Ethnic fractionalisation and social cohesion: the relation between immigration, ethnic fractionalisation and potentials for civic, collective action in Germany

Schaeffer, M.

Publication date
2012

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Schaeffer, M. (2012). *Ethnic fractionalisation and social cohesion: the relation between immigration, ethnic fractionalisation and potentials for civic, collective action in Germany*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

Chapter 8

Summary and Conclusion

At the outset of this study stands a debate between social scientists on the consequences of ethnic fractionalisation for levels of social cohesion and potentials for collective action. Ethnic fractionalisation has been proposed as one of the reasons for stagnation and corruption in the developing world or as an explanation why the US does not have a European-style welfare state. Given increasing levels of ethnic fractionalisation in Western countries because of immigration, this debate has seen growing attention among European scholars, spurred by the fear that the high levels of trust, civic engagement and redistribution that characterise European countries might be at threat. With similar levels of concern, critics have warned that the debate obscures the much more important role of socio-economic deprivation and generalises research findings that are particular to the racial situation of the US or the ethnic configurations of developing countries. Rather than analysing a contemporary social problem, so the critics' apprehension, social scientists who problematise diversity unwillingly fuel populist agendas.

My extensive review of the empirical literature, the vast majority of which accounts for socio-economic deprivation, has indeed shown that particularly US American studies tend to confirm ethnic fractionalisation to matter for a range of outcomes. However, it is not the case that those studies focusing on European countries tend to provide confuting evidence. In general, confirmatory and confuting findings hold each other at bay, which tends to hold for different types of dependent variables, levels of analysis, types of fractionalisation, and regions of the world that were investigated. Rather than characterising the existing findings to be fragile or even spurious, I argued that the relation between ethnic fractionalisation and social cohesion depends on the workings of mediating mechanisms and moderating conditions. The debate would be advanced by identifying such factors, not least since socio-economic deprivation might likely turn out to be one such moderating condition. In particular, I formulated the following three questions that demand refined answers: Why should people's reciprocity and trust be reduced in

more ethnically fractionalized areas? How can we account for the mixed results of previous studies? Are there any solutions to the problem of negative ethnic fractionalisation effects?

To join the agenda of answering these questions, I analysed the German sub-set of the EDCA-Survey, which was explicitly designed to study questions of ethnic fractionalisation. With its history of hiring guest workers in the 1960's and its traditionally strong welfare state, Germany is a prime example for those European countries the debate focuses on. Today, about every fifth person living in Germany has a migration background[1], meaning that either they themselves or one of their parents was born abroad. The EDCA-Survey encompasses among its 7.500 standardised telephone interviews two oversamples of the population with migration background. All participants live in one of 55 theoretically and randomly sampled cities and regions drawn from all 16 German federal states. These 55 cities and regions encompass the whole variance of ethnic fractionalisation in Germany and thus qualify the EDCA-Survey as particularly well-suited to study the consequences of ethnic fractionalisation.

Relying on this data, my empirical approach has been to start out by operationalising indices of ethnic fractionalisation that allow to test different explanations of the ethnic fractionalisation effect against one another. I continued by investigating people's perceptions of fractionalisation as important individual-level mediators, which also yield suggestive evidence in favour of different explanations. In order to show that individuals' perceptions are not arbitrarily subjective, I continued to investigate under which contextual conditions ethnic background becomes a more salient characteristic of neighbourhood problem groups. Finally, I investigated explanatory factors of natives' and migrants' inter-ethnic neighbourhood contacts, since all previous chapters suggest these to exert a key moderating function. Overall, my comparison of the survey responses across the 55 German cities and regions, as recorded in these four chapters, has resulted in a range of findings that I believe advance the debate in several important ways.

Is Ethnic Fractionalisation Challenging Social Cohesion in Germany?

Germany is a prime example for those European countries that are both increasingly fractionalised along ethnic lines and try to maintain high levels of trust, civic engagement and welfare state support. Before any refined questions can be discussed, the core question is of course whether Germany faces any ethnic fractionalisation challenges.

My work, which accounts for alternative individual- and context-level influences

---

[1]Federal Statistical Office of Germany: www.destatis.de

such as the local crime and unemployment rates, affirms this question. Those cities and regions with higher levels of ethnic fractionalisation, as operationalised by different indices, are characterised by lower levels of trust in neighbours, collective efficacy, and satisfaction with one's neighbourhood. In general this means that ethnically fractionalised cities and regions suffer from their inhabitants' mistrust in one another and their disbelief that collective endeavours are possible. At the same time, their concrete civic behaviour as indicated by their active membership in associations, voluntary engagement in the same, but also participation in social and political protests do not differ from those living in more homogeneous cities and regions. In contrast to the general expectations, there are even tendencies for increased levels of civic engagement in more fractionalised areas. Further findings support the validity of this pattern. First of all, not only cities and regions with high levels but also recent increases in ethnic fractionalisation are characterised by lower levels of trust, collective efficacy, neighbourhood satisfaction and more reports about frequent neighbourhood problems. Yet, they do not differ in terms of their inhabitants' civic engagement either. The same conclusion is supported by different measures of individuals' perception of fractionalisation, which arguably reflect their concrete life worlds better than any statistical index that refers to an administrative geographical unit. These results hold for natives and migrants alike, particularly in regard to the perception of being different from one's neighbours.

This pattern of confirmatory and confuting findings of my study parallels the distinction between the cognitive as compared to the structural dimension of social cohesion. The former characterises individuals' evaluation of their social environment, while the latter concerns socially, collectively and civic oriented behaviour. Moreover, this pattern also tends to show in the debate at large. My review of the empirical literature has shown a tendency for indicators of trust and trust related sentiments to be related to ethnic fractionalisation, whereas for indicators of civic engagement confirmatory and confuting findings are balanced in frequency. All this implies that one of the reasons why previous research has produced mixed results is connected to the distinction between cognitive and structural social cohesion.

Why would people act against their evaluation of the situation? In my review of the literature, I discussed an argument according to which group conflicts that are associated with ethnic fractionalisation cause people to show lower levels of trust, but also to feel a need to associate with others who are alike and to engage for their particular group's interests (e.g. Matsubayashi, 2010). My own results suggest a similar, but slightly different explanation, by pointing toward the mediating role of local social problems such as waste disposal or harassment that result, at least in part, from failures of informal social control and cooperative norms in the community. Whereas reduced trust and collective efficacy in fractionalised communities negatively impact people's willingness to engage and participate in

collective endeavours, the increased prevalence of social problems in the neighbourhood mobilises people to act for change and therefore results in higher rates of associational membership and protest participation. Whether or not, and in which direction ethnic fractionalisation affects civic engagement depends on the balance between these two paths. Assuringly, the argument also holds for the crime rate and socio-economic deprivation, as measured by the local unemployment rate, both of which show relations to the indicators of social cohesion that are similar to those of ethnic fractionalisation. Just like ethnic fractionalisation, high crime rates and socio-economic deprivation lower cognitive social cohesion, but have ambivalent consequences for behavioural measures of social cohesion; they also result in experiences of neighbourhood problems and feelings of discontent that cause people to engage for social and political change. By emphasising the mobilising role of social problems, this explanation does not imply that this increased civic engagement has an ethno-centric nature and is garned toward the attainment of particular group interests. People might also feel the necessity for engagement across ethnic lines or disregard any ethnic dimension altogether.

In sum, my study suggests that ethnic fractionalisation is associated with a decline of cognitive social cohesion: trust in neighbours and beliefs in collective endeavours. However, rather than to simply "hunker down" and withdraw from public social life (Putnam, 2007), people also try to face their community's social problems and engage to find solutions. On a wider theoretical level this means that ethnic fractionalisation is a challenge that cannot be reduced to population density, socio-economic deprivation or crime rates. However, it does not threaten the foundations of liberal democracy — the willingness to engage, cooperate, share and deliberate — in an unequivocally negative way. It rather seems to fit the democratic process well, which "is supposed to be messy, conflictual, and difficult" (Walker in: Theiss-Morse and Hibbing, 2005, p. 237).

Cognitive Biases, Losses of Social Control, Coordination Problems, or Asymmetrically Distributed Preferences: What is the Nature of the Beast?

One of my central aims has been to shed light on the question, what drives and explains ethnic fractionalisation effects. This aim results from the particular lack of survey research to test the different existing explanations against one another. With discipline-specific emphases, the literature discusses four different explanations, each of which suggests a certain dimension of ethnic fractionalisation to be important. Cognitive biases are expected to result from ethno-categorical fractionalisation, reduced levels of social control from ethnically clustered networks, and both coordination problems and asymmetrically distributed preferences from

ethno-cultural fractionalisation. My empirical approach to this research gap has been to operationalise both statistical indices and individuals' perceptions of those particular aspects of ethnic fractionalisation.

Cognitive Biases   In sociology and probably also in political science, the dominant explanation for the low levels of trust and cooperative spirit in ethnically fractionalised cities and regions are cognitive biases against people of different ethnic backgrounds. Maybe because of a strong tradition in research on prejudices, sociologists tend to explain these cognitive biases with reference to competition (Olzak, 1992) and group threat theory (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958), meaning they suggest feelings of threat over economic, symbolic and political resources that increase with the share of migrants. Just like Putnam (2007) in his seminal article, they confront this explanation with the expectations of contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998; Allport, 1954), according to which inter-ethnic contact and thus probably also inter-ethnic co-existence should reduce prejudices. Economists also discuss cognitive biases against people of different ethnic backgrounds as a possible explanation, however they refer to a social-psychological tradition in studying in-group favouritism (Brown, 2000; Tajfel et al., 1971). This tradition sees cognitive biases as the outcome of a relative comparison between us and them that serves the actor to gain a positive image of himself by derogating those who differ in salient characteristics such as ethnicity.

Both approaches have in common that they deal with categorical distinctions of us versus them and thus see a population's mere ethno-categorical fractionalisation as sufficient and necessary cause of cognitive biases that drive down levels of social cohesion. But rather than seeing them as two sides of the same coin, I highlighted that the two approaches result in different and empirically testable implications. If a self-enhancing relative comparison lay at the root of those cognitive biases that drive the ethnic fractionalisation effect, it would be otherness that counts. The more people differ from one another, the less they trust each other. If, however, competition and threat lay at the core, it would be the existence of threateningly powerful out-groups that caused declines in social cohesion. In highly diverse settings, many people differ from one-self, but it is polarised situations, meaning ideal-typically those where two opponents face each other, where people should feel the most threatened on average . If group threat theory is correct, we should find cognitive biases to increase as we go from ethnically diverse to polarised. This remains true even if group threat and in-group favouritism are compatible, in the sense that group threat strengthens any tendencies for derogating comparisons.

My attempt to test group threat against in-group favouritism by comparing the explanatory power of an index of ethnic diversity against one of ethnic polarisation failed. In general the ethnic composition of German regions is dominated

by natives to such a degree that other ethnic composition criteria do not play any role and results in theoretically different fractionalisation indices that practically yield identical information content, which is basically the mere percentage of migrants. Current theoretical and empirical approaches treat this Europe-wide common composition, where one majority dominates, as an intermediary stage between homogeneous on the one side and diverse or polarised on the other. Hence, this seemingly most common ethnic composition of European cities and regions, which I called quasi-monoethnic, is surprisingly neglected as a special case in theory and empirical research. As I will discuss below, this suggests an important gap that needs to be filled by future research.

Nevertheless, some of my findings speak in favour of cognitive biases as being one of the main driving forces of the ethnic fractionalisation effect. I showed people's perceived otherness and their individual estimates of the percent of migrants in their neighbourhood to be highly significant predictors of all investigated measures of cognitive social cohesion. These two are both operationalisations of cognitive biases, yet should not be seen as particular operationalisations of in-group favouritism and group threat respectively. From migrants' minority perspective, the question on perceived otherness might be an operationalisation of group threat, whereas for natives it seems a fair measure of diversity and hence of in-group favouritism. What both measures tell us, is that in general cognitive biases matter, but whether it is unfavourable comparisons, feelings of threat or both that drive them cannot be decided on the basis of my findings.

Social Control   Much less attention has been paid to the explanation of negative ethnic fractionalisation effects by ethnically clustered networks that result in lower levels of social control (Miguel and Gugerty, 2005; Miguel, 2004). Only few studies, all of which analyse data from developing countries, test this argument. My study is no exception to this trend, as I laid out from the beginning. I rather followed a second implication on the relevance on inter-ethnic contacts for the debate and investigated their importance as moderators of fractionalisation effects. These results and their implications are discussed below.

Coordination Problems   Probably because of Deutsch's (1966) heritage, who emphasised the importance of a shared language for nation states, it seems to be particularly political scientists who are among the few to see coordination problems as an explanation for reduced levels of cooperation and collective endeavours (Desmet et al., 2009; Habyarimana et al., 2007). According to this approach, ethnic fractionalisation is a fractionalisation in language and communication skills and results in people having reduced capabilities to coordinate shared endeavours. Realising this, they also have less trust in their capabilities to act collectively.

Here my attempt to test this explanation was to investigate the predictive power of migrants' average regional host-country language skills and people's perceptions of linguistic diversity in their neighbourhood.

Overall, my results are less definite and robust as those for cognitive biases, but they still suggest coordination problems to matter. The measure of migrants' average host-country language skills was aggregated from the EDCA-Survey itself and suffers from large measurement errors. It thus does not stand in any statistically significant relation to cognitive and structural social cohesion or the number of inter-ethnic contacts. However, the explanation receives support from the investigation of individuals' perceptions of the degree of linguistic diversity in their neighbourhood. Where people experience linguistic diversity to be large, they are less likely to believe in the community's collective efficacy and report more neighbourhood problems. In terms of reported neighbourhood problems, linguistic diversity is even the strongest predictor of all perceived fractionalisations.

Asymmetrically Distributed Preferences A final explanation, which is rather frequently discussed by economists, proposes the low levels of collective action and social cohesion to be consequences of asymmetrically distributed preferences in ethnically more fractionalised cities, neighbourhoods or countries (Page, 2008; Kimenyi, 2006). According to this view, ethnic background correlates with views on how community life should look like and preferences for certain public goods that should see collective investment. Following a classical social choice perspective, this approach assumes that the more ethnically fractionalised and hence diverse these views, the less people will be able to compromise on collective endeavours and the more they will lose trust in their fellow citizens' capacity to cooperate.

I also find support for this explanation. Again, my first attempt failed. Just as the indices of ethnic diversity and polarisation, my operationalisation of a culturally weighted ethnic diversity index was not statistically distinguishable from the mere percentage of migrants. While German cities and regions differ in regard to the shares of migrants, they hardly do so in terms of their relative ethnic composition. When there are few culturally similar French migrants, there are also few culturally more distant Moroccans. The same seems to hold for weighting fractionalisation indices by ethnic differences in socio-economic terms. However, I do find support for asymmetrically distributed preferences to matter in individuals' perceptions. Those people, who do perceive a diversity in norms and values in their neighbourhood are less likely to trust, believe in collective efficacy and report higher frequencies of neighbourhood problems.

In sum, my results imply coordination problems, asymmetrically distributed preferences and cognitive biases all to matter, but the latter seem to play the most

dominant role. The importance of losses in social control because of ethnically clustered networks remains to be investigated. On a wider theoretical level, this speaks against approaches to see the challenges of ethnic fractionalisation as being only rooted in prejudices or other forms of cognitive biases. Language skills and the fractionalisation of values, norms and preferences that are associated with immigration should not be neglected. Surely, the distribution of preferences is highly asymmetric in any contemporary Western country. This is particularly true for urban centres, irrespective of the fact that migrants also tend to reside there. Over the past centuries we have successfully developed democratic institutions to deal with these asymmetries in the messy and contentious ways mentioned above. The workings of these institutions suffer if people are not willing to deliberate with others differ in terms of ethnic background or religiosity, but also if they are not able to participate because of insufficient language skills, or do not support key democratic values and norms.

The Role of Perceptions: Nothing But Imaginations?

The above elaborated affirmation that cognitive biases, coordination problems and asymmetrically distributed preferences all seem to play a role, relies heavily on the findings regarding individuals' perceptions of fractionalisation. This might raise concerns on the validity and substantiveness of the findings; are perceptions not arbitrarily subjective and render all these results to be nothing but imaginations?

I made several arguments against these concerns and supported them with empirical findings throughout this study. First of all, even if people's perceptions were biased, they would still be important because they are the foundation of people's conduct. Following the Thomas theorem — "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas, 1928, p. 572) — it is exactly those aspects of ethnic fractionalisation that are actually perceived by actors that have an impact on their attitudes and actions. In support of my argument, I was able to show that perceptions matter beyond any levels of statistically measured fractionalisation; they exert predictive power in their own right that qualify them to be more but imaginations.

Secondly however, I was able to show that individuals' estimates of the share of migrants in their neighbourhood seem to be rather accurate in the aggregate. This supports my second argument that perceptions of fractionalisation are important, because they are not arbitrarily subjective, but reflect people's concrete life-worlds in contrast to any administrative geographical unit that statistical indices refer to. In continuation, I also showed that perceptions mediate the effects of fractionalisation as measured by statistical indices nearly totally. It is via people's personal experiences that ethnic fractionalisation matters. This is not a truism, since it is also possible that coordination problems arise from misunderstandings or failed

compromises arise from asymmetrically distributed preferences, without people realising this. In terms of coordination problems, think about simple words like "soon" or "probably" and the coordination problems that can arise from mutual misunderstandings, without people realising a diversity in language use. This does not seem to be the case however. In the mediating role of perceptions of diversity could lie another explanation for the mixed results of previous research. Under some conditions people's perceptions of fractionalisation might actually differ from those measured at the contextual level, or even more likely to be experienced as enriching rather than conflictual.

What are such conditions? Next to the below-discussed importance of personal inter-ethnic contact, I argued for the importance of economic decline, which results in feelings of uncertainty and threat over status loss and causes people to project the responsibilities for their problems onto minorities according to the disintegration approach (Anhut and Heitmeyer, 2000). To support this argument, I analysed an open-ended question on natives' characterisation of neighbourhood problem groups, which has the advantage of not presupposing any categories or hinting toward other ethnic groups as possible answer. The responses are therefore even more arbitrary and subjective than those of the above discussed perceived fractionalisation variables. I was still able to show that natives who live in cities and regions that are troubled by increasing unemployment are more likely to characterise neighbourhood problem groups as ethnic groups, even though they might also have described them as teenagers or rowdies for example. Moreover this likelihood is larger in those cities and regions, where unemployment is high to begin with, meaning where increasing unemployment is a continuing trend. These findings are strong evidence in support of my argument that perceptions of ethnic fractionalisation result from observable (contextual) conditions and are not arbitrarily subjective. Moreover, they show that economic decline is not only an additional explanation for lower levels of social cohesion, but potentially contributes to ethnic fractionalisation effects by furthering negative perceptions of ethnic groups. Since the earlier reported results hold for both natives and migrants it stands to reason that migrants also tend to blame other ethnic groups for neighbourhood problems under conditions of economic decline. Migrants category usage and its dependence on contextual conditions is thus a topic for future research.

In sum, my arguments and results suggest perceptions of ethnic fractionalisation to be important individual level mediators and predictors of social cohesion that reflect people's everyday life worlds and are subject to wider contextual conditions such as economic decline. Unlike imaginations, they have real-world consequences and arise from observable contextual conditions. On a wider theoretical level, these results have important normative implications that are discussed below, because people's positive or negative perceptions of ethnic fractionalisation

are easier to deal with than macro-level demographic characteristics such as the population share of migrants. In addition, my findings support the literature on ethnicity as cognition. Not only ethnic fractionalisation as I have argued, but ethnicity in general matters first and foremost to the degree that it becomes a salient category in people's minds. The findings also speak to the concern that the debate on ethnic fractionalisation overshadows the importance of socio-economic deprivation. Besides its additional explanatory importance, socio-economic deprivation matters for the salience of associating problems with ethnicity. Paradoxically, by ignoring the challenges of ethnic fractionalisation one may overlook some of the channels via which socio-economic deprivation matters to social cohesion.

How to Push Things Forward: Contact or Segregation?

I believe in the public mission of the social sciences and in Weber's (1988, (1904)) argument that social scientists may evaluate and develop proposals on how to derive the goals that are formulated in the political arena. At a somewhat normative level, one may thus wonder which policies my results imply to be promising?

The most obvious solution to any challenges of ethnic fractionalisation might seem to be residential segregation; if mixing causes trouble, then do not mix. In the introduction, however, I already mentioned that most scholars who study the challenges associated with ethnic fractionalisation also warn against residential segregation and the long run dangers of deepening ethnic cleavages. My research supports these concerns and implies that conflict avoidance is not a promising strategy. Following Alesina and Zhuravskaya's (2011) cross-national study, I was able to show that it is the more segregated cities and regions, where the same level of ethnic fractionalisation is associated with even lower levels of trust, collective efficacy or neighbourhood satisfaction. The absence of contact opportunities makes inter-ethnic co-existence make troublesome.

The reason lies in a simple process, which is rather similar to what others have shown for the case of prejudices (e.g. Schlueter and Scheepers, 2010). Inter-ethnic coexistence results in declines in social cohesion, but also furthers one of the best measures to attenuate these declines, namely personal inter-ethnic contact. As my findings on ethnic residential segregation imply, these contacts do not need to be tight friendships. Indeed, I was able to show that weak neighbourhood acquaintanceships, meaning that people know their names and might have a chat when they run into each other on the street, are sufficient for perceptions of ethnic fractionalisation to be less negatively associated with losses in trust in ones neighbours or reports of neighbourhood problems. Similarly, the characterisation of neighbourhood problem groups as ethnic minorities increases with the share of migrants, but not in a linear, steadily increasing way. In cities and regions with few migrants, people tend to overestimate their share. With growing numbers, how-

ever, people's estimates get more realistic and inter-ethnic contacts become more frequent so that the strength of the association between the share of migrants and their being blamed for neighbourhood problems declines in strength.

On a wider theoretical level, all this suggests the challenges of ethnic fractionalisation to be similar to those of migration and integration in general: they are processes of adaption that need time and patience. However, these processes can encounter supportive or prohibiting conditions. I believe my research hints at a couple of potential opportunities how to face the challenges of ethnic fractionalisation and thereby supports tentative proposals for policy development. Fortunately, my findings on the role of perceptions suggest that it is not only ethnic compositions per se that matter, but also the way these are experienced. Given the above-elaborated role of inter-ethnic contacts, governments would be well-advised to act against residential segregation. Hartmut Häußermann's idea of a public housing policy that works like acupuncture by filling gaps between buildings or buying single flats on the free market, seems to be a promising direction.[2] Next to working against ethnic residential segregation, such a strategy also does not run into the danger of resulting in public housing blocks, where only those in need of public housing live, and which thereby become pockets of accumulating socio-economic disadvantages. As mentioned above, ethnic fractionalisation and socio-economic deprivation are a troublesome combination. Such an approach could also be combined with attracting families to inner city neighbourhoods, because children generally integrate neighbourhoods, which also holds for the establishment of inter-ethnic neighbourhood ties, as I was able to show.

The role of perceptions of ethnic fractionalisation also hints at the importance of the ways migration issues are publicly framed. Recent research suggests negative news reports to be crucial in explaining negative reactions toward local migrants (Schlueter and Davidov, 2011; Hopkins, 2010). My findings suggest, however, that people are not overtly attentive to discursive policy changes. The move from foreigner to integration policy that was accompanied by the introduction of the official term "migration background" to the public discourse nearly ten years ago is only partially reflected in people's category usage. Moreover, even the growing public media attention Islam has received in the recent years, is not reflected in the ways natives characterise neighbourhood problem groups. In respect to their local neighbourhood problems, a majority of respondents characterise ethnic minorities as foreign nationals rather than as migrants or Muslims. These results of my study are of course limited in scope, but question to a certain degree the potential of policy approaches that try to work via the public discourse to frame people's personal everyday experiences. The reasons can lie in people's missing

---

[2]Der Spiegel (18.07.2008) "Wie Reiche die Armen aus den Städten verdrängen": www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/0,1518,564649-2,00.html

attentiveness but also in their selective consumption of media sources that do not promote and follow changes in official terminology. In this regard more research is necessary, before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Implications for Future Research

My study did of course answer the three initially posed questions only partially. While I believe to have advanced the debate in several ways, a large number of issues remains to be addressed. Some of these issues arise from limitations of my work and others from findings that imply promising routes for future research.

Can It Be That It Was All So Simple Then? A first limitation pertains general problems of cross-sectional survey data and the methodological difficulties to establish the causality over and above the mere empirical associations that one's theory implies. As I have discussed in the theory chapter, however, it is not at all clear whether selection biases, i.e. people moving to or away from certain neighbourhoods in response to ethnic fractionlaisation, result in an over- or underestimation of the effect of ethnic fractionlaisation. The question is which population dominates in biasing the results. Is it the affluent who tend to be high trusting and in favour of diversity, who refrain from ethnically fractionalised neighbourhoods because these tend to be economically deprived and problem ridden? Or is it the low trusting and prejudiced, who prefer to live in a homogeneous neighbourhood with neighbours who are alike? My study does not answer this question. But future research might benefit from using longitudinal data in addressing this issue. Next to the methodological advantages, a time related perspective that utilises the comparison of people's contemporary to their past situation would also be of substantial interest, as my findings on the importance of changes in ethnic fractionalisation imply. How does the effect of increasing ethnic fractionalisation differ for those who move into a more diverse city or region as compared to those whose neighbourhood changes? Such a design should ideally identify individuals or families who were forced to move or moved for job-related reasons rather than those who move to a neighbourhood they favour over the former one. In this respect it might also be interesting to incorporate information on the neighbourhoods people grew up in. Does moving to an ethnically fractionalised city affect those differently who grew up on the homogeneous countryside rather than in one of the country's urban hot-spots?

A Context Characteristic Seldom Comes Single The particular research design of this study seemed the best compromise between having many contextual units to compare, being able to aggregate contextual information from the

survey itself, and assuring the existence of a rich source of publicly available context data. A compromise by definition means limitations with regard to each goal involved. The narrow number of contextual units was the smallest limitation. Relying on 55 contextual units, I was able to investigate several contextual variables at a time and establish statistical significance of quadratic and interaction effects of context-level variables. Still, for even more advanced analysis such as the analysis of moderating impacts of cross-cuttingness and ethnic fractionalisation or a comparison of different fractionalisation indices within the same model, more upper-level units would have been necessary. The aggregation of contextual information from the survey itself, exemplified by the index of the migrants' average regional host-country language skills, proved to face strong limitations. Large measurement errors prohibited the establishment of significant empirical associations with a range of dependent variables. The alternative strategy of operationalising culturally weighted indices of ethnic diversity and polarisation failed because Germany's cities and regions are all characterised by an absolute majority of native German inhabitants that dominate any of the existing indices. Hence, while there is a comparatively rich source of publicly available data on the level of cities and regions in Germany, the spatial units are too large to find the variety of ethnic fractionalisation types that is necessary to test such indices. Future research should hence investigate smaller contextual units such as neighbourhoods, because in cities like Berlin or Munich some neighbourhood might actually not be characterised by a native majority. Moreover, the workings of segregation, as well as the theoretical discussion of the explanations' varying spatial scope, suggest the comparison of the relation between ethnic fractionalisation and social cohesion over different levels to yield promising insights. Finally, being limited to cities and regions is also regrettable in terms of comparing individuals' perceptions of their neighbourhood's fractionalisation to statistically measured levels. On the regional level, the average perception seems quite accurate, but without contextual data on smaller contextual units such as neighbourhoods or postal codes, it is not possible to investigate under which conditions people's estimates tend to be biased up- or downward.

That said, a recent methodological proposal points toward a promising route for future research that might solve at least the first two limitations. Very recently, Selb and Munzert (2011) proposed a method to aggregate contextual information from sparse survey data. Their approach makes use of the fact that social phenomena tend to be geographically clustered, so that the spatial dependence between observations can be used as auxiliary information when aggregating contextual characteristics. Selb and Munzert (2011) show that reliable information on constituency preferences, which means vote shares for five parties in their demonstration for the German case, can be aggregated from data with an average of seventeen

and a minimum of one observation per contextual unit only. Even halving these sample sizes yields worse, but still acceptable aggregates. Rather than relying on the mean or empirical Bayes estimates as I did in this study, future research might be able to aggregate informative indices of ethnic fractionalisation from surveys that were formerly thought to be insufficient for such purposes due to sparse numbers of respondents per geographical unit. At best, such an approach allows to analyse more contextual units at different levels with more reliable aggregates of contextual characteristics.

Different Folks, Different Strokes   Another answer to the limitation arising from the fact that natives dominate the ethnic composition of German cities and regions was suggested in the conclusions drawn in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. So far, all indices of ethnic fractionalisation are universal in that they estimate one degree of fractionalisation for each context. The indices thereby totally ignore the ethnic groups' relative positions within a context's overall ethnic composition. The same ethnic composition of Berlin for example can be very different from the perspective of a native German, a Russian migrant, or an Irish migrant. In cases such as those studied here, where there is on absolute majority and a couple of minorities, the concrete position of each group is decisive, particularly from a group threat perspective. It might thus be worthwhile to advance the debate by developing relational indices that take each group's relative position into account. Such an approach would by definition incorporate quasi-monoethnic compositions as a theoretically and empirically important case rather than an intermediary stage between homogeneity and diversity or polarisation. This idea can be applied not only to the common Hirschman-Herfindahl index, but also to economically and culturally weighted indices of diversity or to indices of polarisation.

We Report, You Decide?   A final gap for future research pertains to the importance of news coverage, political mobilisation, or other elite-driven framings of migration issues that might moderate ethnic fractionalisation effects. Some scholars argue that people rely on news-media or collective actors such as parties to frame their personal experiences of local-level fractionalisation. According to this argument, adverse reactions to ethnic fractionalisation are due to negative news coverage on migrants and going even beyond that, differ in response to the concrete framings of migrants for example as criminals or potential welfare recipients for example (Hopkins, 2012). My findings suggest limits to the impact of public discourses. It stands to reason that people are attentive to media reports to the degree that these support their previously held views so that certain types of frames hit hotbeds and therefore amplify ethnic fractionalisation effects.

To further investigate the role of elite-driven frames of migration issues, future

research should explore the potentials of automated content analyses, which has become possible through software packages such as ReadMe (Hopkins et al., 2011; Hopkins and King, 2010). Such analyses could focus on the framing of migration issues in regional newspapers, at best over a timespan of one or two years in order to find robust regional patterns. Besides the general interest one might have in the regional and international variation in the framing of migration in news media, public statements of political actors, or even online media, such data can be analysed to find the possibly necessary or sufficient media contexts within which ethnic diversity goes along with declines in social cohesion. In addition, it would be interesting to use such data to investigate whether the regional and also international variation in the use of ethnic categories and the perception of (conflictual) ethnic fractionalisation might be accounted for by elite-driven framings of migration issues.

With the decline in response rates and general measurement-error problems of large scale surveys, and the parallel expansion of electronically accessible text documents (newspapers, blog posts, speeches, social media like Twitter etc.) automated content analysis will expand in the social sciences. While some of the existing automated coding procedures may seem crude to researchers who are used to qualitative hand-coding, the software is improving rapidly and the long-run potentials and areas of application of automated coding are vast.