This item is the archived peer-reviewed author-version of:

Migrants in the periphery : migrant organisations and their networks

Reference:

Van Dam Sylvie, Raeymaeckers Peter.- Migrants in the periphery : migrant organisations and their networks
European journal of social work - ISSN 1468-2664 - (2016), p. 1-15
Migranten in de periferie : etnisch-culturele verenigingen en hun netwerken
Full text (Publisher's DOI): <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1080/13691457.2016.1202810>
To cite this reference: <http://hdl.handle.net/10067/1359070151162165141>

Migrants in the Periphery: Migrant organisations and their networks

Sylvie Van Dam & Peter Raeymaeckers

Corresponding author:

Sylvie Van Dam

OASes - University of Antwerp

Faculty of Social Science/Department of Sociology

City campus – Z.506

Sint-Jacobstraat 2 – 2000 Antwerp

sylvie.vandam@uantwerpen.be

T +32 3 265 59 98

Prof. Dr. Peter Raeymaeckers

OASes - University of Antwerp

Faculty of Social Science/Department of Sociology

City campus – M.385

Sint-Jacobstraat 2 – 2000 Antwerp

peter.raeymaeckers@uantwerpen.be

T +32 3 265 53 39

Migrants in the Periphery: Migrant organisations and their networks

Abstract

Poverty rates among people with a foreign background in Europe are increasing exponentially. Literature shows that migrant organisations can play a central role to combat poverty. However, scientific evidence on their specific role in the provision of service towards people in poverty is lacking (Dierckx et al., 2009; Heyse, 2008; Spencer and Cooper, 2006: 51). We consider migrant organisations as a particular type of civil society organisations (CSOs) providing services or activities to a specific group of migrants. It is argued that these organisations must collaborate with different service organisations such as public service agencies and a variety of other CSOs providing crucial services such as financial and material aid. We use a mixed method social network analysis to investigate the networks among migrant organisations, public services and CSOs. We conduct a quantitative social network analysis in a deprived neighbourhood in Antwerp, Belgium. The findings show a lack of collaboration between migrant organisations, public services and other CSOs. Qualitative research is used to explain the lack of collaboration in this network. Our findings detect crucial challenges that must be overcome when bridging the gap between migrant organisations and public services or CSOs, in order to achieve poverty alleviation among migrants.

Keywords: Networks, mixed methods, migrant organisations, poverty

Titel (Dutch): Migranten in de Periferie: Etnisch-culturele verenigingen en hun netwerken

Abstract (Dutch)

Armoede bij mensen met een migratieachtergrond neemt exponentieel toe in Europa. Uit de literatuur blijkt dat etnisch-culturele verenigingen een centrale rol kunnen spelen in armoedebestrijding. Er is echter een gebrek aan wetenschappelijk bewijs over hun specifieke rol in hulp- en dienstverlening aan mensen in armoede (Dierckx et al., 2009; Heyse, 2008; Spencer en Cooper, 2006: 51). Wij beschouwen etnisch-culturele verenigingen als een specifiek type van middenveldorganisaties die activiteiten of diensten organiseert voor een specifieke groep mensen met een migratieachtergrond. Er wordt gesteld dat deze organisaties moeten samenwerken met verschillende hulpverleningsorganisaties zoals publieke diensten en een verscheidenheid aan andere middenveldorganisaties die cruciale diensten verstrekken zoals financiële en materiële hulp. We gebruiken een *mixed methods* sociale netwerkanalyse om de netwerken tussen etnisch-culturele verenigingen, publieke diensten en middenveldorganisaties te onderzoeken. We voeren een kwantitatieve sociale netwerkanalyse uit in een achtergestelde wijk in Antwerpen, België. De resultaten tonen een gebrek aan samenwerking tussen etnisch-culturele verenigingen, publieke diensten en andere middenveldorganisaties. Kwalitatief onderzoek wordt gebruikt om het tekort aan samenwerking in dit netwerk te verklaren. Onze bevindingen onthullen cruciale uitdagingen die moeten worden overwonnen bij het overbruggen van de kloof tussen etnisch-culturele verenigingen en publieke diensten of middenveldorganisaties, met het oog op armoedebestrijding bij mensen met een migratieachtergrond te realiseren.

Keywords: Netwerken, *mixed methods*, etnisch-culturele verenigingen, armoede

Introduction

In the context of astonishing poverty rates among migrants in Belgium and the weakening of support within migrant communities (Dierckx et al., 2013; Van Robaeys, B. et al., 2007), we focus on the collaboration among migrant organisations and a variety of service organisations that are not exclusively aimed towards migrant such as public service agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs). Research demonstrates the importance of migrant organisations for migrants, especially those at risk of poverty. These organisations do not only provide the necessary social capital, often disproportionately absent and essential in communities with high poverty rates, they also function as a bridge between migrant communities, local authorities (or public services) and other CSOs (Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; Vertovec, 2007). Following the literature on networks of service organisations we argue it is crucial that organisations providing services to migrants collaborate with public services and other CSOs. Networks allow service organisations to deal with the very complex problems of vulnerable target groups (Provan and Milward, 2001). However, research on networks of migrant organisations is scarce. Existing research has mainly focused on transnational networks of migrant organisations and the important role of umbrella organisations (Dumont, 2008; Portes et al., 2008; Portes and Zhou, 2012; Rosenow and Kortmann, 2010; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; Vermeersch et al., 2012). We therefore argue that our analysis on the networks of migrant organisations with a variety of service organisations at the local level, will address this gap in scientific literature.

This article aims to position these organisations in the network of service organisations within a district of the city of Antwerp, Belgium. We study the extent to which migrant organisations collaborate with public services and other CSOs, and explore the barriers migrant organisations encounter when collaborating with other organisations. We adopt a

mixed methods approach, combining quantitative social network analysis to map networks among service organisations with qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews with respondents of migrant organisations to explain the position of these organisations in their networks. Data are gathered through two studies. We use the results of a quantitative study focusing on a social network analysis of service organisations in Antwerp (Raeymaeckers and Kenis, 2015). This study is used to analyse the position of migrant organisations in the broader network of CSOs and public service agencies. A second qualitative study elaborates on migrant organisations and poverty reduction (Van Dam, 2015). We use qualitative data from the latter study on cooperation among migrant organisations with other CSOs and public services to interpret the quantitative results of the social network analysis of the first study.

We argue that our mixed methods approach contributes to a better understanding of the crucial role of migrant organisations in the network with a large variety of public service agencies and CSOs. As such, this paper makes a contribution to social work literature by generating insights in ways to improve networks among migrant organisations, CSOs and public service agencies. We argue that by strengthening these networks social work is able to provide more responsive answers to the complex needs of vulnerable migrant target groups. In the first paragraph we elaborate on the diversification of service actors at the local level and explore the role of migrant organisations. We then discuss the importance of networks, before explaining our case selection and the mixed methods research design. After presenting our quantitative findings, we focus on the results of our qualitative research. We end the article by discussing our main results.

Migrant organisations in a retrenching welfare state

Literature reveals a growing importance of the local level in social policy and social service delivery, as well as an increasing differentiation of actors involved (Andreotti et al., 2012; Kazepov, 2010; Pierson and Castles, 2000; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Swyngedouw, 2004). Local authorities increasingly call upon civil society to participate in welfare provision and poverty alleviation (Mingione and Oberti, 2003; Scaramuzzino, 2012). Many CSOs arise, sometimes within social movements, in reaction to unaddressed social needs (Dierckx et al., 2009). CSOs diversify to meet the challenges of social problems such as poverty among migrants. We find a diversification of organisation types. As already stated, we focus on organisations that provide services to migrants because of their growing importance in this changing welfare system. More specifically, we analyse the networks among migrant organisations, public service agencies and other CSOs. We distinguish between these types of organisations according to the way these agencies are initiated and organised (Scaramuzzino, 2012). Public service agencies are organisations that are initiated and coordinated by the government, often at the local level. Civil society organisations are organisations that are initiated outside the government, but often (partially) funded by the state. CSOs work on domains such as health, education, culture and leisure time. They provide debt counselling, assistance, child care and care for the disabled. They set up sensitisation campaigns or perform a signalling function, and act as interlocutor (Dierckx et al., 2009; Vertovec, 2007). Migrant organisations are “*group(s) in support of immigrants’ social, cultural, or political interests*” (Huddleston and Tjaden, 2012). They belong to civil society, but in further applying the initiative criterion, these organisations are defined according to the migration background of the founders or board members, also called self-organisations. As a particular type of CSO, most migrant organisations are primarily established for the creation, expression and preservation of a

collective identity (Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005). However, because these organisations provide social capital in dealing with everyday life, they seem especially important in communities struck with poverty (Ibrahim, 2006). Moreover, studies prove these actors contribute to the integration and emancipation of migrant communities (Scaramuzzino, 2012; Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; Vertovec, 2007). Typically, migrant organisations are ascribed functions regarding social, welfare, representational or cultural objectives (Scaramuzzino, 2012; Van der Meer et al., 2009).

Role of networks for migrant organisations

Literature on networks among service organisations shows that engaging in a network can be a daunting task. Networks often consist of a variety of service providers with differing goals, rules and foci, and have a different knowledge base or varying ethical and normative views (Blom, 2004; Kuosmanen and Starke, 2013). The success of networks is often regarded as the extent to which a network is able to increase integration among a highly differentiated set of service organisations (Rosenheck et al., 1998). In an integrated network all organisations are connected and the resource exchange between network actors is guaranteed. Service organisations draw on all resources available through information exchange, client referral and case coordination (Provan and Milward, 1995; Raeymaeckers and Kenis, 2015). Consequently, clients gain better access to a broad range of services, and the network is able to improve client outcomes (Buck et al., 2011; Provan and Milward, 1995).

However, network integration can be very difficult to establish. Literature shows that network actors perceive barriers such as the lack of a shared goal or common purpose, a lack of knowledge and varying practices (Raeymaeckers and Dierckx, 2012; Rose, 2011). As difficulties emerge when service organisations collaborate, they are often considered a major source of conflict when organisations engage in a network (Farmakopoulou, 2002; Lindqvist

and Grape, 1999). Cooper et al. (2008) illustrate that in a network negative relationships between service organisations can occur, characterised by caution, a lack of information and distrust. Benson (1975) also points out that power differences among service agencies can play an important role for the integration of a network. In every network, organisations try to acquire resources. When some organisations have more resources than others, their position in the network becomes more important. This often leads to one organisation determining the actions of other organisations in the network. According to Benson: *“power permits one organization to reach across agency boundaries and determine policies or practices in weaker organizations”* (Benson, 1975: 234).

These studies illustrate that collaboration of service organisations in a network is a challenging task. Therefore, scholars focus on how network integration can be established (Provan and Milward, 2001). These studies often use social network analysis to investigate the level of network integration. When social network analysis shows a highly connected network, it has reached a high level of integration. When the network shows loose coupled clusters, it is confronted with a high level of disintegration. In line with these studies, we therefore investigate the integration of a network of migrant organisations and other organisations using social network analysis.

In literature on migrant organisations no studies elaborate on the integration of networks among migrant organisations and other COS or public service agencies. Most literature on cooperation and networks among migrant organisations covers transnational migrant organisations (Dumont, 2008; Portes and Zhou, 2012). These are often established for development aid in the country of origin, monitoring remittances or supporting migration to or integration in the host country. Other studies on cooperation and networking among migrant organisations focus on umbrella organisations (Rosenow and Kortmann, 2010; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; Vermeersch et al., 2012). Their main role is to support member

associations. They frequently treat the same issues as those of transnational organisations, although they focus more on integration and preservation of cultural heritage, rather than on migration flows. Research on these umbrella organisations highlighted that the role of other organisations in a network determines the position, role and opportunities of migrant organisations (Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeersch et al., 2012). Although service networks are thus crucial for migrant organisations, research on their networks is limited. No studies elaborate on the difficulties and needs of migrant organisations in collaboration with public service organisations and CSOs. In the next paragraph we discuss the methodology we use to explore this issue.

Methods

In this section we discuss the methods we applied. First, we justify our case selection. We focus on the city of Antwerp and particularly the district of Borgerhout for the social network analysis. Next, we explain our mixed methods approach, combining social network analysis with qualitative research.

Case selection: High poverty risks among migrants

In Belgium, 59,2% of people with a non-EU28 nationality are at risk of poverty (Eurostat, 2014). Antwerp, a city of more than 500,000 citizens and 164 nationalities, has the highest poverty rates in the Flemish region. Rates of unemployment or of children born into a poor family indicate that poverty is higher than average in Belgium, as well as concentrated in Antwerp. The Borgerhout district was selected on the criterion of a high proportion of migrants living there. Socio-demographically, Borgerhout has 43,000 residents from which 16.4% of the population is aged over 65, 44.2% has a foreign nationality, 9% are single parent families and 2.2% are social assistance clients. Furthermore, in this district we find a

broad range of migrant organisations, other CSOs and public service agencies (Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur 2014; City of Antwerp).

Mixed methods

In this research we used a mixed methods approach. As already stated in the introduction, we use quantitative and qualitative data from two studies conducted on networks and migrant organisations in Antwerp (Raeymaeckers and Kenis, 2015; Raeymaeckers, 2015; Raeymaeckers, 2016; Van Dam, 2015). In the first study we conducted a social network analysis to analyse the integration of the network among migrant organisations, CSOs and public service agencies in a deprived neighbourhood in the city of Antwerp. We construct networks among service organisations using three types of ties: informational exchange, client referral and case coordination. The social network analysis reveals the extent to which migrant organisations develop ties with other service organisations. Second, we use data from a study that conducted qualitative interviews with representatives of migrant organisations to explain the extent to which the network is integrated. Combining both quantitative social network analysis and qualitative analysis –to explore one network case among migrant organisations, public services and CSOs –increases our understanding of the position of CSOs providing services to migrantsⁱ in poverty.

Social Network Analysis

Social network analysis is used to analyse the integration of the network among migrant organisations, public service agencies and other CSOs. First, we contacted all organisations that are situated or operate in the selected district. We included this list in an online survey. Respondents were asked to identify organisations on the list with whom that they or their colleagues were in contact. We selected the respondents that were considered as having the most experience in their respective organisations. Following literature in the field of social

network analysis and service networks we believe that these respondents are able to provide very reliable information on the networks of their organisation (Provan and Milward, 1995; Provan and Milward, 2001). Subsequently they disclosed the extent to which they or their colleagues had received/sent information or clients to/from the selected organisations. In a following step, these respondents specified the organisations with whom they had participated in case coordination. They described the frequency of every type of contact, using a scale with the following options: (1) very frequently, (2) frequently, (3) occasionally, (4) rarely, (5) very rarely and (6) never. We acquired an overall response rate of 90%. The survey results were used to develop the social network analysis matrix.

Using UCINET (Borgatti, et al., 2013), this matrix was used to construct a complete or 'any links' network in which a tie between actors referred to one of three ties (informational exchange, client referral or case coordination). This 'any links' network was adopted for further analysis. Following previous studies, we recorded only confirmed ties. This means that we only included a tie between two organisations in the analysis when both respondents of the involved organisations confirmed that a tie (informational exchange, client referral or case coordination) exists (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). As such, we constructed a highly accurate 'any links' network for Borgerhout. To determine the 'gap' between migrant organisations and public service organisations, we calculated the E-I index with UCINET. The E-I index is the number of ties external to the groups minus the number of ties internal to the group, divided by the total number of ties. This value ranges from 1 to -1. When the ratio is equal to 1, both groups are highly connected. When the ratio is equal to -1, both groups are not connected. UCINET also calculates a significance test, allowing the researcher to determine whether the given E-I index is significantly different than would be expected by random mixing. A permutation test is performed to see whether the network E-I index is significantly higher or lower than expected.

Qualitative analysis

Qualitative research helps us explain quantitative research data and will therefore provide more profound insights on migrant organisations and their networks. Using qualitative interviews we clarify the position of migrant organisations in networks of other organisations providing services to migrants in poverty. We explore experiences of migrant organisations in building such a network and potential barriers hampering network formation.

For this purpose we conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with representatives from migrant organisations in Antwerp. We selected organisations by purposive sampling, including a variety of migrant communities and organisation typesⁱⁱ (Van Dam, 2015). Working iteratively, we conducted 12 interviews with coordinators of migrant organisations in Antwerp: one Latin-American (type 1), 4 Maghreb (type 1, 2, 2, mixed), 4 Eastern European (type 1, 1, 1, 2) and 3 African organisations (type 2, 2, mixed). Most interviews were conducted in Dutch. In some cases, we employed a translator, or conversed in English or French. We applied an open topic list in the interviews, concerning features and activities of the organisation and their stakeholders, networks, opportunities and pitfalls. We transcribed and analysed interviews with NVivo (2012). We began our analysis with an open coding phase (Bryman, 2004). For this paper we selected all codes and related citations regarding cooperation between migrant organisations and other organisations and services. We categorised these codes and quotes according to two themes that are discussed in the results of the qualitative analysis below. We first focus on how respondents perceive the importance of networks for their migrant organisations. In a next step, we analysed the barriers they perceive within these networks. The open coding process showed that four barriers are emphasised by our respondents: discrepancies in practices, motivation, knowledge and exchange, and opportunities. Our findings were complemented with

perspectives from stakeholders on the regional level; staff members from the Minority Forumⁱⁱⁱ.

Mapping the networks of migrant organisations

Our quantitative social network analysis answers the question regarding the extent to which CSOs providing services to migrants collaborate with other organisations and services. We analysed the level of integration in the network (Provan and Milward, 1995; Raeymaeckers, 2015; Raeymaeckers and Kenis, 2015). Based on the survey we dispersed among organisations in the district of Borgerhout, we constructed the network below. The black nodes in this network represent organisations targeting migrants. The white nodes are public service agencies and other CSOs that do not specifically aim at providing services to migrants. Table 1 lists the migrant organisations in the network.

Insert figure 1

Insert table 1

We then constructed an E-I index, i.e. the ratio of external to internal links, and established two subgroups. The first subgroup contains migrant organisations, the second covers other CSOs and public services. The E-I index calculates the extent to which both groups are connected. A positive E-I index indicates that migrant organisations do not form a cohesive and isolated subgroup, but are rather integrated in the network. A negative E-I index indicates that migrant organisations form a cohesive subgroup in the network of service organisations.

Insert table 2

Table 2 displays significant negative E-I indices for all ties in the network. This means that for both informational exchange, client referral and case coordination as well, migrant organisations are situated in an isolated position in the network. As a final test we calculated the E-I index for the any links network. This E-I index also confirms that migrant organisations do form an isolated subgroup in the network of service organisations. These results lead us to suspect that migrant organisations encounter barriers in forming and maintaining networks.

Reading networks of migrant organisations

This section presents the results from the in-depth interviews we conducted with coordinators of migrant organisations in Antwerp. These data clarify the extent to which migrant organisations cooperate with other actors involved in service delivery to migrants. Using these interviews we explain why the subcluster of migrant organisations in our quantitative research is isolated from the rest of the network. What prevents these organisations to cooperate?

Why networks?

“We need methods. Perhaps we cannot do individual coaching alone, but to do more, we must find a place in a platform, I want to collaborate” (Respondent African organisation)

Migrant organisations do have an interest to engage in networks with other organisations. Representatives from public services, CSOs and migrant organisations emphasise their motivation to build networks and cooperate with different actors and for various reasons. For instance, migrant organisations seek cooperation to be able to support their clientele’s

integration into society or provide the necessary support. Material or other practical support may also motivate migrant organisations to cooperate with local administrations and public services. For instance, local authorities or CSOs enable migrant associations to rent a venue or use a computer. Moreover, migrant organisations may seek cooperation to receive administrative support. They pursue collaboration with others to improve their knowledge or introduce methods into the organisation or to cope with complex challenges such as poverty among their members. They also call upon the expertise of public services to inform their members on particular issues. Migrant organisations often bridge the gap between their target group and local authorities or public services. They can be an intermediary for passing on experiences, particularities and needs of migrants in poverty towards policy makers and social workers. In turn, relevant information becomes more accessible to participants in migrant organisations.

“We make people feel good, so they have to come into the organisation, then we give them all the experiences and whatever we learn, because not everybody can have direct communication with the city, so we give them a direct communication with the city and with the minister and all those things. So we are responsible to give people better information and status.” (Respondent African organisation)

Migrant organisations also expect public services and authorities to employ their own expertise developed through working with the target group. Though it would contribute positively to policies and assistance concerning their members, this exchange of expertise still happens far too little. Consequently, we argue there is much potential for network formation. Therefore, we now attempt to explain this untapped potential.

Barriers for networking

Migrant organisations are eager to create networks with public service agencies and CSOs for all kinds of reasons. Our findings concerning the subcluster of migrant organisations in their networks with other service organisations, prompt us to look for barriers impeding cooperation. We focus on perceptions of coordinators from migrant organisations, discussing the difficulties they experience in cooperation with other organisations. To present our results we differentiate between migrant organisations versus all other CSOs and public services, because respondents made no distinctions between barriers they encounter when cooperating with CSOs or public services. We noticed these barriers mainly concern discrepancies in practices within migrant organisations compared to others, or in the motivation or knowledge of people involved in the various organisations. Most importantly, substantial discrepancies in the opportunities of migrant organisations and other organisations greatly affect their network.

Discrepancies in practices

Difficult network formation can often be ascribed to discrepancies in practices among migrant organisations and other service organisations. These practices refer to working methods within organisations, their procedures and conduct, the way they manage the organisation, provide services and cooperate with others. A first barrier concerning discrepancies in practices refers to administration. Official procedures or administrative requirements that are important for public services, are often too complicated or demanding for many migrant clients in poverty. These migrants regularly call upon migrant organisations for help. At the same time, administration also weighs heavily on these migrant organisations. They in turn ask public services for assistance or try to refer clients there. As migrant organisations' representatives perceive people's needs are not addressed, they can be reluctant to cooperate with these public services.

Other differing practices regard, for instance, the grassroots work of many migrant organisations. This refers to the distinction that migrant organisations' representatives make between public services applying predominantly consultations as a practice, and migrant organisations working particularly among people in the field, by means of house calls; hospital visits; charity funding; etcetera. Also, most CSOs and public services consider meetings as a useful tool to attune services, exchange relevant information on specific cases, problems or the needs of the target group. In contrast, migrant organisations apply meetings far less as an important organisational practice. Participation in consultation platforms is often experienced by respondents of migrant organisations as fruitless. They feel they must dedicate time and effort to participate in these meetings. At the same time, they however experience few benefits when attending these meetings. According to our respondents Flemish CSOs and public services allegedly have a 'meeting mania', whereas many migrant organisations appear to work 'on the streets'. Discrepancies in practices also touch upon considerable variation in resources, training and professionalism among network actors. Most migrant organisations are run by volunteers, in contrast to social workers in many aid organisations or public services. These elements affect organisations' capacities to effectively refer clients or build structural networks and partnerships.

"The problem is, all those other associations that also deal with the fight against poverty, one, they only work with people from their own district. We don't. Two, most don't do house calls. And three, there's no association that does the work we do. They are not called by hospitals. They have no contacts with the pharmacy to buy medication. They don't, because they send families to me." (Respondent Maghreb organisation).

Discrepancies in motivation

Motivation for cooperation can differ widely among the various people and actors involved in a network. This motivation refers to the priorities, incentives and interests of actors in the network to cooperate, and their investment of time or energy in collaboration. Office hours of salaried social workers, for instance, determine the time people can invest in cooperation. Sometimes this generates perceptions of differences in motivation between partners. People might feel others are not really interested in the project or its objectives.

“But the people of the government are working people, I do volunteer work. For example, we have a project. Today I have a meeting at half past two. We'll discuss how we are going to do things. E. looks at the time, half past three, and she goes away. It's our project. We are volunteers. We know what we want. They're at work.”

(Respondent Latin-American organisation)

Organisations' interests to collaborate may sometimes differ. For example, local authorities might seek for an intermediary in the assistance of migrants in poverty, while an involved migrant organisation initially aims at providing socio-cultural activities and hopes to gain more financial support. Significant discrepancies can engender misunderstandings, so that collaboration may become hindered or even discontinued. Moreover, they prevent effective support of migrants in poverty.

“They know that (we work for) free. One (social worker) comes to you: 'Maybe you can solve that.' Legally you can do little, only attend, interpret, ask questions, write reference letters. Our intention is bringing people together, to strengthen their integration or cooperation and make progress, with information, education and sports. But poverty hinders our progress. Enormously complex, these quarrels with working services do not help” (Respondent Eastern European organisation)

Discrepancies in knowledge and exchange

Furthermore, we find that a lack of collaboration between public services, aid organisations and migrant organisations often results from discrepancies in knowledge. On the one hand, few volunteers in migrant organisations have sufficient knowledge on the availability and functioning of organisations and services in their organisational environment. On the other hand, many social workers of public services or CSOs lack adequate knowledge of their diverse clients' needs, characteristics or language. This lack of knowledge about other actors generates distrust and impedes network formation. The position of migrant organisations in the network is affected by the reliability of shared information. For instance, if migrant organisations can only access outdated contact details of other organisations, they cannot collaborate or refer their members to the appropriate service organisations. Due to such experiences these organisations may refrain from collaboration with others, and rely on themselves instead. Exchanging reliable up-to-date information would improve the perception of being acknowledged, facilitate cooperation and contribute to adequate assistance of migrants in poverty, both within migrant organisations and public services. Some migrant organisations have managed to improve their communication methods with other organisations and services, generating a considerable increase of client referrals from a growing number of actors.

“Other organisations have no experience on how to work with migrants, how to work with newcomers. My colleague is expert on employment. At the same time he represents this community. Working with other partners leads to the best program, the best policy.” (Respondent Eastern European organisation)

Limited knowledge about other actors in a network sometimes generates diverging expectations between organisations and, in turn, perceptions of unequal exchange within

cooperation. People from public services, local administrations or CSOs, are often eager to obtain information, access to the target group, contact persons or input for projects from migrant organisations. Volunteers from migrant organisations sacrifice their spare time to participate in projects, represent their supporters in meetings and platforms and hand out information on needs or particularities of the target group. However, many of our respondents have the impression they receive little in return, perceiving that other actors in the network take advantage of them. Their position in networks is generally weaker compared to others. These organisations would clearly benefit from support in their administration, or with specific information for referrals.

“We get much work to do, but mostly unsubsidised. Available means go integrally to the schools. And we are called upon, based on: ‘You’ll do that because you feel so involved in your country.’ Pity that it’s taken for granted by different partners that we’ll work for free, that needs to be signalled” (Respondent Maghreb organisation)

Discrepancies in opportunities

Next we discuss discrepancies in the opportunities of migrant organisations versus other organisations and services. These opportunities concern the capacities to keep their organisation running, provide services to their clients and invest in networks. As mentioned earlier, migrant organisations struggle to cooperate with others because of their limited resources or their dependence on volunteers. Another important barrier is that these organisations lack a permanent venue of their own. Sometimes they call upon local authorities to obtain one. This way new forms of cooperation can emerge between migrant organisations and public services. Still, migrant organisations receive insufficient support (or acknowledgement in their role) from other service organisations or local authorities. However, public services lack the necessary means to support all migrant organisations.

Combined with a lack of knowledge on the objectives and services of each other, this may create diverging expectations towards one another. For instance, a migrant organisation's expectation for more financial support without further cooperation, can collide with authorities' expectation to find an interlocutor of a migrant community with few organisations. Both parties end up empty-handed. As such, these barriers are interconnected. Adequate support would nonetheless allow for actors in the network to make better use of the expertise available within migrant organisations.

“I've been with the President of PCSW(Public centre of social welfare) during the period of the former Mayor of Antwerp, now it's even harder. I had an appointment with this President, that was a real shock to me. 'What do you guys need? No, you have so many needs!?' For one local organisation?' That's really a problem, and to rent something, that's almost impossible.” (Respondent Eastern European organisation)

Discussion

Literature agrees that networks are crucial to provide responsive services to vulnerable target groups suffering from very complex problems (Provan and Milward, 2001). Few studies are however conducted on networks of migrant organisations. In this article, we analysed the position of migrant organisations in their networks with other CSOs and public services. Our findings confirmed scientific studies stating that migrant organisations can play a very important role in European welfare states confronted by increasing poverty rates among migrants. They form the bridge between vulnerable migrant communities and services provided by other CSOs and public service agencies (Dierckx and Van Dam, 2014; Ibrahim, 2006; Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; Vertovec, 2007). We however found that migrant organisations have a very vulnerable network position. This

finding is demonstrated by the results of our quantitative social network analysis. We mapped the network of service agencies in a deprived neighbourhood in Antwerp. Our results showed that migrant organisations clearly form an isolated subcluster in the network among other service organisations. In terms of our theoretical framework we can state that a lack of network integration appears in a network among migrant organisations, CSOs and public service agencies (Provan and Milward, 1995). An integrated network with other organisations would enable migrant organisations to use network resources and improve their services for migrants in poverty (Provan and Milward, 1995; Raeymaeckers and Kenis, 2015).

We explained the isolated and vulnerable position of migrant organisations in their network by looking at the perceptions of migrant organisations' representatives on collaboration with CSOs and public service agencies. First, our results showed that our respondents believe it is highly relevant to cooperate with other services and organisations to improve aid for – and the position of – migrants in poverty. Various reasons are mentioned as to why networking is beneficial. Migrant organisations form networks to improve their knowledge or introduce methods into the organisation to cope with complex challenges such as poverty in migrant communities. Through cooperation, they can also call upon the expertise of public services to inform their target group on particular issues. Vice versa, they can share their knowledge on the target group with other partners in the network. However, while there is a growing pressure on organisations to collaborate, our findings indicated that the potential of migrant organisations as mediators is left untapped.

Our respondents emphasised four types of barriers that negatively influence networks of migrant organisations. A first barrier refers to discrepancies in practices that migrant organisations experience when collaborating with CSOs and public service agencies. Our analysis for example showed that migrant organisations have less interest in organising meetings than CSOs and public service agencies. Next the complexity of administration is a

heavy burden for migrant organisations when referring their target group to public service agencies. Furthermore, a second barrier refers to discrepancies in motivation. Respondents of migrant organisations often experience that representatives from public service agencies are less motivated or have less interest in collaborating. We furthermore showed that discrepancies in knowledge among migrant organisations' volunteers and among social workers affiliated to other CSOs and public services on the particular needs of migrant in poverty hampers trust in networks. It is argued that reliable information on specific needs of the migrant population is crucial for developing and maintaining trust, to prevent diverging expectations of network actors towards each other, and to strengthen the position of migrant organisations in the network. Finally, discrepancies in opportunities of migrant organisations compared to other organisations are crucial to explain the lack of collaboration. Migrant organisations have limited material and immaterial resources and they lack the necessary support from others.

These findings generated important insights in the way social workers in public services and CSOs can improve collaboration with migrant organisations. By tackling the barriers discussed in our analysis, social workers can improve service delivery by strengthening network integration. As such, social workers contribute to an increased responsiveness of services for migrants. We argue that investing in adequate knowledge on complex needs of migrant target groups in poverty is crucial in this matter. We therefore emphasise that network governance could contribute to network integration by improving informational exchange on social services and the needs of vulnerable target groups (Provan and Milward, 1995; Provan and Kenis, 2008). The bundling of information on the specific needs of the migrant population in the network could improve the knowledge of CSOs and public service agencies on the problems of migrants in poverty. It would also increase the accessibility of

services for migrants in poverty, being no longer obliged to knock in vain on the doors of all kinds of organisations.

We conclude that our mixed methods approach enabled us to highlight and explain the vulnerable position of migrant organisations in their network. This approach also provided us with tools to improve cooperation and network formation. Nevertheless, we are aware of some limitations in our research. We did not differentiate between CSOs and public services in our discussion of network barriers. Further research should focus on different perceptions of social workers in CSOs and social workers affiliated to public service agencies. Furthermore, we suggest that more work must focus on the perceptions of clients themselves. The perception of migrants concerning the way public agencies and CSOs collaborate with migrant organisations will shed more light on how networks could take into account the specific needs and complex problems of vulnerable target groups with a migrant background. Finally, we believe further research is needed on the material and immaterial opportunities of migrant organisations to improve networks as partners within the local welfare systems, attentive to the differences of various kinds of actors involved in these networks. We therefore encourage other scholars to further develop a research agenda focusing on how networks of migrant organisations can be strengthened.

References

- Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur. (2014). Lokale Inburgerings- en Integratiemonitor, Editie 2013. Antwerpen. (Local Integration Monitor) Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur / Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering, accessed February 03, 2015, <http://aps.vlaanderen.be/lokaal/pdf/integratiemonitor/Antwerpen.pdf>.
- Andreotti, A., Mingione, E., and Polizzi E. (2012). Local Welfare Systems: A Challenge for Social Cohesion. *Urban Studies*, August, 1-16: 10.1177/0042098012444884

- Benson, J.K. (1975). The Interorganizational Network as a Political Economy. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 20 (2), 229-249, DOI: 10.2307/2391696.
- Blom, B. (2004). Specialization in social work practice: Effects on interventions in the personal social services. *Journal of Social Work*, 4, 25-46. doi:10.1177/1468017304042419.
- Borgatti, S. P., Everett, M. G., and Johnson, J. C. (2013). Analyzing social networks. London: SAGE Publications Limited.
- Bryman, A. (2001, 2004). *Social Research Methods*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buck, A., Seale, E., Leiter, J., and Taylor, T. (2011). Differentiation and integration of welfare-to-work service Delivery in North Carolina. *Administration in Social Work*, 35(5), 475-493. doi:10.1080/03643107.2011.614199.
- City of Antwerp. (2015). Buurtmonitor Accessed February 03, 2015, www.antwerpen.buurtmonitor.be.
- Cooper, L., Anaf, J., and Bowden, M. (2008). Can social workers and police be partners when dealing with bikie-gang related domestic violence and sexual assault? *European Journal of Social Work*, 11(3), 295-311. doi:10.1080/13691450701733317.
- Dierckx, D., Vranken, J. and Kerstens, W. (2009). Faith-based Organisations and Social Exclusion in European Cities: National Context Reports. Leuven: Acco, 342p.
- Dierckx, D., Geerts, A., and Van Dam, S. (2013). De teloorgang van *thouiza*? Een verkenning van de oplossingsstrategieën van personen van buitenlandse herkomst in armoede, Antwerpen: Acco, 123p.
- Dierckx, D. and Van Dam, S. (2014). Redefining Empowerment Interventions of Migrants Experiencing Poverty: The Case of Antwerp, Belgium. *British Journal of Social Work* 44(1): 105-122. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcu055.
- Dumont, A. (2008). Representing voiceless migrants: Moroccan political transnationalism and Moroccan migrants' organisations in France. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31 (4), 792-811.

- Eurostat (2014). Statistics. *Consulted on February 05, 2015*,
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions/data/database
- Farmakopoulou, N. (2002). What lies underneath? An inter-organizational analysis of collaboration between education and social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 32(8), 1051-1066. doi:10.1093/bjsw/32.8.1051.
- Huddleston, T. and Tjaden, J.D. (2012). Immigrant Citizens Survey. How immigrants experience integration in 15 European cities. Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation and Migration Policy Group.
- Ibrahim, S. (2006). From Individual to Collective Capabilities: The Capability Approach as a Conceptual Framework for Self-help. *Journal of Human Development*, 7(3), 397-416.
- Kazepov, Y. (2010). Rescaling Social Policies towards Multilevel Governance in Europe: Some Reflections on Processes at Stake and Actors Involved. *Rescaling Social Policies: Towards Multilevel Governance in Europe*, Ashgate. 35-72.
- Kuosmanen, J. and Starke, M. (2013). Identifying the invisible: The experiences of prostitution among persons with intellectual disabilities: Implications for social work. *Journal of Social Work*, 13(2), 123-140. doi:10.1177/1468017311409632.
- Lindqvist, R. and Grape, O. (1999). Vocational rehabilitation of the socially disadvantaged long-term sick: Inter-organizational co-operation between welfare state agencies. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 27(1), 5-10. doi:10.1177/14034948990270010901.
- Milward, H.B. and Provan, K.G. (2006). A Manager's Guide to Choosing and Using Collaborative Networks , IBM Center for the Business of Government.
- Mingione, E. and Oberti, M. (2003). The struggle against social exclusion at the local level: Diversity and convergence in European cities. *European Journal of Spatial Development*, 1, 2-23.

NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software; QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 10, 2012.

<http://www.qsrinternational.com/support/faqs/how-do-i-cite-nvivo-10-nvivo-9-or-nvivo-8-in-my-work>

Pierson, C. and Castles, F.G. (eds.) (2000). The Welfare State Reader. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Portes, A. and Zhou, M. (2012). Transnationalism and Development: Mexican and Chinese Immigrant Organisations in the United States. *Population and Development Review*, 38(2), 191-220.

Portes, A., Escobar, C., and Arana, R. (2008). Bridging the gap: transnational and ethnic organisations in the political incorporation of immigrants in the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 31, 6. 1056-1090

Provan, K. G. and Milward, H. B. (1995). A preliminary theory of interorganizational network effectiveness: A comparative study of four community mental health systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(1), 1-33. doi:10.2307/2393698.

Provan, K. G. and Milward, H. B. (2001). Do networks really work? A framework for evaluating public-sector organizational networks. *Public Administration Review*, 61(4), 414-423. doi:10.1111/0033-3352.00045.

Provan, K., G. Veazie, M., A., Staten, K., Teufel-Shone, N., I (2005), The Use of Network Analysis to Strengthen Community Partnerships. *Public Administration Review*, 65 (5), 603-613. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3542526> .

Raeymaeckers, P. and Dierckx, D. (2012). How can we study the integration of networks among human service organizations? Some lessons from organizational sociology. *European Journal of Social Work*, 15(4), 484-502. doi:10.1080/13691457.2012.704871.

- Raeymaeckers, P. (2013). Tussen centrum en periferie: Een mixed methods onderzoek naar de integratie van netwerken tussen hulpverleningsorganisaties, Antwerpen, Universiteit Antwerpen, Faculteit Politieke en Sociale Wetenschappen, Departement Sociologie, 375 p.
- Raeymaeckers, P. (2015). Should I stay or should I go? A qualitative analysis of legitimacy in a shared participant governed network. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*. Advance online Publication. doi: 10.1080/23303131.2015.1117553.
- Raeymaeckers, P. and Kenis, P. (2015). The influence of shared participant governance on the integration of service networks: A comparative social network analysis. *International Public Management Journal*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/10967494.2015.1062443.
- Raeymaeckers, P. (2016). A specialist's perspective on the value of generalist practice: a qualitative network analysis. *Journal of Social Work*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/1468017316644693.
- Rose, J. (2011). Dilemmas of inter-Professional Collaboration: Can they be resolved?. *Children and Society*, 25, 151-163. doi:10.1111/j.1099-0860.2009.00268.x.
- Rosenheck, R., Morrissey, J., Lam, J., Calloway, M., Johnsen, M., Goldman, H., Randolph, F., Blasinsky, M., Fontana, A., Calsyn, R., and Teague, G. (1998). Service system integration, access to services, and housing outcomes in a program for homeless persons with severe mental illness, *American Journal of Public Health*, 88(11), pp. 1610-1615.
- Rosenow, K. and Kortmann, M. (2010). Muslimische Gemeinschaften zwischen Recht und Politik. Allen unter einem Dach? Muslimische Vielfalt in Deutschland: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Kooperation. (Consulted on http://www.migration-boell.de/web/integration/47_2724.asp#top).

- Scaramuzzino, R. (2012). *Equal Opportunities? A cross-national Comparison of Immigrant Organisations in Sweden and Italy*. Malmö: Malmö University: Health and Society Doctoral Dissertation, 232 p.
- Spencer, S. and Cooper, B. (2006). 'Social Integration of Migrants in Europe: A Review of the European Literature 2000-2006', COMPAS University of Oxford, OECD DELSA, European Commission, AMPI, paper presented at Expert's Workshop 10-1-'06, 93 p.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2004). Globalisation or 'glocalisation'? Networks, territories and rescaling. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17(1), 25-48.
- Van Dam, S. (2015). Changing Responsibilities: True opportunities of migrant organisations in local poverty reduction. (paper presented at the RC21 Conference, Urbino, Italy, August 27-29, 2015).
- Van Der Meer, T.W.G., Te Grotenhuis, M., and Scheepers, P.L.H. (2009). Three types of Voluntary Associations in Comparative Perspective: The Importance of Studying Associational Involvement through a Typology of Associations in 21 European Countries. *Journal of Civil Society*, 5(3), 227-241.
- Van Robaeys, B., Vranken, J., Perrin, N. and Martiniello, M. (2007). De kleur van armoede: Armoede bij personen van buitenlandse herkomst. *Sociale Inzichten 2*, Leuven: Acco.
- Vermeersch, L., Sels, J., and Vandenbroucke, A. (2012). Vol van verwachting: Studie naar de (mis)match tussen de verwachtingen ten aanzien van etnischculturele federaties en hun mogelijkheden om daar aan te voldoen. Leuven: HIVA-KU Leuven.
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30 (6), 1024-1054.
- Wasserman, S., and Faust, K. (1994). *Social network analysis: Methods and applications*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Notes

ⁱ By migrants, we imply people with a foreign or a double (Belgian and foreign) nationality, or people of which at least one parent has a foreign or double nationality.

ⁱⁱ Type 1 socio-cultural, integration and binding; 2 services and empowerment; 3 development aid; 4 federation (Van Dam, 2015)

ⁱⁱⁱ The Minority Forum represents 19 member organisations (12 accredited ethno-cultural federations, plus umbrella organisations, not federated organisations and representatives of (other) ethno-cultural minorities) in different provinces (www.minderhedenforum.be/lidorganisaties, www.vlaamsparlement.be/commissies/commissievergaderingen/968113/verslag/970505).