Do People Who Like Diversity Practice Diversity in Neighbourhood Life? Neighbourhood Use and the Social Networks of 'Diversity-Seekers' in a Mixed Neighbourhood in the Netherlands

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Urban policies in various countries aim at integrating minorities into mainstream society through combating residential segregation. One strategy is to change the housing stock. Assuming that the middle classes leave certain neighbourhoods because they lack suitable dwellings, building more expensive dwellings is an important policy trajectory in the Netherlands. However, living in the proximity of other income groups is in itself insufficient to overcome racial, ethnic and class divides in social networks. The usual policy indicator for defining 'middle class', e.g. income, is not a very good predictor for the diversity of networks of people living in mixed neighbourhoods. What, then, is? The first step is to ask what distinguishes people who prefer diverse neighbourhoods. Are people who are attracted by the diversity of an area different from others? Next, we question whether people who like diversity have more diversity in their networks or contribute in other ways to a more integrated neighbourhood through their use of it. We use social network data collected in a mixed inner-city neighbourhood in Rotterdam to explore this. We argue that attracting people to an area because of its diversity may contribute to the economic viability of local businesses and possibly to the nature of interactions in public space. However, we can not empirically substantiate that a

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preference for a diverse neighbourhood translates into distinct practices or social networks that enhance the integration of ethnic minorities into mainstream society.

Introduction

European countries that have experienced increasing immigration all struggle with 'integration' in their own way. Definitions of integration vary, and are often grounded in normative presumptions about what an integrated society looks like. Generally, public debate shows a rough divide between integration as an *individual* characteristic—a migrant can be more or less 'integrated', measured by labour market participation, educational attainment and, at times, adherence to dominant values—or *societal* integration (cf. RMO 2006), defined by a Durkheimian notion of cohesion (Blokland 2000, 2003; Misztal 1996) or by communitarian notions of what defines 'us' in multicultural societies (Bellah 1985; Etzioni 1996). The connection of integration with residential segregation brings these two together.

There are two main arguments against residential segregation in public debate. The first is that residential segregation hampers individual opportunities for the social mobility of migrants because they are disconnected from the resources and networks necessary to get ahead primarily because of the demographic composition of their neighbourhood. The disadvantaged position of immigrants is then explained by a supposed absence of people who are better-off. People who, had they been available, would have provided the disadvantaged with networks rich in resources for getting ahead, or what in social capital theory has been called 'bridges' (de Souza Briggs 1998; Putnam 2000). Second, a common belief is that segregation threatens cohesion because minority groups keep their distance—in practice and in values—from the mainstream by forming their own communities in their own neighbourhoods. Urban policies in various countries aim to achieve balanced, sustainable communities. Some of these invest in strengthening existing community structures, as in Asset-Based Community Development. Other policies seek to change the demographics of disadvantaged neighbourhoods (for an overview see Galster 2007). Several strategies have been employed in the latter approach.

In the Netherlands, for example, a recent new law enables City Councils to restrict the movement of un- or underemployed people into designated deprived areas. Rotterdam so far is the only city that has implemented this. Meant formally to prevent poverty pockets, this law effectively keeps non-Western ethnic minorities from moving into these areas, because these groups are more often un- or underemployed than others.

Another, much more common and extensive, measure is changing the demographic make-up of areas through interventions in the housing stock. Western European countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, Great Britain

and Sweden, as well as Australia, have applied this measure in various forms (see Kleinhans 2004 for an overview). HOPE IV and the Gautreaux Program in the US aimed, through different measures, to achieve similar outcomes, but shared a focus on moving disadvantaged residents to other places (de Souza Briggs 1998; Curley 2008; Goering and Feins 2003).

Current Dutch urban regeneration programmes replace affordable rental dwellings by more expensive, larger owner-occupied dwellings. This policy is informed by the observation that, would they want to opt for an urban lifestyle, the middle classes cannot find suitable housing, a problem especially salient in Rotterdam. Architecture and design may market to specific middle-class consumers. Market researchers are increasingly able to tease out how lifestyles, preferences for residential locations and consumption cohere (Burrows and Gane 2006). However, the most important, somewhat predictable variable in who will eventually buy or rent a house is its price: those who can afford it may move there. In practice, therefore, the policy will bring in people with more money, who are more likely to be white, but *social outcomes* remain unclear.

Research has indicated that living in the proximity of members of other ethnic groups or social classes is insufficient for overcoming racial, ethnic and possible class divides in social networks (Atkinson 2006; Blokland 2003, 2008; Butler 2003). Researchers who specifically focused on the mixing of the poor and the rich or on mixing types of tenure suggest that old and new residents have few ties (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000; Bolt and Torrance 2005; Bramley and Morgan 2003; Brophy and Smith 1997; Cummings *et al.* 2002; Kleinhans *et al.* 2000). Apparently, bringing people of different incomes into the same neighbourhood does not create networks mixed in income. As income is related to ethnicity, the results for interethnic networks remain limited as well. What, then, *does* induce mixed networks?

We explore one possible answer here:[1] people who seek out certain neighbourhoods because of their diversity may be more inclined to develop diverse social networks than others. First, we ask how people who have a pronounced preference for diverse neighbourhoods, or 'diversity-seekers', differ from other residents. The gentrification literature suggests that a 'new middle class' may be more inclined to find a diverse neighbourhood attractive than do other people with middle and higher incomes. Florida (2003) suggests that a 'creative class' consists of considerably more-tolerant people who enjoy diversity. Next, we inquire what diversity-seekers *do* in their neighbourhoods: do they contribute to integration through various forms of neighbourhood use? Finally, we investigate whether diversity-seekers have more diversity in their networks than others.

We use data from a study on social networks and space in a mixed inner-city neighbourhood in Rotterdam to explore these questions. We argue that there may be many reasons to strive for mixed neighbourhoods, and to market neighbourhood diversity to attract new residents.[2] However, our case study does not substantiate empirically that such areas bring about integration, understood here as networks across borders of race, ethnicity and class which can be tapped into to get ahead, and

can contribute to cohesion, relationally understood (see Blokland 2000). Others have noted that, generally, such networks do not develop. We add that even those residents who are attracted to an area by its diversity do not, in their daily lives, practice diversity any differently to those without such a preference.[3]

Desirable Diversity

Once geographers and other students of space came to see 'place' as representing a distinctive type of space defined by the lived experiences of people, and as fundamental in expressing a sense of belonging (Hubbard *et al.* 2005: 5), it was a small step to seeing places as intersections of social, political and economic relations, or as resulting from class divisions or expressions of class conflicts (cf. Massey 1995). Studies of impoverished ethnic communities in urban areas also show the spatial expression of the intersections of race and class divisions (Bourgois 1991; Eade 1997; Gans 1962). The meaning of place is then defined by experiences of ethnic, racial and class exclusion beyond the neighbourhood, or shows multiple layers depending on ethnic, racial and class distinctions.

Once place is seen as expressing a sense of belonging, where you live draws attention to your social identity. Place of residence can then become a source for distinction much like other forms of cultural consumption. Tastes and preferences correspond, according to Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1986; see also Jenkins 1996: 137–8) to education and class. So a taste for diversity may be linked to specific social groups. Theories of the role of the middle classes in contemporary urban life have been advanced along these lines in gentrification research (Butler 2003; Butler and Robson 2001; Filion 1991; Ley 1986), while researchers like May (1996) and others (see Eade 1997) have advanced our understanding of the appreciation of white middle-class residents of a culturally diverse urban setting.

One of the explanations for inner-city regeneration is its association with a distinctive set of values often identified as an 'urban lifestyle' (Ley 1986: 524). Initial inner-city gentrifiers, at least in North America, looked for more dense and socially diverse communities, thus distancing themselves politically and culturally from the suburbs (Allen 1980; see also Ley 1986). Subsequent research, however, has indicated that, whereas this may be part of the *early* stages of gentrification, the actual practices of daily life paint a different picture.

Carpenter and Lees have argued, for example, that the (new) urban middle class uses symbolic indicators of the urban landscape to carve out their identities; however, while working hard to express their individuality they create exclusionary landscapes (1995: 299). Their security buzzers and closed gates reveal that they are not entirely comfortable with inner-city living (Anderson 1990). Atkinson has argued that middle classes in the city are disengaging with their surroundings through a wide variety of spatial practices (2006: 822). Higher-income groups, Atkinson argues, may no longer be averse to 'the potential amenity of urban life, but (...) the risks associated with these areas need to be made manageable' (2006: 821). What results is a 'consumption

landscape of seclusions', not a setting of interconnections between groups diverse in class, race and ethnicity.

Similarly, May has pointed to the ambiguous position of middle classes in gentrified neighbourhoods: 'whilst welcoming a world of difference this interest in difference and otherness can also be understood as describing a project of cultural capital' (1996: 196). The presence of working-class residents and ethnic minorities is an opportunity to 'learn' about other cultures, which makes these residential groups 'little more than the object of (. . .) an "exotic gaze"' (May 1996: 208). The inner city is predominantly a 'colourful backdrop against which to play out a new urban lifestyle' (1996: 196). Butler (2003), too, has shown that middle-class residents living in a gentrified area in London often expressed a 'narrative of belonging', but that this narrative did not necessarily translate into actual involvement with other residents and neighbourhood institutions. While gentrifiers 'celebrated' the diverse population and the cultural and consumption infrastructure of the neighbourhoods, they separated themselves from other residential groups by taking their children to schools elsewhere, thus 'perpetuating social divisions across the generations' (Butler 2003: 2483). Butler describes a high level of individualism and privatisation within middle-class households. He concludes that there is 'little evidence of the middle class deploying its resources for the benefits of the wider community'. The 'social mixing' that residents say they like is the coming together 'through commonly shared social networks of like-minded individuals and which, in reality, is largely exclusive of non-middle-class people', and not a mixing across racial, ethnic and class boundaries (Butler and Robson 2001: 2150).

Yet if the presence of a middle class is to contribute to integration, there are, in theory, three ways in which middle-class residents can do so. First, they may be more inclined to have *and* use access to those in charge of neighbourhood safety, maintenance and amenities, in order to improve or sustain the quality of life in their area. Even when they act individually on their own behalf, the resulting effects may benefit all residents. Better amenities, such as good community services and health-care facilities and, in particular, schools, may positively affect the life chances of ethnic minorities and hence support their integration. This assumes that social mobility will intergenerationally and gradually assimilate ethnic minorities into mainstream society. We see here the intersection of ethnicity or race and class. Ethnicity and race cease to be a public concern when members of an ethnic or racial group are doing well economically. This effect is not discussed in the literature mentioned (but see Galster 2007), but lies beyond the scope of our paper. Second, social-capital studies have shown that ties with people who are different from us can provide access to resources we cannot find in our own social circle. Such resources contribute to social mobility (e.g. Granovetter 1973; Lin 2001; Ooka and Wellman 2006; Portes 1998; Putnam 2000). And the ties reduce the fragmentation or compartmentalisation of the larger social structure as more bridges between groups are formed. So when middle-class residents build ties with people different from themselves in their neighbourhood, such networks may provide the disadvantaged

with access to resources and enhance community structure. Third, middle-class residents, especially when white, could interact with ethnic-minority residents in social and political neighbourhood activities and organisations, exposing members of ethnic minorities to the mainstream cultural values and ways of communication, or simply reducing closure in social networks.

On the latter two accounts, existing research thus suggests that such effects do not occur. British researchers have argued that middle classes may prefer diversity, but either the diversity they seek does not cross class and race boundaries (Butler and Robson 2001) or is simply a consumption of multiculturalism (May 1996). The Other is little more than 'social wallpaper' (Butler 2003: 2484). Similarly, several Dutch studies on spatial mix suggest that differences in lifestyle—and consequently differences in neighbourhood orientation—keep different groups socially segregated (e.g. Kleinhans *et al.* 2000; van Beckhoven and van Kempen 2003). The cultural reproduction of class relations that Bourdieu identified in education can be traced here, too. When middle-class residents become active in neighbourhoods, some ethnic-minority members of lower economic status may begin to see neighbourhood organisations, and eventually the neighbourhood, as 'not for us' (cf. Jenkins 1996: 113).

Lifestyle, as an expression of cultural capital and of habitus, thus seems to matter a lot. What, then, if we start not with income groups, but elsewhere, and explore the hypotheses that people who *prefer diversity as a neighbourhood characteristic* and consciously moved there for this very reason, contribute differently to the integration of ethnic minorities than do others, independent of social class? Would this result in a different picture of consuming and *practising* diversity in activities and social networks than does the approach that starts with social class? Or are the creative individuals drawn to 'places that are innovative, diverse and tolerant' and seeking communities that are open to 'all ethnicities, races and walks of life' while keeping their distance from 'community connectedness' (Florida 2003: 8, 10, 15), effectively nothing more than a group to whom 'openness to cultural diversity may indeed be more of a lifestyle choice than a political trait' (Peck 2005: 758)? How, in other words, do people with an outspoken preference for a diverse neighbourhood translate this taste into their everyday practices?.

Research Location and Methods

Cool-South, Rotterdam, as a Case Study

We explore this question through the case of Cool-South, a nineteenth-century neighbourhood situated in the centre of Rotterdam. Cool, initially, was a quite mixed neighbourhood with working- and middle-class residents. After World War Two, the area faced overcrowding, low housing quality and absentee landlords running boarding houses. When the neighbourhood was finally renovated in the late 1970s, Cool had acquired a reputation as a dangerous slum where prostitution, dark bars

and the drug trade were rampant. From the mid-1980s, the area gradually improved. The southern side of Cool has now again turned into a mixed-housing area with a core of low-income dwellings surrounded by more expensive housing. Joint efforts of the city government, the neighbourhood association and commercial stakeholders turned its commercial strip, the Witte de Withstraat, into a gentrified shopping street with florists, antique and designer shops, fancy restaurants and art galleries. Office buildings were transformed into high-priced apartments.

Cool consists of 2,600 households. Most residents live alone (71.4 per cent) and 16.5 per cent of the households are families with children (of whom half are single-parent families). Nearly 50 per cent of the residents are officially classified as 'ethnic minorities', with residents of Surinamese, Moroccan and Turkish origin as the largest groups (respectively 10.5, 5.8 and 3.6 per cent). In 2002, 17 per cent of the households had an income below the poverty line; 57 per cent were categorised as middle- and high-income groups. Two-thirds of the residents had an MBO degree or more.[4] Cool has a mixture in tenure of owner-occupied houses, private rental apartments and social housing. The social housing in particular has preserved its mixed demographics, as these units are rent-controlled and not available to groups with an income above a certain limit, depending on apartment and household size.

Methods

In 2001, we interviewed 206 residents with a structured questionnaire, using a sample stratified by streets, as different streets had different types of tenure and thus were likely to reflect the diversity of the residents.[5] After an introductory letter, we sampled through cold-calling every third residence, simply ringing every third door at different times of the day, returning twice or if possible making contact by phone when we got no answer. When we could not contact the resident at all, we moved to the apartment or house next door.

The interviews gathered data on people's social and political participation within and outside the neighbourhood and generated network data. We measured social and political participation through organisational memberships and activities, and voting behaviour. For the social networks we followed the 'exchange method' (Fischer 1982; Völker 1995, 1999) of collecting names through asking interviewees about certain types of support. Our primary goal was not to map entire ego-centered networks, but to gain information about relationships that might provide social capital. So we used a set of 15 network generators, and asked, for instance, whether someone helped the interviewee to get a job or a house or with small tasks in or around the house. We asked whether interviewees had anybody specific to talk to about social and political issues and personal matters. As the overall project had a focus on social and political participation, we also asked with whom people participated in the social and political activities they had mentioned. We collected data on age, gender, ethnicity, place of residence, level of education, length and type of relationship and frequency of contact for each of the network ties. Table 1 shows the demographics of the interviewees. Compared with

Table 1. Demographics of interviewees (N = 206)

	% in sample		% in sample
Man	49	Native Dutch	64
Woman	51	Ethnic minority	36
Married/partner	44	MBO degree or higher	52
Single	47		
Living with parents	7	Household income	
<Minimum income	24		
No children	54	Minimum–standard income[1]	24
Children living at home	23	>Standard income	52
Age >31 years	24	Paid job	67
31–40 years	28	Unemployed	4
41–50 years	18	Retired	8
51–60 years	12	Disabled	3
>60 years	18	Never worked	13

Note: [1]The Dutch standard income is a fixed-income level, about twice as high as the minimum income, on which the government bases some social security benefits.

Cool's population, the sample included more native Dutch (64 vs 50 per cent in Cool) and Turkish (12.2 vs 3.6 per cent) and fewer Surinamese (8.3 vs 10.8 per cent) and Moroccan (3.4 vs 5.8 per cent) residents. Our sample also contained more residents with higher incomes and people younger than 40.

The sample is not statistically representative of the entire neighbourhood, but it represents, as we intended, all *categories* of residents. The interviewees named a total of 1,740 network ties; the mean size was 6.51, the median 5.00, standard deviation 5.14. The smallest network consisted of just one member, the largest of 32. Eighteen interviews omitted network data. These participants either did not want to reveal information about network members, or other problems occurred during the interviews.

Measuring a Preference for Diversity

In a set of questions on their residence, we asked interviewees why they had moved to Cool. They could choose from 13 reasons, such as 'my family lives in this neighbourhood', 'close to work', 'the working-class character of the neighbourhood' and reasons that (as the literature has shown) particularly attract middle-class groups or gentrifiers—'architecture', 'cultural facilities', 'near the Witte de Withstraat' and '*diversity of the neighbourhood*', which we abbreviate to 'diversity'. We asked interviewees to list in order of importance those reasons that applied to them. The mean number of reasons interviewees listed was six. In our analyses, we therefore contrast residents who mentioned diversity among the first six reasons (N = 64)—our 'diversity-seekers'—with residents who did not list diversity in their top six.

We cannot, of course, know what residents understood neighbourhood diversity to mean, but we believe that methodologically this phrase was our best option in the

construction of the survey. It may well be that in other social contexts diversity means, to residents, the presence of the same people who are only nominally different, for example because they are artists, musicians or public-health professionals, but are in fact 'other creatives' (Butler 2003: 2477; Peck 2005: 745). However, *diversiteit* in common Dutch language is often used as a term to refer to social variety of some sort, especially in terms of race and class (entertainment drawing a 'diverse audience' is in common usage understood to reflect the taste preferences of several social classes; 'a student population with much diversity' is immediately understood to reflect a mixture of ethnic and racial backgrounds). In the specific context of the city of Rotterdam, where ethnic and racial as well as income segregation have dominated the political discourse over the last decade, it is therefore likely that our respondents adhered to this common usage, especially as there was no other item in the list of 13 reasons that hinted at ethnic and racial diversity.

We opted for *diversiteit* over terms like 'multicultural' because the latter has taken on specific connotations in public debate. We also preferred the term over *ethnically mixed* and equivalents, to avoid this reason being put aside because it did not reflect the actual social practice of mixing, and we assumed that 'mixture' would refer more to patterns of interaction than diversity. We cannot exclude the possibility that people would think about class differences rather than racial and ethnic ones. But in large Dutch cities, these two increasingly go hand-in-hand (in contrast to smaller cities in other regions of the country). With the exception of some neighbourhoods where, for specific historical reasons, poor native Dutch residents continue to concentrate, most low-income housing also gives shelter to ethnic minorities—so that discourse about locality framed in terms of class can no longer be separated from ethnicity and race. Finally, then, it is possible that our interviewees understood this item to be more about the functional diversity of the area than the demographics. As we offered other options that directly referred to this (shops in the area, cosy character), we believe that our interviewees understood diversity to be about the demographic composition of the neighbourhood, albeit not *exclusively* about race and ethnicity.

In the next sections we explore these data through ANOVA-analyses to see whether a mixed neighbourhood attracts people who not only like its diversity, but also act according to this preference. First, we explore, through logistic regression analysis, what predicts whether people have such a preference.

Who Likes Diversity?

From the research that presents gentrification as a form of cultural politics, we may derive the hypothesis that a 'new middle class' or cultural bourgeoisie (Gouldner 1979: 19) may differ in their taste for diversity from others. Generally, such a new middle class has been described with reference to the types of employment they have. We have classified our interviewees on the basis of descriptions of (previous) jobs accordingly.[6] We expected that class based on job description, income, education and employment status would all help us to predict whether or not one came for diversity,

as these variables compose several dimensions of social class. We also expect ethnicity itself to matter, as the common understanding of diversity as referring to ethnic and racial mixture would be more important to native Dutch residents seeking a certain type of area than it would be to ethnic minorities, in congruence with the literature in which gentrification is a process of 'whitening' neighbourhoods.[7]

Not only the general social status, but also the 'local social status' (Hunter 1974) of individual residents matters to how they define places through lived experiences. Local social status refers to the positions of individuals in the social structure of the locality, defined by home-ownership, length of time of residence and use of local facilities such as shops, bars and restaurants. If now diversity positively characterises Cool-South, its history may be reflected in the fact that residents who opted for the area for its diversity did so quite recently: 63 per cent moved into Cool within the last five years (Table 2), while only 21 per cent had lived there more than ten years (compared to respectively 46 and 34 per cent of those who didn't mention diversity). Indeed, it was not until the mid-1980s that Cool gradually became known as a diverse, yet attractive, neighbourhood. We enter these variables of local social status in our logistic regression procedure accordingly. The literature thus provides a number of different variables that matter to a taste for diversity, but these are not independent from each other. As there is, for example, a significant relation between ethnicity and education, ethnicity may also indirectly affect whether or not diversity matters in deciding to move into Cool. A logistic regression analysis gives more insight into which factors best predict who likes diversity and who does not; Table 3 shows the results.

Indicators of one's socio-economic position—education, income and having a paid job—are strongly correlated, as are education and ethnicity, and having a paid job and being a home-owner. As education and having a paid job best predict a preference for diversity, we chose to include only these variables in the model, next to length of residence. The table shows that this latter is no longer significant while, of the two socio-economic indicators, having a paid job predicts a taste for diversity slightly better than does education. Diversity-seekers in Cool are thus people with access to resources for 'getting ahead'. The next question is whether this preference for

Table 2. Preference for diversity

Characteristics of interviewees	Diversity-seekers (%)	Others (%)	Statistics (Cramer's V) and significance
Below minimum income	14	21	.219**
Employed	83	60	.223***
Native Dutch	77	63	.131*
Higher-educated	69	46	.231***
Length of residence <6 years	63	46	.160*
Home-owners	34	18	.214***
N (100%)	64	142	

Note: *p <.10, **p <.05, ***p <.01.

Table 3. Predicting a preference for diversity: a logistic regression

Variable	B	Wald		
Paid work	.894**	4.726	Initial -2LL	226.954
Education	.672*	3.683	Chi-square improvement	16.116
Length of residence	−.018	.690	df	3
			p	.001
			Nagelkerk's R-square	.111

Note: *p < .10, **p < .05.

diversity translates into a more local orientation in everyday routines and diverse networks.

What Do Diversity-Seekers Do?

To some, the decision to move into a neighbourhood with ethnic, racial and class diversity may reflect a neighbourhood orientation in daily-life routines. It has been suggested, for example, that diversity-seekers who *also* have their workplace at home, spend more time during their daily routines within the borders of their neighbourhood, are thus more likely to do their shopping locally or, for example, prefer the neighbourhood for its functional diversity rather than its diversity in demographic components. Meanwhile, the variety of ways in which people then use the neighbourhood may still make them live apart together, in their own smaller social circles (cf. Eade 1997). This raises the question of what diversity-seekers *do* locally: how do they compare to other residents with regard to their place of work, their use of local shops and other venues, and their participation in local political activities and social neighbourhood events?

Diversity-seekers are not more likely to have their place of work in the immediate environment, but do spend leisure time locally: 31.7 per cent of the residents who did not move in because of the diversity never went to any of the local restaurants, bars or cafés. Diversity-seekers used these facilities more (90 per cent) and when they did, they did so more often (Cr V = .237, p = .003). Using an ANOVA test, we also found that diversity-seekers used a wider variety of stores on a regular basis than did residents who moved in for other reasons (Eta .216, p = .002). Further exploration shows that, within the set of stores, micro-patterns of neighbourhood use occur. When we compare, for example, an up-market liquor store and a small, fancy bakery open for warm croissants on Sunday and selling *pain de campagne* and other speciality breads, on the one hand, with a small generalist supermarket on the other, we discover that they each find their own clients among the residents. Diversity-seekers did not differ from others in their use of local green space, such as two nearby city parks, two playgrounds and a strip of greenery alongside a canal on the most gentrified edge of the neighbourhood.

One may wish that residents who consciously choose an area because of its diverse character want to engage in their neighbourhood. Liberal gentrifiers of the new

middle class in the United States (see Blokland 2008) tell their stories of engagement in terms of a commitment, politically and socially, to ethnic, racial and class diversity in their local communities. Some actually involve themselves with neighbourhood initiatives aimed at maintaining and stimulating an active diverse community, more or less successfully, through political and social activities. Community-building policies in the Netherlands, especially in Rotterdam, have put high value on the development of social activities organised in neighbourhoods to get people to know each other and to secure, if not to celebrate, a sense of community. A wide variety of programmes has been designed to stimulate active residents' involvement through small grants for block parties, Queen's Birthday parties and the like. Residents who came for Cool's diversity were neither more nor less likely to engage in such activities. Nor could we find a strong local orientation otherwise, for example, in the likelihood that they would inform themselves about local affairs through reading the local paper, or the weekly paper distributed free to all residents.[8]

In itself, a desire for diversity did not produce a significant difference when it came to involvement in neighbourhood organisation and a range of (individual and collective) local political activities for neighbourhood improvement. Generally, such participation was not high, even though we measured a wide range of things—from membership of the neighbourhood organisation to contacting the City Council with complaints about local affairs. Variables that in simple bivariate analyses influenced a desire for diversity, such as home-ownership or educational level, may affect whether or not residents participated in such activities, but a taste for diversity as such did not matter directly.

In summary, then, we conclude that diversity-seekers consumed the local facilities more than other residents, but showed just as little engagement with local, social and political neighbourhood affairs as others. It is still possible that the formal neighbourhood structure, e.g. the organised social and political activities aimed at creating cohesion, does not turn a preference for diversity into practice, whilst informal social ties do develop, in much more subtle ways. Diversity-seekers would then have more mixture in terms of race, ethnicity and class in their personal networks. We now turn to this hypothesis.

Do People Who Like Diversity Have Diverse Networks?

Statistical research has often suggested that segregation indexes predict the chances of people of diverse backgrounds running into each other (cf. van der Laan Bouma-Doff 2007). As we have argued elsewhere (Blokland 2003), using local facilities and public spaces may indeed create the 'public familiarity' which results from running into the same people regularly and which helps people to feel 'at home' in their neighbourhood, even when *not* developing further social ties or even speaking to anyone. Such public familiarity may also provide the soil for growing local ties. It is logical that only residents who live in areas with racial, ethnic and class diversity have a statistical *chance* to accidentally get to know a neighbour who is not like themselves.

Those who live in high-concentration areas, either on the low or the high end of the housing market, are in theory less likely to encounter diversity when walking down the road to buy a loaf of bread. The question still is, however, whether and how such encounters translate into durable social ties.

Our literature review suggests that they often do *not* translate in such ties. We have limited ourselves here to those residents who actually *said* that the diversity brought them into the area in the first place, and then looked at what this meant to them. We inquire whether these residents differ in the diversity of their social networks, both locally and overall, in terms of race or ethnicity, level of education and (perceived) class position.

Constructing Measures of Network Diversity

We constructed a relative measure of heterogeneity of the social networks of the interviewees in three (simplified) respects: ethnicity (native Dutch versus ethnic minorities), education (less vs. more than an MBO degree) and perceived class position (measured through directly asking interviewees to identify who on their network list they thought of as having a similar class position to their own). We coded these scores 0 ('same as interviewee') and 1 ('different to interviewee'). Next, we aggregated the number of network members for each of the interviewees and divided the score on heterogeneity by the network size. In this way, we constructed three measures of the *relative heterogeneity* of our interviewees' social networks. Using a t-test, we then compared the heterogeneity in networks of diversity-seekers with that in networks of those to whom diversity did not matter.

Initially, we looked at the entire personal networks we had collected, not just at local ties. The rationale behind measuring the heterogeneity of entire networks was that a taste for diversity may also affect social relationships outside the neighbourhood, in two ways.

First, a positive attitude towards diversity and the consequential daily encounters with diversity in public space may make people more open to developing ties with people different to themselves, independent of whether this occurs in the neighbourhood or not. A positive attitude towards diversity and living in a diverse neighbourhood may not reflect a diverse *local* network, but may still result in more diversity in ties elsewhere. People who are 'used to' or 'like' diversity may develop such ties in their workspace, health club or social organisation outside the neighbourhood. This, then, would not produce neighbourhood effects as such, but would still be relevant for wider social integration across race and class, and for access to resources. It would hence serve integration in both understandings laid out in our introduction.

Second, people who chose a residential environment because of its diversity may already have been more prone to live their daily lives in diverse social contexts, thus carrying over a preference developed in other social settings than their neighbourhood as such. Although there would then be no real neighbourhood effect, the

neighbourhood would provide a suitable context for people with a desire for diversity to bring that desire into practice.

Localness and Heterogeneity of Social Networks

Next, we tried to see if local ties of diversity-seekers differed from the ties of others. If a conscious choice for a diverse neighbourhood indeed means more intense use of local consumption patterns, as we have observed, we may see more local ties among those who like diversity, independent of whether such ties are then more diverse or not—but we found no such effect (25.7 per cent of the ties of diversity-seekers were local, 28.4 per cent of the ties of other residents concerned local people).[9] We constructed a measure for the relative importance of local ties within the social networks of interviewees through dividing the number of local ties by the total number of ties. The relative localness of networks of diversity-seekers was .23; others had a degree of localness of .31, not a significant difference.

Results

Generally, the social networks of the interviewees tended to be homogeneous, both overall and when we looked at local ties only. The vast majority of members shared a position as either native Dutch or member of an ethnic minority (homogeneity .82 and .75). This is a limited conceptualisation of ethnic heterogeneity. It is possible that a Turkish interviewee had an ethnically diverse network including Moroccans, Antilleans or other non-Western immigrants, but no native Dutch people. Coming from a social capital perspective that the dominant social group, e.g. the native Dutch—and especially the better-educated native Dutch—hold stronger positions to access resources in mainstream society than do their fellow ethnic-minority residents, we believe this to be a justified approach. We added a second measure of relative homogeneity in race and ethnicity, e.g. a self-classification, where we asked people to identify who in their network they considered to be members of the same ethnic or racial group as their own. Our measure of the relative ethnic heterogeneity of the total social networks was not significantly affected by whether one was a diversity-seeker, either for the entire social network or for local ties only (Table 4). The relative positioning of all network members in terms of social class (as perceived by our interviewees) also did not produce significant differences for all or only local ties, nor did educational heterogeneity. Apparently, a desire for diversity does not affect the likelihood of having network diversity, in the neighbourhood or elsewhere.

As we have seen, a desire for diversity affected shopping patterns and local eating out and having a drink at local venues. We may thus find, following the idea of public familiarity mentioned above, that it is not a direct taste for diversity, but actual neighbourhood use that diversity-seekers display more often, providing a rich soil for growing diverse ties. Running an ANOVA for shopping and going out locally on the relative measures of diversity, we found, however, no significant differences. Whether

Table 4. Heterogeneity of social networks

	Diversity-seekers	Others
Homogeneity of overall networks for:		
Ethnicity (categorical)	.82	.79
Ethnicity (perceived)	.73	.68
Education	.67	.66
Class (perceived)	.80	.78
Homogeneity of local networks for:		
Ethnicity (categorical)	.78	.79
Ethnicity (perceived)	.71	.67
Education	.68	.64
Class (perceived)	.82	.76

Note: None of the differences are significant.

one shops, eats and drinks locally is not related to the heterogeneity of social networks, locally and overall.

This, then, confirms the picture put forward by Butler (2003) or May (1996): a taste for diversity means little to social network diversity. As far as diversity is brought into the practice of daily life, using commercial neighbourhood facilities is all that diversity-seekers do more. But actual use of neighbourhood facilities does not contribute to network diversity. Even for those who, whether middle-class or not, come into a mixed neighbourhood with openness to diversity, this openness does not translate in more diverse networks.

Conclusions

Expectations in urban policy of the benefits of a middle class, especially a native middle class, for the integration of low-income ethnic minorities have been challenged for some time by students of gentrification, as our discussion of the literature demonstrates. We have taken as our starting point that such a middle class may facilitate integration through, firstly, contributing to the social mobility of ethnic minority individuals by forming networks with them through which resources can be transmitted. Second, we have suggested that they may contribute to the formation of networks that strengthen overall cohesion. In both cases, their role as residents cannot be one of simply consuming facilities in an ethnically and class-diverse neighbour-hood. For such integration effects to occur, this native middle class would need to contribute to social capital. Empirical findings so far have suggested that such contributions are not self-evident. The gradual discursive shift in public debate from stressing the importance of a middle class, if not middle incomes, to a 'creative class', starts from the ideas of Richard Florida that certain creative people like diverse, tolerant environments, and will bring all sorts of benefits once they settle there. Therefore, we wondered whether it would be useful to focus on people who may not have the best access to resources in social capital terms, but who may be the most

likely to *share* the access that they do have with others to whom they are different and who may lack those resources. In other words, we asked whether people who came to live in a mixed neighbourhood because it was so diverse differed from other residents.

We explored this question on the basis of a case study of Cool-South, Rotterdam, along three lines. First, we looked at whether residents who came for the neighbourhood diversity differed demographically from others. They differed, but were not limited to the new middle class we often encounter in gentrification literature: in occupational class position they were similar to other residents. Whether they had a job or not and their level of education best predicted a preference for diversity. This latter finding confirmed our theoretical position, that to live in a diverse neighbourhood as a life-style may become part of a distinction of groups with strong cultural capital.

We then asked whether such a preference for diversity translated into neighbourhood engagement, to see whether these residents might *actually* be of benefit to other residents unlike themselves through providing access to resources. Diversity-seekers frequented restaurants, bars and shops more intensely than other residents, but did not show more (or less) social or political engagement with local neighbourhood affairs than other residents.

Finally, we looked at whether this desire for diversity manifested itself in diverse social networks, especially for local ties. While using the local facilities in a mixed neighbourhood, we might hope that meeting chances would result in building acquaintances, and that such encounters would gradually move from public familiarity and a greeting or nod of the head in the street to more durable ties rich in social capital. However, we generally found quite homogeneous networks all over the area, independent of whether one had come to live there for its diversity or not.

While it can be argued that different generations, and hence age groups, relate to neighbourhood space, local ties and diversity in different ways, we have not explored this fully in our analyses. Certainly, now that tensions in public space between young immigrant youth and elderly native Dutch residents seem to be increasing, the question of the interrelationship between generations, a liking for diversity and ethnicity becomes interesting and warrants further research.

For now, however, our paper illustrates how hard it is to mix communities, even among people who claim to be open to such mixture and moved to an area because the diversity attracted them. Although they are living together, they still move in networks divided by class, ethnicity and level of education. That is *not* to say that attempts to diversify neighbourhoods are invalid or should be judged negatively *a priori*. Home-owners, for example, may be more likely to address neighbourhood issues politically, and this may be to everyone's benefit. We have also seen that diversity-seekers were more likely to frequent local businesses, and they may hence be of importance to a neighbourhood's economic viability. But our results also confirm that social inequalities in access to resources that result from the excluding and including mechanisms of social networks are not being overcome through the

diversification of neighbourhoods—not even for those who move there because they enjoy the thought of a diverse community. Strategies for attracting people to an area because of its diversity may thus contribute to the economic viability and possibly to the nature of interactions in public space. But in terms of the integration of social networks across borders of race, ethnicity and class, or in terms of their contribution to vital community politics or sociability—hence to a community's social capital and integration—we have found no supporting evidence. We have thus not been able to empirically substantiate the assumption that those who like diversity practice diversity in their daily lives differently to those without such a preference.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1]   Other possible answers could draw attention to institutional barriers or opportunities for ethnic ties (or a social infrastructure, see RMO 2006), to ethnic and racial prejudices (for example Verkuyten 1997) and symbolic neighbourhood use and attachment (Blokland 2003).

[2]   See Galster (2007) on the potential ways in which social mix at the neighbourhood level might affect residential outcomes.

[3]   When we say 'practice diversity' we refer to diversity as a shared *doing*, similar to the notion in Jenkins (1996) of identity and community as verbs rather than nouns.

[4]   This is approximately the equivalent of three years of college in the United States.

[5]   This approach was based on adaptations of the work of Fischer (1982) and, in particular, the publications and help of Völker (1995), who generously shared her survey on social support in Dutch neighbourhoods with the first author.

[6]   We used the US census job-classification schemes.

[7]   It was technically impossible to list an item of 'similarity' in this survey question, so we cannot test directly the commonly taken-for-granted notion that ethnic minorities opt for certain neighbourhoods because they find people 'like them' there; we have, however, acquired a sense of similarity with others in the neighbourhood through the questions 'Do you think people in the neighbourhood overall are pretty much like you, or quite different from you?' and 'Do you think people whom you personally know in the neighbourhood are pretty much like you or quite different from you?'. The answers did not vary significantly for native and non-native Dutch residents.

[8]   In the entire survey, the number of people who read a quarterly bulletin distributed door-to-door by local community organisations was so low that no further analysis was possible.

[9]   One may wonder whether length of residence is not an important factor explaining why diversity-seekers have no diverse networks yet: they may simply not have had time enough to establish them. However, we think they then would have a lower number of local ties overall—and that is not the case. Only if people keep developing the number of ties over time—and networks in neighbourhoods thus keep growing over time—would diversity-seekers eventually have more local ties. They tend to live there for a relatively short time but still have a similar percentage of local ties. However, for the degree of diversity we have looked at a *relative* measure: only if *diverse* ties are slower in developing would length of residence matter. We have no theoretical reason why diversity-seekers would develop diverse ties so much more slowly than they would ties with people like themselves for a statistical effect to occur.

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