The role of Roma selforganizations in societal integration processes

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Hypothesis

• RSOs provide the context (networks) wherein the development and exchange of social capital can take place

• RSOs can play a role as a partner for local governments working on Roma integration
Objectives, design & methodology

• Objectives
  - Analyse the network structure of RSOs
  - Analyse if/how these networks facilitate the development and exchange of social capital
  - Analyse how partnerships with local governments could be developed or identified.

• Research design
  – Networks, activities and political aspirations

• Methodology
THEORETICAL CONCEPTS - LITERATURE
Social Capital (bonding, bridging, linking)

Migrant selforganizations

- Complementary to society
  - Closer to target groups and alternative for regular social services [see Odmalm (2004)]
  - Mediator: shield vs adaptation support system [see Albuquerque et. al. (2001), Marquez (2001), Sardinha (2009)]
  - Political representative
  - Indicator of identity [see Schrover & Vermeulen (2005)]

→ BB&L SOCIAL CAPITAL
The importance of the Political Opportunity Structure (POS)

- Activity of MSOs is context dependent:
  - Social, political, cultural religious needs of target groups in diaspora
  - Opportunities and thresholds created by governments
    - Impact of subsidies
    - Access of MSOs to political arena
RESULTS
‘one-man’-organisations (1/2)

URGB, Antwerp

ORI, Ghent

Local government

Civil society organisation

Local Government

Civil society organisation

User 1

User 2

User 3

President

User 1

User 2

User 3

President
‘one-man’-organisations (2/2)
‘one-clan’-organisation

RCC, Sint-Niklaas
ethnically mixed organisation

Opre Roma, Ghent
A theoretical classification of RSOs

Based on Korten (1990), Lewis & Kanji (2009), Michielsen (2012)
CONCLUSIONS
Conclusions (1/2)

• RSOs have distinct profiles, but in general:
  – importance of the president
  – impact of an ethnically mixed EC ((!) capabilities!)
  – influence of network hubs (brokers & (!) gatekeepers)
  – importance of POS
  – mostly service providers: indicates a societal need
  – not all RSOs look for partnerships

• For local policy makers: be aware of this diversity and potential pitfalls!
Conclusions (2/2)

• RSOs provide the context wherein the development and exchange of social capital can take place.

• Depending on the role RSOs take on in relation to their member communities (DOERS-KATALYSATORS) and to other societal actors (PARTNERS-INDEP. ENTREPRENEURS), they generate B,B and/or L social capital.
THANK YOU!