1 Introduction

Migrant politics is as old as migration itself. Leaders in receiving societies (and later, nation-states) have generally been sceptical – if not hostile – towards political loyalties and involvements that defied their territorial borders. At present, we witness such host country anxiety over migrants' 'integration' and activities that may contravene its political and security interests.

Regardless of whether such concerns are justified – they are often based on unsystematic and patchy evidence, to say the least – there has been growing scholarly interest in the political involvement of migrants. Again, much of this work has focused on migrants' political 'integration' into receiving societies – for example, on their political awareness, participation and voting patterns. At the same time, it has become clear that at least a sub-group of migrants – including members of the second generation – continue to maintain political ties to their country of origin in a wide range of forms. They engage in what can be called transnational migrant politics.

Despite the growing interest, at least three serious gaps remain in our understanding of transnational migrant politics. First, it is far from clear how migrants' transnational political activities and ties to the homeland relate to political 'integration' in the country of settlement. Is there a trade-off between the two, as is often suggested in popular debate? Do they swing free of each other? Or do they perhaps reinforce each other after all?

Second, there is little systematic knowledge on transnational migrant politics even when viewed apart from political integration. Why are some migrant groups more involved than others? Why do different groups have different organisational structures, within the country of settlement as well as for contacts with the country of origin? In short, there is insufficient knowledge of the individual, social and political factors that shape transnational migrant politics in its diverse manifestations.

Finally, popular debate is pervaded by the amorphous feeling that 'globalisation' – in particular, easier cross-border communication – has spurred transnational involvements and loyalties, the internet forums that have sprung up over the past decade to reconnect diasporas being but one manifestation. The sense is that transnational migrant politics is on the rise. At the same time, any such trend may be counterbalanced by the progressive weakening of migrants' transnational ties as their stay in host countries

lengthens, and many let go of plans to 'return'. This is particularly true of migration that followed in the wake of decolonisation and labour migration to Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. By now, many migrant families have raised a second generation born in the country of settlement, and it is far from clear whether, in net terms, the passing of time has seen transnational migrant politics increase or decrease.

These three gaps in our knowledge of transnational migrant politics are central in this book and provide its three guiding questions:

- What explains the emergence and development of transnational migrant politics?
- How has transnational political participation evolved over time, particularly in light of globalised communications and the coming to age of a second generation in countries of settlement?
- How does migrants' political integration in receiving societies impact on political transnationalism and vice versa?

This book ventures to answer these questions through a study of the transnational political participation of migrants from Surinam and Turkey and their descendents in the Netherlands over a period of roughly 50 years.

While the literature on migrant 'transnationalism' and 'diaspora' has blossomed over the past two decades, there is no agreement among scholars even on the meaning of these terms. Some view transnationalism as a new trend in a globalising world; others think it is a new word for an old phenomenon. Some argue that globalisation is encouraging transnational ties and activities; others claim these will diminish as migrants integrate within receiving societies. This introductory chapter recounts the relevant academic debates and the key terms used in this book that provide an analytical framework to orient the study's empirical core.

Transnationalism in migration studies

Migrant politics relating to the homeland has been a focus of studies on diaspora (Armstrong 1976; Sheffer 1986) and long-distance nationalism (Anderson 1992a, 1992b, 1994). Though the diaspora concept was developed around the third century BC to describe Jews living in exile (Marienstras 1989), the term traditionally also referred to other groups expelled from their 'homeland' (Braziel & Mannur 2003). More recently, the diaspora concept has been extended to cover groups in exile as well as immigrants, expatriates, guest workers, overseas and ethnic communities (Tölöyan 1991). A new wave of literature has attempted to redefine diaspora and classify its many instances (see among others Safran 1991; Clifford 1994; Cohen 1995, 1996; Laguerre 1999; Koser 2003b; Sheffer 2003; Van Amersfoort 2004), making the concept at once more inclusive

but analytically less useful (Vertovec & Cohen 1999; Van Amersfoort 2001). This book uses the concept in its limited, political meaning – a group that considers its 'homeland' occupied and wants to 'return' to establish a state.

Conversely, the concept of long-distance nationalism applies to people who have a state to identify with. It includes groups that have migrated for economic reasons, fled from war or political oppression and continue to have strong feelings towards their place of origin. Such sentiment can be found among Irish nationalist supporters of the IRA living out their lives as ethnic Irish in the United States, as well as among Jamaicans in London, Turks in Berlin and Jews in New York (after the establishment of the state of Israel). Anderson argues that these groups are formed by a new type of nationalist – the 'long-distance nationalist' without formal opportunities to participate in homeland politics.

> While technically a citizen of the state in which he comfortably lives, but to which he may feel little attachment, he finds it tempting to play identity politics by participating (via propaganda, money, weapons, any way but voting) in the conflicts of his imagined *Heimat* – now only fax-time away. But this citizenshipless participation is inevitably non-responsible – our hero will not have to answer for, or pay the price of, the long-distance politics he undertakes. He is also easy prey for shrewd political manipulators in his *Heimat*. (Anderson 1992b: 13)

Turkish migrants in the Netherlands who retain Turkish nationality, however, can vote in Turkey. And in the period under study, Surinam and Turkey have experienced only limited periods of conflict; at present, these homelands are safely accessible and not necessarily 'imagined'. The *Heimat* becomes *real* when migrants travel back and forth between home and host countries and engage in numerous daily activities related to homeland politics – discussions with relatives over the telephone, cultural immigrant organisations inviting their hometown mayor for special occasions – that do not fall under the banner of long-distance nationalism.

Migrants' daily political activities that take place in both home and host countries simultaneously are a form of transnationalism. International relations scholars used the term 'transnational' to conceptualise the border-crossing contacts of non-state actors such as NGOs (Nye & Keohane 1971; more recently see Anderson 2002; Tarrow 2005). It was only in the 1990s that the concept of transnationalism became en vogue to explain migrants' ties with the homeland (for a complete overview of the development of the term see Vertovec & Cohen 1999; Vertovec 2003, 2009; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2006; Khagram & Levitt 2008; Bauböck & Faist 2010). These studies understood transnationalism as 'the processes by which

immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement' (Basch, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994: 7).

Transnationalism thus includes those cultural, economic and social relations with the homeland previously researched in studies on return migration (Cerase 1974; Gmelch 1980; Bovenkerk 1982) and chain migration (Price 1963 cited in Van Amersfoort 2001; Massey & Espinosa 1997). It also encompasses economic activities such as remittances and political practices such as the mobilisation of migrants by homeland political parties. Accordingly, transnationalism in migration studies covers a broad spectrum of border-crossing activities. As a subset of these, Østergaard-Nielsen defines transnational *political* activities as

> direct cross-border participation in the politics of their country of origin by both migrants and refugees […] as well as their indirect participation via the political institutions of the host country. (2003d: 762)

For the host state, migrant politics is transnational only when it has a clear homeland or diaspora component. This is the case when homeland actors are directly or indirectly involved and/or the interests refer to homeland issues. For example, the appearance of a book on Turkish ultranationalists, the so-called Grey Wolves, in the Netherlands and their ties to the ultranationalist party MHP in Turkey (Braam & Ülger 1997) raised questions in Dutch parliament about the government's role in facilitating these ties. Measures followed to monitor the influence of the MHP and other foreign parties on Turkish migrant organisations, some of which then lost their subsidies. In this example, migrant politics became transnational because homeland *actors* were assumed to be involved. An example of a homeland *issue* rendering migrant politics transnational is lobbying by Armenian and Lebanese Americans to influence US foreign policy – homeland actors are not necessarily involved. Without any of these homeland components one may speak of immigrant politics.

For the sending state, transnational politics requires a host country component where its former citizens and descendents abroad are directly or indirectly involved and/or the interests refer to an issue in the host country. When Turkish organisations in Germany mobilise support for a political party to compete in Turkish elections, former citizens abroad are involved in transnational politics. Issues involve the host country when, for example, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan stated in Germany in 2008 that Turkish migrants should not assimilate. Without these host country components, politics is domestic.

Finally, migrant transnational politics on a supranational level comprise both host country *and* homeland components, be they actors or issues. An

example is joint lobbying in Brussels by Alevis from Turkey and Turkish Alevis living in Europe to promote their rights in Turkey. If supranational politics has none of these host or homeland components, it may still be transnational in international relations scholarship but not in transnational migration studies.

The debate on the influence of globalisation on transnationalism raises a central question: what's new about transnationalism? Basch et al. (1994) argue that migrants have created a 'transnational social field' between their countries of origin and settlement. Their continuous crossing of borders has 'deterritorialised' the nation-state so that a '"nation's" people may live anywhere around the world and still not live outside the state' (Basch et al. 1994: 269; see also Appadurai 1991). In such a 'deterritorialised' setting, immigrants are the vanguard of a new era of post-national or transnational citizenship (Soysal 1994). The emergence of rights backed by supranational institutions – such as human rights by the European Union – is seen by post-nationalists like Soysal as a process limiting the role of states.

More recently, scholars have argued that transnational citizenship often entails 'dual' or 'multiple' citizenships – but a citizenship still grounded in enforceable rights and clearly bounded memberships (Fox 2005: 194; see also Faist & Kivisto 2007; Kivisto & Faist 2007). Others have argued that while some supranational institutions do champion rights, state actors retain great influence in the international and supranational arenas (Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy 2005: 74-106). The present study follows Kearney, who argues that though

> global processes are largely decentred from specific national territories and take place in a global space, transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation-states. (1995: 548)

Far from being deterritorialised or global, then, transnational processes remain bounded by nation-states.

With the above in mind, the question arises whether processes of globalisation have increased the intensity and scope of transnational activity. Access to air travel, the internet and mobile phones allow migrants to extend and deepen their contacts not only with the 'home country' but with members of the community anywhere in the world (see among others Vertovec 2004b). This has produced a global imagination of 'home' that affects both migrants and those who stay behind. Globalisation, some scholars argue, has made today's transnationalism substantially different from transnationalism in the past (see among others Smith 1998; Van der Veer 2002; Vertovec 2004a). Return visits and contact with the country of origin have become routine and regular, while the incidence and scope of transnational activity will only expand because 'immigrant transnationalism is not driven by ideological reasons but by the very logic of global capitalism'

(Portes 2001: 187; see also Guarnizo, Portes & Haller 2003). Other scholars claim that while it may have been harder to sustain contacts across oceans in the past, immigrants seldom cut ties and allegiances to those left behind – the ties just became fewer and thinner (Foner 2001: 49).

Yet, scholars have argued that processes of globalisation have facilitated the emergence of transnational communities (see among others Levitt 2001; Mandaville 2001; Pries 2001; Faist 2004). A transnational community, however, is difficult to operationalise – it implies a collective transnational identity shaping migrant behaviour (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002) and disappears if analytically divided into its component parts (Carroll & Fennema 2002). Because of the homogeneity it assumes, focusing on transnational communities will likely overlook those activities that are more dispersed, fragmented or less institutionalised (Al-Ali, Black & Koser 2001a; Al-Ali 2002). In other words, the approach implies that transnational activities affect the whole transnational community (migrants in the country of settlement as well as those who stayed in the country of origin); it does not allow for the study of diversity within groups to see who is politically active, and why. The current study relies on the concepts of transnational ties and activities to capture and explain such involvement – which will enable us to gain insight into diversity within migrant groups over time.

In the past decade, researchers have focused on how transnationalism is reproduced among second- and third-generation migrants (Guarnizo & Smith 1998; Levitt & Waters 2002; Smith 2006). Some have argued that the first generation's attachments to the homeland are likely to be absorbed by their children and grandchildren due to the permanent contact between generations (Itzigsohn 2000; Levitt 2009). Fouron & Glick Schiller (2001) – who argue that ties between emigrants and non-migrants construct transnational identities both at home and abroad – have even called for a redefinition of 'second generation' to include all those in the homeland and the country of settlement who have grown up in 'transnational social fields' since the beginning of the migration process. Though their empirical evidence is impressive (it covers a period of 30 years in Haiti and the US), the question is whether their conclusion applies to other cases.

Another longitudinal study by Rumbaut (2002) was based on a decade-long survey comparing second-generation transnational attachments among seven migrant groups in San Diego. Fewer than 10 per cent of the second generation appeared to make their parents' attachments their own. Similarly, a survey (though not longitudinal) on the second generation of five migrant groups in New York found that robust transnational activities were confined to a small minority, and were likely to become less significant over time (Kasinitz, Waters, Mollenkopf & Anil 2002). The impact of this minority, however, should not be underestimated.

> The presence of a transnational minority among the second generation probably ensures that structural ties between the home

> countries and diaspora communities in New York will endure as the second generation comes to age. Such structural ties will be available to be revitalized when and if historical circumstances dictate. (Kasinitz et al. 2002: 119)

To support their conclusion, the authors refer to a small minority within New York's Irish community that continued its involvement in Irish nationalism into the fourth and fifth generations. Vague ethnic sentiment turned into material support for the IRA when interest in Ireland among Irish Americans rose during the 'Troubles' of the late 1960s and 1970s. A similar pattern could be observed among a small minority of New York Jews with sustained transnational connections; they have played a vital role in mobilising support for Israel since the 1967 war (ibid.).

Kasinitz et al. conclude that the majority of migrants who are not – or are only weakly – attached to the homeland 'are clearly here to stay' (2002: 117). This leads to the second discussion related to the time factor. Scholars generally argue that over time, migrants become increasingly likely to integrate or assimilate. The question is how integration affects transnational involvement – or conversely, how transnational involvement influences integration (see also Fibbi & D'Amato, 2008).

In studying the transnational activities of different groups in the US, Guarnizo et al. (2003: 1239) and Portes, Escobar and Radford (2007: 276) found migrants involved in transnational activities to be better-educated, longer-term residents of the host society active in local politics. Likewise, Snel, Engbersen and Leerkes (2006) in their comparative study of individual transnational involvement in the Netherlands found no indication of transnational activity undermining integration:

> More highly educated respondents and respondents with jobs engage in just as many transnational activities… as the poorly educated, unemployed respondents on social security. (Snel et al. 2006: 304)

Nevertheless, Koopmans et al. (2005: 142) in a comparative study of migrants in several European countries found that on a collective level, migrant homeland-directed activism often takes violent forms. Strong homeland orientations are therefore, they argue, detrimental to their integration.

Although their findings differ, the above studies have one thing in common. Their understanding of integration above all emphasises migrants' social, cultural and economic integration in countries of settlement (the general indicators being labour market participation and the acquisition of education and language skills). One of the central questions of this study, however, is how transnational politics affects migrants' *political* integration in countries of settlement – and vice versa. In this context, following Bauböck, Kraler, Martiniello and Perchinig (2006), political integration

encompasses access to political status, rights, opportunities and representation for immigrants and to an equalisation of these conditions between native and immigrant populations. But political integration is also about migrants' activities and participation and their acceptance of the laws and institutional values that 'integrate' a political system. The political integration of immigrants can be broken down into four dimensions:

> political rights, identification, norms and values, and participation. The more rights they enjoy […] the more they participate and are represented in the political system, the better integrated they are. (Bauböck et al. 2006: 66-67)

The current study focuses on two dimensions of political integration: political rights and political participation. Both are part of the political opportunity structure consisting of laws, policies and discourses that formally include or exclude migrants from full citizenship. Political rights include passive and active electoral rights (voting or running for office). Political participation refers to the more active dimension of citizenship and covers activities such as protests, demonstrations, sit-ins, etc. These extra-parliamentary forms of political participation 'generally presuppose the formation of a collective actor characterised by a shared identity and some degree of organisation through a mobilization process' (Bauböck et al. 2006: 86).

How do national and transnational political participation influence one another? Some studies have shown that transnational political participation goes hand in hand with political participation – and thus political integration – in the host country. Morawska (2003: 161-165), for example, argues that incorporation in local politics in the receiving society often runs parallel to greater political involvement in the country of origin; they can be – and often are – successfully combined (see also Pantoja 2005; Levitt 2007).

Political integration, however, is not restricted to issues relating to the country of residence. There are numerous examples of diaspora groups that in response to homeland political developments have attempted to influence foreign policy in the country of settlement (see among others Weil 1974; Garett 1978; Arthur 1991; Jusdanis 1991; Shain 1999). Not all agree this is a good thing. Huntington (1997), for instance, has argued that American foreign policy has come to be unduly dominated by minority migrant interests. More positively, Mathias (1981) argues that such interests would otherwise be overlooked. Either way, migrant groups being able to work the political system to the point of being able to influence foreign policy is in and of itself a type of political integration; certain types of transnational political activity thus seem to facilitate political integration.

The emergence and evolution of transnational politics

What explains the emergence and evolution of transnational migrant politics? When examining the political dimension of transnationalism, many scholars underline the importance of political opportunity structures in both home and host countries which refer to:

> institutional opportunities in the form of chances of access and influence of citizens in the decision-making process (institutional openness versus closure) and material reactions of authorities to challengers (repression or facilitation of mobilization). (Koopmans et al. 2005: 17)

These dimensions of the political environment that encourage or discourage collective action are not necessarily formal, permanent or national. It is, indeed, changes within them that provide openings for resource-poor actors to engage in collective action.

The political opportunity structure of the host country covers its integration policies, in particular, the extent to which they encourage or discourage migrants' full participation in the political arena. It includes:

> national asylum regimes; provisos around visas, citizenship, voting, residency, naturalization, and other aspects of legal status; sources of and access to bodies of information of migrant incorporation…; access to legal representation; labor union membership and activity and the organisation of local ethnic or hometown associations for migrant assistance. (Vertovec 2003: 654)

The political opportunity structure of the host country may or may not allow migrants equal opportunities to participate in local politics. There are different levels of institutionalised consultation with migrant groups; governments also influence community organising by providing or withholding resources, for example, by subsidising specific activities or supporting certain models of community organisation. The more political rights and access to political gatekeepers such as labour unions, political parties and NGOs that migrants enjoy, the more they will channel their activities into the political system of the receiving country (see Soysal 1994; Doomernik 1995). The basic issue is the type of citizenship a country bestows on its migrants (Koopmans & Statham 2003) – citizenship being those practices (juridical, political, economic and cultural) that define a person as a competent member of society and thus the flow of resources to persons and social groups (Turner 1993). Citizenship acquisition, free movement and rights for non-citizens (Vink 2002) are thus central issues within migrant transnational politics.

Some scholars argue that open political opportunity structures in receiving countries encourage migrant transnational activity (Faist 2000: 214). Others predict the very opposite: that political opportunity structures open to migrant participation will create fewer occasions for transnational activity (see Koopmans & Statham 2003). For the latter, strong transnational orientations are 'responses to traditional, exclusionary citizenship regimes that put high barriers to migrants' access to the political community' (Koopmans et al. 2005: 143; see also Goldring 1998: 170; Khagram, Riker & Sikkink 2002: 19).

The political opportunity structure in the country of origin refers to political rights that enable the political participation of settled migrants, emigrants and circular and return migrants. Political rights can exist in the form of dual nationality, the right to vote from overseas or the right to run for public office (see also Nyberg Sørensen 1998: 263; Levitt & De la Dehesa 2003: 589-598). In some cases homeland governments have institutionalised attempts to stimulate or weaken emigrants' economic, social or political input (Freeman & Ögelman 1998; Laguerre 1999; Itzigsohn 2000; Mahler 2000; Howard 2003; Koser 2003b; Martínez-Saldaña 2003; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003f; Smith 2008). Institutional provisions may include assistance to migrant communities through ministries and consulates, as well as programmes that go beyond traditional consular services such as literacy training and primary and secondary schooling for adults. Transnational activities can be perceived as threatening in countries of origin as well (see Guarnizo 1997; Bauböck 2003, 2008). Turkey, for example, passed a law prohibiting organisations in Europe from financing Turkish political parties (Amiraux 2003). Nor do attempts to broaden political opportunity structures for present or former citizens abroad always have the intended effect: the prevalence of dual citizenship and overseas voting appear to be universally low (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a: 223; Rubio-Marín 2006: 146).

Sending countries' policies towards emigrants and migrant communities in destination countries can span a wide range of areas from political relations and national security to bilateral agreements on pension schemes for retirees (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a). Levitt and De la Dehesa (2003: 589-598) have distinguished the types of policies states can implement, from those that aim to channel remittances (see also Koser 2003a; Kearney & Besserer 2004; Fitzgerald 2005) to symbolic policies designed to reinforce a sense of enduring national membership. While these measures are directed at individual emigrants or the migrant community in the country of residence, policies can also target emigrants visiting the homeland and returnees, for example, those that try to stimulate a 'brain gain' (Baldwin 1963; Zweig 1996; Thomas-Hope 1999; Arowolo 2000; Ley & Kobayashi 2005). Not all instances of the sending state reaching out to the emigrant community are captured in policy. In a less structured way, Turkey has encouraged

migrants in Europe to lobby in favour of Turkish EU membership (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003f). Again, measures to shape emigrant behaviour can have unintended effects (Guarnizo, Sánchez & Roach 1999: 390; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a: 223; Margheritis 2007), a notable example being Mexico's attempts to regulate emigration to the US and return migration to Mexico (Goldring 1998).

Based on the political opportunities they allow emigrants, Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004: 1023-1024) have identified three broad categories of sending states. The first, transnational nation-states, treat their emigrants as long-term, long-distance members. States such as El Salvador and the Dominican Republic have become so dependent on remittances that emigrant contributions and participation have become an integral part of national policy. The second and more common type are strategically selective states that encourage certain forms of transnational participation but aim to manage what migrants can and cannot do. On the one hand, they want to maintain homeland involvement among emigrants, who they recognise are unlikely to return. On the other hand, they want to maintain some level of control over emigrants' homeland ties. Such states, Levitt and Glick Schiller argue, offer partial and changing packages of privileges to migrants, encouraging long-distance membership but never granting the legal rights of citizenship or nationality. Haiti, India and Turkey have all tried to obtain support from populations abroad without granting full participation in internal political activities (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004: 1024). The third type of state is the disinterested and denouncing state. Such states (such as Cuba) treat migrants as if they no longer belong to the homeland.

> Any overtures migrants make vis a vis their ancestral home are viewed as suspect because migrants are seen as having abandoned the homeland or even as traitors to its cause. (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004: 1024)

Diplomatic relations relevant to my study are those between labour-exporting and labour-importing countries and those between former imperial powers and their ex-colonies; continued peaceful relations between countries is also obviously important. When two states share an interest in retaining migrants' ties to their homeland, they may sponsor the activities of sending-country organisations in the country of settlement (Koopmans et al. 2005: 111-113). Diplomatic relations in this way influence political opportunity structures, at least in the country of residence.

Diplomatic relations on a broader level may offer migrants an additional venue – an international political opportunity structure – for collective action. Whereas national political opportunity structures refer to states, the international political opportunity structure is a

> composite of a number of International Governmental Organisations… like the UN, the EU… establishing a number of formal treaties, international regimes… as well as sometimes, structures of norms and values. (Van der Heijden 2006: 32)

One of the main reasons transnational actors turn to the international arena is to influence domestic regimes (Hawkins 2002: 47). Migrants' claims may be more specific than 'universal rights' and may appeal directly to particular paragraphs within UN or EU human rights treaties, for example, Kurdish organisations when appealing for minority rights.

The organisation of migrant civil society in both the homeland and country of settlement can facilitate transnational activity. The density or fragmentation of organisational networks will likely determine the success of collective action. Studies have been conducted in the Netherlands on the network structures of the most important migrant groups, including Turks and Surinamese (Van Heelsum, Tillie & Fennema 1999; Van Heelsum & Voorthuysen 2002). Combined with secondary literature on civil society structures in countries of origin, they enable us to study the impact of such national network structures on the evolution of transnational ties.

In addition to the political opportunity structure and migrant civil society, the overall political climate plays a role. In homelands in conflict, independence movements mobilise support among settled emigrants and refugees in diaspora (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003b: 6-8). Intra-ethnic conflicts, foreign occupation, civil war and dictatorships all motivate homeland-directed activities among migrants (see Al-Ali et al. 2001a: 595; Koopmans et al. 2005: 111-113; Collyer 2008; Turner 2008).

The political climate in home and host countries affects migration motives. Migration motives may have an economic or political basis – economic malaise and armed conflicts in the homeland, labour shortages and the political will to accept refugees in the receiving country. Whereas labour migrants more often transfer money back home, political refugees are more often involved in transnational politics (Snel et al. 2006). Many of these exiles are in a continuous struggle to bring about the conditions that will allow their eventual return (Shain 2005 [1989]: xix). Migration motives thus have a great influence on transnational activities; Al-Ali, Black and Koser (2001b) state that forced migration can lead to 'forced transnationalism'.

Finally, much has already been stated about length of stay. In some cases, however, generation and length of stay are not chronological within the same migrant group (see Eckstein 2002; Eckstein & Barberia 2002). Though migration from Turkey and Surinam to the Netherlands is ongoing, we can nevertheless follow Vermeulen (2006) in distinguishing three general phases of settlement. The first is a period of adjustment and orientation when migrants are often confident about returning home. The second is

that of 'increased adaptation': migrants still hope to return one day but their lives are increasingly enmeshed – a second generation has been born and raised – in the host society. In the third phase, adaptation becomes more permanent: the first generation grows older and the second generation reaches maturity. In this phase, Vermeulen (2006: 177) argues, migrant organisations focus more on issues related to their stay in the Netherlands while links with the homeland weaken.

These factors should not be seen in isolation. Diplomatic relations may shape migration motives, migration motives are influenced by political opportunity structures, transnational activities will change with the political climate in host and home countries. Their relative importance will vary from case to case and over time.

Transnational actors, activities and ties

The structural determinants of transnational politics remain inadequately understood. Crucially, this is due to a lack of *comparative* scholarship in the field, which has limited the scope for generalisation and an evaluation of different factors' relative importance to explain the varying patterns of migrant political transnationalism. To be sure, several quantitative studies have emphasised comparison (Engbersen, Snel, Leerkes & Van San 2003; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Koopmans & Statham 2003; Koopmans et al. 2005; Snel et al.; Portes et al. 2007). Their analytical focus, however, has been on transnational activities, and not on the ties and social structures that underlie the 'visible' side of transnational politics. There are, however, good reasons to believe that a deeper understanding of political transnationalism requires a more thorough analysis of the emergence, development and decline of the ties that individuals and collective actors maintain.

While comparative research on transnational migrant politics is indispensable to gain inferential leverage over the various factors that shape it, the research also clearly benefits from qualitative analysis (see also Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004: 1012-1013). Mapping the transnational political ties of migrants and their organisations requires extensive knowledge of particular histories. Precisely because of the political nature of these activities and ties, migrants may have incentives to be cautious in sharing information, for example, with journalists and government authorities. Political migrant organisations may likewise use the facade of apolitical cultural associations to conceal ties with radical movements in home countries. In short, there may be more to transnational politics and the ties underlying them than initially meets the eye, requiring robust qualitative components within comparative research.

In spite of the increasing attention transnational politics has received over the years, the object of inquiry remains disputed and vague. Different authors have focused on transnational 'identities', 'fields', 'spaces', migrants' public pronouncements, networks between organisations and a range of other indicators. Only very rarely have different facets of transnational political involvement been distinguished, let alone conceptualised in relation to one another.

This study distinguishes between transnational actors, transnational activities and transnational ties. The underlying hypothesis is that the ties between actors are crucial for channelling and structuring transnational political activity, even if they often remain invisible to the casual observer. In the following sections I clarify the distinctions and relationships between transnational actors, their activities and the ties that exist between the actors. The distinctions are important as an exclusive focus on any one of them generates a skewed picture.

Transnational actors

Transnational actors may participate on the individual, collective and state levels (see Penninx 2009). We obviously want a clear picture of who is involved. But apart from some recent comparative quantitative studies (Engbersen et al. 2003; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Koopmans & Statham 2003; Koopmans et al. 2005; Snel et al. 2006; Portes et al. 2007), most empirical research on migrant transnationalism relies on single qualitative case studies that 'document in detail the characteristics of the immigrants involved in transnational activities but say little about those who are not' (Portes, Guarnizo & Haller 2002: 279; see also Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004). This creates two biases. First, such studies generally focus on activities that are highly institutionalised; second, they are likely to exaggerate the number of people involved (Mahler 1998; Itzigsohn et al. 1999).

Individual actors

Three types of individual actors are involved in transnational political activity: migrants, return migrants and non-migrants. Migrants settled in receiving societies often channel their financial and social capital towards the home country. Among return migrants, I focus on so-called 'returnees of innovation' who hope to contribute to the home country's development by making use of skills acquired during their sojourn (Cerase 1974). Not all returnees return permanently. Some re-emigrate while others return occasionally, seasonally or temporarily (see Gmelch 1980; Duval 2004). Non-migrants who remain in the home country can make or break transnational ties, acting as gatekeepers who determine the success or failure of transnational activities (Nell 2008).

Transnational political participation among individuals cannot be divorced from the organisation of migrant civil society because, as Kriesi (1993) argues, collective structures provide individuals with opportunities for participation.

> At any given point in time, overt participation in political campaigns is a rare event in the lives of individual citizens. Most of the time, most of them do not get involved in politics, even if they have a considerable potential to do so…. In order to mobilize, one also needs an *opportunity* to do so. Without an opportunity to mobilize, one's potential remains latent. A group of citizens may be very concerned about a given situation and they may be ready to act collectively. But if they are unaware of their mutual concern, they will not act accordingly. If there is no one taking the initiative, no collective actor organizing a campaign to articulate their concern, our citizens have no opportunity to get actively involved. (Kriesi 1993: 9)

This underlines the importance of studying individuals' embeddedness in civil society.

Collective actors

Migrant organisations, NGOs and political parties are the main actors at the collective level. They include migrant or ethnic organisations in the country of residence, religious, socio-cultural and political organisations in the country of origin and homeland political parties that fundraise and offer active emigrants administrative or political functions in the country of origin or, in cases of dual nationality, campaign for votes (Glick Schiller & Fouron 1998; Graham 2001; Amiraux 2003; Argun 2003; Levitt & De la Dehesa 2003; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003e; Smith & Bakker 2005; Nell 2008c).

Elites in both countries are important actors at the collective level. By 'elites' I mean 'corporate' elites – those who, by their position as directors of organisations, publicly represent groups (Davis & Greve 1997). While they do not necessarily work in the name of the collectivity, their status can mobilise the rank and file.

State actors

The main actors at the state level are governments and state institutions. Sending states are increasingly aware of the economic importance of transnationally active migrants while receiving states are also beginning to appreciate the value of relations with migrants' countries of origin.

States may react positively or negatively to transnational political activities and thereby shape them. Local governments of receiving states may

provide specific programmes to solve common problems that result from emigration, return and circular migration (Nell 2007), while governments in both sending and receiving countries may implement policies to encourage or hinder transnational activities.

Transnational activities

Scholars have attempted to classify transnational activities by differentiating between economic, social-cultural and political activities, and whether these take place in the home or host country (Portes, Guarnizo & Landholt 1999: 222; Al-Ali et al. 2001b: 618-626; Portes 2001: 187). Economic activities include remittances to, and investments in, the homeland as well as donations to migrant organisations with a homeland focus. Transnational social-cultural activities include visiting friends and family, participating in online discussions, and the exchange of theatre groups and museum exhibits. An example of a transnational political activity is participation in homeland elections (see Al-Ali et al. 2001b: 619).

The distinction between economic, socio-cultural and political activities is an analytical one, for in reality they overlap (see Van Amersfoort 2001; Martiniello & Bousetta 2008; Martiniello & LaFleur 2008). Likewise, scholars have shown that transnational religious networks play an important role in political mobilisation (Schiffauer 1999; Levitt 2001; Mandaville 2001; see also Karam 2004; Solari 2006; Levitt 2007, 2008). Thus, migrants may use existing cultural, social and religious resources and institutionalised channels to achieve political goals.

To examine the durability of transnational activities, we need to assess their degree of institutionalisation. Activities are institutionalised when they become predictable, constant and structured (see Beerling 1978 cited in Penninx 1988). Activities are highly institutionalised when they are held on an organised and regular basis – for example, annual festivals and congresses, weekly discussion groups governed by written or unwritten rules and norms of attendance.

Activities can further be distinguished by whether they are initiated and institutionalised from 'above' or 'below'. Institutionalised political initiatives from above include governments allowing migrants to be elected to home country legislatures; initiatives from below include fundraising for hometown civic committees among migrants (Table 1.1).

Transnational activities can take five general directions and one specific direction (Table 1.2). The first type is transplanted homeland politics, where, for example, conflicts between ethnic or political groups in the homeland are transplanted to the immigrant community (Koopmans et al. 2005: 126-127). This happened in the Netherlands in the 1980s when members of leftwing and rightwing Turkish movements violently opposed one another – in the same way and for similar reasons as did their

Table 1.1 *Transnational activities and their degree of institutionalisation*

	Economic	*Political*	*Socio-cultural*
Low institutionalisation	Informal trade between home and host country	Home town civic communities created by migrants	Amateur sports matches between home and host country
	Small businesses created by returned migrants	Alliances of immigrant committees with home country political associations	Homeland folk music groups giving presentations at immigrant centres
	Circular international labour migration	Fundraisers for home country electoral candidates	Priests from hometown visit and organise parishioners abroad
	Investments by multinationals in the homeland mediated by migrants	Consular officials and representatives of national political parties abroad	Imams sent by homeland institutions to visit and preach in migrant mosques
	Development of tourist locations in the homeland by migrants	Dual nationality granted by home country governments	Home country major artists perform in countries where their former co-citizens live
High institutionalisation	Home country banks in immigrant centres	Migrants elected to home country legislatures	Regular cultural events organised by home country embassies

Source: Adapted version of 'different spheres of transnationalism' in Portes et al. (1999)

Table 1.2 *Typology of transnational political activities*

General type	*Example*
Transplanted homeland politics	Homeland political conflicts are transplanted to the host country
Transplanted immigrant politics	Organisations set up in the host country are transplanted to the country of origin
Homeland-directed politics	Host country-based groups support or oppose groups or institutions in the homeland
Diaspora politics	Homeland-directed politics among groups without a homeland or who consider their homeland occupied
Country of residence-directed transnational politics	Homeland-based actors set up institutions for their former-nationals in the host country
Subset	*Example*
Locally specific	When any of the above are directed to a specific locality, e.g. district, town, village

compatriots in Turkey (Penninx 1980). We witness transplanted homeland politics when specific views held by homeland political parties or states enter politics in the country of settlement. The 2006 national elections in the Netherlands provided a clear example: during the campaign, a Labour Party (PvdA) candidate of Turkish origin claimed that the Armenian genocide had never taken place. The official viewpoint of the Turkish state conflicted with the official view of the PvdA; the candidate was eventually forced to withdraw his candidacy but was praised by Turkish officials.

The second type is transplanted immigrant politics, likely to emerge when migrants return to the homeland with skills and ideas acquired in the host country (Nell 2008). For instance, Ivorian elites who had been involved in French student movements used their political experience to create opposition political parties after returning to the Ivory Coast (Ammassari 2004: 147).

The third type is homeland-directed transnational politics when migrants in the country of settlement direct their activities towards the home country. Homeland-directed politics generally consists of attempts to improve the legal, economic, and political status of particular groups in the homeland. Such support may take place in either the host country or in the country of origin. Migrant organisations may petition the host country government to intervene directly on behalf of group interests in the homeland (Koopmans et al. 2005: 127), or try to influence homeland foreign and domestic policy via the foreign policy of the host country (see Danforth 1994; Østergaard-Nielsen 2001; Adamson 2002).

The fourth type, diaspora politics, is a subset of homeland-directed transnational politics for groups that do not have a homeland or consider their homeland occupied.

A fifth category is country of residence-directed transnational politics when homeland-based groups mobilise to intervene on behalf of the group's interests in the country of settlement (Koopmans et al. 2005: 127). When, as the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs, Diyanet sets up Islamic centres in Europe, it does so to strengthen its position in the migrant community. Country of residence-directed politics need not be confined to homeland-based actors. In the 'cartoon controversies' of 2006, the Danish government ignored complaints about the publication of a satirical cartoon of the prophet Mohammed in a national newspaper. Activists then took their campaign to countries of origin in the Middle East and Asia, though their goal was to improve the position of migrants in the country of residence.

One further type of transnational activity can be distinguished, a subset of the five types already mentioned. Authors have labelled activities targeting local places trans-local politics (see Portes 1999; Itzigsohn 2000; Levitt 2001). The term, however, does not imply transnational activity that cross international borders (for example, it could refer to relations between two

locales within the same country). I therefore use the term 'locally specific transnational politics' (Nell 2007). Homeland-directed transnational politics becomes locally specific when initiatives in a city in the host country target a local community in the country of origin. A clear example involved co-operation between Amsterdam Turks and the Municipality of Amsterdam to help victims of the earthquake in Izmit, Turkey in 1999 (Gölpinar & Demirbas 2001).

Transnational ties

Both the emergence and institutionalisation of transnational activities are expected to depend on the ties between actors. Alevis lobbying the European Parliament for the recognition of Alevism in Turkey may culminate in a one-day political event, but the decade-old ties between Alevi organisations in the Netherlands and their counterparts in Turkey can be used for other purposes. Transnational ties are expected to be more durable than activities. Whereas activities reveal the process of transnational politics, transnational ties constitute its collective structure.

The existence of transnational ties is expected to be a condition for transnational activities to take place. But not all transnational political activities require ties with homeland actors (for example, lobbying within the host country to influence foreign policy). In such cases, ties between migrant organisations and the host country or supranational institutions are deemed a condition for indirect transnational activities.

Transnational ties can take a variety of forms, and may evolve through kinship, friendship or professional cooperation. Personal ties are usually informal, while professional ties develop through work relations, for instance, when the leaders of migrant organisations pursue joint activities. Ties can also be based on interlocking directorates (when one person is on the administrative board of two or more migrant organisations) or on formal memberships (when an individual is a member of a political party or when local migrant organisations are members of a national federation). According to Granovetter (1973: 1361), the strength of these ties derive from a

> combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services, which characterize the tie. Each of these is somewhat independent of the other, though the set is obviously highly intracorrelated.

Many observers assume transnational ties based on kinship are strongest (DiCarlo 2008; Eve 2008). Being related by blood, however, is no condition for frequent contact. Friendships also have different levels of intimacy (for types of friendship ties see Boissevain 1974). Assuming there to be

little emotional intensity between voluntary organisations and governments, Granovetter would classify such ties as 'weak'. But for my purposes, I seek to determine the strength not only of interpersonal ties, but ties involving actors on the collective and state levels. Since it is difficult to measure emotional intensity, reciprocity and intimacy between, for example, states and migrant organisations, I consider factors such as frequency of contact and length of relationship.

To see whether activities are institutionalised from above or below, it is necessary to examine the ties between actors. In Putnam's words, a tie may be horizontal (based on reciprocity and cooperation) or vertical (based on authority and dependence) (1993: 88). Relations between an individual or organisation and government institutions are often vertical 'patron-client' relations institutionalised from above.

A further distinction can be drawn between institutionalised and uninstitutionalised ties. The former are written in statutes, and include official individual memberships, the official branches of homeland political parties and representatives of a homeland government institution; their official character makes institutionalised ties visible to the public eye. Uninstitutionalised ties, on the other hand, rely on informal or unspoken agreements and are less visible.

Finally, ties are the building blocks of dense or fragmented networks. Davis and Greve argue that practices will spread more rapidly within dense networks than in thin ones, 'just as viruses spread faster in urban areas than in rural ones' (1997: 7). Although the research that led to this volume was not designed to study the density or fragmentation of transnational networks, it does shed light on the embeddedness of transnational ties in

Table 1.3 *Differentiation between ties*

Level of institutionalisation	*Basis*	*Hierarchy*	*Agreement*	*Networks made up of these ties are*	*Strength*
Low	Kinship	From below	Personal	Fragmented	Weak
↕			Advising		
			Sporadic cooperation		
	Friendship		Structural cooperation		
			Formal membership		
High					
	Professional	From above	Interlocking directorates	Dense	Strong

dense or fragmented national migrant organisational networks. Albeit on a small scale, this may generate insight into the mobilisation capacity and thus the speed in which transnational activities spread.

The existence of transnational actors on various levels in both the home and host countries generates many possible combinations of ties between them. Central in this study are ties between migrants in the Netherlands and actors in their former homeland. While the above 'bi-national' (Lucassen 2006) ties do not extend beyond Dutch, Surinamese and Turkish borders, transnational ties may also exist between actors originating from the same country residing in several countries. For example, Turkish and Kurdish labour migrants and refugees are dispersed across Europe and are most numerous in Germany; academics even speak of 'Euro-Turks' (Kaya 2004). Østergaard-Nielsen (2003e: 81) argues that German-based federations serve as bridges between political parties in Turkey and organisations in other European countries, while Kurdish political lobbying often relies on cooperation between actors and organisations in different countries (Østergaard-Nielsen 2002). Such ties can be termed 'third-country transnational ties'.

Studies show that ethnicity often forms the basis of transnational cooperation. Kurdish organisations in Europe have cooperated with Iraqi and Syrian Kurdish organisations to establish what came to be referred to as a united Kurdish Parliament in Exile (Van Bruinessen 2000), while some scholars argue that East Indian-Surinamese living in the Netherlands identify more with India than with Surinam (Gowricharn 2003; see also Desai 2004). Such ethnic and third-country transnational ties will only be discussed when the activities channelled through them clearly refer to Turkey or Surinam and contain a political element.

Surinamese, Turkish and Kurdish migrants in the Netherlands

While research on activities relating to migrants' country of origin are gaining ground in international migration studies, much of the scholarship in the Netherlands remains focused on the position of immigrants in Dutch society. This 'integration perspective' concentrates on factors that allegedly contribute to, or hinder, integration, such as migrants' socio-economic position or cultural background. Little is known about migrants' ties with their country of origin and the role these play for their participation in Dutch society.

The last decade has witnessed the publication of a range of studies on transnationalism in the Netherlands, mostly consisting of individual case studies, amongst which are a literature review on transnationalism and social cohesion (Van Amersfoort 2001), qualitative case studies on transnational citizenship and remittances by Surinamese (Gowricharn & Schüster

2001; Gowricharn 2002), the diaspora activities of Moluccans (Steijlen 2004), Iranian women in exile (Ghorashi 2002) and Ghanaian remittances and social security (Kabki 2007). Transnationalism's political dimension, however, has not been studied. While it has begun attracting scholarly attention in other European countries, most studies have been restricted to Turks and Kurds in Germany (Wahlbeck 1998; Argun 2003; Ögelman 2003; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003e; Amelina & Faist 2008; Sökefeld 2008).

This book examines the transnational political participation of Surinamese, Turkish and Kurdish[1] migrants and their descendents in the Netherlands. All three groups have a migration history to the Netherlands that reaches back several decades.

The most significant group of Surinamese colonial migrants arriving in the Netherlands in the 1950s and 1960s were students with university scholarships (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1971). A small number of skilled labourers, for example, nurses, were also recruited in this period (Cottaar 2003). Broader Surinamese migration began in 1973 when an Afro-Surinamese-dominated government declared its goal of independence within two years, creating fears of race riots as had happened in British Guyana. This triggered a 'panic emigration' of ultimately 200,000 Surinamese to the Netherlands (Gowricharn & Schüster 2001: 159). A second peak (1979-1980) was fuelled by disappointment over post-independence developments, coupled with a 'last chance' for unrestricted emigration before visas became mandatory in 1980 (Oostindie & Klinkers 2001: 245). After 1980, migration from Surinam comprised political migration in the aftermath of the 1980 coup (1980-1987), economic migration and family reunification.

The colonial heritage is clearly visible in Surinam's ethnic and religious composition. The current Surinamese population consists of descendents of African slaves (Afro-Surinamese), runaway slaves (Maroons), settlers, planters and administrators from the Netherlands, Jews from Portugal and Brazil, indentured labourers from China, British India (East Indians) and the Netherlands East Indies (Javanese) as well as Chinese and Lebanese traders (Van Lier 1982; Gobardhan-Rambocus 1993; Comité Herdenking 150 jaar Boerenkolonisatie in Suriname 1995; De Bruijne 2006; Oostindie 2006). Surinam's ethnic and religious diversity is well represented in the Netherlands. As in Surinam, East Indians and Afro-Surinamese are the most prominent, though we do not have exact numbers because ethnic self-identification is not registered.

Significant migration from Turkey began a decade later than from Surinam, being concentrated between 1964 and 1974 when the Dutch and Turkish governments had a labour agreement to fill the vacancies resulting from rapid economic growth in the Netherlands (General Directorate of Turkish Employment Organisation 2003: 90; Lucassen & Penninx 1997: 54-55; for a complete overview of Turkish migration in this period see

Akgündüz 2008). The Turkish government promoted labour migration: it hoped remittances would cushion the impact of high unemployment and economic crisis at home (Sayarı 1986: 91-92) and that unskilled rural migrants would later return from Europe with new skills to meet the shortage of skilled labour (Akgündüz 2008: 53). Kurds were under-represented in the first wave of labour migration in the 1960s as recruitment mainly took place in western and central Turkey, though this changed in the early 1970s when labour was increasingly recruited from eastern Turkey (Van Bruinessen 1999). The recruitment of guest workers was always complemented by spontaneous individual immigration, including by refugees after the 1971 coup (Bakker, Vervloet & Gailly 2002). Although official labour recruitment stopped after the first oil crisis in 1973, immigration from Turkey continued through family reunification, political migration after the 1980 coup and, more recently, marriage migration (Hooghiemstra 2003). Recruited Turkish workers as well as those immigrating through family reunification were mostly unskilled and semi-skilled labourers from rural areas (Penninx, Schoorl & Praag 1994; Dagevos, Euwals, Gijsberts & Roodenburg 2006).

Why compare Surinamese, Turks and Kurds? First, migrants from Surinam and Turkey constitute the largest immigrant groups in the Netherlands (according to the Dutch Bureau of Social Statistics: 342,016 and 384,64 in 2010, respectively). Both have sizable second generations. This allows studying transnational political involvement across generations, and thus changes over time and the impact of migrants' length of stay.

Second, although migration motives from both Surinam and Turkey have been (and continue to be) varied, both include politics, marriage and family reunification. The coups d'état that took place in both Surinam and Turkey in 1980 are particularly relevant, for they swelled the number of political refugees in the Netherlands in the same period, including many Kurds from Turkey (Bakker et al. 2002: 162-167). This similarity enables study of the impact of political migration motives and the homeland political climate on transnational politics.

Third, there has been a clear shift among all groups from seeing their stay in the Netherlands as temporary towards acknowledging its permanence. Colonial and post-colonial Surinamese and Turkish (including Kurdish) guest worker migration was initially seen as temporary by governments and migrants alike (Sayarı 1986; Böcker 2000; Van Niekerk 2000; Van Amersfoort & Van Niekerk 2006; Akgündüz 2008). The first Turkish migrant organisations in the Netherlands almost exclusively focused on the homeland, with the whole Turkish political spectrum from extreme right to left represented in the 1970s (Penninx 1980). While these political orientations remain visible, organisations today increasingly focus on migrants' lives in the Netherlands (Van Heelsum, Tillie & Fennema 1999). Similarly, the first Surinamese organisations focused on 'furthering

Surinam', not on integration in the Netherlands (Van Niekerk 2000: 70). They, too, have gradually shifted their focus towards a more or less permanent stay.

The perception of residence in the Netherlands as permanent has affected migrants' political participation in the host country. What remains less clear is how this shift has affected their transnational political participation. Here the variation that both cases exhibit over time will allow us to examine the effect of this shift in consciousness. The idea of temporariness also had consequences for the political opportunities that the Netherlands, Surinam and Turkey offered migrants. Policies were initially designed to facilitate migrants' or emigrants' return and the maintenance of strong ties with the homeland.[2] Today Dutch policies have shifted towards an emphasis on integration in the Netherlands. This enables us to study the impact of political opportunities provided by the host country and country of origin over several phases of settlement.

Fourth, reflecting the population in the countries of origin, migrants from Surinam and Turkey constitute heterogeneous groups in terms of ethnicity and religion. This allows the study of the diversity of transnational politics and thus *who* is involved. Research has shown that ethnicity and religion are important organising principles for Surinamese and Turkish migrant organisations and their political mobilisation in the Netherlands (Van Heelsum et al. 1999; Van Heelsum & Voorthuysen 2002). Comparing the transnational ties and activities of migrants from different countries, and from different groups from the same country, can lay bare the influence of ethnicity and religion on transnational political mobilisation.

In addition to these four similarities between Surinamese and Turkish migrants, there are four important differences. First, the large-scale migration waves from Surinam can be characterised as colonial and post-colonial, whereas immigrants from Turkey mostly arrived as guest workers. Most of the early migrants from Surinam belonged to the middle and upper classes, while those from Turkey were from the lower classes. Surinamese migrants were already familiar with the Dutch language and culture; Turks and Kurds were not. Studying these two migrant groups with their different backgrounds allows us to establish the impact of different migration motives and social backgrounds on transnational politics. Are there significant differences between the transnational political involvements of relatively skilled post-colonial migrants and unskilled labour migrants?

Second, diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Surinam versus the Netherlands and Turkey are very different. Due to their colonial ties, relations between the Netherlands and Surinam are emotionally charged, with many tense periods since independence in 1975. This was especially true in the 1980s and 1990s when Desi Bouterse, the commander of the army ran the country. Subsequent relations have remained tense, with Dutch governments criticising the use of development aid sent to

Surinam and the democratic government of Surinam criticising the Netherlands for its 'patronising' attitude. In contrast, relations between Turkey and the Netherlands are influenced by Turkey's aspiration to EU membership, an issue that has mobilised Turks and Kurds in the Netherlands (for Germany see Østergaard-Nielsen 2003e: 3). Two questions follow: how have diplomatic relations impacted upon Surinamese and Turkish policies for emigrants and their descendents? How have they influenced the transnational activities of migrants and their descendents in the Netherlands, as well as of those who stayed behind or returned?

A third and obvious difference is the total emigrant stock of the sending countries. Surinam's population just exceeds half a million; Turkey's is over 70 million. Today, Surinamese migrants comprising 66.4 per cent of the total Surinamese population live abroad (mainly in the Netherlands); for Turkey this percentage (spread over several European countries, the Gulf and the US) is 'only' 6 per cent.[3] The question is how this influences the responsiveness of homeland-based actors to migrants' transnational activities. Do actors in Surinam embrace transnational activities more eagerly than those in Turkey because the migrant group in the Netherlands is two-thirds of the population of Surinam and includes many highly skilled people?

Finally, the scholarly literature suggests differences in the structure of Surinamese and Turkish civil society in the Netherlands: Surinamese organisations exist within weak and fragmented networks whereas Turkish networks are strong and dense (Van Heelsum et al. 1999; Van Heelsum & Voorthuysen 2002). At the same time, Surinamese have lower levels of political participation in the Netherlands than Turks – which may suggest migrant organisations foster political participation in the country of residence (Fennema & Tillie 1999). For our purposes, the question is how the quality of migrant networks and their political participation in the Netherlands influences their transnational political activities and the ties they maintain with the homeland. Are Surinamese more concerned with homeland matters because they participate less in Dutch politics? Or is it the other way around, with Surinamese having lower levels of political participation in the Netherlands because they are less involved with homeland politics? Pursuing these questions should shed light on the influence of transnational political involvement on political participation in the country of residence, and vice versa.

This chapter has introduced the phenomenon of transnational migrant politics, discussed broad themes in the literature, presented the factors considered most relevant in explaining transnationalism and advanced a framework for studying transnational migrant politics based on the concepts of transnational actors, activities and ties. Empirical evidence on the evolution of transnational political ties and activities, and how this affects political

integration in the country of residence, however, is thin on the ground. The following empirical chapters aim to address this gap.