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SEGREGATION IN EUROPEAN CITIES: PATTERNS AND POLICIES

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INTRODUCTION

The image of violence and despair associated with the black American ghetto has proved to be a powerful metaphor for the judgement of developments in European cities. Despite reassurances from social scientists (Wacquant 1993; Peach forthcoming; Musterd & Ostendorf 1995) the possible occurrence of social exclusion, divided cities, and neighbourhoods left behind – especially within an ethnic context – has attracted the attention of the media and politicians. Although one should never take these kinds of warnings lightly, it appears that the recurrent focus on the black ghetto did more or less obstruct a comprehensive European approach towards the study of ethnic segregation and concentration. Can we describe a European metaphor instead of using the black American ghetto? In general, should we worry about (the effects of) ethnic segregation? What kinds of policy reaction have been devised at the local and national government levels in Western Europe?

These questions were asked in a research project that was commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior. This contribution draws heavily upon the results that were published in the spring of 1996 (Breebaart *et al.* 1996)

URBAN RESTRUCTURING AND ETHNIC SEGREGATION

Over the past decade, urban social scientists were quick to link the increasing global economic pressures and constraints to the fate and fortunes of

urban communities (e.g., Sassen 1991). Although no consensus exists about the precise effects of the restructuring – some even question the global character – many social scientists and politicians relate the economic restructuring to an increase in deprivation of certain population categories, low-skilled immigrants in particular. Whether a particular spatial element is important remains to be seen. In general, loss of 'old' jobs can lead to devastating social blows on a neighbourhood or even city level. However, the mismatch between demand and supply of jobs often operates more subtly and qualitatively instead of quantitatively. In Amsterdam's infamous Bijlmermeer neighbourhood more than 15,000 unemployed (relative to a total population of 86,000 in January 1996) live at a stone's throw from an industrial park which offers thousands of jobs.

It is tempting to link the 56.5% ethnic minorities in the Bijlmermeer to the social and physical problems that are indeed quite visible. Frequently, the concentration and spatial segregation of the minorities involved, is seen as detrimental to their integration in society. Low levels of spatial segregation in society – in education, social life, places of residence and work, implying better opportunities to get in touch with each other – are commonly regarded to facilitate social integration. However, a certain level of segregation could also be seen as an asset in the survival strategy of poor immigrants right after their arrival in a new society. Besides, not every instance of ethnic segregation is seen as a problem; Japanese expatriates in Amsterdam or Düsseldorf are seldom mentioned. It appears that segregation gets its ominous undertone when

'those who are left behind' live segregated from those with a better position in society. The prime example of this is the American black ghetto. Anyone living in such an area appears to have little opportunity to escape, as opposed to the situation in which 'the same person' would live somewhere else (Massey & Denton 1993). This concentration effect is unacceptable to a proponent of a European-style welfare state, and this might explain the sensitivity to 'American situations' that we found in all countries in our research. Recent riots, and other tensions in which ethnicity plays at least a part (London, Paris, Brussels), combined with the fact that many European welfare states may be beginning to resemble the American welfare state, at least in terms of a shift to the market sector and a reduction of subsidies, social welfare and health care systems, and the penetration of American culture in European countries through the media (television, movies) at times function as a trigger for the latent fear of American situations.

As long as the American metaphor has not been replaced by a European one, it will shape the perception of many Europeans. In fact, remarkably little research has been done on the development of a 'European' model. As a first step, we describe the patterns of segregation in six European cities.

PATTERNS OF SEGREGATION IN SIX EUROPEAN METROPOLISES

Research directed towards a better understanding of ethnic segregation in Western Europe requires the use of neighbourhood-level statistical data for several metropolitan areas. It goes without saying that thorny methodological questions arise when comparing cities in different countries. The simultaneous research in all cities enabled us to evade most pitfalls, and it will be indicated where caution

is appropriate (see also Breebaart *et al.* 1996, p. 164).

In the study of segregation, one comes across the Index of Segregation and Index of Dissimilarity. Despite well-known deficiencies these indices are still widely used, and suitable for our purposes. The results of the Index of Segregation (see table 1) show considerable variation within the group of six metropolitan areas. Segregation in both German cases – Frankfurt am Main and Düsseldorf – is remarkably low. A breakdown of the statistical material shows that the Index of Dissimilarity of individual nationalities hardly reaches 30. Only the Japanese in Düsseldorf live highly segregated with indices above 60. High scores are also reached in Brussels. The Turkish and Moroccan nationals live segregated with indices above 60. The overall index of 40 for Brussels could be considered as relatively low, in view of the numerous foreign diplomats and professionals who live in upper class neighbourhoods. London and Amsterdam occupy intermediate positions, although the aggregate index of London hides a high level of segregation for the ethnic Bangladeshi group – close to 70.

By definition, the segregation indices are not very pertinent to geographical questions about the actual spatial distribution of population categories within the metropolitan area. Figure 1, comprising six maps, shows the distribution of the aggregate category of ethnic minorities (or foreigners). Although the aggregate category hides some variation at the level of the individual categories, it is possible to distil three typical patterns. Ethnic minorities are to be found primarily in the centre of Frankfurt am Main, Düsseldorf and to a lesser extent Brussels where the higher skilled immigrants tend to live in the suburbs and the lower skilled in the centre. Interestingly enough, low levels of segregation were calculated in the German cities despite the existence of clear concentration neigh-

Table 1. *Share of ethnic population and index of segregation.*

	Year	Population	Share (%)	Index of segregation
Amsterdam	1995	719,923	32.2	32
Brussels	1991	952,131	28.5	40
Frankfurt am Main	1994	658,815	28.3	17
Düsseldorf	1993	585,168	16.3	19
London	1991	6,679,699	20.1	37
Paris	1990	10,660,075	13.8	-

* due to data limitations no segregation indices could be computed for Paris

bourhoods of up to 80% immigrants. A detailed look proves that these neighbourhoods consist of many different nationalities living together.

In Paris and Amsterdam, concentration neighbourhoods can be found outside the city centre. London is in an intermediate position with concentrations all over the area. The highest concentration mark is reached in London with 90.3% (of which 90% belong to the category 'Indian Continent'), an impressive score considering the 11,000 inhabitants in the relevant neighbourhood.

STATE AND LOCAL-LEVEL POLICIES

The lack of a generally accepted theory of segregation implies that policy reactions can only be based on restricted insight in the phenomenon. Still, we found that all cities devoted a certain degree of formal policy attention to segregation issues. To get a grip on the complex issue of policy comparison, two dimensions for analysis were created. First of all, a distinction was made between state and local-level policies. Secondly, we defined general policies as accessible to all, irrespective of ethnic origin or nationality, and specific policy, that is only accessible to specific national or ethnic categories. Both general and specific policies could be of an integrative area-based character or of a sectoral type (housing policy, labour market policy etc. separately). Two types of specific policies come to the fore: spatial dispersion of ethnic categories or specific nationalities, and efforts to compensate for the social disadvantages of these categories.

It was found that all countries except France have devised specific policies towards immigrants. The response of the French government to the disturbances in the summer of 1995 in the *banlieu* did not take ethnicity into account, although it is

clear that mainly ethnic minorities from North Africa were involved. The preference for general policies could be explained by the universal French policy towards immigrants that has up till now been dominated by assimilation objectives and a generous naturalisation policy. All ethnic groups are seen as French, therefore there is no need for specific programmes.

Spatial dispersion policies – Table 2 gives the story of spatial dispersion policies up to 1995. The discussions were mainly about the assumption that a dispersed migrant population, and consequently a better mixed population, would help integration in society and avoid a rise of ethnic ghettos (for the Dutch case, see Van Praag 1981). In practice, spatial dispersion proved to be unsuccessful, primarily because of conflicts with the national constitutions or with prevailing interpretations of democracy or other ideologies.

In Belgium, a nation-wide spatial dispersion policy was operational until early 1995. Municipalities were allowed to refuse settlement to non-EU citizens on the basis of section 18bis, once they received permission from the federal government. However, insiders considered the effects of that law as only marginal. In their view section 18bis was merely meant as a signal to the indigenous population rather than an effective instrument.

Only Frankfurt am Main worked with an ongoing dispersal policy, the *Frankfurter Vertrag*, that was signed by the municipality, the housing authority and the important private housing developers. The core of the treaty establishes a ceiling on the shares of several population categories in each neighbourhood. Although the treaty was developed to prevent the rise of ghettos, there have been several counter effects. Some old neighbourhoods already house 60% or more immigrants and

Table 2. *Spatial dispersion: policy and effectiveness, 1995.*

	Policy	Effects
Amsterdam	Discussion 70s (s, l), 80s (l)	Unsuccessful
Brussels	Section 18bis (s)	Abolished in 1995
London	Discussion 70s (s)	Unsuccessful
Frankfurt am Main	Discussion 70s (s) Frankfurter Vertrag 90s (l)	Unsuccessful Operational
Düsseldorf	Discussion 70s (s)	Unsuccessful
Paris	No debate	

Note: s = debate/policy at national level; l = debate/policy initiated at local level

Fig. 1. Segregation patterns in major European cities.

Ethnic group non-White in Greater London, 1991.

Foreigners in metropolitan Paris, 1990.

Foreigners in Düsseldorf, 1993.

Ethnic minorities in Amsterdam, 1995.

Foreigners in Frankfurt am Main, 1993.

Foreigners in the Brussels Capital Region, 1991.

Legend

Greater London

non-White; ethnic groups Black, Indian Continent, Chinese, Other Asian and Other. They represent 20.1% of the Greater London population.

Source: OPCS census, MCC & UK borders.

Paris

Foreigners: 13.8% of the population of metropolitan Paris does not have the French nationality

Source: INSEE.

Amsterdam

Ethnic minorities; ethnic groups Black Caribbean (Surinamese and Antillean), South Mediterranean (Turks and Moroccans), North Mediterranean and non-Industrialised countries. Their share of population is 32.2%.

Source: O+S, Het Amsterdamse Bureau voor Onderzoek en Statistiek.

Düsseldorf

Foreigners: 16.3% of the population of Düsseldorf does not have the German nationality

Source: Heinrich-Heine Universität.

Frankfurt am Main

Foreigners: 28.3% of the population of Frankfurt am Main does not have the German nationality

Source: Amt für Statistik, Wahlen und Einwohnerwesen, Stadt Frankfurt.

Brussels

Foreigners: 28,5% of the population of the Brussels Capital Region does not have the Belgian nationality

Source: N.I.S. volkstelling 1991, KU Leuven kaartmateriaal.

could house more because of the type of dwellings available. Under the treaty, further growth is impossible and this even leads to vacancies because few indigenous German households want to live in a 'foreign' area. On the other hand, some high rent areas have serious problems in attracting sufficient numbers of immigrant households to settle there, again with vacancies as a threatening result. Here too the higher income German households try to stop the (modest) invasion of immigrant households. Furthermore the rental sector is not large enough to house all immigrants. These immigrants are forced to rent or buy on the private market. The experience is that those who rent in the private sector are frequently worse off.

It is noteworthy that of those cities in which spatial dispersion policy actually became operational, all belong to countries in which local authorities are relatively powerful versus national government. Besides, the timing of the discussion seems to be in line with an awareness of the permanency of the presence of immigrants.

Compensating policies – Instances of specific compensating policy were found in all countries. Even in France (some) special attention is directed at the education of immigrant children. The United Kingdom and the Netherlands seem to have taken the lead. Table 3 presents a summary. There are no examples in which both spatial dispersion policies and compensating measures were applied at the same time at a significant level. In Amsterdam the end of the discussion on spatial dispersion policies coincided with the start of the discussion on compensating measures at around 1978. In recent years the attention for a special policy declined in favour of a general policy. The same type of change – from specific to general – was also seen in the United Kingdom. Former section 11 funds that were meant to stimulate integration of immigrant households, are included in the Single Regeneration Budget. In effect, earmarking of funds for ethnic minorities was reduced. At the local level a number of initiatives have been taken to improve the position of ethnic migrants, like linkworkers, ethnic monitoring, and equality tar-

Table 3. *Compensating policy.*

Case	Compensating policy			
	General	Education	Housing	Labour
Amsterdam	xx	xx	-	xx
Brussels	x	x	-	x
London	xx	x	x	x
Frankfurt am Main	x	-	-	-
Düsseldorf	x	-	-	-
Paris	-	x	-	-

Note:

The difference between -, x and xx reflects the intensity and scope of the formal policies that were found in the cities. For a more comprehensive overview of the policies and the research methodology, see Breebaart *et al.* (1996).

gets. Still, the overall direction of change is from specific to general policy.

Remarkably, the metropolitan area with the highest index of segregation in table 1 – Brussels – shows little specific policy, especially compared to Amsterdam. Some recent initiatives might close the gap, but it is questionable whether the fiscal crisis of the Belgian state will allow all initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS

No clear-cut European type of ethnic segregation in terms of patterns or policies could be found in our investigation. Significant differences exist between European cities with regard to patterns of ethnic segregation, especially with the remarkably low segregation in the German cities. No link could be established between patterns of segregation and policy initiatives. Spatial dispersion poli-

cies were found in the city with the highest level of segregation (Brussels) and the lowest level (Frankfurt am Main). Instances of compensating policy found in Amsterdam and London did not seem to be closely connected to segregation per se, for substantial changes in policy went without similar changes in segregation indices.

The gradual change from specific to general policies and the apparent accompanying reduction of state involvement could indicate a trend which might refuel expectations of the American situation. However, if one really wants to compare with the United States one should take into account the unique position of African Americans compared to other groups (Massey & Denton 1993) and therefore include these other groups in the picture. Little research has been done on this topic, which is not surprising considering the complexity of international comparison.

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