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Musterd, S.; van Kempen, R.

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## OUTLOOK ON EUROPE

# SEGREGATION AND HOUSING OF MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS IN WESTERN EUROPEAN CITIES

SAKO MUSTERD\* & RONALD VAN KEMPEN\*\*

\**University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies, Nieuwe Prinsengracht 130, 1018 VZ Amsterdam, the Netherlands. E-mail: s.musterd@uva.nl*

\*\**Utrecht University, Faculty of Geosciences, PO Box 80.115, 3508 TC Utrecht, the Netherlands. E-mail: R.vanKempen@geo.uu.nl*

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### ABSTRACT

Segregation of minority ethnic groups is a returning issue in public and political debates in many parts of the world. This paper focuses on Western European cities and presents information on levels and dynamics of segregation. While acknowledging the measurement problems, we feel comfortable in saying that overall segregation levels do not appear to increase. However, big differences exist, not just between immigrant groups in one city, but also between similar groups in different cities and countries. 'Integration' processes of those who settled a long time ago may be counterbalanced by new and difficult to predict immigration. Likely, individual preference, availability of resources, the role of the state, globalisation and economic restructuring as well as discrimination simultaneously impact on segregation.

**Key words:** Segregation, dynamics, Western Europe, index of segregation, housing

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### INTRODUCTION

More than American cities, cities in Europe are characterised by mixed neighbourhoods with respect to ethnic origin. While in the US numerous neighbourhoods are completely Black, or almost completely Italian, Puerto Rican, or even Irish, such large mono-ethnic areas in European cities are exceptional, while in Eastern European cities ethnicity and immigration hardly plays a role (see e.g. Musterd 2005; Kovács 2009).

European cities offer a quite differentiated and complex panorama in terms of segregation (Arbaci 2007). This complexity can partly be traced back to the immigration history of different groups. The diversity has to do with

the colonial past of countries such as the UK, France and the Netherlands. Numerous individuals moved from the (former) colonies to Western Europe with the aim of finding a better existence. Since the 1960s, countries like Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and Sweden have recruited labour migrants, first from Southern European countries, but later also from countries like Morocco and Turkey. These migrants were called guest workers since the prevailing idea was that most of them would return to the country of origin after 'the job would have been done' (Van Kempen 2005). Over recent decades, refugees and asylum seekers added to the number of immigrants in almost all European countries.

However, many guest workers decided to stay in the host countries and started to bring over their families. The host countries slowly realised that they had become immigration countries.

On the housing market, opportunities for immigrant families were limited. In most of the countries they simply did not have enough money to afford a decent house. Housing market mechanisms and individual orientations resulted in some spatial concentrations of migrants, and thus relative segregation from others.

In this short paper, we focus on the segregation of minority ethnic groups in Western European cities. The aim is to give a sketch of the segregation levels of immigrant groups in Western European cities and to provide some ideas about how to understand them. But we start with a few words on the measurement of segregation.

### MEASURING SEGREGATION

One of the most frequently used measures of segregation is the index of dissimilarity (ID). A special form of the ID is the IS (index of segregation); in that case the reference group is comprised of all the other people in the area under investigation. The main advantage of this measure of unevenness of spatial distributions is that it can be interpreted easily and that it is independent of the sizes of the population categories in the entire urban system. The index runs from 0 (no segregation) to 100 (maximum) (Duncan & Duncan 1955). However, the size of the ID is not only dependent on the pattern of segregation, but also on the size of the areas used in the calculations. The larger the area, the lower the ID value will be (Woods 1976). This limitation impedes comparability between cities within a country and between countries. On top of that, the availability of comparably defined data is a problem. In some contexts a certain group may be defined on the basis of nationality, in others on the basis of birth place, and elsewhere self-identification is used.

### SEGREGATION IN EUROPEAN CITIES

Despite these limitations, the ID and IS values are indicative for the different levels of segregation. Therefore, we will show some values for

a number of cities across Europe (see Table 1). The figures should be read as indications for qualitative differences (see also Musterd 2005; Van Kempen 2005). From Table 1 it can be inferred that there is no systematic data registration on segregation in Europe. There are gaps and few data are available over a longer time period and for recent years. However, if we condense the information and focus on the most recent information (1998–2004) some idea can be given of the actual levels of segregation and differences between groups and cities. This is shown in Figure 1.

From Table 1 and Figure 1 we draw four conclusions. First, the simple conclusion must be drawn that ethnic segregation exists in all selected cities. Immigrants and their descendants have different patterns of spatial concentrations than those who are regarded as 'indigenous'. This holds for the cities for which we have figures, but without doubt for any other city in Europe.

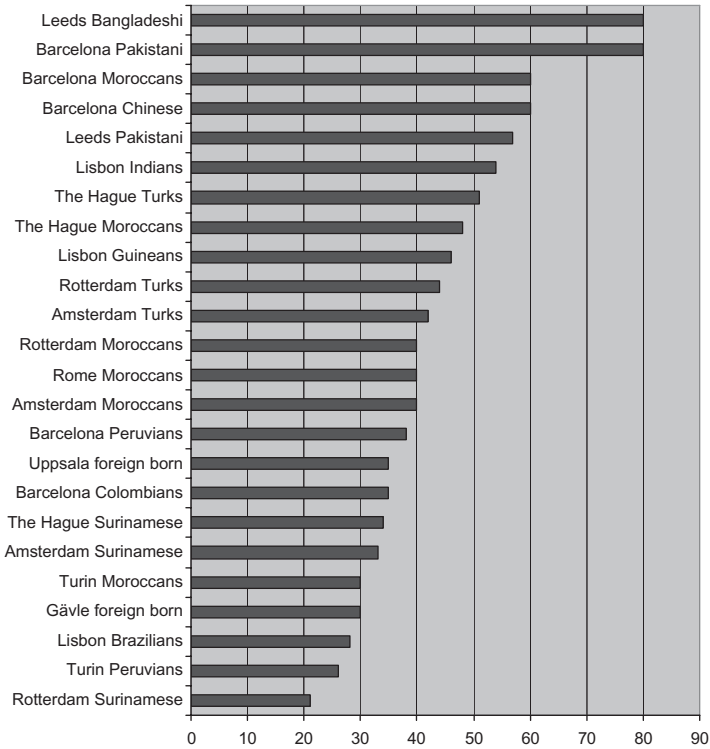
Second, as far as we can see, it is clear that in the course of time the values of the indices generally do not massively increase. In some cases there is a small tendency of increase (for example, the Moroccans in Amsterdam), but the dominant tendency is one of stability or decreasing levels of segregation. This finding is supported by research that focused on the dynamics. An analysis of mobility with regard to existing ethnic concentrations of Turkish and Moroccan Amsterdammers revealed that more Turkish and Moroccan residents left the existing concentrations than settled there (Musterd & De Vos 2007). It is true that many ethnic minority residents move to another concentration area (Bolt *et al.* 2008), but it is also true that the number of residents who are able to find a place elsewhere is increasing (Burgers & Van der Lugt 2005 for Rotterdam; Musterd 2006 for Amsterdam).

A third conclusion is that big differences exist between the same groups in different countries (compare the Turks in The Hague and Cologne) but also between different cities within the same countries (e.g. Turks in Amsterdam and The Hague). This may be explained by different cultures and origins of the Turkish communities in these cities, or it may be related with local conditions in the housing market or labour market.

Table 1. Segregation index for selected cities and selected migrant categories, 1986–2004.

	1986	1991/2	1993/4	1995/6	1997/8	2000/1	2002/3	2004
<i>Amsterdam (NL)</i>								
Turks	39		41		42			42
Moroccans	37		39		41			40
Surinamese	34		34		34			33
<i>Rotterdam (NL)</i>								
Turks			53	52		48		44
Moroccans			50	47		43		40
Surinamese			30	29		24		21
<i>The Hague (NL)</i>								
Turks	65			55		51	51	51
Moroccans	57			50		49	48	48
Surinamese	46			40		37	34	34
<i>Brussels (B)</i>								
Moroccans		59						
<i>London (UK)</i>								
Bangladeshis		75						
Indians		54						
Black Caribbean		49						
<i>Birmingham (UK)</i>								
Bangladeshis		79						
Indians		56						
<i>Leeds (UK)</i>								
Bangladeshi		79				80		
Pakistani		61				57		
<i>Cologne (D)</i>								
Turks			33					
Yugoslavs			26					
Italians			27					
<i>Frankfurt (D)</i>								
Turks			19					
Yugoslavs			23					
<i>Lisbon Metro (P)</i>								
Brazilians		33				28		
Guineans		51				46		
Indians		54				54		
<i>Madrid (E)</i>								
Peruvians				22				
Moroccans				27				
<i>Barcelona (E)</i>								
Peruvians							38	
Colombia							35	
Moroccans							60	
Pakistani							80	
Chinese							60	
<i>Turin (I)</i>								
Peruvians							26	
Moroccans							30	
<i>Rome (I)</i>								
Moroccans					40			
<i>Uppsala (S)</i>								
Foreign born					35			
<i>Gävle (S)</i>								
Foreign born					30			

Sources: Peach (1996); Gullberg (2002); Malheiros (2002a, b); Martori *et al.* (2005); Musterd (2005); Stillwell & Phillips (2006); Arbaci (2007); Bolt *et al.* (2008).



Sources: Peach (1996); Gullberg (2002); Malheiros (2002a, b); Martori *et al.* (2005); Musterd (2005); Stillwell & Phillips (2006); Arbaci (2007); Bolt *et al.* (2008).

Figure 1. Segregation index for selected cities and selected migrant categories, 1998–2004.

Fourth, there are big differences between different groups within cities (for example, between Bangladeshis and Blacks in London; Surinamese and Moroccans in Dutch cities; Brazilians and Indians in Lisbon; Columbians and Pakistanis in Barcelona; and so on). These differences seem related to differences in cultural distance; especially language issues play a role and possibly explain a good deal of the variance.

## HOUSING (AND OTHER) CONDITIONS

Spatial concentrations are associated with housing conditions, although some of the associations in fact seem to be due to household characteristics. Some references to these conditions may help to understand some of the spatial inequalities we find.

**Tenure (and socio-economic position)** – Minority ethnic groups generally concentrate in the rental sector, while they are under-represented in the owner-occupied sector. In Belgium, France, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, more than 85 per cent of the Turkish households are tenants. This is for a large part a consequence of their low and insecure incomes (Van Kempen & Özükren 1998a). With rising affluence of immigrants in these countries owner-occupation among minority ethnic groups increases (De Villanova 1997; Glebe 1997; Kesteloot *et al.* 1997).

**Size of dwelling (and household size)** – Minority ethnic households often have less space per person in the dwelling compared to native households. These differences can, again, for a large part be explained by the lower incomes of

ethnic minority households. It also has to do with the fact that minority ethnic households concentrate in cities, where dwellings are generally of smaller size. The larger household size is also an explaining factor. This specifically holds for some categories, like Turks and Moroccans (see e.g. Tesser 1995).

**Housing quality and age of the stock** – Some studies on housing conditions indicate that minority ethnic groups live in housing of lower quality than those who have settled long ago. But this does not mean that these ethnic groups automatically live in the oldest stock or in houses of bad quality. In Sweden, for example, Turks are concentrated in the post-Second World War housing stock, built between 1965 and 1974 (part of the ‘million housing programme’). These dwellings and areas are considered as unattractive by the Swedes, which largely explains the concentration of Turks. But the rented dwellings where the Turks live in are generally built to high standards and do not show significant differences with the municipal rented dwellings where low-income Swedes live (Özüekren & Magnusson 1997). Also in the Netherlands the largest concentrations of the largest minority ethnic groups (Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese) can be found in the post-Second World War housing stock and not (anymore) in the older pre-Second World War stock. Also in Belgium Turks and Moroccans are less concentrated in pre-Second World War dwellings than 20 years ago, with the exception of the city of Brussels. Still, however, their housing conditions are consistently worse compared to other nationalities (including the Belgians). The Moroccans are even worse off than the Turks (Kesteloot *et al.* 1997).

### EXPLANATIONS OF SEGREGATION AND HOUSING CONDITIONS

Explaining patterns and processes of segregation, housing conditions and differences between groups with respect to segregation and housing conditions can only be done adequately by taking into account numerous factors, developments and contexts (Van Kempen & Özüekren 1998b; Van Kempen & Murie 2009). Moreover, explanations vary according to approach. Here we only give a

brief account. The general argument in the ethnic-cultural approach is that housing conditions and residential patterns differ between groups. These differences are attributed to cultural differences. There is a clear element of ‘choice’ in this approach; the ethnic-cultural approach does not include constraints in the explanation. This approach is used by those who try to explain spatial concentrations by referring to the desire to live together in one area. However, the choice for social rented dwellings or specific own-group concentrations, for example, may perhaps be seen as a cultural preference, but it may also be a defensive reaction against discriminative or racist practices of landlords in the private rented sector or a response to offensive reactions in public debates (e.g. Sarre *et al.* 1989; Bowes *et al.* 1990; Phillips 1998; Musterd & Ostendorf 2009).

Developments in patterns of segregation are – given certain constraints – the consequence of the process of residential behaviours of all groups in the city and the interchange between groups of people in the city and the rest of the world. Part of the process of residential mobility can be attributed to forces that apply to all groups. In behavioural approaches, for example, choices of households are directly linked to positions and events in the family life cycle (see e.g. Clark *et al.* 1997). In their view developments in household characteristics are major determinants of housing (and locational) preferences. Positions in the life cycle are crucial factors: establishing a durable relationship, starting a family, contraction of the family, and the death of a partner are all situations that influence the household’s size, its preferred type of dwelling and its preferred place of residence (Rossi 1955).

However, the value of the behavioural approach is largely determined by the extent to which households are able to fulfil their preferences. But what about the constraints? Household income is a major determinant of patterns of segregation and housing conditions. But in many West European countries, the state has had a strong influence on the demand and supply sides of the housing markets as well. Especially in countries like France, the Netherlands and Sweden, the number of social rented dwellings has been very important in the supply

of housing as well as the individual rent subsidies on the demand side. By providing social rented dwellings and individual rent subsidies, the state ensures that low-income households can obtain decent housing. In other countries the social rented sector has either declined very rapidly, for example, the United Kingdom (Murie & Musterd 1996) or has never been very large (as in Belgium; see Kesteloot *et al.* 1997). In a retreating welfare state, the number of affordable dwellings will almost inevitably decline (Özüekren & Van Kempen 1997).

There is another possible influential factor. Exclusionary policies of local authorities and private landlords may force ethnic minorities into (substandard) owner-occupation, even in an early stage of their housing careers (Ward & Sims 1981; Phillips & Karn 1992).

Developments on a macro-spatial level can influence the choices and opportunities of households and individuals (see also Sarre *et al.* 1989). Households operate within the societal, demographic, economic and political context of their countries, regions and cities and all of these contexts will affect residential behaviour, also of ethnic minority groups.

## CONCLUSIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Comparing patterns of segregation, as well as housing conditions of minority ethnic groups is a difficult task due to the lack of comparable data. Even more difficult is the explanation of the patterns and processes of segregation and the housing conditions of these groups. Despite these difficulties, some important conclusions can be drawn from this contribution.

Patterns of ethnic segregation in European cities are dynamic but levels of segregation are generally not increasing. There are indications that a good deal of segregation of ethnic groups, and their overrepresentation in 'weaker' sections of the housing market, must be ascribed to their socio-economic position. Large differences in segregation patterns exist between groups, between cities within countries and between countries. Adequate explanations of levels of segregation include general theories and notions (behavioural aspects, the availability of resources, the role of the state, discrimination, etc.), but also local issues.

It is difficult to say what can be expected with regard to ethnic segregation in European cities in the decades to come. Social and cultural distances are path and context dependent and thus also depend on migration itself. It is difficult to predict where wars will develop and where not; where food problems will arise and where they will stay unknown; where economic crisis will be deep or not. These are the factors that impact upon global migration and these processes thus impact upon the ups and downs of international migration flows with respect to cities in Europe as well. This is an insecure condition.

However, it seems clear that those who settled some decades ago slowly started to get embedded in new cultural and continuously changing environments. This is not a process without problems, but progress can be detected. Economic and social indicators reveal that the gap between former immigrants and those who settled in cities generations ago are declining; this pushes segregation down. Some cultural differences, however, are, for a small selection of immigrants, still relatively large. Some politicians cannot resist using these cultural gaps for populist purposes. This may become particularly risky when the economy goes down, because then it is an easy job to suggest that financial and economic crises are related to the immigration of specific groups. It is a task of researchers to resist these explanations by describing actual processes and by offering new insights that can help to understand them.

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