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Living in concentrated poverty

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2. Local social networks and social resources in two Dutch neighborhoods

Submitted. Co-authored by Beate Völker.

Abstract

Much research in neighbor relations is inspired by two research questions. First, one wants to know to which degree social contacts are local and in particular whether local social contacts in disadvantaged neighborhoods bear an instrumental disadvantage. Second, one wants to know whether policies aiming at mixing people from different social and ethnic backgrounds result in more diverse networks and therefore in better opportunities for low income residents. To address these questions, we compare the role of local relationships and the social resources they provide in a low income neighborhood and a socio-economic mixed neighborhood in The Netherlands. Contrary to assumptions in the research literature, residents in the low income neighborhood do not differ from their counterparts in the mixed neighborhood in the degree to which they receive social support for dealing with everyday problems. However, networks of low income residents provided less resources in terms of accessed prestige.

Keywords: neighbor relations, social networks, social resources

2.1 Introduction

The undesired consequences of concentrated poverty are a recurring topic in the political debate on low income neighborhoods in the Netherlands as well as in many other Western European countries and in the United States. Recently, the Dutch Ministry of the Interior has expressed strong concerns about segregation in the larger cities: “While the physical and economic infrastructure [of cities] has shown a strong improvement in recent years, the urban social structure continues to be confronted with a concentration of low income households, exclusion, non-participation, health problems, safety issues, and non-integration” (BZK, 2004, p. 17). The debate about disadvantaged neighborhoods centers on the question of how segregation inhibits integration and how living in an area of concentrated poverty exacerbates the already marginalized position of poor, low educated and/or minority residents (Musterd, 2003). Although empirical evidence for such neighborhood effects is relatively scarce and inconclusive in the European context (Galster, 2007), these concerns have nevertheless contributed to policies of social mixing. In Dutch low income neighborhoods renewal programs replace social housing with more upscale rental and owner occupied housing in order to attract more affluent residents.



Mirroring the attention in policy practice for social mixing, the consequences of living in low-income neighborhoods have also been the focus of much research. Neighborhood researchers study the association between neighborhood characteristics, such as the degree of ethnic and income mix, and individual outcomes such as employment and social mobility, level of educational attainment of children, teenage pregnancies and criminal behavior, whereby higher levels of neighborhood disadvantage are often found to be related to unfavorable social outcomes (Friedrichs, Galster & Musterd, 2003; Galster, 2003; Sampson, Morenoff & Gannon-Rowley, 2002; Small & Newman, 2001). One explanation for this relationship focuses on the social context of low income neighborhoods and the negative influence of neighbor relations. Although it is widely recognized that people's activity patterns and their social life generally exceed the neighborhood level (Schnell & Yoav, 2001), it has also been shown that this is less the case for unskilled, low income and minority residents (Fischer, 1982). Consequently, the 'limited resource' or 'social isolation' hypothesis for neighborhood effects assumes that the social networks of residents in low income neighborhoods are particularly local oriented and lack useful social resources to improve their lives (Wilson, 1987). This paper builds upon this argument by studying the social relationships of people who reside in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

We use survey data from a case study in The Hague, the Netherlands to compare the degree to which social resources are provided through local relationships. Our interviews were conducted with social housing residents in the low income neighborhood Transvaal-Noord and the socio-economically mixed neighborhood Regentesse. A Dutch case study on local social networks can provide an interesting perspective on the question of how severe neighborhood conditions need to be to trigger processes of social isolation. Many neighborhood studies are driven by the assumption that the relatively heterogeneous population composition in low income neighborhoods in European cities and the living conditions in these neighborhoods might not reach the necessary thresholds of concentrated poverty to evoke processes such as social isolation (Musterd, Murie, et al., 2006). This argument is thought to be particularly relevant for social welfare states such as Netherlands (Ostendorf, Musterd, et al., 2001; Musterd & De Vos, 2007): levels of socio-economic and ethnic segregation in Dutch cities have been traditionally low as a result of a large supply of affordable social housing, extensive redistribution programs of the welfare state and active involvement of the central and local government in low income neighbourhoods. Indeed, while the case of Transvaal-Noord represents an extreme case of concentrated poverty in the Netherlands, it constitutes a mild case from an international perspective and it is therefore questionable whether social isolation might occur.

2.2 How neighborhoods influence social resources

Social relations form an important source of information and social support (Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1995; Lin, 1999). Whom we know, determines what type of social resources are available to us to shape, change and improve our lives. Some relations help us to get by and cope with everyday problems, by babysitting our kids or lending money to pay the rent. Others are more useful to 'get ahead' in life by providing information and new opportunities and connecting us to

formal institutions or structures, such as the housing or labor market. This is also referred to as the distinction between expressive social resources and instrumental social resources (Lin, 2001; Wellman, 1992). Expressive resources confirm social positions and are generally more abundant than instrumental resources that are thought to facilitate upward social mobility (Van der Gaag & Snijders, 2005). This is related to the fact that expressive resources are generally provided by family and friends from similar backgrounds with access to similar information, while instrumental resources are provided by people with different backgrounds who have access to different information and institutions. Often, similar ties are strong, while dissimilar ties are weak (Granovetter, 1973). A more diverse or heterogeneous personal network with more weak ties is thought to provide better instrumental resources or bridging social capital than a homogeneous personal network dominated by strong ties that provide bonding capital (Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Halpern, 2005; Portes, 2000; Putnam 2000, 2004). In the case of low income families, a social network existing of network members of similar socio-economic background is therefore expected to bear an instrumental disadvantage.

Researchers who study neighborhoods and the effects of neighborhood characteristics on individual networks and individual well-being often argue that the population composition of the neighborhood influences the degree to which personal social networks are homogeneous or more diverse and thereby the resources available to residents' to improve their social position. The neighborhood is viewed as a potential place of interaction where one meets potential network members and the social composition of this meeting place thereby shapes the resulting personal network (Feld, 1981; Verbrugge, 1979; Volker & Flap, 2007; Wellman, 1996). This restriction to the locale is in particular assumed for low income residents who are expected to be more locally oriented in their social contacts, because of their lack in financial or material resources, e.g. to cover larger distances (Briggs, 1997; Dawkins, 2006; Kleit, 2001; MacDonald, Shildrick, Webster & Simpson, 2005; Sampson, Morenoff, et al., 2002; Small & Newman, 2001; Small, 2007; Tigges, Brown & Green, 1998). If low income residents also live in a low income neighborhood, this will, consequently, negatively influence the degree to which these residents have access to the different types of resources. This is also referred to as the 'limited resource' or 'social isolation' hypothesis (Wilson, 1987). Simply put, it is hypothesized that homogeneous low income neighborhoods lead to homogeneous social networks of residents which in particular lack 'useful' instrumental resources for climbing up the social ladder. Consequently, low income residents in disadvantaged neighborhoods are expected to be worse off than their counterparts in more mixed neighborhoods. While local contacts of the former are limited to other low income dwellers, the latter have access to contacts of higher socio-economic positions. For residents in a low income neighborhood, therefore, it can be said that they lack the useful contacts with more affluent and better educated neighbors, even though they might receive various forms of personal support from their neighbors. In contrast, the networks of low income residents in more mixed or affluent neighborhoods are expected to be more diverse, providing the instrumental resources that facilitate social mobility.

While these ideas have been dominant in shaping policy measures, questions can be raised about the actual importance of neighborhood contacts for low income residents and the nature of

these contacts. Several studies raise doubts about the benefits of social mixing, as they have found little evidence in heterogeneous neighborhoods for interaction between residents of different backgrounds (Clampet-Lundquist, 2004; Kleit, 2005; Schnell & Yoav, 2001): although the neighborhood composition was mixed with regard to the social and economic background of residents, on a micro level of personal interactions little mixing was found. Residents mainly interacted with neighbors who were similar to themselves. This might be explained by the fact that people generally prefer to interact with those of similar backgrounds, such as education, occupational status, age and ethnicity (Fischer, 1977; Verbrugge, 1977).

Similar evidence for limited interaction between residents of different backgrounds in mixed neighborhoods has been found in the context of the Netherlands. In newly restructured neighborhoods most affluent newcomers have socio-spatial action patterns that transcend the neighborhood and that they do not really identify themselves as being part of a neighborhood community (for example Van Beckhoven & Van Kempen, 2003; Duyvendak, Kleinhans & Veldboer, 2000). In most cases, however, the aim of these studies is to evaluate changes in the community in a given neighborhood as well as in the perceived social cohesion amongst residents, rather than changes in actual relations amongst neighbors and in the personal networks of residents. Unfortunately, no insight is provided in how renewal programs focused on diversifying the housing stock and the resulting influx of more affluent residents have improved or worsened the resources and opportunities available to the remaining residents.

Another group of researchers focuses on the nature of neighborhood relations in mixed neighborhoods rather than only on the degree to which residents interact. They question whether the benefits for low income residents of living in a mixed neighborhood are not overestimated. Briggs (1997, p. 202), for example, points to possible negative effects of mixing in terms of a loss of social support: *“For decades, researchers have pointed to the importance of ethnic and other ties in creating networks of social support, which often depend on close contacts with similarly situated individuals [...] In some new neighborhood contexts, housing mobility programs may actually leave the poor with less of this social support dimension of social capital - the kinds of resources that help individuals and families get by or cope with chronic poverty. The same programs may leave the same people with more of other types of social capital, including “social leverage” - social resources that help change people’s life chances or help them get ahead”*. The question then is whether the benefits of social mixing through urban renewal outweigh the drawbacks of forcing people to move away from their support network. The argument is that living in a homogeneous neighborhood might provide the type of social resources that forms a springboard for residents to improve their social positions, for example in the case of ethnic communities (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Portes, 2000). Low income residents in mixed neighborhood might miss these types of social resources.

Finally, some researchers reject the view on neighborhood contacts as an asset, at least for low income neighborhoods. Rather, they interpret neighborhood relations in low income neighborhood in a negative way and state that residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods are less likely to interact or trust each other than residents in more affluent neighborhoods due to crime and other forms of neighborhood disorder (Ross, Mirowsky & Pribesh, 2001; Sampson, Morenoff, et

al., 2002). This perspective on social life in disadvantaged neighborhoods offers the bleakest hypothesis about access to social resources: living isolated not only from mainstream society but also from each other, residents lack any kind of support.

To summarize, there are competing hypotheses about the role of neighborhoods in influencing the structure (homogeneous/heterogeneous) and type of social resources (expressive/instrumental) and networks available to low income residents. There is, however, little empirical evidence to support or reject these hypotheses in the context of the Netherlands, as well as elsewhere. The aim of this paper is therefore to compare the personal social networks of residents in the social housing sector in two urban neighborhoods in their degree of local orientation, socio-economic structure and support. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. To what degree are personal social networks of social housing residents in a low income neighborhood and mixed neighborhood locally oriented?
2. How do the social networks of social housing residents in the two neighborhoods differ in terms of socio-economic prestige, the importance of family ties, and ethnic composition?
3. Do social housing residents in the two neighborhoods differ in the amount of social support provided via their network?

2.3 Research design

To address these research questions a case study was conducted in two neighborhoods in The Hague, The Netherlands. The Hague shows the highest level of residential segregation in the Netherlands and income segregation has increased over a period of six years, despite a decline in low income residents overall (SCP & CBS, 2003). Within this urban context, two research areas were selected with different levels of socio-economic mix. Both neighborhoods are centrally located and were built in the late nineteenth century. The first neighborhood can be viewed as an ‘extreme’ case: the low income neighborhood of Transvaal-Noord is one of the most marginalized neighborhoods in the city. The share of households with an income below the poverty line is more than twice the city average and unemployment is high. The adjacent neighborhood of Regentessekwartier was selected based on the fact that this is one of the few socio-economically mixed neighborhoods in the city. The share of households below the poverty line and the level of unemployment reflect the city average. Table 1 reports the demographics of the two research areas. Note that while the low income neighborhood is considered an extreme case in the Dutch context, the share of households below the poverty line is still only one third of all households in the neighborhood.

Table 1: Demographics research area (Source: Statistics Netherlands 2004)

	Transvaal (Low income)	Regentesse (Mixed)
Residents (n)	4350	5030
Social housing (%)	76	27
Share of families with income below poverty line, of which...	33	18
On unemployment benefits	53	45
Share of families with income in highest income group (top 20%)	5	14
Average yearly disposable income (per person in euros)	8,300	12,300
Working population without job (%)	50	26
Household structure (%)		
Single	44	52
Family, no kids	19	24
Family with kids	37	26
Non Dutch (%), of which....	88	54
Surinamese	18	26
Turkish	24	6
Moroccan	16	6
Immigrant non-developed country	19	13
Immigrant developed country	3	11

In these neighborhoods, a survey was performed amongst social housing residents between the age of 18 and 65. As the selection of residents on the basis of income is rather problematic – data on personal incomes at the individual level are unavailable and a selection question about one’s personal income at the beginning of an interview is rather tricky – residents were selected on the basis of living in social housing. Respondents were randomly selected from an address database provided by the local government of all social housing units in the two neighborhoods. In view of the relatively large share of low-educated and minority residents, 399 questionnaires were collected face-to-face by interviewers of different, and where possible matching, ethnic backgrounds. To gather information about residents’ social networks the survey used a combination of methods. The questionnaire included some general questions about the residential location of respondents’ family and friends. Because neighbourhoods are “neatly segregated geographical spaces” (Sayer, 2000) and are experienced differently by individual residents, it was left to the subjective perception of residents whether network members lived ‘in the neighborhood’.

In addition, two individual social capital methods, the position generator method and the resource generator method, were used to collect more detailed information about the resources in and locality of residents’ networks. These individual social capital measures were partially adapted from the Social Survey of the Networks of the Dutch (SSND, see Volker & Flap, 2002). The first method, the position generator, provides insight in the degree to which respondents potentially have access to social resources by measuring the different occupational positions of their network members (Lin & Dumin, 1986; Lin, 2001). The assumption behind this measurement instrument is that network members with a higher job prestige can give access to better instrumental resources

that are needed to improve their social position, such as finding a job. For disadvantaged residents, such relations with people in prestige-rich positions might thus act as bridging or weak ties. To measure the prestige of respondent’s social networks, they were confronted with a list of 22 occupations, ranging from domestic work to being a judge. If they knew anyone with such a job, they were asked the ethnic background of network members, whether they lived in the neighborhood and the nature of the relationship (family, extended family or friends and acquaintances; in contrast to other studies the categories of friends and acquaintances were combined, because this distinction was not made and understood by respondents). For each occupation or position a prestige score was calculated based on standardized codes for occupations of the Central Bureau of Statistics. These scores were used to create four indicators for socio-economic diversity: the percentage of occupations known, the range in accessed prestige calculated as the difference between the highest position and the lowest position, the prestige score of the network member with the highest occupational position and an average prestige indicator.

The second measurement instrument for social resources, the resource generator, (Van der Gaag & Snijders, 2005) determines the degree to which residents receive various forms of social support in their daily lives from alters in their social network. Questions about practical support in the personal or home domain (i.e. helping out with the groceries in case you’re sick or giving advice in case of family problems at home) provide information about residents’ access to expressive resources. Questions about support in dealing with formal or political institutions, financial support and support with regards to work are used to measure instrumental resources. In this survey, respondents were confronted with a list of 11 examples of personal and leverage support. They were asked whether anyone in their surroundings could provide such support, and if so, what their relationship was and whether this person lived in the neighborhood.

Finally, the survey included questions about respondents’ residential history, their reasons for moving to the neighborhood, the degree to which they were satisfied with the neighborhood and their wish to move. These questions were raised to give some insight into the degree to which residential selection mechanisms might be related to local social networks. A danger in comparative studies is “to mistake neighborhood or other effects for selection effects with a group of ‘upwardly mobile poor’ who differ by internal position or motivation to succeed” (Briggs, 1998, p. 196). The question is thus whether potentially different outcomes in the location, structure and resources of residents’ networks can be attributed to differences in residential context rather than solely to compositional differences of the two neighborhood groups. To address the issue of selection further differences between the two neighborhood groups will be analyzed whilst controlling for individual characteristics of residents such as ethnic background or level of education. Nevertheless, the issue of selection remains a methodological caveat (Galster, 2008).

2.4 Research population

In both neighborhoods, our respondents scored lower in terms of level of education and employment than the neighborhood average and belonged more often to an ethnic minority (see Table 2). This is expected considering our selection of respondents in the social housing sector and their

relatively low socio-economic positions compared to residents in the owner-occupied or private rental sector in these neighborhoods. The two residents groups differ in some aspects: social housing residents in the low income neighborhood of Transvaal are more often unemployed than their counterparts in the mixed neighborhood of Regentesse and the level of education is somewhat lower. The ethnic composition of the two neighborhood populations differs greatly in that residents in Transvaal are more often of minority background and of different ethnic backgrounds. At the same time the two neighborhood groups do not differ in terms of migration history, age or sex.

Table 2: Respondents' demographics by neighborhood (N=399)

	Transvaal (Low income)	Regentesse (Mixed income)
Age (mean in years)	41	42
Education (%)		
Less than high school	31	22
High school (<4 years)	25	26
High school (>4 years)	28	33
University / Professional training	16	20
Employed (%)	36	46
Occupational prestige (current or last job in %)		
Low	70	56
Middle	23	32
High	7	12
Household structure (%)		
Single	26	36
Family, no kids	16	15
Family with kids	55	44
Other	3	5
Non-Dutch (%), of which	95	68
Surinamese	34	32
Turkish	28	13
Moroccan	20	19
Immigrant non-developed country	16	14
Immigrant developed country	2	14
First generation (imm. as adult)	54	56
First generation (imm. as child)	28	26
Second generation	18	18

With respect to their residential history and intentions to move, no differences were found between the two neighborhood groups. More than one third of the respondents indicated that the move to their current neighborhood was a conscious choice and one in every three residents had family or acquaintances living in the neighborhood before they moved there. In the low income neighborhood of Transvaal, family relations were more important, while in the mixed neighborhood of Regentesse friends and acquaintances were more important. The average length of residence is rather similar in both neighborhoods which is unexpected in view of the fact that one

might expect the low income neighborhood to be more of a transition neighborhood or at least a neighborhood that people want to leave, if possible. This does not seem to be the case. In fact, three out of four of the residents in Transvaal feel at home in the neighborhood. Also, the share of residents who want to move does not differ between the neighborhoods, although residents from Transvaal more often want to leave the area.

2.5 Local social networks

Respondents were asked to what degree their family, friends and acquaintances lived within their own neighborhood. Results indicate that social housing residents in both neighborhoods are to a considerable degree locally oriented in their social contacts: one out of four residents indicate that the majority of their family lives in their own neighborhood and one in every three residents indicates that the majority of their friends and acquaintances live within the neighborhood. Thus, the neighborhood can be regarded as a very important place for social interaction. Further analyses show that residents in the two neighborhoods show remarkably similar degrees of local orientation in their social networks, despite the differences in their educational and social backgrounds (see Table 3).

Table 3: OLS Regression analysis for degree of neighborhood orientation of social network (standardized coefficients)

	Family members	Friends and acquaintances
Sex (ref=male)	0,035	-0,022
Age	-0,144**	-0,109
Education (ref=low)		
Middle	-0,017	-0,006
High	-0,092	-0,051
Employed	-0,005	-0,011
Ethnic minority (ref=Dutch)		
Surinamese	0,192**	-0,018
Moroccan	0,191**	-0,006
Turkish	0,276***	0,094
Other Western immigrants	0,052	0,018
Other non-western immigrants	0,014	-0,018
Family with children	-0,100	-0,004
Low income neighborhood (Transvaal)	-0,031	0,053
Years in neighborhood	0,149**	0,154***
Model summary		
R ²	0,113	0,049
N	319	330

Statistically significant: *** p<0,01; ** p<0,05; *p<0,10; a not measured for resource items

Several other factors determine the degree to which residents are locally oriented in their social networks. In the case of family networks residents of Surinamese, Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds are considerably more neighborhood oriented than Dutch and other minority residents. Younger residents are more neighborhood oriented than older residents, which probably relates to the fact that younger residents are often second generation immigrants who grew up in the neighborhood. Also of importance is how long one has lived in the neighborhood. Finally, families with children are slightly less neighborhood oriented than other households. Gender, employment and level of education, on the other hand, do not influence the degree of neighborhood orientation. In contrast, the share of friends and acquaintances in the neighborhood is much less easy to predict on the basis of individual characteristics such as age or ethnicity. Only the number of years that residents have resided in the neighborhood is positively related to a more localized network.

These findings indicate that the social networks of social housing residents in both the low income and the mixed neighborhood are considerably locally oriented. It does not, however, provide insight into the question of who these neighborhood contacts are and to what degree they provide social resources. Our next steps in the analysis is therefore to look at respondents' potential access to instrumental resources based on the socio-economic prestige in their networks and the degree to which they actually receive various forms of social support.

Socio-economic prestige

The socio-economic pattern of residents' social networks was measured using a position generator method, as described previously, as an indicator for respondents' potential access to instrumental resources. The findings are reported in Table 4. On average, our respondents know only about 22 % of the possible occupations, which is low compared to what is known from the Dutch population (49 %, source: Van der Gaag, 2004). There is some difference between the two neighborhoods in terms of this indicator for socio-economic prestige: residents in the mixed neighborhood know slightly more people than the residents in the low income neighborhood. This suggests that there is a small, but statistically significant difference in network size. There is little difference, however, in terms of the highest position accessed, the range of occupations known or the average prestige of the positions accessed. In other words, social housing residents in the mixed neighborhood of Regentesse are acquainted with a slightly larger variety of occupations, but these are not occupations with a higher prestige status.

Table 4 also provides some more insight in the structure of residents' networks. In terms of neighborhood orientation, almost half of all occupations are accessed through network members that live in the same neighborhood as the respondent. A difference was found between the two neighborhood groups: social housing residents in the low income neighborhood of Transvaal are considerably more neighborhood oriented than residents in Regentesse as far as their accessed prestige is concerned. In terms of the nature of the relations, strong ties are more dominant than weak ties: 60 % of all network members are family rather than friends or acquaintances. Residents in the low income neighborhood refer even more often to family relations rather, of which a considerable share is extended family, than residents in the mixed neighborhood. Finally, in terms of

ethnicity, the dominance of the own ethnic group in residents' networks and the small share of Dutch network members is striking: more than half of the non-family ties have the same ethnic background as the respondents and the majority of them are other ethnic minorities. If we include kinship ties, 84 % of residents' social network is of similar ethnic background as the respondent. No statistically significant differences were found between the two neighborhoods.

Table 4: Socio-economic prestige in residents' networks in percent (N=394)

	Transvaal (Low income)	Regentesse (Mixed)	All
Socio-economic prestige			
Share of occupations known	20	25***	22
Range in prestige (diversity)	39	42	40
Highest prestige	68	71	69
Average prestige	46	47	47
Share of accessed positions through neighbor relations			
	52	38***	46
Type of relationship			
Family	32	29	31
Extended family	33	21***	27
Friends/acquaintances	36	50***	42
Ethnic diversity (incl family relations)			
Same ethnic background as respondent	84	81	83
Other ethnic background than respondent, but also minority	10	10	10
Other ethnic background than respondent, Dutch	6	9	7
Ethnic diversity (excl family relations)			
Same ethnic background as respondent	58	54	56
Other ethnic background than respondent, but also minority	31	36	34
Other ethnic background than respondent, Dutch	11	10	11

Difference between neighborhoods statistically significant: *** $p < 0,01$; ** $p < 0,05$; * $p < 0,10$

Social support

Another way to gain information about respondents' access to social resources is to measure the degree to which they receive various forms of social support, using the resource generator as described above. As shown in Table 5, in terms of access to social support, the social housing residents indicate that they know someone in 63 % of the case. These scores are relatively low compared to the findings of the Survey of Social networks of the Dutch (71 %, source: Van der Gaag, 2004). There is also considerable variation between the items in how often residents have access to specific forms of support. In general, personal support seems more abundant than leverage support. Indeed, the lowest scores are found for the most concrete examples of leverage support: providing a summer-job for a family member (38 %), borrowing money (42 %) or helping or advising on finding a job (49 %). No statistically significant differences were found between the two neighborhoods in terms of either personal or leverage support, which contradicts the assumptions in the research literature.

While there are no differences between the two neighborhoods in terms of received support, differences exist in the type of network members providing social support. First, kinship ties form the most important source of support: more than half of all support is provided by family members, mostly by direct family (parents, siblings or children) but also by more extended family (cousins, aunts and uncles). Friendship ties are another important source of support, while the role of co-workers or professionals is minimal. Again, there is considerable variation in these findings for different forms of social support (data not shown): two thirds of the expressive resources are provided by family in contrast to half of all information and financial support and less than half of the work-related support. For these forms of support respondents rely more on professional help. There is also some variation between the two neighborhoods: networks members in the low income neighborhood context are more often family relations than in the mixed neighborhood context, in particular due to the role of extended family in Transvaal.

Table 5: Social support in residents' networks in percent (N=376)

	Transvaal (Low income)	Regentesse (Mixed income)	All
% of social support	61	63	62
Personal support	73	78	75
Work support	50	48	49
Information and financial support	57	58	57
support through neighborhood contacts	66	58**	62
Personal support	71	64**	68
Work support	61	47***	54
Information and financial support	64	57	61
support provided by...			
Family	46	43	45
Extended family	13	8**	11
Friends/acquaintances	32	36	34
Coworkers	2	2	2
Professionals	7	10	9

Difference between neighborhoods statistically significant: *** $p < 0,01$; ** $p < 0,05$; * $p < 0,10$

In terms of location, contacts in the neighborhood form an important role in residents' support networks: 62 % of the network members who provide some form of support live in the same neighborhood as the respondent. However, there is considerable difference in the type of support that neighborhood relations provide: support in the personal domain is more often provided by network members living in the neighborhood than other forms of support, in particular work-related support. Moreover, there is considerable difference between the two neighborhoods in the share of neighborhood contacts in their support network: in the low income neighborhood 66 % of all contacts live in the neighborhood against 58 % in the mixed neighborhood. The contrast between neighborhoods is greatest with regards to work-related support. Thus, while residents at first glance did not differ in the general orientation of their networks (see previous paragraph), they

differ with respect to the residential location of those network members who are most important to them.

2.6 Residential context and neighborhood orientation

In the previous paragraph, a picture emerges of rather homogeneous social networks considerably oriented at the neighborhood, particularly amongst social housing residents in the low income neighborhood. Of obvious interest to this study is the question of whether these differences in neighborhood orientation in terms of socio-economic prestige and actual support remain after controlling for differences in population composition.

To gain more insight into the differences between the neighborhoods in the degree to which socio-economic prestige is neighborhood-based, a multivariate regression model was estimated (see Table 6, model 1) including both personal characteristics alone and residential location. The strongest effects on neighborhood based prestige were found for education and ethnicity: compared to respondents with a low education residents' with a medium and a higher education are less locally oriented in their networks in terms of accessed prestige. Compared to Dutch respondents residents of Moroccan and Turkish background are more locally oriented. Other characteristics, such as gender, having children, being employed, age and years of residence in the neighborhood do not have an effect on the share of network members in the neighborhood. Note that after controlling for these personal characteristics, a relationship remains between neighborhood context and the degree to which socio-economic prestige is neighborhood based, albeit significant only at the .10 level. For residents in the low income neighborhood of Transvaal network prestige is more locally provided than for residents in Regentesse, the mixed neighborhood.

In addition, Table 6 includes two multivariate regression models for the differences found in neighborhood orientation in personal support (model 2) and work-related support (model 3) to discover whether these differences can be explained by personal characteristics or also by residential location. First, in the case of social support in the personal domain, neighborhood orientation is related to various personal characteristics, such as age (negative) and gender (negative for women). Surinamese and Turkish residents are more neighborhood oriented than other ethnic groups and the longer one has lived in the neighborhood, the higher the share of support provided by neighborhood relations. When controlled for these personal characteristics, neighborhood context is no longer a factor of influence in the degree to which neighborhood contacts are an important source of social support. In other words, the differences in neighborhood orientation in terms of personal support between the two neighborhoods can be largely explained by differences in population composition. In contrast, in the case of work-related support, neighborhood context remains a factor of influence in terms of the degree of neighborhood orientation with regard to work ($p < 0,10$): respondents in the low income neighborhood are considerably more neighborhood oriented in terms of work related support than respondents in the socio-economically mixed neighborhood. This mirrors previous findings reported in a qualitative study on informal job networks in the neighborhood of Transvaal (Pinkster, 2007). Other factors of influence are the number of years of residence (positive) and whether respondents work themselves (negative).

Table 6: OLS Regression analysis for degree of neighborhood orientation of a person's resources (standardized coefficients)

	Model 1 Position generator	Model 2 Resource generator (personal support)	Model 3 Resource generator (work support)
Sex (ref=male)	0,035	-0,151**	-0,005
Age	-0,174	-0,209***	-0,095
Education (ref=low)			
Middle	-0,125**	0,064	0,073
High	-0,150**	-0,067	0,067
Employed	0,040	-0,062	-0,160**
Ethnic minority (ref=Dutch)			
Surinamese	0,072	0,159**	-0,027
Moroccan	0,150**	0,074	0,108
Turkish	0,140*	0,182**	-0,043
Other Western immigrants	-0,111*	0,038	-0,064
Other non-western immigrants	0,097	0,003	0,579
Family with children	-0,074	0,096	0,017
Low income neighborhood (Transvaal)	0,117*	0,018	0,160**
Years in neighborhood	0,059	0,117*	0,174**
Model summary			
R2	0,125	0,116	0,113
N	300	297	182

Statistical significance: *** p<0,01; ** p<0,05; *p<0,10; a not measured for resource items

In short, differences between the residents in the two neighborhoods in neighborhood orientation of socio-economic prestige and work-related support, which can be considered as indicators of potential instrumental resources, remain after controlling for personal characteristics. The opposite has been shown for the degree to which one receives social support in the personal domain: differences in neighborhood orientation between the two neighborhoods of expressive resources are an expression of differences in personal characteristics.

2.7 Neighborhood orientation and social resources

The next question is to what degree a relationship exists between the degree of neighborhood orientation and the amount of accessed prestige and support. A multivariate regression model was estimated which included neighborhood context and neighborhood orientation as well as personal characteristics and other network characteristics to explain the level of prestige and support in residents' networks. Table 7 summarizes the findings.

With regard to socio-economic prestige of residents' networks, the level of education of respondents shows a positive correlation with the socio-economic structure of their social network. Ethnic differences, on the other hand, do not matter, with the exception of the very heterogeneous group of non-western immigrants. A possible explanation for this might be that this is a very diverse group of immigrants, many of whom have only recently immigrated and therefore not had

time to develop very a large social network. Of the network characteristics, only the share of friends and acquaintances versus the share of family as network members is positively related to the socio-economic prestige of respondents' networks. The share of neighborhood contacts, on the other hand, does not have an influence and the earlier mentioned bivariate relationship between share of neighborhood contacts and prestige of one's network can be largely explained by differences in the population, particularly ethnic, composition of the two neighborhoods. A last and interesting finding is that respondents in the low income neighborhood score significantly lower on socio-economic prestige than respondents in the more mixed neighborhood, even when controlling for the share of neighborhood based contacts and share of family ties. Note, that this finding does not imply that these lower resources are all provided through local contacts.

In contrast, the findings for the amount of social support do not differ between the two neighborhoods, nor does a multivariate analyses provide further explanation for the share of support that residents receive (see table 7, model 2). Neither living in a low income neighborhood, nor a high share of neighborhood based support contacts influence the degree of support. This remains the case when analyzing the results for the three types of social support separately.

Table 7: OLS Regression on socio-economic prestige (share of occupations known) and support in residents' network (standardized coefficients)

	Model 1 Prestige	Model 2 Support
Sex (ref=male)	0,045	-0,024
Age	0,026	-0,197***
Education (ref=low)		
Middle	0,279***	0,019
High	0,193***	0,097
Employed	0,060	0,079
Ethnic minority (ref=Dutch)		
Surinamese	-0,102	-0,064
Moroccan	-0,034	-0,073
Turkish	0,066	0,039
Other Western immigrants	-0,020	-0,047
Other non-western immigrants	-0,218***	-0,122
Family with children	-0,006	-0,060
Network characteristics		
% neighborhood contacts	0,006	0,085
% family relations	-0,164***	0,045
% own ethnic group	-0,089	- ^a
Residential		
Low income neighborhood (Transvaal)	-0,121**	0,003
Model summary		
R2	0,219	0,094
N	299	308

Statistical significance: *** p<0,01; ** p<0,05; *p<0,10; ^a not measured for resource items

2.8 Summary and discussion

An important discussion in the research literature about the role of neighbor relations in transmitting neighborhood effects is whether low income residents in low income neighborhoods are worse off than low income residents in mixed neighborhoods, because they lack useful social resources to improve their disadvantaged social position. The dominant assumption in this debate is that while social interaction patterns in low income neighborhoods reproduce social inequalities, they facilitate mobility in mixed neighborhoods. The aim of this paper was to study the degree to which social housing residents in a low income neighborhood and a socio-economic mixed neighborhood in The Hague, the Netherlands, differed in the availability of social resources, in particular in their access to different social positions and in actual support provided by their social network. Additionally, we studied whether differences found can be attributed to local contacts. To study the relationship between neighborhood and access to social resources, we used two different indicators for individual social capital: a measure of support and a measure of socio-economic prestige. The former measure is an indicator for daily and practical support while the latter indicates potential instrumental access to resources that are needed to improve one's social position. Interestingly, we found different results for the two measurements.

On the one hand, the two resident groups differ in socio-economic prestige of their networks in terms of the share of positions known. On this indicator for socio-economic diversity, social housing residents in the low income neighborhood of Transvaal score lower than respondents in the mixed neighborhood of Regentesse. However, no differences were found in terms of knowing people with higher prestige positions: the greater share of accessed positions in the networks of respondents in Regentesse is the result of knowing people with more diverse jobs in the lower ranges of occupational structure rather than people with a higher job status. This means that social housing residents in the mixed neighborhood of Regentesse do not benefit from the proximity of more affluent neighbors. Possibly, this is the result of considerable social distance between residents and social closure of networks of more affluent residents, although further research would be needed to test this hypothesis. The difference between the two neighborhoods in the number of occupational positions known remains stable in a multivariate analysis, where it is controlled for personal characteristics as well as for network characteristics. This also applies to the degree of neighborhood orientation of residents' networks: social networks of residents in the low income neighborhood are more constricted in terms of socio-economic prestige, but this is not simply related to the higher share of local social contacts in their networks. An explanation for the remaining neighborhood effect on socio-economic prestige might lie in the nature of local social contacts relating to social closure or processes of socialization or stigmatization of Transvaal residents, but a deeper inquiry of these processes is beyond the scope of this contribution.

On the other hand, the two resident groups do not differ in terms of actual support provided by their networks and their ability to find people to deal with the problems of everyday life, whether these problems are in the personal domain, work-related or related to dealing with formal institutions such as the housing and labor market. Apparently, receiving support is not related to a person's status or capability, but more to the availability of others. Thus, contrary to the general as-

sumption in the research literature, living in a mixed neighborhood or a low income neighborhood does not matter for the degree to which residents receive actual support. Yet, note that both groups score rather low compared to the Dutch population in general. In addition, there is a difference between the two neighborhoods in the degree to which support is provided by the local network: for social housing residents in the low income neighborhood family and friends live more often in the same neighborhood than for their counterparts in the mixed neighborhood. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that this does not affect the degree of received support.

A final question that can be raised is how we should interpret the dissimilar findings for the two individual social capital measures? The position and resource generator measure social resources in respondents' networks that serve different goals and that are not necessarily provided by the same people. Thus the different types of resources complement each other. In fact, it can be hypothesized that the socio-economic prestige in residents' networks as measured by the position generator is an indication of the usefulness or effectiveness of social support as measured by the resource generator. Following this line of thought, the more diverse networks of residents in the mixed neighborhood of Regentesse might provide more effective support to deal with problems in everyday life. For example, knowing people with more diverse occupational positions may be more beneficial to maintain one's social position (if not improve one's social position) because one can tap into more diverse sources of job information, even though these positions might all be at the lower end of the social rank. On the other hand, there is a considerable difference between knowing someone and actually benefiting from this relationship. From this perspective, residents in the mixed neighborhood might know more people, but they might not be capable of deriving actual useful support from these contacts. Simply put, the question is whether it matters that one knows a truck driver as well as a cleaning person rather than only a truck driver. Further research on the way in which network prestige is used in different domains of residents' life would provide more insight into this issue.

In short, the findings for socio-economic prestige in residents' networks show that disadvantaged residents in low income neighborhoods are slightly worse off in terms of network diversity than disadvantaged residents in mixed neighborhoods, while they do not differ in terms of informal social support to deal with problems in everyday life. Thus, residents in the low income neighborhood are socially isolated in terms of access to prestige, but not in terms of actual support. Although neighborhood context plays only a moderate role in influencing socio-economic prestige compared to individual characteristics, such as level of education and ethnicity, it is nevertheless interesting from an international perspective that such mild forms of social isolation occur even in relatively fragmented and heterogeneous low income neighborhoods such as Transvaal-Noord.

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