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# Political Participation and Civic Community of Ethnic Minorities in Four Cities in the Netherlands

Anja van Heelsum

*Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, University of Amsterdam*

In this article, the political participation of Turkish, Surinamese and Moroccan immigrants in four cities in the Netherlands is related to the civic community of these groups. The usefulness of Robert Putnam's civic community perspective is tested for the immigrant communities in Dutch cities in the Netherlands. The relationship between the networks in the migrant communities and political participation found in earlier research can partly explain the differences between the ethnic groups and between the cities, but some additional explanatory factors are suggested.

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## Introduction

Robert Putnam's work has stimulated the debate on the positive effect of civic communities on democracy. He took Italy and the United States as examples. A similar mechanism may occur within the Dutch situation: an active civic community might have a positive effect on political participation. It is particularly interesting to see how immigrant communities function. New immigrants initially participate less than established ethnic groups, but not all ethnic groups are the same, as shown by Jean Tillie (1998). The reason might be that the civic community of some ethnic groups is more developed than that of other ethnic groups. For instance, the number of community organisations might stimulate active political participation in other fields. In this article I will focus on the explanatory power of civic community for the political participation of ethnic groups. I will take the Netherlands as a case study to test to what extent Putnam's theory applies. Amsterdam has been researched earlier, but other cities have not. By looking at four cities, it might become clearer under what circumstances the civic community perspective applies.

I will look at different communities of ethnic minorities. The population of the Netherlands is about 16 million, of which 7 per cent is usually considered to consist of ethnic minority groups. *Ethnic minority groups* are recent immigrant groups with a lower socio-economic status in terms of educational level and income. National and local policies have been formulated to improve the socio-economic situation and the possibilities of these specific groups. The main ethnic minority groups are: 1) immigrants from former Dutch colonies with Dutch passports, e.g. Surinamese and Antilleans; 2) immigrants that arrived as temporary labourers between 1960 and 1980, mainly from Turkey and Morocco and their offspring; and 3) immigrants that arrived more recently as refugees, from a variety of countries like Somalia, Iran and Iraq. Hans Vermeulen and Rinus Penninx (2000) describe the situation

of immigrants in Dutch society extensively. In the current study, the focus lies on the three largest ethnic minority groups, namely Surinamese, Turks and Moroccans. Culturally, these groups differ considerably from each other. To shorten the description, I will use the term migrants.

*Political participation* in this study includes, for instance, the act of voting in local or national elections, or the act of becoming a councillor or parliamentarian. Immigrants do not automatically participate. They can only become councillors or parliamentarians in the Netherlands when they have acquired Dutch nationality. The opportunities for political participation of members of ethnic minority groups vary for the three categories that are mentioned above. Immigrants from the former colonies have always had Dutch passports and have the right to vote in national, provincial and local elections and to become a local or provincial councillor, parliamentarian or governor. Turks and Moroccans have the right to dual nationality since 1992; about two-thirds of them took Dutch nationality and kept their Turkish or Moroccan passports so they have dual nationality.<sup>1</sup> They can participate in all elections. Non-nationals have been granted voting rights on the municipal level, when they have lived for more than five years in the Netherlands. That means the number of Turks and Moroccans that can vote in local elections is considerably higher than in national elections. The third category of ethnic minorities, refugees, has different types of legal status. Refugees with Dutch nationality vote in all elections, temporarily or permanently accepted refugees without Dutch nationality can vote after five years of stay in the municipal elections and asylum seekers (not yet accepted) do not have voting rights at all.

I will concentrate here on the national level first and then on the four largest cities in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague. These cities have a concentration of ethnic minorities around 30 per cent, so representation in their municipal councils is an important issue.<sup>2</sup>

## **Theoretical perspective: the civic communities perspective**

The debate on civic community theory has recently been stirred up by authors such as Francis Fukuyama (1999), Robert Putnam (2000) and Marc Hooghe (2001), who have debated whether the diminishing interest in formal organisations throughout the Western world does or does not have serious consequences for the social capital and stability of society. The civic community perspective was explained by Putnam in *Making Democracy Work* (1993); it can help to explain the different levels of political participation of migrants. In his study of the regional councils in Italy, Putnam has shown that civic culture explains a large part of the different political performances among the Italian regions. Putnam has measured the 'civicness' of regions by determining the density of the local cultural and recreational associations, by newspaper circulation, by the referendum turnout and by the preference voting for regional candidates. These different measurements have a high interrelation and thus form a robust 'civic community index'.

'When two citizens meet on the street in a civic region, *both* of them are likely to have seen a newspaper at home that day; when two people in a less civic

region meet, probably neither of them has. More than half of the citizens in the civic regions have never cast a preference ballot in their lives; more than half of the voters in the less civic regions say they always have. Membership in sports clubs, cultural and recreational groups, community and social action organisations, educational and youth groups, and so on is roughly twice as common in the most civic regions as in the least civic regions' (Putnam, 1993, pp. 97–98).

Meindert Fennema and Jean Tillie (1999) have suggested that what is true for the Italian regions may also be true for the Dutch multicultural society. They have used the civic community theory to investigate the relationship between political participation and the civic participation in organisations of ethnic minorities in Amsterdam. The civic culture of ethnic groups, that is their degree of civic community, will most likely contribute to the working of the multicultural democracy. Fennema and Tillie elaborate further on the theoretical model behind this in their article in 2001, based on the case of Amsterdam. They used indicators of political participation (turnout in municipal elections), political trust (questions about trust in municipal government) following newspapers and television from the country of origin and indicators of the civic community (density of organisations). The order of ranking of the three main ethnic groups was the same on all indicators, namely, first the Turks, second the Moroccans and third the Surinamese. They took this similarity in order of ranking as a sign that the strength of the civic community of an ethnic group results in political trust in a community and political trust within a community results in political participation.

In an earlier article I have shown a similar relationship at national level in the Netherlands, but the order of rank of the three ethnic groups turned out differently than that in Amsterdam (van Heelsum, 2002).<sup>3</sup> Studying the networks of organisations at national level, I concluded that Turks have a stronger civic community, followed by the Surinamese and third the Moroccans. In the current article I will follow the same reasoning as in 2002 and try to analyse, firstly, if using more indicators for civic community can clarify the relationship at the national level. Secondly, I will describe Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht and seek for an explanation of the differences between these cities. Two indicators of political participation are used and five indicators of civic community.

## Method

The results of three field studies are used: first, a study of voting behaviour; second, a study of local councillors; and third, the study of migrant organisations.

Data on voting are available from the 1998 elections (van Heelsum and Tillie, 2000). We depend on exit polls and surveys to know more about the characteristics of voters, since the municipal registry supplies the election registry only with names and addresses and not with data on birthplace to protect the privacy of the voters. In 1998 exit polls were organised during the municipal elections in five Dutch cities.<sup>4</sup> The five cities with the highest percentage of ethnic minorities were selected: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Arnhem. In every city the sample consisted of seven polling stations. Interviewers asked voters on their way out of the polling station to fill in a questionnaire of one page, with questions on their ethnic

background and voting behaviour. The answers of 11,588 respondents were gathered, of which 2,210 were Turks, 1,040 Moroccans and 1,354 Surinamese. Unfortunately, the figures on voter turnout for Surinamese and Antilleans could not be separated in the four cities, so we had to use a combined figure for both groups.

The second type of data that I use here is on migrant councillors.<sup>5</sup> Joosje Lakmaker (2000) gathered data on the number of councillors at national level. Berger, Fennema, van Heelsum, Tillie and Wolff (2000) interviewed all migrant councillors in four cities, namely Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Eindhoven and Zaanstad.

Thirdly, data were gathered on the number of, and interlinks between, migrant organisations. Information on the organisations was collected from various sources: the Chamber of Commerce, experts on the specific ethnic groups, members of ethnic organisations and migrant support organisations. Three databases were developed with names of organisations, addresses and telephone numbers, objectives and names of board members. Data were gathered on the Turkish (van Heelsum and Tillie, 1999), Moroccan (van Heelsum, 2001) and Surinamese (van Heelsum and Voorthuysen, 2002) organisations and their links through common board members. To analyse the links between organisations, a computer program for network analysis Gradap was applied. After the technical analysis, the results were converted into a picture to show the links between organisations. These pictures can be found in van Heelsum (2002). From these network analyses, several indicators of organisational and network density were constructed.

The indicators of political participation are: turnout rate at elections and number of councillors. The indicators for civic community are: the number of organisations, the density of organisations (per inhabitant), the percentage of isolated organisations and the network density (internal links); from these four measures I will construct an indicator of the order of rank. The calculation of this indicator is explained with the example in Table 1.

## National level results

Data on voter turnout of migrants are lacking at the national level. The exit polls that were held during the elections of 1998 (Tillie et al., 2000) concentrated on big cities and cannot serve as a basis to calculate national voter turnout. For this reason, only the number of councillors and the data on organisations are described below.

In Table 1, the following indicators are presented: a) population: the number of Surinamese, Moroccans and Turks in the Netherlands; b) the total number of organisations; c) the density of organisations per inhabitant; d) the percentage of isolated organisations according to network analysis; e) the network density, that is, the number of lines in the network divided by the number of points in the network; f) the rank order index of civic community, calculated from rank ordering the indicators b, d and e and adding them up for every ethnic group; g) the voter turnout for 1998; and h) the number of councillors. Similar indicators will be used in the tables on the four cities in the next section, without the elaborate explanation.

As the table shows, Turks are the largest ethnic minority group. The number of Turkish organisations (1,100) in the Netherlands is one and a half times as high as

**Table 1: Indicators of civic community and political participation of ethnic groups in the Netherlands (at 1 January 2001)**

{PRIVATE}	Dutch	Surinamese	Moroccans	Turks
a) population*	16 mil	308.625	272.000	319.600
b) no. of organisations**	881	720	1100	
c) org. density (b/a × 1.000)		2.85	2.65	3.44
d) % of isolated organisations		53	65	48
e) network density (lines/points)		449/713 = 0.63	189/503 = 0.38	441/773 = 0.57
f) index***		5	9	4
g) voter turnout (1998)		no data	no data	no data
h) number of councillors****		40	21	60

Source: \*Website of the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics <http://statline.cbs.nl>

\*\*van Heelsum and Tillie (1999), van Heelsum (2001) and van Heelsum and Voorthuysen (2002).

\*\*\*The rank order index of civic community is calculated from rank ordering the indicators b, d and e and adding them up for every ethnic group: a lower outcome indicates a higher order of ranking of the civic community index.

\*\*\*\*Lakmaker (2000).

the number of Moroccan organisations (720); the number of Surinamese organisations is in between (881).

It is logical that the largest number of organisations is related to the number of citizens. Since there are more Turks, one can expect more Turkish organisations. To compare the organisational density per community, one should divide the number of organisations by the number of citizens. This turns out to be 3.44 organisations per 1000 Turkish inhabitants, 2.85 organisations per 1000 Surinamese and 2.65 per 1000 Moroccan inhabitants. That means that the Turkish community has a stronger civic community, to use Putnam's terminology and organisational density as an indicator.

According to Fennema (2004), an indicator that includes also the connections between organisations would be a better indicator for the civic community. Our network analysis of interlinking directorates supplies us with information about the connections in the sense that board members in two organisations form a connection. The organisations that are isolated, not connected to any other organisation are given under d) in the table above. Again the Turks have the lowest number of isolated organisations, Moroccans the highest, with Surinamese in between.

Consequently, the size of the largest interconnected network varies for the three ethnic groups. The largest network of Turkish organisations consists of 150 organisations; the largest network of Surinamese organisations consists of 143 organisations; and, in the case of Moroccan organisations only 53 were part of the largest cluster. At the national level the order of ranking for ethnic groups is as follows for all indicators: 1) Turks, 2) Surinamese and 3) Moroccans.

Network density ((e) in the table) includes the total number of connections (lines) within the network divided by the total number of points, i.e. the organisations from which the information about board members is available. But, according to

Fennema, the best measure is a rank order index of civic community, calculated from rank ordering the indicators b), d) and e) and adding them up for every ethnic group. The results remain the same when this index is used.

Throughout the Netherlands as a whole, the density of organisations is highest for Turks, the percentage of isolated organisations is lowest for Turks and the number of councillors is highest for Turks. The second group is the Surinamese group: it is second on number of organisations, on density and on number of councillors. The group that is considerably lower on number of councillors and a little bit lower on density of organisations is the Moroccan group. The general assumption that the indicators of political participation and civic community are interrelated is valid at national level. This conclusion does not differ from the conclusion of van Heelsum (2002). The use of more network indicators does not affect the conclusion, since they all point in the same direction: the order of ranking does not change.

## **Results: the situation in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht**

Fennema and Tillie reported earlier on the case of Amsterdam. In the last two years, new data have been gathered that show that the number of Surinamese organisations was underestimated two years ago. I will present an updated table on Amsterdam and give some background information on the composition of Amsterdam.

### **Amsterdam**

Amsterdam has a relatively large Surinamese community, which consists of a high percentage of Afro-Surinamese. The first immigration from Surinam consisted of highly-educated Afro-Surinamese who came to Amsterdam to study in universities. A special characteristic of the Surinamese population in Amsterdam is their relatively high intermarriage rate, which has resulted in a big proportion of Surinamese-Dutch children (van Heelsum, 1997). The size of the Turkish community in Amsterdam is relatively smaller than the Surinamese and Moroccan ones. But, many federations of the main Turkish religious denominations are based in Amsterdam, such as STICF (umbrella organisation of the mainstream Turkish mosques) and the Federation Milli Görüs Nederland. The Moroccan population in Amsterdam is relatively large, but not known to be well organised. Two main Moroccan organisations are, however, found in Amsterdam, namely the main mosque organisation (UMMON) and the main left-wing organisation (KMAN). The results on Amsterdam are shown in Table 2.

With these new data on Amsterdam, the order of ranking of organisational density of the three largest groups that Fennema and Tillie found earlier is repeated. Turks are the smallest group in actual number in Amsterdam, but they have the highest density of organisations, the highest voter turnout and as many councillors as Surinamese. Surinamese are the largest ethnic group in Amsterdam; they also have the largest number of organisations, but the lowest density of organisations. The number of councillors is equal to the number of the much larger Surinamese community. The Moroccans score lowest on the actual number of organisations, in between on density of organisations and voting behaviour and lowest again on

**Table 2: Organisational density and turnout at elections of ethnic groups in Amsterdam (at 1 January 2000)**

{PRIVATE}	Dutch	Surinamese	Moroccans	Turks
a) population*	400.027	71.760	55.043	33.931
b) number of organisations		217	170	189
c) org. density (b/a × 1.000)		3.0	3.1	5.6
d) % of isolated organisations		111/185 = 0.60	80/144 = 0.56	73/156 = 0.47
e) network density (lines/points)		67/185 = 0.36	82/144 = 0.57	77/156 = 0.49
f) index		7	6	5
g) voter turnout (1998)		21 (+Ant)	23	39
h) number of councillors		4	2	4

Source: \*<http://www.onstat.amsterdam.nl>

number of councillors. Generally speaking, I have found the same results as Fennema and Tillie with data gathered two years later.

### Rotterdam

The second city of this study is Rotterdam. Rotterdam has a different ethnic composition: Surinamese are the largest ethnic group (Afro- as well as Indian-Surinamese), Turks are second and Moroccans are third. Looking at the indicators of political participation, Turks have an evident first position again. Voter turnout rates are highest of all groups and the number of councillors is also highest. The two indicators of political participation follow the same pattern. Second in Rotterdam are the Moroccans on all indicators. Third on the indicators of political participation are the Surinamese.

These indicators do not seem to be connected in Rotterdam to the number and density of organisations as they were in Amsterdam. Surinamese have the largest number of organisations and the largest density of organisations. Turks are second on number of organisations, but lowest on the density of organisations. Moroccans are the smallest ethnic community in Rotterdam, but are second in organisational density.

In short, on density of organisations, Surinamese are the highest, Moroccans second and Turks third. On both political indicators, Turks are the highest, Moroccans second and Surinamese third.

### The Hague

The third city under investigation is The Hague, the seat of the Dutch government. The composition of the ethnic minority population of The Hague is a little special. The Hague is known for its relatively large Indian-Surinamese (Hindustani) community. The Surinamese community in The Hague is of a clearly different nature than in other cities. The Indian-Surinamese are described as a more inwardly-

**Table 3: Organisational density and turnout at elections of ethnic groups in Rotterdam (at 1 January 2001)**

{PRIVATE}	Dutch	Surinamese	Moroccans	Turks
a) population*	328.575	51.500	31.636	41.467
b) number of organisations		131	77	81
c) org. density (b/a × 1.000)		2.54	2.43	1.95
d) % of isolated organisations		71/114 = 0.62	36/57 = 0.63	47/76 = 0.62
e) network density (lines/points)		33/114 = 0.29	14/57 = 0.25	24/76 = 0.32
f) index		5	8	5
g) voter turnout (1998)		27 (+Ant)	33	42
h) number of councillors		1	2	3

Source: \*[http://www.cos.nl/html/cijfers/demgeg\\_cijfers.html](http://www.cos.nl/html/cijfers/demgeg_cijfers.html)

**Table 4: Organisational density and turnout at elections of ethnic groups in The Hague (at 1 January 1999)**

{PRIVATE}	Dutch	Surinamese	Moroccans	Turks
a) population*	26.3915	4.1361	1.9279	2.4915
b) number of organisations		152	43	65
c) org. density (b/a × 1.000)		3.68	2.23	2.61
d) % of isolated organisations		68/141 = 0.48	18/30 = 0.60	35/43 = 0.81
e) network density (lines/points)		104/141 = 0.74	11/30 = 0.37	4/43 = 0.09
f) index		3	7	5
g) voter turnout (1998)		27 (+Ant)	23	36
h) number of councillors		3	1	2

Source: \*[http://www.denhaag.nl/bestuur/dhcijfers/bevdhst/bevolking\\_naar\\_etniciteitsgroep\\_den\\_haag.htm](http://www.denhaag.nl/bestuur/dhcijfers/bevdhst/bevolking_naar_etniciteitsgroep_den_haag.htm)

directed group, with higher social cohesion, that finds conservation of culture important. Members are described as less interested in marriage with members of other ethnic backgrounds (van Niekerk, 2000). Although this sharp distinction between the Surinamese sub-groups is disappearing fast, it is evident that the Surinamese community in The Hague has a different nature from the one in Amsterdam.

Looking at Table 4, the actual number and the density of the Surinamese organisations are indeed higher than in other cities. This finding is not surprising, considering the characteristics described earlier. The number of Surinamese councillors is also higher than in the other two ethnic groups. Contrary to the theory, it is surprising that the voter turnout is not the highest among Surinamese. Voter turnout is, as nearly everywhere else in 1998, highest for Turks.

The order of organisational density is Surinamese first, Turks second and Moroccans third. It is important to take into account that the number of councillors did not rise to the current level in one year. It takes years of immigration before the first councillors enter the municipal boards. The fact that Surinamese are ahead on number of councillors might – amongst other factors – be to do with the fact that they arrived earlier in the Netherlands and entered politics earlier. There seems to be a development that the Surinamese entered politics first and are not increasing much any more in big cities, the Turks entered politics as the second group and their number is still growing fast, and the Moroccans are still slowly entering, with an expected growth ahead. It is still unclear how this will develop in the elections in the next decades.

### Utrecht

The last city of the analysis is Utrecht. The ethnic composition of Utrecht has a particular characteristic, namely the majority of the inhabitants of foreign origin are Moroccans. The number of Moroccans in Utrecht is nearly two times as high as the number of Turks. The Moroccans in Utrecht may be large in number, but this does not show in the number of Moroccan organisations. There are only 32 Moroccan organisations, while there are 30 Turkish organisations. A few of the Moroccan organisations in Utrecht are of national importance, however, for instance SMT and a federation of mosques. The density of the Moroccan organisations is the lowest of all ethnic groups. Ordering of organisational density shows the following order: 1) Surinamese, 2) Turks and 3) Moroccans. Regarding the two types of political participation, Turks are first on voting turnout and also on the number of councillors. The relationship between political participation and organisational density cannot be proven in Utrecht: Turks are more active in politics and Surinamese are more active in organisations.

**Table 5: Organisational density and turnout at elections of ethnic groups in Utrecht (at 1 January 2000)**

{PRIVATE}	Dutch	Surinamese	Moroccans	Turks
a) population*	163.701	8.419	19.643	10.524
b) number of organisations		27	32	30
c) org. density (b/a × 1.000)		3.21	1.63	2.85
d) % of isolated organisations		12/24 = 0.50	15/19 = 0.79	21/24 = 0.88
e) network density (lines/points)		9/24 = 0.38	2/19 = 0.11	21/24 = 0.88
f) index		5	5	8
g) voter turnout (1998)		20 (+Ant)	18	39
h) number of councillors		1	2	3

Source: \*Calculated on the basis of percentages on <http://www.utrecht.nl/cijfersinter/>

## Conclusion and discussion

In the Introduction I have described how Putnam suggested a relationship between political participation and civic community, based on research in Italian regions (Putnam, 1993). He elaborated his reasoning to show how American citizens became less and less involved in civic associations in the last 10 years and how this caused a social disengagement of virtually every kind, including political apathy, retreat from church attendance and eroding union membership.

Fennema and Tillie developed a theoretical frame applying Putnam's ideas to immigrants in Amsterdam. They made the relationship plausible between 'civicness' of the immigrant communities and their political activities within Amsterdam. In 2002 I broadened this reasoning by showing that a similar relationship to that in Amsterdam exists on a national level, though with a different order of ranking of the ethnic groups. In the current article I test the general idea again by looking at more indicators at the national level and secondly by comparing data on four Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht).

The results show that the relationship between political participation and civic community – shown by the order of ranking – exist both at national level and in Amsterdam. The general idea that civic community and political participation are interrelated is thus supported in Amsterdam and at national level. The actual order of ranking of ethnic groups is different at national level from the situation in Amsterdam. Adding more indicators did not change this conclusion. Turks are in both cases more politically active and have more organisations. But, at national level, Surinamese are second and Moroccans third, while in Amsterdam the opposite is true. A reason for this difference might be the specific composition of the Surinamese population of Amsterdam. In my earlier article I have focused on the type of Surinamese in Amsterdam: they are mainly Afro-Surinamese while in other cities Indian-Surinamese constitute a larger section. Cultural differences between the two groups are enormous. The Indian-Surinamese are known as more socially cohesive and consequently have more organisations, so this could possibly explain why the Surinamese in Amsterdam seem to have a less dense network and less political participation.

Secondly, I have compared Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. The order of ranking of political participation and civic community that was found earlier in Amsterdam and at national level is not found in the other three cities. In Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht the organisational density of the Surinamese group is always on top, whilst the voter turnout of the Turks is highest. So, the direct explanatory power of the civic community approach to expound political participation in these three smaller cities is less clear than in Amsterdam. The relationship that Putnam suggested is not as clear cut.

One possible reason that the civic community perspective can explain the relationship at national level and in Amsterdam, but not in the other cities, might be simply the size. The number of Turks, Moroccans and Surinamese and consequently the number of ethnic organisations in the three other cities might be too small to develop into a fully-fledged civic community. By a fully-fledged civic community I mean that organisations of all political and religious views and all target groups, for instance

women or youngsters, are represented. There might be a minimum size of community required for the effect to become clear. Within a small community, information does not reach as many people and the organisations represent fewer views.

Another characteristic in which cities differ is their policy. In ongoing research more attention needs to be paid to factors of the political opportunity structure. Though policies usually focus on all migrant groups, it is possible that an active city policy to motivate immigrants to participate in elections works more favourably for a large immigrant community than for a small community.

The detailed description of The Hague makes clear that the time frame is also relevant. Surinamese are ahead in forming organisations and in some cases in number of councillors – amongst other factors – because of their immigration date: they started earlier. The development, with Surinamese as the first to enter politics and not increasing much any more in big cities, Turks as the second group still growing fast, and Moroccans slowly entering, with an expected growth ahead, is another hypothesis for future research. The number of youngsters of the second generation that are interested in becoming politicians is another interesting case to study.

Participating in elections seems to be popular among Turks, even in cities without many local organisations. Turks could have certain cultural characteristics that motivate them to join in political activities. It is possible that a certain sub-group of Turks is more interested in voting or political activities. Further research on the attitudes of Turks towards political issues is needed, to find out the reason for this. Since Turks have a higher number of community organisations throughout the Netherlands as a whole, it is also possible that Turks in Utrecht are members of organisations in Amsterdam and are more inclined to vote because of that. For instance, in the case that there is no Milli Görüş type of mosque in Utrecht, the followers of this movement could go to Amsterdam. This would mean that Putnam's theory is actually correct, even though we do not find it in every city.

To summarise, the results can be explained by specific attributes of the cities (such as size), or by specific attributes of Turks (such as their strong religious groupings), but it is more probable that the interaction between these two is the main explanation. A hypothesis for further research is that the relatively tolerant political climate in Amsterdam might have led to more organisations and a more active civic community in the sense that Putnam means. On the other hand, characteristics of the Turkish community, for instance, the capability of the different Turkish political and religious groups to work together, interacts with the Dutch discussion culture.

A general conclusion on the civic community perspective and its applicability to immigrants in cities is possible. The civic community perspective helps to explain the relationship between political participation and civic communities, but can only become a full explanatory model of political behaviour of immigrants when some additional factors, such as time frame, size, culture, attitudes of ethnic groups towards politics and composition of the population of a town are taken into account. Further research in other European cities is in progress, comparing for instance Berlin, Brussels, Madrid, Rome and Amsterdam. This international comparison will make clearer the circumstances under which Putnam's theory works.

## Notes

- 1 IOT.
- 2 This percentage concerns people that are born or have one parent that is born in a non-Western country (see Berger et al., 2000).
- 3 Data on political trust and reading newspapers and watching television from the country of origin are not available at national level, nor for these four cities.
- 4 van Heelsum and Tillie (2000), Tillie (1994 and 1998) and Tillie et al. (2000).
- 5 Berger et al. (2000); Fennema et al. (2000).

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