

Local Government Perspectives on Urban Diversity and its Policy Implications: A Multi-scale, Cross-city Comparison

Myrte S. Hoekstra*

© by the author(s)

(*) University of Amsterdam, Department of Human Geography, Planning, and International Development Studies, P.O. box 15629, 1001 NC, Amsterdam.
E-mail: M.S.Hoekstra@uva.nl

Paper presented at the RC21 International Conference on “The Ideal City: between myth and reality. Representations, policies, contradictions and challenges for tomorrow’s urban life” Urbino (Italy) 27-29 August 2015. <http://www.rc21.org/en/conferences/urbino2015/>

Local Government Perspectives on Urban Diversity and its Policy

Implications: A Multi-scale, Cross-city Comparison

This paper investigates how city governments address population diversity resulting from international migration. As migrants and their descendants are often concentrated in (large) cities, local governments increasingly formulate their own policies focusing on migrants' incorporation into city life, which can exist more or less independently from national policies. While cities are sometimes considered to have a mostly pragmatic approach to governing diversity, their policies also express underlying ideas and norms about who should be incorporated into what kind of urban community, and to what end. A comparison of both the discursive content and the practical implications of policies of migrant incorporation in Amsterdam and The Hague – two highly diverse cities in The Netherlands – found substantial programmatic differences between as well as within these cities. These differences are related to differing ideas on 'integration' and local identity.

Introduction

Since the early 2000s, national political discourse in Western European societies has been characterised by a 'multiculturalism backlash' (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2009), which is critical of perceived excessive differences that would threaten social cohesion and the core values of the nation (Anthias 2013; Cheong et al. 2007). Yet in cities growing diversity has long been a reality with its associated social and policy challenges (Amin and Thrift 2002; Schiller and Çağlar 2009). More and more, cities are creating their own narratives about diversity and its place in city life, which may run counter to more exclusionary discourses at the national level (Ambrosini and Boccagni 2015; Hoekstra 2015). While there is a relatively abundant literature discussing cities' (changing) discourses on migrant incorporation (e.g. Alexander 2003; Caponio and Borkert 2010; García 2006; Vermeulen 2008), less attention has been paid to the institutional implications of new formations of 'governing difference' (Glick-Schiller and Çağlar 2009; Uitermark, Rossi, and Van Houtum 2005) and how they can be explained.

Studies looking at local divergence from national integration policies have related it to differences in policy rationales and problem framing. Where national governments would focus on symbolic actions in a highly politicised and mediatised context, local governments would be more pragmatic and efficiency-oriented (Jørgensen 2012; Poppelaars and Scholten 2008; Scholten 2013). However, others argue that policy divergences and the reframing and reshaping of national policies are not simply the result of differing circumstances ‘on the ground’ but are also influenced by local ideas and norms (Schiller 2015) and imaginaries of local places and communities (Barbehön and Münch 2015; Walker and Leitner 2011).

This paper follows the latter line of inquiry and examines how policy discourses on migrant incorporation are understood and implemented by municipal policy-makers in Amsterdam and The Hague; two highly ethnically diverse cities in the Netherlands that have a long history of pursuing their own migrant policies. Through an analysis of municipal policy documents and interviews with policy-makers in different departments and at different levels of scale (municipal and sub-municipal), it is examined to what extent and why ethnic diversity is (not) taken into account in policy formulation and implementation. The focus is on the policy aims, the categories which are formulated and the groups which are targeted, and how policies are legitimised as being in the public interest. The main question guiding this research is whether differences in migrant policy organisation between and within these cities reflect ideological differences, specifically with regard to local (urban) identity and whose belonging is problematised.

The following section provides a brief overview of previous research on the development of urban policy discourses on migrant incorporation. Specific attention is paid to the conceptualisation of local migrant policies as primarily pragmatic and efficiency-oriented, and critiques of this position which focus on their normative and ideological qualities. This is followed by a discussion of the case study cities and their situation within the Dutch national policy framework. The empirical findings are presented in two sections which discuss policies implemented at two levels of scale: municipal (at the level of the city) and sub-municipal (at the level of the

district/neighbourhood). Finally, in the discussion attention is paid to how programmatic divergences can be explained.

Urban Policies of Migrant Incorporation

There is increasing scholarly attention for the development of policies of migrant incorporation at the local level (see e.g. Caponio and Borkert 2010; García 2006; Penninx et al. 2004; Vermeulen 2008). Whereas in the past it was often assumed that local governments merely adopt and implement the policies designed by national governments, now it is increasingly recognised that urban governments are policy-makers in their own right. Cities sometimes develop policies to deal with migration in the absence of a national framework (Penninx and Martiniello 2004) or the responsibility for migrant policies is deferred to the local level (Jørgensen 2012). Differences in the accommodation of migrants between national and local governments, and between different local governments, have been explained in terms of what has been called the ‘local pragmatism’ hypothesis. Local governments would be more directly confronted with the consequences of policy implementation as they are naturally closer to the situation ‘on the ground’. Contrary to national governments, they would therefore prefer an instrumental or pragmatic approach to migrant incorporation (Jørgensen 2012; Poppelaars and Scholten 2008; Scholten 2013). Rather than adhere to specific paradigms, responses to policy problems would be dictated by the practical means and techniques available, and by the short term consequences of policy decisions. One indication of such a ‘pragmatic approach’ would be the continued existence of older institutional structures and programmes that were designed to accommodate different policy paradigms. Policy-makers can adopt the language of a new discourse without making the corresponding organisational changes, or only make superficial changes in order to meet their targets (Uitermark and Duyvendak 2008). For example, in her study of diversity policies in Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Leeds, Schiller (2015) notes that these policies combine previous ideas and methods within a new ‘diversity’ framework. Local pragmatism can also be a consequence of a multitude of policy-makers at different levels of scale. As Wolff (1999) showed for the Amsterdam

minorities policy of the mid-1990s, marked differences in interpretation and emphasis developed between the different sub-municipal district governments who implemented the policy, partly as a result of differences in population composition.

However, there are also indications that urban policies are not wholly motivated by pragmatic considerations but also reflect prevailing ideas and norms on managing difference. Cities provide spatial and historical contexts which facilitate certain problematisations and policy actions while inhibiting others (Barbehön et al. 2015). Although cities face similar challenges, the ways in which these are interpreted and taken up are often different due to locally specific experiences and processes of meaning-making, which can be described as the ‘intrinsic logic’ of cities (Löw 2013). For example, studies show differences in the discursive construction of ‘diversity’ (Barbehön and Münch 2015) and ‘community’ (Walker and Leitner 2011) between cities which cannot simply be traced back to either national discursive frameworks or ‘pragmatic’ decision-making. A similar logic can also be applied to actors and institutions within the same urban context, as Valverde (2008) demonstrates for the city of Toronto. While tolerance and the accommodation of diversity is a way for the city to set itself apart from other metropolitan centres, in Toronto’s tribunal hearing rooms a completely different logic is at work. These legal areas are viewed as neutral and apolitical spaces, in which ethnicity or social position is not a relevant factor.

Policy Aims and Target Groups

Alexander (2003) has developed a typology of cities’ policy responses to migrants which distinguishes four policy phases, describing the level of involvement from local authorities as well as the desired level of adaptation to the host society. They range from ‘non-policy’, where no migrant-specific policy is instituted and specific problems are reacted to on an *ad-hoc* basis, to ‘guest worker policy’, designed as a temporary solution until migrants return to their home country, ‘assimilationist policy’, aiming to integrate migrants through minimising their ethnic difference and other aspects of ‘otherness’, to ‘pluralist policy’, which does not seek to minimise but rather accommodates or even celebrates ethnic group identity. In recent years, attention has

also been drawn to the appearance of a fifth phase, variously labelled ‘diversity’, ‘intercultural’, or ‘post-multicultural’ policy (Ambrosini and Boccagni 2015; Schiller 2015; Uitermark, Rossi, and Van Houtum 2005). What typifies this new form (and distinguishes it from pluralist or multiculturalist policies) is the focus on individuals rather than ethnic groups, and the incorporation of other aspects of difference such as gender and sexuality.

Different paradigms in the field of (urban) migration policies reflect notions of the nature of the urban community, who belongs to it and whose belonging is problematised, and how belonging can be achieved and preserved (Walker and Leitner 2011; Yuval-Davis 2006). For example, in assimilationist policies the host culture or ethnic group is dominant and migrants’ culture is either viewed as irrelevant (e.g. when the focus is on socio-economic incorporation) or as an obstacle (e.g. when migrants are expected to adopt the culture of the host society). Pluralist policies, on the other hand, promote a view of society as made up of (ethnic) communities of equal value, and seek to support and empower migrants through their membership of ethnic groups. These policy types can thus be said to differ in terms of their aims – whether (some) adaptation to the culture of the host society is deemed desirable and what form this should take, whether migrants should be the only ones to adapt or whether integration should be two-sided, et cetera.

Another important distinction concerns who is targeted by a policy: individuals with a migrant background, ethnic groups, or the entire society. The social construction of policy target groups conveys information about the shared characteristics of group members that make their recognition as policy recipients socially meaningful (Schneider and Ingram 1993). The normative description of a policy target group (as deserving, dangerous, marginalised et cetera) influences which policy tools are used and how a policy is legitimised. Many Western European governments have in recent years moved away from group-based policies towards policies targeting individual migrants (Joppke 2007). In addition, there has been a replacement of migrant policies by generic policies targeting the whole population (Van Breugel, Maan, and Scholten 2014). This ‘mainstreaming’ of migrant policies is often justified as

an attempt to generate broader public support. In his study of the black underclass, Wilson (1987) argues for universal over group-specific policies, claiming that these policies are still relatively advantageous for marginalised minorities while they ‘enjoy the support and commitment of a broad constituency’ (p. 120). In addition, such policies would avoid stigmatising groups or individuals as they are either aimed at the whole population or at a part of the population described by ‘objective’ criteria such as income level or living situation. However, others have argued that generic policies are not able to address causes of inequality which are rooted in race/ethnicity itself, such as discrimination (Simon and Piché 2012). Unequal structures may in fact reproduce themselves even stronger under generic policies as such policies tend to assume that the existing structures are neutral, while in fact they often represent and reward values and attitudes of the dominant culture (Valverde 2008). De Zwart (2005) has called this tension between generic and targeted policies the ‘dilemma of recognition’. He describes three possible policy responses: accommodation, where redistributive policies are designed to benefit minority groups; denial, where existing redistributive policies are assumed to be neutral and to benefit all citizens equally; and replacement, which falls in between generic and group-specific policies as it awards special benefits to newly formulated administrative categories which are generally designed to be more inclusive than the pre-existing categories which they replace.

Methods

This study discusses migrant policies of two cities in The Netherlands: Amsterdam and The Hague. As the first and third largest city, they have traditionally attracted a disproportionate number of migrants compared to the rest of the country, and today house the largest and second-largest share of non-ethnic Dutch in the Netherlands. Both cities have a long history of formulating policies concerning migration and diversity. There are also differences between the cities, notably in their spatial, economic and political structure, which in turn can be explained by diverging historical trajectories. Table 1 provides a brief statistical overview.

Table 1. Statistical overview Amsterdam and The Hague

	Amsterdam	The Hague
Population (2014)	811,185	509,779
Ethnic structure		
% Non-Western migrants¹ (2014)	34.8	34.6
% Western migrants² (2014)	15.9	15.9
Segregation index³ native Dutch (2012)	24.9	35.4
Segregation index non-Western migrants (2012)	35.8	43.8
Income structure		
% Low income households (<= 25.200 Euros, 2012)	51.3	49.4
% High income households (>= 47.400 Euros, 2012)	16.7	16.8
Segregation index low income households (0-20%, 2011)	13.4	22.5
Segregation index low income households (0-40%, 2011)	15.8	25.9

Source: Statistics Netherlands, OIS Amsterdam, The Hague in Numbers.

Amsterdam has been historically tolerant of religious and national diversity and has a long history of housing large numbers of migrant (Lucassen and Penninx 1994). This can be viewed as the result of a capitalist and entrepreneurial mentality, but it also relates to the value placed on religious freedom (during the struggle for independence against the Spanish Empire, many Jewish and protestant refugees came to Amsterdam). Today, Amsterdam retains the image of a tolerant and anti-establishment city (Nijman 1999). Amsterdam is characterised by relatively low levels of class and ethnic segregation, due in part to limited income inequality and the ubiquity of social housing (approximately half of the housing stock). The urban economy is based primarily in the service sector, with important roles for the financial sector and ICT.

¹ Share of the population with at least one parent born in an African, Latin-American, or Asian country (including Turkey, excluding Indonesia and Japan).

² Share of the population with at least one parent born in a Western foreign country (including Indonesia and Japan).

³ Dissimilarity Index: $D = \sum \text{abs}(a_i/A - o_i/O) * 50$, where a_i/A denotes the relevant population category and o_i/O the rest of the population. a_i and o_i measured at four-digit postcode level.

The city has historically been more left-wing than the national level, with a strong dominance of the Labour Party. Its governance style has been described as consensual (Alexander 2003) and decentralised, as seven sub-municipal districts could until recently (March 2014) design and implement their own policies within the broader municipal framework.

While Amsterdam is the capital and arguably the most important city of the Netherlands, The Hague is the seat of the national government and of international diplomacy. It houses around 160 international institutions, most of them around the themes of peace and justice, among which the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Permanent Court of Arbitration. The Hague is relatively segregated (for the Netherlands), which can be related to the extension of the city in the second half of the nineteenth century, when luxury housing was built at the sea-side on sandy ground and working-class neighbourhoods on the inland side (Kloosterman and Priemus 2001). Its urban economy is based mostly in public services: national government and international diplomacy. Compared to Amsterdam, it has a more polarised political climate: it is one of only two cities in the Netherlands in which the populist anti-immigrant party PVV is represented in the municipal council, and the council also includes two Islamic parties. Policy-making is also more centralised as districts only function as administrative units without budgetary or policy-making capabilities.

This study focuses on local policies of migrant incorporation during the period of the 2000s up till the present. The analysed material consists of twenty semi-structured interviews with municipal policy-makers at the central city and district level, external experts, and representatives of migrant groups. Respondents were identified based on publicly available information and through snowball sampling. The interviews, which took place between June and November 2014, discussed respondents' assessment of diversity in their city and how diversity and migration are addressed in past and current municipal policies. Questions focused on the aims of the policies, which groups are addressed, and in what manner (i.e. general versus group-specific). In addition, respondents were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of policies

in achieving their aims. Interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were recorded, transcribed, and then analysed using Atlas.ti software. In addition to the interview data, an analysis of relevant municipal policy documents (15 in each city) was conducted. The material (interviews and policy documents) covered two policy domains: diversity/integration policies and housing/urban renovation policies. While the latter are (in the case of these cities) general policies, they can be expected to reveal information about (indirect) local attitudes towards migrants as they are (also) significantly affected by such policies. In the Dutch national context, diversity and integration are very much tied to the direct living environment through the political aim of achieving ‘liveability’ and ‘social cohesion’ at the very local level. Concepts such as ‘urban restructuring’ are employed with the aim of creating (ethnically) mixed neighbourhoods (Musterd and Ostendorf 2009).

In the following sections, the empirical findings are presented. For each city, a brief impression is given of the development of migrant policies in the last two decades. This is followed by a discussion of current diversity/integration policies (i.e. the policies in both cities that explicitly target migrants), which are then contrasted with the policies on housing/urban renovation, which do not specifically target migrants.

Migrant Policies at the City Level

Amsterdam

In Amsterdam, ‘diversity’ and ‘diversity policy’ were introduced in the late 1990s to signal a move away from earlier group-based, ‘multicultural’ policies that supported emancipation within the own subculture through ethnic organisations. These policies are now considered outdated as they would facilitate intra- rather than intergroup contacts and would not reflect the reality of residents’ lives, which are seen as characterised by multiple and intersecting identifications. Increased (recognition of) diversity both within and between social groups was cited as a reason for an individualised and more positive approach to diversity (Wolff 1999). In the mid-2000s,

‘urban citizenship’ was added to the diversity policy as a common point of identification for the diverse Amsterdam population and a way of formulating shared norms and rules of conduct (‘citizenship competences’). Amsterdam’s policy discourse espouses a relatively open and positive definition of diversity, which is seen to encompass not just ethnicity but also gender, sexuality, age, and (dis)ability, and is appreciated as an integral part of urban life and a motor for economic growth (Amsterdam 2012a). Within this policy discourse, Amsterdam citizenship functions as a superordinate identity category: ‘Every *Amsterdammer* [resident of Amsterdam] is citizen of the city regardless of age, origin, belief, and ethnicity. Citizenship transcends and bridges the differences among the population of Amsterdam’ (Amsterdam 2012a, 1). Whereas the Dutch national government distinguishes between ethnic Dutch (*autochtonen*) and first and second generation migrants (*allochtonen*), Amsterdam uses an ethnic-cum-city categorisation (e.g. *Marokkaanse Amsterdammer*, Moroccan resident of Amsterdam). As an urban professional at the Citizenship and Diversity unit notes, this is not only a symbolic gesture of inclusion towards ethnic minority residents, but also considered a more accurate description of urban reality in a city where more than half of the population would be *allochtoon*.

The primary responsibility for the design and implementation of the diversity policy rests with the Citizenship and Diversity unit, which is part of the Social Affairs department. This unit is in charge of the five ‘pillars’ or programmatic themes connected to the diversity policy: women’s emancipation, anti-discrimination, LGBT⁴ acceptance, radicalisation and polarisation, and citizenship. Some of these – such as women’s and LGBT emancipation – are continuations of earlier policy activities under the new framing of diversity, while others are more recent additions. Notably, the radicalisation and polarisation programme was developed in the aftermath of the murder of Islam critic Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam in 2004 and was at first coordinated by a separate unit called ‘Platform Amsterdam Together’, before being incorporated in the diversity policy in 2010. Although, according to a respondent from the Citizenship and Diversity unit, attempts are made to ‘open up’ what can be seen as

⁴ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

bounded identity categories by signalling that the themes they address potentially concern all residents (for example, a programme concerned with the commemoration of slavery history was re-baptised ‘shared history’), there remains a strong focus on certain category markers (gender, sexuality, religion) that would constitute ‘diverse’ residents, who are constructed as vulnerable and/or dangerous. According to some respondents, ethnic and especially Muslim minorities are the implied target group in many diversity programmes, as they are considered to ‘lag behind’ the Amsterdam average. For example, the women’s emancipation programme discusses five policy aims (financial independence, self-determination, assertiveness of adolescent girls, emancipation of fathers, and visibility of lesbian women), all of which are upon closer investigation mostly deemed lacking in non-Western and especially Muslim communities (Amsterdam 2011).

Apart from these five core themes, the unit has a coordinating and agenda-setting role in drawing attention to ‘diversity aspects’ in other policy fields. Many policy programmes with a potentially large ‘diversity aspect’ – such as civic integration exams for non-Dutch nationals, honour-related violence, and spatial segregation – are located in different departments (the Work and Income department, Healthcare department, and Housing department respectively), and are thus not primarily approached from a ‘diversity angle’. There seems to be considerable distance between different departments and levels of scale, so that some other respondents are unclear about the precise role and responsibilities of the diversity unit. The diversity policy, and especially the citizenship component, is perceived by them as mostly symbolic in nature and associated with the top-down propagation of norms and values. This perceived abstractness is mentioned by an urban professional of one of the districts:

Q: To what extent did you take the city’s diversity policy into account [in formulating the district’s policy]?

A: (...) there was actually cooperation on several components (...) but the policy in the central city is, in principle that is, it’s not written after a real consultation with the districts (...) not in terms of policy and I believe not administratively either. And for example the women’s emancipation programme of the city, I thought that was pretty good, but there were all sorts of things in it that made

me think OK, and what happens in practice, where do we stand so that I can try to follow that line (...)?

While some districts have formulated their own diversity policies, these diverge from the central city policy as they emphasise specific target groups (such as LGBT residents in the inner city district) and/or construct broader target groups which can apply to the entire district population (e.g. 'gender' rather than 'women'). Other districts consciously choose to not have a diversity policy. Two respondents from different districts argue that they find it more fruitful to provide generic policies targeting socioeconomic arrears than to adopt the central city's diversity policy or to devise their own policies to address arrears of specific social groups:

For us it's indeed one's socioeconomic position, because that's often an issue, and of course there are all kinds of other factors in people's lives or in their background that play a role, but that's true for everybody (...) [socioeconomic] vulnerability is the most important criterion. And what you look like or which, you know, that doesn't matter.

We haven't made a policy on diversity, we've said we're making a policy for everyone. It's about the aim that you want to achieve (...) we should also be careful with diversity because once you favour one group, another group can start to think that they're seen as less important.

Such a 'mainstreaming' perspective, in which residents are addressed as individuals (rather than – also – as social group members) and where the role of the state is to provide 'colour-blind' services, can be seen as the logical end-point of Amsterdam's diversity discourse: a universalistic and holistic approach in which all citizens are treated as similar in terms of their needs, regardless of background. However, the diversity policy continues to be associated by respondents with the – according to some illegitimate – recognition of social groups, and in particular of some social groups whose members are seen as especially vulnerable. Interestingly, although the diversity policy was conceived as the successor of the minorities policy which focused on ethnic/migrant groups, these have disappeared as explicit target groups but are addressed through other categorisations (e.g. women, LGBTs, Muslims).

The Hague

Similar to Amsterdam, The Hague experienced a discursive and policy shift with respect to migration at the end of the 1990s. At the time, a minorities policy was in place that mainly provided subsidies for the preservation of cultural customs. Motivated by the lagging socioeconomic integration of migrants, this policy was reformed into a more general welfare policy. Unlike in Amsterdam, diversity is not a central aspect of the current policy. Rather, the aim is the socioeconomic and cultural ‘integration’ of migrants into the ‘mainstream’ The Hague society – with the exception of the 2006 to 2010 period, when The Hague’s policy was relabelled ‘citizenship policy’ and the focus shifted towards creating ‘encounters’ between residents and between residents and the government. After this period, citizenship remained a policy trope but its meaning became more normative and focused on the duties of (migrant) residents, rather than mutual encounter and recognition (Hoekstra 2015). The policy paper ‘Differing pasts, one future’ warns that ‘failed integration’ threatens social cohesion within the city and results in a lack of ‘feeling at home’ in one’s street and neighbourhood:

Many citizens have been confronted with one large societal change after the other. They no longer feel at home in their street and their city. Every day they experience what failed integration means: neighbours with whom they cannot talk and who cannot be their allies in the struggle for a liveable, safe and social neighbourhood. We want to win back those justly concerned citizens for our policy (...) by increasing the pace of integration (The Hague 2011, 2).

As in Amsterdam, the integration policy is coordinated by a unit which develops its own policies but also puts integration issues on the agenda within other departments. While respondents from the Integration unit consider their role of ‘policy influencers’ to be an important part of working efficiently, it does mean that the unit is often only peripherally involved in issues that relate to integration but that are the primary responsibility of other departments, or that it becomes involved when a policy is already being implemented. An example provided is the Dutch language programme *Taal in de Buurt* (language in the neighbourhood/close-by) which provides language classes at a very local level. This programme falls under the Education department,

while the Integration unit became involved only at a later stage and after some political arm wrestling.

Although The Hague has formally abolished its ethnic target group policy, many respondents indicate that some groups continue to receive special attention. Most prominent among these are Central and Eastern European labour migrants, a relatively recent and large migrant group. Whereas the municipality used to provide only information in the Dutch language, they have now started a special counter and help line for CEE migrants where they can receive assistance in their own languages. The three 'integration themes' (policy priorities) formulated by the municipality also show a continued orientation on specific migrant groups, although these are different from the 'classic' ones which were the main target groups under the old minorities policy⁵. These themes are EU labour migration, diversity and inclusivity (including anti-discrimination programmes focusing on CEE migrants), and language and participation (focusing on African migrants). Contrary to its official doctrine of generic policies, The Hague justifies this targeted approach by referring to group-specific (cultural) characteristics which would hinder the integration of these groups:

The Hague municipality no longer has a categorical [group-specific] policy but does stimulate addressing specific problems that are an obstacle to the integration of The Hague populations (...) like the approach for breaking the isolation of Somali and East-African families (The Hague 2014).

Respondents consider the adaptation of general policies for different (ethnic) target groups or even the formulation of group-specific policies to be a realistic and pragmatic approach. Generic policies are often described as inadequate because they are designed to meet the needs of an ethnic Dutch population, while different ethnic groups are thought to have culturally specific problems and needs:

I think that you shouldn't put up obstacles for yourself in this (...) we shouldn't talk about whether we have a target group policy, but let's consider whether we have a problem where ethnicity or background or migration might play a role, or not. That it's a part of the analysis you make (...) (respondent Integration unit).

⁵ These 'classic' target groups are residents of Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese, and Antillean descent: the four largest non-Western migrant groups in the Netherlands.

This targeted approach is not only visible in the design of policies, but also in the communication with policy recipients:

We also employ many people who you could say are sent to those groups. So Kurds talk to Kurds and Hindus talk to Hindus and we aren't afraid of that (...) strengthening a certain cultural identity isn't something we're afraid of (respondent Urban Development department).

Despite an official preference for generic policies, The Hague continues to target ethnic groups which are presumed to face culturally specific barriers that hinder their integration. This approach is legitimised by the migrant policy's aim of integration – implying a distinction between the integrated residents who fully belong to the urban community, and those who are discursively positioned outside of it. As the integration of migrants is of paramount importance, all programmes which reduce their distance to the 'mainstream' (whether generic or group-specific) are considered to be in the interest of all The Hague residents.

Diversity at the District Level

The following section moves the discussion from migrant policies – which are designed and implemented at the city level – to urban renovation and neighbourhood policies which target specific areas within the city. Notwithstanding their general focus, diversity/integration is expected to be a theme within these policies as well as they address issues of segregation and social cohesion and target areas in which migrants are overrepresented.

Amsterdam

While Amsterdam's diversity discourse is largely focused on the city as a whole, neighbourhoods are regarded as important locations for the practice of 'citizenship competences' and 'living together with difference' (Amsterdam 2005; 2012b). The existence of tensions between ethnic groups in neighbourhoods and the possible consequences for neighbourhood social cohesion are monitored by the municipality

(Broekhuizen and Van Wonderen 2012). Therefore, at the start of the research some interlinkage or even cooperation between policy-makers in the fields of diversity and area-based policies was expected. However, diversity is conspicuously absent in the narratives of respondents responsible for neighbourhood- or area-based policies. When asked whether they take diversity aspects into account in their work, some respondents explicitly mention that they do not associate neighbourhood policies with diversity issues or the diversity policy. Images of the neighbourhood as a natural unity and of residents as united in their shared identification with and participation in the neighbourhood dominate. Respondents from the Housing department describe neighbourhood policies as having a ‘different perspective’ as they would focus on similarities between residents in a positive way, which according to them contradicts the rationale of the diversity policy:

(...) that ideological [aspect] that is also related to diversity-thinking and arrears, and that cultural [aspect] that you’re behind because of a cultural context, I wasn’t concerned with that from a policy perspective. I was [concerned with] how to organise collectivities as well as possible and how to empower people again within the collective in districts and neighbourhoods, regardless of their cultural background.

I feel like it [diversity policy] doesn’t connect because we weren’t so much concerned with polarisation but rather wanted to stimulate and enable connection (...) [polarisation] is a negative angle. Whereas we’re working towards involvement, doing things together... so in a way it’s a different perspective.

These respondents do not talk about (ethnic) diversity among neighbourhood residents as a relevant dividing line. Neighbourhoods are portrayed as neutral and apolitical spaces, and participative democracy at the neighbourhood level (such as communal decision-making about the allocation of money to neighbourhood initiatives) is presented as consensual and oriented towards the common good: ‘Residents (...) have said together: OK, which initiatives get the money and how do we make that decision? So that means choosing with each other what’s important to this neighbourhood.’

Within the Citizenship and Diversity unit, the connection with neighbourhood policies is also not considered self-evident. One respondent argues that diversity should be taken into account within neighbourhood development programmes (formally the responsibility of the Housing department), and that the Citizenship and Diversity unit should be involved in designing these programmes, stating: ‘where diversity is relevant we pay attention to it, and the assumption is that that’s nearly everywhere because the city is very diverse’, but struggles to define how this should be realised in practice:

[The diversity policy] didn’t fit in with that approach [neighbourhood development programmes] anyway. You know, it already was very much a reflection of the city. So what’s the diversity aspect? Improving neighbourhoods together with residents, if you do that in a diverse neighbourhood, then... what more should you add to it?

Here again, the assumption is that although diversity is a characteristic of neighbourhoods, this does not influence the organisation or the outcome of neighbourhood development: group identity is superseded by the generic category of ‘residents’ who collaborate with one another and with the government to collectively improve their neighbourhood. The (implicit) aims of the neighbourhood policy – formulated by respondents as forming connections between residents in order to generate a sense of responsibility for the neighbourhood – are thought to be best achieved by targeting neighbourhood residents as a collective. Like urban citizenship at the city level, area-based policies in Amsterdam appeal to people’s common interests as residents of a certain area and thereby reconstitute this area as a community. Focusing on separate (ethnic or cultural) groups within these neighbourhoods is rejected. The rationale for this is that either diversity is treated as a factual description which has no bearing on the neighbourhood policy, or diversity is seen as negative and associated with polarisation. From this reasoning it follows that policies should target the general Amsterdam public and stress the collective whole.

The Hague

Contrary to Amsterdam, respondents in The Hague frequently refer to specific neighbourhoods – such as Schilderswijk and Transvaal – when discussing diversity. These neighbourhoods, which house large numbers of non-Western (Muslim) migrants and experience social deprivation and liveability issues, are cited as examples of segregation and exclusion. Problems associated with diversity are thus seen to accumulate in specific areas, which are labelled ‘problematic’ and therefore receive additional attention and resources:

[Although] our policy is of course aimed at the city level, the implementation for a large part takes place in the neighbourhoods, and that, you see that there are differences. And that is also, well, not every neighbourhood or every district has to make a similar effort (respondent Integration unit).

One way in which the integration policy is implemented at the neighbourhood level is through the budget provided for ‘resident participation’, in which individual residents and neighbourhood organisations can apply for subsidies to increase local welfare and ‘liveability’ in their neighbourhood or district. This budget originated as part of a national neighbourhood renewal programme in four areas in The Hague, which was implemented from 2008 to 2012. Concentrations of disadvantaged migrant groups were seen as being at the heart of the social problems in these areas. Furthermore, internal diversity in the neighbourhood and the resulting differences in policy needs also demand the attention from policy-makers within the urban development department. Unlike Amsterdam where respondents talk about diversity in rather abstract terms (e.g. by referring to ‘groups’ or ‘cultural background’), policy-makers in The Hague often refer to specific ethnic or national groups:

[About the Schilderswijk] Because there are 123 or, I don’t know how many nationalities, there is of course also, there is also a kind of multicultural tension internally in that neighbourhood (...)

Q: Was that also something that you considered in the policy implementation?

A: Certainly. Well, in any case we considered it and discussed it (...) you have to approach every group separately. So a general approach doesn’t exist. Berbers are very different from Kurds, and Kurds have to be addressed differently from

West-Turkish et cetera. Well, there are incredibly many different groups (...) so yes, you have to try to address that in a very focused manner (respondent Urban Development department).

Furthermore, this internal diversity and fragmentation of (some) neighbourhoods is seen to have consequences for policy implementation. The political mobilisation of communities of interest and unequal power relations between groups make creating inclusive neighbourhood facilities more difficult. One example that was provided is the award winning project ‘mothers of Schilderswijk’, a group of female volunteers who function as confidantes of isolated women in the very ethnically diverse Schilderswijk neighbourhood. This project was initiated by the municipality in the context of the aforementioned national neighbourhood renewal programme. However, the chosen approach, where funding was made conditional on the project being open to all women in the neighbourhood instead of targeting only a specific ethnic group, turned out to be difficult to realise. Rather than organising on the basis of a shared neighbourhood identity or shared problems, various ethnic groups used their connections within the municipality to demand funding for group-specific programmes. While the project is now regarded as highly successful, its difficult start demonstrates that cooperation across (ethnic) group lines is difficult to achieve and requires intensive supervision by professionals, as is also stressed by a respondent from another district:

Our philosophy involves everyone: young, old, Dutch or residents from diverse backgrounds (...) we train our employees to deal with that. Sometimes we don’t succeed in getting groups together, and then we just visit groups separately. But in the end we want to create situations in which all groups have their place (...) that’s a precondition (respondent from district).

To sum up, policy-makers in the field of area-based policies in The Hague consider population diversity, especially in terms of ethnic background, to be a relevant dimension in formulating and implementing neighbourhood policies. The neighbourhood is not viewed as a ‘community’ but rather it is made up out of separate ethnic communities whose interests do not necessarily align. While at the city level, the groups which are identified are recent arrivals (CEE migrants) and highly isolated

groups (East African migrants), at the neighbourhood level the focus is on Muslim migrants who are not just portrayed as vulnerable but also as well-organised and politically resourceful communities.

Discussion

Migrant policies can be said to be concerned with the ‘maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging (...) [they include] the struggles around the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of a community, and of what roles specific social locations and specific narratives of identity play in this’ (Yuval-Davis 2006, 205). The incorporation of migrants into the urban community has increasingly become a matter for municipal governments. Although a lot has been written about the development of cities’ discourses on migrants, as well as recent attempts to move past the ‘multicultural paradigm’, less is known about their consequences for the design and implementation of policy programmes (Uitermark, Rossi, and Van Houtum 2005). This study focused on the consequences of policy discourses for the formulation and implementation of programmes in terms of their aims, target group, and legitimising rationales. Assuming that policies are influenced by, and themselves express, local norms and identities (Walker and Leitner 2011), the findings provide insight into what kind of urban community is desired by local policy-makers, and show how certain policy problematisations might resonate in one specific local setting but not in another (cf. Barbehön et al. 2015). Policy aims and problematisations are a way to tell stories about group identity (Yanow 1997) and the ‘character’ of local places (Barbehön et al. 2015), which are not completely reducible to different implementation settings of national policy frameworks or to rational, technocratic decision-making processes. Indeed, the findings show that Amsterdam and The Hague employ city-specific and distinct meaning structures. This does not mean, of course, that alternative constructions would not be possible, or that there are not also counter-narratives which challenge the established order. However, these counter-narratives also have to engage with

dominant meanings and policy constructions, which serves to stabilise the discursive order as a whole (Hajer 1995).

In Amsterdam and The Hague, different approaches exist with regard to policy aims and the construction of target groups. Especially in Amsterdam, different policy rationales could also be identified between the diversity policy which targets the entire city and area-based neighbourhood policies. Amsterdam's diversity policy draws attention to various dimensions of difference including gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, and stresses the multiple and overlapping identifications of Amsterdam residents. Ethnicity is de-emphasised as a policy target in favour of other dimensions of difference. Urban citizenship, defined as a shared attachment to the city regardless of background, is presented as the glue that can keep a super-diverse city together. The diversity policy is perhaps best characterised as the outcome of a struggle to move on from previous multicultural policies while simultaneously resisting the assimilation-oriented frame of the Dutch national government. Although it is divided into programmes for specific groups with associated aims and objectives – indicating a sensitivity to the need for a tailored approach – the policy as a whole emphasises the celebration of difference at the level of individual residents, a diversity which is moreover taken as a descriptive (and defining) characteristic of the city of Amsterdam. The 'mainstreaming' of policies by constructing more inclusive policy target groups can be a strategy to increase a policy's legitimacy and avoid stigmatisation (De Zwart 2005; Wilson 1987). Amsterdam's focus on highly inclusive replacement categories such as 'the urban citizen' and 'the neighbourhood resident', as well its treatment of other markers of identity as individual characteristics rather than a basis for group formation and collective claims making, serves to depoliticise migrant incorporation to the point where respondents struggled to define why diversity should be a policy concern at all.

In The Hague on the other hand, migrant policies explicitly aim at migrants' integration into the 'mainstream' society, the need for which is explained by referring to a (presumably) native population who 'no longer feel at home in their street and their city' (The Hague 2011, 2). Rather than addressing the entire population, the focus on specific ethnic groups is justified as these groups are construed as a threat to the

belonging of natives. Contrary to Amsterdam, ethnic diversity is also seen as influencing the design and implementation of area-based policies. Not the neighbourhood itself, but the ethnic groups in it are the primary target groups of policy-makers. While the continued usage of ethnic category markers and the explicitly normative demand of adaptation to native Dutch culture leave significantly less room for enduring cultural differences (as these are viewed as obstacles that need to be overcome in order to achieve integration and/or successful neighbourhood participation), it at the same time allows for more explicit discussions of ethnic group identity and mobilisation, which can also include a critique on existing power relations and the ways in which institutional structures are not neutral but reflect dominant group norms, an observation which was made multiple times by The Hague respondents while being almost completely absent in the Amsterdam narratives.

While the aim of this paper is not to demonstrate how policy discourses and practices arise from past or current structural features in a causal manner, it stands to reason that there is a relationship between specific interpretations of the (past and present) nature of the city and current policy problematisations, in such a way that some categories are more easily imaginable and justified than others. In this respect, it is perhaps useful to ponder the city branding of Amsterdam, which uses a reading of its historical past that portrays it as a city that has become rich due to its openness to the world and tolerance of difference. While this tolerance historically referred to ethnic/national and religious 'otherness', today it is arguably more closely associated with (commercialised) sexuality and drug use (Nijman 1999). In contrast, The Hague has historically not viewed itself as a 'diverse city' but rather stresses its aristocratic origins and international outlook. While there have been attempts in recent years to embrace the city's history of immigration, this is done mostly by way of recognising the contributions *specific ethnic groups* made to The Hague; notably Indonesian-Dutch colonial repatriates and the Chinese community. These quick characterisations suggest that the historical imaginary of Amsterdam more easily allows ethnic diversity to be subsumed under a general umbrella of tolerance of difference than is the case for The Hague.

Further research would need to examine more systematically how historical perspectives can be connected to today's meaning-making processes, as well as what role can be attributed to economic infrastructures, cultures of governance et cetera, whose effects are beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the findings point to the importance of assessing migrant policies in an holistic manner which treats general characteristics and self-images of cities as factors which both shape urban policy discourses and practices – including policies on the incorporation of migrants – and which are themselves shaped by them. Not only policy discourses, but also their institutional anchoring and the ways in which policy programmes are designed and implemented are influenced by normative ideas and assumptions. Moreover, the ways in which policy discourses are (not) put into practice or integrated in specific policy programmes can highlight inconsistencies or discrepancies which provide further information about the rationales underlying paradigm shifts. An important question here is how policy-makers construct notions of community to make their policies acceptable within a given political and cultural system.

References

- Alexander, Michael. 2003. "Local Policies toward Migrants as an Expression of Host-Stranger Relations: A Proposed Typology." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 29 (3): 411–30. doi:10.1080/13691830305610.
- Ambrosini, Maurizio, and Paolo Boccagni. 2015. "Urban Multiculturalism beyond the 'Backlash': New Discourses and Different Practices in Immigrant Policies across European Cities." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 36 (1): 35–53. doi:10.1080/07256868.2014.990362.
- Amin, Ash, and Nigel Thrift. 2002. "Cities and Ethnicities." *Ethnicities* 2 (3): 291–300. doi:10.1177/14687968020020030101.
- Amsterdam. 2005. "Actieplan Wij Amsterdammers" [Actionplan we, Residents of Amsterdam].

- Amsterdam. 2011. “Vrouwenemancipatie in Amsterdam: Naar Economische Zelfstandigheid En Zelfbeschikking” [Women’s Emancipation in Amsterdam: Towards Economic Independence and Self-determination].
- Amsterdam. 2012a. “Beleidsbrief Burgerschap En Diversiteit” [Policy Paper Citizenship and Diversity].
- Amsterdam. 2012b. “Vervolgbrief Amsterdams Burgerschap” [Follow-up Policy paper Citizenship in Amsterdam].
- Anthias, Floya. 2013. *Identity and Belonging: Conceptualisations and Political Framings*. http://roar.uel.ac.uk/3329/1/WP_Anthias.pdf.
- Barbehön, Marlon, and Sybille Münch. 2015. “The ‘Distinctiveness of Cities’ and Distinctions in Cities: Boundaries of Belonging in Comparative Perspective.” *Urban Research & Practice*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/17535069.2015.1037342.
- Barbehön, Marlon, Sybille Münch, Petra Gehring, Andreas Grossmann, Michael Haus, and Hubert Heinelt. 2015. “Urban Problem Discourses: Understanding the Distinctiveness of Cities.” *Journal of Urban Affairs*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1111/juaf.12206.
- Broekhuizen, Jolijn, and Ron Van Wonderen. 2012. “Samenleven Met Verschillen: Signaleren van Spanningen En Versterken van Vertrouwen in Amsterdamse Buurten” [Living Together with Difference: Identifying Tensions and Strengthening Trust in Amsterdam Neighbourhoods]. Verwey-Jonker Instituut. [http://www.verwey-jonker.nl/doc/vitaliteit/Samenleven_met_verschillen_Signaleren_spanningen_v
ersterken_vertrouwen_in_Amsterdamse_buurten.pdf](http://www.verwey-jonker.nl/doc/vitaliteit/Samenleven_met_verschillen_Signaleren_spanningen_versterken_vertrouwen_in_Amsterdamse_buurten.pdf).
- Caponio, Tiziana, and Maren Borkert, eds. 2010. *The Local Dimension of Migration Policymaking*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

- Cheong, Pauline Hope, Rosalinde Edwards, Harry Goulbourne, and John Solomos. 2007. "Immigration, Social Cohesion and Social Capital: A Critical Review." *Critical Social Policy* 27 (1): 24–49. doi:10.1177/0261018307072206.
- De Zwart, Frank. 2005. "The Dilemma of Recognition: Administrative Categories and Cultural Diversity." *Theory and Society* 34 (2): 137–69.
- García, Marisol. 2006. "Citizenship Practices and Urban Governance in European Cities." *Urban Studies* 43 (4): 745–65. doi:10.1080/00420980600597491.
- Hajer, Maarten. 1995. *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hoekstra, Myrte. 2015. "Diverse Cities and Good Citizenship: How Local Governments in the Netherlands Recast National Integration Discourse." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38 (10): 1798–1814. doi:10.1080/01419870.2015.1015585.
- Joppke, Christian. 2007. "Beyond National Models: Civic Integration Policies for Immigrants in Western Europe." *West European Politics* 30 (1): 1–22. doi:10.1080/01402380601019613.
- Jørgensen, Martin Bak. 2012. "The Diverging Logics of Integration Policy Making at National and City Level." *International Migration Review* 46 (1): 244–78. doi:10.1111/j.1747-7379.2012.00886.x.
- Kloosterman, Robert, and Hugo Priemus. 2001. "The Hague - A Dual City? Causes and Policy Responses: An Introduction." *Built Environment (1978-)* 27 (3): 167–75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23288412>.
- Löw, Martina. 2013. "The City as Experiential Space: The Production of Shared Meaning." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37 (3): 894–908. doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12022.
- Lucassen, Leo, and Rinus Penninx. 1994. *Nieuwkomers, Nakomelingen, Nederlanders: Immigranten in Nederland 1050-1993 [Newcomers, Offspring, Dutch: Immigrants in The Netherlands 1050-1993]*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

- Musterd, Sako, and Wim Ostendorf. 2009. "Residential Segregation and Integration in the Netherlands." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (9): 1515-1532. doi:10.1080/13691830903125950.
- Nijman, Jan. 1999. "Cultural Globalization and the Identity of Place: The Reconstruction of Amsterdam." *Cultural Geographies* 6 (2): 146–64. doi:10.1177/096746089900600202.
- OIS Amsterdam. 2015. www.ois.amsterdam.nl. Accessed June 16, 2015.
- Penninx, Rinus, Karen Kraal, Marco Martiniello, and Steven Vertovec. 2004. *Citizenship in European Cities: Immigrants, Local Politics and Integration Policies*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Penninx, Rinus, and Marco Martiniello. 2004. "Integration Processes and Policies: State of the Art and Lessons." In *Citizenship in European Cities: Immigrants, Local Politics and Integration Policies*, edited by Rinus Penninx, Karen Kraal, Marco Martiniello, and Steven Vertovec, 139-165. New York: Ashgate.
- Poppelaars, Caelesta, and Peter Scholten. 2008. "Two Worlds Apart: The Divergence of National and Local Immigrant Integration Policies in the Netherlands." *Administration & Society* 40 (4): 335–57. doi:10.1177/0095399708317172.
- Schiller, Maria. 2015. "Paradigmatic Pragmatism and the Politics of Diversity." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38 (7): 1120-1136. doi:10.1080/01419870.2014.992925.
- Schiller, Nina Glick, and Ayse Çağlar. 2009. "Towards a Comparative Theory of Locality in Migration Studies: Migrant Incorporation and City Scale." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (2): 177–202. doi:10.1080/13691830802586179.
- Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. 1993. "Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy." *The American Political Science Review* 87 (2): 334–47. doi:10.2307/2939044.
- Scholten, Peter W. A. 2013. "Agenda Dynamics and the Multi-Level Governance of Intractable Policy Controversies: The Case of Migrant Integration Policies in the Netherlands." *Policy Sciences* 46 (3): 217–36. doi:10.1007/s11077-012-9170-x.

Simon, Patrick, and Victor Piché. 2012. "Accounting for Ethnic and Racial Diversity: The Challenge of Enumeration." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35 (8): 1357–65. doi:10.1080/01419870.2011.634508.

Statistics Netherlands. 2015. www.cbs.nl. Accessed June 16, 2015.

The Hague. 2011. "Verschillend Verleden, Eén Toekomst. Hoofdlijnen Integratiebeleid 2011-2014" [Differing Pasts, One Future. Main Directions Integration Policy 2011-2014].

The Hague. 2014. "Integration in The Hague."

The Hague in numbers. 2015. www.denhaag.buurtmonitor.nl. Accessed June 16, 2015.

Uitermark, Justus, and Jan Willem Duyvendak. 2008. "Citizen Participation in a Mediated Age: Neighbourhood Governance in The Netherlands: Neighbourhood Governance in the Netherlands." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32 (1): 114–34. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2007.00743.x.

Uitermark, Justus, Ugo Rossi, and Henk Van Houtum. 2005. "Reinventing Multiculturalism: Urban Citizenship and the Negotiation of Ethnic Diversity in Amsterdam." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29 (3): 622–40. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2005.00614.x.

Valverde, Mariana. 2008. "The Ethic of Diversity: Local Law and the Negotiation of Urban Norms." *Law & Social Inquiry* 33 (4): 895–923. doi:10.1111/j.1747-4469.2008.00127.x.

Van Breugel, Ilona, Xandra Maan, and Peter Scholten. 2014. "Conceptualizing Mainstreaming in Immigrant Integration Governance: A Literature Review." UPSTREAM Project Report. Rotterdam: Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Vermeulen, Floris. 2008. "Diversiteit in Uitvoering: Lokaal Beleid Voor Werkloze Migrantenjongeren in Amsterdam En Berlijn" [Diversity in Progress: Local Policy for Unemployed Migrant Youth in Amsterdam and Berlin]. NICIS Institute.

Vertovec, Steven, and Susanne Wessendorf, eds. 2009. *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Discourses, Policies and Practices*. London: Routledge.

Walker, Kyle E., and Helga Leitner. 2011. "The Variegated Landscape of Local Immigration Policies in the United States." *Urban Geography* 32 (2): 156–78. doi:10.2747/0272-3638.32.2.156.

Wilson, William. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wolff, Rick. 1999. "Minorities Policy in the City of Amsterdam and the Amsterdam Districts." Paper presented at the Multicultural Policies and Modes of Citizenship (MPMC) Workshop, Liège Belgium, October 30-November 2.

Yanow, Dvora. 1997. *How Does a Policy Mean? Interpreting Policy and Organizational Actions*. Georgetown: Georgetown University Press.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2006. "Belonging and the Politics of Belonging." *Patterns of Prejudice* 40 (3): 197–214.