The big world experiment: the mobilization of social capital in migrant communities
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5. Social Capital in Amsterdam

The social capital and organizational landscape of the Turkish community in Amsterdam cannot be understood in isolation from the ideological divides running through it. The main groups that can be distinguished are left-wing, right-wing and religious, which are the same splits that characterize society in Turkey itself. After interviewing the divergent organizations, which each took a completely different stance, it became clear that there is at least one thing they all agree on: the Turkish community in Amsterdam is multi-dimensional. It is split into several groups that each cling to their own ideology, which is usually in conflict with that of their (Turkish) counterparts. Vermeulen (2006) has already addressed this issue extensively with respect to the organizing processes of Turkish organizations, revealing that the emergence of Turkish civic organizations in Amsterdam was directly linked to the political situation and changes in Turkey. Furthermore, the foundation of an organization by one group often led to the response of the immediate formation of another by a different group. This was also confirmed by several of my respondents.

5.1 The subjective classification by community members

One of the questions I asked my respondents concerned who or what they think is a proper representative of the Turkish community in Amsterdam. The usual answer I got was:

“There can’t be one representative. The Turkish community is too divided.”

Subsequently, they would characterize their community according to a unanimous typology. As one respondent said:

“All organizations are in fact branches of political movements. Every organization represents a particular political movement, and everybody knows this.”

Most respondents distinguished four dominant groups. The leftist organizations, including the Kurds from Turkey, the Alevi, and the communists and socialists form one of these. They are the opponents to the rightist, nationalistic, organizations that are thought to have strong ties to the Turkish embassy and consulate. Some of these

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38 I will not go into the discussion of whether the Kurds should or should not be regarded as Turkish; it did, however, cause a great deal of controversy during the interviews. See also note 87 on page 4.
organizations are directly linked to the Grey Wolves, the extreme-right ultra-nationalist association that is connected to the Turkish Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). People from other groups call them ‘fascists’. The leftist and, to a lesser extent, the right-wing groups oppose the religious associations, which in turn include several different religious movements that are in opposition to each other. The Diyanet supporters profess to follow a moderate, but nationalistic, form of Islam which is prescribed by the Turkish Presidency for Religious Affairs. Milli Görüş, another well-represented Islamic movement, is opposed to the Diyanet supporters and their influence in Turkish politics. In some countries, the Milli Görüş group is accused of being extremist, but in Amsterdam its image is more positive. Some regard the organization as a wolf in sheep’s clothing, and accuse its members of putting on a moderate face in Dutch public life while internally still propagating extremist ideas. Yet many policy makers regard the Milli Görüş as a moderate ally. One respondent said: “Milli Görüş’ leader, Haci Karacaer, is the right-hand man of the mayor of Amsterdam.” Finally, some respondents also explicitly mentioned the arts and cultural organizations as a separate group within the Turkish community. As I will demonstrate below, there is a case for this, since several cultural associations are revealed to have a clearly different, more bridging position between the Turkish community and Amsterdam society as a whole.

Several interviewees proved the tenability of this classification with their comments. Diyanet organizations, for example, declared that they do not want to be involved with their Milli Görüş’ counterparts:

“Milli Görüş was set up as an organization that is in political opposition to the ruling Turkish government. My organization does not want to become involved in political conflicts and therefore we would rather not be connected to Milli Görüş or any other religious organization.”

“We claim political neutrality, but other organizations, such as the Milli Görüş and Süleymancilar don’t. That is why we prefer to keep to ourselves.”

A left-wing organization reacted against opposing counterparts by stating:

“We don’t want any contact with racist and fascist Turkish organizations. So we don’t want to be connected to nationalistic, conservative, fundamentalist organizations such as Milli Görüş.”

Another organization put it more mildly:

“In terms of ideology, we have very little in common with religious organizations of any kind, so there is no need for us to collaborate with them.”

Some of the other respondents’ remarks are also noteworthy with respect to this rough sketch of the ideologies that play a part in understanding the Turkish community. First
of all, two interviewees commented that even though a single representative of the Turkish population could not be nominated, this was not a huge problem because the community as a whole, and each group in its own right, is very well organized. Accordingly, a (single) representative is deemed unnecessary.

The younger board members of newer associations particularly expressed their dissatisfaction with the disagreements within their community. They feel that they are ‘modern’, implying that their organizations are neither political nor religious, but neutral. In their view, the older generations arranged themselves along political lines, while these youthful respondents try to keep away from any particular ideology, at least within the organization. These interviewees also indicated that although they might be religious, or sympathize with the Grey Wolves, they believe that these individual characteristics should not interfere with organizational life. Perhaps this is a trend that will continue once more second and third generation Turks take over the key roles within civic organizations. This is also what key informants told the Commission Blok during its investigation of the immigration and integration policies of the Netherlands over recent decades (Commissie-Blok, 2003-2004, p.515).

5.1.1 Confirmation by network analyses

The divides between associations not only exist in the minds of the respondents; these divisions are also clearly present in the everyday lives of organizations, as represented in the contact and formal networks. Many tend to stick to ‘their own kind’. For example, the Milli Görüş groups in Amsterdam are interconnected to a significant degree. The movement has various organizations for a variety of different target groups, such as women’s, youth, and mosque associations. Furthermore, each type of organization within the Milli Görüş movement has its own ‘federation’ (e.g. the Federation of women’s organizations, the Federation of youth organizations). These are all located at the same address, and because of that they are closely connected. The member organizations have close knit relationships with their respective federations as well as with other Milli Görüş associations of the same kind. Respondents said that they would always turn to these associations if they have a question or a problem. For example, the women’s organization MGKT Hilal in the city district of Bos en Lommer, regularly arranges joint events with other Milli Görüş groups in other city districts. The close ties between these organizations can also be seen from the fact that when we interviewed one of them, the respondent would already know about an interview we had held with someone else on an earlier occasion. The Milli Görüş associations are also well connected on the formal level, i.e. in the network of interlocking directorates. One of the biggest components therein is completely made up of Milli Görüş organizations (except for one Dutch health care agency which shares a board member with the Milli Görüş Gehandicaptenzorg organization (for the care of the handicapped)).
The five Diyanet mosques in Amsterdam are also closely connected. As one of the respondents stated, these only want to be involved in the religious experience, and therefore prefer to connect to other Diyanet mosques.

In the right-nationalistic corner, the organizations that share this ideology are also noticeably clustered. The ULU mosque and its companion social organizations (youth and women’s) are all located at the same address in the city district of Zeeburg. In the formal network, this significant interconnectedness most distinctly manifests itself by way of numerous interlocking directorates. During the interview, the respondents from the ULU Camii/Tukem (the latter is the general social organization, but the respondents presented themselves as spokesmen for both organizations simultaneously), declared that it is in touch with ‘everybody’ in the neighborhood. Nevertheless, when push comes to shove, it has relatively few contacts with the organizations located close to it, and usually arranges activities on its own, without collaborating with other actors.

Organizations in left-wing circles are also highly interconnected. Associations such as the Democratische Volksvereniging Amsterdam and the HTDB have regular gatherings, as they also do with the (left-wing) women’s organization, the ATKB, and the Alevi cultural association (Alevitische Culturele Vereniging Amsterdam). Many of the Kurdish organizations are located at the same address and hence it is no surprise that they are in close contact. In general, they tend to keep to themselves. According to a Kurdish respondent, this is also because the Turkish organizations do not want any relationships with the Kurdish ones. The following remark, made by one of the respondents upon reading the name of a Kurdish organization on the name recognition list, confirms this:

“The Kurdish Federation, are they Turkish?! I don’t want to hear of that!”

The phenomenon of ‘birds of a feather flock together’ is not typical of the Turkish community in Amsterdam. As I will show in the next chapter, its counterpart in Berlin is also based strongly on divisions on an ideological basis. However, this is not a typical characteristic of Turkish communities only, as Zmerli and Newton (2007) demonstrated in a comparative study of five European cities. They highlighted that most civic organizations have a tendency to connect only to associations of the same ideological background.

5.2  High social capital with respect to the type of alters

Of course, the fact that organizations of a certain kind have the tendency to stick together does not imply they are connected only to each other. Most of them, in fact, have a wide range of social capital, and are linked to organizations that are engaged in activities that are different to those that they are engaged in themselves. The core activities of their alters also differ.
It is mostly the smaller, ‘specialist’, organizations, such as sports’ clubs or relief agencies that have a narrow range of types of organizations to draw upon for resources. For example, the football association, the AGB, maintains many contacts, but these are mainly with other sports’ organizations that use the same arena or with other football clubs across the city. On the other hand, it is also connected to some more general organizations, such as the left-wing laborers association, the HTIB, of which the AGB used to be a division. The respondent from the AGB told me:

“Only occasionally do we keep in contact with other organizations, when we arrange a tournament or something like that, but those contacts are never structural. (...) I don’t really care about other organizations. It’s not that I don’t like them, but I only want to have something to do with them when they can mean something to my own organization.”

On the other hand, some small-scale and specialist organizations did have a high level of bridging social capital in the sense that they are connected to many different organizations. This particularly relates to organizations of a ‘unique’ kind: there are very few other associations of the same type, and these, therefore, have to rely on relationships with other types of organizations. An example is the Stichting Beth Nahrin, an Assyrian organization serving the relatively few Assyrians living in the Netherlands. Beth Nahrin is the only Assyrian association in Amsterdam. It does have connections to other Assyrian organizations, but these are all abroad. Within Amsterdam, it mainly has bonds with the HTIB and related organizations.

The organizations that take part in (state-initiated) consultative bodies, and Amsterdam has several, have a wider range of contacts than those that do not. Several city districts have a migrant council within which migrant organizations of different ethnic backgrounds are united. On the city level, there used to be a deliberative body called the TDM, which was established by the local authorities in 1985 and was dissolved in 2003. Several respondents, nevertheless, still referred to this institution. Around the time of the interviews (recall that this was in 2005), a number of organizations were trying to launch a successor to the TDM, namely the Stichting Inspraakorgaan Turken Amsterdam (ITA). However, due to internal differences of opinion, this was proving to be a difficult process. As a result, the ITA has not yet become a particularly viable body, but it was mentioned several times by respondents. It never became clear to me which organizations were involved in the ITA other than the ones which mentioned it. Another state-initiated consultative body is the Inspraak Orgaan Turken (IOT), which is a national representative of the Turkish community in the Netherlands, and not only the one in Amsterdam. The members of the IOT are umbrella organizations which each represent different ideological groups.

It is no surprise that such councils add to the diversity of the social capital of their members, since their aim is to gather migrant organizations together to combine forces.
In these circumstances one would expect different types of organizations to be united. One respondent mentioned the positive effect of councils on the social capital of his organization:

“I used to take part in the Turkish Advisory Council. But ever since it was abolished, we have much less contact with other Turkish organizations. We are, therefore, trying to set up a new collaborative body.”

As fertile as these councils might be, a relatively small proportion of organizations actually participate therein. In 2005/2006, four city districts had migrant councils, but only a minority of the organizations involved with them were Turkish (save for the one in Bos en Lommer, in which this was the majority nationality). The reasons why associations do not participate in such bodies are often simple, for example because there is nothing like them in their city district, or, in the case of the smaller organizations, because they do not have the time or the manpower to invest in the regular meetings that are held. One respondent said that it was a cultural characteristic of Turks not to take part in consultative bodies.

“The Turkish culture is characterized by shame on the personal level as well as when it comes to organizations. If a Turkish organization has a problem or needs advice, it will try to take care of it itself instead of contacting other organizations that might be able to help. That is also the reason why it is unlikely that several organizations will be found at the same assembly.”

A remark like this could lead to the conclusion that organizations can decide whether or not to participate in a council. However, the local authorities have an important influence. For instance, the migrant council in Bos en Lommer (BOMBL) is only open to organizations that have received subsidies from the city district, and only those that operate according to its guidelines, such as a demand for collaboration, are eligible for funding. Here, one can see the influence of the political opportunity structure on the social capital of migrant organizations.

Compared to the amount of state-initiatives, the number of self-initiated collaborative bodies is rather low. Two of the few examples that do exist are the collaboration of sports’ organizations in the city district of Osdorp, in which the football association, the AGB, is a participant, and the action group, the Keer het tij, a national anti-discrimination committee, in which several associations in the city district of Oud-West are involved. Within the former, the organizations work actively together because they are jointly responsible for the maintenance of their sports’ park. The latter is a huge cooperative which operates nationally. Due to its size and the fact that its members only meet sporadically and do not know each other on a first name basis, the additional value of this collaborative body remains debatable.
5.3 Connections to non-Turkish organizations: ethnically bridging and bonding social capital

The interviews revealed that organizations tend to have more connections to Turkish than to non-Turkish associations, whether they be Dutch or otherwise. On average, about 60% of Turkish organizations’ contacts are Turkish (see also Figure 5.1). What is more, if government institutions are left out of the equation, up to 70% of the organizations’ alters are Turkish. This highlights that this community is still very inwardly focused.

![Figure 5.1 Percentages of ties to organizations of different ethnicities, including governmental organizations.](image)

Some of the organizations are connected to almost no non-Turkish associations. This was particularly the case with religious organizations and those that were keeping a low profile, either because they had just started-up, or they were about to close-down (as they told me). Also social organizations that have very little to offer, other than being places where Turkish men can meet and drink tea, are likewise mainly linked to associations of the same ethnicity. Many of these small-scale organizations are still involved with life in Turkey. For example, relief agencies support poor villages in the regions from which their members have migrated. Indeed, the organizations that tend to be focused on other Turkish organizations are very keen to remind their members of ‘their roots’.

Some respondents attributed the absence of links to Dutch organizations to a general lack of time to invest in such relationships. Indeed, many advanced this reason as an explanation for their, generally, small circle of connections. Others indicated that they would like to have more contact with Dutch organizations in particular, but stated that this was practically impossible. For example, in the city district of Bos en Lommer,
several respondents indicated that they would form links to Dutch organizations more if they could. The Stichting Anatolië is located in Bos en Lommer:

“Our association has a really good network in our city district and the surrounding districts. We know every organization there. We have good contacts and we jointly organize things very often. This is also very important, to involve more and more ethnicities. But we don’t have much contact with Dutch organizations, mainly because they aren’t really present in Bos en Lommer.”

The respondent of a women’s organization in the same district said:

“I live in Bos en Lommer and I work in Bos en Lommer, but I have never encountered any Dutch organizations.”

Since the organizations that possess mainly ethnic bonding social capital are all rather small, it is all the more surprising that the HTIB is also among the associations that have more Turkish than non-Turkish connections. This is contrary to the statements of the HTIB’s chairman:

“We are strongly focused on Dutch society and Dutch politics and not so much the Turkish community.”

The network position of the HTIB is embedded more at the heart of the Turkish community than it believes itself to be. Perhaps the chairman’s other belief, namely that the HTIB

“tries to play a mediating role between the immigrant and native populations in Amsterdam and the Netherlands”

is a better reflection of what is happening. After all, to be able to fulfill a bridging function one has to know one’s grassroots well, while at the same time keeping friendly alliances with ‘the other side’. Given the fact that the HTIB has good connections to political and governmental organizations, this indeed seems to be the case. The HTIB’s bonding social capital is ‘top-down’, consisting mainly of organizations that are smaller than it is, while its bridging social capital is ‘bottom-up’ as it is connected to several large organizations of other ethnicities as well as to governmental organizations (see also the paragraph on linking social capital).

There are also some organizations that have considerably more ethnic bridging than bonding social capital. Several of these indicated that they are very aware of the significance of having non-Turkish connections. They, more than other organizations, kept repeating their belief in the importance of integration. For some, incorporating non-Turkish board members was a conscious strategy, with a view to acquiring links to the non-Turkish organizations that follow in their wake. A clear example of this is the
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cultural organization, *Stichting Aslan*, which was having financial trouble. This was more than enough reason for it to find Dutch board members with the organizational expertise to get it back on track and serve as relationship managers. This has turned out to be an effective strategy given the other organizations that *Aslan* is now collaborating with, many of which are Dutch. The youth association, *MGT Bos en Lommer*, had a similar approach. This Milli Görüş organization served mainly Turkish youngsters, but had begun to try to attract the Moroccan youths living in their city district as well. To get access to the Moroccan community, the *MGT* was now looking for a Moroccan board member. The expectation was that this individual would bring ample connections to his/her community.

The left-wing associations were predominantly found to be closely connected to non-Turkish organizations. Furthermore, the organizations that take part in migrant councils or self-initiated cooperatives more often have bridging social capital. Of course, these councils are usually established precisely to bring together organizations of different migrant groups. Most of these are not, however, connected to non-Turkish organizations through interlocking directorates. In contrast, some organizations are connected to non-Turkish associations at the board level, but have few practical connections to them in everyday life. For example, the Fatih mosque was only interlocked with the mixed social interest organization, *Röportaj*, and not with any Turkish association. This may give the impression that the mosque was more focused on actors from outside the Turkish community, but the interview revealed that 90% of its connections in practice are with Turkish organizations. This indicates that there is a discrepancy between formal networks and everyday practices with respect to ethnicity. The two networks that make up the social capital are complementary on this point.

5.4 A horizontal community

In general, the Turkish organizations in Amsterdam are horizontally connected. The community does not have many associations that are substantially bigger or more professional than the rest. There are some umbrella organizations, but they do not play

HTIB

The *HTIB* was one of the first Turkish organizations in Amsterdam, and was founded by and for migrant workers connected to the communist party in Turkey. It has always had a prominent position in the Turkish community. Due to its left-wing character, Dutch local authorities have often seen the *HTIB* as the ideal partner in the dialogue with the Turkish community. In recent years, however, the *HTIB* has slowly been losing its leading position, as several interviewees indicated. It is regarded by some as an old-fashioned organization that no longer represents the present day, ‘modern’ Turkish community.
an overly dominant role in organizational life (I will come back to this in due course.) Furthermore, even though there is a multiplicity of ideological groups, most of them stick together as equals, save for the religious bodies. Particularly in an environment like the Netherlands, with its tradition of pillarization, one might expect that each group would know its official representatives, but most of them do not have leading organizations that clearly represent their respective ideologies. This is possibly due to the subsidies that have been provided by the local government in Amsterdam, which were easily accessible by all migrant organizations for a long period of time (Vermeulen, 2006). There was, therefore, no need to join forces, because each organization could look after its own resources. Even though the policy on subsidies has changed (organizations have to meet more requirements to qualify for funding, including the demand for collaboration, and the grants have been cut) the organizations’ approaches have not; no association came forward or was established as an umbrella organization.

5.5 The umbrella organizations of religious movements

Only the religious movements have umbrella organizations that serve as their representatives in the public debate\(^\text{39}\). The member associations occupy themselves with their particular target groups (women, youth etc.) or activities (e.g. mosques providing services of prayer), while the umbrella organization is involved in more general affairs and defending the position of the movement. The Milli Görüş' umbrella organization (FMGNN) is very active in Amsterdam, particularly because it is located there. The Diyanet mosques also lean heavily on their umbrella organization (the Islamitische Stichting Nederland, ISN), although it is located in The Hague. The Diyanet and Milli Görüş member organizations (i.e. the mosques) are well connected to their umbrellas as well as to their fellow member associations. From a network perspective, the umbrella organizations do not, therefore, have a dominant position over their members. In other words, in a situation where each actor in a network is connected to every other actor therein, the disappearance of one of them does not affect the way in which the remaining actors are connected to each other. This means that none of the actors has power over the others. In contrast, in a network in which one organization is connected to otherwise unconnected associations, this central organization does have more power than the other actors: all information flows through it and its removal would cause the network to disintegrate. Strikingly, even though the connections between the Turkish religious organizations in Amsterdam are shaped according to the former situation (the umbrella bodies do not have a dominant structural position), in

\(^{39}\) I only discuss the Diyanet and Milli Görüş movements here. Other religious movements, such as Süleymancilar, are relatively marginal. Furthermore, I did not speak to any organizations belonging to other movements, in spite of several attempts. I take this as an indication that these organizations are, indeed, less active.
real life they operate according to the latter. The umbrella organizations are crucial to the functioning of their members because they take the lead. For example, the representative from the youth organization, MGT Bos en Lommer, explained:

“We are part of the federation of Milli Görüş and therefore we often have contact with the youth federation. This youth federation not only plays a major role in keeping contact with others organizations, it is also involved in the spread of information to and from our organization. They also exert a degree of control over the youth organizations that are connected to the federation, for example they always come to our general meetings.”

A respondent from the Milli Görüş women’s organization MGKT Hilal said something similar about its connection to the Federation:

“I speak to the chairwoman of the Federation of the Milli Görüş women’s organizations practically daily. I ask her all sorts of things, about what I can say during a meeting with the municipality and all that stuff, what I should say, and what I should bring with me.”

Other Milli Görüş and Diyanet associations spoke of how their respective umbrella organizations are the ones that keep in contact with ‘the outside world’ (this phrasing was used by several respondents). This tendency is the strongest for the mosques.

There are also some non-religious umbrella organizations, but they have a different relationship with their members. For example, the political organization, DVA-DIDF (originally a Marxist association, it says it is ‘democratic’ these days), which operates
locally, is a member of the national DIDF, just as the pressure group, the HTDB (which also stresses its democratic caliber), is a member of the national DSDF. These umbrella organizations are like the national counterparts instead of the ‘conductors’ of their members. The local branches operate much more on their own account, and are more involved with their direct (social) environments instead of with the vertical relationships with their superiors.

Most small-scale associations are independent and not a member of any umbrella organization. For some of these, the HTIB comes closest to fulfilling that role for two key reasons. Firstly, several organizations have sprung up from the HTIB. For example, the Stichting Anatolië and the AGB were initially founded as parts of, or by active (board) members of, the HTIB. Secondly, some regard the HTIB as their ‘big brother’, to whom they can turn in the case of trouble. This is because it is viewed as being the oldest and wisest organization in Amsterdam. The respondent from the HTIB also commented that:

“90% of the first and second generation Turks in the Netherlands know the HTIB and people are often referred to us in the coffee houses. We often advise people who want to found a new organization or who have a question regarding their organization. We also keep office hours to help people with questions on the law and bureaucracy.”

5.6 The importance of personnel and personality

The Turkish community does have some organizations that are clearly more dominant than others. These have more connections and are also more central in the contact network. Furthermore, they not only have more social capital, but that which they do possess is also more diverse. These associations are characterized by having a longer history, being (quasi) umbrella organizations, and actively reaching out to other Turkish and non-Turkish associations. Some are active throughout the city of Amsterdam (laborer’s organization HTIB, the religious Milli Görüş Federation FMGNN), while others are instead active locally, in their respective city districts, but are known in the city nevertheless (the educational organization, STOC, in the city district of Geuzenveld-Slotermeer, and the pressure group, the HTDB, in Oud-West). Another important characteristic of these ‘giants’ is that they are led by strong personalities, or they have board members with strong personal motivations. One respondent spoke about this:

“For Turks, an organization can only be strong and important if it has a strong leader. Only then will it have many followers. This is what you see with Milli Görüş and Haci Karacaer, for example.”
Karacaer was the head of Milli Görüş at the time of the interviews. He was a charismatic leader who was relatively progressive, which made him an ally of the local politicians and civil servants, but he also knew how to satisfy the local grass roots\textsuperscript{40}. The same applies to non-religious organizations, where one can also see the importance of forceful leaders. Vermeulen (2006) pointed to the importance of Nihat Karaman, the leader of the HTIB, in bringing the Turkish community together in the 1980s. The current leader of that organization, Mustafa Ayranci, is also very well-known in Amsterdam in both the Turkish community and by the local government. Likewise, the smaller educational organization, Stichting Turks Onderwijs Centrum (STOC), profits from its potent leader, Ismail Ercan, who represents his association at every opportunity, thereby being almost single-handedly responsible for all of the contacts that the STOC maintains.

Several dominant organizations have board members who have a (long) history as organizational leaders. Many of them have been on the board of one or more organizations before they took up the position they had at the time of the interviews. Taking all of this information together, it is clear that simply by bringing in their personal social capital, the people who make up the board of an organization obviously contribute to its social capital and, subsequently, to that of the community.

5.7 The relevance of locality

With respect to how organizations use their social capital, their locality may be of crucial importance, i.e. the geographical position of an organization in comparison to the geographical position of its connections. One of the respondents, for instance, took a mental walk through the neighborhood to recall which organizations he knew:

“Around the corner you have ..., and then in the square there’s...”

Several organizations gave the impression that they have so little time to maintain contact with others that it seems plausible that those that they do meet need to be nearby. It transpired that some organizations are indeed mainly connected to neighborhood associations. Some of them are small-scale inactive organizations that, if they are prepared to reach out at all, only connect to others if they are right next door. One social association for men, called the Ihtiyarlar Sohbet Solune, which literally means ‘Old People’s Chat Room’, stated:

“The contacts we have with our neighbors are confined to greeting them in passing. That is because we want only one thing: peace. We do not want anything more than to offer our members a place where they can find some company.”

\textsuperscript{40} After he resigned from his post in 2006, a more conservative leader was appointed by the Milli Görüş’ European head quarters in Germany, which considered Karacaer to be too progressive.
People in this organization’s locality all go to their ‘own’ community centers and there is little communication between these. Yet it is not only relatively inactive organizations that have local connections. Some organizations are very active in their city district and have a local, yet extensive circle, of acquainted connections.

Some organizations have a city-wide network, but that mainly relates to the fact that they do not have their own accommodation. These organizations are registered at the address of one of their board members and look for a location when activities are planned. The result is that these associations are not bound to a specific area and their connections are thus spread out over the city. Other organizations, which are connected to associations all over the city, are characterized by the objective of serving the entire Turkish community, instead of just Turks living in a specific area. Those such as the HTIB have the goal of supporting the Turkish community, and not just organizations in a particular city district. On the other hand, some associations which have a greater than average amount of social capital are very active locally in practice. For example, three organizations in the city district of Bos en Lommer (the community center, the Stichting Anatolië, the educational organization, the Stichting Yunus Emre, and the Milli Görüş women’s organization, the MGKT Hilal) all had a great deal of social capital, but the majority of these contacts were located in their near vicinities.

5.8 Linking social capital

The links between the organizations and governmental institutions (i.e. linking social capital) deserve a special mention. The picture is mixed: some organizations have a great deal of linking social capital, while others have none. I distinguished three types of government institutions: political organizations, by which I mean mainstream Dutch political parties and politicians, as well as city district councils and councilors; ‘true’ governmental institutions, such as sub-divisions of the municipality; and semi-governmental organizations that are ‘in the field’ but were founded on the initiative of, and fully sponsored by, the (local) government. It transpired that the organizations studied herein had very few direct bonds as an organization with political parties; only four (leftist) organizations could be said to have such connections. The left leaning laborers’ organization, the HTIB, was the only one linked to the parties in the city council, while the political organization, the DVA, the pressure group, the HTDB, and the welfare organization, the Stichting Anatolië, all indicated that they were linked to the

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41 Migrant organizations that are concerned with politics but are not a player in the Dutch political arena, form a separate category of voluntary organizations that is not regarded as linking social capital.

42 As I did not explicitly ask for the connections between organizations and political actors, it is possible that other organizations are connected to them as well, but they failed to mention this. It was only for the organizations that mentioned the political actors spontaneously that this linking social capital was noted. I assume that these connections are the most relevant for, and are actively maintained, by those organizations that mentioned them of their own accord.
(left-wing) parties in their respective city district councils. Several interviewees did have
direct bonds with political parties on a personal basis; they had had seats on the city
district council, or used to be more generally involved with a political party at the city
district level. Michon and Vermeulen (2007) had indeed already reported that over 60 %
of the Turkish city (district) councilors were board members of a local Turkish
organization. One respondent mentioned to me that his organization had a good
relationship with the city district because the chairman used to be a city district
councilor.

For many other organizations, the relationships with politicians remain confined to
inviting them to events, or accepting their invitations (some organizations indicated that
they do this only on the initiative of political parties) at election times. Politicians visit
the organizations during evening meetings, where they explain their political programs
to the members in attendance. For many organizations, this boils down to only a two-
yearly encounter.

The number of organizations that are connected to the second category of governmental
institutions, the true government associations, is much higher. Over 80% of the
respondents (31 of 38) stated that they were, more or less, intensively linked to a city
district and/or the municipality. One could also distinguish the kinds of relationships:
financial (subsidies) and interactional.

The seven organizations that are not connected to government associations were
very explicit in their desire to not have anything to do with the local authorities. This
was usually because of funding issues. Some had been refused financial support in the
past, or had received only a small part of the money they had applied for. Because of this,
they were disappointed in the subsidy schemes and the local authorities by association.
As a response, they refused to have anything to do with them. Other organizations had
never even tried to apply for grants because they wanted to keep their autonomy, which
they felt would be compromised if they did what the government wanted them to do to
be approved for funding; they wanted to show that they were able to manage on their
own. For example, the youth organization, the Stichting Gouden Paraplu, stated:

"We want to prove ourselves. Too often the subsidies are abused. We want to show
that we can do it on our own."

For other organizations, the need to prove themselves was not relevant. Instead,
because of their aims, they obtained financial resources through other channels, namely
by commercial sponsorship. For example, the respondent from the entrepreneurs’
association Nederlands Turkse Jonge Ondernemers stated that:

"We are all entrepreneurs and do not need government funding."
Moreover, some of the organizations that do maintain interactional contacts with government organizations do not want to receive funding. As a sports organization said:

“We don’t receive funding and we don’t ask for it. I think that their leisure activities should be worth something to the members, and when they pay, we don’t need subsidies. ... Of course, there are several ways to apply for funding, but I think it’s nonsense to ask for money as a sports organization under the pretext of ‘integration activities.’”

But for many organizations, an important reason to be connected, or not, to the local authorities is financial.

The interactional relationship between voluntary organizations and governmental institutions can take place at the city district as well as at the central level. That organizations make a distinction between these financial and interactional relationships becomes clear from this quote from a respondent:

“We know the way to the city district officials well, but we do not want any contact with the municipality any more. They have turned down our requests for subsidies!”

It transpired that of the organizations that have any linking social capital, a third are connected solely to city district authorities, and not to those on other levels. This was particularly the case for small organizations. Another third were only linked to the municipality, while the remainder are connected at the city district as well as at the central level. The latter two groups contain small as well as larger organizations. The interactions with the city district’s civil servants sometimes consist of negotiations about accommodation, such as the renovation of a sporting body's club house, or even, as one respondent told us, about barring a rival organization from moving in. In other cases, as one youth association commented, the organizations and the local authorities try to solve the problems in the neighborhood together. And sometimes the organizations even compete with the authorities, as the welfare agency, Stichting Anatolië, confirmed:

“Stichting Anatolië plays an important role in the city district. Many people always come to our activities, in contrast with the activities that the city district organizes: not many people show up there. That is because people feel at home at our place.”

The organizations that have more social capital generally tended to also have more and better connections to government institutions. They mentioned the authorities more often, and their links are the strongest. This may be because of a self-reinforcing mechanism: organizations start looking for contact with the government, for example to
apply for funding. If they receive this money, they can expand their activities and grow. This, in turn, makes them more attractive partners for the government, and they are thus more likely to be included in any policy implementation. Thus, high general social capital and high linking social capital go naturally together.

Half of the respondents indicated that they were in contact with semi-governmental organizations, the third category of government organizations referred to above. Examples of these that are active in Amsterdam are: community work associations, such as the Stichting Impuls, the Stichting Buurtparticipatie, and the MDSO; youth organizations such as the Stedelijk Jongerenwerk Amsterdam; and libraries and the Amsterdam Centrum Buitenlanders. Sometimes these relationships are a bit strained:

“Stichting Impuls is like a big elephant. They used to receive 90% of the funding from the city district but they don’t anymore and that is why they are almost bankrupt. We do it differently: in collaboration with a couple of organizations we all apply for a little bit of money, which we then use together. We also get funding because we are well-known and we are trustworthy.”

What is striking is that organizations in the city district of Bos en Lommer are above-averagely related to semi-governmental organizations that provide community work. The welfare organization Stichting Anatolië, the educational organization Stichting Yunus Emre, and the women’s organization MGKT Hilal are all very active organizations which are aimed at improving the quality of life in their particular neighborhood and assisting the residents of the city district. Their societal aims, of course, fit the objectives of their semi-governmental counterparts. That their objectives are the dominant explanation for the connections can also be seen from the fact that another organization in Bos en Lommer, a social organization, is not linked to any semi (or any other kind of) governmental institution. In the adjacent city district of De Baarsjes, none of the associations I interviewed are involved with semi-governmental organizations, and only few of the organizations in Geuzenveld Slotermeer, Slotervaart-Overtoomse Veld, and Osdorp were. I mention these city districts because they were all marked by the national government as “Krachtwijken” (‘strong neighborhoods’) in 2007. These are neighborhoods where the quality of the living environment is much lower than average, and they are characterized by “high unemployment, outdated housing and deteriorating public spaces”43. One of the aims of the policy on these challenging areas is to encourage all actors in a civil society to work together to overcome the problems. Given the results of this study, there is a long way to go before that aim is achieved.

43 As stated on the website of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning, and the Environment: www.international.vrom.nl
5.9 The media and the message

Media associations, such as the Stichting Turkse Televisie Amsterdam STTA (television) and the Feza Media (newspaper), are fairly well known in the community and many organizations indicated that they are actively connected to one or more of them. This was confirmed by the Galaxi Media, the sister organization of Feza Media, which revealed that most organization contact them because they want information about their activities to be disseminated by the media.

Notably, most organizations only connect to the Turkish media, some of which are associated with a local, mixed broadcasting station (Salto). At the same time, many respondents commented that the STTA is an extension of Milli Görüş and it can never provide objective information. Because of the relationship between Milli Görüş and this media association, many respondents did not want to be involved with it. Some organizations also disregarded the role of the media in general. As one respondent said:

“One should not use the media to make it known that you are there, but you should become known because of all the good things you do.”

Since the media can play an important role in the mobilization of a community (e.g. Newton, 1999; Walgrave & Manssens, 2000), it will be interesting to see whether these organizations are actually addressed when the community is indeed triggered to mobilize. Whether this is the case is discussed in Chapter 7.

5.10 Comparing the network of interlocking directorates and the contact network

The formal and informal network structures\textsuperscript{44} share a resemblance when it comes to the ideological divisions that run through the Turkish community. The network of interlocking directorates did, however, reveal a more pronounced and more extreme picture than the contact network. The formal network is much more fragmented, i.e. there were more separate components, thus emphasizing the ideological cleavages. The fragmentation is, for the large part, caused by the fact that only half of the organizations share at least one board member with any other organization, while the other half were formally unconnected. As Vermeulen (2006) described, organizations often make a strategic choice to establish new associations with board members who are already seated in another organization. The Milli Görüş associations are, in this respect, prototypical, and a respondent from one of them said:

\textsuperscript{44} Recall that these refer to the network of interlocking directorates and the contact network.
"We sometimes work with very large amounts of money, so it is very important that we know new board members well and that we can trust them. That is why we are quite picky when it comes to new board members. I was asked to join this organization because I was already active in the Milli Görüş Federation."

The tendency to only be connected to Turkish organizations is also more pronounced in the network of interlocking directorates: only a small group of organizations share a board member with non-Turkish ones, whereas practically all are connected to non-Turkish organizations in everyday life. Several ethnically bridging organizations in the network of interlocking directorates were cultural associations that were connected to non-Turkish (cultural) counterparts. These organizations also displayed a greater than average interest in integrating into Dutch society by, for example, co-organizing cultural events. On the other hand, another group of cultural organizations had no connections in the network of interlocking directorates. Apparently, these organizations are more concerned with reconfirming the Turkish cultural identity by referring to the homeland and its traditions. By doing this they turn away from non-Turkish associations. The same goes for a large group of social organizations: they are not connected to other (non-Turkish) associations in the formal network, nor do they maintain many bridging connections in everyday life.

Moreover, with regard to the types of organization that are connected, the network of interlocking directorates shows a more distinct picture than the contact network. On average, the organizations in the former connect more to similar counterparts than those in the contact network do. This may also be caused by a strategy that was applied when the organizations were founded. If someone wants to set up a new sports' association, it is convenient to include board members who know about running such an association, and hence formal relationships are logical. On the other hand, in everyday life it may be as obvious to connect to sports' organizations as it is to other kinds.

Furthermore, the contact network and the network of interlocking directorates differed considerably with respect to the locality of related organizations. On the formal level, most were interlocked with organizations in their geographical vicinity. The analysis was conducted on the city district level—the result being that most organizations were officially connected to ones in the same city district—while further scrutiny made clear that many were linked to organizations in the same block or even at the same address. The contact network revealed a much more diverse picture. Organizations were mainly connected to those outside their own city districts, and these alters were spread out over several city districts. In everyday life, the organizations thus have a bigger world than one might expect to find based on the formal network.
5.11 Social capital in Amsterdam summarized

The social capital of the Turkish community in Amsterdam has been revealed to be rich and various. Although there are no clear, leading organizations in the form of umbrella organizations or any others that clearly represent the community, or large parts thereof, there are associations that have more social capital than others. The amount of social capital is related to an organization’s history (older ones usually have more), the people who are its face (charismatic leaders), the diversity of the types of other organizations they are connected to (more diverse), and their objectives (serving the community). On the other hand, these ‘richer’ organizations do not have markedly more ethnically bridging or bonding social capital. In fact, except for a few small examples, most organizations have more ethnically bridging than they have bonding social capital. The majority also have considerable linking social capital.

The two networks (the contact network and the network of interlocking directorates), which when combined form social capital of organizations, have been shown to be complementary rather than alike. Even though they contained the same actors, the connections between them were very different; only a few of the links in the formal network were found in the informal network as well. The contact network is much more extensive in the sense that it highlights that organizations have more connections than could be derived from the network of interlocking directorates. Because the contact network involves more relationships, this network also soothes the clear differences that are highlighted by the network of interlocking directorates. Ideological divides are prominent in the network of interlocking directorates, while in the contact network they are bridged. In a similar fashion, the network of interlocking directorates gives the impression that the Turkish community is inward focused (i.e. bonding), while the contact network reveals that in everyday life ethnic cleavages are often overcome.

This information leads us on to the question of what will happen when the community is mobilized. Will the ideological and ethnic divides be overcome or underlined? Is the relative equality that appears to characterize the Amsterdam Turkish community real or an illusion? These questions and more are answered in Chapter 3.4. Firstly, however, I will next deal with the issue of the social capital of the Turkish community in Berlin.