgium). Later on, agreements with Spain (1956); Greece (1957); Morocco (1964); Turkey (1964); Tunisia (1969); Algeria (1970); and Yugoslavia (1970) followed suit (Lafleur, Martiniello & Rea, 2015). This list of countries already gives an idea of how diverse the residents in Belgium can be in terms of countries of origin. Once settled in Belgium, these 'first generation' migrants gave birth to a population that is referred to as 'second generation' or 'third generation' migrants. The countries of origin of the 'first generation' migrants are themselves varied in terms of culture, language and religion. Among the factors that led to an even more diverse population, as far as countries of origin and administrative status and rights, the introduction of the principle of free circulation for European workers in 1967 was key. Indeed, it made a first clear distinction between people from the countries recognised as members of the European Union and the others (Lafleur, Martiniello & Rea, 2015).

In reality, Belgium never ceased to be an immigration country, even if as a reaction to the oil crisis of 1973, the government took the decision to restrict immigration of individuals on the grounds of family reunification and of temporary workers in 1974. Subsequently, migratory balance turned negative from the early 1980s through 1989, because many people left the country as a reaction to these restrictive measures (Poulain, 1994). However, the migratory rate soon turned back to positive again, and new waves of migration brought an even more diverse landscape within migrants in Belgium. Indeed, free circulation within the European Union was extended to the whole European Union population in 1990, when it had been limited to workers before (Biourge, 2014). This changed and diversified the profiles between EU countries: EU migrants became more prominent in terms of numbers (51% of people born from another

nationality than Belgian are from a country of the EU [Myria, 2018]), and student migrants became more and more present in the territory (Lafleur, Martiniello & Rea, 2015). However, Belgium also attracted individuals from outside the EU countries who experienced political violence and sought refuge in Belgium. Recently, this particular impact on the diversity of origin country and the influence of external political conflict has been illustrated by the arrival of Syrian nationals in Belgian territory. In 2011, Syria was not ranked among the five most represented nationalities to which a resident permit is granted. A few years later, in 2016 they occupied the first position of this table, as a result of the civil war taking place in the country (Myria, 2018; see Appendix 6.3).

Another aspect of the diversification of migration journeys and profiles of migrants is reflected in changes in gender representation within the population of foreign origin in Belgium. The vast majority of the workers 'invited' to migrate to Belgium through conventions were males. As a result, they were slightly more represented than women within the migrant population, and the majority of women who were present in Belgium reached the country under the provisions of family reunification, or, alternatively, to perform low paid work, including as a result of human trafficking (Lafleur & Marfouk, 2017). This trend may still be present today, but significant changes have occurred in the gendered aspects of migration to Belgium: for instance, many males have also entered the country via family reunification (which today represents 50% of the justification through which a residence permit is accorded in Belgium [Myria, 2017]). More notably, more and more women are migrating independently. In terms of numbers, a slight shift occurred as well, with women now representing 51,4% of the migrant population in Belgium (Lafleur & Marfouk, 2017).

Migrants and their descendants living in Belgium have also clearly impacted the cultural landscape of Belgium, which was already diverse regarding the different linguistic communities. Perhaps the most significant example regarding this impact is the diversity of religion and the impact of international migration on the representation of various faiths in Belgian society. Today, Islam is considered to be the second religion (by order of followers). This situation is clearly influenced by first but also second and third generation of migrants as by example we can find a lot of Belgian-Moroccan or Belgian-Turkish people within the population. Islam has had such an impact among the Belgian population that it is now the faith of more and more Belgian nationals who have no foreigner heritage. This fact can be considered to be a result of the multiculturalism anchored in the country for decades (Martiniello & Perrin, 2009). Other cultural aspects of Belgian society bear the marks of multiculturalism such as food, music, clothes, art (as music, theatre or cinema), literature, and last but not least, sport. Sport is directly related to our discussion on supporterism and integration, and also impacted the number of foreign (or of foreign origin) professional athletes' representation in Belgium (Martiniello & Perrin, 2009).

The different dynamics highlighted in this section allows us to conclude that Belgian society can be considered as both a ‘multinational’ and ‘polyethnic’ context. Indeed, Kymlicka provides a distinction between two kinds of multicultural states: On the one hand, he explains that societies are considered as ‘multinational’ when “historical community, more or less institutionally complete” occupy “a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and culture” (1995, p. 11). In the context of Belgium, the different communities (Walloon, Flemish and German) and their distinct territory, culture and languages but also their legal recognition allows us to consider Belgium as a multinational society. On the other hand, the term ‘polyethnic’ refers to the diversity as a consequence of immigration (Martiniello, 2011). Kymlicka considers that this term can only be applied if immigrants from other culture are accepted by the society which “allows them to maintain some of their ethnic particularities” (1995, p. 14). As we explained earlier, some individuals issued from migration in Belgium, and their culture became accepted in the country. The most accurate example we previously highlighted is the question of Islam, which nowadays is the second religion in the country and is a good example of the anchoring of multiculturalism in the Belgian society (Martiniello & Perrin, 2009). Consequently, Belgium can be considered as a polyethnic society.

1.1.2 Main Aspects of Migration and Super-Diversity in Liege

The main dynamics underlying migration and super-diversity in Belgium can be applied to the context of Liege. However, I will highlight aspects that are specific of this city. With a population close to 200.000 inhabitants, Liege is one of the biggest towns of Wallonia and is also its economic capital (Martiniello, 2018). By his history, Liege is first of all a very atypical city compared to its counterparts in Belgium: it used to be a principality for eight centuries and was even a Republic during two years in 1789 (Martiniello & Stangherlin, 2018). The city is very attractive for individuals residing in other parts of Belgium, from neighbouring countries but also from other parts of the world. Its attractive character can be explained by its location (in the centre of Europe, and close to the boundaries with Luxembourg, Germany and Holland) and also by its political, social and economic history (Lafleur & Stangherling, 2016). Liege was one of the richest regions of the world during the industrial period through the strong concentration of coal, steel, glass material and weapon industries on its territory (Martiniello & Stangherlin, 2018). The city experienced multiple impressive migratory waves, such as the arrival of migrants during the Spanish civil war in the 1930s or the settlement of Mediterranean workers (mostly Italian) after World War II (Lafleur & Stangherling, 2016). This migratory wave was reinforced by the city’s economic and industrial development. It can be observed today, with Italians remaining the most represented foreigner community in the city (Ville de Liège, 2015). The city counts around 20% of foreigners within its population which represents the double the Wallonia average (Lafleur & Stangherlin, 2016).

During the last thirty years, the foreign population in Liege remained stable. Nonetheless, the profile of individuals settling in Liege changed significantly during that time. Both the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and the economic crisis of 2008 had an impact on the diversification of the population present in Liege. For instance, the number of Romanian nationals more than doubled in the six years following Romania's entrance into the EU. As a result of the economic crisis in South Europe, between 2007 and 2011, the number of Greek and Portuguese citizens in Liege also tripled, while the number of Italians doubled (Lafleur & Stangherling, 2016). Non-EU migrants in Liege should not be underestimated, even though statistically they represent less than the half of its foreign population. Non-EU nationals are more likely than EU nationals to apply for Belgian citizenship. In Belgium overall, the majority of individuals who obtained Belgian citizenship during the last decade were Moroccans (Statistics Belgium, 2017). Individuals who have become Belgian nationals are no longer represented in the statistical representation of the foreigner population. In the case of Liege, this particular population represents an important number of individuals: between 2011 and 2014, a total of 7,148 foreigners living in Liege acquired Belgian nationality (Lafleur & Stangherling, 2016).

The last three decades also saw the form and purpose of migration experiencing major modifications. As in Belgium overall, the number of migrant workers (who represented the majority of migrants after World War II) diminished to the benefit of, on the one hand, European citizens who benefited from the enlargement of the principle of free circulation and, on the other, migrants originating from countries suffering from political instability (Lafleur & Stangherlin, 2016). We can also observe from the numbers of the IWEPS⁴ (2013) that the commune of Liege is one that welcomes the highest number of asylum seekers in Wallonia: on 31st December 2012, 1,647 asylum seekers were registered in Liege, while the average for Wallonia was 63 (Lafleur & Stangherlin, 2016). Nevertheless, international migrations - i.e. "the installation of foreigners on the territory apart from the research for protection" (Lafleur & Stangherling, 2016, p. 197) - remains the primary form of migration in the city. It encompasses a large range of purpose of migration as studies, marriage or work (Lafleur & Stangherling, 2016). As was the case for Belgium in general, migrants strongly contribute to the slight demographic growth of the region by compensating the large number of emigrants (Lafleur & Stangherling, 2016) while the international migration rate of the commune is one of the highest of Wallonia (IWEPS, 2018).

Another aspect of super-diversity in Liege is the spatial distribution of migrants. I have not expanded on this point at a national level. In the case of Liege, transformations have occurred, even if Italian and Moroccan communities remain the most represented ethnic minorities in most neighbourhoods. A slight shift can be illustrated by the increasing number of French migrants settling in Liege, and who are most predominantly represented among foreigners in the centre of the city (French

⁴ Institut Wallon de l'Evaluation, de la Prospective et de la Statistique (Walloon Institute of Evaluation, Prospective and Statistics).

nationals in Liege enjoy a better socio-economic condition than other migrants, and are more heterogeneous regarding the purpose of their migration). Among the neighbourhoods which are most significant in the analysis of migration and diversity in Liege, Bressoux and Droixhe stand out because of their over representation of migrants coming from non-EU countries. A significant indicator of its demographic is its age composition: its young population (under 20 years old) which is far more represented in these neighbourhoods (Lafleur & Stangherling, 2016).

I will now outline the composition of the neighbourhood of Sclessin (home of the Stadium of Standard de Liege and Cosa SL). Historically, during the Industrial Revolution and after, this area was an important industrial pole for metallurgy and coal mines (Portugaels, 2004). It has therefore a strong cultural heritage from the migrant workers who settled there, and still has a strong representation of Italian and Moroccan inhabitants (related to the context previously detailed). Nowadays, this tendency can still be observed as in other locations of the region, but we still can attest of a shift in the representation of third country residents. Indeed, when we compare the most represented foreigner populations within this neighbourhood, we can observe a process of ‘Europeanisation’ in the last decade as the three nationalities occupying the head of this rank in 2002 were Italian (1033), Moroccan (72) and French (52), while in 2015 Italians still occupy the first position with 663 individuals while Moroccan went down to the fifth position (behind Congo which already occupied the fourth position in 2002), French (96) and Romanian (82) respectively occupy the second and third positions (Rebia & Jehin, 2003; Ville de Liège, 2015 [See Appendix 6.1 & 6.2]). Nevertheless, those statistics need to be analysed with precaution, as the process of naturalisation may minimise the statistical representation of foreigner origin populations, as it was previously explained regarding other statistics in Belgium and Liege.

1.2 Standard de Liege

1.2.1 The Football Club

The Standard de Liege, whose official appellation is based on its acronym (R.S.C.L.) which refers to ‘Royal Standard Club de Liege’ was founded in 1898/1900⁵ by a group of students from Saint-Servais College, located in the city centre of Liege. The name ‘Standard’ was inspired from the football club ‘Standard de Paris’, which was using this appellation as well; its first president was Joseph Debatty (Ethaïre, E., 2007). This section does not have the purpose of drawing on the sportive or managerial history of the club, but it remains relevant to highlight the importance of this club in Belgium: the club acceded to the first division after the season 1908–1909 before going to second division in the beginning of World War I. Then, the club definitely acceded to the first division in 1921 and was never relegated since then (Bilic,

⁵The year of creation of the club remains controversial as the official website and logo of the club mention the year 1898, but a recent research demonstrates that the club was officially founded in 1900 (Govers, B., 2018).

Capitaine, Delmotte & Leruth, 1998). After several relocations, the club settled in Sclessin in 1909. This neighbourhood is an ancient industrial neighbourhood which gives to the location a post-industrial setting in the middle of which the “Maurice Dufrasne” stadium is implanted (Louis, 2017). The stadium has a maximum capacity of more or less 30.000 seats, but the effective capacity was reduced to 27.670 in order to fit with the security requirements (standard.be, n.d.). Therefore, it has the third largest capacity in Belgium after the national and FC Bruges stadium (The Stadium Consultancy BV, n.d.; Clubbrugge.be, n.d.) while it remains second in terms of attendance in first division (Transfert Markt, n.d.). The club is considered as one of the most important in Belgium (with FC Bruges and RSC Anderlecht) and as the biggest club of Wallonia regarding both performances and attendance (it is the only Walloon club in first division to have ever won the Championship and the National Cup).

Beyond this aspect, an important dimension has to be taken into account regarding the subject of this research: the diversified profiles encountered in the stadium. The most notable example of this diversity is the representation of Flemish supporters among the season ticket holders. A statistic published in April 2018 by “La Famille des Rouches”⁶ indicates that the number of Flemish supporters represents one fifth of the season ticket holders (Schyns, 2018). This number is impressive regarding the Walloon origin of the club and the existing tension between Walloon and Flemish communities. This can be partly explained by the geographical proximity of Liege with Flemish cities but also by the fact that the club used to have an important number of Flemish players in its squad. Some of them have marked the history of the club and are considered as icons or legends for a large number of Standard de Liege fans (Martiniello in Louis, 2018). This example shows that football, in certain contexts, has the ability to unite people from various backgrounds who would not have encountered each other outside of football.

Nevertheless, this work does not deal with the existing tension between the two most important linguistic communities in the country but with migrants’ integration. As no statistics exist about the national origins of Standard de Liege supporters, I had to rely on my two participative observations on the field to demonstrate the diversity in terms of national origins which arises from Standard de Liege supporterism. I could observe that the population which was going to the stadium was diverse in terms of age but also in terms of origins. Even if the majority of supporters were Caucasian, it does not necessarily mean that they were all originating from Belgium. I observed that individuals from Mediterranean origin countries such as Italy, Morocco, Spain or Portugal (which all have migratory history with Liege) were also very present among Standard de Liege supporters. This observation was confirmed when I engaged conversation with some of them who were mostly second or third generation migrants. This aspect is also tackled by Marco Martiniello during an interview accorded to the magazine *Onze Mondial*, he explains that “we find this diversity in the stadium as well” while he argues that multiculturalism is also present within Standard de

⁶ La Famille des Rouches is a non-profit association which encompasses all the official supporter groups of the club all over the country. The association has a seat at the administration council of the club (Standard.be, n.d.).

Liege squad (Martiniello in Louis, 2017, p. 40). This presence of foreigner origins supporters can be understood as a result of the super-diverse context we find in Liege I previously explained. It is important to understand that the influence of supporterism on integration has been studied here in a context and a city where diversity and multiculturalism are very present (including within the context of football), which surely had an impact on my findings. It is worth nothing that the situation is not the same in every region and football club, and that unfortunately football is usually the scene of racism and intolerance of diversity through multiple forms. In order to be complete about the context in Liege, it is important to explain the development of a political trend within the supporter groups of Standard de Liege which more than probably, plays a role on the dynamics observed and was influenced by the population and mentality embodied in the city.

1.2.2 Supporter Groups Encountered

This section mainly relies on the testimony of several supporters encountered during my field study. Most of them are or were active supporters of Standard de Liege during a more or less extended period and provided me information which could not be found from other means. I completed the information extracted during those interviews with a documentary, webpages, academic sources and a report redacted by Manuel Comeron from the Fan Coaching.

1.2.2.1 The Hell-Side

The Hell-Side was founded in 1981 but it is not the first 'siders group' in Belgium, as this movement had already emerged by the end of the 70s in the cities of Antwerp, Bruges and Brussels. At its creation, the Hell-Side was mostly composed of very young (teenagers) individuals, which was not the case for most of the other main 'Belgian sides'. Therefore, in a first stance, they were not able to compete with more developed 'sides' in the country, and their expansion was partly influenced by this aspect. Indeed, at the occasion of a game opposing Anderlecht and Tottenham in 1984, the Belgian channel RTBF made a documentary about the O-Side (Anderlecht) in which their members explained that the 'siders groups' from Wallonia were amateur and that they are not considered as a serious threat (Jack, Appendix 3.3). Those statements pushed the Hell-Side to increase its number of members by asking to relatives if they would like to join the group: "And the week afterwards, we gathered all the buggers who hang around town, all the guys, all the jerks, you could bring in your classmates from school" (Jack, Appendix 4.11). In the following years, the group became known for its extreme violence, usually directed toward rival 'sides' but police as well. In the documentary *Hell Side '81 - Les feux du stade*, one of its members explains that "you are gonna hit him [the rival 'sider'], just once, and then you can leave him because there are fifty chaps following and they will beat the shit out of him. So you see, it's not a matter of hitting him just once or twice". This sentence gives us an idea about the groups' relation with violence.

This aspect can also be observed through their source of inspiration (for example, the movie *A Clockwork Orange*) they used to design some of their logos and stickers (see Appendix 8.1).

At its creation, the group defined itself as apolitical but was strongly influenced by the British model and some of its members clearly claimed their xenophobic, racist or nationalist ideology. Nonetheless, a shift regarding this aspect occurred at the turn of the 90s through the arrival in the group of a younger generation, interested in violence but in the sportive aspect as well. They came from different neighbourhoods (such as Droixhe, referred to earlier) and brought a diversification of Hell-Side's members in terms of origin country or nationality (Jo, Appendix 4.12). Benoit was one of them and explains this change through the following sentences: "The far-right guys were about to leave and then we came, we were kids of migrants, and... We were kids and we came from mixed neighbourhoods so had a different perspective on things" (Appendix 4.5). This change also influenced the actions of the group; they started to look more specifically for "Nazi skinheads" in order to fight, and we can consider this shift as a manner to mark the new ideology of the group (Jo, Appendix 4.12). We could also observe the presence of Flemish supporters (between 10 and 15% in 1992 [Le Soir, 1992]) within the group; we do not know if it was a new trend or not but it surely enlarges the diversity of profiles within the group. Around the same period, the social composition of its members was diverse as well. Indeed, Comeron lets us know that within its members (more or less 150), 41% were college students, 25% were workers (19% of workmen and 6% of employees), 21% were unemployed, and 5% did not benefit from any source of income (1991). Most of their members claimed to be antiracist; others referred to the appellation antifascist (more politically oriented), while some better liked to define themselves as apolitical (Comeron, 1997). Finally, as reported by Jo, the Hell-Side was not structured around any kind of hierarchical distinctions between its members. He tells us that it was "a very anarchical group on this level" whose sole (informal) rules were based on values of friendship (Jo, Appendix 4.12). This aspect marks one of the major distinctions which can be observed between the Hell-Side and the Ultras Inferno I will now detail the main characteristics.

1.2.2.2 The Ultras Inferno

The creation of the Ultras Inferno can be considered as an evolution of collective supporterism in Standard de Liege in terms of practices. Indeed, this ultras group was born in 1996, and its appearance in the Maurice Dufresne stadium is due to the wish of three supporters of the club (one member of the Hell-Side and two closely related to it; two of them with Italian origins) to approach supporterism from a different perspective. Its history started by the deployment of a banner on which the appellation 'Ultras Inferno' was written in reference to the Italian Ultras movement but with no intention to lead to the creation of a new group. This banner was very badly welcomed by some members of the Hell-Side and led to conflictual situations within the stand. I will not draw on this aspect I do not consider important for this study. With this in mind, the group started to develop and to clearly distinguish itself from the Hell-

Side as its practices relied on the codes of the 'Italian model' of supporterism through the animation of the stand with flags, banners, singings (initiated by a capo), pyros, and so forth. They were the first supporter group in Belgium which clearly based its practices on the Ultras movement and gave much more importance to the vocal or visual support of the team than the physical confrontation with the rival supporters (Trevor, Appendix 3.11).

As introduced earlier, their organisation differs from Hell-Side's as the group bases its structure and ways of functioning on what can be referred to as a 'meritocracy'. There is a clear hierarchy; the more important tasks or status are clearly assigned to specific members depending on their level of implication, seniority, charisma and authority. There is no vote or elections for assigning status; the president is designed by his peers (the actual one was designated by his predecessor without his consent but finally agreed). The most influential members share every day on the orientation of the group through a Facebook private conversation, and a reunion is organised more or less every two weeks⁷. The group is economically autonomous, and its financial resources arise from fundraisings, merchandising, bar receipts and the organisation of parties (Ultras Inferno, n.d.). They also can be considered as a counter-power, being able to sometimes create changes regarding the orientation of the club. Their point of view can be expressed through various actions, such as the deployment of messages on banners during and before the game, making a strike of support during the first minutes of home matches but also through more violent actions. For example, the previous president of Standard de Liege was not seen as appropriate for various reasons. It led to the invasion of the presidential box during a home game by the ultras in order to send him a clear message. At the end of the season, the president left the club and this decision was certainly influenced by supporters' actions (see DH online redaction, 2014; Le Soir, 2015). Ultras groups are considered, in some contexts, as the "syndicate of supporters" (Martiniello, 2017, p.163). I decided to rely on this example to show the potential influence this particular group can have on the management of the club. Therefore, we can imagine the impact they have regarding other supporters, more specifically in their stands (approached earlier as 'territory') regarding questions such as racism or fascism I will now develop.

The group claims to oppose to "football business" and to police repression through various actions within and outside the stadium (Ultras Inferno, n.d.). From the interviews conducted with Jack and Trevor, the main ideology of the group can be summarised through the following terms: fervour, fidelity, antiracism, antifascism and anti-homophobia (see Appendix 4.11). Most of those values can be observed on their logo (which includes the red communist star), tifos, flags, T-shirts and stickers, which can be found in Appendix 8.2. The group can also be characterised by its actions directly oriented towards refugees. Indeed, they are used to organise actions such as collection of funds, clothes and hygiene products for supporting the association BXL Refugees (which is a citizens' action group which supports refugees [BXL

⁷ Information collected through a conversation (which was not recorded) with the actual president of Ultras Inferno during my field study at Cosa SL on the 7th of August 2018.

Refugees, n.d.) or for helping the refugees from detention centres located in the region (see Appendix 8.2.2). Their sphere of action is not confined to this particular population as they annually organise similar events for providing support to associations dealing with homeless. They also spread their core values by other means such as the release of a video clip for celebrating the 15th anniversary of the group. The lyrics of the rappers taking part to it are very explicit and spread strong messages regarding their antifascist and antiracist ideology. For example: the rapper Mangouste refers to the “the positive energy to the multicultural”⁸ emanating from this group; the female rapper Pyskosa states “Fraction antifascist -Ultras Inferno- antiracist movement marked by the tifo”⁸ while the chorus says “Antifa regardless of skin color”⁸. This antifascist and antiracist mentality is also defended by Bruno Venanzi, the actual president of the club and can be exemplified through the following citation:

“With our Ultras, in Standard, there is an antiracism and an antifascism we can only be proud of! This is also a particularity we have comparing to other clubs in Belgium. On this point, we all make a stand: the direction, the players and the supporters. We will never tolerate that (racism and fascism), I want to be very clear on this point” (Van Damme, 2018).

In order to go deeper in the understanding of Ultras Inferno’s ideology and sphere of action regarding the question of racism and acceptance of diversity, it is important to introduce the different networks with which they are affiliated.

1.2.2.2.1 Antifascist and Antiracist Networks’ Affiliations

This small section focusses on two networks with which the Ultras Inferno are affiliated. They both seek to bring supporter groups from diverse countries (but mostly from Europe) together, with one common characteristic: the clear claim of being an antiracist and antifascist group.

The first one is called “Alerta Network” and regroups diverse antifascist and antiracist groups (24 to be precise [Alerta Network, n.d.]) from Europe but also from other countries of the world (such as Israel or Canada). It was created in November 2007 in order to struggle “against racism tendencies on the terraces” (Alerta Network, n.d.), a description of the network’s main guideline can be found on their website:

“We are awake: We fight against the repression that tries to destroy our culture, the Xenophobia we see on the terraces and the whole wrong situation in the surroundings of football. We understand our network as an [sic] growing idea, a spirit and a

⁸ Ultras Inferno translation.

movement, and so we are looking forward to more and more groups joining us in our fight” (Alerta Network, n.d.).

Alerta Network seeks to attain those objectives through the organisation of multiple actions as ‘Action Days’ taking place once a year. On this occasion, all the groups are invited to deploy a banner in their stadium related to a topic such as the support to refugees or the fight against homophobia (see some of the Ultras Inferno in Appendix 6.2). They also take part to more politically connoted practices such as taking part to riots against G20.

Before its creation, several antiracist and antifascist groups used to meet in events such as the ‘Mondiali Antirazzisti’ (whose first edition can be traced back to 1997 [Mondiali Antirazzisti, n.d.], the first participation of Ultras Inferno was in the early 2000s⁹) or the ‘Antira’ (also called Antiracist Tournament) which used to take place every year in Sankt Pauli (Hamburg) but is now organised every other year in the town of other groups affiliated to Alerta Network (Appendix 7 details the full programme of both 2012 and 2018 editions which, inter alia, presents the different supporter groups participating or activities such as an educative visit about migration in Hamburg). In this context, the Ultras Inferno developed strong links with some other supporter groups such as the Ultras Sankt Pauli (Hamburg), Ultras Hapoel (Tel-Aviv) and Gate9 (Nicosia). Those tight links became so intense that the appellation “Yobov” (which can be defined as “Communist Freaks”⁹) was invented in order to refer to the persons involved in the actual friendship between the two last groups cited and the Ultras Inferno (you will find a picture of a T-Shirt referring to it in Appendix 8.2.2).

The second network is called “Rebel Ultras” and is an online platform whose main goal is to centralise and exchange information about various antifascist and antiracist groups originated from several continents (South, Central and North America, Europe, Africa and Middle East). It currently encompasses 36 groups, and at the difference of Alerta Network some of them are very small (such as Quartograd whose club plays in the Sixth Italian division). Another distinction which can be made is that it does not lead to actions in the reality; its creation was clearly focussing on the communication between several groups sharing the same values. Beyond their opposition to racism and fascism, the groups affiliated to Rebel Ultras are also opposed to ‘Modern Football’ which is nowadays a common appellation within supporter groups all over the world to describe the strong development and expansion of football business during the past decades which (for the groups opposed to it) was, inter alia, followed by the increase of tickets prices, of control within the stadium and repression regarding the use of firecrackers but also of police brutality. Finally, their official webpage also includes a section dedicated to diverse news dealing with antifascism, antiracism and anti-modern football thematic (Rebel Ultras, n.d.).

⁹ Information collected through a conversation (which was not recorded) with several Ultras Inferno members during my participative observation at Cosa SL on the 7th of August 2018.

1.2.2.3 Gathering Places

I will now very briefly introduce here two locations considered as gathering places (near the stadium), first for supporter groups members but open to all supporters independently of their affiliation to a Standard de Liege's supporter group. The finding will allow us to determine if they can be considered as appropriate for influencing migrants' integration through supporterism or not.

1.2.2.3.1 The Fan Coaching

The Fan Coaching is a non-profit organisation which was born in 1990 from a socio preventive action research in Standard de Liege directed by the Criminology Section of the University of Liege in partnership with the Interior Minister, the city of Liege, the "French Community"¹⁰ and the Roi Baudouin Foundation (Comeron, 1996). Its main purpose consisted in decreasing violence and vandalism within supporters of the club through their social reintegration. In order to attain their objectives, they make their installation available to supporters. It was first located in the stadium under the appellation "Fan Home" but now settled in front of one of the entrances of the stadium (Province de Liege, 2017). They accompany and preventively oversee the supporters at every game, organise sportive activities, try to facilitate social reinsertion through judiciary and professional support and also organise meetings with the players and officials of the club (Kellens & Comeron, 1999). Through the years, they extended their main goals and activities to other populations such as homeless, refugees, primary school and college students with, inter alia, the projects "Kick-off" and "Homeless" which seek to develop social reinsertion and personal development through the practice of sport (Bruyneel, J., 2015). They also developed the project "Foot-Citoyen" permitting youths from different neighborhood of Liege to meet different professional corporations (Today in Liege, 2018), and organise weekly extracurricular support for primary school and college students (RTC Télé Liege, 2012). For the current research, I will partly rely on the experience of migrant supporters who spent time in their local at the time the organisation's main focus was the accompaniment and support of Hell-Side members.

1.2.2.3.2 The Cosa SL

In the course of the year 2001, the "Cosa SL" (for "Cellule d'Organisation de Spectacles et d'Animations"¹¹, the "SL" simply makes reference to "Standard de Liege") was founded. The Cosa SL is

¹⁰ "The French Community (named Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles) (...) exercises its powers in the Walloon provinces (except the German-speaking communes) and in Brussels" (Belgium.be, n.d.). It is worth noting that at the time of Fan Coaching's creation it did not respond yet to the appellation Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles.¹¹ Organisation of Show and Animation Unit.

¹¹ Organisation of Show and Animation Unit.

a non-profit organisation which has for purpose to give access to the Hell-Side and Ultras Inferno members to an independent meeting place to organise animations, stock the banners and flags of the group, organise meetings for settling future actions but also to programme events. It even had a small music studio where everyone (even non-supporters) could come to record. It is a local open to everyone, the only rules at its creation were the followings: people cannot come with weapons, violence and hard drugs are forbidden, and racism or every practice related to it was clearly not welcomed. Nevertheless, some Hell-Side's members did not follow this change, they considered the local was created for the Ultras Inferno and decided to keep gathering at the Fan Coaching (see Appendix 4.12 for more details). Nowadays, we still can find members of both groups (and others such as the RSCL Youth, founded in 2013) at the Cosa SL, even if all its administrators are members of the Ultras Inferno. The local is not the same either as the non-profit organisation was relocated more or less 500 metres away in the same street.

2. Main Findings

My findings encompass several points introduced in the theoretical framework in order to understand whether supporterism can influence the process of migrants' integration to the host society, but also to understand how and on which domains and dimensions this dynamic mainly occurs. It is important to keep in mind that the migrants encountered did not settle in Belgium at the same moment, with the same purpose or administrative status and with the same expectations about integration. This is why it is first important to comprehend their understanding of the word 'integration' and of the aspects they consider important to feel integrated. As this concept is open to interpretation, I think it was important to mix both academic literature on the subject but also the point of view of migrants who experienced integration in their daily life.

2.1 Migrant Participants' Approach of Integration

When we refer to the two very widespread approaches of integration introduced in the literature review, we distinguish integration as a 'one-way' versus a 'two-way' process. The first one focusses on the need for migrants to adapt to the host society which leads to a loss of their cultural habits while the second considers both migrants and the host society need to adapt to the situation in order to facilitate the process of migrants' integration. In this case migrants do not especially have to lose their cultural habits inherited from their origin country (Spencer & Cooper, 2006; Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas, 2016). From this first understanding, when I asked to the migrant interviewees their own definition of the term integration, six (out of thirteen) only tackled the need for the migrants to adapt to the host society, this sentence from Jonas is quiet representative of this taught: "Integration is to adapt. (...) To adapt to the way local people live (...) It is to live like them, to adapt to their way of thinking and to their culture" (Appendix 4.7). The others gave a more nuanced approach of this phenomenon. Four of them tackled the need to adapt to the

host society but specified it does not specifically lead to the loss of their origin country's culture, such as Ama who says:

“Integration is to arrive in a new society, to understand the way it functions, its rules, its laws and its values and to be able to do with it. Because we arrive as adults, we are already structured in our heads regarding values and education” (Appendix 4.9).

It is important to mention that his understanding is influenced by the fact that he arrived in Belgium as an adult. The age at the moment migration occurred will be an important variable to take into account as we will see later. Benoit is the only one to approach integration through the acceptance of diversity by the society and its inhabitants. He explains that:

“Integration is when (...) people call you by your first name when you don't feel anymore these hateful or even surprised glances, it is (...) when people look at you almost with indifference (...) you are integrated once people stop noticing you”¹² (Appendix 4.5).

Other interpretations remain interesting to mention, such as Ilyas', who explains this term is not relevant for him because of its appropriation by public and political debates: “For me it is a word constructed by media and politics, it does not mean very much” (Appendix 4.4). On his side, Ivan relies on a very interesting approach regarding the subject of this study as he underlines the need to find a common language to integrate (which, in our case, can be supporterism). He says, “I use this word to describe how you feel in the society you are not originated from. You have to find a common language or you will stay in the ghetto” (Appendix 4.8).

Besides this aspect, we also discussed the non-linear aspect of the integrational process, which was confirmed by the information raised during the field study. In order to exemplify it, the lived experience of one of the migrants encountered is particularly relevant and very atypical. Indeed, Benoit is a Congolese migrant of 48 years old and settled in Belgium at the age of three or four. The reason behind his migration is the impossibility for his parents to raise him, as he has nine brothers and sisters; his dad is a diplomat and found a stable solution in Belgium for him to grow up. Nevertheless, he does not know under which status he arrived but confirms that he was a regular migrant. Then, at the age of 13, he left with his dad and came back to Belgium around the age of 18 but as undocumented migrant. Five years later, he was expelled from the country and only came back eight years after his expulsion under the status of regular migrant with a residence permit. Benoit told me he did not remember to have experienced strong

difficulties regarding integration in Belgium during his childhood (we will refer to it as ‘period 1’ to make it simple). The ‘period 2’ (from 18 to 23 years old) was the complete opposite; his administrative situation restricted his access to a large number of integration’s core domains highlighted by Agger and Strang while in ‘period 3’ (above 31 years old), he went through a slow process which permitted him to feel integrated by the moment he found a regular job. This example reinforced the idea that the specificity and the path of every migrant strongly influences his or her manner to approach and to define the integrational process. I do not think it is a coincidence that Benoit was the only interviewee to define integration in terms of acceptance from the host society’s population. His story speaks for itself and reminds us that it would be a mistake to acknowledge a universal definition of the term ‘integration’. The other testimonies are also relevant in order to understand that the ‘one-way’ versus ‘two-way’ process approach is not always the appropriate distinction to take into account for categorising the various point of views about integration. Indeed, none of the migrant interviewees tackled all the components of the multiculturalist approach: Benoit mentioned the host society’s need to adapt but did not rely on the preservation of cultural habits, while the ones who mentioned it did not speak about the effort needed from the host society to adapt. Nevertheless, the ‘multiculturalist’ versus ‘assimilationist’ approach remains useful, as most of the interviewees tackled some of the points of distinction it introduces. Finally, Ilyas’ point of view should make us think about the limits of the term ‘integration’, which is commonly used but covers different meanings in the public debate.

2.2 The Impact of Supporterism on the Core Domains of Integration

If a general definition of integration cannot be taken for granted, some of the core domains which influence the access to it seem more relevant than others. Indeed, among the 13 migrants interviewed, 11 considered social bridging as an important factor to feel integrated in Belgium, while only one evoked social bonding, with the same number for social link. All the individuals encountered who did not master the basics of French language before arriving in Belgium considered language knowledge as important. Eight of the migrant interviewees pointed out cultural knowledge, six tackled the access to employment, four touched upon the access to education, and two mentioned access to healthcare and the importance of access to housing. Security (and stability) were not mentioned by the participants, even if those two dimensions may be influenced by the others.

2.2.3 Markers and Means

The information gathered during the interviews allows us to attest to supporterism’s influence on most of the markers and means of integration. The results are contrasted, but the dynamics observed already show an important influence of personal characteristics on the whole process.

Two of the interviewees explained that their contact with members of the Ultras Inferno helped them to find employment. One of them is Ricardo, a member of the Ultras Inferno since its foundation. He migrated to Belgium at the age of 14 and started to feel integrated from the moment he had a job and could earn money from it. When I asked him when he started to feel integrated, he answered:

“Maybe when I left school to start working (...) you earn 40.000 Belgian franc (...) when you convert it in Portuguese ones it is impressive (...) by that moment, I understood I could do something for me. Here I can set money aside, I can have more or less what I want” (Appendix 4.1).

Thus, employment can be considered as one of the most influential factors on his integration. Later in the interview, he explains that he once found a job through a contact encountered via a friend belonging to the Ultras Inferno. He also pointed out that it happened for another friend, but we cannot rely on this example to draw any conclusion (see Appendix 4.1). However, his investment within the group also had a negative impact on his access to employment, as he received prior warnings from his employer. He explains it through the following sentence: “I was not going to work because of football (...) from my 16-17 until my 27-28 years old, it was football before everything” (Appendix 4.1). The other interviewee who experienced the influence of supporterism on employment is Ivan, a political refugee from Russia who left because of his involvement in the political conflict occurring in Ukraine. In his case, contacts encountered via the Ultras Inferno helped him to find a job but not in the legality (see Appendix 4.8).

The results concerning the impact of supporterism on access to employment are contrasted and more examples would be needed to draw a clear conclusion about it. Nevertheless, we can observe that the influence can vary as supporterism can either affect or restraint the access to employment. In the case of the migrants I encountered, the positive impact of supporterism on access to employment remains limited to illegal jobs in one case but proved to be able to facilitate access to employment through legal means for another. For the latter, it was also possible to observe a negative influence of supporterism on his access to employment but this observation remains limited to his only case. In order to conclude on this domain, it is important to acknowledge that both Ivan and Ricardo could be considered as professional fans and members or close relative to the Ultras Inferno. Therefore, the only effects observed of supporterism on the access to employment occurred on migrants which were closely tied to a supporter group and very loyal regarding their support to the club.

The results regarding healthcare remain limited to the case of Benoit. He experienced a concrete positive impact of supporterism on his access to healthcare through some friends from the Hell-Side and Ultras Inferno. Indeed, his personal situation as undocumented migrant in ‘period 2’ restrained (or even prevented) his access to most of the services any regular resident can benefit from. The friends he

encountered through his affiliation to the Hell-Side permitted him to find a solution when he had to consult a medicine. When I asked him if those persons helped him to access to healthcare, he answered by the following sentence: “Yes, undocumented migrant means you have no access to hospitals through legal means (...) there was always a friend who knew a place or a medicine” (Appendix 4.5). Therefore, in his specific situation we can observe a strong positive impact of supporterism on his access to healthcare. It is also important to understand that he is the only migrant encountered which responds to the status of undocumented migrant, and thus is the only one who faced restrictions concerning access to healthcare. Consequently, he is the only migrant interviewee who could experience an impact of supporterism on this domain.

Supporterism also proved to have positive repercussions on the access to housing for two migrant supporters I interviewed. Ivan is the most accurate example within my sample. The interview I conducted with him took place in his habitation, which is the unoccupied house of the parents of a member of the Ultras Inferno. Indeed, he explained that:

“In a first stance the group helped me to look for apartments, it was very kind because at that moment I did not speak good (...) and after there had this house, this is the house of one of the man from the Ultras (...) it belongs to his parents” (Appendix 4.8).

I think this passage of the interview is quiet revealing of the important impact supporterism had on his access to housing. It is important to mention that Benoit faced a similar situation right after being regularised (‘period 3’) as he lived in the Cosa SL while he was looking for a place to settle. He did not feel fully integrated at this period even if his administrative status already allowed him a significant amelioration of his access to the markers and means of integration highlighted by Ager and Strang. It is worth noting that they are the only two migrant interviewees who pointed out the importance of housing for achieving integration. Indeed, most of the other participants to this research did not face that difficulty for various reasons such as the presence of family or friend in the country before they settled in Belgium. During the period studied they also both belonged to a supporter group and could be categorised as a professional fan.

Finally, supporterism’s influence on the access to education can almost be considered as inexistent amongst the migrant population encountered. The only case for which it is legit to question this aspect is Benoit’s, whose regularisation was partly influenced by his affiliation to the Hell-Side (I will draw on this aspect later). This development is based on the fact that Hell-Side members played a major role in his regularisation and that, as an extension to this situation, enjoying the status of regular migrant allowed him the access to professional formation. Nevertheless, this effect stays very scarce and because of his extensive character, I do not consider it as a direct effect of supporterism on the access to education. Moreover,

when I asked him if being a supporter of Standard de Liege had an impact on his access to education his answer was clear: “I will say no, but it was also because I was not looking for it”¹³ (Appendix 4.5). He justified this situation by the fact that as undocumented migrant it was hopeless to look for a formation as his status did not allow him any administrative registration.

2.2.4 Facilitators to Integration

Two main domains called “facilitators to integration” were already introduced in the literature review of this paper. The first one encompasses “Language and Cultural Knowledge”, while the second refers to “Safety and Stability” (Agger & Strang, 2008, p. 170). However, it sounds like evidence that the effect of supporterism on the different aspects just mentioned will be analysed separately. It is worth remembering that stability will not be taken into account for this research, as I explained in the literature review.

The first one is language knowledge and is obviously an important factor for integration in a new society regarding the fact that this aspect was mentioned by all the participants who did not know about French language before migrating. Ricardo is one of the migrants encountered who showed to have suffered the most on this aspect, he explains in the following sentence how difficult it is to integrate at 14 without any French language background:

“When you do not speak the language you are blocked (...) you enter in a bus or a train and you want to go somewhere, you imagine someone who just arrived here (...) with the ticketing machine they have in the train station (...) if he comes from a country where people do not speak French, how is he going to do ? You have to put yourself in the place of those people (...) put yourself in my place when I arrived here (...) there are African countries where people speak French, when they arrive here, they achieve to manage it. But a man who arrives and does not know one word of French, I can tell you, it hurts” (Appendix 4.1).

His development allows us to tackle here the importance of the origin country on the whole process of integration because the learning of French language does not apply to population originated from French speaking countries. The influence of supporterism on the learning of host country’s language has proved to be relevant in the current study. Within my sample, three individuals (out of five who did not speak French when they settled in Belgium) explained they improved their level of French language

by practicing with supporters they encountered through their support for Standard de Liege. This influence was very strong for Ivan as we can see in the following extract of his interview:

“I¹⁴: You have just mentioned the change in terms of culture, language, access to some facilities, and so on. Did the contact you tied through the support of Standard helped you in the access to it?”

R¹⁵: More or less all I knew in Belgium, almost 90% of what I know here happened through the Ultras.

I: For example, talking with them helped you to improve your French?

R: Yes, I speak a better French because I practiced, I met the people, people from music as well that I met through the group. Everything I experienced in Liege happened thanks to the Ultras” (Appendix 4.8).

Genaro, who was affiliated to Ultras Inferno and who still considers himself as a member of the group (even if he left the country) explains this similar influence through the following sentences:

“I: Did you know about French language before arriving in Belgium?”

R: Not at all.

I: Then, did the meeting with people in Standard, going to see the games in the bar or in the stadium allowed you to improve your knowledge of French language?”

R: Exactly! (...) When I started to go out with Belgians, I had to speak French. And then I improved every day” (Appendix 4.6).

In order to make the last sentence understandable for everyone, Genaro explains in the interview that before supporting Standard de Liege he was mainly going out with people from his country or region (respectively Italy and Napoli), and that when he started to support the club, his contacts with Belgians population increased (see Appendix 4.6). Ricardo explained to have experienced the similar influence Ivan and Genaro expressed but also that the Italian and Spanish population he encountered through supporterism helped him for being understood as their language was “a bit closer” to Portuguese than French. He also is originated from a touristic region and told me he knew a bit of Italian and Spanish which facilitated the comprehension between each other (see Appendix 4.1). Here Ricardo tackled the influence of social bridging through contact with communities which are not natives of the country of settlement. It is important to mention it and we will briefly come back to this point later when we deal more in detail with social bridging.

¹⁴ “I” for “Interviewer”.

¹⁵ “R” for “Respondent”.

The absence of supporterism's influence on language knowledge for the two participants who did not know about French language before settling in Belgium can be explained by the fact that they started to support Standard de Liege after acquiring a good level of French language. Therefore, their need for learning host society's language was almost void. It is worth noting that Genaro, Ivan and Ricardo were or are all affiliated to the Ultras Inferno. The three of them practiced supporterism for Standard de Liege (during the period studied) as professional fans or 12th Man (the two highest level of loyalty in Fillis and Mackay's typology). Nevertheless, it is not possible to certify that language knowledge improvement can only be observed for migrants belonging to those two supporter's categories as no participant entering in others lacked of French speaking skills when they started to support Standard de Liege.

If the effects of supporterism on language knowledge has just been observed for migrants who support their club with a certain level of loyalty, the influence on the sphere of cultural knowledge is even more revealing: Out of the seven migrants interviewed for whom supporterism influenced their integration, six said that spending time with friends who support Standard de Liege helped them to learn about the Belgian cultural practices. For example, Ilyas was living in Mons (now he settled in Liege) and one of the sub-sections of the Ultras Inferno is located in the Hainaut (where the city of Mons is located) which gave him the opportunity to meet Belgian people through their common passion for the Ultras movement. Indeed, Ilyas is an important member of the Ultras Winners (Wydad Casablanca) which is a well-known group in the 'ultras world'. He followed actively Standard de Liege during one season and during that period, his involvement for the club was identical to a professional fan's practice. However, he never considered himself as Ultras Inferno but as sympathiser of the group and Ultras Winners before everything. When he arrived in Belgium, the main difficulty he faced was loneliness, he explains it through the following words: "You know when you come from Africa and arrive here in Belgium you really feel alone... a really cruel loneliness, you don't know anyone, it is another country, another life" (Appendix 4.4). The links he tied through Standard de Liege supporterism helped him regarding two main domains of integration: first, fighting loneliness through social bridging and making friends originated from the host society and as a consequence to it, learning about Belgian culture. He explains it from the following words:

"I am a devout Muslim, my mom's family is quiet catholic, they are from the Ardennes (...) they lived in the campaign (...) it changes when you live with people from Liege, you discover their passion for alcohol, the way they go out, their way of life, the cheerfulness of Liege inhabitants (...) yes, culturally it is very very interesting to meet those people, to see that there are welcoming people in Europe" (Appendix 4.4).

This extract from the interview tackles some of the cultural particularities of Liege extracted from the lived experience of a migrant. Even if Ilyas was born in Belgium, he left the country to Morocco when he was aged eight months, consequently he can be defined as migrant because he "moved across an

international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence” (International Organization for Migration, n.d.), and his case is relevant for the current study because leaving the country at an early age made him face the same difficulties migrants encounter when they settle in a foreign country, even if he benefits from some facilities as he obtains Belgian Citizenship. Ilyas’ description of those particular traits of Liege permits us to draw on the context within which the different dynamics analysed in this work occurred. Indeed, Liege is a city where its inhabitants claim a “distinctive character” which they usually lack to clearly define (Martiniello, 2018, p. 202). Nevertheless, Ilyas may have tackled some of its main characteristics as the city is known for his parties (even outside of Belgium) but also for his very welcoming aspect. However, this aspect in the context of migration goes in my sense beyond the simple idea to say that people from Liege like to party and to welcome any strangers. Indeed, its multicultural and super-diverse composition clearly influences some people’s understanding of diversity, this passage from the interview of Genaro allows us to have a better understanding of this aspect, which in this case deals with the Italian community in Liege:

I: Have you ever been victim of racism in the context of football in general or more particularly in Liege?

R: No, not at all! Especially in Liege (...) Liege is really an amazing Italian immigrant city.

I: Yes, it is true that there are a lot of Italians in Liege...

R: Yes, we are almost the majority” (Appendix 4.6).

What I find particularly revealing in this extract is when he says that he did not face racism, especially in Liege. Genaro lived in Brussels too (which also can be approached as a super-diverse city) but he especially points out that in Liege, the chances would be very limited for him to be confronted to racism. Genaro also expresses the idea that Italian are almost majoritarian. I think it has to make us reflect on the different profiles of migrants encountered. Indeed, as it was explained in the context, the strong concentration of Italians and Moroccans (like Genaro and Ilyas) in Liege is not a new phenomenon, their representations in the city concerns different generations and both of their culture had repercussions on the city’s culture. I will not develop more on this aspect as I already described its main components. I would advise to any reader interested by the dynamics of diversity and multiculturalism in Liege to refer to the large panel of literature provided by academics from the CEDEM (Centre d’Etudes De l’Ethnicité et des Migrations)¹⁶ such as Marco Martiniello or Jean-Michel Lafleur I refer to in this paper.

That being said, my purpose here is to underline the fact that we must be careful in the way some communities may be welcomed or may evaluate diversity in Liege compared to others. This is why the following example retained to highlight the influence of supporterism on cultural knowledge is the only one I observed on an interviewee originating from a non-European or not highly represented nationality

¹⁶ Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies (translation: CEDEM).

in Liege. This example is the one of Nicolas; he is a Togolese political refugee who came alone in Belgium as he received threats because of his implication in protest movements. He is the only interviewee who has been impacted by supporterism on the core domains of integration but for who this influence did not play a major role in his integrational process. He is also the only one who experienced supporterism's influence on the core domains of integration as situational fan and without being affiliated or closely related to any supporter group. He explains in the following sentence how supporterism impacted his cultural knowledge of the host society:

I: Then, going to watch Standard really helped you to discover the Belgian culture but also the one from Liege?

N: Exactly, being able to meet way more people... the most important is to meet people and to see their way of thinking because whatever we say, it is different (...) for example, when I go watch the game with my Togolese friends, I know how to dress. But when I go with the others, I know how to dress as well because I will be different" (Appendix 4.3).

This example is important because it demonstrates that the influence of supporterism on cultural knowledge is full of resources and can occur with very different profiles regarding country of origin, level of loyalty to the club and affiliation (or not) to a supporter group.

The impact of supporterism on safety turned out to be way more nuanced than I taught. Indeed, Agger and Strang's theorisation pointed out the need for refugees (here applied to migrants) to feel that their environment is "peaceful" (2008, p. 183). In the current study, the cases of Ivan and Benoit proved the need to adapt Ager & Strang's understanding of safety in the context of migrant supporters taking part to violent actions. I will now highlight this aspect through the case of Benoit which allowed us to go beyond Ager and Strang's theory. Indeed, in 'Period 2', Benoit did put himself in danger because of his practice of violence in the context of football. Benoit was a very active member of Hell-Side and participated to a lot of fights against rival 'sides', then, he was purposely dealing with an unpeaceful environment while on the other hand he explained to feel safer with the group. During his interview we tackled more in detail the different ways to feel safe or unsafe, three dimensions were extracted from this reflection: physical security, psychological security and legal security. In my sense, the following passages highlight as much unexpected findings as his profile is atypical:

I: Did you experience situations where you felt unsecure? Physically or mentally...

R: (...) during the second period yes (...) as an undocumented migrant you know the risk you can face at any moment... by the way I got caught many times... until being expelled (...) when I was going to see the games (...) there usually had altercations (...) I was not

hiding (...) the fact of being undocumented sent me to jail many times and more than that because I was a bit unruly at that moment” (Appendix 4.5).

I: During your ‘Hell-Side period’, when you were with the group, did you feel more physically, psychologically or legally secure? With the members of the group more than when you were not with them?

R: I was feeling safer with them.

I: And have you ever felt physical insecurity in Belgium?

R: No (...) not in Liege at least.

I: (...) you told me that you felt more in security with the group, can you tell me on which point?

R: At least within the stadium, I felt physically safe (...) legally too (...) because it was a crowd, the police was far even if I was easily identifiable. They still had to reach me (...) it would not have happened like....

I: Like if you were alone in the street and submitted to an identity check?

B: Yes, yes” (Appendix 4.5).

From those two extracts, varying effects of supporterism on security can be observed. First, Benoit’s practice of supporterism had a negative impact on his security, in both physical and legal dimensions. From this statement, the legal aspect was more a concern for him as his actions sent him to jail and lead to his expulsion. The negative impact on his physical security is more nuanced as he states that he never felt insecure in Liege but his phrasal also includes the idea that he did not in other locations which were unfortunately not explicitly detailed during the interview. This is here his own feeling regarding violent situations which is tackled but regarding the facts, any supporter which acknowledges fight against others puts himself in physical danger. Therefore, we can attest that, one the one hand, his legal security and his physical security were put at risk. On the other hand, we cannot say that his security on a psychological level was negatively influenced as he never mentioned such influence during the interview. Ivan also experienced a negative impact on his legal security because he never accessed to Belgian citizenship and may be expelled in case of problems with justice due to riots or fights with other supporter groups (See Appendix 4.8). It is also worth noting that his physical security was put at risk for the same reasons as Benoit. Nevertheless, both Ivan and Benoit did not seem particularly affected by this situation of ‘physical insecurity’, it even led to positive repercussions on Benoit’s psychological security as I will explain now.

Indeed, supporterism also showed to have a positive repercussion on Benoit’s security. Regarding the physical dimension of security, he explains that he never felt in physical insecurity in Liege and then, it is not possible that supporterism increased his feeling of physical security (because it was not needed). The situation is much clearer regarding the psychological aspect. Indeed, he explains that fighting allowed

him to not think about the problems he could face in daily life: “I: Was it an activity which allowed you to think less about everyday problems? R: All my problems (...) as I was undocumented it allowed me to release my anger too” (Appendix 4.5). This answer highlights the idea that some supporters’ practice of violence allows them to momentarily psychologically feel safer as they just do not focus on thoughts of insecurity. Of course, this effect does not have repercussions on the long term but only within the context of football games/fights, therefore football can provide a safer environment in a very different way than approached by Agger and Strang who characterised it by the term “peaceful” (2008, p. 183).

The same impact but through a practice of supporterism and a situation which gets closer to Agger and Strang’s explanation was also observed in the case of Ricardo, who started to frequent a supporter group as a teenager with the Hell-Side (but without taking part to any violent act) before the existence of the Ultras Inferno. His first year in Belgium was very difficult, we already tackled some aspects of it earlier, some part of the interview really reflect the fact of being able to not think about daily life thanks to the support for Standard de Liege. First, he said, “When Standard was playing and that I could go (...) I was breathing a bit” (Appendix 4.1). Then, when I asked him if meeting the Hell-Side during the weekend made him feel in a safer place than others where he felt less (psychologically) safe (such as school), he answered by the following words: “Yes, because I was welcomed by the good persons” (Appendix, 4.1). Ilyas also experienced a positive impact on psychological security as he says: “During the week we were having drinks together, if I was not feeling good I knew they would check up on me”. As it was previously mentioned his links with the Ultras Inferno helped him to fight loneliness which is, in my sense, directly linked to psychological security. I found important to point out their experiences as well in order to show that the power of supporterism on psychological security was not inclusively observed in a context of violence. I think this point confirms the considerable need to approach leisure activity as an important area of integration which permits individuals to escape from stressful situations. Supporterism is one of them, and the extracts related in the previous paragraphs only reinforce an already spread idea about the implication of such activities on migrants’ integration (see Horolets, 2012; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009).

I will now go back on the case of Benoit, for whom supporterism played a major role regarding his administrative status, and consequently, legal security. Indeed, we can already observe in the previous citations mentioned in this section that when he was surrounded by the crowd in the stadium, he felt less vulnerable than out of this context which is a first clear but ephemeral positive influence of supporterism on the feeling related to legal (and psychological) security. Moreover, a very important aspect has not be detailed about his personal history yet: When Benoit was expelled from Belgium, it created a strong emotion among his close friends (which were for a very strong majority members of the Hell-Side or close to it). As a consequence, they all tried to find solutions to regularise him till to he finally came back eight years later. They even supported him financially in order to pay his plane back to Belgium, he explains this experience through the following sentence:

“B: It helped me so much that it is thanks to all those people that I could be regularised (...) people brought their financial contribution, organised events to raise funds so I can pay my plane ticket (...) they were all people I knew from Standard.

I: So, without those people....

B: I would not have come back here” (Appendix 4.5).

What is very interesting in the case of Benoit regarding the legal security is that grouped supporterism had both positive and negative consequences on his status and process of integration. On one side, it led to his expulsion of the country which means that it literally cancelled all his chances of integration in Belgium during 8 years. On the other side, it helped him to come back with a status (regular migrant) which strongly influenced his integration in Belgium. Indeed, the main aspect he considers important to integrate in a new society is the access to administrative services he did not have access to when he was undocumented; and the help provided by other members of the Hell-Side clearly impacted his legal security and access to administrative services in Belgium. Unfortunately, he did not wish to go into the details of his regularisation for personal reasons I respect, even if it may have provided more elements to attest of the positive effect it had on his integration.

I would like to emphasise one last thing: The three dimensions of security highlighted in this section were naturally invented all along the interview with Benoit. It allowed me to rely on them for the interviews which were conducted after and permitted to think about it for the previous ones (for example, for Ricardo’s). Legal security clearly relies on the situation of irregular migrants or refugees but I still found important to take it into account for this study I consider as exploratory. We also need to acknowledge that on some points the legal and psychological dimensions of security tend to overlap in the case of undocumented migrants or refugees. The psychological security only relies on the feeling of the individuals while physical and legal security can also be observed through facts, without taking into account the perception of the individuals concerned.

2.2.3 Social Bridging and its Implications

Over all the domains of integration retained for this work, social bridging showed to be the one we encountered the most in the context of Standard de Liege supporterism. Indeed, all the migrants interviewed for who supporterism influenced the access to one or several core domain(s) of integration said that supporterism allowed them to experience social connections with host society’s population. The interviews proved that most of the social connections tied through supporterism took place with natives and none of the interviewees referred to social bonding as an important matter in the process studied. The original meaning of social bridging (as contact with other communities) allows us to understand that in the

specific case of Ricardo, social bridging with people issued from other non-native communities helped him to overcome his difficulties regarding the mastering of French language. Nonetheless, this is the only case which mentioned it so it cannot be considered as a significant result regarding this study. Therefore, in the current study, social bridging refers to social connections between migrants and natives. Regarding the large number of interviewees who experienced social bridging through supporterism, the supposition that supporterism makes room for social bridging can be confirmed. Most of the social connections developed by migrants with natives in the context of supporterism showed to not remain limited to a few contacts but to lead to the building of a whole sphere of close relatives in the arrival society. Several extracts of interviews are very revealing about this aspect:

“My real friends I met them at Standard” (Ricardo, Appendix 4.1).

“All the friends I have in Belgium now, it is thanks to the Standard” (Jonas, Appendix 4.7).

“I was working like crazy for University, I met some friends but (...) it was not ‘super-friends’ and the Ultras Inferno helped me to integrate on that level. I had friends, I had activities to do with them, I knew what I was going to do during the weekend (...) it was really a family for me (...) this is why I referred in the beginning [of the interview] to a host family” (Ilyas, Appendix 4.4).

Moreover, for all the migrants who experienced influence of supporterism on the core domains of integration they considered important regarding their personal situation, social bridging proved to be the key which opened access to it. Indeed, during our analysis of supporterism’s influence on the core domains of integration we can clearly observe that all its impacts occurred through social bridging. This influence of social bridging could be observed on the following domains: access to employment, housing, healthcare, cultural knowledge, language knowledge and security. In one specific case it also allowed regularisation leading to an improvement on the access to administrative institutions (social links).

In order to go further in the understanding of how those influences took place, it is important to explain the several ways through which migrants supporters made first contact with native supporters of Standard de Liege. The reasons behind it are diverse but we can clearly attest of a significant influence of the political/ideological orientation of supporter groups for some of them: Ivan, Jonas, Genaro and Ilyas all stated that their decision to encounter the Ultras Inferno was influenced by their position about racism, xenophobia and fascism. Most of them were already affiliated to other supporter groups defending similar ideas, and it facilitated first contact with the Ultras Inferno. Ilyas got in touch with the Ultras Inferno through his attendance to a game in Charleroi when the team celebrated his first championship win since 25 years, he decided to take a ticket for a game of Standard de Liege as he considered Ultras Inferno as

one of the most important ultras group in Belgium. Then, he said that he spoke with some of its members which led to other meetings with the group. Jonas sent an e-mail to the Ultras Inferno and they redirected him to a member living in Brussels. Ivan used Facebook to get in touch with the ultras group and for him the political aspect was primordial as he explained in the interview that he started to go to the stadium when he was living in Russia because of the political orientation of some supporter groups. In his view, the sportive aspect does not matter but he still considers himself as supporter of Standard de Liege regarding its 'supporterist' practices. On his side, Genaro encountered them through the previously introduced network "Rebel Ultras" which shows here its ability to create contact between different antifascist/antiracist groups members (Genaro is member of Tifoseria Quartograd which also belongs to this network). It is worth noting that the other interviewees encountered native supporters through the attendance to the games (inside and outside the stadium) but also via common friends or relatives. These different examples show how diverse are the channels which can be mobilised in order to get in touch with other supporters. It also shows that the stadium and bars are appropriate locations for meeting between migrant and native supporters.

However, both Fan Coaching and Cosa SL appeared to be accurate gathering places for migrant supporters who did share a particular interest in grouped supporterism. Indeed, if places such as bars or the stadium were mentioned by various profiles regarding Fillis and Mackay's typology and affiliation (or not) to a supporter group, the only supporters I interviewed who frequented the Fan Coaching and/or the Cosa SL were already in contact with Standard de Liege supporter groups members before frequenting those two gathering places. Most of them attached a certain interest in participating in the supporter groups' activities and corresponded to 12th man or professional fan regarding Fillis and Mackay's typology. Nonetheless, it is important to remember those two locations are open to any supporter, but not knowing about their existence may be the reason why some of the interviewees never accessed to it. Even if they did not prove to be locations where first contact between migrant and native supporters occurs, they remain locations where social bridging can gain in intensity through the active participation to supporter groups' activities or through the simple fact of exchanging with people from a different community. However, it cannot be considered as much inclusive as the stadium or bars. It is worth mentioning that all the interviewees considered the gathering places they frequented while attending to a game (the stadium, bars, the Cosa SL or the Fan Coaching) as favourable to intercultural exchange.

That being said, it is worth mentioning a particular aspect about a specific value of supporter groups: the notion of solidarity. As I explained in the literature review, Bourdieu refers to solidarity in his explanation of social capital, he says that "the profits which accrue from membership in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible" (1986, p. 51). In the current study, solidarity between members of a supporter group proved its ability to impact migrant's integration. We could observe it in the case of Benoit we previously mentioned for whom a strong solidarity from Hell-Side members led to

his returning in Belgium eight years after being expelled. The values of solidarity within the supporter groups also proved to be important for Ricardo who relies on this aspect in the following sentences:

“I remember four years ago (...) my uncle died (...) I received the news in the morning, with Facebook it spreads fast. The next morning I left the job and came here, four friends were waiting for me in front of the door to know if I needed something (...) there are moment where you do not expect that (...) when you are (...) in troubles (...) there is the group behind you who will organise fundraising for example. It was the case with a guy who had problems with justice. We are behind him (...) I am used to drink three or four glasses of Coca-Cola during match attendance, but in this situation I will drink one and not eat” (Ricardo, Appendix 4.1).

I think those words speak for themselves and clearly tackle solidarity within Ultras Inferno as an embodied component of the strong social ties which can emanate from grouped supporterism. Hell-Side also proved to have particular characteristics regarding solidarity such as not leaving a friend getting beaten up but I do not think this aspect needs more specific development. My purpose here is to tackle solidarity as a component of supporter groups which permits to increase the strength of friendships (and consequently, of social bridges tied through supporterism) on the long term.

Social bridging through supporterism also allowed to some interviewees the development of a certain feeling of belonging to a community. Indeed, all the participants who experienced social bridging through supporterism said that supporting the club with other supporters increased their feeling of belonging to ‘Standard de Liege community’ or, in a more restricted way, to the Hell-Side or Ultras-Inferno community. Nevertheless, only one of them said that it allowed him to increase his feeling of belonging to the Belgian community (see Genaro’s explanation in Appendix 4.6) and with the same number regarding the city of Liege (see Cesar’s development in Appendix 4.10). The scarce results on the feeling of belonging to the community of Liege have certainly been influenced by the fact that I did not pay enough attention to this possible influence during the interviews; it constitutes the main regret I have regarding the way I gathered information for this research. It is worth noting that some interviewees who did not experience social bridging through supporterism also felt to belong to ‘Standard de Liege community’ which, consequently, does not exclusively relies on social bridging. Ilyas pointed out an interesting development when I asked him if he felt integrated in Belgium:

“First what is Belgium? (...) is a Walloon integrated for a Flemish? Not necessarily, he does not even understand what he says... for someone from Brussels it will mean something else, the same for a German-speaker (...) for me Belgium is a very complicated country” (see Appendix 4.4).

This development can be put in parallel with the concept of local integration. The feeling of belonging I explained above is linked to Standard de Liege (or one of its supporter groups) community and can consequently be considered as taking place at a local level. It is also interesting to observe that if most of the interviewees who experienced the influence of supporterism on social bridging saw repercussions on their local integration in Liege, it was not the case for two of them. Indeed, supporterism allowed to Genaro and Ilyas to tie friendships with natives living in the respective cities of Brussels and Mons. We already mentioned the way it happened for both of them but I found interesting to highlight that supporting Standard de Liege has the ability to influence local integration in other cities. This can be explained by the much diversified fan base of the club which can be found all over the country.

It is also worth noting that this study permits us to attest of an influence of social bridging on social bridging. Indeed, almost all the interviewees who experienced social bridging through supporterism (with the exception of Nicolas) told me that since the moment they first met native supporter(s), it allowed them to encounter more because they got introduced by this (or these) first contact(s) to other native friends. We can refer here to some kind of 'snowball effect'. However, this result also has to be nuanced as all of the interviewees who experienced this effect could be described as 12th man or professional fans and were affiliated or close to the Hell-Side or Ultras Inferno. It can be exemplified by the extract of Ivan's interview we previously relied on who explains that his relation with Ultras Inferno allowed him to encounter more people, even out of the context of football (in his case music; see Appendix 4.8). Nevertheless, I do not consider this observation as a sufficient reason to exclude of future researches this potential influence on other types of supporters.

2.3 Impacts on Integration

This section does not need a lot of new explanations, I think that most of the main dynamics observed during my field study were detailed in the previous sections. From those developments, we can attest of an influence of supporterism on integration depending on various factors such as: migrants' origin country and administrative status but also the context and mostly migrants' practices of supporterism regarding Agger and Strang's typology and their affiliation (or not) to a supporter group. Indeed, it could be observed that migrants' administrative status played a certain role in their needs regarding the different domains of integration. For example, regular migrants did not face difficulties regarding access to some institutions (such as healthcare services) while the only undocumented migrant I interviewed did experience a strong need for social links. The origin country was also determinant regarding migrants' need to learn a new language. As explained earlier by Ricardo, the migrants originating from non-French speaking countries will face more difficulties to communicate or to manage everyday life's component, such as ordering a train ticket. The context proved to be important for some migrants as the ideology of

the supporter groups of Standard de Liege oriented their decision to support this club. When we take a look at the table summarising my results in regards of every migrant's profile (see Appendix 1.1), we can observe that loyalty in terms of 'supporterist' practices and affiliation (or not) to a supporter group have a significant impact on the process studied. Regarding the four dimensions of integration from Heckman's theory, we can observe that all of them were tackled at some point in this research.

Social integration is the dimension which proved to be the most impacted by supporterism. Indeed, the migrant participants who experienced supporterism's influence on integration could all attest of its positive impact on social connections in the host society (mainly providing social bridges). It was also possible to observe that the social connections resulting from supporterism allowed some of the interviewees to tie strong friendships with other supporters, and that in some cases it got extended to a large sphere of close relatives. It is also worth noting that supporterism gave the opportunity to some migrant supporters to participate to voluntary activities in associations (that Heckmann cites as an example of social integration) through the affiliation to a supporter group. All these observations permit to attest of a significant influence of supporterism on the social integration of migrant supporters of Standard de Liege.

Regarding cultural integration, a large number of interviewees said that encountering natives through supporterism allowed them to increase their knowledge of host society's culture, three even explained it made them adapt their behaviour on this aspect which is particularly in adequacy with Heckman's theorisation. Indeed, Genaro explained: "thanks to football, I learned to know Belgians, to do things in the Belgian way" (see Appendix 4.6). As noted earlier, for Nicolas the results are more oriented to one particular cultural practice which is the dressing codes (see Appendix 4.3). In the case of Ivan, the changes in terms of cultural practices were more related to the warmth of the inhabitants of Belgium comparing to Russia such as the way to greet people (see Appendix 4.8). It is worth mentioning that Nicolas can be considered as a situational fan from Agger & Strang's understanding. Therefore, these observations permit to attest of an impact of supporterism on cultural integration independently of migrants' level of loyalty in terms of supporterism's practices.

As we could see in the previous section, the effects of supporterism on the identificational dimension remain limited to a local level and was not observed regarding ethnic or national aspects Heckman refers to. Nevertheless, I still consider supporterism influenced this dimension as the feeling of belonging to a community is, in my sense, tackling migrants' identities. In this case, it is worth remembering Stone's development who says that "football can impact a sense of belonging (...) if it is an important part of one's constructed self-identity" (2013, p. 70). Then he refers to 'us' versus 'them' terminology as an indicator for observing this effect. In the current study, all the participants referred to this distinction (even the ones who did not experience supporterism's influence on their integration) which, in my sense, proves that supporterism in Standard de Liege clearly tackles supporters' identity, which in our study focuses on

migrants. It is also worth noting that the effects of supporterism on these three dimensions were only observed as facilitating their access and never as restricting it, contrarily to structural integration.

Indeed, the structural dimension was influenced in both positive and negative terms but only relies on the experience of one specific case. On the one hand, Benoit experienced a positive influence of supporterism on his status regarding Belgian institutions thanks to the help provided by Hell-Side members to allow his returning to Belgium. On the other hand, supporterism was at a certain moment a limitation to structural integration as he got expelled of Belgium because of his violent behaviour in the context of supporterism. Therefore, it cancelled his chances to see his status evolve during eight years. In this study, the influence of supporterism on structural integration remains scarce but can also be explained by the fact that Benoit is the only interviewee who suffered from a lack of recognition from the state regarding his situation as undocumented migrant.

As a consequence, from these developments, we can say that supporterism does have the ability to influence social, cultural, identificational and structural integration of migrants within the Belgian society. This influence depends of diverse factors and could be observed on high or small numbers of individuals. I will now summarise those observations through a schematic representation of my findings I decided to call 'The Migrant Supporter Sphere of Integration'.

3. The Migrant Supporter Sphere of Integration

In order to summarise my findings, I drew what I decided to call the 'Migrant Supporter Sphere of Integration'. This figure does not seek to schematically give a universal representation of the reality but to highlight the main findings concerning the different aspects of integration through supporterism which could be tackled during this specific research. It is worth remembering it only relates on the atypical case of Standard de Liege and on my sample and should not be generalised to a wider population. Nevertheless, as my research is exploratory, it remains an interesting starting point for future research on the subject.

The way I designed this sphere was mainly influenced by the central character of social bridging's influence on the core domains of integration. Indeed, in the current study, supporterism proved to provide a favourable context to integration through social bridging. As one can observe, social capital was withdrawn from my schematic representation. This is due to the fact that social bridging is one component of social capital and constitutes one of the core elements of my development. Therefore, it became useless to refer to social capital in general terms as social capital also encompasses social links and social bonding which did not prove to have significant relations with supporterism's influence on integration (none of the interviewees mentioned social bonds tied through supporterism while only Benoit experienced changes regarding social links in this context). Education was not retained either because the effects of supporterism

on this domain of integration showed to be very limited in the current study. As I explained earlier, the legal and psychological security dimensions may overlap in some cases, then, in order to be clear about it I made them intersect in the scheme.

The six circles attached to the bottom of the sphere represent several elements which influenced the dynamics observed. If most of their impact were previously explained, I would like to very briefly come back on the age which showed to have an important impact on the current study. Indeed, Thomas and Benoit told me that they do not remember about facing any particular difficulties when they moved in. They arrived here at very early ages; Thomas was the oldest (five) and said that he just remembered he had to adapt to the change in terms of climate (see Appendix 4.2). It is then important to consider that arriving at an early age may facilitate integration of migrants because of their ability to adapt to new environment comparing to others. Nevertheless, it was not the case for all the migrant interviewees I encountered. Indeed, Pierre and Cesar settled in Belgium at an early age as well but experienced difficulties to integrate in terms of cultural habits for both of them but also in terms of language knowledge for Pierre. Therefore, the only ability to adapt to new environment cannot be understood as the only reason why all the migrants I interviewed who settled in Belgium during their childhood did not experience the effects of supporterism on integration. An additional explanation relates on the fact that first they were too young to remember or evaluate some difficulties their parent faced. In those interviews, when I tackled for example access to education or healthcare, they said they did not remember if their parents faced difficulties to make them access to it. Another major point is that they were too young to follow the game in most of the gathering places covered in this work (bars, Cosa SL and Fan Coaching). Moreover, they were too young as well to tie social connection with supporter group members which showed to be determinant in this study. For all those reasons no “kids” (from Fillis and Mackay’s typology) experiencing integration through supporterism were observed in this study. Moreover, most of them felt integrated before becoming a Standard de Liege fan so their need for integration was void during the ‘supporterist period’ of their life. Therefore, we can conclude from this study that integration through supporterism is more applicable to a teenager or adult population.

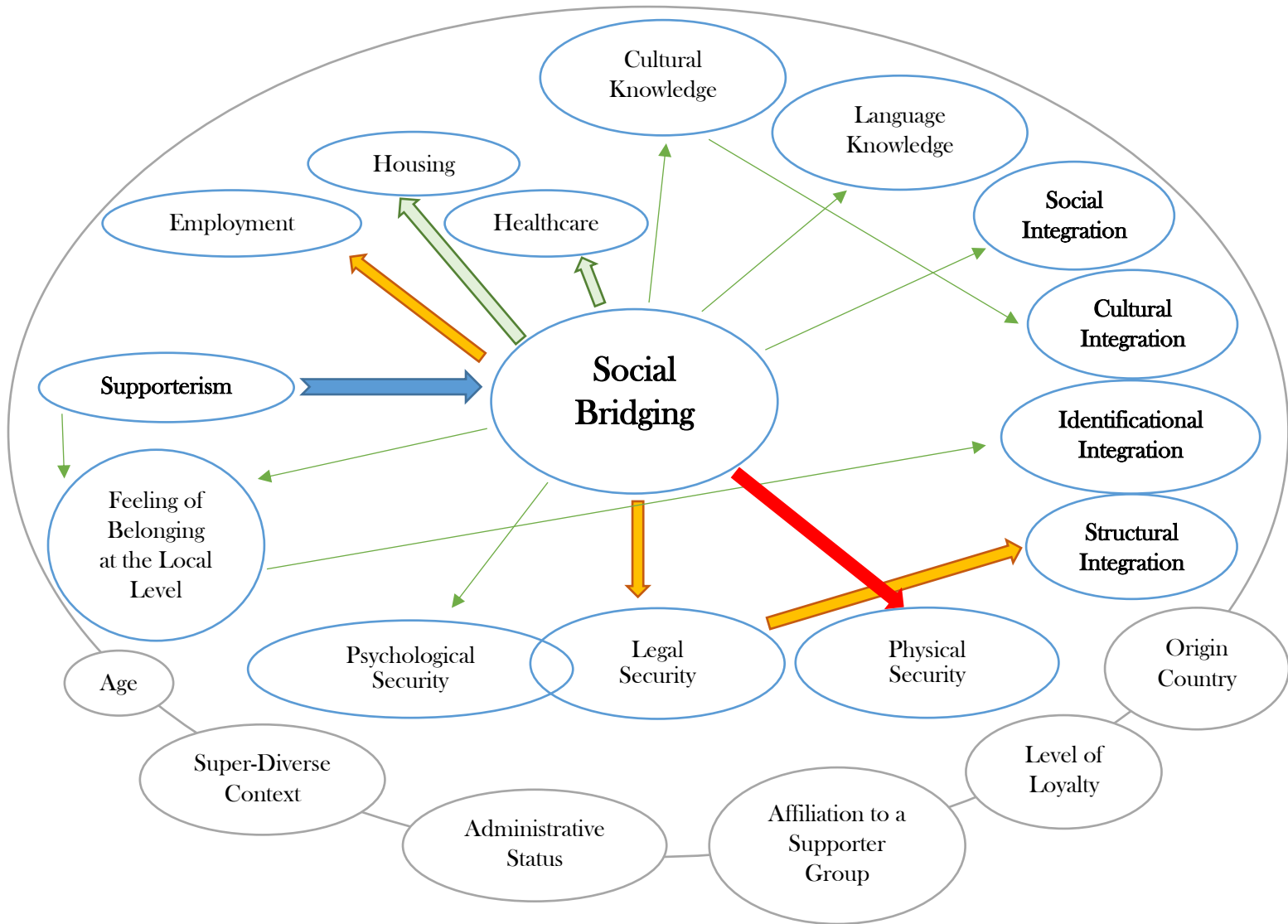
I opted for different ways to express relations between the elements present in this scheme. First, the influence of supporterism on social bridging is depicted as ‘making room for’, relying on the ability of supporterism to provide a favourable environment for social bridging. Then, the other relations are divided regarding different criteria: first, the number of examples on which the relation could be observed (differentiated by the size of the arrows). Second, their ability to facilitate or to restrict the access to the element they are directed to (green for the ability to facilitate, red for restricting, and yellow for both abilities to facilitate and restrict).

That being said, the 'Migrant Supporter Sphere of Integration' can be read in the following manner: supporterism proved its ability to make room for social bridging between some migrant and native supporters of Standard de Liege. This influence also showed to have possible repercussions on various aspects related to integration. Most of them facilitated the access to those aspects and could be observed on more than two cases: with those criteria, social bridging in the context of supporterism showed ability to facilitate migrants' psychological security, cultural knowledge, language knowledge, feeling of belonging to a community, social integration and cultural integration. The impact on the feeling of belonging only occurred at a local level and also proved to happen without social bridging (which made me change the organisation of this scheme comparing to Figure 1). This same dynamic is clearly related to identificational integration and therefore we can attest that supporterism facilitates the access to this dimension of integration but still on a local level. Through this scheme I would like to nuance social bridging's impact on cultural integration. Indeed, it sounds evident that migrants' change of behaviour in terms of cultural practices is due to their learning of the host society's culture. Therefore, I decided not to directly link social bridging to cultural integration in this scheme but to show that its influence passes by the learning of cultural knowledge. Social bridging through supporterism also proved to be able to facilitate access to healthcare and housing, but those observations respectively rely on the experience of one and two interviewees, so they are represented through a green large arrow.

Social bridging proved to be able to influence access to employment but with more contrasted results. Indeed, if it proved its ability to facilitate access to employment for Ivan and Ricardo, it also proved to be able to restrict access to employment for the only case of Ricardo. This is the reason why this relation is represented through a yellow and red large arrow. The experience of Benoit showed that its practice of supporterism with natives both facilitated and restricted his access to legal security with repercussions on his structural integration. For Ivan, his legal security was put at risk but it did not lead to significant repercussions on his structural integration. Regarding the limited number of participants who experienced these effects, the relations involving legal security in this scheme were represented with a red and yellow large arrow. Social bridging in the context of violent supporter groups showed its ability to put at risk the physical security of Benoit and Ivan so in the dynamic observed, those social bridges were tackled as possibly restricting access to physical security through a red large arrow.

What I find particularly interesting in this scheme is the over-representation of green arrows which clearly shows that most of the influences of supporterism on integration can be understood in terms of facilitators to integration and not as restricting access to it. Moreover, the only restrictive impacts of supporterism on integration and its core domains remained limited to the experience of a small number of individuals. Nonetheless, they should not be underestimated for future research, more specifically if they deal with violent supporter groups and migrants whose administrative status is 'unstable' in regards to host society's institutions.

Figure 2: The Migrant Supporter Sphere of Integration



Legend:

- ➡ = Makes room for
- ➡ = Facilitates the access to
- ➡ = May facilitate the access to (limited to one or two cases)
- ➡ = May both facilitate and restrict the access to (limited to one or two cases)
- ➡ = May restrict access to (limited to one or two cases)

V) Conclusion

This study aimed to research the different impacts of supporterism on migrants' integration in Belgium, and more specifically in Liege. Through 13 semi-structured interviews conducted with Standard de Liege migrant supporters, the effect of such practice was observed on different core domains of integration from Agger & Strang's theory (2008) and on the four dimensions of integration tackled by Heckman (2001). Nevertheless, participants demonstrated how some core domains of their integration into Belgian society were more impacted by their practice of supporterism than others. At the core of the dynamics sustaining their integration process, two key factors emerged from the experiences of the migrants who participated in this research. First, their need to access dimensions and domains of integration related to their age, administrative status or origin country; and second, their level of loyalty regarding Fillis & Mackay's understanding which relies on supporterism's practices but also their affiliation or close link with a supporter group.

Beyond individual characteristics, we were able to identify the central characteristic of supporterism that enable it to influence migrants' integration: its ability to make room for social bridging. The ability of supporterism to make people meet and mix and build social ties does not only apply to a migrant population. However, in the case of the migrants who participated in this research, it appeared clearly that the encounters and exchanges with the local population through their practice of supporterism impacted significantly their integration into the host society. On the basis of this observation I designed the 'Migrant Supporter Sphere of Integration', which highlights the influences of social bridging through supporterism on the core domains and four dimensions of integration observed in this study. These influences proved to be able to facilitate - but also at times to restrict - migrants' integration into the host society.

Overall, the effects of supporterism on the domains and dimensions of integration can be considered as facilitating its access. For example, one can cite discovering and understanding host society's culture since its access was facilitated for a large amount of migrant supporters regardless of their loyalty in terms of practices of supporterism, administrative status and origin country. It was also observed that it influenced the behaviour of some interviewees which permits to attest of an influence on their cultural integration in regards of Heckman's understanding. Fluency in the language of the host community proved to be essential to migrants' integration. It reminded us that in this case the origin country is an important individual characteristic to take into account because the need for learning French language depends on the language spoken in the country of origin. In the cases encountered, the access to the language knowledge was to a certain extent facilitated by supporterism in the case of individuals who showed a certain level of loyalty in terms of practices of supporterism and were affiliated to a supporter group. The same effect could be observed for psychological security. This shows that supporting a football club with

a certain level of loyalty and through a supporter group permits individuals to momentarily escape from every day's life concerns. Social bridging through supporterism has also shown to facilitate migrants' feeling of belonging to a community at a local level. Indeed, it impacted their feeling of belonging to Standard de Liege, Ultras Inferno or Hell-Side's community, with only one participant referring to an influence on the feeling of belonging to the Belgian community. This observation highlights the importance to consider that integration takes place at a local level (or that it is where it starts) and that the concept of local integration is crucial for integration studies. Therefore, we can attest of an influence of supporterism on migrants' identificational integration at a local level. It is also worth noting that the sole fact of supporting Standard de Liege allowed some individuals to feel that they belong to Standard de Liege community without passing through social bridging; this reinforces the potential of supporterism to impact migrants' feeling of belonging to a community. Supporterism also proved to be able to facilitate access to housing but this effect remains restricted to the particular case of two migrants affiliated to a supporter group and who practiced supporterism with a high level of loyalty. We also have one instance where supporterism facilitated access to healthcare. This limited observation can be explained by the fact that it is the only migrant from my sample who suffered from restrictions regarding this domain because of his administrative status of undocumented migrant. One last observation regarding supporterism's influence on integration which was observed only in terms of facilitation is the impact of social bridging on social integration. If supporterism in this study is understood as 'making room' for social bridging, it can be logically attested that once social bridging took place it facilitated migrants' access to social integration.

However, in some cases, this research found that supporterism has also the potential to restrict access to integration and its core domains. Indeed, if access to employment was facilitated by the affiliation to a supporter group and the contacts provided by other members, the implication of professional fans in the activities of a supporter group also showed for one individual to have negative repercussions on his attendance at work, which led to prior warnings from his employer. Supporterism's influence on legal security can be nuanced as well and its application clearly relates to migrants' administrative status and therefore only applies to a restricted number of individuals. The practice of supporterism through violence proved to put legal security at risk: it led to the expulsion of one participant, while another mentioned the potential negative impact of such practices on him obtaining Belgian citizenship. The migrant who was expelled returned to Belgium eight years later, this time with a legal residence permit, partly as an outcome of solidarity actions from his friends from the Hell-Side. Consequently, for this very special case the social bridges tied through supporterism both restricted and facilitated his access to legal security. This domain of integration is directly intertwined with access to status and rights allowed by the main institutions of the host society. Therefore, we can consider that both restrictive and facilitative influence of supporterism on legal security impacted migrants' structural integration under very specific circumstances.

In this study, supporterism proved to be able to restrict migrants' access to physical security. This is the only dimension of integration that was observed to function only in terms of restriction. Indeed, the specific case of two supporters whose practice of supporterism includes violence can be considered as putting at risk their physical integrity because any supporter who fights against other supporters gets exposed to unsecure situations. Nevertheless, neither of them seemed to be affected by this aspect. One of them even explained how it allowed him to release his anger and to not think about his daily life problems which was understood in this work as a positive impact on his psychological security. The distinction between psychological, legal and physical security was developed during one interview. In the light of this interview, I reflected upon the description of safety as a facilitator to integration provided by Agger & Strang. I revisited the very special characteristics of supporterism and the different facts exposed during the interviews and concluded that their theory did not adequately reflect the reality experienced by all the participants in my research. Indeed, Agger & Strang describe safety with the term "peaceful" (2008, p.183), in contrast with the more complex and unpeaceful situations that in one specific example seemed to facilitate a migrant's access to psychological security. It is worth noting that supporterism also facilitated the access to two participants' psychological security out of the context of practicing supporterism through violence.

The different results of this study should not be taken for granted in every situation. Indeed, the specific context of Standard de Liege, the political orientation of their supporter groups and the super-diverse aspect of the city are all factors which surely influenced my findings. However, I think this exploratory study is a good starting point for any researcher who would like to further explore the understanding of supporterism's influence on integration. I wish scholars' interest for this subject will increase in the future and that football supporterism's power to facilitate migrants' integration will be fully exploited. Nowadays football is the most popular sport in the world, it has the incredible power to connect individuals through a common passion and it would be a mistake not to acknowledge the same power supporting a common football team has on connecting and unifying individuals.

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VII) Glossary

Asylum seeker: “A person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments. In case of a negative decision, the person must leave the country and may be expelled, as may any non-national in an irregular or unlawful situation, unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian or other related grounds” (International Organization for Migration, 2011, p. 12).

European citizen: “Any national of an EU country is considered to be a citizen of the EU. EU citizenship does not replace national citizenship: it is an addition to it. Citizenship gives them the right to: move and take up residence anywhere in the EU; vote and stand in local government and European Parliament elections in their country of residence; diplomatic and consular protection outside the EU from the authorities of any EU country if their country of nationality is not represented; petition the European Parliament and appeal to the European Ombudsman; address the European institutions in any of its official languages and to receive a reply in the same language; non-discrimination on the basis of nationality, gender, race, religion, handicap, age or sexual orientation; invite the Commission to submit a legislative proposal (citizens' initiative); access EU institutions' and bodies' documents, subject to certain conditions” (EUR-Lex, n.d.).

Internationally mobile student: “An internationally mobile student is an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin (UNESCO, 2015, as cited in, Migration Data Portail, 2018)

Mods: “Contraction of the word ‘Modernist’ (...) this term describes the individuals belonging to a British clothing and musical tribe born at the end of the 1950’s. The mods are urban youth who stem from low and middle-range class” (Bertheau, 2013, p. 294).

Refugee¹⁷: “Either a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned before, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it” (European Commission, 2019).

Regular Migration: Migration that occurs through recognized, authorized channels (International Organization for Migration, 2011, p. 81).

Skinhead: At its origin, it refers to British youth with shaved head who at the end of the 60’s formed a new urban tribe, descendant of the mods. Unlike the mods who cultivate a certain elegance, the skinheads acknowledge a tougher temperament and claim their belonging to the working class (Bertheau, 2013, p. 366).

Teddy boys: “During the 1950’s in England, the teddy boys are (...) young people who show a strong interest to American Rock’n roll (Elvis Presley, Eddie Cochran,..) and who dress in ‘dandies’ in the same way aristocrat did in the reign of Edouard VII between 1901 and 1910. The appellation *teddy boys* comes from the name the British press used to refer to the sovereign: “Teddy”. Their habits and

¹⁷ In the current study, all the migrants which are considered as refugees have been granted this status by the host society’s institutions.

customs does not prevent them to fight to defend the honour of their group or territory. This is the reason why they are sometimes considered as precursors of hooliganism” (Berteau, 2013, p. 400).

Undocumented migrant: “A non-national who enters or stays in a country without the appropriate documentation. This includes, among others: a person (a) who has no legal documentation to enter a country but manages to enter clandestinely, (b) who enters or stays using fraudulent documentation, (c) who, after entering using legal documentation, has stayed beyond the time authorized or otherwise violated the terms of entry and remained without authorization” (International Organization for Migration, 2011, p. 102).