

Ethnic conflict or civil peace: the contribution of associations

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Abstract

What types of civic associations contribute to uphold civil peace and democracy in societies deeply divided by ethnic, religious, or linguistic cleavages? And which kind of associations are likely to damage peace and democracy? While a positive relationship between a lively civil society and democracy is broadly accepted, this assumption is rarely tested in deeply divided societies. Especially in these societies, another consensus comes to the forefront, namely that not all associations are good for democracy. The most widespread assumption is that ethnic associations strengthen the “dark side of social capital” and undermine social cohesion. However, this assumption is not unanimously accepted and not everywhere equally plausible, the least in consociational democracies. On the basis of a review of the existing empirical literature, this paper offers a refined analysis by asking which factors of associational life are relevant for civil peace and democracy in different contexts. Following the conventional differentiation in the literature on plural societies, I will concentrate on the one hand on majoritarian and on the other hand on consociational arrangements as institutional frameworks for civil life in divided societies. It will be shown that in either model it is less the content of associations, whether they are labeled “ethnic organisations” or not, than the internal and also external ties across ethnic boundaries that are important to uphold civil peace and democracy. Yet depending on the institutional context, the specific configuration within civil society should vary.

Introduction

In spite of widespread claims about an emerging cultural homogeneity on a global scale, cultural differences are far from being extinguished, rather to the contrary. If such differences are combined with differences in religious denomination or the belief in common ancestry they are often the basis of – voluntary or involuntary – assignments of belonging to an ethnic group. Ethnic group differences in turn have the reputation to be especially conflict prone. Evidence of ethnic conflicts worldwide (e.g. Gurr 1993; 2000) substantiates this reputation. Therefore the search for measures and conditions to appease such conflicts is, though very old already, still of heightened salience today. Yet, there is an important caveat: “What people often mean by getting rid of conflict is getting rid of diversity, and it is of the utmost importance that these should not be considered the same” (Follett 1924: 300). In this paper, I will look for ways to get rid of conflict without getting rid of diversity in the meanwhile most widespread type of political systems, namely in democracies.

Democracy in multi-ethnic societies seems to be challenged more than in more homogeneous countries. This is the case since the democratic process is often marked not only by the normal ‘tit for tat’ of any political business, but also by the impression that the political community which is underlying the democratic system in toto is constantly at stake. Ethnic¹ differences are commonly perceived as prone to endanger any uniting sense of community. Yet how comes that in some countries as heterogeneous as others the democratic process is flourishing – with the same flaws and problems as present in every democracy – and in other multi-ethnic societies these differences seem to make democracy impossible because no consensus is found on the rules by which conflicts can be peacefully settled? This paper focuses especially on the existence of a political community in spite of ethnic differences because “underlying the functioning of all systems, there must be some cohesive cement – a sense or feeling of community amongst the members“ (Easton 1979: 167f). This cement of a political community is foremost linked to the underlying political value orientations which following the premises and results of political culture research have to be in accordance with the implemented political structure (Almond/ Verba 1963; Fuchs 2007). For a democracy to be stable and flourishing, democratic values shall be part of the foundations of its political community. Ethno-cultural diversity might not only challenge the existence of a sense of political community however defined, but also the distribution of specific democratic values such as tolerance and acceptance of majority rule which enable not only a ‘cold’ peace, but a civil, more stable one.

¹ Ethnicity is understood as a socially constructed sense of group belonging on the basis of the belief in common origin linked to a variety of markers, be they cultural, religious, linguistic etc. (for an overview on the debate see e.g. Ganter 1995).

Yet, culture and attitudes are always embedded in a particular structure. While it is undisputed that institutions play an important role in managing ethnic conflicts peacefully, there is no consensus on which forms of democracy and institutions are concretely doing better in this respect. Mainly two quite contradictory normative models of democracy claim to be best suited to incorporate ethnic differences, namely the (majoritarian) liberal and the consociational model. There has been a heated debate on each model's pros and cons (e.g. Lijphart 1977, 1991; Horowitz 1990, 1999). Even if consociational democracies might fare a bit better in extremely fragmented societies (see Lijphart 1999; Linder and Bächtiger 2005), especially in the long run both approaches have their pros and cons. The normative theories of both, liberalism and consociationalism, usually do not put much weight on the influence of citizens on the final outcome, civil peace or ethnic conflict. They very much focus on institutions and rights on the one hand, and on elite compromises on the other hand which might too easily underestimate the contribution civil society makes to the final result. In addition, this discussion focusses merely on the influence of political institutions on the stability of democracy in the sense of the absence of violence; it does not include more refined and normatively more exigent conceptions of the persistence of a political community. This is different in literature on social capital in which normative aspects of democracy, such as trust, tolerance and support for democracy are at the center stage (e.g. Putnam 2000; Paxton 2002). Yet they in turn are rarely connected to the question whether ethnic differences influence the result. It is therefore necessary to bring these two strands of literature together. Within the broader question whether specific institutional settings are more related to the emergence and persistence of a democratic community in spite of ethnic differences than others (see Schlenker-Fischer 2009), the focus here lies on the specific contribution of social capital of the involved ethnic groups, and more specifically on their voluntary associations.

Thus, the research question of this paper is as follows: What types of association contribute to uphold civil peace and democracy in societies deeply divided by ethnic, religious, or linguistic cleavages? And, complementary, which kind of associations are likely to damage peace and democracy? While a positive relationship between a lively civil society and democracy is broadly accepted, this assumption is rarely tested in deeply divided societies. Especially in these societies, another consensus comes to the forefront, namely that not all associations are good for democracy, not every kind has the expected positive influences on the development of cohesion promoting social capital (see Levi 1996; Stolle and Welzel 2000; Olson 1982; Putnam 2000; Warren 2001). Already Coleman (1990) insisted that social capital is not one thing, but numerous kinds of social relations; and the same kind of social relation might be good in one context, but bad in another. Social capital of a group in form of associations and

trust is without doubts valuable for this group; yet it can be either positively or negatively related to social capital on the more encompassing level of the political community. The most widespread assumption is that ethnic associations strengthen the ‘dark side’ of social capital and undermine social cohesion (Warren 2008: 129; Putnam 2000: 352f). However, this assumption is not unanimously accepted and not everywhere equally plausible, the least in consociational democracies.

Based on a literature review of the empirical research in social capital as well as ethnic conflict studies in respect to civil society – mainly large scale quantitative comparisons, but also innovative case studies –, I will collect evidence for specific characteristics of associations more conducive to civil peace and democracy than others. This will allow to undertake a refined analysis of the factors which are relevant for civil peace and democracy in different settings, namely in majoritarian and consociational arrangements as institutional frameworks for civic life in divided societies. Surpassing pure ‘cold’ peace in the sense of a mere ceasefire, civil peace depends on several attitudes and behavior which will be discussed in the first part of the paper. The second and third part will give a brief overview on the relationship between democracy, social capital and ethnicity, before the remaining parts will elaborate on necessary differentiations in this relationship as well as logic connections to specific institutional settings.

Civil peace in a democratic community

The term ‘civil peace’, which receives such a prominent role in this paper, is deliberately chosen to capture the opposite situation of ethnic conflict in which citizens of the same political community fight each other on the basis of ethnic self- and other definitions². Such conflicts include not only protracted, long-term violent conflicts but also short term riots. Conflicts of interests, ideas or persons are of course omnipresent in any society but a functioning political process should ensure the solution of political conflicts by nonviolent means. Even if one accepts the constant existence of self- and other-definitions on the basis of ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969), this can and should be channeled into a peaceful political process. While the absence of violence is the basis of any societal peace, it is in the long run always on shaky grounds unless the members of the political community develop certain attitudes and behaviors such as the basic willingness to cooperate politically as well as mutual recognition of equal rights. In order to highlight this necessity especially in multi-ethnic contexts my interest lies on this more exigent form of civil peace. Only on the basis of such a peace a political community

² Stavenhagen (1996: 284) for example defines ethnic conflict “as a protracted social and political confrontation between contenders who define themselves and each other in ethnic terms; that is, when criteria such as national origin, religion, race, language and other markers of cultural identity are used to distinguish the opposing parties.”

exists which is more than an arbitrary definition of external boundaries, circumscribing the sovereignty of the political system involved.

This conceptualization is based on the idea that in line with results from political culture research (Almond/ Verba 1963) a democratic community has to exist in order to make a democratic polity persistent (see also Fuchs 2007). All larger communities such as nations are imagined ones (Anderson 1983) and socially constructed without the intimate personal knowledge of smaller communities. Thereby community is not a binary phenomenon of either existing or not, but it exists in different degrees: The stronger the boundaries and commonalities are cognitively and emotionally ingrained in the members as well as the more they behave accordingly, the stronger and more persistent is the resulting community (for more details see Fuchs 1999; Schlenker-Fischer 2009). It is important to add the behavioural dimension to cognitive and affective aspects of building a democratic community since it is after all the acting subject of democratic rule, the sovereign ‘demos’.

What is specific about a democratic community? The meaning of democracy is widely debated which becomes obvious in the wide range of normative theories on democracy. However some essentials can be retained: since ancient times the idea of democracy is linked to the idea of freedom and political equality of every member of the political community³ (see Sartori 1987). Democracy is unthinkable without the “idea of intrinsic equality” (Dahl 1989: 84f), in a democracy “all members are to be considered as *politically equal*” (Dahl 1998: 37). Given the normative differences in how this basic idea is implemented it is not surprising that in empirical research the widest accepted definition of democracy is minimal and procedural: a democratic regime is characterised by free elections, general suffrage, peaceful change of government and the respect of civil rights (Dahl 1971). Procedures alone do not constitute a stable and experienceable democracy; yet already an encompassing institutionalisation of democratic principles is always an approximation (Dahl 1989; Merkel 2004).

These rules and institutions are at the core of our understanding of democracy, they decide about the kind of political regime is installed and how power is exercised and distributed, thus they constitute the ‘kratos’. My focus in this paper however lies on the ‘demos’, thus the members of the political community which is underlying the political regime. The cohesion and specific fabric of a political community is widely accepted to be important for the legitimacy and efficiency of any political system and of democracies in particular (Easton 1975). A sense of community lends legitimacy to the political regime as expression of this community, makes it easier to accept majority decisions and facilitates collective decision making by ensuring the willingness to cooperate and a certain sense of solidarity. In order to specify concrete indicators

³ Membership had to be enlarged over time from the few free men in Athens to include all adult citizens today.

of such a sense of community and thereby of a durable civil peace we can differentiate between different levels. On the level of democratic processes, i.e. concerning the activities of concrete authorities and citizens in any democratic division of political labor, we can retain the rejection of violence as a political mean as well as the acceptance of majority decisions and a certain level of participation in political decision making, at least sporadically.⁴ On a hierarchical higher level are those values who found the community, thus in a democracy especially the mutual recognition as politically free and equals (Fuchs 1993; 1999).⁵ This normative orientation of citizens can be measured by the extent of support for democracy as well as the extent of (political) tolerance. We can also include generalized trust on this level as a more demanding indicator of the existence of a community⁶ (see Table 1).

Table 1: Indicators of civil peace

| <i>Democratic norms</i> | <i>Democratic behavior</i> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Support for democracy | Peaceful conflict resolution |
| (Political) tolerance | Acceptance of majority decisions |
| Generalized trust | Political participation |

Democracy and social capital

In recent decades there was bulging evidence that democratic norms and behavior are promoted within civil society. Especially social capital was discovered to be an important resource stored in civil society with a positive influence on democracy (e.g. Putnam 1993, 2000; Paxton 2002; Skocpol et al. 1999). Yet the general enthusiasm which emerged right after Robert Putnam and his collaborators (1993) published their book on Italy gave place to a more nuanced picture of this relationship. First of all, the definition of the concept itself is disputed since it is often not defined in a clearcut way.⁷ Most research on social capital follows Coleman's (1988; 1991) and Putnam's (1993; 2000) conceptualisation. In this line of reasoning social capital refers to aspects of the social structure, which facilitate collective actions mainly by socialising actors into cooperative behavior. Putnam differentiates between three components of social capital: networks, norms and trust, which all help to solve problems of collective action (1993: 36).

⁴ In how far political participation is a necessary condition is disputed in normative theories.

⁵ Between these two levels, we can locate support for the political structure of the democratic system, i.e. for the institutions and rules as they are fixed in the constitution (Fuchs 1999). It is not possible to specify concrete indicators of a democratic community on this level in general since there are manifold forms to implement the idea of democracy institutionally. People may support democracy but not the kind which exists in their country, eventually called "critical democrats" (Klingemann 1999). I therefore stick to the specified basic conditions on the other two levels.

⁶ Trust is in general assumed to be a necessary condition for social integration, economic efficiency and democratic stability (Coleman 1988: 306; Putnam 1993, 2000; Fukuyama 1995).

⁷ Some even criticised it to be just an elegant term to draw attention to possible advantages of societal behaviour, "a nuanced understanding of the pros and cons of groups and communities" (Portes and Landolt 1996: 21).

Newer analyses question the close relationship between these components (Gabriel et al. 2002). Instead of simply assuming it, it is more promising to analyse its existence empirically.

In addition it is important to differentiate between two different levels of analysis. On the individual level social capital can be understood as “resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/ or mobilized in purposive actions” (Lin 2001: 12). This kind of relational capital is influenced by extent and resources of the network of an individual as well as by the nature of the ties involved.⁸ On the level of a group, social capital is the capacity to pursue collective aims by cooperation, pooling of resources and reduction of transaction costs, thus constituting system capital. On both levels, we can differentiate between structure and content as indicated above: the structural element encompasses the network of an actor or of a group; with respect to content, interpersonal and generalized trust as well as the internalisation of pro-social norms such as reciprocity and tolerance are involved on the individual level; on the system level, their collective manifestation in form of loyalty and the society-wide extent of trust, reciprocity and tolerance are at stake (see Table 3). These pro-social norms are the backbones of a democratic community, in which the members see each other as free and equals. In how far they are influenced by the structural element of ties between individuals and groups is part of the research on social capital.

Table 2: The multidimensionality of social capital

| | SOCIAL CAPITAL AS INDIVIDUAL RESOURCE: RELATIONAL CAPITAL | SOCIAL CAPITAL AS COLLECTIVE GOOD: SYSTEM CAPITAL |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| <i>Structural elements</i> | Relationships, personal networks | Distribution of network structures |
| <i>Normative elements</i> | Interpersonal and generalized trust | Society-wide generalized trust |
| | Internalisation of pro-social norms and orientations such as trust, reciprocity and tolerance | Society-wide extent of pro-social orientations such as trust, reciprocity and tolerance; loyalty |

Source: Following Gabriel et al. 2002: 29.

In political science, the main focus is less on networks between individuals and groups than on voluntary associations as structural elements of social capital. Building on Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill it is assumed that the sources of trust are found within voluntary associations in civil society. Such networks and their norms and practice of cooperation are regarded as the foundation of formal organisations such as political parties which aggregate the preferences of individuals (see Putnam 1993). Since associating is inherently tied to the

⁸ In the same line Warren defines social capital as “individual investments in social relationships that have the consequences, whether or not intended, of enabling collective actions which return goods in excess of those the individual might achieve by acting alone” (2008: 125).

disposition to cooperate, civil engagement is supposed to teach individuals to cooperate, to trust others, even if they do not know them, and to develop self-respect as well as political capacities and attitudes necessary for participation in the democratic arena (Warren 2001).

There is indeed widespread empirical evidence for these expectations. While modernisation theories explain support for democratic values by individual characteristics such as education and socio-economic resources (Inglehart 1990; 2000; Inglehart/ Baker 2000; Welzel 2002) and others stress the characteristics of political institutions and their performance (e.g. Norris 1999), we find the empirical perspective on the relationship between associations and democracy in research on political culture. Almond and Verba (1963: 298ff) discover a clearly higher level of interpersonal trust in the two traditional democracies USA and UK, which are characterised by a well functioning system of intermediary organisations, than in Germany and Italy where the extent and functional capabilities of civil associations were considerably weakened by the totalitarian structures.⁹ Putnam (1993) and his widely received comparison of Italian regions in which more social capital leads to a better functioning of democratic structures initiated further research on this relationship. Pamela Paxton (2002), for example, studies social capital worldwide and finds indeed a positive relationship between social capital and the formation and persistence of healthy democratic institutions.¹⁰ However, Paxton stresses that this relationship is reciprocal since democracy also significantly influences both components of social capital, namely associations and trust; thus the relationship runs in both directions.

Furthermore one caveat has to be mentioned when enthusiasm becomes too general: the extent of trust in a society is an important context factor. If there is only little general trust an increase of membership in associations has a negative influence on democracy. Only in a general climate of mutual trust, thus if at least 50 per cent of the population generally trusts, do more associations lead to more democracy: associations in a climate of mistrust are potentially dangerous for democracy (Paxton 1999).¹¹ Rose and Weller (2003) confirm this finding. They show for Russia that neither trust nor membership in associations goes along with more support for democratic values. Networks also have the potential to strengthen support for undemocratic regime forms. We can thus conclude: “*context matters* both for social capital and support for democratic values” (ibid. 215; see also Newton and Norris 2000; Mishler and Rose 2001).

⁹ The relationship between age of the democratic system and the extent of generalized trust among citizens was later confirmed in 43 societies (Inglehart 1997).

¹⁰ She compares data of the World Value Survey in more than 48 countries and information on 101 countries according to the Yearbook on International Nongovernmental Organisations.

¹¹ As far as we know the determinants of generalized trust, they are the same as for tolerance and include education, economic security, racial affiliation, age and gender; yet age and affiliation to a racial minority have the opposite influence on trust than on tolerance (Patterson 1999). The size of the community also influences the extent of trust (Putnam 2000: 138). In addition, Putnam finds a negative influence on generalized trust of TV consumption and a positive one of the reading of newspapers (ibid. 34, 53, 218-220).

Therefore we have to question in a detailed manner if the assumptions and results on the relationship between associations and democracy are also applicable to multicultural or multi-ethnic societies in general and ethnic associations in particular. Do also strong ethnic organisations¹² and subcultures have a positive effect on the political integration of their members into the encompassing political community? Or is social capital which is produced within ethnic communities and the trust and solidarity which go along with it limited to the own ethnic group and rather detrimental for the integration into the broader society? Contrary to some public debates, I assume that this question cannot be answered in a general way. The discussion so far showed that social capital has to be disaggregated in different parts and on different levels in order to assess its influence on civil peace and the above specified indicators thereof. For this purpose I will compile in the following the empirical results of major comparative studies in the field of social capital as well as ethnic conflict research. The studies are selected in order to allow a representative overview on the state of the art. This motivation leads me to consider large-n analyses just as well as more case oriented studies. More concretely, the main selection criterion was the question if they contribute to the understanding of the influences on various aspects of civil peace inspite of ethnic difference. Though these democratic norms and behavior are important for any democratic system to persist, they are even more at stake in ethnically divided societies where loyalty is many times given or even demanded along ethnic lines.

Social capital and ethnicity

Among the rare studies investigating the relationship between social capital, ethnicity and democracy Dowley and Silver's (2003) analysis stands out. They focus on social capital on the individual level, ethnic group belonging and support for democracy in 20 post-communist states. Their results substantiate the importance of context. The usual indicators of social capital – interest in politics, membership in voluntary associations and interpersonal trust – are overall only slightly related to the extent of democratisation in these countries. The authors find no positive relationship between aggregated measures of social capital and democratisation, neither if extent of democratisation is determined institutionally nor if it is measured by the extent of trust in and satisfaction with democracy (ibid. 116).¹³ Yet, this result looks quite different if the single components of social capital are disentangled.

¹² Ethnic organisations are understood as associations members of which are mainly or exclusively from one ethnic group or such associations which mainly or exclusively promote the interests or the welfare of one ethnic group.

¹³ Roughly 55 per cent of the minority groups (19 of 26) trust the legal system less than the majority population, while 45 per cent trust the national parliament less. Whole 63 per cent of the minority groups are less content with the performance of the political regimes, and 60 per cent express less support for democratic principles (ibid. 105).

Interpersonal trust is for all respondents positively related to support for democracy, for regime institutions and performance (ibid. 114). In contrast, interest in politics and associational membership have a differentiated impact in these multi-ethnic countries. While interest in politics correlates positively with support for institutions and democracy for titular nationalities, such a heightened political interest among Russians abroad and other minority groups is negatively related to support for democratic principles. This can be explained by the fact that political mobilisation is especially probable among those who are less satisfied with the newly established order. Thus, political interest among ethnic minorities in this context does not necessarily represent social capital promoting democracy, but perhaps political mobilisation against democratic development.

The pattern concerning associational membership also depends on the group status. For titular ethnic groups this factor seems to function as predicted by the social capital thesis: participation in voluntary organisations is related to more trust in the new institutions and more support for the regime and democratic ideals. Yet, for Russians abroad participation in voluntary organisations is not related to more support for democratic institutions. Among other ethnic minorities in the region, organisational participation is indeed positively and significantly correlated with more trust in the legal system and more satisfaction with the policies of the government, but with less support for democracy as ideal regime form (ibid. 113). Overall, more political participation and social engagement of members of the majority increases their support for democracy, the government and regime institutions, while the more mobilised members of ethnic minorities support democracy less than the more passive ones. Thus in these countries it makes a difference for assessing the influence of social capital whether an individual belongs to the titular national group or to an ethnic minority group.¹⁴ The authors therefore conclude:

„In particular, high levels of interest in politics and high rates of participation in voluntary organisations in ethnically plural societies, especially but perhaps not uniquely in countries undergoing significant political transformations, might signal the ethnic polarisation of society and a consequent threat to democratic institutions, democratic values, and liberal notions of civil and political rights“ (ibid. 113).

Given that in general the political community is perceived as the highest level within a multidimensional scheme of political support (Norris 1999a), Dowley and Silver offer two possible explanations for these results: either social capital has the expected positive influence on some of these levels, but not on others, thus possibly on the level of support for the performance of the regime but not on the level of the political community; or national unity in

¹⁴ However, the non-Russian minorities are overall more positive towards the performance of the regime and democracy in general, since the post-communist developments and democratisation processes certainly meant for Russians in these countries (not Russia) a loss in status as a group. For many other minorities in contrast these processes opened up new possibilities to unfold their cultural life or to reach a certain political independence.

the sense of a general support for the political community by all relevant subnational groups is a necessary precondition for a positive relationship between social capital and democratisation (Dowley and Silver 2003: 102f). The authors conclude from their results that social capital theory can not easily be transferred from established democracies to ethnically heterogeneous societies in periods of transition. This period brings about the potential for liberation of minorities as well as for their oppression, in order to secure the boundaries of the state or the newly gained dominant position (ibid. 117). For ethnically plural societies democratisation is more difficult if ethnic groups in the majority do not follow an inclusive nation building project or if minority groups – because of a history of injustice against them – mobilise in a way which endangers national unity.

Again, context is important for the question whether ethnic heterogeneity influences the cohesiveness of a society and in which direction the influence of social capital points. Therefore it is not very surprising that in a totally different country, namely Canada, Johnston and Soroka (2001) show correlations which stand in contrast to the mentioned results for the post-communist countries. The results of their empirical analysis of regional and ethnic differences using World Value Survey data are clear-cut: “diversity is not obviously the enemy of social capital” (ibid. 40). Social capital in this context has the expected positive effects also among ethnic minorities, civic engagement and trust go hand in hand among all groups. The ethnically most heterogeneous provinces are not the most uncivil ones, rather to the contrary. Johnston and Soroka conclude:

„The context that matters in the Canadian case is not the ethnic diversity of a province so much as the history of the whole country. (...) It is very relevant that one Canadian in four belongs to a national minority with a deeply equivocal relationship to the overarching political nationality. And it matters that Canada’s multicultural policy seems to have facilitated, not inhibited participation in the country’s political life“ (ibid. 41).

These contradictory results show that it is impossible to draw the conclusion that ethnic diversity prevents the development of social capital which is good for democracy. Ethnic organisations are in general the expression of mobilised resources and ambitions of ethnic groups. Yet, their impact is only rarely unambiguous. The above mentioned results show that they can be either an accepted part of civil society and help to develop and to implement policies of cohesion – or they isolate themselves or are excluded from the majority society. In the latter case they do not have a positive impact on the development of a democratic community. Apart from employing in-depth analyses of single case-studies, could we find general aspects which help to recognise of which ‘spirit’ associations are? Based on the empirical research conducted so far, is it possible to single out certain characteristics of associations in general which allow to expect a positive or negative impact on civil peace?

Differentiations that make a difference

Diversity of associations with respect to their aims/ content

We often find differentiations with respect to the content of associations such as their aims or criteria around which they mobilise. Those associations which are based primarily on cultural commonalities such as religion, language or ethnicity have usually the worst reputation. Their exclusivity would fragment society and hinder pro-social or pro-democratic effects. On the other hand we also have to consider that right because of their bonding character they are able to convey individuals a sense of capacity to act as well as a sense of solidarity and efficiency, especially if the respective group is marginalised by the dominant culture. Among ethnic associations we can again differentiate on the one hand those which are aiming for equal chances and integration into the majority society, and on the other hand those which claim special rights in order to secure their cultural particularities. It is undisputed that such associations which propagate the end of the political system itself or the fragmentation of the political community are detrimental for societywide integration. Militia groups, religious fundamentalists or ethnic groups longing for separation usually aggravate cleavages within society. The former many times solely promote close ties based on clientelism and hierarchy which fosters neither democracy nor societal cohesion. Apart from these associations empirical studies show that we do not have to consider ethnic associations which are structured around cultural particularities as necessarily fragmenting society.

Stolle and Rochon (1998) offer an interesting study that analyses empirically which associations foster the unity of a political community by producing more social capital. They differentiate two characteristics of associations: their aims and the diversity of their members. On the basis of six surveys among the population in three countries – Sweden, Germany and the USA – they look at membership in 43 different types of organisations, grouped into seven categories called associational sectors; these encompass associations which deal in the first place with political or economic matters, group rights, cultural or community topics, private interests or social leisure (ibid. 57). The authors find that membership in all kinds of associations is most strongly related to political activities, mostly also to generalized trust and reciprocity and least to more general attitudes such as optimism, tolerance, and the attitude towards free riding. Cultural organisations, namely those which want to preserve traditional, regional, national or ethnic culture, as well as church groups, literature, music and arts societies, have members with the most social capital. In contrast membership in associations promoting group rights as well as in social or leisure associations is least related to the different indicators of social capital. Political associations in turn have the politically most active members, but they are least likely related to generalized and political trust, efficiency, tolerance, optimism and the

rejection of free riding (ibid. 61). Thus the enthusiasm about membership in associations has to be specified with respect to the kind of association analysed as well as to the kind of social capital looked for.

Yet the authors also find a considerable variance between countries with regard to the associational sectors which produce most social capital: church groups in the USA and Germany, welfare and social work associations in the USA, sports clubs in Germany and union and Third-World-associations in Sweden “are the greatest associational stars in the social capital firmament” (ibid.). This implies that the classification of associations depending on their aim is not enough in order to grasp their influence on attitudes and behavior relevant for democracy across countries¹⁵. From these findings we cannot generalize on ethnic organisations in different countries. The same kind of association has different consequences depending on the context; country specific influences are at work. Less contingent than aim or content of an association is their differentiation along structural traits such as internal diversity.

Internal diversity of associations

Contact across group boundaries

As mentioned, already Tocqueville (1987 (1835): 522) emphasized the importance of civil associations as ‘schools of democracy’ which help citizens to understand the interests of others and to develop empathy in order to solve collective problems by cooperation. He justified this positive expectation by stressing that within associations prejudices were reduced as well as friendship and trust developed. Yet, within an almost homogeneous association in all respects this learning effect can be expected to be minimal. As also mentioned before, group internal social capital also has the potential to damage democracy and to aggravate cleavages within society. Especially pluralist liberals caution against these dangers and count on the integrating effect of heterogeneous associations as well as cross-cutting cleavages (Miller 1983). If social boundaries are crossed within an association, thus if contact to diverse others is facilitated and experienced, it is expected that the members develop more tolerance and other pro-social orientations such as generalized trust. In contrast, isolated and homogeneous associations can intensify inward oriented trust and behavior, reduce contact with and openness towards new ideas and aggravate existing cleavages (Paxton 2002: 259).

Such expectations can be based on the results of social psychological research on inter-group conflicts since the 1940s. This research shows that contact between groups can indeed

¹⁵ This variation can also be the case within the same country over time: Wuthnow (1999) shows that the protestant associations in the USA dominant in the past were clearly different from the evangelical ones of today. While the former built bridges to general societal matters, the latter concentrate the energy of their members on activities within the religious community.

lead to the reduction of prejudices under specific circumstances. Allport (1954) specified four such conditions: (1) same group status in the situation, (2) common aims, (3) cooperation between the groups, and (4) support by authorities, laws or habits which make the contact acceptable¹⁶. There might also be positive effects if several of these conditions are missing; every single of them facilitates the reduction of prejudices. This is especially the case if the effects of contact between groups transcend the individual, thus if a process of generalization from the interpersonal experience to general attitudes towards out-groups occurs (see Pettigrew 1997).¹⁷ Concretely, at least two mechanisms are at work which make contact with opposing views also leading to political tolerance. Firstly such interactions entail information and individuals learn that their norms, habits and ways of life are not the only possibility to deal with the social world (ibid. 174). A bigger consciousness of the existence and legitimacy of opposing views motivates to secure the civic liberties of dissidents, to change perspectives and to subordinate the own perspective under societal aims, lastly the core of political tolerance (see already Mead 1934; Piaget 1932). In addition to this cognitive mechanism also an affective one is at work. We can learn from a personal contact experience that those who are different are not necessarily bad (Stouffer 1955). Here the quality of the personal relationship is of course essential. Close relationships most powerfully work against prejudices and political intolerance. Overall, positive effects of contact between groups are expected because of the learning about the out-group, the changes in behavior answering to new norms, the development of affective ties as well as the reconstruction of the in-group (depending on the changes in attitudes or behavior) (e.g. Mutz 2002). To develop affective ties, to challenge stereotypes and to change attitudes towards out-groups needs repeated encounters under the mentioned circumstances (see Pettigrew 1998). How much time this needs, remains however unclear.

Stressing structural characteristics of associations such as internal diversity is not only supported by socio-psychological consequences of contact, but is also in line with insights from social network analyses (see Mitchell 1969). Sociological studies emphasize that it is less the substantial individual traits of individuals which exert the strongest influence on their values, but rather formal characteristics of their networks.¹⁸ Homogeneous personal networks promote inward oriented interactions, the sharing of experiences, attitudes and values within a group. Heterogeneous networks work against such fragmenting tendencies, promote relationships

¹⁶ For empirical confirmation of these assumptions see for example Brown (1996) and Pettigrew (1998).

¹⁷ Wright and his colleagues (1997) show that already knowing someone who has a friend in an out-group is related to more positive attitudes towards this out-group, that 'extended contact effects' are possible.

¹⁸ The willingness to cooperate is part of every association, but the extent and depth of this disposition depends on the specific relationship, on its strength and position in the network. Especially support is a relational phenomenon: "With the partial exception of emotional support, the delivery of support is not based on *who* you know but on *how* you know them" (Wellman/ Wortley 1990: 581).

between groups and thus contribute to the integration of different groups and society as a whole (Fischer 1982; Hooghe 2001).

While there are plenty of studies concerning the contact hypothesis as well as networks, there are only a few studies on associations which bridge ethno-cultural cleavages and thus offer explicit contact situations between ethnic groups. Thereby we can consider multi-ethnic associations as ideal contact situations in order to enhance relations between ethnic groups, since they usually offer the positive contact conditions stressed by Allport: same status, common aims and cooperation. They also fulfill Pettigrew's mechanisms for prejudice reduction such as repeated interaction. We find scattered evidence on multi-ethnic associations from different parts of the world.

Western evidence

A traditional way to distinguish internally homogeneous from heterogeneous associations is to look at their internal social composition (Blau 1977; Blau and Schwartz 1984). This is also the approach of Putnam (2000: 22) and his distinction between 'bonding' and 'bridging social capital' in the United States. Bonding social capital encompasses networks between persons who are socially similar, while bridging social capital refers to networks which are socially heterogeneous. Both kinds of social capital have differing qualities: as already mentioned, bonding social capital creates strong in-group loyalty, is good for specific reciprocity, and can provide social and psychological resources for marginalized groups. Bridging social capital extends networks, and connects groups to resources they might not otherwise be able to access.¹⁹ Putnam tries to avoid judging these two kinds of social capital since both are necessary for social life. Yet while bridging social capital enhances information flows and can "generate broader identities and reciprocity", bonding social capital may generate more "negative external effects" because strong in-group loyalty often generates "strong out-group antagonism" (ibid. 23). He therefore suggests that the 'dark sides' of social capital, such as intolerance and sectarianism, are more likely to be found in situations in which bonding social capital is not tempered by bridging capital (Putnam 2000: 352f). Empirically he underlines that social capital in general is related to "tolerance for racial integration, gender equality and civil liberties" (ibid. 256) on the state level. Yet his results only suggest that where there is more social capital in aggregate, the effects are more likely to be positive. He does not investigate whether bridging associations, especially those bridging ethnic cleavages, are empirically connected to such pro-social attitudes and less prejudices.

¹⁹ Since groups often bond along some social dimensions and bridge across others, the bridging-bonding distinction is not an either-or distinction, but rather one of more or less.

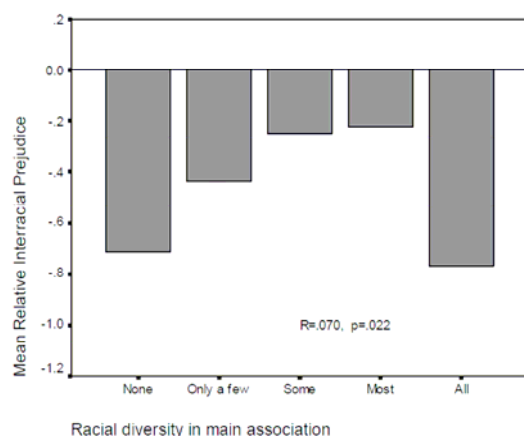
Again Stolle and Rochon (1998) analyse in more details the hypothesis that associations whose members are socially diverse are better promoters of generalized trust and other normative components of social capital than homogeneous ones. They cover seven dimensions of social cleavages among the members of an association: education, profession (or job prestige), religion (or church attendance), party membership (or left-right-ideology), age and gender. In addition they measured in the USA the representativity of the members with respect to racial affiliation and in Germany and Sweden with respect to immigrants. The results show that there is indeed a relationship between diversity of the associational sector and the extent to which members exhibit generalized trust and reciprocity in the community (ibid. 8). However, the authors analyse diversity within associational sector, not within single associations, thus potentially entailing an ecological fallacy. The single associations within a sector could be internally homogeneous and only as a composite heterogeneous. Under such circumstances the increased generalized trust would have nothing to do with internal diversity but rather with external relations within sectors. The authors' emphasis is furthermore on socio-economic diversity and they show correlations, not causality. The causal relation might also run in the opposite direction: those who trust more are more likely to join mixed associations.

More refined results are offered by Stolle (2001) in a later analysis of the influence of diversity among members of an association on the development of generalized trust in Germany, Sweden and the USA. Her results show that across countries diversity in many respects does not make a difference, except for one: the proportion of foreigners or the diversity of racial affiliation is indeed significantly correlated with generalized trust in all three countries (ibid. 128). A higher internal ethnic diversity of an association is related to more generalized trust among members. Yet at the same time, Stolle underlines that a self-selection process is indeed at work here: people with more generalized trust choose heterogeneous groups, while those with less trust rather join less heterogeneous ones. This self-selection becomes evident given that the extent of trust does not change over time (ibid. 130), the experience within the association thus does not seem to influence the willingness to trust. Nevertheless, this general finding should not overshadow the fact that repeated interaction within single associations might contribute over time to more trust across ethnic lines. For example, Warren (2001a) stresses these dynamics in his description of a multi-ethnic oecumenic association. Based on a shared Christian identity and the respective rituals, this association enhanced trust and ameliorated the overall relation between the racially diverse members by repeated interactions and good leadership.

Furthermore, the concrete internal composition of associations also seems to be relevant. Hemmer (2003) investigates in how far multi-ethnic associations contribute more than others to reduce prejudices and to enhance trust between ethnic groups in the USA. His study finds

indeed a strong correlation between ethnically bridging social capital, including friendship with and visits of members of another race, and less prejudices. Racial diversity of an association is also related to significantly less prejudices; yet thereby a well-balanced internal composition of an association exerts an even greater influence. The relationship between diversity of an association and the reduction of prejudices shows a u-form: it is stronger the more diverse an association is, but weaker if this diversity is too pronounced (see figure 2). These results also resist a multivariate analysis: while general social capital does not significantly influence inter-racial prejudices when the traditional predictors of prejudices such as age and education are taken into account, indicators of bridging social capital still exert a significant influence (ibid. 32). Especially a well-balanced composition between races within an association predicts fewer prejudices. This effect either takes the detour via inter-ethnic friendship, but also occurs without.

Figure 2: Racial diversity of associations and interracial prejudice



Source: Hemmer 2003: 20

In addition to such quantitative analyses concerning the internal diversity of associations it seems promising to look at an exemplary in-depth study in order to substantiate the claims made so far. Descending from the heights of national comparisons, it is often the associational life on the local level which offers the missing factors explaining why ethnic conflicts explode. This becomes evident in an excellent study of different cities in India.

Asian evidence

Riots between Hindus and Muslims in India are locally very concentrated. Between 1950 and 1993, in eight cities alone – Ahmedabad, Bombay, Aligarh, Hyderabad, Meerut, Baroda, Calcutta and Delhi – there were 45,5 per cent of all deaths through inter-communal²⁰ violence,

²⁰ In this section I use the adjectives ‘communal’ and ‘inter-communal’ which are traditionally used to describe relations between religious communities in India. They are synonymous for ethnic and inter-ethnic.

even though these cities only encompass 18 per cent of the urban population and only 5 per cent of the overall population in India (Varshney 2002: 6f)²¹. In order to find the causal factors underlying the different outcomes, Varshney (2002) compares three peaceful and three violence prone Indian cities, while he combines each time one trouble spot and one peaceful city to three pairs (Aligarh and Calicut, Hyderabad and Lucknow, Ahmedabad and Surat). These cities are comparable with respect to their Hindu and Muslim population²². Demographic composition was chosen as minimal control since the size of the communities is considered to be important in political discourses as well as in theories about political behavior²³ (e.g. Vanhanen 1999). In spite of the similar conditions the extent of civil peace is very different in the selected cities.

What counts for the difference between communal peace and violence following Varshney's (2002) analysis are pre-existing local networks of civic engagement between the two communities. Where such networks exist, tensions and conflicts were regulated and managed; where they are missing, communal identities led to endemic and ghastly violence. These networks can be broken down into two parts: associational forms of engagement and everyday forms of engagement. The former ties are formed in organisational settings; the latter require no organization. Both forms of engagement, if intercommunal, promote peace, but the capacity of the associational forms to withstand national-level 'exogenous shocks' – such as India's partition in 1947 or the demolition of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 by Hindu militants – is substantially higher.

The mechanisms Varshney empirically detects by process tracing are various. First, by promoting communication between members of different religious communities, civic networks often make neighborhood-level peace possible. Routine engagement allows people to come together and form temporary organisations in times of tension. Such peace committees turned out to be highly significant. They policed neighborhoods, discovered rumors, provided information to the local administration, and facilitated communication between communities. Such organisations were difficult to form in cities where everyday interaction did not cross religious lines or where Hindus and Muslims lived in very segregated neighborhoods. Sustained prior interaction allowed appropriate crisis-managing organisations to emerge (ibid. 10).

The second mechanism also answers the question why associational forms of intercommunal engagement are more robust than quotidian ones. If vibrant organisations

²¹ Such riots in general rarely take place in villages. Rural India where two thirds of all Indians still live, exhibits only 4 per cent of all deaths through inter-communal violence, it is thus mainly an urban phenomenon.

²² In addition the second pair shares previous Muslim rule and cultural similarities. The third pair is the most similar one since both cities are in addition within the same federal state, Gujarat. All six cities have more than 500 000 inhabitants, Hyderabad, the biggest one, even is a metropole of 4,2 million people.

²³ Rudolph and Rudolph (1987: 195) for example argue that Muslims living in cities in which they form a majority typically favor confessional parties and centrist parties only if their proportion of the electorate is small, thus making them searching for security within a powerful mainstream party.

-serving the economic, cultural, and social needs of the two communities exist, the support for communal peace tends to be stronger. Associations can serve interests that are not the object of quotidian interactions. Intercommunal business organisations survive by tying together the business interests of many Hindus and Muslims, not because neighborhood warmth exists between the two. “Informal engagement may often work in villages in keeping peace, but it does not in cities, which tend to be less interconnected and more anonymous. Size reduces the effectiveness of quotidian interaction. Associations are critical when village-like intimacy is impossible” (ibid. 10). Organized civic networks, when intercommunal, not only withstand exogenous shocks, but also constrain local politicians in their strategic behavior. “If politicians insist on polarizing Hindus and Muslims for the sake of electoral advantage, they can tear the fabric of everyday engagement apart through the organized might of criminals and gangs” (ibid.)²⁴. Where in contrast organizations such as trade unions, associations of businessmen, traders, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and at least some political parties are communally integrated, countervailing forces are created. Varshney puts his argument in a vivid metaphor:

“If the civic edifice is interethnic and associational, there is a good chance it can take ethnic earthquakes that rank quite high on the Richter scale (a partition, a desecration of a holy place, perhaps a civil war); if it is interethnic and quotidian, earthquakes of smaller intensity can bring the edifice down (defeat of an ethnic political party in election, police brutality in a particular city); but if engagement is only intraethnic, not interethnic, small tremors (unconfirmed rumors, victories and defeats in sports) can unleash torrents of violence. A multiethnic society with few interconnections across ethnic boundaries is very vulnerable to ethnic disorder and violence” (ibid. 11f).

We have to keep in mind that these different outcomes exist within the same overall institutional framework of one nation-state. The institutional framework sets up the broad parameters of political strategies, not the actual strategies within a broad cluster permitted by the framework. The same political party, for example, may choose to polarize ethnic communities in one place but not in others, and even if it seeks to polarize, it may not succeed in engendering ethnic divisions. Structures of civic life constrain political strategies and their outcomes (ibid. 13). Thus overall, the effect of exogenous shocks, tensions or rumors are mediated by the form of civic engagement: if it is intracommunal, communal violence is likely; if it is intercommunal, communal peace is more likely. While the form of civic engagement is a proximate reason, the more longterm reason offering space for the development of these networks were different forms of mass politics which came up in the 1920s in whole India (see Figure 3). This decade was a transformative moment since for the first time in India mass politics was incited under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Before, politics was purely an elite matter. Gandhi was not only interested in political independence from Great Britain but also in the social transformation of India. The Congress party led the movement politically, but this aim also triggered the

²⁴ Such gangs disturb neighbourhood peace so deeply under the protection of politicians that people move to homogeneous neighborhoods for the sake of security. Brass (1997) calls this an institutionalized riot system.

emergence of other kinds of voluntary organisations working for social projects such as education, women’s rights, welfare of tribals and untouchables. Varshney underlines:

„In the long run a transformative shift in national politics laid down India’s associational civic order. In the short-to-medium run, however, the civic structures put in place by the national movement have in turn been a constraint on the behavior of politicians, for they acquired a life and logic of their own. (...) the civic constraint on politics was especially serious if building or destroying bridges between Hindus and Muslims was the object of politicians’ strategies. The historical lines of causation run from mass movement to civic order to violence or peace” (ibid. 18).

Figure 3: Structural diversity of civic associations – internally

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Calicut | | | Civil structure constrains communal polarisation and violence |
| | Previous existence of intra-Hindu caste divisions in politics | Civil ties between Hindus and Muslims | |
| Lucknow | | | |
| | Previous existence of intra-Muslim divisions in politics | Civil ties between Hindus and Muslims | |
| National mass politics 1920s and 1930s | | | |
| Aligarh | | | Civil structure promotes communal polarisation and violence |
| | Previous existence of a Hindu-Muslim division in politics | No civil ties between Hindus and Muslims | |
| Hyderabad | | | |
| | Ban by the prince of inter-communal mass organisations | Hindu-Muslim integration on elite level, but undermined on mass level | |

The example of India shows impressively that networks and trust are no exclusive matter of formal associations. In addition it touches upon the question which institutions are more appropriate to avoid ethnic conflicts. The answer seems to depend on the fabric of civic engagement in the respective multi-ethnic country. This study shows that a well functioning associational life which cuts across ethnic boundaries can back up liberal institutions as they are implemented in India with its majoritarian electoral system. Varshney is convinced that an effort to install more consociational elements in a political system whose founding society is in many arenas of civic life largely integrated, could lead to more, not less violence. In his opinion, “(c)onsociationalism may have a better chance of success if a society is not simply multiethnic but also highly segregated in its civic life“ (Varshney 2002: 286).²⁵

But what about such an ethnically segregated associational life? Are homogenous intra-ethnic associations necessarily detrimental for civil peace and democracy? As already mentioned shortly, we can elaborate on this question by focussing not only on internal diversity of associations, but also on their external connections.

²⁵ Varshney is convinced that „India’s repeated encounters with ethnic violence of all kinds (religious, linguistic, caste) and its equally frequent returns from the brink have a great deal to do with the self-regulation that its largely integrated and cross-cutting civil society provides “ (2002: 286). This runs counter Lijphart’s argument that India’s communal peace in the 1950s and 60s was based on consociational elements while the increasing violence since this time was due to the liberalisation of the Indian democracy (Lijphart 1996).

External connectedness of associational life

Under which conditions do intra-ethnic associations also contribute to civil peace and democracy? Only for a certain time period, only for certain groups or only with specific aims which concentrate on the integration of groups into society? Or is already the fact that organisations are formed good for democracy, no matter their ethnic composition? This standpoint is provocatively formulated by Fennema and Tillie: “to have undemocratic organisations is better for the democratic process than to have no organisations at all” (1999: 723). Of course their statement is embedded in a more refined analysis of the circumstances under which civil peace and democracy are fostered by intra-ethnic forms of associational life. In particular, they take into consideration the aggregate level of how an ethnic group is organised. Analysing the civic engagement of migrants²⁶ in Amsterdam they find that the ethnic group with the highest degree of participation and the strongest political trust had at the same time the densest network of organisations of their own community. Political trust of immigrants in the encompassing political community as well as the willingness to participate in the political process of the country is stronger among those individuals who are members of an ethnic community which is internally well organized, i.e. which has a dense network of ethnic organisations, and whose ethnic elite is integrated into the local political elite. Such individuals are politically better integrated than those who are members of a less organized ethnic community even if they individually may have more ties outside their ethnic group. Here it seems that a well organized and integrated ethnic community functions as a bridge enhancing the political integration of its members (Fennema and Tillie 1999).

The political integration and organisation of Turks, Maroccans, and Surinamese in Amsterdam in 2002 illustrate this finding (Fennema and Tillie 2008). Turks are overall the politically best integrated group, followed by the Maroccans and lastly by Surinamese. Yet, considering social capital indicators on the individual level, the Surinamese have the highest numbers of membership in voluntary associations, followed by the Maroccans and lastly by the Turks. Social capital on the group level in contrast offers a different picture. While the quantity of ethnic organisations per ethnic inhabitant is similar among Turks and Surinamese, there are by far more ties between Turkish associations, in this respect the Turks are much better organized. Such ties between associations are created either by multiple memberships of members in different organisations or by interlocking directorates – members who are at the same time on the board of several ethnic organisations – contributing both to the cohesion of the

²⁶ Migrants are certainly different kinds of ethnic groups than those who live in multi-ethnic nation-states as long as other natives. Since there is no comparable network analysis of ethnic associations in such states, the analysis of dynamics in an immigration setting with its consequent group formations can nevertheless offer insights to further the understanding of the impact of ethnic organisations.

ethnic elite and to the horizontal communication among ethnic organisations. Among Turkish organisations there are clearly less organisations which are isolated (38,2 per cent versus 44,7 per cent for Maroccans and 55 per cent for Surinamese) and there are more ties per organisation (1,16 versus 0,62 for Maroccans and 0,45 for Surinamese), different political and religious associations are connected within a network of horizontal ties (see Table 4).

Table 4: Degree of ethnic community of ethnic groups in Amsterdam (2002)

| | Turks | Maroccans | Surinamese |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Total population | 34.850 | 56.755 | 71.430 |
| Total number of organizations | 233 | 190 | 493 |
| Total number of ties | 271 | 118 | 222 |
| 1. Organizational density (a) | 0,007 | 0,003 | 0,007 |
| 2. Isolated organizations | 38,2% | 44,7% | 55,0% |
| 3. Mean degree (b) | 1,16 | 0,62 | 0,45 |
| 4. Organizations in largest component | 25,8% | 26,8% | 6,1% |

a Calculated as total number of organizations/ total population

b Calculated as the total number of lines/ total number of organizations

Source: Tillie and Slijper 2006

In addition the Turkish elite has many more Dutch advisors than the elite of the other groups and is overall better integrated into the Dutch elite. The authors thus show that within a socially heterogenous migrant community strong, i.e. frequent and close, intra-ethnic ties offer members of the socially lower stratum access to networks of weak ties maintained by the upper stratum of the community. They have therefore also more inter-ethnic social capital thanks to their ethnic network.²⁷ This is especially the case if the ethnic elite is well connected to the civic elite of the mainstream society (Fennema and Tillie 2008: 360). In such a case the ethnic community has at the same time bonding *and* bridging social capital even though it seems as if the basis had only bonding ties.

If elites are integrated, social trust within the community can transcend into trust in local political institutions. This can happen either ‘bottom up’ and/or ‘top down’. ‘Bottom up’ political trust is fostered if members of the ethnic community are able to control their ethnic leaders. We can therefore assume with Fennema and Tillie: “The higher the level of participation of the members of an ethnic group in the ethnic associations and the higher the trust of the rank and file in the directors of these associations the higher the quality of multicultural democracy“ (ibid. 365). ‘Top down’ political trust is enhanced if elites are able to disperse their own trust in and commitment to political institutions via the network of

²⁷ Already Granovetter (1973) stressed that strong ties usually connect people within a network and that weak ties have the potential to connect networks with each other.

interlocking ethnic associations. This is of course only the case, if they are convinced that political institutions are efficient and fair. The openness of the government towards claims of ethnic groups certainly influences the extent of support for political institutions by the ethnic elites. Good governance in general fosters political trust among citizens (see Levi 1996; Rothstein 1998), and this is especially true for ethnic minorities. Yet confidence usually builds up by specific communication and transmitting channels such as elites.

These results point to an interaction between social capital on the individual level and social capital on the level of the group. Individuals are parts of networks and members in either connected or isolated organisations. Internally bonding social capital fosters integration and lastly democracy the more it is externally connected to the encompassing political community. This is in line with Pamela Paxton's (2002) results of an internationally comparative study. She also stresses, that ties to other associations and to the encompassing society might incorporate diversity into the experience of members, helping to integrate homogeneous associations into society. She analyses the influence of bonding and bridging social capital on democratic attitudes with the help of World Value Survey data, distinguishing those associations which are connected to others via multiple memberships of their members, from those which are isolated.²⁸ Members of different associations can function as informants and mediators. Beyond the influence on the individual, this experience is spread in one's network. Paxton's result is clearcut: "certain types of associations do better in promoting democracy. When associations were broken into two types using the WVS, connected associations had a strong positive influence on democracy, while isolated associations had a strong negative influence on democracy" (ibid. 272).

Again, this has to be considered within the specific institutional context. Fennema and Tillie show that the structure of the Turkish community considerably changed after the shift of Dutch integration policies from a group oriented approach to a more individual based one since 1999. The biggest component of the Turkish network desintegrated and more isolated organisations sprung up (Fennema and Tillie 2004: 100f). In consequence, political integration was reduced and the authors conclude: "the local government's political neglect of Turkish civic community seems to have been answered by a neglect of local politics by the Turkish ethnic community" (ibid. 102). While in general the development and influence of social capital depends on the specific local context (Hooghe and Stolle 2003), this seems to be especially the case with respect to ethnic associations.

²⁸ Paxton singles out three kinds of associations which are generally less connected than others: unions, sports and religious associations. This is in line with the result of the American Citizen Participation Survey by Verba, Schlozman, Brady and Nie (1995).

Since intra-ethnic organisations are characteristic for consociational democracies, these studies showed the condition under which an encompassing political community is nevertheless sustained even if there is no heterogeneity within associations as it was stressed for liberal institutions: the more ethnic communities are organized internally by connected associations and the more their elites are integrated into the encompassing power structure. Without these conditions ethnic social capital has a rather detrimental influence on civil peace and democracy, alienation or separation tendencies are then more probable.

Conclusion

In general, the characteristics of ethnic communities as well as the surrounding political opportunity structures help to explain the organisational activities of ethnic minorities. Even if the influence of ethnic social capital is different on the individual, organisational and institutional level, it is certainly interconnected: Institutional arrangements determine to a strong degree the opportunities and scope for action of organisations, and they may also exert significant influence on how ethnic organisations develop and orient themselves. Institutions and organisations together, in turn, create the structure of opportunities and limitations as well as socialisation sights for individuals (Penninx and Martiniello 2004: 143f). Given the ephemerality of associational membership in the life course of an individual it is of course difficult to filter out relationships between experiences made within associations, especially in comparison to other strong influences on attitudes such as socialisation in the family or in school as well as social interactions in other life arenas such as at the working place. Yet on the basis of the overview given in this paper it is safe to say that the ethnic diversity of associational life indeed influences the existence and persistence of a democratic community in spite of ethnic differences to a considerable degree.

The empirical evidence scrutinized here underlines the need to be conscious about the dualism between groups and actors, about the fact “that the nature of groups is determined by intersection of the actors within them (i.e., by the ties of their members to one another as well as to other groups and individuals), while the nature of actors is determined by the intersection of groups ‘within’ them (i.e., by their own various group affiliations)” (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994, 1417f). The specific form of associational life, which can itself be conceived as a network characterised by its specific ties, frames the interactions within and between ethnic groups in the pre-political sphere; it thus influences the norms and behavior of members with respect to the encompassing political community. For a democratic community in spite of ethnic difference the intersection of ethnic groups is essential, whether there are bridges between them which

broker an encompassing sense of political community. Multiple ways of building such bridges have been shown: the most established way is heterogeneity of the associations themselves. Given the experience of diversity within such associations, members learn to deal with it in a peaceful way, reduce their prejudices, develop tolerance and trust and might even become friends with members of ‘the others’. Homogenous associations in contrast have a rather ambiguous record. Yet their existence per se does not preclude the existence of bridges between them. Such bridges are either built on the level of individual members via multiple memberships in intra- as well as inter-ethnic associations or on the level of the elite of ethnic groups being integrated into the encompassing society.

It therefore proved to be fruitful to combine two paths analysing the influence of the structural components of social capital on its normative components such as generalized trust and democratic convictions: on the one hand it is worthwhile to combine informations on the characteristics of associations with data on individual members. This allows to distinguish those associations which are internally diverse and those which are connected to other associations via multiple memberships. On the other hand it is important especially for ethnic associations to elaborate in more details their connections to other associations and the encompassing society as a whole. These considerations concerning the internal and external structure of associations can be categorized in a four-fold table. One of the dimensions encompasses the extent of ethnic homogeneity of the members of an association and the other the extent of external connectedness of the association (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Internal and external structure of associations

| | | Extent of internal ethnic homogeneity of members | |
|--|-------------|--|------------|
| | | <i>High</i> | <i>Low</i> |
| Extent of external connectedness of associations | <i>High</i> | (1) | (3) |
| | <i>Low</i> | (2) | (4) |

Scenario 1 and 2, thus ethnically homogenous associations, are more probable where ethnicity plays a big role in society and forms a salient social cleavage; given their internally bonding character their effects are most contested. If associations are ethnically homogenous, but connected, they offer the possibility for bridges to emerge (1). If they are however ethnically homogenous, but neither by their members nor their elites connected (2) there is a big potential for fragmentation and only little chance to learn about diversity since this is neither internally nor externally promoted. Scenarios 3 and 4 postulate internal heterogenous associations, thus their external connectedness (3) is less important for the experience of diversity and their bridging function.

Overall, the influence of ethnic social capital cannot be assessed in a general way. Based on the evidence presented in this paper, we have to differentiate between different institutional settings with consequently different configurations in civil society: liberal systems need a relatively integrated civil society regarding ethnicity, i.e. internally mixed associations, and consociational systems need an ethnically segregated civil society, yet under the condition that the ethnic associations are at least connected to each other and their elite integrated into the encompassing power structure. Thus, for an encompassing political community to be persistent certain bridges in civil society have to be built, but between which actors, groups and associations depends on the kind of democracy at stake.

In normative respect, the expectations postulated by the liberal and the consociational model of democracy concerning the influence of ethnically shaped engagement have to be further differentiated. Since the liberal consensus is based on its legitimacy accepted by all members of the political community, processes of subnational community formation are then not negative for democracy if they serve to represent the interests of subordinated groups marginalized by the dominant culture – even if in the short-run this might have contra-productive consequences for the cohesion of the encompassing political community. Wherever grievances exist, they first have to be discovered and articulated. ‘Protected enclaves of resistance’ (Rosenblum 1998) help disadvantaged groups to strengthen their self-respect and to define their interests and positions. Usually their fight against discrimination is successful only collectively. When power relations between groups are more equal, there is also a greater likelihood that groups can limit or re-internalize costs that other groups seek to impose. Since justice is lastly the postulated aim of the liberal consensus, such battles are especially necessary when cultural and socio-economic cleavages overlap. The more such battles over recognition are brought into public, and the more individuals and groups concerned are included in public judgement on an equal footing, the bigger the chance that they are civilized and settled by a general perspective.

In consociational theory political integration is achieved via the detour of ethnic communities only if at least the elites of ethnic associations are willing to cooperate and integrated into the majority society. In order to mediate this integration further down, the positions formulated by the elites have to be representative for their community for which a certain extent of collective identity and cohesion within the ethnic group is necessary. Conflicts about recognition which always emerge have to be settled within such communities (see Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev 2005), the extent of internal democracy is therefore decisive. The necessary consultation between elites and basis is given the better they are organized. Then representatives can be held accountable as well as sensitized for changed concerns. Furthermore

they can only offer access to their weak ties to other communities and thus function as bridges if they are well connected to their constituency.

Thus the differentiations necessary for evaluating the influence of ethnic associations on civil peace depend on the institutional context and concern on the one hand power relations between ethnic communities and especially the relationship between recognition and redistribution, and on the other hand the extent of organisation and the strength of ties between elite and basis of these communities; thus mainly relational aspects between and within ethnic communities are decisive (Table 5).

Table 5: Influence of ethnic associations on civil peace and democracy

| | <i>Evaluation of the influence</i> | <i>Additional differentiations</i> |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Liberal democracy | Fragmentation and desolidarisation among citizens | Depending on the power relations between ethnic groups and the extent of public contention over the (re-)constitution of justice |
| Consociational democracy | Self-respect of subcultures enables their integration | Depending on internal power relations, degree of organisation and strength of ties to the elites and their integration in the political community |

If in contrast to the conditions just specified intra-ethnic processes of organisation stay unconnected to other associations or to the surrounding society, the conflict potential increases considerably. Existing prejudices remain intact, distrust is virulent and already small rumors might seriously endanger civil peace. In a multi-ethnic society without ties across ethnic boundaries an encompassing sense of community is not fostered, which is a fruitful psychological soil for any instrumentalisation of ethnic loyalties for particular interests at the cost of the persistence of an encompassing political community. In such a context politicians are often seduced to play the ‘ethnic card’ and to agitate groups against each other, lastly entering into a vicious cycle of violent forms of conflict management. Liberal as well as consociational democracies focus mainly on political institutions in order to impede such a vicious cycle. The analysis in this paper however demonstrated that they both depend to a considerably bigger extent than foreseen in the normative models – and each in its own way – on the engagement of citizens. Such engagement empowers people, either directly within the encompassing political community or via the detour of the ethnic community which in turn ensures civil peace and democracy in the long run. Since as for social capital in general, whether ethnic social capital in particular functions as good or bad “depends upon the degree of democracy, not only for the normative resources involved in the very distinction itself, but also as a structural and institutional matter, that is, whether people are empowered to pressure, bargain, and persuade as ways of resisting negative externalities” (Warren 2008: 142).

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