

“Changing Responsibilities:
True opportunities of migrant organisations in local poverty reduction”

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Abstract

Against a background of skyrocketing poverty risks among migrants and emerging local welfare systems (Andreotti et al, 2012) - where the discretionary power of local authorities rises and the actors involved in local social policy and poverty reduction diversify ever more - we look at the real possibilities of migrant organisations in poverty reduction. These migrant organisations are increasingly called upon by local administrations, but also civil society organisations to participate in local social policy (Kazepov, 2010; Vertovec, 2007). Because of a lack of knowledge on these migrant organisations, however, little is known on the actual role they undertake today. Moreover, the question remains whether they are able and willing to play such a role, allocated to them. Empirical research indicates that migrant organisations often provide assistance to their members, outside their mandate or founding vision. They are indeed confronted with aid requests from a diverse group of members, left aside by other aid organisations or public services. This situation not only prompts us to ask questions on the responsibility of actors involved in social policy and poverty reduction, but on the justification thereof as well. Furthermore, it is vital to explore the real possibilities of these actors in undertaking an ascribed role. To assess these real possibilities, we apply the concept of collective capabilities of migrant organisations, to evaluate whether these organisations are able to play the role they choose. With this framework, we reconstruct the process by which these organisations build and maintain their collective capabilities, and simultaneously contribute to the widening of individual and social capabilities of individuals involved in these organisations. For this purpose, we conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with representatives of migrant organisations in two major cities in Flanders, Belgium. Their selection was based on an inventory we constructed of Flemish migrant organisations and a derived typology. We took the variation of migrant communities into account. Our empirical findings suggest that many migrant organisations are nowadays searching for ways to deal with the rising poverty among their target groups within a context of budgetary restraints, volunteer work, a lack of experience on these issues and the call of authorities to participate in poverty reduction. They initiate cooperation with other migrant organisations, CSOs and public services to develop specific projects to tackle poverty. They experiment with innovative ways to provide services and welfare provision to migrants in poverty, accounting for their particular needs. Our main conclusions refer to the willingness of migrant organisations to partake in poverty reduction. However, to be able to fulfil this role as a genuine partner in local welfare regimes, they need structural financial as well as substantive support from other organisations and services, more specifically from local authorities.

Key words: Migrant organisations, local welfare system, collective capabilities, poverty

Migrant organisations in pressuring times

Alarming poverty rates among (especially non-EU28) migrant communities in Belgium (Dierckx et al, 2011; Eurostat, 2013; Van Robaeys et al, 2007) spiked new interest in poverty among migrants (Dierckx et al, 2013) and relevant actors such as migrant organisations (MOs). Traditional actors involved in poverty reduction struggle to deal with a diversifying clientele. 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). 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 emerge, *'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). The discretionary power of local authorities rises and actors involved in local social policy and poverty reduction diversify ever more (Andreotti et al, 2012). Cooperation and networking increase between local administrations, traditional civil society organisations (CSOs), but also private businesses, ethno-cultural federations and increasingly local MOs (Kazepov, 2010; Vertovec, 2007). We thus ought to study the urban social, economic and cultural configurations because they affect the interpretation of social problems and ensuing policies. This suggests the importance of gathering knowledge on the actors and their networks (Van Dam et al, 2015; Van Dam and Raeymaeckers, forthcoming), involved in these local welfare systems (LWS), as well as the activities and services they provide (Van Dam and Dierckx, forthcoming). However, little is known on the actual role MOs undertake today. In general, Flemish and international research focus on the level of ethno-cultural federations when studying migrant communities and their representation (Vermeersch et al, 2012 ???). Few existing research on local MOs 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 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 MOs, rather with a focus on social capital, identity and representation (Anciaux, 2014). Internationally, Scaramuzzino (2012) has compared the role of MOs in welfare provision in Sweden and Italy using the concepts of political opportunity structures and resource mobilisation for explaining MOs' diverging roles. Because of the illustrated contexts, we wonder what role migrant organisations undertake in poverty reduction. Moreover, the question

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remains whether they are able and willing to play such a role, allocated to them. Empirical research indicates migrant organisations often provide assistance to their members, outside their mandate or mission statements (Dierckx et al, 2013; Kanmaz 2007; Scaramuzzino, 2012; Vermeersch et al, 2012). They are indeed confronted with aid requests from a diverse target group, left aside 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 the justification thereof as well. Against the background of superdiversity, rising poverty among migrant communities and emerging local welfare systems, we argue it is vital to explore the real possibilities of migrant organisations in undertaking any (or no) role in poverty reduction. For this purpose, we prefer the concept of collective capabilities (CCs) of MOs because of the broader interpretation of the complex multi(f)actor mechanisms concerned today, as well as the opportunities the framework provides for interventions (Van Dam, *forthcoming*).

The paper will first outline our conceptual framework of collective capabilities. After discussing methodology, it presents the empirical findings of in-depth interviews conducted with representatives from different types of migrant organisations. To conclude, we hold these results against the background of our theoretical framework and suggest possible interventions, as well as questions for further research.

Collective capabilities of migrant organisations

To assess the real possibilities of MOs, we apply the concept of collective capabilities of these organisations. 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), creator of the CA. Ibrahim (2006, 2008) developed a framework for analysing collective capabilities of 'self-help initiatives' in Egyptian poor communities. Kabeer (2008) reconstructed the process of creating specific capabilities within organisations. We developed our own CC-framework for analysing the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction (Van Dam, *forthcoming*). With this framework, we reconstructed the process by which these organisations build and maintain their CCs, as such participating in local poverty reduction (and broader, 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 through participating in LWSs). By means of building social and other individual capabilities through the participation in migrant organisations, migrants in poverty become able to change (elements of) the social structure of society. This is because, as migrant organisations can strengthen their collective capabilities to effectively work

on poverty reduction, they become genuine partners in LWSs. We will explain this process here concisely (for an extended account, see Van Dam, *forthcoming*).

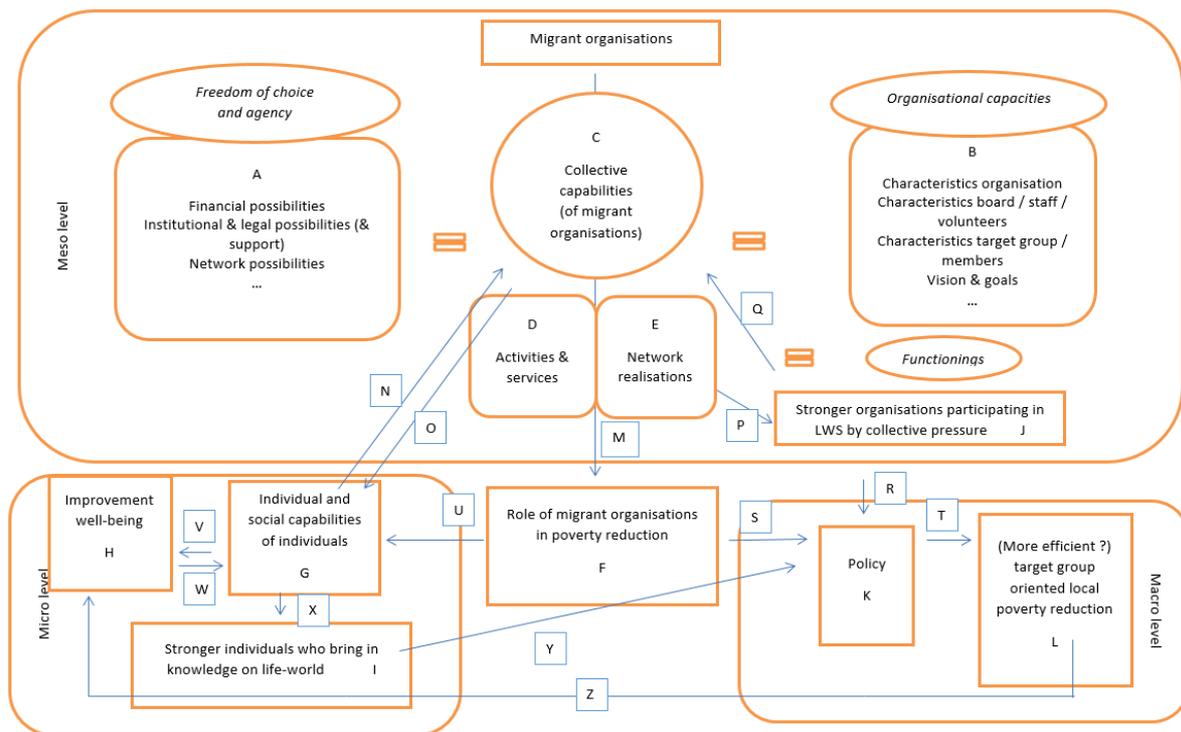


Figure 1 Analysis model for collective capabilities of migrant organisations with micro, meso, macro level

For interpreting and explaining the role of migrant organisations in poverty reduction, we ought to reconstruct the process of how they construct collective capabilities and how these capabilities in turn enable them to actively participate in local welfare systems (and thus undertake a particular role in poverty reduction). This process establishes links with the micro and macro level (figure 1). This suggests we first explore the CCS of MOs (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, CCs of MOs 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, they require the agency and freedom to make these choices, as well as particular capacities enabling them to undertake the role they choose. CCs therefore contain two dimensions; freedom of choice and agency (A) and organisational capacities and features (B).

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Our empirical analysis is in part substantiated 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 by looking at conversion factors like their institutional and legal possibilities and support (or restrictions) derived from authorities and other institutions. An organisation's freedom and agency is thus determined by internal and external actors. 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. Subsidies (or assistance for applications), but also judicial or other substantive support, rely on the disposition of these institutions and regulations. Formal and informal expectations of internal and external actors towards an organisation are crucial in studying the true opportunities of MOs.

The other dimension of MOs' CCs refers to what an organisation is (and can do), the available organisational capacities (B). These capacities are determined by conversion factors like an organisation's basic features and the background characteristics of people involved in it. These features concern size, age or current financial assets of an organisation; the degree of formalisation and the organisation type (relating to the vision as stipulated in the mission statement and the kind of activities or services an organisation provides). Comparable to an individual's life plan, most organisations compose a mission statement, which directly affects MOs abilities to provide activities or services. An organisation's characteristics also include features of individuals involved in it. Background characteristics of board and staff, volunteers and even visitors are key factors in the conversion of individual and social capabilities into collective capabilities (cfr. Definition of CCs). Therefore, we account for the impact of migration experience (E.g. the generation, migration motive or rural versus urban background); 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 CCs. Simultaneously, these individual features (as part of B) touch upon the individual and social capabilities of people involved in the MO (G), directly interfering with the CCs of MOs (N-O).

Precisely like people, organisations select a number of functionings from their available capability set. Available CCs thus determine the actual current functionings of these migrant organisations, i.e. their activities and services (D) and the network(s) they may rely on (E). Moreover, through realising and participating in networks, MOs are enabled by their CCs to participate in the local welfare system through collectively pressuring inter alia local authorities (P-J-R). As such they aim contributing to more

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efficient 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 MOs undertake in poverty reduction (F), in turn determined by its realised and chosen activities and services (M). This role may affect policies regarding social policies, especially in the case of intended policy participation or influence through voice (S-K), as such potentially contributing to improved well-being of the target group (L-Z).

On the other hand, the role MOs choose to play (F) affects the social and other individual capabilities of people on the micro level (U). Through participation in MOs, individuals widen specific individual and social capabilities (G-O). While these capabilities form part of the CCs of organisations (N), they also empower individuals, enabling them to bring in knowledge of their life-world and experiences (X-I), thus participating in local policy and poverty reduction (Y). Moreover, through widening individual and social capabilities specifically obtained through participation in a MO (G), individuals improve their own well-being (V-H). Additionally, strengthened individual and social capabilities of individuals involved in MOs in turn contribute to the development of CCs of the organisations themselves (O), thus closing the virtuous circle of capability expansion of both individuals and organisations.

Methods

This paper aims to reconstruct the process of building and widening CCs of MOs 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. Their selection was purposively based on an inventory we constructed of Flemish migrant organisations and a derived typology (infra, Van Dam et al, 2015; Van Dam and Dierckx, *forthcoming*; Van Dam and Raeymaeckers, *forthcoming*). We took the variation of organisation types, migrant communities and locations throughout the cities into account. We focused on the cities of Ghent and Antwerp due to the prominent different migration histories that led up to a diverse picture of migrant communities and their organisations, but also relevant policies, today (Van Puymbroeck et al, 2014; Van Dam and Dierckx, *forthcoming*). Working iteratively, we arrived at a total of 24 in-depth interviews, of which 12 interviews were conducted with coordinators of MOs in Antwerp. One of them was Latin-American (type 1), 4 were Maghreb organisations (type 1, 2, 2, mix), 4 were Eastern-European organisations (type 1, 1, 1+4, 2+1) and 3 African organisations (type 2+1, 2+1, mix). In Ghent we conducted another 9 in-depth interviews with representatives of MOs. Among them was one Eastern-European organisation (type 1c), three African organisations (type 1, 2+1, mix), four Turkish organisations (type 1+2, 1+2, 1+2, 2+1) and one Maghreb organisation (type mix). Interviews were transcribed and

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analysed with the help of the qualitative analysis software program NVivo. We complemented the resulting findings with a perspectives from a few stakeholders on higher representation levels. We had one interview with the coordinator of a Turkish federation in Ghent. On the regional level we talked to two staff members from the Minority Forum¹. For further substantiation we had informal discussions with stakeholders and experts from the academic world, MOs and their federations and relevant local administrations. This enabled us to generate an inventory of the migrant civil society (Van Dam and Dierckx, *forthcoming*) as well as to reconstruct the process of widening CCs of MOs and the impact thereof on their role in local welfare systems.

Reconstructing the collective capabilities process

Collective capabilities of MOs (C) are thus shaped by freedom of choice and agency (A) on the one hand and organisational capacities (B) on the other. To presenting our results, this paper centres on the conversion factors defining both dimensions of CCs of MOs and the vital links for demonstrating the process of building CCs of MOs on the meso level (Figure 1). This way we aim to explain the role of the migrant civil society in poverty reduction (M-F). Though not elaborating on them, this discussion will give several indications of links with the micro and macro level.

Organisational capacities and features:

What (or who) organisations are and do depends on their capacities and features (B), determined by the conversion factors, i.e. features of both the organisations itself and the people involved in them.

Organisational features

To identify migrant organisations we apply our typology on their objectives, derived from the inventory we constructed (Van Dam et al, 2015; Van Dam and Dierckx, *forthcoming*):

1. Socio-cultural / Integration & binding
 - a. Cultural and religious focus
 - b. Social focus
 - c. Pedagogical focus
 - d. Integration focus
2. Services & empowerment (& poverty reduction activities)
 - a. Empowerment focus
 - b. Services and social assistance

¹ The Minority Forum represents 19 member organisations (12 accredited ethno-cultural federations, plus umbrella organisations, not federated organisations and representatives of (other) ethno-cultural minorities) in different provinces (www.minderhedenforum.be/lidorganisaties, www.vlaamsparlament.be/commissies/commissievergaderingen/968113/verslag/970505).

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3. Development aid
4. Federations

These types reflect the objectives and methods of MOs as outlined in their mission statement and thus represent the organisations' vision. As explained, an organisation's vision directly affects its capabilities (C) to provide certain activities and services (D-E-M). We will apply this typology when discussing the realised activities of MOs today (infra).

Relatively few MOs explicitly aim to deal with poverty or work on empowerment (B-C-M-F), according to their mission statements and explained visions. Many officially registered mission statements of accredited MOs contain a standard enumeration of activities they wish to provide. They often literally phrase the four officially defined socio-cultural functions of socio-cultural work; community building, cultural participation, social activation and education, clearly relying on the decree on socio-cultural adult work. Seldom 'poverty' appears in these texts, empowerment is relatively better represented. In the interviews representatives of MOs were able to elaborate on the vision of the MO. Many mentioned main objectives that rather imply some form of empowerment or poverty alleviation (F); 'helping people', sensitisation, stimulating participation, prevention, improving people's self-esteem for their agency or signalling problems and needs. Besides these, highlighted goals concerned integration and building bridges or promoting diversity. We may conclude that the vision of many MOs actually includes objectives regarding poverty alleviation (F). Because the representation of interests is also important among many of them, we could even claim they are prepared to be a partner in the local welfare system (P-J-R-K-T-L), although the interpretation varies. Considering the importance of freedom and agency (A-C), we believe it is possible to support particularly these MOs (B) to strengthen this potential role (M), but not enforce it on MOs not envisaging poverty alleviation, empowerment or interests representation.

Organisations differ in their degree of formalisation, i.e. their statutes. We have spoken to representatives of accredited as well as de facto organisation. A statute (B) directly defines the capabilities of an organisation (C), not merely because of the link with subsidisation. The risks and benefits of both statutes, will be discussed among the conversion factors for the agency and freedom of organisations (A). Indeed, the legal and institutional possibilities and the expectations of external actors are directly determined by criteria linked to these statutes (B). Many de facto organisations are one-man organisations, although most de facto and accredited MOs also depend on one key figure, whether or not they have a (small) board of directors or a (small) group of volunteers. Most MOs are thus relatively limited in size, activities or branches, or stakeholders. The continuity or survival of the MO depending on the key figure of the organisation, impact its CCs. These in turn affect the outcomes

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in terms of functionings; i.e. the network realisations (E) and the activities and services (D) these MOs provide. Both functionings then again determine the role MOs undertake in poverty reduction (M-F). This role is also affected by organisations' history. Their initiation and development regards the available expertise and experience within them, not per se tied to the individuals involved today. Most 'young' organisations are, trial-and-error, looking for the best methods to realise their objectives and seeking possible support or cooperation partners. Older organisations can, on the contrary, call upon the experience in providing services and activities (D), dealing with the target group, finding support or cooperate with others (E). Also, organisations founded within, or with a lot of support from, another organisation or service, can often rely on available expertise or means. Clearly, in this way these factors affect the CCs of MOs and as such define the role they undertake in poverty reduction (M-F).

Financial resources are a major impact factor for the CCs of MOs (C) to provide certain activities or services (E) and thus define the role they undertake in poverty reduction (M-F). Although financial resources of an organisation determine to a large degree an organisation's freedom of choice and its agency in particular (A), it concerns the features and capacities of an organisation today (B). Inherent problems or issues will be treated when discussing external actors' expectations (A). Generally, the lion's share of MOs receive some form of subsidies. These may include activity subsidies, obtained for particular activities such as a cooking club, monthly debate nights or a one-time information session.

MOs may also apply for project subsidies when setting up a specific, usually temporary, project on a demarcated subject. For example, a MO starts a poverty advocacy group for one year. These subsidies actually enable the organisation to experiment with new methods and activities (C-D) as such expanding their role in poverty reduction (M-F). Such projects are often in collaboration with other partners (E). For instance, the MO might rely on experience of an existing poverty advocacy group. Next, there are more structural operating grants (*'werkingssubsidies'*), a relatively small amount awarded each year (if considered eligible by local administrations) intended to cover daily costs for administration, rent or insurances. Structural subsidies would, in theory, strengthen the CCs of MOs in a rather structural and sustainable way (C). With a steady income (B-C), MOs may plan further ahead and organise regular activities (M-E).

The majority of subsidised MOs claim subsidies are often insufficient to cover all their costs (B-C). Additional resources may be subsidies or grants awarded by other actors (E), for instance private investment funds or corporations supporting particular initiatives with social objectives. Also the European Union supports several initiatives through particular funds. Other possible sponsors are schools or private business men etcetera. Stakeholders mention the 'bricolage' they have to deal with

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to assemble the necessary means (B-D-M); through accumulating small member contributions, activity fees or selling drinks, food or self-made products during events or other activities. In some cases MOs organise events especially intended as a fundraising for the organisation or rely on sponsoring by local businesses, whether or not within their ethno-cultural community. These kinds of revenues sought-after among the target group are rather limited, though (B-C-G-N). MOs are indeed well aware of the poverty situation of many of their supporters. Most MOs therefore refrain from asking their target group for money, nonetheless they face financial difficulties (B-C). They thus feel obliged to make own contributions to keep the organisation running (B-C). Taking the high poverty rates into account, clearly many stakeholders struggle to keep their organisations going and undertake the role they aspire (M-F).

Characteristics stakeholders

Stakeholders concern the board of directors, if there is one, or otherwise the leading volunteers, but also other supporting volunteers. They could include employed staff, but among the organisations we spoke only the federation had the means to pay for staff.

The ethno-cultural background of MOs' stakeholders in general is as diverse as the diversity in the local population of a city in which these MOs are established (B). For instance, in Ghent we find mainly Turkish MOs, the Turkish community being the largest migrant population. In Antwerp, the Moroccan community is one of the eldest and largest migrant communities, well represented in the share of Moroccan MOs (that barely exist in Ghent). Many MOs aspire internal diversity in the board but often fail to realise this. They want to reach and involve multicultural groups, yet in reality they are often quite homogenous (B-C). The socio-economic background of many MO-stakeholders is regularly middle-class, but not highly educated. However, we also met people from MOs whose day job concerns social or other services, rendering them able to bring their relevant professional knowledge into the MO (B-C). Continuity therefor affects MOs' CCs. Particularly in dealing with complex issues like poverty reduction, turnover appears to be a major barrier in the role MOs may undertake (C-M-F). The capacities (and social and other individual capabilities) of stakeholders greatly determine the CCs of MOs (C). Inter alia their knowledge of the social map, knowledge of the language of the host country, their (professional) experiences in social service provision etcetera, form important conversion factors contributing to the CCs of MOs. The high turnover rate in the migrant civil society makes (B-C) these MOs vulnerable in their new position as members of the LWS (C-M-F-P-J-Q).

Characteristics target group

Besides stakeholders, organisations' capacities are also determined by the characteristics of their target group (B-G). MOs are close to their target group and apparently they (must) adapt regularly to the wishes, needs or changes of this target group. One of the target group's characteristics possibly influencing the CCs of MOs (C), concern the age and gender of people calling upon them. For instance, various representatives of MOs explain how it's not always easy to reach young people. If not enough children turn up for a series of activities, the MO cannot keep on paying the rent. Particular activities or even branches of organisations are changed or even stopped due to changes in the target group (C-D-M-F). Moreover, MOs within the Turkish community are sometimes confronted with cultural issues related to gender. To reach everyone MOs can organise different activities for different groups, like a mosque having several spaces available to provide activities for various groups simultaneously. However, this requires people, space and other means (B) to be able to provide all these activities (C-D-M). Not all MOs are able to adapt to this diversity within their target group (C). Additionally, MOs with different branches or various kinds of regular activities frequently reach people with diverse backgrounds in these separate groups. These differences may inter alia refer to gender, age, culture, but also socio-economic status. Bringing groups together can be complicated. Middle class people from a cooking group, could hinder people from a poverty debate group to feel understood there (C-N-O-G-V-H-X-I-Y).

Although nearly all MOs intend to be open for diverse societal groups, in reality most of them reach mainly people from one ethno-cultural community in which these organisations are (still) often established. In a context of superdiversity, the migration background and motive of the target group affect MOs' CCs. Newcomers have different experiences, needs and opportunities compared to migrants arrived 50 years ago, or their descending generations. The situation of newcomers arrived here through internal European migration is equal to those coming directly from, for instance, a rural area outside Europe (Dierckx and Van Dam, 2014). Politically motivated migrants, often the case with Eastern-European migrants with a high-skilled profile (B), expect specific activities and services from the MOs they call upon (A). These expectations may differ greatly from low-skilled migrants rather looking for recreation or from people who grew up in Flanders. Migration background also affects people's language skills. A lot of people participating in MOs have limited knowledge of the Dutch language and lack practice opportunities (B-G), often addressing these organisations in this matter. Yet, MOs not always have experience in providing language classes or the space or people to be able to provide these (C-D-M). Language may also be a barrier in organising sensitisation, informing, debate or advocacy groups, especially in heterogeneous groups (G-C-M-N-O). Many target group members of

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MOs have limited knowledge on the structures, rights and duties, but also cultural habits within society (B-G-C-M-N-O). MOs are therefore overrun by questions about how to find the necessary information or support, sometimes interfered in the actual objectives or activities they intended (B-C-D-M-F).

Most importantly, MOs are confronted daily with people in poverty (B-G-N), though not always to the same degree or visibility. People with a migration background are confronted with discrimination on the labour market, many are unemployed or have precarious jobs, have a lower education level, experience family or health problems, have housing difficulties, are isolated, have limited future aspirations and a low income and still barely call upon aid organisations. MOs' CCs are affected by their target group's precarious situation (C); people's needs or possibilities to participate in or even pay for activities are limited (N). Organisations often develop creative solutions to reach these people and organise the activities they aspire (C-D-M).

Freedom of choice and agency

The other dimension of CCs of MOs (C), their freedom of choice and agency (A), is determined by conversion factors like support, interference or various expectations of external and internal actors. We therefore discuss the potential actors with whom MOs are ideally able to build networks, as well as all sorts of expectations, support or constraints from these internal and external actors. There are many external and even internal actors with whom MOs might cooperate. Even without particular cooperation, MOs have to take the presence of many actors into account (A). One of the most important external actor concerns the authorities, ranging from the local, regional, national to even the international level. They include also public services and organisations such as community centres initiated by authorities, but schools as well. Next, there is civil society, referring to both traditional Flemish and migrant CSOs (ethno-cultural federations and local MOs). Religious institutions are found among the Flemish as well as the migrant CSOs. Finally, there are important private actors, such as banks, shops and other businesses, and the media. The availability of actors to form networks (C, E) with, greatly determines MOs' freedom of choice and agency (A) and thus their CCs (C). Being available may be physical, certain public services or social organisations are not situated everywhere. Their diffusion over different districts and neighbourhoods is often unequal. Yet, limited networking or cooperation (E) may also be due to a lack of knowing each other lacking shared interest in cooperation.

Support and barriers

All these external actors might support or rather hinder MOs in their initiation or development. MOs encounter specific obstructions laid out for them with their initiation (A-C). Though we know of organisations obstructed by financial and administrative requirements for official accreditation, for most MOs these are ‘difficult’ or ‘time-consuming’ but quite reasonable (A-C). Sometimes initiators must persuade relevant actors, like local administrations, of the value of the MO and its objectives (A-C-E-P-J-Q). Misunderstandings or miscommunication often lie at the roots of these situations. One obstacle most starting MOs cope with is the search for a location and the means thereto. Lacking ‘official’ support, MOs sometimes turn to their target group (A-G-N-C).

In contrast, many starting MOs receive some form of support from one or more external actors. MOs can rely on key figures within their ethno-cultural community for establishing, expanding or improving their own organisation (A-G-N-C-M). As MOs develop (C), this support from their community usually increases (O-G-N). MOs become better-known throughout the community (C), gaining its confidence (O-G-N). This stands in contrast to a rather diminishing support from CSOs or public services in which some MOs were initiated and slowly grows to be independent (A-C-E). Local authorities, when valuing a MO’s objectives or methods, can indeed support people intending to establish an organisation (or formalise a de facto association) with substantive, administrative or financial support (A-B-C). Usually, certain staff members of local administrations have sympathies for the project (A). In some occasions they even persuade stakeholders to initiate a MO (A), not seldom in search for an interlocutor representing certain ethno-cultural minorities (J). Authorities’ support may also entail a mix of different actors and various government levels (A-E). Sometimes a joint project of local, national and European administrations with CSOs and other private actors may motivate representatives to commit to the project (A-E-D-M). This in turn facilitates creating an own organisation (A-B-C). Community (development) work or other social organisations are confronted with diversifying needs of people (A-G-N-C). To contribute to a tailored approach of leisure activities or social care for ethno-cultural minorities unaddressed in traditional CSOs (D-M-F-L), these organisations frequently support migrant communities in establishing their own associations (A-B-C-E). Consequently, many MOs originate within Flemish CSOs or public funded integration services (B), often better equipped to handle required paperwork or to deal with complex issues like poverty (B-C-D-M-F). After all, they generally receive the administrative and substantive support, especially during initiation (A-C). After a while, the MO gradually learns to stand alone/be independent (C-M-F). Also, some initiators of MOs have work experience in other CSOs (B), enabling them to deploy their knowledge, experience and networks for establishing a MO (C). Though not officially linked to these CSOs, many MOs able to address poverty

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or empowerment in their organisation (C-M-F) can invoke the experiences and networks through these CSOs (B-E-P-J). People have experience in family support services, integration centres, school mediation functions, ethno-cultural federations, poverty advocacy groups, cultural centres, etcetera. They are able to rely on their own expertise and networks as well as that of (ex-)colleagues to support the MO with initiation or its later development, and even its target group (B-C-P-J-O). Other actors sometimes support MOs' initiation as well. For instance, a school principal may assist with administration or allows a MO to use the premises (A-B-C-D-E-M). Finally, ethno-cultural federations are often crucial facilitators in the initiation of MOs. A federation is often relied on for administrative support, use of their premises and substantive advice (A-C-E). Also, people intended to initiate an association, can meet other stakeholders from MOs within this federation (A-E). This enables them to make use of their experiences on the do's and don'ts regarding the initiation and organising in general (A-B-C-E).

Some barriers for MOs' (initiation and) development are situated within legal and institutional regulations (A-C). One known legislative threshold concerns the Decree on socio-cultural adult work through which most MOs are subsidised (A-B-C). Many MOs encounter difficulties in the approval of subsidies for activities not directly associated with one of the official functions (A-C-D). The criteria in the decree therefor leave little leeway for activities or services regarding poverty reduction (C-D-M-F). Vice versa, an organisation in the Welfare or Integration sector, for instance, needs support to realise its aim of providing more socio-cultural activities besides its core services (A-B-C-D-E-M). In some cases stakeholders feel obliged to establish a separate organisation for expanding the range of their activities. In this sense, various stakeholders criticise the inability of the decree and other regulations to adapt to changes society and CSOs - including MOs – undergo (A-B-C-M-F). Ethno-cultural federations sometimes try to overcome these obstacles local MOs face (A-C), by organising particular services themselves (C-D). However, they neither have the means nor mandate to provide this social care (C-M). Temporary projects can therefor difficultly be structurally continued (C-M-F). MOs plead for more flexibility in categorising and assessing organisations and their (requests for supporting) activities. One suggestion is the possibility of funding small one-time activities not covered by the regular decree criteria.

MOs' freedom of choice and agency is also affected by safety requirements or regulations regarding the organisations' statute (A-B-C). Remaining a de facto organisation instead of formalising through accreditation (B), restricts financial possibilities (B-C) but enhances the freedom and limits the administrative burdens (A-C). The statute of being an accredited non-profit organisation ('vzw') (B) may also constrain the agency and freedom of choice of a MO regarding possible ways to generate

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income for themselves or their target group (A-C-O-G-M). For instance, a 'vzw' cannot freely open a shop to sell craftwork. It is a different tax system (A-B-C-D). On the other hand, not being accredited (B) may also relieve MOs from certain expectations and requirements (A-C). MOs might experience more freedom (A), due to fewer administrative and other criteria to fulfil (A) when choosing to remain de facto (C). However, at the same time they obtain less subsidies (B) because of the lack of accreditation, simultaneously restricted in their freedom and agency (A-C). Representatives of de facto organisations are sometimes advised by others to formalise the association and apply for accreditation (A-B). Rather reticent about this, they are anxious to be forced to deal with 'positioning' themselves among other organisations and to be expected to increase the scale of the organisation and its activities (A-B-C-E-M). However, some de facto organisations have a weaker bargaining position, particularly when cooperation partners differ in their view on the joint project (A-B-C-E). A formalised statute of accreditation might strengthen their position vis-à-vis others (B-C-E-P-J).

External expectations

This account on barriers and support indicates all these actors operating in the environment of MOs significantly affect MOs' freedom of choice and agency (A). Earlier research already highlighted the many expectations of various organisations and services ethno-cultural federations in Flanders have to deal with, whether or not within their initial mandate (Vermeersch et al, 2012). We confirm these expectations exist towards local MOs as well. Moreover, we demonstrate how these expectations affect their freedom of choice and agency (A-C).

First of all, local authorities seem most relevant to MOs. Our discussion of network realisations (E, *infra*) will illustrate diverse purposes and varying degrees of formality, frequency and success of cooperation among local authorities and their public services and MOs. Often, there are strings attached (A-C). This is clearest in the case of subsidisation of MOs. To be eligible for certain subsidies (C), MOs must meet a number of conditions and pass different procedures and timings (A-B-C), varying according to the type of subsidy. For instance, for a structural operating grant in Antwerp MOs must make an online account, fill in an application form and attach several documents. Many respondents agree with the criteria for subsidisation, acknowledging the need of transparency and control to prevent abuse of means (A-C). However, MOs' stakeholders experience these procedures often as complicated and time-consuming (A-C). Most of them call in the help of people with relevant knowhow from other organisations and services or of their personal social network. Because of a lack of time or help, these procedures and criteria prevent numerous MOs to apply for subsidies they are actually eligible to (A). As such they restrict MOs' CCs (C) to provide the activities and services or establish the networks (D-E)

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they aspire (M). For lots of subsidised MOs these subsidies prove insufficient to cover all costs (C-M), forcing MOs to search further for additional revenues (B-C-D-M). Many other problems concern these criteria or on subsidisation in general. For instance, approval of accreditation or subsidies applications often depends on what activities or services the decisive administrations deem valuable (A). Authorities' expectations are therefore crucial in analysing how these affected CCs (C) define the role these organisations undertake (M-F). Also, to prolong financial support local authorities have granted and as such help guarantee the continuity of the organisation (C-M), MOs are often required to show results or proof of success (A).

Apart from subsidies, authorities may have other expectations towards MOs. Most importantly, several migrant civil society actors are aware that authorities increasingly turn to MOs in search for an interlocutor (A) to represent migrant communities and their organisations in the local welfare system (P-J-R-K). The last few years this increasingly concerns poverty reduction (F-S-K-T-L). (Local) Authorities and public services regularly address MOs (A) to represent their target groups in a number of ways (P-J-R-K-T-L). For instance, they participate in policy fora and conferences. Several respondents also criticise the apparent obviousness with which public services assume (A) that stakeholders from MOs are always able (C) and willing (C) to accompany people they refer to these services (D-E-M-F). They expect these volunteers of MOs to be responsible for administration support, mediation or translation (A). Because these MOs do not always have the required capabilities to do so (B-C), problems of people with a migration background in poverty are regularly left unsolved (N-O).

Public authorities can also refer clients to MOs, sometimes generating the impression that MOs are increasingly called upon to do the job of these public services (A). MOs usually have insufficient means or expertise to help all people sent to them (C-M-F-O-G-V-H). In other forms of cooperation, such as setting up a new project together with organisations connected to local authorities (D-E), this expectation to participate and contribute everything voluntary and free of charge occurs as well. These stakeholders are occasionally called upon their commitment and solidarity as migrants (A-C). But these organisations may set other criteria as well. For instance, using the community centre's premises, might require a MO's activity to target the entire neighbourhood. This might interfere with the objectives of (activities of) the MO (C). Consequently, due to a lack of means and these expectations, specific activities will not take place (D-M-F).

Besides authorities, CSOs also have expectations towards MOs. This is often the case when MOs cooperate with other CSOs for certain activities, services or joining forces for a project. Particular expectations among cooperating CSOs and MOs on the precise role of each actor are often stipulated

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in a contract, preventing misunderstandings or possible conflicts (A-E-M). Through a good collaboration with CSOs based on an equal position stakeholders can also gain information and strengthen other individual and social capabilities (A-E-C-O-G). This in turn strengthens the CCs of their MOs (C-M). Lacking or neglecting these agreements, may generate diverging expectations towards one another (A). Limited capabilities of MOs (C) may prevent them from playing a larger part in the project. MOs' stakeholders often feel they're in an unequal position and refrain from further cooperation (D-E-M).

MOs' stakeholders that also work in another social organisation or public service (B) often encounter additional expectations (A). For instance, they are more explicitly invited for specific events or consultation fora. People try with difficulty to meet these expectations of others while at simultaneously guarding various roles and functions, attempting not to let both roles interfere of being responsible for the MO as well as for the other organisation (A-B-C-M). Being able to rely on volunteers can relieve these stakeholders (B-C).

However, most respondents mention no real pressures or tangible expectations from other CSOs or ethno-cultural federations (A). They usually experience respect and equal treatment. Organisations are 'free' to provide the activities they want (C-M), planned by the (board of directors of) MOs themselves. Most MOs do indeed receive material, administrative or other support from their federation without many strings attached (A-C-E-M). Cooperation is often perceived as very constructive and beneficial. Merely on 'visibility' of organisations in announcing joint activities, certain expectations arise. Usually, CSOs or federations expects for instance their name to be on the poster announcing the activity they supported. If MOs received a financial grant or loan for activities or projects (C-M), other criteria might be included regarding the accountability of expenses, similar to authorities' criteria for lending support. This support clearly depends on the means and possibilities of the federations themselves. Due to a lack of budget or other means, support is usually much appreciated and valued by member MOs, but at the same time insufficient (C-E-M).

In most cases, federations also (implicitly) expect people from their member organisations to attend certain activities or meetings organised by the federation (A). Many respondents willingly participate in these kinds of activities (C-E-M). Often the stakeholders from these MOs hope to gain some information, networks, ideas, support or other forms of return from this participation (C-M). MOs can also subscribe to projects initiated by federations on certain issues, for instance to learn about methods of poverty reduction. Such a specific project comes with particular demands concerning meetings, preparations, implementations etcetera.

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Many mosque associations are, often alongside their membership of an traditional accredited ethno-cultural federation, also member of a federation based on their religious tradition (A-B-E). These structures exist on different levels. These umbrella organisations may strengthen as well as impede their members' freedom of choice and agency (A-C). They can provide expert speakers and imams, but sometimes also have a say in the activities (A-C-D-M).

Internal expectations

MOs' freedom and agency is also defined by internal expectations. MOs' stakeholders, i.e. the directors and the volunteers, directly determine the organisation's objectives and the methods (D-E) to realise them. They may have certain expectations towards themselves and others regarding these objectives on activities and cooperation. The target group can also have specific expectations concerning the participation in MOs about activities, help or practices (A-C-M).

Stakeholders from MOs have various expectations towards external partners with whom they are confronted. When they join a federation (E), they expect some form of support or benefits from this liaison (A). When participating in certain consultation networks (E), they aspire some results for their organisations or their target groups (A). If they experience the relation to be one-sided, this may prevent further cooperation and inhibit them to continue their activities or projects (A-C-D-E-M). When they have ideas, they expect their cooperation partners, authorities or federations, to support their realisation (A-C).

Due to difficulties in finding an affordable location, MOs often turn to local authorities or their federation for a location to be able to organise their activities (A-C-D-E-M). Most affiliated MOs, indeed have the possibility to rent a location from their federation at a low cost, or use it for free (C-M). Still this is often inadequate for structurally providing activities. On the other hand, many MOs expect their federations or other organisations or services to provide MOs of ideas and projects to which they can subscribe (A-C-M). They hope to receive financial as well as substantive support, referring to a lack of necessary capabilities of MOs and their stakeholders to devise projects themselves (A-B-C-E). Some organisations rather assume a wait and see attitude, criticising a lack of opportunities. They also allude to stronger organisations rather able to scoop the projects(' funds) and leaving other MOs with the 'crumbs'. Improving cooperation and communication (A-E-C) on potential projects would enable them to provide activities and contribute to poverty reduction (C-M-F), because of their knowledge of and (confidential) relation with the target group (B). With the right support and opportunities (A-B), these MOs consider themselves able to play a part in poverty reduction (C-M-F).

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The view on poverty, however, determines stakeholders' preferred solution strategies and thus their role (A-C-D-M-F). Indeed, the definition of social problems and according solutions strategies are shaped by the urban cultural, social and economic configurations (Andreotti and Mingione, 2013; Mingione and Oberti, 2003). MOs' stakeholders expect certain practices and solution strategies among the support from and projects within their federation (A), based on their view on poverty and relevant solutions (B). Diverging views prevent some MOs to participate in projects on poverty among ethno-cultural minorities (A-B-C-D-E-M). Stakeholders can, for instance, prioritise activation to the labour market over discussion and advocacy, or even financial support (A-B-C-D). In many cases, representatives of MOs hold a rather absolute view on poverty (B), referring to income or homelessness. Especially in the case of newcomers and first generation labour migrants, people rather refer to the living standards in their country of origin for interpreting the poverty situation of people in Flanders and possible solution strategies. Because the view on poverty also determines solution strategies, it affects the view on whose task it is to combat poverty among ethno-cultural minorities (A-C-M-F). If MOs are increasingly expected to undertake a role in poverty reduction (A-F) and we account for their agency (A-C), they ought to have the freedom of choice whether or not (and how) to undertake such a role (A-C-F). Exceeding common assumptions, more MOs than often assumed are willing to actively participate in poverty reduction (A-C-M-F). One of the main reasons is MOs proximity to and knowledge (and trust) of the target group (B).

To undertake 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 (MOs) think of them (target group). They (MOs) can give a solution for the problem. When nothing is done, it doesn't work (Respondent African organisation, Antwerp).

Although, most if not all, do claim they need certain support to be able to perform this role (A-C-E-M-F). This necessary support may refer to cooperation in different forms; financial subsidies, the provision of or support for locations, other material support, substantive support and advice on good practices, training and education on relevant issues, administration or human resources (A-B-C-E). These elements fundamentally determine the collective capabilities of MOs (C) to undertake a role in poverty alleviation (M-F), because they impact directly and significantly both the organisational capacities of MOs (B) and their agency and freedom (A) to convert their capabilities (C) into the functions (D-E) they would choose in real freedom (M-F). Many MOs thus agree with the idea of participating in the local welfare system (C-M-F-P-J-R). However, most of them emphasise a shared responsibility of all societal actors (A-E-F); MOs, traditional CSOs, authorities and even migrants themselves. One decisive element in this matter usually regards the mission statement and objectives of the MOs in question (B-C). When

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a MO's objectives primarily concern sport or cultural preservation for example (B-C-D), they are less inclined to ascribe themselves a role in poverty reduction (A-D-M-F). These MOs rather turn to the authorities for responsibility in the matter (A-J-R-E). Stakeholders from MOs thus expect other organisations and services to solve the problems of the clients they referred to them (A-C-M-P-R-O-V). Whether or not such expectations are realistic and just, depends largely on the needs of the clients and the objectives of the organisation or service they are referred to (A-B-C-N). Success of cooperation also depends on the people in the functions of organisations and services MOs collaborate with (A-E-P-J-R). Due to the investment in personal confidential contacts over time, turnover of these people often leads to a setback in the cooperation and its results (E-P-J-Q-R-M). Particularly in referring clients to public services, intermediating with administrations or receiving support for a specific project from local authorities (A-E-M), effectivity apparently depends largely on whoever holds the position (C-P-R-T-L-Z).

More in general, stakeholders from MOs often express the expectation to be heard, respected and addressed as equal partners (A-E-M-P-J-R-T). Many representatives try to participate on different occasions to express their voice, to exchange with authorities and other organisations and services their views and experiences, their knowledge on the target group and their needs (E-P-J-R-K-T-L-Z). However, many of them feel their efforts go unheeded (C).

Stakeholders may as well hold certain expectations towards their target group (A). For instance, MOs expect their target group to acknowledge the commitment of the stakeholders and their difficulties in organising activities (A-C-O-G-N). They feel people take these activities for granted, assuming everything is subsidised while stakeholders actually often pay most themselves (A-N-C-O-G). At the same time they expect their target group to engage in different activities or services provided by the MO, and not only to show up when they need help (A-N-C-O-G). When the target group includes children, stakeholders expect parents to support their children, make sure the children are able to attend the activities and invest in their development (A-N-C-O-G-V-H-W). Many stakeholders also expect their target group to show up on the agreed time and participate in the meetings for input, feedback and questions (A-N-C-O-G). Some stakeholders of MOs find it harder to motivate second or third generation migrants to engage themselves on a regular basis to an organisation (B-G), whether merely to participate in activities or commit as a volunteer (C-O-G). This makes it harder to recruit motivated people and guarantee the continuity of activities (B-G-N-C). Organisations' freedom and agency depend therefor not only on the commitment of volunteers, but on the target group as well (A-B-C-G-N). Because of a lack of stability in the target group, particular activities or branches are regularly closed down (B-G-N-C-D-M). To limit potential negative effects and guarantee success of

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(attendance to) activities (C-D-M-O), MOs develop certain strategies. For instance, with targeted invitations, they aspire reaching more or less like-minded groups. They organise specific activities for children, women or elderly respectively. People seem to ask MOs primarily to organise recreational activities in line with their own cultural habits or individual preferences, even when MOs aim for sensitisation, informing and welfare (A-C-D-M-F). Examples are separate spaces for women and men or excursions focused at and tailored to specific target groups (women, families, men, children). Thus trying to meet the expectations of their target group on the objectives or working methods regarding activities and services of the MO (A- C-D-M-F), many MOs fill a gap often lacking in traditional CSOs or public services (C-D-E-M-O-G-N).

On the other hand, most MOs are confronted with expectations of their target group to solve their problems. People address MOs frequently with aid requests (A), whether or not this falls within the mission of the MO in question (B-C). As a result, many MOs do provide unofficial social aid or poverty reduction activities (D) outside their mandate and the time reserved for the MO or the skills of the stakeholders (C-M-F). However, the means and abilities of MOs are limited for structural poverty reduction (B-C), leaving certain expectations of the target group unaddressed (A-C-D-M-F). Specifically regarding poverty reduction (D-M-F), alleged or expected professionalism of MOs (A-B) is crucial for people to call upon these organisations for help (A-N), as well as for the organisations to be able to reach and assist their target group (C-M-F) and to become a genuine partner in the LWS (A-B-C-E-P-J). Due to the lack of a location, many MOs are run out of people's homes. Receive people, stocking material and papers, making phone calls at own expenses, and so on. Besides many other consequences and pitfalls, this influences visitors' impression of professionalism in the MO, making them refrain from telling their whole story and ask for help (A-B-N-O-G).

Many MOs not only provide activities and services according to the needs and questions of the target group (A-C-D-M-F-U-G-N). Some of them even work merely demand-driven (N-C-D), organising activities only when asked for. They can even go as far as determining the organisation structure (G-N-C-O-A-B).

Though it might be awkward to argue that a MOs' stakeholders hold expectations towards the MO itself, we believe these are vital. They may implicitly or explicitly expect a function, role or future trajectory or objective of the MO (A-B-C-M-F). Expectations may also arise towards other stakeholders involved, among board members or between them and volunteers. Many key figures of MOs have expectations towards their fellow stakeholders (A-B-C). Because most stakeholders are volunteers (B), their active contribution depends inter alia on their available time (B-G-N-C). Vice versa, volunteers

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often expect the MO not to rely on them for every activity or service, or to remain involved informally (A-C-O-G-N). They refrain from doing too much, referring to their voluntary status and family or work obligations (B-G-N). Although generally, volunteers commit themselves rather unconditionally to an organisation (B-N), they do often expect a reimbursement of their expenses, if possible (A-B-C). Members can be employed and paid as volunteers as a poverty solution strategy. In other cases MOs are able to compensate volunteers with a kind of subsidised volunteer allowance (C-O). Volunteers also sometimes underestimate the time and energy required for running a MO and try to opt out on certain occasions, increasing the burden on the key figure and the remaining volunteers (G-N-C-O-B). Many MOs thus depend on the strength and time of the key figure, often the coordinator (A-C-M). This key figure is responsible for the continuity of the organisation and urgently needs more assistance from others in the organisation (A-B-C-O-G-N-M-F). Stakeholders then sometimes explicitly search for others with the necessary expertise to commit to the MO (A-B-C-M), or they invest in training and sensitising volunteers or board members (B-C-O-G-N). With high turnover among MOs, this might be a bottleneck as people take these investments and expertise along with them.

C Collective Capabilities of MOs:

CCs of MOs are thus formed by the organisational capacities and features and the agency and freedom to become enabled to convert these into real possibilities from which the organisations may choose to realise those functionings – providing those activities and services and constructing those networks – they aspire in accordance with their vision (outlined in their mission statement). We illustrated how these main conversion factors contribute to the actual CCs of MOs. Our aim is not to provide an exhaustive list of CCs of MOs, but to demonstrate the process of building and strengthening these CCs of MOs by means of some examples. These enable us to clarify the role of MOs in poverty reduction.

For instance, we outlined the impact of the background and other features of stakeholders involved in MOs (B). The ability of a MO to assist people in finding their way to the appropriate help by referring them to other organisations (C-D-M-F-U-O-G-V-H), is inter alia the result of stakeholders' knowledge of the social map (B) and the organisation's agency to choose not to provide emergency assistance but instead guide people to professional organisations and services (C-D-M).

The ability of a MO to set up an advocacy group on poverty issues aiming to influence or participate in (local) poverty reduction policies (C-D-M-F-S-K-T-L), is enabled by the organisation's mission (B), the expertise of stakeholders (and the strengthening of members' individual and social capabilities through participation in this group) (B) and the support of external actors with relevant knowhow (regarding

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methods) (A-E-P-J-Q). Its ability to consolidate this poverty advocacy group structurally also depends on the collective capability of the MO to initiate it in the first place (C), structural financial means (B-E-P), as well as the strengthening of the collective capabilities of the MO obtained through this experience (J-Q), such as the capability of applying new methods in the organisation or the capability to empower people through this advocacy group (C-D-M-F-U).

The ability of a MO to set up networks or join existing ones (C-E), depends on the time, commitment, work experience and social networks (social capital) of stakeholders in the MO (B) and the motivation of available external actors to collaborate (A).

The capability of a MO to obtain project subsidies (B-C) depends on the experience of stakeholders, earlier organised activities or participation in projects by the MO (B), MO's membership in a federation (E) or its access to other sources of information, support and/or funds (A-C).

Many MOs have the collective capability to give voice people that would otherwise have none (C-O-G-X-Y-E-J-R). Because of the motivation of the stakeholders, the mission of the organisation and the membership in available and accessible or (self-established) consultation platforms and federations representing the interests of the organisation and its target group (B-E), the organisation is enabled to pass on knowledge on the problems and life-world of people involved in the MO to relevant policy makers (C-O-G-X-Y-E-J-R).

A CC of MOs described by a respondent concerns an organisation's ability to create justice and cultural and social life in society (C). He also refers to this capability with the '*notion of participation*'. Being the '*beating heart*' of society, MOs are enabled through their objectives and activities (B-C-D), the financial support and recognition of external actors (A), the motivation, expertise and knowledge of the stakeholders (B), the history and development of the organisation (B), its ability to adapt to changes in society and their target group (A-C), its ability to enable people to build networks, help one another and create art for instance (C-O-G).

Most importantly, the ability of a MO to provide particular poverty reduction activities or services (E.g. activation to employment, financial support or emergency aid like food distribution) (C-D-M-F) is determined by the availability of sufficient financial means within the MO, its mission, knowledge and training of stakeholders, equipment or infrastructure (B) 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 (A).

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It's not that we don't want to, but to, 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 I think there are many others like me that want this, but well. Our organisation is actually a general dogsbody. So yes, the societal experienced responsibilities like social aid for people in a precarious situation, that's impossible. You can't simply go on and undertake that unexperienced, that doesn't work. So if you pass it on to organisations in the context of: 'They are closer to the target group, so they should be willing to do something for that.' Yes, they can, provided decent support and training, and cooperation (Respondent Moroccan organisation, Antwerp)

MOs' realisations and their effect on MOs' role in poverty reduction

From the collective capability set, MOs select and realise particular functionings (D-E), determined by (the conversion factors to both dimensions of) their freedom of choice and agency and their internal capacities (A-B-C). Consequently, MOs provide certain activities and services (and no other), and realise network formation with particular external actors (and no other). These realised CCs help us explain MOs' role in poverty reduction (M-F).

The activities and services MOs provide are the functionings or realised capabilities of MOs in Flanders today (D). They are chosen (C-M) based on the history and features or capacities of an organisation (B), influenced by the expectations of external and internal actors and other factors with an impact on a MO's freedom of choice and agency (A). The majority of MOs provide socio-cultural activities (D), as *disclosed* by means of our inventory (Van Dam et al, 2015; Van Dam and Dierckx, *forthcoming*; Van Dam and Raeymaeckers, *forthcoming*). These include culture preservation, religious activities, intercultural encounters and integration, excursions or bonding activities (D). Many activities serve the dual purpose of raising money for the operation of MOs themselves or for certain projects or people they wish to support (B-C-D-M-O-G-V-H). Cultural activities are also often linked with the objective of supporting or training people or children in language skills (C-D-M-F-U-G). As such, also homework assistance or parenting support is often combined with socio-cultural activities (D), crossing the typology border with the type of service provision and/or empowerment (B). Indeed, MOs frequently aim to empower their target group indirectly, either through socio-cultural or pedagogical activities, sensitisation or information (B-C-O-G-D-M-F-U). The realisation of such activities clearly depends on the MO's CCs (C-D-M). MOs not always possess the required capabilities (C) for organising language courses or sensitisation activities (D-M).

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Our inventory did not reveal, however, to what extent poverty (reduction) is an issue in these organisations (D-M-F). The in-depth interviews we conducted among MOs revealed most of them actually provide some form of poverty reduction activities or services today (D-M-F). Few MOs explicitly present themselves as working on poverty reduction or empowerment as a means to improve the well-being of people with a migration background (B-C-D-M-F). These organisations had for instance a poverty advocacy group, provided social (administration) and emergency aid (distributing clothes, food or furniture) or organised activities aiming at strengthening the capabilities of their target group (E.g. sensitisation for women or developing talents of youth, B) (D-M-F-U-G). Numerous other strategies were found in more MOs not explicitly focussing on poverty (B-C-D-M-F). Most MOs' representatives, initially claimed they bear no relation to poverty reduction (D-M-F). However, probing into the issue, people do recount they often provide services and activities that - they concur - may fall within poverty reduction.² Examples are fundraisings for a target group member or another project, helping people to find shelter or employment, helping people set up businesses with microcredit, making house calls or hospital visits (D-M-F-U-G). Unofficially, outside the hours or mandate of the organisation, or rather indirectly (C-D-M-F), most MOs (actively) refer people to other services and organisations (D-E-M-F), and provide emergency aid. Many MOs take the role of mediators upon themselves (A-C-E-M-F). They translate, mediate, but especially assist their target group with administration, whether or not on request of these external actors (D-E-M). Many MOs are indeed increasingly confronted with the poverty risks of their target group (B-G-N), which address them with aid requests (B-C-D-G-N). Many organisations even clearly desire to undertake a greater role in poverty reduction (A-D-M-F), intended to expand activities like (active) referral or proper provision of services such as administration support, emergency aid, or even rather structurally, to generate advocacy groups for policy participation and influence (D-M-F-U-G-X-I-Y-K). However, they find themselves obstructed by their actual CCs (C-M). For example, the decree of socio-cultural work does not explicitly include poverty reduction activities (A-B-C-D-M-F). Subsidisation criteria also impact their capabilities to perform these activities as well (A-C-D-M). Challenged by their limited budget and available time of the stakeholders, they devise creative solutions (C-M). For instance, they deploy and reimburse target group members as volunteers in specific activities (C-D-M-F-U-G-V-I). MOs thus stress the importance of support for being able to undertake any role in poverty reduction (A-B-C-M-F). Whether this support is recognition as an equal partner (in the LWS), financial or substantive support or more cooperation

² This may also relate to a diverging view on poverty (B-C-M). 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 (B-C-D-M-F).

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(A, E), depends on the respective organisational capacities and features (B) and the agency of a MO to develop according to its mission and objectives (A).

Many MOs therefore aim at representing the interests of themselves and their target group in consultation fora, meetings or events organised by their federations or other important external local actors (E-P-J-Q-R-K). Frequently, signals of the life-world and problems of the target group are gathered in MOs and transferred to advice or claims directed at local authorities or relevant organisations or services (E-P-J-R-K). Generally, MOs appear to cooperate somehow with authorities or diverging services and organisations pertaining thereto (E). Subsidisation and accreditation turn out to be the main reasons for many MOs to cooperate with local or higher administrations (A-C-E). Also, about 1700 MOs are member of federations. Their role (and their potential value) is subject to debate. Some MOs recite a close and effective collaboration, receiving administration support, locations at (low) rent or the possibility to pool resources and people or attend conferences or trainings (E-A-C-B-M). For others, however, their federation's support is insufficient (C-M). Still others believe federations exist merely to support MOs in difficulties. If they encounter few problems, they do not expect their federation's support (A-C). Most MOs, though, emphasise the role of federations as mediator between them and their target group and authorities or other societal actors (A-C-E-P-J). Moreover, federations enable MOs to cooperate with each other, or attend others' activities, through the federation (C-E-P-J). Besides federations, MOs collaborate with numerous different kinds of CSOs; with very diverging goals, types and methods. A lot of MOs collaborate closely with these CSOs, for joint projects or activities (E-C-D), material, practical or substantive (E-C-B). Meanwhile, others have barely no contact whatsoever (E). MOs also collaborate with schools in their neighbourhood or with community centres and other organisations established by local authorities, for material or administrative support or organising joint activities or services (E-C-B-D). Furthermore, MOs sometimes connect with private actors. This may include media for publicity, banks for loans, shops or business owners from their ethno-cultural community or the neighbourhood for sponsoring with material, money or locations (E-C-A-B). Finally, almost all MOs call upon networks of individuals, often key figures in the ethno-cultural community, sometimes chairmen of MOs or an elder from a community originating from the same region or village (B-C-E). However, MOs also receive support from their supporters in the neighbourhood or community (G-N-C). For example, the community is addressed for fundraisings (C-O-G-N). Still, reminding the poverty rates, this support from their ethno-cultural community is rather limited (G-N-C).

Though networking thus seems to prevail, collaboration among these networks not always runs smoothly. Many barriers impede the path to successful networking (Van Dam et al, 2015; Van Dam and Raeymaeckers, *forthcoming*). As we voiced the need for support (A-B-C-E), this clearly affects the

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current role of MOs in poverty reduction (M-F) and simultaneously supplies us with possible interventions for improving organisations' CC to contribute to this role.

MOs thus undertake a more extensive role in local poverty reduction today (F) than often assumed, although many of them still see opportunities for further developing this role (A-C-M-F). Participating in networks with relevant actors (E), renders MOs stronger (by expanding their CCs, they improve their network realisations, in turn strengthening their own CCs) (P-J-Q). These networks enable them to further evolve as a genuine partner in the LWS (P). By collective pressure they become enabled to participate in or at least influence local poverty reduction policies (J-R-K), meanwhile giving voice to their target group (T-L). As such they may contribute to more efficient target group oriented local poverty reduction policies (L) and also indirectly improve the well-being of their target group (Z). There, the circle starts anew. Improved wellbeing of individuals involved in MOs (H) widen their individual and social capabilities (W-G), thus contributing to the CCs of MOs (N-C) (from which they choose to provide specific activities and services and realise particular networks (D-E)), thus shaping again the role these MOs undertake in local poverty reduction (M-F).

Conclusions and policy recommendations

Our empirical findings suggest that if MOs would indeed take part in local poverty reduction, they need a certain freedom of choice and agency (including inter alia legal, financial and network possibilities, ...) to become able to convert specific required organisational capacities and features (regarding the organisation [accreditation, location, vision, size, ...] and the stakeholders [experience, knowhow, numbers and time, ...] into CCs from which they are able to choose freely and able which activities and services they want to realise and as such undertake a role in poverty reduction. These CCs thus refer to the ability to choose freely (with sufficient legal, institutional and financial freedom and support) for active participation in local poverty reduction and the way they envisaged, in accordance with their own mission statements and objectives. In this sense the general intended CC of MOs in this context is to be able to provide poverty reduction activities and in this way participate in local welfare systems. This ability is only a real possibility if it is chosen by the MO (according to its vision/mission/objectives) and if this choice is based on real freedoms, means, information and capacities to select and realise it.

One of the main organisational capacities directly enhancing the CC(s) of MOs to combat poverty among ethno-cultural minorities concern the experiences, knowhow and networks of the stakeholders involved in the organisations. At a first glance, this might confirm a social capital perspective as key determinant in explaining the role of these MOs. However, with the reconstruction of the process MOs

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go through strengthening their CCs - and interact simultaneously with the social and other individual capabilities of individuals – we demonstrated it is crucial to account for the real possibilities of these MOs to explain their role. Therefore, analysis must consider the financial, legal, institutional and other internal and external environmental factors determining the agency and freedom of choice of these MOs, rather than merely looking at a limited set of organisational capacities or networks of the people involved. We believe our CC framework to be an adequate tool.

Many, if not most, MOs in fact already contribute directly or indirectly to local poverty reduction among ethno-cultural minorities. They search for ways to deal with the rising poverty among their target groups within a context of budgetary restraints, volunteer work, a lack of experience on these issues and the call of authorities to participate in poverty reduction. They initiate cooperation with other migrant organisations, CSOs and public services to develop specific projects to tackle poverty. They experiment with innovative ways to provide services and welfare provision to migrants in poverty, accounting for their particular needs. They inform and sensitise their target group. They actively refer clients to the appropriate organisations and services or provide emergency assistance or social care themselves. They help people in finding their way in the tangle of organisations and services, rights and duties. They inspire people to participate in society, create things, bond with others and stimulate entrepreneurship. They empower people by strengthening their social and other individual capabilities they can employ in turn in the MOs or in the general society. As such they do play a particular role in local poverty today, however not all MOs to the same degree or with the same methods. To enable willing organisations (accounting for their agency) in becoming genuine partners in the LWS, they require recognition and support for this role; financial, substantive, structural and cooperative support as equal partners in these new welfare systems. Many MOs are willing to further develop this role both as a facilitator and a signalling function. Policy participation and influence are fundamental for this LWSs to actually generate a more efficient target group driven local poverty reduction. Some MOs hence expect their federations for instance to grow more proactive and bold in pressuring policy. It seems that MOs and their federations are currently called upon for their expertise and knowledge of the target group on the terms of external actors like local administrations. However, their experiences and knowhow built through being close to the target group, could be employed more effectively, structurally and with more respect.

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