Challenges and Capabilities:

Real opportunities of migrant organisations and intervention strategies for local target-group driven poverty alleviation

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For mum,

because I am because of who you were…

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Migrant Organisations Challenged to the Fight against Poverty

Sylvie Van Dam

Since the startling disclosures in 2007 on the *"dramatic"* poverty situation of many people with a migration background (Horemans, 2013: 54; Van Robaeys et al., 2007), attention for the issue increased. A little over four years ago, the research centre OASeS again published "*alarming*" poverty rates among people with a migration background[1] in the Yearbook Poverty and Social Exclusion (Broeckmeyer, 2011; Dierckx et al., 2011). *"Signals from the field were confirmed and policy makers were aroused, generating an increase in attention for the issue and investments of resources from both the integration and the poverty sector"* (Moris and Loopmans, 2014: 4). In a reaction to these *"alarmingly high"* numbers (Ketelslegers, 2013: 46) the Network Against Poverty (representing people in poverty and their organisations) stated: "*The numbers are shocking for field workers and policy makers. These high figures highlight the importance of urgent action"* (Ketelslegers, 2015: 1). The Minority Forum (representing ethno-cultural minorities and their organisations) advocated a *"change in mentality"* (Tegenbos, 2011). Minister Lieten (Flemish Minister for Innovation, Public Investment, Media and Poverty Reduction, for the term of 2009-2014) replied: *"It is dramatic, maybe we must adjust our policy based on these new data"* (Daeninck, 2011). Clearly, not only academics, but policy makers and civil society actors too were astounded by these figures and impelled to take action. The debate was launched. Taskforces and advising committees were set up to define poverty among people with a migration background and to generate policy recommendations. For instance, the Minority Forum initiated a *"Table of experts"* to determine its position on poverty among ethno-

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[1] We define people with a migration background as people with a foreign or double nationality, people that are not born in Belgium, and people of which at least one parent has a foreign or double nationality (Van Haarlem et al., 2011: 184). Although there is much debate on the fairness of continuously referring to the migration background of people born in Belgium, we include second and third generation migrants in the analysis. Research has revealed that not only migrants of the first generation, but many of subsequent generations face poverty as well (Dierckx et al., 2013; OECD, 2015b; Van Robaeys et al., 2007; Valtonen, 2008). Because this research is concerned with gathering knowledge to contribute to the improvement of well-being of people with a migration background in poverty, we cannot ignore the disadvantages these generations also face in various life domains. Therefore, although we are aware this identification does injustice to their life-world and multiple identities (Vertovec, 2007; Valtonen, 2008), we do not want to exclude them from the analysis. For convenience's sake, the abbreviated term 'migrants' often used in this study refers to people with a migration background. In line with this, as in the field of practice the term 'ethno-cultural minorities' (or 'ethno-cultural communities') is applied to refer to groups of people with a migration background – including by stakeholders of migrant organisations themselves – we also use these terms interchangeably with the notion of 'migrant communities' or 'migrants'. With these notions we thus always refer to groups of people with a migration background, including second and third generation migrants.

cultural minorities (Kanmaz et al., 2015). The *Kruispunt Migratie-Integratie* (expertise centre supporting the integration centres and services) set up an advisory group to guide local governments in poverty policies with a focus on ethno-cultural minorities (Slaets, 2013). The Flemish government invested in an advisory committee – crossing sectoral boundaries of integration and welfare or poverty, and including academic and civil society experts – to exchange knowledge; develop a shared view on poverty among ethno-cultural minorities, and to formulate detailed policy recommendations (Werkgroep gekleurde armoede, 2012). As a member of these advisory boards, I was able to make contributions to the discussion on poverty and its alleviation among ethno-cultural minorities. Furthermore, conferences were organised to debate (and promote) the social inclusion of migrants in poverty (e.g. "*Samen of liever apart?*"[2]). Some claimed that migrant organisations ought to play their part in poverty reduction because of their relation to the target group (Horemans, 2013: 57; Segers, 2012). Others argued for more collaboration of traditional actors with these migrant organisations (Dierckx et al., 2013; Werkgroep gekleurde armoede, 2012). Still others proposed the establishment of new separate organisations targeting migrants in poverty, refraining from charging existing organisations with the task of poverty alleviation.

However, there appeared to be a lack of knowledge with regard to both poverty among ethno-cultural minorities and their organisations. Although data of aid services indicate a significant share of people with a migration background among their clientele (City of Antwerp), the poverty rates imply many people are still left behind. In trying to find answers, it is important to look closely at relevant actors that might be involved in poverty reduction among ethno-cultural minorities. The majority of research addresses the accessibility of public service organisations and their role as well as that of many civil society[3] organisations[4] (CSOs) in local social policy and poverty reduction (Gil-Gonzalez et al., 2015; Greenwood et al., 2015; Raeymaeckers and Vranken, 2009; Sannen, 2003; Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011; Willems et al., 2003). However, again and again we stumbled upon a lack of knowledge on (especially local) migrant organisations[5], particularly about their share in welfare provision or poverty

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[2] "*Samen of liever apart?*" [Together or rather apart?], Conference on inclusive versus categorical work, *provincial council* East Flanders*, June 21, 2012.

[3] In the Flemish region of Belgium, usually the term 'middenveld' is applied, when referring to what is called 'civil society' in international literature. However, literature points out both concepts are not quite similar. The Dutch term of '*middenveld'* is more an 'empirical instrument', whereas 'civil society' has a normative meaning (Elchardus, Huyse and Hooghe (2000) – in Maree et al., 2005). Still, in the absence of a better alternative, we apply 'civil society' when we refer to this '*middenveld'*.

[4] Civil society organisations are organisations that are initiated outside the government, but often (partially) funded by the state.

[5] A migrant organisation is a particular type of CSO. It can broadly be defined as a *"group in support of immigrants' social, cultural, or political interests"* (Huddleston et al., 2012). Most often these organisations are defined on the basis of the background of the founders or members of the board, also called self-organisations or self-initiatives (organisations established by immigrants).

reduction (Beaumont, 2008; Dierckx et al., 2009; Moya, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). This raised research questions on the role of local migrant organisations in poverty reduction which inspired this current study. The study is situated within the Policy Research Centre on Poverty (*Vlaams Armoedesteunpunt*), initiated by the Flemish government, in which one domain focused on migration and poverty. I have represented the policy centre on various occasions in advisory boards, or through presentations for policy makers or civil society organisations. As such, I noticed how – at conferences, meetings and workshops – highly motivated policy makers and social workers from various administrations, services and organisations, discussed how they would promote collaboration with all relevant actors and contribute to more effective poverty reduction among migrant communities. Noticeably absent in most of these gatherings were people with a migration background themselves, not to mention the local migrant organisations operating closely to and with the target group. Four years ago, an introduction to this research would have clearly stated that the migrant civil society and the general civil society are completely different worlds. What is more, exploratory discussions with various stakeholders suggested poverty was only scarcely an issue in migrant organisations. Also, few Flemish poverty advocacy organisations reached (any) migrants, or were able to maintain their commitment. However, during this four-year research the times are a-changin'. Partly due to this emerged debate, poverty among people with a migration background gradually became an issue, not merely among researchers, policy makers, administrations, public services and CSOs, but incrementally in the migrant civil society as well. New projects arose. The Flemish government supported the project '*Armoede Gekleurd*' – intended to *"strengthen the voice"* of people with a migration background in poverty – in which the poverty sector joined forces with the minorities sector (Cabinet of Minister Lieten, 2011). It aimed at an exchange of experiences and at coaching and the development of methods, with the objective of putting poverty on the agenda and to generate a trickle-down effect to local member organisations and their target group[6] (Ketelslegers, 2013, 2015). As a member of the advisory committee, I was able to provide input on the subject of poverty among ethno-cultural minorities and of their organisations, follow-up on the activities and progress of the project and participate in various activities, meetings and conferences to exchange ideas, knowledge and experience. Besides this project, the community development sector and a platform of poverty

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[6] The project, which ran between 2011 and 2014, concerned a collaboration between the Minority Forum and the Network Against Poverty, with support from the corporative Cera (Ketelslegers, 2013, 2015). These representation organisations wanted to support local poverty and migrant organisations to address poverty through a project call for poverty advocacy groups, ethno-cultural federations and their member organisations. They offered four trajectories of work forms: local organisations that were able to participate in an open learning network focussing on exchange of experiences and best practices; financial and/or substantial support of six organisations in their process of developing methods to address poverty among people with a migration background in their activities; policy work with people with a migration background in poverty; and reflection on practices and vision development (Ketelslegers, 2013, 2015).

organisations in Antwerp also experimented with methods from the poverty sector in migrant groups. At the same time, a recent internal inquiry of the Network against Poverty revealed how Flemish poverty advocacy groups are increasingly able to reach people with a migration background and to perpetuate their participation (Sempels and Ketelslegers, 2014). Poverty among people with a migration background thus became a hot topic, rendering it highly interesting – and challenging at the same time – to conduct research in such a volatile environment where many people and organisations are still in the early stages of poverty alleviation, driven in their search for knowhow and methods to deal with these encountered challenges. This research focuses on the role of migrant organisations in poverty alleviation. It aims at making a significant contribution to the debate and to the change of the harsh social reality faced by countless people with a migration background and their organisations. Importantly, we do not assume these organisations are best positioned to combat poverty among their supporters. However, as we will explain below, in the contemporary context, much is expected from these organisations – increasingly concerning poverty reduction or welfare provision. At the same time, many migrant organisations (choose to) take on a more prominent role in poverty reduction. Therefore, we argue we ought to assess their role in poverty reduction, if we want to gain a better understanding of the societal actors involved in poverty reduction among people with a migration background in poverty today. We could expect traditional players in the field to address this issue – as poverty among people either with or without a migration background appears to have many similarities. Nevertheless, people in poverty with a migration background face various additional barriers that affect the poverty mechanisms at play. Moreover, they encounter several difficulties in their search for help with traditional service providers. These organisations struggle with their increasingly diversified clientele and the complexity of their needs. Therefore, we believe it is highly relevant to study how migrant organisations cope with this reality.

The remainder of this introduction will illustrate the basic concepts used in this study, as well as various challenges migrant organisations are confronted with today, before outlining the structure of the study. This implies beginning with a description of poverty among people with a migration background. We study poverty in urban contexts undergoing rapid change. Therefore, we explain the localisation of welfare provision and the impact of related tendencies on services and organisations, more specifically migrant organisations. Having drawn the contexts of migrant organisations, we then look more closely into these organisations themselves. We discuss what is already known of these organisations, and their role in welfare provision. That will lead us to the main research questions that have guided us along the way, and the theoretical quest we have set about to help us address these research questions and thus explain the role of migrant organisations in poverty. To conclude this

introduction, we sketch in broad outlines the methods used for this purpose and the leitmotiv of this study.

1.1 Poverty and migration in superdiversity

In this section we will discuss the issue of poverty among people with a migration background. For this reason, we start by defining poverty in general. To make the bridge to poverty among people with a migration background, we will shortly see the reason why attention for the issue is rising, and tie it to theory on poverty in ethno-cultural minorities. After considering the expectations raised by theories on assimilation and segmented assimilation, we will look at empirical data available on poverty among people with a migration background in Belgium. We will demonstrate that they are in fact disadvantaged on various life domains. Moreover, increasing diversity and other tendencies in migrant communities apparently further complicates the opportunities of people with a migration background to escape poverty. This section will conclude with our main research question.

1.1.1 Poverty in theory

The aim of this research – to clarify the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction – requires first and foremost a definition of poverty. One of the main assumptions in this study is that when migrant organisations are expected to play a role in poverty reduction, they ought to be able to do so (Ballet et al., 2007; Doyal and Gough, 1991; See also Chapter 5). As we will explain later, the ideas of Amartya Sen (1987; 1993, 2002) on poverty and well-being play a key role in the main theoretical framework of this research (See also Chapter 5). Sen focuses on what people are really able to do and be. In this way, he studies the real opportunities or freedom of people to live the life they have reason to value (Sen, 1987; Sen, 1993, 2002). This perspective implies an absolute view on poverty in the sense of capabilities, as well as a relative view on poverty as it relates to the society in which people live. Therefore, this thesis applies a structuralist, multidimensional view on poverty (Tiwari, 2014: 33-36), in line with Townsend (1979: 31), where one is poor when lacking the resources to be able to participate in the generally accepted modes of existence in society. This implies poverty is related to the standards of living in a certain society. We emphasise its multidimensional nature and a broad interpretation of the notion of *'resources'*. People find themselves in precarious situations with reference to the labour market, housing, health care access, education levels, and so on.

Throughout Europe, concern has grown regarding the rising poverty among ethno-cultural minorities. Research indicated that people with a migration background (especially non-EU migrants) are disadvantaged on several dimensions (Dierckx et al., 2011; FPS Social Security, 2015; Kazemipur and Halli, 2000; OECD, 2011; 2014; 2015a, 2015b; Van Robaeys et al., 2006). Contrary to what is often

assumed, this does not merely concern first generation migrants or newcomers. Based on the assimilation theory[7] it is often assumed that migrants are economically disadvantaged during their first years of residence in the *'country of destination'*, but catch up as their length of stay extends (Kazemipur and Halli, 2000, 2001; Park and Burgess 1925; Portes and Zhou, 1993; Warner and Srole 1945). Upward social mobility is expected as a result of lowered language and cultural barriers, improved employment skills and accrued networks that facilitate finding a job. Second generation migrants are assumed to follow the same path faster, as they would experience even less resistance by a lack of training or language proficiency. In other words, migrants' socio-economic status would relate positively to their length of stay (Kazemipur and Halli, 2000, 2001). However, great variances appear to exist between diverse generations and certain ethno-cultural groups. In particular domains, subsequent generations of migrants actually turn out to be worse off than their predecessors. Research in the US, Australia, France and Canada disclosed how many second generation migrants face "*grave problems of social exclusion*" (Valtonen, 2008: 139). Portes and Zhou (1993) therefore suggest the notion of '*segmented assimilation*' (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Valtonen, 2008; Zhou, 1997) to describe diverging adaptation patterns among second generation migrants (Valtonen, 2008; Zhou, 1997: 984). Possible outcomes are upward assimilation into the middle-class, downward assimilation into structural poverty or the combination of upward mobility and "*persistent biculturalism*" (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Waters et al., 2010; Zhou, 1997). Many individual (e.g. length of stay, education, place of birth) and structural factors (e.g. racial status, family socio-economic backgrounds, place of residence) affect these segmented trajectories (Zhou, 1997). Compared to the first generation, second generation migrants experience decreased integration through the labour market. A less friendly socio-economic environment and the widened distance to the Belgian population generate discrimination. Though several bottlenecks have already been disclosed by research, still relatively little is known about poverty among people with a migration background (Kanmaz et al., 2015; Kazemipur and Halli, 2000; Krols et al., 2008; Van Puymbroeck and Dierckx, 2011; Van Robaeys et al., 2006; Van Robaeys et al., 2007; Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011; Van Robaeys and Krols, 2008).

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[7] "*Assimilationists focus on the changes that a new environment can bring about in cultural patterns and describe how immigrants and their succeeding generations gradually move away from the old country ways*" (Zhou, 1997: 983). They expect cultural assimilation to bring about economic and social mobility for migrants because of the material and social capital ethno-cultural communities may provide for them (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997). This stands in sharp contrast to the divergent outcomes in today's "*context of a society consisting of segregated and unequal segments,*" for second and third generation migrants that "*become incorporated into different segments of the society*" (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Valtonen, 2008: 143; Zhou, 1997: 984).

1.1.2 Poverty in numbers

Poverty risks are comparatively high among migrants in Belgium. People with a non-EU27 nationality belong to the highest risk groups for the indicators within the European strategy of social inclusion (FPS Social Security, 2013, 2014, 2015). *"Regarding the socio-economic position of persons with a migrant background, Belgium is among the worst performing EU Member States"* (FPS Social Security, 2015: 46). Compared to other groups, migrants in Belgium have been shown to face high risks of poverty or social exclusion (51%), severe material deprivation (30%) and low work intensity (28%)[8] (FPS Social Security, 2013). Affecting all life domains, they encounter disadvantages and discrimination on the labour market, housing, education, health care etcetera. We first discuss income poverty, before elaborating on the other dimensions in which people with a migration background are confronted with poverty and social exclusion.

"Belgium is among the EU Member states with the largest difference in poverty risk between non-EU citizens and nationals" (Eurostat, 2015; OECD, 2014, 2015a, 2015b; FPS Social Security, 2015: 20). Apparently 61,2% of people with a non-EU28 nationality live below the poverty threshold (60% of the median national equivalent income), compared to only 11,7% of people with a Belgian nationality (>18y; Eurostat, 2015). The most recent data with detailed figures distributed by origin concern weighted multi-annual averages based on data from 2007, 2008 and 2009 (EU-SILC in Van Haarlem et al., 2011). Narrowed down to country of origin, over half the people with a Moroccan background (54%) or 33% of people of Turkish origin*,* for instance, are at risk of income poverty (Van Haarlem et al., 2011*)*. These figures reveal a significant share of migrants at risk of income poverty. As we mentioned before, also in other life domains migrants (especially of non-European origin without Belgian nationality) suffer from deprivations[9] (Coene and Raeymaeckers, 2011; FPS Social Security, 2014). As such, migrants are more often unemployed and have to make do with a replacement income,

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[8] *"Poverty or social exclusion is based on the combination of three indicators: the number of persons that is below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold* (60% of median disposable household income) *or in a situation of severe material deprivation or in a situation of very low work intensity"* (FPS Social Security, 2013: 4). Severe material deprivation refers to somebody living *"in a household that is confronted with at least four out of nine problems: being confronted with arrears, not being able to afford 1 week annual holiday away from home, not being able to afford a meal with meat/fish/chicken every other day, not being able to make an unexpected expense with a value equal to the poverty threshold, not being able to heat the dwelling adequately, not being able to afford a washing machine, a TV, a telephone, a car"* (FPS Social Security, 2013: 4). A household has a very low work intensity *"if the actual number of months worked in the household is less than 20% of the possible maximum number of months that could be worked by all adult household members (excluding students)"* (FPS Social Security, 2013: 4).

[9] While 16% of people born in Belgium suffer from cumulative deprivation, 45% of the people of non-European origin with a Belgian nationality have a risk of deprivation. Cumulative deprivation implies that someone is poor on at least two poverty domains (housing, financial stress and limited financial resources). At 66% of the total, people of non-European origin without Belgian nationality have the greatest risk to suffer from multiple deprivations on multiple dimensions (Coene and Raeymaeckers, 2011; FPS Social Security, 2014).

or find themselves in precarious, temporary and low-paid jobs (FPS Social Security, 2013, 2015; OECD, 2015a, 2015b; Van Dam and Dierckx, 2013). The employment rates of people with a migration background in Belgium are the lowest in the entire OECD region (FPS Social Security, 2013). While the total employment rate for the Belgian working population in 2012 was 63%, it lay on 37,4% for people of non-European origin (Coene, 2012b). The unemployment rate of this last group was 27,8% in 2012. This employment rate gap widened between 2008 and 2013 particularly for (male) non-EU migrants (OECD, 2015a, 2015b). There are significant regional variances. Many factors contribute to explaining these numbers. Decisive factors are the economic growth, the development and the functioning of the labour market (Dierckx et al., 2011). In addition, 54% of the Flemish job-seekers of Moroccan and 46% of Turkish origin have a language deficiency – relating among other things to problems in education (Corluy and Verbist, 2010; Dierckx et al., 2011; Van Haarlem et al., 2011). Generally speaking, school performance remains negatively related to a migration background (FPS Social Security, 2013, 2014). The impact of a migration background on educational performance is even among the greatest of all OECD countries (FPS Social Security, 2013). Grade repetition and delay tracking in secondary education are more common in these groups, compared to others (OECD, 2015a, 2015b). Youths with a migration background are also over-represented in part-time and vocational secondary education. A third of the male youth and a fourth of the female youth are early school leavers. Only 5% commence in higher education and few among them make it to the finish (Dierckx et al., 2011; Van Dam and Dierckx, 2013).

In the field of housing, migrants (especially with Moroccan, Turkish or other non-European origins) comparatively end up more often in social housing or on the secondary housing market, although ownership figures of some ethno-cultural minority groups are similar to the Belgian average (Dierckx et al., 2011; Vanneste et al., 2007; Van Robaeys et al., 2006). Many people with a migration background thus live in overcrowded houses with minimal comfort (Dierckx et al., 2011; OECD, 2015a, 2015b). They are often obliged to buy a house of inferior quality, due to a lack of high-quality, spacious and affordable homes in certain cities (Dierckx et al., 2011; Van Dam and Dierckx, 2013). These buyers do not dispose of the resources for the necessary maintenance of the house, which they can afford to buy with their tight budget. However, research indicated that a better financial position does not guarantee housing of better quality for these people. Other explaining factors are the precarious labour market position of migrants, or the idea of returning home after temporary migration that many migrants retained for a long time. Additionally, discrimination and cultural differences in spending patterns force migrants to the secondary housing market (Dierckx et al., 2011; Van Dam and Dierckx, 2013; Vanneste et al., 2007).

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Concerning health, we see that especially people of Moroccan and Turkish origin have higher risks for a poorer subjective health, chronic conditions, diabetes type 2, depression, anxiety and psychotic disorders. In addition, they call less frequently upon preventive health services, general practitioners, dentists or paramedical care providers (Derluyn et al., 2011). These findings appear to relate both to the socio-economic status as to the nationality of people. Traumatic experiences linked to the migration background partially explain these differences in health (care) of people with a migration background – besides pre-existing health problems, socio-demographic factors, acculturation stress, racism and discrimination, legal statutes and inequalities in access to health care (Derluyn et al., 2011; Levecque et al., 2006a, 2006b; Missine and Leveque, 2011).

This account of how poverty among people with a migration background manifests itself in all these life domains indicates that many of them daily face complex challenges. Although there are many similarities with the poverty situation of people without a migration background[10], there are also significant differences. We identify these differences rather as additional bottlenecks or barriers. For example, the migration background can generate specific psychological adjustment problems. Newcomers, having only recently arrived, possess limited knowledge on their rights and obligations. Diverse reference frames can come into conflict with each other. For example, when does one acknowledge his or her current poverty situation if the standard of living from the country of origin is perceived as the norm? Many women with a migration background are found to suffer from expectations to care for their families, while their own emancipation and participation in society is omitted. This is particularly problematic when it comes to female newcomers, where the husband and in-laws dissuade this integration path (Dierckx et al., 2013; Van Robaeys et al., 2007). Questions arise on how these people with a migration background try to escape from poverty. These differences might suggest migrant organisations play a substantive role in this matter, as they are categorically organised and thus assumed to be closer to the target group.

1.1.3 Escaping poverty in superdiversity

We have discussed how people with a migration background are often confronted with poverty. We now focus briefly on how their classical protection mechanisms or strategies for escaping poverty appear to fail and are challenged by superdiversity. In the following chapters we will elaborate more on this impact of superdiversity. Employment, higher education or home ownership can safeguard

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[10] Some features are general. We know from research that the poverty situation has a large common divisor for people with or without a migration background, or various subgroups within these populations. They must try to get by with limited resources, experience a daily struggle for survival and need to make difficult choices. They adjust their expectations and future prospects as a result of a (seemingly) hopeless situation. As such they stack frustrations and experience powerlessness (Van Robaeys et al., 2007; Krols et al., 2008; Dierckx et al., 2013).

many people against poverty. However, it appears that these classical solution strategies do not sufficiently protect people with a migration background. This is attested by the composition of people with a migration background in poverty, including the highly educated, employed and homeowners. 32% of highly educated people with a migration background, 43% of homeowners with a migration background and 46% of people with a migration background that have a job, still suffer from cumulative deprivation (Dierckx et al., 2011; OECD, 2015b). Do perhaps other solution strategies function, particularly among people with a migration background?

It is commonly assumed that migrant communities have strong social networks protecting their members through social capital and solidarity (Cloke et al., 2009; Phalet et al., 2005; Schans, 2008). These social networks are indeed found in various ethno-cultural communities. For instance, people with Moroccan or Turkish backgrounds can rely on their own community for all kinds of help (Van Robaeys et al., 2007). However, research indicated a weakening of support within migrant communities and families over time and across various waves of migration (Dierckx et al., 2013; Meert et al., 1997; Van Robaeys et al., 2007). The solidarity underlying these networks is often founded on the principle of reciprocity. As tendencies such as individualisation and women's emancipation gradually affect migrant communities, it is precisely this reciprocity that may lead to exclusion. Also, with the diffusion of poverty in these communities, reciprocal mechanisms can no longer be guaranteed because the exchange relationships weaken within the community (Dierckx et al., 2013; Van Robaeys et al., 2007). Moreover, migrant communities appear to diversify increasingly, even to the extent that the notion or relevance of the ethno-cultural community is questioned (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014; Vertovec, 2007). This differentiation is determined by factors such as the variety of countries of origin, the migration history, status of residence, religion, age and gender (Geldof, 2013; Schrooten et al., 2015). Vertovec (2007) identifies this sharp increase of a complicated diversity as '*superdiversity'*, referring to "*a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade"* (Vertovec 2007, 1024). This phenomenon not only affects the variances in manifestations of poverty within sub-groups (for example rights bound to their legal status), but also the experience of poverty and the strategies to escape it. We will elaborate further on the impact of superdiversity in Chapter 4. As such it undermines solidarity mechanisms as well. Because these solidarity mechanisms – as well as the mentioned solution strategies of education, employment or home ownership – fail to protect people with a migration background against poverty, it is important to look closer into the people or organisations migrants call upon for social support. As this superdiversity implies a diversification in needs, it also raises questions on how services and organisations cope with this diversity.

Challenges and Capabilities: Real opportunities of migrant organisations and intervention strategies for local target-group driven poverty alleviation

1.1.4 Research question

In a nutshell, alarming poverty rates among migrant communities in Belgium and weakening community support mechanisms inspired questions on the role of migrant organisations in poverty alleviation. However, superdiversity complicated matters. Gathering knowledge and developing poverty reduction policies in a context of superdiverse migration backgrounds, languages, skills, statutes and related rights or obligations, etcetera, is a laborious job (Vertovec, 2007). We discussed the challenges of poverty among people with a migration background. Questions were raised on where migrants in poverty turn to, and how organisations and services respond to the challenges of diversification and rising poverty among people with a migration background. It became clear that migrant organisations might play a crucial role. However, knowledge is scarce, especially with regards to these migrant organisations (Beaumont, 2008; Dierckx et al., 2009; Moya, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). Looking at migrant organisations in a context of superdiversity and poverty, we are faced with many small, often limitedly organised groups. Most of these (formal or informal) organisations are overrun by their target group members in search for help. Existing forms of government support they receive prove to be inadequate. They are confronted with budget restraints and groups' internal diversity. Therefore, they are often unable to fulfil the needs of their diverse target group. On the one hand migrant organisations are increasingly expected by both their target group and authorities to be involved in the implementation of social policy, including the alleviation of poverty (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013; Cas, 1994; Heyse, 2008; Moore, 2004; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). On the other hand local authorities are confronted with superdiverse migrant communities. Because migrant organisations thus become increasingly important in local welfare provision, the question rises which functions they perform, which role they play today. To what extent do migrant organisations contemporarily participate in poverty reduction in Flanders? We therefore study the following main research questions:

How – and to what extent – do migrant organisations participate in poverty reduction in Flanders? As such, what role do they play in the contemporary welfare state (vis-à-vis the local/higher authorities, market and civil society/family/individual)?

What processes do these organisations go through to play a specific role in poverty reduction?

To address these issues, we need to look more closely into the actors involved in poverty reduction among people with a migration background. In what follows, we will therefore first shortly discuss the welfare state and civil society in Belgium – and the changes it goes through in contemporary challenges – before addressing the position and role of migrant organisations in poverty alleviation in Flanders.

1.2 Welfare and poverty alleviation in Belgium

Welfare services and poverty alleviation in Belgium occur by means of an extensive formal provision of social services within welfare state institutions, and the welfare sector (Beaumont, 2008; Deleeck, 2005: 350-388; Parama, 2008; Raeymaeckers and Vranken, 2009). In this welfare state, the state embarks on assuring the well-being of its citizens through social services such as pensions or unemployment benefits. Many authors set out from the welfare state types in looking at strategies of poverty reduction. After all, the role of civil society varies according to the type of the welfare state (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013). In the conservative-corporatist welfare state of Belgium, civil society is an integral part and thus crucial in Belgian welfare provision and poverty reduction. As many CSOs operate at the local level, it is important to assess the position of CSOs on both the national and the local level.

Literature reveals a growing importance of the local level in social policy and social service delivery, as well as an increasing differentiation of the actors involved (Andreotti et al., 2012; Kazepov, 2010; Pierson and Castles, 2000; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Swyngedouw, 2004). In analysing poverty reduction among migrant communities, it is therefore crucial to explore the role of local actors involved in contemporary service delivery and poverty alleviation in Belgium. Migrant organisations are among the newly involved partners in poverty reduction at this local level. As migrant organisations are a particular form of CSOs, and as we aim to explore the role of these organisations in poverty reduction, we ought to position them among other actors that are involved in poverty reduction. For this reason we briefly discuss the welfare state type in Belgium and its link with civil society. In particular, we focus on the role of local CSOs in welfare society, as part of this civil society, and of migrant organisations in particular. Subsequently, we will look into the changes occurring within the welfare state and their effects on migrant organisations.

1.2.1 The welfare state and civil society

The welfare state can be categorised according to the well-known typology of Esping-Andersen (1990). He distinguished between a Nordic social-democratic, a continental-conservative and a liberal Anglo-Saxon welfare state type. Increasingly, a Mediterranean and an Eastern European type are recognised as distinct types (Deleeck, 2005; Dierckx et al., 2009; Manow, 2002; Scaramuzzino, 2012).

The conservative-corporatist welfare state type (e.g. Belgium, France and Germany) is "*based on an alliance between the state and the family against the individual. The state grants protection to the family and the civil society organisations to ensure that these in their turn provide for the welfare of the individuals they are composed by*" (Scaramuzzino, 2012: 70). Family and civil society thus play vital

roles, hence the importance of the breadwinner principle and the social dialogue between the government and the social partners (management and trade unions) (Deleeck, 2005). The continental welfare type entails an extensive social security system with welfare services based on the connection with people's labour market position – perpetuating occupational and family inequalities (Deleeck, 2005). In Belgium, this social security system includes the seven classical sectors of old-age and survivor's pensions, family benefits, unemployment, insurance for occupational diseases, insurance for accidents at work, compulsory insurance for medical care and benefits, and annual vacation. There is a residual right to social integration for people who did not acquire rights through labour (minimum income guarantee around 66% of the European poverty line at 60% of the national median income) (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Deleeck, 2005; Dierckx et al., 2009; Manow, 2002). This residual system of social assistance encompasses an integration income, an income guarantee for the elderly, guaranteed family benefits, and benefits for disabled persons. Local authorities are authorised to implement this residual social assistance, for which they established separate organisations. A such, public centres for social welfare (PCSWs) make up the closing safety net, the culmination of a whole range of services and facilities of the social security. PCSWs provide mainly, but not exclusively, financial support (Deleeck, 2005; Raeymaeckers and Vranken, 2009; Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011).

In the continental corporatist welfare state of Belgium, civil society plays a crucial role in the implementation of social policy, i.e. poverty reduction and welfare provision of citizens (Deleeck, 2005; Scaramuzzino, 2012). In this thesis we work with the three-sphere model in line with de Tocqueville (1848, 2003 in Scaramuzzino, 2012), recognising civil society as a separate domain vis-à-vis the market and the state, because of its specific role (as a mediator and counterbalance to the power of state and market) and importance in relation to the market and the state (Deleeck, 2005; Meert et al., 1997; Polanyi, 1944; Scaramuzzino, 2012). Each domain (or sphere of economic integration [Polanyi, 1944]) has its own dominant logic and accordingly its own solution strategies[11] of people in poverty. The dominant logic in the market is exchange, whereas in the state it is the redistribution of goods and services (or money) and in civil society[12] (and communities or families) it is reciprocity (Polanyi, 1944 in Meert et al., 1997). The relationship between the welfare state and civil society is reflected in the

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[11] Survival strategies are "*every deliberate economic act by households with the ultimate motivation to satisfy the most elementary human needs, at least on a minimal level, according to universal social and cultural norms, and without any social integrating character*" (Meert et al., 1997: 173). They can be categorised according to Polanyi's modes of economic integration; "*reciprocal actions whereby money is completely absent, redistribution of goods and services or money, and finally the market exchange where money is used in every action*" (Meert et al., 1997: 173).

[12] Civil society or "*Zivilgesellschaft*" includes "*all more or less spontaneously emerged associations, organisations and movements, which ensure that the concerns that arose in the private sphere of social problems are recorded, aggregated and forwarded amplified into the public arena of politics*" (Habermas, 1992: 444 in Maree et al., 2005, own translation).

principle of subsidiarity (Deleeck, 2005), stating *"that policies ought to be handled by the institutions or agencies that are best positioned to get the most immediate and efficient results"* (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013: 1). "*This implies that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level*" (Kazepov, 2008: 248). In most continental-corporative countries such as Belgium and Germany, civil society is well developed. Many CSOs (outside the government, often nongovernmental organisations in the form of a non-profit organisation) partake in welfare provision, *"sometimes alongside the welfare state, sometimes as an integral part"* (Dierckx et al., 2009). '*Welfare society'* as part of civil society is the '*non-state dimension'* of a welfare regime and strongly developed in the continental regimes (Dierckx et al., 2009). Examples of welfare society organisations that are relevant in poverty reduction generally refer to organisations in the sector for general welfare with its centres for general welfare (CGWs, *Centra voor Algemeen Welzijnswerk*), the community development sector and the poverty sector[13]. In Belgium, welfare society is responsible for over 50% of all service delivery, however, over 60% is financed by the state (Kazepov, 2010; Andreotti et al., 2012). Kazepov (2010: 65) therefore describes this as *'active subsidiarity'*, "*a principle that endeavours, in a multilevel governance system and in situations in which problem-solving requires the cooperation between different levels, to*

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[13] General Welfare Work (*Algemeen Welzijnswerk*) usually refers to the social assistance provided to people that do not necessarily belong to a clearly demarcated sector. It is the link between basic social services – such as education, housing, employment, etcetera – on the one hand, and categorical social care sectors – i.e. care for elderly, people with disabilities, etcetera. As such, it crosses public-private boundaries (of civil society and the state) with its main actors being the PCSWs and the CGWs (Verschuere, 2014). Employing a narrow definition, it refers to the organisations regulated by the Decree on general Welfare Work (*Decreet Algemeen Welzijnswerk*, 1997, altered in 2009 and 2012), i.e. the CGWs and the Helpline Centres (*Centra Teleonthaal*). The CGWs coordinate all local/small-scale initiatives for homeless, youth, detainees, victims and people with personal or relational problems. These centres provide service desks for information or referral; psychosocial counselling to stimulate individual skills in performing social roles and functioning in society, and prevention and signalling problems to policy in order to structurally improve the position of people in poverty in need of assistance. Their subdivisions are easily accessible contact points per issue/subject or target group (CGW; Raeymaeckers and Vranken, 2009; Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011).

The community development sector (*Samenlevingsopbouw*) is regulated by the decree on community development work (*Decreet Maatschappelijk Opbouwwerk* 1991). It includes *Samenlevingsopbouw vzw* at the Flemish level and its eight regional departments. In turn, these organisations coordinate local initiatives regarding two work forms, i.e. community work (*opbouwwerk*) and outreach work (*buurtwerk*). The core mission of these organisations is to combat situations of deprivation and exclusion of socially vulnerable groups. Through specific actions and initiatives for these groups, they try to safeguard the access of the ten constitutionalised Fundamental Social Rights (housing, employment, social security, education, cultural and social development, healthy environment, and social, legal and medical assistance). Community work has a political mission of sensitising various governments, and a pedagogical mission regarding the process of strengthening the agency of people in a socially vulnerable position. Outreach initiatives might also take the form of a poverty advocacy group, recognised by the Poverty Decree (2003; Verschuere, 2014). As such the sector overlaps with what is called the poverty sector, containing those organisations working on poverty that fall under the Poverty Decree (2003, *Decreet betreffende de armoedebestrijding, 21 Maart 2003*). The decree supports associations were people in poverty take the floor through the establishment of a Flemish Network Against Poverty. This network represents 59 local associations where people in poverty take the floor in Flanders and Brussels. The main activities of these associations concern policy advocacy and support (Network Against Poverty).

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promote both the greatest possible unity and the greatest possible diversity. The principle of active subsidiarity is central to contemporary governance". In other countries, civil society's role is rather complementary because of the social-democratic character of the state (despite pressure from neoliberalism and transnational migration).

Civil society is thus comprised of organisations that are initiated outside the government, but often (partially) funded by the state. CSOs are operationally defined based on five structural-operational features. They are organised as a permanent and regular organisation (reflected in regular meetings, membership, decision-making procedures accepted as legitimate by members, etcetera). They are private, i.e. separate from the state or the public sector. They are non-profit-distributing, referring to their non-profit(-making) main objective and the fact that they do not distribute profits to managers or owners. They are self-governing, with control over their activities. Finally, their membership is voluntary (Salomon et al., 2004 in Scaramuzzino, 2012: 52). These criteria, however, allow for a grey area, as many organisations are difficult to categorise unequivocally. Presumably, it is rather difficult to identify many organisations' source of initiation, crossing the boundaries of civil society and public institutions (Scaramuzzino, 2012; Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005). This civil society, where citizens are linked by common interests and collective activity, consists of a broad range of organisation types. In this study we focus on poverty among people with a migration background. Therefore, we are particularly interested in the role of the wide variety of migrant organisations that are also part of the civil society. To assess the position or role of these organisations in the contemporary welfare state, we ought to explore how this welfare state and civil society might be affected by poverty, superdiversity and other pressing challenges.

1.2.2 Changing roles in changing welfare states

As we discussed, CSOs – and thus migrant organisations as well – are often important actors in welfare provision and poverty alleviation, through a complementary role in the welfare state. European comparative research, however, indicates a crisis or even a retrenchment of the welfare state (Deleeck, 2005; Dierckx et al., 2009; Kazepov, 2010; Scaramuzzino, 2012). With the rise of neoliberalism, growth in prosperity, the democratisation of education, social mobility, depillarisation and secularisation, the state gradually withdraws from direct welfare provision – shifting the emphasis towards the private sphere of both profit and non-profit organisations. At the same time, migration has increased and diversified (asylum seekers and family reunification for migrant workers). As highlighted earlier, compared to the first generation of labour migrants a significantly smaller share of the second and third generation are part of the working population. They became dependent on social transfers and

ended up in poverty. This created a gap in services and assistance that is usually taken up by CSOs *(particularly within the "welfare society")* (Dierckx et al., 2009).

In a reaction to these transformations, CSOs, and thus migrant organisations as well, try to respond to the unaddressed needs of migrants in poverty. Each kind of actor develops diverse inclusive or exclusive strategies within a welfare state model (Meert et al., 1997). Organisations can react in two ways. They can provide services in cooperation with authorities, amounting to accreditation and possibly public funding. Alternatively, they can organise themselves completely autonomously, outside regulatory and government requirements (Dierckx et al., 2009). At first, this appears to be a return to the idea and method of charity – with social assistance comparatively autonomous through horizontal interaction with local authorities and civil society. However, it may also be a development of a new type of (urban, local) welfare regime with a stronger focus on urban policy and strategies, and new interactions between local governments and CSOs (Dierckx et al., 2009; Kazepov, 2010: 65; Andreotti et al., 2012). As the local level is considered as an ideal implementation level, higher authorities transfer powers to the lower echelons (typically implementation with a great margin for interpretation). Local authorities are assigned a directing role or take this on themselves. They facilitate the local civil society with an emphasis on networking and coordination. Mingione identifies this transformation as the rise of local welfare systems or local welfare regimes. *'Local welfare systems'* are thus *"dynamic processes in which the specific local social and cultural contexts give rise both to diversified mixes of actors underlying the strategies for implementing social policies and to diverse profiles of needy or assisted populations"* (Mingione and Oberti, 2003: 3). This newly emerged type of local welfare systems refers to a decentralisation and the growing role of different actors, such as migrant organisations, to partake in local social policy (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013; Andreotti et al., 2012; Beaumont, 2008; Dierckx et al., 2009: 23; Mingione and Oberti, 2003). Certainly in the field of poverty reduction among people with a migration background, and specifically for undocumented migrants, these two opposite tendencies develop within local governments. This creates, among other things, a hybridity in policy and actors, and a gap in the provision which – in the meantime – civil society might not be able to fill (Kazepov, 2010: 65; Andreotti et al., 2012). Therefore, we argue it is essential to study the role of CSOs – and migrant organisations in particular – and try to explain this role by assessing the opportunities of migrant organisations to play such a role against the background of these changes in society and the welfare state.

Although these shifts are taking place all over Europe, the local development of new governance arrangements greatly differ from each other[14], especially where (sub-)regions have the freedom to

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[14] Mingione (and Oberti, 2003) differentiates three types of local welfare systems that can be traced back more or less to the broader welfare state types. The first group of cities has limited interventions, often complemented

direct policy themselves. Examples of this are the *'Länder'* in Germany, the *'Communidades Autónomas'* in Spain, the *'Cantons'* in Switzerland and the Communities and Regions (*'Gemeenschappen en Gewesten'*) in Belgium (Kazepov, 2010). Mingione (and Oberti, 2003) recognises the embeddedness of poverty reduction strategies and programmes in the national welfare state type. Local differences are thus linked to the socio-economic and institutional context (Kazepov, 2010). It is important to consider how this type manifests itself at the local urban level since every city has its own singularities in social, economic and cultural configurations. That is why Mingione (and Oberti, 2003) sets great store by the urban economic and socio-demographic histories, the relevant actors and the spatial distribution of several social groups. The interplay of these factors determine the interpretation of social problems like poverty, and how adequate social policies such as poverty reduction strategies are defined accordingly. As such, local welfare sytem types affect the notions of exclusion and poverty and thereby determine who is eligble for assistance. Consequently, it is vital to account for the urban social, cultural and economic configurations. According to Mingione this hybridity of local configurations forces organisations in all cities to question themselves whether to continue working on charity, or to become real partners in the new local welfare system (Mingione and Oberti, 2003). We believe this consideration challenges migrant organisations in contemporary local welfare systems. CSOs and private companies are urged by authorities to take on more social responsibility, though local implementation results may vary extensively (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013). Traditionally, social policy in Belgium occurs to a large extent at the Federal and Flemish level. Social security, activation, housing and education policies are each responsible for citizens' welfare. The evolution towards more local responsibility goes hand in hand with an increase in actors involved in policy development and implementation. Social facilities and services become partly owned by non-profit and private actors. In the Belgian corporatist welfare state type, cities are described as mixed types of local welfare systems. Intervention is here less grounded in citizenship, but rather in accumulated rights (predominantly related to labour). Public support is – in theory – subordinate to family support, which also applies for charities. Yet the role for these informal support networks is still limited compared to southern European cities. Organisations in this type are often hybrid because their funding is largely public (Mingione and Oberti, 2003). As mentioned, in Belgium this government funding of CSOs is about 60%. Mingione and Oberti (2003) therefore to semi-public institutions. There are also the

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by a wide range of heterogeneous civil society organisations. Families and traditional organisations have, despite their major role, a low autonomy. State intervention remains subsidiary. The second group is diametrically opposite, there being a high degree of institutionalisation with central control and relatively many resources (financial and human capital). Integrated intervention accounts for specific various individual needs. Family and community play a limited role. There is also a limited discretionary scope for social workers and a strong degree of bureaucracy. Between both types a mixed type exists in which the Belgian cities are positioned (Mingione and Oberti, 2003).

various ethno-cultural minorities, each 'represented' by their own organisations and having a voice in varying degrees. It is thus important not to take the civil society as one entirety in the analysis, but to account for its diversity (Mingione and Oberti, 2003). That is why we focus on migrant organisations in particular.

Mingione thus compels us to address the local context adequately when analysing actors in poverty reduction. This is why we, compared to most researchers in this field, prefer to focus on local migrant organisations instead of their umbrella organisations at higher representation levels (Dumont, 2008; Portes et al., 2008; Portes and Zhou, 2012; Rosenow and Kortmann, 2010; Moya, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; Vermeersch et al., 2012). The variety among local migrant organisations influences the view on poverty and its reduction strategies. These strategies range from "*advocating religious conversion to deliver social services as contracted out by public authorities' and all kinds in between*" (Dierckx et al., 2009: 23). Many migrant organisations gradually became '*professional*' service providers, often responding to unaddressed needs. As such, welfare society complements the welfare state, sometimes even replacing it (Dierckx et al., 2009: 23). Therefore, the evaluation of local systems must take the diverse mix of institutional and individual actors into account. Within this complexity and diversity, policy is increasingly based on partnership relationships and thus a shared responsibility between claimant and provider (Mingione and Oberti, 2003: 3).

1.2.2.1 Challenges of diversity for local welfare systems

As we explained earlier, we must explore how the welfare state and civil society might be affected by the challenges we discussed, if we aim to map the position or role of migrant organisations in the contemporary welfare state. The localisation of welfare, the diversification of the population and the rise of poverty among people with a migration background presumably have a direct effect on the form, content and effectiveness of social services in public services and CSOs. Organisations that have been working for years in supporting people in poverty apparently struggle with their diversifying clientele and the growing complexity of their needs.

Especially in the poverty sector, we see that poverty advocacy groups have only recently succeeded in involving people with a migration background. Before, merely one out of ten organisations had participants with a migration background, and mostly these people did not participate in the advocacy group of organisations, but rather in socio-cultural or service activities of organisations. Today nine in ten organisations have participants with a migration background in varying numbers and profiles (although the majority concerns rather low-skilled migrants and newcomers). Addressing this tendency, one out of three local poverty organisations now provide language classes or conversation

practice (Sempels and Ketelslegers, 2014). CGWs and PCSWs are other striking examples because of their role in primary welfare care and the fight against social exclusion and poverty. These organisations and services notice this diversification most strikingly in areas with a concentration of certain migrant communities. In 2009, 28% of clients in Flemish CGWs are people with a migration background, in Antwerp this was 44% (Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011). More than half of PCSW-clients in Antwerp have a foreign nationality, two-thirds have a migration background. The share of Belgian public welfare assistance recipients in the population between 18 and 65 years was in 2010 1,2%, where it is 4,9% for non-Belgians (Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011).

Migrants thus increasingly find their way to these organisations and services. However, there appears to be a significant mismatch between the superdiverse clientele and social services. Various obstacles interfere with the relation of people with a migration background in poverty with relief organisations and social workers (Dierckx et al., 2013; Gil-Gonzalez et al., 2015; Greenwood et al., 2015; Kanmaz et al., 2015; Ma and Chi, 2005; Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011). Thresholds in the provision of services or barriers linked to the situation of people with a migration background in poverty hinder the connection between these clients and services. The cultural deficit model employed by many social workers, the lack of information on services, or language barriers are only a few examples (Schrooten et al., 2015; Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011). Moreover, certain needs appear to be left unaddressed, for instance, concerning language classes, child care or easily accessible services for administrative assistance (Dierckx et al., 2013). Also, people with a migration background often experience discrimination in their search for support. Such negative experiences often prevent them from further enlisting traditional service providers – such as public centres for social welfare or particular civil society organisations (CSOs). Particular barriers seem at play in poverty advocacy groups that employ a dialogue method to raise awareness, empower people in poverty and gather policy input. Prejudices, diverging views on poverty or reference frames between '*white*' people in poverty and migrants challenge advocacy groups in their aim for reaching and involving people with a migration background in advocacy work (Kanmaz et al., 2015; Sempels and Ketelslegers, 2014).

In general, particular groups of migrants rather call for categorically organised and easily accessible primary work at the grassroots level, for bonding and welfare provision – whereas traditional service organisations typically work inclusively (Heyse, 2008; Kanmaz et al., 2015). We might assume that these experiences and needs incite people with a migration background in poverty to call upon migrant organisations, perhaps expecting less discrimination in congenial groups. Moreover, these organisations as part of their ethno-cultural community – and thus typically categorically organised – might be better known than other service organisations. The question remains whether poverty issues

are addressed in the categorically organised migrant organisations. Moreover, are they able to? Furthermore, because of superdiversity, representation issues arise regarding migrant organisations (Vertovec, 2007). Which *'groups'* or *'communities'* do they represent in superdiversity? In addition, these migrant organisations are presumably not equipped to address these needs (Vermeersch et al., 2012). Generally, it is assumed migrant organisations possess few organisational skills and have a marginalised position in decision-making (Caponio, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). If we want to map the position of migrant organisations in the welfare state and their role in poverty reduction, we ought to explore to what extent they address poverty and they are able to connect to other CSOs and public services. Literature is not promising, describing totally different worlds. For instance, nearly half of migrant organisations in Brussels have no contact with other CSOs (Thys, 2011). And as these CSOs have only recently been confronted with migrants, presumably many needs of people with a migration background are left unaddressed. Because of these challenges in the relation between migrants in poverty and service providers, we argue it is vital to explore whether and to what extent migrant organisations step up, willingly or otherwise. In what follows we will discuss what we know of migrant organisations in contemporary Flanders and the gaps in our knowledge on their role in poverty reduction. We start by defining the concept of migrant organisations and discuss their functions by means of typologies. Then, we will position these organisations in the institutional context in Flanders.

1.2.2.2 Migrant organisations in changing times

Defining migrant organisations

As explained, we focus on categorically organised organisations at the local level. We expect these migrant organisations reach the target group of people with a migration background in poverty that remain comparatively hidden for other CSOs or public services. In literature migrant organisations are commonly defined on the basis of one characteristic, i.e. the ethno-cultural identity of its members (Anciaux, 2014; De Graaf, 1983 in Vanmechelen, 1995; Moya, 2005; Sierens, 2001; Vermeulen, 2006). Therefore, they are often called self-organisations or self-initiatives. Research in Flanders defined a self-organisation as a "*non-profit organisation or unincorporated association that is active in Flanders, it has its headquarters and regularly organises socio-cultural activities",* that is *"grown from the migrant communities themselves, from accidental coming together to develop an organisation. The majority of the members of the boards belong to the target group of migrants"* (Heyse, 2008: 9-10, own translation). Often, a reference is also made to the migration background as part of the organisational culture, identity or objectives (Anciaux, 2014; De Graaf, 1983: Scaramuzzino, 2012). Some definitions also include objectives of migrant organisations, others focus on emancipation, integration and/or participation. Frequently occurring features in most definitions are voluntariness,

identity and group formation, meeting needs in the community and organisations as part of that community (Scaramuzzino; Sierens, 2001; Moya, 2005; Vermeulen, 2006). In this study, a migrant organisation, as a particular kind of CSO (Scaramuzzino, 2012), is broadly defined as a *"group in support of immigrants' social, cultural, or political interests"* (Huddleston et al., 2012). They belong to civil society, but in further applying the initiative criterion, we define these organisations according to the migration background of the founders or board members, often called self-organisations or self-initiatives (organisations established by migrants). As such they are CSOs that are established outside the government by a group of people with a migration background, supporting their social, cultural or political interests.

Functions and types of migrant organisations

Because our interpretation of migrant organisations is quite broad, they can be further distinguished, for instance, according to their functions or activities; their target group (by gender, age, nationality, ethnicity or sub-ethnicity); the age of organisations, their type, their geographical dispersion, their level (local or supra-local level, i.e. the federations); or their cooperation or orientation (Levrau, 2011; Van Parys, 2002; Vanmechelen, 1995). Classifications of migrant organisations according to their functions vary depending on the type of migration, ethnicity, organisational characteristics, the kind of benefits migrants are entitled to, the structure of the social security and the phases of the migration process. Most migrant organisations are primarily established for the creation, expression and preservation of a collective identity (Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005; Moya, 2005). However, because these organisations provide social capital in dealing with everyday life, they seem especially important in communities struck with poverty. Research indicated that social capital is especially important in communities that struggle with poverty because of a lack of sufficient other kinds of capital, particularly financial resources or human capital (Cloke et al., 2007; Ibrahim, 2006). Moreover, studies have shown that these actors contribute to the integration and emancipation of migrant communities (Dierckx et al., 2009; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). Typically, migrant organisations are ascribed functions regarding social, welfare, representational or cultural objectives (Scaramuzzino, 2012; Van der Meer et al., 2009). Many organisations perform multiple functions simultaneously. Various typologies of migrant organisations are based on their activities[15]. Canatan (et al., 2003), for instance, categorised mosques according to their activities. In

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[15] Generally organisations offer the following types of activities: dispersion of culture, educational, recreational or social (bonding) activities, intercultural activities and activities aimed specifically at migrant women. A cultural event is considered a culture-dispersing activity. An intercultural activity revolves around exchange and cooperation and is aimed at people with various ethno-cultural backgrounds, or at both people with and without a migration background. Possible funding depends on this categorisation. For example, a culture-spreading activity will sooner generate public funding compared to social activities. Welfare and religious activities or

addition to religious activities mosques also provide socio-cultural activities, sport and leisure, intercultural and interreligious activities, participation stimulating activities, training and educational activities, and computer and internet courses. Finally, individual assistance contains counselling, referring to public services or other CSOs, filling out forms and contacting professional counsellors (Canatan et al., 2003). Based on these features, Cas (1994) categorizes five types of migrant organisations in Belgium: mosque associations, socio-cultural organisations, sports clubs, welfare organisations and non-profit-café's.

Although these types appear to be still closely linked to the reality of migrant organisations in Flanders today, it is uncertain that these very specific and a priori typologies still apply to today's migrant civil society. In order to address this issue, it is possible to widen the scope and consider typologies not specifically developed for migrant organisations. For instance, Stewart (2005) worked out a typology of organisations based on the objectives and relevant capabilities of organisations. She distinguishes efficiency groups, claims groups, and pro bono groups, according to economic functions (Stewart, 2005). Of course, not all migrant organisations intend to have economic functions. Therefore we may expect to find many other types of migrant organisations that do not match Stewart's classifications. For most migrant organisations we will hence need other typologies. We may for instance use the types of Clarke (2006), identifying representative, charitable, socio-political, missionary and illegal or terrorist organisations. However, to start off from categories with labels such as *'charitable'* or *'terrorist'* is in our opinion excessively normatively biased as an approach to study the migrant civil society. An alternative is found in the CSO typology of Van der Meer (et al., 2009), classifying leisure, activist and interest organisations. Although we value this categorisation, it concerns itself in our view with rather vague and broad distinctions. According to our definition, all migrant organisations serve political, social or cultural interests, rendering it relevant to distinguish between various kinds of interests. Furthermore, if we compare this typology to others specifically devised for migrant organisations (E.g. Canatan et al., 2003; Cas, 1994), obviously a further breakdown is highly relevant and also plausible.

Additionally, increased diversity in the migrant population in terms of ethno-cultural origin, legal status, generation, age and education is likely to affect a diversification in migrant organisations in Flanders. This diversity might be translated in the range of migrant organisations' activities, services, sensitisation and advocacy, involving various target groups and touching upon various societal

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services are not financed within the institutional framework of socio-cultural adult work under which most migrant organisations in Flanders operate (infra) (Decree 1995, *Decreet van 19 april 1995 houdende een subsidiëring voor verenigingen voor volksontwikkelingswerk*; Sierens, 2001; Van Leugenhaeghe, 2001 in Van Parys, 2002).

domains. This diversity further complicates adopting existing typologies indiscriminately, especially when constructed with very different (non-migrant) organisations in mind. The migrant civil society is typically a volatile environment, and research suggests that the foundations and structures of these organisations are currently undergoing a transition (Kanmaz, 2007; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). Not only do new organisations often arise in the rather unstructured form of a social movement rather than a formal organisation, a vast share of local migrant organisations are also unincorporated, i.e. recognised, but not publicly funded. There appears to be no a priori criterion to assess which of these general organisational typologies adequately apply to contemporary local migrant organisations. Also, because we do not want to exclude in advance certain kinds of local migrant organisations that remain under the radar, we believe it is more appropriate to address the migrant civil society as a relatively unknown territory. That implies that we derive our own typology of migrant organisations in Flanders from our empirical data, inspired by the literature on organisational types and activities we reviewed here. As such, the various kinds of organisations and activities in these typologies are applied as codes for analysing our inventory and survey. We thus employ these types to code the objectives and activities of organisations. After combining and comparing these codes and our data, we develop a new typology (See Chapter 4).

Institutional organisation and development of migrant organisations

We argued migrant organisations presumably have a greater role in poverty reduction, because of the challenges – of poverty, superdiversity and the localisation of welfare – in society and the welfare state. Therefore, we have discussed the definition and functions of migrant organisations and their position in civil society and the welfare state. At the same time, these challenges presumably affect the opportunities of migrant organisations to play a role in poverty reduction. The institutional structure in which organisations operate typically affect the opportunities of migrant organisations to perform particular functions (Fennema and Tillie, 2004; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). For instance, public funding depends on the decree of the sector in which an organisation operates or on the types of activities these organisations provide. Organisations can also be represented by accredited umbrella organisations at a higher representation level. For the analysis of local migrant organisations in poverty reduction, we must thus also discuss the main elements in the institutional organisation of the minorities sector in Flanders, and how they came to be.

This entirety of various kinds of migrant organisations has known many transformations. Besides policies on migrant organisations, the size and composition of migration flows also largely affect the activity and structure of migrant organisations. The historical background of migrant organisations thus also relates to the migration history (De Gendt, 2014; Heyse, 2008; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van

Puymbroeck et al., 2014). Although an extensive historical account of migration and migrant organisations would extend beyond the scope of this introduction, we will recount here some of the main elements relevant for interpreting today's migrant civil society, and for the analysis of migrant organisations' role in poverty reduction (For further historical insights, see De Gendt, 2014; Heyse, 2008; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014 among others).

The first generation of Belgian migrants are the *'guest workers'* of the 1960s and early 1970s. They had a position in the labour market and society which provided them with a certain level of prosperity and welfare. Integration was not a priority because most labour migrants believed their migration to be temporary. In the financial crisis, with the so-called '*migration stop'*, only family reunification became a possible route for migration to Belgium. Migrants reacted by bringing in their families, actually increasing immigration numbers. Meanwhile, the idea of returning to the country of origin gradually faded. These circumstances gave rise to the establishment of local migrant organisations. Initially, these concerned mainly religious organisations and activities, but their activities have slowly expanded (De Gendt, 2014; Heyse, 2008; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). In the 1980s women's organisations gradually emerged, responding to the needs of migrant women (Heyse, 2008). Also second generation migrants became involved in migrant organisations. Whereas most migrant organisations were initially organised with the help of or mostly by people without a migration background, changing legislation on the requested share of board members without a migration background incited more organisations to arise. In the nineties, the Decree on civic development work in associations (1995, *Decreet van 19 april 1995 houdende een subsidiëring voor verenigingen voor volksontwikkelingswerk*) provided local migrant organisations with the opportunity to establish an association at the regional level. These first '*ethno-cultural federations'* were eligible to public funding, provided they met a number of criteria imposed by the decree. Local as well as higher level migrant organisations were able to apply for public funding of their activities. As such, the decree included migrant organisations as a specific target group of policy. This decree was an incentive for a number of local migrant organisations to federate themselves, based on an ethno-cultural, ethno-national, thematic or religious perspective. As the field of religious organisations underwent great transitions, gradually separate socio-cultural organisations arose in Moroccan communities, whereas Turkish religious organisations further subdivided and their activities widened (Cas, 1994; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck, 2014). In the meantime, as migrants diversified, organisations from expanding or new minorities arose as well – for instance Eastern European, Indian, Congolese or Chilean organisations (Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). These various communities federated and further differentiated at the same time, as the internal diversification of migrant communities also differentiated the needs of people with a migration background. Migrant organisations slowly

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expanded their range of activities (Cas, 1994; Heyse, 2008; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014).

During the 2000s, policy was thoroughly restructured. Local migrant organisations now fall within the domain of culture, more specifically the sector of socio-cultural work (D'Hooghe, 2014). More strictly defined tasks were imposed on integration centres, resulting in the discontinuance of many migrant women's groups tied to these centres. Today, the minorities sector, as part of the socio-cultural sector, refers to all structures regarding ethno-cultural minorities and their organisations in Flanders. As such it overlaps with other sectors, such as the integration sector that belongs to the Welfare sector (*Welzijnssector*) since the implementation of the Minorities Decree (1998, *Decreet van 28 april 1998 inzake het Vlaamse beleid ten aanzien van etnisch-culturele minderheden*) in 2000. Part of it concerns government structures and public services (e.g. Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities[16])*; Huizen van het Nederlands[17]*, but also religious organisations (D'Hooghe, 2014; Verschuere, 2014)*.* Furthermore, it contains categorical organisations, organisations working with refugees, people with a precarious residence statute and non-accompanied minors*.* Thus, most accredited migrant organisations are now regulated by the decree on socio-cultural adult work[18] (2003, *Decreet betreffende het sociaal-cultureel volwassenenwerk*) and the decree on ethno-cultural minorities *(1998, Decreet van 28 april 1998 inzake het Vlaamse beleid ten aanzien van etnisch-culturele minderheden)*. These policy changes implied a shift from categorical toward inclusive policy (Heyse, 2008). Henceforth, Flemish CSOs ought to be open to minorities and migrant organisations were expected to be open for men and women, and people with as well as without a migration background. Ethno-cultural federations were to include more local migrant organisations from diverse ethno-cultural minorities. Heyse denotes a sudden lack of resources and structural policy in Flanders in the 2000s (Heyse, 2008). Since the minorities decree (1998, *Decreet van 28 april 1998 inzake het Vlaamse beleid ten aanzien van etnisch-culturele minderheden*), only the recognised ethno-cultural federations are

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[16] The Centre monitors political developments and advises authorities at different levels. It is involved in the preparations of the "National Action Plan for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" (http://www.diversitybelgium.be/organisational-structure ; http://www.diversitybelgium.be/policy)

[17] *Huizen van het Nederlands* (Houses of Dutch) were set up in 2004 by the Flemish government. They do not organise language courses themselves but provide tailored information on learning and practising Dutch and cooperate with schools in the region (http://www.huizenvanhetnederlands.be/en/learning-dutch).

[18] This decree implied several significant policy changes concerning the recognition and public funding of migrant organisations at the regional level. A transition period until 2010 was introduced for migrant organisations at this level, i.e. the ethno-cultural federations, to be able to meet the same criteria as other socio-cultural associations, implying that the federations had to aim for an expansion towards a representation of at least 50 member organisations, i.e. the local migrant organisations. These federations must have at least ten active member organisations in at least three Flemish provinces. Ethno-cultural umbrella organisations that are unable to meet these criteria, were advised to seek cooperation with one another (Federation of socio-cultural work).

funded by the Flemish government. Their local member organisations can no longer directly obtain public funding from the Flemish government. It is therefore beneficial for local migrant organisations to join the recognised ethno-cultural federations (Heyse, 2008; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). From 2011 on, the term '*migration association*' has no judicial meaning by decree (Federation of socio-cultural work). They are recognised as '*socio-cultural associations*'. Still, they have an umbrella organisation of their own at the regional level of Flanders, i.e. the Minority Forum. As a member of FOV (Federation of socio-cultural work), this Forum is a recognised socio-cultural association at the regional level. The ethno-cultural federations, as members of this Forum, and their local member organisations are socio-cultural organisations (D'Hooghe, 2014)*.

In October 2015, the Minority Forum represents 19 member organisations, of which 12 are accredited ethno-cultural federations (that are also recognised and funded by the department of Culture of the Flemish government), plus umbrella organisations that are not federated organisations and representatives of (other) ethno-cultural minorities in different provinces (Minority Forum). About 1800 local migrant organisations are represented by these federations, thus forming the pinnacle of the three-stage structure in the minorities sector, together with organisations that arose from external initiatives (often integration centres or other CSOs) that gradually developed into organisations of people with a migration background (self-organisations). As we explained before, when we apply the term migrant organisations, we primarily refer to this local level in the three-stage structure (Cooke and Spencer, 2006; Heyse, 2008; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; Van Parys, 2002; Minority Forum, 2011). This is also the organisational level of which the least knowledge is available.

1.2.2.3 Mind the gap: challenged migrant organisations: bottlenecks in the sector and gaps in the literature

We aim to study whether migrant organisations play a role in poverty reduction, because of rising poverty, superdiversity and the localisation of welfare. We argued that these organisations ought to be positioned in their organisational environment. Therefore, we elaborated on the role of welfare state institutions and CSOs in poverty alleviation among migrants – with particular attention to local migrant organisations. The institutional structure of migrant organisations affects their opportunities to play a role in poverty reduction. We have discussed the challenged and changing roles of migrant organisations in local welfare systems and positioned them in their institutional structure. Here we recapture the main elements relevant for our research questions, and highlight the missing links in knowledge to clarify the role of migrant organisations in poverty.

The migrant civil society is a dynamic and expansive field that became highly differentiated in terms of objectives, history, target groups and activities. It also typically involves many unincorporated associations and informal groups (Cas, 1994; Caponio, 2005; Van Puymbroeck, 2014). Some groups even resist forming organisational structures, frequently to remain free from expectations or obligations that accompany accreditation or public funding (Vertovec, 2007). Most organisations are based on ethnicity or culture. Important bottlenecks concern a lack of vision, resources and infrastructure; expertise or organisational skills; and the dependence on volunteers and on government logic (Heyse, 2008; Kanmaz et al., 2015). Especially the funding and procedures in the fragmented policy domains burdens these organisations. In recent years public funding is distributed primarily on a project basis, is hardly structural, and rarely provides means for paid staff, increasing the dependence on volunteers. CSOs can apply for government recognition and are then centrally managed and controlled and possibly funded. Through official recognition and funding migrant organisations obtain financial security, but also a moral authority. They gradually become an interlocutor for authorities (Moore, 2004; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). On the other hand, they are compelled to act in accordance with the rules, conditions, and developments in policy and the sector. The main change is the shift towards inclusive policy in which separate categorical organisations are phased out and all organisations are impelled to increase diversity within their organisations (Heyse, 2008). As a result, a contradiction emerges between the role authorities (but also many CSOs and migrants in poverty) ascribe to migrant organisations and the lack of structural support, but also their initial objectives and structures (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013; Cas, 1994; Heyse, 2008; Moore, 2004; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Spencer and Cooper, 2006).

In the meantime, migrant organisations are gradually increasingly called upon by their target group and local authorities to participate in poverty reduction (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013). The localisation of welfare creates a hybridity in policy and actors and generates unaddressed needs among migrants in poverty – which civil society might not be able to respond to. The local welfare system appears to be very decisive for the functioning and structure of migrant organisations. Decentralisation allows for local flexibility, but also makes ethno-cultural communities and organisations vulnerable when contacts with local authorities do not run smoothly (Spencer and Cooper, 2006). The vision of the city (which varies electorally) has a large impact on the functioning of migrant organisations (Spencer and Cooper, 2006). Also, an underestimated growth potential and policy distinctions between welfare and culture play tricks on the organisations, despite enormous flexibility (Heyse, 2008). There appears to be a lack of a general policy or structural funding for local migrant organisations in Flanders. Moreover, collaboration with other CSOs generally appears to be limited. Migrant organisations usually have more contact with their federations and other migrant organisations, although the

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support and embeddedness of the federations vary extensively between regions (Dierckx et al., 2009; Heyse, 2008; Sierens, 2001; Van Parys, 2002).

Although migrant organisations thus remain crucial in linking people with authorities and service providers, representation issues arise and knowledge of these organisations is scarce (Beaumont, 2008; Dierckx et al., 2009; Dierckx et al., 2013; Moya, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). In that regard, we believe it is crucial to analyse the opportunities of CSOs to partake in the local welfare system, and migrant organisations in particular (Andreotti et al., 2012; Kazepov, 2010: 65; Sen, 1982, 1987, 1993, 2002; Vertovec, 2007). The diversifying population and the rising poverty among migrants are likely to affect public services and CSOs, including migrant organisations. We might expect that this hinders migrant organisations to generate social capital because of the intensified diversity. In addition, this should imply that they are not able to meet the high expectations in supporting poor migrant families as a consequence of welfare localisation. It is therefore important to address the issue of how migrants organise themselves in contemporary societal pressures of poverty, superdiversity and the localisation of welfare.

Migrant organisations seem to cover a broad range of approaches in combating poverty and exclusion (from religious to social services recognised by the government). Apparently, they often provide assistance to their target group, outside their mandate or mission statements (Dierckx et al., 2013; Kanmaz 2007; Kanmaz et al., 2015; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeersch et al., 2012). However, this role is still very unclear (Beaumont, 2008; Dierckx et al., 2009; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). Moreover, there is little agreement in the literature on the best practices of migrant organisations in social inclusion and poverty reduction (Cas, 1994; Cloke et al., 2005; 2007; Dierckx et al., 2009; Heyse, 2008; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). Little is known about the position and role of migrant organisations in the Flemish society in general, and in welfare services and poverty reduction in particular. Are these organisations – despite their challenges – able to reach people with a migration background in poverty and achieve their objectives? What opportunities do they have to play such a role? In general, research focuses on the level of ethno-cultural federations when studying migrant communities and their representation (Rosenow and Kortmann, 2010; Moya, 2005; Sierens, 2001; Vermeersch et al., 2012). Little existing research on local migrant organisations focuses on their role in welfare provision or poverty reduction (Beaumont, 2008; Cas, 1994; Dierckx et al., 2009; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). Internationally the emphasis often lies on transnationalism and political participation (Dumont, 2008; Portes et al., 2008; Portes and Zhou, 2012; Spencer and Cooper, 2006), identity (Alsayyad et al., 2002 in Spencer and Cooper, 2006), belonging and agency (Bailey, 2012), social capital (Bunn and Wood, 2012; Morales and Ramiro, 2011) and empowerment (Neal, 2014). A recent study in Flanders addresses issues regarding

the general role of migrant organisations, with a focus on social capital, identity and representation (Anciaux, 2014). Scaramuzzino (2012) has compared the role of migrant organisations in welfare provision in Sweden and Italy using the concepts of political opportunity structures and resource mobilisation for explaining migrant organisations' diverging roles. This focus is not yet found in research specifically conducted in Flanders. There is a significant lack of correct and up-to-date information on these organisations in Flanders. Already denounced in 2003, researchers wonder why *"no single agency appears to have a solid updated list"* of these local migrant organisations (Verhoeven et al., 2003). Therefore it is difficult to reach these organisations in search for an interlocutor for policy makers and service providers, or in search for research subjects. Still today, nobody appears to have adequate knowledge to acquire an overview on the minorities sector, although it would be expected that its ethno-cultural federations or its Minority Forum on the one hand, or authorities on the other would possess such reliable data. Where are they established, in which communities? What are their functions in general, and what is their role in poverty alleviation in particular? We therefore aim at contributing to this knowledge on local migrant organisations. In this task we focus specifically on their role in poverty reduction and welfare provision, exactly because of the high poverty rates among ethno-cultural minorities, the changing role of local actors in service delivery and poverty alleviation and the gaps between the public services and CSOs with people with a migration background, as well as the gaps within civil society, i.e. between migrant organisations and other CSOs (or services).

We believe it does not suffice to simply list the activities of migrant organisations. To explain the role of migrant organisations, we ought to explore the organising process migrant organisations go through, and the vital factors that are at play. Vermeulen (2006) distinguishes six factors that determine the '*immigrant organising process'*: number of formal organisations, types of organisations, their activities, the organisers, the members and the organisational networks[19]. These elements will inspire us in our theoretical quest and operationalisation of our research questions. Moreover, our discussion on the localisation of welfare taught us the importance of urban social, economic and cultural configurations because they affect the interpretation of social problems and ensuing policies, as well as the opportunities of migrant organisations. This suggests the importance of gathering knowledge on the actors and their networks (See chapter 3), involved in these local welfare systems, as well as the activities and services they provide (Chapter 4 and 6). We believe it is critical to explore this issue in detail. For example, do migrant organisations differ in their role in poverty reduction in

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[19] In our study we apply the terms '*target group'* (or sometimes participants) versus '*stakeholders'* – instead of '*members'* versus '*organisers'* as Vermeulen (2006) does – because depending on the organisation or spokesperson of the migrant civil society (or the literature), the notion 'members' can be applied to both target group and stakeholders.

the ethno-cultural community and the organisation type? How can we improve collaboration among CSOs and public social services? Answers to these questions may help ameliorate the services provided to migrants in poverty. For this aim, research on the experience of poverty and the solution strategies of migrants must be pursued, as well as the factors determining the process of migrant organisations. This will shed light on the role of migrant organisations in these surviving strategies of migrants. Summarised, we can now rephrase our main research questions:

How – and to what extent – do migrant organisations participate in local poverty reduction in Flanders? As such, what role do they play in the contemporary welfare state?

What processes do these organisations go through to play a specific role in local welfare systems, more particularly in poverty reduction?

1.3 The search for a theoretical concept

Against the background of transforming welfare systems, superdiversity and profound poverty rates among people with a migration background, we argue it is vital to explore the real opportunities of migrant organisations in undertaking a (if any) role in poverty reduction. We aim at revealing what organisations are really able to do in this changing and challenging context. As we discussed, migrant organisations often lack certain capacities compared to other organisations and services to perform particular functions (Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeersch et al., 2012). Such opportunities are vital, because if it is expected of certain actors to play a specific role, they ought to be able to fulfil this role (Doyal and Gough, 1991: 92-111, 146-147). We explained how opportunities of organisations to play a role can be affected by the local welfare system. This implies that not only the institutional structures – but also local policies, and other organisations and services – positively or negatively affect migrant organisations' opportunities to play a role in local poverty reduction. Clearly, discrepancies emerge between the role ascribed to migrant organisations and the lack of structural support, but also their initial objectives and structures. The localisation of welfare and intensified diversity presumably implies the need for attuned theoretical frames for analysing migrant organisations in today's challenges (Chapter 4) (Vertovec, 2007). Therefore, the theoretical concept we seek to analyse the opportunities of migrant organisations – in order to explain their role in contemporary local welfare systems – must be duly normatively substantiated. In line with the idea that the interpretation of social problems and the definition of appropriate policies are determined by the urban social, cultural and economic configurations (Mingione and Oberti, 2003), we must be explicit in the foundations of our concept to fully grasp the role of these organisations. Indeed, if social sciences necessitate normative principles to clarify concepts like poverty or well-being (Crocker, 1992), then we require a normative

validation of our concept to analyse the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. Obviously, there are other criteria this concept must meet.

Most importantly, a theoretical concept to analyse the opportunities of migrant organisations must be able to account for these discrepancies between internal features, capacities and relations in organisations, and external expectations, support or incentives. Consequently, it ought to be able to clarify the possibilities or opportunities of migrant organisations to perform a particular function (such as poverty reduction), as this concept ought to account for these inconsistencies. This indicates it should capture both internal capacities, features and objectives of these organisations, and external support, expectations and features of the organisational settings. Finally, as we are interested in a concept that helps clarify the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction among migrants, this implies the concept must as well be applicable to the analysis of collectivities, particularly in organisations that vary in the levels of formalisation, and in line with our structuralist and multidimensional view on poverty (Tiwari, 2014: 33-36), as explained above. Only then will we have a conceptual tool to analyse the role of these organisations in local welfare systems and their impact on people with a migration background in poverty. We went off in quest of a concept to substantiate this notion of '*opportunities*' in the analysis of migrant organisations within local welfare systems. We explored the explanatory capacities of some sociological and economic key concepts – in particular empowerment, social capital, collective action, political opportunity structures and capabilities. Because we found most of these concepts highly valuable, yet inadequate in dealing with our research questions, we introduce the Capabilities Approach (CA) of Amartya Sen. The most convincing argument to employ the capabilities approach is that it is concerned with the opportunities of people to adopt certain roles they aspire in society. For instance, one can (aim to) be a mother, daughter, sister, partner, employee, friend, etcetera. Capabilities then refer to the opportunity to take on a role that is valued with reason. In the capabilities approach, agency refers to "*what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as valued*" (Sen, 1985). As such, agency refers to people's roles in society and their opportunities to participate. Agency is thus critical in the explanation of inconsistencies regarding the capabilities and social, economic and political barriers to realising these real freedoms. The availability of other roles is crucial to really enable people to play such a role, and no other. Indeed, the explanation of undertaking a particular role might be obscured in the analysis that only focuses on the actual role. Therefore, Sen focuses on what people are really able to be or to do, rather than what they actually are, have or do (Nussbaum, 2000: 86-96, 167-297; Sen, 1987: 33-40; Sen, 1993, 2002: 38-40). Applied to our research, we argue that we ought to focus on the real opportunities of organisations to take on a particular role. This implies that the value of assessing the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction depends on the capability of

organisations to play various roles – with particular concern for the actually chosen role, and the availability of alternatives (Nussbaum, 2000: 86-96, 167-297; Sen, 1987: 33-40; Sen, 1993, 2002: 38-40). Indeed, if we only account for what organisations contemporarily do or have (i.e. their '*functionings*'), we neglect crucial elements to explain the real opportunities of these organisations to partake in poverty reduction. For instance, perspectives such as social capital, empowerment, collective action or political opportunity structures rather emphasise current actual functionings of organisations, neglecting aspects such as agency[20]. Collective agency then refers to the ability of a collectivity to set its own goals and act upon them. Collective action is the action itself taken by this collectivity *"in pursuit of members' perceived shared interests"* (Scott, 2014: 92). Whereas collective action is often seen as a conversion factor – a means to improve individual capabilities (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2003) – we argue that organisations and groups can construct a valuable vision, similar to an individual life plan, regarding the progress or empowerment of a group, community or organisation. Most organisations have formulated a mission statement with objectives and methods to realise these goals. Collective action is therefore not merely a conversion factor of individual capabilities, but also of collective capabilities at the individual and the collective level. As collective agency thus denotes the ability to conduct collective action – and migrant organisations are a particular form of collective action (Ibrahim, 2006) – collective agency is a result of and catalyst for collective action. Most importantly, the capability approach can thus be applied to treat the discrepancies between internal capacities and objectives, and external expectations and support. We argue it is exactly this condition that is crucial in our analysis, and precisely the one where these other conceptual approaches fail, unable to grasp this complex interdependence. Later, we will elaborate on other arguments with regard to why the concepts of social capital, empowerment, collective action or political opportunity structures fail to be adequate for our research aims. In what follows, we first introduce the basics of the CA and argue why we apply the concept of collective capabilities of migrant organisations to study and clarify their role in local poverty reduction.

1.3.1 Capabilities as deus ex machina

Following some applications of the Capabilities Approach (CA) of Amartya Sen, we argue this theoretical framework is highly appropriate to answer our research questions and address a broader variety of actors and factors involved in the process migrant organisations go through (whether or not) to play a role in poverty reduction. It may help us clarify the mandate, the actual role and the

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[20] In sociology agency is mostly discussed as opposed to structure and regularly used synonymous with action – as undetermined human action versus allegedly determining structures. In a broader interpretation '*it is to draw attention to the psychological and social psychological make-up of the actor, and to imply the capacity of willed (voluntary) action"* (Scott, 2014: 11). As agency in the CA implies the ability of practical reasoning to reflect on objectives and act upon them, we believe this is complementary to this sociological perspective.

expectations and requirements of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. In comparison to most other relevant concepts, capabilities do account for political and social contexts and align with our structuralist and multidimensional view on poverty. Most importantly, the strength of the CA is its normative underpinning, i.e. a focus on capabilities as the real opportunities of the element of analysis. In capabilities, agency and freedom play a crucial in qualifying opportunities as such. The CA thus accounts for the potential discrepancies between the ascribed role or expectations towards migrant organisations and their objectives and organisational features and capacities. We argue this is of critical importance in the selection of a theoretical concept for the analysis of opportunities of migrant organisations to play a role in poverty reduction. It is also this touchstone where most other concepts fail that are often applied in the analysis of organisations and their functions (infra). At first sight, because the capabilities approach focuses on the individuals, it remains to be seen whether capabilities can simply be transferred to the collective level (Chapter 5-6). Before we discuss the issue of collectivities in the CA, we first review its basics here.

The capabilities approach of economist Amartya Sen (Sen, 1982; Sen, 1987; Sen, 1993, 2002) is progressively gaining more ground and praise for its strong philosophical foundations and its wide applicability (Robeyns, 2000; 2005; Volkert and Schneider, 2011). The approach crosses disciplinary boundaries and is embraced by many philosophers, development theorists, anthropologists, social work researchers and sociologists. However, introducing this theory in sociology does not run undisputed, as its moral foundation is after all individualistic. For Sen, the individual is "*ultimately what matters*", the individual as means and end (Deneulin, 2008; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1987; Sen, 1993, 2002). Thence, we will debate the arguments for expanding the focus of the CA to the collective level in this chapter, after explaining its keynotes.

The CA is a "*broad normative framework for the evaluation of individual well-being and social arrangements and for the design of policies to bring about social change in society*" (Robeyns, 2010: 237). It is not a theory that explains poverty or social arrangements, but rather an analytical tool or frame that enables us to conceptualise and evaluate these issues (Robeyns, 2010). Sen created the CA in response to conceptions of development and well-being in terms of primary goods, utilitarian or absolute and relative welfare. For Sen, these conceptions fail to reflect the quality of a person's life. He evaluates well-being rather in terms of freedom, more specifically the real freedom and opportunities people have to choose the life they have reason to value. Poverty measurement or reduction is not an issue of looking at what people have, but rather at what they are able to do and to be. For this purpose, Sen developed two related concepts: functionings and capabilities. Functionings are the doings and beings of a person, the different things one realises or achieves. Examples of functionings are being fed, clothed or being able to walk in public without shame. A capability, on the

other hand, is the "*ability to achieve a certain doing or being, called a functioning*" (Sen, 1985: 5) or the "*various functioning bundles an individual has the freedom to choose from to achieve the life that he/she has reason to value*" (Sen, 1985: 18, 1992: 40-45). Capabilities are derived from functionings. Where a functioning is a specific being or doing, a capability is the opportunity to realise this functioning. As such, functionings directly relate to one's life conditions. However, focussing on functionings does not consider freedom of choice. For example, someone who fasts out of religious beliefs but has food available has more capability than one who does not eat because of a lack of food (Robeyns, 2005; Robeyns, 2010; Sen, 1987; Sen, 1993, 2002). This implies a specific direction. Goods and services have particular characteristics, which are the inputs to capabilities. Social, environmental and personal conversion factors influence how a person can convert these goods and services into capabilities, and capabilities into functionings. As these contextual factors thus affect the conversion of features of input (such as resources) into capabilities, and the conversion of capabilities into functionings, they are essential in the approach. The capability set represents different bundles of functionings from which one may choose, according to personal preferences and social influences (Robeyns, 2005). The evaluation criterion becomes what people are genuinely able to be or to do. In practice, the CA is generally applied to evaluate effects of policy and social changes on individuals' functionings and capabilities. Some capabilities need material inputs like financial resources or economic production. Others need political practices, social institutions etcetera. The approach accounts for the links between material, mental, and social well-being, and connects these with economic, social, psychological, political and cultural dimensions, covering the whole spectrum of human well-being (Robeyns, 2005; Robeyns, 2010).

According to Sen, well-being should thus always be evaluated at the individual level. Nevertheless, Sen does not apply methodological individualism, since he accounts for social arrangements and the influence of institutions on individual freedoms (Sen, 1999). Even in his operationalisation Sen has an eye for collectivities as he also applies the CA in an evaluation or comparison of the average well-being levels of different collectivities, such as groups or even countries. However, for Sen, a collectivity is merely the sum of individuals participating in it. As such the approach seems inapplicable in our context of analysing the role and opportunities of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. Nevertheless, some CA applications are actually highly relevant for this kind of analysis. A number of scholars stress the role of collectivities in forming or maintaining capabilities and explore the possibility of including a more collective focus and concepts into the CA (Ballet et al., 2007; Evans, 2002; Ibrahim, 2006; Lessmann, 2009; Soubhi et al., 2009). Gradually a theory of collective capabilities is growing. At the collective level of a community or organisation, collective capabilities may be a solution in thinking about the role of associations in poverty alleviation in migrant communities. A collective capability *"is

the capability of a group or institution. It results from the combination of the individual capabilities of the agents in this group, or members of these institutions, and social capabilities that are the result of the interaction between different agents or members. The corresponding aggregative process is complex to analyse, since the collective capability can be superior or inferior to the combination of individual and social capabilities depending upon the state of the interactions between agents" (Dubois et al., 2008: 260, own translation). A varying degree of collective capabilities may explain a different readiness or willingness of organisations, for example between various migrant communities or organisation types to play a role in poverty reduction. This perspective brings into account what organisations are capable of, what is expected of them and to which they are prepared. They may indeed have the freedom of choice whether or not to undertake this task.

This discussion of our theoretical quest prompts us to rephrase our second main research question: What is the process of building and widening (or limiting) capabilities that these organisations go through to play a specific role in local welfare systems, more particularly in poverty reduction? We argue that when migrant organisations develop the necessary collective capabilities, they acquire the ability to become partners in the local social welfare system, making policy and/or providing services besides other civil society actors, authorities and market, thus undertaking a sustainable role in poverty alleviation. These required collective capabilities refer on the one hand to organisational capacities, i.e. characteristics of the board/staff/members and the target group (migration background, religion, education, motivation, time, paid/non-paid, organisational expertise or expertise concerning poverty) and characteristics of an organisation (size, age, experience and changes, organisation type, internal power relations, adequate and stable financial means, …). On the other hand they refer to freedom of choice and agency (freedom to choose the goal and activities of the organisation whether or not to work on poverty reduction, institutional and legal opportunities and support, network opportunities, being a member of a federation, participation of the organisation (members) in advisory councils or policy making, criteria for public funding, …). Chapter 5 will treat the operationalisation of this concept.

1.3.2 Collective capabilities: a class above others

Following this discussion of the capabilities approach, we argue collective capabilities are the eligible candidate to assess the real opportunities of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. As they account for the discrepancies between organisations' internal capacities and external expectations and setting – and the role of agency and freedom in the explanation thereof – the concepts meets our most crucial conceptual criteria. Moreover, its firm normative underpinning refers to the focus on real opportunities of the elements of analysis. It also strongly pleads for integrating theory and empiricism, while sufficiently accounting for a coherent philosophical groundwork (Robeyns, 2010). Moreover, it

accounts for the political, social and other environmental contexts in the factors that influence the conversion of goods and services into capabilities. Additionally, it takes the role of external actors and their expectations into account, as they affect the freedom of individuals – or in our case organisations. Another reason for adopting the CA is that while many sociological studies describe or analyse well-being empirically with a multi-dimensional framework, the CA offers a firm theoretical foundation of this multidimensional analysis. The perspective thus suits our multidimensional and structural view on poverty (reduction). Finally, it may clarify the impact of collective action on individuals and (elements of) society as well as the factors contributing thereto. As a result, we argue that collective capabilities largely surpass other concepts that are commonly applied in the analysis of the role of CSOs and poverty reduction. We clarify our opinion by shortly discussing where other frameworks – social capital, empowerment, collective action, and opportunity structures – fail in comparison to collective capabilities in comprehensively assessing the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction.

For instance, social capital is unable to interpret the discrepancies between internal capacities and external influences, although it can be applied to evaluate the role of internal and external actors in the availability of resources. At the meso level it is usually described as "*features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit*" (Putnam, 1995: 67 in Mayer, 2003) or *"the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively"* (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000: 226 in Mayer, 2003). Social capital has many advantages (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Engbersen, 2002; Putnam, 1993; Mayer, 2003). Participation in migrant organisations can provide migrants with social capital (Cloke et al., 2009; Da Graça 2010; Engbersen, 1996, 2001; Engbersen et al., 2006; Peters, 2010; Van Meeteren et al., 2009). It helps explaining the role and function of CSO's as "*particularly competent for local problem-solving and networking and brings into focus their skills in (re)vitalizing local participation"* (Mayer, 2003). However, social capital reduces something social to capital and makes social relations '*context-independent'* (Adler and Kwon, 2002; Mayer, 2003). No matter their objectives, it assumes that all sorts of CSOs are equal in generating social resources due to trust and reciprocity. As such it is inappropriate for today's civil society with its number and variety of fragmented, mostly small-scale groups, often initiated in reaction to poverty or other forms of exclusion (Mayer, 2003). As explained, this also applies to many migrant organisations, often small, not (yet) institutionalised and under the radar. This stands in contrast with the need for a concept that accounts for discrepancies in internal objectives and capacities, and external expectations. Social capital authors dismiss the fact that the "*movements of these weak-resourced groups"* can also generate social capital effects (Mayer, 2003). Furthermore, the social capital perspective became misplaced in contemporary welfare localisation to clarify the role of new types of

voluntary organisations[21]. The approach ignores these changing state-society relations, and assumes that all actors involved undergo the same impact, neglecting the weak positions of those excluded (Mayer, 2003). In contrast, we deem these political and social contexts quite relevant to our research context. Moreover, certain aspects are difficult to employ in this perspective, such as the mission of an organisation. And last but not least, this approach does not deal with the opportunities of organisations as such, but rather their effects.

Empowerment[22] as "*a process of strengthening in which individuals, organizations and communities get a grip on their own situation and their environment and this through the acquisition of control, the sharpening of critical awareness and encouraging participation*" (Van Regenmortel, 2002, own translation) is another concept often used in research on the role of organisations and poverty reduction. According to Zimmerman, empowerment is the increase of control at both the individual and the collective level (El Harizi, 2008; Zimmerman, 1995). However, most empowerment theories give no account of the dynamic relationship between individuals and institutions or social structures, nor of how agency may vary between these institutions and can exist simultaneously at the individual and several collective levels. Moreover, even when applied to organisations, most interpretations and applications of empowerment focus on its psychological aspects (Steenssens and Van Regenmortel, 2013; Zimmerman, 1995). As such, the role of external actors and their expectations is neglected. Most importantly, the psychological focus in the study of empowerment prevents an adequate definition of organisational empowerment. Even the distinction between '*empowering*' (organisations generating psychological empowerment of its target group) and '*empowered*' organisations (characterised by effectiveness in realising their goals), which was created in order to solve this very problem, falls short

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[21] Contemporary urban movements and voluntary organisations (E.g. migrant organisations) evolve and change according to the changes in their own social and political environment. These initiatives grow in number and variation, often in reaction to the growing social needs of a diversifying (marginalised) population. In the localisation of welfare, and the strong role of market forces driving up inequality, these trends "*jeopardize the very qualities that are the basis of the success and valorization of community-based initiatives: their empowering and solidarity-creating capacities*" (Mayer, 2003: 120). This partly explains the waning solidarity networks among many migrant communities in larger cities and indicates at the same time that the offered solution is inadequate. Often these organisations are pressured to replace public services or partner up with them. As a consequence they often evolve into mere service providers, losing their empowering or solidarity-enhancing potentials. Or, as Mayer calls it: '*getting by*' instead of '*getting ahead*' (Mayer, 2003).

[22] Empowerment, a concept which has already acquired so many meanings that delimitation imposes itself, also appears intertwined with the economic understanding of capabilities (infra). Some definitions of empowerment (sometimes even literally) refer to these capabilities, as a subcategory or a certain form of capabilities (Narayan, 2002). For example, Narayan (2002) explains empowerment as the "*expanding assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives*" (Grootaert, 2003 in Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007; Moser, 2003 in Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007; Narayan, 2002: vi, 2005: 5 in Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). She thus sees capabilities as an essential element in the process of empowerment.

of its intended goal[23] (Steenssens and Van Regenmortel, 2013). Additionally, the definitions of organisational and communal empowerment used by Steenssens and Van Regenmortel (2013) and Zimmerman (1995) indicating the combination of empowered organisations and options of civil participation focus on the effects of participation on the individuals and therefore more closely aligned to notions like social or external capabilities. As we, on the contrary, focus on the opportunities of organisations themselves, empowerment is a very useful yet inadequate concept in this context.

Another sociological concept that is commonly applied in research into collectivities concerns collective action: "*emergent and minimally coordinated action by two or more people that is motivated by a desire to change some aspect of social life or to resist changes proposed by others*" (McAdam, 2007: 575). This action is "*taken by a group or organisation in pursuit of members' perceived shared interests*" (Scott, 2014: 92). Through collective action people form or participate in migrant organisations. Often this is motivated by concerns about a specific situation and the will to change it. Collective action is thus an essential concept in the analysis of groups and organisations, particularly when we want to study their aims for changing aspects in society. However, many collective action researchers address mainly success factors of a single collective action or how collective action (particularly demonstrations) offer information on the public opinion to (eligible) policy makers (McAdam, 2007). Research into the impact of collective action and the factors that determine whether a specific collective action may or may not achieve its goals, however, is severely underexposed. Most importantly, the concept of collective action does not provide us with a tool to analyse the real opportunities of an organisation. In particular, it is unable to fully grasp the discrepancies between internal organisational capacities and external expectations. Furthermore, the analytical approach of this perspective lacks the normative underpinnings that we do find in the concept of capabilities, for instance.

Also often applied in the analysis of (migrant) organisations is the perspective of the political opportunity structure[24] – or sometimes ethnic opportunity structures – from the social movements

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[23] The widening of capabilities, whether individual or collective, is more than effectiveness in the realisation of their goals. Its core is the ability to choose the goals they value. Focusing on effectiveness sounds a lot like staring at functionings instead of capabilities. It matters what people and organisations are able to do and to be, rather than merely what they are or do at the moment. It is possible to see empowerment as a process of widening capabilities, as Narayan (2002) does. Yet, this way we expand the most common interpretation of empowerment, as used by Zimmerman (1995), Steenssens and Van Regenmortel (2013) and many others. Although most capabilities contribute to the expansion of control over one's life and its main issues, we consider mastery not the (only) end goal of poverty reduction and capability expansion.

[24] In this perspective studies address the necessary conditions to mobilise people, such as forming a joint problem definition and the ability to translate this into concrete (collective) actions. It is therefore essential to explore the view on poverty within an organisation and the way organisations provide specific activities to address this poverty. This may help explain why people organise themselves around a particular issue and how organisations

literature (Da Graça, 2010; Scaramuzzino, 2012). For instance, Scaramuzzino (2012) analyses the role of migrant organisations in welfare provision by means of political opportunity structures. He studies the role of institutional actors at various policy levels and their effects on local migrant organisations. As such, this approach seems highly relevant in our research context. However, it needs to be complemented with other theories to account for broader aspects or sources of opportunities for migrant organisations to play a role in poverty alleviation. More specifically, it fails to grasp internal capacities, and the link with external structures affecting these capacities. Typically, authors then resort to the application of the perspective of resource mobilisation. This implies that the concept is in itself unable to account for the discrepancies between internal capacities and external expectations and support. Moreover, it does not involve agency in the analysis to explain why certain functions or roles are performed, instead of others.

In line with this concept is the notion of ethnical opportunity structure, referring to the opportunities of migrant organisations available in ethno-cultural communities (Chung, 2005; Da Graça, 2010; Fennema et al., 2001). This opportunity structure is assumed to provide migrant organisations with organisational power, operationalised by means of various factors: the number of migrant organisations and involved members and volunteers (also referred to as the potential social capital of these organisations); the variety of organisations (i.e. their objectives and activities); the networks of these organisations; and features of leadership (including power relations that affect the availability of resources) (Chan, 1992; Da Graça, 2010; Fennema et al., 2001). Although it aims to take both internal and external factors into account and approaches our research aims, it requires other theoretical frameworks (such as resource mobilisation) to address the discrepancies between these factors. However, we argued that a focus on resources obscures the potentially crucial role of freedom and agency to explain the real opportunities of organisations in poverty alleviation. This is where we believe capabilities can make a difference.

The concepts we discussed here are still relevant to address certain aspects in the analysis of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. For instance, empowerment can support the analysis of solution strategies of people in poverty (Chapter 2); social capital can be applied to the assess the variety of migrant organisations in their reaction to poverty and diversity (Chapter 4); and social capital, collective action and opportunity structures incite us to study the networks of migrant organisations

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can affect this process. People and organisations thus create a collective identity and a definition of the problem and possible solutions. However, in this approach participation is usually the dependent variable. Still, the perspective focuses on mobilising people. In that sense perhaps we can also borrow elements from social constructivism. Thereby we think of the necessary conditions to mobilise people. These conditions cover forming a joint problem definition and the ability to translate this into concrete (collective) actions. This may clarify why people organise themselves around a theme and how organisations can possibly direct this.

to position them in their organisational setting (Chapter 3). However, as we explained earlier, we argue that the capabilities approach surpasses these other concepts in its applicability to assess the discrepancies between internal capacities and external expectations and settings – and the role of agency and freedom in the explanation thereof. Therefore, in the analysis of the real opportunities of migrant organisations in poverty reduction, we will adopt the concept of collective capabilities. The remaining question is to clarify whether the CA of Amartya Sen is adequate for our purpose. Is the approach able to deal sufficiently with the organisational level in addressing poverty with specific groups? Does Sen adequately treat the collective dimension of capabilities or should we adapt the approach to this level of analysis, and if that is the case, how should we adjust it? Are we able to reconstruct the process of developing and widening these collective capabilities by migrant organisations as a specific form of collective action – affecting what their individual members are capable of and consequently bearing upon their opportunities to deal with their poverty situations? Is it possible to map out this impact? In Chapter 5 we try to address these questions by reviewing this potential development to the collective level, referring to the individual-collective debate within the CA. In Chapter 6 this framework will be employed in the empirical analysis of migrant organisations' opportunities to play a role in poverty reduction.

1.4 Outline of the study

This introduction provided an overview of the contemporary context of local migrant organisations and the challenges generated by poverty, superdiversity and the localisation of welfare confronting these organisations. We explained our main research questions and shed some light on our search for an adequate theoretical framework with which we are able to analyse the role of migrant organisations in local poverty today. In what follows, we will present the outline of this study by discussing how this pressing issue is analysed in our work.

We recapture our main research questions: How – and to what extent – do migrant organisations participate in local poverty reduction in Flanders? As such, what role do they play in the contemporary welfare state? And what processes do these organisations go through to play a specific role in local welfare systems, more particularly in poverty reduction? Because we want to explore a broad subject such as the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction and this introduction produced many secondary questions, we ought to tackle this issue piecemeal. We set about with the types of solution strategies people with a migration background in poverty develop in order to improve their well-being. In Chapter 2 we link these poverty solution strategies of people with a migration background to the local social policy in the city of Antwerp. We describe how the background of these people affect the people and services they call upon in their search for help. This chapter reveals the enduring lack of

knowledge on the role and position of migrant organisations in welfare provision. As explained, studies often point to the importance of collaboration and networks with several actors to deal with a complex issue such as poverty reduction. Therefore, in Chapter 3 we took a closer look into the position these migrant organisations among other service organisations reaching people with a migration background in poverty. For this purpose we combined research and methods from Peter Raeymaeckers (2013) and the study here presented. By means of a social network analysis we mapped the networks of migrant organisations in a deprived neighbourhood in Antwerp. Our findings indicated that migrant organisations form a subcluster among other organisations and services, implying the possible existence of barriers impeding network formation. With qualitative in-depth interviews we conducted with representatives of migrant organisations, we initiate an explanation of the isolated position of migrant organisations and demonstrate that various discrepancies between the diverging partners appear to hinder them in forming or maintaining networks. This might explain why people with a migration background in poverty do not always find their way to the help they need, complementing our findings on the solution strategies of this target group. Moreover, it gives indications on whether migrant organisations take part in local welfare provision. However, at the same time our findings illustrate the need for further research into the real opportunities of migrant organisations (explored in Chapter 5) to play any potential role in local poverty reduction today (studied in Chapter 4, 5 and 6). Indeed, the barriers to network formation suggest the importance of exploring of the real opportunities of migrant organisations to play any potential role in local poverty reduction. To improve the knowledge on migrant organisations and their role in local welfare provision, we attempt a comprehensive portrayal of the variation of migrant organisations and their activities in Flanders. We constructed an inventory of the migrant organisations in thirteen central cities in Flanders. In Chapter 4 we examine how migrant organisations in two major cities (Antwerp and Ghent) respond to the challenges of increasing diversity, poverty and the localisation of welfare. As suggested in our introduction, our findings implicate that the theoretical framework of social capital fails to grasp the reality of migrant organisations within a context of poverty, superdiversity and local welfare systems. This implies the need for attuned or new theoretical frameworks in the analysis of migrant organisations today. Our introduction afforded a glance behind the scenes of our quest for the adequate theoretical concepts with which we ought to study the real opportunities of migrant organisation to play a role in poverty reduction in today's circumstances. In Chapter 5 we argue how the concept of Collective Capabilities is an eligible candidate for this task. This chapter briefly discusses contemporary debates among the adherents of the Capabilities Approach of Amartya Sen concerning the focus of analysis on the individual versus the collective level. We developed a new framework of collective capabilities for the analysis of migrant organisations' role in local poverty reduction. We claim migrant organisations go through a process of developing and widening their collective

capabilities in relation, but not limited, to the social and other individual capabilities of individuals involved in these organisations. We operationalised collective capabilities as specified by two dimensions: organisational capacities and features on the one hand and freedom of choice and agency on the other. Each dimension is defined by conversion factors such as the background features of the organisation and its stakeholders for determining an organisation's capacities, or expectations of relevant external actors affecting organisations' agency. We argue our framework may grasp how individual and collective capabilities are intertwined in determining the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction, as well as in the direct and indirect improvement of the well-being of individuals with a migration background involved in these organisations. What is more, we are able to link the collective capabilities and their role in explaining the role of migrant organisations in poverty to their position within local welfare systems and as such their (potential) contribution to more effective target-group oriented local poverty reduction policies. By means of this process connecting the organisational meso level to the micro and the macro level as a tool for analysis, we argue this approach of analysis does more justice to the reality of migrant organisations in today's challenges – compared to an analysis based on other conceptual frameworks. However, such claims require sound empirical testing. In Chapter 6 we put our theoretical framework to the test. Based on in-depth interviews with stakeholders from migrant organisations in the two cities mentioned previously, we empirically reconstruct the process of developing collective capabilities within migrant organisations to explain the role migrant organisations play in local poverty reduction in Flanders today. We illustrate this process with two individual cases of migrant organisations. One organisation has strengthened collective capabilities regarding their objectives and undertaking a role in poverty reduction. Another organisation is rather limited in its capabilities to realise its objectives and play a role in the local welfare system. Our findings suggest our framework of collective capabilities is the appropriate answer in our search for the adequate conceptual frameworks with which we ought to analyse migrant organisations facing the challenges of today. We highlight that these organisations already do play a large part in poverty reduction, contrary to common assumptions. However, at the same time we reveal numerous bottlenecks impeding the fulfilment of their potential role, at least for those organisations willing to become genuine partners in local welfare systems to contribute to more effective poverty reduction among their target group. By means of our collective capabilities framework these bottlenecks provide us with ready-to-implement potential policy interventions to strengthen willing migrant organisations in their role of poverty reduction, and as such contribute to more effective local social policy and the improvement of well-being of people with a migration background in poverty. We come full circle in the conclusion. There we test our findings by our points of departures and literature and discuss the implications of our findings for both research and practice. The main implication for scientific research is the pivotal role of agency in addressing the discrepancies

between migrant organisations' ascribed role and their capacities. Collective capabilities therefore surpass other commonly applied concepts in the analysis of migrant organisations and poverty reduction. Concerning policy, our findings provide relevant potential policy interventions. As such we aim to contribute to a more effective target-group oriented poverty reduction policy, which would improve the well-being of individuals with a migration background in poverty, and lead to a more efficient and effective financial and substantive support of willing migrant organisations in their role in poverty reduction, while accounting for their agency as genuine partners in a local welfare system.

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Challenges and Capabilities: Real opportunities of migrant organisations and intervention strategies for local target-group driven poverty alleviation

Chapter 2: Redefining Empowerment Interventions of Migrants Experiencing Poverty: The Case of Antwerp, Belgium[25]

Sylvie Van Dam, Danielle Dierckx

2.1 Introduction

The risk of poverty amongst migrants in Belgium is profound. The figures are indeed astonishing. Poverty risks for migrants are 30–55% compared with 15% for the average Belgium (EU-SILC, 2011). In addition there is an evident weakening of support within migrant communities and families over time and across various waves of migration. In this chapter, we therefore focus on the new challenges posed for social work at the local level in light of this evolution within communities. We first define the constraints these migrants must overcome to empower themselves and influence their environment (Zimmerman, 1992). Second, we discuss these thresholds in view of recent reforms in local public and social work policies. We focus on the local level because we agree with Kazepov (2010) that responsibilities of the welfare state have recently been transferred to local governments and involve a growing variety of actors, including civil society organisations, business organisations and local government agencies.

This qualitative research elaborates on the strategies developed to survive and to gain access to social rights and services among migrant communities. We conducted thirty-five in-depth interviews with migrants experiencing poverty in the city of Antwerp, Belgium. The interviews focused on Moroccan and Turkish migrants and their descendants with differing lengths of residency in the country (migrants and their descendants). These interviews resulted in a typology of migrants in poverty based on the methods used to empower themselves and influence their environment. We evaluated local public and social work policies based on what the motivations are for the different strategies of migrants experiencing poverty develop. This evaluation was made through discourse analysis and interviews with key stakeholders like local policy makers, civil society organisations and social workers. They were selected by the DES (diverse expert sampling) method (Dierckx, 2007). We conclude with some discussion and suggestions for further research.

2.2 Empowerment through coping strategies

We study how migrants experiencing poverty try to cope with their situation and to find empowerment support. The meaning of empowerment as a goal for poverty eradication may differ depending on ideologies or paradigms. We follow Rappaport and others who define empowerment as the process of people, organisations and communities increasing or gaining control over their lives and becoming active participants in efforts to influence their environment (Rappaport, 1987; Hasenfeld, 1983; Gutierrez et al., 1995). To be able to specify concrete actions and outcomes, Zimmerman (1992) also adds the influence of the specific context, environment and circumstances. In that respect, the distinction made by Neher and Natale (1997) and Tengland (2008) between goals and the processes of empowerment is useful. Empowerment mainly refers to gain control over one's quality of life. Tengland (2008) has argued, however, that a definition limited to goals lacks information about the process. During this empowering process, individuals must identify their problems, find a solution and act to solve them.

Solution strategies for escaping poverty are "*all strategically chosen actions that individuals and households in poverty apply to reduce their expenditure or to earn some extra money, to enable them to satisfy the basic needs and not end up too far under the societal welfare level*" (Snel and Staring, 2001: 11). In this tradition, we could classify strategies according to whether people use their own or external resources (family, community or government) or depend on monetary or non-monetary strategies (Meert et al., 1997; Snel and Staring, 2001; Van Robaeys et al., 2007).

Meert et al. (1997) categorise solution strategies based on three integration spheres: market, state, and community and family. Each domain has a specific logic whereby solution strategies differ according to sphere. The market domain is ruled by the logic of monetary exchange, founded in utility. The domain of the state is characterised by redistribution based on citizenship. The sphere of community and family, which includes civil society, is characterised by reciprocity based on membership. The focus of our research is on the solution and coping strategies of migrants in Antwerp.

2.3 Local welfare systems

Poverty eradication is conceived here as the total coping strategies of migrants who can no longer count on their families for assistance. These strategies, however, need to be discussed in the context of localised welfare regimes. In providing welfare for every citizen, local governments increasingly engage with organisations in civil society in providing for citizen welfare and combating poverty (Andreotti et al., 2012; Mingione and Oberti, 2003). We therefore have to consider the coping strategies of migrants experiencing poverty within the context of localised social policies and service provision. Part of the context in which we have to consider the coping strategies of migrants

experiencing poverty is the local level of social policies and service organisations. Mingione and Oberti (2003) argue that, with the retrenchment of national authorities across Europe, responsibilities shift to lower governmental levels and other actors. Civil society organisations and private companies are urged to take on more social responsibility, though the results may be very different. Mingione and Oberti refer in this context to a new model: a Local Welfare System (Mingione and Oberti, 2003; Andreotti et al., 2012). They define it as "*dynamic processes in which the specific local social and cultural contexts give rise both to diversified mixes of actors underlying the strategies for implementing social policies and to diverse profiles of needy or assisted populations*" (Mingione and Oberti, 2003: 3).

Mingione and Oberti differentiate three local welfare systems types, which can essentially be traced back to the broader welfare state types. The first type offers limited interventions, often complemented by a wide range of heterogeneous civil society organisations. Families and traditional organisations have, despite playing a major role, low autonomy. State intervention remains subsidiary. The second group is diametrically opposite, featuring a high degree of institutionalisation with central control and a relatively large number of resources (financial and human capital). Family and community play a limited role. There is a limited discretionary scope for social workers and a strong degree of bureaucracy. Interventions of the Belgian type are based less on citizenship than on accumulated rights. Public support is in theory subordinated to family support, as are charities. Yet the role of these informal support networks remains limited compared to southern European cities. Additionally, the organisations from this type are often a hybrid because of governmental funding; Mingione and Oberti refer to these as semi-public institutions. There are also migrant communities, each represented by their own associations. It is thus important not to view civil society as one entity in the analysis, but to account for diversity (Mingione and Oberti, 2003).

In the city of Antwerp, the local government's role in diversity and integration has been increasingly reinforced by the regional Flemish government. The Minorities Decree of 1998 prompted the installation of an Integration Office at the municipality level, with the appointment of a City Councillor for Diversity and Integration. In social policies, the autonomy at the local level has also increased since the 2004 Decree on Local Social Policy. In cities responsible for social benefits and social aid, the Public Centres of Social Welfare (PCSW) remain federally funded, but have discretionary power to diversify services for local needs. Many civil society actors in Antwerp receive mixed funding that was a combination of mainly regional and local government, and must meet different outcomes and criteria. They struggle to organise themselves to provide clients with integrated services.

The policy discourse of the new local government (since 2012) includes explicit elements of welfare state retrenchment, managerialism and greater accountability from individuals and organisations.

Local policy makers emphasise the conditionality of social benefits, the link between rights and duties, and the importance of involving more volunteers in the provision of social welfare. More than ever, covenants between city and welfare organisations need to prove efficient and efficacious. However, coproduction and collaboration between local government and civil society are overshadowed by the primacy of politics. These changes relate to a new political constellation, reflected in a new mayor from the centre-right wing, conservative, nationalist party (NV-A) after years of socialist governance. Budgetary constraints also sharpen the focus of the political choices that have to be made as part of the recent financial crisis.

Antwerp, a city of more than 500,000 citizens and 164 nationalities, scores worst in the Flemish region for all poverty figures. Although only a small percentage of poverty risk is significant at the city level, rates of unemployment or of children born into a poor family indicate that poverty is higher than average in Belgium and concentrated in Antwerp. In this research, the focus on migrants experiencing poverty is based on earlier surveys on high poverty risks (Dierckx et al., 2011). The at-risk-of-poverty rate of people of non-European origin, based on the European poverty line (60% of median equivalent income), is two to four times higher than the Belgian average (Van Haarlem et al., 2011). In Belgium, the average in 2011 for all residents is 15,3% (Coene, 2012). The poverty risk for Belgians with Belgian nationality (>18) is 11,7% in 2014, and for individuals with EU28 nationality (>18) 24,9%. For people with non-EU28 nationality, it climbs to 61,2% (>18, Eurostat, 2015). For figures looking at origin more specifically, we would have to consider earlier research. The multi-annual averages (based on data from 2007, 2008 and 2009) indicate 33% of people of Turkish origin and 54% of Moroccan origin live at risk of income poverty (Van Haarlem et al., 2011).

These figures show that a significant proportion of migrants face complex challenges daily. Moreover, we notice that common factors such as a job, higher education or home ownership do not protect these groups from poverty (Dierckx et al., 2011).

2.4 Methods

In this study, we are specifically interested in the coping strategies of migrants experiencing poverty and in the factors that facilitate or hinder empowerment of this group. Although we limit our scope to Antwerp, Belgium, we are convinced our case is relevant for readers from other European countries. We discuss our methodological choices below.

2.4.1 A qualitative research

This research consists of three phases. In the first, we interviewed experts to construct a general overview of developments in poverty among migrants and thresholds concerning accessibility of social services. Second, we questioned migrants experiencing poverty regarding their coping strategies and

defined challenges for more effective anti-poverty policies. Third, we organised a focus group discussion to verify research results and to advise policy makers.

For the interviews, we developed a semi-structured in-depth interview (Mason, 1996; Wengraf, 2001), organising the topics such that interviewees could interpret them in their own way. This method allows us to protect the validity of the results. To avoid accidental biases (Maso and Smaling, 1998), the interviewer may discuss the context elements with the respondent. The first survey showed the experts' perception of poverty among migrants and its evolution on the needs and strategies these clients develop as well as the facilitating and constraining factors for effective support. The topics of collaboration and task division between social services were added. The second survey for respondents experiencing poverty aimed to answer the same research questions as the first survey. To gain more insight into their personal coping strategies, we added some hypothetical situations and asked whom they would ask for help. Situations might include *"You are not able to afford the school fee"* or *"Your child is ill and you have no transport to go and see a doctor"*. Respondents were informed that their answers were confidential to avoid socially desirable answers and to protect their privacy. The focus group discussion was structured using statements derived from the results of the first two phases, linking these results to local social policies and social work practice. Examples of topics that were discussed are the accessibility of the local training and employment centres, the role of religion and language skills in coping with poverty, and the relation between local government and migrant organisations. We focused on the coping strategies of migrants experiencing poverty and challenges related to social policies and social work practice. Other research issues exceed the scope of this chapter (Dierckx et al., 2013).

2.4.2 Selection of respondents

Twelve experts were selected based on their involvement in poverty eradication and/or their affinity with migrant communities in Antwerp. All are connected to a PCSW, the poor people's movement, migrant organisations, public administration, and services for community development or more general civil society organisations.

These experts also participated in the focus group discussion. Additional respondents with particular expertise in policy making and social work practice were present. Seventeen participants discussed the research results, formulated advice for policies and practice, and suggested further research.

The respondents experiencing poverty (aged twenty-three to sixty-three) had a Moroccan (twenty-five) or Turkish background (eleven) and lived in Antwerp. Selection criteria were subjectively defined. Respondents who were eligible for an interview admitted having financial difficulties running their

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households. We chose this approach because of the proclaimed taboo on discussing poverty in many migrant communities, according to experts. Table 1 contains some additional information.

Table 1 Personal information on respondents experiencing poverty

Personal information	Number of respondents ($N = 36$)
Man/woman	7/29
Married/divorced	32/3
Tenants/home owner	31/5
Family with one to eight children	33
Nationality	
Belgian	1
Belgian + Moroccan/Turkish	14
Moroccan	11
Turkish	5
Moroccan + Spanish	4
Spanish	1
Unemployed	32
Dutch as most used language	10

We identified five categories based on duration of residence in Belgium (See Table 2). Three respondents belong to the first-generation cohort of migrants, and have lived in Belgium for over thirty years. Four respondents belong to the intermediate generation and two to the second-generation cohort. The intermediate generation includes people who came to Belgium as children in the context of family reunification. They belong mostly to the same age group and have grown up in the same contextual environment as the second-generation cohort, who were born in Belgium to one or two parents of the first-generation migrants.

We consider people who entered adulthood in Belgium in 1990 or later as newcomers. There are two different groups of newcomers, namely people who came to Belgium from Morocco or Turkey within the context of family reunification, and people who came to Belgium after residing in another EU country.

Seventeen respondents belong to the first group of newcomers. They came from Turkey or Morocco to Belgium, mainly for marriage — in this case, a marriage between a person legally living in Belgium and a partner from the country of origin. Ten respondents have resided in Belgium for between one and five years only. We classify these respondents as the second group of newcomers. Nine came from Spain, one from the Netherlands. This group is considered a part of internal European migration. Most of these respondents lived with their families in a European Union country before the economic crisis forced them to move, looking for employment. Several respondents do not have legal residence papers. We are aware that the representation in some groups is low. However, we believe this is not problematic since respondents in qualitative research need not be representative of a population,

although the theoretical reasoning ought to be generalisable (Bryman, 2004). The main goal is to investigate an issue in depth.

Table 2 Respondents experiencing poverty in generations

Generations	First-generation cohort	Intermediate-generation cohort	Second-generation cohort	Newcomers group 1*	Newcomers group 2**
Number of respondents	3	4	2	17	10

* Newcomers group 1: marriage migration since 1990; ** Newcomers group 2: internal European migration since 1990.

2.4.3 Data analysis

We started analysing the transcripts immediately after the first interview. This timing allowed us to verify early findings and indications in later interviews. Transcripts were subject to a coding process (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Data were reduced by making use of broad concepts derived from literature, narrowed down to meet the specificity of the data collected.

During the coding, analysis and writing of the report, the anonymity of our respondents was guaranteed. Every interview was analysed without any reference to the names of our respondents. In the final report, references to names or individual events were avoided. All the respondents provided verbal confirmed consent. Finally, the study was approved by members of the Steering Committee (coordinators and management staff of civil society organisations, public administration and academic institutions).

2.5 Coping strategies of migrants experiencing poverty

Our results clarify the coping strategies for migrants experiencing poverty in the context of the local welfare city. We review the various strategies that they develop, derived from interviews with both migrants in poverty and experts, and supplemented with comments from the focus group. The main focus is on migrant responses; the experts provided mainly contextual material. Due to the limited scope of this chapter, we were not able to include many citations. We classify strategies according to whether people use their own resources or external resources (from the family, community, civil society or government) and we present a typology based on the coping strategies these migrants develop.

2.5.1 Typology of coping strategies

Our data collection resulted in a typology of migrants in poverty based on the coping strategies they develop to empower themselves and influence their environment. We make a distinction between

those who rely on family, community, themselves, neighbours, migrant organisations, regular social services or individual experts. This typology refers directly to a number of the background features of our respondents since we discovered that the migration background in particular has a significant effect on the kind of coping strategy migrants develop. The main categories that we found particular differences in are newcomers versus earlier migrants. To reflect the diversity within these groups, we defined four categories of migrants: the first generation of labour migrants; the intermediate, second and third generations; newcomers who arrived through marriage migration; and newcomers who arrived through internal EU migration. This classification is not exhaustive, since there are many other kinds of newcomers that do not fit these criteria. Yet, because of our rather limited pool of respondents, it is difficult to make general statements about these other groups. Nonetheless, we found indications of comparable trends through the interviews with experts from civil society and public institutions.

Type 1: Newcomers

Coping strategies diverge according to migration background. We first discuss the coping strategies of newcomers in general and then specify the type of strategy according to their particular migration background.

Newcomers often find themselves isolated and lacking a social network in their new environment. In particular, the absence of family seems to force them to rely on themselves. When trying to tackle problems, they develop creative solutions to postpone, distribute or reduce expenditures. For example, they collect and use vouchers, buy in outlet stores and save the '*extra*' income from informal jobs for large expenditures. Furthermore, they try to solve their problems by directly addressing relevant private service providers. They ask, for example, for a debt reduction plan to deal with accumulated gas and electricity invoices or rent. This coping strategy works only for newcomers who are educated, well informed, and able to communicate and negotiate in a pragmatic way.

Since family is not available for many newcomers, they generally call upon neighbours or acquaintances for problems they are unable to solve themselves. For many, this is also the only way to establish social contact. Neighbours are approached because of their proximity. However, most of the respondents live in deprived areas, where neighbours have a rather low socioeconomic status. Therefore, social support from neighbours may be quite limited due to an inability to help. This stresses the importance of the presence of social services in neighbourhoods where newcomers arrive. Some newcomers also end up in religious organisations in search of support. For instance, the mosque association, which seems to play a larger role than other migrant organisations, may provide emergency aid, such as small sums of money, food or shelter.

Type 1a: Newcomers through marriage migration

Our results show a situation that is very specific to women who immigrate after marrying a man that resides in Belgium. These are women with low education, often illiterate, originating from rural areas. They arrive in Antwerp and continue the traditional role of caring for the household and the education of the children without questioning this permanent situation of living indoors. Consequently, even after many years, these women hardly understand Dutch and totally depend on their husband. They seem to be unassertive and unaware of administrative and financial affairs because these issues have always been the responsibility of their husband. They reconcile themselves to their poverty situation by referring to the poor living conditions in their village of origin. They have no access to information on Belgian society. Their social network is often small. Civil society organisations or public services are inaccessible due to language problems and a lack of information. Their coping strategies do not reach further than the family or neighbours for basic material support. In some cases, they ask their family in the country of origin to send money to survive in Antwerp.

Type 1b: Newcomers through internal EU migration

Recent internal European migration shows a difference in needs within the migrant community. Dutch, Spaniards, Italians and Greeks of Moroccan or Turkish origin migrate to Belgium, usually for employment opportunities. With marriage migration, these people arrive as a family. All members face similar challenges regarding integration. Compared to marriage migration, however, women who migrated from another EU country are less dependent, and are more assertive in exploring their rights and duties and in looking for help. They are more likely to pursue language courses and develop social and cultural capital more easily.

Although they are less isolated than other newcomers, the coping strategies of these families remain limited. They rely to a large degree on their network from the country of origin. Respondents who migrated from Spain, for example, often call family and friends in Spain for advice and moral support, to compensate for absent social support in their new environment in Belgium.

One remarkable finding is that poverty among this group puts pressure on solidarity among migrants, even among people of the same ethnic, cultural or religious background. First- and second-generation migrants feel unjustly treated. In their view, newcomers receive more support when arriving in Belgium, especially the integration courses, only recently made an obligation. The situation seems unfair to them. They feel neglected by Belgian society because they never received this kind of assistance and they thus feel hindered in their integration. They still have limited knowledge of service provision; newcomers are better guided.

Type 2a: First generation of labour migrants

The first generation of labour migrants intended to return to their country of origin, mostly after some years of working in the coal mines. Because they perceived their residency in Belgium as temporary, they did not invest in learning Dutch, nor did employers expect them to speak it. In most of these households, women stayed indoors and had contact only with their own migrant community. Today, they lack language skills to participate in the daily life that is open to the rest of society. Moreover, speaking Dutch is now a condition for having access to public services such as social housing. According to experts, this is one of the reasons that this generation is underrepresented in social services and civil society organisations that could support them in coping with poverty and social exclusion.

Also, their coping strategies seem influenced by their preference for hiding problems because of a taboo or honour. Some respondents report difficulties in discussing mental, emotional or relational problems.

The first generation is well connected to their extended family and the migrant community. In their coping strategies, the bonding dimension is strongly developed. Family members financially support each other in buying or renovating a house or they share their accommodation. Sometimes, young children accompany their parents or grandparents to social services to translate. This family care may have negative repercussions for the child in terms of absence from school or involvement in adult matters.

The first generation established the migrant community and invested in community solidarity. Some respondents mentioned '*thouiza*', which means '*collective*' or '*together*'. This principle allows some people in need to ask to buy on credit in neighbourhood shops or to ask the mosque to collect money for them. Most of them are connected to mosques; what is remarkable is that civil society organisations rarely reach out to these first generation migrants experiencing poverty and that they remain unfamiliar with these organisations.

Type 2b: Second, third and intermediate generations

Of the other generations of migrants who are born in Belgium, the majority live in poor circumstances. Their language skills are better than those of the first generation, but their school careers have not guaranteed them high-educated status or a job. Despite the fact that they grew up in Belgium, this group lacks knowledge of social services and benefits, and they are not able to realise their social rights. These generations are embedded in family and social networks, particularly within their migrant community.

However, the family is usually not able to help structurally or long term. They often suffer from poverty as well. This means that they do not always possess the ability to deal with a problem.

In comparison to the other categories, these second to third generations establish relations outside their own community. This seems to stimulate them to find their way to welfare state institutions or civil society organisations that can support them. Respondents evaluate these public services as services that offer professional help and add value to the support the mosque or other migrant organisations can provide. However, one motivation for reaching out for services outside their own community instead is the desire for privacy. Several respondents clarify their hesitation to talk about family or community problems because they fear gossip and a violation of their privacy. Nevertheless, some migrant organisations report an increase in help requests because of increased need and bad experiences with discrimination or racism in some other social organisations.

2.5.2 The role of changing social policies and social work practice

We have defined the constraints migrants experiencing poverty meet to empower themselves and influence their environment (Zimmerman, 1992). Now, we discuss these thresholds in view of recent reforms in local public policies and social work practice. When considering their needs, we may conclude that these migrants are not fully using existing social services, particularly health and social care. Exclusion mechanisms can be found on both the demand and supply sides: constraints are inherent to the way social services are organised or due to the (lack of) capabilities of individuals involved.

2.5.2.1 Diversity amongst migrants

Our research results indicate some particular challenges for poverty eradication programmes. Discussing the particularities of poverty with migrants highlights this category of people experiencing poverty as super-diverse (Vertovec, 2007). Because of the diversity in statute, migration background, period of residence, ethno-cultural origin, religion and so forth, it seems important to consider these differences when developing policies or organising social services. This implies a need for a tailor-made approach and attention to specific groups, such as undocumented migrants or single parents—two groups with extremely high poverty risk figures (Dierckx et al., 2011). Moreover, generations experience poverty differently. In contrast to their (grand) parents, migrants of the second (or third) generation refer to Belgian society as their frame of reference. They compare their own living conditions with those of other Belgians instead of, for example, referring to a rural area in Morocco. This leads to more subjective poverty and sentiments of deprivation.

The challenge for social work and local social policy then is to take these differences into account. Social work only recently started discussing the consequences of diversity in Antwerp. These insights

have not yet been translated into tailor-made approaches for social service delivery to migrants. In the discussion, pros and cons of a categorical approach have been formulated. Specific services for migrants may lead to more segregation in society or at least hinder their integration. There is a growing consensus that social workers should be more sensitive to the migration background of clients. The idea that only social workers with a migration background can help migrants effectively is rejected by all our respondents and social workers in the field. However, social work practice often lags behind reality, in part because local social policies have neglected to deal with increased diversity for many years.

Another development is that local social policies in Antwerp focus less on pro-active service delivery than before. The new local policy makers have cut back on outreach and support for vulnerable groups. They prefer control and activation as leading principles. For migrants who are reluctant to admit they are poor or to ask for help, this policy discourse is less effective.

Still another striking difference between older generations and newcomers is reflected in the isolation of female newcomers by marriage migration and of first-generation women. The lack of information on social services and duties and rights challenges local social policies. In Antwerp, obligatory integration courses for newcomers seem to make a huge difference in encouraging people to participate in society. However, this information is often not disseminated to the older generations of migrants in the city. In fact, it increases friction between older generations and newcomers. Because implementation of more courses is the shared responsibility of local and regional government, it can pose additional challenges.

2.5.2.2 Beyond the taboo

To improve empowerment, people need to overcome the taboo on discussing poverty and social exclusion. Many respondents adjust their coping strategies to accommodate their fear of gossip or violation of their privacy and therefore may not always call upon their community. As a respondent said:

> *"Some things are hard to discuss with my Moroccan friend, so I tell them to my*
> *Belgian or Italian friend. For example, when it concerns my husband or household.*
> *In our community we sugar-coat those things, because it is difficult to discuss"*
> *(Moroccan woman, twenty-eight years old).*

Consequently, they not only hesitate to ask for outside help, but the tension within families also increases. However, family members often lack the necessary skills or means to provide assistance. The pressure on family members to help each other in many situations puts a strain on everyone's

development: for example, instead of going to school, young children may accompany their parents to social services to translate, or older children may be forced to get a job instead of starting higher education. When faced with an unfamiliar alternative, they often choose to keep their problems secret, which can lead to disaster in the long run. This brings the importance of accessibility of social services to the fore. In Antwerp, local decentralised information services were installed to make social service delivery more immediately accessible to possible beneficiaries. For instance, a person may pose an individual problem or question. A social worker will then refer this person to the most appropriate service. This service remains a part of the new government, but too few personnel, due to budget restraints, hinders its efficiency.

2.5.2.3 Language skills as access to rights

The issue of language skills remains one of the most discussed obstacles. A respondent illustrates this:

"I was looking for a job, but my problem is that I don't speak Dutch very well. So,
now I first ask other Turkish people now whether they can help me find a job"
(Turkish woman, twenty-seven years old).

In recent policy reforms, speaking Dutch has become a condition for eligibility for some rights and services, such as in social housing and employment programmes. These rules are rigid: for some jobs, only a minimal knowledge of Dutch is needed, but the employers claim high language standards. Our research shows the added value of good language skills. It stimulates people's self-reliance and it empowers people in the sense that they are no longer dependent on others to manage their lives. Moreover, based on the derived categories of migrants, we presume that language and communication skills, as well as education level, play an important role in the improved accessibility of social services.

The lack of language skills forms a barrier for many people in need. Policy makers obligate people to speak Dutch, yet policies have not been developed to realise this goal. The city of Antwerp offers language courses but waiting lists are long. Moreover, not all people have equal learning abilities, which can depend on several factors, such as their level of education and age. Additionally, a recent policy measure in Antwerp abolished the local translation service. Schools had been able to use interpreters to support the communication between teachers and parents. Policy makers argue that the budget is tight and that this measure will stimulate migrants to learn Dutch on their own. Social workers and schools recently expressed their regrets about this decision because they fear losing contact with these parents.

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2.5.2.4 Area-based approach

Our results also show some interesting challenges concerning the limited mobility of migrants experiencing poverty. These migrants are primarily located in deprived areas, where rents of apartments are low or where buying poor housing is affordable. Many families share their shelter. Migrant communities are also concentrated in certain areas of the city. This concentration is reflected in the school population and in the presence of ethnic entrepreneurship (e.g. night shops, halal food) (Tasan-Kok and Vranken, 2008). The coping strategies of our respondents show that proximity plays a key role. Material and immaterial thresholds hinder them in their ability to move outside their neighbourhood. The presence of social services in these neighbourhoods seems to facilitate accessibility of the services for these target groups. A respondent says:

> *"A social worker in the hospital advised me to go to the Public Centre of Social Welfare to support me in paying my bills. But I didn't know where it was, so I didn't go" (Moroccan woman, fifty years old).*

Nevertheless, because of budget restraints, recent policy decisions have found ways to save by delocalising services. This has been the case for employment and training centres in the region of Flanders. In Antwerp, budget restrictions and a shift towards a managerial approach have resulted in the closing down of some social restaurants in order to move them to areas where more '*deserving*' beneficiaries live. Our results show that newcomers, especially, rely on support from neighbours because they are lacking these other social relations. This stresses that an area-based approach to social work is most relevant for stimulating migrants' participation in broader society.

2.5.2.5 The role of civil society

What role do civil society organisations play in poverty eradication among migrants? When considering migrants' coping strategies, we conclude that today civil society is not functioning as a dominant and visible actor in the local anti-poverty field. Mosques and socio-cultural migrant organisations are solicited in emergencies. Yet these organisations are often flooded with demands and must refuse support. Other civil society organisations could fulfil the need for social support networks of the different kinds of migrants experiencing poverty. However, experts report that they have difficulty reaching these migrants and, in particular, involving them in their activities. Challenges come in the form of religion, a need for separate male and female activities, taboos about confronting social problems or a lack of language skills.

Some evolutions in local social policies have led to the need to consolidate in this situation. Current funding schemes do not support welfare provision or poverty eradication as a task for socio-cultural organisations. Civil society organisations are hence caught between vulnerable people who need

emergency care and the risk of losing public funding. Local policy makers also promote a management model of fewer paid staff but more volunteers within these organisations. Because of the complexity of social problems of migrants experiencing poverty, volunteers in these organisations admit their inability to cope with these problems. The increase of volunteer organisations also weakens collaboration between civil society organisations, because of the limited time of the volunteers and a lack of information about other social organisations. Additionally, these weaknesses influence the protest capacity and critical voice of these actors in policymaking. Interactive policy making is now less likely than it has been.

2.6 Discussion

Local social policy in Antwerp is an interesting case. Challenges in combating poverty, in particular, among migrants, are severe. By looking at the coping strategies of these people realising their empowerment, we were able to formulate criteria to evaluate local social policies and social work practice.

Our qualitative research allowed us to combine the perspective of migrants experiencing poverty and of experts with experience in dealing with these target groups. The heterogeneity of migrants involved in our research was reflected in the differences in coping strategies we were able to detect. The research results showed that there is an information gap for all the different subgroups. Thanks to the recently mandated public integration courses, this gap is less extreme for newcomers. Shame and fear of gossip from within the migrant community also stimulate migrants to hide or keep social problems invisible, leading to extreme situations of exclusion. Furthermore, the isolation of women, particularly those with a marriage-migration background, needs special attention.

Social services and civil society organisations succeed in providing material support for some, but not all, potential beneficiaries. Current social policies strengthen the retrenchment of the welfare state and appeal to individuals to solve problems themselves. Examples of these types of policy measures are the closing down of the public translation service and the absence of an area-based approach. Social policies in Antwerp fail to carry out a pro-active response to hidden poverty and to strengthen civil society to stimulate social cohesion and participation of these migrant groups.

This research shows that investing in the empowerment of migrants experiencing poverty is entering a new era. Their traditional, informal support structures within the family or community are no longer sufficient for any of the categories we considered. Local governments are seen as the dominant government level for establishing coalitions with civil society organisations to provide answers to this complex and dynamic reality. The challenge of this decade, in an era of budget restraints, is to make active subsidiarity real. More research is needed, though, to better understand the coping strategies

of migrants; consideration should also be given to how they are differentiated by age or religion. The role of migrant organisations, which barely reach the most vulnerable people, should be further explored. Peer reviews could support social work practice in Europe to overcome the biases presented in our research, particularly those concerning women in isolation.

Chapter 3: Migrants in the Periphery: Migrant Organisations and their Networks[26]

Sylvie Van Dam, Peter Raeymaeckers

3.1 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 migrants 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 chapter 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 study 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 chapter by discussing our main results.

3.2 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).

3.3 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*

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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.

3.4 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.

3.4.1 Case selection: high poverty risks among migrants

In Belgium, 61,2% of people with a non-EU28 nationality are at risk of poverty (>18, Eurostat, 2015). 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, and 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 2014a; City of Antwerp).

3.4.2 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 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 migrants[27] in poverty.

3.4.3 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

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[27] 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.

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 (External-Internal 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.

3.4.4 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 types[28] (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

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

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transcribed and analysed interviews with NVivo (2012). We began our analysis with an open coding phase (Bryman, 2004). For this chapter 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 at the regional level; staff members from the Minority Forum[29].

3.5 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 (Figure 1). Table 1 lists the migrant organisations in the network.

Figure 1 Any links network of migrant organisations, CSOs and public services in Borgerhout

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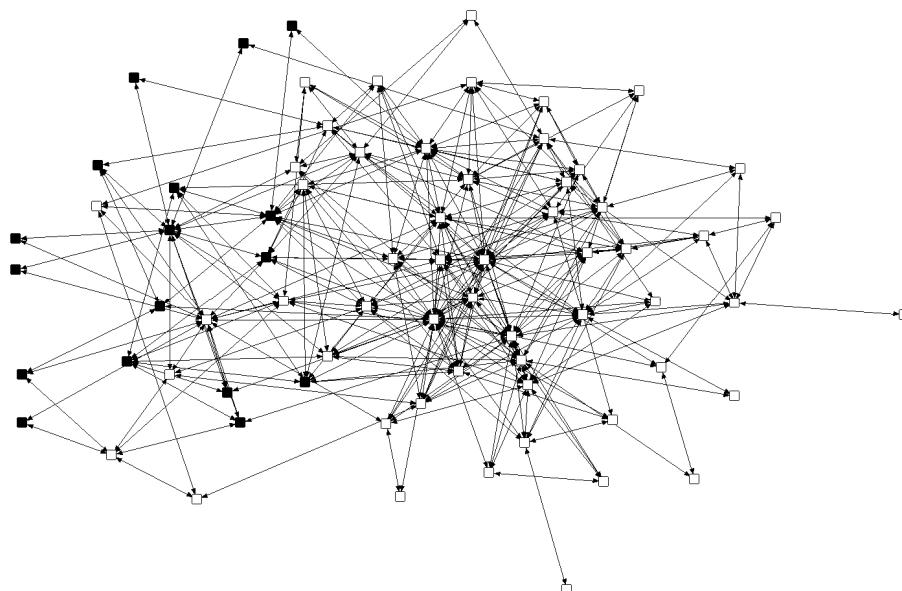
[29] The Minority Forum represents 19 member organisations (12 accredited ethno-cultural federations, plus umbrella organisations, not federated organisations and representatives of (other) ethno-cultural minorities) in different provinces (www.minderhedenforum.be/lidorganisaties).

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Table 1 Organisations from cluster of migrant organisations

Type organisation	Name of the organisations
Umbrella organisations	Federation of Moroccan associations, *Platform Allochtone Jeugd*
Cultural associations: organisations of group activities	CINTA, SAFINA, NIBRAS, SAFINA, NGOs of Mosques

We then constructed an E-I index (External-Internal index [Krackhardt and Stern, 1988]), which is 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.

Table 2 E-I indices per type of network ties

Network	E-I index	p-level
Informational exchange	-0.615	$p < 0.05$
Client referral	-0.606	$p < 0.05$
Case coordination	-0.591	$p < 0.05$
Any links network	-0.624	$p < 0.05$

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.

3.6 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?

3.6.1 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.

3.6.2 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.

3.6.2.1 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 and so on. 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,*

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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).

3.6.2.2 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).

3.6.2.3 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

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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).*

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3.6.3.4 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).*

3.7 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 chapter, 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

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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 migration 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.

Chapter 4: A World of Difference: Mapping Migrant Organisations in Local Welfare Systems

Sylvie Van Dam, Danielle Dierckx, Stijn Oosterlynck

"A single bracelet does not jingle" (Congolese proverb)

4.1 Poverty, diversity and the pressures on migrant organisations

Astounding poverty figures among migrants[30] in Belgium and their weakening community support mechanisms inspired questions on the position of migrant organisations[31] in local welfare systems and particularly their role in poverty alleviation. These organisations are increasingly called upon by their members and local authorities to address poverty (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013). However, migrant populations are increasingly internally fragmented and diverse. They differ not only in socio-economic and demographic terms, religious adherence, migration experiences and migrant statuses, but in cultural or political affiliations as well. People have multiple identities, various migrant groups interrelate and groups appear to be smaller and less organised (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014; Vertovec, 2007). We might expect that this diversity hinders migrant organisations to generate social capital because of the high degree of heterogeneity. Also, they find it increasingly difficult to meet the high expectations in supporting poor migrant families in the context of public welfare retrenchment, which is linked to an agenda of fiscal austerity but also to the rise of structural long term employment amongst the low-skilled (often people with a migration background) (Dierckx et al., 2009). In this chapter we want to find out how the fragmentation and diversity of the migrant population, particularly those living in poverty, challenge the local welfare systems and affect the networks of people with a migration background and their organisations. We focus on migrant organisations here because we assume these actors will be among the first to be confronted and deal with this diversity and the high prevalence of poverty amongst people with a migration background.

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[30] We define migrants as people with a foreign or double nationality. We include people whose parents have a foreign or double nationality, because not only the first generations, but also second and third generation migrants seem to be disadvantaged in different life domains (Dierckx et al., 2013).

[31] A migrant organisation can broadly be defined as a *"group in support of immigrants' social, cultural, or political interests"* (Huddleston and Tjaden, 2012). They are inter alia socio-cultural organisations, but also mosques, ethno-cultural federations, etcetera. Most of them are self-organisations, i.e. civil society organisations founded outside government by a group of migrants and usually, but not exclusively targeting migrants.

To describe the context of these organisations, we first discuss poverty among migrants in Belgium. Next, we reflect on local welfare systems and the role of migrant organisations, before moving on to key concepts like collective action and social capital. Afterwards, we discuss our methodology and main findings, and conclude with a discussion.

4.1.1 Poverty and diversity in Belgium

The high prevalence of poverty among migrants in Belgium (Eurostat, 2015; Krols et al., 2008; Van Robaeys et al., 2007) and the weakening of their community support mechanisms (Dierckx et al. 2013) raises questions about the role of migrant organisations in poverty alleviation. We conceptualise poverty within the structural, societal deficit model. This indicates a relative view on poverty in line with Townsend (1979: 31), where one is poor when lacking the resources to be able to participate in the generally accepted modes of existence in society. It is related to the standards of living in a certain society. The deep causes of poverty have to be found in the structures of society (e.g. functioning of labour market) rather than in institutional dynamics or individual attitudes. Poverty is multidimensional; people live in precarious situations concerning the labour market, housing, health care access, education levels, and so on. Although this definition reflects the complex reality of poverty, we can only rely on income data to estimate the amount of people experiencing poverty. We refer to the European norm of income poverty (60% of the median national income). This poverty risk for adult migrants with a non-EU28 nationality is 61,2% compared with the Belgian average of 11,7% (Eurostat, 2015). Furthermore, education, employment or home ownership insufficiently protect migrants from poverty. 46% of employed, 43% of home owners and 32% of high-skilled migrants are at risk of poverty (Dierckx et al., 2011).

Migrant communities are typically ascribed with strong social networks that should protect their members through social capital and solidarity (Cloke et al., 2009; Phalet et al., 2005; Schans, 2008). Even though such social networks actually do exist, these support mechanisms weaken within migrant communities and families over time and across various waves of migration (Dierckx et al., 2013 Meert et al., 1997; Van Robaeys et al., 2007). The solidarity underlying these networks often operates on the principle of reciprocity. Poverty and modernisation tendencies – like individualisation and emancipation of women – increasingly affect migrant communities. As such, they challenge the reciprocity underlying these solidarity mechanisms, generating exclusion (Dierckx et al., 2013).

Additionally, the diversification of migrant communities has increased substantially (Vertovec, 2007). Superdiversity challenges the idea of ethno-cultural or migrant 'communities'. It is unclear which community would be the frame of reference for these organisations, since migrant communities are fast becoming superdiverse (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014; Vertovec, 2007). The concept of superdiversity

reflects new social and demographic tendencies in modern societies, denoting "*a level and kind of complexity*" new to these societies. This condition is to be *"distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade"* (Vertovec, 2007: 1024). The country of origin is therefore not the only indicator distinguishing migrants from one another. Estimates of generations, statutes and religion reveal that migrant communities are highly differentiated by a complex set of fluctuating factors.[32] Their migration can be driven by conflict, economic, political or ecological reasons. These differing motivations imply diverging migration histories and experiences. Partly because of these divergent backgrounds, migrants end up with all kinds of migration statuses and corresponding rights. Backgrounds also differ in education levels and labour market experiences, diversifying the needs and features of migrants.

At the same time*,* there is a mismatch between the superdiverse group of people experiencing poverty and actual social services, whether organised by public institutions or NGOs (Nongovernmental organisations), as well as between migrant organisations and other civil society organisations (CSOs) (Thys, 2011). Moreover, these CSOs have only recently been confronted with migrants. The question rises whether and how migrant organisations address diversity and poverty. All this implies that the traditional perspective of multiculturalism might be challenged by superdiversity. Multiculturalism refers to a policy discourse of recognising cultural differences, implying a positive view of and placing an emphasis on ethno-cultural differences. However, the idea fails to address the contemporary changes in migration and diversity, or persistent inequalities within and between groups (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014). In a multicultural context, for instance, we could expect to find strong social ties between ethno-culturally organised groups, generating social capital. Besides social scientific challenges – are traditional exploratory concepts such as social capital still applicable in contemporary superdiverse cities? – superdiversity also raises policy challenges. What will be the impact of superdiversity on civil society organisations and public service delivery (Tasan-Kok et al., 2014; Vertovec, 2007)?

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[32] Regarding religion for example, 6% of the Belgian population or a fourth of all people with a migration background is Muslim (Debeer et al., 2011). Almost half of all Muslims in Belgium is Moroccan, and a quarter is Turkish. Migration motives and thus residential statutes vary significantly, also according to the region of origin. Newcomers arrive through family reunification (26,3%), asylum (4,8 asylum seekers, 5% recognised refugee), regularisation (0,5%), employment (38,6%), education (6,2%) and various other reasons. Migrant populations are also differentiated by age and generations. Generally, migrant populations are ageing and getting younger at the same time. However, this varies significantly according to ethno-cultural background. Also, migrant families are diversified – including singles, single parents, couples (11,2% of people with a non-EU nationality), couples with children (1/3 of people with a non-EU nationality), and people living together with their parent(s) (25,1% of people with a non-EU nationality) (Van den Broucke et al., 2015). Educational levels and socio-economic positions also vary considerably, although people with a non-EU nationality are clearly overrepresented in lower education levels and lower income shares (Van den Broucke et al., 2015).

4.1.2 Migrant organisations and localising welfare

In the continental corporatist welfare state of Belgium, civil society plays an important role in welfare provision. '*Welfare society'* as part of this civil society is the non-state dimension of a welfare regime and is strongly developed in the continental regimes of Germany and Belgium. It includes the NGOs partaking in welfare provision, "*sometimes alongside the welfare state, sometimes as an integral part"* (Dierckx et al., 2009). With retrenching national authorities across Europe, responsibilities shift to lower governmental levels and other actors (Mingione and Oberti, 2003). CSOs and private companies are urged to take on more social responsibility, though results may be very different. Through tendering they are compelled to compete with each other to provide social services at the lowest possible price. Many migrant organisations gradually became '*professional'* service providers, often filling gaps owing to the retrenching welfare state or its inability to address timely and adequately these increasingly unfulfilled needs. As such, the welfare society slowly complements the welfare state, sometimes even replacing it (Dierckx et al., 2009: 23). Bridging this gap is possible by a return to charity work, or contrarily, with a new type of welfare regime (Beaumont, 2008). This type refers to a decentralisation and the growing role of different actors, such as migrant organisations, to partake in local social policy (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013; Dierckx et al., 2009). In this context, Mingione and Oberti (2003) introduce Local Welfare Systems, the "*dynamic processes in which the specific local social and cultural contexts give rise both to diversified mixes of actors underlying the strategies for implementing social policies and to diverse profiles of needy or assisted populations"* (Mingione and Oberti, 2003: 3). These systems include inter alia an increased focus on individual and organisational responsibility, a mix of actors and their activities or services, more discretionary power for local authorities, and customised care (Andreotti et al., 2012; Mingione and Oberti, 2003). Consequently*,* it is vital to look at the urban social, cultural and economic configurations as they determine the definition of social problems – such as poverty – and matching social policies. The variety of actors in the local welfare system – including migrant organisations – therefore influences the view on poverty and its solution strategies. These strategies range from "*advocating religious conversion to deliver social services as contracted out by public authorities and all kinds in between"* (Dierckx et al., 2009: 23). As migrant organisations thus become more important in these local welfare systems, we wonder how and to what extent they respond to rising poverty and increasing diversity.

Historically, migrant organisations were established in Belgium over the years within the boundaries of their ethno-cultural communities – with a relatively low degree of heterogeneity (e.g. originally mainly labour migrants from a limited number of countries). For instance, the Moroccan community is historically the largest ethno-cultural minority in Antwerp, in Ghent this is the Turkish community (De Gendt, 2014; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). We could therefore expect to find

the largest number of migrant organisations within the Moroccan population in Antwerp and the Turkish population in Ghent, respectively. As we explained, however, ethno-cultural minorities became superdiverse in numbers, origin, migration background, generation, residential status, etcetera (Vertovec, 2007). Because of superdiversity and emerging local welfare systems, we could expect a diversifying provision of activities and services in migrant organisations as well as more heterogeneous groups.

Migrant organisations (may) have an important bridging function between migrant populations and local authorities or service providers. They can be essential for "*sharing experiences and needs, establishing good practices and providing access to services*" (Vertovec, 2007: 1047). For this reason, they are often supported with beneficial regulation, funding or advice. Some of them are even involved in policymaking. Because local authorities are confronted with increasingly diverse migrant populations, we thus find a growing demand for migrant organisations to be involved in the implementation of social policy, including poverty alleviation (Dierckx and Van Dam, 2014). To study migrant organisations in this context of increasing diversity and poverty, we explore the kinds of organisations there exist in which ethno-cultural minorities, as well as their role in the local welfare system. Studying these issues might help us clarify whether the complexity of superdiversity in Belgium (Flanders) is visible in the way migrants have organised themselves. We wonder whether the ideal-typical functions and roles of migrant organisations apply in this challenging context of these organisations, which are faced with high poverty rates amongst migrants, and increasingly participate in local welfare systems.

4.2 Social capital and local welfare in diversity

As we have described the context of this chapter, this section will briefly discuss theoretical frameworks that help us understand today's reality of migrant organisations. We focus on the concepts of social capital and collective action, because the literature on social capital and collective action highlights the importance of strong ties within homogeneous, close groups (Coleman, 1990; Granovetter, 1973; Mason and Beard, 2008; McAdam and Paulsen, 1993). Applied in the context of migration, these frames predict that people tend to rely on close, strong homogeneous ties (Coleman, 1990; Granovetter, 1973; Mason and Beard, 2008), which implies that migrant organisations would derive their internal cohesion and strength mainly from the shared ethno-cultural identity of members.

Collective action is the action taken by a collectivity "*in pursuit of members' perceived shared interests*" (Marshall, 1998) or "*emergent and minimally coordinated action by two or more people that is motivated by a desire to change some aspect of social life or to resist changes proposed by others*" (McAdam, 2007: 575). Participation in migrant organisations – as a particular form of collective action

(Ibrahim, 2006) – can provide migrants with social capital (Da Graça, 2010; Engbersen, 1996, 2001; Engbersen et al., 2006; Peters, 2010; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Van Meeteren et al., 2009). Social capital is often considered to be particularly crucial for people and communities in poverty lacking other forms of (economic or cultural) capital (Ibrahim, 2006). At the meso level social capital is usually described as "*features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit*" (Putnam, 1995: 67) or "*the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively*" (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000: 226 in Mayer, 2003). Cloke (et al., 2009) believes migrant organisations, and particularly faith-based organisations, are often a "*last vestige of social capital*". This applies especially to communities where economic or human capital is lacking. Mason and Beard (2008) constructed a frame to analyse a community's capacity to alleviate poverty, combining literature on collective action, social capital and social movements. They concluded that only the "*community with the strongest capacity for community-level collective action was capable of planning independent of the state, and thus in a position to take incipient steps toward addressing poverty's structural causes*" (Mason and Beard, 2008). Collective action research vastly demonstrated the importance of (strong) ties individuals form with each other or with organisations to engage in collective action (McAdam and Paulsen, 1993; McAdam, 2007). Likewise, social capital literature contains a vast bulk of research on the benefits of networks and ties among people and collectivities. This perspective emphasises the instrumental benefits of groups, common grounds of people and the strong interpersonal ties increasing social capital. Following common interpretations of social capital theory (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1995), we could expect people to organise primarily in predominantly homogeneous groups. Today the historically qualifying characteristic of ethno-cultural identity might still largely determine these ties.

However, today's context of superdiversity, poverty and local welfare systems might interfere with these mechanisms. In this light, "*theories developed in the past may have only limited application in the study of multigroup relations today*" (Vertovec, 2007: 2). The assumption of strong ties with close homogeneous groups ought therefore to be tested in an environment of superdiversity and welfare localisation. We thus want to study how the fragmentation and diversity that challenged local welfare systems affect the networks of migrants and their organisations. How do migrant organisations deal with the rising diversity, poverty and the localisation of welfare? To address this issue, we must explore the kinds of migrant organisations that exist in different ethno-cultural populations and their heterogeneity in particular. Based on the theory on social capital and strong ties (Coleman, 1990; Granovetter, 1973; Mason and Beard, 2008), we would expect to find homogeneous target groups of migrant organisations, primarily based on the shared ethno-cultural identity or migration history within one particular migrant population. However, the theory on local welfare systems implies we

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ought to detect many small groups of minorities with ethno-culturally blurred boundaries. At the same time, superdiversity would make us expect the factors that bind together members of migrant organisations no longer lies in the shared ethno-cultural identity, but more in other aspects – such as their legal status (demographic focus) or socio-economical position (focus on poverty) (Scaramuzzino, 2012). Confronted with diversifying populations, it becomes decidedly more challenging for a migrant organisation to address merely ethno-culturally homogeneous groups. Moreover, in the context of local welfare systems and the growing recognition of local authorities of increasing diversity (City of Antwerp, 2013; City of Ghent, 2012; Vandeurzen, 2014), these authorities increasingly impose conditional accreditation or public funding criteria to stimulate diversity (Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). The focus lies increasingly on inclusiveness, impelling organisations to be open to groups of various ethno-cultural backgrounds and other elements of diversity, such as gender (Heyse, 2008). We want to study how the fragmentation and diversity that challenged local welfare systems affect the networks of migrants and their organisations. How do migrant organisations deal with the rising diversity, poverty and the localisation of welfare? Emerging local welfare systems predict a change of a bi-ethnic (natives and a limited number of more or less clearly demarcated groups of migrants) to a multi-ethnic composition of urban populations. Furthermore, local welfare systems predict a diversifying range of activities and services provided by migrant organisations, to a diversified target group and its differentiated needs. As more groups arrive, expand and diversify, their backgrounds, characteristics and needs will vary increasingly. In what follows we reveal the methods with which we tried to address these questions.

4.3 The quest for data

For our data collection we focused on Flanders, of which the migrant population has recently diversified. New groups entered Flanders and started their own associations, while older groups remained. The scarcity of knowledge on local migrant organisations stimulated questions on their role and organisational variation. We constructed an inventory of this migrant civil society to get an overview of the variety of activities and services of migrant organisations in Flanders.

The main challenge was to detect as many migrant organisations as possible. Many organisations are registered in the reference databases of the national statute book or in databases of local administrations, but a large number remains unregistered or informal. To maximize the amount of organisations, we engaged ethno-cultural federations and asked to deliver their list of member organisations. In addition, we consulted local administrations in thirteen central cities in Flanders. Staff responsible for diversity policies have access to many local, (informal) associations and migrant groups. Furthermore, we consulted the official reference databases of accredited organisations and websites

of local organisations and their federations. To supplement these data, we held exploratory discussions with stakeholders in the field.

We invited all migrant organisations in our database to fill in a survey, online or on paper, which we made available in Dutch, French and English to overcome language barriers. To elaborate our database, we asked to name other migrant organisations relevant for our research. We sent reminders and extended the deadline for completing the questionnaire to optimise the response (Bryman, 2001; 2004).

During the data collection several difficulties occurred. Some organisations were difficult to contact. Many organisations are located at a home addresses of one of the board members, causing privacy issues. In addition, many of the organisations under review are informal, appearing neither in the official databases nor in most lists of local authorities. Additionally, much information was outdated, partly due to a high turnover in the formations and terminations of organisations, as well as in the relocations of associations' registered office. Relocations are often linked with a change of chairman or board members. Furthermore, there is a tendency amongst local authorities to no longer separate data on migrant organisations from other CSOs. Though the underlying sensitivity to segregation may be noble, it complicates research.

Although we made efforts to minimise non-response, we highlight the limitations of the collected data. The response rate of the survey was a mere 6%. Some organisations did not respond, some questionnaires were incomplete. Volunteers' lack of time partially explains this. The survey also contains several questions on poverty – which is still taboo to many ethno-cultural communities, and therefore might be a barrier. We thus soon realised the need to shift our focus in information sources to complete the inventory.

We combined empirical findings from the survey and data of official reference databases with literature on organisation types (Cas, 1994; Clarke, 2006; Heyse, 2008; Stewart, 2005). This enabled us to construct a typology of migrant organisations (infra). We used the thirteen central cities for the construction of our inventory and typology, in order to account for the greatest possible variation in types. An in-depth discussion of thirteen cities, however, is beyond the scope of this chapter. Therefore, this chapter narrows down to two major Flemish cities that are interesting for comparison, Antwerp and Ghent. These are the two largest cities in Flanders in terms of residents. Antwerp has 510.610 inhabitants in 2014 or 2496,70 inhab./km². Ghent has 251.133 inhabitants in 2014 (1607,96 inhab./km²) (City of Antwerp; City of Ghent). Also, they are both confronted with a continuous influx of migrants. They are the two cities with the highest immigration rate in Flanders in 2014 (Noppe, 2015a, 2015b; Van den Broucke et al., 2015). Antwerp is home to almost 170 different foreign

nationalities, which make up 19,3% of its population in 2013 (Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur, 2014a). Including the second and following generations, they comprise 41,9% of Antwerp's population in 2012 (Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur, 2014a). The largest nationality groups of Antwerp migrants come from the Netherlands, Morocco, Poland, Turkey and Spain. Ghent has 156 nationalities, 12,3% of its population has a foreign nationality in 2013, and 28,5% is foreign origin in 2012 (Agentschap Binnenlands Bestuur, 2014b). The largest groups of people with a foreign nationality in Ghent are from Bulgaria, Turkey, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Poland. Where in earlier days the Turkish community was the largest group, their offspring obtained the Belgian nationality, and many Eastern European newcomers have migrated to Ghent. The cities differ in other aspects of diversity as well. For instance, while both are comparable in employment rates of people with a migration background, Antwerp comparatively has more labour migrants, asylum seekers and people migrated through family reunion among newcomers (Noppe, 2015a, 2015b; Van den Broucke et al., 2015). Politically, these cities differ greatly. Currently, while government is centre-left in Ghent, it is centre-right in Antwerp. Policies vary by the available budget for these organisations (Van Puymbroeck, 2014). For instance, Antwerp raised its budget for migrant organisations in 2003 because it noticed Ghent spending a multiple of this budget to a relatively smaller number of migrant organisations active in the city (Van Puymbroeck, 2014). Local policies can thus impact the degree of heterogeneity in the kinds of migrant organisations and their target groups.

We want to study the response from the migrant civil society to the increasing poverty, diversity and the localisation of welfare. Because the boundaries of migrant groups and their organisations are historically in line with ethno-cultural boundaries, we focus here on the ethno-cultural origin of members or participants of migrant organisations[33]. The question is whether this ethno-cultural criterion is still determinant for the way migrants organise themselves under today's societal pressures. We found these origins for classification in the mission statements on websites or in deeds of incorporation and on lists of contact details received from local authorities or federations. They were grouped by region of origin, inspired by the UN classification of countries by major area and region of the world (UN Population Division, DESA, 2012). Talking about African organisations, we refer to Sub-Saharan associations. Since Turkish and Moroccan communities both have a particular history of labour migration in Belgium, we wanted to be able to highlight certain particularities of these

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[33] This shortcoming is a necessary demarcation. For instance, many migrant organisations explicitly state in their mission statements to aim at various target groups, referring for instance to newcomers or refugees, or men, women and children. For the delineation of the ethno-cultural background of an organisations, we focus in the first instance on the ethno-cultural background of the target group or participants – as described in administrative lists, websites of organisations or their mission statements. The background of the (majority of) stakeholders of an organisations is applied in organisations of which we have insufficient data on the target group.

groups. Therefore we added a focus on the Maghreb. Also, because Turkey can be categorised as Asian, but also as European, African, Maghreb or Middle Eastern, we chose to classify it separately. Moreover, following discussions on whether different countries pertain to Asia or Africa, we also recognised Middle Eastern organisations as a specific group. Unlike the UN, we consider former Yugoslavian countries as Eastern European, whereas the UN classifies them among Southern Europe. Former Yugoslavian or Balkan countries are often categorised in what is called the '*Eastern Bloc*' or classified as a Central European country. Again like the UN, we identify the Caribbean as Latin-American. Finally, we only withheld categories containing at least one organisation. With no registered organisations from Southern and Western Europe, North America or Oceania, we excluded them from our category list in the results. The following section will reveal our findings in Antwerp and Ghent. It should be noted that none of these data are exhaustive, because of the high degree of volatility of the migrant civil society in Flanders. The data was gathered in the years 2013-2014 and depended greatly on the availability, accuracy and comprehensiveness of information in the various sources we consulted.

4.4 Mixed findings on mixed organisations

We want to find out how and to what extent migrant organisations – as part of the emerging local welfare systems – respond to the growing prominence of diversity, welfare localisation and poverty. Is the complexity of these challenges visible in the way migrants organise themselves? In other words, are migrant organisations today still based primarily on ethno-cultural boundaries or do they seek social cohesion more in other issues – such as their socio-economic situation (and thus the concern for poverty alleviation)? We structure our findings according to these main questions in two cases: the cities of Antwerp and Ghent.

4.4.1 Shifting grounds: diversity as a challenge

Based on social capital literature and the history of migrant organisations in Flanders, we would expect to find mainly migrant organisations established within particular ethno-cultural populations, rather than organisations that gather participants from several ethno-cultural populations.

4.4.1.1 Antwerp

Exploring the data on the number of migrant organisations existing and the ethno-cultural background of their stakeholders and target group, our questions do not appear to be answered unequivocally. Figure 1 presents information on the distribution of the number of migrant organisations per ethno-cultural minority in the city of Antwerp.

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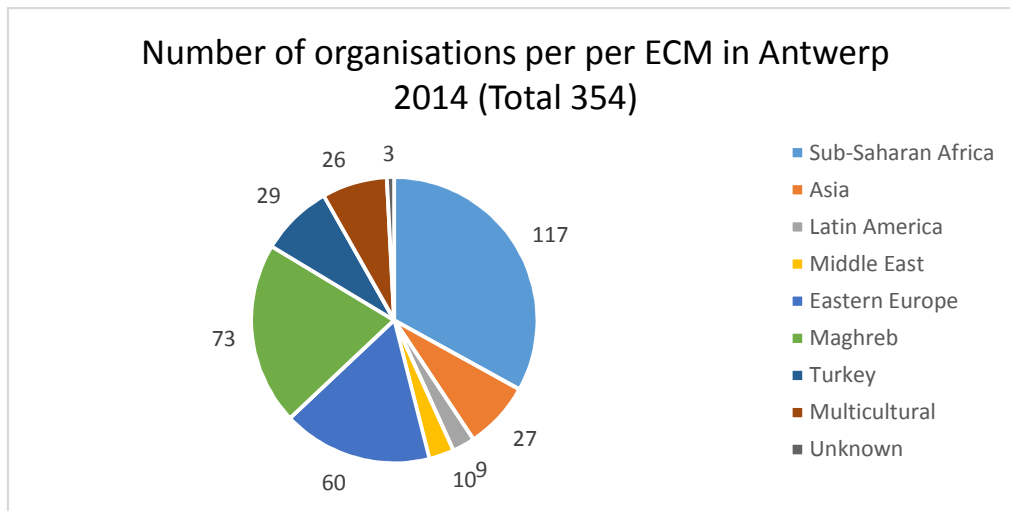
The chart demonstrates that one-third of the migrant organisations mainly have participants with an African background. With 117 organisations, this is 33% of the 354 migrant organisations we registered in Antwerp. This group contains members of many different African ethno-cultural communities, each decidedly smaller than traditional migrant communities such as the Moroccan or Turkish communities. Almost every African ethno-cultural group has its own organisations and churches, largely explaining their comparatively high number of organisations. Moreover, most African organisations focus on a particular country of origin, or a specific ethnic group crossing different national borders. As such, they turn out to be considerably more ethno-culturally homogeneous than they appear, despite the different countries of origin.

There are 73 Maghreb organisations, making up 21% of the total number of migrant organisations. This category is largely ethno-culturally homogeneous, because the vast majority of these organisations is founded within the Moroccan population. With 60 organisations, Eastern European organisations make up 17% of all registered migrant organisations in Antwerp. This group targets mainly newcomers with high-skilled profiles. Many members of these ethno-cultural groups have already acquired some organisational experience in their country of origin (for instance with political refugees) or, due to their higher education level, are more inclined to establish organisations out of a need for information on integration issues they encounter. Moreover, this category also consists of members of different ethno-cultural groups. Some of them aim at groups from one specific country of origin, being rather homogeneous in ethno-cultural background.[34] However, unlike most African

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[34] Although one could claim this is hardly the case when considering Roma with Eastern-European nationalities, they appear to have separate (field of Roma) organisations. Moreover, Roma organisations seldom occur on administrative lists or lists of member organisations of the accredited ethno-cultural federations. Because of other specific dynamics in Roma groups, they are not included in this study. For more information on Roma organisations, see Wauters (et al., 2013).

organisations, many Eastern European organisations reach people from various ethno-cultural backgrounds. This is especially the case when organisations are established with a specific objective (for instance on integration issues) concerning various ethno-cultural minorities (Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). The picture is thus quite ambiguous. Most, but not all, Eastern European organisations reach rather ethno-culturally heterogeneous groups. The Turkish community has 29 organisations (8% of the total number of migrant organisations). Since Moroccan and Turkish communities are two of the largest migrant communities residing over 50 years in Belgium, they have had the time and opportunities to establish many different associations. Moreover, these communities presumably grew highly internally diverse in generations, statutes, migration histories, etcetera. Asian organisations also form a multitude of smaller communties, making up a larger piece of the pie as well. Because they cover a wide continent and there are particular histories of certain Asian countries (e.g. the link between the Chinese community and the harbour, or the Jewish and Indian communities and the diamond trade), Asian communities are remarkably diverse in migration histories, ethno-cultural origin, socio-economic status and so on.

The category of '*multicultural*' organisations is of specific interest to us. This category refers to migrant organisations targeting diverse ethno-cultural groups, whether different ethno-cultural populations or their people with their own ethno-cultural background and Belgians outside their ethno-cultural group. However, it also includes most ethno-cultural federations, which are encouraged by government decrees to reach diverse groups (if they want to receive public funding). Furthermore, although many organisations offically aim for ethno-culturally diverse groups, in reality they often only reach people who share their own ethno-cultural origin. An explanation partly lies in the fact that many small migrant organisations' participants are members of the personal social networks of people involved in the association – still consisting of mainly people with similar ethno-cultural origins – confirming social capital theory.

In Antwerp, 26 organisations are categorised as multicultural. The majority of them are explicitly '*multicultural*' (20), as mentioned in mission statements, vision texts, deeds of incorporation or existing lists of registered organisations. However, we may differentiate between some of them, all faith-based organisations. One organisation allegedly reaches diverse Islamic groups. Another targets diverse Catholics, a third reaches diverse Hare Krishna's. Three organisations claim to reach diverse and Jewish groups. This appears to confirm the superdiversity perspective of high internal diversity, because the social cohesion of the group lies in the shared religion, crossing ethno-cultural boundaries. Like other socio-cultural *'axes of differentiation'* – such as ethno-cultural background or language – religion largely determines the identities, interaction patterns and social networks of people with a migration

background (Vertovec, 2007). As such, religion can mobilise people across ethno-cultural community boundaries.

4.4.1.2 Ghent

It is interesting to compare these findings on Antwerp with those on the city of Ghent. Figure 2 presents our data on the number of migrant organisations per ethno-cultural minority in Ghent.

Figure 2 Number of migrant organisations per ethno-cultural minority in Ghent, 2014

Number of organisations per ECM in Ghent, 2014
(Total 200)

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Asia
- Latin America
- Middle East
- Eastern Europe
- Maghreb
- Turkey
- Multicultural
- Unknown

4   47   6   3   3   16   12   34   75
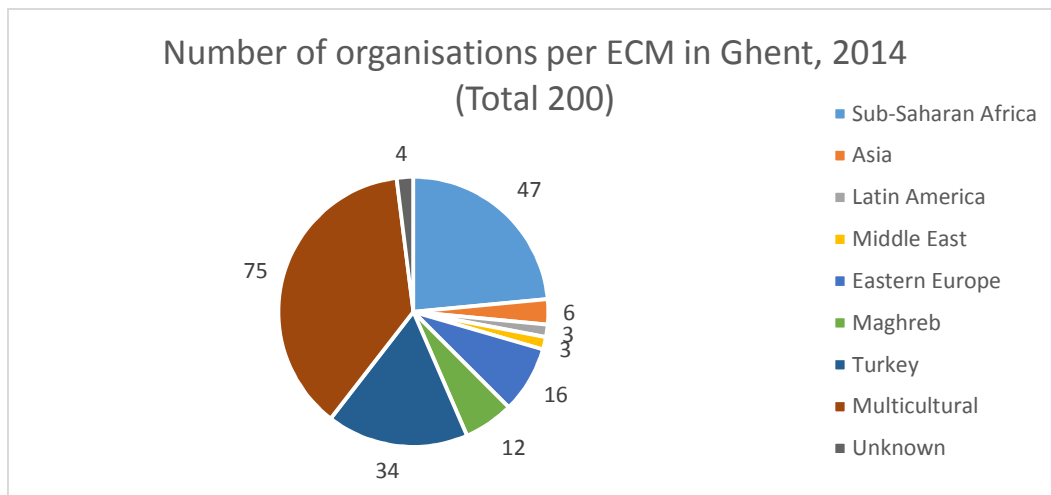
Significantly, and in contrast to Antwerp, the largest category of migrant organisations in Ghent concerns multicultural groups. Seventy-five migrant organisations, or 38% of the 200 registered organisations, target diverse groups. However, 39 organisations or 52% of all multicultural organisations proclaim specifically to target '*diverse'*, '*intercultural'*, or '*multicultural'* groups. Compared to Antwerp, where three-fourths of the multicultural organisations are '*actual'* multicultural organisations, this is only half in Ghent. At the same time, looking closer at the other multicultural categories, specific circumstances appear peculiar to Ghent. As much as 20% of multicultural migrant organisations target both Eastern European and Turkish groups. Twelve of the 75 '*diverse'* organisations (16%) reach the specific combination of Turkish and Bulgarian groups. Turkish groups are in one case also targeted together with people from Bulgaria and Kazakhstan. Two organisations combine Turks with Russians. Other combinations are made of people from Maghreb countries and people from the Middle East in three organisations, or with an African group in one organisation (primarily people from Sudanese and Iraqi origins). Five organisations reach mainly Turkish groups, but claim to be '*multicultural'* or '*diverse'*. Only three organisations are African multicultural organisations, explicitly targeting people originating from multiple African countries. One organisation in the multicultural Maghreb category reaches predominantly people with Tunisian roots, but they assert to reach a '*broad public'*. Furthermore, one organisation explicitly focuses on people with '*Arabic roots'*, reaching in fact mainly migrants with a Moroccan or Turkish background. Finally, among faith-based

organisations, only one organisation presents itself as Jewish and '*diverse*' at the same time. Six multicultural organisations in Ghent (8%) target Muslims from various ethno-cultural origins. This illustrates again how religion can bind people across ethno-cultural boundaries. Not one multicultural organisation specifically targets Catholics or Hare Krishna's.

Forty-eight organisations – or 23% of the migrant organisations in Ghent – involve African groups, again including many different Sub-Saharan minorities. However, they also reach mainly particular ethno-cultural minorities, i.e. ethno-culturally homogeneous groups. Thirty-four organisations – or 17% of the total number of migrant organisations in Ghent – reach people with a Turkish background. Sixteen Eastern European organisations constitute another 8% of all migrant organisations registered in Ghent.

The lower share of Maghreb organisations is striking. The fact that people with a Maghreb origin are fewer in Ghent is clearly reflected in the number of Moroccan organisations. Although they are also among the four largest minority groups in Ghent, they are comparatively smaller with respect to Antwerp. At the bottom of the list remain a few minorities. We registered merely three Middle Eastern, three Latin-American and six Asian organisations, 1%, 2% and 3% respectively. Due to the lower share of migrants from these regions of origin, the smaller number of their organisations in Ghent is obvious.

Compared to Antwerp, a much larger share of organisations is thus multicultural. This might be an indication that generally speaking, migrant organisations in Ghent reach comparatively more ethno-culturally heterogeneous groups than those in Antwerp. This would imply that, contrary to common assumptions (but in line with new research, De Bock, 2015), Antwerp is diverse in the array of ethno-cultural minorities with self-organisations (Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014), but knows fewer internal diversity in organisations than Ghent. However, within this multicultural category the proportion of organisations that are explicitly multicultural is smaller in Ghent than in Antwerp. The question remains how these organisations respond to the challenges of poverty among migrants. If Antwerp has more ethno-culturally homogeneous organisations, for instance, we could expect these organisations with stronger bonding social capital to be better suited to support people with a similar ethno-cultural background in poverty. It appears migrant organisations are still largely based on the shared ethno-cultural identities. However, our apparently contesting findings might suggest that migrant organisations gradually tend to seek common grounds in other bonding aspects. The challenges of poverty, diversity and localising welfare might imply that migrant organisations are increasingly based on the shared interests concerning issues, such as integration or poverty. Because of the high prevalence of poverty among migrants, we will next study the extent to which migrant organisations address poverty.

4.4.2 Diversified organisations: poverty as a challenge

To clarify how migrant organisations respond to the challenges of poverty among migrants, we thus ought to explore the types of organisations and the activities they develop. For this purpose we derived a typology from the data we collected in Flanders' thirteen central cities. We used classifications from literature to code the activities of migrant organisations mentioned in the survey, deeds of incorporation or websites[35] (Canatan et al., 2003; Cas, 1994; Clarke, 2006; Cloke et al., 2009; Heyse, 2008; Stewart, 2005; Dierckx et al., 2009; Van der Meer et al., 2009). This method yielded four main categories (Table 1).

Table 1 Typology of migrant organisations in Flanders based on their mission and activities

Type 1	Socio-cultural / Integration & bonding
Type 2	Services & empowerment
Type 3	Development aid in country of origin
Type 4	Federations: Support other organisations

The first type of organisations concentrates on socio-cultural activities, in combination with activities promoting integration and bonding. Organisations work on bonding and integration in various ways. Bonding activities usually refer to easily accessible social activities to bring people together and strengthen their social networks. Integration and bonding can be addressed through, for instance, cultural activities – concerning the preservation of a particular culture within an ethno-cultural community. An example is the celebration of Children's Day in Turkish groups. It also includes presenting cultural habits to the Belgian people or promoting intercultural encounters. Integration can also refer to working on pedagogical issues – like homework assistance or parental support – or specific integration issues – such as providing language courses, conversational practice, information sessions on integration courses, etcetera. Although most organisations providing social activities also organise cultural as well as pedagogical and integration activities, many associations specify one activity type as their core business. Faith-based organisations mainly organise religious activities – such as prayer meetings, religious courses, religiously inspired debate or information events – but generally also aim at bonding and integration.

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[35] Literature shows many classifications of organisation types (Canatan et al., 2003; Cas, 1994; Clarke, 2006; Cloke et al., 2009; Heyse, 2008; Stewart, 2005; Dierckx et al., 2009; Van der Meer et al., 2009). For instance, Clarke (2006) distinguishes between representative, charitable, socio-political, missionary and illegal or terrorist organisations. Van der Meer (et al., 2009) identifies leisure, activist and interest organisations. Canatan (et al., 2003) classifies mosque activities: religious activities, socio-cultural activities, sport and leisure, intercultural and interreligious activities, participation-stimulating activities, training and educational activities, computer and internet courses and individual assistance (Canatan et al., 2003). Cas (1994) categorises five types of migrant organisations in Belgium: mosque associations, socio-cultural organisations, sports clubs, welfare organisations and non-profit-café's. These classifications inspired the codes we applied to find and group key words in the survey and in mission texts of organisations.

The second type refers to what we associate with social services or poverty reduction strategies. Many among these organisations concentrate on empowerment, explicitly aiming for the improvement of the well-being or societal position of their members. They may also be women's groups with a bonding function and empowerment of these women as their explicit intention. Besides these, organisations can also focus on providing mainly services – i.e. emergency aid, conflict mediation, administrative support or client referral to service providers or other aid organisations. The third type of organisations focus on development aid in the country of origin, either raising money in Belgium for projects in the homeland or setting up projects there. The final type refers to umbrella organisations, mostly officially recognised federations. Yet, their unique role fades as they increasingly also provide activities for individuals instead of exclusively for member organisations.

4.4.2.1 Antwerp

We categorised the 354 registered migrant organisations in Antwerp according to our typology. As the complex reality of migrant organisations is reflected in their activities, most cross category boundaries. The core business numerous organisations concerns socio-cultural activities, occasionally also the provision of services or work on empowerment. Vice versa, a lot of organisations primarily focusing on empowerment or service provision organise sporadically socio-cultural activities. These activities might, for instance, help collect revenues for organisations with insufficient means. The category '*unknown*' in the charts below covers organisations on which we have insufficient data. The '*mix*' class includes organisations that combine socio-cultural activities with services and empowerment, but also development aid in the country of origin.

Figure 3 shows that 67% of migrant organisations in Antwerp are socio-cultural organisations, including religious organisations. Forty-eight of these socio-cultural organisations also work on empowerment or service provision secondarily. This vast majority stands in great contrast to type 2. Thirty-nine organisations that focus on empowerment and services only make up 11% of the total. Within this group, 23 organisations also provide socio-cultural activities sporadically. However, these activities can also be found in the eight organisations of the mixed type, adding 2%. Yet, concentrating on development aid in the country of origin, often assumed to make up a great deal of migrant organisations, we see that with only 4% this is barely the case.[36]

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[36] Worthy of mention, the numbers of these categories might shift slightly if we were able to include more data on the 41 '*unknown*' organisations in Antwerp (on which we have inadequate information thus far to categorise them according to organisation type).

Number of organisations per organisation type in Antwerp (Total 354), 2014

- Socio-cultural / Integration & bonding
- Services & empowerment
- Development aid
- Federations
- Mix
- Unknown

41 / 8 / 13 / 15 / 39 / 238
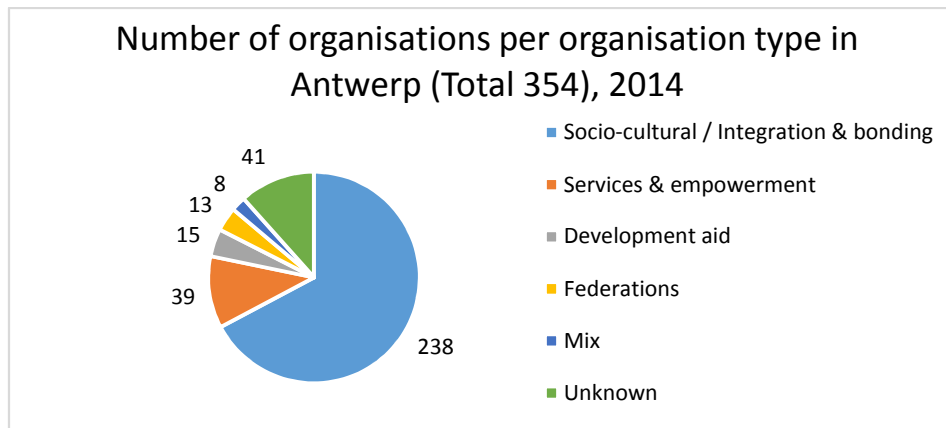
The next step in analysing our data is combining all details. The results are shown in Figure 4, demonstrating the numbers of migrant organisations per organisation type, taking into account the ethno-cultural background of its members.

Based on the poverty figures among ethno-cultural populations (Dierckx et al., 2011), we might expect those ethno-cultural groups with the highest prevalence of poverty to indicate the presence of organisations that do somehow address poverty. Because of the highest poverty risk can be found among people with a Moroccan background (54%), we could thus expect especially Maghreb organisations to work on poverty alleviation. Turkish and Eastern European minorities have similar poverty risks (33% and 36%). We have no separate data on African, Latin-American and Asian minorities, they are aggregated in one category of non-EU origin (37%). However, exploratory discussions with stakeholders from ethno-cultural minorities and their federations revealed how they are confronted with widespread poverty among African and certain Asian communities. This implies we ought to find organisations focusing on empowerment and service provision mainly with Moroccan, Turkish, Eastern European and African groups.

Figure 4 clearly indicates that organisations concentrating on empowerment and service provision are especially found indeed in organisations with members with African (17 organisations or 14,54% of African organisations of type 2) and Maghreb (8 organisations or 10,96% of Maghreb organisations of type 2) backgrounds. These groups also have the largest share of mixed organisations, working on poverty besides socio-cultural or development work (4,27% of African organisations and 2,74% of Maghreb organisations are mixed type). In comparison, four Eastern European (6,66% of all Eastern European organisations), three Turkish (10,34%) and multicultural (11,54%) organisations, two Asian organisations (7,41%) and one Latin American organisation (11,1%) explicitly works on service provision or empowerment. Only one multicultural organisation (3,85% of all multicultural organisations) combines service provision or empowerment with socio-cultural activities and

development work. This mixed type does not occur among other groups. Organisations providing secondary socio-cultural activities, alongside their core business of empowerment or service provision, also occur mostly in African, Eastern European and Maghreb groups. These findings confirm our assumptions, only the Turkish community in Antwerp makes the exception. There, as well as in Asian, Latin-American and multicultural organisations in Antwerp, poverty is a secondary issue. In Middle Eastern organisations, poverty is not specifically addressed at all.

Figure 4 Number of migrant organisations per organisation type per ethno-cultural minority in Antwerp, 2014

Number of organisations per organisation type per ECM in Antwerp 2014 (Total 354)
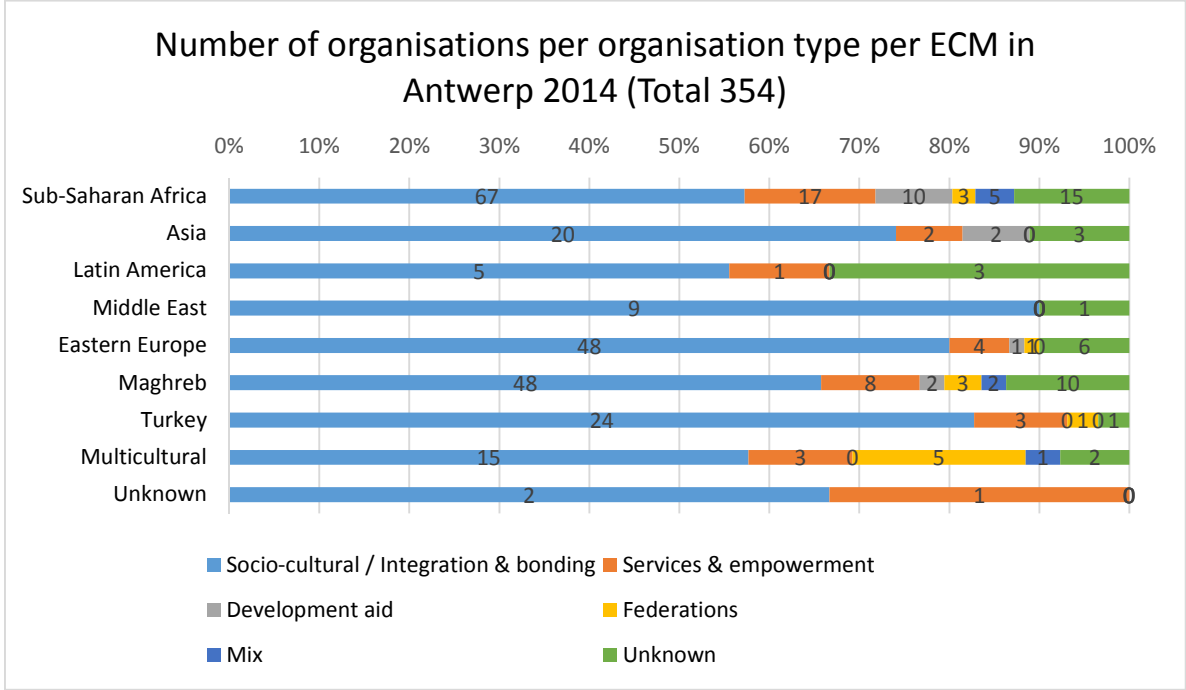
4.4.2.2 Ghent

Proceeding to Ghent, Figure 5 presents the number of migrant organisations per organisation type. In Ghent, 122 of the 200 migrant organisations (71%) are socio-cultural. This share is comparable to Antwerp (68%). Twenty of these organisations occasionally provide services. Again comparable to Antwerp (11%), 25 migrant organisations in Ghent (12%) concentrate on empowerment or services. Eighteen organisations (23 in Antwerp) focus primarily on empowerment or the provision of social services, but occasionally organise socio-cultural activities, often in order to bring some money in the till. Five migrant organisations in Ghent work on development aid in their country of origin, 1% less than in Antwerp. Six organisations (eight in Antwerp) provide services and organise socio-cultural activities in Ghent, but work on development aid in the country of origin as well. Comparatively, this is a somewhat larger share than in Antwerp. We registered twelve ethno-cultural umbrella organisations in Ghent. Compared to the thirteen umbrella organisations in Antwerp, this is a slightly

larger share. One advantage of our findings in Ghent is that there are fewer organisations on which we have insufficient data for categorisation.

Figure 5 Number of migrant organisations per organisation type in Ghent, 2014
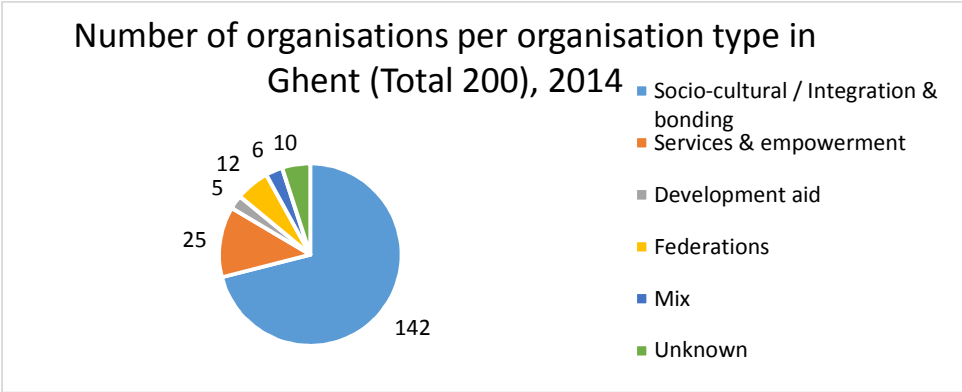
Now that we have presented the general distribution of migrant organisations in Ghent over the organisation type, we will assemble all our data to indicate the extent to which ethno-cultural minorities and their migrant organisations deal with the challenges of poverty. Figure 6 illustrates the number of migrant organisations per organisation type across ethno-cultural minorities in Ghent.

Figure 6 Number of migrant organisations per organisation type per ethno-cultural minority in Ghent, 2014
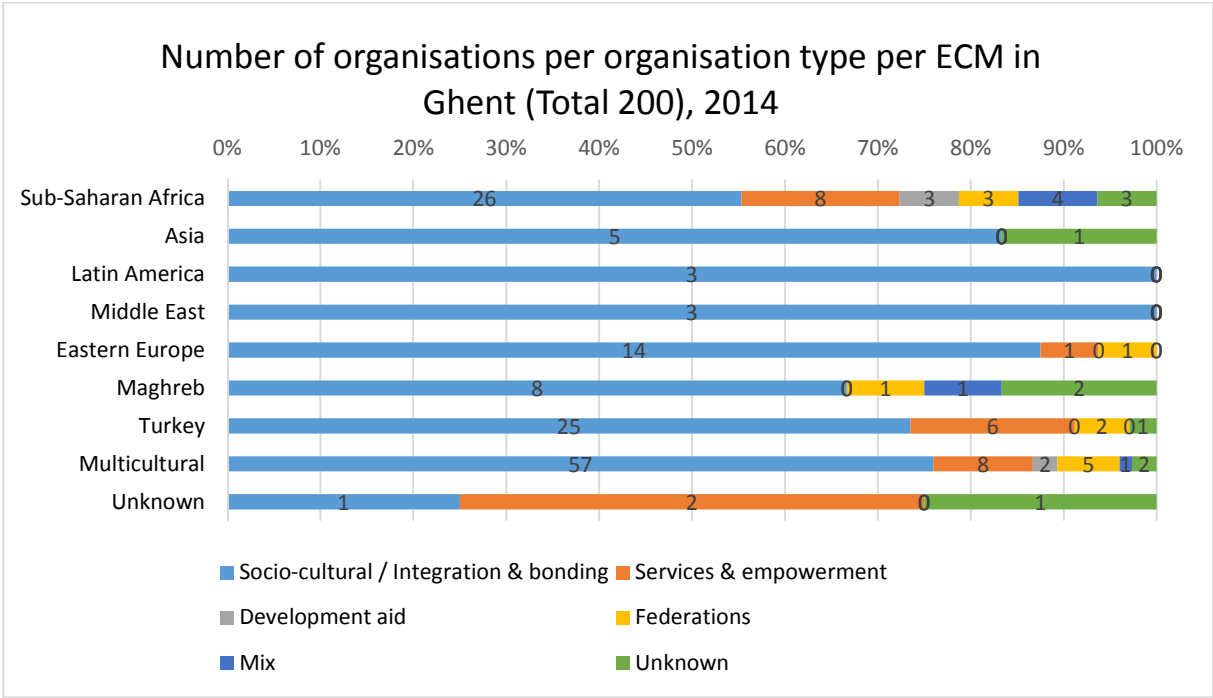
Looking back at the poverty figures in ethno-cultural minorities (Dierckx et al., 2011), again we could expect poverty to be an issue in mainly Maghreb, African, Turkish and Eastern European organisations. In the first instance, we notice, like in Antwerp, that poverty appears to be addressed mainly in African organisations. Eight organisations or 17,02% of all African organisations focus on empowerment and

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service provision, another four organisations (8,51% of all African organisations) combine service provision or empowerment with socio-cultural activities and development work. Besides these, eight multicultural organisations (10,67% of all multicultural organisations) focus on service provision or empowerment. While only one multicultural organisation is of a mixed type, both African and multicultural groups also contain comparatively a significant number of organisations that address poverty, but also sporadically provide socio-cultural activities. Six organisations or 17,65% of all Turkish organisations focus on poverty. Turkish groups are indeed well represented, in contrast to Antwerp. Poverty is only secondarily or sporadically addressed within Eastern European (only one organisation focuses on poverty, i.e. 6,25%) and Maghreb organisations (one organisation combines service provision or empowerment with socio-cultural activities and development work, i.e. 8,33%) in Ghent, while we do not find poverty as an explicit issue among Asian, Latin-American and Middle Eastern organisations.

4.5 Discussion

We wondered how the fragmentation and diversification that challenges local welfare systems affect the networks of people with a migration background and their organisations. We studied how migrant organisations respond to the diversification, poverty and localisation of welfare provision – assuming they would be among the first to encounter and anticipate this increase in diversity and poverty. Based on migration histories in Antwerp and Ghent, as well as the theory of social capital and strong ties, we expected to find homogeneous groups in migrant organisations, primarily based on the ethno-cultural identity within a particular migrant community. At the same time, the perspective of local welfare systems made us expect rather heterogeneous groups. Increasing diversity in migrant communities would bring about many small groups of minorities with blurred boundaries.

Antwerp historically houses a few large ethno-cultural communities. The city clearly has accommodated a number of communities from diverse countries of origin for several decades. Our data confirmed that the lion's share today is indeed found among some of the oldest and largest ethno-cultural communities, i.e. Moroccan, Turkish and African (especially Congolese, due to Belgium's colonial history). It appears migrant organisations in Antwerp are indeed principally established within ethno-cultural communities, confirming the social capital perspective. However, originally established organisations in pioneering communities are now complemented by a mix of many new (small, often informal) organisations in and between many different ethno-cultural minorities. Because of Antwerp's growing diversity (Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014), authorities have turned their attention increasingly to the many new and small minorities. Shifts in public funding criteria further advanced diversity in Antwerp's migrant civil society. Certain forms of public funding were made dependent on the extent to which migrant organisations explicitly contribute to diversification, interculturalisation

and integration (Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). This might explain why – though there are comparatively few '*multicultural organisations*' (75 in Antwerp) in comparison to Ghent (26 in Ghent) – we see predominantly explicit multicultural organisations within this category. This could indicate many migrant organisations are currently diversifying gradually in terms of ethno-cultural identity, perhaps bringing people together through other elements than their ethno-cultural identity. The known ideas of diversity or multiculturalism are clearly challenged by superdiversity. Second (and subsequent) generation migrants might play a crucial role here (Kanmaz, 2007; Van Puymbroeck, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, Ghent is commonly far less portrayed as a superdiverse city, known for its large Turkish community. Unsurprisingly, their organisations are among the largest groups, because of the significant historical labour migration of Turks to Ghent. Still today they remain a vast and close-knit community, with Turkish organisations, shops, lawyers and so on. Only recently has Ghent seen an influx of Eastern European immigrants. However, new research indicates migrant communities in Ghent were more heterogeneous than supposed (De Bock, 2015; De Gendt, 2014). Pioneering Turks in the sixties did not necessarily share an identical ethno-cultural origin. For instance, a number of ethnic Turks originally migrated first to Istanbul from other countries such as Serbia, only to migrate again to Belgium decades later. These people differ greatly from people originating from rural Turkey. Similarly, Turkish migrants in Ghent also had various statutes and backgrounds. The image of Ghent as being historically bicultural to becoming ever more superdiverse in recent years cannot be endorsed unambiguously. Our findings on the share of multicultural organisations appear to support the claims of De Bock (2015). The city probably already was more (super-)diverse than commonly accepted (De Bock, 2015; De Gendt, 2014; Van Puymbroeck, 2014).

As expected, the share of Eastern European organisations in Ghent is significant. Discussions with stakeholders revealed that since the debate on migrants and nuisance was launched a few years ago, local administrations have encouraged several Eastern European women to establish self-organisations to act as an intermediary between authorities, civil society and Eastern European communities. This has contributed to a larger number of Eastern European organisations and a greater variety of communities involved in migrant organisations, but with less diversity within the organisations. However, we cannot state unequivocal claims on the issue of heterogeneity regarding migrant organisations in Ghent. Groups that appear to be heterogeneous are actually more homogeneous than expected, and vice versa. Our findings revealed an important share of migrant organisations in Ghent combining people from Turkish with Eastern European origins. At first glance, this seems to refer to heterogeneous groups. However, these groups concern one particular ethno-cultural group crossing the borders of both countries of origin, implying these Bulgarians are in fact

ethnic Turks (Albena, personal communication, March 23, 2015). Still, Turkish Bulgarians in Ghent do not manifest themselves as one and the same community with other Turks. They have their own Bulgarian shops, etcetera. Organisations targeting both groups, indicate that boundaries between ethno-cultural groups are increasingly difficult to define in the context of superdiversity.

Furthermore, Ghent knows comparatively many intercultural marriages between Belgians and people originating from Maghreb countries. This might also limit the number of organisations focusing on an ethno-cultural identity. Our findings suggest that the social cohesion in migrant organisations is less unequivocally based on people's ethno-cultural identity. Research and discussions with stakeholders confirm migrants increasingly gather around issues other than their ethno-cultural identity (Cas, 1994; Kanmaz, 2007; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). The high prevalence of poverty in most migrant communities inspired us to study the extent to which poverty is an issue in these organisations – and whether this is increasingly a binding factor.

Our comparison of the diffusion of organisation types across ethno-cultural minorities in Ghent and Antwerp illustrates well how migrant organisations in both cities respond to the challenges of poverty. Generally, Antwerp is highly comparable to Ghent: for instance, in the (majority) share of socio-cultural organisations (type 1), or the share of organisations focusing on empowerment or service provision (type 2), or even in those of type 2 also providing additional socio-cultural activities. Organisations usually organise these sporadic socio-cultural activities to gather additional revenues. Both in Antwerp and Ghent, many migrant organisations actually have insufficient means. In case organisations are eligible, public funding is inadequate, and they often have a limited time span and demand a lot of time and capacities, not always available in migrant organisations run by one (or a few) volunteer(s). Socio-cultural or empowering activities require sufficient means. This applies especially to providing material support. Contrary to Ghent though, Antwerp has a comparatively larger share of type 1 organisations secondarily working on empowerment or service provision. Moreover, both cities are comparable in the share of organisations combining socio-cultural activities with empowerment or services and development aid (eight organisations in Antwerp, 2%, and six in Ghent, 3%). We may add organisations that are mainly socio-cultural, but work secondarily on poverty reduction. Aggregated, 26% of migrant organisations in Antwerp address poverty to varying degrees. In Ghent we find a similar share of 25%. This indicates that in both cities about a fourth of all migrant organisations we registered work to some extent on poverty. Although few migrant organisations explicitly address poverty, it appears increasingly on the agenda of ethno-cultural federations and their member organisations. (Dierckx et al., 2013; Van Dam, 2015). Moreover, many formally socio-cultural migrant organisations in Antwerp and Ghent in fact often provide social assistance to their members. Most migrant organisations provide social assistance informally, outside of the statutes or *working hours* of the

organisation (Van Dam 2015). It also concerns activities or services initially not identified as poverty reduction by the stakeholders of these organisations (Dierckx et al. 2013; Van Dam 2015). Poverty might well increasingly be a binding factor for members of migrant organisations.

Furthermore, these findings suggest that, in general, the city context is not solely decisive for the prevalence of poverty reduction activities in migrant organisations. Whether this is instead more connected to the prevalence of poverty in particular ethno-cultural communities, can be inferred from our data on organisation types in various communities. In line with expectations based on the poverty figures, we found a focus on empowerment and service provision mainly in African, Moroccan and Eastern European organisations in Antwerp. Turkish organisations were an exceptional case. Due to different proportions of migrant populations in Antwerp and Ghent, we could expect diverging numbers of organisations dealing with poverty across various ethno-cultural minorities. Initially, this seems to be true for the Turkish community in Ghent, were poverty appears comparatively more explicitly addressed in Turkish organisations, compared to Antwerp. Maghreb organisations in Ghent have been shown to deal less frequently with poverty issues. However, like in Antwerp, African organisations also often address poverty. Unlike Antwerp, though, Eastern European organisations in Ghent barely work on poverty reduction. This implies it is not exclusively the prevalence of poverty in ethno-cultural communities determining the extent to which migrant organisations address poverty. Features and capacities of ethno-cultural communities (e.g. their size, structure, social capital) probably also affect to a large extent in which communities organisations will deal with poverty. Migrant organisations with members mainly from one of the older and larger ethno-cultural communities in Antwerp more often address poverty, while multicultural organisations are less involved. However, the Turkish groups in both cities and the multicultural groups in Ghent complicate matters, challenging the assumptions based on the perspective of bonding social capital. This suggests that poverty might be able to bring people together across various ethno-cultural boundaries. Still, further research is necessary for exploring these and other factors more in detail.

We demonstrated how the complexity of fragmentation and diversity in local welfare systems in Flemish cities became manifest in the way migrants have organised themselves. Boundaries between ethno-cultural groups are increasingly difficult to define in the context of superdiversity and local welfare systems. This brings us to conclude that against the background of emerging local welfare systems and urban superdiversity, the straightforward theoretical frames of social capital and strong ties and their effects on associational life are not robust in the context of research on migrant organisations. Theoretical frames need to be attuned for the analysis of migrant organisations in today's superdiverse societies. Our typology indicated the variation of migrant organisations and their activities, and its diffusion across different ethno-cultural communities. Furthermore, it helped us

demonstrate that the ideal-typological functions of migrant organisations in Flanders are under pressure in an increasingly complex context of poverty and superdiversity in local welfare systems. When comparing our data to earlier research (E.g. Cas, 1994; Kanmaz, 2007) and the discussions we had with stakeholders from the migrant civil society, we conclude that migrant organisations slowly but surely continue to diversify in their types and activities – as such responding to their diversifying clientele with their differentiating needs. Migrant organisations increasingly address poverty, whether within one and the same ethno-cultural minority, or targeting diverse ethno-cultural groups. While we find poverty reduction activities often in organisations linked to ethno-cultural minorities with high poverty rates, multicultural organisations gradually step up to tackle the issue; after all, 11,54% of all multicultural organisations in Antwerp and 10,67% of all multicultural organisations in Ghent focus on service provision or empowerment. Especially in Ghent, multicultural organisations work comparatively more on empowerment or service provision than most organisations established within specific ethno-cultural minorities. We may conclude that the function of providing socio-cultural activities allows the expectations of strong ties and social capital to remain intact. In the case of poverty reduction, we ought to revise these frames. In line with recent literature (Kanmaz, 2007; Van Puymbroeck, 2014; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014), we believe this might indicate many migrant organisations will sharpen their focus on poverty – and other issues relevant for their supporters – as a binding factor. This snapshot of the contemporary (and highly volatile) migrant civil society increases our understanding on the role these organisations (can) play in local welfare systems. However, further research needs to assess these developments.

Chapter 5: Together as One: Collective Capabilities of Organisations and Social Capabilities of Individuals

Sylvie Van Dam

5.1 Migrant organisations and poverty alleviation in Belgium

In most OECD-countries concern has grown regarding rising poverty among ethnic minorities (Dierckx et al., 2011; Kazemipur and Halli, 2000; OECD, 2008, 2011; Van Robaeys et al., 2006). A diversifying population and rising poverty among migrants affect public services and social organisations. Higher authorities transfer powers to the lower echelons, while local authorities wish to withdraw and facilitate local civil society, emphasising networking and coordination – thereby creating a hybridity in policy and actors (*cf.* Mingione's local welfare regime) and a gap in service provision which civil society might not be able to fill in. In that regard, it makes sense also to examine the role of associations (Andreotti et al., 2012; Kazepov, 2010: 65; Sen, 1982, 1987, 1993, 2002). Unfortunately, little is known particularly about the role of organisations within migrant communities in welfare provision or poverty reduction (Beaumont, 2008; Dierckx et al., 2009; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). International literature on migrant organisations[37] mainly addresses transnationalism and political participation (Dumont, 2008; Portes et al., 2008; Portes and Zhou, 2012), identity (Alsayyad et al., 2002 in Spencer and Cooper, 2006), belonging and agency (Bailey, 2012), social capital (Bunn and Wood, 2012; Morales and Ramiro, 2011) and empowerment (Neal, 2014). Where it deals with social services this usually concerns international development or the role of Catholic inspired organisations (Bunn and Wood, 2012) or public services. Although the labour market position or educational level of migrants is well documented (e.g. Portes and Manning, 1986, 2008), literature on migrants or their organisations rarely addresses poverty as a multidimensional complex mechanism (Dierckx et al., 2009; Heyse, 2008; Spencer and Cooper, 2006).

While these migrant organisations are increasingly called upon, the question remains whether poverty is actually on their agenda. Civil society workers often wonder whether migrant organisations serve this purpose and if any opportunities are available to them. We therefore wonder how migrant organisations contribute to poverty reduction in migrant communities and which role they play in the contemporary welfare state.

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[37] A migrant organisation can broadly be defined as a "*group in support of immigrants' social, cultural, or political interests*" (Huddleston et al., 2012). Most often these organisations are defined on the basis of the background of the founders or members of the board, also called self-organisations or self-initiatives (organisations established by immigrants).

Challenges and Capabilities: Real opportunities of migrant organisations and intervention strategies for local target-group driven poverty alleviation

Our goal is to analyse the real opportunities of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. We believe the concept of capabilities seems most appropriate for this undertaking. However, the Capabilities Approach (CA) of Amartya Sen revolves around the individual. This chapter addresses the issue whether Sen sufficiently addresses the collective dimension of capabilities or whether and how the approach should be adapted to this level of analysis. We argue that the capabilities concept needs modification to account for the collective dimension in analysing real opportunities of organisations and we delineate some issues regarding this elaboration. Based on this theoretical investigation we constructed a new model for analysis, outlined in section four. We consider this model of collective capabilities particularly appropriate for analysing the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction.

5.2 The search for an adequate concept

Against the background of transforming welfare systems and towering poverty rates among ethno-cultural minorities, we look at the real opportunities of migrant organisations. The aim of this study is to discover what organisations are really able to do in this changing and challenging context (Scaramuzzino, 2012; Sen, 1982; Sen 1987; Sen, 1993, 2002; Vermeersch et al., 2012). The localisation of welfare and increased diversity call for attuned theoretical frames for the analysis of migrant organisations in today's superdiverse societies (Chapter 4). Significant inconsistencies appear between organisations' internal capacities and objectives and the role that is ascribed to them, or the given support (Heyse, 2008; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeersch et al., 2012). Migrant organisations often lack certain capacities compared to other organisations and services. For instance, these opportunities appear to diverge in forming and maintaining networks (Chapter 3). These opportunities appear vital to the analysis, because if it is expected of certain actors to play a particular role, they ought to be able to fulfil this role (Doyal and Gough, 1991). Therefore, the theoretical concept with which we seek to analyse the role and opportunities of migrant organisations must be duly and normatively substantiated. Indeed, if social sciences necessitate normative principles to clarify concepts like poverty or well-being (Crocker, 1992), then we require a normative validation of our concept to analyse the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. Obviously, there are other criteria this concept should meet.

A theoretical concept that is to explain the real opportunities of organisations whether or not to play a specific role, must primarily be applicable to the analysis of collectivities, notably organisations with various levels of formalisation. Furthermore, it ought to be able to clarify the opportunities of organisations, i.e. not only the typical properties of collectivities as such and their internal relations and/or external links. It also needs to be able to explain why migrant organisations do or do not play specific roles and whether they are able to do so. This refers inter alia to apprehending the limitations

and incentives to specific roles. When we wish to investigate a possible role in poverty reduction, the concept must as well be consonant with our structuralist, multidimensional view on poverty (Tiwari, 2014: 33-36), in line of Townsend (1979: 31), where one is poor when lacking the resources to be able to participate in the generally accepted modes of existence in society.

Following some applications of the CA, we presume this theoretical framework is suitable to answer our research questions. It may help us clarify the mandate, the actual role and the expectations and requirements of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. Compared to other concepts, capabilities account for political and social contexts and suit our structuralist and multidimensional view on poverty. Moreover, the strength of the approach is its normative underpinning (Bonvin and Dahmen, 2012; Nussbaum, 2012; Sayer, 2009), and most of all, capabilities inherently refer to the real opportunities of the element of analysis. Before discussing the issue of collectivities in the CA, we review its foundations in the next section.

5.2.1 Capabilities as deus ex machina?

The capabilities approach of economist Amartya Sen is progressively gaining more ground and praise for its strong philosophical foundations and its wide applicability (Robeyns, 2000; 2005; Volkert and Schneider, 2011). The approach crosses disciplinary boundaries and is embraced by many philosophers, development theorists, anthropologists and sociologists. However, introducing this theory in sociology does not run undisputed, as its moral foundation is after all individualistic. For Sen, the individual is *"ultimately what matters"*, the individual as means and end (Deneulin, 2008; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1987; Sen, 1993, 2002). Thence, we will debate the arguments for expanding the focus of the CA to the collective level in this chapter, after explaining its keynotes.

The CA is a *"broad normative framework for the evaluation of individual well-being and social arrangements and for the design of policies to bring about social change in society"* (Robeyns, 2010: 237). It is not a theory explaining poverty or social arrangements, but rather an analytical tool or frame with which we may conceptualise and evaluate these issues (Robeyns, 2010). Sen created the CA in response to conceptions of development and well-being in terms of primary goods, utilitarian or absolute and relative welfare. For Sen, these conceptions fail to reflect the quality of a person's life. He evaluates well-being rather in terms of freedom, more specifically the real freedom and opportunities people have to choose the life they have reason to value. Poverty measurement or reduction is not an issue of looking at what people have, but rather at what they are able to do and to be. For this purpose, Sen developed two related concepts: functionings and capabilities. Functionings are the doings and beings of a person, the different things one realises or achieves. Examples of functionings are being fed, clothed or being able to walk in public without shame. A capability, on the

other hand, is the "*ability to achieve a certain doing or being, called a functioning*" (Sen 1985a in Foster and Handy, 2008: 5) or the "*various functioning bundles an individual has the freedom to choose from to achieve the life that he/she has reason to value*" (Sen, 1985: 18, 1992: 40-45). Capabilities are derived from functionings. Where a functioning is a specific being or doing, a capability is the opportunity to realise this functioning. As such, functionings directly relate to one's life conditions. However, focussing on functionings does not consider freedom of choice. For example, someone who fasts out of religious beliefs but has food available has more capability than one who does not eat because of a lack of food (Robeyns, 2005; Robeyns, 2010; Sen, 1987; Sen, 1993, 2002). This implies a specific direction. Goods and services have particular characteristics, which are the inputs to capabilities. Social, environmental and personal conversion factors affect how a person can convert goods and services into capabilities, and capabilities into functionings. These contextual factors are therefore essential in the approach. The capability set represents different bundles of functionings from which one may choose, according to personal preferences and social influences (Robeyns, 2005). The evaluation criterion becomes what people are genuinely able to be or to do. In practice, the CA is generally applied to evaluate effects of policy and social changes on individuals' functionings and capabilities. Some capabilities need material inputs like financial resources or economic production. Others need political practices, social institutions etcetera. The approach accounts for the links between material, mental, and social well-being, and connects these with economic, social, psychological, political and cultural dimensions, covering the whole spectrum of human well-being (Robeyns, 2005; Robeyns, 2010).

According to Sen, well-being should thus always be evaluated at the individual level. Nevertheless, Sen does not apply methodological individualism, since he accounts for social arrangements and the influence of institutions on individual freedoms (Sen, 1999). Even in his operationalisation Sen has an eye for collectivities as he also applies the CA in an evaluation or comparison of the average well-being levels of different collectivities, such as groups or even countries. However, it appears that for Sen, a collectivity is merely the sum of individuals participating in it. As such the approach seems inapplicable in our context of analysing the role and opportunities of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. Nevertheless, some CA applications are actually highly relevant for this kind of analysis. A number of scholars stress the role of collectivities in forming or maintaining capabilities and explore the possibility of including a more collective focus and concepts into the CA (Ballet et al., 2007; Evans, 2002; Ibrahim, 2006; Lessmann, 2009; Soubhi et al., 2009). Gradually a theory of collective capabilities is growing. At the collective level of a community or organisation, collective capabilities may be a solution in thinking about the role of associations in poverty alleviation in migrant communities. A collective capability "*is the capability of a group or institution. It results from the combination of the individual capabilities of*

the agents in this group, or members of these institutions, and social capabilities that are the result of the interaction between different agents or members. The corresponding aggregative process is complex to analyse, since the collective capability can be superior or inferior to the combination of individual and social capabilities depending upon the state of the interactions between agents" (Dubois et al., 2008: 260, own translation). A varying degree of collective capabilities may explain a different readiness or willingness of organisations, for example between various migrant communities or organisation types to play a role in poverty reduction. This perspective brings into account what organisations are capable of, what is expected of them and to which they are prepared. They may indeed have the freedom of choice whether or not to undertake this task.

Since it meets our conceptual criteria, we consider the CA highly relevant in our research context. For instance, its firm normative underpinning refers to the focus on real opportunities of the elements of analysis. Furthermore, it strongly pleads for integrating theory and empiricism, while sufficiently accounting for a coherent philosophical groundwork (Robeyns, 2010). In the form of collective capabilities the approach can serve as a tool to analyse the real opportunities of organisations. Moreover, it accounts for the political, social and other environmental contexts in the factors that influence the conversion of goods and services into capabilities. Additionally, it takes the role of external actors and their expectations into account, as they affect the freedom of individuals – or in our case organisations. Another reason for adopting the CA is that while many sociological studies describe or analyse well-being empirically with a multi-dimensional framework, the CA offers a firm theoretical foundation of this multidimensional analysis. The perspective thus suits our multidimensional and structural view on poverty (reduction). Finally, it may clarify the impact of collective action on individuals and (elements of) society as well as the factors contributing thereto.

The remaining question is to clarify whether the CA of Amartya Sen is adequate for our purpose. Is the approach able to deal sufficiently with the organisational level in addressing poverty with specific groups? Does Sen adequately treat the collective dimension of capabilities or should we adapt the approach to this level of analysis, and if that is the case, how should we adjust it? Are we able to reconstruct the process of building and widening these collective capabilities by migrant organisations as a specific form of collective action, influencing what their individual members are capable of and thus their opportunities to deal with their poverty situations? Is it possible to map out this influence? In the following section we review this potential elaboration, referring to the individual-collective debate within the CA.

5.3 The sociological key question: individual or collectivity?

Comparable to the never-ending sociological debate of agency and structure, the CA literature reveals a compelling discussion about in the introduction of collectivities. Some authors defend the current CA (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2003; Robeyns, 2005; Sen, 1993, 2002) whereas others believe it is possible, but not necessary, to extend the CA to the collective level (e.g. Dumbi and Lallau 2008; Panet; 2008). Still others say that identifying, analysing and measuring this collective level is essential (El Harizi, 2008; Ibrahim, 2008; Ballet et al., 2007; Dubois et al., 2008; De Herdt and Abega, 2008; Kabeer, 2008) and thus prefer collective (or community) capabilities. Here we discuss the main arguments within this individual-collective discussion.

5.3.1 The individualist Capabilities Approach?

Originally concepts like community or collective capabilities were seen as challenges to the CA's individual focus. Reluctant towards this expansion, Sen argues that the CA positively heeds social influences with concepts like social opportunities, social structures, sympathy and commitment (Panet and Duray-Soundron, 2008).

In Sen's *'social opportunities'* the word *'social'* indicates that individuals and their opportunities are not isolated. A person's options depend on his relationships with others and on what the state and other institutions do. In the CA social structures are thus instrumentally very important, being the means by which capabilities can improve (Ibrahim, 2008). Sympathy and commitment are strongly linked with the idea of collective agency. Agency refers to "*what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as valued*" (Sen, 1985). Collective agency represents the ability of a collectivity to set its own goals and act upon them. Collective action is the action itself taken by this collectivity *"in pursuit of members' perceived shared interests"* (Scott, 2014: 92). With sympathy, the situation of others influences individual well-being. It refers to the concern towards others that directly affects their own well-being, containing elements of self-interest. Commitment regards a concern for others, even when self-interest is not threatened. Both are forms of agency promoting social and personal well-being (Deneulin, 2004 in Ibrahim, 2008). Ibrahim believes Sen's position is not too individualistic because these concepts do not merely indicate that an individual acts out of self-interest. Actions may also be determined by broader values. An individual can act to promote values, even if they do not necessarily improve his own well-being (Ibrahim, 2008). Furthermore, freedom and agency are "*inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available to us*" (Sen 1999: xii; Deneulin, 2008). Some of Sen's examples of *'basic human capabilities'* are also social capabilities, such as participating in a community or being able to appear in public without shame. According to Sen, though, evaluations should always

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be done in terms of the contribution to and improvement of fundamental individual freedoms (Sen, 1999; Deneulin, 2008). The individual is both an end and a means of social development. It is central in the CA, but inseparable from social contexts. Sen therefore mentions socially dependent individual capabilities (Sen, 2000; Deneulin, 2008). Individual freedoms and their outcomes depend on existing institutions and their functioning. They determine the conditions within which individuals can exercise and realise their capabilities: the social opportunities structures. Institutions therefore play a part, but one must primarily look at the way in which they affect the individual capabilities (Sen, 1999; Deneulin, 2008). For Sen, collective capabilities exist rather at the level of all mankind. All other capabilities as a result of collective action are socially dependent capabilities (Sen, 2002; Ibrahim, 2008).

Robeyns (2002) follows Sen's reasoning. She defends the recognition of social influences within the CA against the criticism of its supposed individualism. Like Udehn (2002), she blames critics for entangling different kinds of individualism. Robeyns discerns three main types of individualism: ethical, ontological and methodological. Ethical individualism indicates a common denominator of the liberal philosophy in which the individual ultimately matters morally. It "*makes a claim on who or what should count in evaluative exercises and decisions*" (Robeyns, 2000)*.* Within ethical individualism it is still possible to value and study social structures and social characteristics, but only insofar as they contribute to the well-being of an individual. In evaluating social structures and institutions, the focus thus lies on their effect on individuals (Robeyns, 2008). In methodological individualism, common among economists – except for Sen, one can explain everything with reference to individuals and their characteristics. Udehn (2002) renders a typology of various kinds of methodological individualism derived from different theorists throughout history[38]. Since Sen speaks of a "*quintessentially social creature*" and socially dependent individual capabilities (Sen, 2000 in Deneulin, 2008), it is incorrect to ascribe him natural individualism because these theorists assume an asocial individual. Yet to our understanding, Sen does not endorse social individualism either, since he clearly acknowledges the impact of institutions on individuals, rather than merely the individual attaching meaning to

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[38] In order of descending individualism, he first recognises the theory of the social contract. This departs from the natural asocial individual, "*living without social institutions in a state of nature*". Next comes the theory of general equilibrium that starts with the isolated individual *"without social relations, interacting on the market in the absence of social institutions and technology"*. The Austrian methodological individualism also began with the isolated individual, but later considered individuals rather as *"social or cultural beings who attach subjective meaning to their own actions and to human artifacts".* So far, Udehn classifies these variations as strong individualism. Then come the weak variants of individualism. Popperian methodological individualism recognises the existence of social institutions *"in the antecedent of social scientific explanations, or as exogenous variables in social scientific models"*. Coleman's methodological individualism acknowledges *"social wholes in the form of structures of interrelated positions, which exist independently of the particular individuals who happen to occupy these positions"* (Udehn, 2002). He reclassifies these different types into natural individualism (regarding the theory of the social contract and that of general equilibrium); social individualism (instead of Austrian methodological individualism); institutional individualism for the Popperian variant and structural individualism in the case of Coleman (Udehn, 2002).

institutions. And because Sen perceives individuals as means and end in themselves, we believe his view also does not suit the structural individualism of Coleman. For ontological individualists only individuals and their properties exist. Society is here no more than the sum of its individuals and their characteristics (Robeyns, 2008). Most sociologists reject this assumption, in line of system theory or holism of inter alia Durkheim who argued that social facts can be studied and explained independently of the individual (Fournier, 2013; Goddijn, 1969). Holism generally indicates "*the theoretical principle that each social entity (group, institution, society) has a totality that is distinct, and cannot be understood by studying merely its individual component elements*" (Scott, 2014: 341). Yet, neither Sen nor Robeyns subscribes to this ontological individualism. The CA theoretically acknowledges social relations and the "*constraints and opportunities of societal structures and institutions on individuals*" (Robeyns, 2005) and it recognises the impact of social and environmental factors on the different types of conversions of commodities into functionings (Robeyns, 2010). This indicates that groups, institutions and organisations influence the way and extent people can convert their available resources and social conditions into functionings. Alongside environmental and personal factors, a social type of conversion factors also influences the conversion of goods and services into capabilities and functionings. These social factors are defined by all kinds of societal elements, like social institutions, social norms, traditions and behaviour of others in society (Robeyns, 2010). The CA further acknowledges this by differentiating between functionings and capabilities, since selecting functionings out of one's capability set implies actively choosing and it is exactly this choosing that influences societal structures. Moreover, Sen also analysed a number of collective processes, for example in households (Sen, 1990). Therefore the CA does not endorse ontological nor methodological individualism (Robeyns, 2005).

We are inclined to subscribe to Robeyns' analysis that the CA is about ethical individualism and that any capabilities-researcher can choose his or her methodological focus or level of analysis according to the subject and goal of the research question. Therefore it is not a question of letting go of methodological individualism, since it was only an option, yet never a precept. Robeyns proclaims, based on differentiating between various kinds of individualism, that the CA's ethical individualism is compatible with the recognition of social influences in the formation of capabilities and the choice of functionings. Groups and social structures thus fit the CA, although they are barely addressed in the capabilities literature (Robeyns, 2008 in Foster and Handy, 2008). Ibrahim considers the finding that Sen's CA is not too individualistic crucial for analysing self-organisations. Individuals create these initiatives to improve their own well-being and that of others in the community (Ibrahim, 2008).

5.3.2 Advocating the collectivity

One could conclude like Sen and Robeyns that the CA sufficiently addresses social factors and collectivities and needs no elaboration. Yet various authors claim that the influence of social factors on the conversion of individual capabilities fails to explain many processes in collective action. Specifically the role of groups and organisations themselves are too scarcely described in the capabilities literature. Therefore it is necessary to expand the focus and terminology to the collective level. Many sociological authors bind individuals strongly to the collective. As such, individuals are rational, socially embedded actors. Collective agency is a result of and catalyst for collective action. Following Evans (2002) we can assert that poverty alleviation through capability expansion requires collective action because of the shared values, as well as preferences and instruments in order to pursue them. Ibrahim (2008) concludes that collective action is both instrumentally and intrinsically valuable to human freedoms, in this context thus also to capability expansion and poverty alleviation. Collective action implies the formation of groups; since we are particularly interested in the real opportunities of organisations themselves, we distance ourselves from ethical individualism. Even Sen (2002: 85) seems to shift towards this collective interpretation rather than ethical individualism (Deneulin, 2008). Reacting to criticism of inter alia Evans (2002), Sen says:

> *"The intrinsic satisfactions that occur in a life must occur in an individual's life, but in terms of causal connections, they depend on social interactions with others. The socially dependent individual capabilities have to be distinguished from what are genuinely 'collective capabilities', such as the capability of a world nuclear power to kill the entire population of the world through nuclear bombing [...]. Similarly, the capability of Hutu activists to decimate the Tutsis is a collective capability in the genuinely integrated sense, since the ability to do this is not a part of any individual Hutu's life. There could also be more positive – more admirable – collective capabilities, such as the capability of humanity as a whole [...] to cut child mortality drastically"* (Sen, 2002: 85).

Deneulin infers that according to Sen, there "*do indeed exist capabilities that belong to collectivities that can only with difficulty be reduced to individual capabilities*" (Deneulin, 2008). Most authors on capabilities and collectivities, however, continue to maintain either ethical, ontological or methodological individualism. Yet, because an organisation transcends the sum of its parts, it becomes an agent in its own right and with its own mind (List and Pettit 2011 in Volkert, 2013). This indicates that a collectivity may build capabilities of its own, different from the human capabilities of its members. Collective capabilities are no socially dependent individual capabilities, this difference is

crucial. For capabilities and freedoms to be sustainable and evenly distributed among groups, these collective acts of agency should be institutionalised. Indeed, due to their unstable organisms, human beings ought to create a stable environment. All human activity implies habitualisation, i.e. frequently repeated actions forming a reproducible and comprehensible pattern. This habitualisation relieves people from choices and allows for innovation and deliberation because of possible anticipation. It generates an institutionalisation process. After all, institutions[39] arise whenever there is a *"reciprocal typification of habitualised actions by types of actors"* (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, 1991). These typifications are institutions, implying reciprocity of institutional typifications and the typicality of actions and actors in those institutions. The typifications of habitualised actions that constitute institutions "*are always available to all members of the particular social group*" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, 1991). Institutions typify individual actors and actions. These patterns of conduct bring forth specific roles people play towards each other, which they internalise and appropriate (and potentially choose or classify by importance according to personal experiences, preferences and capacities). As such, values and norms are created and the individual can no longer withdraw from this institution and its norms without effect. Because they are internalised, they will belong to the individual. This notion does not necessarily conflict with Sen's basic assumptions. If Sen sees the individual as a '*quintessentially social creature'* (Sen, 2000), then the life people have reason to value can be socially affected, yet not exclusively determined socially. This does not make an individual an entirely social product, but implies that a person's freedom of choice, based on reasoning, is also socially influenced. The primary social control lies in the existence of the institution itself. The predictability of each other's actions makes interaction foreseeable. Institutions thus relieve tension and save people time and effort. All institutions appear "*as given, unalterable and self-evident*". "*Institutions as historical and objective facticities confront the individual as undeniable facts.*" They are "*there, external to him, persistent in their reality, whether he likes it or not*" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, 1991). This indicates that a collectivity as an entity develops inter alia its own values and norms. This institutionalisation process of the collectivity implies that the individual can no longer subtract him- or herself (without effect) from the institution arisen. Applied to our context, this relates to the concept of '*institutional completeness'*, the extent to which migrant groups are able to organise activities (Breton, 1964; Fennema, 2004). Informal groups of migrants become actual organisations with their own vision, goals

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[39] Institutions are *"the framework within which human interaction takes place. They consist of written rules as well as typically unwritten codes of conduct that underlie and supplement formal rules"* (North, 1990: 4 in Ibrahim, 2006). For Spencer and Parsons, a social institution "*consists of all the structural components of a society through which the main concerns and activities are organised, and social needs (such as those for order, belief, and reproduction) are met*" (in Scott, 2014: 357). However, the current concept of institution is more fluid, *"seeing kinship or religion, for instance, as comprising changing patterns of behaviour based on relatively more stable value systems"* (Scott, 2014: 357).

and methods, habits, values and norms from which the individual stakeholders can no longer simply retreat. If institutions generate values, they determine the values and opportunities of individuals. Institutions are thus crucial for the expansion of capabilities because their type and functions affect the individually available opportunities and freedoms (Sen, 1999: 142; Ibrahim, 2006). A relevant form of institutions for the development of collective capabilities concerns self-organisations. For Ibrahim, self-organisations are a way to build collective capabilities that promote sustainable poverty reduction. In this research, we prefer to apply a broader category of migrant organisations because we wish to avoid the exclusion of associations that are strictly speaking not a type of self-organisation (Ibrahim, 2007; Narayan, 2000). The institutionalisation process of these migrant organisations can be observed in its degree of formalisation. Many groups start off as an informal group, gradually developing as an informal organisation, often with a group of core stakeholders and a particular range of activities. Some of these groups apply for the Articles of Association and become an accredited association, with or without public funding. Still, many remain informal organisations. In all cases the group or organisation becomes more than the sum of the individuals, it has its own entity and capabilities. "*Group capabilities exist or perish with the group*" (Foster and Handy, 2008). If the CA wants to make statements on development outcomes, it must also include the collective processes responsible for those outcomes (e.g. specific power structures of a country, social standards, national identity, political and democratic history). Therefore one ought to identify the collective capabilities since they are characteristics of a collectivity instead of individual features. Furthermore, these collective capabilities provide the conditions for individual life to flourish (Deneulin, 2008). For these reasons, we believe the CA needs to be expanded theoretically.

5.3.2.1 Collective capabilities

We discussed how the CA addresses social and collective issues. Since we noticed, however, that the CA inadequately accounts for the role of groups and organisations themselves, we advocate an adjustment of the CA in order to capture more appropriately the collective dimension of capability expansion, inter alia in poverty alleviation. The concept of collective capabilities is highly appropriate in this context.

Evans (2002), Ibrahim (2006), Stewart and Deneulin (2002) among others, argue for extending the CA vocabulary with group or collective capabilities (Alkire, 2008). Deneulin maintains a strong variant of this criticism. According to her the current CA even distracts attention from the importance of social structures (Alkire, 2008). Deneulin and Stewart (2002) emphasise the intrinsic value of social structures that barely seems to be touched in the capabilities literature (Ibrahim, 2006; Foster and Handy, 2008: 13). They believe that using the CA without this expansion risks ignoring social influences. Ibrahim goes

even further, advocating a shift in the focus of the analysis to the collectivity (Ibrahim, 2006; Foster and Handy, 2008: 13). If it is the individual that acts, then the exercise of freedom is dependent on a group of people. This has indeed an impact on others and therefore plays a fundamental role in determining the degree of individual freedom. Consequently, we ought to look at the capabilities of individuals and of a collectivity/group since this interplay of individuals (that is contingent and situated) is a vehicle of certain achievements, i.e. the realised functionings (Ibrahim, 2008 in Panet and Duray-Soundron, 2008).

According to Davis, Sen could agree implicitly with a notion of individually dependent collective capabilities because he acknowledges the importance of groups for people. These capabilities would then "*refer to the capabilities that (not fully integrated) social groups have as a consequence of individuals making commitments to them*" (Davis, 2013: 10). With Granovetter's theory Davis reconciles Evans and Sen, showing that individuals and social structures are "*mutually influencing*" (Davis, 2013). Davis believes that if we talk about (not fully integrated, thus accounting for internal diversity) social groups, it is correct to speak of collective capabilities of social groups (Davis, 2013). Social group collective capabilities have a dual relation with individual capabilities, says Davis. They "*result from the commitments people make to social groups (are 'individually dependent'), and in turn impact people's individual capabilities (which are 'socially dependent')*" (Davis, 2013: 10). This interpretation of collective capabilities might be complementary to the definition of Dubois, since there collective capabilities are a result of, yet not equal to, the combination of individual and social capabilities of people involved (Dubois, 2008). However, Davis assigns these collective capabilities no status apart from this dual relation, in contrast to Evans (2002), who emphases a clear individual capabilities vs. collective capabilities dichotomy[40] (Davis, 2013).

In our view, it is thus justified to expand the focus of analysis to include collective capabilities. Different definitions of collective capabilities exist. Since we wish to explore how migrant organisations are able to work on poverty reduction through building collective capabilities, we use the definition of Dubois to identify the capabilities of organisations (supra). This definition implies that we need to analyse both the capabilities of individual members of the organisations and the social capabilities they build as a result of participation in an organisation, but above all it implies that both are insufficient in themselves to indicate the actual capabilities of an organisation. The latter can indeed transcend this combination. The resulting capabilities are properties of the group or organisation, not of its members (Dubois et al., 2008: 260). Because groups transcend the sum of their parts (List and Pettit 2011: 75-78 in Volkert, 2013), we also ought to consider the process through which an organisation builds its own collective

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[40] Still, as we will describe in our own model (infra), and again referring to the definition of Dubois (2008), we believe collective capabilities are always in relation to individual and social capabilities (of individuals).

capabilities, in this specific context a migrant organisation. This process clearly transcends a mere summation of individual and social capabilities.

We define individual capabilities based on the theoretical framework of the CA of Amartya Sen (supra) (Sen, 1985: 18, 1992: 40-45). For social capabilities we refer in this context to Ibrahim's definition. Although she applies the term collective capabilities, her colleagues (Dubois et al., 2008: 69) indicate that Ibrahim rather describes social capabilities in her definition, namely: "*as the newly generated capabilities attained by virtue of their engagement in a collective action or their membership in a social network that helps them achieve the lives they value. They are not simply the sum (or average) of individual capabilities, but rather new capabilities that the individual alone would neither have nor be able to achieve, if he/she did not join a collectivity*" (Ibrahim, 2006: 404). We thus endorse Sen's idea in the sense that social capabilities are those capabilities created by individuals as a result of their participation in collectivities. Some authors would name them external capabilities to distinguish them more properly from social capabilities, like being able to appear in public without shame. The way we define social capabilities is rather in terms of collective action as a conversion factor for the improvement of individual capabilities, for example learning to speak in public by participating in group meetings. These capabilities are to be attributed only to the collective action.

Despite the fact that Sen, Robeyns and Bonvin believe that the CA needs no expansion of its focus or terms, a number of strong arguments of their opponents stand ground. We discussed how institutionalisation processes are inherent to human nature, and help us understand the bond between the individual and social structures, groups and organisations. Multiple authors justly speak of socially embedded individuals. In addition, we have outlined several instrumental and intrinsic benefits of collectivities (and particularly self-organisations) in poverty alleviation and the improvement of individual and collective capabilities. Hence, we believe that it is justified and even necessary to widen the focus of the valuable CA to the collective level. Although it is already present, this level of analysis still deserves more specific attention. Most authors on capabilities and collectivities remain focussed on methodological, ontological or ethical individualism. However, capabilities are not be reduced to those of the individual, but may also pertain to a collectivity. As such, they can not only be studied from the perspective of characteristics of individuals. Therefore we plead for adopting the collective capabilities concept in analysing the role of migrant organisations in poverty alleviation. In the next section we will outline our model of analysis for this purpose.

5.4 A new model of collective capabilities

We presented the debate between the advocates and opponents of expanding the CA to a greater emphasis on the collective level. We revealed the resulting arguments about the relationship between

social structures and individual capabilities. We also showed how collective action can generate new collective capabilities. To perpetuate this in the long term, among others, Ibrahim (2006) recommends institutionalising these initiatives of collective agency. Because we focus on people with a migration background, we look at the way in which migrant organisations work on poverty reduction through building collective capabilities. In this section we operationalise our theoretical findings and choices into a framework with which we can analyse our main research questions.

Ibrahim (2006, 2008) inspired us to create our own analysis model (Figure 1). However, since we start from the collective capabilities definition of Dubois (2008), we needed to adjust her model extensively. Ibrahim starts from three pillars: economic endowments, individual capabilities and social capital. These pillars affect the opportunities of people to organise themselves collectively. In contrast, we depart from the collective capabilities of migrant organisations themselves. These consist of the result of the combination of the individual and social capabilities of individuals involved in the organisation, reflected in two operationalised dimensions (infra). Furthermore, we are inspired by Kabeer (2008), who reconstructed the process of an organisation in showing how it creates specific capabilities. Consequently, besides certain capacities of an organisation and its ideas, we are also interested in the initiation process of organisations we study and the evolution they experienced since then.

So we return to the core question whether and how migrant organisations combat poverty in migrant communities; and consequently, which role they play in the contemporary welfare state – and what processes these organisations go through to play a particular role in in poverty reduction. More specifically, how can migrant organisations build collective capabilities to empower people with a migration background to deal with their poverty situation and change elements of society by becoming a partner in local welfare systems? As such we connect the meso level to the micro and macro level. These questions imply that we first ought to study the real opportunities of migrant organisations to play any role in poverty reduction, focussing on the meso level, before we can assess their impact on the micro level (their role in empowering people with a migration background and improving their well-being through participation in the organisation) and the macro level (their role in affecting policies through partaking in the local welfare system, contributing to more effective target-group driven poverty reduction policies).

5.4.1 Analysing the process of building collective capabilities in migrant organisations
Following our theoretical discourse, our general assertion holds that by means of building social and other individual capabilities through the participation in migrant organisations, people with a migration background in poverty become able to change (elements of) the social structure of society because, as migrant organisations can strengthen their collective capabilities to effectively work on

poverty reduction, they become genuine partners in local welfare systems. Here we will explain this process.

When we wish to identify the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction, we need to reconstruct comprehensively the process of how migrant organisations build collective capabilities and how these capabilities in turn empower them to participate in local welfare systems and enable them to play a specific role in poverty reduction affecting the micro and macro level. This implies that we first investigate the collective capabilities of migrant organisations. As we explained when discussing the capabilities of organisations, collective action is not only a conversion factor of individual capabilities, but also of collective capabilities at the individual and the collective level. Through collective action, individuals build up particular individual and social capabilities they are not able to create on their own. These capabilities generate in turn collective capabilities of the organisation itself. For instance, by acting collectively, people learn how to cooperate and solve a problem, expand their social network or learn how to speak out in a group and thus improve their self-esteem or communicating capacities. These new capabilities in turn lead to the organisation featuring strong individuals improving the cooperation between its board, staff or members, what may eventually bring forth a more efficient use of financial means or a more elaborate provision of activities or services.

When operationalising the chosen definition of collective capabilities in our particular research context at the meso level, collective capabilities of organisations refer to their freedom to choose and pursue the role they see fit for themselves and the activities they wish to provide for their members. For organisations to be able to choose the role and activities they see fit for themselves, it implies that these organisations not only need to possess the agency and freedom to make these choices. It also suggests they need to have certain characteristics and capacities that enable them to play the role they choose. Collective capabilities therefore consist of two dimensions: freedom of choice and agency on the one hand, and organisational capacities and characteristics on the other. For the empirical analysis we are partly inspired by Ibrahim (2006), research on the expectations towards ethno-cultural federations (Vermeersch et al., 2012) and exploratory discussions in the migrant civil society. We study the freedom of choice and agency of organisations by looking at conversion factors like the financial opportunities of the organisations under review (Does their funding for example depend on specific expectations relating to activities or other criteria?); their institutional and legal opportunities and support (or restrictions) from authorities and other institutions (What can they do? What is expected of them? Do they encounter impediments or rather support? What is the influence of the decree under which they operate?); the availability of external actors; etcetera. An organisation does not operate in a vacuum. Its freedom and agency depends on other actors in its environment and network. The legal and institutional rules and structures under which it operates tend to determine this freedom to a

great extent. Not only do these rules and structures directly define the criteria for the existence of an organisation, what activities or services the organisation is allowed to provide, as well as the manner in which it is allowed to do so. Institutions and other organisations, inter alia authorities, may also support or impede an organisation in many other ways. Financial support (or assistance in applying for it), but also judicial or practical assistance on how to deal with certain issues, depend on the disposition of these institutions and regulations. It is therefore vital to investigate the expectations of internal and external actors an organisation encounters, as well as the criteria for certain support.

Figure 1 Analysis model for collective capabilities with micro, meso and macro level
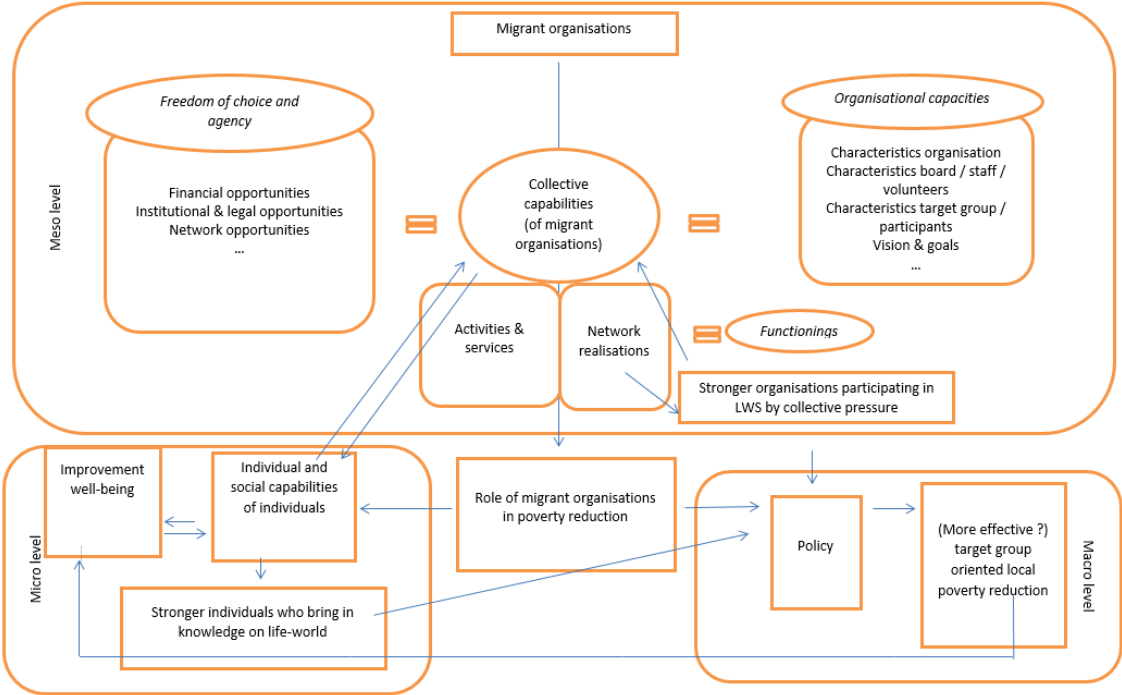
The freedom and agency of an organisation are not the only determinants of the capabilities of an organisation that affect the role it may play. That is also why we ought to examine the dimension of organisational capacities and characteristics. These capacities are determined by conversion factors like an organisation's basic features (for instance, its current financial assets, its age or size) and the background characteristics of people involved in it. Regarding size, for example, smaller organisations are more flexible than larger ones. Yet a larger organisation often has more means, power or experience to deal with certain issues or to provide specific activities or services. It is thus often less dependent on external actors for survival or effectiveness. However, according to Olson (1965, 1973) large groups face higher costs when trying to act in the common interest. Moreover, individuals in larger groups tend to gain less from this collective action for the common interest. This stimulates them less to make an effort in this collective action. Larger organisations are therefore not as able as smaller ones to act in their common interest (Olson, 1965, 1973). Besides size, the age of an

organisation can play a similar significant role, often determining experience or flexibility of an organisation. Also, comparable to a life plan of an individual, most organisations compose a mission statement with initiation. This mission contains the main goal of the organisation and methods with which they anticipate reaching it. This mission thus also indicates the activities they organise or the services they provide. An organisation typically focuses on a limited number of activities, often related to one another. Therefore, we may classify these organisations into a typology according to its main goal and methods (more specifically its main activities). The organisation type, relating to the vision as stipulated in the mission statement and the kind of activities or services it provides, is one of the main intermediating factors affecting an organisation's capacities (Chapter 4). For instance, within a football club or a tea party there is not only fewer experience with poverty, they are also probably not equipped or prone to address such a subject. Moreover, it obviously affects the role an organisation will play in poverty alleviation. Choosing its own goal and activities directly refers to the freedom of an organisation to choose and pursue the role it sees fit for itself, connecting both dimensions of collective capabilities. Furthermore, the degree to which an organisation is institutionalised matters greatly in dealing with a complex issue like poverty. Is an organisation informal or an incorporated association like most NGOs?

Besides the basic characteristics of an organisation, our definition states clearly that individuals involved in an organisation are crucial in determining its collective capabilities. The background indicators of board and staff, volunteers and even members or visitors are key factors in the conversion of individual and social capabilities into collective capabilities. In our particular context, this background relates to the migration experience (e.g. the generation, migration motive or rural versus urban background), religion and gender, but also to the income or education level and the knowledge of civil society actors and public institutions. Furthermore, the role these people play in the organisation, the experience they have, the motive for joining and the length of time they have already been involved with the organisation affect the collective capabilities. Finally, the power relations between different people in the organisation and the potential changes there have been in the board or staff, volunteers or target group are core intermediating factors as well. They all affect the organisational capacities and thus the collective capabilities of an organisation.

Both these categories of freedom of choice and agency and organisational characteristics and capacities thus make up the collective capabilities pertaining to these organisations. We know from our theoretical framework that people or collectivities select a number of functionings from their available capability set. Hence, the capabilities influence the actual current functionings of these migrant organisations. More specifically, they determine which activities and services these organisations provide and they affect the network of people and institutions orgabisations can invoke.

Particularly regarding the network, collective capabilities render migrant organisations into stronger organisations that can participate in the local welfare system by collectively pressuring actors like local authorities or other powerful institutions to influence the policies regarding their target group and poverty alleviation. This links directly to the policy (participation) at the macro level.

We also arrive at this macro level through the selected functionings out of the capability set, in other words, the activities and services these organisations provide. They directly determine the role migrant organisations choose to play in poverty reduction. For example, this may imply that when these organisations have sufficient financial and structural means and can call upon adequate knowledge of service provision and of their target group, the society and the social structure thereof, they may decide to provide particular social services for people with a migration background in poverty. In playing a specific role, these organisations exercise influence on local policy through becoming an actor in the local welfare system. As such they may possibly lead to a more effective target driven local poverty reduction (strategy).

On the other hand, the role these migrant organisations choose to play due to their selected functionings from their collective capability set influences the individuals at the micro level. Participating in these organisations, individuals build up specific individual and social capabilities. While these capabilities form part of the collective capabilities of organisations, they also render these individuals into stronger individuals that, inter alia, bring forward knowledge of their life-world and experiences, thus participating in local policy and poverty reduction. Moreover, whether they are involved as a board or staff member, as a volunteer or as a member, they improve their own well-being by building individual and social capabilities they would otherwise not possess, thereby making them less vulnerable to poverty. Additionally, the expansion of individual and social capabilities of the individuals involved in these organisations in turn contribute to the development of collective capabilities of the organisations themselves, thus closing the virtuous circle of capability expansion of both individuals and organisations.

5.5 Discussion

We discussed the poverty rates among migrant communities and the changing political and social contexts pressuring migrant organisations increasingly to engage in poverty reduction. We wondered whether and how migrant organisations combat poverty in migrant communities; and consequently, which role they play in the contemporary welfare state, particularly in poverty reduction. To find an answer to these questions, we endeavoured to identify an adequate theoretical approach. This attempt raised a number of questions, in particular, whether the approach is able to deal sufficiently with the organisational level in addressing poverty with specific groups in urban areas. We asked

ourselves whether the CA sufficiently addresses the collective dimension of capabilities or whether and how it should be adjusted.

Although Sen's theory includes different social aspects, we follow Evans, Ibrahim, Davis and many others in their plea for a collective expansion. We believe it is possible to use the term collective capabilities in our specific context for the real freedom of organisations to choose and pursue the role they see fit for themselves and the activities they wish to provide for their target group. This relates to the mission statement of an organisation, for example, possibly comparable to an individual life plan, or the progress or empowerment of a group, community or organisation. An organisation is an entity with a distinct life-plan, not the sum of the life plans of all people involved in the organisation. In a mission statement an organisation voices its objective and the means to realise it. This way we regard collective action to be more than just a conversion factor to enhance individual capabilities, as is often proposed by capability writers, but also of collective capabilities at the collective level. Therefore we assume a direct impact on collective and individual capabilities of collective action. This involves a process through which collective action contributes to the generation of social capabilities of individuals (i.e. collective action as a conversion factor). The formation and widening of these collective capabilities will significantly affect the social capabilities and other individual capabilities of individuals involved in organisations.

After reviewing the theoretical debate and introducing our analysis model, we are able to theoretically reconstruct the process of building and widening collective capabilities by migrant organisations (as a specific form of collective action), influencing what individual members are capable of and thus their opportunities to deal with their poverty situation. It also seems to be possible to map the extent of these influences, though this is yet to be confirmed empirically. Because operationalising the CA is always a daring feat and we introduced a new model, its validity will have to be confirmed by this empirical research, however the first field explorations are promising. The key issue in this chapter is nevertheless resolved. Though the process can be reconstructed with the CA, it needs to be elaborated by our concept of collective capabilities because Sen does not sufficiently account for the collective dimension of capabilities in analysing the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction.

Chapter 6: Challenges and Capabilities of Migrant Organisations as New Partners in Local Welfare Systems: Lessons for Interventions

Sylvie Van Dam

6.1 Migrant organisations in pressuring times

Alarming poverty rates among (especially non-EU28) migrant communities in Belgium (Dierckx et al., 2011; Eurostat, 2015; Van Robaeys et al., 2007) spiked new interest in poverty among migrants (Chapter 1; Dierckx et al., 2013) and relevant actors such as migrant organisations[41]. Traditional actors involved in poverty reduction struggle to deal with a diversifying clientele. In times of superdiversity, austerity measures, rising poverty figures and growing inequality, the organisation of local social policy responds to its new environment. Gradually, local welfare systems[42] emerge (Mingione and Oberti, 2003; Andreotti and Mingione, 2013). The discretionary power of local authorities rises, and actors involved in local social policy and poverty reduction diversify progressively (Andreotti et al., 2012). Cooperation and networking increase between local administrations and traditional civil society organisations (CSOs), but also private businesses, ethno-cultural federations and increasingly local migrant organisations (Kazepov, 2010; Vertovec, 2007). We therefore ought to study the urban social, economic and cultural configurations as they affect the interpretation of social problems and ensuing policies. This suggests the importance of gathering knowledge on the actors and their networks (Chapter 3) involved in these local welfare systems, as well as the activities and services they provide (Chapter 4). However, little is known on the actual role migrant organisations play today. In general, Flemish and international research focuses on the level of ethno-cultural federations when studying migrant communities and their representation (Rosenow and Kortmann, 2010; Vermeersch et al., 2012). Little existing research on local migrant organisations focuses on their role in welfare provision or poverty reduction (Beaumont, 2008; Dierckx et al., 2009; Spencer and Cooper, 2006). Internationally the emphasis often lies on transnationalism and political participation (Dumont, 2008; Portes et al., 2008; Portes and Zhou, 2012), identity (Alsayyad et al., 2002 in Spencer and Cooper, 2006), belonging

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[41] A migrant organisation can broadly be defined as a *"group in support of immigrants' social, cultural, or political interests"* (Huddleston and Tjaden, 2012). Most often these organisations are defined on the basis of the background of the founders or members of the board, also called self-organisations or self-initiatives (organisations established by immigrants).

[42] Local welfare systems are *"dynamic processes in which the specific local social and cultural contexts give rise both to diversified mixes of actors underlying the strategies for implementing social policies and to diverse profiles of needy or assisted populations"* (Mingione and Oberti, 2003: 3; Andreotti and Mingione, 2013).

and agency (Bailey, 2012), social capital (Bunn and Wood, 2012; Morales and Ramiro, 2011) and empowerment (Neal, 2014). A recent study in Flanders addresses issues regarding the general role of migrant organisations with a focus on social capital, identity and representation (Anciaux, 2014). Internationally, Scaramuzzino (2012) has compared the role of migrant organisations in welfare provision in Sweden and Italy using the concepts of political opportunity structures and resource mobilisation for explaining migrant organisations' diverging roles. Because of the illustrated contexts, we will consider the role migrant organisations play in poverty reduction. Moreover, the question remains whether they are able and willing to play such an externally allocated role. Empirical research indicates migrant organisations often provide assistance to their target group, outside their mandate or mission statements (Dierckx et al., 2013; Kanmaz, 2007; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeersch et al., 2012). They are confronted with aid requests from a diverse target group, unaddressed by other aid organisations or public services. This situation not only prompts questions on the responsibility of actors involved in social policy and poverty reduction, but on its justification, too. Against the background of superdiversity, rising poverty among migrant communities and emerging local welfare systems, we argue it is vital to explore the real opportunities of migrant organisations in playing a (if any) role in poverty reduction. For this purpose, we adopt the concept of collective capabilities of migrant organisations because of the broader interpretation of the complex multi(f)actor mechanisms concerned today, as well as the opportunities the framework provides for interventions (Chapter 5).

This chapter will first outline our conceptual framework of collective capabilities, before discussing the methodology. By means of the empirical findings of in-depth interviews conducted with representatives from different types of migrant organisations, two cases of migrant organisations will be compared to reconstruct in detail the process these organisations undergo in building collective capabilities to become stronger organisations and able to participate in local welfare systems and poverty reduction. At the same time, this process enables them to strengthen the individual and social capabilities – and in turn the well-being and societal position – of people with a migration background participating in these organisations. More specifically, the focus is on one rather successful example, i.e. an organisation with strengthened collective capabilities enabled to combat poverty, participating in the local welfare system and widen individuals' capabilities. We compare this illustration with an organisation that encounters many barriers in this process, unable to address poverty or fully participate in the local welfare system. To conclude, we evaluate these results against the background of our theoretical framework and suggest possible interventions as well as questions for further research.

6.2 Collective capabilities of migrant organisations

To assess the real opportunities of migrant organisations we apply the concept of collective capabilities. With this concept we evaluate whether they are able to perform the role they choose. Our framework was inter alia inspired by Ibrahim (2006, 2008), Kabeer (2008) and Amartya Sen, (1982; 1987; 1993, 2002), author of the CA. Ibrahim (2006, 2008, 2014) developed a framework for analysing collective capabilities of '*self-help initiatives*' in poor Egyptian communities. Kabeer (2008) reconstructed the process of creating specific capabilities within organisations. We developed our own collective capabilities framework for the analysis of the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction (Chapter 5). With this framework, we reconstructed the process by which these organisations build and maintain their collective capabilities, thereby participating in local poverty reduction (and from a broader perspective, the local welfare system) and simultaneously contributing to the widening of individual and social capabilities of individuals involved in these organisations (as well as indirectly by participating in local welfare systems). By developing social and other individual capabilities through participation in migrant organisations, migrants in poverty become able to change (elements of) the social structure of society. This can be explained by the fact that as migrant organisations strengthen their collective capabilities to work effectively on poverty reduction, they become genuine partners in local welfare systems. We will explain this process here concisely (for an extended account, see Chapter 5).

In order to interpret and explain the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction, we ought to reconstruct the process of how they build and widen collective capabilities and how these capabilities in turn enable them to actively participate in local welfare systems (and play a particular role in poverty reduction). Though this chapter concentrates on the meso level, this process establishes links with the micro and macro level (Figure 1). Starting with exploring the collective capabilities of migrant organisations (C), a collective capability is "*the capability of a group or institution. It results from the combination of the individual capabilities of the agents in this group, or members of these institutions, and social capabilities that are the result of the interaction between different agents or members. The corresponding aggregative process is complex to analyse, since the collective capability can be superior or inferior to the combination of individual and social capabilities depending upon the state of the interactions between agents*" (Dubois et al., 2008: 260, own translation). Operationalised in our research, collective capabilities of migrant organisations refer to their freedom to choose and pursue the role they see fit for themselves and the activities they wish to provide for their target group. For organisations to be able to choose the role and activities they see fit for themselves, they require the agency and freedom to make these choices, as well as particular capacities that enable them to play

the role they choose. Collective capabilities therefore contain two dimensions: freedom of choice and agency (A) and organisational capacities and features (B).
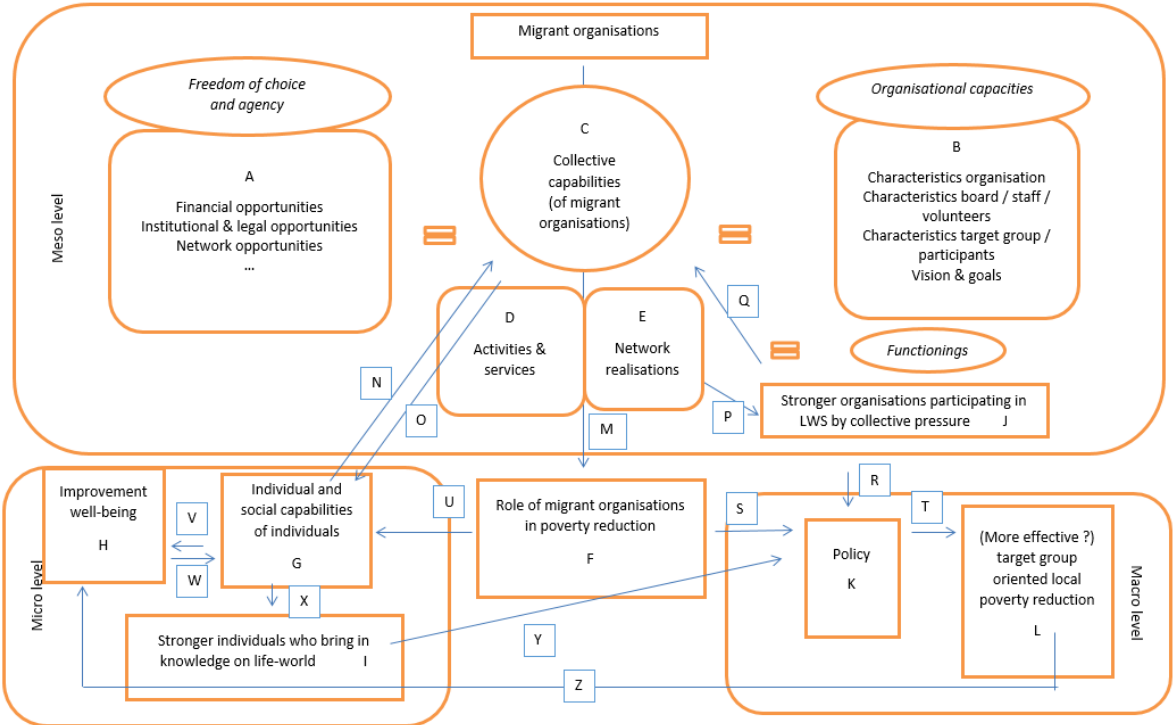
Our empirical analysis is in part substantiated by the work done by Ibrahim (2006), research on expectations towards ethno-cultural federations (Vermeersch et al., 2012) and exploratory discussions in the migrant civil society. We study the freedom of choice and agency of migrant organisations through conversion factors like their institutional and legal opportunities and support received from (or barriers engendered by) authorities and other institutions. An organisation's freedom and agency is determined by internal and external actors. We can therefore discern network opportunities (as part of a migrant organisation's agency, A), referring to the available actors from which migrant organisations are more or less able to choose and with whom they will actually construct networks (network realisations, E). Legal and institutional regulations and structures largely define this freedom. Directly, they determine accreditation criteria and permitted activities or services of the organisation. Indirectly, institutions and other organisations or administrations can support or obstruct an organisation. Public funding (or assistance for applications) – but also judicial or other substantive support – relies on the disposition of these institutions and regulations. An adequate understanding of the formal and informal expectations of internal and external actors towards an organisation are crucial in the study of the real opportunities of migrant organisations.

The second dimension of migrant organisations' collective capabilities refers to what an organisation is (and can do), i.e. its available organisational capacities (B). These capacities are determined by conversion factors such as an organisation's basic features and the background characteristics of people involved in it. These features concern its size, age or current financial assets, as well as its degree of formalisation and organisation type. Comparable to an individual's life plan, most organisations formulate a mission statement, which directly affects migrant organisations' abilities to provide activities or services. An organisation's capacities are also affected by features of individuals involved in it. Background characteristics of board and staff, volunteers and visitors are key factors in the conversion of individual and social capabilities into collective capabilities (cf. definition of collective capabilities). Therefore, we account for the impact of migration experience, religion and gender, the income or education level and the knowledge of existing CSOs and public institutions. Additionally, the function of people in the organisation, their experience, their motivation and available time all affect the organisation's collective capabilities. Simultaneously, these individual features (as part of B) touch upon the individual and social capabilities of people involved in the migrant organisation (G), directly interfering with the collective capabilities of migrant organisations (N-O). Finally, power relations between various stakeholders in the organisation and changes in the board or staff, volunteers or target group are relevant elements for the organisational capacities as well, urging us to consider participation opportunities. They tell us something about who chooses what collective capabilities to realise, and the objectives or the methods of the organisation.

Precisely like people, organisations select a number of functionings from their available capability set. Available collective capabilities thus determine the actual current functionings of these migrant organisations, i.e. their activities and services (D) and the network(s) they can invoke (E). Moreover, through realising networks and participating in them, migrant organisations are enabled by their collective capabilities to participate in the local welfare system through collectively pressuring inter alia local authorities (P-J-R). As such they aim to contribute to more effective target-group oriented poverty alleviation policies (K-T-L). We may also describe the link between the meso and macro level directly through the role migrant organisations play in poverty reduction (F), determined by their realised and chosen activities and services (M). This role may affect policies regarding poverty, especially in the case of intended policy participation or influence through voice (S-K), thus potentially contributing to an improvement of the target group's well-being (L-Z).

On the other hand, the role migrant organisations choose to play (F) affects the social and other individual capabilities of people at the micro level (U). Through participation in migrant organisations, individuals widen particular individual and social capabilities (G-O). These capabilities form part of the collective capabilities of organisations (N), though they also empower individuals, enabling them to

bring forward knowledge of their life-world and experiences (X, I) and thus participate in local policy and poverty reduction (Y). Moreover, by widening individual and social capabilities specifically obtained through participation in a migrant organisation (G), individuals improve their own well-being (V-H). Additionally, strengthened individual and social capabilities of individuals involved in migrant organisations in turn contribute to the development of collective capabilities of the organisations themselves (O), thus closing the virtuous circle of capability expansion of both individuals and organisations.

In what follows, we will put this theoretical framework to the test. We ought to be able to demonstrate empirically that our framework on collective capabilities is in fact able to grasp the collective capabilities of migrant organisations, as well as how these capabilities are widened or restricted and what their effects are on migrant organisations and their role in poverty reduction. The question will be whether we can highlight crucial elements in the analysis that would remain obscured had we applied another conceptual framework.

6.3 Methods

This chapter aims to reconstruct the process of building and widening collective capabilities of migrant organisations to map out their role in poverty reduction. For this purpose, we conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with representatives of migrant organisations in two major cities in Flanders, Belgium. The selection was purposively based on an inventory we constructed of Flemish migrant organisations and a derived typology (Chapter 4). We took into account the variation of organisation types, migrant communities and locations throughout the cities. We focused on the cities of Ghent and Antwerp due to the prominent different migration histories that led to a diverse picture of migrant communities and their organisations today (Chapter 4; Van Puymbroeck et al., 2014). Working iteratively, we arrived at a total of 24 in-depth interviews, of which twelve interviews were conducted with coordinators of migrant organisations in Antwerp and another nine with representatives of migrant organisations in Ghent (Table 1).

Table 1 Interviews per ethno-cultural origin, city and migrant organisation type (Type 1 Socio-cultural, integration and binding; 2 Services and empowerment; 3 Development aid; 4 Federation; Mix Combination of type 1, 2 and 3) (See Chapter 4)

	Antwerp: 12 interviews					Ghent: 9 interviews				
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Mix	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Mix
Latin-America	1									
Maghreb	1	2			1					1
Eastern Europe	2	1		1		1				
Sub-Sahara Africa		2			1	1	1			1
Turkey						3	1			

Interviews were transcribed and analysed with the help of the qualitative analysis software program NVivo. We complemented the resulting findings with perspectives from stakeholders at higher representation levels. We had one interview with the coordinator of a Turkish federation in Ghent. At the regional level we talked to two staff members from the Minority Forum[43]. For further substantiation we talked with stakeholders and experts from the academic world, migrant organisations and their federations and relevant local administrations. This range of sources enabled us to generate an inventory of the migrant civil society (Chapter 4) as well as to reconstruct the process of widening collective capabilities of migrant organisations and its impact on their role in local welfare systems.

6.4 Reconstructing the collective capabilities process

Theoretically, collective capabilities of migrant organisations are shaped by freedom of choice and agency on the one hand and organisational capacities on the other. These capabilities in turn determine the role of migrant organisations in local poverty reduction. In this section, we will begin by highlighting this role. To explain this role of the migrant civil society in poverty reduction in Flanders today, we will subsequently discuss our empirical data on the main conversion factors that converse the resources of organisations and as such determine both dimensions of collective capabilities and the vital links that set off the process of building migrant organisations' collective capabilities (Figure 1). Though several indications of links with the micro and macro level will be discussed, this chapter focuses on the meso level. Subsequently, we will illustrate this collective capabilities process in detail by means of comparing two cases – selected on the basis of our interviews. The first example concerns an organisation that is capable of building collective capabilities to combat poverty among its members, participating in the local welfare system and directly strengthening individuals' capabilities. The second organisation – with more limited collective capabilities – struggles with many barriers in this process, unable to participate as a genuine partner in the local welfare system, and unable to address poverty among its participants.

6.4.1 Migrant organisations in today's local welfare systems

As we will further explain below, the activities and services migrant organisations choose to provide today – indicative of their role in poverty reduction – are based on their history and features or capacities, influenced by the expectations of external and internal actors and other factors with an impact on their freedom of choice and agency. The majority of migrant organisations provide socio-cultural activities, confirming the findings of our inventory (Chapter 4). These include culture

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[43] The Minority Forum represents 19 member organisations (12 accredited ethno-cultural federations, plus umbrella organisations, non-federated organisations and representatives of (other) ethno-cultural minorities) in different provinces (www.minderhedenforum.be/lidorganisaties).

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preservation, religious activities, intercultural encounters and integration, excursions or bonding activities. Activities often serve the twofold purpose of raising money for the migrant organisations themselves or for certain projects or people they wish to support. Indeed, migrant organisations frequently aim to empower their target group indirectly, either through socio-cultural or pedagogical activities, sensitisation or information.

"Many different activities. Debates, for instance, on various subjects, on living together, on drugs, on respect for the elderly, on education. For instance, a few engineers with a nice car come and tell they were poor themselves, they had nothing, but the solution is to study hard, have a diploma. Afterwards it's easier to find work, it's easier because there comes regularity. And then the children start to think, begin to learn more, actively, in school and not only in the mosque association" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

However, most migrant organisations also informally address poverty reduction or service delivery to some extent. Few migrant organisations explicitly work on poverty reduction or empowerment as a means to improve the well-being of people with a migration background. For instance, some organisations had a poverty advocacy group, provided social (administrative) and emergency aid (distributing clothes, food or furniture) or organised activities aiming at strengthening their target group's capabilities (e.g. sensitisation for women or developing talents of youth).

"With us there's a lot of poverty these last years, a lot of poverty. Everyday 2 or 3 people ask us for food, another asks some money for a place to sleep. And then one gives that one 5€, that one 2€, that one 2€, and about 50-60-100. Everyday people come like this. Why? With the crisis.

Interviewer: Do you notice an increase in people calling upon you with these questions?

Yes, these last few months, years, since the crisis, people come also from other countries, from the Netherlands, Spain, Poland, from everywhere. And then you also have the mosque where they have a place, they give people food every day. And for us, in the Ramadan there's food for the members, for everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim, the entire month. And fundraising, to help poor people" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

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"We help people here. People come with statutes, with a bill of the bank, people

come with without shoes, no clothes, they ask money for food, they're poor as well, but

we don't pay" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

"They say their opinion, easily. At first, because they see they are all Moroccan

women, I say it also clearly, they know there's professional confidentiality,

everything that comes in, does not go out. If we meet outside or with a friend, we

will not say 'she's in poverty', we don't say it, confidentiality is really. And then,

because I also have someone without papers, who said: 'It's always stress after

eleven years, I always want to know my rights and obligations and my papers. But

every Wednesday, I long to come to you! Why? I come here and unburden my

heart. Then I feel better'" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp)

"And from that I simply get satisfaction, that's my intention. It's the intention of

the organisation that people flow easier into the system. Sometimes successful,

sometimes not. That's also part of the problem" (African organisation, Ghent)

Numerous other strategies were found in more migrant organisations that do not explicitly focus on poverty. Most migrant organisations' representatives initially claimed they had no relation with poverty reduction. However, probing into the issue, people do recount they often provide services and activities that (they concur) may fall within the concept of poverty reduction.[44] Examples are fundraisings for a member or another project, helping people to find shelter or employment, helping people set up businesses with microcredit funding, making house calls or hospital visits. Unofficially, outside the hours or mandate of the organisation, or rather indirectly with poverty alleviation as outcome rather than initial objective, most migrant organisations (actively) refer people to other services and organisations, and provide emergency aid. Many migrant organisations take the role of mediators upon themselves. They translate, mediate, but especially assist their target group with administration, whether or not at request of these external actors.

"I don't officially, I don't in name of the organisation, but we must also care for,

and I'm known (in the community) and sometimes they come to me and I don't

give advice, but that's not realistic, but I do give addresses of judicial

organisations or of aid organisations. And then they manage on their own.

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[44] This may also relate to a diverging view on poverty. Several stakeholders regard poverty as rather absolute, a lack of food, shelter or income. When not providing any of these, but several other commonly accepted poverty reduction activities, they did not define their activities as poverty alleviating.

Further, I don't know, I hear it's difficult for them" (Eastern European organisation, Antwerp).

"There are grave problems. They (clients) spontaneously start to explain, but I'm not officially their file administrator or social worker. I do that voluntarily. And for who that wants to do that, and for who I don't? If I have time, (I) gladly go along" (Eastern European organisation, Antwerp).

"It is for instance, not so that sports organisations are not confronted with poverty. They do want to pass on information to their visitors. Indeed, they encounter poverty indirectly, for instance, when entrance fees are paid with difficulty. Organisations search for solutions among themselves. They are not asking to work structurally on poverty reduction, because of the idea that it doesn't concern them, without realising they actually also work on poverty reduction" (Turkish federation, Ghent).

The majority of migrant organisations is increasingly confronted with poverty among their target group, which calls upon them for help. Many organisations even clearly aspire to play a greater role in poverty reduction, and expand into activities like (active) referral or proper provision of services such as administrative support, emergency aid, or even structurally, to generate advocacy groups for policy participation and influence. Migrant organisations devise creative solutions to deal with poverty among their target groups in challenging circumstances. They seek collaboration with other local migrant organisations, ethno-cultural federations, other CSOs and public services to set up specific projects to tackle poverty. They experiment innovatively with service provision to people with a migration background in poverty, accounting for their particular needs. For instance, they deploy and reimburse target group members as volunteers in specific activities.

This role of migrant organisations appears to be new, experimental, and in most cases rather limited to or focused on ad hoc or short term support. Most migrant organisations address poverty-related issues of their target group, although these activities or services typically do not accord with their initial objectives. This requires further exploration of the factors that influence the real opportunities of organisations to realise their objectives and (whether or not) to participate in local welfare systems. We argue that the explanation of why (some) migrant organisations do play a role in poverty reduction – and why some do not – and what this role implies – lies in the analysis of migrant organisations' capabilities, i.e. not only their organisational capacities and features, but perhaps most importantly, their freedom of choice and agency. Analysing how migrant organisations are able to widen their collective capabilities – or in the contrary case, are restricted in their capabilities – to realise their

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objectives, enables us to explain why and how they participate in local welfare systems. Therefore, we first discuss several of the main conversion factors determining both dimensions of collective capabilities of migrant organisations, after which we illustrate how this process takes place by means of two exemplary cases.

> *"It's not that we don't want to, but we simply can't. There's a great difference between not wanting and not being equipped to be able to do something about it. And there are many others that want this. Our organisation is actually a general dogsbody. The societal experienced responsibilities like social aid for people in a precarious situation are impossible. You can't simply go on and undertake that without experience, that doesn't work. If you pass it on to organisations (thinking): 'They're closer to the target group, so they'd be willing to do something.' Yes, they can, provided decent support, training, and cooperation"*
> *(Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).*

6.4.2 Organisational capacities and features: who are they?

We first treat the organisational capacities dimension of migrant organisations' collective capabilities. What (or who) organisations are and do depends on their capacities and features, determined by conversion factors such as features of both the organisations themselves and the people involved in them. Crucial factors in explaining organisations' capacities concern indeed their basic features, namely size, age or current financial assets of an organisation, the degree of formalisation, the organisation type and its mission statement.[45] Organisations' history – referring to their initiation and their development – also directly affects their abilities to provide activities or services as it defines most of these basic organisational features currently present in the organisations. Here we discuss some of the main conversion factors affecting the organisational capacities and features.

6.4.2.1 Vision: matter of words

In general, it is unusual for migrant organisations to explicitly aim for poverty reduction in their mission statement or other vision texts. Their mission texts often phrase the four officially defined functions of socio-cultural adult work: community building, cultural participation, social activation and education. Compared to empowerment, '*poverty*' rarely appears in these texts. In the interviews, representatives of migrant organisations were able to elaborate on the organisation's vision. Frequently, objectives do imply some form of empowerment or poverty alleviation: '*helping people*',

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[45] However, the impact of all factors ought to be assessed accounting for their interconnectedness with other factors. As we will see in our case presentation below, the effect of one factor might be outweighed by the effect of another.

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sensitisation, stimulating participation, prevention, improving people's self-esteem for their agency or signalling problems and needs. Other highlighted goals concerned integration and building bridges or promoting diversity. The vision of many migrant organisations thus actually includes objectives regarding poverty alleviation.

"And the intention (of the organisation) was in the area of emancipation of women, that they themselves empower, that they become autonomous, that they stimulate themselves to do something about their problem" (African organisation, Ghent).

6.4.2.2 Material resources: haves and have-nots

Most migrant organisations structurally lack adequate infrastructure or sufficient financial means to cover all costs. These organisations are compelled to creative patchwork in order to obtain means to realise their objectives, such as service provision, whereas other migrant organisations with better equipped infrastructure or financial means are enabled to diversify their activities, tailored to different groups among their visitors.

"I receive people at home, but for official things, some people judge the surroundings: 'Is that serious?' As an organisation (I'm not always taken seriously), also as a person. But we have a problem with very shy people or people who want to keep their problems for themselves, but still they want to talk about it. Then you must search for ways how to stimulate people to tell their story, how to guide them carefully to the right services" (African organisation, Ghent).

"We organise cultural lessons in the classrooms and integration courses for newcomers from Turkey. We give homework assistance to the children in Dutch and Turkish lessons for children that grew up here. We give Koran lessons and Islam lessons to children on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. On Sundays we give free breakfast for everyone between the exam periods in June. For adults, men, we invite every 2-3 months a speaker in the mosque on a particular subject, a professor or something, to discuss problems and solutions, such as problems of Turks in Europe" (Turkish organisation, Ghent).

"There are two prayer rooms, so women and men can pray separately. [There are also classrooms for children and for women with a kitchenette, and two nursery rooms where a volunteer tends the children as women take classes]. And we're renovating a large polyvalent room. It will contain a prayer room with a kitchen

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for the women. In the other part will be climbing frames for the young (and there

can also be indoor football). Women and girls have breakfast every Thursday and

a social activity. On Monday and Friday mornings, they have class and discuss

various topics. The men discuss in the cafeteria of the mosque also the news from

the newspaper or Turkish television they can watch there together" (Turkish

organisation, Ghent).

6.4.2.3 Formal logic: statutum mixtum

Another influential feature refers to organisations' degree of formalisation. Migrant organisations are compelled to choose between the freedom of being an informal organisation and the stronger bargaining position or better financial opportunities of accredited associations. Not being accredited may relieve migrant organisations from certain expectations and requirements. As such, they have fewer administrative and other criteria to fulfil. This widens both their organisational capacities and their freedom and agency – to organise whatever activities they want in the small scale and low frequency they often prefer. However, receiving less financial support as informal organisations may simultaneously restrict their capacities and freedom and agency.

"We are always afraid if we would be accredited, each year you must make a

report, they ask money for it and it's not easy. We prefer staying informal. We

have less administration to do. We are free. We do what we want. We only have

less funding than accredited organisations. Liberty or money" (African

organisation, Antwerp).

However, representatives of informal organisations have the impression that their bargaining position is usually much weaker compared to other collaboration partners, particularly in case of conflicting views in a joint project. Migrant organisations' stakeholders assume they will acquire equal '*rights'* when formalising the organisation. An accreditation might strengthen the bargaining position of organisations that are currently informal vis-à-vis others. As such it can improve both their financial and network opportunities, enabling them to realise more functionings in accordance with their objectives.

"Our organisation, we work driven by ideals. What we think is useful and what we

would like to do. But we notice there are those that are stronger, with a legit and

judicial frame, that are better covered. So, when vision differences arise, you

stand naked on the street. And I think that's something many organisations

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encounter. Then it's a challenge not to simply say: 'I don't do anything anymore'"

(Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

"As an informal association you don't have many rights and such. You will not get known and not appreciated, but we really also do our meaningful work. Why are we not appreciated? Or why don't our rights and obligations become equal?"

(Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

"So, eventually, you get more control, and guidelines within which you must work. The way and the things and such, only the fact that you must so hard, that you in some way must account to someone who gives you money and of which you cannot live, but cannot die either. Actually, as an organisation, I will have to decide, now I realise. Or we will not be able to go on. We already had to quit the sports for the youth. And I would really regret it if other things would disappear"

(Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

6.4.2.4 Stakeholders' expertise: an expert's job

Besides organisational features, organisations' capacities are determined to a large extent by background characteristics of people involved in it, i.e. board and staff, volunteers and visitors (cf. definition of collective capabilities). Influential conversion factors concern among other things the impact of migration experience, religion and gender, income or education level and knowledge of existing CSOs and public institutions. Furthermore, people's role in the organisation, their experience, their motivation and available time all affect the organisation's capabilities. Relevant (professional or other organisational) experience of stakeholders in migrant organisations immediately determines the organisations' collective capabilities positively or negatively. It provides organisations with expertise on organisational or methodical matters, or stronger network opportunities, widening their agency.

"I worked intensively to get the organisation's name known. 'We're here, we can help, you can trust us.' Certainly if I tell people: 'I have a diploma of social worker, I know how to guide you, I learned that,' people feel safe with me" (African organisation, Ghent).

"I see myself as an expert by experience. I've been poor myself, maybe still, but well. I've seen many people that never went to school. I saw the eyes of many illiterates in Africa. And I know the small things of the system here" (African organisation, Ghent).

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"I follow many courses on counselling and such. We are more professional as well, everybody in the board has a background. Myself, years of experience in the sector (of child services and as a volunteer in another organisation). Our secretary is English teacher, that gave also classes here, having a background as well. Then one who also worked in the sector, now in a youth centre. Someone was a school secretary and one used to work in Child Services, somebody working with Intercultural Network of Ghent, also in education. It's a major commitment that requires a lot, you must be strong to deal with the stress. That's our strength, these 7 strong women. The others – having no education, that came from Turkey and only did primary school – they quit" (Maghreb organisation, Ghent).

Migrant organisations lacking the necessary skills have fewer opportunities and fail to realise their objectives, particularly regarding poverty alleviation. Activities or services cannot take place and people's needs remain unaddressed. For this reason, migrant organisations are increasingly in pursuit of substantive support to expand the organisation's knowledge on issues like poverty – and appropriate methods to address them.

"I didn't understand poverty in this. If you want to ask me about the poverty in Sudan, I can talk about that. But poverty here, I don't know" (African organisation, Ghent).

"Within Turkish organisations, also people working there, in the board you notice these people actually have no high education. And they don't necessarily keep to agreements. These small frustrations made me quit" (Turkish organisation, Ghent).

"What to do with our activities and so on, I need somebody for the methods. (…) We need methods. Perhaps we cannot only do individual coaching, but to do more, we must find a place in a platform, I want to collaborate" (African organisation, Antwerp).

Apart from the availability of this expertise, the migrant civil society is typically troubled by a high turnover among its board or staff and volunteers, as well as salient changes in the target group. Moreover, countless migrant organisations' continuity or even their survival depends on a single key figure. Accounting for the importance of relevant knowledge and expertise built up through former experiences or their work in the current migrant organisation, departing stakeholders take this expertise away with them – curtailing the organisation's capacities and thus capabilities.

"We are constantly looking for motivated people. Each year people leave and others join. But it's difficult. Some people are here for years. They know where we must go, who we must call when we need something. We try to train newcomers to be independent so we're not bothered all the time. It remains difficult, so we always try to find new people, also attract and motivate young people, but it's difficult" (Turkish organisation, Ghent).

Furthermore, remarkable power relations between various stakeholders in the organisation are relevant conversion factors for the organisational capacities as well. Therefore, we considered participation opportunities within organisations. There appear to be large variances within the migrant civil society in the degree and opportunities for volunteers or visitors to participate in the organisation's agenda-setting, management or (in building and changing the) mission. While some migrant organisations have quite open committee meetings and actively invite all volunteers and/or visitors to share in decision-making on the objectives or methods of the organisation, most organisations decide upon these organisational aspects in a rather small group of board members and/or regular active volunteers.

"I always went to see: 'What activity does that and that organisation?' And check with the board of directors: 'How must we handle this?' But I really want somebody to help me. It's a lot of work. It's an opportunity, that's why I must follow and look. But I can't do everything" (African organisation, Antwerp)

6.4.2.5 Visitors and groups: in poverty united, we struggle

Features of the target group also affect the collective capabilities dimension of organisational capacities and features. Their age and gender, ethno-cultural background and migration motive, all appear to impact the opportunities of migrant organisations to provide the activities and services they aspire to according to their mission. Moreover, the target group members' limited knowledge of the Dutch language or the structure and culture from the Flemish society, affects migrant organisations' capabilities. Organisations – already limited in their means and capacities – struggle to provide tailored activities and services to a diverse group of visitors, who often call upon them with aid questions that are unrelated to these organisations' initial objectives. More importantly, the poverty situation of the lion's share of the target group hinders migrant organisations in their provision of activities or services (in line with their objectives), the continuity of these activities and the organisations' development. For instance, migrant organisations are unable to ask for (moderate) entrance or member fees when confronted with a target group in poverty.

"Normally I should have less difficult files now, but they keep on coming because the problem is huge. Sometimes I want to unplug the phone, say: 'We don't exist anymore,' but that's no solution. They are fellow-countrymen" (Eastern European organisation, Antwerp).

"Our intention is to bring people together, to strengthen their integration or cooperation and make progress, with information, education and sports. But poverty hinders our progress" (Eastern European organisation, Antwerp).

"People are also overburdened these days, the target group. People must find work, they must go to school, take language classes. Children become problematic growing up. So, people are busy with their own problems, that affects our meetings. There are fewer people than last year. We had 15-20 women together, now it's only 8-9-10" (Turkish organisation, Ghent).

"So when you organise something as an organisation with a small budget – 20€-25€ maximum, if we rent a bus for 50 people, it's 700€ per day – then we share, we don't ask extra entrance, because we believe people have enough problems. They pay us no member fees either" (Turkish organisation, Ghent).

"We had sports for women and for children. We cancelled those because we had no more means to pay the rent. Can you imagine? That's how bad it was. We didn't have any money left. We had an entrance fee of 5€ a month, or 10€, but even that was too much" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

"It's very difficult to organise a paying activity for people, because people are poor. At an activity, we sell drinks and food people can buy. That money goes in the till to function. We only ask entrance fees for concerts, but we cannot ask much, 5€ is already (…) Sometimes a concert hall is 500€, 300€, we, (board) members, pay. When there's an entrance fee, we recuperate, not entirely" (African organisation, Antwerp).

Poverty among migrant communities may thus restrict the collective capabilities of migrant organisations to realise their objectives. However, several migrant organisations have managed to come through by gradually gathering numerous small contributions from their community or through sponsorships from vast personal networks or small businesses of community members. When confronted with more aid requests than organisations can cope with, they develop creative ways to prioritise and choose their approach and assist those who most urgently need help. One organisation

introduced a means test to assess people's means and needs and prioritise them accordingly. Another simply counters the aid requests, referring to the initial organisation's objectives. These examples illustrate how migrant organisations seek ways not to let poverty in their communities hamper their capacities and agency to realise their objectives.

"Sometimes we pay the rent, depending on how much money we can gather. For instance, two men, both have overdue rent and will be evicted. I can only help one. So you do a means test: 'Who is entitled to this?" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

"To rent a tent, to have speakers. That costs and the organisation has not much money. We are driven to reach people. Eventually, they are through advertising, or sponsors supporting them" (Turkish organisation, Ghent).

"I have a Facebook page, I developed a system in my mobile phone nobody has. I save each number that ever called me about poverty, to bring clothes, food or ask something. I now have 9000 numbers. When I do a campaign, I send it to these 9000 numbers. That has an effect throughout Belgium. And then I get response" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

"I only asked public funding once. But the paperwork takes too much time. (We pay for) the activities ourselves and with my family and with the people from society. We are known in society, there's trust, whenever we post something, we get support" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

"They come to me and tell, but I try not to listen and I don't want to talk. It's a totally different project. 'We have no money. I cannot give, go to the public assistance'" (Eastern European organisation, Antwerp).

6.4.3 Freedom of choice and agency: quid pro quo

As explained above, the other vital component of migrant organisations' collective capabilities concerns their freedom of choice and agency. We studied the network opportunities, legal, institutional and financial opportunities of migrant organisations by exploring the support or barriers migrant organisations are confronted with through contact with external organisations or services, and the expectations of these external actors as well as internal actors.

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6.4.3.1 With a little help from my friends: tangled networks and regulations

Migrant organisations often receive support from their ethno-cultural federations or other local migrant organisations, other CSOs, public services and even the ethno-cultural communities in which they were established. Some stakeholders of migrant organisations can rely on their networks built up through professional or other experience. This implies wider network opportunities – i.e. the availability of potential cooperation partners or sources for support – and a positive impact on the organisation's capabilities. However, variable availability of other actors and other barriers encountered in contact with other organisations and services often generate miscommunication and misunderstandings. Moreover, financial support and cooperation are often linked to a particular temporary project – diminishing when the projects ends. As such these opportunities appear quite fragile, yet at the same time determinant for migrant organisations' capabilities.

"Soon the project will be stopped. There's no more money for social aid. Still, the federation wants to continue. Small self-organisations cannot do this because this requires professionals" (Turkish federation, Ghent).

"We are actually coached by Recht-op, a poverty advocacy group" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

"When we talk about poverty, that problem also exists a lot with young families. Then, I try to link it. If I see people there in this problem, I refer them here and vice versa. When I see women that are bored or lonely, I refer them to the (migrant) organisation. Sundays we meet, then signals are picked up. What occupies people? Then we respond. We cooperated with other organisations, now the City of Ghent and other organisations ask to collaborate" (Turkish organisation, Ghent).

"I can refer people to other organisations. I can ask my colleagues from the integration service. I work there as a counsellor, mainly on education. Through this networking people are better guided because they are a friend of mine. It's interaction" (African organisation, Ghent).

"So we just had to quit that initiative I founded in the Cultural Centre (…). Unfortunately, that was a lot of elbowing as well, so eventually it became an initiative of the Cultural Centre and we have nothing to do with it anymore" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

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Furthermore, legal and institutional regulations and structures also directly affect organisations' capabilities – through accreditation criteria and accepted activities or services of a migrant organisation. Indirectly, institutions and other organisations or administrations can support or obstruct an organisation. Public funding (or assistance for applications), but also judicial or other substantive forms of support, rely on the disposition of these institutions and regulations. Furthermore, although migrant organisations can be positively supported by institutional and legal opportunities provided through promoting legislation or public funding, they encounter various institutional and legal barriers that limit their freedom and agency to provide activities or services in line with their objectives. For instance, the Decree on Socio-cultural adult work (2003, *Decreet betreffende het sociaal-cultureel volwassenenwerk*) under which most migrant organisations operate, is not adapted to the changing society and the altering role of migrant organisations. Public funding for activities not directly associated with one of the official functions are approved with difficulty. The criteria in the decree therefore leave little leeway for activities or services regarding poverty reduction.

"We have the decree on socio-cultural adult work, but the world has changed, times have changed. But we are in that decree. We are more than a socio-cultural association. We work on employment, on issues like social services" (Eastern European organisation, Antwerp).

"We work on various issues, but times have changed and we have another CSO, but our decree is not adapted to the new situation, new times. We do sports for instance, we have many organisations that have a small group, for example, one large organisation with a football team in it, or youth work, or a dance group. One organisation with different groups, busy with art or pictures and so on. They expect guidance for divisions, but we cannot give much. For example, the city has no separate funding for one-time activities. A sports club, a small football team, they must be member of an accredited federation. But they stay with us. There's no such model of federations.

Interviewer: Is that also the case for poverty reduction? You said social aid is a big issue, they ask a lot of aid requests, but that's not within the decree?

Yes" (Eastern European organisation, Antwerp).

This decree and other relevant regulations are thus seen as not appropriate (anymore) to frame the activities and services that contemporary migrant organisations do provide. However, it does not prevent all organisations to conform by not addressing poverty. They develop ideas to tackle poverty

while staying (comparatively) true to their objectives or decree criteria. For instance, a socio-cultural organisation establishes a separate organisation to provide service provision within the decree of the welfare sector (*Welzijnssector*), rather than the socio-cultural sector. Or a welfare organisation sets up a separate socio-cultural association. As we mentioned before, most other organisations simply provide services outside their main objectives, core activities or hours dedicated to the organisation. Without the necessary means or mandate to provide social care, temporary projects or irregular activities can rarely be structurally continued.

"People came to me for assistance a lot. That (our organisation) was under (the department of) Welfare, but actually we were not allowed to provide social assistance, but we did anyway because of course people came with papers on child benefits, on housing, and so on" (Maghreb organisation, Ghent).

"Why is the organisation founded? In 1991 I started the Maghreb women's group in Ghent, for the integration centre. But back then we were funded by (the department) of Welfare, so we had to do educational activities and all regarding health care, education, employment. No cultural activities. Moroccan women – they were the largest group – wanted to end training with music and dance. So we founded this organisation for small-scale musical projects" (Maghreb organisation, Ghent).

6.4.3.2 Quid pro quo: involuntary volunteers

Perhaps the most important conversion factors in mapping out the real opportunities of migrant organisations in poverty reduction concern the formal and informal expectations of internal and external actors migrant organisations are confronted with. Most, if not all, migrant organisations criticize the obviousness with which they are called upon by CSOs and public services to function as an intermediary between their target group and relevant organisations or services. These expectations are often not in line with the initial migrant organisations' objectives. Moreover, their stakeholders – typically volunteers – lack the knowhow, means, time or expertise to meet these expectations. Outcomes of this imbalance do not only concern curtailed collective capabilities of these migrant organisations – unable to provide the activities or services they aspire in accordance with their mission – but also leave numerous needs of the target group unaddressed.

"'Can you come along and translate?' and they found it obvious that there would be somebody that just drops his work and comes to translate. I find that very wrong that it's being thrown back at us. It didn't work. That was frustrating. (And

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problems were) not always (solved) and they lingered" (Maghreb organisation, Ghent).

"We get much work to do, but mostly unfunded. Available means go integrally to the schools. And we are called upon, based on: 'You'll do that because you feel 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" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

"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" (Eastern European organisation).

"We count many members in poverty, but to fight poverty we need enough resources, resources, human resources that (know) the great (problem), how to say? (It) lacks with us volunteers" (Eastern European organisation, Antwerp)

"We are volunteers, so even if we have the capacities, you must be able to make time for it, you must make means available. Money and means we don't have, that restricts us, also personnel. If we would have enough people, we can do it. But if people have a job besides their function here, that's difficult." (Eastern European organisation, Antwerp)

When migrant organisations cooperate with other CSOs for certain activities, services or joining forces for a project, they learn to anticipate these expectations. For instance, particular expectations among cooperating CSOs and migrant organisations on the precise role of each actor are often stipulated in a contract, preventing misunderstandings or possible conflicts. By establishing a good collaboration with CSOs based on an equal position, stakeholders can also gain information and strengthen other individual and social capabilities. This in turn strengthens the migrant organisations' collective capabilities. Overall, though, migrant organisations experience good collaboration with most CSOs or public services they come in contact with. Especially in relation to their federation, most migrant organisations feel free, not experiencing high expectations regarding their activities. Nevertheless, the expectations of mainly public services and aid organisations to act – involuntary voluntarily – as an intermediary, is a critique frequently expressed and emphasised both in interviews and numerous other encounters with people in the migrant civil society.

"Organisations that want to be a member of the network, do everything together. YVCA ensures the visibility. But they cannot say: 'You must run your organisation like this.' Your administration must be arranged. When you ask money, they ask if

your paperwork is in order. Then you can (work together) and ask money for this activity. But they cannot force you and say: 'No, you have to organise here.' They can ask advice" (African organisation, Antwerp).

"Every organisation is free. Your Board of Directors does the program of the organisation. For example, joining the African Platform is a choice, you want to be affiliated there. If you are, you must report on what you have done. And they must help you. But for the visibility, you must have an agreement with the African Platform. And if you asked the Platform for money, that's different. What did they do in the organisation? If you're member, you must show things" (African organisation, Antwerp).

6.4.4 Closing the circle

"To play a role, social services must sit with migrant organisations to talk about these problems. (Collaborating) would be a good thing. It will help poor people better. They (migrant organisations) think of them (target group). They (migrant organisations) can give a solution for the problem. When nothing is done, it doesn't work" (African organisation, Antwerp).

The account above of how these conversion factors that converse the resources of organisations and as such influence migrant organisations' capacities and agency explains how and why migrant organisations do or do not participate in local poverty reduction. Numerous migrant organisations claim they are willing to contribute to poverty reduction. However, they find themselves obstructed by their actual collective capabilities. For example, the decree on socio-cultural work (2003, *Decreet betreffende het sociaal-cultureel volwassenenwerk*) does not explicitly concern poverty reduction activities. Public funding criteria affect their capabilities to perform these activities as well. Nor do most organisations possess the necessary resources, networks or expertise to be able to tackle poverty structurally and adjusted to people with a migration background. Migrant organisations thus stress the importance of support in order to be able to play any role in poverty reduction. To be able to fulfil this role as a genuine partner in local welfare systems, they need structural financial and substantive support from other organisations and services, specifically from local authorities. Whether this support is recognition as an equal partner in the local welfare system, financial or substantive (mainly methodical) support or more cooperation, depends on the respective organisational capacities and features and the agency of a migrant organisation to develop according to its objectives. To clarify more in detail how this process unravels, we discuss two cases of migrant organisations with diverging capabilities for illustration.

"The urge to participate is very real. It's a hot topic because, despite so many problems, there is a drive. The structural setting is not adapted to the needs that are really there at the grassroots. And these organisations or their board members actually participate in activities. But then somehow after a year or a process of years, most organisations encounter limits, where they realise: 'To do what I want to do, to be able to do it thoroughly, I need support just like others that also undertake a similar task. But just for free, that doesn't work. Then you have distorted situations and you can never yield equal exchange" (Maghreb organisation, Antwerp).

6.4.5 Case 1: Strengthened collective capabilities

We have discussed several of the main conversion factors and their impact on migrant organisations' collective capabilities to clarify the migrant organisation's role in poverty reduction. Now we will bring the functioning of these conversion factors to life by means of a comparison between two cases of migrant organisations: one with strengthened collective capabilities and another with comparatively weakened collective capabilities regarding their objectives and their role in poverty reduction. We apply our analysis model for collective capabilities of migrant organisations for the detailed representation of the collective capabilities process of both cases. Figure 2 is a representation of organisation A, with several of the main conversion factors and other elements relevant for the reconstruction of the collective capabilities process, both in terms of its role in local poverty reduction and its initial objectives.

As indicated in the dimension of organisational capacities and features, organisation A is an informal organisation from a district of Antwerp. It consists of two groups and rents a venue for meetings and activities on a regular basis. Its objective is twofold, i.e. poverty (reduction and) advocacy and socio-cultural participation. During its three-year existence, the organisation grew in name and kinds of activities. The organisation mainly welcomes people with a Moroccan origin, although their visitors vary greatly in other features, such as their residential statute or the socio-economical background. This internal diversity follows the fault line of the two groups in the organisation. The '*cooking group*' is socio-economically quite diverse, whereas the '*poverty group*' consists merely of people in poverty. The organisation is for the most part dependent on one key figure. This person, however, has a lot of relevant organisational and substantive experience in other organisations. As a result, she is able to draw upon her expertise and the strong network built up through this experience. For most activities or services, this coordinator can also rely on a small group of active regular volunteers, who are committed to the organisation. For occasional activities, the organisation can also call upon a larger number of irregular volunteers.
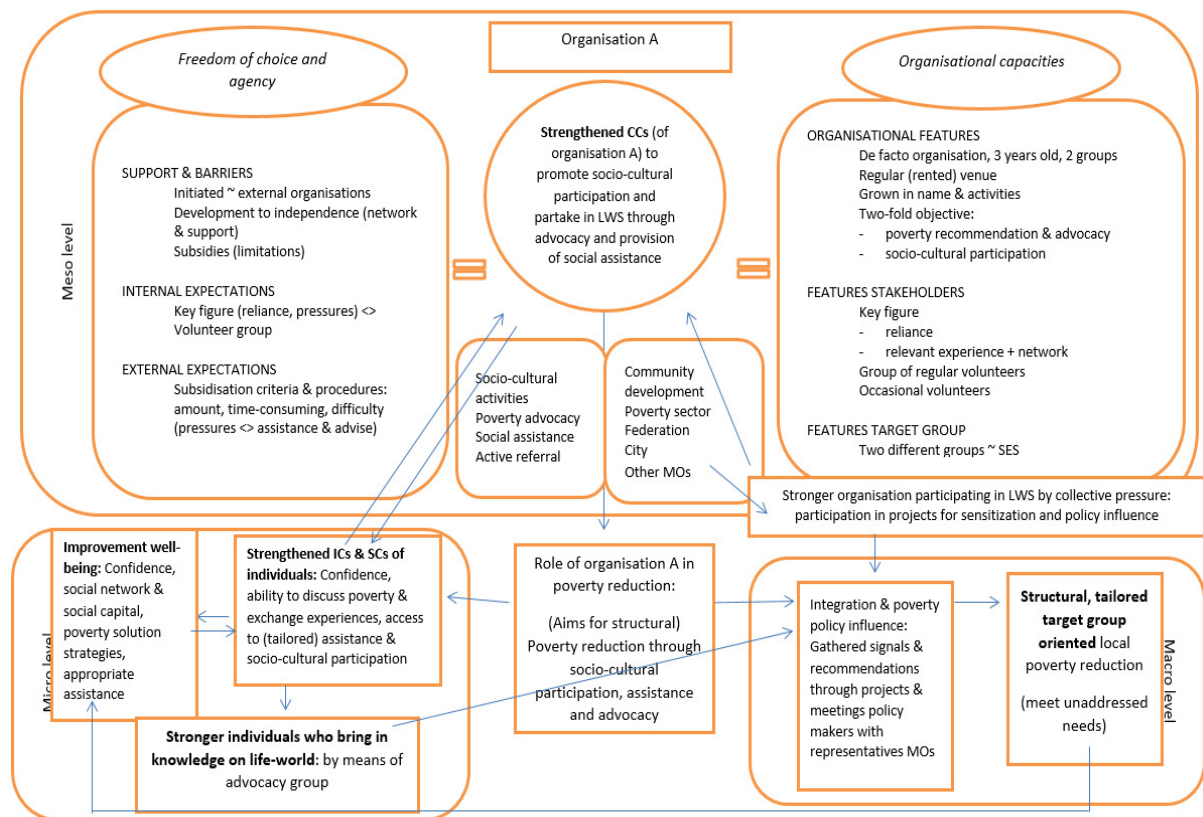
In the dimension of freedom of choice and agency, Figure 2 demonstrates that the organisation is initiated with the help of other organisations (a community development organisation and an ethno-cultural federation). The organisation thus received a lot of support starting up. Gradually it develops to independence, though still able to rely on a strong network for support. Financially, they are supported as well. For instance, in contrast to most other migrant organisations, they receive volunteers' allowances to compensate the regular volunteers. However, the organisation struggles with limitations of the funding they receive to be able to cover the costs of their activities. Internally, the organisation is sometimes confronted with opposite expectations. For instance, the key figure would like the regular volunteers to take up a larger piece of the organisational work to relieve some of the pressures and reliance on her. The volunteers, on the other hand, emphasise their voluntariness, refraining from taking up more tasks in the organisation. This imbalance is slightly counterbalanced by the volunteers' allowances. Regarding external expectations the organisation faces, mainly the amount, the time-consuming nature and difficulty of public funding procedures and criteria are criticised. Although the organisation and its key figure are pressured, they can rely on necessary assistance and advice, enabling the organisation to apply for and receive public funding.

These conversion factors to both dimensions generate rather strengthened collective capabilities of organisation A to promote socio-cultural participation and partake in the local welfare system through advocacy and the provision of social assistance. Through the impact of these strong capabilities on the realised networks and activities, we are able to clarify the role of organisation A in poverty reduction. The model indicates that organisation A is able to convert its capabilities into functionings in terms of activities and networks, consistent with its objectives. As such, it organises socio-cultural activities, poverty advocacy and social assistance through administrative support and active referral. On the other hand, organisation A can invoke a strong network of various people, organisations and services. Frequent and close contacts or cooperation is found with community development organisations, poverty organisations, its ethno-cultural federation, the city and even other local migrant organisations. These functionings imply that organisation A does not only aim for, but also realises to a large extent, structural poverty reduction among its target group by means of socio-cultural participation, social assistance and advocacy.

As such, we can establish the link with the macro and micro level. As a result of a vast and steady network, the organisation is enabled to participate in the local welfare system by collective pressure, viz. by participating in projects for sensitisation and policy influence. Thus indirectly as well as directly the organisation can influence policies on integration and poverty due to their role in poverty reduction. Indeed, they gather and pass on signals and recommendations through projects and meetings with policy makers and representatives of migrant organisations. On the other hand, the strong collective capabilities of organisation A enables it to strengthen the individual and social capabilities of people involved in – or calling upon – the organisation. This capability-widening occurs in their self-confidence, their ability to discuss poverty and exchange experiences, their access to (tailored) assistance and socio-cultural participation. These widened capabilities directly improve their individual well-being, with regard to their grown confidence, their expanded social network, their gained poverty solution strategies, and received appropriate assistance. They also render these individuals stronger to bring forward knowledge about their life-world and their problems by means of the poverty advocacy group. As such they contribute directly to policy influence. This closes the circle: organisation A is able to contribute to structural, tailored target-group oriented local poverty reduction. Unaddressed needs of these people are met here.

6.4.6 Case 2: Weakened collective capabilities

The former case clearly demonstrates how certain conversion factors determine both dimensions of collective capabilities positively, starting off the process of widening these collective capabilities, enabling the organisation to realise activities and networks, strengthening individual and social capabilities and both directly and indirectly influencing policies and contributing to structural tailored

poverty reduction. Now we turn to an example of an organisation that is more limited in its collective capabilities to realise their objectives and play a structural and significant role in poverty reduction as a genuine partner in the local welfare system.

Figure 3 Case B: Migrant organisation with weakened collective capabilities regarding objectives and poverty reduction
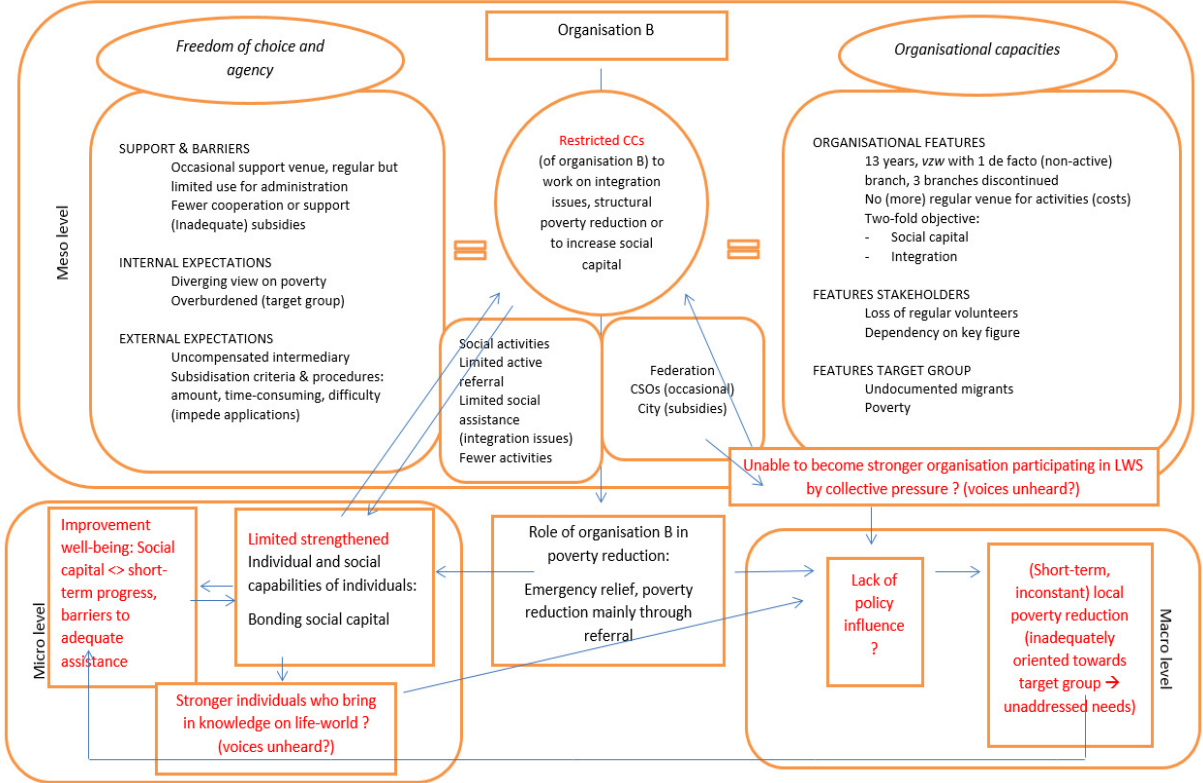
As shown in the dimension of organisational capacities and features in Figure 3, organisation B has been in existence for thirteen years and is thus much older than organisation A. It concerns an accredited organisation with its headquarters in a (more central) district of Antwerp and one informal branch in the city of Louvain that is non-active at the moment. In the past, organisation B had three more branches, all currently discontinued. The organisation no longer has a regular venue for activities, due to the high costs. Like A, organisation B's objective is twofold, but focussing on expanding social capital among their target group members and advance their integration. Its target group consists mainly – but not exclusively – of undocumented migrants, most of them living in poverty. This organisation largely relies on one key figure as well. However, in contrast to A, organisation B has lost most of its regular volunteers during the years. This did not only lead to a suspension of certain activities and branches, but also intensified the dependence on this key figure for the organisation's continuity.

In the dimension of freedom of choice and agency, we notice how organisation B does receive occasional support from other organisations or services. On a regular basis, they can use a venue

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provided by the city for limited administrative use. Furthermore, cooperation with or support from external people, organisations or services has diminished over time. Financial opportunities are restricted as well, as the organisation receives inadequate funding all activities and services it wishes to coordinate. Internally, the organisation is overburdened by questions from the target group that are not in accordance with the organisational objectives. Moreover, there is a diverging view on poverty between the key figure and the volunteers, as well as between them and *'outsiders'*, complicating the provision of poverty reduction activities. Confronted with external expectations, the stakeholders of organisation B criticise the way in which they are often called upon as an uncompensated intermediary in contact with social service provision for their target group. They have difficulties with the same elements as organisation A regarding public funding criteria and procedures. However, organisation B lacks the necessary support, which actually impedes applications.

The conversion factors determining both dimensions we discussed here, reveal how the collective capabilities of organisation B – to work on integration issues, structural poverty reduction or to increase social capital among its target group – are more restricted. This affects their functionings, in terms of activities or services and networks. Organisation B mainly organises social activities, but far less frequently than it used to. Furthermore, it provides limited referral of people to the organisations and services they need. Whereas organisation A actively contacts organisations or services, assists with paperwork, and accompanies people to these services and follows up on their development, referral in organisation B is limited to short-term assistance or a few phone calls. For instance, the coordinator calls a member because he knows a constructor with a vacant job for a few days. Social assistance is rather limited as well, concerning mainly integration issues. The coordinator of organisation B refers to the organisational objectives when explaining why they are reluctant to deal with poverty issues.

On the other hand, the network realisations of organisation B are meagre compared to organisation A. Organisation B is a member of an ethno-cultural federation, but there is little substantive support or cooperation. They occasionally cooperate with other CSOs in the neighbourhood, but only on rare joint activities. Collaboration with the city of Antwerp is confined to public funding and the use of a computer in the neighbourhood centre, whereas organisation A also participates in thematic projects coordinated by the local authorities. Both kinds of functionings reveal how the role of organisation B in poverty reduction is confined to occasional emergency relief, but mainly through limited referral.

Crossing the bridge to the macro level, its restricted role in poverty reduction does not largely affect poverty policies. In fact, because of their smaller network, the organisation is unable to become stronger and participate in the local welfare system by collective pressure. Indeed, one may wonder if

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and where the voice of the organisation will be heard at all. As such, its impact on integration and poverty policies is likely to remain modest.

Turning to the micro level, due to its restricted collective capabilities, organisation B strengthens the individual and social capabilities of people involved in the organisation only in a limited way. It does realise the improvement of bonding social capital. Because other individual capabilities are not specifically widened through participation in this organisation, these individuals will unlikely become strengthened in such a way that they are enabled to bring knowledge about their life-world into policy. Their voices remain unheard as well. At the same time, we might conclude that their well-being is hardly improved. The target group members do gain in social capital, but all other progress is rather short-term, and they still encounter various barriers to adequate assistance.

Coming full circle, organisation B rather contributes to short-term and inconsistent local poverty reduction, which is inadequately oriented towards the target group. Many needs of the target group remain unaddressed. This case clearly illustrates how various conversion factors can negatively affect the process of widening the collective capabilities of an organisation, thus impeding its realisation of activities or services and networks, and limiting its role in structural and tailored poverty reduction as partners in the local welfare system.

We believe our analysis, and especially this comparison of both cases, highlights the importance of the balance between internal capacities and external expectations to enable organisations to realise their objectives and partake in local welfare systems. This implies a significant role of agency in trying to reach and maintain this balance. We argue our collective capabilities framework reveals the importance and the effects of this agency to this balance – and how it helps explain the role of organisations in poverty reduction. This is where other concepts appear to fail. Not only internal capacities nor external supportive factors (alone) are crucial for an explanation, agency (as well) is a core element in the analysis and explanation Moreover, our framework provides us with practical intervention tools for strengthening collective capabilities of migrant organisations and individual and social capabilities of individuals involved in them, to improve individuals' well-being through a tailored poverty reduction policy.

6.5 Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to interpret and explain the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction in Flanders today. For this purpose, we applied our developed analysis framework of collective capabilities of migrant organisations. We described the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction in Flanders today, by means of perceptions of migrant organisations' stakeholders. We discussed how, on the one hand, this role is generally rather limited, focused on short-term and

ad hoc poverty reduction. On the other hand, apparently most migrant organisations are involved in poverty alleviation to some extent. Usually, this occurs outside the hours, mission or mandate of these organisations. This complexity required further scrutiny. We were able to reconstruct the process of how several conversion factors affect the collective capabilities of migrant organisations and how they, in turn, determine the role of these organisations in local welfare systems, particularly with regard to poverty reduction. Moreover, our analysis gave indications of the direct and indirect influence of these collective capabilities (and the role of these organisations as strengthened or hindered by these capabilities), as well as their impact on the well-being of individuals involved in or calling upon these organisations. This analysis highlighted the crucial role of agency. It demonstrated that focussing merely on environmental factors or on organisational capacities will neglect how agency determines the real opportunities of migrant organisations to partake in poverty reduction. To describe this process in detail, we compared two cases of migrant organisations. The first organisation is clearly strengthened in its capabilities to contribute both directly and indirectly to structural and target-group driven poverty reduction. The second case revealed that a migrant organisation can be restricted in its capabilities to realise its objectives and participate in structural local poverty reduction. An explanation of these diverging capabilities lies in the differing conversion factors to both dimensions of collective capabilities. We noticed how material, financial or methodical support of available organisations and services in the environment is crucial – not only for the foundation of migrant organisations, but for their survival or continuity as well. Variances in experience, relevant expertise, networks and availability (or dependence) of stakeholders in migrant organisations also explain these diverging capabilities of migrant organisations. We must nuance our conclusions somewhat. Although collective capabilities are inherently interconnected in our definition with individual capabilities, we do not claim that the strongest migrant organisations in terms of capabilities are the ones that best succeed in the improvement of the well-being of individuals calling upon these organisations. For instance, we noticed how some organisations preferred to remain informal in order to be free to organise the activities and services they aspired to. As such, stakeholders perceived that they were best able to dynamically address the needs of their target group. On the contrary, other organisations' stakeholders perceived that a formalisation would improve their bargaining position among other organisations and services in local welfare systems, as such enabled to improve the well-being of their target group. We did, however, explain the role of the conversion factors to collective capabilities in the determining the ability to take on a role in poverty reduction – and explain what this role actually entails. Indeed, an approach that accounts for agency implies an eye for the (initial) objectives of organisations. In the cases we have presented, the objective of organisation A involved both socio-cultural and poverty reduction activities, whereas organisation B's objective referred to social capital and integration. As such we can see the link with the debate on identity, more in particular on

organisations' foundation in an ethno-cultural identity. For instance, this could imply that a mere focus on bonding social capital (based on an ethno-cultural identity) leads to limited capabilities of an organisation to combat poverty – although it might be successful in realising its objective of generating social capital among its target group members. The combination of a categorical approach (the link with identity) and a focus on poverty or empowerment can widen organisations' capabilities to tackle poverty among its target group. In this sense, we selected two types of organisations – and focused on those particular elements – that substantiate our claim. As these organisations are easily to contrast with one another, they enabled us to highlight the controversial effects of conversion factors that affect the capabilities of an organisation to fight poverty, without obscuring possible conflicting elements. The interconnectedness of conversion factors allow for this variation. This interconnectedness precisely implicates that stronger organisations in term of capabilities are not necessarily those that most strengthen individual capabilities.

At a first glance, these conclusions would appear to confirm findings that might also be revealed by the application of other perspectives than capabilities: for instance, the amount of social capital of the stakeholders in the organisations or the resource mobilisation or dependency of the organisations themselves. However, our analysis revealed that it is exactly the interconnectedness of both internal capacities and features and the agency of migrant organisations that makes an adequate explanation of their role possible. Therefore, our main argument is that for migrant organisations to play a role in poverty reduction or become an equal partner in the local welfare system, a balance is required between the agency of migrant organisations and their organisational capacities and features. It is precisely the crucial aspect of agency in the analysis and interpretation of the role and opportunities of migrant organisations to play a role in local welfare systems that confirms the value of this perspective, compared to other theoretical frameworks and concepts.

To analyse the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction, we may endorse Amartya Sen's argument in his discussion of the importance of individual capabilities. If we focus on the functionings of organisations (i.e. what they are and do), their features and their activities, we tend to overlook or even exclude freedom of choice and agency. The capabilities approach implies that well-being is given by the capability to live various types of lives, with special interest to the actually chosen lifestyle and the availability of alternatives (Nussbaum, 2000: 86-96, 167-297; Sen, 1987: 33-40; Sen, 1993, 2002: 38-40). We continue on the same course. If we merely study what organisations are, do or have – in line with perspectives like empowerment, social capital, resource mobilisation, collective action, etcetera – but refrain from accounting for freedom of choice, we fail to grasp the real opportunities of organisations to play any role in poverty reduction. These real opportunities of migrant organisation to participate in local welfare systems only become visible by means of an analysis of both dimensions

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of collective capabilities. The value of evaluating the role of organisations in poverty reduction is thus given by the capability to play various roles, with specific interest for the actual chosen role and the availability of alternatives.

As such, we are able to derive intervention tools from our framework to strengthen the capabilities of organisations and their participants in order to improve the organisations' role in poverty reduction and the local welfare system, as well as the situation of individuals with a migration background in poverty. We believe investing in support of and networking with migrant organisations – as equal partners – are crucial. The role of ethno-cultural federations could be strengthened in order to improve their support and representation of member organisations. Furthermore, flexibility in categorising and assessing migrant organisations and their activities would advance their role in poverty reduction. Considering the importance of freedom and agency, we argue it is possible to support particularly these migrant organisations to strengthen this potential role, but not enforce it on migrant organisations that do not intend to address poverty alleviation, empowerment or interest representation.

We were able to map the collective capabilities of migrant organisations, how these capabilities are widened or restricted, and their effects on migrant organisations regarding their role in poverty reduction. Moreover, we demonstrated how the crucial role of agency in explaining the reason why and the extent to which some migrant organisations (and no other) address poverty. We argue this role of agency receives insufficient attention in other concepts. Therefore, we believe this chapter successfully presented a first test of our theoretical framework, with a focus on the meso level of migrant organisations. Although we gave indications on the links with the micro and the macro level, further research is required into these connections.

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Chapter 7: Conclusion: Positively Capable?

Sylvie Van Dam

"Impossibilium nulla obligatio est"
"Nobody can be obligated to do the impossible" (Corpus Iuris Civilis)

7.1 Introduction: studying migrant organisations in their challenges

This study started off by outlining the challenging contexts migrant organisations face today in Flanders, Belgium. Poverty and superdiversity place pressure on migrant communities. Local authorities are thus challenged in their search for interlocutors within migrant communities, as well as public services and CSO in their assistance to people with a migration background in poverty. Moreover, these challenges of poverty and superdiversity, combined with the localisation of welfare, challenge local migrant organisations to achieve their objectives and partake in local welfare systems. Although literature already indicates the potentially restraining impact of these challenges on the opportunities of local migrant organisations to play a role in poverty reduction (Fennema and Tillie, 2004; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Spencer and Cooper, 2006), we highlighted the lack of knowledge about the role of local migrant organisations in welfare production and poverty alleviation in Flanders (Beaumont, 2008; Dierckx et al., 2009; Moya, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; Verhoeven et al., 2003). We underline that we do not assume these organisations to be first and foremost responsible for combatting poverty among people with a migration background. However, our research revealed how these organisations confront many expectations to partake in poverty alleviation by their supporters as well as other CSOs or authorities. At the same time, ever more migrant organisations appear to take the initiative to partake in welfare provision. We therefore asked ourselves how and to what extent migrant organisations participate in local poverty reduction in Flanders, and in doing so, what role they play in contemporary local welfare systems. Finally, what processes do these organisations go through to play a specific role in the local welfare system, and in poverty reduction in particular?

In order to answer these questions, we divided our research questions according to several issues that we consider to be crucial in clarifying the role of migrant organisations in contemporary local poverty reduction, as well as addressing the lack of knowledge about these issues. We were inspired by the six factors that determine the organising process according to Vermeulen (2006), i.e. the number of formal organisations (Chapter 4, 5, 6), types of organisations (Chapter 4, 5, 6), their activities (Chapter 4, 5, 6), the organisers (Chapter 4, 5, 6), the members – which we describe as target group (Chapter 1, 4, 5, 6) – and the organisational networks (Chapter 2, 5, 6). Beginning with the target group, we started off by exploring the coping strategies of people with a migration background in poverty, because this

analysis clarifies how and why they end up participating in migrant organisations. Our findings confirmed literature on the gaps between the target group and organisations and services traditionally working on poverty (Dierckx et al., 2013; Gil-Gonzalez et al., 2015; Greenwood et al., 2015; Kanmaz et al., 2015; Ma and Chi, 2011; Schrooten et al., 2015; Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011). It appeared that people with a migration background in poverty increasingly call upon migrant organisations as they search for categorical organised grassroots work. This raised questions on whether these organisations are able to connect with other organisations and services in order to refer their clientele to the services they need. Subsequently we were able to look more closely into the position and role of the migrant organisations themselves. Therefore, after studying the solution strategies of migrants in poverty, we inquired into the networks of migrant organisations with other CSOs and public services. By discussing the target group of people with a migration background in poverty and the networks of migrant organisations, we already tackled two factors of the organising process (Vermeulen, 2006). Building on this gathered knowledge we were able to study migrant organisations in a context of increasing diversity and poverty, and the localisation of welfare, by searching for the kinds of organisations that exist in Flanders, in which ethno-cultural communities they are established and which activities they provide (Cf. Vermeulen, 2006). We analysed how they respond to the challenges of diversity, fragmentation and poverty. Studying these questions shed light on how the complexity of superdiversity in Belgium (Flanders) became visible in the way migrants have organised themselves. We wanted to know whether the ideal-typical functions and roles still apply in this superdiverse context of migrant organisations facing high poverty rates. Answers to these questions permitted us to gather insights on migrant organisations in contemporary local welfare systems and poverty reduction. More particularly, as our findings highlighted the need for attuned theories, they gave the impetus to explore theoretical concepts and frameworks to substantiate our research (questions). We developed the theoretical framework of collective capabilities that enabled us to reconstruct empirically the role of local migrant organisations in poverty reduction in Flanders. Moreover, by encompassing all factors of the organising process according to Vermeulen (2006), we were not only able to highlight the relevance of these factors, and confirm the valuable contribution of our research on the networks and organisational map; but even take the discussion one step further by emphasising the need to account for organisational agency as well in the analysis of organisations' opportunities to play a role (infra).

This study aimed at analysing the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. The variety of questions this issue raised, the related subjects and generated findings were discussed in the previous chapters. In this conclusion, we recapture our research questions, theoretical premises with which we set about our research, and the main findings. By bringing these separate research subjects back

together, we are able to demonstrate their interconnectedness and relevance to the analysis and explanation of the role of local migrant organisations in contemporary poverty reduction. Furthermore, we will discuss the main contributions of our research and its implications for theory and further research. To conclude, we present the relevance of this research for policy and practice, by means of policy recommendations for and interventions in the field of practice. As such we aim at contributing to more effective target-group oriented poverty reduction, which would improve the well-being and societal position of individuals with a migration background in poverty.

7.2 Mapping and reading the role of migrant organisations in poverty

We asked ourselves how and to what extent migrant organisations participate in local poverty reduction in Flanders, and in doing so, what role they play in contemporary local welfare systems. To explain this role, we wondered what processes they go through to play a specific role in the local welfare system, and in poverty reduction in particular. To position them in these local welfare systems, we wanted to know how migrants in poverty end up in these organisations (Chapter 2) and how the organisations are situated among other organisations (Chapter 3). We wondered how migrant organisations respond to the challenges of diversity and poverty in order to map out their role in these local welfare systems (Chapter 4). At the same time, these contemporary transformations impelled us to revise and seek an appropriate theoretical frame to accurately explain migrant organisations' role (Chapter 5). We wondered whether collective capabilities are the adequate framework with which we can truly both map out and explain this role of migrant organisations in poverty alleviation.

In this section we start by addressing our main research question. We thus begin by briefly reiterating our main findings on the role of migrant organisations in today's local poverty reduction in Flanders. Afterwards, we set about explaining this role by positioning them in the local welfare system and discuss the factors that determine to what extent migrant organisations play a (if any) role in poverty reduction.

7.2.1 Taking a picture: migrant organisations in poverty reduction

In the introduction of this study we explained our application of a multidimensional and structural view on poverty. We focus on the multidimensional (material and immaterial) resources people lack to be able to participate in the generally accepted modes of existence in society (Tiwari, 2014; Townsend, 1979). As these deprivations are rooted in the structural composition of society, this view aligns with poverty definitions commonly applied in Flanders' civil society or policies. Although many policy texts often confine themselves to a discussion of monetary poverty because of its measurability, social workers or policy makers in Flanders typically refer to fundamental social rights or the definition of Jan Vranken in which poverty is "*a network of social exclusions which extends over multiple domains of*

individual and collective existence. It separates the poor of the generally accepted life patterns of society. They cannot bridge this gap on their own" (Dierckx et al., 2011: 40, own translation). This view is compatible with our description, as they all refer to the modes of living in a particular society, and to a multidimensional and structural perspective. This perspective implies that poverty alleviation requires a structural approach on all life domains, and therefore also the commitment of (external) actors and institutions to tackle poverty. Empowerment – both as a process of gaining control over one's own situation and environment (Van Regenmortel, 2002) and as a process of widening capabilities (when considering poverty as a capabilities deficit) (Narayan, 2002) – is commonly viewed in civil society as a vital means of poverty alleviation, besides service provision or advocacy and representation. The view on poverty reduction applied in this study is in line with these perspectives. We explored the way and extent local migrant organisations partake in poverty alleviation among people with a migration background by means of service provision, empowerment or advocacy.

The wide scope of research topics and approaches enabled us to map out the role of local migrant organisations in poverty reduction. Our findings revealed that the majority of migrant organisations provides mainly socio-cultural activities. Few local migrant organisations explicitly work on poverty (as expressed in their mission statements or on websites). And where it does occur, it often concerns ad hoc, charitable or short-term poverty alleviation. This stands in contrast to the structural and multidimensional view on poverty (reduction) from which this study started, or that is employed by most civil society actors or policy makers (City of Antwerp, 2013; Decree on Poverty Reduction, 2003; FPS Social Security, 2013; Homans, 2014; Kanmaz et al., 2015; Network Against Poverty; www.samenlevingsopbouw.be). Still, we learned that poverty is increasingly tackled by ethno-cultural federations and their member organisations. Many local migrant organisations address poverty sporadically and/or unofficially – outside the mandate of or hours initially dedicated to the organisation. Moreover, because the view on poverty often differs between migrant organisations and other organisations or services, migrant organisations' stakeholders are often unaware that many of their activities or services are considered by others (academics, social workers or policy makers) as poverty reduction activities. Bonding activities with empowering effects due to informal exchange of information or experience are an example. This underlines the importance of local welfare systems in assessing whether organisations take up poverty issues, and induced us to explain this role. The urban social, cultural and economic configurations do play a role in defining poverty as a social problem and develop appropriate solution strategies and policies (Mingione and Oberti, 2003). Poverty is divergently defined by various actors involved in the minorities sector or in social services to migrants in poverty. Our findings indicated that some migrant organisations endorse a structural and multidimensional view on poverty. This perspective is in line with the view in most literature on poverty

in Flanders, focusing on the structural and multidimensional nature of poverty as a form of social exclusion (Dierckx et al., 2011; Van Regenmortel, 2002). The majority of civil society actors in Flanders also apply a multidimensional and structural approach to poverty, subscribing this (academic) perspective often in combination with a perspective of basic rights (Kanmaz et al., 2015; Network Against Poverty; www.samenlevingsopbouw.be). Besides these, this perspective is employed in various documents on social policies as well (City of Antwerp, 2013; Decree on Poverty Reduction, 2003; FPS Social Security, 2013; Homans, 2014). However, although this perspective is still found in policy documents, recent political shifts (to centre-right parties) at the federal, the regional and the local level gradually indicate this structural and multidimensional is challenged by focusing on income, activation or charity in the implementation of these policies. Contrarily to this multidimensional and structural perspective, other migrant organisations employ an individual deficit model or see poverty absolute in terms of a lack of income or shelter. It appears this difference in the view on poverty among migrant organisations relates on the one hand to variations in the target group – more specifically the prevalence of poverty, and the kind of aid requests with which target group members call upon these organisations. In migrant organisations affiliated to migrant communities that are struck by poverty – and that are called upon with questions concerning various forms of service provision such as administrative issues or emergency relief – we notice a tendency to more explicitly address poverty. In these organisations, a structural and multidimensional view on poverty and its alleviation gradually develops. Organisations that are less confronted with (the effects of) poverty in their daily activities, will be less inclined to develop an explicit (let alone structural) view on poverty reduction. Typically, poverty is here rather described in terms of material deprivation or an individual deficit. On the other hand, the perspective is determined by organisations' objectives, the experience that inspires their activities and services, and their networks. Organisations that have acquired the necessary experience through their activities and services they have organised or the networks they developed in response to the situation and aid requests of their target group, typically have invested in an explicit view on poverty (reduction). In these organisations, a structural perspective on poverty and its alleviation is more common, although these are still limited in number. However, we also have shown that at least a fourth of the organisations we studied in two major cities to some extent work on poverty reduction (through service provision or empowerment work). Migrant organisations are searching for ways to deal with the profound poverty among their target groups. Therefore, they experiment with innovative ways to provide services and welfare provision to people with a migration background in poverty, while accounting for their particular needs. For instance, they try to refer people with a migration background in poverty to other organisations in order to improve their situation. They set up networks and realise support, for instance among single mothers, in migrant communities with weakening solidarity mechanisms. They try to represent their members in various organisations and platforms –

sometimes with success, sometimes in vain. They achieve confidence to address poverty in their own kinds of advocacy groups, taking time for this slow process, in proximity to the target group. As these activities are found in different cities to the same degree, this implies the urban organisational context is not the only determinant in finding poverty reduction activities among local migrant organisations. Also the prevalence of poverty in migrant communities, the characteristics and capacities of these communities (e.g. their size and structure, and their organisations), but social capital as well, still have a significant impact to the extent in which ethno-cultural communities and migrant organisations address poverty. These findings highlight the importance (for an explanation of this role) of studying several aspects of these varying urban configurations in detail – for instance, the organisational context or networks of migrant organisations (Chapter 3), the features and strategies of the target group (Chapter 2, 4) and types and activities of organisations (Chapter 4). Literature on the organisational process of migrant organisations already suggested several factors that are claimed to be essential for the analysis (Vermeulen, 2006). At the same, time our findings confirmed the literature, as these capacities of migrant organisations are in fact often limited – especially regarding poverty alleviation – when compared to other organisations and services (Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeersch et al., 2012). This implies it is vital to include other factors in the analysis and explanation of these discrepancies. Only thus we are able to truly interpret the role of migrant organisations in local welfare systems.

7.2.2 Unravelling the mystery: explaining migrant organisations' role in poverty reduction – and its implications

This role of local migrant organisations in poverty alleviation thus appears to be expanding. In what follows we try to interpret this role of migrant organisations and discuss the immediate theoretical implications. First, we will discuss the issues we studied as we considered several urban configurations that determine the local welfare system, in line with elements of the organising process of migrant organisations (Mingione and Oberti, 2003;Vermeulen, 2006). This will bring us to conclude that a new or complementary approach is necessary. We argue that our framework on collective capabilities positively accounts for discrepancies between the organisational aspects and external settings.

7.2.2.1 Urban configurations and features of the organising process

Our findings confirmed that the challenging context of increasing poverty and diversity among people with a migration background, and the localisation of welfare, affect the contemporary role and functions of migrant organisations. We explained how these tendencies weaken solidarity mechanisms in migrant communities and burden organisations and services traditionally working on poverty reduction. Because many needs of these groups consequently remain unaddressed, we examined the coping strategies of people with a migration background in poverty in order to map out where these

people turn to in their search for help (Chapter 2). In general, we noticed how people with a migration background in poverty do not always find their way in the tangle of service providers, confirming literature on the mismatch between a superdiverse clientele and service providers (Dierckx et al., 2013; Gil-Gonzalez et al., 2015; Greenwood et al., 2015; Kanmaz et al., 2015; Ma and Chi, 2011; Van Robaeys and Driessens, 2011). Our research also confirmed the expectations by revealing how they often end up in migrant organisations in search for help (Chapter 2). As explained, this enabled us to picture how people with a migration background assess the role of migrant organisations. Clearly, also the target group attributes migrant organisations with the task of partaking in poverty reduction. However, although this research gave some indications on what kinds of assistance these organisations may provide, our findings also revealed remarkable discrepancies between the expectations of the target group towards migrant organisations and the capacities of these organisations. At the same time, there still was a significant lack of knowledge on the types and whereabouts of organisations, by whom they are established or managed and what kinds of activities and services they provide. One implication of these findings is that the diversification of the features and needs of migrants in poverty is likely to alter the grounds for social cohesion that binds migrants (and thus their organisations) from their ethno-cultural identity to other issues. This impelled us to study these shifting grounds in Chapter 4.

Because migrant organisations apparently have a potential intermediary function between their target groups and service providers, the question remains whether these migrant organisations seek alliances with other organisations and services providing assistance to people in poverty. Therefore, in Chapter 3 we first took a closer look into the position of migrant organisations among other service organisations reaching people with a migration background. This gave us valuable insights on the position of migrant organisations in their local welfare systems. We wondered whether we could find an integrated network of migrant organisations. Our network analysis revealed that migrant organisations form a subcluster among other organisations and services. This confirmed the gap between migrant organisations and other organisations and services as predicted by the literature (Thys, 2011). Nevertheless, we have shown that most stakeholders in migrant organisations, other CSOs and public services attach great importance to collaboration and networking. Our findings uncovered significant barriers that impede this network formation between migrant organisations and others. These barriers appear in several aspects between migrant organisations on the one hand and other CSOs and public service agencies on the other. We found substantial discrepancies in working methods; discrepancies in the motivation of paid staff from public services compared to the volunteers in migrant organisations; a lack of knowledge of organisations about other organisations or services in a network; discrepancies in the expectations that (volunteers and staff from) various organisations (and services) have towards each other; and finally, considerable discrepancies in the opportunities of

migrant organisations. These opportunities – concerning the capacities to keep their organisation running, provide services to their clients and invest in networks – are clearly limited compared to other organisations and services. As such we highlighted and explained the weaker position of migrant organisations in their network among other CSOs and public services. All this hinders them in the formation and preservation of networks. That might add to the explanation of why people with a migration background in poverty do not always find their way to the help they need, complementing our report on the coping strategies of this target group. Our combined findings on such strategies and on the networks of migrant organisations largely explain how and why people with a migration background in poverty increasingly call upon these organisations. We highlighted that this occurred because of these organisations' proximity to the target group and their tailored provision of activities and services, but also the barriers migrants in poverty are confronted with in their search for help among traditional service providers. These results give some indication on whether migrant organisations take part in local welfare provision, presumably due to their expanding role in poverty reduction as a partner in local welfare systems. However, as these findings also reveal why the target group still has many unaddressed needs, it became necessary to devote more research into the role of migrant organisations in poverty, and the elements that might explain it (i.e. the extent to which they address poverty). Although migrant organisations' stakeholders appear to be highly motivated, our findings nevertheless illustrate the importance of accounting for the opportunities of these organisations (explored in Chapter 5) to play any role in local poverty reduction today (studied in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6). Indeed, the barriers to network formation suggest the importance of exploring the real opportunities of migrant organisations to play a role in local welfare systems. To improve the knowledge on migrant organisations and assess their opportunities to play their role in local welfare provision, a necessary first step is to map the variation of migrant organisations and their activities in Flanders. Therefore, we constructed an inventory of the migrant organisations in thirteen central cities in Flanders, based on the activities and mission statements of migrant organisations. By means of this inventory we analysed in Chapter 4 how migrant organisations in two major Flemish cities, Antwerp and Ghent, respond to increasing poverty and diversity. By addressing these questions, we intended to find vital elements that explain the role of these organisations in poverty reduction.

For this purpose, we explored the migrant civil society through the theoretical frameworks of social capital and collective action. These perspectives imply that migrants presumably call upon strong ties with homogeneous, close groups, aiming for social change or other benefits of these networks. The focus lies on the instrumental benefits of groups that are formed (or organisations that are established) in explaining outcomes in terms of the features of these groups. We wondered to what extent we were

able to apply the theoretical frameworks of social capital and strong ties to the analysis of migrant organisations in contemporary societies characterised by superdiversity and localising welfare. We noticed that although migrant organisations are still largely based on the ethno-cultural identity of their members, our findings indicate shifting grounds of social cohesion. Migrant organisations apparently seek the foundations of their social cohesion increasingly in other issues – such as poverty or integration – as a primary focus, and only secondarily in ethno-cultural identities. Because of the localisation of welfare and the rising poverty among people with a migration background, we focused on poverty. We discovered that both migrant organisations and their activities increasingly diversify. We tried to explain the prevalence of poverty reduction activities in migrant organisations by comparing influential elements of the urban configurations – such as the organisational context or the prevalence of poverty in ethno-cultural communities. We noticed how these factors appear to be still relevant, but are insufficient for a satisfactory explanation of the role of migrant organisations in poverty. Our findings therefore prompt us to conclude that the theoretical assumptions of social capital and strong ties – and their effects on the migrant civil society – still apply to the function of socio-cultural work. Indeed, most socio-cultural migrant organisations are still mainly structured according to ethno-cultural identities. However, these frames are not robust in the function of poverty reduction. In the case of poverty, it appears that ethno-cultural identities are not necessarily the a priori sphere for organisations' cohesion and objectives. The perspectives fail to explain the grounds of social cohesion in the migrant civil society that is challenged by poverty, superdiversity and welfare localisation. In line with Vertovec (2007), this implies the need for attuned theoretical frameworks for research into migrant organisations against the background of today's urban poverty, superdiversity and local welfare systems. This led us to launch our search for an adequate theoretical framework for the analysis of migrant organisations.

7.2.2.2 The missing link: real opportunities

We explained how the effects of several features of the city context (urban configurations in line with Mingione and Oberti, 2003) and the organising process of migrant organisations can explain a great deal of the role these organisations play in poverty reduction. However, we noticed that we were unable to fully grasp this role in the contemporary challenges of poverty, diversity and the localisation of welfare. There is a missing link in the approach of aggregating several separate features (whether internal to the organisation, or external features from their environment) to explain this role. Many discrepancies appear to exist between organisations' capacities and the expectations of their environments. Here we argue that it is the moral claim to focus on the real opportunities of organisations that addresses this missing link.

Literature indicated that migrant organisations often have limited capacities in today's changing and challenging context (Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeersch et al., 2012). Our analysis of the coping strategies of migrants in poverty and the networks, types and activities of migrant organisations confirmed the assumptions that migrant organisations face significant discrepancies between their internal capacities and the demands from their environments. This implied that in the context of superdiversity, poverty and the localisation of welfare, it is essential to inquire into the real opportunities of migrant organisations whether or not to play a certain role in local poverty reduction. To study these opportunities and explain this role, we developed a new framework of collective capabilities. In Chapter 5 we argued how this concept of collective capabilities is an appropriate notion with which we can analyse the real opportunities of migrant organisation to play a role in poverty reduction in today's challenges. Our aim was to reconstruct the process of building and strengthening collective capabilities of migrant organisations, and how these collective capabilities in turn enable these organisations to participate actively in local welfare systems. We claim migrant organisations go through a process of building and widening their collective capabilities in relation, but not limited, to the social and other individual capabilities of individuals involved in these organisations. As we demonstrated in Chapter 6, our framework withstands its empirical testing. We empirically reconstructed the process of building and widening collective capabilities of migrant organisations to explain the role these organisations play in local poverty reduction in Flanders today (Chapter 6). Our qualitative analysis generated models that revealed the interconnectedness of the conversion factors – factors that affect the conversion of features of input (such as resources) into capabilities, and the conversion of capabilities into functionings – determining the collective capabilities process. We focused on the main factors that start off the process, so as to reconstruct this process for the migrant civil society in general. Furthermore, we were able to illustrate how the process unfolds in a particular organisation. By presenting cases of individual migrant organisations, we gained insight into how specific factors contribute to or impede the process. We compared two cases of individual organisations: one of an organisation with strengthened capabilities, and another with rather restricted collective capabilities to realise their objectives and/or partake in the local welfare system. This comparison has shed more light on the effects of various factors advancing or impeding this process, and their effects on individual participants. Most importantly, this comparative analysis highlighted the crucial role of agency in explaining the discrepancies of organisations' internal capacities and external settings. Agency is therefore a vital explanatory element in assessing the role and position of migrant organisations in local welfare systems. As such, this analysis generated intervention tools to strengthen the capabilities of organisations and their participants in order to improve organisations' role in poverty reduction and the local welfare system, and the well-being of individuals with a migration background in poverty. We observed that few migrant organisations

explicitly aim for poverty reduction in their mission or objectives. At the same time numerous migrant organisations refer to their limited financial and methodical capacities to deal with such complicated matters as poverty. An important implication of these findings is that an approach that values agency ought to contribute to organisations' agency by improving these financial and methodical capacities, while respecting adequate autonomy. We therefore argue it is crucial to take this into account when searching for partners in local welfare systems.

We described how critical conversion factors positively or negatively contribute to migrant organisations' collective capabilities. We demonstrated the effect of conversion factors that typically determine the collective capabilities dimension of organisations' capacities and features, as is commonly done in research into organisations, i.e. features of the organisation itself, its stakeholders and its target group. Many of these elements could be assessed by means of research through a perspective on collective action, social capital, urban configurations, resource mobilisation or the immigrant organising process (Coleman, 1990; Mason and Beard, 2008; Mingione and Oberti, 2003; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeulen, 2006). However, literature indicated that there might be important discrepancies between these organisational capacities and the role these organisations are ascribed (Caponio, 2005; Spencer and Cooper, 2006; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeersch et al., 2012). As we revealed this assumed imbalance and the indications of substantial discrepancies by studying the networks and types of migrant organisations, we applied the theoretical framework of collective capabilities to combine an assessment of organisational capacities and features (and their networks) with their freedom and agency. It is in this combination of organisational capacities with elements that determine organisations' agency that our framework of collective capabilities surpasses many other theoretical perspectives. Perspectives on collective action, social capital, urban configurations, resource mobilisation or the immigrant organising process fail to grasp the discrepancies between internal capacities and external settings, because they neglect the crucial role of agency and freedom of choice. This dimension of freedom of choice and agency is determined by conversion factors such as the external support and thresholds migrant organisations encounter in contact with other organisations and services, referring among other things to their financial, legal and institutional or network opportunities, and both external and internal expectations raised towards migrant organisations. Our theoretical framework on collective capabilities (Chapter 5, 6) demonstrated how the factors of Vermeulen (2006) actually refer to what we define as conversion factors for the organisational capacities and features. In our analysis by means of this framework it becomes clear that, although these elements enable us to analyse many aspects for mapping out a certain role of migrant organisations, they fail to explain the role. This is because a focus on these capacities and features neglects crucial conversion factors that affect the freedom and agency of organisations to

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play any role. Our findings indicated that it is our attention for the real opportunities of organisations to play any role, realised by the combination of capabilities strengthening conversion factors for both organisations' capacities and their agency, which is able to explain the discrepancies between internal capacities and external settings. This appears to be crucial in order to determine the missing link in explaining the role of these organisations in poverty reduction. Only an assessment of the balance of both an organisation's capacities and its agency can give a comprehensive explanation of its role. An organisation that possesses sufficient capacities to realise its initial objectives, but is required to expand its scope in activities or services – while receiving disproportionate support for these expectations – will be unable to perform both the role it aspires to and the role it is expected to play. An assessment of its position in a local welfare system is difficult without accounting for this agency. This reveals a normative claim to focus on the real opportunities of organisations, i.e. a focus on organisations' capabilities rather than their resources or functionings.

Our results imply that many migrant organisations are prepared to play a larger part in local welfare systems, but they are hindered by their limited collective capabilities, affected by a context of budgetary restraints, their dependency on volunteer work, a lack of experience on issues such as poverty or welfare provision, and at the same time the call from authorities to participate in poverty reduction. As most of these organisations lack the necessary organisational features and capacities to partake in poverty reduction, there are significant discrepancies between these capacities and the expectations these organisations face – restricting their freedom of choice and agency. Regardless of these discrepancies, countless organisations are willing to contribute to an amelioration of the well-being of people with a migration background in poverty. Therefore, migrant organisations initiate cooperation with other migrant organisations, various CSOs and public services to develop specific projects to tackle poverty. Nevertheless, our analysis highlights that in order to be able to realise the provision of certain poverty reduction activities (e.g. activation to employment, financial support or emergency aid such as food distribution), this capability of a migrant organisation is determined by the availability of sufficient financial resources in the migrant organisation, its mission, knowledge and training of the stakeholders, equipment or infrastructure and support of external actors with the necessary financial, material or substantive means of support (e.g. advice or administrative support), but also supportive institutional and regulatory conditions. Expectations ought to be adequately in line with objectives and capacities, as well as collaboratively and consensually defined roles. Otherwise discrepancies occur, capabilities are restricted and organisations' functionings – the activities or services they provide and the networks they realised – are not in line with either organisations' capacities, their objectives or both. If their capacities and agency are restricted and as a result these opportunities are lacking, migrant organisations cannot address the expectations of authorities, other

organisations or services to play a role in poverty reduction. As such, our collective capabilities framework enabled us to really explain the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction (Chapter 6). Our findings imply this developed framework of collective capabilities is indeed the appropriate answer in our search for the adequate conceptual tool to analyse migrant organisations in today's challenges and pressures. It meets the criteria we have outlined beforehand. A perspective of collective capabilities is normatively substantiated in its central claim to focus on the real opportunities of organisations to take on a role, rather than mere organisational capacities.

Furthermore, the approach can be applied to collectivities. However, to remain close to the basic concepts of the approach, some authors argue for a focus on collective agency when analysing the collective level. In this sense, it could also be argued that measurement of collective capabilities at a group or organisation level is possibly problematic because it is difficult to say that collectivities may actually have the freedom to choose the life which they value with reason. For example, Bonvin suggests that collectivities are considerably more helpful for individuals' opportunities to choose the life that they value. Collective action is then a conversion factor, a means to improve individual capabilities (Bonvin and Farvaque, 2003). This is in line with the idea of Robeyns (2008) that there are three kinds of conversion factors. Social conversion factors are one of them and include institutions, groups and thus also collective action (Robeyns, 2008). We argue that organisations and groups can nevertheless convey a valuable vision – similar to an individual life plan – that concerns the progress or empowerment of a group or organisation. Most (certainly formal) organisations have indeed outlined at their inception a mission statement with objectives, as well as certain methods to achieve these goals. An organisation where people in poverty take the floor, for example, is a collectivity that aims to strengthen the position of people in poverty in the entire society through the method of group work and dialogue. A socio-cultural organisation of a particular ethno-cultural minority can aim at preserving or promoting its culture, but also at making connections between their own ethno-cultural group and the rest of society – to improve the position of its own people in that society. Therefore, collective action is both a conversion factor of individual capabilities and of collective capabilities at the individual and the collective level. Hence, we argue it is more appropriate to apply the concept of collective capabilities in the specific context of our research, and not merely collective agency. Our analysis confirmed that a capabilities perspective at the collective level while accounting for the basic premises of the capabilities approach is not only feasible. As the realisation of these goals depends on the entire process of factors affecting the conversion of resources and capacities into collective capabilities – and of these capabilities into functionings – and its crucial element in this final conversion lies in agency and freedom of choice, our findings remain in line with the basic principles of the

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capabilities approach. Also, it contributes to a better understanding of the reality for many organisations that are challenged in contemporary cities.

Most importantly it is able to truly grasp organisations' opportunities to play any role in poverty reduction. The concept of collective capabilities inherently refers to the combination of both internal capacities and external expectations and support that affect an organisation's freedom of choice and agency – crucial for the conversion of these capabilities into functionings. A migrant organisation that wants to partake actively in poverty reduction but fails to connect to the right organisation or service to acquire the support in methods or funding, will be unable to realise its objective. An organisation that does not explicitly choose to address poverty, but receives funding based on criteria that consider poverty reduction activities, will perhaps fail to put these means to an effective use. Only a concept of collective capabilities can grasp the role of both dimensions and the imbalance that reveals the limited opportunities of these organisations to realise their objectives, whether regarding poverty reduction or otherwise. With this concept the perspective thus accounts for the discrepancies between the internal capacities, features and objectives on the one hand, and external expectations or support and incentives on the other. As such it is able to explain how migrant organisations can become stronger organisations that participate in local welfare systems by means of collective pressure. Additionally, because of the interconnectedness of collective and individual capabilities, we have shown how strengthened migrant organisations in turn can strengthen individuals involved in the organisation, enabled to bring knowledge about their life-world into policy. As such, the framework demonstrates how we can analyse the process these organisations and their members undergo to both directly and indirectly contribute to a more effective target-group oriented local poverty reduction. We argued our framework is able to grasp how individual and collective capabilities are intertwined in determining the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction, and in the direct and indirect improvement of the well-being of individuals with a migration background involved in these organisations. In line with our definition of collective capabilities, the individual capabilities of people with a migration background in poverty that are involved in a migrant organisation with strong capabilities – whether as a participant, a volunteer or a board member – are both strengthened by and contribute to the organisations' collective capabilities at the same time. People with a migration background in poverty with certain organisational skills or relevant professional expertise can contribute to an organisation that may rely on supportive networks and sufficient resources but lacks knowhow. Due to their participation these people can come in contact with adequate service providers and strengthen their own well-being through social contacts or a sense of belonging.

In addition, we were able to connect the collective capabilities – and their part in explaining the role of migrant organisations in poverty – to their position in local welfare systems and thus their (potential)

contribution to more effective target-group oriented local poverty reduction policies. By means of this process linking the organisational meso level to the micro and the macro level as a tool for analysis, we believe this approach does more justice to the reality of migrant organisations in today's challenges as it enables us to explain why and to what extent certain organisations do partake in local welfare systems, and others do not.

7.3 Here be dragons: situating this study in the wider field of research

We have recapitulated our research questions and the main findings of our study and explained their immediate theoretical implications. Literature revealed a significant lack of knowledge about local migrant organisations and their role in contemporary local welfare systems, and poverty reduction in particular. We believe our research greatly contributed to address these unexplored territories, the dragons[46] in academic literature. In what follows we will situate this study and its findings in the broader field of research and elaborate on how further research can build on these findings. Therefore, we first explain how our findings contribute to the necessary knowledge on these organisations (in an understudied domain), and offer adequate tools of analysis for further research into these local migrant organisations. We focus specifically on the gathering of data on these organisations, the study of their functions and how the link with the micro level can be refined by means of employing our theoretical and methodological approach.

7.3.2 Improving knowledge on migrant organisations

Research on local migrant organisations in Flanders is quite a challenge. As we explained, there is a significant lack in Flanders of reliable and up-to-date information on the organisations at this level. Researchers denounce the fact that "*no single agency appears to have a solid updated list*" of these local migrant organisations (Verhoeven et al., 2003). It is difficult for policy makers and service providers to reach these organisations in search for an interlocutor, or for researchers seeking research subjects. Nobody appears to have adequate knowledge on how to acquire an overview on the minorities sector, not even the ethno-cultural federations or the Minority Forum, nor the authorities. Importantly, informal organisations are often not included in databases. A large part of migrant organisations are (still) informal. Excluding these organisations from analysis might generate a distorted picture of the role of the migrant civil society. For this reason, we combined as many data sources as possible to maximise the data on local migrant organisations. Applying the snowball method in our survey, we asked organisations to mention other migrant organisations they knew – in order to include as many organisations as possible. This approach enabled us to include many informal

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[46] '*Here be dragons*' denotes dangerous or unexplored territory. It is an old term to define uncharted areas in maps, in imitation of a supposed medieval practice of placing dragons, sea serpents and other mythological creatures in uncharted areas of maps.

organisations that are usually neglected in research on migrant organisations, because they are so difficult to find or reach. The migrant civil society appears to be a highly volatile domain in which there is a high turnover rate and little inclination among many of them to formalise and/or register their organisations. An exhaustive list is therefore an unattainable ideal, because invariably outdated. Still, if we want to assess the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction, we first ought to map out the variation of migrant organisations and their activities. We have thus succeeded in drawing a more representative picture of the contemporary migrant civil society in Flanders and its role in local poverty reduction. Such an inventory would also be a useful tool for policy makers, public services and CSOs in search of intermediaries for the target group or partners in the local welfare systems. Because we included many informal organisations and combined several data resources in our inventory – and analysed the features and activities – we were able to increase extensively our knowledge on local migrant organisations. However, we were confronted with the limited availability and difficult accessibility of data on local migrant organisations. At the same time there is great demand for more detailed information on these local level organisations. Therefore, we suggest further scientific research can support the civil society and local administrations to gain a better overview on the migrant civil society. Our inventory is an important first step, but it needs to be adapted for public accessibility (because of privacy concerns regarding several sources) and updated regularly.

Another contribution of this study to the knowledge on migrant organisations is the fact that we did not exclude beforehand certain ethno-cultural minorities from the data collection for the inventory (Chapter 4). Stakeholders in the migrant civil society often deplore that research on migration in Flanders focuses too much on the '*oldcomers'* communities, mainly Moroccan and Turkish. Because of increasing diversity, we argue it is vital to include more ethno-cultural minorities in further research. Of course, research always involves choices in narrowing down the focus. Still, in our selection of migrant communities in which we conducted in-depth interviews, for instance, we also included organisations within the Eastern European and Sub-Saharan African communities (Chapter 6). Following these implications, we believe more research based on our methods would also further contribute to the knowledge on the variety within the migrant civil society – and especially its role in the local welfare system. Therefore, we argue that it would be highly valuable to resume our network analysis of migrant organisations (Chapter 3) or the comparison of the organisational map (Chapter 4) in more cities and districts. The social, political, historical, economic and cultural configurations – including the structural features of migrant communities – fluctuate according to different cities and even districts. The variation in the spatial distribution of minorities and people in poverty in different districts is thus likely to alter the distribution of organisations over ethno-cultural minorities and involve other communities or the role they play. If, for instance, the risk of poverty increases in the

Jewish population in Antwerp, they are likely to shift their focus in their organisations on aspects of poverty or welfare – or even establish new organisations for this purpose. However, as the means available in the ethno-cultural group diminish, so will the capabilities of organisations to keep going, let alone to address their challenges. Repeating this research in districts with fewer or smaller migrant communities or with a higher socio-economic status, or in small-scale cities, would therefore improve the knowledge of diverging local welfare systems and their effects on migrant organisations and their role in poverty reduction. Also, we believe the scale of the city is a relevant factor in the analysis. A major city typically houses many ethno-cultural minorities with a variety in origin, size or organisations. Local authorities here can often rely on a reasonable budget for funding these migrant organisations. In smaller municipalities we usually find fewer and/or smaller ethno-cultural minorities, with correspondingly fewer organisations, and smaller budgets from the local authorities. Although we expect them to be limited in their financial support, they might have the opportunity to invest more time for other kinds of support for each organisation. In both cases the capabilities of the local migrant organisations can be strengthened or weakened, depending per case on whether their own strength lies in their financial resources, or rather their methodical capacities. Besides ethno-cultural minorities, local welfare systems also vary across major cities, smaller cities and municipalities. The institutionalisation and thus organisational variety in the civil society will differ accordingly. This degree of institutionalisation directly affects the network opportunities and thus the agency and freedom of choice of migrant organisations. A larger city with an extended range of organisations and services and a large variety of actors involved in its local welfare system, might be a fragmented tangle or it might instead provide more network opportunities for local migrant organisations. We expect the network opportunities here will raise their freedom of choice in the selection of network partners. The local welfare system of a smaller municipality will include a smaller range of actors. Their proximity and overview might enhance organisations' effective collaboration, although perhaps not selected with full freedom of choice. Because these effects include the migrant civil society, we argue for further comparative research with more variances in the scale and the spatial distribution to complement this study. We believe our mixed methods approach – combining social network analysis with qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews or document analysis – is highly appropriate for this venture.

Finally, the validity of the empirical testing of our capabilities framework would improve by expanding the number of in-depth interviews with representatives of migrant organisations through an increase of the number of organisations selected for interviews, as well as the inclusion of more diverse people involved in one and the same organisation. Involving more people per organisation generates diverse perspectives on these organisations, giving us a fuller image of organisations and their capabilities. For

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instance, we have addressed internal power relations in exploring the participation procedures and elements of voice. Extending this focus would further account for variances in these internal power relations. Our discussion of the collective capabilities in Chapter 6 (and the networks in Chapter 3) also referred to the role of other powerful actors in the environment of local migrant organisations and its effects on migrant organisations' capabilities to play a role in poverty reduction. However, the power struggles within and among migrant organisations, and between them and their federations, deserve more specific attention in research into the opportunities of local migrant organisations, as they directly affect organisations' agency both external and from within.

7.3.2 Analysing the functions of migrant organisations

We discussed how the data collection on research into migrant organisations can be improved by means of our findings and experiences. Here we want to highlight how this study can contribute to the analysis of migrant organisations' functions.

In this study we have developed our own typology of migrant organisations, derived from our empirical data. Following our findings, we believe typologies that are not specifically constructed for an analysis of migrant organisations fail to grasp the contemporary reality of local migrant organisations in Flanders. Most typologies that are especially developed for research on migrant organisations appeared to be inadequate to detect aspects of welfare provision and poverty reduction. We argue that our own typology adequately reflects the reality of migrant organisation in Flanders today, because it indicates the variation of migrant organisations and their activities – and their diffusion throughout different ethno-cultural communities. Also, because our typology is also comparable to typologies or functions often attributed to migrant organisations (Scaramuzzino, 2012), we believe it is both sufficiently substantiated by theory and empirical findings. Furthermore, it helped us demonstrate that the ideal-typological functions of migrant organisations in Flanders are under pressure in a context of poverty and superdiversity. It can therefore stimulate further research into migrant organisations in Flanders. As the migrant civil society is highly volatile and drastically challenged in contemporary urban contexts, we expect the focus of many old and new migrant organisations will shift in trying to address these challenges. This typology can be a useful tool to follow up on these developments.

Remarkable in this typology is the fact that none of the organisations in our study focused explicitly on the function of voice or representation. Nevertheless, many attach great importance to the representation of their target group members' interests. They actively try to advocate for them in several organisations and at various policy levels. In modern societies it is often expected that organisations employ politics as the ideal way of policy influence. Our findings make us wonder why

this voice aspect appears so rarely in the main mission of migrant organisations. Our data suggest that local migrant organisations would rather ascribe this function to their ethno-cultural federations than to themselves[47]. This appears to be in contrast to the importance of voice and representation in recent studies on migrant organisations (Kanmaz, 2007; Van Puymbroeck; 2014), indicating the rise of what may be considered as *'one-issue political movements'* (Van Puymbroeck; 2014). Newly emerging collectivities in migrant communities appear to be movements that gather around a certain issue, rather than more formalised organisations. However, our findings on how migrant organisations deal with poverty and diversity also suggested the times are changing. Increasingly confronted with these phenomena, many groups and organisations gradually come to the fore in addressing poverty related issues – through service provision or empowerment work, but also more explicitly through advocacy and representation. These groups might have a more informal structure, like social movements. However, it is also possible that they too will undergo a process of institutionalisation. One possible explanation is that these movements remain under the radar of research on migrant organisations at the moment. Nonetheless, we believe that the issue will increasingly be scrutinised, whether in a new experimental movement approach, or by means of formal organisations. The realisation of the objectives of most of these groups largely depend on the support for and expectations of these organisations. We believe furthering our research by means of our mixed methods approach into the capabilities of organisations to realise their objectives could enable us to include more of these new movements in the analysis and thus follow up on further changes in the migrant civil society.

7.3.3 Reconnecting the organisation with the individual

This study focused on the meso level of local migrant organisations. Our aim was to study the real opportunities of these local migrant organisations themselves and the process they undergo in building and widening their collective capabilities, in order to analyse the role of these organisations in local poverty reduction. As such, we focused on the perceptions of people involved in these organisations. Our findings can be further discussed in interaction with stakeholders in the migrant civil society at various levels. For instance, the inclusion of ethno-cultural federations might complete the picture of the local organisations in their surroundings and give more detailed information on the real opportunities of migrant organisations. However, earlier studies (Rosenow and Kortmann, 2010;

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[47] Also the way people define politics can be debated. This could concern merely agenda-setting, or it might be more than this. As our findings demonstrated, the migrant civil society is undergoing many transformations. Several organisations at the level of the federations as well as in their member organisations increasingly address aspects of poverty. The taboo on poverty is gradually fading because of the dispersion of poverty throughout migrant communities; nevertheless many people with a migration background still find it difficult to discuss. Although Kanmaz (2007) employs a broad interpretation of political opportunity structure, including a cultural and an ideological dimension, and thus elements of imaging, we believe we were able to grasp these institutional circumstances by means of our concept of collective capabilities and the context of local welfare systems.

Vermeersch et al., 2012) enabled us to shed light on their share in the process. This focus on local migrant organisations implies we have no detailed analysis of the local welfare systems. For instance, we did not compare this for both major Flemish cities where we conducted our qualitative research. We believe this would complement the current study. These local welfare systems might be analysed by means of a comparative discussion on the regulatory frameworks in cities, as well as the networks of migrant organisations and all other organisations and services they come in contact with at the local level. We do believe, though, that our data give adequate indications on the role of these local welfare systems through the analysis of networks among migrant organisations, other CSOs and public services. Moreover, these elements receive ample treatment in our introduction, where we discussed the institutional structure of the migrant civil society, in our discussion of the collective capabilities of migrant organisations, and particularly in the internal expectations, support and barriers encountered by migrant organisations. Importantly, research rarely focuses on local migrant organisations (Rosenow and Kortmann, 2010; Moya, 2005; Sierens, 2001; Vermeersch et al., 2012), whereas we explicitly decided to focus on the perceptions of these local migrant organisations in our qualitative research. Their voices are rarely heard, which is precisely where we wanted to make our contribution.

Although we focused on the meso level, our findings brought about indications of the positive effects of widened (and negative effects of limited) collective capabilities of migrant organisations (and their role in poverty reduction through the realisations of these capabilities in terms of activities and services and networks) on the individual and social capabilities of people with a migration background in poverty calling upon these organisations, and in turn their well-being. However, this effect was not the main focus of this study. Additional research studying exactly these effects would contribute to the knowledge on best practices in the migrant civil society and on the (functioning of the) links in the process between the meso and the micro level. We argue this is exactly where the greatest opportunity lies, both in respect of the value of our theoretical and methodical approach, and in what it can deliver in terms of intervention tools. To actually improve the well-being of individuals with a migration background in poverty, it is crucial to further study in detail how these links between migrant organisations work. In addition to collecting data and other qualitative material on the experiences and difficulties of people with a migration background in poverty, we therefore advocate for the construction of tangible intervention tools in order to substantially address the issue. Such a thorough approach concerns diverse societal actors: governments (at various levels and domains), social assistance and the wider civil society, but also the target group itself. However, authorities struggle with reaching and involving the highly diverse groups to develop an integral target-oriented poverty reduction policy. At the same time, the role of local migrant organisations in structural poverty alleviation is restricted because of their limited capabilities. We argue that the proper response would

be an increased effort to strengthen the capabilities of these local organisations, not only in order to be a full partner in poverty alleviation among people with a migration background, but also because they in turn strengthen the capabilities of individuals from their target group. However, research into these organisations – particularly with regard to their true potential and the way to strengthen it – still concerns relatively uncharted territory. We therefore advocate for a further development of our analytical framework to assess the collective capabilities of migrant organisations in the fight against poverty, as a practical tool for interventions in both policy and the broader field of practice. This would enable us to construct a complete set of intervention instruments. As we will see in the next section, we can already infer a variety of recommendations for specific interventions. Continued research would improve their range and practical applicability. These intervention strategies can thus be developed for migrant organisations themselves, as well as for other organisations and services, to strengthen migrant organisations' capabilities in order to further develop their role in poverty reduction. Moreover, it can also be developed for the broader field of socio-cultural work or social assistance and service delivery in order to strengthen individuals with a migration background in poverty. Thus, this toolbox would not only widen the capabilities local migrant organisations for them to play a greater role in poverty reduction – at least of those organisations that have this objective in view. Authorities also gain stronger partners in the fight against poverty, thereby enabling them to adjust their policies to the challenging conditions of budgetary restraints, high poverty rates among people with a migration background, increasing diversity and the localisation of welfare provision. As such, policies would be better attuned to the diverse local needs. We indicated that for migrant organisations to be able to undertake a task in poverty reduction in a structural manner, they need not only financial and material support, but guidance in methods and approaches to eradicate poverty as well. Therefore, we believe further research based on our collective capabilities frame may help the civil society to provide adequate methods for the fight against poverty in migrant organisations and their communities. We argue that action research in close collaboration with field workers can generate this comprehensive and thoroughly substantiated set of tangible interventions tools. Thus, our analysis framework can further be converted into an action-oriented instrument for intervention strategies with which social workers can strengthen individual capabilities of people with a migration background in poverty. We argue for investing in the intersection of scientific expertise and practical experience, and combining the knowledge and forces to develop a more effective target-group oriented local poverty reduction. This collaborative approach of combining scientific and practical expertise is in line with the basic premises of the capability approach on which we have built our conceptual framework. A perspective of capabilities implies a deliberative democratic process to select the elements of focus in an analysis or evaluation. In order to account for agency and freedom of choice – and as such better grasp and intervene in the opportunities of organisations – both scientific experts

and relevant individuals and groups need to be involved in the development of social policies and research (Doyal and Gough, 1991; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1993, 2002). We believe this alliance of knowledge will strengthen the collective capabilities of migrant organisations that are involved in this process of evaluation and intervention. Indeed, they can rely on expertise in matters of which they lack knowhow. At the same time, they can advocate on behalf of themselves and their target group through input on their experience. They can identify the factors that most affect their own organisational capacities and their agency and aim to strengthen these in collaboration with authorities and CSOs through an alignment of external expectations and support with the objectives and capacities of these organisations. Therefore, in this action research we argue for a literature review of methods for strengthening individual capabilities of people living in poverty, combined with an exploration of existing projects in collaboration with key figures from the field. A description of relevant methodologies and best practices in Flanders serves as the starting point for developing and operationalising the instrument. Based on this methodology exploration, we can inquire into the perceptions of social workers from various kinds of organisations and services about key elements of the instrument that needs to be specified. Only then can it be developed in collaboration with practice, i.e. with people experienced in working on empowerment or the strengthening of capabilities of people (with a migration background) in poverty. To be able to implement and evaluate this intervention instrument, we argue that in order to account for agency it is first to be field-tested in an organisation or service that is relevant for this objective and interested to introduce this instrument. After this try-out, a number of social workers, volunteers and clients can be questioned about their perceptions regarding the practical application of the instrument and its effects. We argue this can be achieved by means of participant observation and focus groups with both social workers from the participating organisations and clients, in line with the importance of a deliberative process in a capabilities perspective (Doyal and Gough, 1991; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1993, 2002). On this basis, the instrument can be adjusted and, if necessary, implemented in other organisations or services. We believe our study provides the necessary insights to substantiate this further research. As such it can assist local authorities in the wider implementation of best practices. Our study paved the way, providing the necessary leads for further research and development.

7.4 Bridging the gap: relevance of research for policy and practice

We have situated our study in the broader research field and indicated where further research can continue on our findings. As we explained, we believe our study not only contributes to bridging the gap of knowledge in research and theory, but also among policy makers and organisations or services that come in contact with people with a migration background in poverty. Here, we will highlight some of the most important contributions in our research that are relevant for policy and practice. Building

on our findings, we first suggest several policy recommendations. Next we discuss intervention tools for relevant actors in the field, i.e. local migrant organisations, their federations and the Minority Forum, other CSOs and (local and higher level) administrations and their public services.

7.4.1 Relevance for policy: recommendations: do the needful

In times of changing responsibilities on local welfare systems and the profound (and structural) poverty among people with a migration background, we believe this study can assist local and higher authorities and public services in their social policies. Our findings generated various specific recommendations for policy interventions on diverse issues concerning migrant organisations and poverty reduction.

As we explained, authorities are often in search for interlocutors within migrant organisations. However, our findings highlight the crucial importance of agency to account for the discrepancies between these organisations' capacities and objectives on the one hand and the external support, barriers and expectations on the other[48]. Therefore, we argue that our findings indicate that mainly, but not exclusively, local authorities can support migrant organisations in their role in poverty reduction. This support does not consider merely the vital structural financial and methodical support and guidance. A focus lies on widening the agency of organisations – their ability to set their own goals and act upon them – by respecting their freedom of choice and aligning expectations and support with their objectives and capacities. The interconnectedness of conversion factors to both collective capabilities dimensions imply this support ought to be more than financial incentives, and include guidance on methods and best practices. For instance, to be able to experiment with new approaches to poverty alleviation, migrant organisations need more available and reliable information on potential projects and funding they can subscribe to, as well as simplified procedures and assistance in their applications. To this end, the government is adequately positioned to strengthen not only local migrant organisations, but also the role of ethno-cultural federations. As our analysis on the networks (Chapter 3) and collective capabilities (Chapter 6) implies, the role of federations needs to be reinforced in order to improve their support of member organisations, as well as to advance the representation of the interests of local migrant organisations and their target groups. This would enable the federations to realise their objectives, and strengthen the capabilities of their member organisations. Many

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[48] Our findings demonstrated that the capability of a migrant organisation – to realise the provision of certain poverty reduction activities (e.g. activation to employment, financial support or emergency aid such as food distribution) – is determined by the availability of sufficient financial resources in the migrant organisation, its mission, knowledge and training of the stakeholders, equipment or infrastructure and support of external actors with the necessary financial, material or substantive means of support (e.g. advice or administrative support), but supportive institutional and regulatory conditions as well. Following this, we argue that policy makers and field workers are crucial in making this capability real.

stakeholders in the migrant civil society experience that federations are currently not entirely able to fulfil this role of representation as independent organisations. In times of superdiversity and welfare localisation, these federations need support to better represent their member organisations in diversity. This requires not only an expansion of resources, but also of these organisations' mandates. As we explained, agency is crucial in this approach. Aligning expectations towards migrant organisations with their capacities and objectives therefore implies first investing in the capacities of those organisations that aim to partake in poverty reduction, before expecting them to do so. We established the importance of agency both in the assessment of the role of organisations, and in the expectations towards them. Considering this, we argue this approach would not only account for the agency of the federations and their member organisations, but also strengthen these organisations at both levels to become partners in the local welfare system. This suggests that authorities ought not to impose a role on these organisations but to strengthen and assure their agency and freedom of choice. Following our findings, we emphasise the need to account for the discrepancies between capacities and expectations. Only in accepting the importance of agency and the shared responsibility in advancing the capabilities of migrant organisations, will authorities find the partner they are looking for.

In line with these implications, our findings entail the need for local authorities to invest in networking with local migrant organisations as equal partners in local welfare systems. Importantly, our research into migrant organisations' networks revealed the importance of making clear (written) agreements on the role and expectations of each actor in joint projects or consultation platforms, to prevent misunderstanding and structurally perpetuate the success of collaboration. As such, these forms of cooperation and networking would not only strengthen local migrant organisations, but also improve the services to (and the situation and societal position) of people with a migration background in poverty. It would also improve the effectiveness of service provision in CSOs and public services. Of course, various networks among service providers already exist. However, they often appear to fail to include relevant organisations representing people with a migration background in poverty. Our analysis of network integration among migrant organisations, other CSOs and public services produced several solution strategies for the improvement of network formation and integration. Within networks, participants ought to search actively for other participants with relevance in poverty reduction among people with a migration background – through outreaching. This active approach would strengthen the agency of many players in the migrant civil society that are disconnected from other CSOs or public services. Local authorities can provide the coordination of these networks, but ethno-cultural federations can play a central role as well – provided they are strengthened in their role and capabilities. Only with this support would they have the agency and ability to realise (and revise)

their objectives. Authorities can assist interested local migrant organisations to become formalised and/or participate in platforms. As such, they can promote participation in decision-making at the level of the neighbourhood, stepwise in small groups. Precisely with organisations' agency in mind, transparent procedures are crucial in these kinds of networking – but also in the allocation of related funding. Only adequate information about procedures will enable organisations to choose their functionings with reason and capabilities. Therefore, the information exchange on the needs of people with a migration background is vital in these networks as well. For instance, gathering aid requests in plenary information sessions would enable participants to advocate for their interests and those of their target group. Also the exchange of reliable information on social services is apparently essential in order to enable organisations to realise the objectives they choose. A network coordination function requires the necessary knowledge on available organisations and their functions. Therefore, we believe it is crucial that authorities cooperate with researchers and civil society to improve and continuously update the knowledge and data on migrant organisations. Such kinds of knowledge alliances do not only contribute to knowledge about these organisations, but also strengthen their capabilities to be and to do what they want to be and to do. Our findings imply it is advisable for all relevant actors in the field to promote cooperation in order to jointly improve the availability of and access to information on these local migrant organisations, with the necessary respect for privacy. According to both stakeholders in the field and our respondents, these actors consist of the Minority Forum, the ethno-cultural federations and local authorities. If migrant organisations are treated in this cooperation as equal partners and expectations concerning their involvement in this collaboration are in line with their objectives and capacities, the agency of these organisations would be considerably strengthened. Because many migrant organisations highly value the representation of their target group's interests, they are prepared to be a partner in the local welfare system – although the interpretation and extent of the role varies. Considering the importance of freedom of choice and agency, we believe it is possible to support specifically these migrant organisations to strengthen this role, but not impose it on organisations that do not aim at poverty alleviation, empowerment or interest representation. We believe our theoretical framework and findings can assist these partners in this project.

Furthermore, we demonstrated how legal and institutional settings greatly determine local migrant organisations' capabilities to play a role in poverty reduction. Therefore, we believe that if administrations would employ more flexibility in the evaluation and the categorisation of migrant organisations and their activities – for eligibility to recognition or public funding – they would significantly contribute to the opportunities of migrant organisations to play a role in poverty reduction. This is also true for higher level authorities. Applying more flexibility to the implementation

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of decree criteria would strengthen the capabilities of migrant organisations to participate actively in local welfare systems and to play a more structural role in poverty reduction. However, our institutional discussion of the migrant civil society revealed its fragmentation, and our findings confirmed how this impedes the realisation of organisations' objectives and agency. We therefore advocate the necessity of building bridges across various policy domains.

During the course of this research, many ethical questions were raised regarding the growing role of migrant organisations in – and their approach of – poverty reduction. We could wonder whether the increasing involvement of migrant organisations in local poverty reduction can be considered as a strategy of empowerment – by means of working on the collective capabilities of migrant organisations – or rather as an expression of a public welfare retrenchment. We argue that to prevent the latter, it is vital that these capabilities of migrant organisations are explicitly and positively addressed and strengthened through specific interventions by policy makers. We have suggested various interventions. Precisely because our framework of collective capabilities is able to grasp the discrepancies between organisations' capacities and objectives versus external expectations and support, it provides us with the necessary tools for accounting for the agency and real opportunities of organisations in this process. Indeed, if we were to expect migrant organisations to participate in local poverty reduction, we ought to enable them to do so. This implies that policy makers and other actors in society (public services, CSOs, …) have the shared responsibility of strengthening the capabilities of these local migrant organisations – through direct support and indirect conducive institutional and legal regulations – in order to create promoting institutional settings for migrant organisations to play a (more explicit, structural or extended) role in poverty reduction. Additionally, this also implicates that policy makers ought to differentiate between the roles they ascribe to diverse organisation types, accounting for the agency of migrant organisations by taking their organisational objectives into consideration. Furthermore, policies ought to distinguish between the various expectations towards different target groups, and in the diverse methods with which to address poverty in these different groups. The tension we noticed in the view on poverty alleviation – between migrant organisations versus most civil society actors, policy makers or academics – implicates precisely the importance of agency both in the decision of whether and how migrant organisations are involved in the local welfare system, and in the set-up and input of (joint) projects to tackle poverty. At the same time, as there often occur inconsistencies between the discourse and the activities of migrant organisations, this tension implies the significance of substantial methodical support of and cooperation with local migrant organisations to experiment with new ways of poverty alleviation among people with a migration background. The mutual exchange of expertise – on both poverty alleviation and on poverty and the life-world of the target group – between migrant organisations and

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policy makers, is therefore crucial to address the gaps that currently prevail in poverty reduction among people with a migration background. A better understanding of the mechanisms of poverty and potential solution strategies could strengthen migrant organisations in their decisions on whether and how to address poverty alleviation among their target group. Perhaps they already work on poverty alleviation without knowing. Perhaps they want to invest in this role or rather connect to other organisations and refer their target group members there. On the other hand, expertise in working with the target group can strengthen authorities in adapting their approach of poverty reduction to the target group of people with a migration background in poverty. For instance, accounting for the taboo on poverty and investing in categorically organised collectivities that takes time to address the issue gradually.

Last but not least, we believe authorities can play a crucial role in strengthening capabilities of individuals with a migration background in poverty and of the organisations by stimulating and participating in further research into the role of migrant organisations. More specifically, further research into the effects of migrant organisations' capabilities on the individual people with a migration background in poverty calling upon these organisations would add to the knowledge of the links between the meso and micro level. We explained how this can be tackled in further research by getting involved in both updating the migrant civil society's inventory, and the development of a comprehensive toolbox of intervention strategies for the improvement of individual and collective capabilities. We also demonstrated the interests of authorities in partaking of this advancement. On the other hand, more detailed insights on the links between the meso and the macro level would assist local authorities in their cooperation with migrant organisations – in order to enable migrant organisations to become real partners in the local welfare systems if they intend to. Therefore, we believe local authorities can be an essential partner in research on the particularities of different local welfare systems on the role of local migrant organisations in poverty reduction.

7.4.2 Relevance for practice: process interventions

Besides generating recommendations for policy makers, our research appears relevant for the field of practice as well. Here we will give some recommendations for organisations that are confronted with people with a migration background in poverty. Because our results highlight the importance of collaboration and shared responsibility, we argue that both authorities and the civil society have a vital part to play in enabling migrant organisations to partake in local welfare systems. This implies that local migrant organisations themselves, but also their umbrella organisations (ethno-cultural federations and the Minority Forum) and other CSOs are required in the joint project of tackling poverty structurally among people with a migration background.

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Because migrant organisations refer to this shared responsibility, we believe that if CSOs at various levels treat poverty as a priority issue with structural attention, they would be able to structurally perpetuate the approach of combating poverty and its effects on people with a migration background in poverty. This implies, for instance, addressing the issue of poverty among this target group within their organisations – as such widening the capabilities of the individuals. Based on our analysis of migrant organisations' capabilities to play a role in poverty reduction, we argue that there are plenty candidates among migrant organisations and other CSOs. Provided that migrant organisations are strengthened in their capabilities and other CSOs successfully invest in networking with these organisations, we therefore believe separate poverty advocacy organisations for people with a migration background in poverty need not specifically be established when traditional CSOs manage to involve people with a migration background in poverty. Our findings did indicate this is rarely the case, although their participation is on the rise. However, we believe the presence of separate groups that can experiment with the dialogue method for addressing poverty might be an ideal stepping stone towards further developments that will be of use in order to work inclusively in the future. Migrant organisations that are willing and adequately supported have already started these initiatives. For instance, several migrant organisations are now experimenting with methods from poverty advocacy organisations to introduce the issue of poverty in their own organisation. Those that succeed in discussing poverty with people with a migration background in poverty can rely on the close collaboration with and expertise from other CSOs. If the aim of both (particularly intended) migrant organisations and outsiders is for them to become a real partner in the local welfare system, rather than developing a charity approach, substantial support through networking is the ideal way to achieve this. This is because of the differences in the view on poverty as a social problem and the appropriate poverty reduction strategies in organisations and policies put forward by these various actors. Crucial in this achievement is thus the ability of migrant organisations to experiment with and adjust these methods to their daily experiences in working with migrants in poverty. This refers to both the support and the freedom these organisations require in order to develop such an approach. As such, they try to take the necessary time to gradually build up trust among their participants in order to discuss this sensitive issue. These implications also call upon CSOs to contribute actively to the strengthening of local migrant organisations' collective capabilities. In our view, both strategies and levels are equally important when taking the agency of both migrant organisations and other CSOs into consideration. As explained before, we therefore argue for investing in collaboration and networking with these local migrant organisations, through outreaching and with clear agreements on the role and expectations regarding the cooperation.

Particularly regarding the Minority Forum and the ethno-cultural federations, our research findings implicate that there are many questions in the migrant civil society related to the issue of poverty and the methods with which to address this issue. Because of the gaps both within civil society and between the minorities sector and other sectors, we believe the Forum and the federations can play a crucial role in further developing an approach to poverty eradication. They are the official representatives of local migrant organisations. As our findings also revealed that local migrant organisations entrust this representational function almost entirely to these umbrella organisations, they are the eligible candidates for the job. As such, they can decide whether their task or approach is merely to bundle signals and call upon policy makers and public services to tackle poverty through the available institutions and resources. Conversely, they can choose to develop a vision on the issue of poverty among migrants and adequate approaches based on their experiences and advocate on this issue and approach, or rather to play an active, structural and substantiated role in poverty eradication. Their agency implies this choice is not determined beforehand. However, they are expected by their member organisations to assume responsibility. As local authorities increasingly find an intermediary in ethno-cultural federations – and our respondents advocate for strengthened federations acting as pioneers – we believe they too share responsibility to address poverty among people with a migration background. In this way, they in turn also contribute to the agency of their member organisations. Investing in a broadly shared and supported problem definition of poverty and perspective on its reduction strategies could strengthen the real opportunities of migrant organisations to actively take up a position in the local welfare system. The Minority Forum has recently developed an official view on poverty among people with a migration background and they have set up a joint project with the poverty sector to put the issue on the agenda in the minorities sector. However, our findings reveal the need for structural implementation by including poverty as one of their main structural issues. Several ethno-cultural federations have participated in the joint project on poverty among people with a migration background. They try to address poverty through activities of their own and stimulate (some of their) member organisations to participate in this new challenge. However, the project has come to an end. We wonder to what extent these federations and their member organisations will be able to perpetuate their attention to poverty and structurally implement the methods they have learned in projects such as this one, and disperse best practices. We are very much aware that the federations are overburdened by questions and expectations – covering a broad range of issues not necessarily related to poverty – from their target group, their member organisations, local and higher administrations, public service agencies, CSOs from various sectors and, of course, nosy researchers. If these expectations are maintained, the federations therefore need more – and more structural – support to strengthen their role (and opportunities to realise their objectives). However, our findings revealed that crucial information on project funds or opportunities for support does not always arrive

at the local level. Therefore, this also highlights their responsibilities towards their member organisations regarding the flow of reliable information about potential projects for obtaining new methods or building up networks to the advancement of poverty eradication. As such, they would contribute significantly to their members' agency and strengthen the real opportunities of those members that intend to fight poverty to partake in the local welfare system as a new approach to poverty reduction.

Finally, we believe that our research has established the importance for local migrant organisations – willing to address poverty or social exclusion among their members or participants to some extent – to initiate cooperation and especially to raise their voice in calling upon their umbrella organisations and authorities, in order to be heard and adequately supported. Recapturing our respondents' claim of a shared responsibility, we refer to their claim for all societal actors to support them in experimenting with new or adjusted approaches of poverty reduction among their target group. This is partly to prevent a return to mere charity work, and mainly to contribute to structural poverty eradication and the continued improvement of the well-being and societal position of people with a migration background in poverty. We emphasise local migrant organisations already partake in poverty reduction to a great extent, in contrast with common assumptions. However, at the same time we revealed several bottlenecks that prevent them in fulfilling their potential role. These bottlenecks especially hinder those organisations intended to become genuine partners in the local welfare system in order to contribute to more effective poverty reduction among their target group. Through our collective capabilities framework these bottlenecks bring forth ready-to-implement interventions to strengthen those migrant organisations in their role of poverty reduction. As such it can contribute to more effective local social policy and the improvement in well-being of people with a migration background in poverty. Moreover, we described how we can further such a toolbox with research in collaboration with the field. We argue that this study is of topical interest, because a new wave of generational poverty is emerging. As attention for this pressing issue is fading in policy and practice priorities, we emphasise the need for all relevant actors to address and prioritise this issue. We believe this study can thus make a positive contribution to the amelioration of the life of people with a migration background in poverty, as well as the real opportunities of migrant organisations to do and be what they deem valuable.

List of figures and tables

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Chapter 6

List of abbreviations

CSO   Civil Society Organisation

EU   European Union

NGO   Nongovernmental organisation

OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PCSW   Public Centre for Social Welfare

Uitdagingen en Capabilities: Nederlandstalig Abstract

Werkelijke mogelijkheden van etnisch-culturele verenigingen en interventiestrategieën voor lokale doelgroepgerichte armoedebestrijding

Sylvie Van Dam

Alarmerende armoedecijfers bij mensen met een migratieachtergrond, een groeiende diversiteit en het toenemende belang van het lokale beleidsniveau, roepen vragen op omtrent de rol van etnisch-culturele verenigingen in armoedebestrijding. Daartegenover staat een opmerkelijk gebrek aan kennis over armoede bij mensen met een migratieachtergrond, evenals over etnisch-culturele verenigingen – in het bijzonder over de rol die zij al dan niet opnemen in welvaartsvoorziening of armoedebestrijding. Daarom vragen we ons af hoe en in welke mate etnisch-culturele verenigingen deelnemen aan lokale armoedebestrijding in Vlaanderen, en welke rol ze daarbij spelen in de hedendaagse lokale welvaartssystemen. We bekijken ook hoe deze rol tot stand komt.

Om deze vragen te beantwoorden, bestuderen we – geïnspireerd door het organisatieproces van etnisch-culturele verenigingen volgens Vermeulen (2006) – de oplossingsstrategieën van de doelgroep, de netwerken van etnisch-culturele verenigingen, de types organisaties en hun activiteiten. Onze kwalitatieve analyse van de oplossingsstrategieën van mensen met een migratieachtergrond in armoede verheldert hoe en waarom zij deelnemen aan etnisch-culturele verenigingen. Er blijkt een duidelijke kloof tussen de doelgroep en organisaties en diensten die reeds jarenlange ervaring hebben in het werken rond armoede, zoals OCMW's, Centra voor Algemeen Welzijnswerk (CAW's) of sociale huisvestingsmaatschappijen. Mensen met een migratieachtergrond in armoede doen in toenemende mate beroep doen op etnisch-culturele verenigingen, op zoek naar laagdrempelige categoriaal georganiseerde basiswerkingen. Die vaststelling werpt vragen op omtrent de mate waarin etnisch-culturele verenigingen in staat zijn om de verbinding te maken met andere organisaties en diensten – om hun cliënten door te verwijzen naar de gepaste diensten. Daarom onderzoeken we de netwerken van etnisch-culturele verenigingen met andere middenveldorganisaties en publieke diensten. Middels mixed methods tonen we aan dat er een kloof bestaat tussen etnisch-culturele verenigingen en andere organisaties of diensten, en verklaren deze kloof. Voortbouwend op deze verzamelde kennis, kunnen we etnisch-culturele verenigingen bestuderen tegen de achtergrond van toenemende diversiteit en armoede, en de lokalisering van welzijn – middels een analyse van de types organisaties die in Vlaanderen actief zijn, in welke etnisch-culturele gemeenschappen ze werden opgericht, en welke activiteiten of diensten ze voorzien. We onderzoeken hoe zij reageren op de uitdagingen van diversificatie, fragmentatie en armoede. De ideaaltypische functies en rollen blijken niet meer

eenduidig van toepassing te zijn in deze superdiverse context van etnisch-culturele verenigingen en gemeenschappen die hoge armoedecijfers kennen.

Omdat onze bevindingen pleiten voor aangepaste theoretische kaders, ontwikkelen we een theoretisch kader van collectieve capabilities waarmee we de rol van lokale etnisch-culturele verenigingen in armoedebestrijding in Vlaanderen empirisch kunnen reconstrueren. Daaruit blijkt dat de meerderheid van etnisch-culturele verenigingen in eerste instantie aan socio-cultureel werk doen. Slechts weinig etnisch-culturele verenigingen werken expliciet rond armoedebestrijding. Daar staat tegenover dat de meeste etnisch-culturele verenigingen toch ook in bepaalde mate aan armoedebestrijding doen – doch eerder ad hoc, informeel en buiten de uren of het mandaat van de vereniging. Tegelijk neemt de aandacht voor armoedebestrijding in lokale etnisch-culturele verenigingen en hun federaties stilaan toe. Etnisch-culturele verenigingen zoeken manieren om met de armoede in hun doelgroepen om te gaan. Ze zoeken samenwerking met andere etnisch-culturele verenigingen, middenveldorganisaties en publieke diensten – om specifieke projecten tegen armoede op te zetten. Ze experimenteren op innovatieve wijze met dienstverlening aan mensen met een migratieachtergrond, rekening houdend met hun specifieke noden. Dit alles vindt plaats in een context van weinig budgettaire ruimte, een afhankelijkheid van vrijwilligerswerk, gebrek aan ervaring rond het werken met deze kwesties en een moeilijke aansluiting bij andere organisaties en diensten. Tegelijk verwachten andere actoren (middenveld, overheden en publieke diensten, achterban) dat zij deelnemen aan armoedebestrijding, hoewel betrokkenen van etnisch-culturele verenigingen ervaren dat daar weinig tegenover staat wat betreft inhoudelijke en financiële ondersteuning, respect, gelijkwaardigheid, erkenning of het benutten van talenten en capaciteiten. Heel veel etnisch-culturele verenigingen zijn bereid (en zelfs vragende partij) om een grotere rol te spelen in armoedebestrijding, maar worden hierin verhinderd door beperkte capabilities om een rol op te nemen. Daartoe is er nood aan structurele financiële en inhoudelijke ondersteuning van andere organisaties en diensten, met het oog op het versterken van hun autonomie. Middels het opnemen van alle factoren van het organisatieproces volgens Vermeulen (2006) in de analyse, tonen we de relevantie van deze factoren aan, evenals de waardevolle bijdrage van ons onderzoek aan de netwerken en de sociale kaart, maar bouwen we hier ook op verder door het belang aan te tonen van organisatorische autonomie, in het bijzonder in de analyse van de mogelijkheden van organisaties om een rol al dan niet op te nemen. Dit komt enkel aan het licht met behulp van een capabilities-perspectief. Immers, dit onderzoek toont aan dat als we verwachten van etnisch-culturele verenigingen om een rol op te nemen in armoedebestrijding, het van belang is bij te dragen aan de werkelijke mogelijkheden van deze organisaties daartoe. Onze analyse benadrukt dat de mogelijkheid van een etnisch-culturele vereniging om bepaalde armoedebestrijdingsactiviteiten te realiseren (bv. activering om de werkgelegenheid,

financiële steun of noodhulp zoals voedseldistributie), wordt bepaald door de beschikbaarheid van voldoende financiële middelen in de etnisch-culturele vereniging, haar missie, kennis en opleiding van medewerkers, uitrusting of infrastructuur, en bijdragen van externe actoren met de nodige financiële, materiële of inhoudelijke steun (E.g. advies of administratieve ondersteuning) – maar ook autonomie bevorderende institutionele en wettelijke condities (E.g. decretale aanpassingen sociaal-cultureel volwassenenwerk). Dat duidt op een verantwoordelijkheid van alle actoren in de samenleving – i.e. mensen met een migratieachtergrond en hun gemeenschappen zelf, de lokale etnisch-culturele verenigingen en hun koepelorganisaties, het bredere middenveld, én de verscheidene overheden en publieke diensten – om in te zetten op de capabilities van etnisch-culturele verenigingen en hun achterban om de uitdagingen van armoede te trotseren.

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