



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Governing diversity, experiencing difference

The politics of belonging in ethnically diverse places

Hoekstra, M.S.

Publication date

2017

Document Version

Other version

License

Other

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Hoekstra, M. S. (2017). *Governing diversity, experiencing difference: The politics of belonging in ethnically diverse places*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

Chapter 1

Introduction

(...) in a climate marked by a widespread politics of polarization, it is of the utmost urgency that we take into account this desire to belong (...) a desire without a fixed political ground but with immense political possibilities (Probyn, 1996, p. 9)

1.1 The governance and experience of belonging

In the mid-1990s, Elspeth Probyn articulated a critique – informed by feminist and psychoanalytical perspectives – of scholarly work that views belonging as uniquely determined by identity and identity politics, and thereby as primordial, pre-discursive, and absolute. In stark contrast to this essentialist perspective, she formulates a notion of ‘outside belonging’, putting centre stage the idea of belonging as a process of becoming – rather than being – which she describes as a desire or a longing for attachment, ‘a process that is fueled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state’ (Probyn, 1996, p. 19). Thus, she posits that belonging is not something that simply ‘is’, but something individuals long for and strive to achieve and maintain (see also Mee, 2009). Others have similarly stressed the notion of belonging as performative and inherently relational, connecting the self to others and to place (e.g. Bell, 1999; Fenster, 2005; Fortier, 1999; Mee, 2009; Mee & Wright, 2009; Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2005).

At the same time, belonging is not merely an individual act or experience but also functions as a discursive resource in social and political settings, where it ‘constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion’ (Antonsich, 2010, p. 644). The politics of belonging concerns the discursive and material boundaries through which meaning and identity are ascribed to particular places which are seen to ‘normatively embody the polity’ (Trudeau, 2006, p. 422). Notably, studies on the politics of belonging have focused on the national level, describing how nation-state boundaries are constructed based on specific signifiers of belonging – often ethnic or racial, but also gendered and sexual (e.g. Crowley, 1999; Mepschen, Duyvendak, & Tonkens, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Yuval-Davis, Anthias, & Koffman, 2006). Moreover, the conflation of these two levels of belonging (individual emotional attachments and the boundaries of the political community) seems to be the hallmark of many contemporary political and policy projects which present the nation as a home writ large (Duyvendak, 2011).

Studies of belonging at lower levels of scale – such as cities or neighbourhoods – often describe how existing insider/outsider configurations and their expression in everyday encounters and interactions shape emotional attachments to place. For minority group members, being valued and respected is important for one’s sense of belonging, as Devadason (2010) demonstrates in the case of North London, where Bangladeshi Londoners are less likely to feel that they belong to the city, despite being born there. On the flip-side, social psychological research indicates that for dominant group members, having a sense of belonging might depend on the absence of disturbing

or threatening Others (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; 2004). Similarly, sociological studies of the housing choices of the white middle class show that they experience greater belonging in places that fit their sense of self (Benson & Jackson, 2013; Savage et al., 2005; Watt, 2009). Whether one can belong thus depends on being accepted as a community member and having the power to claim space and define collective rules (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Belonging is therefore ultimately a political question, as it is always already implicated in broader power relations and inequalities.

Over the last decades, the Netherlands like other parts of Europe has experienced both an increasing population diversity and increasing politicization and polarization regarding questions such as what is and who can determine 'the' Dutch identity, and who can rightfully claim to belong (either in a legal or a moral sense) to the national community. As a consequence, diversity relating to migrant background – focusing in particular on migrants from Muslim countries and their children – has become broadly perceived as antithetical to belonging, not only in the sense that migrants can never fully belong (become Dutch) but, moreover, that their presence also constrains the belonging of the 'native' population (Geschiere, 2009). This development has been analyzed as constituting a 'culturalization of social relationships' (Anthias, 2013), a 'culturalization of citizenship' (Duyvendak, 2011), and a 'moralization of citizenship' (Schinkel, 2010) whereby the state enforces a communitarian form of belonging through paternalist policies. At the same time, government efforts to create belonging are socially and geographically uneven, with physical and social interventions targeting in particular those living in ethnically diverse and socioeconomically deprived neighbourhoods (Fortier, 2007; Van Gent, Musterd, & Ostendorf, 2009a).

In this dissertation, I bring together these different aspects of belonging and explore their interconnections at different levels of scale – paying particular attention to the ways in which policies express visions of home and the 'good' community, and how these are contested and transformed by local understandings of place and belonging. At the national and urban level, I consider the discourses and practices of subjectification in the Netherlands through policies that seek to construct communities of belonging. I then relate these to the emotional connections to place experienced by those who – as residents of neighbourhoods declared to lack 'good' forms of community – are at the receiving end of such policies. Following Askins (2016, p. 516), who argues for the 'need to reframe and repoliticise everyday interactions, and the emotions caught up in them, as interwoven through broader (state) politics', this dissertation aims to trace Dutch discourses of belonging and

their practical implementations in the form of policy interventions to increase social cohesion or community in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, and to compare and confront these with residents' lived experiences of difference and belonging. Through a focus on the emotional geographies of social policy interventions (Jupp, 2013), I bring together literature on urban neighbourhood governance with studies on residents' sense of belonging in order to provide insight into how encounters with difference and formations of belonging are constituted by specific (urban, neighbourhood) contexts. The overall research addresses the following question:

How does the governance of diversity through urban and neighbourhood policies influence residents' lived experiences of difference and belonging?

This research question addresses multiple levels of analysis and their interrelationships. Therefore, in the course of the research three sub-questions were pursued, in correspondence with the relations outlined in the conceptual model (see Figure 1):

1. How does diversity feature in municipal discourses of belonging, and how does this relate to national policy discourses?
2. How are municipal discourses of belonging translated into policy interventions in ethnically diverse and deprived urban neighbourhoods?
3. How do neighbourhood policy interventions in the form of social cohesion projects influence residents' experience of difference and their neighbourhood belonging?

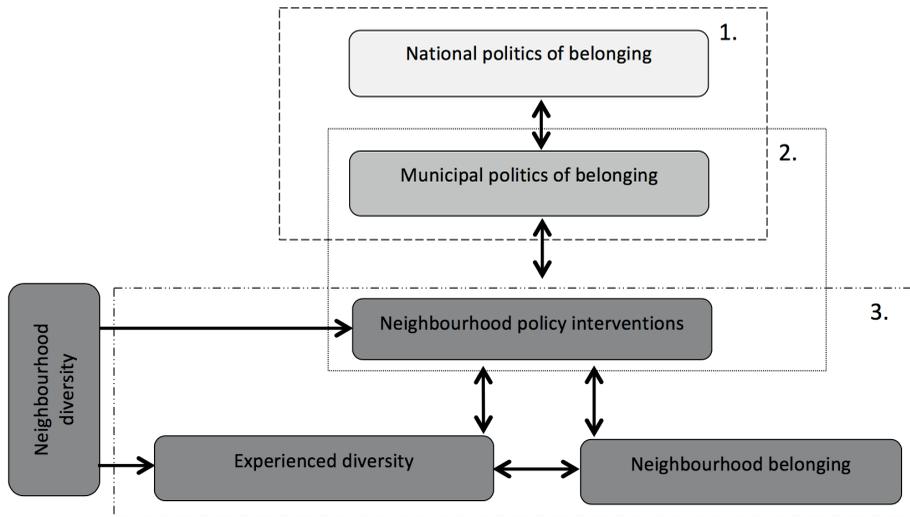


Figure 1 | Conceptual model

1.2 Understanding diversity and belonging

Although the literature on belonging has increased significantly in recent years, the term belonging itself is often ill-defined (Antonsich, 2010) and many studies do not include an explicit theorization of the concept but employ it as a synonym of, among other things, identity, social cohesion, or place attachment. In this dissertation, following Mee and Wright (2009) and Antonsich (2010), belonging is defined as the affective relationship between individuals and their environment. Belonging is about ‘recognising – or misrecognising – the self in the other’ (Leach, 2002, p. 287, cited in May & Muir, 2015) and creating a sense of self through defining the imagined territory of one’s community (Trudeau, 2006). This reading puts centre stage the emotional and spatial aspects of attachment: belonging implies a ‘fit’ between individuals and place, resulting in feelings of comfort. In this sense, belonging is similar to Bourdieu’s (1990) definition of habitus as embodied and routine dispositions that shape orientations to the world: ‘The habitus – embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history – is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product’ (p. 56). This definition acknowledges that experiences of belonging are based in feelings of familiarity and rootedness – being at home, being in place – while these are at the same time denaturalized as cultural constructs (Duyvendak, 2011; Wise, 2010).

The interplay between one's social characteristics and experiences (who I am) and features of the environment (where I am) allows for multiple, situated, and changing attachments that are created through everyday encounters and boundary negotiations, and thereby distinguish belonging from identity and identity construction, which is more concerned with the formation of an essential self that is stable across contexts (Albiez, Castro, Jüssen, & Youkhana, 2011). Experiencing a sense of belonging can include but does not necessitate a shared nature of attachment, as the preconditions for belonging might vary substantially between people in the same locality. In contrast, social cohesion is primarily concerned with relations between people, while less attention is paid to place other than as a location for social interactions. Finally, belonging as based in (shared) emotional connections with a particular place and therefore necessarily located 'outside' the self might provide opportunities for the creation of communities of place beyond communities of identity, based on a sense of physical nearness and situated subjectivities (Antonsich, 2010; Diprose, 2008; Probyn, 1996).

Because belonging is assumed to include a recognition of oneself in the other (May & Muir, 2015), diversity is often considered to decrease belonging – resulting in feelings of displacement, alienation, and isolation – as well as to create exclusionary dynamics against those deemed Other. In particular, Putnam's (2007) study of social trust in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods – which found that increased ethnic diversity results in less social trust, causing residents to 'hunker down' (p. 249) – prompted a large body of research on the hypothesized relationship between ethnic diversity and decreased social cohesion (Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014 provide a critical meta-analysis). While methodologically sophisticated, these studies often depart from the perspective of the 'native' population and do not take into account the diversity between and within ethnically heterogeneous neighbourhoods. In contrast, both quantitative (e.g. Finney & Jivraj, 2013; Vervoort, Flap, & Dagevos, 2011) and qualitative (e.g. Anghel, 2015; Phillips, Athwal, Robinson, & Harrison, 2014) studies indicate differences between ethnic or racial groups in terms of what diversity means to them and their discourses of belonging. Furthermore, experiences are likely to differ between neighbourhoods depending on histories of neighbourhood diversity, local identity, and local norms (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2016; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Wessendorf, 2013).

Arguably, looking at different experiences of diversity and belonging becomes even more important in consideration of the growing (attention for the) diversification of migrant groups and their children, as well as differences within the 'native'

group (often assumed to be homogeneous). These experiences are influenced both by the 'compositional characteristics' of migrants or migrant communities and by the characteristics of the locality itself and its other residents, as well as by being embedded within broader institutional structures that shape people's abilities to recognize each other and interact as equals (Amin, 2002; Amin & Thrift, 2002). This complexity or super-diversity (as it is called by Vertovec, 2007) of many of today's Western urban areas raises theoretical but also methodological questions.

First, diversity is potentially a very broad concept as it may include anyone who is different from someone else or deviates from a stated norm in a socially meaningful way. However, any form of diversity needs to be actively constructed before it can be recognized and identified by others as a meaningful boundary. Although individuals' (intersectional) positioning towards well-recognized social and economic categories – including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, ability, age, and life-course – influences both their self-understanding and how they are perceived and judged by others, these positionalities do not have a fixed meaning but are fluid and contested (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Nevertheless, the institutionalization of social differences often obscures their socially constructed nature, making these distinctions seem anything but fluid. Thus, it is useful to make a distinction between 'objectively' observable diversity on the one hand and subjectively experienced difference on the other hand. In a similar vein, Lamont and Molnár (2002) distinguish between social boundaries – which they define as 'objectified forms of social difference manifested in unequal access to and distribution of resources (...) and social opportunities' – and symbolic boundaries or the 'conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space' (p. 168). The lived experience of social differentiation (Valentine, 2007) then depends on the interactions between social and symbolic boundaries, or which aspects of diversity are made salient as meaningful differences in a particular time and place. Focusing on the 'construction and constructive power of difference' (Jackson, Harris, & Valentine, 2017, p. 8) thus necessitates being sensitive to the ways diversity is presented from the outside in national and urban discourses on diversity and belonging, as well as to how difference is lived from the inside in residents' everyday encounters and the consequences for belonging.

Second, place is implicated in the construction of difference and its impact on belonging, as both arise from everyday socio-spatial practices (Clayton, 2009; Leitner, 2012). It is through encounters that difference is experienced and the other is categorized as an Other or a stranger: 'it is not possible to simply "be" a stranger, one

becomes a stranger through specific, embodied encounters' (Koefoed & Simonsen, 2011, p.2). Encounters are not only shaped by space but also themselves shape the spaces where they take place (Leitner, 2012). Thus, Amin and Thrift (2002) argue that cities are constituted by encounters, while Young (2011 [1990]) describes city life as the 'being together of strangers' (p. 240) who experience belonging to shared spaces and institutions without necessarily forming a community of mutual identification. As Clayton (2009, p. 483) puts it: 'the spatial, itself a product of competing discourses, practices and power relations, has the capacity to constitute, constrain and mediate social distinctions'. A reading of space as productive of difference – rather than merely reflecting pre-existing insider/outsider configurations (Clayton, 2009) – necessitates paying attention to the interactions between social and physical aspects of belonging, and in particular to the ways in which these are structured by place histories, meanings, and imaginaries (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2016; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Trudeau, 2006; Yeoh & Willis, 2005).

Wilson (2017) notes that the historical meaning of the term encounter is that of a meeting between adversaries, a usage which is still visible in its current application in work on urban diversity, where it has come to connote contacts characterized by underlying discomfort, prejudice, or fear. Taking a more hopeful perspective, researchers working on the geographies of encounters have studied how everyday encounters in (semi)public places, such as busses (Wilson, 2011), cafés (Laurier & Philo, 2006), and markets (Watson, 2009) contribute to urban sociality in the form of nearness to and tolerance of difference. However, others have noted that encounters might just as likely create feelings of anxiety through the same mechanisms of nearness and the sensuous perception of difference (Haldrup, Koefoed, & Simonsen, 2006; Wise, 2010) and thereby generate dis-belonging and reinforce prejudice and everyday racism. Shifting attention from public interactions to more privately held convictions, Valentine (2008) moreover argues that even positive encounters with group members might not scale up to change perceptions of the group as a whole. Such encounters and the emotions they engender are always embedded in wider power relations, which influence not only which categorizations are made but also who has the power to enforce them. These critical notes again raise issues of power inequalities between residents in terms of their ability to define place-specific rules of engagement, including who ultimately belongs there.

1.3 The politics of belonging: Constructing community, defining place

Current political and societal discussions in the Netherlands view ethnic (migrant) diversity as a threat to national belonging. Similar to developments in Western Europe at large, a 'backlash against multiculturalism' (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010) has resulted in the establishment of civic integration policies, signalling a renewed assertiveness of migrant-receiving countries to impose the 'native', mainstream culture on newcomers. The Netherlands is often considered the prototypical example of this shift (Joppke, 2007), and its public denunciation of previous multiculturalism has been labelled 'more extreme than elsewhere' (Vasta, 2007, p. 715). Demands for migrants' de facto assimilation can be seen as part of a more general 'civic turn' (Mouritsen, 2008) where the intention is to create or conserve social cohesion through a redefinition of citizenship that stresses its cultural and normative dimensions over and above juridical status (De Koning, Jaffe, & Koster, 2015; Schinkel, 2010).

In contrast to the politicization and polarization of diversity at the national level, some have argued that local governments – in particular those of large cities – may formulate more inclusive forms of belonging. As theorized by Bauböck (2003, p. 157), 'an urban citizenship that is emancipated from imperatives of national sovereignty and homogeneity may become a home base for cosmopolitan democracy'. From a more utilitarian perspective, literature on the 'business case for diversity' (Vertovec, 2012) and location decisions of the creative class (Florida, 2003) argues that (some forms of) diversity are attractive for local governments to establish and maintain, as these are seen as potentially economically profitable. More often, however, the 'local turn' in migration policy-making (Scholten, 2013a) can be described as cities' attempts to neutralize harmful diversity and establish a city-based identity, which nevertheless may entail divergence from national integration discourses (Dukes & Musterd, 2012). Such divergence has been explained by referring to local governments' assumed preference for instrumental and pragmatic courses of action – in contrast to the highly ideological nature of national level integration policy-making (Bak Jørgensen, 2012; Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008). However, such a neat division of labour overlooks substantial variation in cities' policies and their relation to the national level – with some indeed being more inclusive while others champion highly exclusionary policies (see e.g. Ambrosini & Boccagni, 2015 and Kos, Maussen, & Doomernik, 2015 for the former, and Gilbert, 2009 and Van Eijk, 2010 for examples of the latter).

Furthermore, national and municipal politics of belonging share a preoccupation with the very local level – the neighbourhood or even the street – as both the place where diversity-related problems would manifest themselves most clearly, and the place where ‘good’ citizenship should be demonstrated. In response to concerns about places and people that would be insufficiently integrated into Dutch mainstream society – bringing up dystopian images of ‘parallel societies’ outside of government control – both Dutch integration policies and urban policies more generally have focused their efforts on ethnically diverse and socioeconomically deprived neighbourhoods. The diversity of these places is thought to cause alienation between residents, resulting in feelings of unease or even fear – in particular among the ‘native’ population (Fortier, 2010). It is in the first place in the neighbourhood that all residents should experience a sense of belonging and feel like they are ‘at home’, a notion which has affective but also moral connotations (Duyvendak, Leenders, & Wekker, 2016) as policy efforts focus in particular on migrants and their children, whose integration would increase not only their own belonging but also that of the ‘native’ population. Moreover, these neighbourhoods are portrayed as alienated from ‘mainstream’, white middle-class society. Deprived and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods are framed in terms of failed integration (Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2008) and characterized as ‘low aspirational spaces’ (Raco, 2009, p. 441), whose inhabitants are subjected to pathological neighbourhood effects and a culture of learned helplessness.

The governance of urban marginality through integration (Uitermark, 2014) includes direct interventions in the housing stock through urban renewal and social mixing policies, but also many small-scale measures that aim to replace ‘pathological’ with ‘good’ forms of community, where the latter is characterized by shared norms and values among residents, a shared sense of belonging, and a willingness to work together with other residents and institutions to improve one’s neighbourhood. To counter alienation and increase belonging, urban policies strongly focus on participation. Participation would bring residents into contact with each other, and especially with Others in their neighbourhood, and enable them to become self-reliant and take steps to improve their circumstances and become socially mobile (and as a result become more like the imagined ‘mainstream’).

Urban policies focus on stimulating residents to become ‘active citizens’ and deploy initiatives in their local environment that facilitate meeting across ethnic boundaries and thereby mitigate ‘harmful’ diversity (Marinetti, 2003). Borrowing from communitarianist thinking, social cohesion – defined as residents having a shared

moral or cultural framework – is presented as antidote to alienation and community breakdown (e.g. Etzioni, 1995). Encouraging participation moreover fits within broader trends of welfare state reform and/or retrenchment that result in political decentralization and the ‘localization of the social’ (Amin, 2005). While encounters in public space have been criticized as too fleeting to be meaningful (Wilson, 2017), more positive benefits are expected from semi-public sites of regular association, including schools, workplaces, sports clubs, but also neighbourhood centres that are created as a result of government policies. As ‘micro-spaces of social contact and encounter’ (Amin, 2002, p. 959), these places would ideally be locations where residents can shed their ‘ordinary’ roles and engage in intercultural exchange and dialogue. Based on assumptions derived from Allport’s (1979) contact hypothesis – which states that the criteria for positive contacts between majority and minority groups are personal interaction, equal status, cooperation towards a common goal, and support of authorities – sustained engagement between individuals of different groups in a neutral space would lessen prejudice (Matejskova & Leitner, 2011). However, while in-depth studies show that such initiatives do create opportunities for interethnic encounter, mutual understanding does not necessarily follow (see e.g. Askins & Pain, 2001; Bloch & Dreher, 2009; Matejskova & Leitner, 2011; Phillips et al., 2014). Power dynamics within initiatives tend to reflect wider inequalities, causing particular voices and narratives to dominate the conversation (Phillips et al., 2014). Moreover, personal histories and narratives of place and belonging influence how individuals approach and experience encounters (Valentine & Sadgrove, 2012). Therefore, studying encounters as they unfold in specific (organizational, neighbourhood) contexts is vital for understanding the influence of such spaces on belonging. In particular, two issues deserve further scrutiny: the relation between encounters within local initiatives – as would-be micro-publics – and residents’ belonging to the wider neighbourhood, and the reflection of wider neighbourhood and urban policies that seek to stimulate active citizenship in local social dynamics. Fostering encounters is often a key objective of neighbourhood projects, and being open to all neighbourhood residents is usually a precondition for receiving financial support from the local government. In order to receive this support these initiatives need to position themselves within existing ideas of what the neighbourhood is and how it can be improved, and therefore engage in (indirect) attempts to define place meaning and identity. Through what Martin (2003a, p. 733) calls ‘place-based collective-action frames’, local organizations create a narrative of residents’ shared experiences as well as articulate a vision of how the future neighbourhood should be. Moreover, these collectives also need to present themselves as being *more*

representative of the neighbourhood and neighbourhood residents and as having a higher stake in its future than similar local organizations. Fraser's (2004) discussion of a neighbourhood revitalization initiative in Tennessee provides an illustration from the gentrification literature. Within this initiative, a sub-set of largely middle-class residents who had before only been organized internally, teamed up with project developers to market the area to up-scale buyers in exchange for resources for their community association. As Fraser notes, this process involved not only disseminating the new vision for the neighbourhood, but also the discursive construction of groups that opposed the development as 'obstacles to the dominant image of what the area should be' (p. 454). This example shows that while organizations aim to bring residents together on the basis of a shared sense of neighbourhood belonging, they can also become battle grounds of competing visions for the neighbourhood, and therefore function as instruments of exclusion rather than inclusion.

In addition, the embeddedness of neighbourhood initiatives in urban policies which prescribe highly normative forms of 'active citizenship' implies that the discourses and practices of institutional actors, in particular local officials, play a large role in the politics of belonging at the neighbourhood level (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008). Studies not only show that residents' lived experiences do not always line up with policy priorities (Robertson & Colic-Peisker, 2015), but institutional actors may also favour those resident groups whose interests and/or communication style are closest to their own (Fraser, 2004; Robinson, Shaw, & Davidson, 2005), while others are seen as less suitable partners. For instance, a study in a mixed-tenure and ethnically diverse housing block in Amsterdam showed that the block's management structure and everyday management practices exacerbated experiences of social distance between residents, as these favoured the interests of owner-occupiers over renters (Tersteeg & Pinkster, 2016). Other studies have found that ethnic minority groups and lower-educated residents are often excluded from nominally participatory processes due to (implicitly cultural and class-coded) perceptions of residents' capacities (De Wilde, Hurenkamp, & Tonkens, 2014; Dekker & Van Kempen, 2009). Taken together, these studies therefore highlight the relevance of the neighbourhood as a product of social but also political relations (Martin, 2003b) and of the embeddedness of neighbourhood initiatives in wider social and institutional dynamics.

1.4 Introducing the case studies

The design of this research is that of the exploratory (multiple) case study (Yin, 2003). The selection of cases took place at two levels: first, the two cities of Amsterdam and The Hague were selected – which are in turn embedded in the institutional context of the Dutch nation-state – to study municipal discourses of belonging and their relation to national policy discourses, as well as how these municipal discourses are translated into policy interventions in ethnically diverse and deprived neighbourhoods (sub-questions one and two). Second, within Amsterdam three neighbourhoods were selected for in-depth analysis of the influence of neighbourhood policy interventions on residents' experience of difference and their neighbourhood belonging (sub-question three). The following sections provide a brief introduction of these cities and neighbourhoods, as well as outline the theoretical considerations for their selection.

1.4.1 Two urban contexts

The selection of the cities (or municipalities) was loosely guided by the principles of 'most similar systems design' (Prezworski & Teune, 1970), meaning that the cities are similar in key respects while varying in the outcome of interest (here, policy discourses of belonging and their implementation). In the language of statistical analysis, such a selection rules out concomitant variation (Gerring, 2001). Given the qualitative nature of the study and the small number of cases (two), the comparison should be regarded as exploratory and directed towards understanding the meaning-structures ascribed to the outcome of interest in different contexts (Barbehön et al., 2015, see also Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012).

Comparing Amsterdam and The Hague is particularly interesting as, even though the populations of both cities are rather similar, they employ very different discourses of belonging. Amsterdam and The Hague are both large cities for Dutch standards, and as the capital city and the home of the national government they are both nationally prominent. Furthermore, they are both highly ethnically diverse 'majority-minority' cities (Crul, 2016), where the 'native' ethnic Dutch have become a minority,¹ although without losing their political and economic dominance. However, while Amsterdam has articulated a discourse in which diversity of different kinds is valued positively, in The Hague (ethnic) diversity is problematized much more.

1 Autochtonen or 'autochthonous Dutch', statistically defined as those of whom both parents are born in the Netherlands. In 2016, 47.9% of the The Hague population and 48.3% of the Amsterdam population could be classified as autochtoon, while a small majority in both cities is classified as allochtoon (first or second generation migrant).

Next to their similarities, there are also important differences between the cities which are likely to influence their discursive opportunity structures. Although an increasingly popular place to live, segregation levels in Amsterdam remain relatively low, partly due to its (still large although shrinking) share of social housing (Kadi & Musterd, 2015; Musterd, 2014). Amsterdam is generally considered to be a progressive, left-wing city, whose politics up till the 2014 municipal election have been dominated by the Labour Party. In contrast, ethnic segregation in The Hague is higher – although still relatively moderate compared to Anglo-Saxon countries (Musterd & Van Kempen, 2009) – and its political context more polarized. Since 2010, the radical right-wing populist party PVV is represented on the municipal council, as are two Islamic parties. Thus, the two cities face potentially different challenges in designing and implementing migrant policies.

1.4.2 Three neighbourhood contexts

Within Amsterdam, three neighbourhood case studies were conducted. In order to study the design and implementation of policy projects and their relation to the experience of difference and neighbourhood belonging, the neighbourhoods selected had to be (ethnically) diverse and have participated in (one or both of) the major area-based policies undertaken in Amsterdam in the 2008-2014 period². Selection for both policies proceeded based on a large number of (composite) indicators, including but not limited to assessments of residents' satisfaction and sense of security, of social cohesion and liveability, and indicators of socioeconomic position such as the share of social housing (a detailed critical discussion of this selection process can be found in De Wilde & Franssen, 2014). Similar to the majority of neighbourhoods that participated in these policies, the three neighbourhoods studied in this research are ethnically highly diverse, housing a large number of different ethnic groups and fewer 'native' Dutch than the city average, they are socioeconomically weaker than average with a higher share of unemployed residents and lower average incomes, and have a higher share of social housing than the city as a whole.

Nevertheless, these 'diverse and deprived' neighbourhoods still differ from each other in significant ways. Acknowledging that the politics of belonging is co-

2 These policies were the *Wijkaanpak* (2008-2012), which although conceived at the national level offered considerable autonomy to participating cities, and the *Hervorming Stedelijke Vernieuwing* (2013-2014), which was a local continuation of the *Wijkaanpak* policy. Next to more large-scale measures, both policies prioritized funding small-scale projects with significant involvement from residents in a limited number of neighbourhoods, which were deemed the 'worst' neighbourhoods of Amsterdam and/or the Netherlands. After 2014, many of these projects continued to receive funding through different means, while others were discontinued.

constituted through place and is therefore expected to differ between places, the selection aimed to create variation in terms of the neighbourhoods' social and physical characteristics. First, what constitutes (ethnic) diversity in a specific locality – in terms of its demographic composition but also in relation to its history and reputation – was thought to influence how (and where) one encounters the Other and experiences difference, resulting in particular constellations of (not)belonging. Similarly, built environment and location were expected to influence how residents relate to their neighbourhood in terms of place attachment, daily trajectories in and beyond the neighbourhood et cetera. Finally, by selecting neighbourhoods located in three different city-districts, differences in terms of the implementation of city policies and the design of neighbourhood policy interventions³ were also introduced. Combining these three aspects, the neighbourhoods selected are:

1. A post WW-II neighbourhood located in the Amsterdam New-West district, consisting mostly of social rental mid-rise housing but with some owner-occupied single-family homes, with a numerical and symbolic dominance of first and second generation migrants from Muslim countries – in particular Morocco and Turkey – although 'native' Dutch still constitute a quarter of the population
2. A 1920s neighbourhood in the Amsterdam North district, consisting almost exclusively of low-rise social rental housing – although there are plans to renovate and sell off part of the housing stock – where 'native' Dutch are the largest minority group at around 40 per cent of the population
3. A 1960s-1970s neighbourhood in the Amsterdam Southeast district that is mostly made up out of high-rise social housing, where residents are predominantly of Caribbean, African, and Latin-American descent with 'native' Dutch constituting only 14 per cent of the population

3 As of March 2014, the city-district governments are officially abolished and replaced by (less influential) governing committees. However, the city-districts remain relevant as they played a large role during the earlier phase of policy design and are still responsible for policy implementation.

1.5 Research methodology

This study uses a combination of qualitative research methods. The first part of the study addresses the first and second sub-question as it is concerned with the definition and delineation of belonging by national and municipal governments, seeking to chart and explain similarities and divergences therein. This part is based on an analysis of municipal policy documents and semi-structured interviews with policy-makers, external experts, and representatives of migrant associations. The second part addresses the third sub-question and considers the politics of belonging at the neighbourhood level by looking at the impact of local policy interventions on residents' experience of difference and sense of neighbourhood belonging. These chapters are based on qualitative fieldwork consisting of semi-structured interviews with residents and 'neighbourhood experts', participant observation in the neighbourhood and in the spaces of selected neighbourhood projects, and analysis of secondary sources such as policy documents and media reports.

1.5.1 Urban politics of belonging

Material

Twelve policy documents in Amsterdam and eleven in The Hague were selected through a keyword search on the respective municipal websites, as well as through recommendations of interviewees. The selected documents date from 2003 to 2013, allowing for the analysis of shifts in discourses over time. All policy documents expressly addressing migrants and/or diversity, integration, or citizenship were included, as well as documents detailing policies where migrants feature prominently (e.g. policies concerning adult education or women's emancipation). General policy papers detailing the plans of new administrations (called *coalitie-akkoorden* or *programma-akkoorden*) were also examined. A number of other documents (including for example documents authored before 2003, letters to the municipal council, evaluation instruments, and documents authored by city-districts) were also read, but not analysed in detail. The comparison of urban migrant policies with national level policy discourse is based on existing literature as well as the analysis of three prominent integration policy documents: the 2007 white paper 'Zorg dat je erbij hoort!' ('Make sure you're a part of it!'), the 2009 Integration letter to the Dutch parliament (accompanying the 2009 integration report) and the 2011 white paper 'Integratie, binding, burgerschap' ('Integration, connection, citizenship'). Appendix II provides an overview of policy documents analysed, both in Amsterdam and The Hague.

In addition to the document analysis, twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted with a number of 'policy stakeholders' between June and December 2014. Most interviewees were policy-makers at the municipal and district level in Amsterdam and The Hague, while a few others had been involved in the evaluation of migrant policies (e.g. as member of an advisory committee) or had an advisory role as representatives of migrant associations. Most policy-makers interviewed were civil servants, a few were (former) politicians. Potential respondents were contacted based on publicly available information and through referrals from other interviewees. Interviewees were involved with different policy terrains including diversity policy, citizenship policy, social welfare policy, and neighbourhood policy in Amsterdam, and integration policy, social welfare policy, education policy, and neighbourhood policy in The Hague.

Topics discussed varied based on professional role, but always included respondents' understanding of diversity and its relevance to their field of expertise and to issues in their city in general, their assessment of past and current migrant policies, the design of current policies (in particular, the designation of target groups and the spatial application of policies), and the relation between discourses and policy practices. Appendix III provides an overview of interview topics. Interviews, which generally lasted around 60 minutes, were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviewees were sent the transcript of their interview and asked to check it for any factual errors or incomplete information. In one case, this resulted in minor alterations of the transcript.

Analysis

The analysis of policy documents and interviews followed a discourse analytical approach based on the work of Foucault (1977; 1980; 1994). Discourse is defined here as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak (...) they constitute them and in doing so conceal their own invention' (Foucault, 1977, p. 499). Discourses determine what can be legitimately said and what is rendered unspeakable, therefore producing 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980) through which meaning-making and problematizing powers can be exercised. A central assumption is that concepts employed (such as diversity) do not have permanently fixed meanings, and may have different meanings depending on the discursive context. In the analysis, such concepts are considered to be 'floating signifiers': stakes in the ongoing struggle of competing discourses to fix their meaning (Phillips and Jørgensen, 2002). Therefore, the aim of the analysis is not to discover the 'real' meaning of policies or establish the 'objective' reality that they seek to change, but

rather to understand what is problematized and how this problematization reflects and reproduces particular worldviews (Barbehön et al., 2015).

A second, related, approach which informed the analysis is that of interpretive policy analysis (Fischer, 2003; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012; Yanow, 2007). This approach starts from the perspective that policy-makers create narratives through which they represent the social world. For this reason, interpretive policy analysis often makes use of participant observation and/or in-depth interviews to understand how meaning is conveyed through symbolic language and acts, and how policies construct and communicate group identity. Policy meanings are understood to be situation-specific, and the analysis is focused on understanding how they relate to and are embedded in the local context rather than generalizing to other cases (Yanow, 2007). In this dissertation, this approach was helpful to understand first of all how policy categories that tell stories about category members and the wider (urban) community are used for political and ideological purposes, and how these can be related to historical and spatial contexts. Furthermore, this approach directs attention to divergences between discursive utterances and policy practices (Fischer, 2003).

1.5.2 Policy interventions, residents' experience of difference, and sense of neighbourhood belonging

Material

The neighbourhood fieldwork – which looked at the role of policy interventions in shaping local politics of belonging – employed mixed methods, including semi-structured interviews with residents and 'neighbourhood experts', participant observation in and outside of neighbourhood projects, and an analysis of media coverage and policy documents. The interviews with residents formed part of a larger study that included neighbourhoods in Vienna and Stockholm (the Viennese interviews used in chapter 4 were also collected as part of this dataset) and were conducted using a common topic list (see appendix IV)⁴. The semi-structured, in-depth interviews discussed residents' sense of belonging to the neighbourhood as a physical and social place (including among other things their perception of neighbourhood diversity, social contacts in the neighbourhood, daily trajectories, length of residence in the neighbourhood, and willingness to move) and their knowledge and use of neighbourhood facilities, including neighbourhood projects. Questions on respondents' personal characteristics were also asked.

4 More information about the design and outcomes of this larger study can be found on the project website, www.icecproject.com

In total, 93 residents were interviewed (27 in Amsterdam North, 32 in Amsterdam New-West, and 34 in Amsterdam Southeast). Selection proceeded along two criteria. First, as the aim was to explore the influence of neighbourhood projects on residents' experience of difference and sense of belonging, around half of the residents interviewed in each neighbourhood participated in selected neighbourhood projects and half did not. Second, the study aimed to include residents with a variety of (self-identified) ethnic or national backgrounds. In particular, the sample had to include both a substantial number of residents belonging to the numerically and symbolically 'dominant' neighbourhood group(s)⁵ and of residents belonging to various 'minority' groups in the context of the neighbourhood. Furthermore, as much as possible considering the limited number of residents interviewed in each neighbourhood, attention was also paid to achieving a balanced distribution in terms of gender, age, socioeconomic status, and length of residence. Appendix V provides an overview of interviewed residents' characteristics per neighbourhood. Interviews were conducted in Dutch or English and tape-recorded with respondents' permission (in case respondents did not want to be recorded, extensive notes were made during the interview). The length of interviews varied greatly, with some as short as twenty minutes and others as long as two hours. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using the Atlas.ti software programme.

In addition, 26 'neighbourhood experts' were interviewed. These respondents were employed by the district government (8), social welfare organizations (6), housing associations (3), and other local organizations (9). These interviews focused on respondents' work in the neighbourhood and their assessment of local neighbourhood projects. Furthermore, in each neighbourhood the research included participant observation at selected projects and in the wider neighbourhood. I attended various activities and local festivities, engaged in numerous informal conversations with residents, and collected local news clippings, flyers, and photographs. Participant observation formed a way to come into contact with residents who were hesitant to be interviewed, and whose experiences of belonging would otherwise have remained invisible. Moreover, my observations at neighbourhood projects allowed me to better interpret residents' interview narratives and to experience first-hand the influence of these spaces in terms of the social and emotional dynamics they engendered.

5 Dominant neighbourhood groups were considered to be 'native' Dutch residents in Amsterdam North, residents of Moroccan or Turkish descent in Amsterdam New-West, and residents of Surinamese, Antillean, or Ghanaian descent in Amsterdam Southeast.

The fieldwork in Amsterdam North was conducted between October 2014 and February 2015 by the researcher. Fieldwork in Amsterdam New-West (March-July 2015) and in Amsterdam Southeast (April 2015-January 2016) was carried out with the help of two research assistants per neighbourhood who conducted the interviews with non-participating residents. A variety of recruitment methods were used: respondents who participated in neighbourhood initiatives were mostly contacted through these initiatives or through snowball sampling. Non-participating residents were (except in Amsterdam North) contacted through a flyer in Dutch and English distributed in selected streets, followed by door-to-door calls to houses which had received a flyer. A limited number were also recruited through snowball sampling, convenience sampling (approaching people on the street and in local parks), and through neighbourhood media.

Analysis

The coding process took place in two steps. First, for each neighbourhood all interviews were coded according to the themes of the topic list as well as additional themes that emerged from the data. For each interview, a summary was written discussing the main points articulated by the respondent as well as any contextual information deriving from fieldwork notes or impressions at the time of the interview. Second, these summaries were related to each other in order to chart the range of experiences present within the neighbourhood and discover commonalities without losing sight of the individual narratives from which these are derived. Given the qualitative nature of this study, the aim of the analysis is theoretical or analytic generalization rather than statistical generalization. Thus, I seek to generalize to theory rather than to a general population, and I do not assume that my case studies are representative of such a general population (Yin, 2003). The primary aim of the collection and analysis of the fieldwork material is to 'generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experiences' (Silverman, 1993, p. 91) while taking into account that these experiences are always embedded within particular social and policy contexts.

Diversity and belonging are conceptualized as 'sensitizing concepts' (Blumer, 1954), whose exact attributes were not specified in advance. Rather, these concepts functioned as guidelines to structure the research. What constitutes diversity and what makes up their neighbourhood was left to residents themselves and thus became an outcome of the analysis rather than being pre-determined. Therefore, the interviews explored respondents' connection to their neighbourhood without a priori relating this to their experience of difference, ethnic or otherwise. Similarly,

questions about diversity were purposefully kept abstract and are intended to refer to any aspects of difference that are salient to the respondents.

Finally, researchers have long known that the relevance of the neighbourhood differs between residents, and that the scale of their attachments and activities seldom corresponds to 'official' definitions of the neighbourhood (Galster, 2001; Kearns & Parkinson, 2001). Interviews therefore explicitly discussed respondents' perception of neighbourhood boundaries, as well as what they understood as 'their' neighbourhood. The latter was often a smaller area, with respondents describing a nested hierarchy of places (Kusenbach, 2008) and being more engaged with their direct environment (usually one's own street, gallery, or apartment block). On the other hand, especially in Amsterdam Southeast many residents expressed a strong sense of belonging to an area larger than their own neighbourhood (the Bijlmer neighbourhoods or even the entire district).

1.6 Reading guide

This dissertation is composed of five empirical chapters divided into two parts. These five chapters are based on articles published in, or submitted to international peer reviewed journals and have been copied in full⁶. Part I concerns the politics of belonging at the national and urban level and how this is manifested in diversity, integration, and neighbourhood policies.

Chapter 2 investigates the relationship between national and urban migrant policy discourses. Analysis of policy documents in Amsterdam and The Hague shows that both cities deviate from the neo-assimilationist national discourse, in particular through a focus on urban citizenship as an overarching identity category. While offering opportunities for a more inclusionary belonging, these discourses at the same time draw new distinctions based on normative ideas of citizen participation.

Chapter 3 asks where these city-specific discourses on migrants and diversity originate and how they are implemented. Rather than being solely driven by pragmatic considerations, this chapter proposes that urban imaginaries or tacitly shared imaginations about a city's past, present, and future nature are important to understand differences between cities as well as divergences between policy discourse and practices 'on the ground'.

6 Some minor linguistic changes were made, for example replacing 'in this paper' by 'in this chapter' and spelling was harmonized across the chapters. Appendix I provides an overview of the publications.

Part II consists of case studies conducted in three neighbourhoods in Amsterdam and one in Vienna, where the focus is on the role that neighbourhood organizations (understood as micro-level policy interventions) play in residents' sense of belonging to the neighbourhood and neighbourhood social dynamics.

Chapter 4 demonstrates the influence of neighbourhood policies and broader institutional structures on the design of local 'spaces of encounter' through a comparison of a Viennese and an Amsterdam neighbourhood. The findings show that whereas neighbourhood policies seek to create 'thick' forms of community – and design local projects accordingly – residents find that increased superficial contacts and public familiarity strengthen their neighbourhood belonging. More sustained encounters on the other hand run the risk of generating conflicts between residents and between residents and neighbourhood professionals.

Chapter 5 investigates residents' competing claims on a neighbourhood centre that was intended as an inclusive facility. Residents' attachments to the centre as a functional and meaningful place should be understood along intersecting lines of ethnicity, class, gender, and religion, and reflect and affect not only their sense of belonging to the wider neighbourhood but also inform ongoing struggles to determine its place identity. Governing institutions played an ambivalent role in these politics of place through their changing support for some resident groups over others.

Chapter 6 asks how policy notions of active citizenship correspond to residents' emotional geographies. While policy interventions target residents' presumed alienation and lack of participation, residents articulate a sense of neighbourhood belonging based on their appreciation of diversity and engagement in informal practices of social support. Professionals involved in the local neighbourhood centre mediate these different conceptions by creating personal and emotionally charged relations with participants while simultaneously reinforcing dominant interpretations of 'good' citizenship.

Finally, chapter 7 summarizes and connects the main findings, discusses the theoretical and societal implications, and points out directions for further research.