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Everyday encounters and notions of belonging attributed to Moroccan-Dutch and native-born in two different Amsterdam neighbourhoods.

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Abstract

The public discourse on integration and interethnic relations is dominated by conflict, which is in turn fuelled by the contemporary stigmatism of Muslim migrants. Such stigmatization could serve to reinforce we-they configurations. However, the observation of daily interaction between people of different ethnic origins can provide us with an alternative view on this matter. This paper focuses on daily encounters between native-born and Moroccan-Dutch in two disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Amsterdam with a respectively 41% and 86% migrant population of Moroccan-Dutch origin. The information derived from qualitative research provides insights into intra-ethnic contacts - contact established between people with a similar ethnic background. This offers insight into the motivations and habits of people when approaching ethnic look-a-likes, or members of another ethnic group. On the basis of these contacts, and mutual judgements - including prejudices – different patterns can be traced among native-born, as well as Moroccan-Dutch. These different groups experience partially similar but also dissimilar patterns of feeling at home. This study reveals that everyday contact is a reservoir of hope. It will show that daily encounters are of a more civil nature than the gap suggested between ethnic groups in public and political discourse. Thus contradicting the ‘hunkering down’ thesis of Putnam.

1. Introduction

Globalisation goes hand in hand with globalised migration streams. Apart from labour migration, terrorist organizations also make use of global networks. One such network is al Qaeda, which claimed responsibility for the 9/11 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in the United States. The impact of the devastation caused by this attack and the ensuing ‘war on terror’ led to a link between Islam and terrorism in the minds eye of public discourse, not only in the USA (Ewing 2008) but elsewhere.

¹ This paper draws on the research material gathered in the Kolenkit and Diamant neighbourhood in Amsterdam by Moira Galloway and Mandy Hoepel, to whom I am heavily indebted. Moreover, thanks are due to Jacomijne Prins for commenting an earlier version of this paper.

‘[P]ost- 9/11 is not meant to signify a radical historical or political rupture, but rather a moment of renewed contestation over ongoing issues of citizenship and transnationalism, religion and nationalism, civil rights and immigrants rights.’ (Maira 2008: 39).

This implies that the Muslim migrant populations were facing increasingly more problems when it came to integration in the Netherlands and elsewhere. According to Zolberg and Long (1999) migration raises questions about integration at a local and national level, resulting in at least some incorporation of migrants in the host community. Integration should be an interactive process, but in reality the host majority has the most power and sets the agenda. ‘In the cultural realm, host values and traditions are firmly implanted and benefit from institutional support, while the immigrant minorities, who may differ initially with regard to a variety of cultural elements deemed significant by the hosts – notably, religion and language – are at best in a liminal situation with regard to formal and informal membership in the host society, as well as institutional recognition.’ (ibid: 9).

This paper focuses on The Netherlands, where contemporary integration policies emphasize social-cultural assimilation of migrants as opposed to multiculturalism, the earlier focus. The focus of the Dutch public debate on integration emphasizes inter-ethnic conflicts, especially between native-born and Muslim. International terrorist attacks in Mumbai, New York, London and Madrid have had a big impact. In The Netherlands, the murders of Theo van Gogh and the politician Pim Fortuin, plus the harsh criticism of Islam by MP Geert Wilders’ have worsened the already strained relations between Muslim and non-Muslim (Verkuyten and Zaremba 2005; Jurgens 2007). The gap between Muslim and non-Muslim has been expanded by the Dutch media with their somewhat one-sided focus and their emphasis on the negative behaviour of Moroccan-Dutch individuals. Headlines such as: threats against bus drivers in the city of Gouda, aggressive behaviour towards ambulance personnel in Amsterdam and, theft of cars, are all attributed to Moroccan-Dutch. Moreover, Moroccan-Dutch are overrepresented in the crime and unemployment figures (Gijsberts and Dagevos 2009).

The widening gap between Muslim and non-Muslim, as it appears in the media and political discourse, could not be traced by Smets and Dirkx (2011) who have demonstrated that daily encounters between Moroccan-Dutch and native-born in a neighbourhood, in Amsterdam East, are characterized by civility. Here conflicts are rare and don’t intervene with daily encounters. When a conflict does occur, it’s dealt with quickly and people return to civil daily life. These findings are in line with Lee (2006) who shows in her study, interaction between shopkeepers and clients of different ethnic origins, in the Afro-American neighbourhood Harlem,

West Philadelphia. She found that most merchant-customer interactions are positive and civil in everyday life. Conflict, which is often triggered by small issues, emerges infrequently. It can be seen as a temporary breakdown of the everyday social order and not a part of everyday life (ibid.: 186).

It may be suggested that the nature of everyday social encounters goes together with sense of belonging or feeling at home in a neighbourhood. If people feel at home it is easier to approach others in an open-minded manner. To focus on sense of belonging, two disadvantaged neighbourhoods are selected in Amsterdam. The main research questions are: What are the characteristics regarding sense of belonging of native-born and Moroccan-Dutch in the Diamant and Kolenkit neighbourhoods of Amsterdam? What explanations can be found for differences and what does this imply for neighbourhood life? This paper is built up as follows. Firstly, the relationship between belonging and the neighbourhood will be discussed in theoretical perspective. Secondly, a discussion of the research methodology and a description of the research settings will be presented: the Diamant and Kolenkit neighbourhoods. Once we have insight into the settings, thirdly, the focus will shift to intra-ethnic contacts and mutual judgements of interethnic nature, namely between native-born and Moroccan-Dutch in both neighbourhoods.

2. Feeling at home in the neighbourhood

Belonging or 'feeling at home' is a container concept. Many have different opinions about what should be included and what not. This has led to a kaleidoscope of articles dealing with the subject. The common notion is that feeling at home is a layered emotion. In general a distinction can be made between physical and social aspects, which are reflected in the concept haven and heaven. Haven refers to a comfortable and predictable place where people would feel at ease. These are physical familiar places to which people are attached. Heaven is linked to a situation where one feels at ease; being linked with look-alikes and employing favourite activities. Once haven and heaven merge one can trace a sense of feeling at home. In other words, the combination of physical and social attachment determines the sense of belonging (e.g. Duyvendak 2009; Savage et al. 2005; Watt 2009).

Research on haven can have different focuses. For example Corcoran, Gray and Peillon (2008) focus on how residents experience their physical environment, while Van der Graaf and Duyvendak (2009: 104) and Meier and Reijndorp (2010) emphasise that physical characteristics of the environment, such as the design and furnishing of physical space, influences the users sense of belonging.

Scientists who link the social quality of habitat environment with belonging (heaven) generally pay attention to social contacts with friends, relatives, neighbours and other urbanites, who play a role in socio-emotional attachment to a place (Jørgensen, 2010; Valentine 2008; Van der Graaf & Duyvendak, 2009).

Jørgensen (2010) looked into deprived neighbourhoods in Denmark for which she uses the concept, zones in transition. She discovered that the sense of belonging is strongly linked to the quality of social ties and networks. Here, face-to-face interaction plays an important role. There may be a conflict between a community orientation and the personal development of residents, who then look for opportunities outside the neighbourhood (see for Dutch cases: Blokland 2003; Smets and Kreuk 2008).

Van der Graaf and Duyvendak (2009: 26, 105-110) show that Dutch neighbourhood residents attach importance to who is living in their neighbourhood. If they are satisfied with their neighbours and other neighbourhood residents a social-emotional attachment with the neighbourhood develops. However, if said satisfaction is lacking, a different pattern emerges. A lack of (potential) contact between migrants and native-born in a neighbourhood with a high number of migrants can lead to the isolation of these migrants. Gijsberts and Dagevos (2005:25) state that once a neighbourhood becomes more 'black' or 'coloured' there is less contact between migrants and native-born.

Putnam (2007) goes one step further and shows that people living in ethnically heterogeneous neighbourhoods in the USA appear to hunker down, which will be reflected in anomie and social isolation. These residents

'tend to withdraw from collective life, to distrust their neighbours, regardless of the colour of their skin, to withdraw even from close friends, to expect the worst from their community and its leaders, to volunteer less, give less to charity and work on community projects less often, to register to vote less, to agitate for social reform *more*, but have less faith that they can actually make a difference, and to huddle unhappily in front of the television. Note that this pattern encompasses attitudes and behaviour, bridging and bonding social capital, public and private connections. Diversity, at least in the short run, seems to bring out the turtle in us.' (Putnam 2007: 150-151)

Putnam's hunkering down thesis has been tested for the European context and confirmed (e.g. Lancee and Dronkers 2009). Such hunkering down implies that the sense of belonging of

residents is very low, or even absent among neighbourhood residents in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods.

Positive everyday encounters can lead to intercultural understanding between the ethnic groups (Amin 2002). However, Valentine (2008: 332) shows that '[p]ositive encounters with individuals from minority groups do not necessarily change people's opinions about groups as a whole for the better, with the same speed and performance as negative encounters.' (see also Smets and Kreuk 2008). These insights resemble the contact theory to a large extent (e.g. Allport 1979).

Residents try to bring order in their living environment by distinguishing in- and out-groups. People prefer to connect with members of the same ethnic group, which leads to a positive identification with their own social group and a negative identification with other ethnic groups. Such negative identification can nourish prejudices, discrimination and stereotyping (Verkuyten and Zaremba 2005: 376).

Identification processes are also harmed when people feel insecure, unhappy, or threatened when dealing with people that they cannot identify with. These feelings of uncertainty and insecurity can lead to the loss of feeling at home. Group behaviour can be strengthened when rewarded economically, politically, culturally, and socially or with regard to physical positions in society (RMO 2005). Under such circumstances, groups do not compare themselves with all possible groups but tend to compare themselves with those who are closer to themselves with respect to physical proximity, situational salience or status. The other will be seen as inferior and their characteristics being fixed (Tajfel and Turner 1986). One should realize that a person can have more identities and can identify with more ethnic groups (e.g. Lee 2006; Dagevos et al. 2007: 164; Smets and Kreuk 2008). Multiple identities offer people the potential of creating a sense of tolerance, enabling bridging between ethnic groups. Persons sticking to a single identity are often more negative about people with multiple identities (e.g. RMO 2005; WRR 2007).

The construction of ethnic identity from within and outside has to do with 'the placement of ethnic boundaries and the social worth of ethnic groups' (Nagel 1994: 154). Here, the distinction between different processes of boundary formation is relevant; boundary crossing, boundary blurring and boundary shifting. Individual boundary crossing refers to daily interaction, which does not lead to structural changes. Boundary blurring refers to influencing the legal, social or cultural structure of the receiving society. Boundary shifting refers to the reconstruction of group identity, matters of inclusion and exclusion. Such boundary shifting is only possible by substantive boundary crossing and blurring (Alba 2005; Zolberg and Long 1999).

When dealing with the notion of feeling at home, one remaining question is whether one should focus on the neighbourhood level (Savage et al. 2005) or at parts of the neighbourhood as Watt (2009) suggests. Watt found that middle class residents in suburban East London do not identify with the neighbourhood as a whole, but only with the part of the neighbourhood where they reside. These residents enjoy living in their section with look-alikes. Such blocks have a positive image which the wider area – the neighbourhood - does not share.

3. Methodology

The aim of this research is to obtain insight in the different meanings and layers of ‘belonging’ by means of studying available literature and fieldwork, including semi-structured interviews.

The theoretical concepts derived from the literature studied should be seen as sensitizing concepts enabling the researchers to look into the research setting with an open mind (Blumer, 1954). Consequently, the research was started with few pre-conceived ideas, but gradually refined general concepts to fit the empirical situation under study. In this procedure, called grounded theory, theoretical insights are allowed to emerge gradually from the data in dialogue with the collection of new information (Glaser and Strauss, 1976).

First a grand tour is employed to obtain insight in the physical elements of the neighbourhood such as housing, playgrounds, squares and streets. Data was collected by participant observation, informal talks, semi-structured interviews and a literature review. In total 24 native-born, 23 Moroccan-Dutch and 6 professionals were interviewed, all equally spread over both neighbourhoods. Interviewees were enlisted from the streets, playgrounds, sitting on benches, and from neighbourhood activities such as intercultural cooking evenings, meetings, coffee mornings at schools and welfare organisations. The snowball method was used.

The interviews lasted from 45 till 75 minutes and were mainly held at interviewee’s homes, or a meeting place in the neighbourhood. During these interviews a checklist was used. The interviews could not be taped because of the media hyped bad image of the neighbourhoods, especially the Diamant neighbourhood which receives continuous bad media. Residents refused to speak to journalists making the use of audio recording difficult and ultimately it became impossible to obtain information in this way. After the interviews the notes made were worked out as soon as possible, minimising the loss of information gathered.

During the research period, spring 2006 the Constant Comparative Method (see Glaser and Strauss 1967: 101-115) was used. The gathered data were compared with earlier findings and theoretical insights. This required an adjustment of questions, instruments and theoretical knowledge. In the final stage of the research all data was coded, interpreted, summarised,

classified and linked with the theoretical literature. All interviewees have pseudonyms in this paper.

4. Amsterdam and the two neighbourhoods

Amsterdam is a typical multicultural city; similar percentages of native-born and migrants. Although its number of residents is small it has 178 nationalities living in the city. Some come from former colonies such as Indonesia, Surinam and the Dutch Antilles; others are low-skilled labour migrants, mainly from Turkey and Morocco along with migrants from western countries such as Germany and England.

Table 1. Amsterdam and the two neighbourhoods (1 januari 2010)

	Amsterdam		Diamant Neighbourhood		Kolenkit Neighbourhood	
Inhabitants	767,773		3,008		5,866	
Native-born	385,009	50%	1,334	44%	764	13%
Western migrants	114,553	15%	501	17%	412	7%
Non-western migrants	268,211	35%	1,173	39%	4,690	80%
Moroccan-Dutch	69,439	9%	390	13%	2,240	38%
0-19 year	86,071	11%	556	18%	1,866	32%
65 plus	85,440	11%	354	12%	357	6%
Average household income p.a. (x1000 euro)	13.9		12.7		8.4	
Average period of residence (year)	8.1		9.7		7.1	

Source: Municipality of Amsterdam (2010)

The diversity of the urban population does not imply that residents have contact with members of other ethnic groups. 72% of the urbanites in Amsterdam have interethnic contact. Native-born have less contact with other ethnic groups (65% sometimes/ often) by comparison to western migrants (77%) and non-western migrants (83%). Highly educated residents have more contact than the less educated. Moreover, households with children have more interethnic contact than those without children. Interethnic contact is mainly established at work (51% of all interviewees) followed by the neighbourhood (46%) (Municipality of Amsterdam 2009: 123-124). These figures do not show the nature of ‘face to face’ contact between neighbourhood residents. For this purpose we selected two neighbourhoods. The Diamant neighbourhood has 44% native-born and 56% migrants, including 13% Moroccan-Dutch. The Kolenkit neighbourhood has only 13% native-born residents and 87% migrants, including 28% Moroccan-Dutch.

The Diamant neighbourhood has a lower than average household income p.a. than the Amsterdam norm, the Kolenkit neighbourhood has an even lower average. The length of residency in the Diamant neighbourhood is relatively longer, which is reflected in a larger elderly population. In the Kolenkit neighbourhood the average period of residency is 7.1 years, and therefore less.

Both neighbourhoods can be seen as zones in transition where increasingly owner-occupied housing is being created and the percentage of rental housing is declining. It appears that people consider the Kolenkit neighbourhood to be of a more temporary place of residence (Bureau Parkstad 2003: 7-11).

5. Diamant neighbourhood

The Diamant neighbourhood is a densely populated area of Amsterdam South. During the period 1919-1931 working class housing was constructed by housing corporations, having been designed by Amsterdam School architects (Stadsdeel Amsterdam Oud Zuid 2002: v).

The Diamant neighbourhood has few meeting possibilities for youth. Moroccan- Dutch youth hangout or gather at specific points in the neighbourhood, causing irritation among native-born. In 2004 the situation escalated when after a long period of nagging, a native-born family moved out of the neighbourhood (Beusekamp 2004). This has drawn a lot of national attention hyped by the media, who described the neighbourhood as a place where living is impossible. Since then more activities have been organised to bring Moroccan-Dutch and native-born residents together. Residents report that contact between both ethnic groups became more difficult once the number of Moroccan-Dutch residents increased

5.1 Intra-ethnic contacts among native-born

Interviewed native-born in the Diamant neighbourhood can be distinguished by the predominantly individualised, and the predominantly community orientated. The individualised live in apartment blocks where their contacts with other native-born neighbours are mainly superficial. They greet neighbours and may engage in small talk. If they need assistance from neighbours they approach other native-born neighbours. During holiday periods a trustworthy neighbour is asked to empty the mailbox, water the plants or look after pets. This assistance need not be reciprocated directly but a souvenir from the holiday resort is appreciated.

The community-oriented residents live in single-family housing and have known their neighbours by name from childhood. Some of these residents were born in the neighbourhood

and have grown up together. The houses are constructed in such a way that it enables meeting and greeting. Such contact includes eye contact, greeting, conversation and mutual help.

5.2 Intra-ethnic contacts among Moroccan-Dutch

Moroccan-Dutch who adhere to the traditional norms and values of Moroccan village society are the community-oriented ones and the urbanites, trying to escape community control, the individualised.

The community-oriented Moroccan-Dutch are cautious when sharing information in order to avoid gossip. Consequently they talk about artificial issues and avoid issues of a private or personal nature. When weather permits benches perform an important function as meeting places for women, who gather there often between the hours of 6 and 8 in the evening. Women also meet while doing the shopping. First generation Moroccan-Dutch women meet and chat while doing volunteer work or through the schools of their children. They also have contact via the gym or drink coffee together at a neighbourhood centre. Moroccan-Dutch men stop and chat in the street, but more in depth conversation takes place at meeting points mainly outside the neighbourhood. First generation Moroccan-Dutch men also have contact through volunteer work.

Individualised men are not so eager to contact other Moroccan-Dutch. By comparison to second generation women who study or work, second generation men spend more time in the neighbourhood. These youthful men have friends in the neighbourhood that they've known since childhood and meet on the streets where they hang out for hours.

5.3 Mutual judgements

After 9-11 a bloodied pigs head was placed in front of the door of a mosque in a bordering neighbourhood. One Moroccan-Dutch woman Latifa (33) worried about this incident. The assassination of Theo van Gogh in 2004 also had an impact on the image building of Muslims. Latifa noticed a changed attitude in the neighbourhood. 'They avoided me, when I passed in the street people pulled their bags to their bodies.' Once when walking with her children along the waterside and feeding the ducks an elderly woman, native-born resident said: 'Ugh'. Latifa became furious. She felt that the women had referred to her ethnicity or religion as opposed to disliking her feeding the ducks.

Moroccan-Dutch residents feel that attitudes towards them have changed. Anxiety, alienation and avoidance are characteristic of the attitude change adopted by native-born. The Moroccan-Dutch Omar (58) said:

‘In the past, when I asked a woman in the street to help me find a street name, she put her bag on the ground, took out her reading glasses and looked. She then phoned a cab and told the driver where to drop me. She said to the driver: ‘If you cannot find it, drop him at my place.’ If you were to ask a native-born a similar question nowadays they would become scared and wouldn’t dare give you an answer.’

Others report being frightened of increasing alienation not only in the neighbourhood but also at school. Moreover, intercultural meeting places in the neighbourhood such as the neighbourhood museum, do not succeed in bringing different ethnic groups together. The stigmatisation of Moroccan-Dutch, according to Redouan (49), has crucial consequences for the integration and participation of the second generation in Dutch society:

‘The murder of Theo van Gogh was committed by one person and not the entire [Moroccan-Dutch] community. Of course, as a guest, you have to behave as a guest, but we are now Dutch citizens. Our children are born here (...). Today there are not enough opportunities for an internship. Parents are patient, but youngsters seek opportunities. Our kids are citizens of Amsterdam. You can only partake in society when you get opportunities. That is the only way for integration.’

Although Redouan sees the values of integration, some native-born assume that Moroccan-Dutch refrain from integrating. This has consequences for establishing intercultural contact. The native-born Marga (70) said:

‘I do not need to contact Moroccan-Dutch, because they do not want to adjust. They live in their own world and do not partake in Dutch society. Moreover, they do not speak the language [Dutch]. That makes integration difficult.’

A neighbourhood resident of mixed native-born and Moroccan decent remarks that native-born are annoyed about the way Moroccan-Dutch integrate:

‘The Dutch are jealous. They cannot stand it that we don’t walk around anymore in *djelleba*’s, or that we have a nice car and house. They don’t like it that we’re modern and yet still practise Ramadan and stick to Islam. This causes irritations. Material goods are often stolen, meanwhile we have mutual solidarity. Elder brothers work hard for their

younger brothers and sisters. Of course there are a few who do not earn their money in an honest way, but that is not the majority.'

The native-born Wil (73) remarks about Moroccan-Dutch youth and their cars: 'this makes me jealous. I have work and do not own a car and they don't work and drive in such cars. Then I ask myself how this could be possible.'

5.4. Interethnic contact

Everyday traceable interactions were diverse. Eye contact is often the first form of interaction between native-born and Moroccan-Dutch – especially youth - in the Diamant neighbourhood. Second-generation youth, often in groups, like to look at native-born girls. Although young native-born women do not look back, older women do. These mature native-born women want to prevent youth hanging around causing trouble. Sometimes native-born and Moroccan-Dutch women have eye contact, accompanied by a smile. This happens generally between women of a similar age. Walking on the streets requires mutual understanding and recognition. Young women of both ethnic groups look down or straight ahead when they pass each other. This may also apply for Moroccan-Dutch women who pass native-born men.

If native-born and Moroccan-Dutch neighbours know each other – often from the staircase they share - and meet at street level, eye contact will be followed by a greeting. They may stop for a quick chat about their children or health issues. Moroccan-Dutch and native-born are eager to help their neighbours. However, the native-born Simon (68) stresses that Moroccan-Dutch life in a separate world and is hard to access. Still he has repaired the washing machine of his Moroccan-Dutch neighbours and when he got rid of his car a Moroccan-Dutch neighbour offered him a ride if needed. Doing odd jobs at street level is often an instigator of conversation where residents may offer unasked for advice or assist in the repair of a bicycle or car. Moroccan-Dutch report taking soup to ill neighbours and in turn native-born repairing the heating or helping with filling in forms. Such kindnesses can and are, often reciprocated for example, by offering food, or the gift of a holiday souvenir. A Moroccan-Dutch woman reports that she prefers to limit the extent to which she reciprocates a neighbour's help. She's afraid that once a present is given, it's always to be expected.

A native-born woman who suffered from rheumatism frequently asks Samir (35) to assist her with the withdrawal of money from the ATM. When she offered him payment, Samir refused to accept it because he was afraid that the native-born women would forget it and accuse him of theft. This was a sensitive issue because Samir was Moroccan-Dutch. When the native-born

woman's health deteriorated, Samir accompanied her on visits to doctor and hospital. He adopted the role of healthcare worker and regularly replaced the bandage around her knee. Ikram (28) helped her with making tea, preparing dinner, going to the toilet and doing the washing. Basically the Moroccan couple took care of her.

Sometimes native-born invite themselves. Mohammed (40) reports that an elderly neighbour comes twice a month to drink tea. This lonely native-born woman came for the first time after the first son was born. She came with clothing for the baby and asked whether she could see it. She was welcome, however Mohammed had the impression that she used the baby as an excuse for a chat. Twice a month this woman pays a visit unannounced. She just knocks on the door and asks whether she can drop in for a cup of Moroccan tea. Mohammed and his wife have never visited her, for the following reason:

‘She had given me the keys to let the construction workers in. She'd had to leave in the morning, so I needed to open her door for them. When I saw her house ... everywhere it was dirty, dirty dishes, dirty cups, kitchen silk ... dirty ... everything. I thought: No! I will never drink tea here.’

Most interviewees have superficial contact with direct neighbours. Some invite neighbours, or are invited by the neighbours, for tea, coffee or dinner. Zara (48) criticises the hospitality of some native-born and emphasises the differences between native-born and Moroccan-Dutch:

‘A lack of hospitality among the Dutch! One cannot change this (...) you just have to accept it (...). If they pay you a visit, they want food, but when you visit them it is a biscuit, a cup of coffee and you have to leave after two hours. (...) Among us Moroccans, when there is somebody ill we care for them and we bring food, etcetera. When you pass by at your Dutch neighbours' house, it will happen as follows ‘Oh yes thank you’ and then they close the door. She doesn't invite you in and may quite simply say: ‘No, it is too much, it's not needed.’

With special occasions such as birthday parties and religious festivities, Moroccan-Dutch invite native-born. Individualised Moroccan-Dutch only invite native-born when there's an existing friendship. Native-born often invite other native-born but not Moroccan-Dutch.

Apart from positive contact between neighbours tensions also arise. Shared staircases can often lead to conflict. Parking cycles, baby buggies, or old televisions in staircases are only a few examples of those known to promote arguments between neighbours. The main irritations arise from the cleaning or rather, non-cleaning of the staircase. Not everyone can be said to keep the same standards of orderliness.

5.5 Contacts in the Diamant neighbourhood reconsidered

Although the Diamant neighbourhood has had negative publicity, many interactions between native-born and Moroccan-Dutch are positively oriented. If we look at the intra-ethnic contacts of native-born in the Diamant neighbourhood it becomes clear that the individualised native-born have almost no contact with other native-born neighbourhood residents. The individualised native-born have mainly superficial contact with native-born characterised by eye contact, greeting and small talk. Among the community-orientated native-born there are many very warm contacts and friendship based relationships. Moreover, the secluded street where the community-oriented native-born live is an obstacle when establishing contact with other native-born living outside the street.

Table 2. Interethnic contacts in the Diamant neighbourhood

		Native-born	
		Individualised	Community-oriented
Moroccan-Dutch	Individualised men	Superficial	Superficial
	Individualised women	Warm	Superficial
	Community-oriented men	Warm	Superficial
	Community-oriented women	(Very)warm	Superficial

Superficial contact: eye contact, greeting, and conversation

Warm contact: eye contact, greeting, conversation, and mutual help

Very warm contact: eye contact, greeting, conversation, mutual help and home visits

Intra-ethnic contacts between Moroccan-Dutch neighbourhood residents differ. The community-oriented residents have many warm and mutual contacts and the orientation towards their own ethnic group implies that they have less contact with native-born residents. Individualised and community oriented women employ interethnic contact through their children. Individualised Moroccan-Dutch have neither intra-ethnic nor interethnic contact with neighbourhood residents.

Among the native-born interviewees, the individualised residents have superficial or warm contact with Moroccan-Dutch neighbours when they reside near, or have access to their apartments via the same staircase. The community-oriented native-born have no Moroccan-Dutch neighbours in their street, thus hindering the establishment of interethnic contact. Mainly through organised activities do community-oriented native-born establish contact with Moroccan-Dutch neighbourhood residents, with the exception of direct neighbours.

The community-oriented Moroccan-Dutch have warm contact with the individualised native-born and superficial contact with the community-oriented native-born. The community-oriented men establish mainly superficial contact with neighbours. The community-oriented women have more contact with native women. When they take their children to school they meet, talk and make appointments for children to play together. In some cases mothers visit each other's homes.

Individualised Moroccan-Dutch men have established contacts in the neighbourhood through volunteer work, however leisure activities don't include these contacts. Individualised Moroccan-Dutch women feel less tied to their ethnic group and are more open for contact with native-born, with the exception of second-generation individualised women who have a busy life and superficial ties, with both Moroccan-Dutch and native-born neighbours.

6. Contacts in the Kolenkit neighbourhood

The Kolenkit neighbourhood is located in Amsterdam West where the principle 'Light, air and space' of Garden Cities was developed. For that purpose flats were built in lines with greenery and recreation options instead of the regular closed housing blocks (Aalbers et al. 2003: 39). In these garden cities lived mainly the native-born, but the composition of residents changed in the 1960s. Native-born moved out and migrants arrived (Aalbers et al. 2005; Hellinga 2005: 57-64). This research has taught us that Moroccan-Dutch residents have different values and norms, dress differently and change the general appearance of the neighbourhood; a mosque and satellite dishes on buildings. The Kolenkit neighbourhood deteriorated and is currently listed as the most disadvantaged neighbourhood of the Netherlands (Government of The Netherlands 2010).

6.1 Intra-ethnic contacts of native-born

Native-born residents encompass mainly individualised: positive stragglers, newcomers and unsatisfied stragglers. The first two groups appreciate the contemporary multi-ethnic neighbourhood and are open minded. Positive stragglers remain in the neighbourhood for a long period of time, where as newcomers reside in the neighbourhood for only a couple of years.

Unsatisfied stragglers are dissatisfied with the current state of affairs in the neighbourhood and consider leaving. These people tend to stick to their 'traditional' habits and would prefer everything to remain as it was in earlier days. They adhere to an imaginary community of the past. In general, native-born make contact mainly in public spaces and only good friends are permitted to enter private space. Native-born who know each other help each other in the case of an emergency.

Native-born newcomers and positive stragglers stress that they desire contact with 'strangers' on the street. They make eye contact and greet on a regular basis. The unsatisfied stragglers are less open for contact and greet only acquaintances. Native-born newcomers, who do not behave according to the 'rules', are not appreciated. Although the positive stragglers sometimes get fed up with the unsatisfied stragglers' behaviour, both groups go well together. They have lived in the neighbourhood for decades. Moreover, walking dogs offers them some recognition.

The stragglers live for decades in the same street, where social control is widespread. Most native-born mainly meet and talk in the staircases. The 'white' clusters in the neighbourhood are the main meeting places for native-born stragglers. Newcomers come here seldom. Moreover, the number of native-born is small, which restricts interaction. Children have an important role in establishing contacts between adults.

6.2 Intra-ethnic contacts of Moroccan-Dutch

Many interviewed Moroccan-Dutch are community-orientated: a tight knit community with strong ties, strict rules of behaviour and social control. Greeting in public space is regulated: men and women should not have unauthorised contact, but married couples can. The 'individualised' Moroccan-Dutch withdraw from the local 'traditional' community and go their own way. Such orientation has nothing to do with religious orientation. This individualised orientation expresses itself differently; e.g. women drive cars, work, speak Dutch well, enjoy education and look after their own interests. Many do not wear a headscarf.

The division between community-orientation and the individualised Moroccan-Dutch and gender division in public spaces determines intra-ethnic contacts. Individualised Moroccan-Dutch women are less oriented towards the neighbourhood and have only superficial contact, if any contact at all. This is partly due to conflicting lifestyles. They'll stop and chat but in-depth conversation is reserved for friends living outside the neighbourhood. Community-oriented and individualised Moroccan-Dutch men maintain few artificial contacts with other men in the

neighbourhood due to the demands of fulltime work. Several men meet each other at the mosque or at one of the benches nearby.

The life of the community-oriented women is focused on the neighbourhood resulting in a large network of relatives, friends and acquaintances. Although these women meet regularly at one of the schools or the Mother Child Centre and go out together, they refrain from discussing personal issues. In this way they avoid gossip. Meaning that although there is a tight community with a lot of contacts and support, mutual distrust is widespread.

6.3 Mutual judgements

From an interethnic point of view both ethnic groups have differing thoughts about the other. Native-born often praise Moroccan-Dutch for their hospitality: 'When someone comes to visit them they are very generous'. 'The entire table is full of sweets and you may take as much as you like.' Native-born consider Moroccan-Dutch helpful. Especially the Moroccan-Dutch elderly are often praised for their civilities.

Many native-born stressed that Moroccan-Dutch are quick to feel discriminated against and are unwilling to integrate. One native-born said: 'They do not adjust to the values and norms of the guest country, do not learn the language and often refrain from working.' Native-born also assume that Moroccan-Dutch parents do not take the responsibility for the behaviour of their children and transfer the liability to others or deny the misbehaviour of their children. Parents' denial has led to conflicts between members of both ethnic groups. In this respect Greet (57) reports:

"I want to speak in a civil manner with that [Moroccan-Dutch] man, but this is impossible. (...) As you can see He throws a stone at your head! I've seen them scratching doors with nails, but they still say: 'Our kids will not do that.'

Many native-born complain about the fact that Moroccan-Dutch leave their rubbish in public places. Moroccan-Dutch are labelled as 'foreigners' especially by the unsatisfied native-born stragglers. They complain that the neighbourhood is like living abroad, in Morocco.

Most Moroccan-Dutch lump native-born together and label them as Dutch or Hollandias. They stress that native-born are very helpful with small jobs and supportive when learning Dutch. Moroccan-Dutch see native-born as those who do not clean their houses well. Moroccan-Dutch consider native-born as cold, especially when they greet. Moroccans are more affectionate and

kiss and cuddle when they greet. Assia (22) said that when she saw two native-born relatives meet she was unable to determine the relationship by their way of greeting.

Moroccan-Dutch have an opinion about native-born but are also aware of how native-born see them. Firstly, many Moroccan-Dutch assume that native-born see them as being backward, because of the badly mastered Dutch language and headscarves. Secondly, many interviewed native-born consider Moroccan-Dutch as being criminal. Even when malpractices are executed by Turks or Surinamese-Dutch, the native-born blame the Moroccan-Dutch. The negative labelling of Moroccan-Dutch in the media and elsewhere is believed to stimulate the negative attitude of Moroccan-Dutch youth.

6.4 Interethnic contacts

Eye contact plays an important role in interaction between native-born and Moroccan-Dutch in the Kolenkit neighbourhood. Native-born and Moroccan-Dutch do not look at each other for long if at all, but individualised Moroccan-Dutch women do not consider it problematic if they catch a glance from a native-born man. This may indicate that they are not bothered by the opinion of community-oriented Moroccan-Dutch. They are used to contact native-born men at their place of work.

Middle-aged Moroccan-Dutch men, community-oriented and individualised, and native-born women usually make eye contact. They look for a short moment and turn their eyes away. The nature of eye contact appears to be linked with the age of the persons concerned. Younger men take more initiative and look at native-born women more explicitly. When a native-born woman passes they may turn their head and say 'Pssst, hey, hey.' This behaviour is not practised with regard to young Moroccan-Dutch women, even when they are very provocatively dressed. Such behaviour is employed secretly to avoid problems with social control and gossip in the Moroccan-Dutch community.

A group of Moroccan-Dutch youth often take the initiative of making eye contact and greeting known and unknown native-born. Female native-born newcomers and positive stragglers respond with a friendly greeting, but the negative stragglers keep their mouth shut. Moroccan-Dutch elderly do not enforce eye contact by greeting native-born women, even when they know them. Moroccan men, except youngsters in groups, and native-born men always greet when they know each other. Positive but also negative stragglers greet and chat with Moroccan-Dutch in the streets of the neighbourhood.

Most interviewed neighbours have casual contact – greeting and small talk - in the staircase or at the front door. Small talk often concerns children, health and recent occurrences in

the neighbourhood. Although this contact is relatively superficial, people appreciate it because of its civil nature. Even unsatisfied stragglers, who dislike migrants with poor spoken Dutch, emphasize that neighbours should greet each other. Neighbours who greet are seen as friendly and amiable.

Both ethnic groups help each other out. Individualised Moroccan-Dutch often approach friends for emotional help, and some community-oriented individuals said that they discuss personal matters with native-born neighbours. Discussing personal matters may conflict with the social control amongst the Moroccan-Dutch. Apart from emotional help some native-born neighbours help financially, do small jobs, fill in forms, offer first aid, lend items when required, and assist with moving house.

The native-born Miep (58) and Cor (59) refer to earlier times when one of their Moroccan-Dutch neighbours worked in a rose nursery. He often gave us flowers and other Moroccan-Dutch have given us food. Some native-born parents encourage their children to make beautiful drawings, by way of thanks. Remarkably seldom do Dutch give food to Moroccan-Dutch neighbours. Comments like “We have dogs or I don’t cook *halal*,” are widespread among native-born. Moroccan-Dutch often do not bother. For example, Marwa said that she does not eat food that hasn’t been prepared by her or her relatives.

Children play an important role in establishing and maintaining interethnic contacts by offering their assistance and carrying shopping bags. One of the native-born reported that she approached the Moroccan-Dutch boys always sitting on her car and asked them to watch her car well.

‘At the end of the week, it has become less. I had bought a bag of sweets and said: ‘This is your reward. I am so glad.’ From that moment onwards they said: ‘He, get off the car of the misses!’ ‘That was the end of that annoying episode’

Apart from casual interactions there are more in-depth contacts. Drinking coffee together happens mainly between both types of Moroccan-Dutch and the open minded native-born. However, different cultural patterns can become manifest and can harm the contact. Mathilde (83), an elderly native-born mentioned her coffee drinking appointment with a Moroccan-Dutch woman who she gives voluntary sewing lessons:

“By 11 o’clock, and then 12 o’clock she had not yet arrived. Then she came with others! I had made delicious apple pie, but they did not like it. It tasted too sour. They have all that

sweet stuff. I also had a plate with chocolates, but they kept waiting until all the food was placed on the table. They did not want to leave. After that they never paid a visit to my house again.'

Especially community-oriented Moroccan-Dutch consider the native-born way of coffee drinking strange. For them there should also be sufficient food. A platter with (self-made) biscuits should be at least offered, but it is more common that the table is packed with many food items. Native-born appreciate the hospitality, but it may be difficult to handle it especially when they don't like the sweets.

Although there are different mutual expectations both ethnic groups report that they like to drink coffee together. Meeting may lead to joint activities such as shopping at the market, a visit to the *hamam*, or the celebration of a wedding. Sometimes dinner is shared on a regular basis. For example, every Sunday some native-born and Moroccan neighbours come together for a meal. One week they eat Moroccan food such as couscous and the next week Dutch pancakes. Many native-born, especially the positive stragglers appreciate the positive gestures of the Moroccan-Dutch. However, unsatisfied stragglers faced problems with the large concentration of Moroccan-Dutch in the neighbourhood. These stragglers are annoyed with the behaviour of the many Moroccan-Dutch children involved in (small) crimes, such as stealing vehicles from the handicapped along with the theft of bags and cycles, and petty vandalism. Until 11.00 or 12.00 at night the youth make their presence heard on the streets. In addition they exhibit taunting behaviour mainly directed at those of a lower status, such as young children and the handicapped. Consequently, many unsatisfied stragglers and handicapped hide in their houses and only go out during the daytime. One woman only walks her dog before 21.30 and would not go out on the streets without her dog. Another woman even refrains from dropping a letter in the letterbox on the other side of the street and only goes out with her husband.

Some Moroccan-Dutch emphasise that even when nothing special is going on unsatisfied stragglers interpret a group of youth hanging out as intimidating. This fear of especially native-born women causes them to keep their mouths shut when passing these groups on the street. Native-born newcomers and unsatisfied stragglers do not experience such an unsafe feeling. The behaviour of the Moroccan-Dutch migrants has no influence on their contact. Cor (59) reports regular shootings at night and he comes across guns and other weapons on a daily basis. Although he knows this, he carries on as normal walking his small dog on the street and greeting them. It is remarkable that the more open minded native-born indicate that Moroccan-Dutch appreciate their openness and honesty. They do not face brutal behaviour, but obtain respect.

The language gap between community-oriented Moroccan-Dutch and native-born hinders the development of interethnic relations. Some Moroccan-Dutch said that they are afraid of making mistakes and that is why they avoid talking with native-born, but there are also very few opportunities to meet native-born in a neighbourhood with such a small percentage of them. Moroccan-Dutch feel their language skills would improve if there were more native-born living in the neighbourhood. Language problems can also lead to miscommunication. The Moroccan-Dutch Amira (37) explains friction between her and a native-born woman:

‘I crossed the road and a native-born woman on a bike ran into me. She became angry, started shouting and scolding: ‘Bloody hell! Stinky Moroccan. It is always the same!’ I said: ‘Sorry’ but she replied: ‘Nothing sorry, no sorry!’ She was very angry and continued scolding.’

Especially unsatisfied stragglers are not pleased with a simple ‘sorry’. Phrases used are ‘Nothing sorry, fuck off with your sorry. Speak normal!’ Unsatisfied stragglers were very irritated about migrant’s bad spoken Dutch and feel excluded.

6.5 Contact in the Kolenkit neighbourhood reconsidered

Intra-ethnic contact of native-born unsatisfied stragglers and newcomers in the Kolenkit neighbourhood is generally superficial; eye contact, greeting and small talk. Contact between the other native-born is of a (very) warm nature and also includes mutual help and home visits. Unsatisfied native-born stragglers refrain from contacting others of different ethnic origins, but positive native-born stragglers and native-born newcomers like the dynamics of the ethnic-pluriform neighbourhood.

Unsatisfied native-born stragglers have the least contact with community-oriented Moroccan-Dutch. These Moroccan-Dutch stick to their traditional culture and are believed to be excluding themselves from the Dutch way of life. Positive stragglers and newcomers, who are more open minded towards strangers, have more contacts with Moroccan-Dutch in the neighbourhood. Warm contact dominates among native-born and Moroccan-Dutch women.

Individualised Moroccan-Dutch have contacts mainly outside the neighbourhood and limited or no contact with native-born within the neighbourhood. Their individualistic orientation resembles the attitude of many native-born residents.

Community-oriented Moroccan-Dutch, contrary to native-born, have many strong bonds. Moreover, they struggle with the Dutch language which intern hinders interethnic contact, but

this is not necessarily true in all cases. These Moroccan-Dutch women are neighbourhood-oriented and have very warm contact with other woman from the native-born, positive straggler and newcomer varieties. Although native-born will meet community-oriented Moroccan-Dutch neighbours relatively easily, Moroccan-Dutch residents often have very few or no native-born neighbours. This restricts the possibility of contact. Although unsatisfied stragglers maintain only superficial contact with individualised Moroccan-Dutch, contact between the two positive oriented native-born and Moroccan-Dutch groups can be more in-depth. In some cases these contacts can be more intimate than with members of their own ethnic group.

Tabel 3. Interethnic contact between natives and Moroccan-Dutch in Kolenkit neighbourhood

		Native-born (individualised)		
		Unsatisfied stragglers	Positive stragglers	Newcomers
Moroccan-Dutch	Individualised men	Warm	Warm	Warm
	Individualised women	Warm	Very warm	Very warm
	Community-oriented men	Superficial	Warm	Warm
	Community-oriented women	Superficial	Very warm	Very warm

Superficial contact: eye contact, greeting, and conversation

Warm contact: eye contact, greeting, conversation, and mutual help

Very warm contact: eye contact, greeting, conversation, mutual help and home visits

Although the strict gender division among Moroccan-Dutch restricts intra-ethnic contact it plays a smaller role at the interethnic level. Moroccan-Dutch men, individualised and community-oriented, have artificial contact with native-born men and women. This applies also to the individualised Moroccan-Dutch women, who have irregular contact with native-born men. Only community-oriented Moroccan-Dutch women stick to the traditionally prescribed gender division. They refrain from interethnic contact and they avoid contact with native-born men.

Native-born and Moroccan-Dutch can meet because they use the same facilities in the neighbourhood such as a neighbourhood centre, an internet shop or primary school. Although there is little mixing at these facilities and interethnic meetings are exceptional. Both ethnic groups know each other as neighbours. It is rare that the doors of neighbours will be knocked on. In general, neighbours meet on the staircase, greet and talk. Unsatisfied stragglers have a problem with the fact that non-western migrants do not introduce themselves, but they also do not take the initiative. No introduction is a hindrance for establishing contact.

Conclusions

Both neighbourhoods have a negative stigma. The Diamant neighbourhood stigma is mainly caused by Moroccan-Dutch youth in public spaces. The neighbourhood has a larger population of native-born, including many elderly. Many interviewed native-born report that Moroccan-Dutch feel easily discriminated against and do not want to integrate.

By comparison to the Diamant neighbourhood, Kolenkit is the more disadvantaged and has a larger migrant population. Although native-born like the multi-ethnic nature of neighbourhoods, the unsatisfied stragglers do not. They tend to stick to their 'white' cluster in the neighbourhood. The majority of Moroccan-Dutch migrants feel at home in the neighbourhood and the size of this ethnic group is to such an extent that it provides the comfort and security of mixing within their own ethnic group.

It is clearly shown that the sense of belonging differs among ethnic subgroups in these neighbourhoods. Sense of belonging can be traced in smaller sections within the neighbourhood, suggesting the concept, selective belonging instead of elective belonging. Subgroups of residents who have strong ties are more oriented towards their own subgroup. Here the crucial question is whether or not they find sufficient members of their own ethnic group in the neighbourhood. Where there is a large group of Moroccan-Dutch, as in the Kolenkit neighbourhood it may be suggested that traditional norms and values are strengthened. Private matters are not discussed with other Moroccan-Dutch in the neighbourhood to avoid gossip. However, private matters are discussed with open minded native-born. Moreover interethnic contact can be facilitated by children and dogs.

A differing sense of belonging among the varied ethnic subgroups demonstrates that the hunkering down thesis should be reconsidered. This paper has shown that not all subgroups react in a similar way to diversity in their neighbourhood. It is clearly shown that there is no indication of withdrawal from intra-ethnic and interethnic contact. Elements of hunkering down could only be traced among native-born, who wanted to leave the neighbourhood but cannot; the unsatisfied stragglers. There is a tendency to maintain intra-ethnic contact, but only with subcategories when they share elements of belonging. Moreover, it is remarkable that many Moroccan-Dutch residents care for and demonstrate kindness to native-born elderly, especially in the Diamant neighbourhood.

The mechanism that creates divisions here is not hunkering down behaviour, but prejudices directed at the other ethnic group. The negative oriented often assume that contact with neighbours of the other ethnic group is fine and that prejudices apply to the unknown persons from same ethnic group. In other words, civility can go together with prejudice with regard to

known residents. Strange people in the neighbourhood, the media and politicians feed these prejudices. This shows that everyday interaction plays an important role in neighbourhood life. Boundary crossing can lead here to boundary blurring were interethnic contacts are not harmed by misunderstanding about e.g. gender roles and reciprocal relations between different ethnic groups. The opportunity to meet more native-born would increase if the percentages were higher in a neighbourhood such as the Diamant neighbourhood. This would intern increase the potential of improving spoken Dutch. In the Kolenkit neighbourhood there is a higher percentage of Moroccan-Dutch residents, therefore improving the chances of a link with a variety of differing ethnic groups, but to a lesser extent with native-born.

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