Community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods

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“De omgeving van de mens is de medemens.”

J. A. Deelder

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Contents

Acknowledgements **7**

1. Introducing community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods **13**

1.1 Super-diverse cities 14

1.2 From community studies to community dynamics 16

1.3 Everyday life in super-diverse neighbourhoods 24

1.4 Local community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods 26

1.5 Data and methods 30

1.6 Structure of the dissertation 38

References 39

2. Beyond the middle classes: Neighbourhood choice and statisfaction in hyper-diverse contexts **45**

2.1 Introduction 46

2.2 Living in highly diverse neighbourhoods 47

2.3 Research in highly diverse neighbourhoods in Rotterdam and Antwerp 51

2.4 Neighbourhood choice 53

2.5 Neighbourhood satisfaction 55

2.6 Conclusion 60

References 61

3. Symbolic boundary making in super-diverse deprived neighbourhoods **67**

3.1 Introduction 68

3.2 Symbolic boundary making 70

3.3 Data and methods 73

3.4 Making symbolic boundaries to demarcate social groups 75

3.5 Re-position residents around existing symbolic boundaries 79

3.6 Symbolic boundary making and everyday social interaction 82

3.7 Conclusion 83

References 85

4. Raising children in diverse environments: parental narratives about diverse neighbourhoods and school choices **89**

4.1 Introduction 90

4.2 Literature 91

4.3 Methods 93

4.4 Everyday family life in diverse and disadvantaged neighbourhoods 97

4.5 Raising children in diverse schools 100

4.6 Raising children in diverse neighbourhoods and (not so) diverse schools 105

4.7 Conclusion 106

References 108

5. De suburbane droom aan diggelen? Gevestigden en buitenstaanders in veranderende gemeenschappen 111

5.1 Inleiding 112

5.2 Gemeenschapsvorming: gevestigden en buitenstaanders 115

5.3 Suburbane gemeenschapsvorming en mobiliteit 117

5.4 Suburbane gemeenschapsvorming en diversiteit 120

5.5 Besluit 123

Bibliografie 125

6. Conclusion: community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods 129

6.1 Social ties in super-diverse neighbourhoods 131

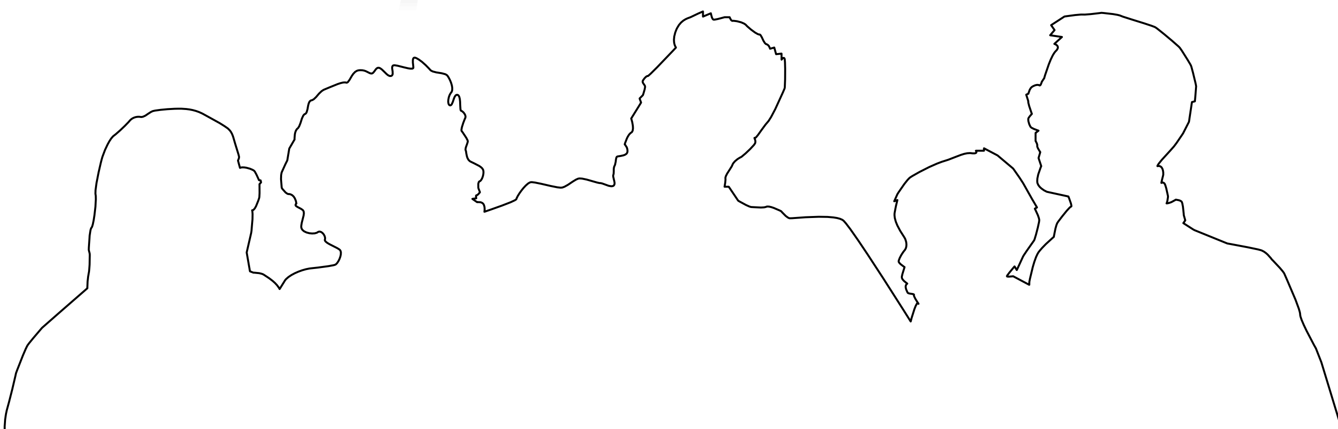
6.2 Community dynamics and place 138

6.3 Include all neighbourhood residents as active agents 142

References 143

Samenvatting 145

Appendices 149



CHAPTER 1

Introducing community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods

In recent decades, cities have changed from diverse cities into super-diverse cities, in which people differ from each other in various aspects. Following on from cities in the United States, more recently European cities too have become majority-minority cities, cities without one dominant ethnic group (Crul, 2016). Since 2019 Antwerp can also be described as a majority-minority city. This trend in European cities, such as Antwerp, is more recent than in cities in the United States (Crul, 2016). These European cities, contrary to cities in the United States, are often also described as super-diverse (Vertovec, 2007). This rapid transition and diversification of the urban population raises the question of how residents deal with this. This dissertation tries to contribute to the answer by focusing on the community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods.

Although diversity is often viewed as something that challenges communities (Putnam, 2007), more recently scholars have focused on the everyday reality of diversity (Blokland, 2017; Wessendorf, 2014b). For residents living in super-diverse neighbourhoods, this diversity is everyday reality. Residents living in super-diverse neighbourhoods are confronted with a diverse neighbourhood population, diversity of shops, and amenities. In this dissertation, I focus on the social interactions taking place in super-diverse neighbourhoods, using the concept of community as a starting point. Accordingly, I propose the following research question: **How does a super-diverse neighbourhood population affect community dynamics in Antwerp**?

In this introduction, I will position myself in the existing literature. Firstly, I will briefly explain the notion of super-diversity. Secondly, I will argue why it is helpful to use community studies to understand how super-diversity influences everyday life, and how I conceptualize ‘community dynamics’. Thirdly, I will explain how the concept ‘community dynamics’ relates to contemporary studies on super-diversity and community dynamics. Fourthly, I will describe which aspects I studied to gain a better understanding of community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods. Fifthly, the case study areas will be introduced, as well as the methods used. In this section I will also briefly explain the context of this study. The research presented here is part of the European FP7 project DIVERCITIES. Being part of a bigger international research project has influenced some methodological choices I have made. I will end with a short note on the structure of this dissertation.

1.1 Super-diverse cities

In this dissertation, super-diversity is the starting point. I will briefly explain here why I use the concept of super-diversity.

Vertovec introduced the concept of "super-diversity" in 2007, as a reaction to the existing terms, such as "multiculturalism" and "diversity", used to describe the changing of the urban population as a result of migration flows. As a concept to describe the changing composition of the urban population, "multiculturalism" and "diversity" are often used interchangeably (e.g. Geldof, 2013; Wise & Velayutham, 2009; Harris, 2009; Kesten et al., 2011). One of the main critiques of the concepts of diversity and multiculturalism is that these describe the changing urban population only in terms of ethno-cultural communities. Because of the diversification of migration patterns, the diversity within ethnic groupsis also increasing. The term "super-diversity" has been introduced to describe this complexity (Vertovec, 2007).

> "In the last decade, the proliferation and mutually conditioning effects of additional variables shows that it is not enough to see diversity only in terms of ethnicity, as is regularly the case both in social science and the wider public sphere. Such additional variables include differential immigration statuses and their concomitant entitlements and restrictions of rights, divergent labour market experiences, discrete gender and age profiles, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents. […] The interplay of these factors is what is meant here, in summary fashion, by the notion of 'super-diversity'." (Vertovec, 2007: 1025)

Hence, the term super-diversity not only refers to the increasing number of nationalities living in a state or country, but also to the variety of other factors such as socio-economic backgrounds, migration statuses, and education levels. By combining these different layers, super-diversity also addresses the variety existing *within* an ethnic group. The origin of super-diversity lies in changing migration patterns. Vertovec (2007) points out that various aspects have changed migration patterns, using the United Kingdom as an example. Not only are super-diverse cities confronted with more migrants coming in, but the countries of origin are also increasingly diverse. As a result, there is not only more ethno-cultural diversity, but also diversity in immigration status, gender and age profiles, labour market experiences, spatial distribution and responses of local residents and services (Vertovec, 2007: 1025). In addition, there is an increasing variety of migration motives. The diversification of the migrant populations challenges researchers to look beyond ethnicity. However, super-diversity not only requires us to focus on more than ethnicity, it goes one step further. Super-diversity refers to *"a changed set of conditions and social configurations which call for a multi-dimensional approach to understanding contemporary processes of change and their outcomes."* (Vertovec, 2014).

In this dissertation, I will use the concept of super-diversity. It is widely accepted that super-diversity is currently the most suitable term to describe urban populations, because of the diversification of these populations (Crul, 2016; Hall, 2015; Gill Valentine, 2013; Wessendorf,

2014b). While the concept of multiculturalism is used to describe the population in terms of ethno-cultural communities (Kymlicka, 2010), super-diversity does not focus on ethno-cultural communities per se. Therefore, it is still unknown how super-diversity and community relate to each other, in contrast to the concept of multiculturalism. The multiculturalist model focuses on ethnic communities, but it is still unclear how community dynamics can be studied in a super-diverse context. Accordingly, this dissertation focuses on the relationship between super-diversity and community dynamics.

1.2 From community studies to community dynamics

While the concept of super-diversity is commonly used, less attention is being paid to the concept of community. In this dissertation I focus on community dynamics, a new term. I define community dynamics as: *"the dynamic process of the (re)creation of social ties between people living in the same neighbourhood"*. This section describes how I have created the concept of "community dynamics": I start with a short note on community studies, and explain the benefits of using the concept of 'community' instead of other concepts.

The community has long been an important aspect in studying (local) social relations. Although community studies have been strongly criticized, there has recently been renewed interest in studying communities. In this section I will briefly describe the origin of and the critique of community studies, and will argue why community studies nevertheless offer a good starting point in studying everyday urban life.

Within the field of community studies there are various approaches towards community. The discussion on the definition of a community focuses on two main points. The first is whether or not a community is characterized by feelings of belonging. Can there be a community whenever people live together, or does there have to be more than that? In other words, is a community without sentiment possible (Elias, 1974)? Some researchers argue that it is, because they study communities as structures in which people are living together. The second question is whether a community is always tied to a specific geographic area. If communities are seen as "people doing things, and being together, rather than separate and alone" (Day, 2006: 2), living together means being together; people living together in a defined geographical area are therefore by definition part of the local community. They are hence creating the local structures in which people are living together. In this section I will elaborate on both aspects of the discussion. Firstly, I will explain why I reject the sentimental element in community studies. Secondly, I will describe how local community dynamics appear in a specific defined geographical area. Table 1.1 demonstrates

the various approaches towards communities and shows which researchers choose which approach. In this dissertation I see community as a structure of living together in the same defined geographical area. Hence, I have taken the same approach as Elias and Gans.

	Geographically defined area	**Not geographically defined area**
Structure and sentiment (romantic ideal)	Tönnies and Putnam	Wellman & Leighton
Structure (empirical fact)	Elias and Gans	-

TABLE 1.1: APPROACHES TOWARDS COMMUNITIES

Community as an empirical fact

Community studies originated in the late 19th century. When industrialisation started and modernisation began to take place, researchers demonstrated that local social relations between people changed. Tönnies (2001/1887), one of the founding fathers of community studies, argued that a transformation takes place from a community (Gemeinschaft) towards a society (Gesellschaft).

The pre-modern societies were described in terms of ‘Gemeinschaft’, characterized by a ‘community feeling’ and intimate relations. Modern societies were described as ‘Gesellschaft’, characterized by impersonal and contractual relations. In an urban industrialised society, people no longer belonged to one close-knit community, but became part of various social networks. The difference between a community and a society is the nature of the relationship. “*The relationship itself, and the social bond that stems from it, may be conceived either as having real organic life, and that is the essence of Community [Gemeinschaft]; or else as a purely mechanical construction, existing in the mind, and that is what we think of as Society [Gesellschaft].”* (Tönnies 2001/1887: 17) Hence, people in a community were bound together by a sense of belonging, solidarity, and intimate feelings, while people in a society are bound together by contractual relations. People in a society do not *feel* connected, but they *are* connected because they depend on each other. So, people in a society are still related but in a different way. Elias (1974) has defined Gesellschaft as “association”, which emphasizes the formal nature of the relations between residents. According to Tönnies, the transition towards a society was negative. In a society *“Nobody wants to do anything for anyone else, nobody wants to yield or give anything unless he gets something in return that he regards as at least an equal trade off.”* (Tönnies 2001/1887: 52).

This subjective approach of Tönnies is strongly criticised. Elias, for instance, argues that several community researchers, like Tönnies, connect structure with sentiment, but that these two elements have to be disentangled (Elias 1974: xiii). While Tönnies argues that interdependencies in a community are based on intimate feelings, and in a society on mechanical constructions, Elias argues that interdependencies are neutral; they can be the basis for cooperation as well as for conflict (Elias 1974: xix). Communities can therefore also be studied as an empirical phenomenon (Blackshaw 2010: 7).

In this dissertation I will reject the subjective approach and choose to study communities as an empirical fact, since I aim to study how people actually live together in super-diverse neighbourhoods. By studying communities as a romantic ideal, however, I would only focus on the warm relations between residents. My aim is rather to study how residents live together in super-diverse neighbourhoods. I do not wish to study only warm relations, but all relations and structures of living together. In addition, I intend to study the nature of the social ties, which has always been one of the main interests of community studies.

I will now, to demonstrate how communities can be studied as an empirical fact, describe two influential studies: “The established and the outsiders”, by Elias and Scotson, and “The Levittowners”, by Gans.

The famous study “The established and the outsiders”, by Elias and Scotson (2008/1965), demonstrates how community can be studied without adopting a normative approach. Furthermore, it demonstrates that strong feelings of belonging and strong communities can be a powerful starting point for the exclusion of other groups. However, in the normative approach which connects structure and sentiment, the community is seen as a positive, warm ideal.

The starting point of Elias and Scotson was not to study the community dynamics in Winston Parva, but to study the delinquency problem in the English suburb they referred to as ‘Winston Parva’. However, they came across an interesting distinction in the community, between long-term residents and newcomers. So, they decided to change the subject of the study and to figure out what happened in Winston Parva. They studied the community of Winston Parva as one unit, to see what happened within this community, without speaking of two communities: one of established residents and one of outsiders. Seeing this as one community, and studying the structures within it, led to some interesting results.

The research shows how long-term residents deal with the inflow of new residents. The long-term residents constituted themselves as the established set, and excluded the newcomers, who became outsiders. Due to the strong social cohesion within the group of

long-term residents in 'Winston Parva', they were able to exclude the newcomers. The social cohesion between the newcomers was, however, very weak. In terms of the romantic ideal, the established residents formed a community, with warm feelings towards each other, but the newcomers did not. In addition, choosing the romantic ideal approach would require us to study the 'problem' of the lack of social cohesion between the newcomers, or to examine the strong social cohesion among the long-term residents, since the romantic approach refers to this specific type of community. Elias and Scotson, however, see 'Winston Parva' as one community, although they did find out that there were two groups living in the neighbourhood. Because they considered Winston Parva as one community, they were not only interested in what happened among the residents in one of the groups, but also in what the existence of two separate groups meant for the community as a whole. In other words, they focus on the interdependencies between all residents in the neighbourhood.

Instead of seeing two separate groups, Elias and Scotson also studied how these groups relate to each other. According to Elias, the social cohesion was an important power resource. "(…) one group has a higher social cohesion rate than the other and this integration differential substantially contributes to the former's power surplus; its greater social cohesion enables such a group to reserve social positions with a high power potential of a different type for its members, thus in turn reinforcing its cohesion, and to exclude from them members of other groups – which is essentially what one means when one speaks of an established-outsider figuration" (Elias 2008b/1976: 5).

According to Elias and Scotson, a lack of social cohesion weakens the power position of a group, while strong social cohesion can strengthen a group's power position. The strong social cohesion of the long-term residents of 'Winston Parva' helped them to monopolise local power and to exclude newcomers from important positions. In addition, the long-term residents stigmatised the newcomers by gossiping. Long-term residents were told not to be in contact with newcomers because they might be 'infected'. The strong social cohesion of the long-term residents and the weak social cohesion of newcomers were crucial in the establishment of this relationship.

With regard to the romantic ideal of the community, this study of Elias and Scotson demonstrates, importantly, that strong social networks within a neighbourhood, generally associated with the romantic idea of a community, can also function as a source of exclusion. Hence, by focusing on structures created in the neighbourhood instead of on sentiment, Elias and Scotson were able to reveal the exclusion mechanisms that were active in this local neighbourhood community.

Gans (2017/1967) also studied the community as an empirical fact, in his standard work "The Levittowners" and in his other famous book, "The Urban Villagers". In both studies he does not start from the romantic ideal and focuses not only on strong relationships.

Gans studied the origin of a new community, how the community was created and how it functioned. One of the important questions for community research is the following: when did Levittown, the suburb Gans studied, become a community? According to Gans (2017/1967: 124): *"In October 1961, Levittown was three years old. As of that July 4200 homes had been built and occupied; the shopping center was half completed; most churches were either in their buildings or about to move in; new schools were still going up and a six-grade parochial school was in operation. Nearly a hundred organizations were functioning; government reorganization was about to take effect and a city manager was being hired. Levittown had become a community."* For Gans, therefore, the community is not only formed because people live together in the same place, but also because of the presence of organisations and institutions, because of the structures organised around the people living together. Gans then describes how the community functions. He describes, for example, the struggles in organisations and the groups which were created within the community. Like Elias, he sees these groups as all being part of one community and describes the various relations within this community and how people relate to each other, as well as which boundaries are drawn between groups, although Gans does not use this term. Hence, by approaching the community as an empirical fact, he describes all the structures and relations which are created within the community of Levittown.

While the study of Elias and Scotson questioned the ideal of strong cohesion, Gans demonstrated that communities can exist without people feeling connected either positively or negatively. Although residents of Levittown did not necessarily feel connected to Levittown, there were all kinds of different groups, and in general there was no strong "community spirit". Gans makes a clear distinction between community and terms such as 'community spirit' and 'sense of community'. So, the warm feelings were not, by definition, part of the community. Thus, Gans actively distances himself from the romantic ideal of a community. *"By any traditional criteria, then, Levittown could not be considered as a community. (…) If Levittown was a community, and of course it was, it could be best defined as an administrative-political unit plus an aggregate of community-wide associations within a space that had been legally established (…) as a township some three hundred years before. As such, it provided residents with a variety of services and required them to act in a limited number of community roles – for example, as voters, taxpayers, and organisational*

participants – but these roles encouraged division rather than cohesion." (Gans 2017/1967: 145/146).

Although the people living in the neighbourhood form all kinds of different groups and may feel more division than cohesion in the neighbourhood, a community still exists (Gans 2017/1967). In the following sections I argue that just by living together in the same neighbourhood with all its organisations and institutions, people are connected to each other.

In this study I take the same approach as Elias and Scotson, and Gans, by studying the community as an empirical fact. In this study, it is important to speak about a community, and not about, for example, everyday life in the neighbourhood, because the concept of community emphasises that interdependencies exist between people living in the neighbourhood. A study of a community examines the various groups created in the neighbourhood and how they relate to each other, like the established-outsider groups in the study of Elias and Scotson. So people form a community by living in the same neighbourhood, even if they do not feel connected. In the following paragraph I will explain how people living in the same neighbourhood are still connected.

WHY PLACE STILL MATTERS

In a globalised world, where people can be connected to each other without being in the same place, the importance of locality has been questioned. While the neighbourhood used to be an important place to meet people, nowadays social relations exist between people not living in the same neighbourhood or even in the same country. Therefore, the connection between community and neighbourhood has been criticised. Wellman and Leighton (1979), for example, challenge the connection made by urban sociologists between communities and neighbourhoods. They argue that communities are not necessarily connected to neighbourhoods, and that if we want to understand communities, the neighbourhood is not the best starting point. Urban sociologists have often made a connection between the positive community and neighbourhood. *"The neighbourhood has been studied as an apparently obvious container of normative solidarity."* (Wellman & Leighton 1979: 364). They therefore argue that researchers would do better to take a network approach than a neighbourhood approach if they wish to understand communities. This idea that neighbourhood and community are not necessarily connected is shared by many other scientists (see e.g. Lupi & Musterd 2006; Duyvendak & Hurenkamp 2004; Wellman 1979).

However, the fact that communities and neighbourhoods are not necessarily connected does not mean that local communities no longer exist. In other words, to better understand communities, we do not have to start with the neighbourhood, since the communities in the neighbourhood are not necessarily strong communities. However, to better understand how people live together in a neighbourhood, we can build on community studies. As demonstrated above, community studies emphasise the interdependencies between people in the neighbourhood and the fact that they are still connected.

So, in what way are people in the neighbourhood still connected to and dependent on each other? What is the importance of the neighbourhood in the daily life of people living in a modern society?

A first reason why the neighbourhood is still an important element in people’s daily life is because the composition of a neighbourhood’s population is not just a random selection of people, as shown by the Chicago School researchers at the beginning of the 20th century. In his work describing the famous concentric model, Burgess (1928) argues that cities grow ecologically. Human ecologists like Burgess argue that, as in a forest, residents and functions have their own natural location in the city. Burgess demonstrates that Chicago grows in concentric circles, and that each zone has its own function in the city. The most deprived residents lived in the transition zone, the working class in the next zone, and the more affluent middle class in the residential zone. More recent studies on segregation have demonstrated that the city is indeed to some extent divided into different parts, all attracting residents with specific characteristics (Bridge, 2006; Burgess, Wilson, & Lupton, 2005; Butler, 2003; Musterd & Deurloo, 2002). Although the idea of the growth of the city as a natural process is highly contested, the work of Burgess has had a huge influence on urban sociology, because *“it contained a central truth, that urban contexts were differentiated socially into quite distinctive types of neighbourhoods, containing population groupings between which there were divergent patterns of social organization and lifestyle; in other words, that there was the basis for the formation of a variety of urban communities.”* (Day 2006: 98). Hence, people live in the same neighbourhood, because this neighbourhood has several characteristics which attract a specific type of person. Nevertheless, some residents have constrained choices, due to limited financial resources, which attract them to the same neighbourhood.

Second, the extent to which people are connected to the neighbourhood varies among social groups. It is known that lower class residents are more connected to their neighbourhood than the middle classes (Adriaanse, 2007; Amerigo & Aragones, 1990; Guest & Wierzbicki, 1999; Völker, Mollenhorst, & Schutjens, 2013). In addition, families are more

connected to the neighbourhood than people without children. Children play in the neighbourhood and go to school in the neighbourhood. These families create functional networks with other families living in the neighbourhood, so they can watch each other's children (Karsten, 2007; Lupi & Musterd, 2006). The neighbourhood is, then, an important part of the daily life of a significant number of residents.

Although the residents of a neighbourhood are still connected to each other, the nature of their relations has changed. As argued by Tönnies (2001/1887), and more recently by Putnam (2000), relations between neighbours have weakened. However, these relations have not disappeared. The current relations between people are dominated by weak ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). Most people nowadays have weak ties with several communities, instead of belonging to one close-knit community (Duyvendak and Hurenkamp, 2004). Instead of seeing the weakening of ties as a threat to the community, weakening ties can also have positive effects, because communities that are characterized by weak ties are often more inclusive (Duyvendak & Hurenkamp, 2004; Elias & Scotson, 2008/1965).

The diversification of the neighbourhood population is said to further weaken the social relations within the neighbourhood. Diversity and community are often described as a bad combination. According to Wirth (1938), there are no or only relatively weak communities in urban areas, because of the diverse backgrounds of residents. Hence, diversity, according to Wirth and other researchers like Putnam (2000), has a destabilising impact on communities. Empirical studies on the impact of ethno-cultural diversity on social cohesion show different results: diversity is found to have a negative effect, or no effect, or a positive effect (for an overview, see van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). In this study I will look at how super-diversity relates to local community dynamics.

Local communities do still matter, as do non-local communities. In this study I use the term 'community dynamics' instead of 'community formation' in the neighbourhoods. While the first implies continuously changing relations between the people living in a neighbourhood, the latter implies a transition from weak to stronger ties between residents. In addition, as I have argued above, people living in the same neighbourhood are, by definition, part of a community. Therefore, the community does not have to be formed; it is already there, as a group of people living in the same place. By focusing on community dynamics, I focus on *"the dynamic process of the (re)creation of social ties between people living in the same neighbourhood".*

The concept of 'social ties' used in this definition probably needs a little more explanation. Social ties can be studied in various ways, and also across neighbourhood boundaries. In this

study I limit myself to the social ties within the neighbourhood. However, within this neighbourhood I study various types of ties, ranging from strong and weak ties to absent ties (Blokland, 2017; Granovetter, 1973). In addition, I focus on the (re)construction of these ties. To give a better insight in my approach to social ties, I will use the distinction that Blokland draws, from Weber, between interdependencies, attachments, bonds and transactions (Blokland, 2017). Here, I focus only on the first three types.

This study of community dynamics takes interdependencies as a starting point. As argued above, all people living in the neighbourhood form a community, because of the interdependencies that derive from sharing the same space. Interdependencies are therefore by definition present in the neighbourhood.

Using the concept of community dynamics, I study how these social ties (interdependencies) are transformed and (re)constructed into other ties, such as attachments and bonds. Attachments and bonds are both characterized by 'sociability', which means that people engage in these ties voluntarily (Blokland, 2017). Bonds refer to the more affective ties, while attachments can be less affective and can also be with people you do not know personally, but with whom you feel connected. Attachments also refer to the groups people feel they belong to, which are continuously (re)created. Hence, attachments also involve processes of boundary making (chapter 3).

In sum, local communities still exist, and community studies help us to better understand how people living in the same neighbourhood relate to each other. Hence, I do not start with the neighbourhood to better understand community dynamics; rather, I use the concept of 'community' in order to better understand daily life and the (re)creation of social ties in super-diverse neighbourhoods.

1.3 Everyday life in super-diverse neighbourhoods

Although I take community studies as a starting point, this study is not only related to community studies, but is also part of the literature studying everyday life in the neighbourhood. Studies focusing on everyday life in super-diverse neighbourhoods use all kind of different concepts, such as 'everyday multiculturalism', 'everyday life', 'everyday interaction', 'everyday practices', 'conviviality' and 'commonplace diversity' (Blokland & van Eijk, 2010; Foner, Duyvendak, & Kasinitz, 2019; Harris, 2009, 2010; Oosterlynck, Verschraegen, & Van Kempen, 2018; Valentine, 2008; Wessendorf, 2013, 2014; Wise & Velayutham, 2009b). In this section I would like to briefly discuss how this study on community dynamics relates to other and contemporary studies focusing on how super-diversity shapes everyday interaction. I will do so by describing the studies of three

influential contemporary researchers and showing how these studies relate to the study of community dynamics.

First, the work of Wessendorf is influential in the study of everyday life and super-diversity. By introducing the concept of 'commonplace diversity', (Wessendorf, 2014b) emphasises the normalcy of diversity for residents living in super-diverse neighbourhoods. She describes how people deal with and perceive the diversity around them, using detailed descriptions of the everyday reality, including social ties. However, her work mostly focuses on superficial contacts in the (semi-)public space, such as maintaining a balance between distance and proximity (Wessendorf, 2014a). She hence focuses more on street life than on contacts with neighbours. This is an important difference with my study of community dynamics. Moreover, Wessendorf does not focus on community. When she refers to community in her work, it is mostly to ethno-cultural 'communities' or 'sense of community', i.e. the feeling of community (Wessendorf, 2014b). So, instead of seeing the community as a whole, and examining the interdependencies deriving from living together in a neighbourhood, she mostly focuses on everyday interaction. A last difference compared to Wessendorf's study is the context (Foner et al., 2019). The London context differs from the Antwerp context in various ways. To begin with, the super-diverse character of the neighbourhood studied by Wessendorf has a longer history. People living in Hackney (the neighbourhood she studied) are therefore probably more used to diversity than residents in Antwerp, which may lead to different community dynamics (Pettigrew, 1998; Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010; Thijssen & Dierckx, 2011). In addition, the political context in the United Kingdom differs from that in Antwerp. While the United Kingdom has promoted the idea of 'celebrating diversity', diversity in Belgium is often dealt with as a 'threat' (Raco, Kesten, & Colomb, 2014; Saeys, Albeda, Van Puymbroeck, et al., 2014). This different political context also influences the everyday life in the neighbourhood. In section 1.4 I will elaborate more on the specific Belgian context.

The second influential researcher on everyday life in diverse environments is Valentine (2008; 2013). Valentine is interested in encounter, and questions to what extent encounter will lead to a more positive image of the 'other', in other words, she questions the contact hypotheses (Pettigrew, 1998). She points to the difference between discourses on diversity and acting in diversity. As other researchers argue that a positive discourse on diversity does not always result in the creation of bonds with the diverse other (Blokland & van Eijk, 2010), Valentine argues that encounter does not necessarily result in positive ideas of the other. As I also show in the third chapter of this dissertation, people can engage in small talk with all their neighbours, but can still create symbolic boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. Like

Wessendorf's study, Valentine's research is situated in the United Kingdom and does not focus on community as a whole, but on everyday encounters. Although everyday encounters are studied in my dissertation, I also focus on the histories people bring to the neighbourhood. Valentine argues that people's reactions to diversity cannot only be declared by the everyday reality in the neighbourhood, but also by their history of experiences and material circumstances. By asking residents why they decided to move to the neighbourhood, I shed, in chapter two, a little light on their past experiences.

Lastly, I should like to draw attention to the work of Blokland. In several studies she focuses on life together in urban neighbourhoods, taking into account all social ties within the neighbourhood (Blokland, 2003, 2017; Blokland & Nast, 2014; Blokland & van Eijk, 2010). In addition, her work focuses on community, and calls for a re-think of the concept of community. In her publication 'community as urban practice', she presents community as a form of social imagination and as a 'culture' (Blokland, 2017: 161). She is critical of the romantic ideal of community and argues for a focus not only on strong and weak ties, but on all relationships. However, unlike myself, she uses the concept of community to cover not only life together in the neighbourhood. She disentangles community from place and entangles it with identity. I focus on place, because I use the concept to better understand the social life in the neighbourhood, as argued above. Another important difference is our focus on social ties. As argued above, interdependencies are the starting point in my research, while, in the work of Blokland, interdependencies are part of 'urban practice'.

1.4 Local community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods

To provide more insight into the local community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods, this dissertation focuses on four specific aspects: neighbourhood choice, boundary making, families living in diverse neighbourhoods, and the diversification of the neighbourhood population in the suburbs. Each of the chapters in this dissertation focuses on one of these aspects. In this paragraph I will explain why I focus on these aspects.

The origin of local communities: neighbourhood choice

The first focus (chapter 2) is neighbourhood choice and neighbourhood satisfaction. This is important because the neighbourhood population, and hence the composition of the local community, is the result of decisions people make about where they want to or can afford to live. Earlier research demonstrates that living in a specific neighbourhood is also used as a distinction strategy (Bridge, 2006; Jackson & Benson, 2014; Karsten, 2007). The composition of the neighbourhood is therefore neither static nor a given. Hence, to better understand the local community dynamics, we first need to understand neighbourhood choices.

Therefore, the second chapter of this dissertation focuses on neighbourhood choices and the satisfaction of people living in diverse urban neighbourhoods, and answers the following research question: **Why do people decide to move to or stay in a super-diverse neighbourhood, and which aspects contribute to neighbourhood satisfaction?**

Existing studies on neighbourhood choice demonstrate that living in a specific neighbourhood is determined by practical considerations like housing prices, but that neighbourhood choice can also function as a mechanism of social distinction, which early scholars mostly described in suburbs. As these urban scholars famously studied, suburbanization is not just the physical expansion of the city, but also the creation of a newly built environment through which the emerging white middle classes could differentiate themselves from the industrial working class in the inner city (Fishman, 1987; Fox, 1985). In more recent studies it is suggested that gentrifiers choose to live in the city to actively distinguish themselves from the 'conservative' suburbs (Karsten, 2003, 2007). Diversity is then seen as a key factor: *"diversity' works as a positive social marker stressing the gentrifiers' difference from conventional and selfish suburbanites."* (Tissot 2014: 1187) Living among a diverse population is seen a symbol of tolerance (Tissot, 2014; Weck & Hanhörster, 2015). If people search for tolerance and a progressive place to live, for instance, how is this reflected in the local community dynamics? Hence, in order to understand local community dynamics, first it is important to understand why people live in a super-diverse neighbourhood and how they experience the super-diversity. Chapter 2 therefore focuses on neighbourhood choice and neighbourhood satisfaction.

COMMUNITY DYNAMICS IN DIVERSE URBAN NEIGHBOURHOODS: BOUNDARY MAKING

Chapter 3 focuses on the community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods. The exact impact of ethno-cultural diversity on the social ties within neighbourhood communities has been discussed at length. While some studies demonstrate that ethno-cultural diversity weakens social ties in the neighbourhood, other studies found no effect (van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). In chapter 3 I combine two theories about community dynamics and diversity, to better understand how diversity can influence community dynamics. I will answer the following research question: **How do residents in super-diverse neighbourhoods create and recreate symbolic boundaries, and how does this process relate to the everyday life in the neighbourhood?** Here I will briefly explain both theories and explain why these are combined in chapter 3.

The boundary making approach fits with the idea of studying a community as an empirical fact rather than as a romantic ideal. The boundary making approach helps us to better understand how residents constantly (re)create boundaries between themselves and other

residents, and to try to grasp processes of group formation. In addition, the boundary making approach does not start from already existing categories, but attempts to understand which categories are created by residents themselves. In this sense it is an empirical approach, using the categories which residents themselves use. Although ethnicity has a central position in the boundary making theory, it approaches ethnicity not as a static given, but as a social creation. In the boundary making approach, *"ethnicity is not primarily conceived as a matter of relations between pre-defined, fixed groups … but rather as a process of constituting and re-configuring groups by defining the boundaries between them"* (Wimmer 2008a: 1027).

According to the second theory, the established-outsider theory, exclusion of specific groups is always based on the power difference between an established group and outsiders (Elias 2008/1974). The established residents have a longer history in the neighbourhood or in a country, for instance, and therefore have access to power resources to exclude newcomers, who become outsiders. This means that exclusion is not taking place on the basis of ethnicity, race or social class, according to Elias. "What are called 'race relations', in other words, are simply established-outsider relations of a particular type." (Elias 1974: 15) Length of residence is, in this theory, the base on which boundaries are created.

By combining the boundary making approach and the established outsider theory, we can counter one of the main critiques of the established outsider theory, namely that this theory is a static approach, as it divides the community into only two groups, namely established and outsiders, and does not take into account how an established group can become an outsider group or vice versa (Hogenstijn, Van Middelkoop, & Terlouw, 2008; May, 2004). The boundary making approach, on the other hand, is a dynamic approach that emphasizes the on-going creation and recreation of group boundaries. However, the boundary making approach is often used to explain ethnic boundaries (see i.e. Barth 1969; Wimmer 2013; Visser 2015). In a super-diverse environment, however, these ethnic boundaries are not always clear, and, as explained above, a super-diverse context forces us to move our focus away from ethnicity only. By combining the boundary making approach and the established-outsider approach, we can study the dynamic process of community, but avoid a one-sided focus on ethnicity.

Community dynamics in diverse urban neighbourhoods: raising children

While diversity is described by early scholars like Wirth (1938) as a destabilizing factor for communities, families are seen as a stabilizing factor for communities. Therefore, in chapter 4 I will focus on family life in diverse urban neighbourhoods. The impact of family life on communities is well-documented in the suburbanism literature, because people having

children often prefer a suburban environment (Burgers & van der Lugt, 2005; Frey, 1979; Meeus & De Decker, 2013). Research demonstrates that families are often more rooted in the neighbourhood and are more likely to create social networks within the neighbourhood, including urban neighbourhoods (Karsten, 2003; Karsten, Lupi, & Stigter-Speksnijder, 2012). These relationships that go beyond greeting exist, however, almost only with other family households. As already described by Wirth, homogeneity is an important aspect here in the creation of stronger ties. However, although these relations go beyond casual greetings, they differ from the warm communal ties described by community researchers such as Tönnies (2001). The local relations between families in the neighbourhood are often functional. "*Both mothers and fathers socialise actively and build communities with a focus on children's issues. This new family community is, however, strongly focussed on supporting middle-class lifestyles to the exclusion of childless households and tenants."* (Karsten et al., 2012: 268). What is important here is that the relations focus on children's issues. The created networks are functional in relation to the children. Hence, local relations are still important, but these relations are more functional. I will elaborate on these relations in chapter 4. I will answer the following research question: **Which narratives and strategies do parents use in relation to raising their children in super-diverse environments?**

Chapter 4 not only focuses on parent networks within the neighbourhood, but also on the strategies they use to cope with the diversity in the neighbourhood. The decision to live in the inner city or outside the city is a complex one for family gentrifiers, as Bridge (2006) has demonstrated. An important aspect in this decision is the desire of family gentrifiers to reproduce cultural capital. While the city, with its aesthetic housing, is helpful in displaying objectified cultural capital, the education options outside the inner city offer a better opportunity to reproduce institutional cultural capital. Research in Amsterdam confirms that the desire for objectified cultural capital can conflict with the desire to reproduce cultural capital (Boterman, 2012). School choice is therefore an important issue for families living in diverse neighbourhoods. The school choice also influences the networks children create in the neighbourhood and the community dynamics of the children. Therefore, chapter 4 not only focuses on the relations of the parents, but also on the school choice and the everyday activities of the children within or outside the neighbourhood, to provide insight into the community dynamics of both children and parents.

Community dynamics in diverse suburban neighbourhoods

In the fifth chapter, a research agenda will be explored, for further research on diversity and community dynamics in suburban areas. Community studies have a long and rich history in suburban areas (see e.g. Elias & Scotson 2008; Gans 1967; Putnam 2000). While suburban

areas used to be described as more homogeneous than urban areas, the ethno-cultural diversity in suburban areas is rapidly increasing (see e.g. Lo, 2011; Young & Keil, 2010; Burgers & van der Lugt, 2005; Alba et al., 1999; Brettell & Nibbs, 2011). The inflow of minority ethnic groups is not always warmly welcomed in these suburban areas, and is sometimes even described as experienced as a threat by the long-term residents (see e.g. Brettell & Nibbs, 2011; Downey & Smith, 2011). It is expected that ethno-cultural diversity will be dealt with differently in a suburban context than in an urban context. This is especially the case in Flanders, where there is a strong anti-immigrant and anti-urban sentiment in suburban areas (Meeus & De Decker, 2013; Schuermans, Meeus, & de Decker, 2015). These negative perceptions of diversity may also influence the community dynamics. In this fifth chapter we will explore which aspects and which theoretical frameworks are useful to study the increasing inflow of minority ethnic groups into Flemish suburban areas. The last chapter will answer the following research question: **How can community dynamics be studied in suburban neighbourhoods that are becoming increasingly diverse?**

1.5 DATA AND METHODS

The fieldwork for this study took place in super-diverse neighbourhoods in Antwerp, the largest city in Flanders, Belgium. Flanders has a long history of strong anti-urban sentiment, which is related to the presence of immigrants. This anti-urban sentiment may influence the community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods. It can, for example, affect the selection of people who choose to live in the city, and therefore the community dynamics. In addition, a bad reputation of a neighbourhood and stigmatization of specific areas may influence how people perceive the neighbourhood and the people living there, which may also influence the community dynamics (Elias & Scotson, 2008: 1965). Therefore, Flanders is an interesting case for studying super-diversity and community dynamics. Antwerp, in particular, is an interesting case; it has always had a problematic relation with diversity, which also became visible during the local elections in 1990s and 2000s, in which an extreme right-wing and anti-immigrant party was highly successful (earlier than in most Western European countries). In this section, I will briefly describe the roots of the anti-urban sentiment in Flanders. Then, I will introduce the case of Antwerp. Thereafter, I describe the neighbourhoods studied. Finally, I will describe the methods used.

THE CASE OF FLANDERS AND ANTWERP

Flanders has a long history of anti-urban policy. In the 19th century, the authorities feared social unrest in the cities, caused by the workers (De Decker, 2011). One of the perceived threats was secularisation in the cities. The elite therefore wanted the workers to live in the villages, because the influence of the church was greater in these villages and the churches

would help to educate the workers. Due to industrialisation, however, workers had to work in the cities. Therefore, the government decided to encourage commuting, by making work centres more accessible and transportation more affordable (De Decker, 2011). However, promotion of commuting was not enough to stop the threat to the city and rural flight; the promotion of home-ownership was the next step. Financial incentives were used, and in the end of the 19th century it was decided that people who owned a dwelling or were saving to buy a dwelling would have an extra vote in elections (De Decker, 2011). Surrounding countries such as the Netherlands also faced problems due to industrialisation and urbanisation. Unlike Belgium, the Netherlands planned to let cities grow instead of urbanising the countryside (De Vos, Van Acker, & Witlox, 2012). After the Second World War, moreover, the housing problems in the cities of Flanders were solved by stimulating suburbanisation, through financial incentives (Van den Broeck, Vermeulen, Oosterlynck, & Albeda, 2014). In the meanwhile, houses in the city were neglected, and although the authorities took measures, cities like Antwerp were renovated very slowly. Due to the slow renovation the city deteriorated further, which stimulated more suburbanisation.

This history is important to understand the anti-urban sentiment in Flanders. The city has never been seen as 'the place to be' and is always connected with deprivation and social unrest. The increasing number of immigrants living in the city has only strengthened the anti-urban sentiment. The degree of ethnocentrism in Belgium is very high, and especially in Flanders people prefer to live in a homogeneous environment (Schuermans et al., 2015). Furthermore, people are afraid of strangers, and they connect in their minds the concepts of urbanism, foreigners and crime (Schuermans & Maesschalck, 2010). *"The idea that the village is much safer than the city is thus the spatial effect of the racist assumption that only 'strangers' are criminals."* (Schuermans and Maesschalck, 2010: 257). In this dissertation, I will not go into depth on the complex link between anti-urban and ethnocentric sentiments. However, it is important to understand this context, since the anti-urban sentiment may influence the community dynamics in urban super-diverse neighbourhoods.

This anti-immigrant sentiment is also strong in and around Antwerp, which was and still is an electoral stronghold of the right-wing and anti-immigrant political parties. In 1988, the extreme right-wing party Vlaams Blok gained more than 17% of the votes in the local elections in Antwerp, and in 1994 it became the biggest party in the city (Van Puymbroeck, 2014). Although none of the political parties wanted to form a local government with Vlaams Blok, the ideas of the Vlaams Blok have had a strong influence on diversity policies in Antwerp. The rise of the right-wing party encouraged other political parties in the 1990s to talk about migration and the problems related to this (Vollebergh, 2016). *"The notion that*

migrants formed a problem that had not been adequately tackled by politics - and the linking of this problem to urban 'concentration neighborhoods', nuisance and street crime by ethnic youths in the public space, and to 'ethnic tensions' - became broadly shared." (Vollebergh, 2016: 53).

In 2013 the Flemish Nationalist party N-VA, which promotes strict immigration policies, came to power. Instead of celebrating diversity, as some other cities do (Ahmadi & Tasan-kok, 2014; Raco et al., 2014), in Antwerp the difficulties of diversity are still emphasized (Saeys, Albeda, Van Puymbroeck, et al., 2014). Because of this problematic relation of Antwerp with diversity, it is an interesting case to study super-diversity.

THE CASE STUDY AREA

To study the local community dynamics, three adjacent neighbourhoods in Antwerp were selected, with high levels of diversity: Antwerpen Noord, Borgerhout Intramuros, and Deurne Noord. We have tried to select super-diverse neighbourhoods. However, due to limited neighbourhood-specific data we are not able to prove the super-diverse character of the neighbourhood. To demonstrate the super-diverse character, we need figures on, for example, education level, immigration status and the language people speak. These data are not available for individual neighbourhoods, nor, in some cases, for cities. Nevertheless, I will try to show why we selected these three neighbourhoods and why they can be seen as super-diverse neighbourhoods.

One of the aspects of super-diversity is the multiplicity of countries of origin. In 2000, Antwerp hosted 154 different nationalities; in 2019 this increased to 171.[1] Although the hosting of various nationalities does not necessarily equate with super-diversity, it is likely that the chosen areas are super-diverse, since the people come from all over the world. Another aspect of super-diversity is, for instance, migration motive. Probably, people coming from Syria have different migration motives than people coming from the Netherlands. In addition, in these countries a different language is spoken: I assume, therefore, that diversity in countries of origin means diversity in language. Another aspect is that the different countries of origin may have different dominant religions, which makes religious diversity likely. Hence, it is likely that people differ from each other in various aspects.

We selected the three neighbourhoods because they all have high levels of diversity, but different characters. The neighbourhoods differ in three ways. The first difference is the

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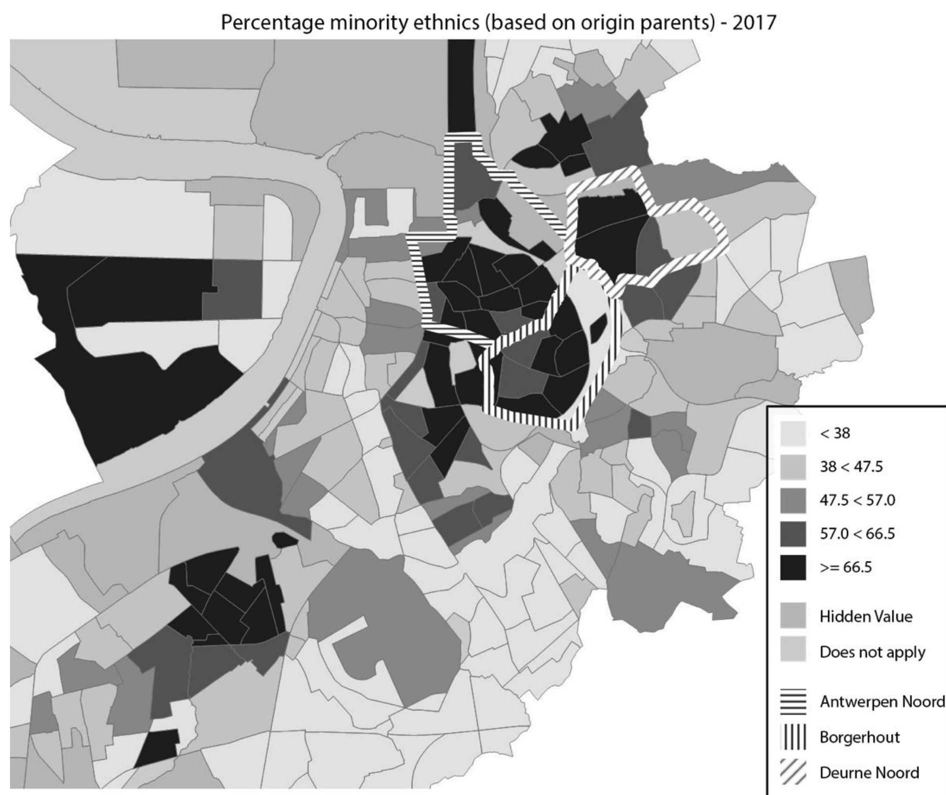
[1] Stadincijfers.antwerpen.be last visited 13 November 2019
[2] Stadincijfers.antwerpen.be last visited 13 November 2019
[3] Stadincijfers.antwerpen.be last visited 13 November 2019

composition of the neighbourhood population, with the highest percentage of people with a minority ethnic background living in Antwerpen Noord and the lowest percentage in Deurne Noord. In addition, the composition of the minority ethnic groups differs. While Moroccans are clearly the largest minority ethnic group in Borgerhout, the differences between group sizes in Antwerpen Noord are much smaller. The second difference is the stage of the diversification process. While Antwerpen Noord and Borgerhout are both neighbourhoods that traditionally house a large number of minority ethnic groups, ethno-cultural diversification started more recently in Deurne Noord. Earlier research shows that perceptions of diversity change over time and that the negative impact of diversity on social cohesion decreases as time proceeds (Downey & Smith, 2011; Thijssen & Dierckx, 2011). A third important difference is the character of the neighbourhoods. Deurne Noord is an urbanised suburb with a relatively high number of single-family houses. In addition, I contrasted areas with different gradients of gentrification. I will describe all three neighbourhoods more in depth below. Figure 1.1 shows the areas studied and the levels of ethno-cultural diversity.

Antwerpen Noord is a lively neighbourhood with many ethnic businesses located near Antwerp Central station. It is an arrival neighbourhood: many migrants first settle in Antwerpen Noord when they arrive in the city (Schillebeeckx, Oosterlynck, & de Decker, 2016). With around 35,000 inhabitants of more than 150 different nationalities, Antwerpen Noord is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the city and a super-diverse area. The most notable minority ethnic groups are the West-Asians (8.1%), the East-Europeans (6.7%) and the West-Europeans (5.7%).[2] However, there is no clear dominant ethnic group. Antwerpen Noord is also known as one of the most deprived areas of Antwerp. The net median income is €11,994, compared to €15,830 in Antwerp as a whole. In addition, quite a few low educated residents live there; 26% of the residents only finished primary education or completed no schooling (compared to 18% in the whole of Antwerp). Only 14% of the residents are highly educated, compared to 22% in Antwerp as a whole. The neighbourhood has a bad reputation and is associated with crime and drugs.[3]

[2] Stadincijfers.antwerpen.be last visited 13 November 2019
[3] Stadincijfers.antwerpen.be last visited 13 November 2019

Percentage minority ethnics (based on origin parents) - 2017

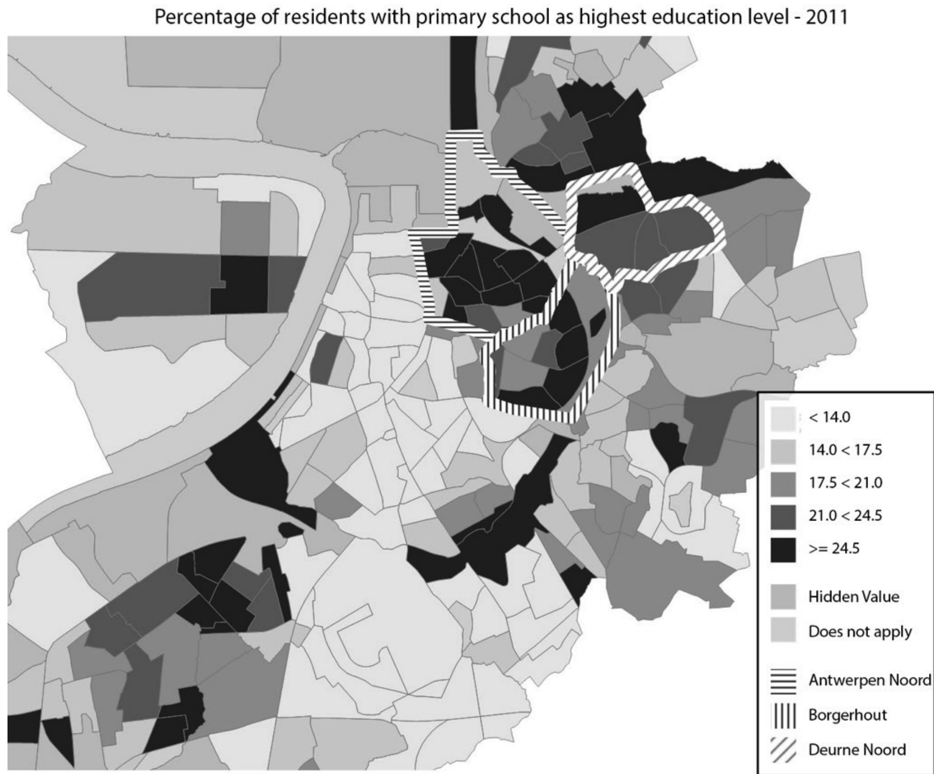


Source: Stad Antwepen, Districts- en loketwerving

FIGURE 1.1: PERCENTAGE OF MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS IN CASE STUDY AREA

Borgerhout Intramuros, located south of Antwerpen Noord, is also known as Borgerocco, referring to the high number of Moroccan people living in this area. It has more than 40,000 inhabitants, from more than 90 different nationalities. Borgerhout is divided into two parts by the ring road that encircles the city. The part of Borgerhout within the ring road is known as 'Borgerhout intramuros' whereas the part outside the ring road is known as 'Borgerhout extramuros'. Only Borgerhout intramuros is part of the case study area. Although Borgerhout still has a bad reputation, this is slowly changing because of gentrification. In the gentrifying parts of the neighbourhood, 24% of the residents are higher educated, which is above the city average, while only 19% of the inhabitants living in these gentrifying parts only finished primary school or have no qualifications. The differences between the neighbourhoods in Borgerhout Intramuros are clearly visible in figure 1.2, demonstrating the percentage of lower educated residents. Borgerhout is hence a diverse neighbourhood along various lines of difference, such as ethnicity and level of education.[4]

[4] Stadincijfers.antwerpen.be last visited 13 November 2019



Source: Stad Antwepen, Districts- en loketwerving (edited by authors)

FIGURE 1.2: PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL AS HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL

With more than 75,000 inhabitants, **Deurne** is the second largest district in the Antwerp municipality and has a suburban character. Deurne is divided into northern, central, eastern, and southern quarters, each of them containing 20,000 inhabitants. Only the northern (most diverse) part of Deurne is part of the case study area. Deurne Noord has become more ethnically diverse in the last ten years. In 2012, 52% of the people living here were from minority ethnic groups. In only 5 years this increased to 63%. However, there are big differences within Deurne Noord. In the most northerly part of Deurne Noord, minority ethnic groups are in the majority, 75%, while in other parts only 40% of the population belong to minority ethnic groups (see figure 1.1). Some parts of Deurne are not yet super-diverse, but considering the evolution of the past ten years, it is expected that all parts of the neighbourhood will become super-diverse. Another characteristic of Deurne Noord is that the percentage of residents living in a rental dwelling is lowest, compared to the other case study areas, namely 31%, which is far below the city average of 42%. There are a relatively large number of families living in Deurne Noord: 14% of the households are family

households. Deurne has for a long time been an electoral stronghold of the extreme-right party Vlaams Belang.[5]

	% Minority ethnic groups	Net median income	% Lower educated	% Higher educated	% Living in a rental dwelling
Antwerpen Noord	72%	€11,994	26%	14%	60%
Borgerhout	69%	€13,003	24%	18%	43%
Deurne Noord	63%	€15,025	24%	10%	31%
Antwerp	48%	€15,830	18%	22%	42%

TABLE 1.3: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD [6]

In-depth interviews in super-diverse neighbourhoods

To gain a better understanding of the community dynamics in the super-diverse neighbourhoods, data were collected in the case study area. The study focuses on the three super-diverse neighbourhoods in Antwerp mentioned above. Hence, we used a case study approach. In the field of urban and community studies, there is a long and rich tradition of highly influential case studies (see e.g. Whyte 1967; Gans 1967; Elias & Scotson 2008).

All data were collected as part of the 7th European framework project DIVERCITIES. During this research project, diversity in 13 different European cities and Toronto was studied. Firstly, the diversity policies in all cities were studied, secondly the local governance arrangements. Third, residents of the super-diverse neighbourhoods were interviewed and then businessmen. The project ended with a cross evaluation, aiming to compare the results of the different cities. In all cities, the same research took place. The interviews with the residents form the basis of this dissertation.

In studying everyday life and community dynamics, I used a qualitative research approach and conducted in-depth interviews with over 50 residents. Six of them were interviewed twice (see chapter 4). This qualitative research method enabled me to get in touch with a

[5] Stadincijfers.antwerpen.be last visited 13 November 2019
[6] Data retrieved from: Stadincijfers.antwerpen.be last visited 13 November 2019

variety of people, living in different kinds of neighbourhoods, in a relatively short period of time. All interviews were conducted between September 2014 and May 2015. For these interviews, a topic list was used, which included questions about neighbourhood choice, social relations, perceptions of diversity, the use of public space, and some factual information (see appendix for the English translation of the used topic list). Most of these questions were given as part of the DIVERCITIES project. During the interviews, I focused on the perceptions of diversity and the social relations of the interviewees, in particular within the neighbourhood. On average, the interviews lasted 80 minutes, and most took place in Dutch. Six interviews were held in English, a combination of English and Dutch, or in very basic Dutch. Holding interviews in English enabled me to also interview people who arrived more recently in Antwerp and people who had never learned the Dutch language. Most interviews were held at people's houses. If people did not want this, an alternative quiet place was suggested, such as a community centre. All respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form that guaranteed anonymity, and they were asked for permission to use the interview in publicly available reports and articles. This did not result in any withdrawals. The interviews were taped and transcribed, and then analysed using the software NVivo. In this dissertation we refer to respondents by their pseudonyms. In the next section I will discuss in more detail the selection of interviewees.

Selection procedure of the interviewees

To grasp the community dynamics in the different neighbourhoods I interviewed 16 people in Antwerpen-Noord, 20 in Borgerhout, and 21 in Deurne Noord. In each area I tried to interview a diverse group in terms of age, ethnic background, socio-economic position and household composition.

To gain access to residents in these areas, I approached several community centres, some of which I had already been in contact with at an earlier stage of the DIVERCITIES research project (Saeys, Albeda, Oosterlynck, Verschraegen, & Dierckx, 2014). The community centres work across neighbourhood borders, so I found residents of Deurne Noord in the community centre of Antwerpen Noord and vice versa. In Deurne Noord, I also recruited respondents through a poverty organisation and an organisation offering 'assistance housing' for elderly people.

When I finished half of the interviews, I critically reviewed the profile of the respondents and decided to interview more families and men, using the snowball method. Other groups that were harder for me to reach were residents of foreign origin, and I had expected to

interview more people with outspoken negative opinions about immigrants, especially in Deurne Noord.

In total I conducted 51 interviews, three of which were with a couple. So, I interviewed 54 residents in total. I interviewed 6 of them two times (see chapter 4). The general characteristics of the interviewees are as follows:

- 38 females and 16 males;
- 21 in Deurne Noord, 16 in Antwerpen Noord, and 20 in Borgerhout;
- 24 people of foreign origin and 30 of Belgian origin. The interviewees of foreign origin came from Africa (11), Europe (7), the Middle-East (3), South America (2), and Asia (1).
- There was a mix of people living alone (15), couples without children (12), families with children (17), people who live only a part of the week with their child(ren) (3), or living alone with a child (1). The other three interviewees lived with family members.
- Half of the interviewees belonged to the age group 31-45, 10 to the age group 46-60, and 8 to the age group 61-75. Two residents were older than 75 years and 5 younger than 31 years.
- The income per adult in a household of 21 interviewees was low/medium-low, and 22 interviewees had a high/medium-high income. The income of 6 interviewees was unknown, and 2 interviewees classified their income as medium.

1.6 Structure of the dissertation

In the following chapters I present the results of the study. The chapters are written as articles or book chapters.

Chapter 2 discusses neighbourhood choice and neighbourhood satisfaction. This chapter discusses not only results from Antwerp, but also from Rotterdam, and was written together with the DIVERCITIES researcher who carried out the fieldwork in the Rotterdam case study. The results from Antwerp and Rotterdam are very similar, and we demonstrate that for most residents, diversity was not an important factor in moving to a super-diverse neighbourhood, but it did contribute to their neighbourhood satisfaction.

Chapter 3 discusses the process of boundary making in super-diverse neighbourhoods, again in Antwerp and Rotterdam. We argue that group boundaries are constantly created and recreated, and that residents use various markers to draw boundaries. While some residents use more general markers, others use specific markers. These boundaries are not necessarily

reflected in the everyday contact of residents, but the contacts within the neighbourhood do influence the boundary making process.

Chapter 4 focuses on family life in diverse neighbourhoods. It focuses on everyday life in the neighbourhood and on school choice. The degree to which children are exposed to ethno-cultural diversity varies between different groups. Parents hence use different strategies to deal with diversity in the neighbourhood and at school.

Chapter 5 considers the increasing inflow of minority ethnic groups into suburban areas and how this might influence the community dynamics in the neighbourhood. It establishes a research agenda for future research on diversity in the suburbs.

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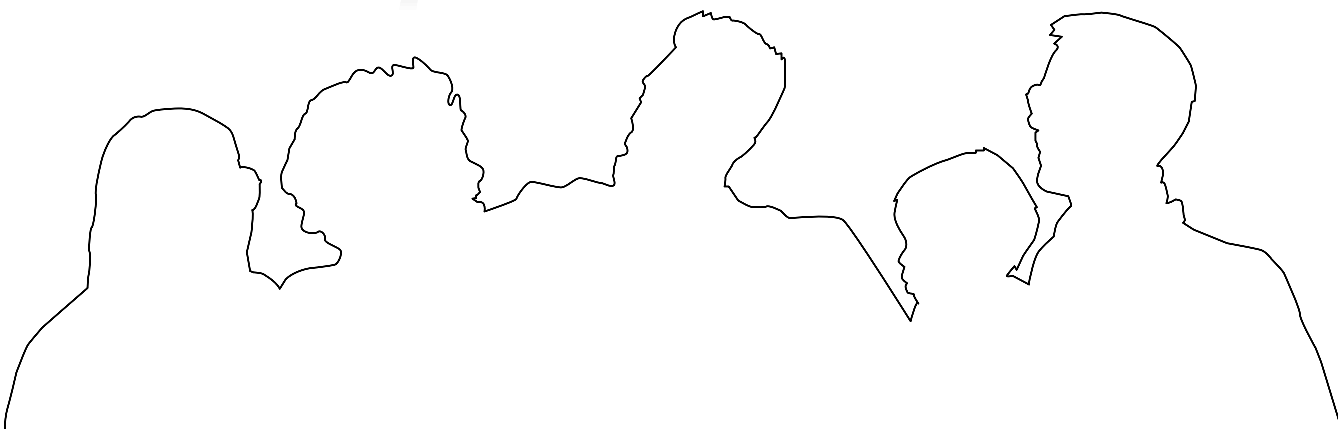

CHAPTER 2

Beyond the middle classes: Neighbourhood choice and satisfaction in hyper-diverse contexts

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2.1 Introduction

Cities have always attracted diverse groups of people, as they offer work, education, housing, social contacts, facilities and services. However, scholars have recently argued that cities are becoming even more diverse, in terms not only of ethnicity but of, for example, activity patterns, attitudes and perceptions, and lifestyles (Tasan-Kok et al. 2013; Vertovec 2007, 2010). In western European cities, the neighbourhoods that are most diverse are often relatively deprived (Wessendorf 2014). Low-income groups are thought to be 'trapped' in their neighbourhoods in terms of their residential careers, and their neighbourhoods are associated with crime, vandalism and low-quality housing, public spaces and education (Dekker et al. 2011; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014). Therefore, these areas are often portrayed in public and political debates as undesirable places to live. The negative understandings are reflected in the multitude of socio-spatial policy interventions for these areas in western Europe, for example to promote the influx of higher income groups and increase social cohesion and social mobility.

Nonetheless, few scholars or professionals have examined what attracts people to diverse and deprived urban areas and how perceptions of local diversities play a role in this respect. Those who have done so mostly focussed on perceptions of ethno-cultural diversity, particularly among the middle classes. Since the 1990s, studies on social mix, gentrification and the creative class have demonstrated how an appreciation of, for instance, ethnic, lifestyle, gender and sexual diversity has attracted the middle classes to cities or kept them there (Butler and Robson 2003; Florida 2003; Hamnett 2003; Lees 2000, 2008). The picture has emerged that middle classes choose diversity (Atkinson 2006; Karsten 2007), whereas lower classes are more often trapped in diverse neighbourhoods. Yet the importance of diversity for neighbourhood choice and satisfaction has hardly been studied among non-middle-class residents.

This chapter fills these research and policy gaps by presenting a qualitative study on neighbourhood choice and satisfaction among residents of different social classes in highly diverse neighbourhoods in Antwerp (Belgium) and Rotterdam (the Netherlands). An in-depth approach was adopted to gain insight into how perceptions of neighbourhood diversity had shaped residents' decisions to move to these neighbourhoods and how the diversity affects their experiences of their neighbourhoods. The study connects the rapidly growing body of literature on highly diverse neighbourhoods to the field of residential choice and satisfaction. The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- To what extent was diversity a motive for residents of diverse and deprived urban areas to move to their current neighbourhoods?

- To what extent does diversity influence the neighbourhood satisfaction of residents of diverse and deprived urban areas?

The following section provides the theoretical background to the determinants of and mechanisms behind neighbourhood choice and satisfaction in diverse neighbourhoods, demonstrating the need for research on, for example, lower- class and minority ethnic groups to add to the literature on middle classes. The research areas, methods and interviewees are then introduced in the section on the research design (section 3). The research findings section discusses 1) residents' motives for moving to their current neighbourhoods and 2) residents' satisfaction with their current neighbourhoods. In the concluding section, we highlight the particular contribution of our findings to existing literature on neighbourhood choice and satisfaction and urban policies for highly diverse urban areas.

2.2 Living in highly diverse neighbourhoods

Studies on the relation between diversity and neighbourhood choice and satisfaction are scarce. The topic has received most attention in the urban studies literature on suburbanisation, gentrification and the creative class. The literature on suburbanisation describes how in the 1960s and 1970s an increase in wealth and car ownership in western Europe encouraged middle-class households to leave cities for suburban areas (de Decker 2011; Jackson 1985; Loots and van Hove 1986). The inflow of non-western migrants to urban neighbourhoods that started in the 1960s further stimulated the suburbanisation. As it was mostly white people who could afford to leave the city, the process has been described as 'white flight' (Frey 1979; Galster 1990; Wright et al. 2014). People who could not afford to move away – namely the poor, the elderly and immigrants – remained in the city. Although this process was stronger in Belgium than in the Netherlands,[7] the process resulted in population loss in both Antwerp and Rotterdam, as well as a poorer and increasingly ethnoculturally diverse population (Statistics Netherlands 2004; Loots and van Hove 1986; Public Affairs Rotterdam, n.d.). Whereas literature on white flight describes ethnocultural diversity as a reason for middle classes to leave the city, literature on gentrification and the creative class describes it as attractive to the middle classes. In the 1990s, these studies started to report the return of middle-class workers and households to cities, due to a new

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[7] In Belgium, suburbanisation was actively promoted by the government as early as the 19th century, as well as after the Second World War (see De Decker, 2011 for more information) namely suburbanisation and urban decay. It passed a law to combat vacancy and slum housing (1995. In the Netherlands on the other hand, the government planned new housing estates not only outside but also within urban areas.

appreciation of social diversity and the improved living conditions in cities (Atkinson 2006; Butler and Robson 2003; Florida 2003; Karsten 2007; Hamnett 2003; Lees 2000, 2008).

Although it has been questioned whether the reappraisal of the city by the middle classes entails an appreciation of the diverse population or the variety of facilities and amenities that are characteristic of urban neighbourhoods[8] (Weck and Hanhörster 2014), white middle-class households in diverse neighbourhoods are thought to have consciously chosen to live amidst diversity. In addition, diversity is seen as a factor that contributes to their neighbourhood satisfaction (Atkinson 2006; Karsten 2007). In contrast, lower-class and minority ethnic households in diverse neighbourhoods are often regarded as being 'trapped' in diversity (Florida 2005; Lees, Slater and Wiley 2008). Nevertheless, these studies rarely take into account the influence of diversity or perceptions thereof on the neighbourhood choice of lower-class and minority ethnic groups. To get a more comprehensive understanding, the present study therefore explored the importance of diversity for the neighbourhood choice and satisfaction not only of white middle-class residents, but also of lower-class and minority ethnic groups living in highly diverse neighbourhoods. In what follows we discuss what is known from the literature about the ways in which socioeconomic as well as ethnic diversity shape neighbourhood choice and satisfaction.

Class differences

Middle- and upper-class households have more choice when it comes to housing than households in lower socioeconomic positions. The former households living in diverse neighbourhoods can more easily move to less diverse neighbourhoods, of which there are plenty in western European cities and even more outside cities. Thus, the literature assumes that neighbourhood diversity is attractive to them. Studies show that middle and upper classes are attracted to different sorts of diversity (Blokland and van Eijk 2010; Jackson and Benson 2014; Tissot 2014). An important point of attraction for middle-class households in diverse neighbourhoods appears to be the heterogeneous facility and amenity structure that characterises highly diverse neighbourhoods (Florida 2003, 2005; Hall 2015; Wessendorf 2014). Nevertheless, studies disagree on the relative importance of this diverse infrastructure compared to traditional push and pull factors such as distance to work (Karsten 2007; Lawton, Murphy and Redmond 2013; van Diepen and Musterd 2009). It also remains unclear why a diversity of facilities might be a pull factor for them.

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[8] Another explanation for the reappraisal of the city is an economic one, described in the rent gap theory. According to this theory, there is a gap "between the actual capitalized ground rent (land value) of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a 'higher and better' use." (Smith 1987, p. 462). Gentrification is seen as an economic process that partly closes this gap.

The literature shows that middle and upper classes do not choose to settle or remain in highly diverse neighbourhood because of the diverse local social contacts they make or might make. This is because middle-class households generally do not depend on the neighbourhood for their daily activities and social network, in contrast to lower-class households (Blokland 2003; Dekker and Bolt 2005; Guest and Wierzbicki 1999). Studies indicate that middle-class households living in diverse neighbourhoods have relatively small and homogenous local networks of neighbours and other local acquaintances in terms of class, culture and ethnicity (Atkinson 2006; Butler and Robson 2001, 2003; Karsten 2007). This is the case even among 'diversity seekers' – residents for whom neighbourhood diversity was a settlement motive (Blokland and van Eijk 2010).

To the best of the authors' knowledge, few studies have explored the role of urban diversity in the neighbourhood choice and satisfaction of households in low socioeconomic positions. Highly diverse urban areas often offer affordable housing. For lower-class households, affordability is thought to be one of the most important reasons to live in diverse neighbourhoods. Because they might not have chosen to live in a diverse neighbourhood, we might expect them to feel that they are 'stuck in diversity', rather than to appreciate diversity.

The literature indicates that lower-class residents have more local activity patterns and social networks than middle- and upper-class residents. Therefore, the presence of family and friends appears to be more important for their decision to settle or remain in a neighbourhood than it is for middle and upper classes (Amerigo and Aragones 1990; Adriaanse 2007; Fischer 1982; Guest and Wierzbicki 1999; Völker et al. 2013). Yet, this preference does not necessarily relate to social diversity, as strong ties with family and friends in diverse contexts mostly develop along lines of ethnicity and class (Valentine 2008; Blokland and van Eijk 2010; Putnam 2000, 2007; Wessendorf 2014). Contacts with strangers and weak ties with neighbours and other local acquaintances can, however, be highly diverse, due to, for example, the local orientation of lower-class households (Amin 2002; Wessendorf 2014; Hall 2015).

The picture that emerges from the literature is that middle- and upper-class residents in diverse neighbourhoods have chosen to live in such neighbourhoods because they appreciate the specific 'social wallpaper' (Butler 2003) and the facility and amenity structure of diverse neighbourhoods, whereas lower classes live in these neighbourhoods because they offer affordable housing and enable them to live close to their family and friends. Therefore, we expected to find that middle-class residents in diverse areas experience diversity more positively than lower-class residents.

THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY

Middle-class majority ethnic residents in diverse neighbourhoods who moved to the area when it was already diverse are thought to mostly appreciate local diversity (Florida 2003, 2005). However, the literature indicates that this is different for long- term majority ethnic residents, particularly those with few housing alternatives. For instance, van Ham and Feijten (2008) and van Ham and Clark (2009) have demonstrated that in neighbourhoods with an increasing percentage of minority ethnic groups, more people, particularly white majority ethnic residents, want to leave the neighbourhood because they are becoming more ethnically different from others in the neighbourhood. A part of this group is long-term residents who did not choose to live in a diverse neighbourhood at the time of settlement and lack the means to move away (Feijten and van Ham 2009). Other long-term residents, however, who lack opportunities to leave, adjust their expectations of the residential environment to reduce residential stress (for example Brown and Moore 1970), suggesting that their neighbourhood satisfaction might not be as negative as one might expect.

Compared to majority ethnic residents, minority ethnic residents in western European cities are more often in low socioeconomic positions and hence have relatively few options when it comes to neighbourhood choice. The literature therefore indicates that minority ethnic groups in low socioeconomic positions settle in diverse, deprived neighbourhoods because of the affordable housing.

According to ethnic enclave theory, minority ethnic groups, regardless of their socioeconomic situation, are thought to settle in diverse areas because they prefer to live close to co-ethnics, who are often spatially concentrated in diverse neighbourhoods (Wilson and Portes 1980). In this respect they prefer homogeneity rather than diversity. An advantage of living in a neighbourhood with co-ethnics is the presence of specialised facilities and amenities that meet ethnocultural- specific needs (Logan, Zhang and Alba 2002). In addition, living in the presence of co-ethnics also offers entry points for work, particularly for minority ethnic groups in low socioeconomic positions (Zorlu and Mulder 2007; Zukin, Kasinitz and Chen 2016; Saunders 2010). Furthermore, according to ethnic enclave theory, living among co-ethnics can provide important personal support networks. These networks can further provide protection and security and can contribute to a sense of home (Saunders 2010; Górny and Toruńczyk-Ruiz 2014). However, living among co-ethnics can also cause negative residential experiences, for instance in the case of too high levels of social control (Dekker and Bolt 2005). An ethnically diverse neighbourhood could mitigate this, but not if ethnic communities live parallel lives (Camina and Wood 2009; Forrest and Kearns 2001). Nevertheless, a growing body of literature shows high levels of everyday social

interaction across ethnocultural differences in highly diverse neighbourhoods. Referred to as, for example, 'everyday multiculturalism', 'corner-shop cosmopolitanism', 'conviviality' and 'light encounters', these exchanges mostly take place between neighbours and other local acquaintances. Inter-ethnocultural relationships mostly develop between more locally oriented residents in low socioeconomic positions, rather than middle- and upper-class residents (Fincher and Iveson 2008; Hall 2012; Valentine 2008; Wessendorf 2014; Wise 2009; van Eijk 2012). In sum, one might expect that white middle classes who settled in diverse neighbourhoods when they were already diverse are attracted to urban diversity and appreciate this, whereas white long-term residents (who are mostly in lower socioeconomic positions, otherwise they would have moved) are more ambivalent about urban diversity because they settled in the neighbourhoods before they were so diverse. Minority ethnic groups are mostly attracted to neighbourhoods where co-ethnics live, preferring ethnically homogenous rather than diverse neighbourhoods.

2.3 Research in highly diverse neighbourhoods in Rotterdam and Antwerp

The cities of Rotterdam and Antwerp are similar in many respects. The former has about 624,800 inhabitants, the latter 516,000, and both are their country's second largest city. Both are also port cities and former industrial cities, and have relatively high levels of low-skilled workers, unemployment and poor households compared to other large cities in the Netherlands and Belgium. In both cities, urban policies have been implemented in an attempt to turn the tide by attracting more middle- and high-income groups by, for example, stimulating processes of neighbourhood gentrification (Doucet, van Kempen and van Weesep 2011; Loopmans 2008). Due to their histories as international trade centres, the cities have attracted migrants from all over the world. Migrants have come to work in the docks or, in the case of Antwerp for instance, as diamond traders. They re-joined their families or formed new families. In 2015, almost half of the inhabitants of Rotterdam and Antwerp (49% and 46%, respectively) were born abroad or had at least one parent who was born abroad (Municipality of Antwerp 2015; Statistics Rotterdam 2016).

The present research was carried out in the district of Feijenoord which is located on the South bank of Rotterdam, and in three adjacent areas in Antwerp, namely Antwerpen Noord, Deurne Noord and Borgerhout Intra muros. Feijenoord has 73,079 inhabitants (2015) and comprises nine neighbourhoods. The neighbourhoods studied in Antwerp have a total of about 95,642 inhabitants (2015). The case study areas are located relatively close to the city centre, in terms of both absolute distance and public transport connections. We conducted our research here because the areas are characterised by an enormous diversity of individuals and households, in terms not only of income, but also of education, household

composition, age, ethnicity, attitudes and lifestyles. In 2014, the largest ethnic groups in Feijenoord were Dutch [9] (32%), Turkish (19%), Surinamese (9%) and Moroccan (11%), and in 2015, the largest ethnic groups in the research area in Antwerp were Belgian (32%), North African (25%), east European (10%) and other west European (6%). Whereas the majority ethnic populations of the Netherlands and Belgium are ageing, the population of the research areas is getting younger: in 2014, 32% of the population of Feijenoord were younger than 25, as were 36% of the neighbourhoods studied in Antwerp. The areas are also deprived: they are characterised by combinations of physical deterioration (low housing quality and badly maintained public places and streets) and a concentration of low-income groups (with relatively high crime rates and large numbers of people who are unemployed and on welfare benefits).

Rather than create a sample that is representative of the population, we interviewed members of as many social groups as possible, paying specific attention to ethnicity, education, income, length of residence and household composition. Interviewees were selected using purposeful sampling to ensure that we spoke with members of the above-mentioned groups (Bryman 2012). Within this framework, we used two methods. First, we approached local governance arrangements that deal with social diversity on a daily basis, most of which we knew from previous research in the area (see Tersteeg et al. 2014; Saeys et al. 2014), and asked them to introduce us to individuals in the neighbourhood. Second, we asked interviewees to introduce us to other potential interviewees (the snowball method). All interviewees were aged 18 years or older and signed a consent form. The interviews were held at people’s homes (unless an interviewee preferred an alternative place, such as a community centre, library or café) and lasted about one hour. The questions focussed on residents’ motives for moving to, living in and, where relevant, leaving their current neighbourhoods in relation to local diversity. During the interviews, we also mapped residents’ egocentric social networks of family, friends, acquaintances and neighbours, because we expected local social networks to be important for the neighbourhood choice and satisfaction of some resident groups. All interviews were taped and transcribed and then analysed using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. The interviews were held between September 2014 and May 2015.

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[9] In accordance with the Scientific Council for Government Policy in the Netherlands, we define ‘Dutch’ and ‘Belgian’ as citizens whose both parents were born in the Netherlands or Belgium respectively.

In Rotterdam, we interviewed 56 people in eight neighbourhoods in Feijenoord. Most interviewees lived in the neighbourhoods of Feijenoord,[10] Hillesluis, Katendrecht and Vreewijk. In Antwerp, we interviewed 54 people: 21 in Deurne Noord 16 in Antwerpen Noord and 17 in Borgerhout. The interviewees represented 15 and 17 nationalities in Rotterdam and Antwerp, respectively. The largest ethnic groups represented by the interviewees were Dutch, Surinamese, Turkish and Moroccan in Rotterdam, and Belgian, Moroccan, Dutch and German in Antwerp. In terms of religion, the sample included followers of various forms of Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. Interviewees' duration of stay in the dwellings and neighbourhoods varied from a few weeks to several decades. They represented different age groups (18–88 years old), household types (single, couples, couples with children, single parents) and socioeconomic positions, referring to income and education levels. See Albeda et al. (2015) and Tersteeg et al. (2017) for an extensive overview of the demographics of the interviewed persons.

2.4 Neighbourhood choice

We know from the literature on neighbourhood choice that the extent to which residents have a choice when moving to their neighbourhoods and dwellings has important implications for their satisfaction with their neighbourhoods (see for example Posthumus 2013). Before we discuss the most important motives for moving to a diverse and deprived neighbourhood, it is therefore important to note that a few residents felt that the decision to move had not been entirely voluntary and that housing options were limited. A number of interviewees living in social housing in Rotterdam had been forced to switch social rental apartments due to urban restructuring programmes here. Other residents had limited housing options because they had been in urgent need of a dwelling, for instance because they had been homeless or expecting a child. Nevertheless, the large majority of interviewees felt that they had made a conscious decision to move to their present dwellings and neighbourhoods, and our focus is now on these interviewees.

The availability of affordable housing

Although relocation options were sometimes limited, most interviewees felt that they had chosen to move to their current neighbourhoods. For most residents, however, it was not the diversity they chose: the primary reason to choose the current neighbourhoods was the availability of affordable housing. Many of the dwellings in the research areas are the cheapest in the city. In line with the literature, households in low socioeconomic

[10] One of the neighbourhoods in the research area, the city district of Feijenoord, is also called Feijenoord.

positions[11](SEP) cannot afford to live elsewhere. Yet, different from what we expected based on the literature, households in medium or high socioeconomic positions were also attracted to the neighbourhood because of the affordable housing stock. For example, when asked why they moved to their current neighbourhood, Edward (43, Dutch, medium SEP, Rotterdam) replied:

> We considered [buying a house in] Rotterdam South because of the affordability of the owner-occupied houses. I mean, it saves us €100,000 buying a house four kilometres away [from the city centre]. This [house] was affordable and large. ... I will never get the opportunity to buy such a house for such a low price again.

Bonds with family and friends

In line with the literature, for interviewees in low socioeconomic positions and from minority ethnic backgrounds, the presence of family and friends in the neighbourhood was an important settlement motive. These networks provided interviewees with company and support; for example, they shared meals, took care of each other in the case of illness or disabilities, babysat and generally kept an eye out for each other. These strong local ties were mostly homogenous in terms of socioeconomic position and ethnicity. When Usha (27, Tibetan Belgian, medium SEP, Antwerp) was asked why he moved to his current neighbourhood, he responded: *"...because all my friends live nearby and I do not know that much about Belgium yet. Therefore, it was important for me to live close to my friends."* Likewise, Willemijn (41, Dutch, low SEP, Rotterdam) and her son had recently moved to her parents' neighbourhood to be close to them:

> It is very nice to have my parents live nearby because they are getting older. They are both 70. I can support them. Of course it is also nice for my son, and convenient for me: when I need to do some shopping, I tell him 'Go visit your grandmother'.

A neighbourhood without a majority group

For some interviewees, mostly of minority ethnic backgrounds, the diversity of people appeared important for their neighbourhood choice, as they preferred to live in neighbourhoods that are not dominated by a majority group. Emre (21, Turkish Dutch, low SEP, Rotterdam), for instance, reported that the commonality of being a member of a

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[11] We define socioeconomic position (SEP) according to the interviewees' education level and household income. A low, medium and high SEP we define as having, respectively: a primary or lower vocational educational degree and a net monthly household income of <€1670; a pre-university or intermediate educational degree and a net monthly household income of €1670–€3300; a university or university of applied sciences educational degree and a net monthly household income of >€3300.

minority ethnic group in his neighbourhood motivates residents to treat each other as equals, despite their differences. It is thus the diversity of the population that was important to these residents, as Salima (38, Moroccan Belgian, medium SEP, Antwerp) explained:

> I don't think I would like to live in a neighbourhood with only Moroccan people, no. I want some variety, Belgian people, African. ...I think [otherwise] it would be boring. Boring, and also everybody has the same opinion, same culture, same religion.

Diversity of the neighbourhood population refers not only to ethnicity, but also to other aspects of diversity, as Rick's (45, Dutch, medium SEP, Rotterdam) situation illustrates. He reported that he preferred to live in his current neighbourhood, which was home to diverse types of households, rather than in his previous neighbourhood, which was mostly inhabited by couples with children, because he had just got divorced and lived alone.

Living among diverse ethnic groups or household types thus made the interviewees feel more 'in place' (Cresswell 1996; Wessendorf 2014). Whereas literature often highlights that minority ethnic groups are attracted to similarity by pointing out that they want to live near friends and family members, our results indicate that minority groups seek not only similarity, but also diversity.

Although for many interviewees diversity was not the main reason to settle in their current neighbourhoods, it did play a role when people had to choose between neighbourhoods with different sorts of diversity. Myrthe (39, Belgian, high SEP), for example, preferred Borgerhout to Antwerpen Noord, because people of Belgian origin were a majority in the former and a minority in the latter. Yet, Nel (63, Belgian, low SEP) preferred Deurne Noord over Borgerhout because of the perceived concentration of Moroccan people in the latter neighbourhood. She said she liked the diversity in her neighbourhood, because no population group was overly numerous or dominant, enabling everybody to feel at home. Nel explained: *"We don't have 'clan formation', like Borgerhout, [which] really [has] a concentration of Moroccans. ...It is enormously mixed here, and [it all works] without problems."* In Rotterdam, too, people from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds compared neighbourhoods with different types of diversity when choosing their current neighbourhoods. Hagar (55, Dutch, low SEP, Rotterdam), for example, chose to settle in a part of the neighbourhood with few Muslims. She said that she would never want to live near another part (Maashaven), because of the high concentration of Muslims living there.

2.5 Neighbourhood satisfaction

To examine the extent to which residents were satisfied with their neighbourhoods, they were asked to elaborate on positive and negative experiences with their residential

environments. They were also asked whether they would remain in their neighbourhoods or leave if they had the opportunity, and why.

We found that residents generally experienced their residential environments positively and preferred to remain in their neighbourhoods. In Rotterdam, quite a number of interviewees in low socioeconomic positions had moved to their current dwellings within the same neighbourhood or from an adjacent neighbourhood. Furthermore, of the interviewees who had moved in from outside the area in Rotterdam, many had chosen to move back to the neighbourhoods they had once lived in. This is in line with the finding of Dujardin and van der Zanden (2014): since the 1990s, at least 35% of those settling in Rotterdam South are local residents, often of a non-western ethnicity, who moved within their neighbourhood or to other neighbourhoods in Rotterdam South. Although most interviewees in Antwerp came from outside their neighbourhoods, residents were also generally satisfied and did not wish to move out. Whereas for most residents the diversity of people was not the most important reason to settle in their current neighbourhoods, aspects of diversity appear to have contributed to their neighbourhood satisfaction.

DIVERSE LOCAL WEAK TIES

'Strong ties' – social bonds with close family members and friends – were an important motive not only for settling in the current neighbourhoods but also for remaining there, as they provide residents with care and support. Interviewees from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds mentioned this. In line with the literature, local networks of family and friends were generally homogeneous in terms of class, culture, ethnicity and religion. Nevertheless, interviewees from different socioeconomic and ethnocultural backgrounds also mentioned 'weak ties' with neighbours and other local acquaintances as a factor that contributed to their neighbourhood satisfaction. Unlike the strong ties, these weak ties were diverse in terms of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion and household type (see Albeda et al. 2015; Tersteeg et al. 2017). Local acquaintances were described as local people with whom interviewees had become familiar but who were not considered family or friends. Maanasa's story (26, Hindustani Surinamese Dutch, low SEP, Rotterdam) illustrates how a diverse network of local acquaintances can positively influence neighbourhood satisfaction. She had recently moved back to the neighbourhood she grew up in. *"I meet many people from the old days, whom I grew up with. ... When I go outside in the summer, when you go out to buy some bread, it takes at least half an hour to get home because you bump into people and chat with them everywhere".* When discussing the people she was talking about, it appeared that they were highly diverse in terms of, for instance, gender, ethnicity, age and household type.

These diverse local networks contributed to a sense of familiarity and provided residents with support. For example, Mouad and Lina (45 and 31, Moroccan Dutch, medium SEP, Rotterdam) said that an important reason for remaining in their neighbourhood was their contact with local acquaintances and neighbours – with diverse ethnic backgrounds, ages and household types – from whom they regularly receive practical support, for instance when they moved into their current dwelling: *"Children, men, everyone helped us."*

However, we also came across residents from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds who found it difficult to make contact with diverse others. Some interviewees perceived barriers related to class or ethnocultural differences. For example, Christiane (49, Colombian Belgian, medium SEP, Antwerp) reported: *"A Belgian on the street would never say, 'Hey, how are you, what is your name?' No. Also not positive or not nice words, but also no bad words. Nothing, nothing, nothing to you."* Ethnocultural barriers are sometimes related to language diversity. Respondents from various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds experience a negative impact of language diversity on the social cohesion and the social mobility of minority ethnic groups. Some long-term residents, for example, complained that it was difficult to communicate with 'foreigners' who do not speak Dutch. Yet, some residents of non-western ethnicities were also bothered. They said that the high local concentration of non-Dutch speakers prevented them from learning Dutch. *"I do not have problems with my neighbours, but I have the problem that I cannot learn Dutch. All my neighbours speak another language, for instance in the local shops. Sometimes I think I live in Turkey or I am in Morocco"* (Meriam, 28, Afghan Belgian, low SEP, Antwerp).

A diversity of experiences and exchanges

Many interviewees said that they valued the liveliness that comes with ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. They enjoyed their neighbourhood because *"there is always something happening"* (Nancy, 41, Cape Verdean Dutch, medium SEP, Rotterdam). Yet, we also came across interviewees who complain about this 'liveliness'. They related the presence of 'foreigners' to nuisance in public and semi- public spaces, including unauthorised rubbish disposal, spitting in the streets, playing loud music, and talking loudly or yelling. Residents attributed the negative behaviours to 'the different cultures' of minority ethnic groups. Interviewees in middle or high socioeconomic positions often attributed the perceived negative behaviours of minority ethnic groups to their poor socioeconomic position, for instance saying that the groups' preoccupation with 'surviving' prevented them from disposing of rubbish properly.

A lot of interviewees of diverse ethnicities, socioeconomic positions and household compositions said that ethnic, cultural and religious diversity offers them new experiences

with, for example, different foods and cooking styles, religious practices, and marriage and family cultures. Cheng (30, Asian Antillean Dutch, medium SEP, Rotterdam), for instance, said that local diversity enabled intercultural cooking experiences:

> I hang out with Turkish and Moroccan [people]. I am always curious. 'Hi, how do you cook this, how do you prefer [that]? Oh that is a difference, but I think it is delicious.' This way I learn new things from them. I always try, I always ask [them]: 'If you would like to learn to cook Chinese, I can teach you'. We can help one another.

Interviewees also often pointed out that neighbours share food, referring mostly to Islamic feasts when they receive food from their Muslim neighbours. Anke (Belgian, high SEP, Antwerp, 31-45), for example, mentioned that she likes the diversity because, for instance: *"I get biscuits from my neighbours during the sugar feast."*

A DIVERSITY OF FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

Interviewees of diverse ethnicities, socioeconomic positions and household compositions in Rotterdam and Antwerp,, said that they appreciated the diverse local facility and amenity structure. It contributed to their neighbourhood satisfaction and motivated them to remain in the neighbourhood. Residents reported that the facilities met the diverse interests and needs of the ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse population. In both Rotterdam and Antwerp, middle-class residents, mostly of Dutch or Belgian ethnicities, said that they valued the diversity of local shops and restaurants, the extended opening hours of minority ethnic businesses and the liveliness they bring to the streets. According to Julia (63, Belgian, high SEP, Antwerp):

> What I think is very positive, and I really appreciate, is that the whole world comes together here, for instance to shop. The exotic supplies are great. The opening hours, the shops are always open, even on a Sunday evening at 9 pm you can buy food, or even a new TV. Some shops never close.

On the other hand, residents of non-western ethnicities mostly value the presence of local shops that meet their specific needs. Hannah (62, Surinamese Dutch, low SEP, Rotterdam), for instance, said that she valued the local Chinese and Surinamese shops highly because they sold certain Surinamese foods.

Dutch and Belgian long-term residents complained about changes in neighbourhood facilities resulting from the inflow of minority ethnic groups (see also Feijten and van Ham 2009). These interviewees lived in the area before it became highly diverse. Some had learnt to appreciate diversity, but they still missed certain facilities that had disappeared, such as a Dutch bakery. Louisa (59, Dutch, low SEP, Rotterdam) lived in the neighbourhood of

Hillesluis in which (in 2010) 81% of the residents were not from a Dutch ethnic background. She told us:

> I wish there were more Dutch shops. We do not have a butcher. A Turkish butcher, but not a Dutch one. [We] do not have a bakery. ...They [the non- Dutch bakeries] have really nice things, but they are often quite buttery, so that is something that you have to like then.

A social climate that tolerates differences

Another aspect of local diversity that contributed to the satisfaction of interviewees with their neighbourhood is a tolerant mentality of residents towards cultural differences. Three narratives can be distinguished in this respect. First, for interviewees who were members of minority groups, for instance regarding ethnicity, household type or lifestyle, the diversity of people was not only a motive to move to the area, but also made them feel at ease in their neighbourhood as they felt they were not the only minority (see Wessendorf 2014; Pemberton and Philimore 2016).

Second, several interviewees of Dutch or Belgian ethnicity said that living with diverse income groups, ethnicities and lifestyles had made them more aware and/ or tolerant of these differences. Lily (33, Belgian, high SEP, Antwerp), for instance, said: “It has definitely opened my mind about how other people live, that it does not all have to be ... white middle classes. It has made me less naive about how the world works, and that there is indeed poverty.” And Martin (66, Dutch Belgian, high SEP, Antwerp) said: “Because there are so many different people living in one street, you do not get large social groups. ... People are more tolerant towards one another because everyone is different in some way”.

A third narrative about tolerance was mentioned by interviewees in medium or high socioeconomic positions, mostly parents, who discussed the value of children growing up in diverse neighbourhoods. Vera (41, Dutch, high SEP, Rotterdam) said that the advantage of living in a diverse neighbourhood is that she can send her children to ethnically, religiously and socioeconomically mixed schools, where children with diverse backgrounds play together:

> I find that a very good thing. ... because it [diversity] is just an everyday reality. ... One day, they [the children] will jointly have to deal with it in Rotterdam, or somewhere else. The more you know about and understand each other’s life world, the more you will be able to make joint decisions on how to handle things. ... Just being realistic: this [diversity] is what you grow up with, and later on you will also be part of these people. People with little money, much money, people with high education levels, low education levels, then you will know how to deal with it.

Yet, some parents regarded diversity at schools and sports clubs positively only within certain limits. They said that a low number of ethnic Dutch or Belgian children corresponds with children's language deficiencies, bad behaviour and lower educational performance.

2.6 Conclusion

This present research sought to provide insight into how residents' perceptions of diverse, deprived neighbourhoods affect their neighbourhood choice and satisfaction. The findings show that for most interviewees, diversity was not a primary motive to move to a diverse neighbourhood. Instead, the primary pull factor to move to their current neighbourhoods was the availability of affordable housing. Even for middle-class residents, who in the literature are often assumed to move to diverse neighbourhoods primarily for the diversity, affordability was the most important settlement motive. Although diversity was thus not the primary settlement motive, it did influence the decision of a specific group of interviewees. We found that members of minority groups, including minority ethnic groups, were attracted to diverse neighbourhoods because they did not want to be the only person who was 'different'. A diverse neighbourhood allowed them to feel more in place. This does not mean, however, that they did not look for any similarity at all. For low-income residents an important motive to move to their current neighbourhoods was the presence of family and friends, who mostly appeared to be similar in terms of ethnicity and class. Minority ethnic groups appreciated the similarity they found within their strong social ties; however, in this respect they do not differ from majority ethnic and different socioeconomic resident groups. Hence, our study shows that it is not the search for similarity that differentiates minority ethnic from majority ethnic groups, but the desire for diversity. These findings are in sharp contrast to ethnic enclave theory, which suggests that minority ethnic groups are attracted to diverse areas only by the concentration of co-ethnics.

For the majority of residents, diversity appeared to be important once they had settled in their neighbourhoods. Despite the negative discourses about diverse areas in public and political debates, we found that residents in these contexts generally appeared quite satisfied and that diversity contributed to the decision to remain in the neighbourhood – also among the low-income groups. Several aspects of diversity, including a diverse facility structure, the opportunity to have new, intercultural experiences and exchanges, and a social context without dominant majority groups, contributed to the decision to remain. Also long- term residents with limited financial resources were in general positive about the neighbourhood and its diversity. This is not self-evident, because they mostly came to live in a much more homogeneous neighbourhood and hence did not opt for diversity. Negative

perceptions among this group are mostly expressed in nostalgic feelings about the past, such as the changing landscape of facilities that meet the diverse needs of the population.

Finally, although we did not find much evidence for diverse social networks of family and friends, the weak ties with neighbours and acquaintances appeared more diverse than we expected on the basis of our literature review. Importantly, among all classes and ethnicities these diverse weak ties appeared to contribute to satisfaction with the neighbourhood. Moreover, for some residents they appeared to be a reason to remain in or move back to the neighbourhood.

The findings show that studies on local social networks in highly diverse contexts should focus not only on strong but also on weak ties. This difference is important, because it can lead to seemingly opposite views on local networks. The findings also show that diversity plays a role in the neighbourhood choice and satisfaction not only of middle-class residents, but also of other resident groups, including households in low socioeconomic positions and minority ethnic and long-term residents in diverse neighbourhoods. Furthermore, we found that local diversity can positively influence neighbourhood satisfaction, and to a lesser extent neighbourhood choice. Although we also came across negative experiences with diversity, the overall picture is much more positive than the literature suggests.

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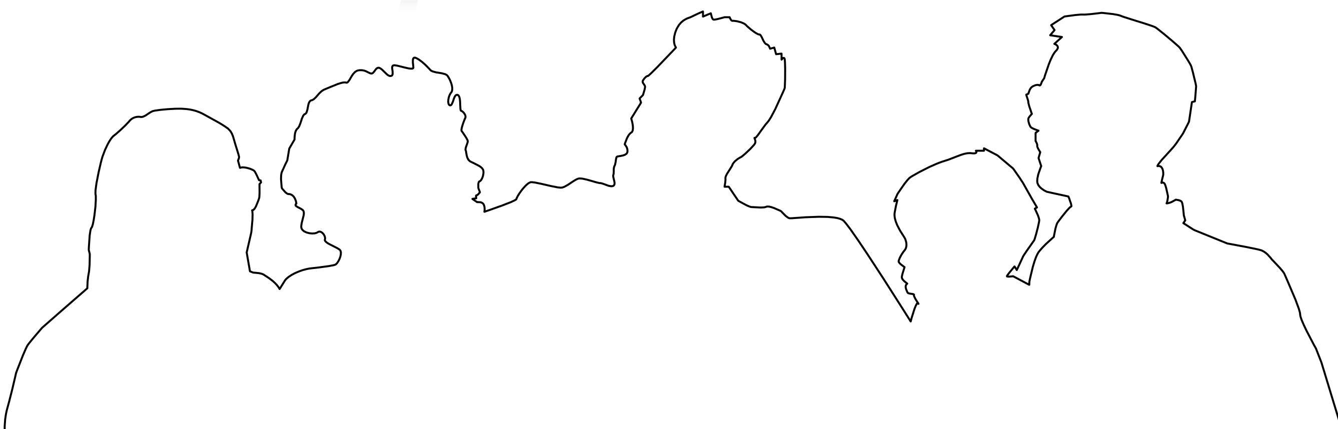

CHAPTER 3

Symbolic boundary making in super-diverse deprived neighbourhoods

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Abstract

Neighbourhood-based research on the rise of super-diverse cities has mostly focussed on the implications of living in super-diverse neighbourhoods for individual relations, and paid little attention to processes of group formation. This paper focuses on how residents of super-diverse neighbourhoods identify social groups. Drawing on the concept of symbolic boundary making, it provides insights into how residents draw, enact and experience boundaries. Using the results of in-depth interviews with residents in Antwerp and Rotterdam, we show that super-diversity complexifies but does not counteract group formation. Residents draw multiple, interrelated symbolic boundaries along ethnic, class and religious lines and lines based on length of residence, which are sometimes used interchangeably. We also show that group boundaries are dynamic and constantly (re-)created. Finally, we show that discursive boundaries do not necessarily lead to less social contact across these boundaries, thus illustrating that symbolic boundaries do not always result in segregated social patterns.

Keywords: super-diversity, boundary making, ethnicity, established–outsiders, qualitative research, urban studies

3.1 Introduction

The character of many urban neighbourhoods is changing due to, for example, migration flows, gentrification, impoverishment and ageing (Blokland & Van Eijk 2010; Butler & Robson 2001; Schuermans *et al.* 2015, Vertovec 2007). This diversification of urban life has been widely discussed in the scholarly literature, mostly in the context of European and American neighbourhoods, and is regularly described in terms of 'super-diversity' (Harris 2009; Vertovec 2007; Wessendorf 2014). The literature on super-diversity problematises the notion of group formation along ethnic and cultural lines, which is implied in much traditional multicultural thinking (see for an exception Neal *et al.* 2013). It calls for more in-depth research on the intersection between ethno-cultural diversity and other axes of social differentiation (e.g. educational level, legal statute, gender, socioeconomic position) (Vertovec 2007). Studies on super-diversity have mostly focussed on interpersonal contacts and interaction by examining the prevalence of meaningful and fleeting encounters, conviviality and daily courtesies (Amin 2002; Hall 2015; Noble 2009; Valentine 2008; Wessendorf 2014; Wise & Velayutham 2009). These studies have illustrated how 'otherness' is normalised in the daily life of residents of super-diverse neighbourhoods. This article acknowledges the importance of conviviality and 'light' encounters in accommodating super-diversity, but aims to advance the literature on super-diverse neighbourhoods by presenting an analysis of whether and, if so, how residents still conceive separate social groups in the local context of super-diverse neighbourhoods. This was explored through in-depth interviews in super-diverse neighbourhoods in Antwerp and Rotterdam.

To achieve this aim, we mobilise insights from the field of cultural sociology that are gradually gaining currency in urban and neighbourhood studies (Van Eijk 2011; Jackson & Benson 2014; Sibley 2003/1995). More specifically, we draw on the concept of symbolic boundary making, which is concerned with "conceptual distinctions made by social actors… [that] separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership" (Lamont and Molnár 2002, p. 168). The distinctions "may be fuzzy and… soft, with unclear demarcations and few social consequences, allowing individuals to maintain membership in several categories" (Wimmer 2013, p. 9–10), but they may also be static and impermeable, with clearly defined identities. We show how the notion of symbolic boundary making is especially useful in contexts that can be characterised by super-diversity, a notion that has been proposed to underline the fact that group boundaries are increasingly dynamic and diverse. According to the literature on super-diversity, individuals increasingly belong to many, partly overlapping symbolic categories, enabling them to switch identities situationally and making it more complex to decide who belongs to which group (Vertovec 2007). At the same time, however, strong symbolic boundaries between, for instance, minority and majority ethnic groups still exist and may lead to discrimination against minorities. One of the main advantages of the concept of a symbolic boundary is that it enabled us to address this empirical variation in group boundary making and to unpack how the increasing diversification of groups works out in everyday interaction.

To capture the diverse ways in which groups are being conceived and constructed, we focused on three dimensions of symbolic boundary making. First, we investigated which type of boundary was being drawn between residents. People use physical characteristics (such as skin colour, gender, and clothing) to separate groups. These characteristics function as the 'marker' of the group boundary and describe what is distinctive. Rather than focussing on one particular category of marker (e.g. ethnicity, class or religion), as many studies on symbolic boundary making do (for an overview see Pachucki *et al.* 2007), we employed a comprehensive approach, examining the interplay of multiple dimensions of difference in processes of group formation, and also analysed how respondents strategically positioned themselves in relation to these groups. Second, we focused on the dynamic character of group boundaries, namely their continuous making and remaking. Third, we analysed the extent to which symbolic boundaries are 'enacted' in everyday social interaction. This last focus is relevant because boundaries have both a categorical and a behavioural dimension. The former is related to how groups are categorised into 'us' and 'them', while the latter concerns the social behaviour that does or does not result from this (Wimmer 2013, p. 9–10).

3.2 Symbolic boundary making

The concept of boundary making has a long but “fairly well-acknowledged” intellectual history (Lamont *et al.* 2015) that goes back to the work of Weber and Durkheim, as well as more contemporary authors such as Frederik Barth and Pierre Bourdieu (Lamont & Molnár 2002). Although literature on boundary work is proliferating across a wide range of topics and disciplines (see Lamont *et al*. 2015), it has been particularly influential in cultural sociology and ethnic and racial studies. Recent work, for instance, has aimed to document variation in ethnic boundaries and how this is linked to institutional context, trying to understand why ethnicity matters in some contexts but not in others (Lacy 2007; Wimmer 2013). This literature entails that “ethnicity is not primarily conceived as a matter of relations between pre-defined, fixed groups … but rather as a process of constituting and re-configuring groups by defining the boundaries between them” (Wimmer 2008, p. 1027). Other research fields have adopted this conceptualisation of boundary making to study the construction or reconstruction of other social categories, based on for example the intersection of culture, religion, class and gender diversity (Lamont *et al.* 2015).

We use the concept of symbolic boundary making for several reasons. First, it acknowledges that social groups are never predefined. This means that ethnic and cultural minorities should not by definition be seen as social groups and that their members are not necessarily perceived by others or themselves primarily on the basis of ethnic and cultural markers. Second, the concept of symbolic boundary making draws attention to the dynamic interplay of multiple dimensions of difference (referred to as, for example, ethnic, religious or class symbolic markers) in processes of group formation, which is important for understanding the creation of group boundaries in super-diverse neighbourhoods. People draw symbolic boundaries to construct their own identity and can position themselves and others in multiple and changing social groups (Sibley 2003/1995). Third, it acknowledges the intersubjective and contested nature of boundary making. Symbolic boundaries are culturally shared, but are also open to interpretation (and hence also to contestation) and can be employed differently according to the situation. Furthermore, people can use a particular symbolic marker (for example ‘black Africans’) to distinguish members of groups, but give a different meaning to them (for example perceiving black Africans as hospitable, or as loud and having other values than ‘us’) (Cohen 1985). Hence, a symbolic boundary consists of one or more symbolic markers combined and the meaning that a person attaches to it/them. Finally, symbolic boundaries are changeable and can vary in strength and clarity. In some societies or contexts, social groups can be neatly demarcated, and members easily classified, while in other cases group boundaries are fluid and contested, allowing individuals

to switch between groups. Thus the distinction between bright and blurred boundaries is not static: a bright boundary can get blurred, and vice versa (Alba 2005; Wimmer 2013).

As will have become apparent from the examples given, symbolic boundaries can be based on different characteristics. Ethnic symbolic boundaries are the first type whose contemporary relevance we wanted to test in super-diverse neighbourhoods. Different ethnic markers can be used to construct symbolic boundaries, like ethno-national, ethno-cultural or ethno-linguistic markers. Our interest in the degree to which ethnic boundaries are still salient in super-diverse neighbourhoods is motivated by a range of studies that show that ethnic markers are commonly used and negative meanings are often attached to these markers (see e.g. Brettell & Nibbs 2011; Schuermans *et al.* 2015).

However, sometimes other types of symbolic boundaries can be used to downplay or overcome ethnic boundaries. One can blur, for instance, an ethnic boundary between Berbers and Arabs by emphasising that both groups are Islamic (Kanmaz 2002). Hence, the second type of symbolic boundary we explore are religious ones. The recent distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims in public and political debates in Europe is an example of the construction of such a religious symbolic boundary (Kanmaz 2002; Karlsen & Nazroo 2015; Zolberg & Woon 1999). Yet, it is often difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between ethnic and religious boundaries as they are often used in close connection (Ecklund 2005).

The same can be said about class boundaries, the third type of boundary we explore. Elwood *et al.* (2015) demonstrated that middle class interviewees assume poor people to be 'non-white'. Hence, the ethnic marker 'non-white' is connected to a class boundary in order to construct strong symbolic boundaries setting apart the poor from other social groups in the neighbourhood (Saperstein & Penner 2012). Classes as symbolically delineated and constituted groups are not to be perceived as homogenous groups and are not only about socioeconomic position; these are also about education, lifestyle, consumption patterns and self-identification (Butler & Robson 2001; Elwood *et al.* 2015). Literature indicates that certain fractions of the middle classes distinguish themselves from other fractions of the middle classes, for instance by drawing cultural or moral boundaries (Hazir 2014; Lamont 1992). Elwood *et al.* (2015) found that middle class people living in Seattle also draw moral boundaries within the lower class and distinguish between the 'good' poor, who grab opportunities to become middle class, and the 'bad' poor, who do not.

While ethnic, class and religious boundaries are well-known categories for the symbolic constitution of groups, we also explored a lesser known group boundary, namely the established–outsider boundary. The idea of a symbolic boundary between 'the established'

and ‘the outsiders’ is derived from Elias and Scotson’s theory, which posits that group boundaries are essentially defined by the length of residence (Elias & Scotson 2008/1965). This theory has been frequently used in urban sociology to study community dynamics (see e.g. Hogenstijn *et al.,* 2008; May 2004; Nieguth & Lacassagne 2012). It describes the process of an established resident group constructing boundaries between them and newcomers (the outsiders) because the former is socially cohesive and has resources to stigmatise the outsiders and exclude them from power resources. We call all symbolic boundaries that are based on the length of residence ‘established–outsider boundaries’. While the established–outsider theory is not often explicitly used to study boundary making in neighbourhoods (see for exceptions e.g. Southerton 2002 and Tilly 2004), we distinguish this boundary because it allowed us to analyse whether ethnic, religious or class boundaries are not “simply established–outsider relations of a particular type” as Elias and Scotson (2008/1965, p.15) argued. The distinction between established and outsiders also draws attention to the importance of place as a basis for boundary making, which is less emphasised in the literature.

As mentioned, symbolic boundaries are dynamic. Wimmer (2013) described the strategies that can be used to change boundaries in detail and distinguished between ‘shifting’ and ‘modifying’ boundaries. By shifting, people change the location of the boundary, for instance by creating a subdivision, in order to create more inclusive or exclusive boundaries. Such a subdivision is created when people distinguish between, for instance, ‘Western’ migrants who belong to ‘us’ and ‘non-Western’ migrants who are perceived as ‘them’. The other strategy, ‘modifying boundaries’, can be used in different ways. First, people can challenge the ‘ethnic hierarchy’ (Hagendoorn 1995) by contesting their position within the hierarchy. Second, people can emphasise other categorisations, for example religion instead of ethnicity. Third, people can change their own position, without contesting the symbolic boundary itself. In this case, they place themselves as individuals on the ‘good’ side of the boundary (Wimmer 2013). In this paper we demonstrate how strategies of changing the boundaries are used in super-diverse neighbourhoods.

A persistent challenge in the literature on symbolic boundary making is understanding the connection between symbolic boundaries and what are often called ‘social boundaries’, which are described as “objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities…” (Lamont and Molnár 2002, p.168). From the point of view of the literature on super-diversity, the impact of symbolic boundary making on actual social opportunities and social interaction in super-diverse neighbourhoods seems an important issue: does the

symbolic distinction between 'us' and 'them' lead to more durable social boundaries and to less frequent and less positive social contacts between groups? To address this, we draw on research that examined how positive or negative perceptions of social differences (i.e. symbolic boundaries) translate into everyday social interaction (Blokland & Van Eijk 2010; Van Eijk 2012; Jackson & Benson 2014; Valentine 2008; Wessendorf 2014). These studies show that negative perceptions about neighbours are often not related to negative interaction experiences. In a study of diverse urban neighbourhoods in Germany, Weck and Hanhörster (2015, p. 479), for instance, showed that middle-class families can appreciate socially diverse neighbourhoods but in practice avoid interactions with diverse local others. In contrast, Van Eijk (2012) found that negative narratives about neighbours in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood in Rotterdam can go hand in hand with positive everyday social encounters with these neighbours. So far the mechanisms behind these apparent contradictions remain unclear. In our case study, we also explored the extent to which symbolic boundaries have an impact on social interaction.

Finally, the literature highlights the importance of context-specific factors for understanding concrete practices of symbolic boundary making. The starting point of this study was that current conditions in disadvantaged and super-diverse neighbourhoods are transforming well-established forms of symbolic boundary making. Processes of diversification and gentrification are changing the context in which individual and collective actors can (or have to) draw boundaries between social groups. Building further on recent literature, we therefore investigated how residents of diverse neighbourhoods draw and practise symbolic boundaries (see e.g. May 1996; Mepschen 2016; Southerton 2002; Tersteeg & Pinkster 2015).

3.3 Data and methods

This paper draws on qualitative research in several disadvantaged and super-diverse neighbourhoods in Antwerp (Belgium) and Rotterdam (the Netherlands). By focussing on territorial units such as neighbourhoods or cities we avoided the 'ethnic lens' that takes for granted the existence and continuity of different ethnic groups and categories (Wimmer 2013). We focussed on the types of group categorisation that are employed in disadvantaged and diverse neighbourhoods to gain insight into how commonalities and differences between residents are constructed within this specific context. Such a broad analytic approach enabled us to, for instance, distinguish ethnic group boundaries from non-ethnic established-outsider boundaries which are based on length of residence. Although we observed disadvantaged and super-diverse neighbourhoods in different cities and even countries, our aim was not to compare Belgium and the Netherlands, or the cities of

Antwerp and Rotterdam. Rather we aimed to explore in detail the different forms of symbolic boundary making within the context of this type of neighbourhood, while also paying attention to the specific socio-demographic processes to which they are subject such as gentrification and the inflow of migrants. In other words, we focused on the specific neighbourhood context, and did not dwell on the territorial level of the city and nation-state, although these contexts do shape the contexts for these neighbourhoods.

Within the neighbourhoods, in-depth interviews were conducted with 110 residents (54 in Antwerp, 56 in Rotterdam). By means of purposive sampling, we interviewed 45 majority ethnics and 55 minority ethnics. We spoke with people from 26 different ethnic backgrounds. The youngest interviewee was 18, the oldest 88. Some interviewees had lived in the neighbourhood for decades, whereas others had just moved in. As regards socioeconomic position, most interviewees had a middle to low or a middle to high income. Potential interviewees were approached through local organisations and institutions, such as community centres. We also used the snowball method; we asked interviewees to suggest other possible participants they felt were different from themselves.

The interviews focussed on symbolic boundary making at the neighbourhood level. In order to examine how residents categorise and give meaning to the diverse population, they were asked to describe their neighbours and other people living in the neighbourhood, and the extent to which they feel similar to or different from them. Interviewees were asked to use their own definition of the neighbourhood. Most interviewees defined their neighbourhood in terms of a geographical area composed of one or more streets around their house. We then asked interviewees to describe their relationship and activities with neighbours and other local residents in order to examine how symbolic boundaries are reflected in everyday social interaction. Most interviews were held at people’s homes; the rest were held at other quiet places suggested by the interviewees, such as a community centre. All respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form that guaranteed anonymity and asked for permission to use the interview in publicly available reports and articles. This did not result in any withdrawals. Only Dutch or English speaking adults were interviewed. Some interviewees spoke and understood only very basic English or Dutch and had only recently arrived in Belgium or the Netherlands. The interviews were taped and transcribed, and then analysed using the software NVivo. The fieldwork was conducted between September 2014 and May 2015. In this paper we refer to respondents by their pseudonyms.

The population of the selected case study areas is highly diverse (in terms of parental country of origin, socioeconomic position, religion and length of residence). The super-diverse and dynamic character of these neighbourhoods provided an excellent context in

which to examine how symbolic boundaries are drawn within super-diverse neighbourhoods. In Rotterdam, the research focussed on all the neighbourhoods in the Feijenoord district, which has about 73,000 inhabitants.[12] Feijenoord is located on the south shore of the Maas river and is connected to the city centre by the Erasmusbrug (Erasmus bridge). 66% of its inhabitants have a non-Dutch background, mostly Turkish, Surinamese and Moroccan, compared to 48% in the city of Rotterdam (Van Dun & Roode 2010). The district is also characterised by a high unemployment rate (11%) compared to the city average (8%) (idem). However, there are differences between neighbourhoods within the district. The neighbourhoods closest to the Erasmusbrug, for example, are characterised by high-rise business buildings and luxurious apartments, while an adjacent neighbourhood is dominated by social housing. Furthermore, the district is changing quite rapidly. Katendrecht, for example, was well known for prostitution activities until the 1980s. It is now a gentrifying neighbourhood.

In Antwerp, three adjacent neighbourhoods with a total a population of almost 100,000 people were selected, namely Antwerpen Noord, Borgerhout Intra Muros and Deurne Noord. The first two neighbourhoods are inside the urban ring-road, whereas Deurne Noord is outside it. The neighbourhoods have diverse populations: 68% of the residents have a non-Belgian background, compared to almost 50% in the city of Antwerp. The unemployment rate in the case study area is high (9%) compared to the city level (6%). Like in Feijenoord, there are some differences between the neighbourhoods. While parts of Borgerhout are gentrifying and experiencing an increasing inflow of Belgian middle classes, the number of minority ethnics is rapidly increasing in Deurne Noord.[13]

3.4 Making symbolic boundaries to demarcate social groups

Interviews with residents of the super-diverse neighbourhoods revealed that residents draw multiple, interrelated symbolic boundaries when demarcating social groups in their residential environment. In this section we discuss which types of symbolic boundaries are constituted and how these intersect.

The residents constructed symbolic boundaries using multiple markers related to ethnicity, class, religion and length of residence (established–outsider boundaries). Most interviewees used ethnic markers to describe their neighbours. Some used general ones, distinguishing

[12] This includes the neighbourhoods Afrikaanderwijk, Bloemhof, Feijenoord (which is the name not only of the district but also of one of the neighbourhoods), Hillesluis, Katendrecht, Kop van Zuid-entrepotgebied, Noordereiland, Vreewijk, and Wilhelminapier.
[13] The statistics is this paragraph are derived from http://antwerpen.buurtmonitor.be.

between the categories of 'Dutch' or 'Belgian' on the one hand and 'foreigners'[14] on the other, whereas others used more specific markers, for instance between 'Moroccans' and other ethno-national groups. Both distinctions were made by interviewees from different ethnic backgrounds; neither the general nor the specific marker appeared to be dominant. The meaning people attached to these categories varied. Some interviewees, for example, emphasised that 'people of foreign origin' are helpful, while others attributed negative characteristics to this group. A wide range of interviewees from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds linked the presence of minority ethnic groups to negative experiences, including noise, nuisance and criminality, in the neighbourhood (see also Brettell & Nibbs 2011; Schuermans *et al.* 2015). Categorising people as 'dirty' and 'noisy' is a commonly used strategy of boundary making (Elias & Scotson 2008/1965; May 2004; Sibley 2003/1995).

> I am not supposed to say it but [I'd like to live in] a neighbourhood with more native Dutch people. …For example, the foreign children make much more noise. (Arjan, Dutch, long-term resident, Rotterdam)

Other residents used more specific ethno-national markers. Eric (Dutch, long-term resident, Rotterdam), for instance, linked the presence of Moroccan Dutch residents with nuisance. He used the same meaning as other residents but related this to a more specific ethno-national marker. His categorisation of Turkish Dutch as being on the 'right' side of the ethnic boundary and Moroccan Dutch as being on the 'wrong' side of that boundary, shows that he does not perceive minority ethnics as a homogeneous group.

> Turkish people, they don't bother you, but Moroccans, the younger generation, they are often messing around. …They steal, hack, all that kind of things.

Ethnic boundaries were used interchangeably with religious boundaries (see also Ecklund 2005). In the following quotation, for instance, an ethnic category ('Dutch') is opposed to a religious category ('Islam'):

> [At the soccer club] where he [my son] used to be, you feel that there were fewer Dutch children, and more Islamic. You see a difference in how they speak. That was a pity. … [The Islamic children] curse very often, that kind of thing. (Rachel, Cape Verdean Dutch, long-term resident, Rotterdam)

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[14] When we use the concepts 'foreign' and 'non- foreign or native' in the paper, we refer to the words that interviewees used to distinguish between minority ethnic groups and majority ethnic groups.

Other residents, however, carefully differentiated ethnic from religious boundaries when giving a negative meaning to some minority ethnic groups. Myrthe (Belgian, long-term resident, Antwerp), for example, said that she was worried about social control within the Moroccan community and a lack of openness to others, which she connected with religion rather than ethnicity.

> For me, it is a difference in openness. I mostly speak about the Moroccans, because the Turkish community here in Antwerpen Noord and Borgerhout are mainly Christian Turks.

Overall, residents of all the neighbourhoods referred less to class distinctions. When they talked about less wealthy people, most of interviewees used a purely financial marker, without giving a specific meaning to it. The 'middle class' category is more often the object of symbolic boundary work, particularly by long-term residents of parts of the research area where processes of gentrification are most tangible. These boundaries are primarily based not on financial markers, but on attitude, behaviour and lifestyle (see also Van Eijk 2013). In addition, in boundary work within classes there was often no clear distinction between the marker and the meaning attached to it. For example, several interviewees distinguished between middle class people like themselves, who are tolerant of people with a lower socioeconomic position, and others who tended to look down upon lower status groups. A long-term resident who lives in a deprived part of the research area bordering a gentrifying neighbourhood called Zurenborg, said the following about newly arrived gentrifying middle-class residents:

> Everything is like, … we are the cool people of Zurenborg. ...A Turkish restaurant wanted to start in Zurenborg and they [the residents] immediately started a petition that it shouldn't be there, because it was of lower status. … And that didn't fit in the nice, cool Zurenborg. ... Then, I think, well, there you are with your tolerance and openness. 'We are the progressive Zurenborgers' so far. (Eloise, Belgian, long-term resident, Antwerp)

This long-term resident drew moral boundaries within the white middle class by criticising the 'self-proclaimed' progressive and tolerant character of middle-class people living in gentrified parts of the neighbourhoods, which she compared to the attitudes of middle-class people living in deprived parts (see also Butler & Robson 2001; Elwood et al. 2015). We also came across interviewees who drew the same moral boundary between middle-class people within gentrifying areas. Myrthe (Belgian, newcomer, Antwerp), for instance, lives in a gentrifying part of the neighbourhood (and could be seen as a gentrifier herself) and she distinguished between herself and other middle-class residents of her neighbourhood who claim to be open towards minority ethnic groups and criticise the right-wing mayor for his minority ethnic group policies, yet send their children to 'white schools'. Although Myrthe

agrees with some of the mayor's policies concerning minority ethnic groups, she considers herself more progressive, amongst others because her children go to a mixed school in the neighbourhood. Earlier research also demonstrated that morality is a commonly used strategy to distinguish groups within the middle classes (Hazir 2014; Lamont 1992). A context of gentrification can give renewed salience to such moral boundaries.

One reason why interviewees tended not to use class to construct symbolic boundaries is because many of them used ethnicity as a 'proxy' for people's socioeconomic position. The identification of ethnic with socioeconomic boundaries was also observed in earlier research (see e.g. Elwood et al. 2015; Saperstein & Penner 2012; Schuermans et al. 2015). Several interviewees talked about minority ethnic groups as being part of a lower social class. Myrthe, for example, did so and used a behavioural marker to reinforce the boundary by claiming a lack of ambition among 'foreign people':

> I think that the standard in this neighbourhood is living on the poverty line. … But among the Moroccan families and also the others… I miss… some ambition to get more out of life, than living on the poverty line." (Myrthe, Belgian, newcomer, Antwerp)

Established–outsider boundaries are also constructed in super-diverse neighbourhoods, but unlike what Elias and Scotson would claim, they do not always take precedence over other types of social distinction. Rather, they are bound up in complex ways with other types of symbolic boundaries (see also May 1996; Mepschen 2016; Southerton 2002). Katharina (German Belgian, long-term resident, Antwerp), for example, at first seemed to draw a clear ethnic boundary by describing the distance between herself and her Moroccan neighbours. However, when she explained why there is little contact, she drew an established–outsider boundary:

> But there is some distance between our Moroccan neighbours and the others [not Moroccan families]. …You don't share the same experiences. … We saw our children growing up here. They played together. … The new families… you miss 30 years together. … It is something different. The old structure disappears to some extent.

Following Elias and Scotson (2008/1965), we could say that the ethnic boundaries in this particular case are established–outsider boundaries of a specific type. Gentrification and other socio-demographic shifts give renewed salience to established–outsider boundaries.

Who exactly is identified as 'outsider' and as 'established' is hence highly contextual.[15] In Katharina's relatively deprived part of the research area,[16] she and her majority ethnic neighbours are the long-term residents and hence perceived as the established, while the Moroccan Belgian families are seen as the newcomers and hence the outsiders. However, in some gentrifying parts of the research area, the minority ethnic groups are the long-term residents, hence the established, and the majority ethnic gentrifiers are the outsiders. Rajesh (Antillean Dutch, long-term resident, Rotterdam), for instance, said that the new, more wealthy people moving in complain more and that there is hardly any contact with this group. However, he emphasised that there is a good connection with other wealthy people, indicating that what marks the difference is not the socioeconomic position, but the length of residence and contrasts in lifestyles.

> Sometimes, I don't like it [diversity]. … For example, in Katendrecht, it was always like, everyone could always play music, nobody complained. … But now, there are new people who moved in, then they immediately come like "no, it is not allowed" etc., noise. …Yes, there are people with [more] money who connect with us. … But, they are also people who have lived here from the beginning, who grew up in the neighbourhood.

This section has shown how in super-diverse neighbourhoods, where residents differ from each other along a multiplicity of axes of differentiation, there is still ample scope for processes of symbolic group formation. Residents construct various symbolic boundaries, which are often articulated with each other in complex ways. Super-diverse neighbourhoods are by nature also dynamic neighbourhoods. Symbolic boundaries are open to continuous attempts to transform them as a result of the inflow of new waves of migrants from all corners of the world and through different migration channels.

3.5 Re-position residents around existing symbolic boundaries

In this section we show how residents, in addition to demarcating social groups through boundary making, also strategically position themselves and others in relation to existing symbolic boundaries, thus changing positions with regard to boundaries rather than changing the symbolic boundaries themselves. They do so in one of two ways, that is, by de-emphasising or undermining the importance of group boundaries (blurring boundaries) or by highlighting their importance (brightening boundaries).

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[15] May (2004) demonstrated that established - outsider relations are created not only in a local context, but also in a national context and that these local relations are influenced by the national established - outsider relations. In this paper, however, we limit ourselves to the analyses of the local level.

[16] Katharina lives in Deurne Noord, a neighbourhood in Antwerp that has only recently experienced an inflow of minority ethnics.

We observed how people specified the marker as a strategy to blur a boundary, for instance between 'foreigners' and 'non-foreigners', and put themselves on the 'right' side of it. In using this strategy, people contest the marker, but not the meaning attached to it. For instance, Salima (Moroccan Belgian, long-term resident, Antwerp) categorised herself as a person 'of foreign descent', but associated the boundary between 'foreigners' and 'non-foreigners' with nuisance and nuisance with Kosovars rather than with Moroccan, Turkish or Polish migrants. By doing so, she subtly repositioned herself (and others) on the right side of the boundary. Hence, she rejected the general category of 'foreigners' as one homogeneous group and blurred this ethnic boundary by specifying subdivisions. In doing so, however, she brightens another boundary by emphasising that Kosovars cause the real problem.

> There were too many Kosovars, too many foreign-, well I am a foreigner myself, but I found it too busy. …The garbage, it always smells there uhm, yes, I don't know. Noisy. … Now, it is much better. [Interviewer: Who are living there at the moment?] Either Turks or Poles. You almost don't hear them. (Salima, Moroccan Belgian, long-term resident, Antwerp)

Specifying the symbolic boundary was also used as a strategy by people who had already categorised themselves on the 'non-foreigner' side of the boundary in order to include what they perceive as 'good foreigners'. Hagar (Dutch, long-time resident, Rotterdam) lives in a part of Feijenoord that has a small concentration of long-term Dutch residents like herself. When she explained that she would never want to live in a neighbourhood with too many foreigners, she distinguished between Surinamese and Antilleans (who make up two large communities in Rotterdam) on the one hand and other 'foreigners' on the other:

> It is nothing but foreigners [in an adjacent neighbourhood]. …Turks and Moroccans; there are some Antilleans, Surinamese, they are totally different people. [Interviewer: How?] Different… Surinamese have of course always been connected with the Netherlands. … They of course speak Dutch well and they have yet… a bit of a Dutch mentality.

Hagar did not contest the negative meaning she attached to the group of 'foreigners', but blurred the existing, general symbolic boundary between foreign and non-foreign. She placed Surinamese people higher in the ethnic hierarchy (Hagendoorn 1995) than other 'ethnic' groups, because of the experienced 'cultural proximity' (Wimmer 2013) compared to Turks and Moroccans. She said she would not mind sharing her neighbourhood with Surinamese and Antilleans. In Antwerp, the Dutch are often perceived as 'less foreign'.

A second strategy to reposition residents around existing boundaries is to emphasise other types of boundaries. Paula (Belgian, long-term resident, Antwerp), for example, was very negative about the number of foreigners living in the neighbourhood. However, when she

talked about some Armenians in the neighbourhood she said that they are different because they are Christian. Religious boundaries were highlighted to distinguish within the group of foreigners and to blur ethnic symbolic boundaries:

> We sometimes go for a drink around the corner … They [the friends visiting this place] are also all Belgians. But the boss is an Armenian. But he's a Christian, that's different [from a Muslim], right? (Paula, Belgian, long-term resident, Antwerp)

However, stressing ethno-national boundaries were sometimes used to blur religious boundaries. Hagar, for example, also said that she does not want to live in a neighbourhood with a lot of Muslims, but distinguished between Croat Muslims and other Muslims:

> I love all people, it doesn't matter from which country they are … but you have to [treat] each other with certain dignity, and Muslims can't do that. … I have had Muslims next door, and I can still cry that they are gone, but well, they were Croats, I had such good contact with them.

Hagar thus tended to stress ethnic boundaries within the muslim community to reposition her Croatian Muslim neighbours, with whom she has positive experiences, while still holding on to the general symbolic boundary between muslims and non-muslims.

Third, people can contest on which side of the boundary they are, without contesting the marker or the meaning of the boundary. In fact, by using this strategy people underline or brighten symbolic boundaries. Some interviewees, for instance, related the presence of 'foreigners' to feelings of unsafety, dirt and criminality, yet framed themselves as exceptions on the 'non-foreigner' side of the boundary.

> It's bad that I have to say it, but streets where a lot of immigrants live are simply the dirtiest streets. (Kamil, Turkish Belgian, newcomer, Antwerp)

In this case, the strategy of 'individual boundary crossing' (Wimmer 2013) was used: people place themselves as individuals on the 'right' side of the boundary, without contesting the meaning or the marker. On the contrary, by placing themselves as exceptions on the other side, the ethnic symbolic boundary is confirmed and even brightened.

In this section we showed that symbolic boundaries in super-diverse neighbourhoods are not only multidimensional but also dynamic, and that personal identifications sometimes complicate group boundaries. As population dynamics in these neighbourhoods becomes more complex, people constantly position and re-position individuals, families and even whole social groups around existing symbolic boundaries. Individuals deal with these

symbolic boundaries differently, as noted by Wimmer (2008; 2013). While some contest the symbolic boundary, others only contest their own position.

3.6 SYMBOLIC BOUNDARY MAKING AND EVERYDAY SOCIAL INTERACTION

Symbolic boundaries were not necessarily reflected in everyday interactions,confirming the findings of scholars like Van Eijk (2011), Peterson (2016), Pinkster (2016) and Valentine (2008). Most of the interviewees emphasised the pleasantness of everyday interaction with diverse others (Wessendorf 2014). Nonetheless, we did come across a few instances in which symbolic boundaries did hinder contact. One interviewee stated that his understanding of female Moroccans as people who are not allowed to have any contact with men (as opposed to non-Moroccans, who are allowed to do so), prevents him from interacting with them.

> Sometimes, I meet the man living downstairs. We have a chat, because you know how Moroccans are, you cannot talk to the woman, only with the man. … They also have two daughters, but I can't talk to them either. [Interviewer: Have id you ever tried?] No, how? It is not possible. You cannot talk to them. [Interviewer: They don't say anything back or…?] Well, they are not allowed to, right. They should not. [Interviewer: How do you know?] I just know it. I have other Moroccan friends who are relaxed, right. They tell you. (Frank, Surinamese Dutch, long-term resident, Rotterdam)

Although most interviewees did not say that symbolic boundaries hinder everyday social interaction, our results provide a better insight into how symbolic boundaries and everyday interaction are related. Everyday interaction can contribute to blurring symbolic boundaries, but can also lead to brighter boundaries. In line with the findings of Van Eijk (2011, p. 1), our study confirms that "neighbour interaction reconstructs symbolic boundaries rather than breaking them down." Salima's experiences with noisy Kosovars, Hagar's with her pleasant Croatian Muslim neighbours and Paula's with her Christian foreign neighbours, are all examples of the blurring of general boundaries as described in the previous section. Everyday social interaction hence made them aware that the described general groups are not homogeneous. In this sense, we can say that everyday interactions made them aware of super-diversity within the neighbourhood and the challenges this poses to the construction of neat symbolic boundaries around groups of fellow residents. However, this awareness of super-diversity does not always lead to blurred boundaries. Olga (Ukrainian Belgian, newcomer, Antwerp) said that she does not appreciate Arabs in the neighbourhood because of some negative experiences she had had with Arabs. Positive experiences could not counter her negative opinion.

> Perhaps you would call me a racist, but I already thought [that the neighbourhood is] a little bit too Arabic. …I was never against them... But, [once] I was walking and behind me kids shouted at me prostitute… …I had it several times. … At the [Dutch language] course there were normal [Arabic] guys. They didn't do especially bad things. And well, logically in every nation you have people who are good and who are bad.

Although Olga was aware that not all Arabic people are bad persons, her general opninion about this group did not change as a result of these positive experiences, confirming Valentine's (2008) thesis that positive experiences with neighbours do not necessarily affect the general perceptions about these groups.

Although everyday social interaction can contribute to blurring the boundaries (but does not have to), it can also brighten or create symbolic boundaries. Negative experiences within the neighbourhood can contribute to the creation of a symbolic boundary, as described in the previous sections. Which boundaries are created depends on the type of neighbourhood. Whereas moral boundaries within middle classes, for instance, were often created and practised in gentrifying neighbourhoods, they were virtually absent from deprived neighbourhoods. We can conclude that symbolic group formation is not always reflected in everyday social interaction, but that in some cases social interaction can contribute to the creation of symbolic boundaries, as well as to the re-creation and blurring of existing boundaries.

3.7 Conclusion

Whereas many studies on neighbourhood super-diversity have focused on the ways in which individuals deal with otherness, we have shown that despite the complex social diversity that characterises super-diverse neighbourhoods, people still conceive and form separate social groups (Amin 2002; Noble 2009; Valentine 2008; Wise & Velayutham 2009). They do so through the construction and use of symbolic boundaries. We have analysed the multiple symbolic boundaries that neighbourhood residents use when addressing the diversity in their neighbourhood, but also how both individual and groups of residents are re-positioned towards existing boundaries and how this is related to social interaction.

We found that residents distinguish social groups in super-diverse neighbourhoods, as well as that there is a diversification of group boundaries, and that group formation along clear ethnic and cultural lines has become less important (Hall 2015; Vertovec 2007; Wessendorf 2014). People use a variety of markers, including ethnicity, class, religion and duration of residence, to which they attach different meanings. This leads to multiple and dynamic symbolic boundaries in which the relative importance of the boundaries differs between

neighbourhoods as well as between persons. In addition, the boundaries are often interrelated and sometimes used interchangeably. Thus when studying the formation of groups in super-diverse contexts, the most rewarding research strategy is to analyse the construction of different types of symbolic boundaries and how these interact in one particular locale, rather than focussing on predefined, singular boundaries. This calls into question the predominant focus on ethnicity in the current literature on boundary making, suggesting that such studies might not grasp the full picture. However, it also calls into question the claim of Elias and Scotson (2008/1965) that boundary work is in essence based on established–outsider relations. Although established–outsider boundaries should be taken into account, the importance of these boundaries differs per situation and person and does not necessarily take precedence over other types of boundaries.

Our study showed not only that the process of boundary making is complex and dynamic (see also Amin 2002; Van Eijk 2012; Hall 2015), but also how people deal with the boundaries and how they are continuously positioning and re-positioning other residents around these boundaries. The dynamic character of boundary making often becomes clear when people experience that they themselves, or people they perceive as being similar to themselves, are situated on the other side of the boundary. The interviewees then used various strategies to contest existing boundaries, depending on the dimensions of diversity that they identify in their residential environment. While some people blur boundaries for individual residents or the whole collectivity, others only contest their own position. Much remains unclear, however, about the social and contextual conditions in which boundaries are blurred or brightened and how individual features shape these processes.

Another way in which the dynamic character of boundary making becomes clear is through everyday social interaction within the neighbourhood. We have shown how the interactions can contribute to the reshuffling and blurring of boundaries in super-diverse neighbourhoods. They can lead to the awareness that earlier predefined groups are internally diverse. In this sense, we noticed a connection between super-diversity, daily contacts and the reshuffling of boundaries. Our results suggest that everyday social interactions in super-diverse contexts can raise awareness of super-diversity and therefore create subdivisions of more general boundaries or blur these boundaries, as Wessendorf (2014) also demonstrated. We have also shown that social interaction can contribute to the creation of new boundaries or the brightening of existing boundaries. Although it remains unclear under which circumstances people brighten or blur boundaries, we showed that everyday social interaction in a context of super-diversity dynamises the process of symbolic boundary making. This idea is supported by the fact that people who did not have any

contact with other people in the neighbourhood did not change symbolic boundaries (but in some cases only contested their own position) and used rather general markers to separate people into groups. More research is needed to get a better understanding of what influences this complex relation between symbolic boundary making, everyday social interaction and super-diversity.

This study has several empirical limitations, which could be addressed in further research. First, our analysis of boundary work in super-diverse neighbourhoods considered only the local context and not the institutional urban and national contexts, although literature has shown how symbolic boundary work is shaped by national policy contexts (Alba 2005; May 2004). It would be interesting to investigate whether and, if so, how specific institutional settings and policy discourses influence patterns of boundary work, using a comparative institutional approach. Second, although our interview data provide first insights into the relation between symbolic boundaries and social interaction, our interviewees' answers might not always accurately reflect everyday realities. Therefore, to investigate exclusionary mechanisms in super-diverse neighbourhoods it would be interesting to complement the interview data with participant observations. Third, we only interviewed Dutch and English speaking adults, while people who speak only other languages probably have fewer interactions with other groups, which might also be reflected in the symbolic boundary making practices. To get a better understanding of the relation between boundary work and everyday social interaction in super-diverse neighbourhoods, it would therefore be useful include this group.

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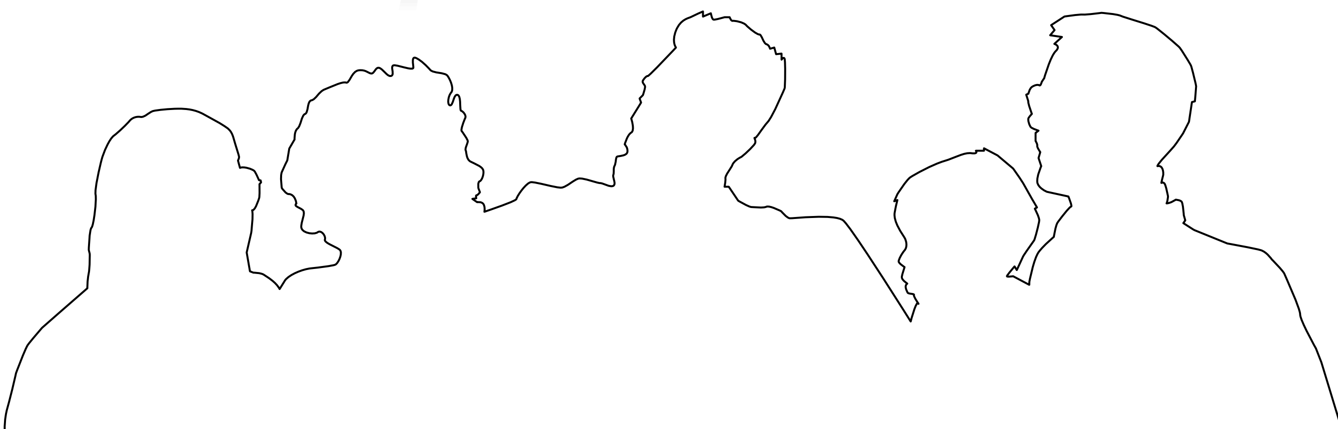

CHAPTER 4

Raising children in diverse environments: parental narratives about diverse neighbourhoods and school choices

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Abstract

Recently, there is increasing scholarly interest in the strategies urban middle class families adopt regarding diversity in the neighbourhood and at school. However, it remains unclear how the strategies used in the neighbourhood and at school are interrelated. In addition, there is little known about the considerations of lower class families. This paper investigates how parents from different socioeconomic and ethno-cultural backgrounds in Antwerp deal with diversity through an in-depth analysis of six interviews. Results indicate that parents use different class informed strategies. Children of lower class parents are more exposed to diversity in the neighbourhood than middle class children, while middle class parents are more likely to mention diversity in the neighbourhood as an asset for their children. Both lower and middle class parents make school choices that contribute to segregation. But some middle class parents deliberately choose mixed schools to build on the multicultural capital of their children.

Keywords: school choice; diverse neighbourhood; family; class; urban childhood

4.1 Introduction

Having children has a big impact on how parents perceive the qualities of their living environment. People with children mostly prefer the quiet suburban environment, with detached housing and private gardens, to the busy urban environment (see e.g. Meeus & De Decker 2013). However, this choice is not open to everyone, since the position of families on the housing market is pre-dominantly class-based, leading to a concentration of families with a lower socio-economic status – often combined with a minority ethnic background – in central urban neighbourhoods. Over the last decades, however, residential preferences of a significant minority of middle class, predominantly white, families have changed. Today there is a group of families, who deliberately choose to live and raise their children in the city. The new middle class orientation to the city is leading to a demographic diversification in terms of ethnicity and class of urban neighbourhoods (Lees 2000). This paper is concerned with the question how families living in todays' diverse urban neighbourhoods deal with the ethno-cultural and socio-economic diversity in relation to the raising of children.

Although there is an increasing scholarly interest in urban family life, there are two main weaknesses in the existing literature. Firstly, the literature suffers from a one-sided focus on (white) middle class families (Butler and Robson 2003; Loopmans 2008). There is insufficient attention given to the perceptions of lower class and/or minority ethnic families and the strategies they use in dealing with diversity in the neighbourhood and at school (for an exception, see Paton 2014). The first research question this paper tries to answer then is: how do different class and ethnic families who live in diverse urban neighbourhoods deal with diversity?

The second weakness in the literature is that a lot of research that discusses the role of diversity in neighbourhoods addresses either neighbourhood choice or school choice (Hamnett, Butler, and Ramsden 2013; Vowden 2012; Weck and Hanhörster 2015). It remains, however, unclear how perceptions and practices of diversity in the neighbourhood and school relate to each other. This leads us to the second and third research question. How do parents living in diverse neighbourhoods choose a school, and how does diversity play a role in this? And how do the perceptions and practices of diversity within the neighbourhood and school relate to each other? To answer these questions, we draw on qualitative data gathered in Antwerp, the second largest Belgian city.

4.2 Literature

Everyday family life in diverse neighbourhoods

Over the last decades there is an increasing scholarly interest in family life in cities, related to gentrification processes. Concerning family gentrifiers Weck and Hanhörster (2015) distinguish two groups namely 'urbanity seekers' and 'diversity seekers'. Urbanity seekers enjoy the city as the optimal place to combine career and family life. They have rather homogeneous networks and are mainly focused on other family households. Diversity seekers on the other hand engage with the diversity of the neighbourhood. They appreciate diversity beyond a background feature of the neighbourhood. In general, children in diverse neighbourhoods have more mixed networks than adults, but not that different as you would expect. This can be partly be declared by class differences in leisure activities. Over the years class differences have grown. Karsten (2005) argues that during the 1950s and early 1960s almost all children with diverse socio-economic backgrounds were 'outdoor children', i.e. they played outdoors every day and met on the streets. The private indoor space was hardly used for playing.

Today, children's activity patterns are much more class specific. There is still a group of outdoor children, mainly lower class, who play outside almost every day. These are the children who are most exposed to the neighbourhood. Besides the outdoor children new groups have appeared: the 'indoor children' and the 'backseat generation' who are less exposed to the neighbourhood (Karsten, 2005). Indoor children 'play' indoors, like watching television and doing computer games. They are mostly lower class children, among them many members of minority ethnic groups. The third group of the backseat generation are the escorted children whose time-space behaviour is characterized primarily by adult-organized children's activities. Most middle class children belong to the 'backseat generation'. Their families have financial resources that they use for extracurricular activities. In so doing, parents reproduce their class position through an investment of

cultural capital spend on their children (Hollingworth and Williams 2010; Lareau 2003; Putnam 2015).

To summarize, children of low and middle class families do not necessarily create social bonds when they live in the same neighbourhood, because of different leisure time activities.

Finding the right school

Research has demonstrated that school segregation is often higher than residential segregation, which is caused by the decision of middle class parents to avoid schools with a high amount of minority ethnic or lower class children (Ledwith and Clark 2007; Oberti 2007; Rangvid 2007; Burgess, Wilson, and Lupton 2005). Reasons for this 'white flight' (Noreisch 2007; Ledwith and Clark 2007) are the perceived lower quality of the education and, in some cases, the minority of majority ethnic children in these schools (Reay et al. 2007; Vowden 2012). Some minority ethnic families also prefer schools that are not predominantly populated by migrant children. However, some minority ethnic parents are more aware of class than of ethnic differences and are hence more concerned about the amount of working-class children than the amount of children of foreign origin (Hamnett, Butler, and Ramsden 2013).

Middle class parents struggle between contributing to social mix by sending their children to the neighbourhood school and their desire to get 'the best' for their children, which is in their opinion often a competitive and exclusionary school (Boterman 2012; Oberti 2007). Yet, the preference for a socially mixed school may also have an instrumental reason since in a globalising world 'multiculturalism is increasingly a source of cultural and economic capital' (Reay et al., 2007: 1046). Research in a French gentrified neighbourhood has demonstrated that working and upper middle class children who go to the local state school do create diverse friendships relations that also exist outside school (Authier and Lehman-Frisch 2013). These children were hence not only exposed to diversity at school, but also during leisure time activities in the neighbourhood.

To summarize: the choice for either black or white schools will not help to establish mixed social networks for children and parents. The level of diversity at school may indirectly influence the level of exposure to the neighbourhood, but that is something not yet clear in the literature.

4.3 Methods

This paper focuses on the neighbourhood and school choice of different types of families living in ethno-culturally and socio-economically diverse neighbourhoods in Antwerp. Of the 518,368 people living in Antwerp, almost half has a minority ethnic background. Our research focuses on three adjacent areas, namely Antwerpen Noord, Borgerhout Intra Muros and Deurne Noord.

The neighbourhoods are all three highly diverse in terms of the ethnic and class background of the residents. Antwerpen Noord is located near Antwerp Central station and is an arrival neighbourhood: a lot of migrants first settle in here when they arrive in the city. Borgerhout is slightly upgrading and changing a bit due to gentrification. Deurne Noord has a more suburban character and is changing only recently into a more ethnically diverse environment. Table 4.1 shows the main characteristics of the neighbourhoods.

	% minority ethnic groups[17]	Net median income	% lower educated[18]	% higher educated[19]	% living in a rental dwelling	% family households [20]
Antwerpen Noord	72%	€11.994	26%	14%	60%	11%
Borgerhout	69%	€13.003	24%	18%	43%	13%
Deurne Noord	63%	€15.025	24%	10%	31%	14%
Antwerp	48%	€15.830	18%	22%	42%	11%

TABLE 4.1: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOODS[21]

In the case study areas, there are 43 publicly funded schools[22]. Parents are free to choose a school in- or outside their neighbourhood. They should rank schools of their choice and on the basis of several criteria, of which distance between the children's home and school,

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[17] Based on the ethnicity of the parents.
[18] % of residents who did not finish any school or only primary school.
[19] % of residents who finished university or university of applied sciences.
[20] Family households include single parent households, married couple with children and unmarried couple with children.
[21] Source: Stad Antwerpen, stadincijfers.antwerpen.be).
[22] There are only two private schools in Antwerp, namely international schools and none of our interviewees attend a private school.

social mix[23] and having older brothers and/or sisters in the school are the most important ones, a place in a school is assigned. Within the publicly funded schools, there is a distinction between 'free' and 'official' education, with the latter being organised by or for the state and the former established by – mainly confessional – organisations (but still publicly funded). Historically, most schools offer free education, although less so in urban areas.

This paper draws on the stories of six families. The six families were part of much larger field research project that was carried in the framework of the EU-funded DIVERCITIES project for which 53 inhabitants in the case study area were interviewed, all by the first author of this paper. Thirteen out of these 53 interviewees had children that went to nursery or primary school. To get a better understanding of the practices and perceptions of raising children in diversity, we did a second round of interviews with six families. The six families were chosen firstly for reflecting different ethno-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and secondly to reflect different practices and perceptions of diversity in neighbourhood and school. A third selection criterion was their origins in the three selected neighbourhoods. Fourthly, we selected parents with children in different age groups.

The second round of interviews was again fully done by the first author of this paper. All six selected interviewees were willing to participate for a second time, indicating that the interviewer succeeded to build trust during the first interview. The second interview enabled us to capture the dynamics, struggles and changes of the practices and perceptions of parents. The second interviews lasted about 45 minutes and focussed on three topics: children's everyday activities within the neighbourhood and perceptions of neighbourhood and school(s).

Table 4.2 (next pages) shows the main characteristics of the six interviewees. The first three interviewees can be characterized as middle class: highly educated with at least a medium household income. The names used in the table are pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the interviewees. Figure 4.1 indicates the locations of the houses of the interviewees and the schools of their children and shows the percentage of minority ethnics in the different neighbourhoods.

[23] Schools distinguish between 'indicator' and 'non-indicator' pupils. 'Indicator' pupils are students from families with limited financial resources and/or students whom mother did not finish secondary school. Schools with a lot of non-indicator pupils are required to give priority to 'indicator pupils' and vice versa.

	% minority ethnics	Ethnic origin	Household	Job	Job partner	Educational level[24]
Lara	Borgerhout 69%	German-Belgian	Partner; 2 children aged 1.5 and 4	Teacher at a university of applied sciences	Director at a public institution	High
Tosca	Antwerpen Noord 72%	Belgian	Partner; 2 children aged 3 and 5	Social worker	Independent programmer	High
Myrthe	Borgerhout 69%	Belgian	Partner; 4 children aged 4, 6, 9 and 11	Policy administrator at the Flemish government	Operator	High
Nour	Antwerpen Noord 72%	Moroccan-Belgian	Partner; 1 child aged 9	Tour guide/ freelance interpreter	Owner of a restaurant	High
Salima	Deurne Noord 63%	Moroccan-Belgian	Partner; 2 children aged 9 and 14	Voluntary work	Industrial painter	Medium
Ramona	Deurne Noord 63%	Kosovar	Partner; 4 children aged 6, 8, 10, 12	Unemployed	Unemployed	Low

Table continues on the next page

	Household income[25]	House owner or renter	% of minority ethnic children at school[26]	Type of education at school	Distance to school from home	School on the map
Lara	High	Owner	13%	Free Method	500m	A
Tosca	Medium	Owner	39%	Free Catholic	500m	B
Myrthe	High	Owner	43%	Free Catholic	500m	C
Nour	Low	Owner	9%	Free Method	2500m	D
Salima	Low	Owner	29%	Free Catholic	1000m	E
Ramona	Low	Renter	78%	Free Catholic	250m	F
			80%	Official		G

TABLE 4.2: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERVIEWEES

[25] The income groups are based on the net income each month per adult in the household. Low income < €1200; Medium income €1201 – €1800; High income > €1801
[26] % of children in the school who do not speak Dutch at home.

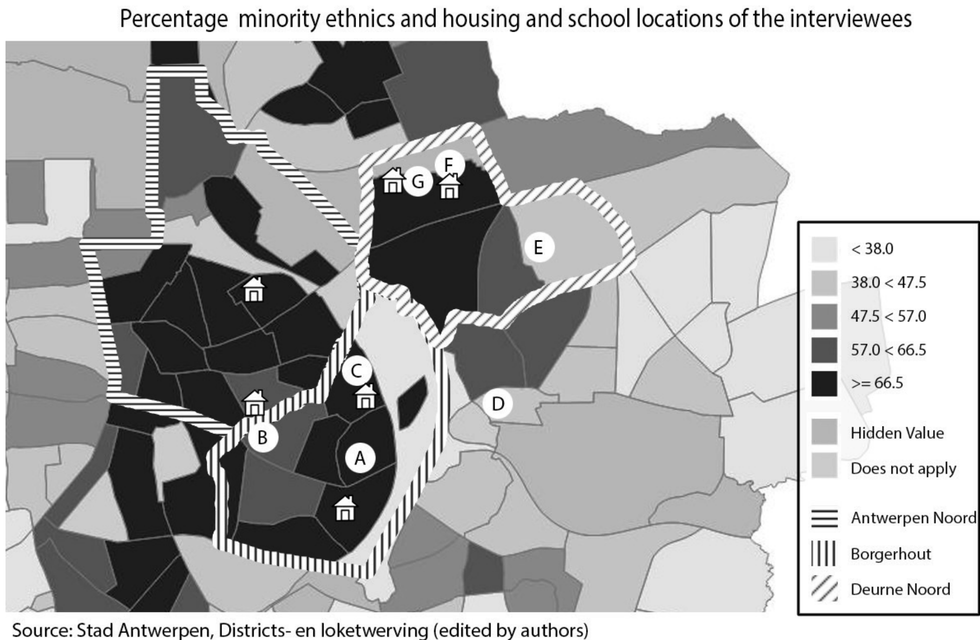

FIGURE 4.1: HOUSING AND SCHOOL LOCATIONS OF THE INTERVIEWEES

4.4 EVERYDAY FAMILY LIFE IN DIVERSE AND DISADVANTAGED NEIGHBOURHOODS

To gain a better understanding of the family life and the degrees to which the children are exposed to the ethno-culturally and socio-economically diverse neighbourhoods we focus on the activities in and perceptions of the neighbourhood. We build on the distinction introduced by Karsten (2005) between 'indoor children', 'outdoor children' and the 'backseat generation'.

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR CHILDREN: NO EXPOSURE VERSUS MAXIMUM EXPOSURE

Our results demonstrate that the residents with the weakest socio-economic position have both indoor and outdoor children, while the children of the middle class residents can be described as the backseat generation. However, the distinction between indoor and outdoor children is not a dichotomous one. In reality this distinction has to be though of as a continuum. Hence, we should not treat the categories as static and invariably linked to specific socioeconomic and/or ethnic-cultural background, but as strategies that residents may reconsider in response to their experiences with neighbourhood life.

The interview with Salima (Moroccan origin, low income, medium education) demonstrates this complexity. On the one hand Salima's children can be characterized as outdoor children, because they often play outdoors without (continuous) adult supervision. On the other hand

at some days her children are not allowed to play outdoors, because Salima is worried about the 'bad influence' of others on her children.

> I have a son, he is very quiet, but others influence him. Sometimes they form groups on the square and that is very negative, very negative for the neighbourhood. You hear the police; you hear all kind of things.

Salima struggles with the situation that her children want to play outdoors, but that she prefers them to stay at home. Once children are used to the freedom to go outdoors on their own and they have created friendships within the neighbourhood, it can be difficult to keep them indoors. She explains:

> My son (9 years old) is not allowed to go outside every day, but if he doesn't come [outside], they (his friends) constantly ring the doorbell.

When Salima's children play outdoors they are exposed to the diversity within the neighbourhood, which Salima perceives as negative. She would like to move to a neighbourhood with more majority ethnics, because in her opinion minority ethnic groups cause nuisance. In dealing with the diversity in the neighbourhood, Salima changes strategies. First, her children were highly exposed to the neighbourhood, including its diversity. Then, she tried to reduce this exposure by keeping them indoors. Now that she realizes this is difficult, she would like to move to a neighbourhood without ethno-cultural diversity to avoid the exposure.

Being an indoor or outdoor child is not only the result of parental strategies, but may also reflect the preferences of the child. Ramona (Kosovar origin, low income and education) has four children; some of them are outdoor children and the others indoor children. Although Ramona is also worried about the bad influences of other children, she does not connect this with minority ethnic groups in contrast to Salima.

> My children are still young now, but I am starting to worry about my oldest [son]. He is twelve years old, but if I had the opportunity to leave […] I would do so. […] Two years ago, a man [a shop owner] called me. He said: 'I just saw your son and I have send him back home, because there was another child who wanted to give your son a joint'. (Ramona)

Despite of these experiences Ramona does not change the leisure activities of her children to decrease the exposure to the neighbourhood, unlike Salima. An explanation for this might be that Ramona has four children and lives in an apartment, while Salima only has 2 children living with her in a single-family house.

THE BACKSEAT GENERATION: CONTROLLED EXPOSURE

The children of the other interviewees, with a higher socio-economic position can be described as the “backseat generation”. While outdoor children are the most exposed to the neighbourhood and indoor children the least, the backseat generation is only exposed to specific parts of the neighbourhood and only controlled; the parents decide which parts of the neighbourhood their children see and not see.

Some of the backseat generation children hardly play outdoors, but have mainly organised activities, like Nour’s (Moroccan, low income, high education) daughter. According to Nour, her daughter therefore does not have a lot of time to play outdoors. In the remaining time her daughter plays with family members or with children from school. The first is according to Nour typical for migrant children, while the second is mostly mentioned by middle class families. When Nour’s daughter brings friends home from school they mostly play indoors or only in front of the door, so the exposure to the neighbourhood is limited. Interestingly, while playing at each other’s houses is by middle class interviewees like Lara and Myrthe seen as an asset, in Nour’s opinion, her daughter is too busy to meet friends from school.

> In the school where she is now they [friends from school] come over, very often. […] We really have to tone it down.

Cultural differences might explain the reluctance of Nour. Nour describes that meeting friends outside school is more common in the current school than in previous schools. She changed from a school with over 70% children who do not speak Dutch to a school with not even 10%. The fact that Nour’s daughter now more often brings friends over, indicates differences in playing cultures between people of Belgian and non-Belgian origin, but also between people with a higher and lower socio-economic position. The current school is not only a white school, but Nour also described that there are lots of higher educated parents that bring their children to the current school.

The experiences of Myrthe’s daughter further underline that there might be different playing habits related to ethnicity and/or class. While the majority ethnic children that Myrthe’s daughter mostly knows from the scouts come to her house to play, the minority ethnic children she knows from school never invite her to play at their houses. The differences became also visible when Myrthe’s daughter gave a sleep over party. It was hard to convince the Moroccan parents to allow their daughters to join the party. Nour confirms that the way in which Belgian children celebrate their birthday differs from how Moroccan migrants celebrate children’s birthdays. These cultural differences can complicate friendship relations. While Myrthe takes an effort to persuade the parents, other interviewees do not

spend much time to maintain these friendships. Lara for instance, noticed that her daughter invited some Moroccan girls for her birthday party, but that they did not come. However, she did not try to convince them, because she had “already heard that they do not come to parties often.” The leisure activities can in this way strengthen or weaken friendships relations created at school.

Although the exposure to the neighbourhood is limited, the backseat generation parents speak in highly appreciative terms about the presence of other ethnic groups, which contradicts with the lower class interviewees. The middle class parents argue that their children learn how to deal with diversity and that knowing about other cultures is an asset for their future.

> I think that they [my children] will have an advantage in the society that will be more diverse. […] because diversity will be obvious for them. (Myrthe)

These findings resonates with previously mentioned studies that observed how parents see the creation of ‘multicultural capital’ as instrumental for the social mobility of their children (Reay et al. 2007). According to some parents, like Lara, this form of capital can also be created by limited exposure to the diverse other.

To summarize, lower and middle class interviewees develop different strategies regarding the degrees of exposure of their children to neighbourhood diversity. These strategies also depend on the resources of families. While some lower class interviewees have limited space indoors to let their children play, middle class parents have enough space to invite other children to play at their houses. Concerning the relation between perceptions and practices, the interviews demonstrate that there is a “playing outside paradox”, which means that the children of the parents who are most critical about the neighbourhood play the most outdoors and are hence the most exposed to the neighbourhood. The middle class parents on the other hand appreciate the diversity, but their children are only controlled exposed to it.

4.5 Raising children in diverse schools

Parents can control the exposure towards diversity within the neighbourhood, but after making a choice for a certain school they have only limited influence. The interviews demonstrate that in school choice diversity is an issue for almost all parents. The table below describes the main characteristics of the interviewees concerning school choice.

	Ideal school composition	% minority ethnic groups at school[27]	Type of education	Distance to school from home
Lara	No black school	13%	Free Method[28]	500m
Tosca	Mixed	39%	Free Catholic	500m
Myrthe	Mixed	43%	Free Catholic	500m
Nour	Mixed	9%	Free Method	2,500m
Salima	White	29%	Free Catholic	1,000m
Ramona	-	80%; 78%	Official/Free Catholic	250m

TABLE 4.3: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERVIEWEES AND THE SCHOOLS OF THEIR CHILDREN.

School as a place to create functional networks

Some middle class interviewees experience the school not only as a place to educate children, but also as a place to create social and functional networks. Lara (German origin, high income and education) and Tosca (Belgian origin, high education, medium income) highly value the contacts with other parents and for both this was one of the reasons to change schools.

> I am going to change schools. [...] because it is yet too diverse. [...] We really regret it, but we are afraid that when we keep her [my daughter] (3 years old) there it will influence her development, also for friendships. We like to get to know parents where our daughter can go and play. [...]. She is now registered [at] […], a school […] which is very white. Very hip and alternative. [...] I really like that school, but I have my reservations like, yeah, it is extreme the other way around. (Lara)

During the second interview Lara's daughter indeed went to the "hip and alternative" school and Lara was very satisfied, amongst other because of the contacts with other parents.

> We have a rotation system. So, on Monday, we take some children with us, on Tuesday another family picks up my daughter. It works well; it is also convenient, because school ends at three o'clock.

[27] Percentage of children at school who do not speak Dutch at home.
[28] Free method schools, are schools that use alternative teaching methods, like Steiner and Freinet.

The creation of a functional network with parents is important to combine career with family life. Other studies have already demonstrated it is easier to combine these two if you live in the city, amongst other because living nearby facilities and work reduces travel times (Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd 2010). As Lara demonstrates, functional networks can contribute to this time-space advantage. However, the creation of these networks is easier with similar people. Therefore, for white middle class families living in diverse and deprived neighbourhoods it is sometimes hard to create these networks within the neighbourhood. Going to a school with "people like us" than becomes more important. We will elaborate more on this relation between neighbourhood and school in the last section.

Because of the creation of functional networks, Lara and Tosca mostly appreciate the presence of the majority ethnic group. On the previous school, Tosca's partner had difficulties to talk with other parents, because a lot of mothers at that school did not want to speak to men. Myrthe (Belgian origin, high income and education) has the same experience, but demonstrates that this can change over time.

> In my opinion, if you take the initiative to start small talk, then you can get in contact very easily. It remains superficial […]. Being a man it is different. My husband, he shouldn't do that [start a conversation]. Now, he can talk with mothers he knows from school… meanwhile he can. […] In the beginning, the mothers didn't even greet him.

Yet, it takes an effort from her and her husband to have contacts with the parents at school. Hence, going to the same school does not directly overcome differences between parents and children of different ethnic backgrounds.

To summarize, for most middle class families, the creation of functional networks is important to combine career and family life. These networks are additionally important because children of the middle class families are not allowed to play on the streets on their own as mentioned in the previous section. Moreover, we argue that these different playing cultures are reflected in the school choice and are important to understand why the middle class families highly value the presence of parents 'like them' and thus, as we will see in the next section, chose for a different kind of school than lower class parents.

School as a place to educate children

While the middle class families see school also as a place to create functional networks with other parents, the other interviewees see the school mainly as a place to educate their children. Nour takes a position in between middle and lower class families, concerning education level and economic status (see table 2). According to Nour, the opinion of her daughter is the most important in school choice. Her daughter first went to two different

schools within the neighbourhood. Both schools had high percentages of minority ethnic children, with over 70% of the children not speaking Dutch at home. However, shortly after changing schools for the first time, Nour started to doubt her decision. Her daughter went to an Islamic school and was confronted with conservative ideas there. Because her daughter was satisfied she did not change schools. This is an important difference with Lara and Tosca, whose children were satisfied at school, but nevertheless the parents decided to change schools. This can be explained by the fact that Nour does not consider the contact with other parents, while Lara and Tosco do. In addition, her daughter was older when she wanted to change schools than the children of Tosca and Lara. Yet, later Nour's daughter did change schools, because of bullies in the classroom. In choosing a new school the opinion of Nour's daughter was again the most important.

> There were two schools that stood out and they had a place available. […] [My daughter] chose the current school. […] She immediately had a connection with the school, although I [had doubts]. […] And we had an appointment in the afternoon at the other school and my daughter said: 'no, cancel the appointment, I don't want that.' So, I cancelled it.

The school population is not leading Nour's decision or selection of schools. However, Nour argues that in a school with a balanced population, without one majority, children are most likely to respect each other. Nevertheless, her daughter nowadays goes to a quite homogeneous school, where only 9% of the children do not speak Dutch at home.

Ramona (Kosovar origin, low income and education) does not consider school population at all and only considers the distance. One son goes to a school for special needs education. Her oldest son goes to the school opposite their house, but because he used to be bullied Ramona decided to send her two younger children to another school close by. However, because nowadays her son is not bullied anymore in the school opposite their house, Ramona considers sending her other children also to that school, because that would be easier. Hence, Ramona her school choice was first and foremost based on practical considerations and whether her children feel good in school.

Ramona describes both schools as good schools and does not mention a lot of differences, although school F is a Free Catholic and school G an Official City school. While all the other interviewees are aware of different teaching methods used in the different schools, Ramona is not. Her lack of knowledge of the schools and different types of education might explain the fact that she did only consider the distance.

In contrast, Salima (Moroccan origin, low education, medium income) prefers a Catholic school with as little minority ethnic children as possible. She explains why:

> When there are a lot more foreigners, they do not work that much. They don't learn anything, not much; I see it with my neighbour. [The school] where her children go, the level [of education] is way too low.

The number of children of foreign origin was an important aspect in her school choice. In finding the right school not only the composition of the school was important for Salima, but also the type of education.

> Better Catholic, why? Because they are stricter. Especially for the education that is very important. […] They got more homework […]. At city schools, they do not oblige children. […] you can do whatever you want, they don't encourage you in my opinion.

Catholic schools have a good reputation in Flanders, but only Salima preferred a white catholic school, while middle class families more often prefer a school which uses alternative teaching methods. Lower class and minority ethnic families are not always familiar with these alternative methods and are sceptical about it. Nour's daughter for example goes to a school using such an alternative method.

> To be honest, it worries me a bit. […] Do they study enough, does the method work? Yes, it is something I don't know. […] In the morning it is always Dutch language or math and in the afternoon, a lesson that is chosen democratically. […] But then I also think, […] who is in this school? What parents? Yes, architects, set designer, very creative people […]. Also, a lot of teachers […] than I think, well they chose this, so it would be [ok].

This sceptical position of minority ethnic and lower class families towards schools using alternative teaching methods strengthens the ethnic and socio-economic segregation at school. Salima for instance preferred a white school, while Lara was also open for a more mixed school. However, because Lara preferred a Free method school and Salima a Catholic school, Lara's children go to a whiter school (13% of the children do not speak Dutch at home), compared to Salima's children (29%). Hence, school segregation is not only influenced by the preference for a certain school population, but also by the preference of a specific type of education.

To summarize, all families chose the school based on various criteria of which the quality of the education is used by almost all parent. However, lower and middle class families use different indicators to estimate the quality. While lower class families are sceptical about Free Method education, middle class families experience this as a good school. Lower class families experience strict education as the best way to prepare children for the life after school, while middle classes chose flexibility. These preferences for different education styles overlaps with differences in pedagogic styles used at home (cfr. Lareau 2003).

Therefore, the middle class children will feel more comfortable at a free method school than lower class children, because this last group is used to a strict education and a clear hierarchy at home (Lareau 2003). These different opinions about the education styles strengthen school segregation.

4.6 Raising children in diverse neighbourhoods and (not so) diverse schools

The degrees of exposure to the diversity differ between middle class and lower class families (see table 4.4). Lara's children are limited exposed to ethno-cultural diversity in the neighbourhood as well as at school. Lara values the presence of majority ethnics at school more than the presence of minority ethnics, because she feels it is easier to create these networks with 'people like us'. Our study indicates that because ethno-cultural diverse neighbourhoods offer limited opportunities to create functional networks, middle class families living in these neighbourhoods are more likely to choose a school with relatively high percentages of majority ethnic children than middle class parents living in homogeneous neighbourhoods. If middle class families only value the presence of majority ethnics and not of minority ethnics this is likely to result in segregated schools.

	Actual exposure to diversity in the neighbourhood	Appreciation of minority ethnic groups in the neighbourhood	Appreciation of majority ethnic group in the neighbourhood	Actual diversity at school	Appreciation of minority ethnic groups at school	Appreciation of majority ethnic group at school
Lara	-	+	+/-	13%	+	++
Tosca	-	+	+/-	39%	+	++
Myrthe	+/-	+/-	+/-	43%	+	+
Nour	+/-	+	+/-	9%	+	+
Salima	++	-	+	29%	-	++
Ramona	++	+/-	+/-	80% 78%	+/-	+/-

TABLE 4.4: EXPOSURE TO AND APPRECIATION OF THE PRESENCE OF THE MINORITY ETHNIC GROUP IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND AT SCHOOL

Other middle class parents, like Tosca and Myrthe, deliberately chose a mixed school. Although the exposure to diversity in the neighbourhood is limited and controlled, their children are exposed to diversity at school. This can, but does not necessarily, result in more exposure to diversity during children's leisure-time activities. The interviews show that a

diverse school can be highly appreciated for two main reasons. First, the presence of minority ethnic groups at school is seen as an asset for majority ethnics, because it can contribute to the creation of multicultural capital (Reay et al. 2007). This is especially important for parents whose children are limited exposed to diversity within the neighbourhood (cfr. Hollingworth and Williams 2010). Second, some majority ethnics, like Myrthe, think that it is *also* an asset for minority ethnics to be in a mixed school. Lara on the other hand, only sees diversity as an asset for minority ethnics only.

> But, I have the feeling it is not our project, that we want to use our child… (silence) to uh. To contribute to the diversity of the school. (Lara)

> [I found it ideal also to have majority ethnic children in the class]. Not only for ourselves, for the parents and children to create a network, but also, because I believe that it is very important for the migrant children that they get to know the world of non-migrant family in a natural way, because the differences are huge. (Myrthe)

Choosing a homogenous school, does not always lead to a low exposure to diversity. The leisure time activities of Nour's daughter, for instance, are very ethnically coloured. She attends Arabic lessons and often plays with (Moroccan) family members. In her case, the homogeneous Belgian school results in a more diverse network instead of a less diverse network.

Salima prefers her children to stay indoors and hence tries to reduce the exposure to the neighbourhood and its diversity. However, as described in the previous section, Salima does not succeed very well in doing so. But by choosing a homogeneous school, Salima can limit her daughter's exposure to diversity. In the case of Ramona, the exposure to diversity was not considered to be important neither in the neighbourhood nor in the school choice.

4.7 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that lower and middle class families use different strategies to deal with diversity in the neighbourhood and in school. Firstly, middle class and lower class families differ in the degree to which they expose their children to the neighbourhood and its diversity. While the exposure towards diversity of middle class families, with mostly backseat generation children, is limited and controlled, parents say that they do appreciate diversity within the neighbourhood. Lower class children are much more exposed to diversity, but their parents are not very positive and their perceptions vary from neutral to outspoken negative. Our research hence indicates a paradoxical relation between control and exposure: middle class parents who control the exposure are more positive about diversity than lower class parents who do not. This relation between controlling diversity

and appreciating diversity has also been demonstrated by Tissot (2014) who argues, “this commitment to diversity is intrinsically linked to the gentrifiers’ capacity to control it”.

Secondly, middle and lower class families use different criteria in choosing a school. For both groups the quality of the school is important. However, the criteria used to assess the quality differ and hence also their school preferences, which can strengthen school segregation. While contemporary literature mostly emphasizes the role of middle class parents in school segregation, our study demonstrates that both groups contribute to segregation. Interesting enough, in this study two of the three lower class families chose a school at a large distance from home. Middle class parents chose for mixed schools and highly value the possibility to create functional networks with other parents, while this is not an important indicator for lower class families. Hence, the drive behind school segregation shows two sides of the same coin: both a search for similarity and the avoidance of diversity. In addition, our results indicate that lower class and minority ethnic families are reluctant towards alternative teaching methods, while majority ethnic middle class families are positive towards these methods.

Thirdly, this study offers a better insight into the relation between exposure to diversity in the neighbourhood and exposure to diversity at school. Middle class children who are only limited and controlled exposed to diversity in the neighbourhood sometimes go to diverse school. Parents perceive this as an asset for their children, to give them the opportunity to create multicultural capital. These parents value not only the presence of “parent like us”, to create functional networks, but also value the presence of minority ethnic groups in the creation of multicultural capital. Lower class parents in this study were either neutral about diversity in the neighbourhood and at school or were negative about diversity in both places.

This study offered an integrated view on the practices and perceptions of middle class and lower class parents in raising children in diverse neighbourhoods and schools. However, further research is needed to get a better understanding of the practices and strategies parents use. First, we were unable to make a clear distinction between ethno-cultural and socio-economic background. In further research, it would be interesting to study majority and minority ethnic groups in both class categories. Second, the exact relation between practices and perceptions remained unclear, especially for lower class families. Further research is needed to better understand why lower class parents who are negative about the neighbourhood and its diversity, allow their children to play outdoors on their own, and why middle class parents who combine a positive perception of diverse neighbourhoods yet mostly supervise their children.

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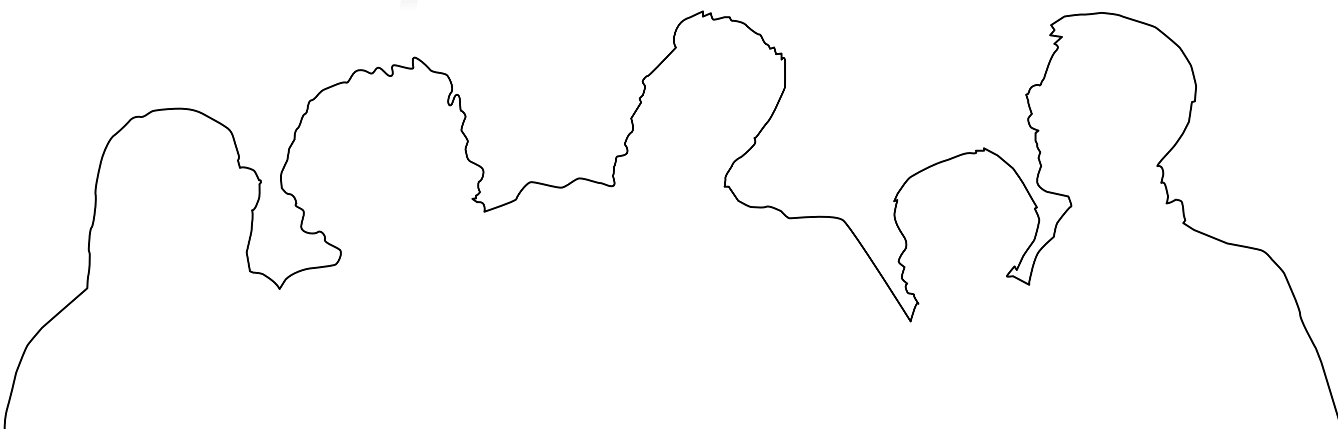

CHAPTER 5

De suburbane droom aan diggelen? Gevestigden en buitenstaanders in veranderende gemeenschappen

Ympkje Albeda en Nick Schuermans

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5.1 Inleiding

In ‘Het lelijkste land ter wereld’ neemt architect Renaat Braem (1968) geen blad voor de mond. Zijn pamflet is één lange aanklacht tegen de “kwetsende vormenkakafonie” in ons land. Braem had destijds vooral problemen met de ongebreidelde verkavelingsdrang die van het Belgische platteland stad noch dorp maakte. Zo neemt hij de lezer op de eerste pagina al mee op een imaginaire vliegreis over de Alpen tot op de luchthaven van Melsbroek. “Waar we enkele minuten geleden nog landschappen onder ons zagen wegglijden, door de natuur gemodelleerd tot monumentale komposities, breed behandelde reliëfs, doorsneden met de harmonische meanders van stromen en rivieren, van heuvels en bergen (…) met daartussen het duidelijke stramien van de wegen, de kristalformaties van dorpen en steden, organisch daartussen kruisende spoorwegen en kanalen”, zo stelt Braem, “verschijnt daar onder ons ineens een door een krankzinnige bijeengenaaide lappendeken, God weet van welke afval bijeengeknoeid, en daarop door een woest geworden reus, de inhoud van hele bazaars blokkendozen rondgestrooid, met verachting neergesmeten”.

Op het eerste gezicht lijkt er bijna 50 jaar later niet veel veranderd in de Belgische ruimtelijke ordening. Iedereen die wel eens de grens met Nederland oversteekt kan met eigen ogen zien hoe het Belgische landschap nog steeds gekenmerkt wordt door versnippering, verstedelijking en lintbebouwing. Met de huidige beleidskeuzes hoeven we in de nabije toekomst ook geen fundamentele kentering te verwachten. Zelfs nu de revitalisatie van stedelijke buurten meer overheidsmiddelen toebedeeld krijgt, blijft men verkavelingen vergunnen op perifere locaties (De Decker e.a., 2010). Het maatschappelijke debat over het belasten van bedrijfswagens, de inperking van de basismobiliteit of het invoeren van rekeningrijden toont aan dat er moeilijk te morrelen valt aan het gesubsidieerde woon-werkverkeer. Ondanks de hoeraberichten over de groeiende populariteit van het stedelijk wonen, zet de suburbanisatie van gezinnen met kinderen zich onverminderd door (Meeus e.a., 2013).

Verschillende auteurs hebben voor ons al uit de doeken gedaan hoe het “door een krankzinnige bijeengenaaide lappendeken” waar Braem van sprak het resultaat is van meer dan 150 jaar anti-stedelijk beleid (Kesteloot & De Maesschalck, 2001; De Decker, 2011; Canfyn, 2014). De beperkte regelgeving op het vlak van ruimtelijke ordening maakte het mogelijk om overal buiten de stad te bouwen. Met woonpremies, goedkope treinabonnementen en een dicht buurtspoorwegennet moedigde de Belgische overheid de constructie van éénsgezinswoningen ‘op den buiten’ aan (De Block & Polasky, 2011; Bervoets & Heynen, 2013). In een stad als Antwerpen nam de bevolking dan ook al af vanaf 1915. In de jaren 1920 en 1930 waren het hoofdzakelijk nabijgelegen gemeenten zoals

Brasschaat, Wilrijk en Borsbeek die profiteerden van de massale verhuisbeweging. Sinds de auto in de decennia na de Tweede Wereldoorlog voor steeds meer mensen betaalbaar werd, tekenden verder gelegen gemeenten zoals Zoersel en Stabroek de sterkste groei op, voornamelijk in de jaren 1970 (Loots & Van Hove, 1986). Ook nu het inwoneraantal in de stad terug aangroeit, stijgt het inwoneraantal van deze gemeenten.

De hierboven genoemde anti-stedelijke beleidsmaatregelen mogen niet gezien worden als de enige motor achter de doorgedreven suburbanisatie in België. Ook de individuele woonwensen van de suburbanisanten speelden een belangrijke rol. In deze context is het cruciaal dat de stadsvlucht in België een sociaal selectief proces was (Loopmans e.a., 2010). Terwijl vele middenklassers het zich konden veroorloven om buiten de stad te gaan wonen, verarmde en vergrijsde de bevolking van vele stedelijke buurten (Kesteloot, 2003). Met de komst van gastarbeiders in de jaren 1960 en 1970 trad er ook een snelle verkleuring van deze buurten op (Kesteloot, 2006). Als we in de titel van dit hoofdstuk spreken over de ‘suburbane droom’, doelen we niet alleen op de wens om eigenaar te worden van een huis met tuin op pendelafstand van de stad. We hebben het dan ook over het verlangen om zich te vestigen in een propere, ordentelijke leefomgeving ver weg van de armoede en de diversiteit van de stad (cfr. Sibley, 2001). Voor de bourgeoisie was stadsvlucht namelijk een ruimtelijke strategie om zich te onderscheiden van de arbeidersklasse in de stadsbuurten. “Al van in het prille begin”, zo schreef Low (2005: 247) over de situatie in de V.S., “was de suburb een ‘anti-stedelijke’ gemeenschap waarin eerst de hogere klasse gevolgd door de middenklasse zocht naar eenvormigheid, status en veiligheid”. In de woorden van Fishman (1987: 22), “verbeelden suburbs meer nog dan de bourgeois utopie de triomfantelijke handhaving van de waarden van de middenklasse”. In zijn ogen “weerspiegelen ze ook de vervreemding van de middenklasse van de stedelijke industrie die ze zelf aan het creëren was” (ibid.). Ook in België was en is de distantiëring van armen en allochtonen een belangrijke motivatie om te suburbaniseren (Kesteloot & De Maesschalck, 2001; Schuermans e.a., 2015).

Ondanks de gentrificatie van bepaalde stadswijken, blijken de grote lijnen van dit historisch gegroeide, ruimtelijke patroon opmerkelijk constant. Ook vandaag wonen vele welgestelde Belgen in randstedelijke gemeenten. Voor al wie genoeg geld op tafel kan leggen zijn het huisje, het tuintje en het boompje anno 2014 nog steeds beschikbaar. Ondanks de retoriek van compact wonen, kan elke middenklasser die de moeite wil nemen om de steeds langer wordende files te trotseren nog steeds beschikken over een woning in het groen. Tegelijkertijd blijven de meeste mensen met een migratie achtergrond geconcentreerd in

kleine en slecht uitgeruste woningen in achtergestelde buurten in de negentiende eeuwse gordelwijken (Kesteloot & Meys, 2008; Vanneste e.a., 2008).

Toch ligt de suburbane droom deels aan diggelen. Hoewel de suburbs nooit zo homogeen zijn geweest als de droom deed vermoeden, komen er de laatste jaren barstjes in het schild van de verbeelde homogeniteit en voorspelbaarheid. Internationale studies wezen al uit dat mensen met een migratie achtergrond in steeds meer landen naar de suburbs verhuizen (zie o.a. Brettell & Nibbs 2011; Burgers & Van der Lugt, 2005; Waters & Jiménez, 2005). Het gaat daarbij niet alleen om middenklassers, maar ook om minder welgestelde immigranten die zich direct in de suburbs vestigen (Lo, 2011). Ook in Vlaanderen verkleuren de suburbs (Schillebeeckx & Albeda, 2014). Door de stijgende vastgoedprijzen in de steden worden vele mensen van buitenlandse herkomst gedwongen om een goedkope woning buiten de grootsteden te zoeken. Het aandeel personen van Marokkaanse herkomst ligt mede daardoor niet alleen in Antwerpen en Mechelen boven de tien procent, maar ook in kleine steden en gemeenten met een uit een industrieel verleden overgeërfde woningvoorraad zoals Vilvoorde of Boom (De Decker & Meeus, 2012: 35). Het aandeel mensen van Turkse afkomst bedraagt niet alleen in de Limburgse mijngemeenten vijf procent, maar ook in Zele, Diest en opnieuw Machelen (Noppe & Lodewijckx, 2012). Ook in de meer welgestelde suburbane gemeentes verandert de bevolkingssamenstelling langzamerhand. Onderzoek in Gent toonde bijvoorbeeld aan dat de sociaal mobiele Turkse middenklasse de achtergestelde buurten steeds vaker inruilt voor meer welgestelde buurten in de rand van de stad (Verhaeghe, 2013).

In deze context wil deze paper een onderzoeksagenda uitbouwen rond gemeenschapsvorming in de suburbs. We doen daarbij voornamelijk een beroep op internationale studies. Hier en daar vullen we die aan met bevindingen uit België. Dit hoofdstuk stelt zelf geen nieuwe onderzoeksresultaten voor. Ons centraal uitgangspunt vormt de gevestigden-buitenstaanders theorie van Elias en Scotson (2008/1965). De machtsverhoudingen en uitsluitingsmechanismen die zij beschrijven, blijken ook vandaag de dag nog relevant. In de tweede paragraaf vatten we de theorie kort samen. In de derde paragraaf gaan we vervolgens in op de ontvankelijkheid van de theorie in een mobiele en geglobaliseerde wereld. De vierde paragraaf focust dan weer op de rol van etnisch-culturele verschillen in de gevestigden-buitenstaanders constellatie. In het besluit werken we op basis van de voorgaande paragrafen een onderzoeksagenda uit. Hierin vragen we ons af op welke manier de internationale ontwikkelingen toegepast kunnen worden op de Belgische situatie.

5.2 Gemeenschapsvorming: gevestigden en buitenstaanders

In dit hoofdstuk nemen we het klassieke en invloedrijke werk 'The established and the outsiders' van Elias en Scotson (2008/1965) als vertrekpunt. Hun gevestigden-buitenstaanders theorie geeft ons een goed zicht op de machtsverhoudingen en uitsluitingsmechanismen die ontstaan tussen bewoners. Hoewel er verschillende kritieken zijn geformuleerd op de theorie, is de kern van de theorie breed gedragen: binnen gemeenschappen bestaan er breuklijnen tussen gevestigden en buitenstaanders. Uitsluitingsmechanismen en sociale cohesie spelen daarbij een centrale rol.

Om hun theorie te onderbouwen, beschreven Elias en Scotson in 1965 de gemeenschapsdynamiek in Winston Parva, een fictieve naam voor een suburb van Leicester. In Winston Parva bleek een duidelijke scheidingslijn te bestaan tussen de oude bewoners en de nieuwkomers. De oude bewoners creëerden een zogenaamde gevestigden-buitenstaanders relatie, waarbij ze zichzelf als gevestigden neerzetten en de nieuwkomers als buitenstaanders. Met hun studie toonden Elias en Scotson aan dat gevestigden-buitenstaanders relaties niet noodzakelijk gebaseerd zijn op een verschil in klasse of etniciteit. In Winston Parva was de scheidingslijn tussen de twee groepen immers niet geënt op socio-economische of etnisch-culturele verschillen, maar op de tijd die iemand (of iemands familie) al in Winston Parva had gewoond. De gevestigden leefden al verschillende generaties in de suburb, terwijl de buitenstaanders naar Winston Parva waren verhuisd.

In de theorie van Elias en Scotson staat sociale cohesie centraal. De vooraanstaande posities binnen Winston Parva werden ingevuld door mensen afkomstig van oude families. Door de sterke sociale cohesie onderling en het gebrek aan sociale cohesie bij de nieuwkomers konden de oude bewoners hun machtsbasis behouden. In de woorden van Elias (2008/1976: 5) had "de ene groep (…) een sterkere sociale cohesie dan de ander en dit verschil in integratie draagt substantieel bij aan de sterkere machtspositie". Hij legde verder uit dat "de sterkere sociale cohesie het mogelijk maakt dat die groep sociale posities met een groot machtspotentieel van verschillende soorten kan voorbehouden voor zijn leden, en dus haar cohesie kan versterken, en leden van een andere groep uit kan sluiten" (Elias, 2008/1976: 5).

Groepscharisma en groepsstigma zijn andere belangrijke elementen in de theorie van Elias en Scotson. Volgens Elias (2008/1976: 25), "houdt het zelfbeeld en het zelfrespect van een lid van een groep verband met wat andere leden van de groep van hem of haar vinden". Op basis van roddel slaagden de oude bewoners erin om de nieuwkomers te stigmatiseren en zichzelf als beter neer te zetten. De gevestigden wierpen op deze manier een emotionele barrière op om contact met buitenstaanders te hebben. De achterliggende gedachtegang

was dat je door vriendschappelijk contact met de nieuwkomers ‘besmet’ zou kunnen worden met hun slechte eigenschappen.

Interessant in de these van Elias en Scotson is dat de buitenstaanders zich ook vereenzelvigen met het beeld dat de gevestigde groep van hen neerzet. Omdat ze niet over de lokale machtsbronnen beschikken, zijn de buitenstaanders niet in staat om zich te onttrekken van hun inferieure imago. Zo had de gemiddelde buitenstaander in Winston Parva een veel minder hoge pet op van zijn of haar buurt dan de gemiddelde gevestigde. Hoewel de huizen in de buurt van de nieuwkomers even schoon waren als die in de buurt waar de oude bewoners woonden, werd de buurt van de nieuwkomers al snel het ‘ratteneind’ genoemd. Het beeld dat de gevestigden creëerden van kleine, vieze huisjes werd door de buitenstaanders ook geïnternaliseerd. Slechts 12% van de nieuwkomers zei dat ze de buurt leuk vond. Bij de oude bewoners was dit maar liefst 69%. 32% van de buitenstaanders gaf zelfs aan dat ze hun buurt niet leuk vonden en 56% dat het geen slechte buurt was. Bij de gevestigden was dit respectievelijk 8% en 23%.

Op het moment van de studie van Elias en Scotson waren er geen substantiële socio-economisch verschillen tussen de gevestigden en de buitenstaanders in Winston Parva. Om de stereotypes over de nieuwkomers te begrijpen, is het cruciaal dat er wel een verschil was in het verleden. De eerste nieuwkomers die Winston Parva binnenkwamen waren economisch achtergesteld en waren, zoals Elias en Scotson het stelden, ‘rough types’. Zij werden door de oude bewoners beticht van een lagere moraal en inferieure standaarden. Hoewel deze groep op het moment van de studie nog maar een kleine minderheid was, is dit beeld wel blijven hangen. De verandering in de feitelijke situatie heeft dus niet geleid tot een verandering in de hardnekkige vooroordelen over de nieuwkomers en de wijk waarin ze woonden. Sterker nog: het doen en laten van de kleine minderheid van ‘rough types’ werd door de oude bewoners gebruikt om de vooroordelen over alle nieuwkomers te bevestigen. Op die manier hielden de oude bewoners de onderlinge cohesie, de machtsposities en de sociale configuratie tussen gevestigden en buitenstaanders in stand.

De theorie van Elias en Scotson ligt sterk in de lijn van de rijke etnografie die Herbert Gans (1996/1967) ongeveer tegelijkertijd schreef over suburbane gemeenschapsvorming in het Amerikaanse Levittown. Gans heeft het namelijk ook over een groepsdynamiek die gericht is op het verwerven of het behoud van lokale machtsrelaties. Er is echter een belangrijk verschil tussen de twee theorieën. Terwijl Elias en Scotson zich focussen op de kloof tussen oude en nieuwe bewoners, vormt de scheiding tussen de ‘haves’ en de ‘have nots’ de belangrijkste breuklijn in het werk van Gans. Hoewel de meeste inwoners van de nieuwe wijk die hij bestudeerde jonge gezinnen met kinderen waren, ontstonden er al snel

conflicten tussen de grote groep inwoners uit de lagere middenklasse en de kleinere groepen uit de arbeidersklasse en de hogere middenklasse. Volgens Gans (1996/1967: 65), "probeert elke groep ervoor te zorgen dat de instellingen en faciliteiten die ten dienste staan van de ganse gemeenschap haar eigen status en cultuur behouden". Verder legde hij uit dat de verschillende groepen "de macht niet najagen als een doel op zich, maar enkel om er zeker van te zijn dat de hele gemeenschap hun prioriteiten zal opvolgen" (Gans, 1996/1967: 66).

Hoewel de theorieën van Gans en Elias en Scotson op veel punten vergelijkbaar zijn, lijkt de laatste ons het meest bruikbaar om de dynamiek van gemeenschapsvorming in Belgische suburbs te begrijpen. Anders dan in de Verenigde Staten rolde de suburbanisatiegolf bij ons niet uit over een gigantisch landbouwareaal zonder al te veel inwoners, maar over een eerder dichtbevolkte ruimte vol kleine stadjes, dorpen en gehuchten (Meeus e.a., 2013, p. 28). Deze dorpen werden bevolkt door bewoners die daar dikwijls al generaties woonden. Door de suburbanisatie kwamen van de ene op de andere dag nieuwkomers wonen in een verkaveling of lint in hetzelfde dorp. We vermoeden dan ook dat een Belgische volgeling van Gans of Elias en Scotson niet enkel beschreven zou hebben hoe de suburbanisatie de socio-economische verschillen in gemeenten als Kontich, Zoersel, Evergem, Lasne of Sint-Genesius-Rode uitdiepte, maar ook hoe de komst van de nieuwkomers de sociale relaties tussen de oude bewoners bestendigde of verstoorde. In tegenstelling tot de Amerikaanse suburbs, die vaak als nieuwe wijken uit de grond werden gestampt, was er in de Belgische suburbs wel degelijk een mogelijke machtsstrijd tussen oude en nieuwe bewoners (cfr. Hogenstijn e.a., 2008; Špačková & Ouředníček, 2012).

5.3 Suburbane gemeenschapsvorming en mobiliteit

Anno 2014 is het echter nog maar de vraag of de dynamiek tussen de gevestigden en buitenstaanders in suburbane dorpen op dezelfde manier verloopt als beschreven door Elias en Scotson in 1965. Nu mensen veel mobieler zijn dan vroeger, moeten we ons afvragen of sociale cohesie nog wel op dezelfde manier tot stand komt als vijftig jaar geleden. In de huidige wereld is het immers veel gemakkelijker om in contact te blijven met vrienden, kennissen of familieleden verspreid over heel het land of zelfs heel de wereld (Castles, 2002). Met behulp van telefoonlijnen en skype-gesprekken kan iedereen vierentwintig uur op vierentwintig uur, zeven dagen op zeven, in real-time met elkaar in verbinding staan. Bovendien zijn een auto of een vliegtuigticket in de westerse wereld voor een grotere groep mensen betaalbaar geworden.

Verschillende onderzoekers zijn ervan overtuigd dat lokale gemeenschappen in zo'n mobiele wereld nog steeds belangrijk zijn, maar aan belang inboeten. Nu gemeenschapsvorming veel gemakkelijker dan vroeger over grote afstanden kan plaatsvinden, betwijfelen zij of de sociale cohesie tussen de oorspronkelijke bewoners nog even sterk is als in 1965. Elias en Scotson gaven zelf overigens ook al aan dat het proces van gemeenschapsvorming onder invloed staat van de toegenomen mobiliteit. Volgens hen zouden mensen in een snel wijzigende samenleving enerzijds sneller teruggrijpen op de bestaande sociale structuren. "Wanneer men wordt geconfronteerd met de moeilijkheden van een zeer mobiele en snel veranderende samenleving is men geneigd zijn toevlucht te zoeken in een beeld van een sociale orde die nooit verandert en het te projecteren op een verleden dat er nooit geweest is" (Elias & Scotson, 2008/1965: 184). Anderzijds suggereerde Elias (1974) later dat verschillende vormen van mobiliteit de lokale gemeenschap minder onontkoombaar hebben gemaakt. Wanneer de bewoners van een wijk of dorp steeds meer behoeften kunnen realiseren buiten de lokale gemeenschap, kan verondersteld worden dat ze zich minder sterk met elkaar verbonden voelen.

Bij onderzoekers die het proces van gemeenschapsvorming bestuderen, is er weinig eensgezindheid over het precieze effect van de toegenomen mobiliteit op het proces van gemeenschapsvorming. Ruwweg vallen er drie literatuurlijnen te onderscheiden (Wellman & Leighton, 1979; Lupi & Musterd, 2006). Volgens een eerste groep onderzoekers zijn gemeenschappen 'verloren' en is er sprake van een verzwakking van sociale bindingen. Lupi en Musterd (2006) laten zien dat dit discours ook aanwezig is wanneer het gaat over de suburb. In 'Bowling Alone' legt Putnam (2000) uit waarom er in de Verenigde Staten moeilijk van gemeenschappen gesproken kan worden. Volgens hem pendelen de inwoners van suburbane verkavelingen constant tussen hun woonplaats, hun werkplaats en het winkelcentrum. Het gevolg is dat mensen weinig tijd binnen de lokale gemeenschap doorbrengen en dat iedereen op zichzelf is gericht. Onderzoek naar de geografische spreiding van sociaal kapitaal onder Vlaamse studenten lijkt deze these te bevestigen. Tegen het aanvoelen van velen in, blijken studenten uit steden over meer sociaal kapitaal te beschikken dan studenten uit suburbane en landelijke gemeentes (Lannoo et al., 2012).

Een tweede literatuurlijn gaat er van uit dat buurtgemeenschappen wel nog steeds een belangrijke rol spelen. Zij spreken in dit verband over de 'geredde' gemeenschap (Wellman & Leighton, 1979). Ondanks de toenemende diversiteit en de steeds groter wordende steden – zo beargumenteren zij - blijven stedelingen elkaar opzoeken en bestaat er nog steeds een idee van een lokale gemeenschap (Wellman & Leighton, 1979). Ook in de suburb is dit discours te herkennen. Het familieleven in de suburb wordt dan vaak aangehaald (Lupi

& Musterd, 2006). Mensen met kinderen zouden sterker geworteld zijn in het lokale gemeenschapsleven dan mensen zonder kinderen. Op basis van een onderzoek in drie Vinex-wijken rond Amsterdam besloten Karsten, Lupi en de Stigter-Speksnijder (2013) bijvoorbeeld dat het hebben van kinderen cruciaal was om deel uit te maken van de lokale netwerken. Op basis van het eerder aangehaalde etnografisch onderzoek in Levittown was Gans (1996/1967) tot een vergelijkbare conclusie gekomen. In zijn woorden “liet Levittown – misschien wel meer dan eender welke ander type gemeenschap – het merendeel van de bewoners toe om te zijn wat ze echt wilden zijn – om hun huis en gezin in het middelpunt van hun leven te plaatsen, om tussen buren te wonen die ze vertrouwden, om vrienden te vinden om hun vrije tijd mee door te brengen en om actief deel te nemen aan een verenigingsleven dat hen gezelligheid bood en de kans om zich in te zetten voor anderen” (Gans, 1996/1967: 64).

Naast de literatuur over de ‘verloren’ en de ‘geredde’ gemeenschap bestaat er ook nog een onderzoekslijn die het heeft over de ‘bevrijde’ of de ‘getransformeerde’ gemeenschap (Wellman & Leighton, 1979; Lupi & Musterd, 2006). Deze stroming koppelt het denken over gemeenschappen en buurten gedeeltelijk los van elkaar. Het uitgangspunt is dat mensen nog steeds deel uit maken van gemeenschappen, maar dat de sociale banden zich steeds minder op buurtniveau bevinden. Zo ondervonden Lupi en Musterd (2006: 811) in hun eigen onderzoek dat vele bewoners in Almere en Zoetermeer buiten hun gemeente werken. Vele inwoners leggen ook serieuze afstanden af op weg naar een theater of restaurant. Hun sociaal leven speelt zich grotendeels af buiten hun eigen gemeente. Gemeente en gemeenschap vallen dus zeker niet één op één samen. Ondanks de toegenomen mobiliteit vormt hun woonplaats toch nog een belangrijk knooppunt van hun sociale contacten. In de sportclub, op de school van hun kinderen of in een lokale vereniging ontmoeten ze vrienden uit hun eigen buurt. Het feit dat vrienden, collega’s en kennissen verspreid zijn over een groot gebied betekent dus nog niet dat ze geen contacten op buurtniveau meer aanknopen. De lokale gemeenschap is minder sterk dan ze vroeger zou geweest zijn, maar bestaat nog steeds. Hoewel de bewoners van de suburb ontzettend mobiel zijn, gaan ze toch sociale verbanden aan met mensen in de buurt. Vele van die verbanden zijn wel sterk functioneel.

Om dergelijke nieuwe vormen van gemeenschap te begrijpen, is het belangrijk om de conceptualisatie van gemeenschapsvorming te herbekijken. In het boek ‘Kiezen voor de kudde’ stellen Duyvendak en Hurenkamp (2004) bijvoorbeeld dat de gemiddelde Nederlander steeds minder gebonden is aan één enkele gemeenschap. In hun ogen betekent dat echter niet automatisch dat Nederlanders ook steeds meer op zichzelf staan. Tegen de pessimistische stroom van studies over de toenemende individualisering in, beargumenteren

zij dat mensen tegenwoordig aan meerdere lichte gemeenschappen verbonden zijn. De eisen om toe te treden tot zo'n lichte gemeenschap zouden minder hoog zijn dan voor een klassieke, sterke gemeenschap. Volgens Duyvendak en Hurenkamp (2004) werken lichte gemeenschappen daarom eerder insluitend dan de vroegere sterke gemeenschappen.

In elk geval moeten we besluiten dat de toegenomen mobiliteit een belangrijk effect heeft op de relatie tussen gevestigden en buitenstaanders. Meer nog dan tijdens het veldwerk van Elias en Scotson al het geval was, zijn verplaatsingen een essentieel element geworden van de levensstijl in suburbane woonwijken. De bewoners werken, wonen, winkelen en recreëren op vele verschillende plaatsen en met veel verschillende mensen. Hoewel lokale gemeenschappen door dit proces ongetwijfeld verzwakt zijn, mag niet onderschat worden in hoeverre mensen nog vasthouden aan een plaats en haar historisch opgebouwde identiteit. Het besluit is dan ook dat lokale gemeenschappen nog steeds belangrijk zijn, maar dat de sociale cohesie tussen de oude bewoners en hun relaties met de nieuwkomers grondig veranderd zijn door de toegenomen mobiliteit.

In deze situatie moeten we ons niet alleen afvragen of de oude bewoners er nog in slagen om de machtsbronnen af te schermen en de nieuwkomers tot buitenstaanders te maken, maar ook of er nog wel gesproken kan worden van zo'n rigide tweedeling tussen gevestigden en buitenstaanders. Op basis van hun onderzoek in Veenendaal en Amerongen lieten Hogenstijn en Van Middelkoop (2008) bijvoorbeeld blijken dat mensen tegelijkertijd tot de gevestigden en de buitenstaanders kunnen behoren, afhankelijk van de situatie. Omdat mensen tot zich een deel voelen van meerdere gemeenschappen, elk met een andere ruimtelijke logica, is een algemene scheidingslijn tussen gevestigden en buitenstaanders niet altijd gemakkelijk te maken. Door de toegenomen mobiliteit en de daarmee samenhangende toename van het aantal lichte gemeenschappen zit de dynamiek van gemeenschapsvorming tegenwoordig veel complexer in elkaar.

5.4 Suburbane gemeenschapsvorming en diversiteit

Het proces van suburbane gemeenschapsvorming is niet alleen veranderd onder invloed van de verhoogde mobiliteit, maar ook door de toegenomen diversiteit. Hoewel de Belgische suburbs nooit beantwoord hebben aan de karikatuur van de homogene verkaveling vol gelijkgestemde zielen met dezelfde levensstijl in dezelfde levensfase, lijkt het toch alsof deze ruimtes op korte termijn bewoond zullen worden door een grotere variatie mensen dan voorheen. Verschillende demografische tendensen bespoedigen dit proces. Enerzijds is er de groeiende vergrijzing in de suburbs uit de jaren 1960 en 1970. Hierdoor komen geregeld woningen op de markt, die doorgaans ingenomen worden door een jonger publiek

(Ryckewaert e.a., 2011). Anderzijds moeten we ook kijken naar het stijgend aantal echtscheidingen. Hierdoor komen ook heel wat woningen te koop te staan. Ze zorgen er ook voor dat het traditionele kerngezin dat het hart uitmaakte van de traditionele suburb langzaam aan belang inboet (De Decker e.a., 2010).

Hoewel de gewijzigde gezinssamenstelling en de grotere leeftijdsverschillen ongetwijfeld een effect hebben op het proces van gemeenschapsvorming, willen we in deze bijdrage focussen op de groeiende etnische en culturele diversiteit in suburbaan België. In verschillende landen hebben onderzoekers namelijk aangetoond dat de kloof tussen de gevestigden en de buitenstaanders hierdoor onder extra spanning komt te staan. Zo ontwaart May (2004) op basis van interviews met autochtone en allochtone bewoners van de arbeidersbuurt Nordstadt in Dortmund drie schaalniveaus waarop etnische en culturele verschillen een rol spelen in de gevestigden-buitenstaanders configuratie. Op schaal van de natiestaat beschrijft May hoe de relatie tussen gevestigde Duitsers en gemigreerde nieuwkomers is geïnstitutionaliseerd. Zonder Duitse nationaliteit gelden er bijvoorbeeld allerlei restricties op het gebied van werk. Op schaal van de stad legt May uit hoe etnische buurten territoriaal worden gestigmatiseerd. Net zoals het 'ratteneind' in Winston Parva werd de wijk als vies en moreel minderwaardig beschouwd. Mensen die uit de wijk konden verhuizen deden dit en hielden het negatieve imago dikwijls mee in stand (cfr. Wacquant, 2008). May toont ook aan hoe er binnen de buurt zelf een derde gevestigden-buitenstaanders relatie ontstaat. Duitsers identificeren zich voornamelijk met andere Duitsers. Hoewel zij buurtbewoners van vreemde herkomst stigmatiseren, slagen zij er toch niet in om deze mensen effectief uit te sluiten. Dit komt doordat hun interne sociale cohesie sterk is aangetast. Ondanks de sterkere cohesie tussen mensen van vreemde herkomst, gebeurt het omgekeerde ook niet. Op de hogere schaalniveaus zijn zij immers de buitenstaanders.

Omdat Nordstadt een typische arbeidersbuurt is, loont het de moeite om ook andere buitenlandse voorbeelden onder de loep te nemen. Zo deden Burgers en Van der Lugt (2005) onderzoek naar Surinamers die vanuit Rotterdam naar Capelle aan den IJssel verhuisden. In hun ogen vormde de suburbanisatie van welgestelde Surinamers een voorbode voor een nieuwe 'zwarte vlucht' waarin welgestelde migranten naar de suburbs trekken. Opvallend is dat de gesuburbaniseerde Surinamers niet alleen dezelfde verhuismotieven hadden als de gesuburbaniseerde Nederlanders; ze gebruikten ook hetzelfde discours. Zo vertelden ze onder andere dat buitenlanders een probleem zijn in de stad en dan met name de Turken en de Marokkanen. Ze onderscheidden zich dus niet alleen etnisch-cultureel van die groepen, maar ook ruimtelijk.

Omdat de onderzoekers de relatie met Nederlanders in Capelle aan den IJssel niet hebben onderzocht, weten we niet of de gevestigden-buitenstaanders relatie zich op schaal van de gemeente ook ent op de vermeende etnisch-culturele verschillen tussen Nederlanders en Surinamers. Op basis van andere studies kan wel vermoed worden dat klasse, naast etniciteit, een belangrijke rol speelt in dit vraagstuk. Welgestelde Surinamers die naar de middenklasse buurten in Capelle aan den IJssel trekken zullen vermoedelijk anders ontvangen worden door de oude bewoners dan Surinaamse nieuwkomers behorende tot de arbeidersklasse (cfr. Meier, 2013). Zo suggereerden studies in Vlaanderen en Engeland al dat de eventuele opening van een asielcentrum doorgaans meer wrijving oplevert in suburbane gemeentes dan de mogelijke komst van expats die de hoge huizenprijzen kunnen betalen (Meert e.a., 2004; Hubbard, 2005). Toch mogen we niet uit het oog verliezen dat etnisch-culturele diversiteit in de woonomgeving voor velen een struikelblok blijft. Op basis van 1500 enquêtes berekenden Bral en Pauwels (2010) bijvoorbeeld dat slechts twee procent van de Vlamingen totaal geen belang hecht aan het percentage vreemdelingen in hun buurt. Op de vraag hun ideale buurt voor te stellen, antwoordde meer dan de helft van de inwoners van plattelands- en suburbanisatiegemeentes dat ze een buurt “met bijna geen vreemdelingen” verkiezen. Zoals in de inleiding al aangestipt, is suburbanisatie voor vele Vlamingen niet alleen een strategie om de armoede van de stad te ontlopen, maar ook haar etnische en culturele diversiteit (Kesteloot & De Maesschalck, 2001; De Decker e.a., 2005).

Gelet op het belang van etnisch-culturele diversiteit moeten we minstens twee kanttekeningen plaatsen bij de theorie van Elias en Scotson. Ten eerste is het duidelijk dat suburbane Vlamingen nieuwkomers met een migratie-achtergrond dikwijls op een andere manier behandelen dan nieuwkomers met diepgewortelde roots in Vlaanderen (Schuermans e.a., 2015). Zo leeft bij velen de angst dat de grotere diversiteit een effect zal hebben op de onveiligheid. Onveiligheidsgevoelens zijn namelijk maar al te vaak gebaseerd op cultureel gebonden stereotypes over daderschap en slachtofferschap (cfr. Neal, 2002; Schuermans & De Maesschalck, 2010). Vele suburbane Vlamingen zijn ook bevreesd dat de positie van het Nederlands en de Vlaamse normen en waarden aan belang zullen inboeten bij een instroom van mensen met een andere cultuur en moedertaal (cfr. Blommaert, 2011). Ook hier spelen cultureel gebonden stereotypes weer een grote rol. Gevestigden-buitenstaanders relaties tussen mensen met en zonder migratie-achtergrond worden dus niet alleen op het lokale, maar ook op het bovenlokale niveau gevormd. Omdat de stereotypes over buitenstaanders met een migratie-achtergrond op een hoger schaalniveau worden geproduceerd en gereproduceerd dan op het niveau van de buurt, verloopt het proces van gemeenschapsvorming sowieso anders dan in Winston Parva. Stigma’s over buitenstaanders met een migratie-achtergrond ontstaan niet alleen door lokale roddels, maar ook in de

nationale media. Dit is een eerste manier waarop etnisch-culturele diversiteit een extra dimensie geeft aan de theorie van Elias en Scotson.

Een tweede kanttekening volgt uit de contacthypothese. Deze stelt – tenminste als er aan een aantal randvoorwaardes is voldaan - dat stereotypes over bepaalde groepen in de samenleving zullen dalen als er maar genoeg wederzijds contact is tussen de leden van die groepen (Allport, 1954). Onderzoek in California wees bijvoorbeeld uit dat de komst van mensen met een migratieachtergrond in eerste instantie als een bedreiging wordt ervaren, maar dat dit gevoel van bedreiging afneemt naarmate er meer contact is tussen de leden van verschillende groepen (Downey & Smith, 2011). In Deurne stelden Thijssen en Dierckx (2011) ook vast dat interetnische, interpersoonlijke ontmoetingen zo'n gevoel van bedreiging voor een stuk kunnen neutraliseren. Vertaald naar de theorie van Elias en Scotson betekent dit dat de relatie tussen de gevestigden en de buitenstaanders niet in steen staat gebeiteld. Hoewel we ons moeten behoeden voor een overgeromantiseerd beeld van betekenisvol contact tussen mensen met verschillende achtergronden (Valentine, 2008), moeten we ook aanvaarden dat stigma's en stereotypes over nieuwkomers met of zonder migratie-achtergrond mettertijd kunnen verschuiven. Dit inzicht vormt een tweede belangrijke aanvulling op de theorie van Elias en Scotson.

5.5 Besluit

In vergelijking met andere landen wordt er in België weinig onderzoek gedaan naar het proces van gemeenschapsvorming buiten de stad. In tegenstelling tot Nederland of de Verenigde Staten bestaat er alleszins geen onderzoekstraditie die expliciet gericht is op de sociologie van het samenleven in de suburb. In deze bijdrage hebben wij daarom geprobeerd om een onderzoeksagenda uit te bouwen rond dit thema. Ons uitgangspunt was dat de gevestigden-buitenstaanders theorie van Elias & Scotson nog steeds relevant is om het proces van gemeenschapsvorming in de suburb te begrijpen, maar dat de wereld in vijftig jaar tijd zo sterk veranderd is dat de theorie een update nodig heeft. De kern van de theorie blijft wél overeind, namelijk dat er een onderscheid bestaat tussen gevestigden en buitenstaanders, waarbij de eerste groep over de machtsbronnen beschikt en aan stigmatisering doet om de tweede buiten te sluiten. Minimaal twee elementen maken echter dat het bijbehorende proces van gemeenschapsvorming nu anders verloopt dan in 1965.

Een eerste belangrijke verandering die we in deze bijdrage hebben aangestipt is de toegenomen mobiliteit. Meer nog dan vroeger is de geografische reikwijdte van suburbane levens groter dan het dorp, laat staan de buurt of de verkaveling. Vele ouders pendelen dag

in dag uit tussen hun woonplaats, hun werkplaats, de sporthal waar zoonlief volleybal speelt, de muziekschool waar de dochter gitaarles volgt en de koffiebar in het nabijgelegen stadje waar ze hun vrienden ontmoeten. De vraag is wat dergelijke mobiliteit met het proces van gemeenschapsvorming doet. In hoeverre is er in de suburbs nog sprake van een sterke gemeenschap van oude bewoners zoals Elias & Scotson beschreven? Klopt het dat we met zijn allen steeds minder aan lokale gemeenschappen gebonden zijn? Dat we in de plaats daarvan deel uit maken van verschillende lichte gemeenschappen? Dat dergelijke lichte gemeenschappen inderdaad eerder insluitend dan uitsluitend werken? En dat de dichotomie tussen gevestigden en buitenstaanders daardoor de complexiteit van de verschillende gemeenschappen onderschat?

Een tweede belangrijke verschuiving die zich voltrok tussen 1965 en 2014 betreft de toegenomen diversiteit in de suburbs. Elders in dit boek is al aangetoond dat verschillende herkomstgroepen verschillende suburbanisatiepatronen hebben (Schillebeeckx & Albeda, 2014). De eerste mensen met een migratie-achtergrond zijn ondertussen al lang aangekomen in de suburbs. We mogen verwachten dat het aantal suburbanisanten van vreemde herkomst in de nabije toekomst alleen maar zal stijgen. De vraag is of nieuwkomers met een migratie-achtergrond op een andere manier bejegend worden dan nieuwkomers met hun wortels in de Vlaamse klei. Is het voor de nieuwkomers met een migratie-achtergrond moeilijker om deel te worden van de lokale gemeenschap? Spelen culturele stereotypes een rol bij de ontwikkeling van een gevestigden-buitenstaanders configuratie? Of worden deze stereotypes doorprikt eens er meer contact is tussen de verschillende groepen?

Bij het beantwoorden van deze vragen moeten we ons behoeden voor sterke veralgemeningen. Ten eerste moeten we beseffen dat er in elke gemeente heel uiteenlopende groepen wonen en komen wonen. Bejaarden die hun dorp volledig hebben zien veranderen zullen vermoedelijk op een andere manier naar nieuwkomers van vreemde herkomst kijken dan een koppel tweeverdieners dat vijftien jaar geleden naar een vrijstaande woning in een nieuw aangelegde verkaveling is verhuisd. De variëteit zit uiteraard niet enkel bij de oude bewoners, maar ook bij de nieuwkomers van vreemde herkomst. Terwijl we in de jaren zestig en zeventig van de vorige eeuw behoorlijk homogene groepen gastarbeiders ontvingen uit een beperkt aantal landen, komen migranten nu uit alle hoeken van de wereld. Sommige migranten hebben hun land verlaten uit schrik voor oorlog of repressie. Anderen willen een paar jaar hard werken om met de spaarcenten in eigen land een zaak op te starten. Vele mensen van vreemde herkomst zijn ondertussen ook in België geboren en praten thuis Nederlands. Sommigen hebben de sociale ladder beklommen;

anderen niet. Spraken we vroeger nog over etnische minderheden met een welomschreven profiel, dan moeten we het daarom nu hebben over een ‘superdiversiteit’ aan herkomstlanden, statussen en burgerschapsstatuten (Vertovec, 2007; Geldof, 2013). Vermoedelijk zullen die niet allemaal op dezelfde manier onthaald worden. De scherpe tweedeling tussen gevestigden en buitenstaanders is waarschijnlijk ook te rigide om het proces van gemeenschapsvorming goed te duiden.

Ten tweede valt er in België heel moeilijk te spreken over dé suburb. In ons land bestaat de suburbane gordel rond Antwerpen, Gent, Brussel of Luik uit een “bijeengenaaid lappendeken” van oude dorpskernen met oude woningen en nieuwe appartementen, eengezinswoningen in grootschalige verkavelingen, villa’s in linten, rijhuisjes aan de spoorweg, verspreide hoeves, enz. Het zou naïef zijn te geloven dat we in dergelijke dorpen van één gemeenschap kunnen spreken. Even goed zou het kort door de bocht zijn om te veronderstellen dat wat er in een gemeente als pakweg Zoersel gebeurt, zonder problemen getransponeerd kan worden naar Mortsel, Boom of Machelen. Sommige suburbane gemeenten hebben een woningvoorraad die voornamelijk uit kleine arbeiderswoningen bestaat. In andere maken fermettes en andere vrijstaande woningen de hoofdmoot uit. Terwijl de bewoners van sommige suburbane gemeenten naar de nabijgelegen stad moeten gaan voor het zwembad, de middelbare school of de schoenwinkel, kunnen anderen veel meer beroep doen op het lokale voorzieningenapparaat. In elk van die gemeenten zal gemeenschapsvorming vermoedelijk op een andere manier gebeuren. Onderzoek naar relaties tussen oude en nieuwe bewoners in de suburbs zou daarom zeker de specificiteit van de plaats in het oog moeten houden. Diepgravende case-studies met kwalitatief onderzoek lijken daarvoor de meest aangewezen methode. Alleen zo kunnen we de complexe dynamieken tussen oude bewoners, nieuwkomers met migratie-achtergrond en nieuwkomers zonder migratie-achtergrond begrijpen.

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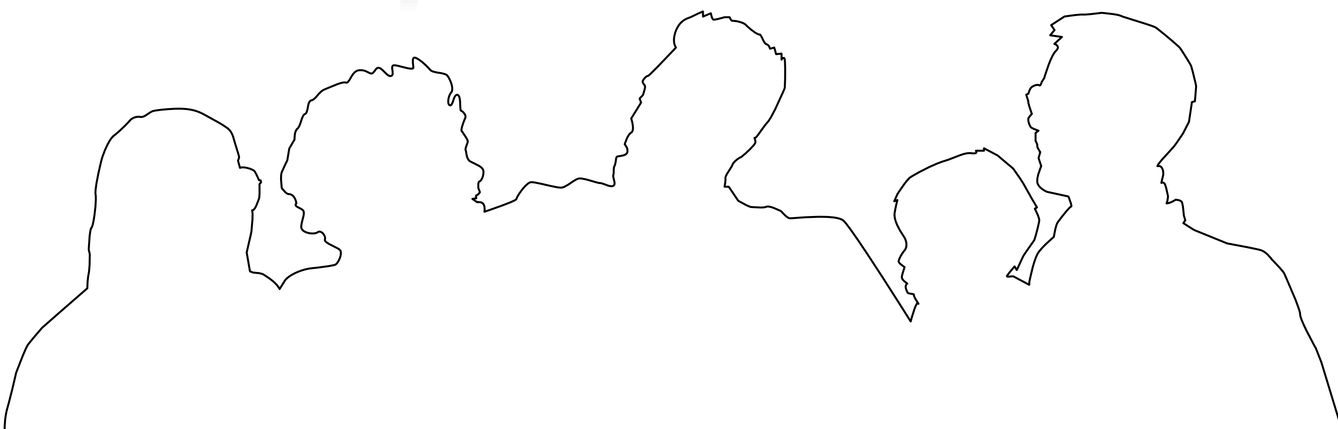

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion: community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods

The central question in this investigation has been the manner in which residents in super-diverse neighbourhoods live together. I have positioned myself within the academic tradition of community studies, which have always been concerned with the question of how people live together. Various social developments are central to this field, where the question is how these developments influence communities. Whereas this has previously dealt with developments such as industrialisation, urbanisation and suburbanisation, it is now more concerned with the increasing cultural diversity of the population (Gans, 2017; Putnam, 2007; Tönnies, 2001; Wirth, 1938). This diversity was thought to have a negative influence on community formation, although there are now also studies suggesting that the influence of ethno-cultural diversity on, for example, social cohesion is restricted (Gijsberts, van der Meer, & Dagevos, 2012; Putnam, 2007; Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009). These studies analyse the impact of ethno-cultural diversity on community ties over a large area, covering many neighbourhoods and cities. In this study, I have zoomed in on the community dynamics in a number of smaller neighbourhoods, in order to be able to study those processes more closely in the context of super-diversity. As set out in the introduction, it was still unclear how we would be able to study communities from the starting point of the notion of super-diversity. After all, the notion of super-diversity can lead to a highly individualized and even atomized view of living together in cities. In order to be able to study the relationship between super-diversity and communities, it is necessary to approach the concept of community differently. As outlined in the introduction, I propose that people who live together in a neighbourhood are – by definition – a community, following, among others, Gans and Elias in their approach to community. While community formation implies, after all, that a community is in the process of being created, my initial conviction is that a community already exists among people due simply to the fact of their living together in the same neighbourhood. Thus, instead of proposing that there can be no community in super-diverse neighbourhoods, or that that community exists only in a sense abstracted from its location, we must study what the community looks like in super-diverse neighbourhoods. For this reason, super-diversity needs a new vision of communities. Instead of community formation, I place community dynamics at the centre, as already outlined in the introduction. I have defined community dynamics as: *“the dynamic process of the (re)creation of social ties between people living in the same neighbourhood”.* In the following passages I will indicate in which way communities should be studied when we speak of community dynamics, and what this approach contributes to the already-existing literature. Table 6.1 presents again the most important aspects of the differing visions of communities. The approach to community dynamics can be described in terms of “structure and geographically defined area”.

	Geographically defined area	Not geographically defined area
Structure and sentiment (romantic ideal)	Tönnies and Putnam	Wellman & Leighton
Structure (empirical fact)	Elias and Gans	-

TABLE 6.1: APPROACHES TOWARDS COMMUNITIES

In this conclusion I will focus on three important aspects of investigating how people live together in super-diverse neighbourhoods, from the perspective of community dynamics. Firstly, I will demonstrate how focusing on community dynamics requires us to take into account the varying strength of ties. This means that, in an approach based on community dynamics, the focus can not only be on strong ties, as with the romantic ideal (see table 1.1). I will discuss the different types of ties that can be present, and thus constitute a part of the community dynamics, in this section.

Secondly, it is important to focus on different places in the neighbourhood when using this approach. I maintain that there are always community dynamics in a neighbourhood, based on the simple fact that people are living together, which necessarily invites interactions. Moreover, different places in the neighbourhood elicit different interactions, meaning that people interact with each other differently in different places. Residents employ a variety of strategies to move between various locations, and so also determine in this way how much space they allow for the creation of ties with different people (chapter 4). Furthermore, it is interesting to consider the extent to which community dynamics in, for example, a suburban super-diverse environment, differ from those described in this investigation (chapter 5).

Finally, an approach from the perspective of community dynamics requires all residents to be included in the research, and treats everyone as active participants. This means, for example, that the focus of research into choice of school and neighbourhood must be expanded beyond that of the white upper-middle class (chapters 2 and 5). It also means, moreover, that everyone has an active role in the (re-)creation of groups in the neighbourhood (chapter 3).

6.1 Social ties in super-diverse neighbourhoods

As shown in the various chapters, different kinds of social ties exist between residents in super-diverse neighbourhoods. People appreciate the neighbourhood because of the loose contacts that exist (chapter 2), they continually (re-)create boundaries between groups in the neighbourhood (chapter 3), and children play together to a greater or lesser extent (chapter 4). In order to be able to examine and analyse these ties, we must take a wide view

of the term 'ties'. Research into community dynamics in the manner I propose is aimed at all kinds of ties, not only strong and weak ties. For this reason I will illustrate how 'ties' are usually studied in community studies, how I have studied them, and how my method can benefit future research into community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods.

When to speak of social 'ties'

In the academic discussion about diverse neighbourhoods, various terms are used to describe how people live together. In general, this discussion concerns the ties between people, but what do we mean by 'tie'? I advocate that we should approach the concept of 'tie' broadly when examining community dynamics in super-diverse neighbourhoods.

Many studies employ a much narrower approach when discussing connections, thus leaving many sorts of relationships that exist between people under-examined. I will now explain a number of commonly used concepts.

Many studies discuss social cohesion (van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014; Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009). As with community, social cohesion is sometimes approached as a 'warm' concept, where people feel connected to each other (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009). At the same time, social cohesion is sometimes inferred from the trust between people, or from the degree of contact (for an overview of studies see Forrest & Kearns, 2001; van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). If neighbours have regular contact with each other, there must be, it is assumed, a high degree of social cohesion. Concerning the ties that develop between neighbours, the term 'social capital' is also used. (Putnam, 2007: 137). This refers to the value of networks between people. The terms 'social capital' and 'social cohesion' are closely related, as the creation of social capital in a neighbourhood is sometimes applied in order to reinforce social cohesion (Forrest & Kearns, 2001).

Although social capital and social cohesion are much discussed in connection with urban sociology, and it would seem convenient, therefore, to use these terms, I have deliberately chosen not to do this. If I were to do so, given the degree of contact between neighbours, I would be likely to conclude that social cohesion is low, and the social capital restricted. This does not tell us much about how people in the neighbourhood live together, and (especially) paints a negative picture of the neighbourhood, since social cohesion is often seen as desirable (Saeys, Albeda, Van Puymbroeck, et al., 2014). Instead of becoming involved in endless discussions about the level of social cohesion, and the level of social capital – whereby researchers constantly employ these concepts in different ways, posing the question of whether or not researchers are discussing the same mechanism – I have described, in this study, how people actually live together and have contact with each other.

This approach is increasingly receiving attention within urban sociology studies, including interest in the 'absent ties' (Blokland, 2017). When we wish to investigate the connections between people and the way in which these develop, community dynamics research includes all sorts of social ties, as opposed to most community studies, which discuss social ties in the narrow sense of the word. According to Tönnies (2001), a community is actually characterized by specific types of ties. As described in the introductory chapter of this dissertation *"… people in a community were bound together by a sense of belonging, solidarity, and intimate feelings, while people in a society are bound together by contractual relations. People in a society do not feel connected, but they are connected because they depend on each other."* (Tönnies, 2001/1887). The type of tie, according to Tönnies, determines whether or not we can speak of a community. Contemporary researchers who present the community as a romantic ideal also propose that only a certain type of tie is valued as such. When such specific ties are absent, community is also absent, or we can speak of social isolation, as Putnam (2007) suggests.

Even those researchers who argue against the romantic ideal of community, by demonstrating that relationships are no longer bound to place, and that people create ties with more people, also focus on a certain type of tie that involves intensive contact between people (Anderson, 2006; Duyvendak & Hurenkamp, 2004). These researchers demonstrate that we should no longer seek those strong ties (so to speak) in the neighbourhood itself, but elsewhere (Anderson, 2006; Wellman, 1979). They also overlook the interesting community dynamics that are still present in the neighbourhood, such as processes of boundary making between residents (chapter 3), and parents' strategies for moving through the various areas of the neighbourhood in order to determine the degree of confrontation with diversity (chapter 4).

If we leave community studies aside and look more broadly to urban studies, we see a similar picture. Simmel has already drawn attention to a weakening of ties in urban areas, and recent studies have also demonstrated that people prefer to make ties with similar types of people (Blokland & van Eijk, 2010). Consequently, ties become weaker in an urban environment where different types of people live together (Putnam, 2007).

A new trend, however, can be seen in urban studies literature, where greater value is increasingly being placed on these weak ties (Blokland, 2017; Hall, 2015; Valentine, 2013). Here, use is often made of the distinction between strong and weak ties drawn by Granovetter in his well-known article "The strength of weak ties", in which he argues that weak ties are important for social mobility. Various other studies contend that urban neighbourhoods are characterised by weak ties. My research also shows that it is the weaker

ties between citizens that are especially valued. If we study the ties between people more intensively, it is insufficient to make use of the dichotomy between strong and weak ties: some of the ties described in this study are even weaker than weak ties. In chapter 3, for instance, it was demonstrated that the relations between neighbours are often extremely weak, even weaker than the 'weak ties' mentioned by Granovetter (1973). According to Granovetter *"the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie"* (Granovetter 1973: 1361). Granovetter argues that is actually the weak ties that are beneficial, as they afford access to sources of help not to be found in one's own network. Weak ties build bridges between one's own social network and that of the other with whom the bridge is built. New sources of support can become available within this new network, sources that are unavailable in one's own network, such as access to work. Simply smiling at one's neighbours, however, is not by definition a weak tie. Because some ties in super-diverse neighbourhoods are characterised by looser ties than the weak ties described by Granovetter, super-diverse neighbourhoods require an alternative approach. Although the distinction between strong and weak ties is certainly useful, as this study has shown (chapter 2), a community-dynamics approach requires a method that also values ties that are weaker than the weak ties in Gronovetter's terms, often designated as 'absent ties'.

Loose ties in super-diverse neighbourhoods

The term 'conviviality', which simply means living together pleasantly, is often used to explain the contemporary manner of living together in super-diverse neighbourhoods. Gilroy has posited that conviviality concerns *"cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature in social life"*. In a super-diverse neighbourhood, what matters is *"a fine balance between building positive relations across difference and keeping distance"* (Wessendorf, 2014a: 393). From my research too it seems that the maintenance of distance can also be important for living together in diverse neighbourhoods. Looking back over my own research, I argue that the literature about public space in combination with the well-known concept of strong and weak ties helps us to better explain the ties in the neighbourhood. I will now differentiate between, and elucidate, three sorts of ties, beginning with the weakest.

As is shown in chapters two and three, we usually see loose ties – where there is contact, but no conversation, between residents – in the neighbourhoods I studied. This includes, for example, 'nodding relations' (Blokland, 2017: 39) people recognise and nod to each other, but there is no small talk. These ties appear to also be an important contribution to a sense of satisfaction with, and feeling 'at home' in, the neighbourhood. This equates to public

familiarity, and a certain assurance, with the neighbourhood's residents, without necessarily knowing them, or feeling the need to speak with them (Blokland & Nast, 2014). Connections such as these are called 'fleeting relationships' in the literature addressing the public space (Lofland, 2009: 53). Although, in the public space literature, this relationship is mostly described when it occurs between strangers, we see this type of contact not only between strangers, but also between direct neighbours within the neighbourhood. Some neighbours avoid contact, or do not conduct any conversations, sometimes because of language barriers. Although these fleeting relations in super-diverse neighbourhoods are characterized by a lack of speaking, there are other more subtle types of contact. One example is 'civil inattention' (Lofland, 2009: 30). Civil inattention is characterized by seeing each other and noticing each other, without paying specific attention to each other. It is referred to as "*courtesy without conversation*" (Lofland, 2009: 30). Restrained contact without conversation is in this case a sign of politeness. In the classic urban sociology studies, this absence of contact is often described as negative and associated with indifference (c.f. e.g. Tönnies, 2001, Simmel). However, particularly in neighbourhoods where people have different needs, backgrounds and desires, leaving each other alone can be a successful strategy to live together in diversity, and can contribute to conviviality. Civil inattention is then a strategy to show neighbours that you see them – and are thus not indifferent – but also that you respect their privacy and that you do not want to interfere in their social life.

Through the application of concepts from the literature on public space, more light is shed on how people live together in diverse neighbourhoods. While I argue that people can sometimes appreciate the absence of contact, Putnam argues that people feel uncomfortable with diversity, and so retreat completely. The stress here is on retreating within oneself and avoiding contact. The community-dynamics approach focuses on the contact that *does* exist. It follows that, although people can indeed feel uncomfortable with diversity, and find it difficult to make deeper contact with people that are different from them, they also really do find ways of making contact with each other (chapters 2, 3 and 4). Moreover, some residents value this extremely limited contact, and prefer these loose ties to stronger ones.

The second type of relation in the neighbourhood is the "intimate-secondary relationship" (Lofland 2009: 56). These relations are, as with 'fleeting relations', characterized by a feeling of familiarity, but the relation is slightly more personal, because conversation is always a component of an "intimate-secondary relationship". An example is neighbours engaging in small talk on the street on a regular basis. They share some personal information, while

keeping their distance. This regularity, along with the fact that people share personal information, results in an "intimate-secondary relationship". As described in chapter two, neighbours sometimes bring each other biscuits or other food, for example during religious holidays. In this way, people have contact with each other on a regular basis. These ties are experienced as positive, maintaining the right balance between distance and proximity.

As demonstrated in chapter two, these ties are sometimes even more valued when they exist between neighbours of different ethno-cultural backgrounds. In this case these intimate-secondary relations form the basis for cultural exchange. Moreover, this study demonstrates that in general, ties between neighbours in super-diverse neighbourhoods belonging to different social groups rarely become stronger than intimate-secondary relations, as described in chapters 2 and 4. Exceptions to this are the weak ties created by borrowing tools, or keeping an eye on each other's houses during holiday absences, for example.

Furthermore, chapter 3 suggests that small talk doesn't always lead to intimate-secondary relationships. Small-scale conversations such as these can sometimes lead to the (re)creation of boundaries between groups. At the same time, it seems that existing boundaries can hinder interaction between neighbours.

Neighbours assign each other to different groups, often attaching negative characteristics to other groups. These negative images of one another sometimes lead to contact between neighbours remaining limited, as shown in chapter 3. In this way, the creation of stronger ties is hindered.

The last types of ties between neighbours are the weak and strong ties, as described by Granovetter. I will deal with these two together, because I see these ties as forming a continuum. Both strong and weak ties are characterized by an emotional and a reciprocal component. The reciprocal component distinguishes them from both the fleeting and the intimate-secondary relationship. A tie can be weaker or stronger depending on the degree of emotional intensity. My research reveals that ties such as these between neighbours manifest themselves in two ways: when lending each other items or keeping an eye on each other's houses (chapter 2); and when looking after each other's children (chapter 4). These ties, both weak and strong, have a fundamentally different character from the loose ties within the neighbourhood. Weak and strong ties contribute not only to a feeling of familiarity within the neighbourhood, but their reciprocal character also contributes to the residents' social capital, and the associated sources of help. In this way, it is a fundamentally

different sort of tie from fleeting and intimate-secondary relationships, as these latter sorts of ties do not contribute to anyone's social capital.

Research in fact shows that these strong and weak ties mostly exist between people belonging to the same social group, as already demonstrated in chapter 2. In addition, they are often created within super-diverse neighbourhoods between residents with children, in the same way as the functional networks described in chapter 4. The fact that these ties are mostly created between people belonging to the same group diminishes the value of the networks. According to Granovetter, it is precisely the weak ties that are important for social mobility, demonstrating that their value is reduced when they exist between people who belong to the same group.

Moreover, my research suggests that strong and weak ties, apart from having positive effects such as increasing social capital, can also have negative effects, despite the fact that ties such as these are often seen as desirable in terms of policy. However, this is not always true for the residents, as described in chapter 2. While fleeting and intimate-secondary relations are experienced as either positive or neutral, tensions can arise when residents try to transform 'intimate-secondary relationships' into stronger ties, such as weak or strong ties. These tensions are characteristic for super-diverse neighbourhoods, because in a super-diverse neighbourhood conviviality *"is characterized by a fine balance between building positive relations across difference and keeping a distance"* (Wessendorf, 2014: 393). Although people are polite and kind towards each other, 'civility towards diversity' is also a strategy to avoid tensions (Wessendorf, 2014). Indeed, the research in Antwerp has demonstrated that building closer relations with neighbours comes at the cost of being confronted with difference, something which can sometimes create tensions.

A good example of this in the case of Antwerp was the organisation of street activities. The Antwerp municipal Opsinjoren encourages residents to strengthen social cohesion in the neighbourhood by organising drinks, barbecues and recreational activities. These activities encourage encounter and stimulate the building of stronger relations. In other words, neighbours were encouraged to transform 'intimate-secondary relationships' into stronger ties. The organisers of these activities wanted every resident to join in the activities. In one example, organisers trying to create an inclusive street-party, where people of various backgrounds could feel comfortable, bought Halal meat so that the Islamic residents could also join in. When the Islamic residents still did not participate, some residents became frustrated. So, by trying to create stronger ties, tensions arose, and boundaries between social groups within the neighbourhood were created.

The distinction between fleeting relationships, intimate-secondary relationships and weak/strong ties is an important factor in the community-dynamics approach. By including, as I have done, all these different kinds of ties in my research, we gain a far better picture of the complex community dynamics in the neighbourhood. While fleeting and intimate-secondary relationships contribute to neighbourhood satisfaction by contributing to the feeling of familiarity (chapter 2), the creation of stronger ties can sometimes produce tensions. Based on this, I argue for a re-evaluation of loose ties within neighbourhoods.

The concepts of social cohesion, weak ties and strong ties have a positive connotation in urban sociology literature, but in super-diverse contexts these ties do not always have positive effects. In addition, urban municipalities create policy to encourage the creation of stronger ties (Saeys, Albeda, Oosterlynck, Verschraegen, & Dierckx, 2014). I argue, however, that instead of attempting to create stronger ties in the neighbourhood, policymakers should have a greater appreciation for the loose ties in super-diverse neighbourhoods: residents appreciate diversity, but trying to build more intimate relations between people who belong to different social groups may end up causing tensions.

6.2 Community dynamics and place

The community-dynamics approach consists of two important components: the ties between residents and place. There are various places within the neighbourhood where people gather together, and these various places encourage different forms of interaction, and thus contribute to the community dynamics. In this regard, I make a distinction between (semi-)public spaces and schools. In this section I will explain why it is important to include place in the overall picture of community dynamics, how I have done that, and what results it has produced.

Before I describe how people in these different locations interact with each other, I should explain why I have discussed (semi-)public spaces and schools under the same heading. Research is generally aimed either at the public and semi-public space, or at schools. In this investigation, however, I have approached them together, not only by looking at how the spaces are actually used, but also at people’s considerations about whether or not to make use of the spaces. By joining these together, new insights have emerged that can enrich both the literature on public space and that concerning choice of school.

Literature on public space often focuses on the specific interactions between people in these spaces (Jacobs, 1961; Lofland, 2009; Whyte, 1967), or criticises the increasing privatisation and/or arrangement of public space that only encourages people to engage in mass consumption, while at the same time more often hindering than stimulating interaction.

Little attention has been paid, however, to the judgments people make about using a public space such as a park, and the question of where they feel open towards diversity and where not. In contrast, the literature concerning choice of school does address the question of why people choose a particular school, and to what degree people feel open towards diversity. There is an implicit assumption in the literature that, as far as schools are concerned, residents make a deliberate choice, whereas the use of public spaces is presented as an inevitable or everyday reality simply to be negotiated. When we investigate how people let their children use public spaces, however, we see that here, too, people apply strategies to ensure that their children only come into contact with diversity to a limited, or only a controlled, extent (chapter 4).

It is important to include place in a community-dynamics approach. Earlier I described which ties neighbours create with each other in the neighbourhood. But community dynamics go beyond simply the ties with other neighbours: it also concerns those with neighbourhood acquaintances, i.e. those people who do not live in the same street or same block, but do live in a super-diverse neighbourhood. While it is difficult to avoid contact with neighbours, even if only because one sees them as one leaves one's house, this is not the case in (semi-)public spaces and schools. People decide whether or not to spend their recreation time in particular places, to take their children to the park, public square or to attend a particular school. These places vary in the potential they offer for the creation of ties, and in the diversity of people that gather in them. They are places that form an important part of the community living together in super-diverse neighbourhoods, and so give us an insight into how people interact. In order to study the community in super-diverse neighbourhoods, we must therefore not only look at contact with neighbours, but also at the use of other places in the neighbourhood.

I have shown in this doctoral thesis that people use different places in the neighbourhood in different ways. As suggested by earlier research, a greater variety of people gather together in public spaces than in schools. Even public spaces, however, are used by certain groups only in a strictly controlled way (Tissot, 2014). The hypothesis resulting from my research is that this is linked to the room these places offer for the creation of strong ties. In this section I will make an initial presentation of my hypothesis that people are more disposed to feeling open to diversity in places where the chance of creating stronger ties is small. In proposing this, I argue that people are open to diversity, and so do not retreat into their shells as stated by Putnam (2007), but are particularly open to the creation of loose ties. I will further elaborate this hypothesis using the results of my research. I use the term 'hypothesis'

deliberately, as my research offers as yet no conclusive evidence. I hope that this stimulates other researchers to investigate the topic further.

Community dynamics and (semi-)public space

The literature on public space largely concerns how people deal with diversity, whereby terms such as 'everyday multiculturalism' refer to the question of how diversity is handled (Wise & Velayutham, 2009). Here, however, I wish to address how people use these spaces, and the role they play in community dynamics.

As has been shown in the literature, and is supported by my research, public and semi-public spaces offer opportunities for encounter between people of various backgrounds. Public places are important for the creation of fleeting and intimate-secondary relationships. People see each other, sometimes there is small talk and even if visitors do not talk to each other, there is contact nevertheless. These small-scale conversations and contacts often take place in shops, but also in parks – the space visited by the most diverse public.

These are fleeting and secondary-intimate relationships, and most residents experience them as positive. In this way, these neighbourhood spaces are important for the facilitation of ties. However, as demonstrated in chapter 2, some residents have negative experiences in the public space, such as garbage on the street, and people talking loudly or yelling. These kinds of experiences lead people to engage in the creation of symbolic boundaries (chapter 3). The contact that people have in the neighbourhood influence not only the creation of ties with the person encountered, but can also influence potential further ties. Negative experiences are usually used by residents to create symbolic boundaries that, in turn, can impede the creation of stronger ties (chapter 3).

Independently of whether meeting each other in public spaces is experienced positively or negatively, it appears that the ties that are created are in general no stronger than intimate-secondary relations. I infer that it is precisely the non-committal nature of public spaces that means that people are more open to diversity in these spaces, but only in a way that creates no strong ties. I intend to demonstrate this with the results of my research into the use of public spaces by children.

As demonstrated in chapter 4, children are exposed in various ways to diversity within the neighbourhood. Middle-class children are often exposed to the neighbourhood in a controlled way, while lower-class children are exposed to the neighbourhood in an uncontrolled way. In the parks, however, the families come together and the children play together. The public spaces offer children the opportunity to play together and to create ties that go beyond fleeting relationships, and are more comparable to intimate-secondary

relationships. Moreover, parents heavily influence the contact between children. Children from middle-class parents are generally exposed in a controlled way to diversity because the parents always accompany their children to the park, in contrast to children from the lower classes. In this way, parents control who the children do and don't play with. This puts pressure on the non-committal nature of the public space. The fact that the higher classes move only within their own bubble (Lofland, 2009) hampers the creation of contact with people they do not know.

At first sight, it seems that diversity in public spaces is largely seen as something positive (chapter 2). Although diversity can be beneficial as social wallpaper (Butler, 2003), at the same time, the way it is used by a section of the residents can preclude the creation of stronger ties between people. Children are in a position to create ties across these boundaries, but only those children belonging to a lower socio-economic class appear to be afforded the freedom to form these ties, as only they are permitted to play unsupervised in the squares. For the upper middle-class, diversity is welcome as long as it is at a safe distance. This safe distance is consciously maintained by the users. This may possibly also explain why parents are more critical towards school choice than with choices regarding public spaces. Furthermore, some parents search deliberately for strong ties with other parents in schools to strengthen their functional network, which is more easily created with people that look like them (chapter 4). As a consequence, loose relationships between children in the public space exist less and less frequently (L. Karsten, 2011).

The public and semi-public spaces are consequently important places in the neighbourhood for influencing community dynamics. These spaces offer an exceptional opportunity to create ties between certain types of people. The ties created are loose ties, such as fleeting and intimate-secondary relations. Stronger ties are hardly ever formed.

Community dynamics and school

I have argued in chapter 4 that middle-class parents find it important to create a functional network at school, while for others, schools represent only a place where children learn, and only the quality of education is important. In this section I want to look more closely into the role school plays in community dynamics.

School is a place not only where children come into regular contact with each other, but also parents. Children form friendships, i.e. strong ties, at school. I have not focused so much on the ties between children in this investigation as on the considerations that form parents' decisions to send their child to a particular school, in the knowledge that school is a place

that plays an important role in the reproduction of social capital and the creation of networks (Boterman, Karsten, & Musterd, 2010; Bridge, 2006; L. Karsten, 2011).

As shown in chapter 4, diversity at school is seen as something negative, because it could damage the quality of the education provided, and/or because it can hinder the creation of strong ties with other parents. In this way, school plays an important role in the community: it not only determines where children encounter each other, but it also has a wider influence on the neighbourhood because, for example, children play together at home, or are permitted to play together in the squares. School is therefore a place where ties are created.

Yet this is not valid for all children. It appears that some children have friends at school, but outside school also play with neighbourhood friends who do not necessarily attend the same school. Parents also have a great deal of influence on this dynamic. Some parents, including many with a migration background, are not enthusiastic about children playing together at each other's houses, while others, particularly well-educated parents without a migration background, see it as a positive benefit. Not being permitted to play together in this way, and so not being able to form ties outside school, is reason enough for some parents to switch schools. The value placed on this aspect is largely attributed to the fact that parents are keen to create a functional network, something which usually contributes to the continuation of a certain lifestyle, even when they have children (Boterman, 2012). The ties created at school, and the parents' choice of whether or not to allow their children to play together at each other's houses, have an influence that spreads further in the neighbourhood. It is for this reason that school plays an important role in the community dynamics of the neighbourhood.

6.3 INCLUDE ALL NEIGHBOURHOOD RESIDENTS AS ACTIVE AGENTS

When we choose to study how people live together in a neighbourhood from a community-dynamics perspective, we must include all residents as active agents in the research. A community-dynamics approach always takes as its starting point that people who live together in the same neighbourhood by definition form a community simply by the fact of sharing the place. Although it might seem a straightforward choice to include all residents as active agents, too often research focuses, for example, only on the middle class, or only on the lower classes, or only on people with a migration background. Regarding choice of neighbourhood, for example, migrants are presented as people who prefer to live in close proximity to each other, or the lower class as a group that are trapped in diverse areas because their limited means leave them with limited options, while it is, it is said, precisely diversity that the white middle class values (Atkinson, 2006; Florida, 2003; Lia Karsten, 2007;

Saunders, 2010; Wilson & Portes, 1980; Zorlu & Mulder, 2010). By researching all these groups together, as in chapter 2, we can see that people usually assess the same aspects when choosing whether or not to live in a neighbourhood, such as the space, the position, and house prices. Moreover, it seems that all the groups value diversity. It is also the case that when a boundary-making approach was applied in chapter 3, all residents were included as active agents. Here, again, we see that all residents contribute to the symbolic boundaries that are created in the neighbourhood. By examining all residents together, using super-diversity – instead of comparing discrete groups – as a starting point, it can be seen that residents usually value similar aspects, and decide to live in the neighbourhood for similar reasons.

It is also important in chapter 4, dealing with choice of school and playing in the neighbourhood, to include all groups. Sadly, it seems that academic interest in children growing up in the city was only sparked around the time that more middle-class children came to live in the neighbourhood. We can also see that interest is usually directed towards the white middle class when considering children in the neighbourhood, as well as choice of school (Butler & Robson, 2003; Loopmans, 2008), while lower-class parents also contribute to the current composition of schools. This means, for example, that not only middle-class parents have the power to change school composition by sending their children to mixed schools, for example, but that lower-class parents also have the power to change the composition, for instance by sending their children to 'method'-schools. Currently, power is assumed to be held only by white middle-class parents, as though only they can change the composition of both the neighbourhood and the schools.

With my community-dynamics approach, I argue the case for academics including all neighbourhood residents as active agents. In this way, we also give policy-makers more ammunition to do the same, and to stop identifying the white middle class as the saviours of deprived neighbourhoods.

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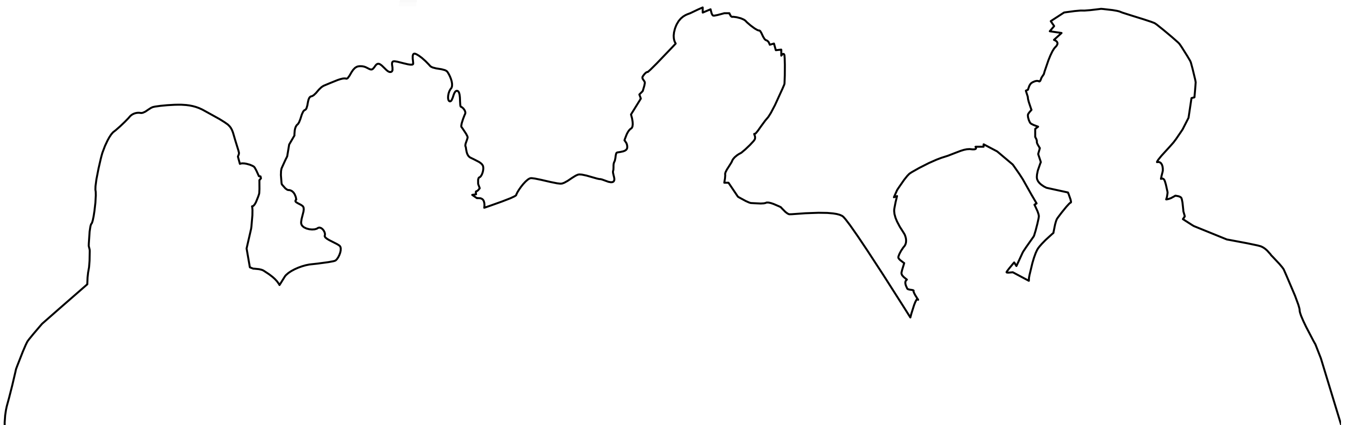


SAMENVATTING

Dit onderzoek geeft inzicht in de gemeenschapsdynamieken in super-diverse buurten in Antwerpen. Het startpunt van dit onderzoek is het idee dat mensen die in dezelfde wijk leven per definitie een gemeenschap vormen, vanwege de afhankelijkheden die een plaats delen met zich meebrengt. Gemeenschapsdynamieken heb ik als volgt gedefinieerd: "het dynamische proces van het (re)creëren van de sociale bindingen tussen mensen die in dezelfde buurt wonen". In vier hoofdstukken zijn de gemeenschapsdynamieken in super-diverse wijken op vier verschillende manieren beschreven en benaderd en het slothoofdstuk gaat verder in op de manier waarop gemeenschapsdynamieken in een wijk onderzocht kunnen worden.

In hoofdstuk 2 is beschreven waarom mensen hebben gekozen om in super-diverse buurten te wonen en hoe tevreden mensen zijn met de buurt. De diversiteit van de populatie blijkt over het algemeen niet de belangrijkste reden om in een super-diverse wijk te komen wonen. Uit de resultaten blijkt dat zowel huurders als kopers zich vooral aangetrokken voelen tot de lage huizenprijzen. Wat betreft de etnisch-culturele diversiteit in de wijk, blijkt dat etnische meerderheidsgroepen vooral zoeken naar homogeniteit, terwijl etnische minderheidsgroepen de diversiteit vooral waarderen. Deze waardering van diversiteit uit zich echter niet in sterke banden met mensen van verschillende achtergronden. De sterke banden bestaan vooral tussen mensen met een gelijkaardige sociaal-economische en etnische achtergrond.

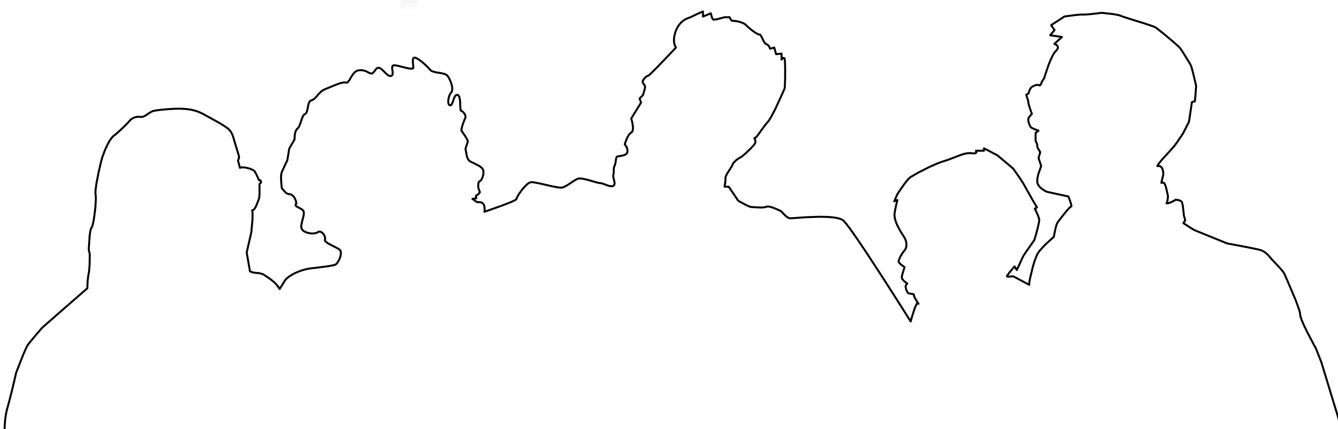
Hoofdstuk 3 geeft een beter zicht op groepsvorming in super-diverse wijken en beschrijft op basis waarvan er besloten wordt wie onderdeel uitmaakt van de eigen groep en wie onderdeel uitmaakt van de andere groep, voortbouwend op de literatuur over symbolisch grenswerk. Zoals in hoofdstuk 3 beschreven kunnen grenzen tussen groepen gebaseerd zijn op tal van verschillende indicatoren, zoals etniciteit, religie en woonduur. Daarnaast blijken sommige bewoners een dichotoom onderscheid te maken, bijvoorbeeld tussen buitenlanders en niet-buitenlanders, terwijl andere meer specifieke grenzen trekken. Deze grenzen worden constant ge(re)creëerd. Bovendien geven mensen verschillende betekenissen aan deze grenzen. Tot slot blijkt dat interactie tussen buurtbewoners soms bijdraagt aan het (re)creëren van grenzen, maar ook dat deze gecreëerde grenzen de interactie kunnen beïnvloeden.

Uit hoofdstuk 4 blijkt vervolgens dat het proces van groepsvorming en de banden die worden gecreëerd een interessante wending neemt wanneer er kinderen in het spel zijn. Veel ouders staan ambivalent tegenover de diversiteit in de buurt. Enerzijds wordt het als een meerwaarde voor de kinderen gezien, maar anderzijds is een deel van de ouders voorzichtig wat betreft het blootstellen van hun kinderen aan diversiteit. Opvallend is dat

juist de ouders die overwegend positief zijn over de diversiteit in de buurt, de kinderen alleen gecontroleerd blootstellen aan de buurt. Ouders die overwegend kritisch zijn op diversiteit, zijn dan juist de ouders wiens kinderen minder gecontroleerd blootgesteld worden aan diversiteit. Op plekken waar de ouders de blootstelling niet kunnen controleren, zoals op school, blijkt dat veel ouders een relatief homogene school preferen. Daarnaast blijkt dat veel ouders de voorkeur geven aan een school met een meerderheid kinderen van Belgische origine.

In hoofdstuk 5 is aandacht geschonken aan de vraag welk verschil er mogelijk bestaat tussen gemeenschapsdynamieken in suburbane en urbane omgevingen. In dit hoofdstuk is een onderzoeksagenda uitgebouwd voor de bestudering van gemeenschapsdynamieken in steeds diverser wordende suburbs in België.

In het afsluitende hoofdstuk is beschreven wat belangrijk is wanneer je de gemeenschapsdynamieken in een buurt wilt onderzoeken. Ten eerste betekent deze benadering dat je alle verschillende soorten bindingen meeneemt in het onderzoek, in plaats van bijvoorbeeld alleen te focussen op sterke bindingen. Alle verschillende soorten bindingen in de buurt maken immers deel uit van de gemeenschapsdynamieken en zijn voortdurend aan verandering onderhevig. Ten tweede vraagt een gemeenschapsdynamieken benadering erom dat verschillende plekken in de buurt bestudeerd worden. Het blijkt namelijk dat mensen anders met elkaar omgaan afhankelijk van de plaats in de buurt. Met andere woorden, verschillende plaatsen, lokken verschillende interacties uit. Tot slot is het van belang dat alle bewoners als actieve actoren in de gemeenschapsdynamieken meegenomen worden. Immers, alle bewoners in de buurt zijn onderdeel van en dragen bij aan de gemeenschapsdynamieken in de buurt.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Author contributions

Chapter 2: Beyond the middle classes: neighbourhood choice and satisfaction in hyper-diverse contexts
Anouk Tersteeg: first draft of the manuscript, developing theoretical framework, data collection and analyses Rotterdam
Ympkje Albeda: discussing and revising theoretical framework, data collection and analyses Antwerp, revisions of manuscript

Chapter 3: symbolic boundary making in super-diverse deprived neighbourhoods
Ympkje Albeda: first draft of the manuscript, developing theoretical framework, data collection and analyses Antwerp
Anouk Tersteeg: discussing and revising theoretical framework, data collection and analyses Rotterdam, revisions of manuscript
Stijn Oosterlynck & Gert Verschraegen: feedback on theoretical framework, critical feedback on the manuscript, revisions of manuscript

Chapter 4: Raising children in diverse environments: parrental narratives about diverse neighbourhoods and school choices
Ympkje Albeda: first draft of the manuscript, developing main argument, developing theoretical framework, data collection and analyses
Lia Karsten: discussing theoretical framework, critical feedback on the manuscript, revisions of manuscript
Stijn Oosterlynck: critical feedback on the manuscript, revisions of manuscript

Chapter 5: De suburbane droom aan diggelen? Gevestigden en buitenstaanders in veranderende gemeenschappen.
Ympkje Albeda: first draft of the manuscript
Nick Schuermans: revising manuscript

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF THE INTERVIEWED PERSONS

	Age group	Gender	Position in Household	Income[29]	Ethnic group
1	61-75	F	Living with her partner	L*	Belgian
2	61-75	F	Living with her partner	ML*	Belgian
3	31-45	M	Living with his partner	ML	West-African
4	46-60	M	Living alone	L*	Belgian
5	31-45	F	Living alone	ML*	Belgian
6	31-45	F	Living alone	MH*	West-European
7	18-30	F	Living alone	L	Middle-Eastern
8	31-45	F	Living with her partner	ML*	East-European
9	>75	M	Living alone	MH*	Belgian
10	18-30	F	Living with her partner	unknown	Asian
11	31-45	F	Living with her partner and children	MH*	North-African
12	>75	F	Living alone	ML	Belgian
13	31-45	F	Living with her partner	MH*	Belgian
14	46-60	F	Living alone	unknown	Belgian
15	31-45	F	Living with friends/family	H	Belgian
16	46-60	M	Living alone	unknown	West-African
17	46-60	F	Living alone	ML	South-American
18	61-75	F	Living with her partner	H*	Belgian
19	31-45	M	Living alone	L	Middle-Eastern

[29] The income groups are based on the net income each month. Low (L) < €980; Medium-low (ML) €981 – €1400; Medium-high (MH) €1401- €1950; high (H) > €1950.

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20	46-60	M	Living alone/with his child	L	Belgian
21	31-45	M	Living alone	unknown	West-African
22	61-75	F	Living alone	unknown	Belgian
23	31-45	F	Living with her partner and children	ML	South-American
24	61-75	M	Living alone/with his child	L	Belgian
25	31-45	F	Living with her partner and children	MH	Belgian
26	46-60	F/M	Living together	M*	West-European
27	31-45	F	Living with her partner and children	L	Belgian
28	31-45	M	Living with his partner and children	unknown	North-African
29	31-45	M	Living alone	MH	Middle-Eastern
30	31-45	F	Living with her partner and children	H	Belgian
31	31-45	F	Living with her partner/ living with her partner and children	H	Belgian
32	31-45	F	Living with her partner and children	ML	Belgian
33	46-60	F	Living with her partner and children	MH	Belgian
34	31-45	F	Living with her partner and child	ML	North-African
35	46-60	F	Living with her partner and children	MH	Belgian
36	31-45	F	Living with her partner and children	H	Belgian

37	31-45	F	Living with her partner	H	Belgian
38	18-30	F	Living with her partner and children	L	South-east-European
39	31-45	M	Living with his partner and children	MH	West-African
40	46-60	F	Living with her child	MH	South-American
41	61-75	M/F	Living together	L	Belgian/African
42	31-45	M	Living with his partner and children	MH	Belgian
43	31-45	M	Living with his partner and children	H	Belgian
44	31-45	F	Living with her partner and children	H	West-European
45	46-60	F	Living with her parents	MH	Belgian
46	18-30	F	Living alone	MH	Belgian
47	61-75	F	Living alone	ML	West-European
48	61-75	F/F	Living together	ML	Belgian
49	31-45	F	Living with her partner	H	Belgian
50	31-45	F	Living with her partner and children	L	North-African
51	18-30	M	Living with his parents	M*	North-African

*Income unknown, interviewees classified their income themselves.

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Appendix 3: Topic list

Core questions are marked with ***

1. **HOUSING**

01 – How did you come to live in this house and in this neighbourhood?

(When, where did you live before, why did you move, do you rent your house)

02- Did you look in other neighbourhoods or at other places for a house?

- If yes, where and why did you prefer this one over other neighbourhoods?
- If no, why not?

03- How would you define the limits/borders of your neighbourhood?

(ask for concrete spatial elements: streets, squares, parks etc.)

2. **SOCIAL RELATIONS AND PERCEPTIES ON URBAN DIVERSITY**

***04 – Can you describe the inhabitants of your neighbourhood?

(age, gender, work, poor/rich, ethnicity)

05 - Do you feel that you match with your neighbours or not (similar mentality/see things the same way/have same values and ways of life)?

- Why (not)?

*** 06 – Do you feel at home in your neighbourhood?

  - Why (not)?

07 - In your opinion, what are the worst things about living in this neighbourhood?

08 - In your opinion, what are the best things about living in this neighbourhood?

- Have there been any important changes regarding the positive or negative aspects of the area during your time of residing here?
- Are there any threats to living in the area?

09 – In your opinion, is the social/cultural/ethnic diversity of the area one of its positive or negative characteristics? Why? How?

***10 – Can you describe your neighbours?

***11 – Can you describe the relationships with your neighbours?

- What do you do together? If people do things together, who is participating and who not? Why?
- Do you know Opsinjoren? If yes, what do you think of it? Is it organised in the street? If yes, why do(n't) you participate?

12 – As far as you can tell, do neighbours in this area help each other in personal or professional matters?

***13 - Would you like to move out of the neighbourhood?

- Why (not)?
- If yes, where would you like to move?
- Would you mind to move to a neighbourhood with almost only Belgian people? Why (not)

- Would you mind to move to a neighbourhood with almost only people of your origin? Why (not)?

Only for people with children:

*** 14 - How did you choose a school for your children?

(Is diversity important?)

*** 15 - Can you describe the classmater of your children?

- Mostly Belgian children or mostly of other origins? What do you think of this?

***16 - To what extent is diversity at school important for you?

- Was the diversity of the school population one criterion in choosing the school?

3. SOCIAL RELATIONS

17 – Could you name the persons that you feel most close to (3 or so)?

- What is their age?
- Male/female?
- Occupation type?
- Type of relation (friend, familie)
- How long do you know each other?
- Where did you meet them in the first place?
- How often do you meet now?

If interviewee mentions only family:

- Are there other people that you feel close to besides your familiy?

4. USE OF PUBLIC SPACE

***18 – What places do you visit in your neighbourhood?

- Do you make use of public or semi-public spaces in your neighbourhood (squares, parks, malls, plazas, community centers…) and for what purpose?
- Do you meet neighbours/acquaintances/friends there?
- If you do not use these public and semi-public spaces, what is the reason for that?
- ***Who else makes use of these spaces?
- Do you make use of public spaces outside your neighbourhood? Where? How?

19 – Do you participate in any local association?

- Which one?
- What is its purpose?

5. FACTUAL INFORMATION

20 - What is your current situation? (in paid work – full time or part time-, unemployed, retired from paid work, on maternity leave, looking after family or home, full-time student/at school, long term sick of disabled, voluntary work, military service etc.)

In case of paid work, currently or in the past:

- Where/was is the job located?
- What is/was your (current or last) job?
- Please tell me your exact job title?
- What (does/did) the firm or organisation you work?
- Could you tell me how did you get this position?

21 – What is the current situation of your partner?

In case of paid work, currently or in the past:

- What is his/her (current or last) job?
- Please tell me his/her exact job title?
- What (does/did) the firm or organisation he/she works?

22 – What is the highest level of education you have achieved? Are you currently in education?

23 – What is your year of birth?

24 – In which country were you born?

- To which ethnic group you feel that you belong most? (give relevant examples by mentioning first the dominant ethnic group of the city: i.e. in the case of Athens, Greeks, Albanian, Pakistani etc.)

25 – Could you give me some detail on your personal situation and household? (single, lives with husband/wife/partner, divorced, number of members of household, relationship of members of household)

26 – Would you say that you are living rather comfortably or you find it difficult on present income of your household?

27 – What about your household income, net per month? Would you say place your household income to the highest/middle-high/middle-low/low group of your city?