

“How can I empower others, if I myself am not?”

**A study on mono-ethnic migrant organisations in a changing policy
context within the Dutch municipality of Rotterdam**

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Abstract

In this research, mono-ethnic migrant organisations (MEMO's) in the municipality of Rotterdam in the Netherlands have been examined by analysing their dependency on their policy context. Over the last thirty years or so, policies regarding the Dutch government's support of MEMO's have been subject to change, with MEMO's slowly losing their external resources of financial support and access to the policy-making process. With MEMO's still existing in a non-supportive policy context, the following main question required answering: *To what extent are mono-ethnic migrant organisations dependent on their policy context in Rotterdam?*

A literature review has been conducted to illustrate this changing policy context of MEMO's. To determine MEMO's dependency, a multiple case-study has been undertaken. Eight people, working for MEMO's, have been interviewed. In multiple ways, interviewees were asked whether they had acted upon the changes in their policy context, by either trying to adapt to them or by trying to influence the changes which were negatively affecting their organisations. These indicators of dependency have been based on the niche theory of interest representation, interpreting MEMO's as 'interest groups', and on theories regarding interest groups and policy change.

The conclusion of this research, based on the theoretical framework's rationale, was considered insufficient, as the formed indicators did not seem to measure the dependency of MEMO's. The adopted theories expected the MEMO's to be more active and more political than they appeared to be through the research, eventually making it seem as if they are not dependent on their policy context. As the analysed MEMO's almost all have lost some of their activeness because of decreasing external resources and as MEMO's in the Netherlands are decreasing in general, one can image the inaccuracy of this conclusion. In the discussion chapter, the research is critically reflected upon, describing the mismatch between the adopted theory and the research case, and proposing further possible explanations and illustrations of the relation between MEMO's and their policy context.

Preface

Before you lies my master thesis, the final part of my master ‘Governance of Migration and Diversity’. It has been over year since I have started the preparations of this research. The most intensive work has been done in the first half year, after which my internship at the department of Migration of the Ministry of Justice and Security caused a gap of another half year between the handing in of my draft version and the handing in of my final version. Although the last half year can be described as one with procrastination, putting away my research for some months has proven to be quite helpful regarding understanding the bigger picture of it all.

No master thesis process goes by without any struggle, as has also been the case for mine. Still, these struggles always have seemed to push my research a bit further and I can undoubtedly state that I look back at a challenging, yet enjoyable time. The subject matter of migrant organisations within the Dutch society and their struggle with their political environment caught my attention during my prior internship at research and knowledge centre Movisie. The main question of this research reflects an issue I personally considered required solving, which helped staying motivated throughout the whole process.

I especially enjoyed the interviews with people who set up and managed these migrant organisations, to whom I am very grateful for their participation and insights. It was not a simple task to find interviewees, but the people who have responded to my request have helped me a great deal with finding answers to my questions.

I want to extend my thanks to all the people who have supported me throughout the past year of research. First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Mark van Ostaijen for all his academic insights and motivational comments. The hard work that went into this thesis would also not have been possible without the overall support of my fellow students: Ceren Öz, Lindy van Geest, Maxime Broekhuizen, Annabelle Verhagen and Ciara O'Donnell. Lastly, I would like to thank Selim Helmi for supporting me and for reading through my whole thesis, correcting all overlooked mistakes.

I hope you enjoy your reading!

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1. Introduction

For a healthy democratic society to flourish, an active civil society is desired. It creates the opportunity for people to organize themselves and influence politics to generate seemingly lacking or overlooked benefits (Edwards, 2014). The Netherlands possesses a very active body of migrant organisations which supports people with a migration background with their social, religious, economic and political life in the Netherlands. These could be religious organisations which provide for spiritual needs, organisations which provide language trainings (Dutch and others) and skill trainings for the labour market or for the issues people deal with in their daily lives. There are also organisations that provide a social platform where people can meet and interact. These organisations mostly arose during the 1980's, when the incentive to organize the needs of migrants and their families was at its greatest (Duyvendak, Pels & Rijkschroeff, 2009, p.5). Many different forms of migrant organisations appeared since then, which were often welcomed by the Dutch government, as they supported this form of minority representation in a society which was getting increasingly diverse (Duyvendak *et al.*, 2005; Scholten, 2011).

Over the last three decennia, however, the government's point of view on the benefits of migrant organisations has been subject to some drastic changes/ Due to, among others, political tensions and a variety of researches presenting negative results concerning the 'integration' of people with a migration background that illustrated a segregated Dutch population. The national government's integration policy approach slowly started to change from target-group policies – implying affirmative action for the less privileged, including certain ethnic groups – to an approach characterized by mainstreaming – adopting more general policies to avoid categorisation and further segregation (Duyvendak *et al.*, 2009; Maan, van Breugel & Scholten, 2014; Vasta, 2007). Consequently, the government turned its attention to migrant organisations, which suddenly reflected a segregation-reinforcing system, specifically the ones organised along ethnicity lines. This resulted mostly in changes regarding policies affecting migrant organisations on the local level, as there is more interaction between migrant organisations and municipalities than between these organisations and the national government. Whereas earlier the migrant organisations were generally involved in the policy process, enjoying subsidy and regular consultation moments with the municipalities, they slowly became deinstitutionalised and were confronted with changing conditions for subsidies and less access to the policy process (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2004, p.

488; Scholten, 2011, p. 99; Maan *et al.*, 2014). Although this changing policy context proved to be fatal for many, some have found a way to withstand the declining political support and others even managed to emerge during this time (MO's search database, n.d.). One possible explanation for this, is the lagging behind or the reluctance of local governments to change its relations with the local migrant organisations, reinforced by the multiple recent (Dutch) researches claiming the benefits of working closely with migrant organisations (to name some: Bellaart, 2014; Neijenhuis, 2014; Schrover & Vermeulen, 2005). Still, one cannot ignore the changing policy context in which migrant organisations find themselves, which triggers the question how they find their way through these new external challenges. To understand the currently evolving situations regarding the relationship between migrant organisations and their policy context, this research focuses on the case of migrant organisations active in the city of Rotterdam. The municipality of Rotterdam has clearly stated in the past to withdraw subsidy for mono-ethnic migrant organisations and has limited their direct contact with migrant organisations over the last couple of years (Ireland, 2004), for example through the government document 'Intgratie Nota 010' (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2015). This research aims to answer the following question:

To what extent are mono-ethnic migrant organisations dependent on their policy context in Rotterdam?

As support from the municipality is decreasing, one can imagine that even surviving mono-ethnic migrant organisations, hereafter called MEMO's, are affected by it. The question remains, however, to what extent their survival is indeed dependent on their policy context. Are MEMO's able to manage 'on their own' or are they a dying form of self-organisation in a political environment that gradually favours a more universalistic and mainstreaming approach regarding populations with a migration background?

To answer the main question, this research conducts a multiple case-study within the municipality of Rotterdam. The dependency of MEMO's on their policy context is analysed through the experiences of MEMO's and whether they deemed certain resources deriving from this context necessary to maintain. The concept of dependency is further elaborated on in the methodological chapter. As shortly mentioned before, the focus on the local level is due to the public administration system in the Netherlands regarding civil organisations. Financial support to MEMO's in the form of a subsidy is granted by the Dutch municipalities, rather than by the national

government. Furthermore, the MEMO's' access to the policy-process also generally takes place at the municipality-level, as MEMO's are often active on the local level. In other words, the relation between MEMO's and their policy context is predominantly demonstrated within their relation with the municipality they are located in.

1.1 Theoretical and societal relevance

For this research's theoretical framework, MEMO's are interpreted as interest groups, which will be explained more thoroughly in the theoretical framework chapter. The niche theory of interest (Gray & Lowery, 1996) is adopted and adapted to the case of MEMO's in the Netherlands. This was done to determine what they might depend on and to paint the broader picture of their existence. Also, a theory is added which focuses on how interest groups may react to changes in their environment, to help determine whether and to what extent MEMO's depend on elements within their policy context. Not only can these theories deepen our understanding of MEMO's in this specific case, it can add to the body of literature focusing on MEMO's in general by providing a better understanding of the dependence between these organisations and their policy context. There are many theories stating that such an organisation *is* indeed dependent on their political context (to name a few: *resource dependency theory*, *exchange theory of interest groups* and the *political opportunity structures theory*), but there is little knowledge on *how* this takes form exactly. How does the role of MEMO's potentially change in a changing environment? But most of all, how do MEMO's deal with the tensions between the internal organisational demands and the external political demands, especially when the latter are changing? This research will go deeper into these questions and will therefore be of relevance to scientists who involve themselves with political studies, organisational studies, sociology studies and studies regarding migration and diversity.

Aside from the theoretical purpose of this research, it also serves a more societal one. This research does not simply answer a question about the survival of MEMO's. Along the way, it digs deeper into the relationship between the Dutch government and its citizens. Whether self-organisation of certain groups within society are celebrated by the government through support or are disapproved of through the lack of support says a lot about the way the government views the effects of such group-forming. By zooming in on a case in which a form of self-organisation,

namely a MEMO, has slowly lost their approval by the government and therefore their support, we can understand more about the government's rationale of picking and choosing, based on what is viewed as 'best' for society. Through the eyes of MEMO's, we can also understand the government's ways.

1.2 Reader's guide

In the theoretical framework, a critical reflection is provided on what defines a MEMO, as many different interpretations circulate through the literature. The main theory of this research, the niche theory of interest, is explained combined with preliminary adaptations of the theory, to make it more applicable to the case of MEMO's in the Netherlands dealing with a changing policy context. These adaptations are based on the literature on MEMO's and on additional theories regarding interest groups. The expectations of this research can be found at the end of the theoretical framework. In the methodology, the sub-questions are formulated together with a description of the case selection, the research design and the operationalization of the key concepts. The findings are structured along the lines of the sub-questions. Firstly, the findings of the literature on the policy context are provided, followed by the findings derived from the multiple-case study in Rotterdam. The analysis chapter is structured in the same manner, whereby the findings are connected to the theoretical framework and answers on the sub-questions are provided. The main question is answered in the conclusion, followed by a discussion which evaluates the conclusion within its bigger picture and which offer suggestions for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

In this theoretical framework, a reflection is presented on what exactly makes a MEMO to explain the complexity of its definition. Next, the interpretation of MEMO's as interest groups is explained. This is followed by the implemented theory of this research, which consists out of two theories: one to determine what a MEMO depends on (niche theory of interest representation) and one to help determining whether and to what extent the MEMO's in this research are

dependent on their policy context (interest groups and policy change). Lastly, the relevant elements of the two theories are combined, which form the base of the formulated expectations.

2.1 What makes a migrant organisation?

One of the main issues of this research is the essentially undefinable ‘migrant organisation’, characterized by the overall disagreement of what exactly defines such an organisation and what kind of activities they undertake. An inclusive definition does not exist, among others due to the many forms a MEMO can take, even when only mono-ethnic organisations are examined; some have a strong focus on religion, while others might focus more on supporting its members’ access to the labour market, on creating social capital for its members or on supporting its members with financial, social or health issues.

An important distinction that should be made is whether the organisation emerged as an independent establishment or by request of the government. Examples of the latter are the Dutch Council for refugees (‘Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland’) and the Dutch Migration Institute (‘Nederlands Migratie Instituut’) on the national level and the umbrella organisation PBR for MEMO’s (‘Platform Buitenlanders Rijnmond’) on the local level of Rotterdam. These organisations provide support for people with a migration background on multiple matters, but have not been initiated by citizens themselves, which separates them from the organisations this research focuses on. Also, given the fact that this multiple-case study focuses on *mono-ethnic* migrant organisations excludes these government-initiated organisations.

Furthermore, defining ‘what makes a migrant organisation?’ is also a complex question, due to the use of the word ‘migrant’; or as Moya (2005) rightfully points out: “*Should associations founded by newcomers but whose memberships are mixed be defined as ‘immigrant’ organisations? How about those founded by natives but whose memberships are mostly immigrant? When do immigrant associations stop being ‘immigrant’: when they are founded by the second or third generations, or their memberships become mostly so?*” (p. 834). Although Moya (idem) acknowledges these general disagreements concerning MEMO’s, he does not disagree with the term ‘immigrant organisation’ as a whole. He states that generally, their role can change and has been changing over time. As an illustration, he explains how organisations which formerly were brought into existence for people that had migrated *themselves* have now changed

into ethnic organisations, representing the people with a different ethnic background. Or, as Cordero-Guzmán (2005) explains it, they can change their focus from the group by which they were established, to a different or broader group. Van Heelsum (2004) adds to this changing nature of MEMO's (in the Netherlands) by stating that their needs can change due to three changes. Changes within the *composition* of the migrant community (e.g. increasing number of women, or more second-generation migrants), changes within the *needs* of people using the organisation's support (e.g. children of migrants helping their parents out with official forms, or the socio-economic position of the community strengthens, meaning they need less support) and lastly, changes within *demands* of their external environment (p. 26). To conclude, what defines such an organisation as a *migrant* organisation is therefore not something static but can change over time and also depends on the eye of the beholder.

2.2 A migration organisation as an interest group

Within the literature, there is an increased interest in the existence of MEMO's (Schrover & Vermeulen, 2005). However, a comprehensive theory about these organisations is still absent within the body of literature. This lack is partly understandable, as a new academic interest in a certain civic organisation within the public field starts with more basic questions; such as why they erupt (Breton, 1964), what kind of effect they have on its members (Tillie, 2004) and what role they play in the civil society (Odmalm, 2004). Although the combination of these studies could make a whole, a convincing theory about what determines the existence, downfall and survival of a MEMO and how they organize themselves accordingly has yet to be developed. Schrover and Vermeulen (2005) made an effort worth mentioning by stating that the survival of a MEMO depends on the political opportunity structure and the size of the migrant community represented by the organisation, but they fail to go into detail or look further than those two factors. Hooghe (2005) interprets MEMO's to be part of a social movement, thus turning to social movements theories. However, this comparison is a mismatch because of the MEMO being less of a political organisation than social movements.

Seeing there currently exists a gap in the research literature regarding MEMO's, another field of study should be consulted for this research's theoretical base. A clearer understanding can be acquired by comparing a MEMO to an interest group. Although this comparison is not a perfect

match, these groups show much more similarities with one another than a MEMO and a social movement do. A straightforward argument for interpreting a MEMO as an interest group is because the existing incentive to organize is embedded in the need to represent and pursue the interests of people with a migration background (Marquez, 2001; Schrover & Vermeulen, 2005). Beyers, Eising and Maloney (2008) describe an interest group in a way which also illustrates a strong connection. According to them, there are three factors defining an interest group: (1) *organisation*, which “relates to the nature of the group and excludes broad movements and waves of public opinion that may influence policy outcomes as interest groups”, (2) *political interest*, which “refer to the attempts these organisations make to influence policy outcomes” and (3) *informality*, which “relates to the fact that interest groups do not normally seek public office or compete in elections but pursue their goals through frequent informal interactions with politicians and bureaucrats” (p. 1106). A MEMO can be perceived as an *organisation* with the *political interest* of standing up for their members or constituency with a migration background within the Dutch society, in a very *informal* way. The level of ‘political interest’ can vary from low to high (Beyers *et al.*, 2008), which means that migration organisations with a greater attention for their members than their political environment are included as well.

Combining the information from ‘what makes a migrant organisation’ and ‘a migrant organisation as an interest group’, MEMO’s are in this research defined as informal organisations set up by citizens to represent and pursue the various interests of people with a migration background, by organising themselves for a mostly singular ethnic public.

2.3 A niche theory of interest representation

Just like defining a MEMO, defining an *interest group* is also not an easy task, as they can take many forms as well (Beyers *et al.*, 2008; Poppelaars, 2009, p. 65). One important aspect that they all have in common is the constant experienced tension between keeping their purpose in mind and their members satisfied, while also complying with demands coming from the political sphere. This can be defined as the tension between *organisational maintenance* and *external political requirements* (Gray & Lowery, 1996, p. 91). An interest group is believed to survive when this structure is ‘balanced’, meaning that it depends on certain internal and external resources. Multiple scholars have studied these resources, but it was not until Salisbury (1969) came up with the

exchange theory of interest group that the tension between both internal and external resources got noticed. This theory focuses on the interest group entrepreneur who deals with both internal organizational issues and the external relationship with policy decision-makers. The main criticism of the theory is that it does not enable you to draw conclusions about how behaviours in one influence the other. One that does this is the *niche theory*, as mentioned in Gray and Lowery's (1996) article 'A Niche Theory of Interest Representation'. In this article, they turn to Hutchinson (1957), a population ecologist who talks about a 'niche' as "a multidimensional set of attributes of a population in relation to its environment" and states that when two species are using the same resources and are too identical, only one will survive. Gray and Lowery (1996) adopt this rhetoric in their organisational niche theory and zoom in on the implications for interest groups. The 'niche' of an interest group can be interpreted as its identity or its package of benefits which only *that* specific interest group can provide (whether it be for its members or governmental institutions); in other words: its addition to the world. As Gray and Lowery (1996) state:

"Niche theory suggests that we can explain why interest communities are structured in one manner or another by examining how interest groups construct viable realized niches from an n-dimensional set of potential or fundamental niches" (p.95).

This set of potential or fundamental niches are defined by Gray and Lowery (1996, p. 96) as a list of five resource dimensions, based on prior interest group research by other scholars. Or, as Lowery (2007) reframed it in an article twenty years later: "niche theory requires that we specify the resources that might enable an [...] organization [...] to survive" (p. 48). All resource dimensions are specified as hypotheses in need of empirical research, which also indicates that the list might not be comprehensive and still lacks additional resource dimensions. Conforming to the niche theory, an interest group should have:

1. Members
2. Access to selective benefits for its members
3. Sufficient finances
4. Access to the policy-making process
5. Something to lobby for because of concerns about authoritative action or proposed action by government

The first three resource dimensions are considered to speak to internal relations of interest groups, while the last two speak to external interactions. By managing the internal organizational maintenance *and* the external political requirements, the organisation has found its ‘niche’ and will therefore sustain. If one of these resources is lacking, the organisation will cease to exist. As a connection exists between the resource dimensions, changes or reductions in one resource dimension can result in changes within the others, indicating the tension between the internal and external resources. For example, if members join the interest group because of its selective benefit to provide access to the policy-making process, but the interest group loses this access, the number of members will decrease. Apart from this interdependent balance, it remains somewhat unclear when exactly a resource is substantial enough. This can only be clarified by studying the resource dimensions within the specific context of a specific interest group. It can, however, be affirmed that not all resource dimensions are equally significant when it comes to the survival of the organisation.

2.2.1 Niche theory and migrant organisations

Adopting the niche theory of interest representation to this study’s case of MEMO’s in the Netherlands and their dependencies on the policy context requires some specifications. To adapt the resource dimensions to this case while maintaining a clear overview, they are graphically illustrated in the image below (figure 1).

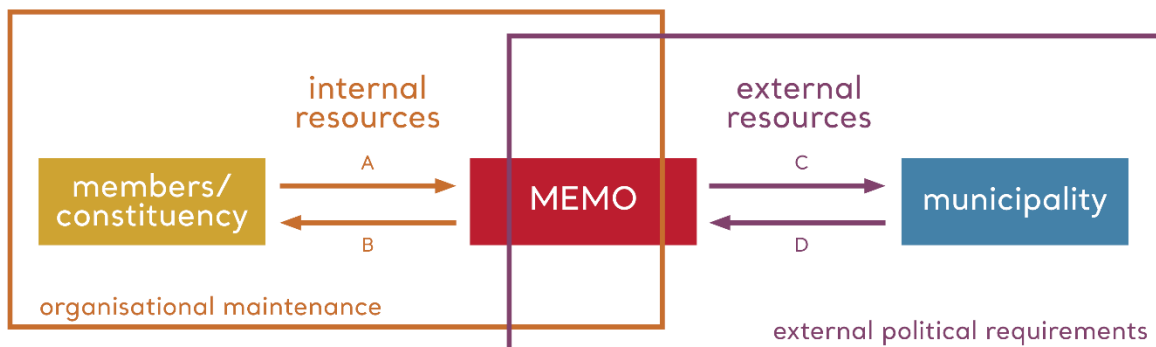


Figure 1: resource flows

The arrows represent the resources going back and forth between the MEMO and its members, and between the MEMO and the municipality; reflecting, once again, the tension between organisational maintenance and external political requirements. As a MEMO is not identical to an interest group, but a form *of* an interest group with its own special characteristics, certain resources should already be specified or even added to the list provided by Gray and Lowery (1996). These are specifications and additions based on the literature on MEMO's in the Netherlands and beyond (Soysal, 1994; Odmalm, 2004; Rijkschroeff & Duyvendak, 2004; Tillie, 2004; Hooghe, 2005; Moya, 2005; Schrover & Vermeulen, 2005; Nijenhuis, 2014). They have been included in table 1 to already take Gray and Lowery's (1996) theory a step further and a step closer to the specific cases of this research. The resources which make up the policy context of MEMO's can be found in section D (arrow D) and will be explained further. The construction of this list is a first try to adjust the niche theory of interest to MEMO's and has not yet been empirically tested. Therefore, parts of it might prove to be incorrect or incomplete during this research.

	INTERNAL
A	1) Selective benefits for members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Personal life: social capital, leisure activities, (language) trainings, information, feeling of belonging, etc. b. Political life: way to influence policy-process
B	2) Members/constituency and their commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Voluntary work b. Financial support
	EXTERNAL
C	3) Support policy-making: representatives of people with migration background and relevant information for consultation 4) Influencing policy-making: power to influence policy-making 5) Having something to lobby for
D	6) Financial support (subsidy) 7) Access to policy-making

Table 1.

Each of the five resource dimensions of Gray and Lowery's (1996) theory have been included, while almost all of them have been broken down to more specific resources. The first resource dimension (*1. Members*) has been specified to *members/constituency and their commitment* and broken down in *voluntary work* and *financial support* (see section B). Having members is not enough when this is only manifested in certain names on a membership list. Members should also make a commitment by providing (voluntary) services or financial support to the organisation. 'Constituency' has been added, as some MEMO's are officially a foundation, rather than an association, and therefore do not have registered members.

The second resource dimension (*2. Access to selective benefits of its members*) has been broken down in benefits for the *personal life* and the *political life* (see section A). The latter refers to the benefits members can enjoy by joining and organized community that involves itself with political matters. This can also be regarded beneficial to the personal life, as joining such a political organisation can enhance social capital, feelings of belonging and can provide for leisure activities (Hooghe, 2005; Marquez, 2001). Still, separating these benefits is required, considering the characteristics of the multiple MEMO's in the Netherlands: some might attach more importance to the services it provides for its members' personal life (e.g. their social life, chance one finding a job and their understanding of Dutch regulations), while others focus more on how to guide their members to political engagement specifically.

The third resource dimension (*3. Sufficient finances*) has been placed under *members/constituency and their commitment* (see section B), following Gray and Lowery's (1996) logic that this speaks to the internal relations of interest groups. However, as MEMO's in the Netherlands have often made use of *financial support* by the government in the form of subsidies, this resource dimensions can also be considered an external interaction (see section D).

The fourth resource dimension (*4. Access to the policy-making process*) is split into two, one deriving from the municipality (arrow D), the other deriving from the MEMO (arrow C). On the one hand, the municipality provides possibilities for the MEMO to be involved in the policy-making process, often by requesting consultation for policies regarding certain issues from people with a migration background (*access to policy-making*, see section D). On the other hand, a MEMO can have access to the policy-making process when they indeed possess and provide information which is deemed relevant in the eyes of the public agencies within the municipality. In that sense, their access depends on whether they have representatives of people with a migration background

and relevant information for consultation to support policy-making within the municipality (*support policy-making*, see section C3). Additionally, a MEMO does not only have to wait and see when an opportunity created by the municipality comes along to have access to the policy-making process. It can also be a strategy employed by the MEMO itself to try to influence certain existing or lacking policies from the municipality (*influencing policy-making*, see section C4). The difference between *supporting* and *influencing* the policy-making process might not always be straightforward, as it can be hard to determine whether a MEMO is merely responding to a municipality's call, or whether it has a strategy on its own. Still, a preliminary distinction should be useful when analysing the resources necessary for a MEMO. Lastly, it should be emphasized that although the resources in section C could be interpreted as *internal resources* (representing what the MEMO itself possesses), this research marks them as *external resources*. These resources should be interpreted as resources which the MEMO's needs to offer the municipality something in exchange for access to the policy-making. In other words, these are *internal* resources used as exchange unit for *external* resource.

The fifth and last resource dimension (5. *Having something to lobby for*, see section C5) refers to one of the MEMO's proclaimed missions. Among others, it determines whether they involve themselves politically. This resource is strongly connected to the above-mentioned *influencing policy-making* resource (C4), since one will need something to lobby for to feel the need to influence a policy-making process. As the MEMO's in the Netherlands often have other main incentives than lobbying for political change, based on the literature, this resource will presumably be less crucial for them.

To sum up, the niche theory of interest states that interest groups are dependent on five resources. These resources have been adapted to the case of MEMO's in the Netherlands and specified to seven resources, as can be found in table 1. Notice how the dependency of the MEMO on their policy context is shown in section D. The 'policy context' of MEMO's in this research is interpreted as the combination of the resource *financial support* in the form of subsidy and the resource *access to policy-making*. As was mentioned in the introduction, the gradual deinstitutionalisation of MEMO's caused them over the years to enjoy less subsidy and less consultation moments with the municipality (Maan *et al.*, 2014). One could argue that trying to get *access to policy-making* can overlap with finding *financial support*, since subsidy distribution is based on policy. In that sense, one could interpret MEMO's trying to influence subsidy-related

policies as MEMO's trying to get more financial support from the municipality. In this research, however, a clear distinction is made between the resource *financial support*, which is specifically meant for the survival of the MEMO, and the resource *access to policy-making*, which aims at influencing policies which affect the people who the MEMO represents (people with a migration background) in an undesirable way. *Access to policy-making* therefore surpasses the mere survival of the MEMO itself and indicates actions towards a bigger community within society. Anything related to policies specifically affecting the MEMO's subsidy will be assigned to the resource *financial support*.

How strongly a MEMO depends on these two resources (and how they manage them while maintaining the internal resources of section A and B, and the external resources of section C) is to be determined through this research. This will be done by going into the experiences of MEMO's and their interaction with the municipality of Rotterdam: by examining how MEMO's react to changes in the external resources, one can understand to what extent they are dependent on these resources. To further explain this, we turn to the literature on interactions between interest groups and public agencies, and how these interactions take form in times of change. This is necessary, as simply knowing the potential resources a MEMO depends on does not provide for a way to study their dependency on these resources. An additional theory is required, which can help analyse whether the MEMO's studied are dependent on these resources and to what extent. The following theory will be visualized in combination with the policy-context-part of the adapted niche theory of interest later on (arrow D in figure 1), to make sure the combined theories remain understandable.

2.4 Interest groups and policy change

Although an extensive body of literature exists on the above-mentioned topics, the current supply fails to go into detail on how interest groups organize themselves with reference to the policies and policy-makers which determine their external resources. Apart from scholars stating that interest groups are indeed dependent on their policy context and the civil agents they interact with to a certain extent (to name some: Richardson, 2000; Pierson, 1993; Poppelaars, 2009; Braun, 2012), no theory comprehensively describes these dependencies and the consequential strategies and activities by interest groups. Combining some of the literature out there can, however, give some insight regarding the interaction between MEMO's and their policy context, and can therefore

support forming expectations on how MEMO's mobilize themselves when this policy context is subjected to changes. One should be aware that most of this literature concentrates on interest groups at the international level and that adapting it to the local level can potentially create some complications.

Richardson (2000) argues that policy communities and networks, which include governments and interest groups, have been witnessing much policy change and instability since the 1980's and 1990's, and that interest groups have learned to adjust their behaviour to use and exploit the opportunities presented by the multi-arena policy-making. According to him, "when interest groups who are members of an existing policy community lose out, they have two basic choices": they can either accept defeat and potentially wait out new opportunities, or they can seek alternative 'venues' where policy-making can be influenced (p. 1011). *"Public policymaking is often carried out in several venues, each presenting a different package of costs and benefits to groups. Thus, there are incentives to abandon reliance on one stable and restricted policy community or network"* (Richardson, 2000, p. 1011).

Braun (2012) reframes this dual 'choice' into two common assumptions within the literature on public agency-interest group interactions: one defines interest groups as being in control within the political sphere and therefore able to influence the policy-process, the other defines interest groups as subject to bureaucrats, which implies that they are controlled by civil servant to serve the public agency's purposes (p. 293). This first view on interest groups relates to Richardson's (2000) option for interest groups to seek alternative 'venues' and to the general function of interest groups to lobby for not only their policy-concerned objectives, but also for their own resources (Lowery, 2007). The second view relates to Richardson's (2000) option to accept defeat, as it involves the idea that interest groups should acknowledge their dependence on public policymaking.

These two possible strategies of interest groups in times of change, hence referred to as the options of *adapting* and *influencing*, can be added to the earlier mentioned adapted niche theory of interest representation to form the definite theoretical base of this research. As this research focuses on MEMO's and their policy context, the following figure is a zoomed-in version of arrow D in figure 1, where the focus lays on the exchange of resources between the MEMO and the municipality.

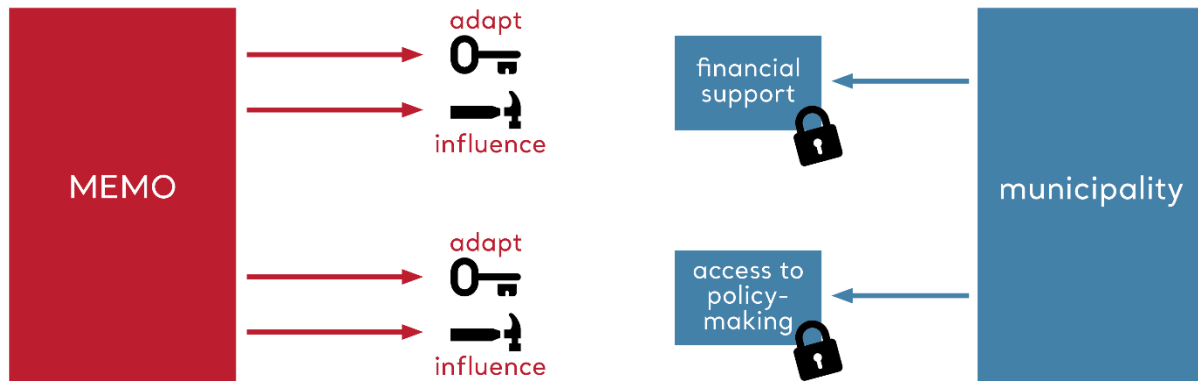


Figure 2: reactions to policy change

The niche theory of interest claims not only that an interest group is *affected* by external political requirements (resources) and therefore by its policy context, but that it is *dependent* on them to a certain extent; financially, but also for the access to policy-making. To determine to what extent a MEMO's survival is actually dependent on these resources, one can analyse whether the MEMO's employ one of the two possible strategies of interest groups. In other words, the combined theory applied in this research suggests that the two resources deriving from the municipality are, as it were, 'locked' until certain conditions are met. If MEMO's indeed depend on the resources of *financial support* and *access to policy-making*, they would either *adapt* themselves and their activities to meet these conditions, a strategy represented by the key in figure 2, or they would try to *influence* public officials involved with the making or implementation of the policies which determine the distribution of the resources, a strategy represented by the hammer in figure 2. When MEMO's consider *financial support* and *access to policy-making* important enough for their survival, trying to 'unlock' those resources can be expected to be a part of their agenda, whether by key or by hammer. This means they would have to adjust their strategy regarding their interaction with the municipality of Rotterdam. This brings us to the expectations of this research.

2.5 Expectations

The above-mentioned rationale indicates that although changes within the policy-context of MEMO's, might *affect* these organisations, these MEMO's will not be regarded as *dependent* on

their policy context unless they reveal acts of *adaptation* or *influence* in regard to the resources of *financial support* and *access to policy-making*.

The decision to concentrate on the (re)actions of MEMO's with reference to changing conditions of these resources, rather than determining their dependence by analysing their current finances or access to the policy-making, is a deliberate one. Firstly, the data needed for such a research is difficult to acquire because of the informal nature of MEMO's and the consequential lack of clear documentation on finances and political actions. Secondly, by analysing the MEMO's experiences and the way they deal with changes in their policy context, we can understand the concept of dependency from the perspective of MEMO's themselves and the way they view their relationship with this policy context. This focus on the MEMO's experience is an important aspect of this research. An existing, and therefore surviving, MEMO may be dealing with drastically declining external resources or may have never enjoyed them in the first place. One could interpret this as a MEMO *not* being dependent on these resources, as it survives without them. Still, the same MEMO might still be trying to 'unlock' those resources, as explained in the paragraph above. This behaviour suggests there is still a form of dependency present, as the MEMO's deems the resources important enough to take action on getting or maintaining them. This reasoning brings us to the following line of thought regarding this research's understanding of 'dependency': dependency on the policy context is only concluded when MEMO's deem it necessary to take action to maintain the resources of *financial support* and *access to policy-making*. Based on this interpretation of the combined theories in this theoretical framework, the following expectations can be formed:

Expectation 1: When mono-ethnic migrant organisations have either *adapted* their activities to the new policy conditions for *financial support* or have tried to *influence* public agencies to get *financial support*, they are dependent on this external resource.

Expectation 2: When mono-ethnic migrant organisations have either *adapted* their activities to the new policy conditions for *access to policy-making* or have tried to *influence* public agencies to get *access to policy-making*, they are dependent on this external resource.

Interestingly, adapting to or influencing the conditions for *access to policy-making* (section D) corresponds with the two resources in the niche theory modified for migrant organisations. The

resource *supporting policy-making* (section C) resembles the idea of migrant organisations *adapting* to the demands of the municipality in order to get the resource *access to policy-making* (section D), while the resource *influencing policy-making* (section C) resembles the idea of migrant organisations trying to *influence* public agencies who determine the condition for the resource of *access to policy-making* (section D). This illustrates that there already seems to be a connection between the adapted version of the niche theory to migrant organisations and two possible strategies of interest groups in times of change based on the literature, be it only for the *access to policy-making* resource.

3. Methodology

This research aimed to answer the following question: *To what extent are mono-ethnic migrant organisations dependent on their policy context in Rotterdam?* This chapter outlines the adopted methodologic practices for finding an answer.

3.1 Sub-questions

Five sub-questions have been formed to collectively provide an answer to the main question:

1. What does the policy context of mono-ethnic migrant organisations contain and how has it changed over the last 40 years?
2. What changes did MEMO's experience in their policy context regarding *financial support*?
3. How have MEMO's reacted to changes within the *financial support*?
4. What changes did MEMO's experience in their policy context regarding *access to policy making*?
5. How have MEMO's reacted to changes within *access to policy making*?

The answer to the first question provided for an extensive overview of the MEMO's policy context necessary to understand the way they might have been affected over the last decennia and the way their interaction with the municipality of Rotterdam might have changed. The following four sub-

questions are each other's replica with two questions for the two resources determining the MEMO's dependency on their policy context: *financial support* and the *access to policy-making*. The exact changes experienced by the MEMO's depend on the municipality's overall policy changes but can differ considerably per MEMO, which is why the 'what changes did they experience' question is added. The way the MEMO's have reacted to these experienced changes determined to what extent they can be considered dependent on their policy context, as explained in the theoretical framework.

3.2 Research philosophy and the relationship between theory and research

By means of the research's nature and the social constructions it holds, the epistemological position of this study is one of interpretivism. Following the line of reasoning of this research's theoretical framework, the mobilization of the MEMO's is largely determined by the way they experience the changes in their policy context, how they make sense of it and how it potentially pushes them to modify their organisation's approach accordingly. This reflects this research's interpretative stance, as the interpretation of people working for MEMO's is key in the measuring of dependency, as explained in the expectations section of the theoretical framework (Bryman, 2012, p. 28-32). Dependency in this research is determined by the extent to which MEMO's seem to consider *financial support* and *access to policy-making* important, by analysing their strategies regarding the municipality of Rotterdam. As mentioned before, because of the MEMO's informal nature, and the consequential lack of sufficient documentation of the organisation, the required data for this research is predominantly accessible by analysing the experiences of people active within the MEMO's themselves. Furthermore, this research has a deductive orientation, as the collection and analysis of this research's data was based on theory whereby elements of the theory have been tested empirically. This has been done by the operationalisation of the applied theory's key concepts within the interviews (see chapter 3.5.2 Operationalisation of key concepts for interviews).

3.3 Qualitative research

There are two main reasons as to why a qualitative research seemed most suitable for this research. Firstly, qualitative research enables the method of inquiry to be more open to unexpected findings. This is useful, as potentially overlooked resources of and the potentially overlooked strategy choices by MEMO's can be considered as relevant background information to the expectations-driven findings. Although this research has a deductive orientation, as stated above, the formed expectations in the theoretical framework can be considered as points of departure which have a leading role during the inquiry, rather than as restricted hypotheses. Secondly, as the experiences and interpretations of the interviewees formed an important base for this research, a qualitative approach suited best, to stay close to the interviewees' points of view. In that sense, the focus of this research was on understanding "the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Bryman, 2012, p. 380).

3.4 Case selection

Municipality of Rotterdam

The decision to remain within one municipality is based on the fact that the policy-process and decision-making regarding MEMO's in the Netherlands is mostly realized by the local governments, which are the municipalities. Including other organisations throughout the Netherlands would also require a careful analysis of the policy context in their municipalities concerned and their relations to the organisations, which exceeds the scope of this research. The Dutch municipality of Rotterdam provides an interesting and suitable case. Rotterdam's population consists of a great diversity concerning migration background (27,7% first generation migrants, 22,6% with at least one parent born abroad) and knows a substantial and active group of MEMO's within its civic society (CBS, n.d.; MEMO search database, n.d.). Alongside this, the municipality of Rotterdam has very clearly chosen the path of mainstreaming, as became apparent in its policy programme 2010-2014, and is considered to play a leading role in this national policy shift regarding mainstreaming (Engbersen, 2014).

Selection of migrant organisations

To collect the necessary data, a multiple case study has been conducted. The unit of analysis consists of eight MEMO's in Rotterdam. The choice for a multiple case study is because the relationship between MEMO's and the municipality differs per case. An in-depth study on only one organisation could generate a one-sided view. The selection of the MEMO's was based on a couple of conditions.

Firstly, they had to be considered 'mono-ethnic migrant organisations'. As mentioned before, this focus rests on the municipality's decision to stop financing these specific kinds of MEMO's and the overall characteristics of the 'newly' adopted mainstreaming-approach in the Netherlands and within the municipality of Rotterdam. MEMO's which are organised along ethnic lines can expect the least support from the municipality and therefore deal with stronger threats regarding their external resources than MEMO's which act in the interest of the general community with a migration background in the Netherlands. It should be noted that one MEMO with a broader target group has been included: the Africa MEMO, focusing on "all African women". Although it does not meet this first condition for the case selection, the experiences of the MEMO regarding their policy context show enough similarities with the other analysed MEMO's to make a minor exception. Additionally, although almost all interviewed MEMO's claimed to welcome people with all sorts of migration backgrounds, follow-up questions on this issue revealed that the actual members or constituencies of the MEMO's seemed to present an overall homogeneous group regarding migration backgrounds.

Secondly, the MEMO's main focus had to be directed at the people living in the Netherlands, which ruled out certain fundraising MEMO's for countries of origin. The changing policy context and decreasing support from the municipality, as mentioned in this research specifically, are related to those MEMO's which engage themselves with populations in the Netherlands.

Thirdly, although the selected MEMO's could engage themselves with religious activities, they were not allowed to hold the title of being a 'religious organisation', as those organisations deal with different policies and an overall different approach from the municipality (Duvyendak, 2005, p. 8).

Lastly, the approached MEMO's preferably had to be at least fifteen years old, to increase the chance of having experienced some changes within their policy context. However, as the quest for MEMO's appeared to be more challenging than expected, three MEMO's which started after 2003 have also been included.

The following information all derives from the conducted interviews in this research.

Org.	Founding year	Interviewee	Extra information
<u>Somali</u> <u>MEMO-I</u>	2012	President	This MEMO was established by two women with Somali backgrounds to personally support families who migrated from Somalia to the Netherlands and who experience problems in raising their children. One woman has quit because of too much pressure, but the other has continued visiting families, be it less often than before. She is planning on becoming more active in the future, as her Somali network in Rotterdam is expanding. They never enjoyed any financial support from the municipality.
<u>Somali</u> <u>MEMO-II</u>	2006	President	This MEMO was set up to tackle multiple issues within the Somali society in Rotterdam and in the nearby region. The main aims are: maintaining peace within the community, reducing poverty and stopping girls' circumcisions. They hold cultural activities and informative activities. They have added some activities regarding the raising of children, but overall have not changed a lot over the years. They never had their own place. They receive financial support from the municipality through some activity-based subsidies.
<u>Turkish</u> <u>MEMO-I</u>	1988	Active Volunteer	This MEMO was founded by a group of Turkish men and started as a meeting place for people in the neighbourhood. Although everyone is welcome, it seems like mostly people from a Turkish background are spending their time there, based on the interview. The word 'Turkish' is also included in

			<p>their name. The MEMO enjoyed housing allowance in the past but had to move to a less favourable location when this ended about a decennium ago. In the past, they organised some cultural events when they still received financial support from the municipality. The meeting place itself has become quieter over the years.</p>
<p><u>Turkish</u> <u>MEMO-II</u></p>	2002	<p>Former board member (still active)</p>	<p>This MEMO was founded by a group of Turkish and Kurdish men and functions as a meeting place for people in the neighbourhood. Although everyone is still welcome, it seems like mostly people from a Turkish and Kurdish background are spending their time there. It has some religious features (e.g. a praying room and Islamic books), but it is known at the municipality as a social-cultural organisation. Apart from one single subsidy at the start, the MEMO never enjoyed any subsidy.</p>
<p><u>Kurdish</u> <u>MEMO</u></p>	1995	President	<p>This MEMO started with support from a Dutch refugee organisation and aimed to help Kurdish refugees find their way in Rotterdam and the rest of the Netherlands. They also organise cultural and informative activities, for which they sometimes received subsidy in the past. From 2003 until 2012, they received financial support from the municipality for their own place, together with some other MEMO's. Currently they do not have their own location and they had to decrease the amount of activities to five or six activities a year.</p>
<p><u>Surinamese</u> <u>MEMO</u></p>	1996	<p>Secretary & Treasurer (two interview- ees)</p>	<p>This MEMO started as a 'women's house' with their municipality-paid place for Surinamese women to meet and participate in cultural and informative activities. In 2005, they declined the municipality's request to fuse with other MEMO's into one big women's house and changed their approach. Currently they do not have their own place anymore and they have decreased their multiple activities to one programme for the elderly with a Surinamese background.</p>
<p><u>Moroccan</u> <u>MEMO</u></p>	1995	<p>Former President</p>	<p>This MEMO was set up for people with a Moroccan background, but also for people with other migration</p>

	(left in 2011)		backgrounds, which was a condition imposed by the municipality to receive subsidies. They organised activities like education for children, (language-)trainings and cooking activities, which were sometimes subsidised. When the financial support declined, they had to cancel a lot of their activities. It is unclear whether the MEMO still exists, as stated by the former president.
<u>African</u> <u>MEMO</u>	2009	Founder/ President	This MEMO was established by two women, who migrated from Uganda and Zambia. Its aim was to establish a network of women from countries in Africa, to share useful information for living in Rotterdam and to share personal stories. Although they wanted their target group to be 'all women', the municipality pressed them to focus on 'African women'. Some of their activities have been subsidised.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

3.5.1 Literature review

To understand how the MEMO's react to their changed policy context and, in that sense, their changed relationship with the municipality, a clear overview is required of what these government-initiated changes contain. Also, the political context is particularly crucial when studying migration-related subjects, as migration situations are part of a long chronicle of events with often many competing interests playing a role (King, 2018, p. 54). Some of this information can be obtained by looking at the MEMO's' own experiences. One could even argue that the interpretivist nature of this research makes this *experienced* changed policy context most relevant. However, for a more complete portrayal of the case, a literature review and a small document analysis have been included regarding Rotterdam's involvement with MEMO's. The literature review is based on secondary sources already covering the changing relationship between MEMO's and Dutch municipalities and the municipality of Rotterdam specifically. The document analysis is based on primary sources, including Rotterdam's policies related to their approach regarding

MEMO's. The selection of these policies was based on the mentioned policies in the revised secondary sources, meaning that the document analysis was more of an extension to the literature review.

The first sub-question of this research, covering the policy-context of MEMO's in Rotterdam in the last forty years, aims to introduce the case more elaborately, which is indispensable when trying to understand the bigger picture of MEMO's dependency on their policy context. It should be noted that for this reason, the first sub-question did not require the same step-by-step operationalisation as the other four sub-questions did.

3.5.2 Operationalisation of key concepts for interviews

The 'dependency on policy context' has been operationalised by converting the key concepts of the theoretical framework into indicators. The information gathered during the literature review has helped translating the key concepts to indicators which make sense in the context of MEMO's. With these indicators, options for a MEMO to *adapt* or *influence* become measurable. Measurable that is, to the extent a qualitative interpretivist research allows.

Dependency on policy context

= 1) dependency on financial support + 2) dependency on access to the policy-making

Key Concepts	<u>1) Dependency on financial support (fs)</u> = a) adapting to new policy conditions or b) trying to influence relevant public agencies regarding fs		<u>2) Dependency on access to the policy-making (apm)</u> = a) adapting to new policy conditions or b) trying to influence relevant public agencies regarding apm	
Indicators	<u>a) Adapt-indicators</u> = following new conditions for fs - Change org. activities for fs - Change target group for fs	<u>b) Influence-indicators</u> = Changing strategy regarding contact w/municipality to get fs - Looking for new 'venues' for fs (new public agents/new departments/etc.) - Trying to convince municipality of importance of getting fs	<u>a) Adapt-indicators</u> = following new conditions for apm - Changing provided information for consultation - Changing their position within the policy arena	<u>b) Influence-indicators</u> = changing strategy regarding contact w/municipality to get apm - Looking for new 'venues' for apm (new public agents/new departments/etc.) - Trying to convince municipality of importance of getting apm

The indicators have been converted to interview questions in the following way:

<i>Concepts</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Questions</i>
<u><i>Financial support:</i></u> <i>Adapt</i>	Change org. activities for fs	- Have you changed activities to comply with new subsidy conditions, set by the municipality? - If so, to what extent? (small changes in existing activities, adding new activities, cancelling existing activities). If not, why not?
	Change target group for fs	- Have you changed the organisation's target group to comply with new subsidy conditions, set by the municipality? - If so, how and to what extent? If not, why not?
<u><i>Financial support:</i></u> <i>Influence</i>	Looking for new 'venues' for fs (new public agents/new departments/etc.)	- Have you tried to find new 'openings' within the municipality (other public agents or departments) to get financial support? - If so, in what way? If not, why not?
	Trying to convince municipality of importance of getting fs	- Have you tried to convince public agents of the importance of getting financial support for your association and its activities? - If so, in what way? If not, why not?
<u><i>Access to policy-making:</i></u> <i>Adapt</i>	Changing provided information for consultation	- Have you adjusted the content of knowledge you share with the municipality to remain relevant for the policy-making process? - If so, how and to what extent (e.g. mostly reacting to consultation request)? If not, why not?
	Changing their position within the policy arena	- Have you adjusted your position as a representative of a certain ethnic group and as an advisor to the municipality, to match the municipality's expectation? - If so, how and to what extent? If not, why not?
<u><i>Access to policy-making:</i></u> <i>Influence</i>	Looking for new 'venues' for apm (new public agents/new departments/etc.)	- Have you tried to find new 'openings' within the municipality (other public agents or departments) to get access to policy-making - If so, in what way? If not, why not?
	Trying to convince municipality of importance of getting apm	- Have you tried to convince public agents of the importance of getting access to the policy-making? - If so, in what way? If not, why not?

3.5.3 Semi-structured interviews

The data of the cases has been collected by means of semi-structured in-depth interviews with (board) members of the MEMO's. The interview questions (see appendix 1) have been structured by the aforementioned operationalisation, along the lines of the theoretical framework, but have remained open enough to create some leeway for the interviewees' replies. This leeway was especially created by the 'If not, why not?' question, which allowed the interviewees' answers to diverge from the formed expectations. Although this research's main goal was to analyse whether and to what extent MEMO's had tried to *adapt* to or tried to *influence* new conditions for external resources, alternative findings were moderately explored as well, as this information could help putting the initial findings in perspective. Furthermore, before going into the operationalisation-based questions, interviewees were first asked more general questions about their MEMO and were asked whether they had experienced any changes regarding *financial support* and *access to policy-making*. This was done to understand the MEMO's specific position within the policy changes and to create a more open atmosphere during the interviews whereby the interviewees could first share their own interpretation of the questioned situations before going into more closed questions.

Interviewees have been found by searching for monoethnic MEMO's in an online database (for the link see references: 'MEMO Search Database') and finding their contact details via google. Six of the eight interviewees responded positively via telephone or email. The other two were found through the network of the former six, meaning that they were found through snowball sampling. The online search for contact details often only resulted in a postal address. These addresses were visited and letters were left in their letterboxes when no one opened the door. Although one Somali MEMO did call the number left on the posted letter, no interviews resulted out of this search. Altogether, thirty-three MEMO's were contacted, of which twenty-two did not respond and three rejected the request for an interview. The absence of a response could have been caused by outdated online information, as some of the visited MEMO's seemed to have closed down already.

The interviews lasted between forty to seventy minutes and took place at locations chosen by the interviewees to make them feel most comfortable: at their home, at their MEMO's location or in a café in Rotterdam. The described experiences of the interviewees dated back to the foundation of the MEMO's or at least to the very first experience the interviewee had with said MEMO. This causes some of the findings to go further back in time than others, which was taken

into account during the analysis. Only one MEMO received the interview questions beforehand, as this might have caused interviewees to prepare socially desirable answers, considering the slightly political sensitivity of the case. The interviewees might have expected that this research's aim was to write a policy advice. This could have influenced their answers. The Surinamese MEMO did request and receive the questions, as they pressed they would not be able to answer appropriately without preparing the required information.

3.5.4 Data analysis

The interviews have been completely transcribed and analysed by coding them with the ATLAS.ti coding-program. The indicators functioned as the leading codes, with sub-codes and even further sub-codes being created along the way to provide more detailed information regarding the indicators. This facilitated the analysis process, as the answers with respect to the indicators ranged widely for each MEMO. All findings which explained why a MEMO had stayed away from either *adapting* or *influencing*, and therefore away from this research's expectations, received the sub-code 'none of these', with even more detailed sub-sub-codes to categorise the reasons why. Although the aim of this research was not to answer a why-question, these findings proved to be relevant for understanding the bigger picture and have been included in the finding chapter.

The code tree which came out of the coding process provided an organised overview of the collected data. The findings chapter was written by firstly noting down a small summary per indicator with relevant findings, including supporting quotes in the side-line. One small adjustment was made to the indicator of 'change org. activities for fs', by interpreting 'activities' in a slightly broader way than initially the case. This was done to be able to include important findings, which else would get lost. Some MEMO's mentioned how they had started to work together with other parties to increase their chance of getting financial support and one MEMO mentioned how they changed the structure of their organisation for the same reason. Although 'activities' initially referred to the events MEMO's hold for their members or constituency, in order to include the aforementioned changes in MEMO's behaviour in the findings, 'activities' were also interpreted as the activities of MEMO's themselves (therefore: the activity of working together with others and the activity of changing the organisation's structure). These changes still seemed to be caused by their less advantageous policy context, which supported the belief that these changes could be included within the 'activities' part of the indicator. As this adjustment was only made during the

analysis, this broader interpretation of the indicator ‘change org. activities for fs’ failed to be a structural part of the data collection during the interviews. This shortcoming will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

After writing down the summaries, straightforward findings were described shortly, while other more telling examples were described in more detail. A main objective of this process was to stay as close as possible to the language used by the interviewees. The quotes used in the finding chapter have been freely translated from Dutch to English by the researcher, except for the quotes deriving from the interview with the Africa MEMO, which was conducted in English. Throughout the process of coding and writing down the findings, connections which could be made with the theoretical framework were placed in a separate document, structured by the sub-questions of this research. This formed the base for the analysis chapter. Afterwards, the finished findings chapter was read through multiple times to interpret the data with the theoretical framework in mind. Any findings which did not serve answering the sub-questions were either analysed for the discussion chapter if considered relevant for creating a bigger picture or were, if not considered relevant, disposed of altogether.

3.6 Reliability and Validity

Confirming the reliability and validity of a case-study is considered impossible by some scholars, as the contextual factors affecting the findings can be regarded as case-specific (Bryman, 2012). The fact that this research has been done by studying multiple cases partly makes up for this shortcoming, yet the relatively narrow scope of this multiple-case study cannot completely support its reliability and validity.

As for the reliability (Bryman, 2012), a replication of the research with similar results could be considered probable to a certain extent, if not conducted too long after this research. The aim was to analyse how MEMO’s have been mobilizing themselves due to a policy context which has been changing for the past years. If the current policies in Rotterdam regarding mono-ethnic MEMO’s will not go through any abrupt new changes, the context will generally remain the same. However, knowing that the amount of MEMO’s is declining and that some are struggling financially (as will be described in the findings chapter), one could wonder what the MEMO-landscape of Rotterdam will look like in ten years from now and whether their experiences of surviving with less support from the municipality will remain the same as they do today.

Regarding validity, there are two main types requiring attention (Bryman, 2012). Firstly, the *internal* validity has been granted partly by checking whether the researched MEMO's actions and behaviour are indeed a reaction to the changes in their policy context, as initiated by the municipality. Other developments might have occurred within the context of the organisations which changed their activities, but which had nothing to do with the changed approach of the Rotterdam municipality. Although these matters unrelated to the policy context have been taken into account while collecting and analysing the data, they have been clearly distinguished from the changes caused by the municipality. Still, as this research is based on the experiences of MEMO's, the chance certain findings are not internally valid cannot be ruled out. Secondly, the *external* validity faced the issues which occurred because of this research's multiple case-study. In each city in the Netherlands, the characteristics of existing MEMO's and its policy context differ considerably, which makes it difficult to generalise the findings of this research. Although the changed integration approach is developing nation-wide, the actual practicalities regarding MEMO's depends greatly on the decisions made at the local level, which gives this case a restrictive policy context. This is less of a weakness of the research design, than it is a fundamental feature of case-studies.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The current situation MEMO's find themselves in seems to be one of slight political sensitivity and uncertain interdependencies between the organisation and the municipality. The interviewees might not have shared everything regarding the MEMO freely, as this might negatively affect their chances on subsidy or access to the policy-process. To avoid any harm in sharing information, the interviews have remained anonymous; the interviewee and their organisations have not been mentioned. However, because of the shared information in the findings, it could not be avoided that some MEMO's could be traced back to the individual or organisation by someone familiar with the case of MEMO's in Rotterdam. Also, before making interview appointments, each interviewee was fully informed about the research's aim and about its eventual readers, to guarantee their informed consent. After each interview, the interviewees were promised to be contacted and asked for approval in case any of the mentioned aims or readers were to be changed.

Furthermore, this research refrained as much as possible from drawing any normative conclusions regarding the municipality's approach regarding MEMO's, the MEMO's' activities and the interactions between the two.

3.8 Limitations

Every research has its limitations, which requires acknowledging them beforehand. Some have already been mentioned in the reliability and validity section; these limitations would have been partly avoided by broadening the scope of this research to multiple municipalities. However, due to the limited time, the decision was made to undertake a more focused research design.

Also, there might be a discrepancy between what has been said by the interviewees and their actual experiences with the current situation, due to political sensitivities. Due to this research's qualitative nature, a more sceptical viewpoint could be managed, yet it cannot be confirmed that the interviewees spoke the absolute truth regarding their own experiences.

Lastly, the literature review for the context of this research has been conducted with care, yet it proved to be difficult to ensure all mentions of MEMO's to maintain the same definition of such an organisation. Different authors might have had different interpretations of MEMO's, whereby not everyone clarified their definition. Still, the exact definition of MEMO's matters less, as the focus of the context section was laid on describing their changing policy context in the Netherlands, rather than on MEMO's itself.

4. Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the literature review, including the brief document analysis, are presented, together with the findings deriving from the interviews. The findings are structured along the adopted indicators.

4.1 Context of MEMO's in the Netherlands and Rotterdam

Before going into the findings of the interviews, a brief overview of national and local policies regarding MEMO's and of the overall interactions between government and MEMO's can help putting the cases of the analysed MEMO's in Rotterdam in perspective. This section does not aim to offer a comprehensive overview of all policies and events relevant to the dependence of MEMO's on their policy context, but intends to inform about some of the national and local developments of the past forty years or so to facilitate the interpretation of the findings and analysis. Understanding the national and local approach regarding MEMO's, one must also look at integration policies in general, as these have a strong leading factor in how the existence of MEMO's are judged by the government. Besides the developments in Rotterdam, the national perspective has also been added. Not only does the municipality's approach reflect the national approach to a certain extent considering the relation between national and local governance, it would also be naïve to look at Rotterdam in a vacuum: the circumstances in this city are connected to an overall national trend.

4.1.1 Netherlands

1980's: institutionalising of the MEMO's

The rise of MEMO's in the Netherlands quickened in the 70s and 80's, whilst also the general realisation grew that 'guestworkers' and other (financial) migrants were becoming a permanent population, rather than a group intending to eventually move back to their country of origin (Rijkschroeff & Duyvendak, 2004; Da Graca, 2010, p. 59; Scholten, 2011, p. 72). The national government started to deem itself responsible for these groups of migrants, which were viewed as 'being different' from the native Dutch and thus in need of different care (Scholten, 2011, p. 72-73). Minority policies were implemented to adopt a target group-based approach which was supposed to improve the socio-economic position of these groups (Duyvendak *et al.*, 2005, p.6; Vermeulen, 2005, p. 70). An important point of departure was the increasing number of MEMO's. These organisations provided the government with the possibility to get in touch with a hard-to-reach community, and to make use of their network and resources (e.g. their cultural and linguistic knowledge). In the 70s, MEMO's were considered a useful tool to keep people within their own 'community' and to let them maintain their 'own identity' (Duyvendak *et al.*, 2003, p. 22). The

80's, however, show a changing interpretation of the MEMO's purpose, whereby they could also encourage the integration process of migrants. Scholten (2011) explains this new viewpoint as follows:

“It was believed that the social-cultural emancipation of these groups could be furthered by maintaining group-specific facilities for immigrant minority language and culture classes. This, in turn, would eventually benefit individual social-economic participation. It was also believed that the democratic voice of migrants would have to be supported by developing an advisory and consultation structure between national government and immigrant organisations.” (p. 73)

The national government expressed support of the existence and activities of MEMO's and started to support them financially through structural and project-based subsidies (Da Graca, 2010; Entzinger & Engbersen, 2014). The implementation of a new general minority policy in 1979 enabled MEMO's for the first time to receive direct financial support from the government, although the latter did determine the desired outcomes of the MEMO's activities and services (van Heelsum, 2004, p. 30). Some MEMO's enjoyed structural subsidies, while others had to apply for subsidies for specific activities (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2004).

In the Note on Minorities of 1981 (*'Ontwerp Minderhedennota'*), municipalities were also stimulated to develop their own minority policies. The decentralisation trend of that time was an important development for MEMO's, as governmental financial support became more accessible (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2004). Two researches from 1985 show, however, that migrant self-organisations did not exercise any influence on policies of their municipalities and that there was little interaction, as they were mostly focused on their 'own' community and their own direct environment (De Graaf, 1985; Horeman, Korterink & Veldkamp, 1985).

On the national level, the LAO (*Landelijk Advies- en Overlegstructuur Minderhedenbeleid*) is established; a national consultative body with mostly representatives of newly formed umbrella organisations of MEMO's. The goal was to advise the national government on their minority policies and other related issues. This seems to be a retry of a former failed attempt to create such an assemblage in 1981: the Lsoba (*Landelijke Samenwerking van organisaties van buitenlandse arbeiders*), which only lasted for a couple of years (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2004).

Although MEMO's were generally encouraged, and the more established ones were partly institutionalised within the Dutch government, it was already clear from the beginning of the 80's

that the Dutch government did not plan to completely isolate the public facilities for people with a migration background from the rest of the population through these MEMO's. The plan to improve the accessibility to more general facilities was already included in the Note on Minorities in 1981, although this did not lead to automatic success (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2004). At the end of the 80's, while efforts were made to include MEMO's in the overall minority policy-approach, uncertainties increased regarding the role of MEMO's in the integration process of their members and constituencies (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2004, p. 38).

1990's: Changing to mainstreaming

The belief that the emancipation of minority groups starts within their 'own' community loses strength during the 90's and the exact opposite belief of MEMO's increasing segregation started gaining ground. Politicians as well as the public were disappointed with the current minority policy-approach, as it did not seem to improve the minorities' socio-economic situation as quickly and sufficiently as expected (Duyvendak *et al.*, 2003; Vermeulen, 2005, p. 72; Tersteeg, van Kempen & Bolt, 2014). This generated a stronger focus on the importance to 'integrate' into the Dutch society, socially (e.g. learning the norms, values and general manners of 'the Dutch') and economically (e.g. tackling unemployment, poor educations and the strong welfare dependence) (Rijkschroeff & Duyvendak 2004; Vermeulen, 2005; Entzinger & Engbersen, 2014; Tersteeg *et al.*, 2014). The findings of the earlier mentioned researches from 1985, which stated that MEMO's devoted too much attention to their 'own' group seemed to be backed by a growing number of people. Slowly, these organisations started to be seen as a form of self-exclusion.

Still, the discussion and disagreements had not resolved regarding the role of MEMO's in the integration process of people with a migration background. Not only did political actors fail to find common ground, authors within the scientific field covering this issue did not seem to agree either. Where Schrover (2004), Boussetta (2001) and Brink, Tromp and Odé (2003) emphasize the segregation-enhancing factors of MEMO's, authors like Sunier (1996), Fennema, Tillie, van Heelsum, Berger and Wolff (2001), and Duyvendak *et al.* (2005) make a case for MEMO's benefits within the integration process. Meanwhile, although political or scientific agreement was not reached, subsidies for MEMO's were already being withdrawn, while expectations regarding MEMO's responsibilities within the Dutch society remained the same (Duyvendak & Rijkschroeff, 2004; van Heelsum, 2004; Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2004; Da Graca, 2010; Nijenhuis & Zoomers,

2012). These budget cuts through withdrawing subsidies in the 90's were also pushed by the overall flagging economy of the Netherlands. The consequential austerity measures forced public officials to impose stricter conditions for MEMO subsidies (van Heelsum, 2004, p. 30), whereby financial support increasingly had to serve matters appointed by the government instead of self-appointed one's (Verwey-Jonker instituut, 2004). Another effect of the declining economy and of the stronger emphasis on integration was a more urgent request for so-called umbrella entities. These were supposed to "represent all migrant organizations in encounters with the Dutch government", concerning applications for subsidies and consulting activities (Nijenhuis & Zoomers, 2012, p. 9).

With respect to the consulting role of MEMO's, the 90's also represented a period of growing uncertainty about their representativeness of the population with a migration background in the Netherlands. Previously, MEMO's were considered to function as a spokesperson, but the disappointing developments of the socio-economic status of people with a migration background also started to undermine the belief that MEMO's could be of use for the development and implementation of minority policies (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2004, p. 488; Scholten, 2011, p. 99). Surprisingly, the amount of MEMO's was still increasing in the 90's. The significant decline after 2000, however, seems to show that there was a delayed response to the new political conditions.

2000's: Scheffer-debate and its consequences

The critique from the 90's accelerated after a series of events. In 2000, Paul Scheffer wrote a news article called 'The multicultural drama', which put a spotlight on the previously claimed failures of integration and which caught storm in the political debate. Also, the popularity of Pim Fortuyn grew, a populist politician who was known for his harsh criticism against Islam and immigrants in general (Duyvendak *et al.*, 2003; Duyvendak & Rijkschroeff, 2004; Tersteeg *et al.*, 2014). This, along with headlines of several violent acts committed by people with a migrant background, including the murder of Islam critic film producer Theo van Gogh, heightened the sense of policy failure regarding integration (Tersteeg *et al.*, 2014, p.9). The discussion moved on apace and migrants seemed to get blamed for not bearing responsibility for their own 'integration process'. Rather than the social-economic position of migrants, the political discussion shifted more towards one about cultural differences, identity issues and the role of MEMO's in this. Noteworthy is how during this time, policies, political actors and the media mentioned MEMO's almost only in relation

to integration. Although discussion still continued regarding the benefits of MEMO's, with left-winged parties being more optimistic about it than right-winged parties (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2004), it becomes clear the Netherlands wanted to seriously diverge from their former multicultural approach to a more individual-based approach (Duyvendak *et al.*, 2003; Vermeulen, 2005; Vasta, 2007; Entzinger & Engbersen, 2014; Tersteeg *et al.*, 2014). This integration policy 'New Style' builds upon the integration policies of the 90's but has an even bigger focus on the self-responsibility and 'good citizenship' of people with a migration background, which caused further budgets cuts for MEMO's as well (Da Graca, 2010, p. 14; Tersteeg *et al.*, 2014, p. 9; Entzinger & Engbersen, 2014). This declining financial support has continued ever since, with additional budget cuts occurring over the years (Tersteeg *et al.*, 2014, p. 6).

Regarding MEMO's consulting role, the in 1985 installed LAO national consultative body with representatives from MEMO's ended in 2013, by then re-named the LOM (*'Landelijk Overlegorgaan Minderheden'*). The main reason seems to be the belief that the participants were not representing the population with a migration background in the Netherlands well enough (Kasem, de Jong & Buller, 2016). The dispelling of this notion reflects the overall tendency of the Dutch to favour a more mainstreaming approach regarding people with a migration background, rather than a target-group one (Breugel & Scholten, 2014).

Now that the developments on the national level have been explored, the policy context of Rotterdam will be presented. The emphasis is put on the matters where Rotterdam deviates from the national developments.

4.1.2 Rotterdam

With a population of over 638.000, the City of Rotterdam is the second largest in the Netherlands after the capital city of Amsterdam. Of its population, 50% has a migration background, which indicates that 50% of the people in Rotterdam have either migrated to the Netherlands themselves, or have at least one parent who has migrated to the Netherlands (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018). Rotterdam is considered a 'hyperdiverse' city with its high rate of people with a migration background and counts 170 different nationalities (IDEM, 2016, p. 3). Although MEMO's in Rotterdam had to deal with similar difficulties to those in other Dutch cities, Uitermark (2012) argues that compared to Amsterdam "*Rotterdam's minority associations enjoyed more favourable*

positions within their governance figuration than Amsterdam's minority associations. They received more practical and financial support, had more constructive relations and enjoyed greater security in their positions" (p. 141).

Although it is true that national policies influence local ones to a large extent, there can still be considerable differences between how cities interpret and implement these directions. The most notable difference compared to the national intended approach is that instead of focussing on more general issues affecting people with a migration background – such as disadvantages on the labour and discrimination –, Rotterdam kept their minority-group-specific policies for a longer time in the 90's, with issues like mobilization, integration and participation of marginalized groups still receiving special attention (Ireland, 2004, p. 137). Still, the relation between the municipality of Rotterdam and the MEMO's has also changed over the last forty years or so, bearing much resemblance to the aforementioned national trends. From the 90's on, reports on the state of integration in Rotterdam were received with a disappointment comparable to the nation's response (Tersteeg *et al.*, 2014, p. 10-11). Among others, a municipal advisory committee called SAMS concluded in 1997 that the integration processes at the time were insufficient (Ireland, 2004, p. 141). Ireland (2004) explains how, at the turn of the 20th century, more formal MEMO's enjoyed a more institutionalized relationship with the municipality than the more informal ones. Still, collaborations would often only occur during certain crisis situations. The overall input of these MEMO's for policy formulations was almost completely absent in policies implementations.

They sometimes complained about serving only as 'decoration'. The local government's financial largesse went to sustain activities that advanced its objectives of integration, crime prevention and participation. If they wanted the money, immigrant associations had to tailor their agendas accordingly. [...] The link between the more established immigrant leadership and the mass base could be extremely tenuous under such conditions. The SAMS warned about the dangers of social isolation and disconnection posed by the cleft between 'regular' associations and smaller, weaker, and less visible forms of organisations" (Ireland, 2004, p. 141).

Nevertheless, Rotterdam's minority approach had an optimistic character, in which diversity was often framed in a positive way and even celebrated at times. This came to an abrupt end in 2002, when the populist party 'Liveable Rotterdam' (*Leefbaar Rotterdam*) became the ruling party after decades of the Labour Party 'PvdA' taking that position. Reflecting growing national

beliefs, Liveable Rotterdam wanted to put more effort in the socio-cultural integration of people with a migration background, turning away from the celebration of differences (Tersteeg *et al.*, 2014, p. 11). Even though the Labour Party temporarily took back control between 2006 and 2014, the new phase of integration and diversity policies has not been reversed ever since. This also had to do with Rotterdam dealing with overall budget cuts, like the rest of the Netherlands. Consequently, declining financial support for MEMO's followed, which caused a substantial drop in the amount of existing MEMO's, as many of them were forced to close their doors due to the financial deficit (Weltevrede, Seidler, de Boom, 2014, p. 42; Tersteeg *et al.* 2014, p. 6). Multiple recent municipality documents restated the decision to steer clear of subsidizing MEMO's which would focus too much on their 'own community' (to name a few: *Coalitieakkoord 2014-2018: Volle Kracht vooruit*, *Integratie010 2015* and *Beleidsregel Volwaardig Meedoen in Rotterdam 2016-2018*). This does not mean, however, that all support for MEMO's and their activities has ceased. A representative example of the 'new' kind of support MEMO's enjoy in current times is the creation of four so-called knowledge centres in 2012, each one focuses on another area: 'Diversity', 'Emancipation of women', 'Emancipation of Homosexuals' and 'Antidiscrimination'. These centres were supposed to function as collection spots for all sorts of data regarding people with a migration background living in Rotterdam, and as a distributor of financial support, as "volunteer organisations and citizens can apply for funding for activities in the four focus areas if the activities ensure social mobility and are accessible to all" (Tersteeg *et al.*, 2014, p. 14). Since 2015, an urban expertise centre called IDEM has been set up to substitute the knowledge centres of Diversity and Antidiscrimination (IDEM Rotterdam, n.d.).

4.2 Dependency on financial support

In this section, the findings from the interviews for the indicators of adapting for financial support and influencing to get financial support are presented.

4.2.1 Adapt: following new conditions for financial support

Change MEMO's activities for financial support

When it comes to choosing or adjusting activities meant for their members or constituency to meet the municipality's conditions for financial support, four of the interviewed MEMO's responded that they had to a certain extent. The Moroccan MEMO adjusted certain activities slightly to receive subsidy, though this was often a matter of details. The Kurdish MEMO explained they have organised informative events about circumcision and honour-related and domestic violence, because they knew the municipality granted subsidy for activities related to these topics. They did claim, however, that this was absolutely not enough to tackle the issues at stake. A similar approach was adopted by the Africa MEMO, which organised a 'women's day' and an activity for reading with children, after finding out the municipality would subsidise them. Some other activities had been adjusted slightly to try and get financial support without success. The president of the African MEMO claimed to want to keep checking subsidy options in the future: *"When it comes to subsidies and other things, I think that the activities that we are doing, that help me either to be able to find my own money, or to ask money from another organisation, or asking from people. So that they know more of my goals."* The Somali MEMO-II has organised multiple 'integration-tours' for their constituency, as a response to a municipality-send request, and got financial support for it. They ignored an earlier request some years before, thinking too much effort would be asked from them. Finding out the requirements were not as demanding as expected, they decided to go for it.

Apart from adjusting activities meant for members or the MEMO's constituency, the same Somali MEMO-II has changed their board composition from family-members only to one also with people outside the family. They learned this would enhance their chance on financial support from the municipality and other funds. Although the president said she was "in denial" at first that being a family would be an issue, she came to terms after realising the municipality, funds and other sponsors would not "finance a family". Furthermore, to receive subsidy they were required to start working more professionally than when they first started, which she claimed she found hard to do: *"Also reports, which we never did, we had to give back to [the municipality]. Also making a planning. All that administrative work we never did in the past. Back then, it was only doing it and done, doing it and done. So, we had to work more professionally"*. The Somali MEMO-II has received critique in the past from some men with a Somali background. The MEMO supposedly

was working too closely with the municipality and “[they] *only want what the municipality wants, so [they] cannot represent us*”. Still, the president has spoken against it and seems not to have changed her approach.

Besides the events organised and internal structure of MEMO’s being changed as a response to their renewed considerations of the municipality’s subsidy policies, five MEMO’s mentioned they worked or tried to work together with other parties to increase their chance on financial support from the government. Some had more success than others. The location of the Kurdish MEMO was paid for by the municipality for nine years, when they shared it together with a local refugee organisation and MEMO’s for refugees from other countries. According to the president, they formed a sort of umbrella organisation. The former president of the Moroccan MEMO explained how he noticed that the usual financial support for smaller MEMO’s in the city got redirected to bigger umbrella organisations (SPIOR and RADAR), to be distributed from there. Although the Moroccan MEMO did work with two of these umbrella organisations for receiving subsidy, the former president stated he missed the direct interaction with the municipality and that requesting financial support had gotten more difficult. The latter was also the case because of the experienced increased competition with MEMO’s aiming at the same budget. When the Somali MEMO-II contacted the municipality for a subsidy request, they were told to direct their request to other organisations, which were partially connected to the municipality. Because they had already approached most of them in the past, they reached out to the still unknown refugee organisation (‘Vluchtelingenwerk’) to explore further possibilities. In the end, no collaboration took place. Lastly, the president from Africa MEMO tried to work with other Dutch organisations, because the municipality requested her to do so, but this did not work out either because of, according to her, favouritism:

“[They said] *you must try to work with other organisations in your neighbourhood. And then you try to look for those organisations, you try to work with them. But also... sometimes, I used to say, maybe it is my fault. But I looked at it, and it wasn’t only just my fault. Within the Dutch organisations, usually these are organisations that have been there for years and years and years. And that... that organisation becomes like... it is known within that place. So, if you ask for subsidies [...] you find that these people have their favourite things that they want. They have chosen their people.*”

The president from the Somali MEMO-I visited a centre which was part of an organisation set up by the municipality to tackle societal issues in Rotterdam. Although she went to explore collaboration possibilities with other MEMO's from different communities, she explained how she did not feel welcome there as a Somali woman, since there were mostly Turkish people present who continued speaking Turkish to her. She did mention she would want to work with other Somali MEMO's in the future, among others to have a higher chance on subsidy.

Change target group for financial support

Although the president of the Africa MEMO originally wanted to create an organisation for *all* women in Rotterdam with a migration background, the municipality urged her to be more precise about her target-group and proposed to change it to *African* women in Rotterdam, as she was from Ugandan descent herself. She explained that this request shocked her, but that she went along with it to be able to receive subsidy. The former president of the Moroccan MEMO explained how it was a municipality-imposed condition to welcome all other nationalities when they started in 1995, in order to receive financial and other forms of support. In reality, people from different backgrounds did visit the centre, yet people with a Moroccan background still made up the vast majority. The Turkish MEMO-I and the Turkish MEMO-II both claimed that their doors were open for anyone that wants to visit, but neither of them stated that this is due to the municipality's request. It should be noted that the majority of visitors have a Turkish or Kurdish background and the MEMO's names make it very obvious that they are connected to Turkey.

4.2.2 Influence: changing strategy regarding contact with municipality to get financial support

Looking for new 'venues' for financial support (new public agents/new departments/etc.)

As mentioned before, the Somali MEMO-II tried to work with a refugee organisation which was connected to the municipality, after being redirected by someone within the municipality. Through this refugee organisation, she tried to find a new way of getting financial support. The most telling example of a MEMO looking for new venues for financial support was that of the Somali MEMO-I. The president reached out to an acquaintance with a Somali background who had just obtained a

seat within the Rotterdam City Council in the municipality elections. She explained that through him she was hoping to find a way to receive subsidy:

“And a while ago I had a conversation with him. Like, hey, you are a part of the municipality now, what can you do for us? So that he will look for subsidy for us. So, I am looking in that direction as well, because I finally found someone within the municipality who I know very well. So, instead of hearing meaningless talks from the outside... I can move him a bit in a direction and that saves time for me. Then, I can say to him: you can also do something for your community.”

She also tried different openings by going to a couple of public meetings in Rotterdam for societal issues within the municipality and by having contact with public officials during some of her job activities.

Trying to convince municipality of importance of getting financial support

The president of the Kurdish MEMO stated they had tried in the past to persuade people within the municipality to, besides covering their setting, also financially support some of their activities. However, after receiving multiple rejections for subsidy requests, they stopped trying. The former president of the Moroccan MEMO said he remembers very vividly how, at a certain moment in the past, he had to reach out to his regular contacts within the municipality for over fifteen times to request an activity-based subsidy and that they even declined in the end. For him, this was a clear turning point in his interaction with the municipality regarding the financial support they usually enjoyed as a MEMO. The president of the Somali MEMO-II explained how they usually deployed the strategy of showing the municipality successful past partnerships, as this builds trust:

“So, they just have to see something, see that the municipality gives me something... Then they think, [...] she is doing a good job. But if I tell them a hundred times that I am doing a good job, then I cannot get anything. So, sometimes you have to make use of the municipality”.

She also described how she had tried to convince public officials Somalis needed a special treatment. This, because of their exceptional situation whereby there exists a certain violent atmosphere throughout the Somali community, due to conflicts which were “*brought from home to the Netherlands*”. The president of the Somali MEMO-I explained how she had tried multiple times to convince people from the municipality of the importance of financing the work she was doing for Somali families. As mentioned before, she went to a couple of public meetings in

Rotterdam organised for discussing societal issues within the municipality and also had contact with public officials during some of her job activities. She specifically pressed for a refund of travel expenses and a paid job to do the work she was doing, as she was working as a volunteer five days a week at a certain point. Although she said to have received appreciation for her work, she never received any subsidy, much to her disappointment:

“[I told them:] come on guys, it is not working like this. I will not make it doing this for five days a week. Can you not do something for me? You can see it is strongly needed. Can you not provide me with a paid job or something? No, they said, because we do not do that anymore, the group approach, not anymore.”

4.2.3 None of those, because

During the interviews, the interviewees have also stated to both not take part in adapting to new conditions for financial support set by the municipality, nor in trying to influence public officials to receive financial support (answering to the ‘if not, why not’ question). The explanations as to why this has not been the case can be found in this section.

The municipality’s intentions do not match the desired selective benefits for members

The president of the Africa MEMO stated although she sometimes made small adjustments to her activities to meet the municipality’s expectations, she knows the people she works with cannot handle certain matters yet, as they *“have not yet reached that stage [...] It is like, when the child still needs milk, and for them (the municipality) they are busy with ‘let’s give meat’”*. The Somali MEMO-I claimed people with a Somali background should be treated differently from other ethnic groups in the Netherlands. According to her, this is because most of them have experienced war and have migrated for different reasons than a lot of other migrants. Also, because of existing clan-related issues within the community in Rotterdam, the Rotterdam citizens with a Somali background should receive specific treatment. She also thinks that people with a Somali background can understand each other better. She believes the municipality focuses too much on learning the Dutch language and too little on issues which the community itself find important, like the raising of children. She presumes the municipality chooses the things they like and do not listen to others.

“That is just the way of the government, a little closed-off. And you are being told what you have to do. Not like: do what is needed [...] leave it to the community. They are making their own rules. And I think, well, you cannot do this. You do not know what is going on here. If you make the rules like that, then people do not want to participate, because they do not even understand you anymore.”

The president of the Somali MEMO-II stated that the municipality is not aware what is needed within the community, yet they ask the Somali MEMO-II to act according to their ‘misinformed’ knowledge and “say: *you should only do what we have written down*”. She does, however, believe their ideas are not completely wrong and understands the municipality bases its focus on research and experiences. She explained however, that the appointed matters of importance do not reflect the most important issues at stake within the Somali community.

The Surinamese MEMO illustrated how they had refused to comply with the municipality’s demand to fuse their women’s house together with five other women’s houses (self-organisations) in Rotterdam. They changed their approach and became a volunteer organisation which mostly engages itself with an activity-programme for elderly with a Surinamese background in Rotterdam. After a long deliberation together with their members, the decision was made that this path would serve their constituency the best, as the people they were working with would not benefit from the fusion with other women’s houses. Most of them were elderly who, supposedly, do not long for meeting new people with different backgrounds anymore.

Not wanting to be dependent on the municipality

With the Surinamese MEMO choosing its own new path instead of adhering to the municipality’s plan to unite with other self-organisations, they felt they made a drastic turn. What started as a women’s house with a municipality-paid location and multiple cultural and informative events, changed into a volunteer organisation without a setting and with no more financial support from the municipality. The board of the Surinamese MEMO believed that this new independence would “bring out their strength” and would support their target group best. Especially since they were already doing a lot with elderly who, as mentioned, tend to prefer the company of other people with a Surinamese background.

The former president of the Moroccan MEMO started a new Moroccan MEMO with members from the prior one, after leaving his position as president. He explained the reason for this was that a big group of people connected to the earlier Moroccan MEMO, including himself, thought the MEMO was getting too much engaged with the municipality. They wished to become more independent and therefore set up a new MEMO.

The Turkish MEMO-II decided on being independent from the municipality since the very start of their association in 2002:

“[F]rom the municipality we actually almost never got any money. And actually, you know, we do not even want anything from the municipality. Why? Look, we manage on our own. Maybe the municipality... I am sure that there are maybe other groups which need more money than we do. An example... a retirement home maybe, and other care in the neighbourhoods of Rotterdam. So, we never requested anything.”

Apart from a one-time subsidy in their first year, they had never worked with any financial support from the municipality. Even when a public official offered to make a subsidy request for them, they rejected. This offer was made after they received a threat from supporters of a Kurdish political party in the beginning of 2018. Graffiti was sprayed on their outer walls and a brick was thrown through their window. The former board member stated that they are very aware that subsidy is “*money from you, money from me, money from everyone*” and that they do not want to ‘bother’ the municipality, unless it is for something big or important.

Incapable of complying with municipality’s demands

The former president of the Moroccan MEMO explained how the relationship with the municipality was an uncomplicated one during the first two years of his presidency. Working with the municipality and getting subsidy did not ask a lot of energy, because people were enthusiastic. They received a lot of compliments and he experienced a bond of mutual trust. He noticed how this changed over the years. The amount of paperwork and administrative work for claiming subsidy increased, the demand for justification for each event got stricter and the overall contact with the municipality got more formal. Although he had ‘good feelings’ about the municipality in the past, he got annoyed and irritated over time, which caused him, among other reasons, to leave the MEMO and start a new one together with other members.

The Somali MEMO-II also claimed that the municipality was asking too much regarding event reports, payment receipts and the overall conditions for subsidy. This made her limit the amount of times the MEMO requested subsidy:

*“But I saw right away that they also have underlying problems with their strong bureaucracy. Then, of course, there is the justification. You have to give a lot of time. They give you something for instance, and then you have to deal with a lot of receipts... and I am not very good with receipts *laughs* Dealing with those receipts, checking every one of them. I thought, better to get NOTHING from the municipality. Because look, you get something, but you have to put a lot of time and effort... I think it is better to use that for the people themselves, because that is something which makes me happy. But if I am busy all day doing administrative things”*

The founder of the Africa MEMO complained how the municipality set a lot of conditions for financial support but asks for too many concrete results of the given events, when the exact outcomes and reached people are not always as obvious and easy to define. She explains how she has “suffered” while preparing subsidy requests in the past, as it takes a lot of energy, time and effort. She is annoyed with the municipality not wanting to grant her subsidy “because [her] wants do not correspond with ours (the municipality’s)”, while they “do not even know why you even started to write, that you spend sleepless nights just to write everything”. She thinks that she is unable to empower the women connected to her association, because of the lack of money and because of the pressure the municipality puts on her regarding expectations: “How can I empower others, if I myself am not?”. Another issue she mentioned as to why she dislikes the working together with the municipality, is the constant changing focus of the municipality. She explains how asking for subsidy can be especially tiring because she might put all her effort in one certain topic, as might be requested by the municipality, yet by the time she is ready to request subsidy, the municipality’s preference might already have shifted to another topic.

“And their problems change very very fast. This... you can be in that June, they are busy with ‘raising of children’. When you are still busy with telling the African people: ‘please come to the meeting about this’ and then they come. But then, that one has changed. They are completely occupied with the emancipation of women. Then... yeah... with time I feel like, I am not able to run the rest of the Netherlands, of the Dutch madness.”

Predicting rejection

The president of the Kurdish MEMO stated that because of all the subsidy rejections over the last couple of years, they have stopped sending requests. Even while knowing that ‘radicalisation of the youth’ was a ‘hot topic’ within the municipality, they refrained from asking financial support for the events they held regarding this issue, “*because we are getting tired of all the negative responses*”. She also explained how they had not tried to find different venues for subsidy within the municipality, because she believes the response will be the same as the people in the municipality will probably discuss the matters of granting subsidy for MEMO’s with each other. This is a slightly different reasoning than the Somali MEMO-II gave for not trying to ‘lobby’ at the municipality for financial support: the president believes trying to convince people working in the municipality is useless, as you are always talking to a different person there.

Although the former board member of the Turkish MEMO-II had claimed before they do not want to use the municipality’s financial support, he also stated they would not try because of others telling them that the process is too difficult. This made them assume that their MEMO would not be able to meet the right conditions, as they do not have a lot of activities that might interest the municipality. They compared themselves to a Christian self-organisation located behind them, which enjoys subsidy because they are active and organise events for a broader target group.

The founder of the Somali MEMO-I has tried multiple times to convince public officials of her MEMO’s importance, when meeting them. However, she has never sent an official subsidy request, because she already knew from the conversations she had that she would be rejected. She described it as being “*cut off from the outside*”.

Alternative sources for financial support

In case a MEMO stated they did not receive subsidy from the municipality or found the received financial support to be insufficient to continue their activities, the question was asked how they financed themselves and how they found financial support in other resources. The given answers are summed up in funds, donations from the community and participants’ contribution, personal contributions and other.

Funds

Four of the MEMO's claimed to have worked with funds in the past, which were functioning independently from the municipality or were not directly financed by the municipality. The president of the Somali MEMO-II has received funding from 'Oranjefonds' in the past, a foundation financed by the Dutch national lottery. They funded a 'neighbourhood day' and one Christmas celebration. She explained how she not only had to work more professionally to gain trust from the municipality, but also for funds like these. She also received financial support from certain 'centres of expertise', like Movisie and Pharos, which are both partially financed by the Dutch national government and partially functioning as private companies. The president pointed out that this was easier, as they did have to write reports about their activities but did not have to *"turn every coin"*. The board members of the Surinamese MEMO explained that although they do not receive direct subsidy from the municipality anymore, they do work with "indirect subsidies" via associations like 'Coalitie Erbij' for some of their activities, which is also partially financed by the Dutch national government. They approached these funds after deciding on their activities on their own at first, rather than adjusting the activities to match the funds' conditions. The president of the Kurdish MEMO stated to have worked with funds in the past as well, as their place was paid for by the municipality, but their activities were not. They organised three 'women's activities' with support from 'Stichting Elise Mathilde Fonds', which enjoys no financial support from the Dutch national government. They also worked with the umbrella organisation for refugee organisations 'Vluchtelingen Organisaties Nederland' for the funding of certain activities. It is unknown how this organisation is financed. Lastly, the founder of the Africa MEMO got a fund once from 'Buren voor Buren' (translates: Neighbours for Neighbours), which does not receive governmental financial support. She also tried to get financial support from the aforementioned *Oranjefonds* but failed to do so. She mentions how trying to receive these funds can be tiring:

"But also, what really pulls me back...however much you try to jump here and jump there, you go to Oranjefonds, then they try to look for the people that are in your circle. And then, those, they don't contact again, you know, about the finance, and do you know more about this organisation and so. And once they give you a negative feedback, they give a negative feedback about you... which means, it sucks... it sucks the energy."

Donations from the community and participants' contribution

Six MEMO's mentioned they receive financial support from very small contributions of people participating in activities or from donations coming from within the community. The latter could be from people who make use of the MEMO or who simply support its purpose. The Turkish MEMO-I asks 50 cents for tea and 75 cents for coffee in their meeting place. Sometimes, when they are short in money at the end of the month, they ask regulars to donate a bit extra: *"Then we are, for instance, short by 200. Then, we will ask for a ten or a twenty extra. Then, these people that come on a regular base will say: these men are short in money, so, we will help them"*. The Somali MEMO-II asks for a contribution of four euros for cooking and dinner activities, just to cover the basics. The president stated that people only have to pay when they are financially capable and that sometimes, someone pays a bit extra to compensate. She explains it just makes her feel good organising these things for people and that she does not always want money. For the elderly wanting to be a member of the Surinamese MEMO, they must pay a small monthly contribution of five euros to get a discount on participating in the activities. The Moroccan MEMO also used to ask for a member-contribution. The Kurdish MEMO used donations from their members and wider community during the start-up of their MEMO in 1995. They still receive small contributions, but these are far from enough to finance the activities, which caused them to have less activities over time. They also hold cooking and dinner activities sometimes, which can be paid for with small contributions or by bringing food. The Turkish MEMO-II has seemingly only been using donations from the community and members:

"[When we started] we never heard from the municipality. They won't pay five thousand out of the blue, that is hard. Look, we have said together with our friends that we are first going to try it on our own. Just try doing it on our own legs. But people heard about that, people knew. So, they came to help a little. Five euro, ten euro. That's just how it goes within the Turkish community. It is mandatory to help each other out."

They also ask a monthly payment of five euros from their members and the former board member pointed out that they have a lot of so-called 'business people' as members, who financially help out as well. Even when there was a risk of not being able to pay the rent in time, they managed by asking for extra donations from their members and within the rest of the community. They also

have a big group of active members who contribute to the MEMO through volunteer work, which reduced the need for financial support.

Personal contributions

Four MEMO's have stated they sometimes reached into their own personal pockets to finance their activities. The former president of the Moroccan MEMO explained how they sometimes had to pay ahead using their own money when the municipality was getting slower and stricter with granting subsidies, which the MEMO experienced as a very difficult financial situation. Also, they organised the aforementioned political activity with their own personal money. Afterwards, an invited public official from the municipality who was present proposed to pay it back, but the MEMO refused because they wanted it to remain their 'own activity'. The two women who started the Somali MEMO-I each contributed two hundred euros from their personal account to pay for a notary helping them to establish their association. The interviewee also mentioned how she paid for travel expenses herself when she was visiting families. The president of the Kurdish MEMO stated that, because of the financial support of a fund, they were able to organise informative events about circumcision, honour related and domestic violence. However, as this was only enough for one event for each topic, they decided to fill the financial gap themselves for follow-up events:

“But what were they thinking? With only one event everything would be okay? I'm not going to do it like this. Not in one time. Another ten times and the people might still even remain the same. You have to clean a bit every time. Clean, clean, clean... and then... [...] It needs time.”

The founder of the Africa MEMO felt like she was being held back because of the lack of financial support from the municipality and other funds. Therefore she sometimes opened up her own house and provided drinks and food herself to continue some of the activities. However, this could not last long, because *“with time I became bankrupt”*. She also mentions how she sometimes would lie to the people around her about getting a fund, while she paid for needed goods herself, as she did not want to let others feel down or let them think things were not going well:

“The people I used to work with, all the ladies that I used to meet, who are very passionate about what they are doing, many of them are going through that something. Many are heartbroken. They say: '[name interviewee], are you still working [on your association]?'. Then, I say 'Yes I am still working'. And then they say: 'were did you get the fund?'. And you will say that you just get it.

[...] Because, sometimes you find the person broken how she was. And when you really try to go deeper, it is like, yeah, she couldn't find a way out, she couldn't get the funds. So instead of sharing a bad story, we are trying to be happy. Instead of sitting on the same sad story. I say: 'Yeah I got the funds'."

Others

Some other ways were mentioned as to how the MEMO's were trying to find a way to cope with less financial support. The founder of the Africa MEMO stated that after being rejected for subsidy and funds multiple times, they started to look for different way to finance their activities. One of them was to offer a performance on cultural misunderstandings, which allowed them to make some money for their association. Some MEMO's started to work together with other associations. The Surinamese MEMO, for instance, lost their own place but could provide their programme for the elderly by making use of spaces in nursing homes like 'Laurens' and 'Zorgkompas'. They also found partnership with another MEMO for Javanese elderly and one Cape Verde MEMO. The Kurdish MEMO and the Somali MEMO-II both also found a place for some of their activities in neighbourhood centres. Furthermore, The Kurdish MEMO found partnership with another Kurdish MEMO for two big celebrations during the year and the Somali MEMO-II is currently trying to work together more often with other Somali MEMO's and one Eritrea MEMO.

Both the Turkish MEMO-I and the Turkish MEMO-II mentioned how they were not really in need of extra financial support, as their expenses are not that high, and all their services and activities are based on voluntary work. The Turkish MEMO-I claimed only to need money for the rent and internet. The Turkish MEMO-II stated they organise small activities, and that they would only request subsidy in case they would hold a big event.

4.3 Dependency on access to the policy-making

In this section, the findings for the indicators of *adapting* for access to policy-making and *influencing* to get access to policy-making are presented.

4.3.1 Adapt: following new conditions for access to policy-making

Changing provided information for consultation

The board members of the Surinamese MEMO declared they never engaged themselves with policy-making in Rotterdam, because the municipality never asked them to or approached them for any advice on the matters of the Surinamese community in Rotterdam. According to the volunteer of the Turkish MEMO-I, public officials used to come over to talk about matters concerning the MEMO's constituency in an informal way at the coffee table. However, they have not come by since a couple of years. The former board-member Turkish MEMO-II said he has only seen public officials coming to their association three times in his time, during the establishment of the MEMO. These interactions were only about finding out more about the MEMO specifically. He mentions that although "*the question has never come from the municipality*", he wished that they would come by more often. During the interview, he asked whether it was possible to write an advice for the municipality based on this research and add the idea of having a public official visit MEMO's once every three months or so, to check if there is anything the MEMO can do for the municipality and whether they can work together on certain issues. The president of the Kurdish MEMO mentioned how they had a lot of contact with Dutch associations before, including the municipality, but that this became less over the years. She stated that she has not heard from them over long time, but that she would "definitely respond" if they would send her a request for advice regarding the Kurdish community in Rotterdam. They would not actively search for ways to find access however: "*We don't know the policies, so we're not going to occupy ourselves with it*". The founder of the Africa MEMO explained how public officials would sometimes approach a certain 'women's group' for advice, a group of women with a migration background who have a "strong voice in their community", which she was a part of herself.

The president of the Somali MEMO-II explained how the municipality would sometimes approach her for certain questions about the Somali community in Rotterdam, as she is a so-called 'key person' at the Association of Dutch Municipalities (*Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten*). A key person stands for someone who can connect public officials to contacts within a certain community, such as the Somali community, and who can provide insight into the community. She pointed out how she can easily translate for the municipality or answer questions about the situation of people with a Somali background living in Rotterdam and their behaviour. According to the president, they ask her for advice since she is a well-known figure to them.

Changing their position within the policy arena

The president of the Somali MEMO-II mentioned how she sometimes joins ‘Dona Daria’ for so-called expert meetings where issues affecting Rotterdam citizens with a migration background are discussed to bring out advice for the municipality. Dona Daria is the earlier mentioned organisation which was established by the municipality in 2006 by fusing five women’s houses in Rotterdam together, in which the Surinamese MEMO refused to take part. During these expert meetings, women from different migration background join the table. The president explained she thinks it is “good for the community” if she takes that advisory role towards the municipality. She considers it to be her personal responsibility towards the Somali community.

The founder of the Somali MEMO-I expressed that she had gone to many public meetings at the municipality to help brainstorming certain societal issues which also included matters of the Somali community. She was invited a couple of times, because people were interested in her MEMO. However, she quit doing so after realising people were only interested in the advice and information she could give, rather than helping her out with her own MEMO. Every time she asked them whether they could support her (financially or in other ways) after responding so enthusiastically, they told her they were unable to but that they were still very interested in her stories:

“So, you are really being used a little, for your ideas. They kind of steal your ideas. [...] Yeah, when I realised that my ideas would continue and that multiple projects were set up in front of your nose, but you are not included, while they are your ideas. Then, I think, I have shared enough. I hope you can help some people with it, but I am done with it, because I really don’t feel fairly treated, you know? [...] I really want to help, but I am not stupid.”

As mentioned before, the founder of the Africa MEMO explained how public officials would sometimes approach the ‘women’s group’ for advice, a group of women with a migration background who have a “strong voice in their community”, which she was a part of herself. However, she also criticized how there was often little attention for her contribution, caused by the other women denying her role in the group:

“Then [the public official] will come and he will hear a bit of some stories. But usually, what I also think is that they pick what they want. [...] I remember the time when I tried to be very active, maybe it was because my mindset was different. Most of the time I tried to go out of my head. To try to speak for other people. So, we used to be in a group, but we are different people. In each group, eight people from the women’s group. Then... for example, I am just giving you an example. Maybe they are Turkish. [...] And then you see that a lot of Turkish people are coming. And then you find that only about five African people come in. Then, when those [Turkish] people come, they are very favoured to speak their own language. But when the African come, they [the Turkish people] say: ‘Yeah, you will have to speak Dutch’.”

She explained how the public officials would then create a negative image of her MEMO, because of the bad stories they hear from other women present at the ‘women’s group’.

4.3.2 Influence: changing strategy regarding contact with municipality to get access to policy-making

Looking for new ‘venues’ for access to policy-making (new public agents/new departments/etc.)

The former president of the Moroccan MEMO mentioned they had organised a political event, for which they invited members of political parties to present their programmes right before a city council election. The goal of this event was not only to inform their constituency, but also to show the outside world they exist and are politically active. This action showed their effort in trying to be noticed, as they also invited public officials from the municipality to attend the event.

One member of the Surinamese MEMO’s board stated she sometimes went to certain public meetings in the past on her own account, to give advice regarding Rotterdam citizens with a Surinamese background. She stopped joining those meetings but did not explain why. At the national level, the Surinamese MEMO works together with ‘NOOM’, a network of organisations for elderly people with a migration background, and Fos’ten, an association committed to the interest of Surinamese elderly in the Netherlands. The two board members stated that they lobby for matters concerning Surinamese elderly together with these two organisations and try to improve the national policies affecting them. They have shared their knowledge and participated in certain campaigns over the years.

Trying to convince the municipality of importance of getting access to policy-making

None of the interviewees have mentioned any explicit attempts to convince the municipality of the importance of getting access to policy-making, other than by trying to get access through the above-mentioned venues.

4.3.3 None of these, because

Although consultation moments have taken place here and there, all the interviewed MEMO's have stated that having access to the policy-making of the municipality is not included in their main goals. The former president of the Moroccan MEMO specifically pointed out that although they had always given their honest opinion about matters, it was never their ambition to influence policies. He does believe bigger organizations take a part in lobbying, but not the smaller ones. The Turkish MEMO-II explained their decision not to put effort in getting access as follows: *"We don't have that sort of power. [...] Look, we're a small organisation. A MEMOsque for instance, they have thousands of members. [...] Maybe [the municipality] will listen, but there is no real use in that"*. The founder of the Africa MEMO wanted to take on an advisory role to the municipality in the beginning abandoned that ambition once she realized how much she had to 'fight' to get attention. It cost her too much energy, which she wanted to put into her own MEMO preferably.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, the connection between the theoretical framework and the findings are made. The analysis is structured along the sub-questions to provide answers to each of them.

5.1 What does the policy context of mono-ethnic migrant organisations contain and how has it changed over the last 40 years?

When reading through the extensive body of literature on integration policies in the Netherlands and Rotterdam specifically, one important thing becomes apparent: since the significant increase of MEMO's in the 70s, there has always been political and public doubt and discussion regarding the benefits these organisations could provide. Interestingly, these potential benefits are almost always framed in matters like integration to the Dutch society and support for finding employment for people with a migration background. The support MEMO's received depended on how they were viewed politically; as benefitting or as undermining integration or employment. This teaches us two things. Firstly, how public actors define the objectives of MEMO's influences the decision to offer support or not, meaning that they want to exert a certain amount of control over the MEMO's. Secondly, although the halt in mono-ethnic organisation subsidies in Rotterdam might seem sudden when reading the Note on Integration 010 from 2015 (*'Nota Integratie010'*), it does not mark one exact moment of change in time. It is rather a continuation of previous critical policy-approaches and reflects Rotterdam's longer-existing strive to minimize differences between people with without a migration background. Or, depending on your viewpoint, it reflects an aspiration to cut back on financial support for issues concerning people with a migration background.

Generally, in Rotterdam and nation-wide, the tendency of the last thirty years has been to create a more structured coordination in the interaction between government and the multiple existing MEMO's. Overall, the potential benefits of migrant communities organizing themselves were embraced, but the consequential enhanced complexity of the civil society was considered undesirable in the face of the already complex question how to manage the 'multicultural' population in the Netherlands. The pursued coordination mostly took form in the attempts to establish umbrella organizations that oversaw multiple MEMO's, consultative bodies (*'inspraakorganen'*) with members of certain MEMO's and sometimes new associations that would take over the activities and services of existing MEMO's. Political and scientific consensus did and still does not seem to exist regarding the specific benefits mono-ethnic MEMO's can provide compared to organisations with broader target-groups. Still, their financial support and access to the policy-making got more strictly regulated and got limited in general because of a newly preferred mainstreaming policy approach. In Rotterdam, more formally organised MEMO's

are preferred for collaboration to more informally organised ones. To receive subsidy, a MEMO in Rotterdam must meet stricter conditions than before: having members or a constituency with different migration backgrounds and undertaking activities which pursue goals set by the municipality. For a voice in the policy-making, MEMO's either have to be part of a bigger consultative body or just have to be available for when the municipality needs their consult in case of a crisis regarding people the MEMO's targets. Although compared to other cities in the Netherlands these stricter conditions took longer to gain ground in Rotterdam, eventually the national developments concerning MEMO's seem to have caught up with the city, pushed by political developments and economic measures.

5.2 What changes did the MEMO's experience in their policy context regarding financial support?

The following analysis briefly shows how MEMO's have experienced changes coming from the municipality regarding the resources financial support (see section D in table 1).

Regarding the financial support, the Somali MEMO-II, the Africa MEMO and the Somali MEMO-I all claimed not to have noticed any differences. The fact that they are all relatively new MEMO's – respectively twelve, nine and six years old – could explain this. They all have, however, expressed their discontent to a certain extent with the way the municipality grants financial support. Regarding the Somali MEMO-II specifically, it seems like they have been more successful in getting financial support from the municipality, which might have influenced the way they experience a changed policy context, as they seem not to have noticed conditions become stricter. Additionally, the Turkish MEMO-II did not experience any changes either, since they never concerned themselves with receiving financial support from the municipality in the first place. The MEMO's that did not notice the changes within their policy context can still be analysed as dealing with the overall results of a changing policy context, as they do not have to be consciously aware of the changes to be affected by the consequences of these changes.

Regarding the other four MEMO's, they have all evidently experienced changes in their policy context regarding the conditions for financial support. The Turkish MEMO-I had to switch to a less favourable location, because the municipality withdrew the housing allowance for their

former place. They also do not receive any more subsidy for activities. The Kurdish MEMO had to leave their place in 2012, together with other MEMO's, as the municipality ceased to provide payment for it. They stopped sending subsidy requests for activities, as they have received too many rejections over the last couple of years. The Surinamese MEMO also lost their place because of decreasing support from the municipality, after they refused to fuse together with other associations concerning themselves with women with a migration background. They have not received any financial support from the municipality ever since. Lastly, the Moroccan MEMO dealt with declining financial support for certain activities, with stricter conditions and with less response from the municipality overall.

5.3 How have the MEMO's reacted to changes within the financial support?

Based on the theoretical framework, to state that MEMO's are dependent on the resource financial support, findings should either indicate MEMO's having adapted to new conditions for financial support, or MEMO's having tried to influence public officials within the municipality to receive financial support.

5.3.1 Adapting

Changing MEMO's activities for financial support

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, 'activities' are interpreted as the activities organised for members, as well as the potential actions of a MEMO to work together with others or to change their organisation's structure. Five of the MEMO's have chosen to adapt to a certain extent, to enhance their chance to receive financial support. This reflects the first indicator of the adapt-option for financial support: 'Change MEMO's activities for financial support'. However, most of these adjustments have either proven to be relatively small or have proven to be unsuccessful.

Regarding the changing of activities for members, the Moroccan MEMO only adjusted certain details, the Kurdish MEMO organised between three or five informative events about topics which were considered important by the municipality, and the Africa MEMO has only organised two activities to receive financial support. Interestingly, the three MEMO's which have made

changes in their activities have also expressed their discontent with the extra energy, time and paperwork it costs to prove they meet the conditions for financial support. This discontent went from complaining about it during the interview (Africa MEMO), to quitting the sending of requests (Kurdish MEMO) and even finding another reason to quit working for the existing MEMO and starting a new one (Moroccan MEMO). The only really big change in activities for members to receive financial support was done by the Somali MEMO-II, which took charge over multiple 'integration tours', an activity the municipality requested of them. However, this only happened after realising the expectations were not too high. The four remaining MEMO's have all stated not to have adapted their activities for members to meet the municipality's conditions for financial support.

Regarding the changing of the MEMO's structure, the Somali MEMO-II has changed the composition of the MEMO's board and has been trying to work more professionally over the years. These matters ask a lot of effort from the president and although the latter adjustment is not always going well, the fact that she is trying to work accordingly to expectations coming from the municipality shows that she considers the financial support that might come out of it to be necessary for her MEMO. Additionally, her going against the men criticizing the MEMO's relation with the municipality is an example of how they have chosen *external political requirements*, namely conditions for financial support, over *selective benefits for members: political life*. The Somali MEMO-II rather worked closely with the municipality than listening to her constituency stating they do not feel represented.

Regarding the effort to collaborate with other parties to create a higher chance on receiving financial support from the municipality, the findings show that five MEMO's have tried this. Still, all attempts seemed to have ended unsuccessfully. The Kurdish MEMO had to leave the place they were sharing with other MEMO's and a local refugee organisation in 2012 after the withdrawal of financial support from the municipality. The four other examples of MEMO's failed attempts to work together with third parties can be understood by the adopted theory's explanation of competition among interest groups. According to the theory, the MEMO's should be able to fill a certain 'niche' to enjoy the external resource of financial support from the municipality. Consequently, they must deal with a certain degree of competition, which seems to be the case for the following three MEMO's. The Somali MEMO-II was sent to a refugee organisation by the municipality but their efforts of collaboration got rejected by the organisation. Being left out,

instead of joining them and receiving financial support together, means that the refugee organisation became a competitor to the Somali MEMO-II, as they competed for the same financial resources. The Moroccan MEMO started working together with a certain umbrella organisation, which distributed the financial support instead of the municipality, but the former president explained how they suffered from the increased competition with associations they experienced because of this. The Somali MEMO-I tried to connect with MEMO's with different target groups, as the municipality had created a centre for them, but stopped doing so after feeling unwelcome. Lastly, the Africa MEMO tried to work together with Dutch organisations, as the municipality requested her to do so. She failed to find support because of competition, as these organisations had already seemed to have chosen the MEMO's they wanted to support and which not. Generally, the MEMO's trying to work with others to enhance their chance on financial support shows how they deem this resource necessary. The failing to succeed in this seems to indicate how they are dealing with competition over resources.

In general, the detected adaptations in the MEMO's activities in order to receive financial support do show serious effort from the MEMO's side. However, these examples proved to demand a lot and even too much from these MEMO's. This demanding work, together with quite some failed attempts often caused them to cease their effort.

Changing target group for financial support

The second indicator of the adapt-option for financial support – changing the target group – has also not found a strong base within the findings. The Moroccan MEMO had to declare from the start they welcomed all nationalities to receive financial support. Also, during the interviews, both Turkish MEMO's claimed their doors are open for anyone. However, the reality remains that in all three MEMO's, people with a background reflecting the MEMO's initial target group are the dominant group present. Furthermore, the Turkish MEMO's did not state their open-door policy was caused by a municipality's request, but rather by their own initiative. All other MEMO's have remained the same target group over the years. Interestingly, rather than expanding, the Africa MEMO had to narrow down its target-group to match the municipality's requirements when the founders just started. Although this goes against the more universalistic approach by the municipality, a possible explanation could be that her prior target-group was believed to be too vague and therefore incapable of reaching anyone.

The reasons for maintaining the initial target group over the years were never explicitly given during the interviews. Mostly because all MEMO's stated they would never reject anyone to join them, which was seemingly proof enough for them not having to change their target group. With this lack of explanation, one can only speculate what is behind it. Two possible reasons come to mind. Firstly, maybe the municipality's request to broaden the target group never really reached the MEMO's, causing them to not see any benefit in doing so. Secondly, there might actually exist a strong resistance to expand the target group for which the MEMO was initially called into life.

5.3.2 Influencing

Looking for new 'venues' for financial support

The decision to try to look for new venues for financial support is made by only two MEMO's, with the last one providing the strongest example. The first one is the Somali MEMO-II who went to the refugee organisation partly connected to the municipality in search for financial support. However, although this counts as 'looking for new venues', the fact that they were sent by the municipality themselves does make it a more passive search. The second and clearest example is that of the Somali MEMO-I's founder who tried to get financial support from a personal contact which took a seat within the city council. While being rejected for financial support via all the public officials she has tried to contact, she claimed to have finally found a way to get to the right person, and in that sense, the right venue.

Overall, the findings do not provide strong indications that MEMO's try to influence the municipality by finding new 'venues' for financial support. Different reasons were given, but the overarching explanation was their lack of time, energy and power to try to find new entrances within the municipality.

Trying to convince the municipality of getting financial support

Regarding the second indicator, the findings show how four of the MEMO's engage themselves with this. Three of them, the Kurdish MEMO, the Moroccan MEMO and the Somali MEMO-II, had already enjoyed financial support and tried to convince people more was needed via their already existing contacts within the municipality. Both the Kurdish MEMO and the Moroccan MEMO have not seemed to put a lot of effort into it. The Kurdish MEMO even stopped trying at

a certain point. The Somali MEMO-II used the strategy of convincing public officials by showing former successful projects they had done with financial support from the municipality. Also, they had tried to convince public officials from the municipality of their need for special treatment, because of the Somali's exceptional situation. The fourth MEMO, the Somali MEMO-I, had not enjoyed subsidy before and seems to have tried the hardest to be able to convince the people from the municipality she spoke to. Her effort can be explained by the fact that she could not continue most of her activities if she failed to receive financial support for it. As she failed to convince the municipality, she had to drop some of her activities.

Although this indicator does not have a strong foundation within the findings, quite some effort from the MEMO's side is detected. However, this effort has proved to be inadequately and has seemed to have decreased over time.

5.3.3 No adaptation nor influencing

As should be clear by now, MEMO's often refrain from the two options of *adapting* and *influencing*. Some assumptions have already been made to explain potential reasons for this. In this paragraph, the reasons as to why they do not concern themselves with the municipality's financial support are described more thoroughly. These can be found in the explanation of them either not *wanting* to or not *needing* to.

Not wanting to

Not wanting to concern themselves with the municipality's financial support is caused by MEMO's wanting to focus more on their *organisational maintenance* and by them not wanting to put extra effort in complying with *external political conditions*.

Firstly, four MEMO's (the Africa MEMO, Somali MEMO-I, Somali MEMO-II and Surinamese MEMO) stated how they preferably kept choosing their own activities, as this would serve their members and constituency best, as compared to the less important priorities set by the municipality. The founder of the Africa MEMO believes the people she helps are not ready yet for certain things. The Somali MEMO-I believes choices should be left to the MEMO's themselves and expressed annoyance over the municipality's quest for control. The Somali MEMO-I also states that the municipality is not aware of what is important within the community. The

Surinamese MEMO chose not to comply with the municipality for a fusion after discussing it with her members. They all declined to adapt to certain municipality's set conditions for financial support, as they believed this would not serve the people who could benefit from their MEMO. This means they believe that the *external political conditions* do not match what is needed for *organisational maintenance*. The MEMO's all wanted to keep focusing more on the *selective benefits for their members*. The strongest examples of choosing *organizational maintenance* over *external political conditions* are the Surinamese MEMO going their own way, the former president of the Moroccan MEMO starting a new MEMO, because the former one was getting too much intertwined with the municipality, and the Turkish MEMO-II never having wanted to be dependent on the municipality in the first place.

Secondly, the reason why MEMO's do not want to occupy themselves with getting financial support from the municipality is, as mentioned, because they do not wish to put extra effort in complying with *external political conditions*. Under "Incapable of complying with municipality's demands" and "Predicting rejections" in the findings chapter, a lot can be found about MEMO's finding the interaction with municipality for financial support tiring and time-consuming. Some of them have experienced change in the extra effort it took over time, others (Somali MEMO-I and Africa MEMO) simply experienced tiring and time-consuming interactions. Mentioned issues were how there are too many strict conditions and too many expectations, how there is too much paperwork and too much focus on exact results, how the interactions have gotten too formal, how mutual trust has been declining, how MEMO's have gotten tired of rejections and how the municipality is changing the topics they want to provide financial support for too quickly. Two MEMO's mentioned how there is no use in trying to influence public officials in the municipality; people are either not aware enough of your actions or are too aware of you being rejected in the past already.

Not needing to

Not *wanting* to adapt nor influence reflects how MEMO's can manage to prioritize their *organisational maintenance* over the *external political conditions*. More specifically, they engage themselves more with the *selective benefits for members* (for the *social life* especially) than with making sure they match conditions for *financial support*. A question that arises then is how they manage to survive financially, which brings us to the findings which illustrate why they would not

need financial support from the municipality, as some of them managed to find alternative sources. Four MEMO's were able to draw on funds for activities. The Somali MEMO-II stated how it was easier to use funds rather than subsidy, as there were less conditions connected to it. The Surinamese MEMO would approach funds only after they had come up with the activities on their own, meaning that they maintained control over them. Furthermore, although the Africa MEMO managed to receive funds, the founder expressed how the searching for funds was also tiring her out. It should be noted, however, that although some of these MEMO's explained how they were not complying to the municipality's conditions for financial support and how they found support in funds, they seemed to not always be aware how some of these funds are partly financed by the municipality or national government, meaning that they are still indirectly connected to conditions set by governmental institutions.

Other alternative resources for financial support are the donations from the community and contributions from participants (member or constituency), which is not surprising considering the theoretical framework. Some MEMO's have managed to fill up the gap left by the municipality by making more use of their *members and their commitment*. Either they received *financial support* from the people concerning themselves with the MEMO, or they could manage because of the *voluntary work* these people were carrying out. Six MEMO's used donations and contributions based on the contributors' financial capacity and both Turkish MEMO's mentioned how they could keep their activities cheap because of the active volunteers. This means that they are depending on the people around them and their will to support. It also indicates that their activities and added values as a MEMO should fill the 'niche' within the community they serve, as the people who want to financially contribute would only do so if they consider the MEMO valuable enough. Especially the Turkish MEMO-II seemed to be doing well because of their big group of active members who contribute to the MEMO, financially and through volunteer work. Unsurprisingly, the two MEMO's who do not have a substantial or stable constituency (the Somali MEMO-I and the Africa MEMO-I) are also the ones lacking benefits from their *members and their commitment*. Among the interviewees, these two MEMO's were also among the most critical regarding the lacking financial support from the municipality, which corresponds with the fact that they do not enjoy a stable financial or voluntary support from their constituency.

A third alternative resource has proven to be a last resort for the four MEMO's mentioning it: the personal financial contributions. In case there was no financial support to be found from the

municipality, from funds or from members and the constituency, The Moroccan MEMO, Somali MEMO-I, Kurdish MEMO and the Africa MEMO have all claimed to have compensated by spending private money. However, this has proven to be only a temporary solution for all of them. A last finding shows how some MEMO's have started to work together with other organisations, such as care organisations (the Surinamese MEMO), neighbourhood centres (the Kurdish MEMO and the Somali MEMO-II), and other MEMO's (the Kurdish MEMO and the Somali MEMO-II). The Somali MEMO-I is also planning on working together with other MEMO's in the future. Is it not clear, however, whether this working together is necessarily connected to their changing policy context, or to the overall development of MEMO's, where working together is simply a next step in the path of progress.

Regarding the 'not needing to' explanation of the lack of *adapting* and *influencing*, one very important issue should not be overlooked. The findings contain many examples which illustrate how the MEMO's are indeed badly struggling with the lack of money. Some had to downsize their organisation by giving up on activities or by losing their residence in Rotterdam. Although these MEMO's still exist, they do not all seem to be thriving as much as they have in the past, regarding their activeness.

5.4 What changes did the MEMO's experience in their policy context regarding access to policy making?

The following analysis briefly shows how MEMO's have experienced changes coming from the municipality regarding the resources financial support and access to the policy making (see section D in table 1).

Regarding the experienced changes in the access to the policy-making, three MEMO's mentioned how the municipality comes by for consultation less often than before. The Turkish MEMO-I, the Turkish MEMO-II and the Kurdish MEMO all seem to have less access to the policy-making since public officials have stopped visiting them. The Surinamese MEMO and the Moroccan MEMO mentioned how they never had any serious access to the policy-making, because no public official has ever requested it in the first place. The Somali MEMO-I, the Somali MEMO-II and the Africa MEMO have not experienced any difference in their access to the policy-making,

since the municipality still approaches them for advice sometimes. The founder of the Africa MEMO is only approached, however, when she takes part in a group composed with women with different migration backgrounds.

5.5 How have the MEMO's reacted to changes within access to policy making?

5.5.1 Adapting

Changing provided information for consultation

The findings which match the indicator *changing provided information for consultation* do not show any active changes within the information they provide the municipality with in order to find access to the policy making. Rather, they adapt their information in a much more reactive and passive way, by waiting for the municipality to make a request concerning consultation. The Somali MEMO-II and the Africa MEMO still have moments where they provide the municipality with relevant information for policy-making, but only when they are being approached themselves by public officials. The Africa MEMO did express its discontent with the municipality only “*picking what they want*” in her consultation with them, yet she refrained from trying to change that, meaning that she adjusted the information to what the municipality requested. The Turkish MEMO-I, the Turkish MEMO-II and the Kurdish MEMO all used to have small consultation moments with the municipality but stopped providing information after public officials put an end to the visits and requests. The Surinamese MEMO never gave any information for consultation, as the municipality had never requested it.

The responses of these six MEMO's show how they have been changing the provided information for consultation, depending on what the municipality requested and when. Although the MEMO's might enjoy the interactions with the municipality and seem happy to help when needed, this adaptation does not seem to demonstrate an actual dependency on the resource access to policy-making, as these MEMO's react in a quite indifferent way to changes in or even to the complete lack of consultation. Looking at table 1 in the theoretical framework, it seems they occupy themselves more with the *support* of policy-making, rather than the *influencing* of policy-making

(see section C). This indicates that the MEMO's do not place serious value on getting access to policy-making.

Changing their position within the policy arena

Three examples within the findings match the indicator of *changing the MEMO's position within the policy arena*. Both the president of the Somali MEMO-II and the founder of the Africa MEMO have stated they joined groups of women with different migration backgrounds to discuss matters concerning their communities. The president of the Somali MEMO-II joined a group which actively provided advice for the municipality. The Africa MEMO's founder joined a group which was sometimes visited by public officials from the municipality for advice. By providing advice to the municipality together with other people with a migration background, they have changed their position within the policy arena from being a representative of group with a specific migration background, to being a representative of a group who voice the concerns of all people with a migration background in Rotterdam. This indicated they have adapted to the municipality's mainstreaming-focused policy. Still, this only applied to these two MEMO's. The founder of the Somali MEMO-I visited certain public meetings on invitation by the municipality, meaning she adapted her position to the municipality's demand. However, she has quit doing so once she realised she would not get anything in return for the knowledge she provided. This shows how she considered her informative role more as a tool to find support for her and her own MEMO, rather than as a medium to get access to policy-making.

5.5.2 Influencing

Looking for new 'venues' for access to policy-making (new public agents/new departments/etc.)

Two MEMO's showed examples of how they looked for new 'venues' in order to get access to policy making. The Moroccan MEMO tried to find new 'venues' by inviting multiple public officials from the municipality to the political event they organised, to show them they exist and engage themselves with political activities. Rather than waiting until the municipality would approach them, they actively reached out to the municipality themselves. One member of the Surinamese MEMO's board visited public meetings organised by the municipality on her own

account and took on an advisory role at these meetings. This indicates how she tried to look for new ‘venues’ to get access to policy-making, other than the contacts she already had within the municipality. However, she has quit doing so. Still, the Surinamese MEMO’s board members are trying to get access to policy-making at the national level, rather than at the local, which can also be considered a new ‘venue’ for getting access.

With only two MEMO’s matching this indicator, with only small examples to do so, the findings do not show a strong confirmation of the indicator.

Trying to convince the municipality of importance of getting access to policy-making

As stated in the findings, none of the interviewees have mentioned any attempts to convince the municipality of the importance of getting access to policy-making. Although some have had moments of interaction with public officials, none of them have actively tried to encourage the interactions when the quantity started to decrease. This indicates the MEMO’s do not place serious value on getting access to policy-making

5.5.3 No adapting nor influencing

Concerning the dependency on access to the policy-making, not many findings have matched the pre-established indicators, which explains why this section of the analysis is considerably shorter than the previous one. The main reason for this is the fact that all MEMO’s denied having ‘access to policy-making’ as one of their main goals. On the contrary, many of them stated how they stay away from policy-making, either because they do not consider themselves strong enough to influence it or because they never had that ambition in the first place. Although deep down they might *have something to lobby for* (resource 5, see table 1 section C), they have not stated so during the interviews. Even if the interviewed MEMO’s did have something to lobby for, they hardly act upon it.

This presents something interesting regarding the expectations of this research. Although it was already mentioned in the theoretical framework that the dependency on *access to policy-making* would not be as strong as the dependency on *financial support*, this degree of detected lack of reaction was not expected.

6. Conclusion

This research has aimed to answer the following question: *To what extent are mono-ethnic migrant organisations dependent on their policy context in Rotterdam?*

The importance of this question lies in this policy context being subject to change over the last thirty years or so. Mono-ethnic migrant organisations (in this research: MEMO's) have been dealing with serious decreasing financial support through subsidies and less access to the policy process. Based on the applied theory, these embody two resources for the existence of MEMO's: *financial support* and *access to policy-making*. If these resources have been decreasing, yet certain MEMO's still seem to survive, the question comes up to what extent these MEMO's are dependent on these resources.

To find an answer to this question, a multiple case-study has been conducted in the city of Rotterdam, whereby eight MEMO's have been interviewed. The dependency of these MEMO's has been measured by analysing whether the MEMO's had reacted to the decreasing resources: whether by *adapting* to the new conditions for these resources, or by trying to *influence* the source which distribute these resources (the municipality of Rotterdam).

In this concluding chapter, the formed expectations of this research will be responded to, based on this research's findings. First and foremost, it should be noted there has been little indication that these expectations have been met. According to this research's rationale, this implies a weak dependency of MEMO's on their policy context. However, owing to the findings deriving out of the literature review and the findings explaining the lack of *adaptation* and *influencing* deriving out of the interviews, a fairly different reality comes to light regarding the MEMO's dependency on their policy context. Accordingly, this research's discussion chapter holds a far more interesting interpretation of the overall findings which offer a more realistic look of the situation MEMO's in the Netherlands currently find themselves in.

Expectation 1: When mono-ethnic migrant organisations have either *adapted* their activities to the new policy conditions for *financial support* or have tried to *influence* public agencies to get *financial support*, they are dependent on this external resource.

On the one hand, there are some examples of MEMO's trying to adapt their activities and overall approach to meet conditions for financial support or which have tried to influence public officials to grant them (more) financial support. On the other hand, the number of occasions this has happened is rather limited. Also, the devoted effort to either adapt or influence has often proven to be weak and rather unsuccessful, with many of them giving up after realising the amount of work it requires. Interestingly, many MEMO's have explained how they are being held back by a general lack of financial support and how their activeness has been declining over time, yet their effort to get financial support from the municipality is minimal. This shows how there seems to exist a certain dependency on the external resource of financial support, but that this strangely does not trigger a serious response, even when MEMO's do seem to be affected by it.

Expectation 2: When mono-ethnic migrant organisations have either *adapted* their activities to the new policy conditions for *access to policy-making* or have tried to *influence* public agencies to get *access to policy-making*, they are dependent on this external resource.

A remarkable discovery is how little reaction the declining resource of access to policy-making has provoked from the MEMO's. The few adaptations which have been detected to preserve access to policy-making are of a far more passive kind than expected. The MEMO's have more of a wait-and-see attitude, whereby they do not necessarily refuse to support the municipality's policy-making yet refrain from actively trying to influence anyone responsible for policy-making. Although MEMO's seem to appreciate moments of consultation with the municipality, according to this research's interpretation of dependency, their existence is not dependent on the resource of access to policy-making.

Based on these conclusions, a couple of holistic claims can be made. Although MEMO's dedicate themselves to the wellbeing of their target group, their behaviour is far more passive than expected. Especially in their relationship with the municipality; they do not adopt a very outreaching approach. Looking back at the niche theory of Gray and Lowery (1996), adapted to MEMO's, there are no substantial signs of tension between the *organisational maintenance* and the *external political requirements*. This is simply because MEMO's generally devote most of their attention to the internal needs of the MEMO, rather than creating a balance between them and the external 'needs' of the municipality. This 'passivity' becomes especially apparent within their political behaviour, regarding the access to policy-making. In the theoretical framework of this research, it was stated that the MEMO's "incentive to organize is bedded in the need to represent and pursue the interests of people with a migration background (Marquez, 2001; Schrover & Vermeulen, 2005)". Although the pursuing-part still seems to stand, the representing-part of a MEMO's incentive to organise appeared to be less meaningful for the analysed MEMO's.

According to this research's approach, all these outcomes lead to the conclusion that although MEMO's are not completely independent from their policy context – there have been signs of *adapting* and *influencing* after all – a significant level of dependency has not been detected.

Since the main question of this research is a descriptive one without a why-question, the potential explanations for the above-mentioned answers are included in the discussion. This should then lead to the pronouncement that MEMO's should have been doing fine over the last thirty years, even when their policy context had been changing. However, as has become apparent through the literature review and the multiple case-study, this is not the case. The amount of existing MEMO's has become smaller and the still existing analysed MEMO's overall had to reduce their level of activeness, due to the lack of resources. The following discussion chapter will go deeper into this disparity between findings and seeming reality.

7. Discussion

In this chapter, the findings of this research are critically reflected upon in three ways. Firstly, by defining the limitations of this research. Secondly, by describing the limitations of the adopted theory. Lastly, by painting the bigger picture of the findings through three narratives. The very last

paragraph of this research will contain suggestions for potential future research, based on further questions which came up throughout the research process. The overall message of this chapter is how this research's conclusion differs from the overall findings of this research and how this disparity could have happened.

7.1 Limitations of research

An important first limitation of this research relates to the multiple case-study's singular viewpoint: only MEMO's have been interviewed. From the beginning, the intention was to capture the MEMO's experiences and to put these in perspective with the findings of the literature review on changes in their policy context. Still, one should not overlook the consequences of excluding the municipality of Rotterdam's viewpoint. The findings have not been fact-checked, causing them to possibly hold distorted information. This should not pose a big problem, as long as the findings are read with an awareness about these possible inaccuracies.

Regarding the interviewees, it should also be noted not all of them mastered the Dutch or English language properly, which could have caused certain miscommunications throughout the data-collection. This issue was dealt with as much as possible by frequently repeating the received information back to the interviewee.

Furthermore, as stated in the methodology chapter, the indicator of 'Change MEMO's activities for financial support' was interpreted in a broader way by also including the MEMO's actions to try to work together with others or to change their organisational structure. These adjustments were therefore not a planned structural part of the interviews from the beginning. Still, it can be stated that these two new topics have been a part in every interview, as the natural flow of the questions caused all interviewees to think about what they might have changed in general to increase their chance on financial support, and how they therefore might have tried to adapt to new conditions for financial support.

Lastly, the decision to only focus on still existing MEMO's, rather than also including disbanded MEMO's or MEMO's who have merged into other organisations might have caused for a distorted picture of reality. Although the analysed MEMO's had to minimize their activeness over the years, they still survived, which gives the impression they can still survive without external resources. Sadly, no available data could be found regarding the disbanded MEMO's in Rotterdam,

nor in the Netherlands in general. Firstly, this made them hard to be found and contacted. Also, there is no data on exactly how many MEMO's have had to disband over the years, which would have been very useful information for this research.

7.2 Limitation of the adopted theory

The various unexpected findings of this research, namely the 'non-adapting' and 'non-influencing' findings, have led to the critical review of the adopted theory. It can be concluded the latter did not properly fit the case of MEMO's in Rotterdam. To explain, a distinction should be made again between the combined theories: there is the niche theory of interest representation, adopted to MEMO's, and there is the theory on interest groups and policy change.

The biggest mismatch seems to exist between the case and the second theory, which states that an interest group would *act* upon changes in their policy context. With the case of MEMO's, this research shows a far more passive form of organisation, whereby little action is taken to reach out to decreasing external resources. Instead of following this theory's rationale and stating that MEMO's therefore are not dependent on these resources, it should be noticed how these migrant organisations do not represent the active interest groups from the adopted theory. Considering that the people working for these MEMO's do so in their free time, while often also having a personal and professional life which requires attention, one can imagine their limited time and energy for their organisations. Time and energy which they, as it appears, rather put in the people the organisation targets, than in reaching out to the municipality.

Whereby the second theory expected MEMO's to be more active, the first theory expected them to be more political. Adopting the niche theory of interest representation, both *financial support* and *access to policy-making* were selected as the decreasing external resources in MEMO's policy context which could possibly damage their existence. From the beginning, *access to policy-making* was expected to be less of a vital resource in the eyes of MEMO's, yet the almost complete lack of interest in this resource was surprising. In the eyes of the MEMO's, providing selective benefits for their members' and constituency's personal life is their main objective. There seems to exist very little interest in making their voice be heard as a representative of a bigger community, through reaching out to the policy-making process. Looking back at table 1 of the theoretical framework, all resources connected to policy-making lose their importance. However, it should be

noticed that although the niche theory seemed too political, this statement is mostly based on the perspective of MEMO's themselves. When you look from a broader perspective, for instance by including the municipality's view, you could state that the niche theory of interest is not a complete mismatch to this research's case. The next sub-chapter will go into this more deeply.

7.3 Bigger picture – three narratives

Although the theory did not lead to a fulfilling answer to the main question of this research, it did lead to three narratives which could possibly explain the relationship between MEMO's and their policy context. These narratives have been formed by noting down all uncertainties throughout the whole research process, together with possible explanations for these uncertainties. Therefore, they do not hold a strong scientific base, but are merely an attempted grasp of the MEMO's reality. None of these narratives are a claim to reality. Furthermore, each narrative contains societal relevance, as efforts are made to show the findings' bigger picture. The mentioned theory in these narratives come from a closer look at the sources used in the theoretical framework, meaning that no new theories have been added.

7.3.1. The MEMO as an informal organisation

This narrative considers the workload of MEMO's and the expectations regarding this workload. The people working for the MEMO's are personally motivated and seem very passionate about the work they do. However, this only gets you so far, as the work is still completely voluntary, and every extra effort required to maintain the organisation adds extra workload. This is important information when trying to understand MEMO's from a scientific perspective and from a public administration perspective. Firstly, if certain activities or elements of these organisations are considered valuable and supported by the government, to maintain or utilize them conditions need to be shaped with different expectations in mind. In other words, expectations regarding MEMO's should not be equal to professional and full-grown organisations. Their power lies mostly in being able to connect with people, not in managing an efficient organisation. Secondly, it should be considered that these are organisations which cannot effortlessly 'fight back' once their existence

is threatened through policy change. Their dependency on their policy context takes form in the situation where they need the external resources to survive, yet they do not have the power to maintain them. In combination with overly high expectations from the same policy context, this causes them slowly to disappear.

7.3.2. The MEMO as an implementation tool

The first narrative explains how MEMO's cannot keep up with external demands because of the workload. The second narrative goes deeper into the findings of MEMO's not *wanting* to keep up, as is shown in the analysed MEMO's various statements of not wanting to engage themselves too much with the municipality. These are the findings regarding not wanting to be dependent on the municipality, not wanting to change for the municipality and generally not wanting to engage in the policy process of the municipality. This narrative considers the history of the relationship between MEMO's and the government, as described in the literature review, and shows an interesting possibly underlying reality of these organisations being used as an 'implementation tool' by the government.

The storyline consists of four stages. The first stage goes back to the 70's, when the Dutch government thought the establishment of self-organisations was a good method for the settlement of incoming migrants. The overall self-organisation-appreciating culture in the Netherlands reinforced this. With financial and political support, migrants started to organize themselves by ethnic background, creating their own space in the Dutch society. The second stage is a jump forwards to the 90's, in which the demands of the government slowly started to increase and started to get connected to integration in the Dutch society. While people had set up MEMO's to create a safe space for their communities, with their own agendas and objectives, they now had to start connecting more with the non-migrants in the Dutch society to receive support. Then, at the turn of the century, the third stage began, with the government's overall disappointment regarding the 'integration' of migrants and people with a migration background. Demands towards MEMO's to assist this so-called 'integration-process' of their members and constituencies grew even more. Not complying with these stricter conditions did not only mean less support, but even a more extreme disapproval, as MEMO's were now viewed as a part of the ('new') segregation problem. One can imagine how MEMO's would not obediently follow, as their core motivation was still not to serve

the Dutch government, but to serve the people in their community. Conditions for support were getting stricter and the consequences of not complying with them were getting more damaging for the survival MEMO's. The last decennium up until now represents the fourth stage of this storyline, in which MEMO's have lost almost all their external support, unless they adapt their activities and objectives completely to the government's demands. Or, in this research's case, to the municipality of Rotterdam's demands.

Overall, this narrative shows a certain downward spiral in which the municipality starts making demands which do not match the MEMO's own idea of their purpose, causing them not to follow these demands and to view the municipality in a more critical way. This causes the municipality to get disappointed with the collaboration and to create even stricter conditions for support, which the MEMO's cannot and do not want to comply with, causing them eventually to suffer under the lack of resources and potentially disappear.

The lessons which should be drawn from this narrative is that people do not necessarily create MEMO's because the government wants them to. The provision of resources certainly helps and can be gratefully received, but merely creates an opportunity structure for people to start organizing themselves in a way which they deem valuable. In other words, although MEMO's might have been created thanks to external resources from the government, this does not mean they automatically act in accordance with government-set plans.

There can be two reactions to this narrative. Firstly, the suffering of MEMO's as a consequence of not complying with external demands can be viewed as a logical process. Especially when looking from the niche theory of interest representation's perspective. By ignoring external political requirements and focusing mostly on organisational maintenance, the consequence is an imbalance of the internal and external, and the disappearance of the organisation's 'niche'. MEMO's might not be interested in starting 'integration'-related activities, in collaborating with other migrant-focused organisation, or in providing information for policy-making themselves, these resources were in fact their unit of exchange. For the government, the worth of MEMO's lies in how much they can do for the government's policy, regarding both the providing of relevant information for policy-making as the providing of possibilities for policy implementation. When a MEMO does not provide the government with resources the latter deems relevant, the MEMO cannot expect any resources back, causing them to slowly disappear.

However, a second reaction to the narrative of MEMO's as an implementation tool provides a more critical and moral view on the former. Although MEMO's might slowly disappear because of a natural process where they lose their 'niche' when they ignore external political requirements, one can ask themselves whether this is acceptable. The *informality*-aspect of interest groups according to Beyers et al. (2008) also stresses the importance of the independence of these organisations. This distinction underlines the notion that although a local government like the municipality of Rotterdam determines the policy context of a MEMO and, in that sense, a share of its resources, it does *not* control such an organisation's right to exist. The MEMO's in this research might partly depend on governmental support, they still have their own agenda and mission, and provide for the citizens they choose to represent. This is essential when considering MEMO's as part of a civil society: they are bodies who came to life by and for the people with a migration background, but which operate within a political environment and therefore constantly deal with tensions between internal and external demands.

7.3.3 The MEMO as a dying kind of self-organisation

The third and last narrative describes the MEMO as a kind of self-organisation under threat, not necessarily because of decreasing external resources, but because of decreasing internal resources. It could very well be that the analysed MEMO's are experiencing a declining number of members or a declining constituency. As was stated already in the sub-chapter 'what makes a migrant organisation' in the theoretical framework chapter, the composition of a MEMO and the needs of its members and constituency can change over time. This was mostly explained by the factor of time and how second-generation migrants would have less of an interest in joining a MEMO, which could also be the case for MEMO's in Rotterdam. Out of the three narratives, the current one has the weakest base, considering the little attention a MEMO's internal resources received during this research. Still, the possibility that there is less of a demand within society for MEMO's should be considered when trying to understand these organisations within their policy context. Mainly to keep that balance of internal and external resources in mind and to not exaggerate the influence of the government on the existence of MEMO's.

If MEMO's are indeed dealing with less members and a smaller constituency, one can still pose the question which decrease in resource was first, as also stated in the theoretical framework;

the decrease in members and constituency or the decrease in governmental support. Both can reinforce each other, as less members can justify a decreasing governmental support, and less support can lead to a decreasing quality of the MEMO, causing members to leave.

7.4 Future research

To prevent confusion, it should be stated again that the three described narratives are based on hunches and insights which came up during the research process. All of them severely lack a scientific base, meaning that all of them pose a potential research topic on their own. Together with the overall reflection on the total research throughout this discussion chapter, many issues can be considered interesting enough to require further research. Here, some of these potential future researches are highlighted.

One of the most interesting questions which came up during the research process regards the last two narratives: is the *need* for MEMO's declining? This seemingly simple question touches upon many different issues, whereby the research's point of departure matters a lot for the outcome. For instance, this 'need' could be measured from a personal interest perspective, whereby the members and constituency of MEMO's could be interviewed, as well as people who the MEMO targets, but who have chosen not to engage themselves with these organisations. What drives these people to join or to abstain could be researched. This 'need' could also be interpreted from a societal perspective, whereby the effects MEMO's have on society could be analysed. Of course, these effects can not only be related to the so-called integration as supposed by the Dutch government, but also to matters like the empowerment of marginalised groups in society.

This latter perspective can also be modified into a more policy-oriented research, with the further exploration of the two opposing policy beliefs regarding diversity within a society: target-group policies versus mainstreaming policies. After all, the idea of less MEMO's, and thereby a mainstreaming approach, could be worthwhile if this means that the people who benefit from these organisations could find these benefits elsewhere. However, when the declining of MEMO's is cutting people off from opportunities they only enjoyed through these organisations, one can reconsider the role of MEMO's within society and therefore reconsider a more target-group oriented policy.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Interview questions (Dutch)

Algemeen

- Missie/doel van de organisatie
 - Veranderd?
 - Oprichtingsjaar + reden
- Activiteiten: Wat + welke doelgroep

Interactie gemeente

- Hoeveel te maken met gemeente → Veranderingen?
- Algemeen beeld gemeente Rotterdam

Financiële support

- Veranderingen ervaren? (bv. subsidie voorwaarden)
- Zo ja: hoe hiermee omgegaan?
 - Aangepast:
 - **Activiteiten** aangepast voor fs → zo ja, in hoeverre?
 - **Doelgroep** organisatie aangepast voor fs → zo ja, in hoeverre?
 - Beïnvloeden
 - **Nieuwe ingang** gezocht voor fs (andere ambtenaren, andere gemeenteafdeling) → zo ja, hoe?
 - Geprobeerd te **overtuigen** van belang fs → zo ja, hoe?
 - Anders: ...
- Zo nee: geen veranderingen *of* nooit fs gemeente?
 - Nooit subsidie → Alsnog proberen?

Toegang tot beleidsvormingsproces

- Deelname expertmeetings, participatiebijeenkomsten, inspraak-momenten?
 - Waarde aan adviserende rol?
- Veranderingen verwachtingen gemeente ervaren?
- Zo ja: hoe hiermee omgegaan?
 - Aangepast:
 - **Reageren** op vraag gemeente?
 - **Kennisaanbod** aangepast om aan te sluiten vraag gemeente → zo ja, in hoeverre?

- Hebben jullie je **positie** als vertegenwoordiger van een bepaalde gemeenschap en als adviseur aan de gemeente aangepast aan de verwachting van de gemeente → zo ja, in hoeverre?
- Beïnvloeden:
 - Zelf **actie** ondernemen voor ingang?
 - **Nieuwe ingang** gezocht voor toegang tot beleidsvormingsproces (andere ambtenaren, andere gemeenteafdeling) → zo ja, hoe?
 - Geprobeerd te **overtuigen** van belang toegang tot beleidsvormingsproces → zo ja, hoe?
- Anders: ...
- Zo nee: geen veranderingen *of* nooit betrokken geweest?
 - Nooit betrokken → alsnog proberen?

Verder

- Spanning tussen verwachtingen *gemeente* en wat jullie *zelf/leden* willen?
- Bestaan vereniging/stichting waarvan afhankelijk?
 - Theorie checken → Specifiek financiële support + toegang tot beleidsvormingsproces
- Laatste vraag: heb ik iets niet gevraagd wat wel belangrijk is?
- Documenten inzien?