

Informal social (link) work in the context of diversity

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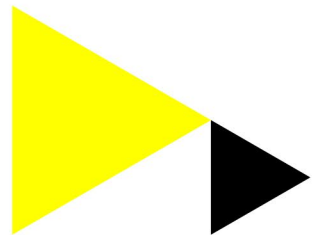
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Informal social (link) work in the context of diversity

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Context: diversity in the city

Residualisation

Concentration of social problems in particular urban areas (periphery)

Retreating welfare state

Cutbacks in formal care, increasing demand on informal care

More diverse 'hard to reach' communities

(research 2019 Geuzenveld, Amsterdam)

- Elderly migrants
- Recently arrived refugees with residence permit
- Persons with mental constraints/
psychiatric background (socialization of care)

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Migrant communities

Super diversity

'Old' and 'new' migrants with different ethnic-cultural backgrounds

Diversity within diversity

Gap

between 'hard to reach' migrant communities <-> formal care/welfare

Informal social work = essential

Informal social (link) work in the context of diversity



Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2017

Informal social work (migrants)

Migrant self-organisations; religious organisations

Community connectedness (Fretwell et al., 2018)
-> trust



Link work: bridging two worlds:
migrant communities - formal welfare services
'Linking social capital' (Hawkins & Maurer, 2010)

'Social work in the shadow' (Schrooten et al., 2019):
less visible, less recognized

(One) main finding

Migrant self-organisations face suspicion:

“closed communities” that “hinder integration” (Ponzoni & Pels, 2016)

But instead, they bridge the gap (migrant communities – formal care):

- low threshold, familiar and safe place
- where residents can express their problems and support questions
- starting point, a ‘foyer’ (Schrooten et al., 2019) to formal welfare/care:

offering support to residents

referring residents to formal care/ welfare

advising formal welfare organisations (Bellaart et al., 2019)

Research context

Research on informal social work in Amsterdam

2019: New West Amsterdam, **Geuzenveld**
*79% citizens with migrant background**

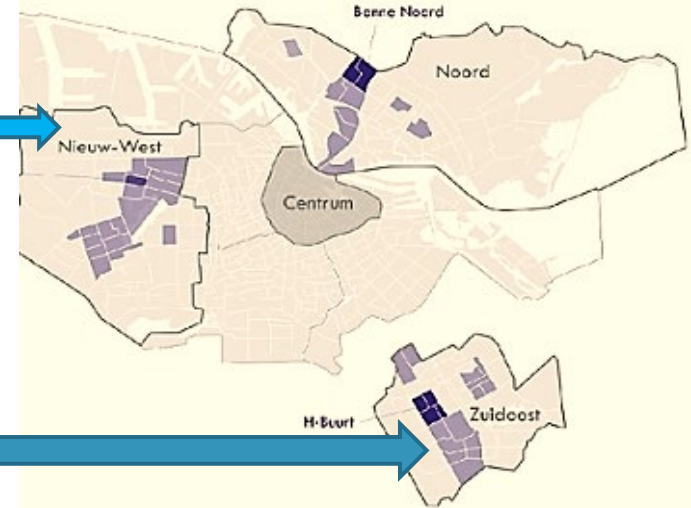


2020/21: Southeast Amsterdam, **Holendrecht**
*72% citizens with migrant background**



*Amsterdam: 55% (Gemeente Amsterdam)

Amsterdam development area's



<https://www.hva.nl/urban-governance/>

Geuzenveld (Amsterdam New West)



Parool.nl

- ▶ Interviews with 10 migrant self-organizations, 25 elderly migrants
- ▶ Elderly migrants: Moroccan, Turkish background
 - multiple problems (poverty, health issues, family member with mental problems, etc.)
 - low use of formal care: low trust, language issues
 - preference contacts in own cultural group

"We come here to take away the stress. It's hard to live far away from Morocco. We come together to forget about our problems for a moment." (woman, 60)

“If we would be like them (formal care), people would stay at home. The point is that they feel at home. We don’t have any expectations. Our door is open to everyone.”
(member Turkish organisation)

“I think that if people feel more firmly [connected to] their base, then it will be easier to take the step to the other world.”
(volunteer, Turkish organisation)

Holendrecht (Southeast Amsterdam)



- ▶ Mostly Suriname, Antillean, Ghanese background; undocumented migrants with diverse backgrounds
 - ▶ Very low trust in formal (welfare) organisations, language issues
 - ▶ ‘Culture of shame’
Problems/ issues “in the shadow”:
discrimination, domestic/sexual violence,
dementia, remittances issues
- f.e. Ghanaian church: support to youth a.o.



“I don’t mention our name (name of the church) when I call a formal institution. Because they have prejudices.”

“We give them support, we talk to them, listen to them. If necessary, we will refer them to formal organisations. But there are waiting lists. We are a buffer to them’.”

(pastor’s wife, Ghanaian church)



Discussion question:

Is this the answer to reach 'hard to reach' communities', or should formal social workers attain better access to these groups?

Any questions?

